



# **AGENDA**

## **SPECIAL MEETING**

## **CLAYTON CITY COUNCIL**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Monday, March 22, 2021**

**4:00 p.m.**

### **\*\*\* NEW LOCATION\*\*\***

*This meeting is being held in accordance with the Brown Act as currently in effect under the State Emergency Services Act, the Governor's Emergency Declaration related to COVID-19 and the Governor's Executive Orders N-25-20 and N-29-20 that allow members of the City Council, City staff and the public to participate and conduct a meeting by teleconference, videoconference or both. In order to comply with public health orders, the requirement to provide a physical location for members of the public to participate in the meeting has been suspended.*

**Mayor:** Carl Wolfe  
**Vice Mayor:** Peter Cloven

**Council Members**  
Jim Diaz  
Holly Tillman  
Jeff Wan

- A complete packet of information containing staff reports and exhibits related to each public item is available for public review on the City's website at [www.ci.clayton.ca.us](http://www.ci.clayton.ca.us)
- Agendas are posted at: 1) City Hall, 6000 Heritage Trail; 2) Library, 6125 Clayton Road; 3) Ohm's Bulletin Board, 1028 Diablo Street, Clayton; and 4) City Website at [www.ci.clayton.ca.us](http://www.ci.clayton.ca.us)
- Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the City Council after distribution of the Agenda Packet and regarding any public item on this Agenda is available for review on the City's website at [www.ci.clayton.ca.us](http://www.ci.clayton.ca.us)
- If you have a physical impairment that requires special accommodations to participate, please call the City Clerk's office at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting at (925) 673-7300.

## Instructions for Virtual Clayton City Council Special Meeting – March 22

To protect our residents, officials, and staff, and aligned with the Governor’s executive order to Shelter-at-Home, this meeting is being conducted utilizing teleconferencing means consistent with State order that that allows the public to address the local legislative body electronically.

To follow or participate in the meeting:

1. **Videoconference:** to follow the meeting on-line, click here:

### Link to join Webinar

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86520967069>

No password required.

**E-mail Public Comments:** If preferred, please e-mail public comments to the City Manager, Ms. Schwartz at [RSchwartz@ci.clayton.ca.us](mailto:RSchwartz@ci.clayton.ca.us) by noon on the day of the Clayton City Council Special meeting. All E-mail Public Comments will be forwarded to the entire Clayton City Council.

For those who choose to attend the meeting via videoconferencing or telephone shall have 3 minutes for public comments.

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### Location:

Videoconferencing Meeting (this meeting via teleconferencing is open to the public)

To join this virtual meeting on-line click here:

### Link to join Webinar

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86520967069>

No password required.

To join on telephone, dial (877) 853-5257 and use the *Webinar ID* shown above.

# **\* CLAYTON CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING \***

**March 22, 2021**

**4:00 P.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** – Mayor Wolfe.

2. **MEETING PROTOCOL VIDEO**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON - AGENDA ITEMS**

*Members of the public may address the City Council on items within the Council's jurisdiction, (which are not on the agenda) at this time. To assure an orderly meeting and an equal opportunity for everyone, each speaker is limited to 3 minutes, enforced at the Mayor's discretion. In accordance with State Law, no action may take place on any item not appearing on the posted agenda. The Council may respond to statements made or questions asked, or may at its discretion request Staff to report back at a future meeting concerning the matter.*

*Public comment and input on Public Hearing, Action Items and other Agenda Items will be allowed when each item is considered by the City Council.*

4. **ACTION ITEMS**

(a) Review, discuss and establish Council – Manager Goals and Objectives for FY2021/22.

a. Meeting Agenda [View Here](#)

b. Meeting Handouts [View Here](#)

c. Clayton City Council Guidelines and Procedures (May 2019) [View Here](#)

d. Article: Exceptional Councils [View Here](#)

e. Article: Reimagining Your Community [View Here](#)

f. Draft FY2021/22 Council Priority Areas & Goals [View Here](#)

**RECOMMENDATION:** By majority consensus, set attainable Goals and Objectives for Fiscal Year 2021/22.

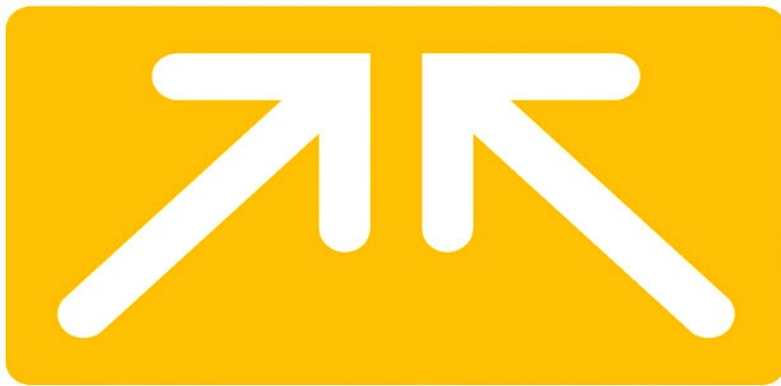
5. **ADJOURNMENT**

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# City of Clayton Mayor and City Council Advance Meeting Agenda March 22, 2021

