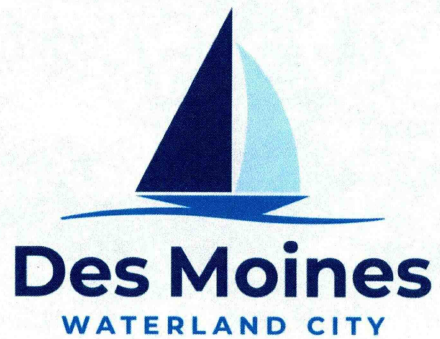
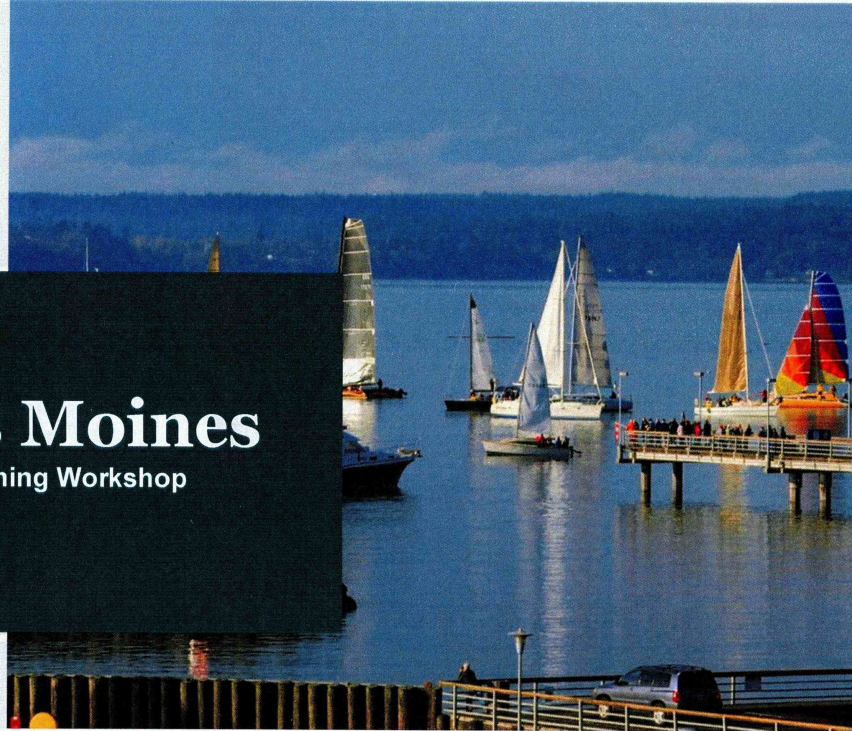




City of Des Moines

City Council Strategic Planning Workshop

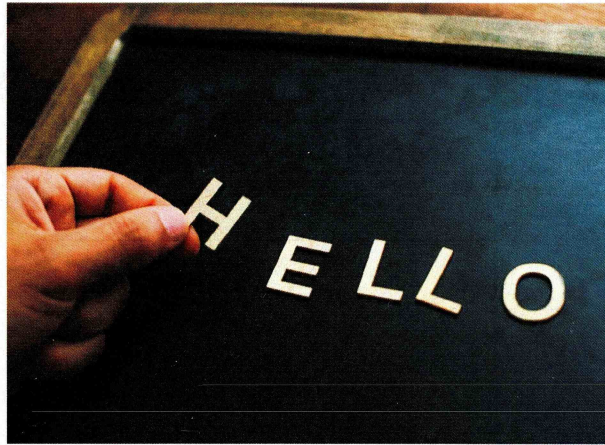
February 26-27, 2026



Opening Comments



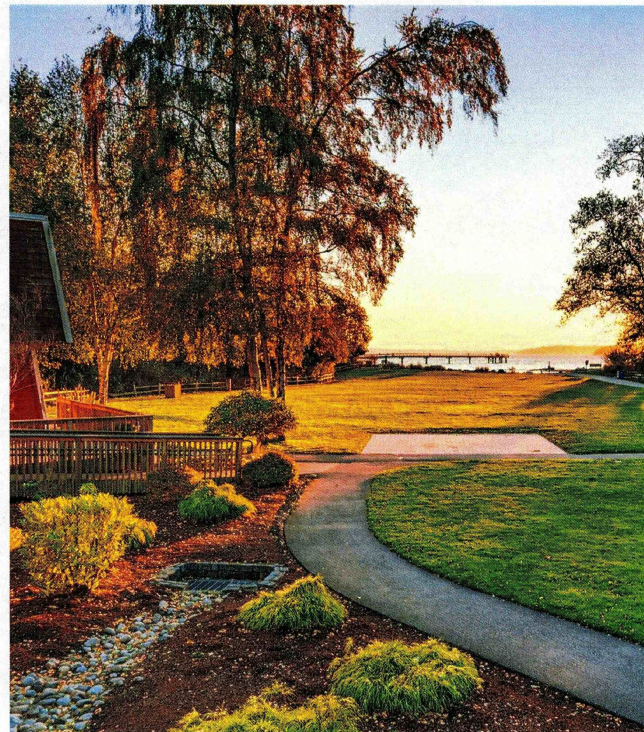
Introductions



1. Name and role
2. What are your hopes for our time together?
3. What are you hearing from the Community?

Day 1 Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Governing Together
3. Sharing Expectations
4. Preview Day 2



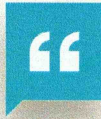
Norms for our time together

Listen	Listen to understand
Engage	Engage in conversations, stay focused, and share ideas
Be open	Be open to new or different perspectives
Seek consensus	Look for opportunities to agree
Have fun!	Enjoy the experience

Bike Rack

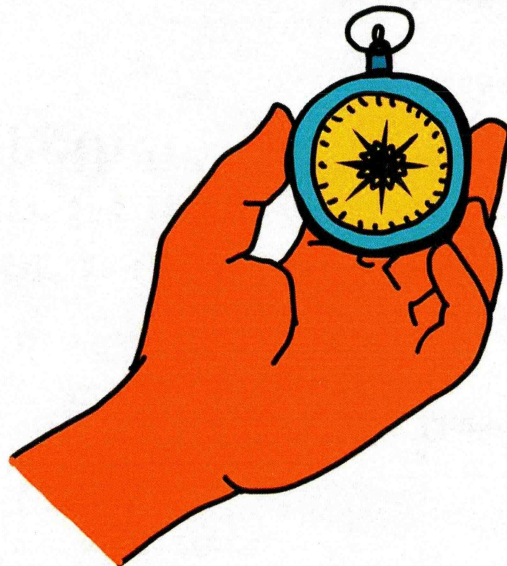
Time Management Tool





“If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

African Proverb

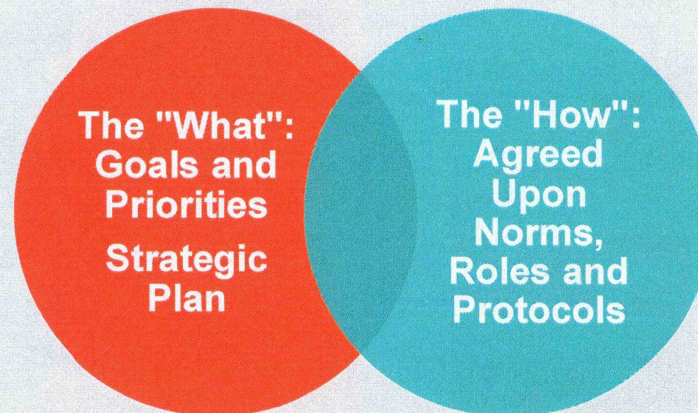


What is your
PERSONAL
MOTIVATION for
& COMMITMENT to
SERVING on
the COUNCIL?

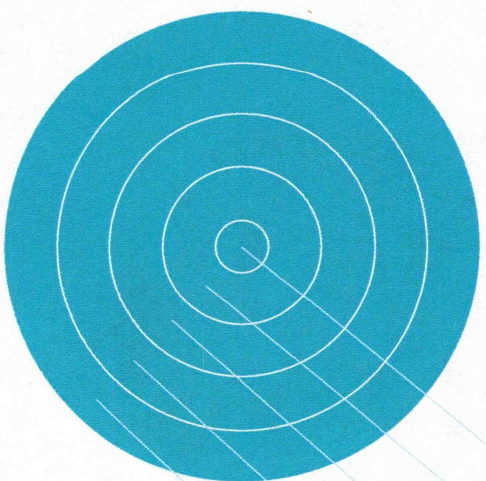
Governing Together



**Serving the
Community
Requires
Both**



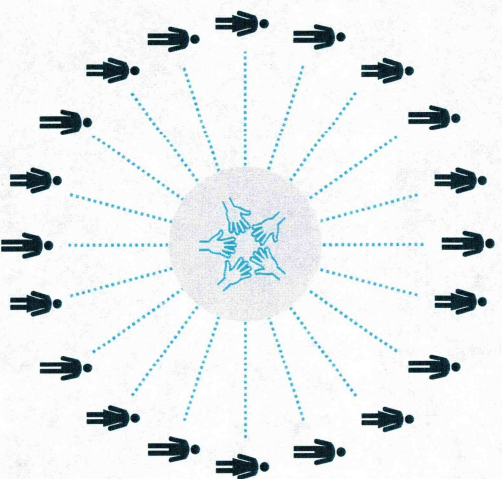
**Good
governance
gets results**



- Recruitment and Retention
- Achieving Results
- Strategic Direction
- Economic Development
- Regional Influence

Impacts

You Govern as a Body





What makes a council work effectively?

