



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes - Final

City Council

Monday, October 6, 2025
5:00 PM

Pre-Council

City Hall
Conference Room
1A/1B
701 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Present: 6 - Buffaloe, Foster, Peters, Carroll, Sample, and Elwood

Absent: 1 - Waterman

This item is open to the public: Strategic Plan Discussion

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

[Draft Request for Proposals \(RFP\) Language](#)

[Draft Strategic Plan Process Chart](#)

Assistant City Manager Carol Rhodes gave an update on the Strategic Plan that was previously approved by Council. Rhodes is asking for input from Council to help staff prepare an RFP. The Community Survey Results will be ready by January.

Assistant to the City Manager Stacey Weidemann introduced herself and overviewed the current plan and discussed the engagement that the city was doing. The development of the current plan started in 2018 and they engaged with both front line staff and the city council. Additionally the city worked with 8 focus groups 3- were broad- other five focused on a targeted audience. 140 residents participated in these discussions that all occurred at the ARC.

Buffalo asked when the last time was when they changed their mission and value statement? Additionally Buffaloe asked how often in other cities are these updated. Weidemann mentioned that she could look into this and didn't know this off the top of her head.

Foster asked about outreach to the Focus Groups that helped create the plan and how they determined it was good representation. Rhodes explained some methods used that got residents to come to the focus groups. These included an application that went through a press release with each of the focus groups above. Rhodes did mention that they could improve on how they did outreach on this. Rhodes also mentioned that they reached out to the Disabilities Commission, Youth Advisory Council, Chamber of Commerce and more. Rhodes explained that the previous consultant that was used on the current Strategic Plan was only there to assist in facilitating the conversation of the Focus Groups. Comparatively, the consultant for the new Strategic Plan would help them in identifying key principles to draw out from those specific focus groups. Rhodes mentioned that we are in a much better position with engagement noting that they now have an engagement team in house.

Following this Weidemann stated that staff is seeking feedback on the following sections:

- Focus groups
- Workshops
- Townhalls

Weidemann discussed that they are working on a roadmap for allocation of resources and the performance measures for the Strategic Plan. Weidemann discussed the implementation and monitoring for the Strategic Plan.

Buffaloe asked if this is where the council would see the relationship of the Strategic Plan with the Budget, and how it would tie into this roadmap. Weidemann stated that it would.

The conversations shifted back to communication.

Elwood asked more about the consultant and if they would be coming up with a plan for communication or if the consultant would step back in and facilitate the communications. Weidemann stated that the communication would be an aspect that the consultant would create a communication plan and they would carry through that communication for the life of the Strategic Plan. Rhodes added that it is a plan for them, and it would help ensure that Sydney Olsen and the Communication team can relay it. Buffaloe mentioned some experiences with other consultants and that sometimes you continue to engage with them throughout the project.

Weidemann continued with the presentation and presented the anticipated timeline for the Strategic Plan:

October 2025- Issue RFP
December- Award Contract
January- Start process with the consultant

After this Foster mentioned how they have enhanced communications since the last time this was done. He specifically mentioned town halls and Let's Talk Local. He asked about changes in communication and how that would work for the community. He mentioned that from his experience smaller groups are helpful because there is a higher chance of having better conversations. Foster commented that this setting is different than when this was done years ago and complimented it.

Buffaloe asked to bring up the Focus Group slides and asked if the audience and number is what staff was looking for in feedback. Rhodes stated that the groups identified are a great representation of our community and they could not think of anything off the top of her head that they could add. She added that she definitely would not remove any of those groups. Suggestion that Shawna Johnson may have input on a population that wasn't represented.

Elwood asked about tracking Wards and if that is being followed up with the people in those wards. She mentioned that she doesn't think we should do ward specific focus groups because that would double the amount of work, but it would be a good idea to keep track of that information. Elwood mentioned income disparities and how that is a concern in recent public comments. She mentioned that they have heard a lot from the community trends manual and wanted to see how we could include it in the Strategic Plan.

Sample asked about college students having their own focus groups due to Columbia's

large student population. Rhodes stated that they would add that to the list, and that it was a great idea. Sample additionally recommended that if it was possible to consider having an online form for these focus groups.

Cale Turner, Purchasing Agent, came up to talk about RFPs. He suggested that it would be best to not get too specific with the focus groups. A true RFP presents how they would get there. He mentioned that it can get muddy when they get too specific because it minimizes what they present.

After further discussion it was advised that it would be best not to narrow the scope of the RFP in regards to the number of workshops and the number of focus groups. This would allow for flexibility and more options and ideas to come to the table.

Sample asked where the council would be allowed to have input in this process. Rhodes discussed that typically they collect input from staff before it is brought to council. Elwood mentioned that in the last strategic plan process they did a really great job connecting with individuals who were already engaged with the city. She asked how the city could reach individuals who are not as engaged with the city.

Sample asked about the estimated cost of this, and Rhodes stated that they included \$125,000 in the FY26 budget to cover this project. Sample then connected this to the budget, wondering on the back end of things when writing out the Strategic Plan, if the city plans on aligning budget items with the strategic plan, and having it written out.

City Manager Seewood stated that would be a priority with the budget, to show how it is aligned with the strategic plan. He mentioned that the question regarding that, is how that will look. He added that this would be something that they work with the consultant with and how other cities are doing it.

Sample asked if vision and value statements are incorporated into the performance evaluation tool. Kathy Baker, Human Resources Director, stated that it is currently built into the evaluation process.

Rhodes brought up that the current strategic plan does not have an end date as directed by the previous administration. She asked if council decided on if they want this to be a three year plan or a five year plan referencing that it would impact the short term and long term goals.

Buffaloe mentioned that it always confused her why the strategic plan didn't have an end date. She added that it should have a timeline on when it would come back to them to review and update. Elwood added that having an end date would assist with when they needed to do a rewrite. Along with that, Elwood mentioned that the annual reports is a good frequency. Noting that they could see what was checked and how it progressed. Peters added that a 5 year goal would be better than a 3 year goal, noting that it needs enough time to actually have time to implement and review it.

This item is open to the public: Upcoming Meeting Dates

City Council Members discussed upcoming work sessions for TIFs (B13-14-15) and the Transit Study. Confirming dates of October 13th from 4pm-6pm for TIF work session and November 10th from 9am-11am for the Transit Study work session.

This item is open to the public: Motion for the City Council to go into closed session to discuss:

Legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public

governmental body and confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys pursuant to Section 610.021(1) RSMo.

At approximately 5:48 p.m., Mayor Buffaloe made a motion for the City Council of the City of Columbia, Missouri, to immediately go into a closed meeting in Conference Room 1A/1B of City Hall to discuss legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys pursuant to Section 610.021(1) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. The motion was seconded by Council Member Peters.

This item is closed to the public: Closed Meeting in Conference Room 1A/1B

At approximately 5:53 p.m., the City Council went into closed session in Conference Room 1A/1B pursuant to RSMo Section 610.021(1).

II. ANY OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

None.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The closed meeting adjourned at approximately 6:44 p.m.