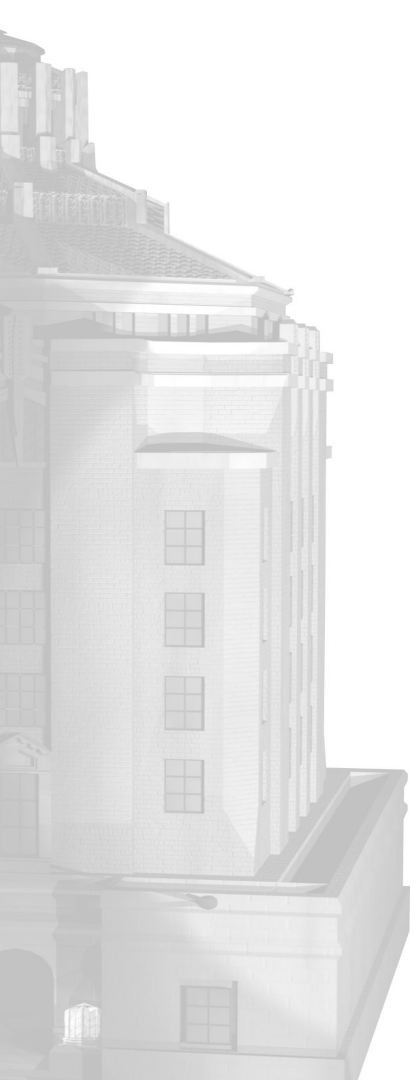


City Council Committee Realignment & Commissions Proposal

Sarah Gross, Deputy City Clerk

May 10, 2022

Presentation Overview

1. Background and History
    - Background and history of initiative
2. Council Committee Realignment
    - Realignment proposal of Council Committees
    - Council discussion
3. Update on Boards and Commissions Restructuring
    - Goals of restructuring Boards and Commissions
    - Community feedback we've heard
    - Council discussion

Background and History

City Staff:

- Identified recurring operational challenges with the current structure
- Conducted an assessment of the current structure
- Developed a draft proposal to holistically align the workflow of Council Committees and Boards and Commissions
- Holding engagement workshops to get community input and feedback
- Will continue to engage with the community

Background and History

Work Session:

- Request was made at 2022 Council retreat to hold a work session to review Council Committees and opportunities for alignment

Moving forward:

- Incremental phases and continued community input
  - Council Committees
  - Boards and Commissions
  - Pilot program

