



POULSBO CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES August 6, 2022 **2022 PLANNING RETREAT**

The meeting video can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/737566270>

THE MEETING'S GOALS

1. Reach consensus on the Council's overarching, long-term vision of the City's future.
2. Identify and discuss the Council's short-, mid-, and long-term goals, paying particular attention to short-term priorities, those that appear immediate and urgent.
3. Discuss key governance issues: hiring a City Administrator and strengthening Council operations.

Review Purpose, Agenda, Ground Rules, and Facilitation Methods

At 9:00 a.m. the retreat began. Facilitator Jim Reid reviewed the purpose, agenda, ground rules, and facilitation methods.

What have you most enjoyed about serving the City as an elected official?

Each Councilmember and Mayor shared what they enjoyed most about being an elected official. See attached 2022 Planning Retreat Summary Appendix 2 for details.

Reach Consensus on the Council's Vision for Poulsbo's Long-Term Future (Council Members)

- *What is each Council Member's overarching, high level, long-term vision for the City of Poulsbo?*
- *What are the mutual interests and/or common outcomes that are embodied in those visions?*
- *Is there consensus among the Council on a future vision?*

Discussion was held regarding the Council's long-term vision for Poulsbo. See attached 2022 Planning Retreat Summary pages 1-2 for details.

Identify and Rank Potential Council Priorities (Council Members)

- *What goals or priorities did the Council identify to prepare for this meeting?*
- *Are there any others to add to the list?*
 - Review of mission statement*

- *As the Council discusses them, are there some that are:*
 1. *Currently being or about to be addressed?*
 2. *Immediate and urgent and, therefore, short-term?*
 3. *Long-term, i.e., could be addressed in 4-6 years?*
 4. *Mid-term, i.e., not immediately pressing but could be addressed in 3 or 4 years?*
- *Is there consensus among the Council on a list of goals in these categories?*

Discussion was held regarding the Council priorities. See attached 2022 Planning Retreat Summary pages 3-4 for details.

Discuss Short-Term Priorities (Council Members)

- *For each short-term goal/priority, what outcomes does the Council seek?*
- *What would be the deadline for making progress on or achieving the outcomes?*
- *Within this category, is there a ranking in terms of urgency and importance?*
- *Is there consensus on these goals/priorities?*
- *What should be the next steps in addressing them?*

Discussion was held regarding the Council priorities. See attached 2022 Planning Retreat Summary pages 3-4 for details.

Should the City Hire a City Administrator? (Council Members/Mayor Erickson)

Most Council Members have expressed a desire to hire an Administrator after Mayor Erickson retires because the issues facing the City are becoming increasingly challenging and complex.

- *What would be the City's governance structure if an Administrator were hired?*
- *What are the arguments for hiring an Administrator? The arguments against?*
- *Is there consensus among the Council on how to proceed?*
- *If there is agreement to hire an Administrator following the end of Mayor Erickson's term, what steps should be taken during the next two years?*

Discussion was held regarding if the City should hire a City Administrator. See attached 2022 Planning Retreat Summary pages 4-5 for details.

Discuss Options Regarding Committee Structure and Community Leadership (Council Members/Mayor Erickson)

There is a range of ideas about how to strengthen the Council's role and operations, and the Committee structure is at the core. Council Members expressed interests in strengthening the

Council's policy-making role, conducting business as efficiently as possible, and partnering with the Administration.

- *What are the ideas for achieving the above interests?*
- *How does each option achieve these interests? How might each fall short of achieving them?*
- *Is one option or a hybrid of them emerging?*
- *Is there a consensus among the Council?*
- *What are the next steps?*

Discussion was held regarding the Committee Structures. See attached 2022 Planning Retreat Summary pages 5-6 for details.

In addition to the Council's structure, some Council Members expressed interest in the future leadership of the Council and Commissions.

- *What might the Council do to help prepare the next generation of City leaders?*

Councilmember Lord shared her concerns of how they can encourage citizens of their opportunities to become public leaders. She wondered how they could demystify public service. She has some printouts that she will have the City Clerk share with them. She thought an interactive public workshop would be helpful and create a one-page flyer.

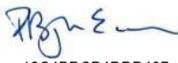
Councilmember McVey said the workshop that was held in the past was very informational, he attended it and quite a few people attended.

