

**Government Transition Advisory Committee Questions for
Interim City Administrator Mike Jordan & Interim Assistant City Administrator Annie Von Burg
August 7, 2024 Meeting**

In anticipation of Interim City Administrator Mike Jordan's and Interim Assistant City Administrator Annie Von Burg's participation in the August 7, 2024 GTAC meeting, GTAC sent some questions with a request for written responses. Those responses are below. At the end of this document are additional GTAC questions that will be answered at the meeting.

**For Mike: How can you lead the transition and serve as the Interim City Administrator at the same time?
What efficiencies can you gain from those overlapping roles?**

- The transition project is well staffed and implementing a prioritized task list. We are on track to deliver the voter-approved charter amendments and have a full six months of test fitting the roles and responsibilities of the administration. We are building our governance structure and operational norms. Our focus is on readying the organization for the transfer of administrative authorities to the executive mayor and city administrator and preparing for the new legislative process and the 12-member council elected by district. The recently appointed Leadership Team expanded the executive branch and established a dynamic talented cohort that assists me in the day-to-day operations of the city. As Interim City Administrator, my role is clearly defined in the charter; my focus during the remainder of 2024 is to operationalize this role and empower the Leadership Team and city staff to lead and deliver for Portlanders. Wearing the hats of Project Sponsor for the Transition Project and Interim City Administrator, I have insight into the needs of an organization that is experiencing significant change and employees who want to innovate and optimize our government. Additionally, there is significant value in our focus on ongoing governance, that work that continues beyond December and into the mayor/council form of government. The Leadership Team, including myself, is keenly aware of what it means to remove the silos of the commission form of government, and we are already working to coordinate across the organization, lead our newly integrated service areas, remove barriers between bureaus, and improve services for Portlanders.

For Mike & Annie: Please provide responses or updates to GTAC's recommendations to *current* City leaders that are in the portfolio of the City Administrator or Assistant City Administrator?

- Council staffing – Please provide an update on the (a) hiring of the council operations manager; and (b) the scoping of the third-party evaluation to assess the relative staffing of the mayor, council, and city administrator.
 - Lori Brocker-Knapp, the City of Portland's first council operations manager, who comes to the City with significant legislative experience, started on August 1, 2024. Their initial work priorities include reviewing the 2022 revised City Charter and work-to-date of the Transition Team, community comments, and the recommendations developed by GTAC.
 - City Council adopted a budget note directing the Interim City Administrator to develop a scope of work for a third-party evaluation "to assess the organizational structure and staffing in the City Administrator's office, the Deputy City Administrator offices, the City Council, and the Mayor's Office under the new form of government. The evaluation should focus on the service delivery and cost impacts of the organizational structure and possible efficiencies and include comparisons to highly performing cities of comparable size and governance structure. It should

include an assessment of the number of Deputy City Administrators, bureau directors, and Council staff.” The draft scope will be presented to the Council by the end of August. After the scope is agreed to, either this council or the future council will need to allocate funds for this evaluation.

- Onboarding - Please respond to GTAC concerns that the onboarding plan doesn’t include an external consultant to help design, schedule and implement the process, team-building opportunities, and a practical overview of responsibilities / councilor 101 in the curriculum.
 - The City is confident of the work of the Transition Team and the incoming Council Operations Manager, who are designing the onboarding plan for the newly elected leadership. Many of the topics listed in the question are included in the draft plan. Internal resources dedicated to onboarding include existing staff as well as the Council Operations Team members who will be joining the City in the coming months. Information on roles and responsibilities will be comprehensively covered in the onboarding process, and through additional materials, the Transition Team will provide for new leadership. Additionally, we look forward to hearing from the newly elected officials about what additional resources they need to support their work.
- District offices – What is the path to securing resources for a robust community engagement process to assess what programming Portlanders want in their districts? Where would responsibility for scoping and implementing the engagement lie in the administration?
 - There is currently no allocation in the FY 2024/25 budget for a community engagement process for the programming of community engagement in council districts. The 2025 City Council will ultimately be the decision-makers on how information is solicited from the community about the needs for district-based offices and engagement opportunities. The City Council has the authority to direct the administration to develop an engagement process and plan after they are seated in January of 2025. The FY 2025-26 budget process is the first opportunity to identify or realign ongoing funding related to scoping and engagement work for district engagement and potential office locations.
- Community engagement – We appreciate the acceleration of the Community Engagement Officer hiring timeline. What is being done to set this person up for success? What, if any, role does GTAC have?
 - The scope of this project includes establishing roles and responsibilities for the Engagement Officer Position based on research on best practices from other jurisdictions. It also includes a current state assessment of the practice, including existing policies and practices, including what is working well and challenges, an inventory of city employees and roles, needs assessment, risk, and gap analysis. The assessment will be informed by engagement practice subject matter experts and leadership. Deliverables include plans to support staff and the organization through change, key components of role of the engagement officer as a member of the Leadership Team. Please contribute to the [community survey](#) that will inform this work. The survey is open until August 12 Additional roles for GTAC will be determined.

For Mike & Annie: Please provide input on GTAC’s draft recommendations to *future* City leaders that are in the portfolio of the City Administrator or Assistant City Administrator.

- What do you envision as the relationship between the new citywide practices (engagement, communications, equity, sustainability) and the legislative branch?