Council Committee Realignment

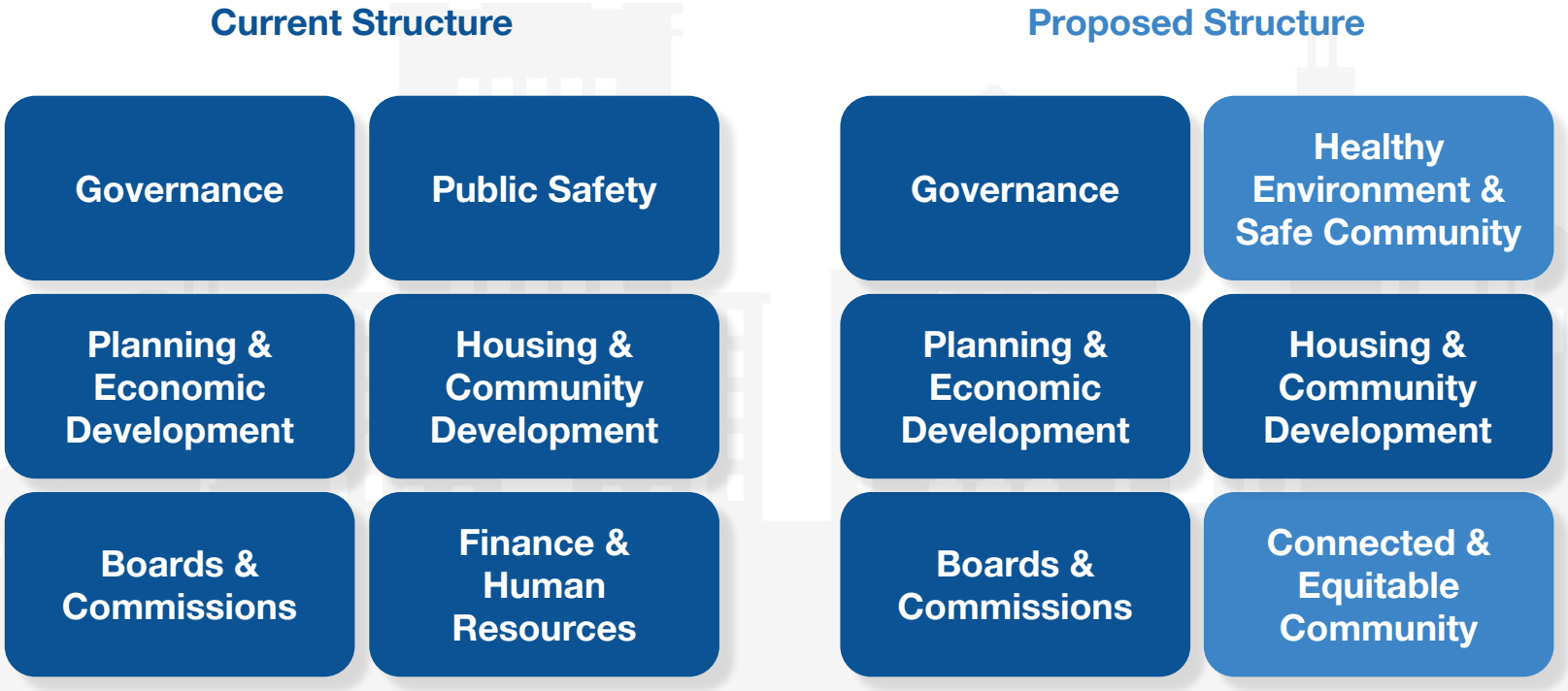
2. Key Takeaways

- Council committee structure has not been reviewed or adjusted in 16 years.
- Proposal to align Council Committee focus areas with the Comprehensive Plan and Council's Vision
- Adjustment of committees will provide:
  - Refocus on Council strategic priorities
  - Align community input, organizational work, and reporting with City Council priorities
- Asking Council feedback on the recommendations

Council Committee History

- Created for policy review and discussion arms of Council
- Majority of Committees were created in 2006 in a Council work session
  - [Revenue and] Finance and [Human Resources]
  - Public Safety
  - Planning and Economic Development
  - Housing and Community Development
- Governance created in 2013
- Boards and Commissions Committee created pre 1997
- Finance added “Human Resources” in 2018

Proposed Committee Realignment



Connected & Equitable Community

Comp Plan connection:
Interwoven *Equity*

Council Vision connection:
Equitable & Diverse + Connected & engaged

FY 23 Council Priorities:
Resilient Neighborhoods
Reparations



Possible Policy Topics Covered:

- Equitable investment
- Community involvement in Decision-making
- Neighborhood planning
- Community survey
- Access to opportunities
- Support for disadvantaged and minority communities

Healthy Environment & Safe Community

Comp Plan connection:
Harmony with Natural Environment + Healthy Community

Council Vision connection:
Clean and Healthy Environment

Council Priority*:*
Reimagining Public Safety





Possible Policy Topics Covered:

- General health & wellness
- Recreation
- Public safety
- Access to natural environment
- Green building
- Green infrastructure, flooding and erosion
- Stormwater management
- Climate change, adaptation & resilience
- Renewable & alternative energy
- Water use & waste

Governance

Council Vision connection:
Financially Resilient City

Council Priority:
Improve/expand core services



Possible Policy Topics Covered:

- Data and analytics
- Innovation
- Human resource policies
- Audit
- Financial well being
- Potential revenue streams
- Human resource policy issues
- Employee compensation

Boards & Commissions

Possible Policy Topics Covered:

- Boards and Commission specific policy

Council Prioritie(s):

- All

For Council Discussion

The proposed Council Committees are based off of the Comprehensive Plan, Council's Vision and incorporates FY23 Council Priorities.

1. Do the proposed Committees align in a way that captures and reflects the spirit of the Living Asheville Plan, Council's 2036 Vision Plan and/or other policy areas?
2. Other issues or concerns about the proposed committee realignment?

Council Committee Realignment- Next Steps

- Take today's feedback from Council and make any necessary updates to the recommendation to realign Council Committees
- Bring final recommendation(s) back to City Council for review and action

