

2019 SUMMIT

COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
Saturday, 26 January, 8:00 a.m. - 3:37 p.m., Meridian Valley Country Club

DRAFT SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING'S KEY DISCUSSIONS, DECISIONS, AND AGREEMENTS

Attended: Mayor Jeff Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem Sean Smith, Councilmembers Joe Cimaomo, Margaret Harto, Fran Hollums, Marla Mhoon, and Paul Selland; City Manager Regan Bolli; Leadership Team Members Noreen Beaufrere, Gina Estep, Kathy Hardy, Rob Hendrickson, Andy McCurdy, Ethan Newton, Sharon Scott, Karla Slate, and Don Vondran; Staff members Casey Parker of Finance and Ross Junkin of Public Works; ECONorthwest Consultant Morgan Shook; and Facilitator Jim Reid and Notetaker Jacob Delbridge.

The Covington City Council held its Annual Strategic Planning Summit on the last Saturday of January, as required by the Council's Policies and Procedures. This document summarizes the key discussions, decisions, and agreements from the meeting.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2018

Below are the City's major accomplishments during 2018 that the City Council and Leadership Team cited at the beginning of the 2019 strategic planning summit:

- Addition of new businesses in town.
- The Love of Covington event was a great success. It showed how welcoming the city is.
- Positive ongoing relationship with the Kent School District regarding negotiating the purchase of part of the property.
- Increasing diversity of Covington.
- High level of enjoyment and usability of Covington Community Park.
- Increase in residents' interest in serving on commissions; they are interested in helping guide the future of Covington
- Partnerships that we continue to grow regionally. We are sought out as partners by other regions and jurisdictions, such as South King County cities and groups.
- Covington is a fast-growing city.
- Getting ClearGov on the website of the Finance Department.
- Online permitting that's growing and helping staff and developers/contractors – great fast response time for customers and staff.
- Partnership with the Chamber of Commerce continues to grow – another great ribbon cutting symbolized the growth of Covington's economy.
- Opening of Covington Elementary School – we are going to see a new generation of kids who will be attending and graduating from a school that says "Covington."
- Sound financial management of the City. The great work is mostly done behind the scenes, is neither recognized nor acknowledged enough, and is very important and beneficial. This is testament to Rob and his staff.

- Worked with St. John the Baptist on Safe Car Camping. There are populations not doing as well as the rest and it's important to create space for them to be safe in the community.
- The evolving nature of the Covington Youth Council, which has been seen at Covington Days and at KidsFest. We are benefitting from their energy and creativity, and the way they have enthusiastically embraced the City.
- Addition of emergency management coordinator Andy Jenkins. There will be positive, long-range impacts extending beyond City of Covington. Looking forward to this position becoming a Tri-City emergency coordinator position.
- Green River College is offering 101 classes in Covington, which is evidence of successful implementation of the strategic plan's goal to coordinate with higher education institutions in the area.
- Regan Bolli took "Play Unplugged" to the Sound Cities Association (SCA) and was very successful in leading the event.
- Change to "Large City Status" was a huge accomplishment.
- Steady growth of sales tax revenue. This is a strategic accomplishment.
- Now all commissions have their own work plans and produce their own reports. Illustrates the engagement of residents; they are embracing a vision for the future.
- Growth of the City and Lakepointe is exciting.
- Funding for Timberlane Overlay Project.
- Great partnership and teamwork between Council and staff.
- Implementation of the Family Medical Leave Act, which takes effect in 2020.
- Efficiencies in the Finance Department. The electronic timesheets will be significant and impactful.
- City took important step in moving forward in planning for the Aquatic Center's future.
- Our staff is really impressive, and new employees have integrated well into the staff working dynamic.
- "Sign code" was major accomplishment.
- Synergy between the City, the Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC), and the Chamber of Commerce.
- "Play Unplugged" and our new mascot were exciting developments.

FINANCES AND FUNDING

This discussion, which occupied the entire morning of the summit, was framed by two primary questions: 1) How does the City determine the optimum levels of service that the people of Covington expect and need? 2) What funding structure is necessary and feasible to allow the reserve funds to grow while sustaining the established optimum levels of service?

LEVELS OF SERVICE

The City Council is interested in establishing level of service standards, including for public safety, parks maintenance, and streets maintenance.

