

Mayor
Aaron Brockett

Council Members
Matt Benjamin
Lauren Folkerts
Rachel Friend
Junie Joseph
Nicole Speer
Mark Wallach
Tara Winer
Bob Yates



Council Chambers
1777 Broadway
Boulder, CO 80302
October 27, 2022
6:00 PM

City Manager
Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde

City Attorney
Teresa Taylor Tate

City Clerk
Elesha Johnson

STUDY SESSION BOULDER CITY COUNCIL

Discussion on a council priority to revise the existing Inclusionary Housing program to focus on increasing middle income housing. **90 min.**

Boards and Commissions Process Discussion **90 min**

City Council documents, including meeting agendas, study session agendas, meeting action summaries and information packets can be accessed at <https://bouldercolorado.gov/city-council/council-documents>. (Scroll down to the second brown box and click "Information Packet")

This meeting can be viewed at www.bouldercolorado.gov/city-council. Meetings are aired live on Municipal Channel 8 and the city's website and are re-cablecast at 6 p.m. Wednesdays and 11 a.m. Fridays in the two weeks following a regular council meeting.

Boulder 8 TV (Comcast channels 8 and 880) is now providing closed captioning for all live meetings that are aired on the channels. The closed captioning service operates in the same manner as similar services offered by broadcast channels, allowing viewers to turn the closed captioning on or off with the television remote control. Closed captioning also is available on the live HD stream on BoulderChannel8.com. To activate the captioning service for the live stream, the "CC" button (which is located at the bottom of the video player) will be illuminated and available whenever the channel is providing captioning services.

The council chambers is equipped with a T-Coil assisted listening loop and portable assisted listening devices. Individuals with hearing or speech loss may contact us using Relay Colorado at 711 or 1-800-659-3656.

Anyone requiring special packet preparation such as Braille, large print, or tape recorded versions may contact the City Clerk's Office at 303-441-4222, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please request special packet preparation no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting.

If you need Spanish interpretation or other language-related assistance for this meeting, please call (303) 441-1905 at least three business days prior to the meeting. Si usted necesita interpretacion o cualquier otra ayuda con relacion al idioma para esta junta, por favor comuniquese al (303) 441-1905 por lo menos 3 negocios dias antes de la junta.

Send electronic presentations to email address: CityClerkStaff@bouldercolorado.gov no later than 2 p.m. the day of the meeting.



COVER SHEET

MEETING DATE

October 27, 2022

STUDY SESSION ITEM

Discussion on a council priority to revise the existing Inclusionary Housing program to focus on increasing middle income housing.

PRIMARY STAFF CONTACT

Jay Sugnet/HHS Sr. Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

- ▣ **Item 1: Inclusionary and Middle Income Housing Update**



STUDY SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager
Kurt Firnhaber, Director of Housing & Human Services
Jay Sugnet, Senior Manager
Hollie Hendrikson, Housing Policy - Senior Project Manager
Michelle Allen, Inclusionary Housing Program Manager
Sloane Walbert, Inclusionary Housing Planner

DATE: October 27, 2022

SUBJECT: Council Priority to update the existing Inclusionary Housing (IH) program to focus on increasing middle income units.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Council identified two priorities related to middle income housing for 2022-2023. The first is to launch the middle income down payment assistance pilot that was adopted by voters in 2019. The second is to consider an ordinance to update the existing Inclusionary Housing (IH) program to focus on increasing middle income homeownership units. The purpose of this study session is twofold: 1) review how affordable housing is financed and produced in Boulder and progress to date; and 2) provide feedback on the upcoming IH update, including potential changes to increase middle income ownership opportunities and get feedback on other substantive program updates. Staff is not prepared to discuss implementation of the down payment pilot at this time and will schedule a separate study session later in the year to share preliminary findings from the consultant. The consultant's work will analyze the feasibility of the pilot program with updated market and lending assumptions.

This memo summarizes the tools used to construct or acquire affordable housing, how these tools work together, the challenges around middle income affordability, and proposals to secure homes affordable to middle income households. The memo proposes additional analysis of the

differences between for-sale and rental developments and several possible updates to IH including:

- Strengthening incentives for middle income outcomes.
- Expanding the IH required rents to serve a range of low income households.
- Changes to the cash-in-lieu contribution option to close loopholes.

The proposed IH updates presented are designed to maximize affordable housing production efficiency and outcomes.

Staff is requesting council feedback on the proposed updates to IH prior to preparing a formal proposal to the Housing Advisory Board in spring 2023 and City Council for consideration in early summer 2023.

Please note that housing staff are working closely with staff in Planning and Development Services on other council priorities related to housing, including Boulder Junction Phase 2, accessory dwelling unit updates, zoning for affordable housing, occupancy reform, and the planning reserve.

Questions for Council

1. Does Council have any questions about the existing affordable housing program and its evolution?
2. Are there any IH updates Council wishes to add?
3. Does Council agree with staff's proposed schedule and approach to community engagement prior to formal hearings with the Housing Advisory Board and City Council?

Inclusionary Housing Update “Why” Statement

Inclusionary Housing (IH) is a living program that should be updated regularly to address current housing challenges and goals, in this case exploring ways to create more homeownership opportunities for middle income households in Boulder.

- **Areas of Program Advancement.** Evaluate the IH program and propose updates including: 1) Incentives designed to encourage on-site for-sale affordable outcomes and create more middle income for-sale affordable units; 2) Provide affordable housing to a wider range of household incomes; 3) Update the cash-in-lieu methodology and potentially requiring larger homes to pay more; 4) Apply IH to demolished and replacement homes; 4) Include other code updates and clean-up items; and 5) Hire a consultant to analyze development trends and assist with evaluating alternatives.

BACKGROUND

Half a century ago, Boulder recognized that housing affordability was an emerging issue and took bold steps to address those challenges. That history is summarized in [Attachment A](#). Boulder's affordable housing programs have evolved over that time into a nationally respected approach for addressing housing needs. The strengths of our programs are how they work in combination with an ability to adapt to changing markets and changing community priorities. The proposed update will build on the 2018 update to address the need for middle income homeownership opportunities in the city. While the Inclusionary Housing (IH) program has not produced middle income homeownership housing directly, it is a key tool in generating the necessary funding to produce a broader range of homeownership opportunities (including middle income housing). This background section defines key terms and briefly explains key concepts to help better understand the evolution and challenges facing Boulder's affordable housing programs.

Key Terms and Concepts

Affordability Challenges. Single family homes have long been out of reach for most Boulder residents and that gap keeps growing. Between 2010 and 2021, Area Median Income (AMI) within the city grew by 30%, while the median sale price of single-family homes grew by 134%.

- **Few Affordable Ownership Opportunities.** In 2016, middle income households were able to afford 99% of the city's rentals, but only 17% of detached for-sale homes. Affordable ownership remains the challenge for renters looking to buy a home in Boulder. Therefore, the focus of this work is on creating ownership opportunities (not rental opportunities).
- **Power of Local Funding.** Non-local funds, such as low income housing tax credits, are traditionally not available to support affordable middle income homeownership. The cost to produce affordable homeownership opportunities is supported either by local funds or a local regulatory requirement, such as IH and annexation. An explanation of these local tools is provided below under '[Tools to Acquire Affordable Housing](#)'.

Missing Middle vs. Middle Income. Missing middle housing and middle income households are often conflated but are two different concepts.

- **Missing middle** refers to a building type (e.g., duplexes, fourplexes, and bungalow courts) in contrast to what the housing market has mostly provided post WWII (e.g., single-family housing, and larger apartments, or condo buildings). Missing middle housing in Boulder, particularly new construction, is NOT affordable to middle income households.

- **Middle income** refers to household income (i.e., affordability) and can apply to any building type. In 2016, City Council adopted the [Middle Income Housing Strategy](#) that defined middle income as households earning between 80% and 150% of Area Median Income. Using this metric, a three-person household in 2022 earning between \$90,320 and \$169,350 per year is considered middle income. Since adoption of the strategy, discussions favored lowering the upper limit of middle income households to 120% AMI (i.e., Downpayment Assistance Pilot, H2O program). This income range for a three-person household in 2022 is between \$90,320 and \$135,480.

Housing Market Limitations. The housing market has been slow to recover from the 2009 housing crisis and the city has not returned to prior production levels of for-sale housing. Recent inflationary pressures and higher interest rates created new challenges to housing affordability. Other challenges include:

- **Market Shift to Rentals.** In the early years of the city's IH program (2000-2014) developments were primarily ownership with very few rentals. Since 2015, however, fewer larger scale condo developments have been constructed. This shift from ownership to rental development mirrored [national trends](#).
- **New Construction vs. Existing Housing.** New housing construction in Boulder and nationwide is relatively expensive. Due to escalating land values and high labor and material costs, new homes coming on the market are not affordable to middle income households regardless of the housing type. Existing older homes, primarily in the form of condos, can be relatively affordable. But these are often small, are dated with limited amenities, and rarely come on the market.
- **Colorado Construction Defect Law.** Over the last couple of decades, the risk of construction defect litigation has been identified by developers as a significant deterrent to building large for-sale condo projects. Smaller scale development is generally considered to be less risky but smaller projects typically cannot financially support an affordable unit. More details about Colorado's Construction Defect Law can be found in [Attachment B](#).

Tools to Acquire Affordable Housing

The three regulatory tools that generate affordable housing in the city are:

- [Annexation](#)
- [Inclusionary Housing](#)
- [Funding](#)

The following section is a summary of how the city utilizes these tools and how they work in tandem to leverage even greater affordable housing opportunities throughout the city.

Tool #1: Annexation Community Benefit

Annexations historically provided the greatest opportunity to create affordable ownership opportunities in the city (e.g., Holiday, Northfield Commons, etc.). Proposed annexations need to demonstrate community benefit consistent with Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) policies to offset potential impacts of development in the Boulder Valley. For residential development, emphasis is given to the provision of permanently affordable housing. Although emphasis is placed on affordable housing, community benefit is not restricted to housing. An affordable housing benefit must be balanced with other benefits such as land or property dedications (e.g., landmarking, flood and open space easements, etc.) or other provisions that help meet BVCP goals.

Annexations of different sizes provide community benefit in varying ways:

- Very small annexations with the potential for one to four additional homes are typically requested to provide community benefit equal to twice the standard cash-in-lieu for each new home constructed.
- Larger annexations are typically requested to provide between 40-50% of the new homes as permanently affordable and more recently, that the homes be for-sale and affordable to middle income households. In addition, recent annexations include a maximum size limit on both the affordable and market homes to prohibit the construction of very large homes. Once an annexation is approved there is no time limit for development of the annexed property.
- Mid-sized annexations have the potential for more than five additional homes but without the economy of scale of large annexations. These annexations have to date been treated similarly to large annexations. This approach is not working well, and staff will return at a later date to discuss what should be considered appropriate community benefit for these mid-sized annexations.

Outcomes

To date almost all the 113 middle income priced homes in the city inventory have been a result of annexation requirements. Annexations are wholly negotiated agreements so the city can require affordable ownership units be provided on-site and disallow the cash-in-lieu option.

Recent annexations that include affordable housing requirements include:

- 90 Arapahoe – 45% affordable (19 affordable homes); all homes for-sale; 25% priced for low/moderate income households, 75% for middle income households; market units may not exceed 2,200 sq. ft.
- 302-334 Arapahoe – 50% affordable (4-7 affordable homes); all homes for-sale, all priced for middle income households.
- 4215 Vine Street – two new homes; cash-in-lieu on sliding scale per the Crestview East Annexation Agreement.

Tool #2: Inclusionary Housing

Adopted in 2000, Boulder was one of the first communities in the country to adopt Inclusionary Zoning as a strategy to address rising housing prices. Renamed Inclusionary Housing (IH), the program has undergone two major updates in 2009 and 2018. This highly successful program is often referred to as the “work-horse” in Boulder’s affordable housing tool kit and has resulted in the development of hundreds of affordable homes directly and thousands indirectly through leveraging of cash-in-lieu contributions. Communities throughout Colorado are following Boulder’s lead and adopting inclusionary housing programs. Other municipalities throughout the country regularly contact Boulder to learn from our IH program.

The IH program requires that all developments, regardless of size, contribute a percentage of new housing as permanently affordable; for developments with more than five units, the IH program requires 25% of new units to be permanently affordable. Smaller developments including single family homes have a 20% requirement. IH can be satisfied by one or more of the following options:

- Provide the affordable units on-site (integrated within the development).
- Provide the affordable units off-site.
- Make a cash-in-lieu contribution.
- Dedicate vacant land for affordable housing development.

Because IH can occur only in new residential development, the location, type, size, and other details are dictated by the developers. The city cannot influence the tenure (ownership/rental), location, or any other characteristics of the IH required affordable housing in a new housing development.

- **IH Ownership Program Requirements.** Homeownership developments should provide at least half of the required permanently affordable units on-site that is integrated within the new development. The other half may be met by any combination of the options listed above. If a developer does not want to provide any affordable units either on- or off-site, the ordinance allows the requirement to be satisfied with 100% cash-lieu if additional community benefit (e.g., additional CIL) is provided.
 - ***Affordability Requirement:*** 80% of the IH affordable homeownership units are priced for low- and moderate-income households, and 20% are required to be priced for middle income households.
- **IH Rental Program Elements.** Rental developments do not have an on-site requirement and may satisfy the inclusionary requirement through any of the options listed above.
 - ***Affordability Requirement:*** 80% of IH affordable rental units are required to have rents affordable to households earning up to 60% of the area median income (AMI), and 20% of the units to households earning up to 80% of the AMI.

A Note on Inclusionary Housing and Rent Control

Historically, required affordable units have not been incorporated into rental developments. Of the 28 rental developments constructed between 2013 and 2021, no affordable rental units were provided on-site. This is a result of a state law adopted in 1981 banning rent control. The law was interpreted by the Colorado State Supreme Court in 2000, commonly referred to as the Telluride Decision, that seriously impaired city's ability to work with developers to provide affordable rental units. Because of the statewide rent control ban, the only option for a developer to provide the necessary rental units was through a voluntary public-private partnership agreement with the housing authority or a similar agency. For developers, this partnership approach was undesirable as it required a public private partnership in perpetuity which included: continuous governmental compliance monitoring, limited access to project financing, and complications to the future resale of the project. These complications present unacceptable risks to most developers and funders.

Last year, [House Bill 21-1117](#) amended state law to allow local governments to require affordable rental units in new developments that could be owned and operated without the public private partnership described above. The amendment requires that at least one other option is available to the developer (i.e., cash in lieu), and that local government adopt zoning and land

use policies that are intended to increase the overall density and availability of housing. The passage of this law removed barriers for developers to provide affordable rental units within a development. Since the changes in state law, two new rental housing developments in Boulder plan to incorporate privately owned and operated affordable rental units. The on-site affordable units make the development eligible for federal dollars via a tax credit partnership.

- **5801 Arapahoe Ave. (Weathervane).** Currently under construction, contains 22 townhouse units and 295 apartments for rent. The developer is providing two townhouse units and 78 apartments at affordable rents, dispersed throughout the development. In return for modest city funding, the developer has voluntarily agreed to provide additional community benefit of deeper affordability than required by the IH program, by including 10 units with rents affordable to 50% AMI households.
- **4775 Spine Road.** Contains 224 rental units. The developer is proposing 59 affordable rental units on-site in four buildings to satisfy the IH program requirements.

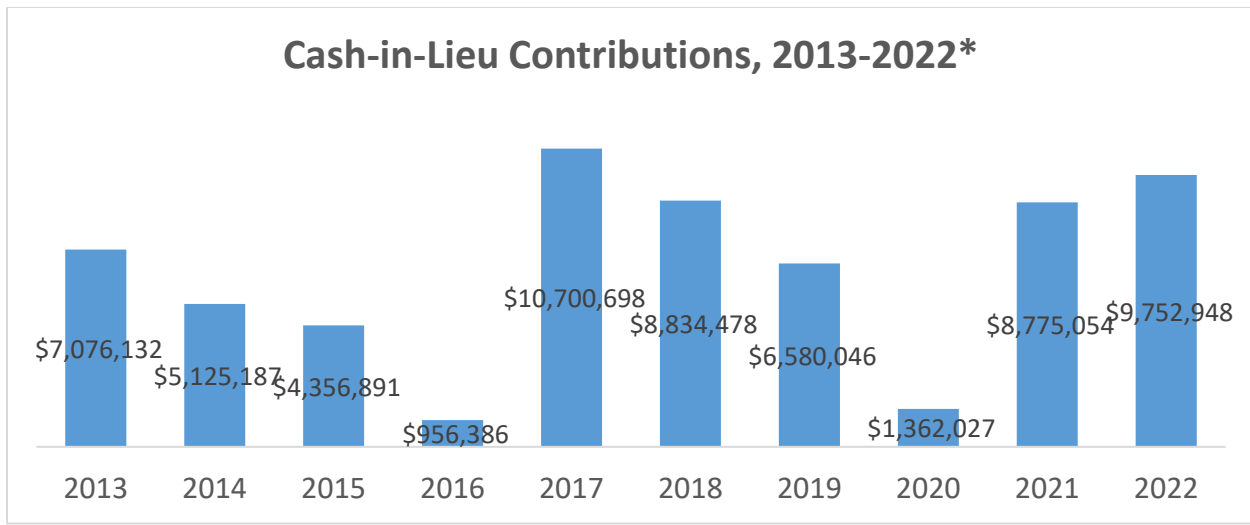
Outcomes

Between 2013 and 2021, 146 developments, primarily single-family homes, with five or fewer dwelling units satisfied IH program requirements with a cash-in-lieu contribution. Thirty-six residential developments with five or more units were subject to IH program requirements. Of these 36 developments, 29 satisfied IH with cash-in-lieu contributions. These numbers do not include residential development that were the result of annexation requirements.

Of the seven medium developments (5-20 units) and large developments (>20 units) that did not pay CIL (satisfying IH with on-site units):

- Three were affordable homeownership projects, providing a mix of on-site units and CIL.
- Four were rental projects: one provided a mix of on-site units and CIL, one dedicated vacant land, and two provided the affordable units off-site (i.e., at a different location).

Based on this data, the IH program is producing significant funds and very few affordable units directly. The chart on the following page includes details of the IH cash-in-lieu contributions between 2013 and Oct. 5, 2022. Cash-in-lieu produced over \$63.5 million in funding to the city, which accounts for almost half of all housing funding sources for the city.

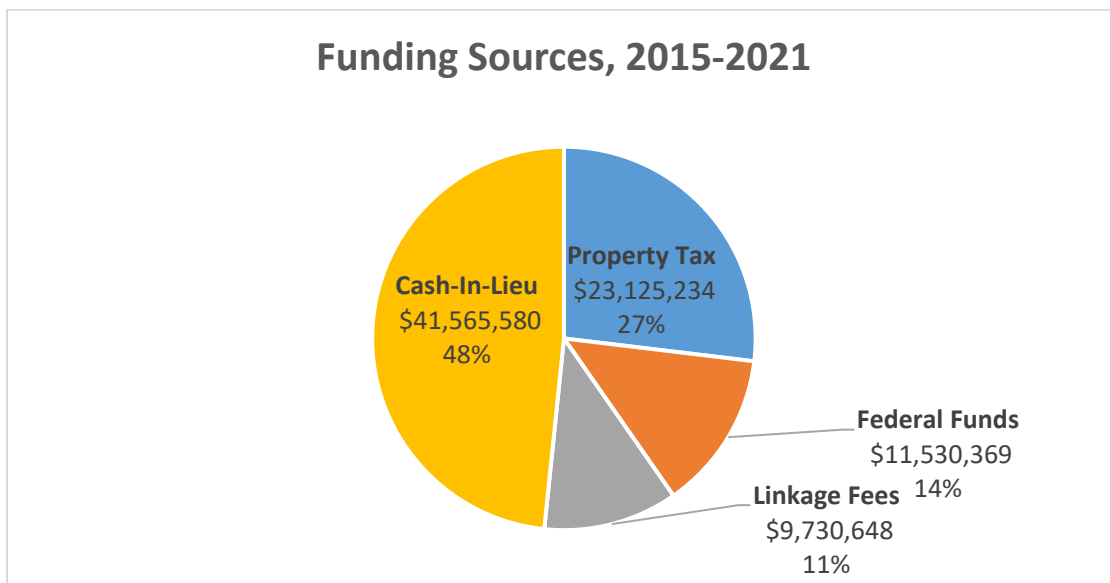


* 2022 amounts are incomplete and include CIL contributions up until 10/5/2022. Complete 2022 amounts will be calculated at the end of 2022.

A more complete discussion of the city's funding sources and strategies is included in the ['Funding for Affordable Housing'](#) section below.

Tool #3: Funding for Affordable Housing

Since 2015, the city received over 85 million dollars from a variety of sources including: inclusionary housing cash-in-lieu contributions, commercial linkage fees, property taxes, and federal funding sources. The amount of funding from cash-in-lieu and linkage fees varies year-to-year based on development activity within the city.



Local Sources of Funding

- **Inclusionary Housing Cash-in-Lieu Contributions.** Cash-in-lieu contributions provide significant funds and are the “workhorse” of affordable housing funding. Between 2015 and 2021, \$85.95 million were invested in the city; 48% of those funds originated from these cash-in-lieu contributions.
- **Commercial Linkage Fees.** Adopted in 2013, the affordable housing linkage fees are gaining more importance as a funding source for affordable housing. These one-time payments are made by non-residential developers to offset the impacts of new developments in the city. In 2018, the non-residential linkage fee was increased from \$12 per square foot to \$30 per square foot; that same year the city collected \$3.5 million in these fees.
- **Property Tax.** Property taxes and housing excise taxes generates around \$3 million per year for the Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) fund. This fund was established in 1991 and provides a simple, flexible, and locally administered funding source to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Cash-in-lieu and linkage fees go to the city’s Affordable Housing Fund. This fund, and the CHAP fund, are entirely made up of local funds and as a result are highly flexible and can be used alone or in combination with state and federal dollars. As stand-alone funding they are not subject to strict state and federal reporting and other requirements. Most notably state and federal funds are not available for middle income affordable homes, but local funds can be used to meet this goal.