- 1 Unity of Purpose
- 2 Clear Roles and Responsibilities
- 3 Positive Governance Culture
- 4 Norms, Protocols, and Policies

Exceptional City Councils

1. Have a **sense of team** – a partnership with the city manager to govern and manage the city
2. Have **clear roles** and responsibilities that are understood and adhered to
3. Honor **the relationship** with staff and each other
4. Routinely conduct **effective meetings**
5. Hold themselves and the city **accountable**
6. Have members who practice **continuous improvement**

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT™
Preserving Good Government at the Local Level

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.

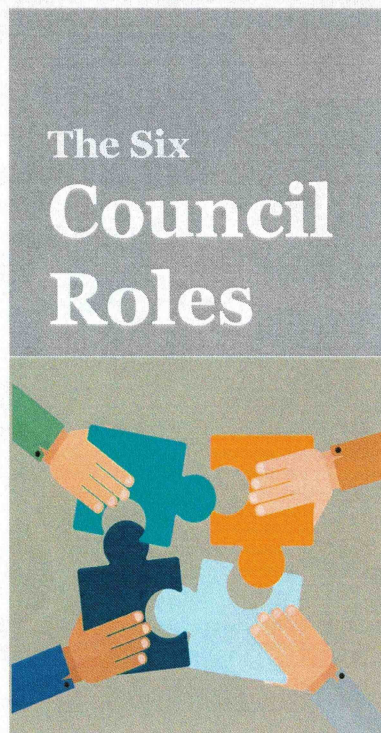
BEST PRACTICE TIPS

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 throughout 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.

Six Roles of a Governing Body

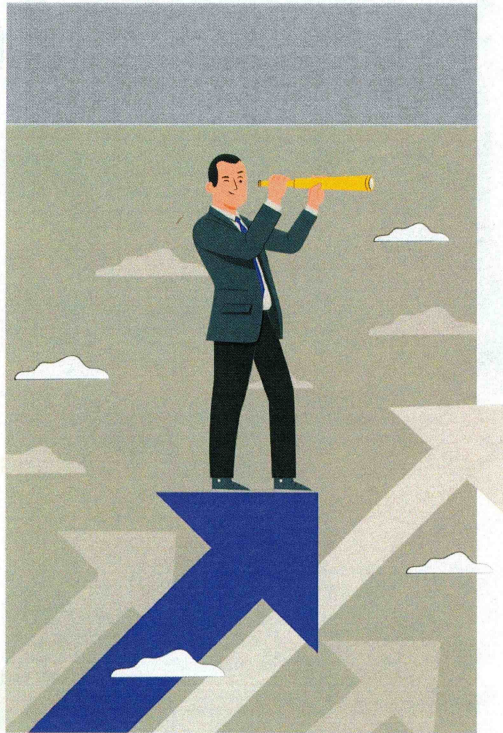


15



16

- 1** Strategic Vision
- 2** Trustee
- 3** Representative
- 4** Community Builder
- 5** Decision Maker
- 6** Oversight

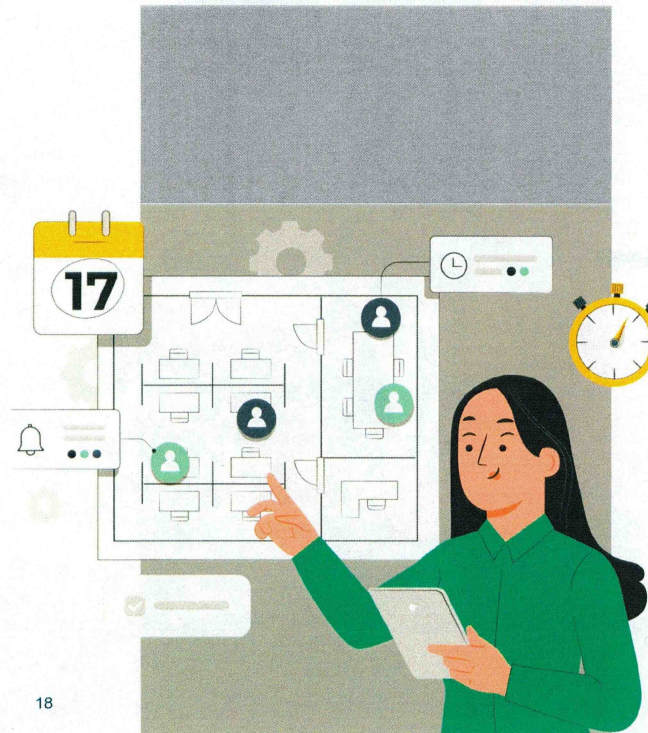


17

1

Setting strategic direction

Being a big picture thinker



18

2

Fulfilling a stewardship role

As you allocate resources to align the organization behind your collective priorities



19

3

Be a customer service representative and constituent advocate

Helping neighbors who look to you to help them interface with matters large and small with the City administration

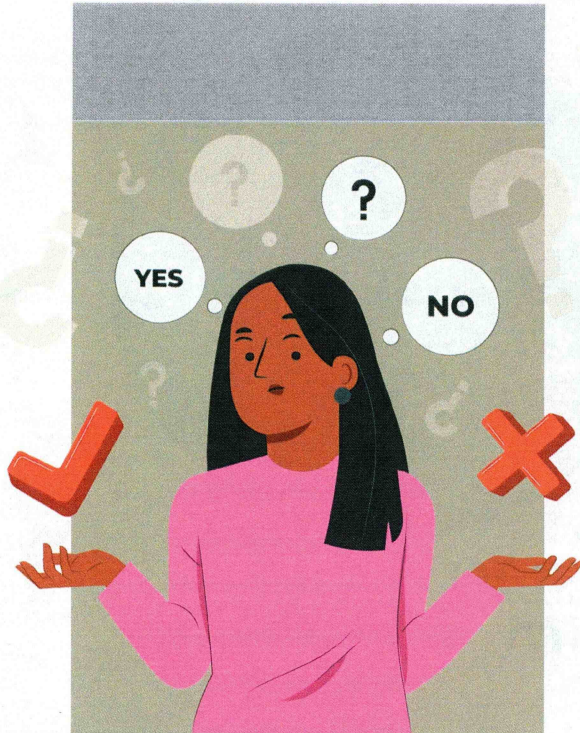


20

4

Being a community builder

Bringing the community and communities of interest together to increase their connection to one another and the City



21

5 Making decisions

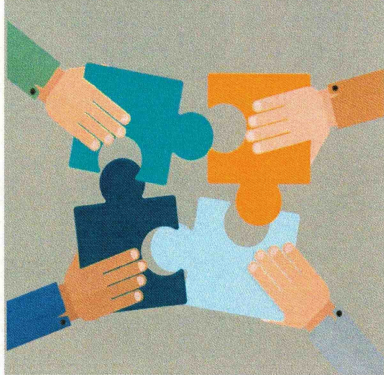


22

6 Providing oversight

you provide oversight and ensure accountability with the City Manager

The Six Council Roles



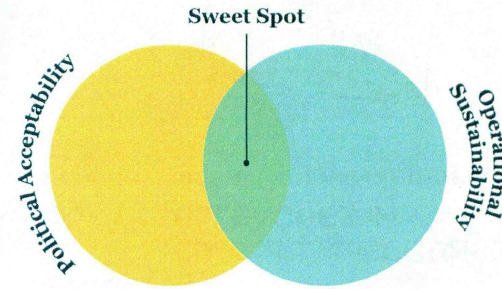
23

- 1 Strategic Vision**
- 2 Trustee**
- 3 Representative**
- 4 Community Builder**
- 5 Decision Maker**
- 6 Oversight**



A Growing Gap

- The gap is growing between what is politically acceptable (what we want to do) and operationally sustainable (can we do it)
- Working the gap is facilitated by understanding that politics involves choices among conflicting values—no value profile is best
- And that politics and administration involve more than different behaviors; they are different ways of thinking



25



Effective Council-Manager Teamwork *Makes for Good Policy and Solid Organizations*

Council

- Respect the policy role of the Council and operational role of staff, working through the City Manager
- Refrain from directing staff - even informally
- Do not criticize staff – if Council members have concerns, bring them to City Manager privately
- Practice the "no surprise" rule
- Understand the need to pace the organization – establish and stick to priorities

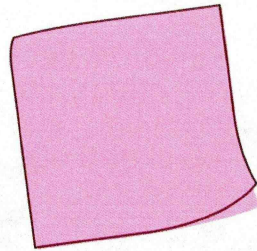
City Manager

- Carry out the role as chief executive – provide leadership to City staff and ensure accountability
- Be direct with the Council
- Practice the "no surprise" rule
- Communicate equally with all members of Council
- Provide clear analysis and recommendations to Council
- Work to help the Council see the "big picture" including impacts of policy positions

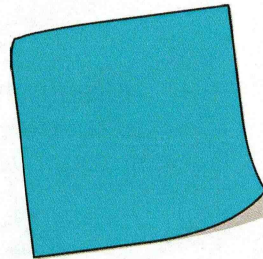
29

The Ideal Council Member

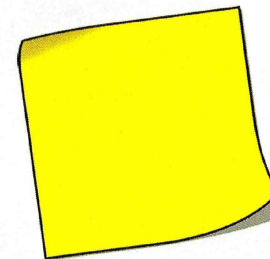
How would the **PUBLIC** describe the ideal Council Member?