The Council supported the level of service standards presented by Chief of Police Andy McCurdy, Parks and Recreation Department Director Ethan Newton, Public Works Director Don Vondran, and the Public Works Department's Operations and Maintenance Manager Ross Junkin.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Council supports an additional revenue source to implement the Future Staffing Plan that was presented by Chief of Police Andy McCurdy. A ballot initiative that increases tax revenues would need to be clearly earmarked for public safety. The amount in the fund would determine how many additional officers Covington could hire, and how frequently they'd be hired.

Current and Proposed Future Staffing Patterns:

1. The current staffing pattern is: a) a minimum of two deputies work from 10 a.m.-11 p.m.; b) occasionally only one deputy is on duty overnight from 11 pm.-10 a.m.; c) overlap between shifts allows for completion of paperwork, jail transports, and other administrative duties; and d) most training, sick leave, and vacation requires overtime.
2. The staffing pattern of the future that Chief McCurdy proposed includes:
 - Add one Deputy to provide the City with a minimum of two officers 24/7 and "double-up days" and overlap between shifts so that the City can conduct training. This will allow vacations and time off with a minimal use of overtime pay.
 - Given projected residential and retail growth, add approximately five deputies during the next decade (one deputy per every 1,000 residents plus at least four deputies at Lakepointe). The addition of one officer every other year over ten years will put the City on the correct trajectory to meet public safety needs given Covington's projected population increase and the Lakepointe development.

Key points of the discussion among the Council and Leadership Team members:

1. Covington's population growth and the Lakepointe development have and will substantially increase the need for public safety staffing to conduct enforcement and related tasks. The number of calls-per-officer is a good indicator of the City's public safety needs.
2. The residential areas around the Lakepointe shopping mall, especially to the northeast, are going to grow significantly. The City needs to consider the increasing public safety needs in these neighborhoods.
3. Most cities with malls the size of Lakepointe have significantly larger populations than that of Covington.
4. While individual stores at Lakepointe may have their own security, the mall as a whole will not provide its own public safety enforcement staff, meaning that the City will need to divert staff time from elsewhere in the community to ensure public safety at Lakepointe and in surrounding areas.
5. The Sheriff's Office "Contract Model" (Regional Enforcement Contract) is the best financial and administrative option because King County absorbs liability and Covington shares enforcement costs with other regional jurisdictions. (In 2015 Covington's cost was \$3.3 million; in 2019 it was \$4.5 million. The increase was due to both personnel costs and other public safety-related costs.)

6. Hiring a detective versus a deputy versus a sergeant: There appeared to be support among the Council for hiring a deputy rather than another sergeant. But the Council did ask if another detective should be hired in addition to the staffing plan proposal to hire additional officers.
7. In 10-15 years should the City ask that Lakepointe share the costs of enforcement or provide their own security and enforcement?
8. To determine the level of public safety staffing, first determine the level of service needed in particular areas. Assign personnel appropriately given neighborhood and citywide needs.
9. The South King County Task Force: a) The "Task Force Unit Model" is considered best practice now, but Covington doesn't have a detective on the Task Force, and that probably would not be a top priority for Covington; and b) In contrast, Maple Valley has two detectives on the Task Force, thereby contributing more resources relative to other participating jurisdictions.
10. Would this be an appropriate time to conduct a new Covington Community Survey of residents to gauge their funding preferences and priorities and help guide the Council's decision about placing an initiative on the ballot? (The last survey was conducted in 2016.)
 - Public Safety is consistently the top priority among survey respondents. Residents would more likely support an additional tax revenue stream if it supported public safety (compared to other areas such as parks, street maintenance, or transportation).
11. Public Safety Ballot Initiatives: a) Kirkland and Tumwater passed public safety ballot initiatives, whereas the Kent public safety ballot initiative failed; b) These initiatives included both personnel costs and some capital costs; and c) Successful initiatives were grassroots, i.e., driven by the community to address the public's stated needs, concerns, and interests. City Council support followed the community's support.
12. The Council's follow-up questions and comments regarding public safety ballot initiatives:
 - What is the average household income of the cities where public safety tax increase initiatives passed? How do those average income levels compare to Covington's?
 - It is important that the ballot measure increases accessibility because residents favor making the reporting of safety issues more accessible and easier.
 - It is also important to ensure accountability and funding transparency because the public wants assurances that the funds are spent according to how the initiative said they would be spent.
13. "SET" Team (South King County Special Enforcement Team) helps with gang and crime issues and may be a resource for additional enforcement given that Lakepointe mall and more housing in the surrounding neighborhoods are likely to increase crime. But proactively assigning staff to patrol designated "high-risk" areas will reduce staff available to respond to other issues across the City. Andy stated that adding an extra officer who is assigned to the SET team would prevent straining the workloads of officers under the current and proposed future staffing plans.