Federal and State Sources of Funding

Boulder receives federal funding directly from HUD from two major federal funding sources: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Program. CDBG and Home funds are allocated to Boulder and to the Boulder Broomfield Regional Consortium and are awarded based upon the priorities identified in a plan, the [2020-2024 Consolidated Plan](#), submitted by the city every four years.

Indirect funding is provided by state and federal low income housing tax credits (LIHTC), which gives state and local agencies the authority to issue tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or construction of rental housing targeted to low income households. The [Colorado Housing Finance Agency](#) (CHFA) allocates these housing tax credits and administers the program in Colorado.

Benefits of City Funding: Distribution and Diversity

The city funds a [wide variety of housing types](#), from small transitional apartments to larger townhouses equipped to house families. Local funding sources are leveraged with outside funding sources (e.g., state and federal tax credits, HOME, and CDBG funds). Currently, IH results in 60% AMI affordable rentals when built by a private developer, which does not serve

the needs of the community for homes that are affordable to lower income households earning 30, 40, and 50% of AMI. Over a recent five-year period, out of every 100 homes created, the city's investments and regulations have resulted in the securing of 36 permanently affordable homes: 19 achieved through new construction and an additional 17 preserved through acquisition.

Cash-in-lieu contributions and other local funds allow the city to provide affordable housing units throughout the city and produce new sustainable permanently affordable housing. Housing produced serves a full range of needs from for-sale homes to permanent supportive housing and a range of incomes from very low to middle without the extensive regulatory requirements of state and federal funds. The Affordable Housing Fund also allows the city to acquire affordable housing units throughout the city; without investments from CIL and commercial linkage fees these acquisitions would not be possible.

The city has a goal for 15% of all homes to be affordable for low-, moderate- and middle-income households by 2035. As of June 2022, there are 3,815 affordable homes, which is more than halfway to the 15% goal. Almost 80% (3,004) of these affordable homes are rental units, while 21% (811) are homeownership units. Since 2013, more than 90% of these permanently affordable homes have been created as rental units. The [Affordable Housing Dashboard](#) is an interactive webpage that tracks progress towards meeting the goal and who we serve.

Potential Strategies for Increasing Middle Income Housing

Boulder's three tools for creating permanently affordable housing – annexation, inclusionary housing, and funding – all contribute to the growth and maintenance of the community's affordable housing stock. To date, annexation has been the most effective tool at producing middle income homeownership units. Increasingly, inclusionary housing has resulted in an outcome of nearly entirely cash-in-lieu contributions. However, this shift in the IH outcome has resulted in considerable growth in the city's affordable housing stock as it creates a robust local funding source. The discussion below includes a list of proposed updates and next steps for the IH program.

1. Strengthen Existing IH Incentives for On-Site and Middle Income Affordable Units

The 2018 IH Update included the following incentives to provide affordable ownership and middle income units on-site:

- All for-sale affordable units provided on-site in developments with 20 or fewer total units qualify for middle income pricing.
- When 50% or more of the required affordable homeownership units are provided on-site, the remaining cash-in-lieu is reduced by 50%.

- When 75% or more of required affordable homeownership units are provided on-site the pricing mix may be adjusted to allow half of the affordable units to be priced to be affordable to middle income households.

To date, these incentives have not resulted in developers satisfying IH with on-site or middle income homes. These incentives could be strengthened by allowing more on-site for-sale units to be priced at higher percent or entirely middle income levels.

2. Adjust IH Rents

IH currently has two rent categories. The program requires that:

- 80% of any required rental units have rents affordable to households earning no greater than 60% area median income (“AMI”).
- 20% have rents affordable to households earning no greater than 80% of the AMI.

This has resulted in a wave of affordable rental housing available to households earning at or near the 60% AMI income limit. These relatively high rent levels are relatively close to market rents and are not serving many lower income households that need affordable rental housing in Boulder (e.g., 30%, 40%, and 50% AMI). The chart below shows current maximum rents for affordable homes in Boulder.

2022 Affordable Rents						
ALL Units – Detached, Attached, Townhome						
Number of Bedrooms	0 & 1 BR <475 sq ft	0 BR ≥ 475 sq ft	1 BR ≥ 475 sq ft	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
Area Median Income:						
30%	\$658	\$658	\$705	\$846	\$978	\$1,091
40%	\$878	\$878	\$941	\$1,129	\$1,304	\$1,455
50%	\$1,097	\$1,097	\$1,176	\$1,411	\$1,630	\$1,818
IH Rent – 60%	\$1,185	\$1,317	\$1,411	\$1,693	\$1,956	\$2,182
IH Rent – 80%	\$1,317	\$1,756	\$1,882	\$2,258	\$2,609	\$2,910

Source: Colorado Housing and Finance Authority and [City of Boulder](#)

Affordable rental housing is almost always created using low income housing tax credits (LIHTC). Tax credits can only be used for rental units affordable to households earning 60% AMI or less. As a result, the current IH 80% rents are not allowed in a LIHTC funded project.

3. Adjust IH Cash-in-Lieu

In 2018, the rate at which cash-in-lieu is increased was increased from 7% to 10% annually. However, higher CIL is not resulting in more on-site outcomes. Over time a 10% increase

each year could have negative impacts on the financial viability of housing developments. Also, when the IH program was adopted cash-in-lieu was set to not increase for larger homes over 1,200 square feet and, as a result, larger homes are not paying a proportionate share of the cash-in-lieu contributions.

Additionally, homes in developments with four or fewer units that are demolished and replaced can have IH waived if the new home is constructed within three years. Almost all new single-family homes in the city are the result of a demolition which removes a smaller, relatively more affordable, home and replacing it with a large expensive home. The following are some of the proposed updates to IH:

- Strengthened incentives for on-site middle income housing.
- Scale IH so larger homes pay a proportional fee.
- Apply IH to demo/replacement homes.
- Additional IH code updates and clean-up items.

Additionally, staff proposes to hire a consultant to explore the following:

- Look at current development trends, assist in evaluating alternatives, and recommend updates to IH such that there is sufficient incentive for developer to put for-sale affordable units on-site.
- IH was adopted and has run for 20 years with similar rules and requirements for rental and for-sale developments. Staff proposes to look at separating the two as the financial realities of these two types of tenure are increasingly different.

4. Focus Annexation Community Benefit on Middle Income Affordable Homeownership Housing

Maintain the current approach taken with larger annexations to provide all new homes as for-sale with a significant percentage permanently affordable to middle income households. Consider allowing all middle income homes in annexations.

5. Focus on Funding Strategies

By far, funding is the most productive tool for preserving, increasing, and diversifying Boulder's affordable housing stock. A critical advantage of this tool is that locally funded developments can leverage outside resources, which stretches local dollars farther, producing far more affordable homes than a unit-only outcome under IH. Funded projects can be developed throughout the community, and unlike inclusionary units, funding supports a range of desirable outcomes:

- Housing affordable to a range of households, from families with children to older adults living alone, very low income people transitioning out of homelessness, to low-, moderate-, and middle-income households.
- Creation of more for-sale housing opportunities.

- Increased distribution of affordable housing throughout the city.
- Housing production and management carried out by partners, primarily BHP, the city housing authority, Thistle, and Flatirons Habitat for Humanity who are buffered from bankruptcy, are mission driven, have extensive experience with affordable housing management, and have resources to maintain affordable projects over time.

Several local and state policies have been enacted to correct an imbalance between AMI and real estate prices, with a specific focus on affordable homeownership. Below is a summary of some of these efforts:

- *Acquisition and Rehab.* 1,033 permanently affordable units have been acquired and/or rehabbed by the city. While these units are typically for-rent, recent efforts by city staff have focused on middle income homeownership acquisition. HHS purchased a home in South Boulder earlier this year, made improvements and then sold the home to an eligible household. HHS currently has three additional homes under contract to be included as middle income units in the homeownership program.
- *H2O Down Payment Assistance Program.* Since 2000, a total of \$2.38 million of House to Homeownership (H2O) shared appreciation down payment loans have been utilized by 85 resident households throughout Boulder to purchase a home on the market. As of 2022, the revolving loan program has recouped 78 loan repayments with zero losses. Of the \$709,654 total initial investment, the current funds available are \$729,604.
- *Middle Income Down Payment Assistance Pilot Program.* This Pilot Program was put on hold in 2020 due to the pandemic and the uncertainty it created regarding the housing market. Since that time, the market for homes in Boulder has changed dramatically and some assumptions may need to be revisited. With the goal of seeking to better understand potential financial and social impacts of this Pilot Program, the city hired a consulting firm to conduct a financial impact analysis and feasibility study. Specifically, the city wishes to explore the potential short-, medium-, and long-term financial impacts of this pilot program on the city and middle income homebuyers. Staff will return later in 2022 with an update on progress.
- *Statewide Grant Programs.* The Colorado Department of Local Affairs recently announced the creation of two new programs: the Transformational Affordable Housing, Homeownership, and Workforce Housing Grant Program and the Transformational Homelessness Response Grant Program. The aim of these programs is to “increase the number of affordable housing units and the availability of housing opportunities across Colorado to ensure everyone has a safe, stable, and affordable place to live and thrive.”

- *Statewide Middle Income Access Program.* In 2022, the Colorado Legislature passed Senate Bill 22-146, which appropriated \$25 million from the affordable housing and home ownership cash fund, which money originates from the general fund, for expansion of the middle income access program created and administered by the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA).
- *Encouraging the city's housing partners to focus on creating affordable ownership opportunities.* Flatirons Habitat for Humanity and Thistle are important partners who focus on homeownership opportunities for Boulder residents. The city will continue to provide gap funding to these organizations to provide additional homeownership. The city is also pursuing a unique opportunity for Habitat to build an affordable housing modular factory to increase production and lower costs through modular construction. The modular factory will focus on homeownership exclusively in the early years of production.

Racial Equity Assessment and Public Engagement Plan

In alignment with the city's commitment to racial equity and good public process and engagement, staff prepared a racial equity assessment and public engagement plan, included in [Attachment C](#). These will inform staff considerations and the public process for the update to the IH program.

Next Steps

Staff proposes the following project schedule for the IH Update, subject to Council's feedback:

Nov – Dec 2022	<i>Initial Engagement.</i> Staff will meet informally with stakeholders and affordable housing partners and formally with the Housing Advisory Board, and Technical Advisory Group.
Jan – Feb 2023	<i>Alternatives Development.</i> Informed by initial engagement, a consultant will assist staff to develop alternatives.
Mar – Apr 2023	<i>Evaluate Issues.</i> Policy alternatives and analysis will be shared with Housing Advisory Board for feedback on design.
May – Jun 2023	<i>Code Development.</i> Policy and code amendments will be developed and informed by the Housing Advisory Board and any further feedback.

In addition to the IH update, staff will return to Council in late 2022 with an update and evaluation of the voter approved Middle Income Down Payment Assistance Pilot program.

Attachments

- Attachment A: Timeline of City of Boulder's Affordable Housing Efforts
- Attachment B: Construction Defect Law
- Attachment C: Draft Racial Equity Assessment and Public Engagement Plan

Attachment A: Timeline of City of Boulder Affordable Housing Efforts

1966

Boulder establishes the Housing Authority of the City of Boulder (dba Boulder Housing Partners), which becomes the primary provider of subsidized rental housing for low- and very-low income households, as well as special populations.

1973

Adoption of a moderate-income housing annexation strategy. The policy requires all new residential developments seeking annexation or requesting an out-of-city utility permit to commit at least 15% of such units to be low and moderately priced housing units.

1975

City begins receiving Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which have been used since to finance housing and community service projects for low income persons, including the homeless, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

1976

City adopts a formal growth management plan with a limit on the number of housing permits issued each year. A merit system based on points determined which developments would receive the limited allocations. The provision of low- and moderate-income housing earned the applicant extra points.

1980

Citizen initiative is passed in the city to impose rent control in existing buildings. In response, the Colorado State Legislature instituted a statewide rent control ban to ensure that no city or county in Colorado would, as a matter of law, be able to institute a rent control measure.

1982

- First Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance is adopted that allows a second unit to be constructed in single family homes within low density residential zone districts. The intent of the ordinance was to provide a broader mix of housing choices for various ages and incomes, while preserving single-family neighborhood character; reduce the number of illegal and unsafe rental units constructed; and offer homeowners a way to offset the increasing cost of living in the area.
- The growth management plan is reworked, now referred to as the Residential Growth Management System (RGMS). A two percent growth rate is set on residential building permits. Allocations for residential building permits are given out on a first-come, first-served basis until the number of permits reach a trigger point. Specific exemptions to the

allocation system are intended to incentive low- and middle-income housing, including low income housing projects approved by the Housing Authority as well as the first 100 qualified moderate income rental units per year.

1985

- Moderate Income Housing Program (MIHP) is established, which is an inclusionary zoning program that generally required that 15% of the total units in a project be sold to moderate income households. Prices were not limited, only the incomes of eligible buyers. Resale restrictions remained in place for a period of 10 to 20 years, at which point the homes could be sold as market rate homes. Developers could earn “credits” by building more than the required number of MIHP, and these credits could then be sold to other developers to help meet MIHP requirements.
- City adopts a Mobile Home (MH) zoning district. The new zoning district serves the dual purpose of guiding development of new mobile home parks and reducing the risk of redevelopment and displacement of residents.

1990

Housing excise tax is adopted and levied on all new development on a per square foot basis. The excise tax establishes a modest source of funding to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. The funds are used to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate permanently affordable housing for households within 15 - 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) defined as the “working poor” within the adopted ordinance.

1991

City convenes a working group to develop a new, affordable housing program. As a result, the mandatory MIHP from 1985 is discontinued and replaced with the Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP). CHAP served as a local housing trust fund to provide subsidy funds for developers to acquire and build permanently affordable housing in the community. Property taxes and a housing excise tax on new development produces approximately \$1M per year that is used to fund housing for low income and special populations. The fund is still in place today, although the housing excise tax was repealed. This fund provides a simple, flexible, and locally administered funding source to increase the supply of affordable housing.

1992

- City begins to receive federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds, a block grant for affordable housing. Boulder receives approximately \$650,000 per year in HOME funds which may be used for a variety of housing projects for low- and very-low income households.

- The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) is updated to include a housing goal to have 5% of the total housing stock as permanently affordable to low income households.

1993

City's First Home program is established. Initially, First Home was a shared equity loan program. The rapid increase in Boulder's housing prices led to a concern that insufficient funds would be recaptured from the shared equity proceeds to enable the city to replace units on a 1:1 basis. This led to the program being changed to a down payment grant in exchange for permanent affordability.

1995

- The Residential Growth Management System (RGMS) revised to cut the growth rate to one percent and reduce the number of available allocations on an annual basis. The update divided the annual allocations into three categories: market rate, permanently affordable, and restricted. The exemptions to the allocation system are intended to incentivize the types of housing identified as the most needed in the community. The permanently affordable allocations were deed restricted units for low income households and the restricted units were size restricted, owner-occupied units with initial prices set to be affordable to middle income households but with no ongoing resale or income restrictions. Projects which included at least 20% permanently affordable and 35% restricted units were able to receive the required RGMS allocations faster than those projects that contained market rate units exclusively. The policy objective was to ensure that new residential growth helped to meet the city's affordable housing goals. This was still a voluntary system. Given Boulder's rapidly escalating land values, it made more sense for someone to wait for an allocation for a market rate unit rather than produce an affordable unit.
- The Major Site Review process was established as part of the discretionary land use review process, which gave priority consideration to residential projects that contained at least 20% permanently affordable and 35% restricted units.

1996

- The city's first cooperative housing ordinance is adopted. Cooperative housing is a form of housing where unrelated individuals choose to share a dwelling unit and where each family or individual has rights commensurate with ownership. No co-ops were created under these strict code provisions.
- City began administering a down payment assistance program. The purpose of the down payment program was to provide gap financing to make up the difference between what the purchaser can afford as a down payment and the amount needed to make the financing work for the purchaser.

- City requires that all units assisted through the Housing Fund Program remain permanently affordable in perpetuity.

1997

- City establishes its first cash-in-lieu option for developers of projects that were in progress at the time the new RGMS was adopted. Approximately \$1.3M was generated from this option. These funds were used for low- and moderate-income housing projects.
- The housing policies of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan were amended to reflect the city's goals for maintaining existing and integrating new affordable housing throughout the community and establishing the goal to have at least 10% of the total housing stock be permanently affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

1998

- The city begins work on the Comprehensive Housing Strategy. The Strategy, accepted by Council in 2000, is organized around five themes: managing density and growth; strengthening partnerships; holding and gaining ground on support for low- and very low income households; keeping moderate-income workers in Boulder; and helping special populations and seniors. The Housing Strategy included the objective of reaching the goal to have 10% of the total housing stock as permanently affordable within 10 years.
- City voters voted to increase the housing excise tax and market developments and to waive the development excise tax on permanently affordable housing projects.

2000

- The city's Housing Division establishes an Asset Management Program to ensure that the affordability requirements of all the city's affordable rental and homeownership units are met. This includes annual monitoring of permanently affordable rental units and an annual letter sent to permanently affordable homeowners to remind them of the program's requirements. The city also begins to expand its homeownership assistance program for moderate income households.
- City adopts the Inclusionary Zoning program. The Inclusionary Zoning program requires that 20% of all new residential development is permanently affordable for low and moderate-income households. The program provides options for meeting the Inclusionary Zoning requirement, including the option of paying a cash-in-lieu amount for the required permanently affordable units. Cash-in-lieu funds are combined with other city housing subsidy funds and used to rehabilitate existing affordable units, acquire market rate units, and

convert them to permanently affordable units as well as construct new permanently affordable units and help make units permanently affordable to very low income households.

- The Residential Growth Management System (RGMS) is amended to remove the affordable housing components added in 1995. At the time the growth management system, as well as annexation policy, were the only methods of securing some affordable housing through development projects. However, the adoption of the Inclusionary Zoning program described above allowed the city to achieve the goal of affordable housing in a less cumbersome, more direct way than through growth management limitations. Additional exemptions were added to growth management allocations, including mixed-use developments, developments with a significant portion of affordable housing. These were housing types that the city, as a matter of policy, desired to encourage. The memo sent to City Council stated that this change “would have the effect of permitting more residential construction, more quickly” than the previous growth management system.
- Manufactured Housing Land Use and Policy adopted as part of the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan update. A policy titled *Preservation and Development of Manufactured Housing* is adopted and the Manufactured Housing (MH) land use category is established. The new policy recognizes the importance of manufactured housing as an option for many households and commits to preserving mobile home parks, developing new ones, increasing opportunities for resident ownership, addressing health and safety concerns in these communities, and helping to mitigate for the loss of housing through support for rehousing.

2004

The Residential Growth Management System (RGMS) is amended to add an exemption for land that has been rezoned from non-residential zoning district to a residential zoning district. The update was made in response to blanket rezonings done by the city to implement updates made to the comprehensive plan, including the rezoning of the 28th Street frontage road to high density residential zoning. This growth management system adopted in 2004 is still in place today.

2007

- The city forms a Regional HOME Consortium with Boulder County, the City of Longmont and the City and County of Broomfield. The Consortium has increased locally controlled funding for affordable housing and formed collaborative partnerships to address affordable housing concerns in the region.
- The Boulder County Homeownership Consortium and its sponsors support the Boulder County Housing Authority’s HUD-approved Housing Counseling Program. Both the City of Boulder and the City of Longmont provide the program with financial support. Thistle

Community Housing provides valuable in-kind training support through the NeighborWorks Training Institute.

2008

The city initiates the Affordable Housing Program Review which consists of three phases: Council reaffirmed the existing goal to have 10% of the city's housing be permanently affordable including the income targets and homeownership rental mix. They removed the goal for some percentage to be acquired through acquisition and some through new development and adopted an additional goal of 450 units affordable to middle income households.

2010

In an update to Inclusionary Zoning, the program was renamed Inclusionary Housing (IH). The updated modified the annual adjustment for cash-in-lieu and mitigated the adjustment for smaller developments, applied IH requirements to redevelopment projects when the total number of redeveloped or newly constructed dwelling units equals five or more, and modified the land dedication option to clarify specific requirements for the dedicated land.

2013

- A community conversation commences to inform city housing goals and city efforts, refer to as Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS). The CHS provided the city with an action plan organized around five themes: 1) address housing as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update, 2) create a middle income housing strategy, 3) preserve existing affordable housing, 4) achieve our 10% goal, and 5) projects, partnerships, governance, and other.
- Affordable housing linkage fees are adopted, which apply to non-residential development in the city. The funds are used offset the impacts of new developments in the city and are an important funding source for affordable housing.

2015

- City establishes stiff penalties for interference with the sale of pre-1976 mobile homes, disallowing excessive home upgrade requirements by a mobile home park owner and clarifying that tree maintenance is exclusive responsibility of the park owners. Council also commits funding for legal services for mobile homeowners.
- Short-term home rentals (rented for 29 days or less at a time) are expressly permitted in the rental licensing code with specific regulations. The rental property must be the owner's principal residence; principal residence is defined as the dwelling unit in which a person resides for more than one-half of the year.

- A Housing Boulder Toolkit was developed as a compilation of ideas to begin a community discussion on housing. The Housing Boulder community conversation was brought to a close and rather than adopt a full housing strategy, Council chose to identify approximately 20 work plan items known as the Housing Boulder Action Plan.

2016

- Middle Income Housing Strategy (MIHS) adopted as a new component within Boulder's Comprehensive Housing Strategy. The strategy provides a housing policy framework, including community priorities for action and specific tools to help meet the adopted Housing Boulder goal to "Maintain the Middle."
- Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance adopted, which was aimed at long-term preservation of affordable housing that would otherwise be lost over time. The ordinance enables permanently affordable properties to rebuild to the number of existing units in situations where zoning was changed after the property was built (legal nonconforming uses).