How would the **STAFF** describe the ideal Council Member?

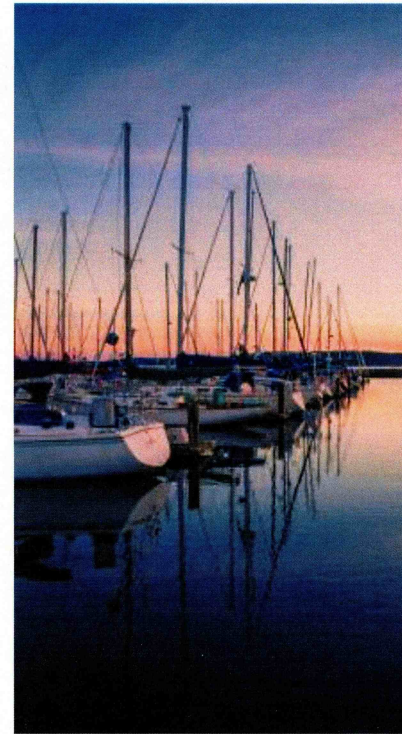


How would your **COUNCIL COLLEAGUES** describe the ideal Council Member?



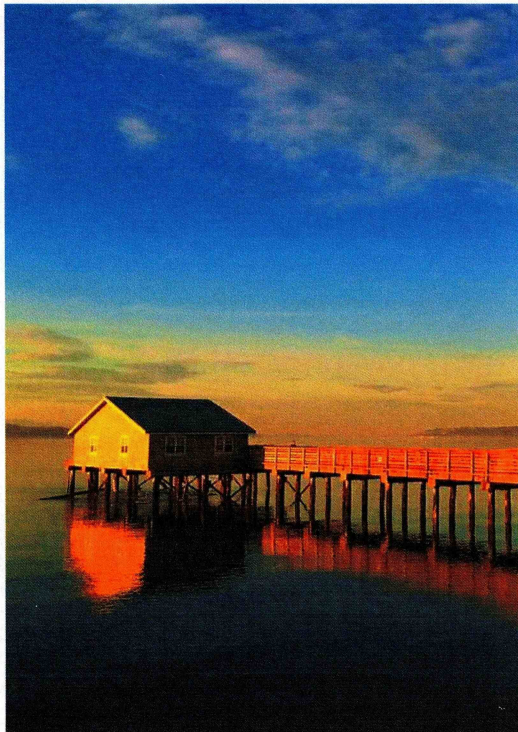
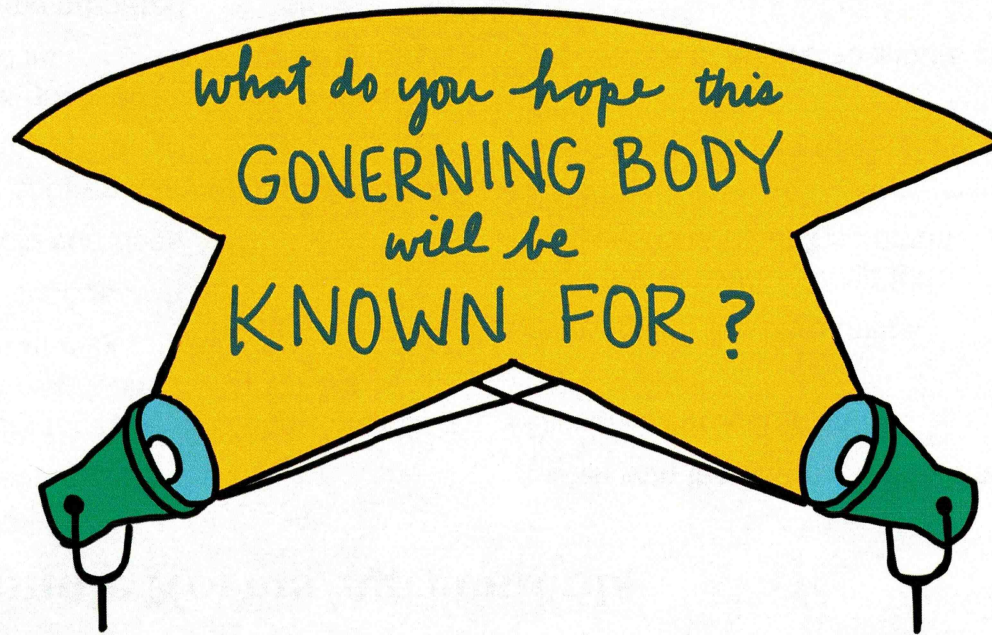
Sharing Mutual Expectations

- As a governing body, what do you need from each other to be successful?
- What do you need from the City Manager and staff in order to be successful?
- What does the City Manager/staff need from the City Council?



Sample Norms/Agreements

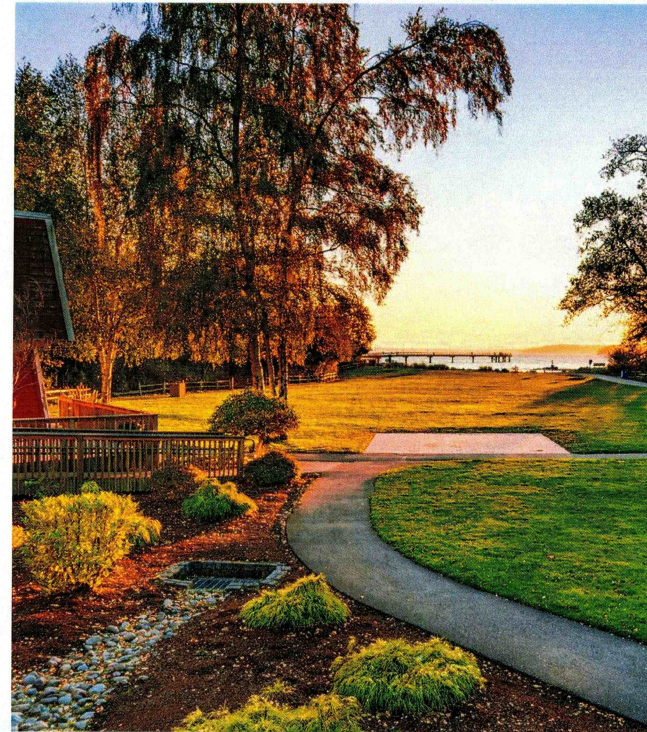
- Assume good intent
- Work together as a body, modeling teamwork and civility for our community
- Be curious
- Avoid surprises
- Be open-minded and willing to learn from others
- Ask questions to clarify perspectives and increase understanding
- Come prepared
- Listen with the intent to understand
- Disagree agreeably and professionally
- Don't ignore the hard things
- Work for win-win -- strive for consensus and seek common ground
- Keep everyone informed and in the loop
- Tap into each others' strengths and preferences



Share *one word* about
how you're feeling

Day 2 Preview

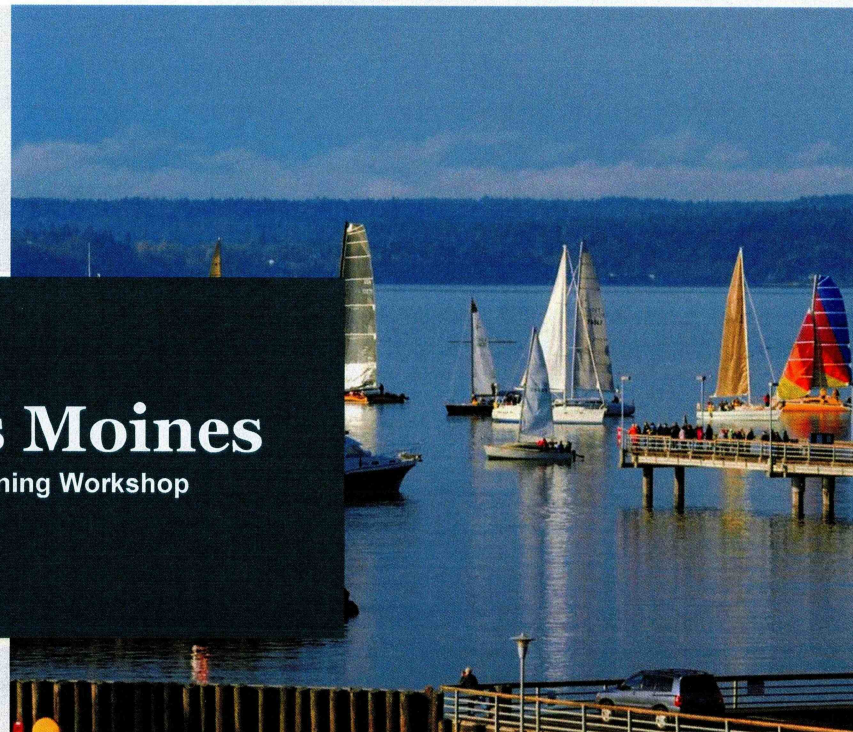
1. Reflections on Day One
2. Strategic Planning Process and Project Overview
3. Engagement Themes and Environmental Scan
4. A Deeper Dive
5. Vision for Des Moines
6. Strategic Focus Areas
7. Next Steps

