

September 28, 2007

TO: SALT LAKE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
FROM: CINDY GUST-JENSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
SUBJECT: RETREAT FOLLOW-UP

As a follow-up to the Council's recent retreat discussion, I would like to request the Council's consideration of a proposal to confirm priorities, confirm and refine policies, and add resources to meet the demands currently facing City Council Members and Council staff.

For your Tuesday, October 2 meeting we will have a consolidated list of the top priorities as identified recently by the Council (we will eliminate duplicates, clarify language). These priorities would then be managed by the Chair/Vice Chair in the setting of the agenda and oversight of staff. We will ask the Council confirm the list on Tuesday.

Attachment One is a list of City Council policies and related questions for the Council's review. Would the Council review the policies and related questions and provide direction for staff?

For Tuesday we will have a list of options for reducing workload, based upon items listed in the retreat paperwork and mentioned by Council Members at the retreat. Could the Council review these options and provide direction for staff?

With the Council's feedback and collaboration on the items listed above the workload will become somewhat more manageable; however, due to the factors discussed at the retreat (outlined on Attachment Two), I highly recommend the addition of one full time equivalent to fill a constituent liaison and administrative support role. An administrative support position was actually recommended in an audit of the council operations a few years ago. Under the approach outlined here we would still need to have the periodic assistance of the two former employees who assist as needed on special projects as seasonal employees.

The cost of this new position for the remainder of this year would be \$56,000, including salary, benefits and one-time office furnishings / computer. The annualized cost of the position would be \$76,000.

We will need to be in continual conversation with the Council through the Chair and Vice Chair on the prioritization of issues as they arise. With the addition of a staff member and the continued use of seasonal assistance we will be back in a position where we can better meet the Council's needs.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. Please let me know if you would like additional information in advance of Tuesday's Council Meeting.

Attachment One -- Council Policy Items

- A. Discuss options for equitably allocating Constituent Liaison and Analyst resources to each City Council Members. Options could include:
 - 1. Evaluate the 40-hour check-in with the Council. Does the Council wish to continue with the practice on assignment of workload that requires a check-in with the Council on issues / projects expected to take 40 hours?
 - 2. Does the Council wish to reduce the threshold from 40 hours to 30 hours for Council check-in?
 - 3. Enhance role of Chair and Vice Chair in prioritizing workload.
- B. Closer consideration of the policy on notifying Council Members regarding work outside of someone's own Council District. The current policy specifies that Council Members should notify their peer if they are addressing an issue outside of their own district. In some cases staff is asked to do the notification, or the notification isn't made. This sometimes creates frustration with Council Members and places staff in a difficult position. Would the Council discuss the protocol for working outside one's district and the notification of peers?
- C. Could the Council clarify whether the protocol (from item B above) applies on issues where the Council will be voting on an issue in a particular district? Examples: Granite Block, Downtown development, zoning changes. Would the same approach be taken in terms of notification of the peer whose district the issue is located in, or would the notification relate largely to issues that won't come before the Council for a vote?
- D. Clarification on adding resources from fundraising to the communication budgets. The Council has previously determined that a Council Member may not add personal resources to his/her communication budget. Could the Council clarify whether a Council Member can enhance the budget (for publications, meetings, or staffing) through fundraising?
- E. Does the Council wish to formalize the practice of asking Council Members to identify three other individuals interested in a topic before the Chair authorizes staff resources to be allocated toward preparing a Legislative Action and places the item on the agenda?
- F. Currently our policy requires that we put out a formal bid for catering at the induction. This is not a requirement according to State Code or City Ordinance. Given the time crunch, could the Council staff go ahead with ordering the catering without following the higher standard outlined in the policy?
- G. Does the Council wish to develop a policy on to what extent staff should be involved in issues / initiatives / ordinance recommendations that are raised by individual Council Members with the Mayor or with City Departments when those issues / initiatives / ordinance recommendations have not been vetted with the full Council? (Attending the initial meeting is helpful for staff's understanding, and is generally not very time consuming. We are seeking clarification because the Administration naturally follows up with staff after the initial meeting; the inquiry follow-up could then become time consuming without being established as a Council priority. If the Council elects to set priorities we need direction on this.)

- H. In some cases one Council Member raised a policy or ordinance issue, and later another Council Member becomes interested in it and pursues it independently. This can put staff in an awkward position when the Council Member(s) who initially raised the issue are not aware of the effort and the full Council has not expressed support for the approach or concept. Staff would appreciate direction on this.