2017

- The 2015 Major Update to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) strengthened housing policies and goals for middle income units were included. Council also adopted specific policies related to achieving additional affordable housing when the city grants additional intensity, height, or any other benefit to a developer.
- City's regulations on cooperative housing are substantially revised to facilitate the creation of new cooperative housing units and to legitimize existing illegal units.
- Code changes are made to support mobile home park residents, including the establishment of a homeowner's right to privacy, prohibiting retaliation by the park owner, and mandating mediation. The regulations are intended to "level the playing field" between homeowners and park owners.
- Updates made to the Inclusionary Housing Program to achieve three goals; create a middle income requirement, incentivize on-site units, and create a new design review process. To implement the middle income strategy, IH was updated to add a 5% middle income component consisting of three tiers of pricing: 80%, 100%, and 120% of area median income (AMI). The resulting standard IH requirement is 25% of all units as permanently affordable, with a pricing mix of 80% low/moderate income and 20% middle income. Incentives and a couple of disincentives were built into the program to encourage for-sale developments to provide the affordable units on-site.
- Housing excise tax is repealed and replaced with non-residential capital facility impact fee.

2018

- ADU regulations updated, which increased the maximum allowable saturation in a neighborhood area, increased the allowable area, loosened parking requirements, created exemptions for historic properties, and established an affordable ADU option. Newly created accessory units are unable to be used as short-term rentals.
- Affordable housing linkage fees, originally adopted in 2013, are increased on non-residential development in the city, increases the funds available for affordable housing development.

2019

Manufactured Housing Strategy and Action Plan adopted, which frames the city's approach to and understanding of Mobile Home Communities in Boulder into the future. The strategy and action plan encourages the preservation of existing mobile home parks and the development of resident-owned parks.

2020

Ordinance No. 8412 approved to support eviction prevention services. Excise tax was approved on dwelling units with rental licenses to be used to fund legal representation for persons facing eviction proceedings and for rental assistance for persons that may be facing an eviction or need emergency rental assistance.

2023

Proposed date for update to the Inclusionary Housing program to increase on-site and middle income outcomes and make other substantive program changes.

Attachment B: Construction Defect Law

The risk of construction defect litigation has, over the last couple of decades, been identified by developers as a significant deterrent to building attached homeownership housing. This is considered especially true for larger condominium projects that, according to the Middle Income Housing Study would offer the most durable affordability. Developers and affordable housing advocates report that [House Bill 2017-1279, “Construction Defect Actions Notice Vote Approval”](#) (HB17-1278) has reducing construction defect risk. Major requirements introduced by HB17-1278 include: (1) notification by the association board to all homeowners and impacted contractors of their intent to commence a construction defect action, (2) an association board-convened meeting 10-15 days after the notice, (3) the option for a contractor to the community and offer a remedy for the defect, and (4) a majority vote by homeowners in favor of pursuing litigation. Despite passage of HB17-1279, construction defect risk is still considered in a developer’s assessment of risk and general contractors and their subcontractors continue to struggle to secure insurance to build attached for-sale housing. Though developers generally consider smaller scale development to be of less risk of construction default litigation, these smaller projects typically cannot financially support an affordable unit.

Attachment C: Racial Equity Instrument and Public Engagement Plan

Introduction

For the 2022-23 Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) update, in alignment with the city's commitment to advance racial equity and to good public process and engagement, staff assessed racial equity and developed a public engagement plan. They are presented together here because they inform one another. Also, both must consider that the update builds upon more than two decades of public process and program operation and seeks neither to change the intended beneficiaries nor the program intent, but instead to better align program design with the primary goal of the 2017 update: produce middle income housing. The IHO does not preserve or construct in neighborhoods in a predictable manner, but only requires contributions of housing units, cash in lieu of units or land, as new development occurs limiting the spatial understanding of its impact.

Background

The city adopted the first iteration of Inclusionary Housing in 2000 to provide a diversity of housing types in the city. Most recently, in 2017, Chapter 9-13, "Inclusionary Housing" was updated by [Ordinance No. 8201](#). Among other objectives, this update sought to promote middle income homeownership. The findings section of that ordinance, summarized below, establishes the city's current considerations and intent under the IHO.

- A diverse housing stock is necessary to serve all people.
- Inclusionary housing is important and necessary to provide housing that serves households ranging from very low to middle income.
- Increasing housing prices are reducing housing affordability.
- Reduced affordability impacts the ability of local employers to retain a local workforce.
- University-related housing needs should not preclude access to housing by other community members.
- Housing shortages are detrimental to public health, safety and welfare and impact transportation and the environment.
- The trend toward building larger, more expensive homes, increases overall realty values and reduces affordability.
- The remaining land in the city is limited, so it is worthwhile to dedicate land for affordable housing.
- Affordable housing should not be over-concentrated in certain areas.
- Special consideration should be given to smaller developments to avoid disproportionately impacting them.

This update to the ordinance has been in effect for five years. Since its adoption, no new middle income homeownership units have resulted directly from the updated ordinance (although cash-in-lieu has contributed to other programs to promote homeownership). The purpose of this

update is to examine the ordinance and market to understand how best to align it with the goal of promoting middle income homeownership opportunities.

Draft Racial Equity Assessment

Title: **Inclusionary Housing Ordinance Update**

Description: Revise Inclusionary Housing (IH) ordinance to incentivize more middle income homeownership opportunities in Boulder.

Department: Housing and Human Services Contact: Michelle Allen,
Housing Principal Planner
allenm@bouldercolorado.gov

☒ Policy ☐ Program ☐ Budget Issue

Step 1. Establish outcomes.

- a. *Community result:* By 2035, 15% of all housing units in Boulder are affordable to low-, moderate- and middle income households, providing diverse housing options that meet the needs of all people, regardless of their income.
- b. *Organization result:* The inclusionary housing ordinance will effectively increase the share of middle income housing opportunities in Boulder.
- c. *Indicators:* Affordable units as a share of total units, affordable rental vs. homeownership units, affordable housing types, bedroom count (different bedroom counts support different household types), affordable homes by area medium income (AMI) category and tenure type, household income, occupation, race, and ethnicity.
- d. *Potentially impacted populations:* Middle income households (80 to 150% AMI) that wish to own a home in Boulder. This update may also impact...

- | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infants | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teens | <input type="checkbox"/> Students | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Older adults |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Men | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LGBTQIA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immigrants | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undocumented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low-income | <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disabled | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health-impacted | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> African American/Black | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed-Race | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> White | | |

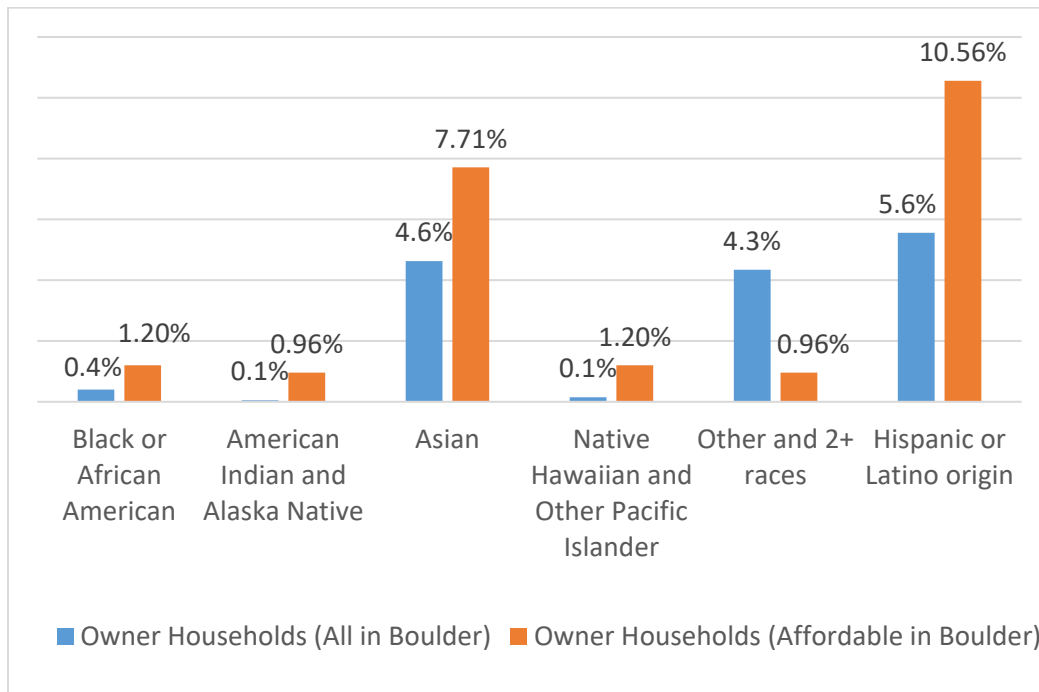
- e. *Potentially impacted issue areas:* Increased middle income housing opportunity in Boulder is expected improve the community's housing options and somewhat reduce in-commuting, by allowing middle income homeowners to live closer to where they work. Additional middle income housing could help employers retain middle income employees such as teachers and firefighters.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Human services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal/restorative justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and recreation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic development | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning / development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Procurement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food access and affordability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government decision-making processes | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce policies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing / Homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> Other specific City departments |

Step 2. Collect data.

- a. *Anticipated geographic areas to be impacted in Boulder:* All areas of Boulder where new housing can be developed and/or existing housing can be acquired could be impacted.
- b. *Racial demographics.* Race data for the heads of household of owner-occupied homes in Boulder were compared to owner-occupied affordable homes in the city's affordable housing program. Compared to all owner-occupied homes in Boulder, these affordable homes had higher rates of heads of households identifying with the race categories shown below, except for the "other and 2+ races" category (details provided in the figure below). This suggests that, overall, affordable homeownership increases the rate of homeownership for most nonwhite race categories. Increasing affordable middle income homeownership opportunities is expected to advance race equity in Boulder. Since the racial wealth gap is driven primarily by racial disparities in homeownership that resulted from state, local and federal housing policy, such as redlining and discriminatory lending, expanding affordable homeownership opportunities today is a step towards reducing the racial wealth gap.

Figure 1: Race of Heads of Household in Owned Homes in Boulder, All vs. Affordable



Sources: [Affordable Housing in the City of Boulder Data Dashboard](#) and 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, S2502, [Demographic Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units](#).

- c. *Other Quantitative Data.* Various data sources, such as Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data, can demonstrate racial disparities in homeownership, but the update only seeks to efficiently expand resources to provide more middle income homeownership opportunities. Funding decisions, housing development and home sales are areas where there is increased potential for racial disparities but only after resources are gathered through the IHO.
- d. *Qualitative Data.* Like quantitative data, because the intent of Inclusionary Housing is inclusion across household type, race, ethnicity, etc., and the update will only seek to better align the IHO with the middle income goal and will seek to avoid reducing resources for lower income households, qualitative race-related data is not believed necessary to the IHO update.

Step 3. Determine Benefit and Burden.

- a. *Potential of IHO Update to Increase or Decrease Racial Equity.* On the one hand, page 11 of the city's [Racial Equity Plan](#) states that, "The imposition of affordable housing impact fees and inclusionary housing requirements that provide permanently affordable housing have the indirect impact of increasing the cost of all residential development." This is understood to occur because developers report offsetting those costs by raising

rents or sales prices, therefore transferring the cost to the tenant or buyer, which increases costs for new development. Adoption of the IHO was a response to an already high and escalating housing market. Today, across much of the state, and especially where economic opportunity exists, first-time homebuyers have limited options to gain entry into homeownership. While inclusionary housing is understood to increase rents and home prices of new development in Boulder, eliminating a means to produce housing would not increase racial equity and would, in fact, have the opposite effect. And, as noted in the race data section above, if the IHO update can increase funding resources for middle income owned homes, staff anticipates increased homebuying opportunities for middle income households of color with negligible opportunities on the open market.

Step 4. Develop Strategies.

- a. The following strategies will be pursued to monitor and remain open to, racial equity impacts from increasing the effectiveness of the IHO in producing middle income homeownership opportunities in Boulder.*
 1. Consider the indirect impacts of Inclusionary Housing on the housing market.
 2. Consider the benefits of homeownership in exploring policy options.
 3. Present to the Human Relations Commission, an advisory committee with an equity focus, so they may consider the proposed update and provide feedback on racial equity.
 4. Use a racial equity lens to continuously evaluate the proposed changes to better understand potential benefits and unintended consequences.

Draft Public Engagement Plan

Staff developed a public engagement plan for the Inclusionary Housing update informed by the city's adopted Engagement Strategic Framework. More than two decades in effect and with several updates over the years, Step 9. "Reflect and evaluate", has led to this current update, especially the desire to better produce middle income homeownership opportunities. Below Figure 2, staff lays out the Planning Stage (Steps 1-3) the Shared Learning Stage (Step 4) and the Options Phase (Step 5 and 6), which will support a Council decision in Step 7.

Figure 2: 9 Steps to Good Engagement, [Engagement Strategic Framework](#) (p. 9).



Step 1: Define the issue before embarking.

Desired Outcome: Align housing programs, especially the Inclusionary Housing Program, with the city's goal to increase middle income homeownership opportunities in Boulder.

Note: Previous policy efforts have demonstrated that middle income homeownership is both desirable and lacking in Boulder. The purpose of this project is not to establish the need. The 2017 update to the IHO sought to promote middle income homeownership, yet the five years it has been in effect have not produced that outcome directly.

Step 2: Determine who is affected.

Primary Stakeholders: Market-rate housing developers who must meet the Inclusionary Housing requirement.

Important Sources of Input:

1. City's affordable housing partners
2. City of Boulder Technical Advisory Group (HHS)
3. City of Boulder Housing Advisory Board (HHS)
4. Other organizations and/or jurisdictions with middle income homeownership programs
5. Other city departments with resources or incentives that could help expand access to middle income homeownership opportunities in Boulder

Secondary Sources of Input:

1. Market-rate homeownership developers
2. Housing professionals, including architects, planning consultants, general contractors, lenders, realtors
3. Human Relations Commission

Secondary Audience:

1. Middle income households interested in homeownership in Boulder.
2. Employers and other organizations seeking to retain middle income employees and members.
3. Community members more generally concerned about social, environmental, economic, or other consequences of less middle income ownership housing in Boulder.
4. Broader public.

Step 3. Create a public engagement plan.

Level of Engagement. Based on the technical nature of the desired outcome, “adjust Inclusionary Housing program to efficiently produce middle income homeownership units”, the project team proposes the following approach to public engagement.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Parties	Secondary audience	Market-rate homeownership developers Housing professionals City Council Human Relations Commission Other MI homeownership programs Other city departments with resources	City’s affordable housing partners Technical Advisory Group Housing Advisory Board	
Participation Goal	Provide with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding a problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	Obtain public feedback on public analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	Work directly with throughout process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Partner with, in each aspect of decision, including development of alternatives and identification of preferred solution.
Promise	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to you and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations, and share feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are reflected in any alternatives and share feedback on how the input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and to incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Tools and Chronology of Engagement. This chronology presents the proposed engagement methods and timing.

Nov – Dec 2022	<i>Initial Engagement.</i> After the Study Session, an email will be sent to stakeholders and other interested parties that will include the Study Session memo, City Council input and link to the project page which will be updated throughout. In this initial phase, staff will meet informally with stakeholders and affordable housing partners and formally with the Housing Advisory Board, and Technical Advisory Group.
Jan – Feb 2022	<i>Alternatives Development.</i> Informed by initial engagement, a consultant will assist staff to develop alternatives.
Mar – Apr 2023	<i>Evaluate Issues.</i> Policy alternatives and analysis will be shared with Housing Advisory Board for feedback on design.
May – June 2023	<i>Code Development.</i> Policy and code amendments will be developed and informed by the Housing Advisory Board and any further feedback.
July 2023	<i>Public Hearings and Adoption</i>

Step 4. Share a foundation of knowledge.

The study session memo and presentation will provide the initial foundation of knowledge, to be built upon in a project webpage. Stakeholders who wish to follow the project may subscribe to a newsletter and will be updated on the events/input opportunities and new knowledge.

Step 5. Identify options.

Staff will work with a consult, incorporating initial feedback to identify options.

Step 6. Evaluate options.

A public hearing at the Housing Advisory Board will allow for options feedback, which will inform the proposed code changes.



COVER SHEET

MEETING DATE

October 27, 2022

AGENDA ITEM

Boards and Commissions Process Discussion

PRIMARY STAFF CONTACT

Pamela Davis

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

- ▣ **Item 2 - Boards and Commissions Process Discussion**



STUDY SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager
Pam Davis, Assistant City Manager
Aimee Kane, Equity Officer
Elesha Johnson, City Clerk
John Morse, Elections Administrator
Sarah Huntley, Director of Communications and Engagement
Ryan Hanschen, Community Engagement Manager
Brenda Ritenour, Community Engagement Manager

DATE: October 27, 2022

SUBJECT: Boards and Commissions – Process Review and Improvements
for 2023 Recruitment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is for city council to have a comprehensive discussion regarding roles, processes, and proposed or in progress improvements for boards and commissions. A multi-department staff team has been working to assess the city's practices around board and commissions and implement incremental changes since early 2021.

Many improvements proposed or in progress are driven by the city's Racial Equity Plan goal 5: "The city will eliminate barriers and create opportunities to build a diverse workforce across the depth and breadth of local government including elected officials, boards, commissions and working groups." More specifically, strategy 5.1 calls for the city to address boards, commissions and working group by:

- Collecting the demographic data of boards, commissions and working groups.
- Revamping application process, including forms, to support increased inclusivity.
- Ensuring outreach and recruitment processes support and encourage racial equity.
- Identifying and mitigating barriers in the operations of board, commission, and working group meetings (times of day, frequency, locations, days of the week, etc.).

As part of accomplishing this goal, city staff is utilizing the city's Racial Equity Instrument (REI) to ensure the city is increasing empowerment and efficacy of community members of color for engagement in city program and process decision-making through increased, sustained level of equitable engagement.

In addition to this staff-driven work, several other parallel interests in changes to our Board and Commissions structures and processes have emerged. A community group called Dialogue Boulder submitted results of a survey and a list of recommended improvements to the Council Subcommittee on Engagement in October 2021 for consideration. Since then, the recommendations regarding boards and commissions have been initially assessed by staff and referred to the Council Subcommittee on Boards and Commissions.

Additional ideas have been provided to the subcommittee by Community Connectors-in-Residence and board and commission staff liaisons. From all these sources, some recommendations were accepted and implemented right away; others are slated for work in the coming year, and others will require additional discussion by Council as a whole.

Recently, during a July 14, 2022, process discussion, individual council members also submitted recommendations for Board and Commission changes. These six additional recommendations were tabled for discussion until this Oct. 27 study session could be scheduled. All ideas from all sources have now been compiled into a single document, **Attachment A** of this memo.

The potential list of action items is lengthy. Staff has already begun implementing some of the improvements that did not require extensive resources or formal council decision-making. In the interest of making further incremental progress following this study session, subcommittee members and staff have identified 7 recommendations that we would like council to weigh in on now. These recommendations represent a mix of ideas from a variety of sources, and in most cases, reflect the priority items put forward by those who submitted them. The action items for discussion on Oct. 27, as noted in Attachment A are:

1. Does council support the continuation of the application and consideration process that was piloted in 2022?
2. Does council support the creation by staff of a protocol to address board and commission appointments when there is only one application for a vacancy?
 - Example from 2022 practice: extend the initial recruitment period for any seat with only one applicant until the mid-year appointments to create opportunity for additional applications and a competitive process. If no additional applications are received, advance the one applicant during mid-year appointment cycle in the interest of filling the seat and completing the board or commission

3. Does council support a requirement that all boards and commissions be required to hold meetings that are either all virtual or hybrid for board members, commissioners, and community members to allow for maximum public participation and make Zoom recordings available in a timely way for community viewing? Exceptions would still be permitted for special cases like annual retreats and field trips.
 - *Original Recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: Video and audio tape every board and commission meeting and make these recordings available to the public in a timely way. Allow in-person and remote participation at all board and commission meetings.*
4. Does council support a pilot program through November 2023 in which one council member serves as a liaison to a board or commission, with a goal of bringing back lessons learned before the 2024 retreat?
 - Note: Nicole Speer is already fulfilling a similar role with the Transportation Advisory Board – the staff recommendation is that she continue this as the pilot. Staff is concerned about the workload impacts for council of appointing council members across 20 boards and commissions. A pilot would allow for clarity and alignment around what the role of the liaison will be and what supports are most helpful to boards and commissions.
 - *Original recommendation from the Council Subcommittee on Boards and Commissions: Assign each council member as a liaison to two boards or commissions.*
5. Does council support the encouragement of boards and commissions to experiment with new methods of public participation for a select number of items each year? A chosen item must already be on staff's workplan, fall under the purview of that board or commission; and be categorized by staff as a topic appropriate at an involve or collaborate level on the city's engagement spectrum.
 - Note: Staff supports engagement and public participation at the board and commission level but recognizes this has an impact on the project teams working on the issue at hand. As such, staff is adding caveats to help identify appropriate items for innovation.
 - *Original Recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: Encourage boards and commissions to pilot new methods of public participation such as facilitated deliberative processes, civil discourse, invited input, online discussions, charrettes, circle talks, and other approaches, as appropriate.*
6. Does council support modifying its procedures to add study sessions to the type of forum that warrants an invitation to board and commission representatives? And can this be at the direction/discretion of the Council Agenda Committee?
 - *Original recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: When a council study session involves a topic relevant to a particular board or commission, that board or commission will be invited in a timely manner to have one or two representatives (of their own choosing) present information and answer questions at the same study session.*

7. Does Council agree with the approach to address the remainder of the ideas in **Attachment A** through a comprehensive evaluation by a 3rd party to assess our current system and make recommendations for broader structural and role clarity improvements?
 - Staff's recommendation to approach the remainder of this large body of work is for the city to embark on a holistic review and development of a multi-year implementation plan of these various inputs, as well as additional engagement of council, city staff, and community regarding the experiences of boards and commissions. Many of the recommendations currently being considered are interdependent; considering individual improvements in isolation could have unintended consequences.
 - Due to a desire for a fresh perspective on our existing system and ongoing staff capacity constraints, the core staff team recommends enlisting support of third-party consultants to engage stakeholders and ensure future structural changes to boards and commissions follow best practices in DEI and city management.