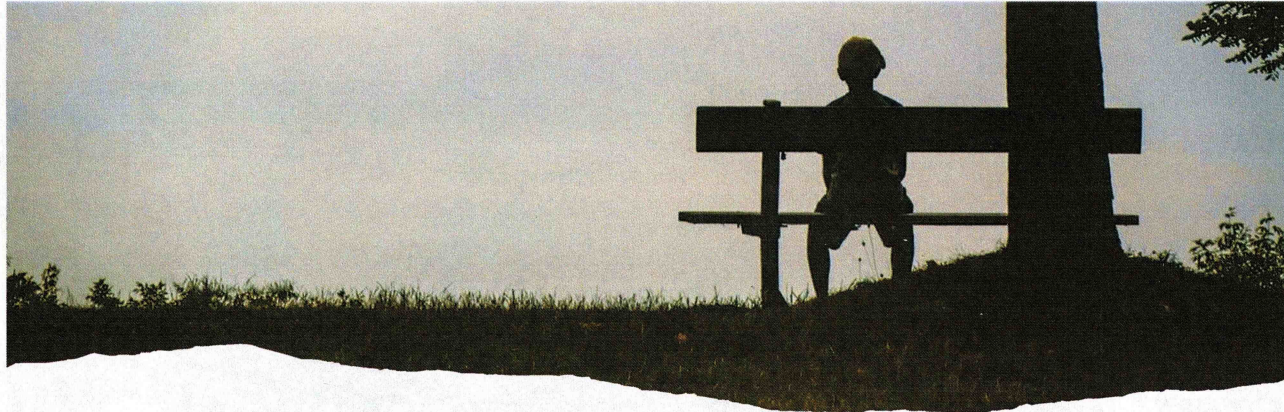


City of Des Moines

City Council Strategic Planning Workshop

February 26-27, 2026



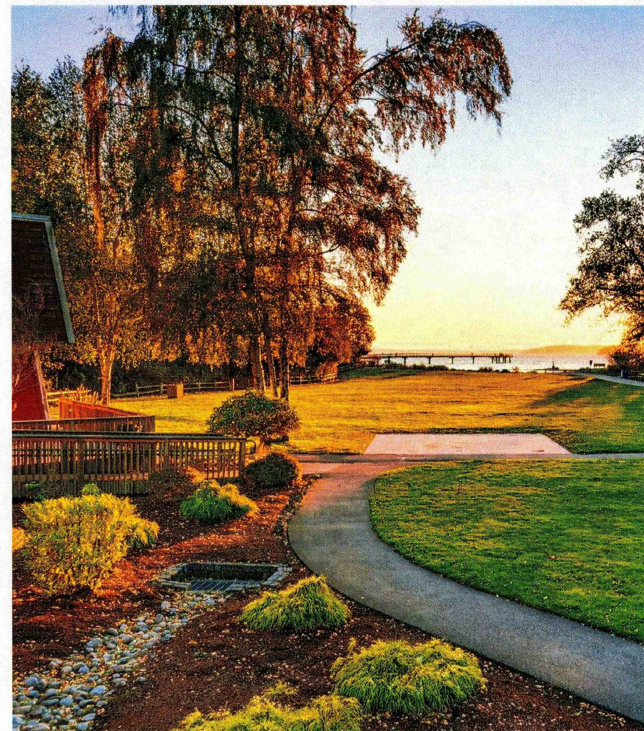


Reflections

- What do you think went well yesterday?
- Do you have any additional thoughts to share?

Day 2 Agenda

1. Strategic Planning Process and Project Overview
2. Engagement Themes and Environmental Scan
3. A Deeper Dive
4. Vision for Des Moines
5. Strategic Focus Areas
6. Next Steps

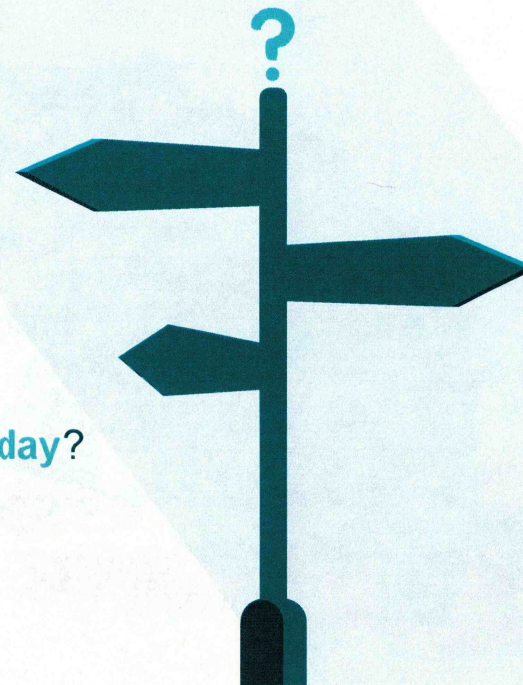


Strategic Planning Process & Project Overview



A Strategic Plan Answers 3 Questions

- What do we know to be **true today**?
- Where do we want **to go**?
- **How** do we get there?





Strategic Framework Elements

Vision	
Strategic Focus Areas	
Strategies	
Mission	
Values	

Strategic Planning Process Overview



Hopes for the Strategic Plan

- **Establish a united vision**
 - › Clear direction and alignment
- **Provide a decision-making framework**
 - › Align projects and resources
- **Highly interactive with community**
 - › Meaningful engagement to understand what the community wants
- **Create a cohesive identity**
 - › Think of Des Moines as one city

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use Post-It notes to share your feedback on the City's Mission and Values.

Mission

Des Moines is a waterfront community committed to maintaining a safe, sustainable environment, while ensuring a high quality of life for all to live, work, and play.

Values

Core Values of the City of Des Moines are:

- Safety
- Sustainability
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Innovation

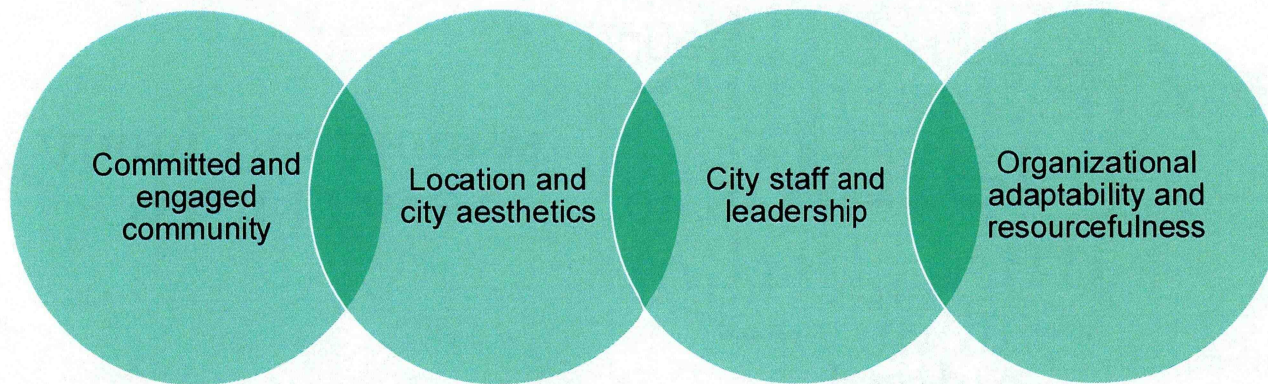
Engagement Themes



Engagement Process



Strengths



Opportunities



Hopes for the Future of Des Moines



Cross-Cutting Engagement Themes

Stakeholder Groups

Council

Staff

Community Members



Common Themes

Creating a vibrant community

A thriving downtown, strong local business community, and public marina are top priorities

Financial and budgetary constraints

Sustainable revenue sources needed to protect quality of life

Location and natural beauty

Great access and natural resources make Des Moines a destination and must be protected

Public safety

More officers and safer streets would enhance already high quality of life

Active and engaged community

Passionate residents want strong relationship with the City

Discussion

- Reactions?
- What stands out?

