

# SULTAN CITY COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

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ITEM NO: A-3  
DATE: January 11, 2007  
SUBJECT: City Council Retreat  
CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Knight, City Administrator

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### SUMMARY:

The City Council has tentatively selected Saturday, February 10, 2007 as the date for its Council retreat. Staff has prepared a proposed agenda (Attachment A) for the retreat. The Agenda outlines some options for Council consideration. There are certainly more topics for discussion than time available. Staff is seeking Council direction to fine-tune the retreat format and discussion topics.

The proposed retreat agenda assumes an all day retreat from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM with a morning break, an hour for lunch, and an afternoon break. Staff recommends the Council consider an off-site, facilitated retreat. The benefit to meeting off-site is to provide a “change of scenery” and encourage fresh and creative thinking. Staff recommends the Council hire a professional facilitator to focus the Council’s efforts and increase the possibility of a productive and engaging meeting. The cost estimate of a facilitator is \$1,000-\$2,000. There is \$1,000 in the Council’s legislative budget for professional services that could be used for this purpose.

The proposed retreat agenda is broken into three steps:

Step 1 (1-2 HOURS) – Visioning exercise using current vision statements from the Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Plan 2020, Industrial Park Master Plan, etc. The purpose of the visioning exercise is to set the foundation for a discussion of goals and objectives. The Council’s long and short-term visions provide direction for staff efforts.

Step 2 (4-5 HOURS)– Identify city goals based on vision. Step 2 would include a brief review of completed projects and to identify what existing efforts need to continue during 2007. This is also the opportunity to discuss in-depth those goals and objectives the Council wants to focus its energy on in 2007 and 2008. Staff is recommending three focus areas. The Council should select one or two topics in

each focus area during this evening's meeting and direct staff to prepare topic materials for the retreat:

- 1) Police/Public Safety - community policing, code enforcement and animal control;
- 2) Planning and Community Development - annexation efforts, Comprehensive Plan and development regulation amendments, and economic development;
- 3) Finance - storm water utility fee, budget and operating policies, and building department special revenue fund.

Step 3 (OFF-SITE W/ REPORTS TO COUNCIL) – Preparing department work plans (objectives) based on City goals. Report back to the City Council during a regular Council meeting in March.

**ANALYSIS:**

The Council’s retreat sets aside time for Council members to clarify their thinking on the future of the City and identify the primary goals and policies in the upcoming year to achieve the City’s vision. A retreat is a rare opportunity for the City Council to focus quality time on a limited number of important issues facing the community. The main purpose of a retreat is to offer the City Council an opportunity to accomplish work that can’t be done through routine meetings.

There are more topics for discussion than can be reasonably covered in a one-day meeting. The Council should narrow the agenda to two or three primary topics and direct staff to prepare discussion materials for the retreat. The Council should consider adding more time to the retreat (e.g. Friday evening on February 9) if there are more than two or three topics the Council would like to discuss.

The purpose of this retreat is to offer the City Council an opportunity to meet together as an executive board to drive problem solving and generate solutions to business issues facing the Sultan community.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Staff recommends the Council hire a trained facilitator for approximately \$1,000. This contract would include some pre-meeting preparation (1-2 hours), day of facilitation (7 hours) and follow-up report (1-2 hours) summarizing the outcomes of the retreat. The meeting would be held off-site at a donated facility. Food and beverages would include a light continental breakfast, snacks throughout the day and lunch. The funding is available in the Council’s travel budget.

Facilitator:	\$1,000
Meeting Room:	\$0
Food/Beverage	\$225 (15 people x \$15)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,225.00</b>

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. Review the proposed Council Retreat Agenda and give direction to staff on the format and discussion topics.
  2. Direct staff to retain the services of a paid facilitator and authorize the City Manager to sign a contract with the selected facilitator.
  3. Direct staff to locate and secure an off-site meeting room.
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COUNCIL ACTION:

DATE:

Attachment A  
Proposed Agenda  
Council Retreat 2007

## Proposed Date

Saturday, February 10, 2007

One full-day to complete Step 1 and Step 2 (below) with follow-up presentations by staff as necessary to complete Step 3

## Proposed Format

The City has developed a number of vision statements for the community over the last few years. The staff recommendation is to start with a consensus on the vision for the City and then drill down to develop specific actions (goals and objectives) to achieve the vision. This ensures that the Council and staff are following the stated direction of the community.

The intent of the discussion is to answer the following questions. There may be other questions identified by the Council that also need to be addressed during the retreat:

- What vision is the Council hoping to achieve?
- Where does the Council want to focus the City's attention?
- How does this focus move the community forward towards its vision?
- What resources (staff, financial, community) are needed to achieve the vision?
- How will the City obtain these resources – grants, donations, general fund, new utility fees, etc?

Step 1: Visioning exercise using current vision statements from Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Plan, Industrial Park Master Plan etc.

- Purpose – set the foundation for a discussion of goals and objectives. The Council's long and short-term visions provide direction for staff efforts.

Step 2: Identify city goals based on vision

- Review completed projects identify what has been accomplished and what needs to continue into 2007/2008
- Identify new goals and objectives for 2007/2008

### Proposed Goals and Objectives for Discussion

1. Police/Public Safety - including code enforcement and animal control
  - Focus of police and public safety in 2007/2008

*Outcome of Discussion: Direction to staff on the primary objectives of the police and public safety.*
2. Planning and Community Development
  - Future annexation areas
  - Comprehensive Plan and development regulations changes
  - Hearing Examiner Appeal Process

Attachment A  
Proposed Agenda  
Council Retreat 2007

- Focus of economic development efforts - how much and where  
*Outcome of Discussion: Direction to staff on the priority planning and community development efforts for 2007 (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> quarters) and 2008.*

3. Finance

- 2007/2008 budget policies
  - Storm water utility fee - 2007
  - Budget operating policies – 2007/2008
  - Building department special revenue fund - 2008

Step 3: Prepare Dept. work plans (objectives) based on city goals

- Coordinate department work plans and present to Council.
- Set 2007 work plans and lay the ground work for 2008 budget
- Identify resources (staff, financial, community support, etc.) needed to achieve vision, goals, and objectives

**Facilitated vs. Self-Directed**

Since there is limited staff experience with facilitating a retreat, staff recommend investing in a paid professional facilitator to ensure a meaningful retreat discussion.

A facilitated retreat has the benefit of focusing the Council's efforts and increasing the possibility of a productive and engaging meeting. The cost for a facilitated usually start at around \$2,500 and go upward depending on the length of the retreat and coordination meetings with Council prior to the retreat.

Facilitated retreat - \$1000 - \$2000

A retreat facilitated by staff has the benefit of being low cost. However, a staff facilitated retreat may not result in any meaningful outcomes. The Council's willingness to participate in the retreat and achieve consensus can increase the changes of a productive staff facilitated retreat.

If the Mayor and Council decide to have staff facilitate the retreat , the Council will need to have consensus on the agenda and format prior to the retreat to ensure a meaningful outcome.

Attachment A  
Proposed Agenda  
Council Retreat 2007

**Retreat Location**

On-site vs. Off-site Location

The ideal retreat is held far enough away to eliminate everyday distractions. The Council should consider going off-site, if possible. To keep costs and travel time to a minimum, the staff recommendation is to secure a donated space in or around Sultan.