PARKS MAINTENANCE

Points of consensus from the Council discussion:

1. The Council is satisfied with current levels of service for parks but recognizes that the future growth of the City's population and the concomitant growth in the use of parks and recreation facilities, as well as the implementation of the park development phases, will require more funding.
2. Council agrees that there is a need for more internal (City-sourced) financial investment in parks.
3. Staff will continue to monitor the parks maintenance needs as parks continue to grow. If preferred levels of service exceed current levels, then staff will present the budget levels that would be required to support preferred levels of service.
4. Tell the story of parks and recreation. Start by using the Covington Community Survey to evaluate resident priorities and receptivity to a tax levy in support of parks and recreation. The State of the City speech, Covington Days, and other community forums and events are options for telling this story even better. Providing Councilmembers with talking points would ensure that the Council is on the same page when messaging to the public the importance of parks and recreation.

The City's vision is to have proactive and increased levels of service to maintain and continually improve the City's parks and recreation facilities. We recognize that to achieve this vision, City support will need to increase because we can no longer rely primarily on grants and state funding. Financial strategies to meet the City's vision for park maintenance that were discussed for funding parks and recreation maintenance in the future were:

1. More effectively leverage volunteer support by establishing "Friends Groups" and/or foundations.
2. Evaluate the feasibility of implementing the "Adopt-a-Park" program as a means of increasing funding support.
3. Consider leveraging "Make a Difference" day or another civic engagement/community service day for cleanup efforts in parks and for sidewalks.
4. Consider a parks and recreation levy to support increased levels of service that residents will expect. (However, a public safety levy is likely more politically feasible than passing additional taxes to support parks.)
5. Consider creating a Regional Parks District (Metro Parks District) with the cities of Maple Valley and Black Diamond to construct and operate a regional community center that includes a pool.

These key points from the discussion among the Council and Leadership Team members resulted in the consensus agreements and funding strategies listed above.

1. Current Parks Maintenance Staff: a) Jesse Dalton, who was hired in 2011 and is the maintenance lead, works 1300 field hours; b) Nate Smith, the maintenance worker who was hired in 2014, works 1500 hours in the field; and c) Tyler Miracle, a seasonal maintenance worker who works nine months of the year and started with the City in 2018, works 1400 hours in the field.

2. Levels of Service are determined by visitation numbers and the severity of maintenance issues. There are five levels of service standards:
 - Level 1: High Priority, i.e., work on immediately.
 - The field at Covington Community Park is mostly Level 1, and the remaining areas of the park are mostly Levels 1 or 2.
 - Restroom pickup and maintenance, facility repairs, and garbage pickup.
 - Tree and shrub care when posing danger and hazards.
 - If urgent, irrigation, mowing, and natural turf care are dealt with immediately; otherwise, they are a lower priority and service level.
 - Level 2: Priority, but below Level 1.
 - Level 3: Somewhat less prioritized.
 - This is the Level of Service to which Crystal View, Friendship and the Skate Park are maintained.
 - Most tree and shrub care falls within this level.
 - Level 4: Less prioritized.
 - An example: Jenkins Creek Park.
 - Level 5: Lowest priority Issues.
 - SoCo Park, Evergreen Park, and Native Growth Protection Areas (NGPAs) are mostly level 5 (NGPAs include Wingfield Open Space and Rainier Open Space)
3. Covington Community Park labor hours:
 - During the past few years, the number of labor hours devoted to Covington Community Park (CCP) has increased.
 - 2016: Covington Community Park is the most visited park and consumes the majority of labor hours.
 - 2017: The percentage of labor hours declines, but the total number of labor hours rises. 2018: The total number of labor hours increases significantly (in line with implementing Phase 2, which followed Phase 1, the opening of the field).
 - This trend reflects an increase in the level of service since 2015, when the City took over the maintenance of CCP. It also reflects the increasing use of the park. For example, in 2018 the field hosted 497 practices and games plus a number of events.
 - The greatest share of labor hours and costs at CCP are mowing the lawn, followed by sports field maintenance.
 - A new mower has resulted in a reduction in the number of hours spent on field maintenance. In addition, proactive field maintenance has reduced the frequency and duration of field closures.