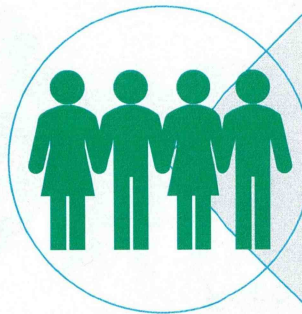


Environmental Scan



True Today: Demographics

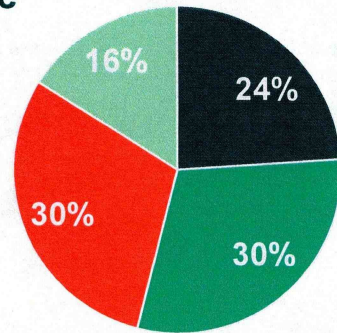
Total
Population:
32,500



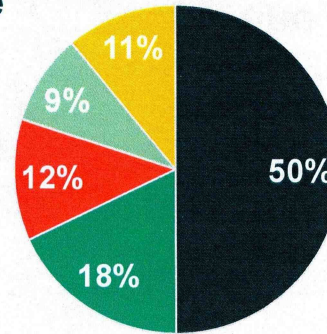
Des Moines' population is **growing**, but at a **slower rate** than the surrounding county and state.

True Today: Demographics

Age



Race



■ Under 19 ■ 20-39 ■ 40-64 ■ 65 and up

■ White ■ Hispanic ■ Asian ■ Black ■ Other

Des Moines is becoming **more diverse**

- While still majority white, increase in Asian and Hispanic populations since 2010
- More diverse than county and state

Median Household Income



True Today: Income

Des Moines has a **lower** median income than King County and the state.

Poverty rate is **above** county and state averages but has **decreased** since 2013

True Today: Housing



13,222

Housing units

The number of housing units have **increased by 7%** over 10 years, generally keeping up with population growth.



\$565,000

Median housing value

Des Moines' median housing value is lower than King County (\$779,500) but **increased at higher rates** than County since 2013



66%

Renters with unaffordable housing

Higher rates of unaffordability for **renters** than county and state.

True Today: Commuting & Traffic



79% of residents work **outside** of Des Moines

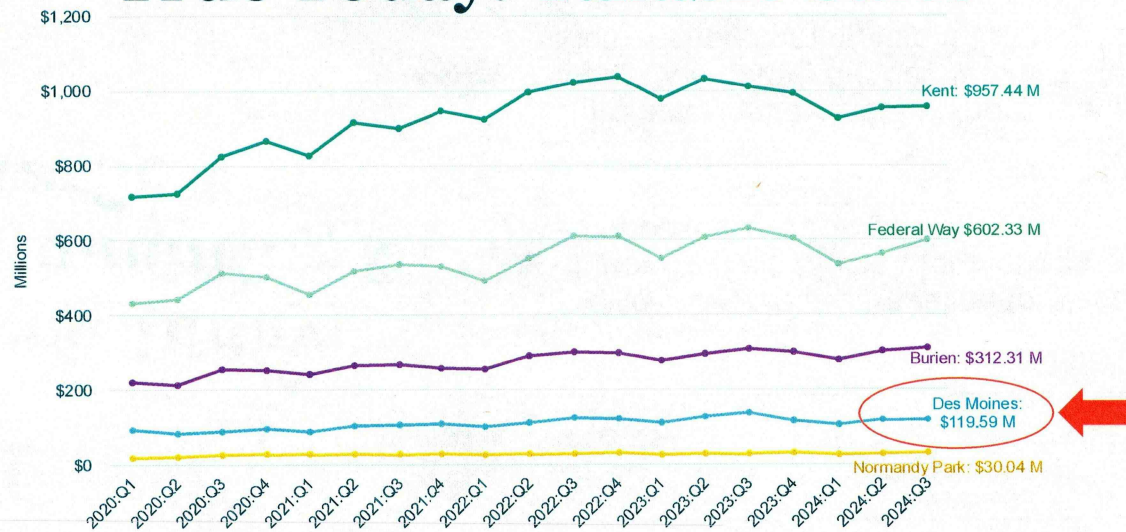


More people are traveling to places **nearby** Des Moines for work as opposed to into Seattle



Commuter patterns show there are far more trips during the day **leaving** Des Moines than coming into it

True Today: Taxable Sales



Des Moines is **predominantly residential** with a limited commercial base, which impacts the tax base

True Today: Land

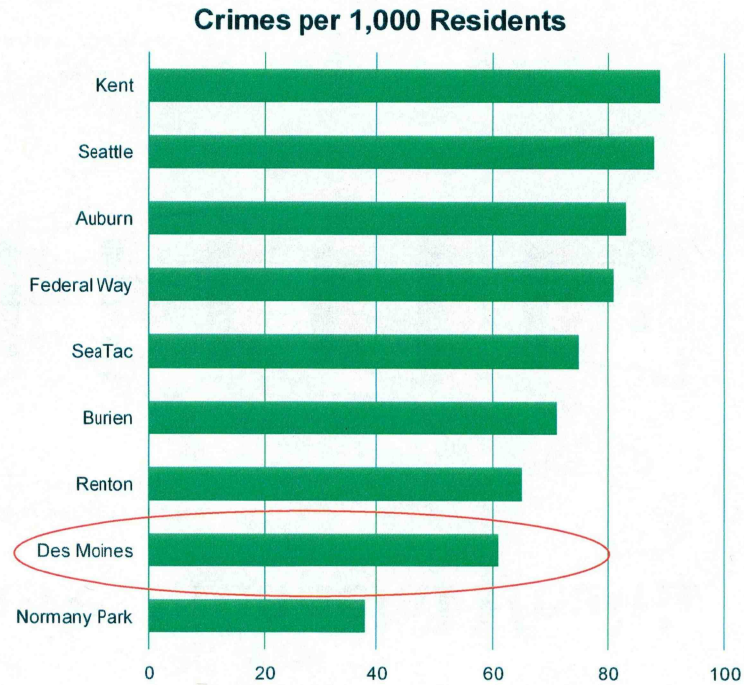
Highest amounts of property tax-exempt land in the County

30% of acreage is property tax-exempt

Approximately 5.8 miles of shoreline following the Ordinary High Water Mark

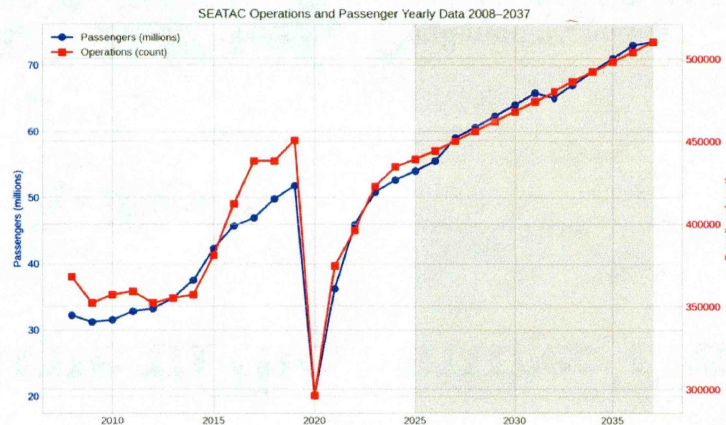
True Today: Public Safety

- Des Moines has 2nd lowest crime rate compared to neighboring cities
- While crime has fallen in the last year, it has returned to a normal rate of the last 2010s.



True Today: Airport Traffic

Sea-Tac Operations and Passenger Yearly Data 2008–2037



Traffic from Seattle-Tacoma Airport has largely **rebounded, or surpassed**, pre-COVID numbers

True in the Future: Transportation



Airport Expansion

- Proposed SEA expansion would add a second terminal and 19 new gates
- Projected 2032 demand of 56 million passengers



Multimodal Options

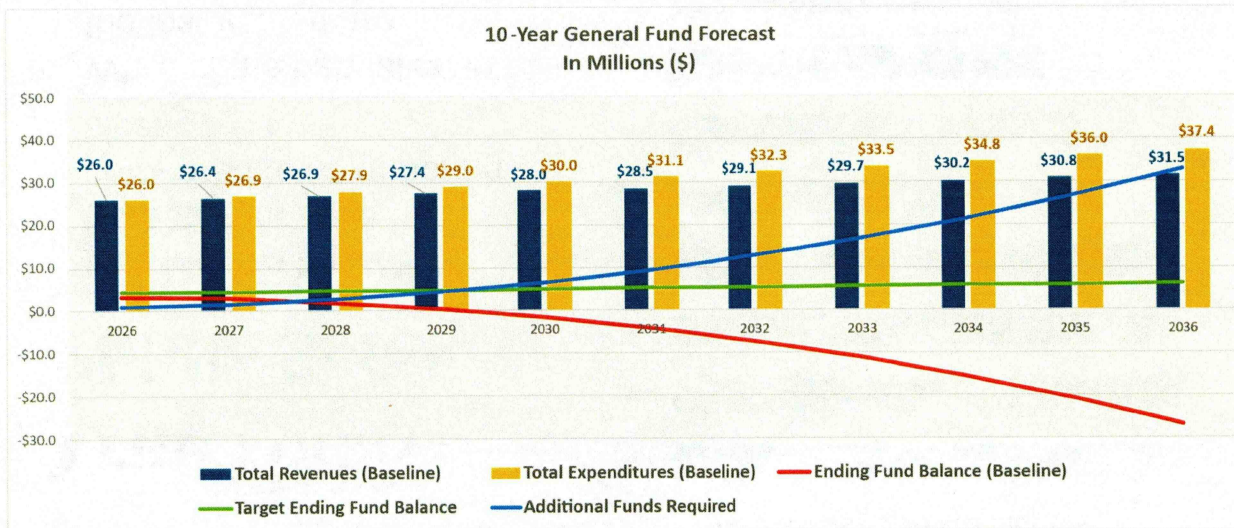
- Expanded sidewalks
- Improved bike infrastructure