Discussion was held on past personal experiences on why they decided to run. They agreed having someone personally reaching out and asking them to consider running is helpful.

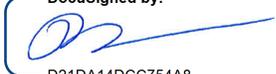
What are We Taking Away from Today's Meeting? (Council Members/Mayor Erickson)

Discussion was held regarding takeaways from the retreat. See attached 2022 Planning Retreat Summary page -6 for details.

The meeting ended at 3:30 p.m.

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Rebecca Erickson, Mayor

ATTEST: 
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Rhianon Fernandez, CMC, City Clerk



CITY OF POULSBO CITY COUNCIL

2022 PLANNING RETREAT

Saturday, August 6th 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Poulsbo City Hall Council Chambers
200 NE Moe St., Poulsbo, WA 98370

SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING'S KEY DISCUSSIONS AND TENTATIVE POINTS OF AGREEMENT

Edition #3, 08.23.22

ATTENDED: Deputy Mayor Jeff McGinty; Councilmembers Britt Livdahl, Connie Lord, Gary McVey, David Musgrove, Andrew Phillips, and Ed Stern; Mayor Becky Erickson; City Clerk Rhiannon Fernandez; Planning and Economic Development Director Heather Wright; Public Works Director Diane Lenius; Parks and Recreation Director Dan Schoonmaker; Facilitator Jim Reid

Background and Context: The format of this meeting was informal, as would be expected of a workshop. No official decisions were made. Instead, the Council's discussions occasionally resulted in informal or tentative agreements on how to proceed to further discuss or advance issues. Formal actions that follow up this workshop would be discussed and taken in official Council meetings after sufficient opportunity for consideration and public comment.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ARTICULATE THEIR LONG-TERM, OVERARCHING VISIONS

The Councilmembers articulated their long-term, overarching vision for Poulsbo's future. Their comments are provided in the order in which they spoke.

Councilmember **Ed Stern:** Fifty or one hundred years from now, our good stewardship of the environment that defines Poulsbo, that being Liberty Bay, that the watershed of Liberty Bay should define then future boundaries of the city. The community's infrastructure, including housing, is well maintained. Liberty Bay is protected by the City, including septic systems have been replaced by sewers.

Deputy Mayor **Jeff McGinty**: Today growth and development are threats. By focusing our direction and prioritizing traffic, housing, and commerce, we can meet the challenges that those threats pose.

Councilmember **Gary McVey**: Years from now we will have maintained downtown, a “there’s there.” We will have succeeded in carving out an identity for the community. We will work to ensure that “Little Norway” is not limiting, but a starting point. We will be inclusive and welcoming to everyone. We will welcome people of diverse backgrounds and make them feel comfortable in Poulsbo.

Councilmember **Dave Musgrove**: Our vision guides the direction of the City’s daily operations. We build upon our history, culture, and quality of life.

Councilmember **Britt Livdahl**: We are planting trees whose shade we will never enjoy. Our actions today are “heritage trees” for future generations to enjoy. We will be a great place to live and a great place to visit, and we will have found the balance between them.

Councilmember **Connie Lord**: Liberty Bay is key to the health of our community, so we must preserve and protect its health. Annexations should someday ensure that the bay is part of the city. Poulsbo is fragmented—divided by geographic barriers and some that are man-made. For example, the differences between the 7th Avenue and 10th Avenue business corridors. We envision a community that overcomes barriers to unite people and ensure that everyone thrives. And we also prevent the community from being exclusive rather than inclusive. One way to ensure this is to nurture a diversity of businesses, housing types, and architectural styles. And while we respect and preserve our history, we won’t be limited by it. Rather, we will grow and evolve. We’ll balance old and new.

Councilmember **Andrew Phillips**: The future of our community is families. We should, therefore, welcome new people to Poulsbo. We are “everything together.” Responsible growth with corresponding infrastructure that supports environmental stewardship and balances the needs and interests of a diverse population. We are a welcoming, diverse, and safe community.

After the seven Councilmembers had each spoken, they and Mayor Erickson further defined these visions and summarized some of the common themes.

