



CITY GOVERNMENT 101



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NEIGHBORHOOD
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We're going to talk about...

**What the
City does,**

**how
decisions
are made,**

**& how to
participate!**

Let's set the tone.

- Government as it is, not how it could or should be.
- Participants agree to:
 - Listen to each other respectfully
 - Save questions for the end
- Staff agree to:
 - Answer questions as best we can; write down questions we can't answer and follow up.



Introduction: Why does the City of Charleston exist?

The purpose of government is to create public value where the market is not providing value.¹

When we have limited space and resources, how do we use them to maximize public value?

How do we do this equitably?

¹Moore, Mark H. 1997. [Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government](#). Harvard University Press.





What does the City of Charleston do?

- (Non-exhaustive) Summary of City services:
 - Public sanitation (trash & garbage collection)
 - Stormwater with drainage maintenance and permitting review
 - Emergency responses with police and fire
 - Managing traffic flow and parking enforcement
 - Creating opportunities and space for recreation
 - Making public spaces safe and clean
 - Encouraging housing opportunities for all residents
 - Creating and implementing plans to manage growth and guide development



...And planning how all these can continue and improve in the future.

What services do other agencies provide (*that the City doesn't*)?

- **Dominion Energy:**
 - Powerlines, tree trimming associated with powerlines
- **Charleston Water Systems:**
 - Water, sewer, fire hydrants
- **Charleston County:**
 - Repaving, Recycling, Landfill, Elections, Property Assessments, Coroner, Jail, Library, Schools
- **Public Service Districts:**
 - Varies by district
- **SCDOT:**
 - Managing state-owned roads and ROWs





Who Makes the Decisions (*big picture version*)

1. Mayor
 - A. Executive decisions
 - B. Proposing policies
 - C. Appointments to some positions
 - D. Final hiring decisions for senior staff
2. City Council
 - A. Working Committees
 - B. Ordinance votes (including *budget*)
 - C. Board/Commission appointees
3. City Staff
 - A. Day-to-day operations
 - B. Research/long-term planning proposals
 - C. Work with boards and commissions

What impacts decisions about City services? (Non-exhaustive list)

- Public opinion/input
- Natural or man-made disasters & weather events
- Population numbers
- Population *density*
- Changes to technology
- Other agencies (local, state, federal)
- Staff capacity
- Revenue
- New data indicating success (or lack of success) or new information about best practices



Group Activity Time!

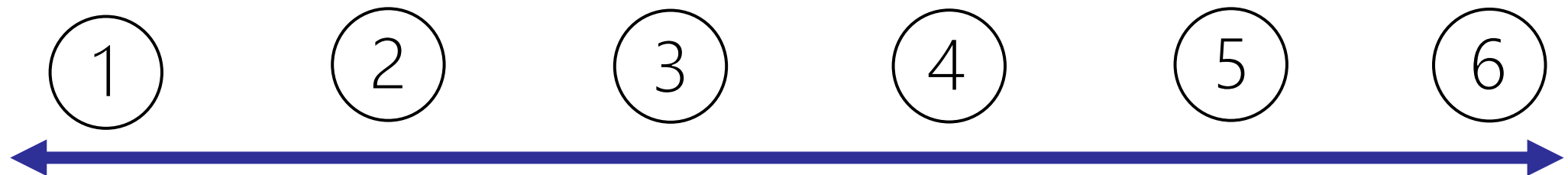
- Congratulations!
- 2 scenarios
- Divide into groups, pick scribe & spokesperson
- Consider issues in each case study
- Make recommendations as City of Not-Charleston staff





Public Input

1. Work orders/requests for service
2. Requests to staff for changes in how services are delivered
3. Requests to elected officials for changes to policy
4. Participating in a survey, focus group, community meeting, town hall, or public comment period at a City Council meeting
5. Serving on a board
6. Running for office





Work Orders/Requests for Service

1. City:

- A. Citizen Services Desk
- B. CitiBot
- C. City of Charleston App
- D. Individual City staff

2. Other Agencies:

- A. SCDOT Work Order Form
- B. Charleston County Work Order Form
- C. CWS Request Line
- D. Dominion Hotline & Work Order Form

Requests to staff for changes in programs/services

1. Department leadership
2. Individual City staff

How do I find the right person to talk to?