Recent Light Rail Station Opening

- Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE) added new stations in Kent Des Moines near Highline College
- Connects Kent Des Moines to Downtown Seattle in 42 minutes

True in the Future: Financial Health

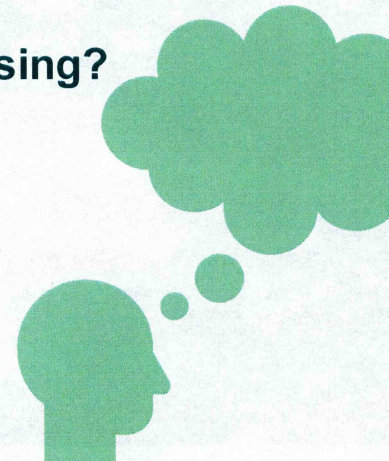


True Today: Revenue Challenges

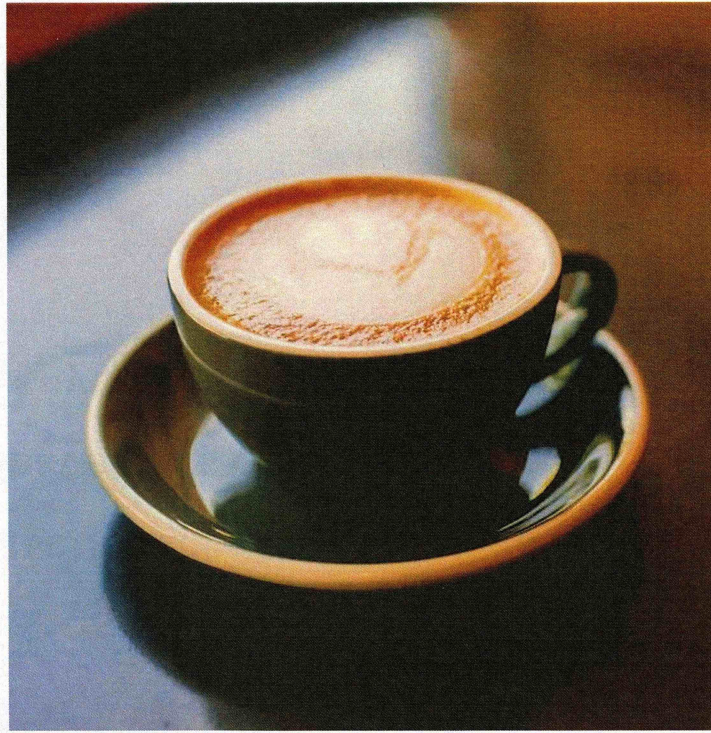
- Property Tax:
 - Increase capped at 1%
- Sales Tax:
 - Dependent on health of economy
- Business and Occupation Tax:
 - Regular rate (non-square footage) is higher than neighboring cities
- Franchise Fees:
 - Some agreements opened for renegotiation
- Red Light Camera Revenue:
 - Safer drivers resulting in decreasing revenue
 - Other camera revenue restricted for specific purposes outside the General Fund

Discussion

- Reactions?
- What stands out?
- Is anything surprising?



Break



A Deeper Dive



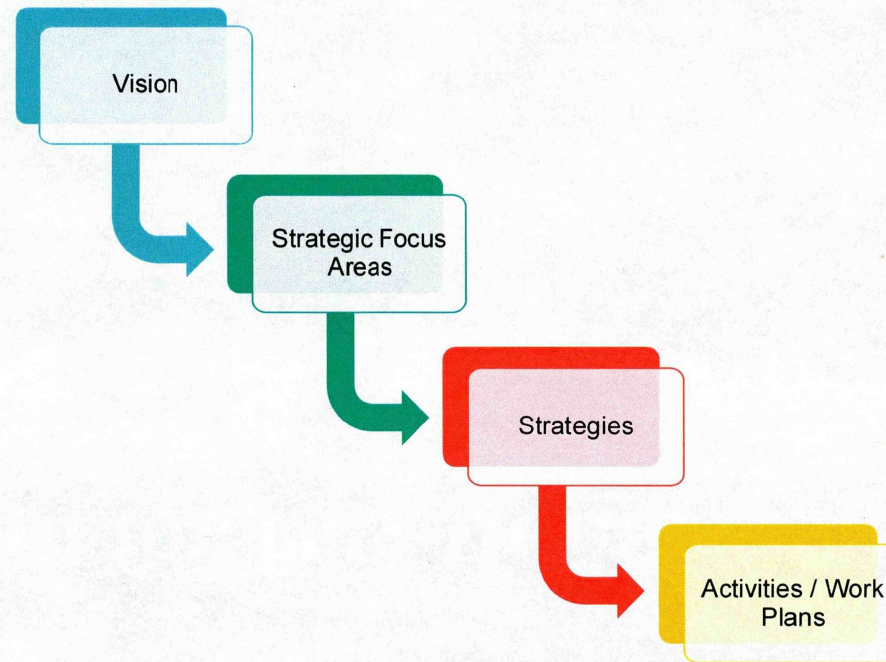
Instructions – *A Deeper Dive*

- **Economic Development 101:** Overview provided by staff with opportunity to ask questions
- Council members will then rotate between 2 tables to have deeper conversations about economic development
- In small groups, discuss:
 - › **Opportunities:** What does Econ. Dev. mean to you? What most excites you?
 - › **Trade-Offs:** What are the trade-offs of our decisions?
- You'll have ~12 minutes at each table
- We will reconvene as a large group to discuss



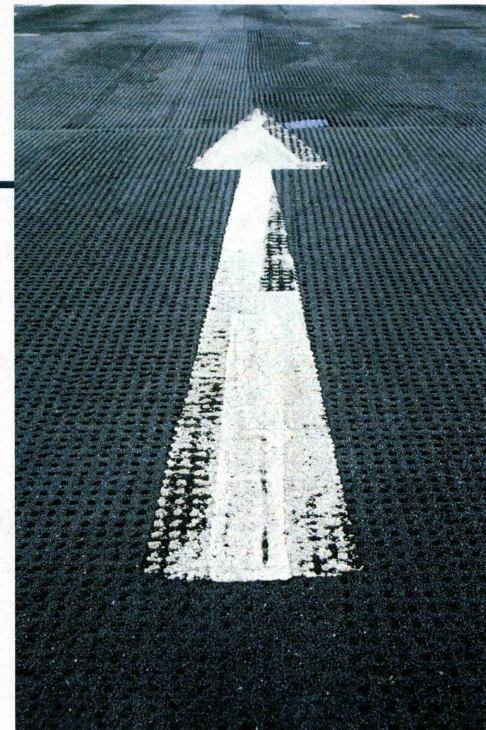
Vision for Des Moines

Strategic Framework Hierarchy



Purpose of a *Vision Statement*

- Describes a desired future
- Creates alignment and shared direction
- Guides resource allocation and decisions



True Today, True in Ten Years

What is true today
about Des Moines
that you hope will
STILL be true in
10 years?

What is **NOT** true
about Des Moines
today that you
hope **WILL** be true
in 10 years?

One idea per Post-It



Lunch

Return at ____

What *Themes* Stand Out?

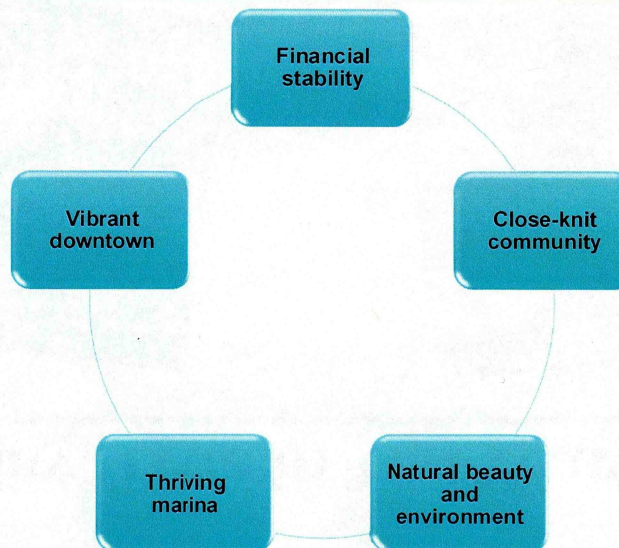


True today, to still be true in 10 years...



Not true today, to make true in 10 years...