Facilitated by Patrick Ibarra  
The Mejorando Group

1. Identify and discuss benefits from Good Government. Group discussion about the benefits of Good Government. (4:00 – 4:10)
2. Enhancing Credibility as a Governing Body: Review the Seven Factors which comprise a credible Governing Body. (4:10 – 4:20).
3. Strategies for Creating a More Collaborative Governing Body – Review and discuss the various dimensions essential to ensure sufficient credibility by residents in the governing body. (4:20 – 4:30)
4. Objectives (4:30 – 5:50) – The governing body will identify specific goals and objectives for possible inclusion in the upcoming budget discussion.
5. Next Steps - Discuss next steps. (5:50 – 6:00)



mejorando group



# ***MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL ADVANCE MEETING***

Facilitated by  
**PATRICK IBARRA**

**March 22, 2021**

## BENEFITS FROM GOOD GOVERNMENT

***“Role of local government is to be the protagonist/advocate for a better quality of life.”***

# ENHANCING CREDIBILITY AS A GOVERNING BODY



# STRATEGIES FOR CREATING A MORE COLLABORATIVE, EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BODY

- 1) Think and Act Strategically
- 2) Respect “shared constituency”
- 3) Understand and Demonstrate the Elements of Teams and Teamwork
- 4) Have Clearly Defined Roles and Relationships
- 5) Honor the Council-Staff Partnership
- 6) Allocate Governing Body Time and Energy Appropriately
- 7) Have Clear Rules and Procedures for Council meetings
- 8) Practice Continuous Personal Learning and Development as a Leader
- 9) Communication and Problem Solving
  - a. Be attentive
  - b. Ask clarifying questions
  - c. Let people know you are listening
- 10) Distinctions between Values, Interests and Positions
  - a. Separate the people from the problem
  - b. Focus on interests
  - c. Invent options for mutual gain
  - d. Insist on using objective criteria
- 11) Civility and Councilmember Behavior
- 12) Effective Public Engagement



# POTENTIAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

# **COUNCIL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

## **\* CITY OF CLAYTON \***

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the Clayton City Council, the following guidelines have been adopted.

### **A. GENERAL**

1. The Council takes courageous action when necessary to keep Clayton on the cutting edge of well-run, well-managed, innovative cities.
2. The Council provides leadership and participates in regional, state and national programs and meetings.
3. The Council looks to its Commissions and Committees for independent advice and some legislative actions.
4. There is extensive citizen participation and work on City programs and documents.
5. There are numerous meetings other than regular Council meetings.
6. There is a commitment to training for staff, Council and Commission members.
7. Council Members will inform the City Clerk when they will be out of town as early as possible so absences can be calendared.
8. Council Members receive the same information as much as possible: Citizen complaints, letters, background, etc. [All Members receive copies of everything].
9. Technology is used to create efficiencies.
10. Unwanted reports and documents are returned to staff for distribution to the public or for recycling.

### **B. COUNCIL VALUES**

1. Each Councilperson is elected to and encouraged to represent his or her opinion and to work to carry out what he or she believes is in the best interests of Clayton and its citizens.
2. The Council and the City Manager are a participatory team.
3. The Council is high energy and achievement oriented.

4. Council Members exhibit care and respect for each other as persons.
5. Council Members promote care and respect for each other's point of view. Each Member has a right to be heard.
6. Opinions are expressed honestly, openly, civilly and with integrity.
7. Humor is an important tool.
8. Traditions are respected but not always binding.

C. COUNCIL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION

1. The Mayor makes Council sub-committee appointments annually in December; the Mayor is encouraged to seek input from Council regarding appointment preferences.
2. Members will take seriously the responsibility of reporting to Council on sub-committees and other regional, state and national board/agency/group activities in which they are involved.
3. Each Council Member has the responsibility to initiate resolution of problems as soon as possible.
4. Members shall recall and abide by the Brown Act when giving information to each other outside of public meetings.
5. Cheap shots at each other are not allowed by Members during public meetings, in the media, or at any other time.
6. Relationships are informal, but Council Members need to be aware of impact on and perception of the public.
7. Council Members will be flexible in covering Council responsibilities for each other.
8. Council Sub-Committees.
  - a. Sub-committee areas belong to the Council as a whole; they are not seen as territorial.
  - b. Sub-committees shall keep the rest of the Council fully informed. The rest of the Council is responsible for letting a sub-committee know if they want more information or to give input.
  - c. Before sub-committees start moving in new directions, they will obtain direction from the rest of the Council.