- Anyone who wants to live here can.
- Liberty Bay is a key indicator of the community’s health, so the City has an obligation to protect the watershed.
- Poulsbo is welcoming and diverse.
- Preserve and respect the community’s history but don’t be limited by it. Grow and evolve to embrace people of all backgrounds.
- Strong environmental policy is good economic policy.
- Blend together types of people, architecture, amenities, businesses, experiences.
- Capitalize on change to grow gracefully.
- Be open minded and willing to change for the greater good.
- Continuously blend and incorporate new ideas and visions.
- Everyone seeks a safe community.
- Good stewardship is for all of us and our children’s children.

POLICY ISSUES AND POTENTIAL GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Following the presentation of the Councilmembers' visions, the Council and Mayor discussed and defined a list of issues that could help advance the City's vision and direction. Each Councilmember originally compiled a list of issues of greatest interest and importance to them. The list was refined by facilitator Jim Reid after he interviewed each member as part of the process of preparing for this workshop. **The list is Attachment #1 on pages 7-9.** It includes bulleted points that the Council and Mayor added during the discussion to further define the issues.

As a result of the discussion and an informal poll toward the end of it, the Councilmembers and Mayor Erickson:

1. Agreed that parking in downtown, given the needs of Poulsbo residents and the influx of tourists, is a challenge that must be addressed in the short-term (although the implementation of any solutions could take longer).

Mayor Erickson offered the following plan to address the issue. Councilmembers suggested changes or additional elements, as noted below. At the end of the discussion they appeared to support the plan.

- Define and understand the problem: Identify the amount of parking currently available and projected future needs.
 - Commission a study to look at a variety of models/options and their costs.
 - Identify potential locations for one option—a parking garage.
 - Identify potential funding sources.
 - Mayor Erickson will also convene a Task Force consisting of three Councilmembers and representatives of downtown merchants, landowners, the Port of Poulsbo, and community residents.
 - The Council urged the Mayor to appoint and convene the Task Force early in the process to gain their support for it and build interest and momentum throughout the community.
2. Shelved for now issue #4, the future of the old Albertson's store, because there may be imminent action to address it that will resolve the Mayor's and Council's concerns.
 3. Recognized that many of the issues are short-, mid-, and long-term. This is because they are on-going concerns with critical, immediate challenges. One member also stated that responses to these issues will be driven by the budget and will require funding over time.

In the informal ranking at the end of this discussion, Councilmembers identified these as Issues with short-, mid-, and long-term elements: a) economic development; b) affordable housing; c) maintenance and preservation of infrastructure and the environment; d) crime/public safety; e) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI); f) social services, including mental health; and g) parks facilities and recreation programs.

In addition, public engagement and building and maintaining relationships with county, regional, state, and federal officials are also on-going responsibilities.

4. Categorized some of the issues under the umbrella of economic development. The issues on the list that were put into this category were: 1-5 (downtown parking, revitalization, tourism, etc.); 11 (cannabis sales), 12 (Poulsbo Event and Recreation Center); and 13 (branch campus).

Another group of issues was recognized as having an impact on economic development even if they are not directly considered economic development issues per se. They were: 6) crime and public safety; 8) affordable housing; 10) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and 14) fireworks and festivals.

COUNCIL AND MAYOR AGREE TO HIRE CITY ADMINISTRATOR IN 2025

The Councilmembers and Mayor Erickson agreed to hire a City Administrator in 2025 before the Mayor leaves office on the last day of that year.

All the elected officials agree that the issues and challenges facing the City are increasing in complexity, particularly given Poulsbo's growing population and development. A person educated and trained in public management and policy would help the City continue to move ahead when there are changes in the City's elected leadership. In addition, the job of Mayor has become more than full-time. A professional Administrator could relieve the Mayor of the burden of managing the daily operations of the City, thus freeing up the Mayor to focus on the position's external demands, which are many.

The Council and Mayor discussed the option of establishing the position of City Manager, but rejected it for these reasons: 1) It would require the City to change its form of government under the Revised Code of Washington; 2) That change would require a vote of the electorate, making the change costly; 3) A City Manager has seven bosses, which the Mayor and Council believe can result in a City Manager having to spend too much time looking for the four votes that enable them to keep their job; and 4) The overall cost of the position is greater than a City Administrator.

Everyone agreed that the City Administrator should be hired in early 2025 so that there is a transition period in which the newly hired Administrator has time to become acclimated to the job while Mayor Erickson is still in office. Furthermore, there was agreement that having a full-time City Administrator and full-time Mayor in 2025 will provide the Mayor and Council with the opportunity to assess if the Mayor's position should be full- or part-time after that year.

