



A City that Works

Decisions bring City values to life and put City goals into action

What strategies are working?

POSITIVE RESULTS ARE COMING FROM OUR BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS.

- The business planning process deliberately links departments' work to the City's values and goals. The process encourages departments to focus on Citywide measures as well as departmental measures.
- The focus on results and accountability has departments speaking a common language.
- If we need to pare back a program or revisit a decision, the business planning process offers a great way to set the trajectory for our department. We are using the business planning process to break down silos within our department.
- Business planning is more flexible and adaptable than in the past.

THE MAYOR IS CLEARLY ARTICULATING CITY PRIORITIES.

- The mayor's consistent message about our three priorities — grow the city, eliminate disparities and run the City well — are simple, straightforward messages that illuminate our work.
- The mayor's directive about how to organize our budgets puts the focus on City values and goals.

OUR PROCESSES HAVE GOOD INTENTIONS AND ARE IMPROVING.

- Although it's a work in progress, our business planning process is pointing us toward the need to act tactically to get results.
- Results Minneapolis has many flaws, but it's better than previous efforts. In the past, we created long-term plans that were filed away and never looked at again. Results Minneapolis places more emphasis on the short term, and that helps us stay on track.
- Results Minneapolis reminds us that we need to be accountable. Our participation in this process shows that we're willing to measure our efforts and hold ourselves accountable.
- My department is able to use some of the information generated by Results Minneapolis to help us share our story and articulate our vision.
- Technical improvements are helping us focus on transparency and innovation, even if these new capabilities aren't yet illuminating our progress on results.
- Our hiring process has improved.
- Our improved capacity for strategic planning has helped departments achieve goals and put our values into action.
- The Finance Department does a good job of reminding departments that we are working with City revenue on behalf of the entire enterprise.

THE CITY COORDINATOR'S OFFICE PROVIDES SUPPORT AND PERSPECTIVE TO DEPARTMENTS.

- Departments appreciate the City Coordinator's flexibility and willingness to help when new issues or directives are thrown at us.
- The coordinator's staff helps departments craft solutions that departments with competing interests are unable to see. The coordinator's staff serves as a neutral third party that helps departments change their perspectives and reach a mutual goal that serves the City.

What strategies are not working?

RESULTS MINNEAPOLIS NEEDS A STRONGER FOCUS.

- Results Minneapolis, our performance measure accountability system, isn't organized in a way that focuses on an enterprise-wide vision. We talk too much about *what* we're doing, not *how well* we're doing.

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- Results Minneapolis gets off the rails too easily, and every year it changes. We report on interesting stuff, but we're reporting on small tactics that don't tie to the business plan or focus on key results.
- There are so many people attempting to have input during Results Minneapolis meetings that it's not clear who is supposed to find this process meaningful. My department? The public? Policymakers?
- Because most of the public doesn't know about Results Minneapolis, it only serves an internal function.

OUR PROCESSES AREN'T ALIGNED WELL ENOUGH.

- There isn't a clear connection between Results Minneapolis and department business plans.
- The cycle for business planning and the cycle for Results Minneapolis don't mesh.
- It's not clear how departments are supposed to connect their business plans to City Council work plans.
- City Council committee work plans are calendar reports that aren't tied to City goals. Are we organizing work around City Council committees or City goals? There's too much slice and dice.
- The agendas of City Council committees don't match the committees' stated purposes. For example, why is the investment policy discussed at a health committee?

WE DON'T TALK ABOUT THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CITY COUNCIL DIRECTIVES AND EXISTING PROGRAMS OR POLICIES.

- The City has goals and policies that, broadly speaking, work well and reflect our values. However, departments get caught in the middle when trying to implement a new City Council directive that conflicts with an equally valid existing policy. For example, an equity/hiring directive may conflict with a risk management directive. When these policy implementation conflicts arise, there's no forum to discuss how to balance competing priorities. There isn't an internal process for talking about trade-offs or determining who is empowered to make a decision to resolve the conflict.
- The City Council enacts policies that sound good in theory but aren't clear cut when it's time for staff to implement them. There's not enough advance work done to ensure proposals are feasible.
- We don't talk about how departments can stay on track with their business plans in the face of new City Council initiatives or unexpected directives. Departments don't know what adjustments are acceptable.

