

DRAFT

Title: Council–Staff Communication and Administrative Direction

1. Purpose

This policy establishes clear guidelines for communication and administrative direction between City Council Members, City Department Heads and legal services to ensure compliance with Idaho law, preserve the City's organizational structure, and promote efficient and transparent governance.

2. Authority

This policy is adopted under the authority of Idaho Code Title 50 and the City's adopted form of government. It is intended to clarify roles and does not expand or limit authority granted by statute, charter, or ordinance.

3. Governing Principles

- The City Council acts only as a body through motions, resolutions, or ordinances adopted at duly noticed public meetings.
- Individual Council Members have no independent authority to direct City staff or City operations.
- Day-to-day administration is the responsibility of the Mayor and City staff, as provided by Idaho law.

4. Permitted Communications between council members and department heads

Council Members and department heads may communicate directly without giving notice to the mayor for the following items:

- Requests for factual information or clarification
- Questions related to agenda items or Council preparation
- Inquiries regarding public records
- Constituent concerns, provided no direction or commitment is made
- These communications shall be informational only.

5. Agenda Requests and Department Head Review

To promote efficient Council meetings, informed decision-making, and coordinated administrative review:

A. Agenda Request Routing

All proposed Council agenda request forms submitted by a Council Member shall be routed to the relevant Department Head(s) for review and comment prior to placement on a Council agenda.

B. Department Head Review

Department Heads shall:

- Review the request for operational, fiscal, legal, and policy implications;
- Identify potential impacts on staffing, budget, workload, or existing Council direction;
- Provide written comments within a reasonable timeframe established by administrative procedure.

Department Head review is advisory and informational only and does not constitute approval authority over whether an item is placed on the agenda.

C. Requestor Review of Comments

The requesting Council Member shall have the opportunity to review Department Head comments prior to final submission for agenda placement.

Following review of staff comments, the requesting Council Member may:

- Proceed with the agenda request as submitted,
- Modify the request, or
- Withdraw the request.

D. Purpose

This process is intended to:

- Ensure Council is informed of administrative and fiscal implications prior to discussion;
- Prevent avoidable duplication of effort or conflicting direction;
- Streamline Council meetings by identifying implementation considerations in advance;

- Support transparent and efficient governance.

Nothing in this section limits a Council Member's right to request an item be placed on a properly noticed public meeting agenda.

Permitted Communications between department heads and Legal Services

* might just add this to item 4

6. Prohibited or Restricted Communications

Council Members shall not:

- Direct, supervise, or evaluate Department Heads or staff
- Request changes to enforcement, staffing, priorities, or operations
- Instruct staff to initiate investigations, projects, or work not previously authorized

Any request for action or operational change must occur through one of the following:

1. Formal action of the City Council at a public meeting, or
2. Authorization from the Mayor, consistent with Idaho Code § 50-607

7. Role of the Mayor

The Mayor serves as the **City's Administrative Officer** and should be the liaison between the City Council and City staff. The Mayor is responsible for:

- Providing administrative direction to Department Heads
- Communicating Council actions and priorities to staff
- Preventing conflicting or unauthorized instruction

8. Department Head Responsibilities

Department Heads shall:

- Provide timely and accurate information to Council Members

- Decline requests that constitute unauthorized direction
- Refer improper requests to the Mayor
- Maintain professionalism and transparency in all communications

9. Emergencies

In matters involving immediate threats to public health or safety, Council Members may communicate concerns directly to Department Heads. Operational control remains with the Mayor or designated authority, and such communications shall be reported to the Mayor as soon as practicable.

10. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in administrative or corrective action consistent with City policy and applicable law.

11. No Individual Authority

Nothing in this policy grants any individual Council Member authority beyond that provided by Idaho law or formal Council action.