Councilmember identified a range of options for funding the City Administrator’s position, including increasing allocations to enterprises, initiating a B&O tax, allowing cannabis to be sold in the City so that revenues from the sales could help fund the position, using budget surpluses and drawing down reserves, or leaving some other positions vacant.

To do:

1. **Short-term:** Mayor Erickson will ask Assistant City Administrator/Finance Director Debbie Booher to lead the effort to identify, assess, and recommend funding options to the Mayor and Council.
2. **Short- to mid-term:** Undertake public education regarding the benefits of hiring a City Administrator.
3. **Mid-term:** Learn from the experiences of other cities who have City Administrators, including how they define the role.
4. **Long-term:** By the middle of 2024 write and approve a job description for the role of City Administrator.
5. **Long-term:** In the last half of 2024 conduct the hiring process so that the City Administrator begins working for the City on approximately January 1st, 2025.

COUNCIL REACHES CONSENSUS TO TEST NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR FOUR MONTHS

The Council reached agreement to test a new Council Committee structure between September 1st and December 31st, 2022. In early 2023 the Council will assess the structure to determine if it achieved the members’ primary interests and should be continued. If it has not, the Council may revert to the current structure or implement another option.

The Council agreed to abolish the existing Council committees and replace them with workshops in which all seven Councilmembers participate. Workshops will precede the Council meetings that are held on the first three Wednesdays of the month. The workshops will be held between 5:00 and 6:30 p.m. They will be followed by a half-hour break; at 7:00 p.m. the Council meetings will convene.

The workshops are intended to be less formal than the Council meetings and stimulate a “deeper dive” into the issues. Council members expressed an interest in meeting around a table on the main floor of the Chambers, as was the setup at today’s retreat. They recognize that microphones will be needed so that members of the public in attendance can hear the discussions. (At the retreat the acoustics of the room and lack of microphones made it difficult for the Councilmembers and Mayor to hear each other.) The Council and Mayor also agreed that public comment will not be taken at the workshops. Councilmembers supported the idea that a member of the public who wishes to make a comment about the discussions during the workshop will be able to do so at the beginning of the Council meeting when public testimony is heard.

The agendas for the workshops will be determined with an extended “rolling calendar” that tracks urgent issues and upcoming actions. The calendar will also track issues that have come before the Council for discussion and then need to come to the Council for a decision. The Administration will develop the calendar in consultation with Council and will be responsible for maintaining it.

This structure replaces subject matter committees and constitutes a Committee-of-the-Whole. Council members and Mayor Erickson agreed to test it for the last four months of this year because they share these interests:

1. Strengthen the City Council's policy-making role.
2. conduct business as efficiently and consistently as possible.
3. Ensure greater equity and transparency.
4. Ensure the staff's support of the Council aligns with its resources and can be delivered efficiently.

City Clerk Rhiannon Fernandez and Mayor Erickson will work out the logistics so that the new system can be implemented on September 1st.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE RETREAT

Here are the key takeaways cited by the Councilmembers and Mayor Erickson from today's retreat:

- We worked effectively
- I like all of you and appreciate the collegiality among us.
- I arrive frustrated and am leaving happy.
- It is good that we are all open to trying new things.
- I'm tickled that we were able to talk things out.
- We have a common vision and direction.
- Thank you for being open to change.
- This retreat was worthwhile. We accomplished a lot.

APPENDIX #1

POLICY ISSUES: POTENTIAL COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES

These are the policy issues that the Council and Mayor said need to be addressed to achieve the City's long-term, overarching vision. The points under the issues help to further define the issues.

1. Downtown: Parking (build a parking facility and/or charge for street parking or do nothing)
 - See the Mayor's proposal for addressing downtown parking on page 3.
2. Downtown: Revitalization, including road and sidewalk maintenance and downtown cleanliness)
 - Improve what we have with a Downtown Master Plan.
 - Recycling should be added to the list of actions needed to revitalize the downtown core.
3. Downtown: Balance commercial and residential development.
 - Partner with the Port of Poulsbo to achieve this balance.
 - Tie this effort to Poulsbo Place.
 - Convert existing buildings and encourage new buildings to include mixed uses with offices, shops, and restaurants on the street level and residences above.
4. Economic Development: The old Albertson's store
 - Appears this issue may be resolved soon.
5. Economic Development: Tourism
 - Poulsbo does not seek to become another Leavenworth. It is a town with tourists, not a tourist town.
6. Crime/Public Safety
 - Include panhandling, car thefts, and burglaries in the topics to be addressed under this issue.
 - The State Legislature drives much of the governmental response to crime through legislation and funding.
 - Levels of service need to reflect public expectations and funding.
 - Construct a Law and Justice Center in the future.