- d. Sub-committee reports will be made under “Council Reports” at Council meetings, when appropriate.
- e. Sub-committee memos will be sent on an interim basis to update other Council Members on:
  - 1). Issues being discussed.
  - 2). Options being considered.
  - 3). Progress.
- f. Appropriate reports will also be included in the City Manager’s “Weekly Report”.
- g. Council may contact Department Heads or the City Manager to be briefed on any sub-committee work.
- h. Council shall review the performance of citizen committees no less frequently than every six months.
- i. Sub-committees are task oriented with scheduled dates of completion.

D. COUNCIL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

- 1. City Manager.
  - a. Council Members should always feel free to communicate with the City Manager.
  - b. When a Council Member is unhappy about the performance of a Department, he/she should discuss this with the City Manager, not any other employee [the City Manager will inform the Mayor of any serious violations of this norm].
  - c. Concerns about the performance of Department Heads must be taken to the City Manager and/or Mayor first for resolution through proper channels.
  - d. In passing along critical information, the City Manager will inform all Council Members.
  - e. Council will provide ongoing feedback, information and perceptions to the City Manager, including some response to the “Weekly Report”.
  - f. Council will page the City Manager if there is an emergency and he/she cannot be reached by phone.

2. Staff in General.

- a. Council may make reasonable requests for information directly from Department Heads.
- b. An informal system of direct communication with staff is used but not abused by Council.
- c. Staff will inform Council immediately when an unusual event occurs that the public would be concerned about [e.g., major vehicular accidents; major police activities; areas cordoned off by police or fire, etc.].
- d. The Council and staff will not intentionally blind side each other in public; if there is an issue or a question a Council Member has regarding an agenda item, that Member will contact staff prior to the meeting.

E. COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR KEEPING INFORMED

1. Read Commission minutes and staff reports to find out issues being addressed.
2. Read documents on planning items.
3. Read City Manager “goal updates” list for Council.
4. Do homework diligently and thoroughly.

F. MAYOR SELECTION

1. Election to Vice Mayor and Mayor requires supporting votes of three (3) Council Members, but in the interest of harmony unanimous consensus is to be sought and encouraged.
2. Any Council Member wanting or not wanting a role has a responsibility to tell all other Members.
3. As far as possible and until otherwise decided, Council Members will take turns as Mayor.
4. Mayorship will be a one-year term, commencing with the first meeting in December.
5. Selection of a Mayor is not a lock-step system. The Vice Mayor is generally expected to ascend to Mayor.
6. All Council Members are peers, and the Mayor and Vice Mayor serve at the pleasure of the Council.

G. MAYOR'S ROLE

1. Each Mayor operates somewhat uniquely from past Mayors; the role is largely defined by the person based on style.
2. The elected Mayor is to chair the meetings with proper decorum and to treat all Council Members and the public with respect.
3. The Mayor will inform the Council of any correspondence received or sent in relation to City business. This will be done within reason so as not to create a paper-trail overload. (Use of voice mail is encouraged, whenever possible).
4. The Mayor will forward pertinent information to other Council Members.

H. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

1. City residents are considered “customers” and will be treated with courtesy and respect.
2. Council Members will receive copies of citizen written complaints, as received.
3. Council Members will be informed on telephone complaints, as appropriate.
4. Staff will inform Council of their response to complaints; copies of written responses should be included in Council packets.
5. Responses to citizens are personalized and professional.
6. Written responses will be selective. Responses will be made to all complaints.
7. Staff will draft a copy of responses for Council to use; letters over Council signatures checked out with signatory.
8. Council should not go to a hands-on mode when complaints occur. Issues will be referred to appropriate staff who will be given adequate time to respond.
9. If a Council Member wants action based on a citizen complaint, he/she should go through the City Manager's office to insure proper handling.

## I. PUBLIC MEETINGS

### 1. Agendas.

#### a. Formation.

- 1). The City Manager and the City Clerk will prepare a draft agenda and review it with the Mayor for finalization.
- 2). Any member of the Council may request that an item be placed on the agenda by contacting the Mayor. It is the Mayor's discretion as to which regularly scheduled meeting the requested agenda item will appear, after consultation with the City Manager regarding availability of staff time to prepare necessary reports and the extent and number of items already scheduled for each upcoming Council meeting.

#### b. Council may move to table any agenda item for future study.

#### c. Council Members will feel free to ask for continuance if enough time has not been available for the Council to prepare.

#### d. If a Member is ill or away for any big or "personal" agenda item, the item may be tabled at the Member's request.

#### e. Council may refuse to act on items where critical materials were not available in the Friday agenda packet.

#### f. Agenda packets are available by 5:00 PM on the Friday preceding the Tuesday meeting.

#### g. No item on the agenda will be taken up after 11:00 PM without the unanimous consent of the Council Members present.

### 2. Consent Calendar.

#### a. Items placed on the Consent Calendar are those considered by the Mayor or the City Manager to be routine in nature; they are enacted in one motion. There is normally no separate discussion of these items, unless requested.

#### b. The Consent Calendar is used judiciously for items such as minutes, routine City business, some appeals, items already approved in the Budget, etc.

