

Submitted to Councilmembers as "information only" March 18, 2022

Colleagues,

At the 7 April, 2022 Strategy meeting I will present the following items:

**Pg 1. Councilmember Research Process**

**Pg 2. Committee/Meeting Modernisations**

**Pg. 4. Digital Presence**

### ***#1. Councilmember Research Process:***

This is modeled on the SeaTac City Council Request Form (CRF.) The process is very simple.

1. Any CM may enter a request for research using a secure database form. The database, which is keyword searchable, is kept for all CMs use in perpetuity.
2. The City Manager responds within (x) of hours, either with an ETA or a cost estimate (in hours, specific staff)
  - A. If the answer requires less than one hour of staff time it must be fulfilled within 5 days.
  - B. If the answer is deemed to require more than one hour of total staff time, the information is remanded to the relevant committee for discussion, vote. If the vote is yes, the task commences.
3. As a follow-up, the CM may also request a staff briefing on the topic, which becomes part of the CRF.

## ***#2. Committee/Meeting modernisations:***

Our meeting and committees should be refreshed in two ways:

- (A) To provide more transparency and ease of use for CMs.
- (B) There are also several structural changes that are needed to help oversee and establish policy in several key areas.

### **A. Process Improvements**

1. Adopt Hybrid Conferencing both for full and committee meetings.
2. All Committees should accommodate public comment
3. All committees should be generating minutes, membership lists and routinely posting ongoing public work product.
4. All CMs should be able to attend all meetings and be allowed an opportunity to ask questions re. the operation.
5. CMs should be able to add presentation materials to the Packet if they are part of their comments and are received within 24 hours of the Agenda being published.
6. All Meeting Agendas should be locked in when posted and should contain all presentation materials, with one exception: Any materials submitted by the public as part of their comment will be added ex post facto

## B. Structural Changes

Along with everything else, the City downsized its committee structure significantly when it was in financial crisis. We are now a larger organisation, with much bigger aspirations. We also face timely challenges such as the SAMP. All these require more policy direction and oversight than can be accommodated with the current committee system. I would like to explore the following changes to committee structure:

1. The Environment Committee mission should be expanded to include Sea-Tac Airport. All activity relevant to the SAMP process should be channeled through there with monthly reports.
2. Planning Commission: The planning commission which was abandoned in 2013 for cost savings. Despite the construction boom *and* ongoing State changes to zoning laws, we are the only nearby City that has no planning commission, and thus no public input on the process. Currently the EDC *is* the de facto planning commission. But land use and construction are not the same thing as economic development, which should also focus on business formation and development. Restoring this functionality would give the public more input on comprehensive planning and allow the EDC time to focus on revenue generation un-related to building.
3. Finance/Admin Committee: I'd like to explore a committee that can oversee the changes to the city web site and administrative processes.
4. Marina Advisory Committee: I'd like to establish an Advisory Committee
5. Cultural Advisory Committee: We are now 45% BIPOC and yet our City has no outreach or programming to make government reflect our community. This group would be tasked with finding ways to invite more diverse cultures into City life.

### ***#3. Digital Presence***

We should begin implementing a robust and ongoing digital presence. I am not using the term ‘web site’, and you should flush that from your minds, please. I am proposing a completely new system of communication and outreach, which would also include the more traditional municipal functions commonly referred to as ‘the City web site’.

In addition to those traditional municipal functions, our efforts should focus on schools, businesses, faith, cultural and senior communities which rarely interact with the wider community. The City is the only way to connect all of Des Moines. We can develop a system to make them aware of each other's activities and extend our reach out to Puget Sound--particularly giving some marketing assists to retail businesses.

Having a great digital presence will not only provide great value for the community, it will send a strong signal to the rest of the world that Des Moines is a place that is forward looking and stands out from the crowd.

We can begin here: at our 16 September, 2021 ARPA Stimulus Spending Meeting, we already allocated money to develop a Marina Redevelopment Town Hall. The project can provide a kick off to show the community that we are serious about having the best Digital Presence in South Puget Sound. Our primary goals must be:

1. **Mobile First.** Every person in DM, from the eight year old Somali child to senior citizen at Wesley, even homeless people, *have* a cell phone. All our communication *must* lead with SMS because that is the way, and in fact the only way to reach everyone.
2. **Usability.** Despite the fact that everyone has a digital device, many of our residents struggle with them. We also have a high degree of digital illiteracy that many are embarrassed to discuss. We must make our systems easy to use, especially for seniors and for people who's first language is not English.
3. **Search.** This is a two-way street
  - We must make information, programs, tasks, easy to find
  - But we must also make it easy for the rest of the world to find *us*. Des Moines has a fantastic story to tell. And our City should be telling it! Currently, the City has at least ten domains that do not connect. We should be working on an integrated communications/marketing approach whereby anyone searching *anything* 'Des Moines' see everything we have to offer and first on Google.
4. **Portal.** The City should be the portal and the nexus for the entire community.
  - When any group has something of interest, the City can be that town crier.

- We can expose far more public information, including dashboards for public safety, finance, public works projects. This improves transparency, but also improves resident satisfaction. (Just seeing all the projects the City is working on at any given time never fails to impress most people.)
5. **Notification as incentive:** OTS tools exist right now which almost all residents will want. And in return, these will allow the City to reach residents when it matters:
- Emergency Alert
  - SMS bill pay, licensing and permit reminders
  - Fixit reporting
  - Personalised calendars, meeting and events alerts
  - Public safety reporting
  - Available services
6. Des Moines has a fantastic story to tell. And our City should be telling it! We need to develop a coherent communications strategy that tells people and businesses about our City. Our new system can provide the framework for consistent messaging.
7. Automation: The 'boring' part. Because we have so many disparate systems and processes, there are too many inconsistencies. We can integrate any number of systems so that information is entered once and syndicated everywhere it needs to be, consistently and error-free.