- In 2018 a new FTE was added to the maintenance staff to help with CCP Phase 2. In addition, the City purchased a new aerator that allows for increased levels of service in aerating the field six to eight times per year (compared with once per year before the City purchased the aerator).

4. Challenges and considerations for all parks and recreation facilities:

- Because additional parks are being developed, the City needs to continue to evaluate the distribution of staff hours across all the parks (both large and small).
- In anticipating future needs, it is clear that maintaining current levels of service will take more time, effort, and resources.
- The City has an understanding of what is needed to maintain Phase 2 (opening bathrooms, kiosks and BBQ areas) but we do not know the future levels of use and peak times of usage, and how that equates in terms of staff presence in the parks, particularly on weekends.
- For a long time the City has relied on a volunteer to maintain Jenkins Creek Park, but the volunteer now plans to only mow trail areas in the lower section of the park.
- Staffing parks on weekends reduces working hours available during the workweek, and during weekends most tasks cannot be accomplished by a sole worker.

STREETS MAINTENANCE

Points of consensus from the Council discussion:

1. Add street maintenance costs, labor hours, and trends data to the City's website.
 - Provide the public with more information about how funds are being spent.
 - Illustrate to the public the need for new revenue streams to support transportation projects and street maintenance, including asphalt overlays.
 - Provide context, such as explaining how patch repair hours are a result of no funding for asphalt overlays.
2. Continue to maintain our current Adopt a Street program.
3. If there is available staffing, recruit community volunteers for the cleanup efforts in the parks and on sidewalks by leveraging "Make a Difference" Day or another civic engagement/ community service day.

The Council's discussion was the context for these agreements. The key points of the discussion were:

1. Streets Maintenance staff are: a) Bill Fealy, the lead maintenance worker who was hired in 2012; b) Gage Goranson, the maintenance worker hired in 2015; and c) two seasonal employees.
2. Levels of Service standards:
 - Level 1: Highest priority is safety and emergency issues, such as responding to snow and ice or a tree that has fallen across a road.
 - Level 2: Proactively scheduled tasks requiring constant attention, such as filling potholes, vegetation control and picking up litter and garbage.
 - Level 3: Scheduled at semi-regular intervals and completed as resources allow; includes watering.

- Level 4: Items acted upon by request, such as repairing aesthetic and nonhazardous issues with sidewalks.
- Level 5: No resources available and no work is scheduled. This category includes asphalt overlays.

3. Trends in street maintenance:

- There was a significant increase in labor hours for asphalt repairs between 2015 and 2018.
- The City received a grant from the Transportation Improvement Board of Washington State (TIB) in 2017 for \$50,000 to pay the costs of emergency patch repairs. If not for this funding, the costs to the City would have been even higher. Now we have better patches that are holding.
- No asphalt overlay program and funding mean increased patch repair work and, therefore, more hours spent on asphalt repairs relative to other public works issues.

4. Challenges facing the City:

- Asphalt/Overlays:
 - No funding for asphalt overlay means more potholes year over year and an annual increase in the number of labor hours spent on patch repair.
 - Covington's assessment value has increased so it no longer qualifies for TIB's Pavement Preservation grant.
- Landscape/Watering:
 - Even with drought tolerant plants, recent droughts have caused stress on these plants and the need to water more often.
 - The only irrigation is in portions of the 272nd median
- Equipment:
 - Equipment is aging and increasingly unreliable, and there are insufficient funds to cover the costs of replacing it.
 - There's also a lack of space to store equipment.
- Increase in illegal dumping: It is difficult to determine culpability and to enforce.
- It is proving to be difficult to recruit seasonal employees. In recent years we have not had applicants.
 - Seasonal positions last six months, which doesn't fit well within school schedules when students only have three months of summer vacation.
 - Staff is trying to work with being flexible on timing to try and get students and others to fill the 4 seasonal employee positions

THE CITY'S FINANCIAL MODEL

Points of agreement from the Council's discussion:

1. The City Council is interested in further exploring the levy lid lift financing option to support public safety services. As part of the assessment, the Council directed staff to explore using levy lid lift funds to help pay the cost of Covington's contract with the King County Sheriff's Office. Council is also

interested in exploring the designation of only the Community/Aquatic Center (not all City parks) as a Metropolitan Park District.