#### c. The Mayor will inquire of the public, "Is there anyone who wishes to speak to anything on the Consent Calendar?" [to be in bold type on the agenda]. If so, the item is pulled off the Calendar for separate discussion.

- d. If a Council Member has a question on a Consent Calendar item for their information only, they are encouraged to ask staff ahead of time, rather than having it pulled off for discussion during the meeting.
  - e. If there is time before the meeting, Council Members will inform staff of items they wish to pull from the Consent Calendar.
  - f. If additional information is requested by a Council Member, staff will provide back-up material to all Council Members.
- 3. It is reasonable to expect that staff be prepared to give an oral report on every agenda item.
- 4. The Mayor works with the City Manager to decide how much information needs to be disseminated at the meeting based on the item, and Council and audience needs.
- 5. There will be no packing of the audience by individual Council Members for specific agenda items.
- 6. Corrections to minutes should be passed to the City Clerk before the meeting, if possible.
- 7. Public Comment.
  - a. As required by law.
  - b. To be directed to the Mayor and Council, not staff or the audience.
  - c. Has a three (3) minute time limit enforced at the Mayor's discretion; is announced in advance and consistently applied.
  - d. Is addressed early in the meeting.
  - e. A Council Member may ask staff to put an item on a future agenda.
  - f. Council may ask staff to respond, when appropriate.
  - g. The following options may be considered by the Mayor during times of high controversy:
    - 1). The Mayor designates a block of time early in the meeting (20 minutes) and any comments beyond this limit will be held until the end of the meeting.



- 2). The Mayor polls the audience for an indication of the number of people wishing to speak, then calls on individuals to speak.
8. The Mayor should survey the audience, as appropriate, to move agenda items up or back to address audience items of concern.
9. Public participation is encouraged on all public agenda items.
10. Council and staff will treat participants and each other with courtesy. Derogatory or sarcastic comments are inappropriate.
11. The public will likewise be encouraged by the Mayor to maintain meeting decorum.
12. Council and staff will treat the public with respect; refer to citizens by surnames, as appropriate.
13. In Council meetings when citizens are agitated, the Mayor may call a short recess to calm the situation.
14. The portion of a regular Council meeting before 7:00 PM, in addition to the present items, should include Council and City Manager reports; action items are discussed first and reports second; Council will ask staff for a summary, if appropriate.
15. The Mayor allows other Members to speak first, then gives his/her views and afterward summarizes the discussion. Council Members should not be redundant if they concur with what has already been said.
16. Voting.
  - a. Each Council Member is given an opportunity to speak before a motion.
  - b. Attempts are always made to reach consensus on significant issues.
  - c. On split votes, each Member shares his/her views about the issue and the reasons for his/her vote.
  - d. Once a vote is final, Council Members will support the action taken. If a Council Member wants a vote to be reconsidered, he/she will follow The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure.
  - e. Any Council Member may request a roll call vote on any given issue.
17. When any Council Member believes something would be helpful during a meeting, he/she is free to suggest change in the procedure.

18. Department Head attendance is encouraged at every Council meeting when there is a pertinent issue relative to that Department on the agenda; other staff attendance at Council meetings is at the City Manager's discretion.
19. Written documents, written statements, citizen petitions, references, newspaper articles or other materials submitted at or read by a council member or a member of the public at a City Council meeting become part of the Agenda Packet retained for that meeting, not an attachment to the official minutes prepared by the City Clerk of said meeting.
20. Council Members shall not use or receive digital or electronic communications (such as electronic text or visual communications and attachments distributed via email, instant messaging, twitter or comparable services) regarding an agenda item at any time during the meeting of the City Council at which he or she is in attendance.

J. EXECUTIVE SESSION IN GENERAL

1. Council will receive written reports for Closed Session items, as appropriate; these reports are to be returned to staff at the end of the meeting.
2. The City Manager will schedule pre-meeting Closed Sessions if it will save the City money [due to consultant or legal fees, etc.].
3. There is to be no violation of Executive Session confidentiality. Council Members will not talk to affected/opposing parties or anyone else (press, etc.) regarding Executive Session items without Council direction and concurrence.
4. The Mayor will make a public report after every Closed Session in the same meeting.

K. REDEVELOPMENT, GEOLOGIC HAZARD ABATEMENT DISTRICT (GHAD), AND CLAYTON FINANCING AUTHORITY MEETINGS

1. All general procedural rules apply as related to normal agenda, consent calendar, etc. These meetings generally follow the Council meeting.

L. SPECIAL MEETINGS

1. Any member may request the Mayor to call a Special Meeting and the Mayor will call it unless there are extenuating circumstances. Special Meetings will be called as specified in the California Government Code.

M. CITY ELECTION YEAR

1. Election year politics should be conducted in such a fashion that the business of Clayton can carry on as usual.
2. Council Candidates will be introduced at Council meetings as candidates only after they have filed their nomination papers.

