

2025 City Council Retreat

February 18, 2025

Overview



This overview is provided to help prepare participants for the retreat activity and discussions. There will be three distinct parts to the retreat: Consensus Workshop, Funds Discussion, and Conclusion. Each part is described below. The objective for this retreat is intended to begin conversations and build consensus on broad topics, thereby setting a foundation for future discussions, planning, and decision making in the months ahead.

Part I. CONSENSUS WORKSHOP

The retreat will begin with a *consensus workshop* to identify the Council’s strategic priorities. This activity will help inform future discussions and identify areas of importance and agreement among the Council. The workshop will include individually generating ideas, sharing and grouping ideas collectively, and identifying three to five strategic priorities.

For the purposes of the retreat, the term **Strategic Priorities** means broad statements or areas of importance or focus. These help to articulate the City’s general direction and allocation of resources. Future discussions will be necessary to develop specific goals and action steps to support the strategic priorities the Council determines.

Examples of strategic priorities from other communities include:

- Environmental Stewardship
 - Welcoming Community
 - Quality Development
 - Multi-Modal Transportation Options
 - Reliable Infrastructure
 - Collaboration and Innovation
 - Resilient Economic Base
 - Good Governance
 - Life-Cycle Housing
 - Leading at or in _____
 - Destination for _____
- Stable Finances

Part II. FUNDS DISCUSSION

The city’s various funds will be reviewed in the late morning and afternoon. The funds will be grouped and following review of each, discussion will occur around the Council’s priorities, philosophies, and preferred options regarding the funds or fund groups. The questions below for each fund are starting points for discussion. Following the retreat, staff will build potential scenarios and draft policies based on this discussion for future consideration and direction by the Council. These will help inform the development of the 2026 budget as well.

A. General Fund

The Question: What is the basic City philosophy for the General Fund?

The Objective: Build consensus and articulate core principles.

- What are your key take-aways?
- What are expectations for levels of service and levels of performance? What are they worth (think about staffing, compensation, tools, services, resources)?
- What requirements or investments will be needed with these expectations?
- Where should City maintain the status quo? Where should it be proactive?

B. Shorewood Community and Event Center

The Question: What is the Council's vision and expectation for the SCEC?

The Objective: Build consensus and articulate a vision for the SCEC.

- What are your key take-aways?
- What is the role or importance of the SCEC for Shorewood residents?
- How does the SCEC align with the services the City wishes to provide?
- What is the level of service desired for the SCEC? What are the funding expectations?
- If the SCEC went away, what opportunities emerge?
- What is the willingness to invest in the SCEC?

C. Capital Funds (Street, Park, Equipment, Community Infrastructure)

The Question: What is the philosophy for financing infrastructure and equipment?

The Objective: Articulate principles to develop a financing program for infrastructure and equipment that aligns with goals and values.

- What are your key take-aways?
- How does discussion on other funds impact discussions about Capital Funds?
- What public improvements are most important to Shorewood residents?
- What are Shorewood's general expectations for its infrastructure and facilities?
- What concerns and appreciations have been expressed about public projects? Why?
- How does Shorewood want to finance public improvements?
- Should levy support for these funds increase? If so, at what rate?

D. Enterprise Funds (Water, Stormwater, Sanitary Sewer, Recycling)

The Question: What is the Council philosophy for operating enterprise funds?

The Objective: Articulate principles to develop financing plans that align with goals and values.

- What are your key take-aways?
- How does discussion on other funds impact discussion about Enterprise Funds?
- What principles should be applied to solve fund deficiencies or ensure sustainability? What solutions are preferred and should be explored or focused on first? (city wide Infrastructure fee, incentives vs requirements, trigger events like point of sale)
- What reactions might be expected from these solutions?
- Are there alternatives or options that have not been considered and should be?

PART III. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The retreat will conclude with a short reflection on what was accomplished, identifying areas or topics that need more attention and what matters are ahead. Potential discussion questions may include:

- Of the Strategic Priorities, which ones are most solidified? Which ones need more clarity? Which have strong consensus among the Council, or less consensus?
- Should we proceed with developing goals and actions for these in future work sessions? Should we plan to meet earlier for work sessions? Do a half day meeting?
- Considering the Funds discussions, where did there seem to be the most consensus? Where is more discussion needed? What considerations will be the most challenging?
- Final thoughts and comments