BACKGROUND

As stated above, there is significant interest in transforming the board and commission experience and establishing a set of consistent best practices. The following inputs have contributed to this discussion and work planning:

2021 Council Subcommittee on Engagement

Recognizing that board and commission service is a form of community engagement, the Council Subcommittee on Engagement and Creating a Welcoming Council Environment (Engagement Subcommittee) began discussing process improvement recommendations in 2021. While this group continues to be updated, it quickly became clear there was potential overlap with the Board and Commission Subcommittee as well as existing staff work. As a result, Engagement Subcommittee Members Bob Yates and Rachel Friend requested that staff determine the appropriate forum for these discussions. Upon consultation with the staff project team, it was decided that much of the work would fit best under the Board and Commissions Subcommittee's purview. If there are specific items related to engagement, staff will bring them to the Engagement Subcommittee for discussion and consideration.

2021 Dialogue Boulder Recommendations

Also in 2021, the city became aware of the formation of a community group that calls itself Dialogue Boulder. The group is made up of interested community members, some of whom have served on boards and commissions, who wanted to develop ideas for making the process more consistent, transparent, and meaningful. Interestingly, this group is comprised of individuals with many diverse political perspectives and its focus is on process, rather than particular areas of desired influence. The group works on a principle of consensus, so its carefully worded list of recommendations reflects the input and recommendations of the group.

City staff has met with leaders from Dialogue Boulder several times to better understand their many ideas. The concept of categorizing recommendations based on what staff could implement and what council would need to discuss came out of these sessions. Dialogue Boulder's most recent report is included in this packet as **Attachment B**.

Community Connectors-in-Residence Feedback

Community Connectors-in-Residence – a team of community members who partner with city staff to support the voices and build power of underrepresented communities by reducing barriers to community engagement, advancing racial equity, and surfacing the ideas, concerns, and dreams of community members – have also shared many recommendations. These recommendations were primarily brought up in a dedicated group discussion in the fall of 2021 and generally focused on addressing barriers in understanding the role and workplans of boards and commissions, applying to join a board or commission, ensuring that members from underrepresented communities are welcomed and supported throughout their experience on a board or commission. Community Connector-in-Residence recommendations are included in Attachment A.

2022 Recruitment and Selection Process Improvements

Based on subcommittee and council feedback, the city tested a new approach to the board and commission interview and selection processes earlier this year. For the first time, individual applicants were able to select their own interview time for direct conversation with relevant staff members and at least one council liaison. A total of 116 interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom, including the city's first interview in Spanish with interpreters. Interviewees were provided their interview questions in advance to better prepare and be more comfortable during the interview. Interviewees were also allowed a chance to ask staff and council members questions germane to each board at the end of their interviews. Those interviews were recorded and provided to the full council and the public for viewing and assessment.

July 14, 2022 Process Discussion

Council members raised specific process items during the most recent solicitation for process items for the body's July 14 meeting. Given the breadth and scope of these recommendations, council agreed to postpone discussion of the items until this Oct.27 study session. That list has been incorporated into today's packet.

2022 DEI Workshops

Since the spring of 2022, board and commission project team members, secretaries, and liaisons have been working with iProject LLC, an outside consultant, in a series of workshops to enhance board and commission diversity, equity, and inclusion/belonging (DEI). The lead consultant, Angela Davis, worked with city staff to host three two-part workshops toward the goal of creating a DEI Blueprint for boards and commissions.

Sessions one and two in April focused on Inclusion and Belonging to help liaisons and secretaries understand the importance of creating an inclusive and belonging climate to encourage maximum productive participation of board and commission participants, including members, staff and community. Workshop participants worked together to

create shared lists of welcoming, excluding and dominating behaviors, as well as behaviors that enhance the understanding of differing perspectives. They also worked in small groups to create their inclusion maps detailing action plans specific to each board and commission.

In July, sessions three and four focused on creating a diversity blueprint for each board and commission with a goal of enhancing the development of a valuable and valued service experience for historically excluded communities. Workshop participants worked on understanding what qualities in a candidate would add to the culture of their board/commission, rather than the traditional “culture fit” approach that can lead to a less diverse group. This session also provided the opportunity to strategize and source topics and information that are currently missing from the board and commission process. Working with tools such as a social identity wheel and psychological safety principles, staff teams continued working through their inclusion maps from the previous session to determine actions to support increased diversity on boards and commissions.

The final two sessions in September illuminated past and present of inequities in America, particularly related to political structures and policies. The recent pilot process improvements of the Human Relations Commission that are informing current equity needs was lifted up for attendees as a case study for change. Staff teams worked to finalize their action plans, understanding their individual and team opportunities to control, influence and challenge existing systems within their own board/commission. They have been asked to implement innovations and lift any barriers they are experiencing to the staff committee.

In addition to the pilot actions by the Human Relations Commission, other innovations already implemented include co-created group agreements with the Landmarks Board and new orientation practices for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Other new practices are emerging across several boards and commissions and all groups are expected to continuously improve.

Meeting Logistics

The trajectory of COVID-19 has been an important influence on this ongoing work. Based on the improving conditions and recognition that the virus is now an endemic, rather than a pandemic, city staff have begun the transition of moving boards and commissions from all-virtual to hybrid meeting spaces. This transition must be informed not only by the pandemic, but also by room readiness in city buildings and staff capacity.

As such, the city is rolling out hybrid meeting training with a goal of having all boards and commissions experience at least one hybrid meeting by the end of the year. On Sept. 21, 2022, the Arts Commission became the first commission to try the new hybrid format. The Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) piloted the transition to hybrid meetings on Oct. 12, 2022. Staff will incorporate the feedback and learnings from these inaugural sessions to inform future implementation. Of note, council will be asked on Oct. 27 to affirm the city’s desire to offer boards and commissions opportunities to be either all-virtual or hybrid, with no more in-person only sessions for regular meetings.

ANALYSIS

Process Change Proposals regarding Boards and Commissions:

As previously discussed, a cross-departmental staff team has been assessing and implementing a broad collection of recommendations for changes to Board and Commission administration. In late 2021, the recommendations from all known sources were compiled as reflected in **Attachment A**. Staff has been working through the recommendations received from the six different sources:

- Council Subcommittee on Engagement and a Welcoming Council Environment
- City staff (staff), including the cross-departmental board and commissions project team
- Community Connectors-in-Residence (CC)
- Dialogue Boulder (DB)
- Board and commission liaisons/secretaries (b-c staff)
- Solicitation for council process items for the July 14, 2022 meeting

These recommendations have a wide range of scope and feasibility; some are already implemented or underway; others require additional resources; many will require more in-depth council discussion. As documented, there are more than a dozen recommendations staff generally supports and will continue to consider and prioritize depending on available resources, and over 20 staff would like to discuss further with the subcommittee and/or the entire council body.

In addition, staff has been researching other cities' approaches to board and commission system changes and may recommend consideration of hiring a consultant to provide needed capacity for a full system analysis and recommendations. An example of this work happening in another city is included as **Attachment C**.

Following that context, here are process items staff recommends council immediately discuss:

1. Does council support the continuation of the application and consideration process that was piloted in 2022?
2. Does council support the creation by staff of a protocol to address board and commission appointments when there is only one application for a vacancy?
 - Example from 2022 practice: extend the initial recruitment period for any seat with only one applicant until the mid-year appointments to create opportunity for additional applications and a competitive process. If no additional applications are received, advance the one applicant during mid-year appointment cycle in the interest of filling the seat and completing the board or commission

3. Does council support a requirement that all boards and commissions be required to hold meetings that are either all virtual or hybrid for board members, commissioners, and community members to allow for maximum public participation and make Zoom recordings available in a timely way for community viewing? Exceptions would still be permitted for special cases like annual retreats and field trips.
 - *Original Recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: Video and audio tape every board and commission meeting and make these recordings available to the public in a timely way. Allow in-person and remote participation at all board and commission meetings.*
4. Does council support a pilot program through November 2023 in which one council member serves as a liaison to a board or commission, with a goal of bringing back lessons learned before the 2024 retreat?
 - Note: Nicole Speer is already fulfilling a similar role with the Transportation Advisory Board – the staff recommendation is that she continue this as the pilot. Staff is concerned about the workload impacts for council of appointing council members across 20 boards and commissions. A pilot would allow for clarity and alignment around what the role of the liaison will be and what supports are most helpful to boards and commissions.
 - *Original recommendation from the Council Subcommittee on Boards and Commissions: Assign each council member as a liaison to two boards or commissions.*
5. Does council support the encouragement of boards and commissions to experiment with new methods of public participation for a select number of items each year? A chosen item must already be on staff's workplan, fall under the purview of that board or commission; and be categorized by staff as a topic appropriate at an involve or collaborate level on the city's engagement spectrum.
 - Note: Staff supports engagement and public participation at the board and commission level but recognizes this has an impact on the project teams working on the issue at hand. As such, staff is adding caveats to help identify appropriate items for innovation.
 - *Original Recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: Encourage boards and commissions to pilot new methods of public participation such as facilitated deliberative processes, civil discourse, invited input, online discussions, charrettes, circle talks, and other approaches, as appropriate.*
6. Does council support modifying its procedures to add study sessions to the type of forum that warrants an invitation to board and commission representatives? And can this be at the direction/discretion of the Council Agenda Committee?
 - *Original recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: When a council study session involves a topic relevant to a particular board or commission, that board or commission will be invited in a timely*

manner to have one or two representatives (of their own choosing) present information and answer questions at the same study session.

As a continuation of aligning board and commission culture with strategy, city staff recommend enlisting third-party consultant support in order to:

- Engage board and commission stakeholders to compile additional feedback regarding desired improvements.
- Conduct an environmental scan of best and emerging practices in board and commission administration that the city should consider.
- Refine understanding of existing barriers to service and recommend solutions.
- Define the current culture of Boulder boards and commissions, identifying a desired future state in which DEI is embedded.
- Make recommendations to sustainability enhance inclusion and belonging as well as equity and access to serving on boards and commissions.

This third-party assessment would also provide guidance on several outstanding council ideas/recommendations, including (complete list in **Attachment A**):

- Structure Recommendations
- Role Clarity Recommendations
- Logistics/Process Recommendations
- Feedback Method Recommendations

OPTIONS

The Boards and Commissions project team envisions two paths to maintain progress on this important work.

Recommended: Pursue third party assessment of total board and commission system for best practice recommendations and multi-year implementation recommendations.

Alternative: Continue periodic incremental process changes as prioritized by the board and commission subcommittee, to be brought to council as work plans and schedules allow.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the discussion during this study session, staff will begin implementing process changes agreed upon by council. If additional discussion is needed, staff recommends follow up during the January mid-term check-in retreat. The Council Retreat Committee (currently represented by council members Nicole Speer and Lauren Folkerts) has begun to plan the mid-term check-in, currently scheduled for late January 2023.

If Council supports this recommendation, staff anticipates partnering with a consultant by early 2023 with a hope to present recommendations before the 2024 board and commission recruitment.

In addition to the improvements discussed in this memo, staff is exploring an updated database for boards and commissions information tracking. Desired features will include the ability to track demographics of our board and commission members, process applications more efficiently, and allow for data to be pulled out and presented in a variety of graphic visualizations. A new software would also offer user friendliness in the logistics and reporting requirements for recruitment. Staff projects moving forward with a new database for boards and commissions by 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

- A- Board & Commission Recommendations, categorized by potential pathway to action
- B- Dialogue Boulder Report
- C- Bloomington Study

Attachment A

Board & Commission Recommendations, categorized by potential pathway to action Updated Sept. 27, 2022

This document includes recommendations compiled from:

- Council Subcommittee on Engagement & Creating a Welcoming Council Environment (Subcomm)
- City staff (staff), including the cross-departmental board and commissions project team
- Community Connectors-in-Residence (CC)
- Dialogue Boulder (DB)
- Board and commission liaisons/secretaries (B-C staff)
- Individual council members at council's July 14, 2022 process meeting (Council)

Twenty recommendations staff is already implementing, planning on, and/or can enact independently (with brief status description):

- Continue to appoint new board and commission members to vacancies each spring but develop and provide increased year-long board and commission information on recruitment to the public, with a particular focus on outreach to diverse communities. (DB)
Status: The Clerk's Office is working on updating the Boards and Commissions recruitment website and the city is working with a DEI consultant to develop practices that help to attract and retain diverse participants.
- Ensure that materials used for recruitment, applications, training and orientation detail the specific tasks, responsibilities and time commitments of each board or commission. (DB)
Status: In 2021, the city began delivering specific orientation and training to Board and Commission Chairs and Vice Chairs to understand their roles. In addition, each individual board has orientation and training processes specific to their scope.
- Host an annual pre-application session for any interested residents to ask questions or get more information. (DB and staff)
Status: This is occurring on a board specific basis. HRC hosted such a session prior to the last application process. In addition, city staff is exploring development of a video overview for community members to learn more about board and commission service broadly in early 2023. Staff believes a video might be more accessible to a greater number of people as individuals could watch it on their own time. The video would include clear pathways for interested applicants to ask questions.
- Send an invitation to all existing board and commission members to observe City Council's annual retreat. (DB)
Status: This will be done prior to the next retreat.

- Ensure that orientation of new board members details the following: the importance of understanding the particular ordinance that established each board or commission; the specifics of each board or commission's bylaws relevant to the new member; and the importance of the careful review of minutes, agenda packets and other information. Inform new members of their board or commission's role in the overall decision-making process. (DB)
Status: The orientation program has been revamped and now covers these points.
- Encourage existing board and commission members to attend occasional relevant meetings of other boards or commissions. (DB)
Status: The orientation program has been revamped and staff makes this invitation during the training of new members. Staff also demonstrates how to access the online city calendar for information about when other boards and commissions meet.
- Designate staff with expertise in public engagement to work with boards or commissions and their staff liaisons to implement a balance between professionally designed protocols and innovation in public engagement. (DB)
Status: This collaboration will be added to Brenda Ritenour's workplan for 2023. Brenda has been playing this role with a few boards and can extend her service to a couple of others as this concept continues to be piloted. (Note: This is slightly dependent on whether council agrees they wish for boards and commissions to experiment with new forms of engagement, which will be asked on Oct. 27; in addition, DB has also recommended that these staff members work on many issues with a new public process advisory group it would like the city to form. This part of the request re: a new public process advisory group still needs to be considered and discussed further. It is unclear whether there is staff capacity at this time.)
- Revise council memo template to include section on any input from boards or commissions and any public input provided at board or commission meetings (DB)
Status: The current template includes placeholders for input from boards and commissions and engagement/public input. Staff will work to ensure common understanding that these are valuable sections to include in memos to council.
- Boards and Commissions and staff should have an option of putting an item on an agenda, as long as it is within the scope of the board or commission. (DB)
Status: The underlined language has been added by Dialogue Boulder. With that change, staff believes this is current practice and will direct that it continues.
- Research presented to council by staff, including research conducted internally or citing other sources in literature reviews, will be based on commonly accepted relevant best research practices and will present all sides of relevant issues. (DB)
Status: Staff concurs that this is essential. A next step will be for staff members from Communication and Engagement to meet with those making this recommendation to see if there is agreement about what commonly accepted relevant best research practices are.

- Produce bi-lingual information to increase the community's understanding of boards and commissions, the role they play, their work plans, how their decisions impact our community, and how individuals can participate in board and commissions open comment periods. (CC)

Status: The Human Relations Commission produced an application and information in Spanish for the 2022 recruitment cycle as a pilot initiative. The pilot was very successful in that it led to the appointment of the city's first primarily Spanish-speaking board member. The city did, however, encounter some technical limitations with its existing recruitment platform. The Clerk's Office and Communications and Engagement teams are partnering to explore how to overcome these difficulties and strongly support doing the same for more boards and commissions moving forward. Other board and commission staff have been encouraged to create similar information for the 2022-2023 recruitment cycle.

- Develop comprehensive welcome package that covers how to participate and become comfortable and welcome. (CC)

Status: Onboarding materials have been significantly updated over the past year. All members receive an information booklet, and chairs and vice chairs receive specialized training. The city understands that the spirit of this recommendation is to go beyond simple how-tos and to help address power dynamics for newer members. The city will continue work on this goal following the ongoing DEI workshops.

- Create consistency in how board and commission information is portrayed on city-governed websites. (Staff)

Status: This task has been completed.

- Work with a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion professional with experience in creating positive, effective and welcoming boards and commission experiences to develop action items for future implementation. (staff)

Status: This is in progress, and several trainings with existing board secretaries have occurred. Oct. 27, 2022 council memo provides more details.

- Ensure orientation includes strong centralized messaging about council priorities, role clarity (advisory not governance, quasi-judicial, who sets policy?), open meeting rules (including email and virtual meeting tools), attendance policies and advocacy (B-C staff)

Status: The orientation program has been revamped and now covers these points.

- Address concerns about treatment of members from underrepresented communities from other B&C members – enforce requirement for Bias & Microaggression training (and maybe create annual refresher program), external support, and clear process for addressing when bias/microaggressions come up. (CC and staff)

Status: This is in progress and several trainings with existing board secretaries have occurred. Staff will be leaning into required BAM training for all board and commission members in the next 12 months.

- Draw from existing capacity-building groups, like People Engaged in Raising Leaders' or 'Leadership Fellows Boulder County,' to recruit applicants for boards and commissions. (CC)

Status: This will occur as part of the next recruitment process.

- Support interview prep or support for underrepresented community members, including specific feedback for applicants who were not successful to encourage applying again/elsewhere. (CC)

Status: This has occurred informally but could be a more formal part of the next recruitment process.

- Launch a process, in collaboration with community connectors, to identify barriers for participation in boards and commissions as well as possible solutions to mitigate them, including adjusting meeting times, virtual meeting options, not having enough data or not having access to a reliable digital device, needing culturally appropriate meals and/or childcare if in-person, support for transportation (Lyft or gas card or bus pass), etc. (CC and staff)

Status: While initial conversations have occurred, this is on the 2023 workplan for the city's Community Connectors-in-Residence.

- Hiring a boards and commission coordinator and/or project manager to assist with implementing new processes and then providing consistent management/centralized support of boards and commissions (staff)

Status: Incremental progress has been made on this item. For now, these duties have been added to an existing position within the Clerk's Office. City staff will continue to re-assess the capacity required for these duties and the need for a full-time coordinator in the future.

Recommendations that staff suggests council consider at its Oct. 27, 2022 study session:

1. Does council support the continuation of the application and consideration process that was piloted in 2022?
2. Does council support the creation by staff of a protocol to address board and commission appointments when there is only one application for a vacancy?
 - Example from 2022 practice: extend the initial recruitment period for any seat with only one applicant until the mid-year appointments to create opportunity for additional applications and a competitive process. If no additional applications are received, advance the one applicant during mid-year appointment cycle in the interest of filling the seat and completing the board or commission
3. Does council support a requirement that all boards and commissions be required to hold meetings that are either all virtual or hybrid for board members, commissioners, and community members to allow for maximum public participation and make Zoom recordings available in a timely way for community viewing? Exceptions would still be permitted for special cases like annual retreats and field trips.

- *Original Recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: Video and audio tape every board and commission meeting and make these recordings available to the public in a timely way. Allow in-person and remote participation at all board and commission meetings.*
- 4. Does council support a pilot program through November 2023 in which one council member serves as a liaison to a board or commission, with a goal of bringing back lessons learned before the 2024 retreat?
 - Note: Nicole Speer is already fulfilling a similar role with the Transportation Advisory Board – the staff recommendation is that she continue this as the pilot. Staff is concerned about the workload impacts for council of appointing council members across 20 boards and commissions. A pilot would allow for clarity and alignment around what the role of the liaison will be and what supports are most helpful to boards and commissions.
 - *Original recommendation from the Council Subcommittee on Boards and Commissions: Assign each council member as a liaison to two boards or commissions.*
- 5. Does council support the encouragement of boards and commissions to experiment with new methods of public participation for a select number of items each year? A chosen item must already be on staff's workplan, fall under the purview of that board or commission; and be categorized by staff as a topic appropriate at an involve or collaborate level on the city's engagement spectrum.
 - Note: Staff supports engagement and public participation at the board and commission level but recognizes this has an impact on the project teams working on the issue at hand. As such, staff is adding caveats to help identify appropriate items for innovation.
 - *Original Recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: Encourage boards and commissions to pilot new methods of public participation such as facilitated deliberative processes, civil discourse, invited input, online discussions, charrettes, circle talks, and other approaches, as appropriate.*
- 6. Does council support modifying its procedures to add study sessions to the type of forum that warrants an invitation to board and commission representatives? And can this be at the direction/discretion of the Council Agenda Committee?
 - *Original recommendation from Dialogue Boulder: When a council study session involves a topic relevant to a particular board or commission, that board or commission will be invited in a timely manner to have one or two representatives (of their own choosing) present information and answer questions at the same study session.*

Items that staff suggests be included in a third-party assessment in 2023:

Structure Recommendations

- Ask council to reconsider the number and scope of boards and commissions. (Subcomm)

- Ask council to reconsider lengthy terms for board and commission members, as these can create barriers to participation especially among communities of color (CC)
- Create term limits for Boards/Commissions (Council)
- Ask council to consider, where allowed under the charter, whether to delegate the selection of new board and commission members to staff, with final appointment by the City Manager. Ask council to consider whether it wishes to retain authority to veto or ratify appointments. (staff)
- Instruct staff to evaluate the possibility of compensating all board and commission members at a rate of at least \$20/hour. (CC)
- Address lack of historically excluded representation – at least two or 25% of positions on each B&C should identify as BIPOC or other underserved identity (CC)
- Before recruitment begins each year, the city will seek advice from boards and commissions about what expertise and perspectives are useful to achieve the desired diversity. (DB)

Role Clarity Recommendations

- Council should set yearly workplans on how they will engage individual boards and commissions and set priorities, including developing a defined set of expectations, an accurate timeline, deliverables, and measurements to help determine whether there are beneficial impacts for the community (DB and CC and B-C staff and Council)
- Allow boards and commissions to designate a portion of their budget for research within their subject area to consider emerging or best practices. (DB)
- Ask council to consider delegating some public hearings to boards and commissions or council subcommittees. (DB)
- Develop and implement a process to better determine the level and type of staff support needed for each board or commission to be effective, including instructions for when or how boards or commissions may request additional assistance or research from staff. (DB)
- Ask staff to consider “emerging” and “best” practices, when conducting research in their respective fields, and share fresh ideas that might have merit with boards and commissions. (DB) *(Note: This was originally in the category of something staff could implement. Upon further consideration, however, it has been moved to this role clarity area. While the city always encourages the exchange of innovative ideas, further discussion has determined this item falls within a larger conversation about the scope and roles of boards and commissions.)*
- Create a process to address situations in which members of boards or commissions, staff or the public disagree about the accuracy of the information presented in formal records. (DB)
- Charge boards and commissions with conducting public hearings on upcoming issues, gather and accurately report public feedback, as well as their own conclusions, in advance of council discussions and perhaps in lieu of public hearings at council. (DB)

Logistics/Process Recommendations

- Give equal time and attention by council and when requested, to any report from a board or commission that differs significantly from staff recommendations. (DB)
- Increase the attention that council and staff give to letters and priorities provided by boards and commissions (DB)
- Send an invitation to members of relevant boards to observe council discussions each time council is scheduled to discuss any matter that is relevant to the topic areas under their purview. (DB)
- Create a template/model for meeting minutes, ensuring that it includes complete and useful information about deliberations, decisions, action items and communications. This template should also include a section for minority viewpoints or perspectives, as well as a balanced portrayal of any public feedback provided to the board or commission. (DB)
- Train board and commission members and staff on how to contribute to and/or draft minutes using this new model. (DB)
- Ensure that council strives for consensus by offering opportunities for public dialogue with representatives of competing interests on specific issues. (DB)
- Require staff to timestamp all minutes to reflect where a discussion starts on recordings of all board and commission meetings. (DB)
- Put more boards and commissions information and/or links, including to meeting schedules, on the City Council webpage. (DB)
- Explore a notification system (texting?) to publicize upcoming board and commission discussions. (CC)
- Create a uniform agenda template and guidelines on agenda creation (B-C staff)
- Develop peer-support program (e.g., how to navigate processes, language to use) for new board and commission members. (CC)
- Provide interpretation for monolingual Spanish speakers as well as individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at all board and commission and council meetings, so that individuals do not have to request this and feel singled out. (CC)

Feedback Method Recommendations

- Host a virtual meeting with current and former city board/commission members who wish to attend to solicit their ideas on public engagement. (Subcomm)
- Create a new public process advisory group, with its status as a committee, board, commission (or other) TBD. (DB – this group has also recommended a specific composition and agenda for this group)
- Assign two council members to meet twice a year with a standing committee of current and past board or commission members with diverse opinions to discuss ongoing and periodic specific enhancements to policies and procedures for boards or commissions and to address board or commission issues that may arise. (DB)
- Convene a committee every five years that includes members of the public, past of present board or commission members and staff to review board and commission practices and procedures, sunset provisions, new needs, and examples of procedures from other cities. (DB)

REPORT ON BOARD/COMMISSION MEMBER RESPONSES TO DIALOGUE BOULDER QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

Members of City of Boulder Boards and Commissions were invited to read Dialogue Boulder's overview and recommendations and then respond to a few questions from September 10-25, 2021.

