# Council Norms: Is This Tool in Your Toolbox?

Learning Lounge Session

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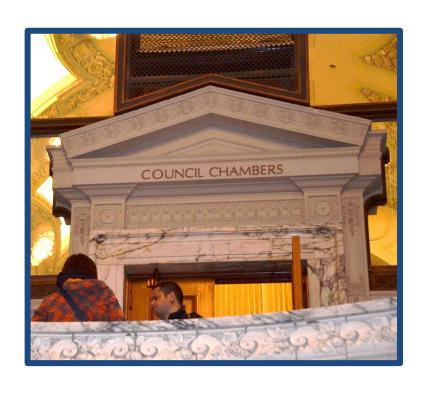
## **Session Topics**

- What are Council norms?
- Why it is helpful to have them?
- What do Council members need to be effective in their Council roles?
  - From other Council members?
  - From staff?
- Review examples of Council norms





## What is a norm?



An agreed upon behavior or procedure that all team members will demonstrate for the benefit of the organization.







# Why is it helpful to have Council norms?







## What do Council members need to be effective in their Council roles?

#### From other Council members

- Once a vote is taken, respect the Council direction
- Discuss issues openly at Council meetings
- Strive for consensus
- Demonstrate respect, consideration, and courtesy

#### From City staff

- Thorough staff work
- Professional recommendations





### What does staff need from Council?

- Prepare for Council meetings
- Ask clarifying questions in advance of a Council meeting
- Communicate to staff as appropriate based on the City Manager's direction
- Communicate questions about legal issues to the City Attorney
- Keep confidential matters confidential



## **Examples of Norms**

#### **General Council Behavior**

Work for the common good, not personal interest.

Respect the proper roles of elected officials and City staff in ensuring open and effective government.

Serve as a model of leadership and civility to the community.

Prepare in advance of Council meetings and be familiar with issues on the agenda.

Demonstrate respect, consideration, and courtesy to other Council members and the public verbally or in writing.

Inspire public confidence in City government.





## **Examples of Norms**

#### **Council Conduct with One Another**

Work together as a body, modeling teamwork and civility

Be respectful of other people's time

Honor the role of the presiding officer in maintaining order

Be respectful of diverse opinions

Have high ethical standards in all Council matters

Encourage public participation



## **Examples of Norms**

#### **Council Conduct with Staff**

Treat all staff as professionals

Practice civility and decorum in all interactions with City staff

Direct questions to City staff through the City Manager

Never publicly criticize an individual employee or Council member

Support a positive and productive work environment

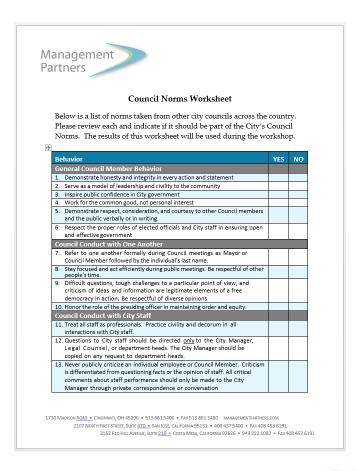
Do not get involved in administrative functions; Council's responsibility is to make policy





## **Establish Norms Collaboratively**

- Valuable exercise for all Councils
- Norms vary by city and depend on organizational culture
- Ideally, establishing norms is a collaborative exercise that involves all Council members and some city staff





## Questions/Comments?



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