7. Parks and Recreation

- Address community’s expectations, which seem to be rising, and the need for more opportunities—more facilities, more programming.
- Within five years establish a Metropolitan Parks District.
- Analyze levels of service.
- Use public-private partnerships to help fill the need.

8. Affordable Housing: including high density, in-fill development

- Keep all options on the table, including mobile home parks.

9. Social Services: Includes mental health

- The roles and responsibilities of state, county, and local governments need to be clarified and negotiated. State and county agencies have a larger role to play than the City. Can our partnership help fill gaps?

10. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: What are the next steps to infuse DEI principles and practices into the daily work of the City?

- Could we address DEI in the Comprehensive Plan?
- Conduct an audit of internal operations to provide a benchmark.
- A statement of values and the City’s publications and social media can communicate the importance of DEI to the City and what we are doing to advance it.

11. Cannabis: Should the sale of cannabis be allowed?

- There is now more data and information available given that the State law has been in effect for nearly a decade. In addition, the change in the law to allow some revenues to flow to cities is a new dynamic.
- How much of a revenue generator would the sales of cannabis be? And what would be the costs, including law enforcement and educational programs?

12. Poulsbo Event and Recreation Center (PERC)

- What is the relationship of this proposed facility to other similar recreational facilities in Kitsap County?
- Could this be part of the Metropolitan Parks District?

13. Branch Campus: Engagement with Olympic College and Western Washington University

- Talks among the colleges and City are underway and are making great progress.
- Model Funding Project.
- Is the economic impact of a branch campus less because of the impacts of COVID, one of which is more on-line and less in-person education?
- We may need to reimagine the space.

14. Fireworks and Festivals: Near- and long-term future

- We need a smaller local event on July 4th because we cannot manage a regional event that attracts thousands of people from around the area.
- Should the City be more active in shaping the event? For example, should we help to create a multi-cultural event?

15. Public Engagement

- The City needs uniform messaging.
- A high priority in the budget should be an Information or Communications Manager.

16. City and State Elected Officials: Roles and Relationships

- All of us as elected officials need to work together to help define the City's legislative agenda and priorities.
- We also all need to take an active role in joining our lobbyist to lobby the legislature.

17. Hospital Districts

- Partner with the City of Bainbridge and the Tribes to address health care for underserved populations.
- Establishing a Hospital District should be considered.

18. Review and develop a City or elected officials' vision statement.

APPENDIX #2

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIALS MOST ENJOY ABOUT SERVING THE COMMUNITY

The retreat began with the Councilmembers and Mayor Erickson citing what they most enjoy about serving as elected officials in Poulsbo. The answers are listed in the order in which the elected officials spoke.

Councilmember **Gary McVey**: Getting things done; having a positive impact on the community

Councilmember **Ed Stern**: Acting as a bridge between City Hall and the citizens and community organizations. Helping ensure goodwill to overcome snafus.

Deputy Mayor **Jeff McGinty**: Working to advance a vision with the staff and public.

Councilmember **David Musgrove**: Council is working well. Learning about people and processes that are outside my usual sphere.

Mayor **Becky Erickson**: I was motivated to run for elected office by fear that Poulsbo might make the same mistakes as my hometown. I saw Poulsbo at a crossroads. It is an honor to serve as Mayor. We are doing the right things for the community.

Councilmember **Britt Livdahl**: As someone who is naturally curious, I enjoy getting to know individuals—both staff and citizens and learning about the processes and procedures. It is a privilege to serve as a conduit between City government and the community.

Councilmember **Connie Lord**: While working at another city, I got an inside perspective on how local government operates and developed the experience to manage the “nuts and bolts.” I enjoy learning and working in a group, particularly this Council which is so collegial and respectful.

Councilmember **Andrew Phillips**: Working with staff. Being a Councilmember was made tougher by COVID, which prevented us from being together and inhibited getting to know each other. But that is changing as we come together, as we are today.