All past and current board and commission members (for whom email addresses easily could be obtained) were invited to participate.

Approximately eighty-eight (88) people were sent the questionnaire link. Twenty-eight (28) responded. This is a **32% response rate**.

Of the respondents, **96.4% support Dialogue Boulder's efforts** to request that the city better utilize boards and commissions and enhance public engagement to benefit staff, Council, board and commission members, and the public with increased effectiveness, efficiency, and inclusivity.

The material was presented in both an overview and in five sets of recommendation areas: 1) Board and Commission Recruitment Orientation and Review; 2) Board and Commission Operations; 3) Board and Commissions Working Relationship with Staff; 4) Board and Commission Working Relationship with Council; and 5) Public Engagement.

There was an opportunity for respondents to provide open-ended comments after the overview and at the end of all of the recommendations.

Within each recommendation area, respondents were provided with the opportunity to suggest which recommendations resonated most with them and what additional recommendations they might offer.

For your easy perusal of this report, the conclusions are presented next. This is followed by the questionnaire text in its entirety, interspersed with comment summaries.

Conclusions

- The questionnaire received a very solid response rate of 32%.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents (96.4%) favor Dialogue Boulder's efforts.
- The vast majority of respondents find value in all of the recommendations. There is no need to prioritize some recommendations over others as they are all important.

- Respondents suggested some additional recommendations that should be considered by Dialogue Boulder.
- Dialogue Boulder should consider the few concerns that a very small number of respondents raised.
- Dialogue Boulder has reached out to returning Council members, all Council candidates, the City Manager, staff, and board and commission members. The next step, in addition to presenting the suggested recommendations to Council after the November election, is to reach out to the general public to provide information and request input.
- So far, Dialogue Boulder's recommendations are meeting with outstanding support.

Questionnaire and Response Summaries

Overview:

Why Dialogue Boulder?

Boulder has seen many changes as it has grown. One result has been a corresponding complexity in communications and engagement with the public, the City Council, city staff, and the various Boards & Commissions.

In 2017, the Public Participation Working Group (PPWG) Report identified specific ways in which engagement and communications challenges cause stress for participants in City of Boulder government. The PPWG presented some suggestions to reduce this burden and their report has much merit. The 2021 Council Subcommittee on Engagement and a Welcoming Council Environment noted that the challenges continue and suggested some potential specific considerations. More recently, many board and commission chairs and vice-chairs received additional good governance training. This progress is noted and is laudable.

Still, however, Boulder City Council is overworked and under-appreciated. The same holds true for staff members who often feel criticized by the public. The strengths and possible contributions of board and commission members often are underutilized. Residents frequently feel unheard and dissatisfied with Council decisions they believe haven't taken their input into consideration.

Enhancements to public participation measures, despite meritorious efforts, have been incremental and the current process still far too often produces discord rather than promoting problem-solving, however inadvertently.

Council, staff, board and commission members, and the general public all want the public engagement process to be better and boards and commissions to be more fully utilized. The issue is that the input processes, themselves, need to be enhanced.

Concerned Residents, Broad Perspectives

A group of concerned community members, calling themselves Dialogue Boulder, have been meeting virtually since January 2021 to discuss these same issues, frame the problems, and suggest potential solutions.

Over the course of these meetings, Dialogue Boulder has been developing recommendations to be considered by the new (November 2021) Boulder City Council and City Manager to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and inclusivity of city public engagement and communications processes. These enhancements will benefit residents, boards & commissions, staff and Council.

Participants in Dialogue Boulder represent a cross-section of the public. Individuals within Dialogue Boulder may be aligned with recognized local groups, but each person participates as an individual. Participation reflects a diversity of age, gender, ethnicity and economic resources. Dialogue Boulder is varied in its views on local issues and unified in a desire for better communication as well as enhanced public engagement policies and procedures.

Dialogue Boulder's community members, many who never had spoken to each other before and who never imagined being able to work together, easily found common ground. Dialogue Boulder provides a potential model for enhanced working relationships between residents, staff, boards & commissions, and Council.

Dialogue Boulder – Decisions by Full Consensus

Possible recommendations were suggested and discussed in depth during virtual meetings. Only recommendations with full consensus are contained in these recommendations.

Discussions during meetings included no mention of individual local issues, specific Council members, staff, members of the public, or board and commission members. The focus is on the benefits of structural modifications.

Next Steps

Before recommendations are formally submitted to the City Council and the City Manager, members of Dialogue Boulder are meeting informally with current Council members, the City Manager and some staff members. Dialogue Boulder also received input from some members of the public, including a few community members who serve(d) on boards and commissions. Dialogue Boulder will now reach out to past and current members of Boards/Commissions and the general public on a wider basis. This effort reflects transparency. It demonstrates Dialogue Boulder's aspiration that participative democratic practices can facilitate a healthy inclusionary interplay among Council, staff, boards/commissions, and residents.

Dialogue Boulder invited all 2021 Council candidates to support, in general, positive enhancements to boards and commissions and public engagement and to discuss these topics in their campaigns. Their responses have been received.

Summary of Overview Comments:

- Several very supportive comments
- A concern about the lack of experience in board members
- A respondent stated that their board/commission is rarely asked for feedback from Council and, when asked, the feedback is never discussed by Council. *This was mentioned by more than one respondent.*
- A respondent wished they would have been asked to participate in Dialogue Boulder.
- Some boards already do some of this but welcome the effort by Dialogue Boulder.
- There is a great need because the process is outdated and lacks transparency.
- One respondent doesn't see the need for any of this effort.
- A respondent likes and supports the idea but doesn't want to overburden staff.
- Great need for city to streamline public engagement process with public input to be delivered at board/commission level.
- Concern about ability to connect appropriately due to COVID protocols.
- Concern about the lack of any ability to be heard on many boards/commissions.

AREA 1 Recommendations. Board and Commission Recruitment, Orientation, Review

1. *Each year, Council should determine plans to engage individual boards and commissions and set priorities, including a defined set of expectations and deliverables.*
2. *Before recruitment begins each year, Council will seek advice from boards and commissions about what expertise and perspectives are useful to achieve the desired diversity.*

3. *Although the appointment of new board and commission members will continue to be held each spring, the City of Boulder will provide increased year-long board and commission information on recruitment to the public, including outreach to diverse communities.*
4. *The recruitment, application, training and orientation process will clarify the specific tasks, responsibilities and time commitments of each board or commission more fully and will include a pre-application session for all interested residents.*
5. *Orientation will include more than general city policies, adding aspects such as: the importance of understanding the particular ordinance establishing each board or commission; the specifics of each board or commission's bylaws relevant to the new member; and the importance of the careful review of minutes, agenda packets and other information. Members will be informed of their board's or commission's role in the overall decision-making process.*
6. *There shall be a standing committee of current and past board or commission members with diverse opinions to work directly with two (2) Council members twice a year to suggest ongoing and periodic specific enhancements to policies and procedures for boards or commissions and to address board or commission issues that may arise.*
7. *Every five years, there shall be a committee consisting of members of the public, past or present board or commission members and staff to review board and commission practices and procedures, sunset provisions, and new needs. Board and commission procedures from other cities and other sources of guidance will be reviewed in consideration of possible recommendations to Council.*

Summary of responses in Area 1 as to which recommendations resonate the most (22 respondents):

- Many respondents liked all of these recommendations
- Many provided multiple responses
- Two (2) favored Recommendation 1
- Seven (7) favored Recommendation 2
- Six (6) favored Recommendation 3
- Four (4) favored Recommendation 4
- Six (6) favored recommendation 5
- Four (4) favored recommendation 6
- Three (3) favored recommendation 7

Additional Summary of suggestions in Area 1 (11 respondents):

- The application process is too onerous.
- Council should consider stipends for Board/Commission members. *This was mentioned twice.*
- Council members should serve as (rotating) liaisons to boards and commissions. *This was mentioned twice.*
- It is important to have an actual mechanism to strengthen communication among boards and commissions.

- There should be a committee to actively recruit applicants with a focus on diversity and equity.
- There is a great need for these changes. *Mentioned several times. Positive supportive comments.*

Area 2 Recommendations: Boards and Commissions – Operations

8. *Members from boards or commissions are encouraged to attend occasional relevant meetings of other boards or commissions.*
9. *Meeting minutes will follow a model and be complete as useful records of deliberations, decisions, action items and communications; board and commission members and staff will receive training to this end.*
10. *The agenda for each board or commission meeting will be set by that board or commission, incorporating staff needs and Council matters.*
11. *Minutes and all votes, feedback, and recommendations from boards or commissions to Council will reflect minority points of view when votes are not unanimous. Input provided at public hearings will be reflected in a balanced manner. A method to ensure accuracy will be determined by each board or commission with publicly accessible, archived recordings as a preference.*
12. *All board or commission meetings will be recorded with audio and video; minutes will include timestamps for each item discussed. The city should implement this current vital technology as swiftly as possible to allow both in-person and remote participation in meetings.*
13. *Boards and commissions may designate a portion of their budget for research within their subject area to consider emerging or best practices.*
14. *Boards and commissions will be encouraged to pilot new methods of public participation such as facilitated deliberative processes, civil discourse, invited input, online discussions, charrettes, circle talks, and other approaches.*

Summary of Responses in Area 2 as to which recommendations resonate (22 respondents)

- Several respondents appreciate all recommendations in this area
- Some respondents cited multiple recommendations
- Five (5) favored Recommendation 8
- Six (6) favored Recommendation 9
- Five (5) favored Recommendation 10
- Six (6) favored Recommendation 11
- Eight (8) favored Recommendation 12
- Five (5) favored Recommendation 13
- Eleven (11) favored Recommendation 14

Summary of additional suggestions in Area 2 (8 respondents)

- A mechanism should refine Recommendation 13 to request only areas of research that the board/commission determines to be useful.
- The City should fund boards and commissions to facilitate focus groups.
- There should be more structure for board chairs which could have the additional benefit of relieving some staff burden.
- For all major issues, an advisory board should be formed that is composed of representatives from all relevant boards/commissions.
- Information should be transparent and uniform about budgets for all boards and commissions (even if the amounts allocated to each board/commission varies due to responsibilities).
- Minutes should also contain board/commission questions to staff and the answers that staff provides.
- Several respondents simply support all of the recommendations in this area.

Area 3. Recommendation for Boards Commissions and Working Relationship with Staff

15. *Staff will provide research to the appropriate board or commission and to the public before the relevant board or commission public hearing. Boards and commissions will gather and accurately report public feedback, as well as their own conclusions, in a timely manner before staff makes recommendations to Council. Therefore, Council will be able to digest all information, including public input, board or commission input, and staff input at the same time.*
16. *Since staff packets and memos to council are a key conduit between boards or commissions and Council, all such packets and memos will comprehensively reflect input from boards or commissions, as well as the public input provided at board or commission meetings.*
17. *Analytic data about public input presented by staff to Council will be aggregated, tallied, coded and interpreted to indicate the meaning of the results. Unanalyzed raw data will be marked as such.*
18. *Research conducted by staff will be based on appropriate research design which includes such elements as:
a) statistical validity and representative percentages of respondents that reflect what we know to be the underlying demographics of Boulder residents;
b) framing;
c) formulation of non-leading questions;
d) informing respondents of both the potential positive and negative ramifications of policy being surveyed;
e) sampling and selection of respondents and sites;
f) instrument construction;
g) analysis of results, interpretation of results, and dissemination of findings.*
19. *When a report is issued by a board or commission (including joint boards or commissions or their subcommittees) that differs significantly from staff recommendations, that report and its presentation will receive equal attention and time from Council at the request of that entity.*
20. *A process will be established to address situations in which members of boards or commissions, staff or the public disagree about the accuracy of the information presented in formal records.*

Summary of Responses as to which in Area 3 resonate (21 respondents):

- Several respondents liked all of the recommendations
- Several responded with multiple answers
- Five (5) favored Recommendation 15.
- Four (4) favored Recommendation 16
- Five (5) favored 17.
- Three (3) favored 18
- Eight (8) favored 19
- Five (5) favored 20

Summary of Additional Suggestions in Area 3 (8 respondents)

- Enhance the clarity on Recommendation 15.
- Recommendation 18 may be too detailed.
- Consider rewording Recommendation 19.
- It will be challenging to change the culture between staff and boards/commissions.
- Most commented that they had no additional suggestions.

Area 4. Recommendations for Boards and Commissions and Working Relations with Council

21. *Council's webpage will contain notification to the public that boards or commissions will be a forum for public discussion before staff makes recommendations to Council. The Council webpage will contain a link to all upcoming board or commission public hearings, as well as a link to board or commission recruitment in an effort to increase public engagement.*
22. *Council, staff and boards or commissions will work collaboratively to determine the level and type of staff support that is needed for each board or commission to be effective, including when or how boards or commissions may request additional assistance or research from staff.*
23. *When a Council study session involves a topic relevant to particular boards or commissions, those boards or commissions will be invited in a timely manner to have one or two representatives (of the board or commission's own choosing) present information and answer questions at the same study session.*
24. *Council and the City Manager will provide increased attention and response to board or commission priorities as cited in annual letters (which are each board's or commission's current best option for communicating with Council).*
25. *Council Agenda Committee (C.A.C.) will invite all board or commission members to observe the annual retreat and will invite all appropriate boards or commissions to observe Council meetings that are relevant to the topic areas under their purview.*

Summary of Comments as to which Recommendations in this area resonate (16 respondents):

- Several liked all of the recommendations
- Several responded with multiple recommendations

- Four (4) favored Recommendation 21
- Five (5) favored Recommendation 22
- Five (5) favored 23
- Seven (7) favored 24
- Four (4) favored 25

Summary of Additional Suggestions for Area 4 (8 respondents)

- The prohibition on allowing boards and commissions to voice their opinions on the Land Use Code should be removed from the Municipal Code.
- Again, a respondent suggested that Council members be matched as liaisons to boards and commissions.
- The recommendations are too ambitious.
- Again, consider more communication among boards and commissions.
- One respondent stated that the recommendations are too ambitious.
- Most respondents stated that they had no new suggestions to add.
- Consider how to accomplish Recommendation 24.

Area 5. Public Engagement

26. *Potential hardships and obstacles prevent diverse groups from participation in board and commission membership and in public hearings. A process to identify the potential barriers and possible solutions to mitigate them, including childcare, meeting times, virtual meeting options, etc., will be explored.*
27. *Staff is tasked with much of the communication to the public on behalf of all aspects of city governance, including Council, staff, boards and commissions. Messaging which is meant to gather input from the public or to present issues to the public are to be constructed and presented neutrally. Staff may often be tasked with communications to build support for or ease change, but such persuasive messaging is to be kept in separate channels.*
28. *A new public process advisory group will be created, its status as a committee, board, commission (or other) to be decided depending upon the dictates of its final design. Members of this group would include residents with diverse policy opinions, past members of boards or commissions, and residents who have not often participated in local issues. The public process advisory group would provide input on a variety of public engagement issues that may include:*
 - a) the design of city surveys;*
 - b) the design of the public process in advance of each major decision (at the discretion of the committee);*
 - c) the structure of public conversations and ways in which the city receives/communicates public input;*
 - d) equity concepts and methods for reaching underserved communities;*
 - e) new ways of reaching common ground among diverse groups (including staff); and*
 - f) other issues as they arise.*
29. *Designated staff with expertise in public engagement will work with boards or commissions and their staff liaisons to implement a balance between professionally designed protocols and innovation in public engagement. These staff members will work on many issues with the new public process advisory group.*
30. *Council will strive for consensus by offering opportunities for public dialogue with representatives of competing interests on specific issues.*

31. *When conducting research in their own respective fields, staff will consider “emerging practices” as well as “best practices” in order to provide fresh ideas of some merit so that Boulder can remain innovative.*
32. *Individual City Council members are encouraged to make themselves available to the public and to establish regular public engagement opportunities that employ a variety of different outreach strategies, including consideration of office hours.*
33. *Early in the process, fact-finding on major issues, modeled after the neutral “Blue Book” process of the election commission, will be provided in an easily accessible manner well before public hearings.*
34. *In the development process that commences with an application to the Planning Department, the public shall be brought into the development review process even earlier than the current practice. Staff shall facilitate public input and suggestions even prior to the concept review hearing.*

Summary of Responses as to which Recommendations resonate in Area 5 (19 respondents)

- Several respondents liked all of the recommendations in this area.
- Several responded with multiple choices.
- Six (6) favored Recommendation 26.
- Four (4) favored 27.
- Five (5) favored 28
- Four (4) favored 29
- Six (6) favored 30
- Four (4) favored 31
- Four (4) favored 32
- Four (4) favored 33
- Five (5) favored 34

Summary of Additional Suggestions for Area 5 – Public Engagement (10 respondents)

- Care must be taken that Recommendation 33 is neutral and not manipulated by bias.
- Council should be neutral in soliciting input from all sides of an issue.
- Recommendation 34 is specific to Planning Board. While it is a good recommendation, other boards/commissions may have other improvements that they could suggest, too.
- One respondent stated that the recommendations are too ambitious.
- Several respondents stated that they had no new suggestions to add.

Final Comments to the questionnaire (12 respondents)

- All respondents were invited to leave their names and emails, if they so desired. Five respondents did so.
- Several respondents offered thanks for the questionnaire.
- One respondent stated disappointment at their board/commission service so far because they have not had any real opportunity to provide meaningful input.
- One respondent noted that city-wide chasm between owners and renters.

- One respondent stated that the education of board and commission members must be more than just information about city procedures. Additionally, each applicant for a board or commission position should be required to attend or watch at least one meeting of the board or commission to which they want to apply.

CITY OF **Bloomington**

Organizational Assessment – Boards and Commissions

Project Report / January 2022



This page intentionally left blank to facilitate two-sided printing.

July 28, 2022

Honorable Mayor John Hamilton
City of Bloomington
410 N. Morton Street
Bloomington, IN 47404

Subject: Organizational Assessment of Boards and Commission

Dear Mayor Hamilton:

We are pleased to provide this assessment and review of the City of Bloomington's appointed Boards and Commissions. This purpose of this review was to assess the scope, structure, and resource needs of the City of Bloomington's boards and commissions, and to identify opportunities to enhance their effectiveness and value to the City and community. The recommendations in this report were intended to build upon the boards and commissions' many existing contributions and to enhance the City's community-focused approach to decision-making and operations.

The recommendations in this report will not require any additional staff positions but will require staff time to implement. Our recommendations will enhance the structure of boards and commissions by consolidating those bodies with overlapping purposes and scopes of work; ensuring that proposals for new boards or commissions are thoroughly considered; providing consistency and transparency in communication with applicants and residents; providing training on roles and responsibilities to board and commission members as well as to the City's staff liaisons providing support to them; and by assigning oversight of the entire boards and commission application process and OnBoard™ software to a single City department.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the City of Bloomington. We are confident that the recommendations in this report will provide a framework to maximize the valuable role of the City's Boards and Commissions and ensure they operate as effectively as possible.