N. MEMBERS OF COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

1. Commissions and Committees are appointed by the Council as advisory bodies.
2. Commissions and Committees need to:
  - a. Consider Council vision.
  - b. Understand their roles, authority, limitations, etc.
  - c. Know annual priorities.
  - d. Work within established process and parameters [e.g., citizen involvement].
  - e. Have a Council Member serve as liaison.
3. Criteria to be considered in the selection and re-appointment of Commissions. \*
  - a. Lack of conflicts of interest.
  - b. Attendance [may not miss two consecutive meetings without an excuse].
  - c. Level of participation and preparation.
  - d. Support of community vision and values.
  - e. Respect for staff and public.
  - f. Work for community versus personal purposes.
  - g. Perform as a team player.
  - h. Be a resident [unless there is exceptional need].

- i. Be competent.
- j. Representative of community as a group [e.g., differing points of view, area of residence, aspects of community, backgrounds, experts versus generalists, etc.].
- k. Appointments are to be made by Council as a whole, not on promises by individual Council Members or Mayor.
- \* [A Commissioner may be removed if he/she is in violation of criteria under this section].

4. Selection Process.

- a. Commission candidate application information is to include: Council vision statement, expectations, Brown Act requirements, suggestion to attend a Commission meeting, problem-solving model, etc.
- b. City Council reviews applications, giving input to the Ad-Hoc Committee regarding ranking; Council may request input from Department Heads and City Manager.
- c. Ad-Hoc Committee conducts interviews and makes recommendations to Council [let Council Members know before the meeting who is being recommended in time for individual review].
- d. Council appoints Commissioners [goal is 5-0 consensus vote].
- e. Information packet (including Brown Act, Minutes, Ordinance forming Commission, Calendar of League of California Cities events) is provided to Commissioners by staff.

5. Commissions encouraged to be representative of and involve the entire community.

6. Planning Commissioners shall not use or receive digital or electronic communications (such as electronic text or visual communications and attachments distributed via email, instant messaging, twitter or comparable services) regarding an agenda item at any time during the meeting of the Planning Commission at which he or she is in attendance.

\* \* \* \* \*

Revised: 21 May 2019  
 Revised: 20 February 2007  
 Revised: 20 August 2002  
 Adopted: 05 May 1998



# Attributes of Exceptional Councils

Leading public organizations and governing with colleagues on a council is a challenging art of community service. The Institute recognizes that many aspects of leadership and governance are not intuitive. This piece is intended to provide councilmembers and city managers insight into the attributes of exceptional councils as well as provide practical tips to help them become exceptional.

## 1. Exceptional councils develop a sense of team – a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city

The mayor, councilmembers and city manager see themselves and work as a team as they undertake a series of tasks to further their common purpose. The individual team members work in a coordinated and collaborative manner with a high degree of respect, trust and openness. The team values diversity in style and perspective. The team thinks and acts strategically as it examines issues/situations and decides on a course of action serving their city's mission and goals.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Successfully transition from candidate to a member of the council.
- Become a champion of the city. Make decisions based on the needs and interests of the community at-large / the greater good.
- Develop, communicate and support policy goals and council decisions.
- Demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively (as a team) and have a citywide perspective.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Build capacity to create a more effective team. The governance team (mayor, councilmembers and city manager) should get to know each other; how each person approaches issues, decision making style and so on. This can be accomplished at annual meetings or workshops through-out the year. In the event that councilmembers disagree, clear ground rules (norms of behavior and practice) can help quell acrimony before it becomes a problem. It's important to remember that trust is built around understanding and respect, not necessarily agreement.

## 2. Exceptional councils have clear roles and responsibilities that are understood and adhered.

Exceptional councils understand their role is to serve as policy maker - to represent the values, beliefs and priorities of their community while serving in the community's best interest. They carry out a variety of responsibilities including: developing and adopting a vision for the city; focusing and aligning plans, policies, agreements and budgets in furtherance of this vision; and holding themselves and the city manager accountable for results.

Exceptional councils understand that the city manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. The city manager is responsible for undertaking and accomplishing the policy objectives of the council. Exceptional councils recognize the subject matter expertise of staff and utilize their knowledge and experience to guide and inform decision making.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Understand the role of local government and their responsibilities.
- Know their role- to set vision and policy, avoid micromanagement.
- Councilmembers should strive to be informed about the issues facing the city and be prepared to ask questions of staff and each other.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Create a shared understanding of the city manager's role and the council's expectations to optimize the working relationships. This shared understanding is informed by local charter and ordinance provisions that provide the overall framework for the relationship. The council should make time to have conversations during retreats and or study sessions to define and/or reveal and refine their role and responsibilities. Since role clarity between the city council and city management is critical to mutual success, having clear protocols helps avoid misunderstandings.

### 3. Exceptional councils honor the relationship with staff and each other

Exceptional councils understand that a good working relationship with staff is vital for the city to be run successfully. Exceptional councils treat each other and staff with dignity and respect. They act with civility and a high level of professional decorum. Councilmembers build trust by not playing the “gotcha game” and strive to have a no secrets, no surprises approach as an operating norm. Finally, they respect the diversity of styles and perspectives among their colleagues and staff and are open to new ideas.