True in 10 Years: *Executive Team Themes*



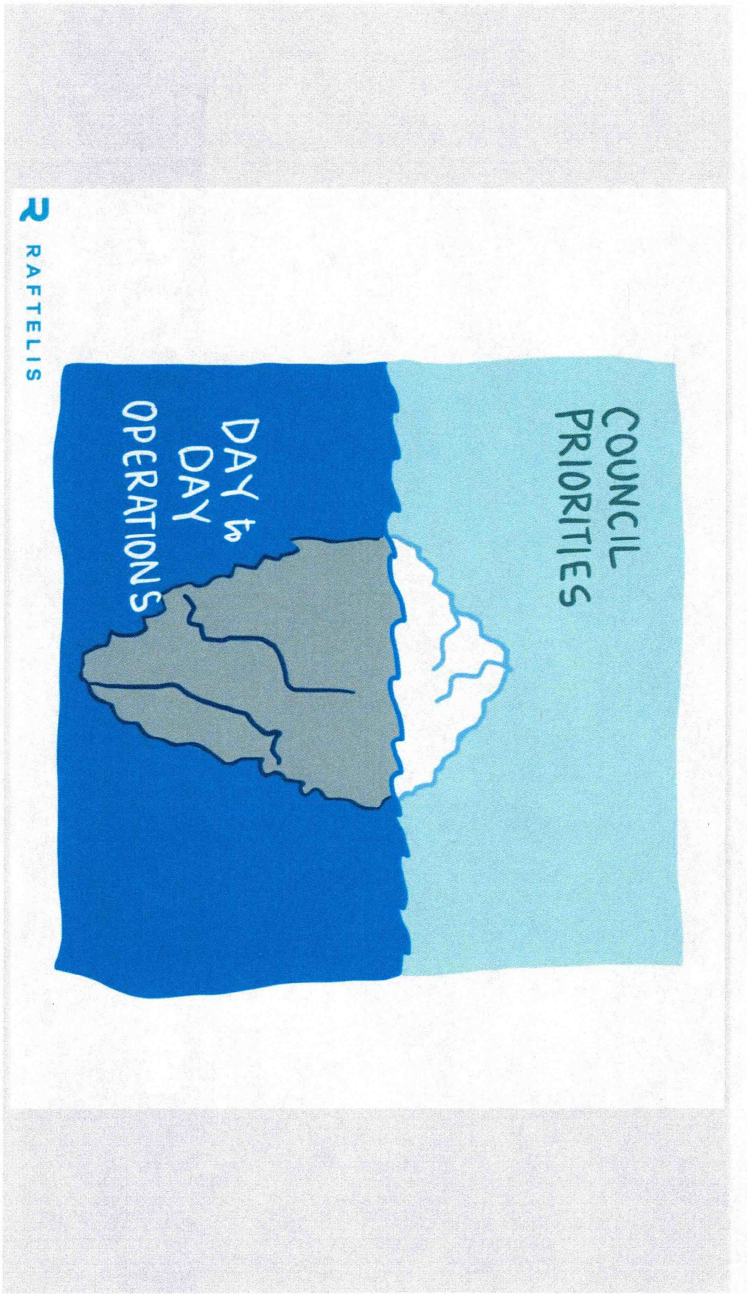
Current *Vision Statement*

To be the premier waterfront destination
in the Pacific Northwest

- Does the statement resonate?
- Does it align with the themes from engagement activities?
- What changes would you suggest?

Strategic Focus Areas





Strategic Focus Areas...

Provide the direction and focus of the organization

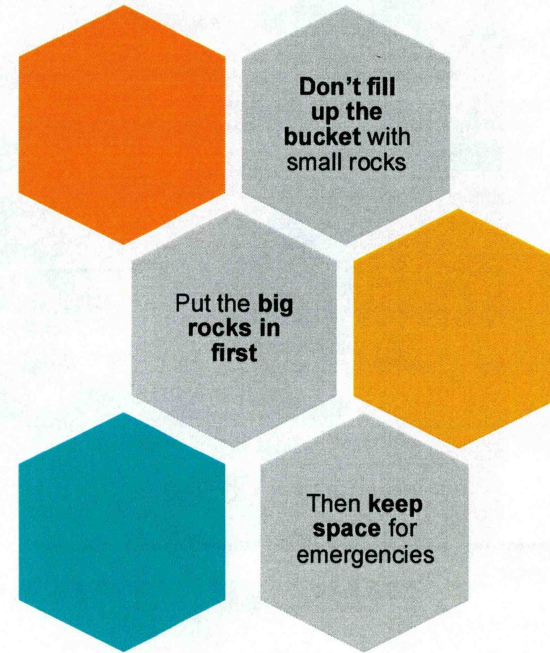
Are to be addressed within the next five years

Are achieved through a range of strategies

The “*Big Rocks*” Approach to Getting Big Things Done

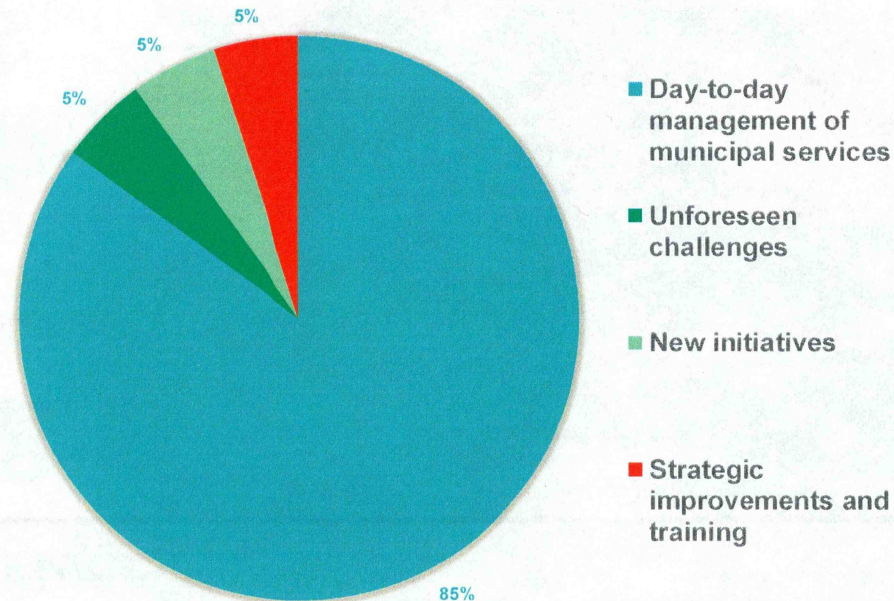


By Stephen Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*



Effective Strategic Planning Requires *Attention*

MANAGEMENT'S TIME



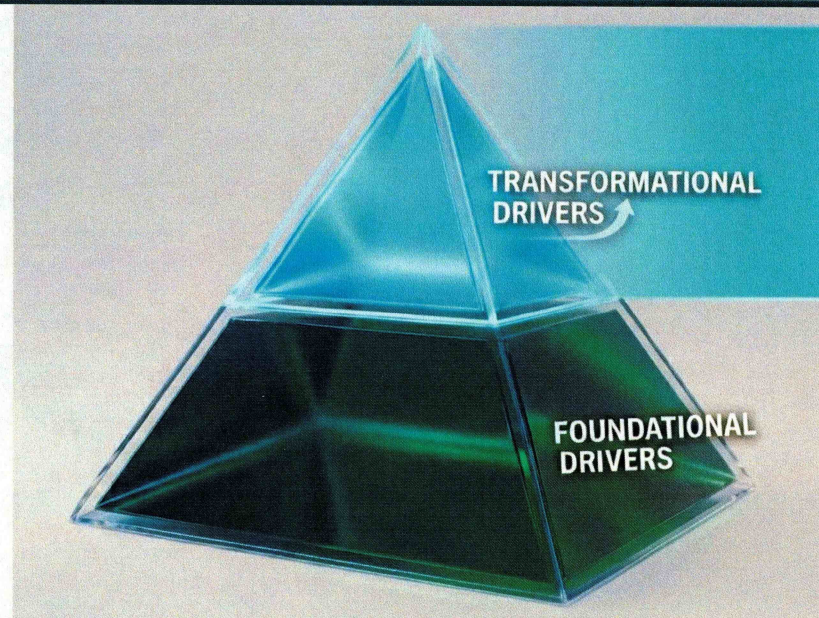
Strategic Drivers

Transformational Drivers

Activities that require major investment in time, resources, or the way programs and services are delivered.

Foundational Drivers

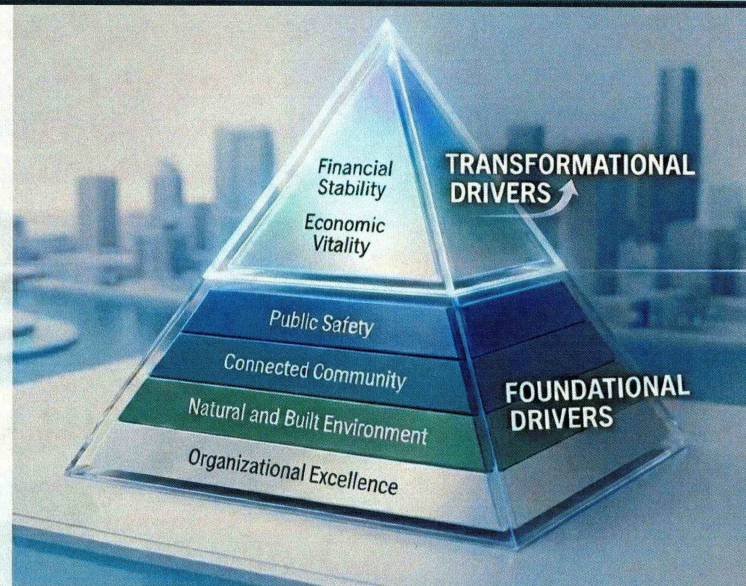
Continuous improvements to existing core functions that are operationalized. The investment in these areas is expected to remain aligned with current levels.