Sincerely,



Michelle Ferguson

Vice President - Organizational Assessment

This page intentionally left blank to facilitate two-sided printing.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION.....	3
BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY.....	3
ABOUT BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS	3
BLOOMINGTON’S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.....	4
Cultural Boards and Commissions	6
Planning and Development Boards and Commissions.....	7
Economic Development and Housing Boards and Commissions.....	7
Environmental and Parks and Recreation Boards and Commissions	8
Public Works Boards and Commissions	8
Other Boards and Commissions	9
Administration of Boards and Commissions	9
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS STRUCTURE.....	10
STRATEGIC FOCUS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS	14
COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY	16
TRAINING AND ONBOARDING	20
CONCLUSION	25

List of Tables

Table 1: List of Report Recommendations	2
Table 2: Benchmark Cities in Indiana	3
Table 3: City of Bloomington Boards and Commissions	4
Table 4: Cultural Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute	6
Table 5: Planning and Development Services Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute	7
Table 6: Economic Development and Housing Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute	7
Table 7: Environmental and Parks and Recreation Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute	8
Table 8: Public Works Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute	8
Table 9: Other Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute	9
Table 10: Average Board and Commission Staff Support	14

List of Appendices

APPENDIX A:	26
APPENDIX B:	29
APPENDIX C:	31

Executive Summary

The City of Bloomington, Indiana, is committed to engaging with its residents and ensuring that decisions are made with a robust exchange of ideas from individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and areas of expertise. The City employs a number of tools to connect with residents, but one of its most prominent is its use of boards and commissions. These boards and commissions, which are generally composed of resident volunteers appointed by either the City Council or the Mayor, advise elected officials and provide policy recommendations on a diverse range of matters from conservation to parking to social justice.

These boards and commissions provide valuable perspectives that enhance City initiatives and officials' decision-making. However, as with all City initiatives, the use of boards and commissions represents a cost. The entities are a significant time commitment for volunteer participants, who generally attend one night meeting per month and assist with whatever research or initiatives in which the board or commission is engaging. They also represent an investment of staff time; each board or commission is supported by a designated staff liaison.

There can also be challenges integrating the work of boards and commissions with the broader strategic direction of the City. Members operate independently from the City and may be unaware of larger City goals or initiatives or of the initiatives of other boards or commissions. This may mean that the boards and commissions are not engaging in the work that would be most beneficial to the City overall, or that their work might overlap or conflict with the work of other entities. Members of the boards and commissions also function as informal representatives of the City, which creates the risk that their actions or messaging may not align with City values.

Boards and commissions serve an important role in the community. For these reasons, it is important to carefully evaluate the structure, purpose, and practices of boards and commissions to maximize their benefit to the community. While it is important to provide opportunities for community engagement to the decision-making process, it is also important to ensure that limited City staff capacity is not diverted from delivering other priority City programs and services.

One strategy to maximize their benefit is to address current areas of overlap in what boards and commissions focus upon. Some of the City's boards and commissions are closely related to one another, which creates complications. This report addresses overlap between the Parking Commission, Traffic Commission, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission, as well as overlap between the Environmental Commission and the Sustainability Commission. In both cases the decisions of one group impact the others and the same proposal is often brought to multiple groups for their review. The same staff also often support multiple groups, limiting their capacity for other work. Restructuring these entities into a single environmental group and a single transportation group would reduce overlap and allow the groups' members to consider environmental or traffic issues more holistically.

This report also recommends strategies to increase the transparency of City boards and commissions. Currently, different boards and commissions have different levels of communication with the public. For example, some post video recordings of their meetings and others do not. Some post meeting agendas and minutes in a timely manner while others do not keep their publicly available meeting materials up to date. These discrepancies can create confusion for the public and be a barrier to public contributions to these forums. Additionally, current board and commission members report a lack of transparency in the application process, which can potentially deter individuals from participating. The City can mitigate these issues by establishing communication standards for all boards and commissions as well as taking steps to increase the transparency of the application process, such as communicating regularly with candidates on the status of their application.

Another opportunity is to clarify the roles of both board and commission members and their City staff liaisons, and to equip members and liaisons with the resources they need to be successful. There is currently no formal onboarding process for board or commission members, and no formal training for staff liaisons. This results in a lack of clarity among both groups surrounding their obligations to the community and to each other as well as the regulations they are expected to follow. Creating formal training programs to clarify and educate members and liaisons on these roles will help equip both staff and volunteers with the skills and confidence to operate the boards and commissions as effectively as possible.

The following report provides more details on these recommendations, as listed in the table below.

Table 1: List of Report Recommendations

Number	Recommendation
Board and Commission Structure	
1	Merge the Commission on Sustainability and the Environmental Commission.
2	Merge the Parking Commission, Traffic Commission, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission.
3	Consolidate park, recreation and urban forestry related commissions under the Board of Park Commissioners.
Strategic Focus of Boards and Commissions	
4	Evaluate the business case for any potential new board or commission before its creation.
5	Require a brief annual report to the Mayor and City Council from each board and commission to ensure the work aligns with the City goals.
Communication and Transparency	
6	Require all boards and commissions to record audio or video of their meetings and to post meeting materials to the City website in a timely manner.
7	Establish a formal, transparent application process for boards and commissions that includes regular communication with applicants.
Training and Onboarding	
8	Develop a formal onboarding program for new board and commission members.
9	Define the role of staff liaisons to boards and commissions and develop a formal onboarding program.
10	Assign oversight of the board and commission process to a designated position.

Introduction

Background and Methodology

In 2020, the City of Bloomington retained the services of The Novak Consulting Group, a part of Raftelis, to conduct an assessment of the City of Bloomington's boards and commissions. The purpose of this study was to review potential areas of overlap among various boards and commissions and to recommend an overall structure that maximizes the value of the boards and commissions to the City and to the community as a whole.

To accomplish these tasks, the project team interviewed and conducted focus groups with Chairs of 18 boards and commissions and 24 City staff liaisons in order to understand their thoughts on the efficacy of the current structure and on the workload for both staff and board and commission members. All board and commission Chairs had the opportunity to provide input. Interviews were conducted by email, over phone, or by video, due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the project team reviewed and analyzed documents and materials provided by City staff, such as board and commission agendas and minutes, and the City charter.

The team also reviewed the structure and scope of boards and commissions benchmark cities. Benchmarks were chosen because they are communities in Indiana and have a population size between approximately 50,000 and 250,000. Specific benchmarks are listed in the table below.

Table 2: Benchmark Cities in Indiana

City	Population ¹
City of Bloomington	85,755
City of Fishers	95,310
City of Fort Wayne	270,402
City of Lawrence	49,462
City of South Bend	102,026

About Boards and Commissions

The membership, role, and authority of the City of Bloomington's boards and commissions can vary significantly. Some are required under state law ("statutory"), while others are formed by the City in response to unmet needs.

Some entities have the power to make decisions or to help direct City operations. The Board of Parks Commissioners, for example, has jurisdiction over all City parks and makes decisions on the acquisition, use, and maintenance of parkland.

Other entities are purely advisory in nature. The City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission, for example, provides reports and recommendations on walkability and bikability to the Mayor and City Council but have no authority to enact any recommended policies or initiatives.

Although the scope and powers of boards and commissions vary, at their most basic level, they are volunteer bodies

¹ Source: United States Census 2019 Population Estimates Program

consisting of City residents appointed by the City's elected officials. These entities provide an opportunity for the elected officials to engage with residents and to be exposed to a broad range of ideas and opinions. Many board and commission participants also have experience or technical expertise in the body's area of focus, and elected officials benefit from this expertise when making policy decisions.

Boards and commissions are also directly supported by City staff. Each commission is assigned a staff liaison who is tasked with providing a wide range of support functions to board and commission volunteers. For example, they are tasked with managing the agenda and meeting minute documentation and publication processes, coordinating board and commission research, and serving as the link between volunteers and the broader City government. These duties require a significant commitment of staff time; however, the amount of staff time dedicated to these functions varies by board and commission. The following summarizes the current distribution of boards and commissions as well as estimates of staff time requirements associated with each.

Bloomington's Boards and Commissions

As of June 2021, the City of Bloomington has nearly 50 boards and commissions, listed in the table below by topic. The table also notes which entities are required by Indiana State statute to maintain current City operations.

Table 3: City of Bloomington Boards and Commissions

Topic Area	Board/Commission	Required by Indiana Statute?
Culture and Society	Bloomington Arts Commission	No
	Commission on Aging	No
	Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs	No
	Commission on the Status of Black Males	No
	Commission on the Status of Children & Youth	No
	Commission on the Status of Women	No
	Human Rights Commission	No
	Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee	No
	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commission	No
	Monroe County Domestic Violence Coalition	No
Development Services	Board of Zoning Appeals	Yes
	Plan Commission	Yes
	Historic Preservation Commission	Yes
	Hearing Officer	No
	Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Citizens Advisory Committee	No
	MPO Policy Committee	No
	MPO Technical Advisory Committee	No
Economic Development	Plat Committee	No
	Economic Development Commission	Yes
	BIDAC (Bloomington Industrial Development Advisory Commission)	Yes

Topic Area	Board/Commission	Required by Indiana Statute?
	Redevelopment Commission	Yes
	Urban Enterprise Association	Yes
	CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) Funding Citizens Advisory Committee	No
	Farmers' Market Advisory Council	No
Environment	Commission on Sustainability	No
	Environmental Commission	No
Government	Citizens Redistricting Advisory Commission	No
Housing	Housing Authority Board	No
	Housing Quality Appeals Board	No
Information Technology	Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee	No
Parks and Recreation	Board of Park Commissioners	Yes
	Banneker Advisory Council	No
	Cascades Golf Course Advisory Council	No
	Environmental Resources Advisory Council	No
	Tree Commission	No
Public Works	Board of Public Works	Yes
	Animal Control Commission	No
	Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission	No
	Council for Community Accessibility	No
	Parking Commission	No
	Traffic Commission	No
Safety	Board of Public Safety	Yes
	Firefighters Pension Board	Yes
	Police Pension Board	Yes
	Public Safety Local Income Tax Committee of the Monroe County Local Income Tax Council	Yes
	Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission	No
	Dispatch Policy Board	No
Transportation	Public Transportation Corporation Board of Directors	Yes
Utilities	Utilities Service Board	No

A total of 14 of the City of Bloomington's boards and commissions are required by statute in order to maintain the City's current operations. For example, the City's Urban Enterprise Association is required by Indiana statute in order for the City to operate its Bloomington Urban Enterprise Zone, where residents and businesses receive tax incentives and grants to spur economic development. Indiana statute has specific requirements for this Association,

and if it were to be abolished, the City would no longer be able to operate its Enterprise Zone.² Because the scope and structure of these 14 entities are prescribed by statute, this report does not recommend any organizational changes. The report also does not recommend changes to any of the six county or regional entities to which the City belongs, such as the Dispatch Policy Board shared between the City of Bloomington and Monroe County. The scope and purpose of the remaining 32³ non-statutory local entities are described in the sections below.

CULTURAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The City maintains 10 boards and commissions intended to help address social or cultural issues in the community. All are voluntary. One, the Monroe County Domestic Violence Coalition, is a County-wide initiative. The local entities are listed in the table below, along with their purpose. In addition, an estimate of staff liaison time for each board and commission is included as Appendix A.

Table 4: Cultural Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute

Entity	Purpose	Authority
Bloomington Arts Commission	Cultivates community participation in the arts through grants, advocacy, and other programs	Administers grants for the arts
Commission on Aging	Raises awareness of issues surrounding aging and cultivates programming for seniors	Advisory
Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs	Researches issues impacting the Hispanic and Latino community and works to identify solutions	Advisory
Commission on the Status of Black Males	Researches issues impacting Black males and works to identify solutions	Advisory
Commission on the Status of Children & Youth	Makes recommendations for systems and initiatives that support children and youth	Advisory
Commission on the Status of Women	Researches issues impacting women and works to identify solutions	Advisory
Human Rights Commission	Enforces the Bloomington Human Rights Ordinance	Investigates claims of employment, housing, or educational discrimination
Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee	Provides funding to social service agencies to help City residents in need	Administers grant funding
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commission	Commemorates the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through events and programming	Sponsors events and programming

The staff capacity required to support these entities varies significantly, from one to two hours per week for the Human Rights Commission to up to 40 hours per week for the Bloomington Arts Commission depending upon time of year or upcoming events. On average, staff spend approximately 14 hours per week supporting each of the boards and commissions in this category. This includes staff liaison time, agenda preparation coordination time from support personnel, and dedicated research projects resulting from board and commission initiatives.

Five of the entities are advisory, meaning that they make recommendations to City staff and officials on policy matters but have no formal decision-making authority. They generally have other roles as well, such as to advocate for issues in the community, but they have no direct control over funding, policy, or operations.

The other four entities do have some decision-making authority: the Bloomington Arts Commission awards grants to support arts in the community, the Human Rights Commission investigates reports of discrimination, the Jack

² Indiana Code § 5-28-15-13

³ One entity, the Public Safety Local Income Tax Committee of the Monroe County Local Income Tax Council is both regional and statutory.

Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee administers grant funds to social service agencies, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commission sponsors events and other initiatives.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Five boards and commissions assist the City in enforcing its planning and zoning ordinances; three of them, the Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Historic Preservation Commission, are required by State statute. Additionally, the City participates in three committees that support the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): the MPO Citizens Advisory Committee, Policy Committee, and Technical Advisory Committee. The other voluntary local entities assisting the City with planning, zoning, and development issues are listed in the table below.

Table 5: Planning and Development Services Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute

Entity	Purpose	Authority
Hearing Officer	Makes the final decision on certain variances and conditional use purposes	Decision-making authority
Plat Committee	Makes the final decision on preliminary and final subdivision requests	Decision-making authority

Both the Hearing Officer and Plat Committee require similar levels of support. Staff estimate they spend two to three hours per week, on average, on responsibilities associated with each body. Both have some level of decision-making authority, with the Hearing Officer making final decisions on certain variances and conditional use permits and the Plat Committee making the final decision on subdivision requests.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Four boards and commissions are required by State statute in order for the City to carry out its economic development initiatives: the Bloomington Industrial Development Advisory Commission, the Economic Development Commission, the Redevelopment Commission, and the Urban Enterprise Association. Additionally, the City voluntarily operates four boards and commissions related to economic development and housing, as listed in the table below.

Table 6: Economic Development and Housing Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute

Entity	Purpose	Authority
CDBG Funding Citizens Advisory Committee	Recommends Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for community projects	Advisory
Farmers' Market Advisory Council	Advises the Board of Parks Commissioners on policy relating to the Farmers' Market	Advisory
Housing Authority Board	Governs a public-corporate entity managing low-income housing programs	Manages low-income housing programs
Housing Quality Appeals Board	Hears appeals to decisions made as part of the Residential Rental Unit and Lodging Establishment Inspection Program	Decision-making authority

An estimate of staff time was only available for one of the four bodies: staff estimate that supporting the Housing Appeals Board requires approximately nine to 10 hours of work per week. Two of the bodies, the CDBG Funding Citizens Advisory Committee and the Farmers' Market Advisory Council are purely advisory and have no policy or operational authority. Of the remaining, the Housing Authority Board is responsible for administering the City's low-income housing programs and the Housing Quality Appeals Board hears and makes decisions on appeals to decisions made as part of the City's rental inspection program.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PARKS AND RECREATION BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The City is statutorily required to operate a Board of Park Commissioners tasked with overseeing City parks. Additionally, the City voluntarily operates six boards and commissions related to parks, recreation, and the environment, as listed in the table below.

Table 7: Environmental and Parks and Recreation Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute

Entity	Purpose	Authority
Banneker Advisory Council	Provides community feedback on management of the Banneker Community Center	Advisory
Cascades Golf Course Advisory Council	Provides community feedback on management of the Cascades Golf Course	Advisory
Commission on Sustainability	Researches and promotes sustainability initiatives to promote environmental health, economic development, and social equity	Advisory
Environmental Commission	Advises the City on how its actions may impact the environment and researches environmental topics	Advisory
Environmental Resources Advisory Council	Advises the Board of Park Commissioners on operations of City natural areas	Advisory
Tree Commission	Advises the City Landscaper and Board of Parks Commissioners on urban forestry and develops recommended forestry policies	Advisory

The time required to support these bodies varies significantly, from one to two hours per week for the Tree Commission and Commission on Sustainability to as many as 22 hours per week for the Environmental Commission. All six of these entities are advisory in nature.

PUBLIC WORKS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The Board of Public Works, which is required by State statute, is responsible for overseeing operations of the City of Bloomington's Public Works Department. Additionally, the City voluntarily operates five boards and commissions related to Public Works, as listed in the table below.

Table 8: Public Works Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute

Entity	Purpose	Authority
Animal Control Commission	Establishes policies for humane animal control, reviews actions of the senior animal control officer, and recommends ordinances to the City	Establishment of standards for animal treatment
Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission	Researches and develops bicycle and pedestrian safety programs and advises the City on these issues	Advisory
Council for Community Accessibility	Advocates for the interests of people with disabilities	Advisory
Parking Commission	Researches parking issues and advises the City on administration and enforcement of parking regulations	Advisory
Traffic Commission	Researches and educates the public on traffic matters and advises the City on ways to improve traffic conditions	Advisory

The time commitment to support these commissions ranges from one to two hours per week for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission to as many as 20 hours per week for the Animal Control Commission. On average, staff spend approximately 11 hours per week supporting each entity.

All of the voluntary Public Works boards and commissions are advisory in nature, with the exception of the Animal Control Commission. The Animal Control Commission has the authority to set standards for animal treatment in the City as well as to review the decisions and actions of the City's senior animal control officer.

OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Other statutorily required boards and commissions operated by the City include the Public Transportation Corporation Board of Directors and three public safety entities: the Board of Public Safety, the Firefighters Pension Board, and the Police Pension Board. The City also participates in two regional public safety groups: the Dispatch Policy Board and the Public Safety Local Income Tax Committee. Finally, the City voluntarily operates four other boards and commissions, as listed in the table below.

Table 9: Other Boards and Commissions Not Required by Statute

Entity	Purpose	Authority
Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee	Advises the City on management of the Bloomington Digital Underground fiberoptic cable system	Advisory
Citizen's Redistricting Advisory Commission	Recommends new boundaries to divide the City of Bloomington into six council districts	Advisory
Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission	Researches the community's perceptions and preferences on public safety issues and researches alternatives to traditional policing	Advisory
Utilities Service Board	Oversees the Utilities Department	Management of Department operations

Three of these entities are advisory in nature. The fourth, the Utilities Service Board, is responsible for managing day-to-day operations for the City's Utilities Department and requires two to three hours per week of staff support.

ADMINISTRATION OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Responsibility for the boards and commissions process is shared across City departments in an informal manner. The City utilizes OnBoard™ software for the board and commission application and agenda process, including processing applications, maintaining membership records, and storing agendas, minutes, and other documents.

When interested in serving on a board or commission, residents submit an application and resumé online through the OnBoard system. Applications are routed for review to the correct appointing authority (Mayor or City Council) for consideration. Once appointed, the applicant is notified by the City. The OnBoard system is the location of contact information used by the City should a member need to be contacted.

Once members are appointed and notified, the City employee staff liaisons who provide support to each board or commission are expected to maintain and update the data in the OnBoard system for their board/commission, including member contact information. Staff liaisons prepare agendas and upload them to OnBoard and the City's website. Staff liaisons serve as the primary City contact for board and commission members after appointment.

Analysis and Recommendations

The City's boards and commissions play an important civic role in the City of Bloomington. They provide a structure and framework for active residents to engage with the policy development process and provide a pathway for the City to capitalize on the diverse skill sets and civic commitment of City residents. Though these are important characteristics, there is still a need to ensure that the focus and attention of boards and commissions is well organized and coordinated and that staff capacity exists to support their mission and focus. While each of the City's advisory bodies serves an important purpose, there are opportunities to consolidate some boards and commissions to create more coordinated and strategic policy focus and ensure that its staff time is applied efficiently and effectively.

Boards and Commissions Structure

Currently, there are a number of existing boards and commissions that have overlapping or shared focus areas. For example, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission, Parking Commission, and Traffic Commission all relate to transportation issues, and the Environmental Commission and the Commission on Sustainability are focused on elements of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

This overlap creates several issues. One concern is the narrowness of scope of some of these overlapping bodies. This prevents board and commission members from considering the broader impacts of a particular recommendation or proposal. For example, the Traffic Commission may recommend a proposed street project because it will reduce traffic delays in a particular area, without considering that the proposal would also reduce available parking in the area and impact the neighborhood's walkability. This type of situation also raises the possibility of conflicting opinions or direction on a topic from multiple boards and commissions.

Overlap also impacts staff time. In cases where several boards and commissions have similar scope, the same staff are sometimes tasked with supporting multiple boards and commissions, which limits their capacity to complete other work. Some proposals must be reviewed by multiple boards and commissions. Presenting the same proposal to multiple groups creates additional work for staff, because, for each of these reviews, staff must prepare a separate agenda item and presentation. Additionally, multiple reviews increase the time it takes for a proposal to be adopted.

Overlapping scopes may also impact the ability of the City to find dedicated participants to serve on each board and commission. Serving on these bodies is a time commitment and there is a limited pool of residents within the City with the capacity to serve who also have an interest in the board or commission's particular scope. The more boards and commissions on a single topic, like the environment, the greater the need for people with both an interest in environmental issues and a willingness to serve. The City may not be able to find enough individuals able to meet that need for multiple boards and commissions, which could impact the number of vacancies on City boards and commissions.

Finally, overlapping boards and commissions may create an obstacle to public participation. For example, if an individual wishes to make a comment on an environmental issue, it may not be clear whether the comment should be directed to the Commission on Sustainability or the Environmental Commission. This lack of clarity can create confusion and deter the community from becoming involved.

The City can address these concerns by regularly reviewing the scopes of individual boards and commissions, identifying areas of overlap, and addressing these areas by merging similar entities or by further differentiating their scopes. The following recommendations identify three opportunities to merge existing boards and commissions while also improving the board and commission management and appointment process.

Recommendation 1: Merge the Commission on Sustainability and the Environmental Commission.