Next steps depend on the scale of the request.

Minor requests may be answered immediately, whereas larger ones may have to be escalated. This can depend on cost, staff capacity, or other factors.





Requests to elected officials

1. Email/phone call
2. Public comment period
3. Formal letter
4. Town halls/Neighborhood Assoc. meetings

How do I find their contact information?

Next steps depend on the scale of the request.

Elected officials may be able to make a request directly to staff to research/develop, or may initiate a change in policy via an ordinance.







Participating in Public Input Opportunities

1. Email/Phone call/Innovate
2. Public comment periods (in person and virtual)
3. Formal letter
4. Town halls/Neighborhood Assoc. meetings

How do I find opportunities for input?

 **Citizen Participation**
Sign up to speak at a public meeting or submit your comments!

 **Meeting Comments**
View online meeting comments and the list of participants signed up to speak.

Serve on a Board or Commission

SOUTH CAROLINA

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Apply For Vacant Positions

West Ashley Revitalization Commission



Eric Pohlman

Term Limit: 3 year Terms, unlimited number of Terms.

Positions: 19 in total. 10 occupied. 9 vacant. 10 becoming vacant.

Board Members:



Brantley Moody



Diane Hamilton



Teresa Tidestrom



Trudie Krawcheck



Jim Garrett



Matt Moldenhauer



Ryan Cumback



Aimee Sutton



Drelle Parker



Peter Shahid
Council Member



Teresa Tidestrom

Join this Board



Run for office!

1. Submit a “statement of candidacy” along with a filing fee (\$1000 for mayor and \$150 for council and Commissioners for Public Works) during the filing period. Provide proof of residency and voter registration.
2. This must be notarized and submitted to the Legal office at City Hall.

Note that these races are *nonpartisan*.



How Decisions Are Made (*Ordinances*)

Issue Identified: Staff, board/commission members, and/or elected officials perceive an opportunity to solve a problem.

Data Collection/Analysis: Staff and elected officials analyze potential solutions and whether a new ordinance would **help solve the problem**, would be **enforceable**, and would be **legal**. During this period, they:

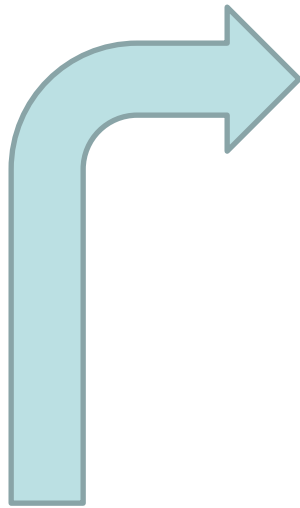
- Listen to how residents feel about the issue
- Consult with staff
- Look into what other local governments are doing
- Consider whether funds are needed/available
- Determine whether there is staff capacity





How Decisions Are Made (*Cont.*)

Solution Proposed: Corporation Council (Legal) work with subject-matter expert staff members to draft an ordinance.



Committee Review: City Councilmembers sit on various subject-matter specific committees. The draft moves to the appropriate committee for review. The committee may send it back to staff for more input or approve it for first reading at City Council.

The committee agendas are posted on the City website.

How Decisions Are Made (*Cont.*)

First Reading at Council: The draft ordinance is posted on the City website along with the agenda for the City Council meeting, where a public hearing is held at either the same or subsequent meeting.

Second & Third Reading are usually done concurrently (same meeting).



How do I keep track of issues I care about?

- Follow your City Council member and the City of Charleston on social media
- Identify local advocacy groups and advocates who work with issues you care about (ex: Charleston Moves)
- Sign up for *Hey, Charleston!* newsletter, and/or any notification lists pertaining to your cause(s)
- Review agendas for committee and council meetings



Image from NPR.org



QUESTIONS?

Sources

- Moore, Mark H. 1997. [Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government](#). Harvard University Press.
- Butler, N. (2018, March 9). Charles Town's Growing Pains. *Charleston Time Machine*. <https://www.ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/charles-towns-growing-pains>