



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kirkland City Council

**From:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**Date:** December 30, 2020

**Subject:** FEBRUARY 5 COUNCIL RETREAT PRELIMINARY AGENDA

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Council reviews the preliminary retreat topics for the February 5 City Council retreat and provides feedback. Following Council input, a final retreat agenda will be brought to the January 19 Council meeting for adoption.

### **BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

The City Council has traditionally held two Council retreats in the first half of each year. Although there have been variations over the years, the first retreat, typically held in February, is usually devoted to relationship building, goal setting and policy development. The second retreat, usually held in May, is most often dedicated to financial and budgetary issues.

The City Manager has discussed informally with each Councilmember potential topics and outcomes for the February retreat. Using this feedback, in December, the City Manager, Mayor and Deputy Mayor developed a preliminary retreat structure and set of topics for Council consideration. This memo summarizes the preliminary framework, but the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are seeking full Council input on January 5, prior to finalizing the retreat agenda.

Most Councilmembers have asked for more opportunities in 2021, including at the retreat, to develop relationships and communication between members, since this was rendered difficult by COVID restrictions in 2020. A portion of the retreat will be dedicated to those key topics. Other topics suggested by Councilmembers were to review and update the Council Goals, and to discuss policy and procedure changes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Council meetings. All Council members are interested in review and adoption of Council procedures that clarify how new legislation beyond the City Work Program is developed and prioritized. Finally, Councilmembers are interested in a less structured conversation at the end of the retreat for brainstorming ideas and future topics.

Marilynne Beard, retired Kirkland Deputy City Manager, and Principal of MMB Consulting, will be facilitating the entire retreat, as well as facilitating updating the Council Goals. Consultants with expertise in best practices for effective Council meetings are also being sought to lead those topic at the retreat. Ms. Beard will be contacting each Councilmember in December and early January to further identify individual Councilmember goals for the retreat.

### Preliminary Retreat Topics

The preliminary topics of the retreat are listed below. The order of topics and time dedicated to each topic will be developed after Council review and feedback on January 5.

- Council Goal review and updates
- Effective and efficient Council meetings
- Process for developing and prioritizing new legislation
- Council Policy and Procedure updates
- Council "Potpourri" open discussion

The Council retreat will be conducted over Zoom and the Directors will also be in attendance.

### Communication Training

In addition, at the recommendation of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the City Manager's Office has retained the services of Agreement Dynamics for a "Success Signals" training for the Council and Directors. The training will be provided by Agreement Dynamics' founder and President, Rhonda Hilyer.

Success Signals is an innovative and fun tool that provides practical ways to improve relationships of all kinds. The highly acclaimed workshop offered by Agreement Dynamics provides training on how to avoid common conflicts and improve communications and rapport, especially with those who communicate differently. This session will be a refresher for some Councilmembers and Directors who taken the training in the past but will be new to others. Success Signals will provide a strong foundation for the retreat discussions.

The City Manager's Office will be seeking three-hour time slots on Councilmember calendars in January for the Success Signals training.