Financial Model Description and Context:

1. ECONorthwest has developed a comprehensive and complex financial model for the City. Morgan Shook joined Finance Director Rob Hendrickson in presenting it to the Council. They emphasized that ECONorthwest chose to apply conservative principles to the model, which indicates a downturn in incoming revenues later this year and in 2020.
2. The model incorporates inflationary factors, reserves, and staffing. The City is dipping below its reserves, mainly because of larger economic changes. Although the City has increased the amount of money in reserves, revenues attributable to taxes, levies, and drops in total sales could reduce the incoming sales tax revenue.
3. Projected expenses for capital projects equal \$96 million.

Financing Options – Overview and Overarching Themes:

The main question the Council was asked to consider was: “How does the City continue to financially support current expenses and future projects?” Here are some of the main points of the presentation and discussion:

1. The City needs to consider strategies for increasing revenues to pay for capital projects and operational expenses. We may want to learn from the City of Kirkland, where voters passed a levy lid lift measure for gun safety and criminal justice.
2. There is also a need to pinpoint the level of taxation and funding that is sustainable for the long-term to ensure that Covington remains affordable for its residents.
3. Taxes have the fewest unintended consequences when they are paid by the greatest number of people and are low in dollar amount. This creates the lowest financial burden. Conversely, there are more unintended consequences when a tax is paid by fewer people and at higher dollar amounts.
4. There are legislative limits on what types of revenue sources and taxes a city can use. Charter Cities such as Seattle have greater legal authority to leverage more forms of taxation than Code Cities such as Covington. All the options proposed and examined by ECONorthwest are within the authority of Covington.
5. Local Level Authority on Transportation Funding: In a study on local transportation funding, the State Legislature found that increasing local level authority for transportation funding was an important strategy for achieving progress.
6. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is another option that is often mentioned. But while other states engage in TIF, Washington State law creates barriers to using this financing tool, although there have been pilot projects in a few cities to test its use.

7. Covington 's Bond Rating is AA+, which is immediately below AAA. This is a good rating for a city the size of ours. And it is an important reminder to not "spend ourselves" out of a good bond rating.

Funding Options:

1. *Criminal Justice Sales Tax*: A sales tax increase of .01% would generate \$500,000 annually. The law requires that King County receive a share of the revenues.
2. *Levy Lid Lift (affecting Property Tax)*:
 - Must be renewed by the voters every six years.
 - Funds are slated for general purpose funding; they could be applied to public safety funding.
 - Allows the City to increase the limits on the allowable amount of revenue collected.
 - Length of time "lifted" is written into ballot language (e.g. multi-year vs. single-year lifts):
 - Can be presented as longer-term model, or it can be slated for the short-term, whereby after the expiration date the limit decreases to the previous level.
 - Can add incremental increases to a levy lift, and also decrease incrementally or immediately to a previous lower amount. For ongoing expenses like public safety, it should be a permanent levy lid lift (permanently raising the property tax).
 - Can ask voters to pay for specific projects or general capacity.
 - An Important policy of WA State property tax law: Even if property values decrease, the property tax revenue does not. This is because property tax levies in Washington are a budget-based system with a dollar amount, rather than based on assessed property value.
3. *Business and Occupation (B&O) Tax*:
 - 44 cities in Washington (including 14 in King County) have B&O taxes.
 - A city can differentiate and categorize B&O tax rates.
 - Cities that have assessed B&O taxes in the past have had agreements with and support of the local business community.
 - It taxes the amount of the business' gross sales, not net profit (after expenses). This disproportionately harms businesses that have high input and overhead costs and might have high gross sales but not necessarily high net profits.
4. *Car Tab Fee*: Increase it from the current fee of \$20 to \$40.
5. *Utility Tax*:
 - Federal Way is currently defending the legality of its water and sewer tax in Court; the case is likely to be heard by the State Supreme Court. Once the Court rules, Covington will have a better idea of whether or not this tax is an option.
6. *Regional Park District Levy (Metropolitan Park District)*:
 - May work well for Covington, given that it can be tailored and specified according to what makes sense for the City:

ECONorthwest modeled the levy lid lift in this manner:

1. An Increase of four officers would lead Covington to reach the reserve balance.
2. The model incorporates some increase in sales tax at Lakepointe, but at a conservative estimate of a growth in sales tax at 5%.
3. The City could take out a bond in 2027 to build a new city hall.
4. Even though there are capital projects, there is no money going to overlay costs.
5. Assuming the source of funds is not restricted, additional funds could be applied in areas other than public safety.