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Councilmembers have the ability to respectfully disagree (to disagree without being disagreeable). They are able to leave it at the dais; debates are about policy, not personality.
- Exceptional councilmembers reflect positive decorum/model of leadership by providing respectful tone with colleagues.
- Establish a set of behaviors ahead of time, potentially documented in a code of conduct, to help promote civility and respect.

#### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Set council priorities and strategic goals at an annual meeting; these goals and priorities are a tool to guide the city manager and staff on where to focus their efforts. This annual meeting provides time for the council to reflect on community priorities as well as offer an opportunity to discuss their decorum and their relationship among each other and the relationship between the city manager/staff and the council.

### 4. Exceptional councils routinely conduct effective meetings

Open and public meetings are central to democratic decision-making. Exceptional councils master the art of effective meetings. They develop and adhere to meeting protocols and processes. They spend time planning and organizing the agenda with the aim of having a more focused meeting. They allocate the council’s time and energy appropriately (focused on the council’s role and responsibilities) and meeting short- and long-term priorities. They honor the public’s participation and engagement and they generally start on time and are held during reasonable hours.

Exceptional councils use public meetings not only for their intended purpose, information sharing and decision-making,

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Councilmembers are respectful of each other, the public and everyone’s time.
- Councilmembers use engaging body language as a way to demonstrate respect.
- Issues are not personalized, thoughtful dialogue is the objective.
- Agenda packets are read, councilmembers come prepared and have an open mind
- Respect is demonstrated for varied opinions.
- Everyone strives to be civil and act with decorum.



but they also use the meeting to demonstrate respect and civility for each other, staff and the public. Exceptional councilmembers prepare in advance of the meeting, remain focused on the city goals and objectives and mindful of their role and responsibilities.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Develop and adopt (with regular reviews and updates), guidelines for conducting meetings and making decisions. These governance protocols typically address meeting procedures (agenda preparation, how to put issues on the agenda, debate and voting procedures (parliamentary rules) and standards of decorum (civility)). As part of a regular self-assessment, councils should evaluate their meetings and their effectiveness and adjust behavior and practices for better results.

## 5. Exceptional councils hold themselves and the city accountable

Exceptional councils operate openly, ethically and work to engage the community in a myriad of decisions impacting the prosperity and well-being of their community. Toward that end, exceptional councils consistently provide short- and long-term strategic direction and goals, as well as provide budget, program and policy oversight.

Exceptional councils hold themselves accountable for the conduct, behavior and effectiveness of the council. They establish clear priorities and goals and hold the city manager accountable for results. And finally, they embrace accountability as a process and tool to calibrate ongoing efforts to address and meet policy and program objectives.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Councilmembers operate ethically and with integrity.
- Councils conduct team building / goal setting exercise to track progress towards mutually agreed upon goals
- Councils taking responsibility for the results (good and bad).
- Councils celebrate success.
- Councilmembers hold themselves responsible for adhering to operating protocols and codes of conduct.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Annually evaluate council and city manager performance toward achieving the city's priorities and goals (consider having this be part of an annual goal setting meeting). Council should consider assessing its own behavior and effectiveness as part of its annual self-assessment.

## 6. Exceptional councils have members who practice continuous personal learning and development

Governance is not intuitive. In addition, the policy and economic environment impacting cities are ever changing. Exceptional councils continually provide the opportunity to build their knowledge and skills, to enhance their understanding of key issues, increase their awareness of best practices and sharpen their leadership and governance skills.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Stay informed on key issues
- Gain key insights and knowledge on all aspects of governing, from budgets to plans and everything in between.
- Learning to listen is sometimes more important than learning to give a speech.

### BEST PRACTICE TIPS

Seek out national, state and local professional growth and educational opportunities. These opportunities can focus on the nuts and bolts of governing to helping you gain valuable information and/or insights on key policy issues facing your city. In addition, city run orientations for newly elected officials provide a good way to acclimate new members to the council's norms and protocols as well as the budget and key policy issues.

# “We’ve Always Done It That Way” Is Over— WHAT’S NEXT?



Ritu Jethani/stock.adobe.com

## PART 3: Reimagining Your Community

BY PATRICK IBARRA

**This is the third** of my four-part series in which I focus on the numerous changes impacting local government. In this edition, I share why shifting conditions are prompting leaders to reimagine the future of their community. Instead of relying on strategic planning, they are utilizing a Futures Planning approach.

Local government directly affects the daily existence and quality of life for residents within the community. Local government leadership is about making things happen that might not otherwise happen and preventing things from happening that ordinarily might happen. It is a process that helps transform intentions into positive actions, visions into reality. The role of government is evolving, but the question is, in what direction is it moving?

