

2021 Board and Commission Survey Results – Staff Input

Survey Questions

***5 Total Responses**

Question 1: In what ways is your board/commission working well?	1
Question 2: What are its strengths and successes?	1
Question 3: In what ways is your commission not working well?	1
Question 4: What are opportunities for improvement?	2
Question 5: What specific suggestions do you have to improve the functioning of your Board/Commission?	2
Question 6: Do you have any ideas about how to keep the City Council informed of the work of your board or commission? If so, please share those here.	2
Question 7: Please use the space below to share any other comments, and any information and/or issues you feel would be helpful to include in the future training of our Advisory Groups.	3

Question 1: In what ways is your board/commission working well?

- People care about the subject matter and regularly attend the meetings.
- Respectful debate, adherence to Robert's Rules.
- The groups are eager to complete work that meets their work plans and the city's strategic plan.
- Very engaged group, all are very passionate about helping the community.
- Moving some projects forward that are part of City plans.

Question 2: What are its strengths and successes?

- Strengths include members showing up and reviewing materials in advance.
- Engagement, respect for staff, understanding of staff capacity.
- Very educated and knowledgeable members.
- Board members are very thoughtful and willing to hear and entertain creative solutions to problems.
- Land Acknowledgement Statement, Educational events, comments on development, letters of support (by Council) for important statewide issues.

Question 3: In what ways is your commission not working well?

- Too often members try to manage and direct staff and/or project details. Additionally, too often the staff are treated as inferior and subordinate and are not treated respectfully as professionals in their field regardless of credentials and experience.
- Tardiness to meetings
- Distrust between the board and staff. The board wanting to do more work than staff can keep up with. Staff feeling like they never have the right information or enough information for the board to review applications properly.

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- I have a hard time understanding the lens of animosity and suspicion that some board members view staff through. Compromise is challenging for a couple of my Board members which can make coming to a final decision challenging. Board members want more communication about other things going on in the city that sometimes don't involve the city but I am supposed to just know and share. I had a board member threaten to boycott a meeting because the agenda wasn't worded the way he thought it should be and I have another board member who likes to make under the breath comments that can be very off-putting.
- Lack of clarity on role, why meeting, what does "advising council" mean, ways for members to meaningfully engage, ways to support City strategic plan

Question 4: What are opportunities for improvement?

- Diversifying Boards/Commissions to be more representative of the community. That includes not being citizen "experts" on a topic, but rather citizens with lived experiences who can inform diverse interests in how policy impacts community. Treating staff with respect. More clear understanding and acceptance of roles v. what they prefer their role to be.
- Possibly adjusting the start time, continue to exercise respect for staff
- More open and respectful communication. Just asking for clarification if needed from either side.
- Training/clarity on roles and what advising council means. Developing work plans that mesh with City strategic plan while still having flexibility to bring items to Council. Commission should be bringing forward issues that Council needs to think about as well as investigating issues that the Council would like to know more about. I've rarely heard Council ask for advice from either of my commissions.

Question 5: What specific suggestions do you have to improve the functioning of your Board/Commission?

- Diversity membership; Require members to follow respectful workplace standards; train boards/commissions on what a respectful workplace is, provide examples of what contributes to hostile and toxic work environments.
- Continue to maintain Robert's Rules and focus on larger policy issues rather than specific staff actions.
- I don't know of any specific things that can be done. It may just take time.
- Improve onboarding process, clarity of roles, Council provide items they would like to know more about for commission to advise on.

Question 6: Do you have any ideas about how to keep the City Council informed of the work of your board or commission? If so, please share those here.

- Annual update summary agendas & packets are available for review if interested in regular awareness of activities.
- Reserve time when possible for EDA-Council members to update the Council during work sessions/regular mtgs.
- I think the administrator's memo does a good job of summarizing the work that staff and the boards are doing.
- Council reps to our Board could include the monthly staff updates that are provided to the Board to Council. Strange to me that this is a problem/concern when our Council rep comes to each of our meetings.
- Commission Chairs provide short summaries as part of routine updates to Council. Maybe in the Administrator's Memo?

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Question 7: Please use the space below to share any other comments, and any information and/or issues you feel would be helpful to include in the future training of our Advisory Groups.

- How to be an approachable, respectful and welcoming board (for all attendees, public, speakers, staff, each other).
- The EDA is a hard-working board that stresses the effectiveness of adhering to Robert's rules. The EDA could be a good example for others to follow.
- Training for liaisons on Roberts Rules and negotiating. Maybe refresher sessions on active/reflective listening?
- Meeting process. Setting agendas, working board vs advisory boards, some are both. When and how can advisory boards be involved in development process comments/questions.