The purpose of the Environmental Commission, per City Code, is “to achieve and maintain such levels of environmental quality as will protect human health and safety, and to the greatest degree practicable, prevent injury to plant and animal life and property, foster the comfort and conveniences of the people, promote the economic and social development of Bloomington and facilitate the enjoyment of the natural attractions of the City of Bloomington.”⁴

The purpose of the Commission on Sustainability, per City Code is “to promote sustainable socio-environmental-economic well-being of Bloomington and all its inhabitants” by reducing use of nonrenewable natural resources and waste production while also improving liability.⁵

These two entities share the same essential goal: to improve quality of life for Bloomington residents by protecting the environment and natural resources. This can result in overlap between the scopes of work in the two commissions. For example, the Environmental Commission’s Environmental Action Plan contains several Objectives related to sustainability, including:⁶

- Promote informed energy retrofit and consumption decision-making.
- Build a renewable energy portfolio in Bloomington.
- Reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill by 15 percent.

This level of overlap is a concern, as previously discussed in the Introduction section of this report. Overlapping scopes creates the possibility for conflicting direction and could potentially deter the public from participating. Additionally, dividing environmental management responsibilities across two commissions may not be the most appropriate structure for developing effective environmental strategy. Sustainability is a subset of a broader commitment by the City of Bloomington to protect and enhance the natural environment. Sustainability is an important aspect of that commitment, but should be part of a holistic environmental strategy. The two groups do work together on some projects, but not consistently. By dividing responsibility for sustainability and for other environmental management functions among two different groups, the City may be missing out on opportunities to develop more comprehensive environmental strategies.

To address this overlap and allow for the development of more comprehensive environmental strategies, the City should amend its charter to merge the Commission on Sustainability into the Environmental Commission. This change will help consolidate responsibility and leadership on environmental issues into one area and create a natural point of contact on environmental issues for staff, the Mayor, the Council, and members of the public. To begin, the City can simply combine the two groups (resulting in a large group) so as not to remove current members or lose any technical expertise or specific representations but can move to a smaller size (as outlined in the Charter revision) over time through attrition of the members as terms expire.

⁴ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.050

⁵ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.100

⁶ Environmental Commission. “Bloomington Environmental Action Plan.” p. 11.

https://bloomington.in.gov/sites/default/files/2017-05/Bloomington_Environmental_Action_Plan.pdf

Recommendation 2: Merge the Parking Commission, Traffic Commission, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission.

The purpose of the Parking Commission, per City Code, is to “make recommendations on parking policy” and “To coordinate parking activities, to carry on educational activities in parking matters, to supervise the preparation and publication of parking reports, to receive comments and concerns having to do with parking matters, and to recommend to the common council and to appropriate city officials ways and means for achieving the city's comprehensive plan objectives through the administration of parking policies and the enforcement of parking regulations.”⁷

The purpose of the Traffic Commission, per City Code, is to “coordinate traffic activities, to carry on educational activities in traffic matters, to supervise the preparation and publication of traffic reports, to receive complaints having to do with traffic matters, and to recommend to the common council and to appropriate city officials ways and means for improving traffic conditions and the administration and enforcement of traffic regulations.”⁸

Finally, the purpose of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission, per City Code, is to “promote and encourage bicycling, walking and running in a safe and efficient manner in the City of Bloomington for the purpose of health, recreation and transportation.”⁹

While these scopes do not overlap as significantly as the Environmental and Sustainability Commissions do, each of these areas have the potential to impact the other. There is limited land and transportation infrastructure available in Bloomington, and it is up to the City to decide how to use it most effectively; more lanes in a road to reduce traffic, for example, may eliminate parking spaces, or narrow the sidewalks and reduce walkability. For this reason, proposals for changes to infrastructure or transportation policy must often be presented to multiple bodies for review and recommendation. For example, as of March 2021, the City Council is considering a proposed ordinance that would increase the number of intersections in the City where right turns at red lights are restricted.¹⁰ The question of whether or not to allow turns at red lights impacts both traffic and pedestrian safety, and so in January 2021 the same proposed ordinance was reviewed by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission on January 11¹¹ and then by the Traffic Commission two weeks later.¹² In both cases, staff were required to prepare memos and presentations to the Commissions and to attend the Commissions to answer questions. Re-submitting the same proposal to multiple groups increases approval time and reduces staff capacity for other work.

Having three Commissions with narrow scopes also limits their ability to consider issues comprehensively. The City wants to reduce traffic, ensure adequate parking, and promote walking and biking, but these goals must be balanced against each other to identify the optimal transportation structure for the City. The Traffic, Parking, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commissions each focus on a single area and thus do not have the capacity to consider this balance.

There also may not be enough City residents with both the time to attend Commission meetings and an interest in transportation issues to populate all three Commissions effectively. As of March 2021, three of the nine Parking Commission seats are vacant, three of the nine Traffic Commission seats are vacant, and two of the nine Bicycle and

⁷ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.110

⁸ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.070

⁹ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.080

¹⁰ City of Bloomington. “Common Council Legislative Packet.” March 17, 2021. p. 235.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/meetingFiles/download?meetingFile_id=8547

¹¹ City of Bloomington. “Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission Agenda.” January 11, 2021.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/meetingFiles/download?meetingFile_id=8113

¹² City of Bloomington. “Traffic Commission Agenda.” January 27, 2021.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/meetingFiles/download?meetingFile_id=8200

Pedestrian Safety Commission seats are vacant. This level of vacancy is a concern because it limits the capacity of the commissions for research and deliberation as well as limits the range of ideas and backgrounds among members. It also creates the risk of being unable to reach quorum at meetings. In both the Parking and Traffic Commissions, a quorum is not met if just two of the current members do not attend.

These vacancies may not be directly caused by the existence of the three commissions, but the issue could be mitigated by merging the three commissions into a single Transportation Commission addressing traffic, parking, and bicycle and pedestrian safety. Instead of filling seats on three commissions, the City would only have to fill seats on one, creating less risk of vacancies. Again, the City could begin with combining membership of all three commissions to form a single larger commission and move to a smaller size through attrition over time.

A Transportation Commission could address issues comprehensively, increasing the value of its recommendations and making it easier for the public to attend one meeting to address all aspects of transportation-related agenda items. A single commission would also reduce staff time spent supporting the current commissions and preparing presentations for multiple commissions on the same issue.

Recommendation 3: Consolidate park, recreation and urban forestry related commissions under the Board of Park Commissioners.

The City of Bloomington, like all cities in Indiana, is required to operate a Board of Park Commissioners consisting of four board members appointed by the Mayor. According to State statute, the Board of Park Commissioners approves budget revenues and expenditures, passes bond issues, acquires and improves property, adopts new programs, establishes management policy and regulations, and provides a public venue for community debate and input regarding park and recreation resources in the community. This commission has authority within that context. However, the City has also established a number of additional related boards that fall under the general rubric of parks and natural spaces.

The Environmental Resources Advisory Council advises the Board of Park Commissioners on the environmental impact of park operations within the City's natural areas. The Tree Commission advises the City Landscaper and Board of Parks Commissioners on urban forestry and develops recommended forestry policies. The Cascades Golf Course Advisory Council provides community feedback regarding the management of the Cascades golf course. The Banneker Advisory Council provides feedback regarding management of the Banneker Community Center.

Each of these advisory councils provides feedback regarding a specialized subset of general park, recreation, and natural resource management. In highly specialized focus areas such as urban forestry and sensitive environmental areas management, policy and operations are primarily driven by subject matter experts among City staff. As such, the role and responsibilities of Tree Commission and Environmental Resources Advisory Council can be effectively subsumed with the Board of Park Commissioners while still ensuring that adequate attention is paid to these important areas.

The Banneker Advisory Council and Cascades Golf Course Advisory Council are primarily special interest citizen advocacy groups. These advocacy groups can continue; however, they should be eliminated as City supported commissions and management/advocacy of these groups taken over as grass roots advocacy organizations. Oversight and management of these areas will continue under the purview of City staff and the Board of Park Commissioners.

Strategic Focus of Boards and Commissions

Boards and commissions are valuable tools for local governments, but they also represent a significant investment of time and resources, particularly time spent by City staff. Each of the City's boards and commissions requires City staff support to operate. The type and level of support varies depending on the purpose and authority of the commission, but commonly includes staff support in writing agendas and minutes, advising the body on legal and other policy matters, and carrying out research and projects at the board or commission's direction. Staff time is a valuable resource for a City, and the more boards and commissions that exist, the greater the time spent supporting them.

In some cases, the project team was able to obtain estimates from City of Bloomington staff about the time commitment involved in supporting each board and commission. Based on this feedback, the average board or commission requires approximately 10 hours per week in staff support, with statutory entities requiring slightly more staff time and county or regional entities requiring somewhat less, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 10: Average Board and Commission Staff Support

Board/Commission Type	Number of Entities	Average Estimated Staff Time per Week	Estimated Total Time per Week Required to Support All Entities	Number of Staff Positions Required to Support All Entities
Statutory	13	12 hours	152 hours	3.8
Regional	6	4 hours	26 hours	0.6
Local, Voluntary	30	10 hours	312 hours	7.8
Grand Total	49	10 hours	490 hours	12.2

Overall, the City devotes the labor equivalent of approximately 12 staff positions to supporting its boards and commissions. This represents a significant investment; if each position costs the City an average of \$65,000 per year for salary and benefits, the City is dedicating more than \$500,000 per year to its voluntary commissions alone. Additionally, the time that employees are spending supporting these bodies limits their capacity for other City work.

It is appropriate for staff to support board and commission operations. However, it is also important to note the investment that each board and commission requires and ensure that staff time and City resources are being used as effectively as possible to meet the City's overall needs. For this reason, it is vital for the Mayor and Council to carefully monitor the work produced by boards and commissions and to carefully consider the business case before creating a new board or commission, as discussed in the recommendations below.

Recommendation 4: Evaluate the business case for any potential new board or commission before its creation.

Under the current framework for establishing new boards or commissions, the City Council and Mayor broadly discuss the advantages and disadvantages to forming any entity before action is taken, but there is no formal process in place for evaluating whether the entity will bring net positive value for the City and how the new entity will integrate with the existing structure and focus of boards and commissions. The Council and Mayor have ultimate authority over what bodies are created but establishing specific criteria for consideration will help ensure that all issues are considered before a new board or commission is enacted. Specifically, when the City is considering a proposal for a new board or commission it should evaluate the following:

- **Is the proposed board/commission required by State statute?** If the answer to this question is yes, then the entity must be created.

- **What is the specific purpose and scope of the proposed board/commission? How will it support City goals?** This question should be carefully defined to ensure that the board or commission would add value and that its scope is clear.
- **Is the scope of the proposed board/commission part of or closely aligned with the scope of an existing entity?** If the answer is yes, the topic should be handled by the existing entity, unless a clear case can be made for why a second board or commission is necessary.
- **What staff position or positions will be supporting the proposed board or commission? What is the estimated staff time that supporting the new board or commission will require? Is this achievable with the employees' existing capacity?** The City should carefully consider the staff commitment created by the proposed new board or commission and evaluate whether this commitment is achievable.
- **What other potential methods does the City have for getting feedback from the community on this topic? Is the creation of a board/commission the most appropriate option for receiving input?** One of the primary roles of a board or commission is to gather input from the community, but other community engagement options may exist that may provide a broader range of feedback. For example, a limited-term task force with a finite duration may be sufficient, or a Citywide or targeted survey may be sufficient to get input on a topic.

When a new board or commission is proposed, either by elected officials or staff, staff from the Clerk's Office should work with the office of the requesting official and the department(s) that would support the proposed board or commission to develop a written memo addressing each of these questions. Based on the results of the memo, the Council and Mayor should carefully evaluate the appropriate next steps.

Recommendation 5: Require a brief annual report to the Mayor and City Council to ensure the work aligns with the City goals.

The process through which boards and commissions update the Mayor and City Council on their activities is not consistent. Some entities, like the Parking Commission, are required by City ordinance to prepare an annual report to the Mayor and Council.¹³ In other cases such a report is not required, but the board or commission still voluntarily presents an annual report to the elected officials. Finally, some boards and commissions have no regular reporting schedule.

Boards and commissions generally serve at the behest of the Mayor and Council and were created to provide public input and research on City actions and initiatives. They also represent a significant investment of staff time and resources. For these reasons it is vital that the Mayor and Council understand how the boards and commissions are spending their time and have an opportunity to evaluate whether these activities effectively align with the board or commission's scope and with the City's goals. It also is a means to acknowledge and respond to the work being done by these volunteer members. Because some entities currently do not submit reports, the Mayor and Council do not have an opportunity to comprehensively review board and commission activities.

The Mayor and Council should amend the City Code to require every active board and commission to prepare a brief, summarized annual report of its activities. The reports should all be due at the same time to facilitate a comprehensive review of the entities' activities as a whole. The report should be concise, both to facilitate the Mayor and Council's review and to limit the staff time spent to prepare them. Some boards and commissions already prepare an annual report; in some cases, this is apparently a considerable effort. While it is important for a report to be done, the report itself should not require significant time and effort of members or City staff. It should convey basic information on the work being done and the future plans of the board or commission in order to inform City Council.

¹³ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.110

All reports should follow a standardized template to ensure that the appropriate information is being provided. At a minimum, the template report should include:

- A concise summary of the board or commission's top activities from the previous year, including initiatives, accomplishments, and policy recommendations.
- A brief explanation on how these activities align with City goals.
- A concise summary of the board or commission's plans for the upcoming year.

The Mayor and Council should review the reports to ensure that the boards and commissions remain an effective use of City resources, and that the board and commission activities align with City goals and with each other. These annual reviews should also be an opportunity to identify areas of potential overlap between entities and consider whether any restructuring is warranted.

Communication and Transparency

One of the primary purposes of boards and commissions is as a tool for engaging with the public. Community members who serve on boards and commissions have the opportunity to provide input on topics of importance to them, and the City gains the benefit of their opinions, expertise, and experience.

However, this form of engagement has limitations. Membership on boards and commissions is generally confined to individuals who are engaged enough to hear about board or commission openings and to seek out the application. It is also limited to those who have the available time and transportation to attend in-person meetings,¹⁴ often monthly and often at night, as well as to review meeting materials and complete other associated work. This practice excludes many individuals who may want to provide input on a topic but are either unaware of the board or commission's existence or do not have the ability to attend meetings. Meetings are generally open to the public, so these individuals would have the opportunity to comment, but this requires them to keep track of meeting times and to have the availability and transportation to attend.

Boards and commissions still serve an important role for public engagement, but it is vital for the City to implement strategies to maximize the transparency of boards and commissions to make it as easy as possible for those who wish to participate. This includes ensuring that the public has access to timely information about the boards and commissions, that information on board and commission openings is widely disseminated, and that the application process is transparent, as discussed in the following recommendations.

Recommendation 6: Require all boards and commissions to record audio or video of their meetings and to post meeting materials to the City website in a timely manner.

Communications practices among boards and commissions vary. Some, like the Bloomington Human Rights Commission, maintain active social media pages, while others do not. Some, like the Bloomington Arts Commission, record video of their meetings, others do not. There is also no standard for when meeting materials are posted on the City's website, and different boards and commissions' practices vary significantly.

The City of Bloomington's large number of boards and commissions are evidence of its commitment to public engagement, but the current board and commission communication practices limit the public's ability to interact with these groups. If meeting agendas are not posted before meetings take place, a community member has no way of knowing what will be discussed, and therefore no way of knowing if the entity will be discussing a topic of interest to them. If no video or audio is recorded, members of the public have no way to understand the details of what is

¹⁴ Meetings have become virtual during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the previous practice was to meet in person.

being discussed without attending meetings in person, which may not be feasible for some. Without recorded video or audio, staff liaisons have no detailed record of the meeting to refer back to if questions arise about a previous meetings' discussions.

Members should not determine the communication mechanisms used; this should be a matter of City policy. The City should address these concerns by standardizing communications and transparency requirements for its boards and commissions. The City passed an ordinance in February 2021 requiring all boards and commissions to post the entity's scope, purpose, membership duties, and other information online, which is an important step ensuring transparency.¹⁵ The City should also adopt other regulations to maximize public engagement, including:

- Requiring boards and commissions to record audio or video of meetings and to post the recordings on the City website.
- Requiring boards and commissions to post an agenda for an upcoming meeting at least three business days before the meeting.
- Requiring boards and commissions to post preliminary minutes from a meeting within three weeks after the meeting.

Adopting these changes will help the public better understand the work that these boards and commissions do and allow for greater public participation. They will also help the City demonstrate its commitment to transparency and engagement and ensure that the boards and commissions are as valuable a tool as possible to enhance the well-being of the community.

Recommendation 7: Establish a formal, transparent application process for boards and commissions that includes regular communication with applicants.

The current process for filling board or commission vacancies, per City Code,¹⁶ is as follows:

At least one month before the expiration of an appointment, and immediately on the vacancy's occurrence in the case of an unexpected vacancy, an announcement shall be sent to the local media that either includes or directs the public to the information required by 2.01.010 about the board or commission [name, purpose, current membership and terms, eligibility requirements, members' duties, time commitment, compensation]. The announcement shall also include a statement on how to apply for the vacant position(s).

The announcement shall be sent to the mayor's office in the case of a mayoral appointment and to the common council office in the case of a council appointment. Upon receiving the announcement, those offices shall edit them as necessary. They shall then be sent, together with a statement on how to apply for the position, to the local media.

No appointments shall be made sooner than fifteen days after submission of the announcement to the media, unless the mayor declares to the common council that an emergency situation exists on a board or commission due to the vacancy, and the mayor recommends and common council votes unanimously to make the appointment before the fifteen days have run.

¹⁵ City of Bloomington. Ordinance 21-03. February 17, 2021.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/legislationFiles/download?legislationFile_id=5582

¹⁶ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.02

Historically, when a position became vacant or would soon become vacant, the board or commission and its staff liaison would be responsible for preparing this summary and submitting it to the appointing authority, which could be the Mayor or Council, for review and approval. However, in February 2021 the City Code was amended to require this information to be posted on the City website at all times.¹⁷

After the appointing authority receives the summary for a vacant position, they are responsible for sending an announcement to local media outlets with information on the position as well as directions on how to apply. City code requires the announcement to be made at least one month before the expiration of an appointment, or immediately upon an unexpected vacancy.¹⁸

Residents can apply for appointments via an online form through the City's OnBoard software that asks for details on why the resident is interested in the appointment and any qualifications they have to serve.¹⁹ However, the specific process for reviewing candidates is not defined, and the Mayor and City Council could choose to waive this application for a specific candidate. The appointing authority also chooses the level of engagement they have with a candidate. This means that the evaluation process varies; some members report applying and interviewing for their appointment while others report being offered the position without a formal application or interview process. The appointing authority is not allowed to make an appointment until at least 15 days after the vacancy announcement's release, unless the Mayor declares the need for an emergency appointment.²⁰ A process map illustrating the current application process is available as Appendix B.

There are several challenges associated with the current process. One is the strategy for advertising vacant positions. Currently, the City is only required to distribute information about the vacancy to local media sources. The information is also posted on the board and commissions page of the City website. This generally limits the individuals who will see it to those who are already engaged in local news or City government. While attracting engaged individuals is important, they may not accurately represent the scope of voices or backgrounds that would allow a board or commission to be most effective. One of the roles of a board or commission is to serve as the public's voice, but if it only represents a subset of that public, its efficacy is limited. Some City staff state that they mitigate this issue by marketing vacancies on their boards or commissions to specific individuals who they feel would bring an important perspective. This commitment to diverse voices is admirable, but it may not capture the true range of opinions and experiences that exist in a community. This practice also contributes to a perception, mentioned by many board and commission members interviewed for this review, that an individual has to "know someone" in order to be appointed.

A second concern is that there is currently no formal process to communicate with candidates about the status of their application. Candidates receive no regular updates about their application, and no information about the next steps in the process. Some individuals spoken with reported waiting many months without hearing anything before being contacted about moving forward. This process creates confusion and frustration, reflects poorly upon the City, and may dissuade individuals from applying for or participating in other government functions.

A third concern is that there is no formal process in place to manage long-standing vacancies. Vacancy information is sent to the media once, and then the appointment is kept open until however long it takes to be filled. The City does not currently track vacancy lengths, but members of boards and commissions report instances of vacancies being open for many months. It is generally the Mayor or City Council's prerogative on whether to move forward with a

¹⁷ City of Bloomington. Ordinance 21-03. February 17, 2021.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/legislationFiles/download?legislationFile_id=5582

¹⁸ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.02.020

¹⁹ City of Bloomington. "Apply." <https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/applicants/apply>

²⁰ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.02.030

board or commission appointment, but long-standing vacancies limit the capacity of a board or commission to do work, restrict the range of ideas and opinions among members, and increase the risk that a meeting will not be able to reach quorum.

Finally, a fourth concern is that the majority of reappointments across all boards and commissions occur at the start of the calendar year. This results in a significant workload for staff across the City, but particularly for the City Clerk, Office of the Mayor, and City Council as they work to receive, review, and process numerous applications and bring new members onboard. The end of the calendar year also coincides with the holiday season when staff often take time out of the office, further limiting their capacity to process board and commission applications and to evaluate candidates.

The City can address these issues through some changes to the application process to ensure that it is as transparent and equitable as possible. One important step is to carefully consider how best to get the most effective membership on a particular board or commission with individuals representing a diverse range of backgrounds and opinions. One way to do this is to expand the locations where vacancies are posted beyond local media to include relevant City social media pages community centers, or neighborhood associations to expand the audience who may see them and wish to apply. Additionally, each vacancy should be treated as an opportunity to evaluate the current membership, identify gaps in their experience or background, and develop a strategy for targeting individuals who may fill those gaps. This may mean reaching out to specific organizations for assistance in filling the vacancy, posting the vacancy on targeted social media pages, or other strategies. For example, if there is a vacancy in a specific board or commission, and the bulk of the current members are retirees, one goal may be to increase the diversity of ages on the board or commission. A strategy for reaching that goal may be to reach out to the local university about posting the vacancy on its job boards to attract participation from students. The City may also consider term limits in some cases to ensure that turnover brings new ideas and perspectives.

The City should also set up automated processes in OnBoard, the system currently used to accept board and commission applications, to automatically notify candidates via email when their application is received, and to provide regular updates about the application review process. The initial message should confirm to candidates that the City has received their application and should provide some details on next steps. It should also identify a specific contact whom the applicant can call with any questions. Additionally, the system should be automated to send follow-ups to candidates, both at regular intervals and when there has been any change in their application status. This change will increase transparency of the process and reassure candidates that their application is being considered.