As a result of recent events—economic volatility, shifting political winds, the COVID-19 pandemic, and disruptive innovation—I am experiencing an

**re-im-ag-ine/**  
**reinterpret (an**  
**event, work of art,**  
**etc.) imaginatively;**  
**rethink**

**com-mu-ni-ty/**  
**a group of people**  
**living in the same**  
**place or having**  
**a particular**  
**characteristic**  
**in common**

**fu-ture/ time**  
**regarded as**  
**still to come.**

increased interest in strategic planning services by government leaders. In my initial discussion, we determine that instead of tying their community’s future to a strategy geared to a single set of events, smart management benefits from a deeper understanding of the present possibilities offered from multiple views about possible futures.

During periods of Turbulence, Uncertainty, Novelty, and Ambiguity (what the Oxford scenario planning approach refers to as TUNA conditions), communities and organizations frequently experience serious challenges that disrupt continuity of operations, financial stability, and community expectations. Such conditions can be unsettling and destabilizing on many different levels. But they also present opportunities for organizations to reframe their strategies and innovate. I refer to TUNA forces as



**PATRICK IBARRA**

and his consulting firm, the Mejorando Group, are passionate about unleashing human potential (patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com).

headwinds and the purpose of Futures Planning is to convert those headwinds into a tailwind helping to accelerate your community toward realizing its potential. Navigating the path forward requires a disciplined balance of three actions: managing your present business, creating your future, and selectively unlearning the past.

The best strategic leaders anticipate where their business/community/organization is headed and see changes before others do. Far from being magicians, instead they shine at “outside-in thinking” that sharpens their ability to anticipate what is to come. They know their customers extremely well, foresee emerging trends, and understand changing dynamics. The headwinds for public sector agencies are daunting indeed, yet increasingly leaders are participating in strategic thinking processes that lead to planning for a number of futures.

The actions that position your community for the future differ from a “we’ve always done it that way” approach. Maintaining a healthy balance between the status quo and innovation is hard work. Striking the right balance between sustaining a legacy organization and building for the future requires judgment.

Increasingly, local governments are reconsidering their approach to strategic planning by referencing the following shift in mindset:

More and better budget planning is not the solitary factor available to you to mitigate the changes impacting your community and organization. I argue that people who lose weight are not always healthier because of it. The phrase “tighten your belt” is a cliché, and it has returned with vigor to local governments throughout the world. I offer that it’s time to “change your pants,” because you cannot cut your way to a better future.

Similarly, making across-the-board uniform budget cuts makes absolutely no sense. Some people might believe that it’s a fair and equitable approach, but in reality, the impacts in some operations can be enormous while in others negligible. Trying to decide priorities while you are trying to reconcile your budget is nearly impossible.

Healthier budgets do not guarantee better government nor does the opposite hold true—smaller budgets leading to ineffective government. I contend money/budget is not your organization’s most precious resource; time is—on what are elected officials and agency staff investing their time? In fact, increasing the number of employees does not always translate into improved productivity.

OLD MINDSET	MODERN MINDSET
• Adoption of the plan is the strategy.	• Execution is the strategy.
• Change is dangerous.	• Stability is dangerous.
• An event.	• A process.
• Wish list—the longer the better.	• Prioritized list—less is more.
• Community is static.	• Community is dynamic
• Tell residents.	• Involve residents.
• A linear process with one particular scenario for the future.	• Non-linear process with several possible future scenarios.
• Arithmetic—sequential	• Calculus—lots of moving parts
• Reductions to public safety (fire and police) are off-limits.	• Nothing is sacred for potential budget reductions, including public safety.
• Assumption that existing advantages will persist.	• Assumption that existing advantages will come under pressure.
• Deficit-closing strategy.	• Capitalize on strengths.
• Conversations that reinforce existing perspectives.	• Conversations that candidly question the status quo.
• Relatively few and homogenous people involved in strategy process.	• Broader constituencies involved in strategy process, with divergent input.
• Precise but slow.	• Fast and roughly right.
• Prediction oriented.	• Discovery driven.
• Seeking confirmation.	• Seeking disconfirmation.
• Extending a trajectory.	• Promoting continual shifts.

## The most effective leaders anticipate where their community is headed and see changes before others do.

I have dedicated my entire career to advocating for high-quality responsive government, and I can also be one of its toughest critics. Accordingly, government does many things well, but knowing what to stop doing isn't one of them. There are employees

right now as you read this article, in your organization, working on assignments that really don't matter in the scheme of what's important, like producing reports no one reads. It's not only a waste of time; it's demotivating to those staff members.

I am a huge fan of Lewis and Clark, whose intent was to explore unknown spaces in their pursuit of building a nation. The Corps of Discovery, as they called themselves, had to continually create a new map as they reperceived their future, relying on a learn-it-all approach, teamwork, and cooperation to achieve their vision. The next chapter for your community is how it reimagines itself. Forward-looking leaders recognize linear strategic planning is a relic of the past. Similar to the Lewis and Clark expedition, a passionate curiosity and relentlessly inquisitive mind are the hallmarks of success in interpreting the changes occurring.