Some additional issues for consideration, including issues asked in survey:

1. Public Safety is the biggest priority according to past community surveys.
2. Street maintenance and roads are rated as problematic but there is not significant interest in residents funding them.
3. Parks maintenance also ranks lower in the community's list of priorities. However, the high popularity of Covington Community Park may spur new interest in funding parks.
4. The City needs a multi-pronged approach to funding because there is a need to simultaneously address and fund multiple areas.

THE COUNCIL'S ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS

After lunch, the Council addressed a variety of issues. Here is a recap of the key discussions, with the consensus agreements or Council direction to staff highlighted in boldface.

THE LOVE OF COVINGTON EVENT

The Council discussed the lessons learned from the Love of Covington event in 2018.

Everyone agreed it was an enormous success. Councilmembers attributed its success to two primary factors: 1) The "\$500 project" was a very successful element of the event and set the tone; and 2) The event created a wonderful connection to many community members, establishing new connections and strengthening existing ones.

The Council also suggested to Karla Slate, the City's Communications and Marketing Manager, these ideas for the future:

1. Could we use "rain art" in front of businesses? Could it be used as a map to lead people to City Hall?
2. Could we follow up on the connections made that evening with community members to keep the connections alive?
3. Could we make Love of Covington an annual event?
 - a. Ask the Youth Council to design shirts that advertise the event.
4. Could we connect with the Instagram account holder (someone in Covington) to create the Love of Covington-focused handle?
5. Could Covington Talks bring in experts to talk about the building of sustainable communities?

THE GATEWAY SIGN AT 272ND

The Council agreed that a temporary gateway banner should be placed at the Soos Creek property, using the same sign design as the Covington Community Park sign. The City will then informally assess the appropriateness of the spot for a potential permanent sign.

The context for this agreement: a) the Soos Creek Water and Sewer District is providing Covington with an easement to allow the City to put a sign at this location. The District is waiting for the City to provide it with a proposal that the District can review and approve; b) there's some concern that this may not be the proper location because it is not on the side of the road where drivers would see it as they enter the City. Thus, the Council briefly discussed placing the gateway sign on the Airstream Corner on property owned by the City; and d) Council expressed concern about Highway 18 traffic and that the future Lakepointe signage will steer Highway 18 traffic to the mall instead of to downtown-area businesses (although the mall's signage would be somewhat restricted by the City Code).

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Because the Washington State Legislature is currently considering approximately seven bills that in one form or another address this issue, the Council agreed to wait to see what comes out of the legislature before considering moving forward on local legislation to address affordable housing.

PLASTIC BAG BAN

The Council did not reach consensus on addressing this issue. Some members expressed an interest in waiting to see if the Washington State Legislature acts to ban plastic bags. Another argument for waiting to see what happens in Olympia is that the Legislative Agenda is already set and taking a position now might overshadow the rest of that agenda. But there also appeared to be interest among some Councilmembers in considering taking action, particularly if the legislature does not act.

FIREWORKS BANS

Council did not direct staff to submit any proposals so that it could consider banning fireworks in the City. These were the reasons: a) there is a low number of fires from fireworks, around two or three per year; b) data from Kent indicates that its ban has not decreased calls for service related to fires purportedly caused by fireworks; c) the most dangerous and bothersome types of fireworks are already illegal; and d) concern was expressed about shifting blame and responsibility to the City to vigorously enforce a fireworks ban, and the City should hesitate to adopt a policy that is difficult to enforce.