The City can address the issue of long-standing vacancies by tracking the number of days a seat has been vacant and regularly reporting these vacancies to the Mayor and Council. The City should also establish a process of re-evaluating vacant positions every three months and considering strategies to move forward with filling the position. The vacancy information should be re-sent to local media and re-posted on social media, for example, and the City should also consider if there are any additional avenues to help publicize the vacancy and find a suitable candidate. In some cases, it might also be an opportunity to evaluate the qualifications and time commitment expectations for the position and to consider whether a more fundamental change to the entity's membership is required. This will help ensure that longstanding vacancies are not forgotten in favor of newer issues and increase the likelihood of suitable members of the community finding the vacancy and applying.

Finally, to mitigate impacts on staff for the filling of vacancies and reappointments, the City should consider staggering the appointment times so that the majority of member terms do not occur at the start of the year, as is the case now. By dividing up the boards and commissions and appointing them on a quarterly basis, the reappointment process is more manageable.

In summary, the City should modify its application process to:

- Define specific backgrounds, skill sets, and/or interest of members that it wishes to attract and develop a communications plan to specifically target individuals in that group (while ensuring that the vacancy application process is open to all who are interested).
- Automate messages to applicants on the status of their application.
- Track and regularly re-evaluate longstanding vacancies to develop strategies to fill them in a timely manner.
- Stagger the appointment process throughout the year.

Appendix C to this report is a process map illustrating these proposed changes. New steps are highlighted in blue.

Training and Onboarding

Previous sections of this report offer recommendations on how to improve the City's board and commission system, but it is important to note that the ultimate efficacy of a board or commission depends on members having the knowledge and support they need in order to serve in their roles effectively. Members should have a comprehensive understanding of their role and how they benefit the City and community as a whole. Staff liaisons who support the members should have the knowledge required to effectively support and guide members and ensure that they have what they need to fulfil the mandate that the Mayor and City Council has set for them. The two recommendations in this section help ensure that both members and staff liaisons are equipped with the tools they need to serve the community as effectively as possible.

Recommendation 8: Develop a formal onboarding program for new board and commission members.

There is currently no formal onboarding process for new members of boards and commissions. The level and nature of onboarding varies from entity to entity. Some members report receiving written materials, such as bylaws, while others report no written materials and a process of slowly learning over time.

There are a number of expectations on board and commission members for how they will conduct themselves as a member of the body. Some of these expectations are specific to the entity itself, such as the role that a member will play and for the time commitment they are expected to give. Other expectations are more universal. City code requires all boards and commissions to follow Roberts Rules of Order during meetings, for example.²¹ Additionally, it requires members to make a commitment to regularly attend board and commission meetings. If a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings or four meetings within a 12-month period, they will be removed from their seat.²² The State of Indiana also imposes public access mandates on certain boards and commissions with authority to take official action on behalf of the governing body,²³ and it is important for all members to understand their transparency and public access obligations under the law.

Additionally, members of boards and commissions function, in some aspects, as representatives of the City government. This affiliation can be an important tool for local governments, as members of boards and commissions can spread accurate information about government programs and advocate for government initiatives within their communities. However, the affiliation also creates risk. If a member of a board or commission says or does something offensive while acting as a representative of that board or commission, many in the community will likely associate that offensive action or opinion with the City itself.

²¹ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.08.020

²² Ibid.

²³ Indiana Code § 5.141-1.5

Such a situation happened in June 2020, when the Bloomington Farmers' Market Advisory Council released a statement during the Black Lives Matter protest that many found to be racially insensitive. The statement was released on the Advisory Council's Facebook page, which bears a logo specifically identifying the Council as being part of "City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation."²⁴ The Office of the Mayor replied to the post, writing that the statement "was not edited or endorsed by the City of Bloomington or the Parks Department."²⁵ However, several commenters expressed skepticism with this statement, with one writing, "What am I missing? Says it right there on the post: City of Bloomington, Parks and [R]ecreation."²⁶ This example illustrates how many see boards and commissions as an extension of the City government and highlights the importance of careful attention to messaging.

It is important that members of boards and commissions have a comprehensive understanding of the rules and expectations associated with their roles. If not, the City risks violations of open meeting laws, or of members disseminating inconsistent, inaccurate, or offensive messaging while acting as City representatives. The current practice of informal onboarding is not the most effective tool for delivering this understanding, because the informal training may not cover all of the topics that a board or commission member needs to know. Several members of boards and commissions interviewed for this report, for example, reported receiving no formal training on open meeting laws.

Formal onboarding training offered by the City would mitigate this issue by ensuring that every member of boards and commissions receives clear, consistent, comprehensive training on the City's expectations. The training should include an overview of the City's boards and commissions system, including which entities exist and how they relate to City government and each other. The training also should include expectations for attendance and participation, as well as on conduct and decorum among meeting members. Additionally, all members should be trained on Roberts Rules of Order, on open meeting laws, and on the City's expectations for meeting transparency and public participation.

The City should also establish specific protocols for how members of boards and commissions should communicate with the public and train members on these protocols. Examples include guidance on when a member can and cannot represent themselves as a member of their board or commission and when and how a board or commission can make use of City branding. The City may also consider additional protocols, like requiring social media posts made on board or commission pages to be first approved by City staff or requiring board or commission social media pages to include a disclaimer that the statements are those of a volunteer body and do not necessarily reflect City policy.

This training should be offered by the City and should be conducted periodically throughout the year. All members of boards and commissions should be required to participate in the training, preferably within three months of their initial appointment. This will help ensure that all members are equipped with the tools they need to serve the City effectively.

This Citywide training should also be supplemented with additional onboarding by the staff liaison for the board or commission itself. Each entity should maintain a shared electronic drive or folder with resource information for new and existing members. Information in the drive or folder should include:

- The board or commission's scope, purpose, and authority, e.g., statutory or advisory

²⁴ Farmers' Market Advisory Council. "Statement from the Broadening Inclusion Group." Facebook. June 5, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/130635957114110/photos/a.176762475834791/1573728929471465/>

²⁵ Bloomington Office of the Mayor. "Statement from the Broadening Inclusion Group." Facebook. June 5, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/130635957114110/photos/a.176762475834791/1573728929471465/>

²⁶ Swedran, Cara. Bloomington Office of the Mayor. "Statement from the Broadening Inclusion Group." Facebook. June 5, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/130635957114110/photos/a.176762475834791/1573728929471465/>

- The role and responsibilities of individual members
- The board or commission's bylaws
- Information on recent and/or ongoing initiatives
- The meeting structure, including the process for preparing and submitting agenda items
- A glossary of commonly used terms and acronyms
- The roles and responsibilities of staff liaisons, including their names, titles, and contact information
- Any other relevant information specific to the board or commission

It should be the responsibility of staff liaisons to maintain these drives or folders, to provide access to members, and to answer any questions members might have.

Recommendation 9: Define the role of staff liaisons to boards and commissions and develop a formal onboarding program.

There is also no formal training process for liaisons, who generally reported being trained by their predecessor or learning on the job. Staff liaisons are City staff members assigned to chair meetings and assist members in undertaking their work. The role of staff liaison to a board or commission is often informal and generally only a portion of a position's duties. In some cases, the role is assigned depending on which position or positions have capacity, rather than what is structurally appropriate. There are no formal expectations for the level of support that a staff liaison is expected to give the board or commission or guidelines as to how that support should be prioritized in relation to the liaison's other work. In some cases, like for the three MPO advisory committees, staff liaisons expressed the belief that assignments from the board or commission take top priority and that there is little or no opportunity to push back if other work creates limited capacity.

Board and commissions members interviewed for this report had almost universally positive feedback about the City staff liaisons they work with, reporting that City staff are dedicated, knowledgeable, and provide the support that the boards and commissions need. However, staff, for their part, reported feeling at times unsure or unprepared about the role they are supposed to play. Some expressed, for example, a lack of knowledge of open meeting laws and how those laws applied to the boards and commissions they support.

This situation creates several challenges. One of the principal roles of a staff liaison should be to ensure that the board or commission is following the law, City ordinances, and its own bylaws. If, however, a liaison is not adequately trained on these regulations, they may not be able to appropriately advise and direct the board or commission in these areas, creating the risk of legal complications or other issues. Furthermore, if liaisons lack clarity on how to balance assignments from boards and commissions with their other work, they may not be working in the way best aligned with their role or with their value to the City.

In order to address these concerns, the first step is to define the role of staff liaisons. The type and extent of the work will vary from liaison to liaison—the role of supporting a decision-making body like the Plan Commission, for example, is more time-intensive than supporting an advisory body like the Tree Commission—but all liaisons should share similar duties. All liaisons should be responsible for developing and maintaining board and commission records, such as meeting agendas and minutes. All liaisons should be responsible for keeping the web page for the board and commission up to date, including posting meeting agendas and minutes in a timely manner and updating membership information as needed. All liaisons should be responsible for ensuring that the appointing authority is notified about an upcoming or unexpected vacancy as soon as possible, and for working with the board or commission to develop a plan to fill that vacancy. All liaisons should be responsible for advising and guiding the Board to ensure that State laws, City ordinances, and board or commission bylaws are followed.

After the City has defined these responsibilities for all liaisons, individual department directors should review the liaison positions within their own department. They should verify that the appropriate position is serving as liaison, as well as evaluate the workload produced by supporting each board or commission and consider whether this workload is appropriate, given the position's other duties. Additionally, they should provide specific guidance for liaisons on how to respond to board or commission requests for assistance and how to balance this assistance with the position's other duties.

After the liaisons' roles and work priorities are clarified, the next step should be for the City Clerk's Office to create a training program for staff liaisons that should be provided periodically to both onboard new liaisons and refresh existing liaisons on their responsibilities and obligations. The training should cover:

- Clarification of the role of liaisons in relation to their boards and commissions
- Standardized formats for agendas and meeting minutes
- Training on the laws and ordinances impacting boards and commission members
- Training on expectations for filling a vacancy
- Training on communication standards for boards and commissions
- Training on use of the OnBoard system

Additionally, each liaison should maintain a library of materials related to the specific board or commission that can be provided to the individual's successor in the role. No liaison should begin work without receiving files and information from the prior staff liaison. Ideally, this information would be kept in a shared drive in the appropriate department.

Recommendation 10: Assign oversight of the board and commission process to a designated position.

There is no specific department or position assigned for oversight of the board and commission system. Per the City Code, boards and commissions and their staff liaisons are responsible for keeping their information up-to-date, and the Mayor and Council are responsible for posting vacancy information and for appointing individuals to fill vacant seats. However, there is no specific position responsible for oversight or for management of the OnBoard software system used to track vacancies, applications, and other board and commission information.

This is a concern because, without a designated individual to ensure that the system is operational, it becomes easy for things to be missed. Board and commission members expressed frustration with the lack of communication during the application process, as discussed in Recommendation 7, and also with the sometimes-longstanding vacancies. Staff in the Office of the Mayor noted that contact information for board and commission members has not been kept updated and thus, when sending notices or information, many are returned in the mail, resulting in additional staff work and delays in notifying the members.

In order for the board and commission system to be managed as effectively as possible, it is appropriate to assign a specific position that takes ownership of the process. This position should be responsible for ensuring that postings for vacant positions are routed to appropriate places, that boards, commissions, and officials adhere to the requirements in City code, that boards and commissions keep their websites up to date, and that applicants are communicated with in a timely manner. The position should also be responsible for maintaining the OnBoard software system, ensuring it is up to date, and addressing any issues that arise. Finally, the position should be responsible for scheduling onboarding training for new board and commission members, as discussed in Recommendation 8.

Creating this designated position will establish a single point of contact for staff and officials to address any issues, as well as for members of the public, including applicants, to address any questions. The most appropriate location for this position is within the City Clerk's Office. The Clerk's duties include maintaining City records²⁷ and maintaining records of board and commission membership and vacancies is an extension of that responsibility. Additionally, the Clerk's Office is already responsible, per City code, for managing any proposals to change term lengths or limits to boards or commissions.²⁸ Finally, the City Clerk is a neutral party, outside of the appointing authorities of the Mayor and City Council.

²⁷ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.04.040

²⁸ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.08.020

Conclusion

This purpose of this review was to assess the scope, structure, and resource needs of the City of Bloomington's boards and commissions, and to identify opportunities to enhance their effectiveness and value to the City and community. The recommendations in this report were intended to build upon the boards and commissions' many existing contributions and to enhance the City's community-focused approach to decision-making and operations. The City is to be commended to its commitment to community engagement. Members of the community are to be commended for the time and passion they have brought to their service on these entities, for the work being done, and for their commitment to make the City of Bloomington the best place possible to live, work, and play for individuals of all backgrounds.

The recommendations in this report will not require any additional staff positions or increased cost. In contrast, it recommends merging the Traffic, Parking, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commissions, as well as merging the Environment and Sustainability Commissions, and these changes may reduce the staff time spent supporting boards and commissions, freeing up some staff capacity to assist with other operational needs. Should the City Clerk be designated responsible for oversight of the boards and commissions process, staff capacity will need to be determined in that office.

This report provides a framework for the City to maximize the efficacy of its existing board and commissions as well as to evaluate the creation of potential new boards and commissions in the future. In order to be successful these recommendations will require planned, thoughtful implementation.

APPENDIX A:

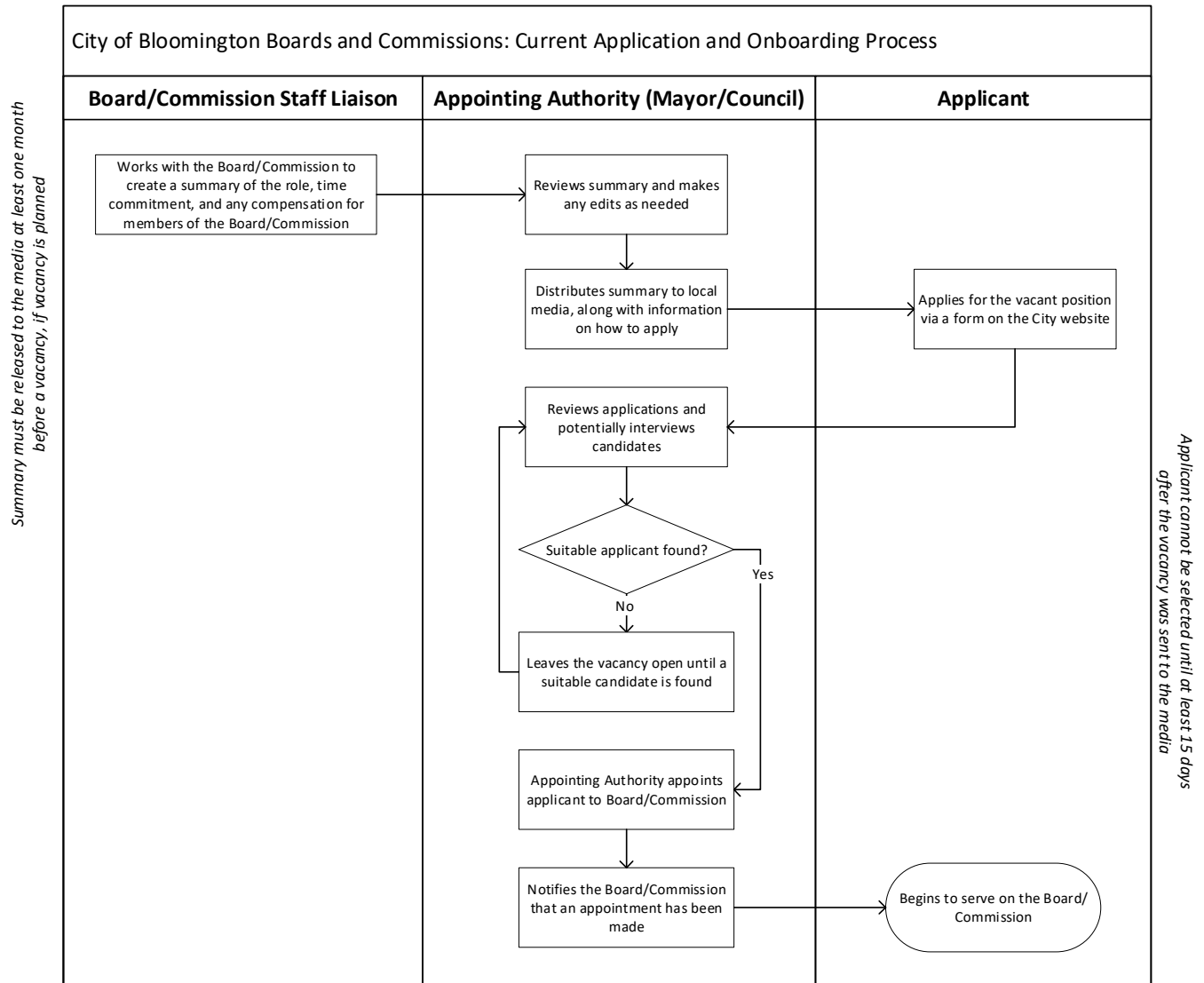
Estimated Staff Commitment for Each Board and Commission

Topic Area	Board/Commission	Purpose	Estimated Staff Time Commitment per Week (Hours)
Culture and Society	Bloomington Arts Commission	Cultivates community participation in the arts through grants, advocacy, and other programs	25
	Commission on Aging	Raises awareness of issues surrounding aging and cultivates programming for seniors	20
	Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs	Researches issues impacting the Hispanic and Latino community and works to identify solutions	23
	Commission on the Status of Black Males	Researches issues impacting Black males and works to identify solutions	11
	Commission on the Status of Children & Youth	Makes recommendations for systems and initiatives that support children and youth	11
	Commission on the Status of Women	Researches issues impacting women and works to identify solutions	20
	Human Rights Commission	Enforces the Bloomington Human Rights Ordinance	1
	Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee	Provides funding to social service agencies to help City residents in need	Not Available
	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commission	Commemorates the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through events and programming	2
	Monroe County Domestic Violence Coalition	Advises the City and County on initiatives to improve domestic violence response	Not Available
Development Services	Board of Zoning Appeals	Makes the final decision on variance and conditional use requests	3
	Plan Commission	Makes policy decisions on land use and development and advises the Common Council on the City's development plans and ordinances	6
	Historic Preservation Commission	Educates the community on historic preservation and makes decisions on proposed changes to historic buildings	9
	Hearing Officer	Makes the final decision on certain variances and conditional use purposes	3
	Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizens Advisory Committee	Advises the Bloomington-Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMCMPPO) on matters impacting the community	4
	MPO Policy Committee	Advises BMCMPPO on policies, plans, and programs	4
	MPO Technical Advisory Committee	Provides technical advice to BMCMPPO on projects and programs	4
	Plat Committee	Makes the final decision on preliminary and final subdivision requests	3
Economic Development	Economic Development Commission	Uses tools like tax abatements and economic development revenue bonds to stimulate development and redevelopment	8
	BIDAC (Bloomington Industrial Development Advisory Commission)	Oversees the City of Bloomington's two Community Redevelopment Economic Districts	Not Available
	Redevelopment Commission	Oversees the City of Bloomington's Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development	15
	Urban Enterprise Association	Oversees the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Zone	32
	CDBG Funding Citizens Advisory Committee	Recommends Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for community projects	Not Available
	Farmers' Market Advisory Council	Advises the Board of Parks Commissioners on policy relating to the Farmers' Market	Not Available
	Commission on Sustainability	Researches and promotes sustainability initiatives to promote environmental health, economic development, and social equity	2
Environment	Environmental Commission	Advises the City on how its actions may impact the environment and researches environmental topics	22

Topic Area	Board/Commission	Purpose	Estimated Staff Time Commitment per Week (Hours)
Government	Citizens Redistricting Advisory Commission	Recommends new boundaries to divide the City of Bloomington into six council districts	Not Available
Housing	Housing Authority Board	Governs a public-corporate entity managing low-income housing programs	Not Available
	Housing Quality Appeals Board	Hears appeals to decisions made as part of the Residential Rental Unit and Lodging Establishment Inspection Program	9
Information Technology	Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee	Advises the City on management of the Bloomington Digital Underground fiberoptic cable system	Not Available
Parks and Recreation	Board of Park Commissioners	Sets park policy and oversees the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department	15
	Banneker Advisory Council	Provides community feedback on management of the Banneker Community Center	Not Available
	Cascades Golf Course Advisory Council	Provides community feedback on management of the Cascades Golf Course	Not Available
	Environmental Resources Advisory Council	Advises the Board of Park Commissioners on operations of City natural areas	Not Available
	Tree Commission	Advises the City Landscaper and Board of Parks Commissioners on urban forestry and develops recommended forestry policies	2
Public Works	Board of Public Works	Oversees the Bloomington Public Works Department	20
	Animal Control Commission	Establishes policies for humane animal control, reviews actions of the senior animal control officer, and recommends ordinances to the City	18
	Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission	Researches and develops bicycle and pedestrian safety programs and advises the City on these issues	2
	Council for Community Accessibility	Advocates for the interests of people with disabilities	25
	Parking Commission	Researches parking issues and advises the City on administration and enforcement of parking regulations	4
	Traffic Commission	Researches and educates the public on traffic matters and advises the City on ways to improve traffic conditions	5
Safety	Board of Public Safety	Oversees the Bloomington Police and Fire Departments	7
	Firefighters Pension Board	Oversees the Firefighters Pension Fund	Not Available
	Police Pension Board	Oversees the Police Pension Fund	4
	Public Safety Local Income Tax Committee of the Monroe County Local Income Tax Council	Adopts local incomes takes rates for public safety services in Monroe County	Not Available
	Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission	Researches the community's perceptions and preferences on public safety issues and researches alternatives to traditional policing	Not Available
	Dispatch Policy Board	Oversees the City's emergency dispatch function	4
Transportation	Public Transportation Corporation Board of Directors	Manages the Bloomington Transit System	Not Available
Utilities	Utilities Service Board	Oversees the Utilities Department	3

APPENDIX B:

Current Application and Onboarding Process



APPENDIX C:

Proposed Application and Onboarding Process