Whenever you face high uncertainty, you need to be creative as you navigate uncharted waters. But you also need to prepare your mind. Way more than polishing up your vision, modifying your mission statement, refreshing your values, revising goals, and setting new objectives, the value of the Futures Planning approach is that it's less of a focus on identifying projects or getting to the "right" scenario, and more about discussing purpose and helping leadership understand that the future can be dramatically different from the present, while fostering a deeper understanding of the forces driving potential changes and uncertainties. The approach gives leaders the ability to *reperceive* reality. The dividend is to sharpen their capability to toggle between present reality and future possibility.

### Recommended Approach for Futures Planning

There are three types of communities: First are those who set the bar low and take a roof shot; second are the ones who are reckless and take a wild shot; and the third are those who are ambitious and take a moon shot! Which of these describes yours? Moon shots do not begin with brainstorming clever answers. They start with the hard work of finding the right questions.

Have you ever noticed that the front windshield of your car or truck is larger than your rearview mirror? That is because it's more important about where you're going than where you've been. And that is why I refer to convening your elected and appointed officials as an advance instead of retreat. Few forums can have as powerful an effect on building a stronger community, increasing a shared understanding among key stakeholders, and overall enhancing relationships as well-executed Advance Sessions that focus on Futures Planning for the short- and long-term. Continually stimulating your thinking and self-reflection is a critical aspect of

building and maintaining your advantage. You have to moisten your mind and have thoughtful, prudent discussions about the present and the future.

An Advance Session provides elected and appointed officials the opportunity to discuss topics and exchange ideas in a manner they normally don't get to, in a way they often don't get to, and while not an efficient discussion, it is productive. Keep in mind "no one washes a rental car" so enlisting elected officials in this type of discussion ensures they have "skin in the game," which is crucial.

In exploring various futures, conversations among policy makers deal with two worlds—the world of facts and data, and the world of ideas and perceptions. Dialogue, conversation quality, and engagement allow people to experiment with ideas and perceptions by taking facts and data into imagined or speculative worlds for the future of your community.

The types of questions that may be asked during the Advance Session may include:

- What profound trends are or will influence our future?
- What is our direction and response to these shifts?
- How can we be both responsive and proactive?
- What aspects of the current strategic plan need to be modified?
- Are any changes to the strategic initiatives needed?
- How will we enlist residents in our journey?
- What types of services will residents require in the future that are not already provided? What might be required to fund and staff these services?
- How will we describe our desired results in measurable terms?
- What are the best ways and means to get there?
- What are the potential impacts from growth?
- Which of our processes and practices might need to change to serve a larger population?
- What types of infrastructure additions or expansions will be required to handle our anticipated growth? What financial resources are required to fund this work?
- What can we do to make our community more attractive for business expansion or development opportunities?

The outcome of these Futures Planning discussions is to help you construct and evaluate an array of options that offer a broader view of the landscape and possibilities for success. Exploring your community through various lenses helps build your capacity to be agile—possessing the balance and capability that enable you to shift focus, priorities, and resources to meeting changing circumstances.

Local governments must operate in a legacy world, meaning that you must be able to keep doing the nuts-and-bolts work at the core of the mission. But you also must be ready to succeed in a fast-changing environment, one that is difficult to predict.

The advantage now goes to those who don't just learn to live with change, but who create change and fashion themselves as catalysts. The most effective leaders anticipate where their community is headed and see changes before others do.

Your community has tremendous untapped potential. Speaking of which, what is your community's potential? It's only limited by your collective imagination because the best days for your community are in front of it! **PM**

## **DRAFT FY2021/22 COUNCIL PRIORITY AREAS**

### **Land Use and Housing**

- Complete a state required Housing Element Update (Mandated; \$)
- ADU Ordinance (Mandated; 2020; \$)
- General Plan Safety and Circulation Element Updates (New; \$)

### **Public Safety**

- Update Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020; \$)
- Update Emergency Operations Plan (New; \$)
- Implement Nixle – for improved emergency communication with the community (New; \$)
- Improve pedestrian/traffic safety (2020; \$)

### **Financial Stability**

- Develop long-term financial plan (2020)
- Adopt a Finance Reserve policy (2020)
- Improve Capital Improvement Project (CIP) information and planning (2020)

### **Quality of Life**

- Hold joint Fireworks Event in conjunction with Concord/in Concord (New; \$)
- Support for Re-Starting Community events (Ongoing; \$)
- Complete a Community Survey (New; \$)
- Review Cannabis Ordinance (2021)

### **Good Governance**

- Install technology to provide Closed Captioning of Council Meetings (2020; \$)
- Update Purchasing Policy (2020)
- Update Employee Handbook (New)
- Update City IT infrastructure (including continued digitizing of records) (2020; \$)
- Create annual City Manager contingency for small unforeseen events/needs (New; \$)
- Improve employee recruitment and retention (2020; \$)