

Workshop #2 Report

Workshop participants engaged in dialogue to further establish context for budget development recommendations for 2010-11. The process allowed them to articulate their individual perspectives on City effectiveness, and the City's purpose, values and essential attributes for the 2010-11 year and beyond.

Summary of Perspectives

1. Where does our community and the City excel?

- Engaged/Involved citizens
- Diverse community
- Great school system
- Arts and culture
- Public transportation
- Parks, lake and green space
- Northwestern University
- Safe location/community
- Volunteerism
- Community expertise
- Good quality of life
- Socially conscious
- Resources (NU, etc.)
- Family friendly
- Large pool of talent/experience
- Strong non-profit
- Location, location, location
- Downtown is great

2. Where do we miss the mark?

- Inability to prioritize/Reluctance to make hard decision/ Participate and engage but do not decide
- "All things to all people"
- Relationship with the University
- Fiscal responsibility/Spend too much
- Personnel costs

- Development of the neighborhoods/ Don't live up to commitment to neighborhood plans
- Council asks for participation but does not listen
 - Church St. Plan
 - West Side Plan
 - Downtown Plan (708 Church)
- Conflicting visions/goals/principles
- We demand without an open mind to compromise
- Micro-managing council
- Lack of pragmatic leadership
- Not listening to our own boards and commissions
- Management
- Interdepartmental communication
- Lack of coordination
- Lack of transparency
- Consistent accountability
- Civic hubris
- Property taxes
- Business retention
- Job creation
- Not acting regionally
- Utilization of intellectual capital/leveraging people and talent
- The streets
- Maintenance
- Parking and tickets
- The City is everybody's business

3. What requires focused attention and creativity?

- The Budget/\$8 million gap
- Fiscal Priorities
- Increasing fees/Cutting Services/Optimize services/spend within our means
- Find new revenue
- Prioritize programs and services/Make the hard choices
- Economic development/Attract new businesses
- Short-term financial planning
- Long-term financial planning
- Better Relationship with NU and other non-profits

- Using Evanston resources and relationships more effectively
 - Non-profits
 - Northwestern
 - Social Service Agencies
- Improve financial balance between Northwestern and Evanston in a measurable way
- Address policy issues at the state and federal level
- Look at other communities as a benchmark
- Complete projects

Connecting to City Purpose

- Serve the citizens
- Creating unity and valuing everyone's time, gifts and talents
- Giving back to the community creates good stewardship, ownership and shows care and love for the community.
- Evanston is our home
- Commitment to human development and growth
- Foster self-governance
- Willing to work towards better democracy
- Commitment toward a better future for us and the future generations
- A livable place for a broad range of citizens
- Motivated to raise the bar beyond a culture of mediocrity
- Providing adequate services while staying within our means
- Help our neighbors and make sure that no one lacks resources
- Community is bigger than the City
- City should create appropriate laws and policy
 - i.e., allow chickens?
- What is the right balance?
 - Far left – where the city does everything
 - Far right – roads, police and fire
- Coordination of the activities (making sure things occur within the boundary of the law)
- Coordinate communication and conversation
- Quality of life
- Place to live, work retire and expire
- Want to be affordable
- Be a vibrant, diverse community
- Affect positive change
 - Ability
 - Frustration
- People

Essential Community Attributes for 2010-11

- Passion for fiscal responsibility
 - Build 1,2, 5 and 10 year plan
 - Discipline to do more with less
 - Across-the-board effectiveness
 - Leaner meaner government
 - More bang for your buck
 - One time personnel reduction that lasts for 5-10 years
 - Smaller, more efficient government
 - Justify action (i.e consultants) as providing value added (ROI)
 - More frugal and more resourceful
 - More fiscal transparency (facilities management, parks, fleet services)
 - Set up and reach goals regarding efficiency
 - Productivity gains
 - Living within our means
 - Cost effective services
- Balanced Budget
 - That is just and equitable
 - Does not raise taxes
 - No new programs “mid-stream” without reducing something else
 - Temporary furloughs
- Smarter government decisions
- Find that not doing something saves money
- Search for effectiveness and competition
- Establish a cost-benefit analysis
- Limited change orders
- Smaller property taxes
- We are fair about new fees, programs, expenses
- Optimal level of service (may or may not equal what we have today)
- Examine consulting relationships (we have a lot of intelligent resources)
- Use in-house (city, community) resources
- Leverage human capital to reduce expense (NU interns) and generate revenue using staff expertise as consultants or contract employees for non-city entities
- Share functions with others (cities, university and non-profits)/Partner with NU
- More internal coordination/cooperation with the city – city, 202, 65, the county
- Willing to cut social services over police and fire
- Maintain social services that prevent the need for fire and police services
- Maintain library services
- No sacred cows
- City staff reflects current economic conditions

- Revenues exceed expenditure
- Find untapped resources (widen events, for example)
- Ability to bundle attractions (athletics, lakefront, restaurant and theatre)
- Safe Community
- Public Transportation
- Prevent the deterioration of the city's assets – buildings, parks, Infrastructure (roads, etc.)
- Schools and education
- Capitalize on citizen input
- Consensus Outcome
- More effective use of boards and commissions
- Let the city manager be the city manager
- More attentive, responsive city council
- Mayoral/alderman pay cuts
- 12 step for recovering politicians
- Tough choices regarding pension
- Community involvement
- Better relationship with the community
 - Expansion
 - Retention
- Increased cooperation with nearby communities
- More engagement of non-profit and charitable organizations
- Provide services that support socioeconomic and racial diversity
- Maximize social values
 - Diversity
 - Concern for the less fortunate
- Cosmopolitan atmosphere
- Jobs
- Business attraction/retention
- Build businesses and keep them in Evanston – Business friendly
- Save street parking for patrons – customer friendly
- Healthier community
- A “Greener” City