

CITY OF COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
**Annual Strategic Planning Summit**

**Saturday, 28 January 2012 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**  
**Covington Christian Fellowship Church 26201 180<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE, Covington**

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## **THE SUMMIT'S CONTEXT**

This summit continues the Covington City Council's tradition of meeting on the last Saturday of January to chart a vision for the community's long-term future and define the City's role in bringing that vision to life. For the past four years, during the deepest recession in the United States since the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Council has chosen to articulate an ambitious vision. As Council members have asserted, this period of economic slowdown offers an opportunity to "take a deep breath," reflect on what the City has achieved since it came into existence, and prepare for the day when conditions improve and the private, non-profit, and public sectors are "off and running again."

Although the US economy shows signs of improving, governmental budgets are still weakened from the recession, resulting in reductions in programs, services, and the number of public employees. The Washington State Legislature is seriously considering closing another large budget deficit by redirecting or curtailing revenues that have traditionally funded local government operations. Such actions will exacerbate the difficulties that local governments face in maintaining their existing programs and services. Thus, many are preparing for further reductions.

In this challenging fiscal environment, Covington City Council members, the City Manager, and the Management Team see the need to be even more precise about what role the City will play in the life of the community. The Council is appointing a Budget Priorities Advisory Committee (BPAC) to voice its priorities for and expectations of City government. What public programs and services do residents favor? Has the City done everything it can to stimulate economic growth in the community? Are there additional revenues that voters would support the City raising to be able to maintain or expand programs and services? These are the questions the BPAC is expected to address when its report is submitted to the Council at the end of 2012.

In preparing for this summit, Council members expressed an interest in letting the citizen Committee fulfill its mission to reach agreement on recommendations for the Council. Yet they also see the need to use this meeting to begin discussing various scenarios that could play out over the next two to five years and how the City would respond in each case. What is the Council's long-term vision for the community? Are current goals, programs, and services the right ones to achieve it? If the fiscal picture does not improve, what should be the City's priorities? What tough choices and tradeoffs would the Council have to make? And what would be the guiding principles or criteria by which to make these difficult decisions?

These questions provide the central context of this year's summit, and are where the Council will focus most of its time.

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# FINAL AGENDA

## THE GOALS OF THE SUMMIT:

1. Identify the accomplishments of 2011 that will have the most significant long-term benefits for Covington.
  2. Anticipate possible scenarios that could confront the community, City, and Council in the 3-5 years, and discuss the choices and tradeoffs the Council could face in each case.
  3. Agree on guiding principles or criteria the Council could use in the event of a “worst case scenario” that requires additional cutbacks.
  4. Identify possible actions the City might take to continue to help stimulate economic growth in Town Center and the “northern gateway.”
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**NOTE:** Refreshments will be served beginning at 8:15 so come early to enjoy them and be prepared to begin the meeting precisely at 8:30.

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|------|------|---|-----------------------|
| I.   | 8:30 | Welcome! Review Today’s Purpose           | Mayor Harto           |
| II.  | 8:35 | Review Agenda and Ground Rules            | Jim Reid, Facilitator |
| III. | 8:40 | Identify Most Significant Accomplishments | Mayor/Council         |
- What were **1-3 accomplishments** of the community, City, or Council during 2011 that you believe will have the greatest long-term benefits for Covington? Why? And why were they possible?
  - What is **one thing** the community, City, or Council has not achieved that you believe it must? Why?

IV. 9:15 Review and Revise or Confirm Vision and Goals Mayor/Council

- Is the vision statement still guiding the City and Council in the right direction? Why or why not? If not, what process should we use to revise it?
- Are our current Council goals still valid as the tools for achieving our vision? Why or why not? If not, what process should we use to revise them?

9:45 break

V. 10:00 Anticipating Potential Future Scenarios Mayor/Council

- Given recent experiences and trends, the State's current budget deficit and what may be done to close it, and other factors in our "environment," what do we anticipate about the future? Will we be better off in 3-5 years, or about the same, or in a worse situation?
- If we are better off, what should the City be doing to advance our vision and goals? What might those priorities cost?
- If conditions are about the same, what would we want the City to be doing to serve the community (with basically the same level of resources available to use today)?
- If we are in a worse situation, what should be the City's priorities? Given those priorities, what might the City consider reducing or eliminating?
- And if conditions were to have deteriorated, what guiding principles or criteria should the Council use to examine the tough choices and tradeoffs and to make difficult decisions?

12:00 Lunch

- Lunch will be provided.

VI. 12:45 The City's Role in Stimulating Growth Mayor/Council

- Council members appear to share an interest in not sitting idly by as the recession lingers. Instead, the Council appears interested in helping stimulate growth and development to improve the quality of life for all Covington citizens.

Council members voiced interest in two areas of town that might be key to a more secure economy and stable finances—downtown (Town Center) and the “Northern Gateway.”

- Achieving the City's vision and goals for Town Center appears to be stalled by the recession. Is there any more that the City can do with its existing resources to help advance our vision and goals for Town Center? What actions might we take? Or what might we do to prompt others to act? If we were to focus more resources on Town Center, what would we not do?
- What might the City do to stimulate economic growth in the area we envision as our “Northern Gateway? Are there lessons from the City's efforts in Town Center that we can apply to the north? Are there specific actions we should take in the near-term or do we prompt others to act?

2:00 break

VII. 2:15 Revise Council Rules Mayor/Council

- Derek has been maintaining notes on rules that Council members have said during this past year may need to be revised. We will review this list and discuss which, if any, rules should be revised and how or to what intended outcome.

VIII. 2:45 Next Steps Mayor/Council

- What should be the next steps to implement any decisions we have made today?

IX. 3:10 Other Issues on the Horizon Mayor/Council

- Are there other issues of interest to us that should be considered possible topics for future Council discussions?
- Example: One issue mentioned was CDBG funding to support work of the Timberlane Home Owners' Association.

X. 3:25 Wrap-up: Final Thoughts Mayor/Council

- What are we taking away from today's meeting?

3:30 adjourn