- We expect the officers to contribute to the development of citywide and council directed policy as subject matter experts through the legislative committee process and to carry out policy initiatives funded in the budget process. The citywide practices project is a strategic approach to improving how we engage the community, communicate with Portlanders, and advance sustainability and equity. Each of these four practice areas will be led by an officer who is a subject matter expert in the administration and can share their expertise to the legislative council through their policy and committee work. While the council cannot direct the work of the staff, they can ask the officers to contribute to their committee work or allocate funds for policy initiatives led by the officers.
- What do you envision as the relationship between the service areas and the legislative branch, including whether standing council committees should align with service areas?
 - The 2025 City Council will decide the topics for standing committees. The topics are anticipated to be policy priorities that likely span multiple service areas. Subject matter experts from service areas will be invited to present to committees to inform the council’s policy discussions and decisions.
- What do you think about centralizing primary responsibility for the design, coordination, and implementation of community engagement in the budget process in the City Administrator’s Office?

For the FY 2025-26 Budget process, we are standing up a community engagement “focus team” co-led by members of the Office of Civic Life, Central Communications, the City Budget Office, and including community engagement professionals from within the City’s service areas. This focus team will identify a community engagement strategy that both encourages meaningful input for the current budget development cycle and sets up the basic structure for future budget cycle engagement efforts. While their position is currently under development, we expect that in the future, Engagement Officer will contribute to the budget engagement strategy.

GTAC Questions to be Answered in the August 7th Meeting

1. Given GTAC's responsibilities (below, and particularly the highlighted content), can you provide feedback on how you think we are doing, any specifics on where our advising or engagement has been most effective and things you would like to see more of/less of from us, as we head into the final 6 months of our tenure. GTAC Roles and Responsibilities:
 - a. Ensure implementation of November 2022 voter-approved charter amendments is done effectively and efficiently, following the City’s core values of anti-racism, equity, communication, collaboration, transparency and fiscal responsibility.
 - b. Maintain open and consistent communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders throughout the transition, and ensure input is meaningfully integrated into the City’s implementation of the November 2022 voter-approved Charter amendments. Other than districting-specific public input, serve as the primary solicitor and repository of public input related to the transition.
 - c. Advise the City on the November 2022 voter-approved Charter amendments transition plan and community education and engagement plan, including project schedule and project budget, resource allocation and funding strategy.

2. Throughout the transition period, the relationship between of the Office of Community & Civic Life and neighborhood associations has been strained. This dynamic now falls within the Assistant City Administrator's purview. Please give us your assessment of the current state of the relationship and your thoughts on how it can be strengthened in the future.
3. Why have some transition components received extensive analysis and discussion, while others seem hasty and incomplete, e.g., matching neighborhood coalitions to voting districts without even involving the Independent District Coalition or many neighborhoods and passing a resolution to have district offices ready for next year? Is that just another symptom of siloed government, or something else?
4. GTAC has been informed that a lack of appropriate staffing in a number of key transition areas is related to the lack of budget funds to fill those positions. The Budget and Finance Staffing and Budget Process Transition Report indicates that some positions, such as the analyst, are classified as ripe for further analysis to find efficiencies. The report indicates there are 387 positions in this classification. Is the City planning to conduct an assessment of all the positions, especially those identified in the report? The analysis of this and other positions mentioned in the same report can produce savings that can be used to appropriately staff the new city council operation and those departments carrying the greatest workload in preparation for and during the transition.
5. Some of the Budget and Finance Staffing and Budget Process Transition Report are time sensitive. Is the City planning to implement the following recommendations:
 - a. The City should immediately develop an improved budget communication and education plan.
 - b. Budget Office staff should release information within the next few weeks on the recently adopted FY24-25 budget and the proposed process for FY25-25.
 - c. The City should develop a transparent budget engagement plan for the legislative and operating sides of government, articulating the purpose, structure, and timelines of engagement opportunities.
 - d. The City Administrator must start a strategic planning process for the 26-27 budget as a first act of business following January 1, 2025 when the new mayor and council are seated.
 - e. The impact and extent of these recommendations are significant and will greatly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of council operations. Moreover, they will foster trust, transparency and accountability in budget development and monitoring processes, which are crucial for gaining staff and community support in this effort.
6. GTAC has consistently recommended that professional expertise is required to design and facilitate the onboarding process for our newly-elected officials. (Note that we are referring to expertise in training and development, not subject-matter expertise in the essential topics.) Transition team members have repeatedly reported that "project leadership...requested that the team focus on internal resources instead of external contractors." At the same time, they have told us that the list of topics that must be covered by subject-matter experts is extensive (and growing), time constraints are severe, and attendance by newly-elected officials is voluntary. As the person in the most senior project leadership position, please help us understand the decision that transition team members will design and implement this complex process without professional assistance.

7. At our Districts + Council Operations Subcommittee meeting last week, we considered the following motion in relationship to onboarding: "We recommend that GTAC's role and working relationship with the transition team be more clearly defined, and the approach to that work be more collaborative and transparent." The vote resulted in a tie: 4 in favor, 4 opposed, and 2 abstentions. After more than a year of working together, we find ourselves uncertain about our role and working relationship with the transition team and whether it is appropriate to expect this relationship to be "collaborative" and "transparent." We will address this question at the August 7 GTAC meeting after you depart. To help guide our discussion in the most constructive direction, please give us your perspective on this issue.
8. How is it going getting City staff out of the "old" silos and ready for more cross divisional teams?
9. GTAC made some recommendations for Council Committees, have you started to build internal teams in expectation of Council Committees?