Transformational vs. Foundational

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

- Financial Stability
- Economic Vitality
- Public Safety
- Connected Community
- Natural and Built Environment
- Organizational Excellence



Proposed Strategic Focus Areas

*Are these the right
areas?*

*Anything to add
or change?*

Economic Vitality

Business attraction and support, permitting

Financial Stability

Responsible budget, sustainable revenues

Public Safety

Emergency services, animal control, safe streets

Connected Community

Community engagement, events, communication, outreach

Natural and Built Environment

Natural resources, parks, infrastructure

Organizational Excellence

Employee training, technology, service delivery

Economic Vitality

Des Moines cultivates a dynamic economy fueled by a thriving downtown, a diverse mix of industries, and efficient permitting and development services that enable local business growth and development.

- Does this statement capture what success looks like?
- What changes would you make?

Economic Vitality

Potential Strategies

1. Streamline permitting and development review processes to support business growth and expansion.
2. Revitalize downtown through strategic redevelopment, placemaking, and activation initiatives.
3. Cultivate a business-friendly reputation through proactive engagement and partnership with business owners.

Financial Stability

Des Moines is fiscally responsible with sustainable revenue sources and stable reserves to plan for the future.

- Does this statement capture what success looks like?
- What changes would you make?

Financial Stability

Potential Strategies

1. Grow revenue sources.
2. Increase reserve fund balance to ensure fiscal resilience and flexibility.
3. Implement comprehensive long-range financial planning with scenario modeling and forecasting.

Public Safety

Des Moines is a safe place to live and visit with responsive emergency services, safe streets, and comprehensive emergency preparedness.

- Does this statement capture what success looks like?
- What changes would you make?

Public Safety

Potential Strategies

1. Recruit and retain personnel to achieve full staffing across the Police Department.
2. Address traffic congestion and reduce traffic accidents through targeted enforcement.
3. Strengthen emergency preparedness planning and community resilience programs.

Break



Connected Community

Des Moines has an active community of residents who are informed and engaged, connected through events and gathering spaces, and contribute to our collective future.

- Does this statement capture what success looks like?
- What changes would you make?

Connected Community

Potential Strategies

1. Align community events, festivals, and activities with community interests.
2. Increase community engagement through expanded outreach, including newsletters, community fairs, pop-up events, etc.
3. Promote inclusivity through intentional programming and engagement.

Natural and Built Environment

Des Moines preserves its natural resources, including waterfronts, parks, and trails, and invests in connected infrastructure that allows for safe, convenient mobility throughout the city.

- Does this statement capture what success looks like?
- What changes would you make?

Natural and Built Environment

Potential Strategies

1. Preserve and enhance natural resources including parks, trails, and open spaces.
2. Connect downtown to the waterfront through safe pedestrian infrastructure.
3. Invest in placemaking initiatives to create distinctive, vibrant public spaces (e.g., along Marine View Drive).
4. Improve mobility and safety through sidewalks and multi-modal infrastructure.

Organizational Excellence

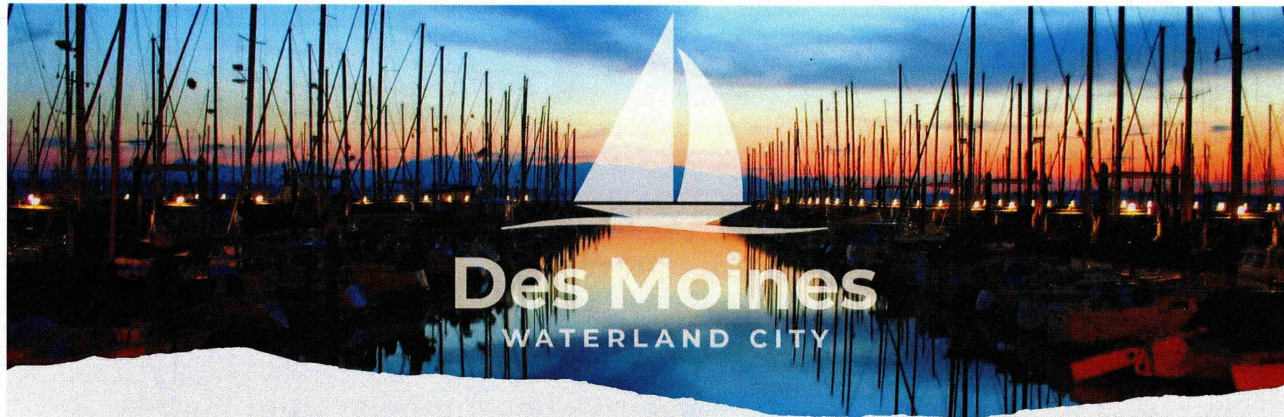
In Des Moines, our employees are skilled professionals who are supported, valued, and inspired to deliver exceptional service.

- Does this statement capture what success looks like?
- What changes would you make?

Organizational Excellence

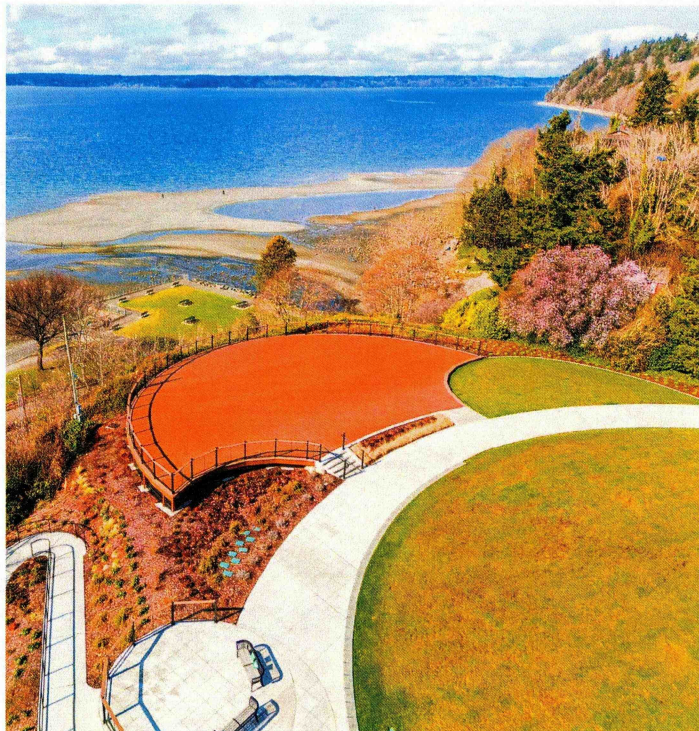
Potential Strategies

1. Develop comprehensive supervisor and manager training programs to strengthen leadership.
2. Establish clear professional development pathways and advancement opportunities for all employees.
3. Foster employee engagement through regular feedback mechanisms, recognition programs, and transparent communication.

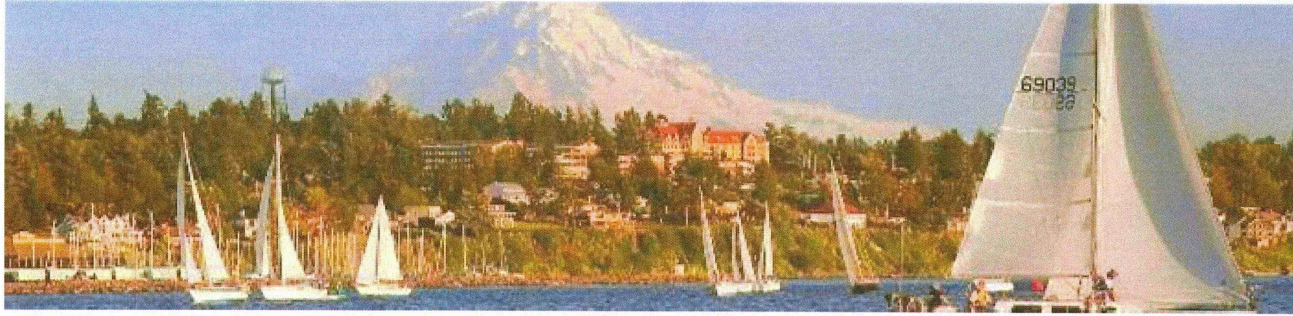


Next Steps

- Develop the draft Strategic Plan Framework
- Meet with staff to develop strategies



Share
one key
takeaway
from our
time together



Thank You!