COUNCIL POLICY TRAINING

City Attorney Kathy Hardy discussed the policies under Section 9.0 of the Council Policies and Procedures Manual, "Public Communication and Representation." These policies relate to how Covington Councilmembers should engage in correspondence with a resident, community group, another governmental agency, or media outlet. It notes scenarios where they should clearly state that they are either expressing the official view of the City or, alternatively, that they are expressing their personal opinion. Some points of clarification that Kathy mentioned included: a) during "coffee chats" with constituents, Councilmembers should clearly state that they are speaking from their personal opinion as a Councilmember; and b) when the Council has not yet taken a position on a issue but a

Councilmember would like to write a letter to the editor, the Councilmember must acknowledge in writing, that they are expressing their personal opinion and not the Council's position.

Kathy complimented the Council for adhering to the State's Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) by not engaging as a Council over e-mail or in unofficial places or capacities that would potentially exclude the ability of the public to participate.

The Council agreed to maintain the current system for responding to emails from constituents. Today the Council receives both the initial email and the City's response from the City Manager's Office. Councilmembers want to continue receiving both the original and the follow-up emails from the public so that they stay abreast of what the public is interested in and the public's positions on those issues.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS SINCE LAST YEAR'S SUMMIT

City Manager Regan Bolli reviewed the status of each item in the "2018 Summit Action Items (01.17.19)" document, which was included in this year's Summit Agenda Packet. The document illustrates the progress the City has made since the 2018 Summit. The draft "2019 Summit Action Items" document accompanies this draft summary of this year's summit.

THE REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Regan reviewed the "Covington Strategic Plan – 2018 Updates" document. Here are updates on items that were not part of the packet, but which Regan highlighted in his review.

1. Green River College (GRC) classes in Covington: GRC may not continue to offer classes in Covington in the future. The format and timing of the classes offered in the community do not appear to meet the preferences of the student population the program is intended to serve.
2. Mascot: Karla is leading next week's presentation at CEDC on where to go from here with promoting the City's new mascot. It may be introduced to the public at "Play Unplugged."
3. Levy Lid Lift: The capital costs for building a new City Hall may be incorporated into the new financial model
4. Transforming the Covington Days Festival: Ethan mentioned that the location of Covington Days is a limiting factor. It would be great to grow the event into a regional one, but the City does not now have the capacity.
5. "Play Unplugged: Two college Interns hand-wrote and distributed thank you notes to the businesses that participated in "Play Unplugged." The City is working to increase business participation in the event.
6. Identifying Cultural Interests of the Community for future events (e.g. storytelling): An idea was suggested that Covington work with Muckleshoot Tribe representatives to discuss the interest in incorporating the Tribe's culturally important stories into Covington Days.
7. Diversified Housing Types: Gina Estep, Community Development Director, is examining residential design standards that might reduce the barriers to producing a wider variety of housing options.

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Approved: March 12, 2019

8. CCP and SoCo Phase 2: On schedule to meeting 2020 goals.
9. Staff Leadership Program: Noreen Beaufriere, the City's Personnel Manager, will have this program ready to go by the end of this year.
10. Staffing Analysis: Noreen will also have completed this task by year's end.
11. Wellness Committee: The committee held the annual planning retreat in January to develop the 2019 work plan to promote wellness. There are many structured requirements to achieve a "Well City" Award, so the City wellness committee staff do not have a lot of extra time to develop and manage additional City-initiated programs.

At the end of the presentation, Mayor Wagner acknowledged that the Council benefits from Regan including Strategic Plan progress reports in his Weekly Updates to Council.

REVIEW THE VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS

The Council affirmed the vision, mission, and goals for 2019.

ISSUES ON THE HORIZON

At the end of the 2019 Summit, the Council quickly listed issues for future consideration. They were:

1. Covington should establish neighborhood plans and funding for neighborhood projects. This would require the time and effort of a staff person.
2. Council orientation packet should be reviewed to ensure that it will be helpful when onboarding new members in the future.
3. Behavioral Health: Moving from State-run facilities to local facilities. This is an important issue as it becomes a larger responsibility of local governments and non-profits.
4. Current funding and a utility tax: Ensure we are in line with neighboring cities in terms of funding levels, types, and solvency.
5. Affordable Housing: Help people get into affordable housing. Consider allowing housing developments that are not dependent on cars as a strategy to lower housing costs. A benefit would be ensuring that new housing is built around a central community area.

SAYING FAREWELL

At the end of the summit the Council and Leadership Team lauded Councilmember Margaret Harto and Finance Director Rob Hendrickson, both of whom are leaving the City this year. Rob will retire on April 1st and Margaret is serving her last year on the Council.