Boards & Commissions Restructuring

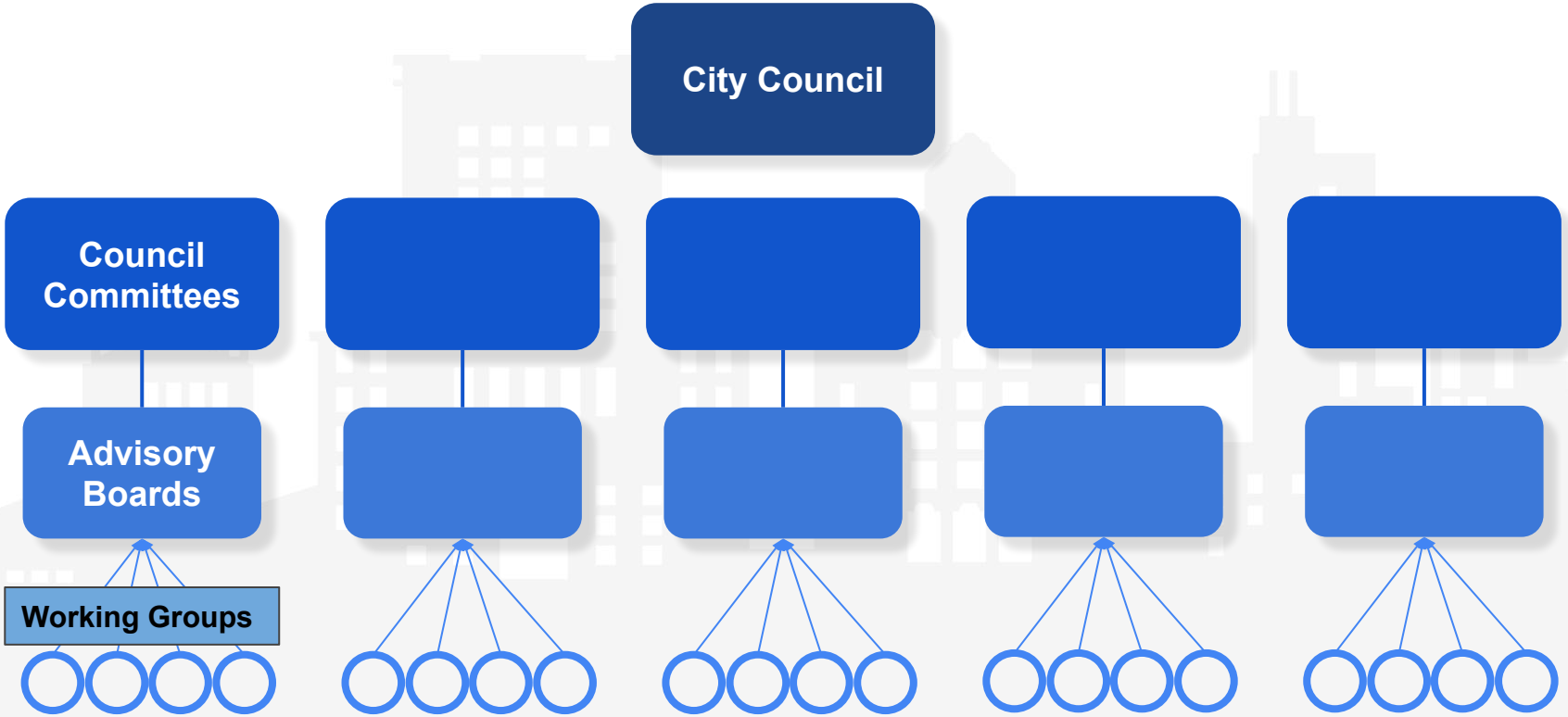
3. Key Takeaways

- The current structure is unclear, inconsistent, and does not maximize staff or volunteers' time
- Holistic assessment of current structure
- Proposed restructuring to make advisory boards more inclusive, effective and strategic
- Restructure Working Group will inform the final recommendation to City Council
- Pilot of the recommendation is an opportunity to test and refine

Intended results of restructuring

- Effective engagement in order to drive change and address community needs
- Effective use of volunteer time and energy
- A system for new ideas are heard and addressed
- Align City resources to better support the work
- Improved visibility and access into the decision making process
- Actively seek diverse cross section of volunteers
- Alignment of board work with City Council priorities

DRAFT Proposed Restructure



Where we are

✅ Two focus groups

✅Four workshops

✅ Independent conversations with various members and stakeholders

Restructure Working Group



Restructure Working Group

- Created by staff
- Charged with:
  - Find creative ways for community members who are unable to attend regular meetings to participate
  - Troubleshoot the proposed structure by processing examples from the work of current boards and commissions
  - Find creatives solutions to community concerns about the proposed structure
  - Help define the names and focus areas of each advisory board
  - Create guidelines and processes to ensure future Working Groups are inclusive and accountable

Working Group kick off meeting - May 5



What We Heard

General themes:

- Consensus the structure needs improvement
- Agreement with staff identified challenges
- There is abundant knowledge in the community
- Desire for stronger ties to City Council
- Staff support is inconsistent
- More outreach and diversity is needed

What We Heard

Concern that the proposal:

- Was developed by staff
- Limits voices
- Hinders community concerns (i.e., too top-down)
- Overlooks participant expertise
- Removes community from decision making power
- Has broad/confusing recommendations
- Includes an unrealistic workload for Advisory Boards

3. Boards and Commissions Restructuring Next Steps

- Proposed next steps:
  - Working Group to continue work and make recommendations
  - Incorporate working group input into pilot proposal
  - Begin work to establish a pilot
  - Test assumptions and adjust proposal
  - Report back and final recommendation to Council
- Council review and action

Discussion & Questions