THE STUDY SESSION FORMAT DISCOURAGES HONEST INTERACTION AND REAL PROBLEM-SOLVING.

- The study session format is so intimidating that it's not conducive to open and candid conversations. The formal speaking rules and the public environment don't facilitate an honest exchange of ideas, risk-taking or the critical thinking that could lead to real problem-solving. Answering questions with council members peering down from the dais stifles an exchange of ideas.

MICROMANAGEMENT GETS IN THE WAY OF REAL LEADERSHIP.

- The City Council loses key opportunities for moving Minneapolis forward when it spends its time on minutiae. When the council gets mired in the details, it misses opportunities to focus on the big picture.
- Because of fear of council reproof, staff bring too many routine matters to council committees. Not everything needs to go before a City Council committee. Governing by committee has ripple effects that aren't healthy for an organization. When City executives fear taking risks, innovation suffers.

Working in partnership, what strategies could we pursue?

ALIGN AND IMPROVE OUR PLANNING AND REPORTING PROCESSES.

- Organize City Council committees around City goals. Revisit council committee work assignments so agendas match the committee's stated purpose.
- Clarify expectations for departmental involvement in City Council work plans.
- Require department business plans to connect to City goals.

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- Focus Results Minneapolis reporting on key enterprise-wide goals.
- Rethink our reporting process. We don't need pie charts in every report. Instead of using every reporting tool in the arsenal, use charts and graphics only when they tell meaningful story.
- Disassociate departmental activities from the budgeting process so we aren't pitting one department against another. Focus on enterprise goals during budgeting.
- Allow departments more flexibility in implementing their business plans so they can react when new priorities surface.

POLICYMAKERS SHOULD FOCUS ON GOVERNING, NOT MANAGING.

- Govern, don't manage. City Council members need to value and embrace their roles as a legislative body. Council members need to focus on the jobs only they can do: make policy, oversee the general direction of the city, and represent their constituents.
- Revamp the council committee approach so committees talk about goals and policies, not minutia.
- Challenge the assumption that every decision should default to a council committee. Have an honest conversation to establish a framework that makes it clear where City Council authority begins and ends. We all need to understand boundaries.
- After setting the vision, council members should let staff implement the details. While City executives should ask for input, they should also be confident that their expertise is respected and know they are entrusted to make decisions.
- Change the council-City staff dynamic and build an internal culture that encourages responsibility, accountability, flexibility and risk-taking.
- Talk about how to better fit the mayor into the City Council governing dynamic.

REVAMP THE STUDY SESSION FORMAT TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HONEST AND PRODUCTIVE DIALOG.

- Change the study session environment to foster an honest and open dialog. Move committee meetings from the City Council Chamber to a room where council and staff can sit around a table and have a candid and respectful conversation. Rather than using formal rules of conversation where council members act as judges from the dais, create an atmosphere that enables all participants to feel comfortable enough to roll up their sleeves and talk to one another as peers who are seeking common solutions. Let's leave the titles at the door so we can work together to solve problems.

CLARIFY HOW WE WILL ADDRESS POLICY CONFLICTS AND BALANCE CONFLICTING DIRECTIVES.

- Talk about the implications for time, money, customer service and staffing when considering whether to enact a new policy directive.
- Explore the trade-offs that will be required when a proposed policy conflicts with an existing policy or directive. Decide who will be empowered to make a decision when policies conflict and what it means to comply with rules and offer good customer service. Look for opportunities to clarify accountability and determine who sets priorities for department resources.
- Learn from past policy implementation experiences so the process can be improved. Find ways to ensure all departments keep focused on how the customer will be impacted.
- Research how other cities deal with policy trade-offs and learn from them.

IMPROVE STAFF COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES.

- Formalize a plan to ensure the people who run the city on a day-to-day basis are meeting regularly. Mid-level staff — not just department heads — need to meet on a regular basis and share information. They're the one who get things done. The City Coordinator's office can be the convener.
- Create an internal communications strategy that keeps leadership involved and committed.

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- *(Note: Conversation participants were asked to focus on enterprise systems that support living our values and achieving our goals.)*

This conversation had representatives from City Clerk's Office, City Coordinator's Office, Community Planning and Economic Development, Finance Department, Health Department, Human Resources, Neighborhood and Community Relations, Public Works and Regulatory Services.