Attachment Two --Contributing factors to workload

A. Growing economy

1. Limits the City's ability to hire and retain employees, limiting the Administration's abilities to fully perform in some areas such as Parks maintenance and building permit processing and inspections. This increases the number of complaints made to the City Council Office.
2. Increases the pressure on the City permitting, inspection and licensing areas; increasing complaints to the City Council Office when processing times are considered to be too long by the public.
3. Increasing property values have increased housing infill activity significantly. There is a heightened awareness and sensitivity on the part of neighborhoods about mass, scale and compatibility. Most infill housing projects generate a call to the City Council Office requesting verification that the height, scale, setbacks and other requirements are verified to be within the ordinance. The answer we receive from the Administration is most often not accepted by the constituent(s) without further significant review. Because the City does not require surveys and does not have staffing to address height, scale and setback issues, mistakes have been found after construction has been completed. The result is a lack of trust by the citizens and a very complicated complaint resolution process.
4. Increasing development interest including the development potential in the Downtown, Sugar House, the southwestern light industrial area and potentially the Northwest Quadrant.

B. Greater Community expectations relating to:

1. Public access to information on City approval processes, administrative interpretations and application of ordinances.
2. Quality of Life Issues
 - i. Zoning
 - ii. Walkable communities
 - iii. Infill housing development
 - iv. Open space
 - v. Conservation of resources
 - vi. Absentee Landlords
 - vii. Animal Control, Dog Off-leash issues
3. Participation in Public Decision making

C. Increased direct role of Council in addressing significant state Legislative issues

1. Membership of three Council Members on Utah League Policy Committee
2. Grant Tower
3. Salt Palace
4. Background Check enhancements
5. North Salt Lake Open Space
6. Airport Light Rail
7. School District Equalization
8. Changes relating to Land Use legislation
9. (National Legislative Issue) Plume remediation funding

D. Enhanced need for and opportunity for Council Members to work with other local government entities and private entities. Council Members are frequently approached in a collaborative way by private organizations, citizens, the Administration, and others to review issues in advance of submittal. While very positive, this increases the amount of time Council Members spend on city business and also affects staff.

1. Salt Lake County
2. State of Utah
3. Salt Lake City School District
4. Utah League
5. South Salt Lake
6. Chamber of Commerce
7. Downtown Alliance
8. Council of Governments
9. House Bill 40 Annexation Committee
10. Rocky Mountain Power
11. Neighborhood Housing Services
12. Housing Authority
13. Homeless coalition
14. Quality Growth Commission
15. Utah Transit Authority

E. Significant transportation issues and opportunities

1. Grant Tower
2. Intermodal Hub connections
3. Sugar House
4. Airport / North Temple rail
5. UTA route issues

F. Administration

1. Focus / Emphasis: Each Administration has its unique focus. The focus of the Administration has an impact on the focus of the City Council and the public perception as to which body to approach on various issues. This Administration has a significant focus on global issues. It appears that citizens are gravitating to the City Council Office with their questions and concerns on direct City services at a greater rate than ever before. This impacts the Council Office in a number of ways:
 - i. A greater number of citizen requests for assistance. Most requests relate to Administrative service delivery rather than ordinance change requests or matters that are directly Legislative.
 - ii. A greater number of requests to solve issues relating to perception of incorrect interpretation of ordinances or unequal treatment by City Boards.
 - iii. Significantly more involvement by Council Members with individual citizens, community councils and now an official organization concerned with the handling of City Planning and Zoning as well as Permitting and Enforcement functions.

2. The Administration is sometimes not in a position to respond to community and Council requests in a timely manner. This creates:
 - i. A need for Council staff to track issues and follow-up more than once to request a response. This adds to the staff workload and increases the potential that we will miss something.
 - ii. A desire for Council Members to seek interim or alternate solutions. For example, the time it will take to complete the Historic Survey projects has given rise to: the recent moratorium request in Sugar House; a desire to establish an alternate solution involving a homeowners association in another district; the suggestion that the Sugar House survey be processed in two parts, with the most significant structures surveyed first and considered for earlier action; a dual Track for establishing implementation tools and completing the survey process.
 - iii. A lack of trust on the part of the community -- an assumption by some that if they don't request regular reports, push for deadlines and demand accountability the project in which they are interested will stall. This creates the need for a great deal of follow-up.
 - iv. Given complaints and requests for information from citizens and developers, Council Members are urged by these outside groups to get involved with the Planning and land use problems earlier than ever before.

G. Urgent issues

1. These require early Council and Council staff orientation in order to assure that the issue can move through the City as requested by outside entities.
2. The necessity to shift priorities due to outside circumstances and/or emergent issues creates re-work when it becomes necessary to shift focus to emergent issues and back again. For example:
 - i. Downtown Transportation Master Plan to Light Rail issues,
 - ii. School District Equalization,
 - iii. Parley's Off-Leash
 - iv. City Creek project strategies
 - v. UTA route issues and fare changes
 - vi. Future and current Bond Issues
 1. The Leonardo
 2. Soccer Complex
 3. Zoo Bond
 4. Public Safety Building