

To: Mayor Kerry Thomson
From: Bloomington Common Council
Date: April 1, 2026
RE: Budget Priorities 2027

As you know, Council has been discussing budget priorities through the lens of outcomes and the 7 priority buckets identified in partnership with the administration. This memo serves as a summary and ranking of our budget priorities for 2027 and requests for budget presentations in light of these priorities.

First, as a body, implementation of existing plans rose to the top of our collective conversations. Existing plans have gone through multiple rounds of community input and vetting, thus implementation of those plans is of high importance for council and for the community as a whole. These plans served as guiding principles through our discussions and our original list of outcomes came directly from these plans. These include the [Comprehensive Plan](#), [Safe Streets for All Plan](#), [Climate Action Plan](#), and [Transportation Plan](#). Related is interest in development of plans where none currently exist, specifically noting a Public Safety Plan.

Second, a list of priority outcomes were identified and ranked. Deputy Mayor Knapp indicated that our final list of priorities did not need to be separated by priority buckets. A combined process that included in-person discussion and follow up surveying narrowed down our original list of outcomes to those of highest priority and then a final exercise required each councilmember to prioritize their list by assigning points to each outcome. This is the final ranked list of 2027 budget priorities based on the consolidation of [council member prioritization](#).

1. Maintenance and enhancement of city assets
 - a. Basic maintenance and upkeep (filling potholes, repaving, etc.)
 - b. Design improvements to improve access, service to community, safety, etc.
2. Making homelessness brief, rare, and nonrepeating
 - a. Increased access to mental healthcare
 - b. Increased access to addiction treatment programs
 - c. Support of early intervention services (like eviction prevention and job support)
 - d. Job and wage growth
 - e. Coordination of support services
 - f. Increased range of affordable housing types
3. Zero traffic fatalities or serious injuries by 2039
 - a. Pedestrian network is cleared quickly and effectively after snowfall
 - b. Transportation network enhancements support all travel modes for people of all ages, abilities and modes of transportation
4. Increase housing diversity within neighborhoods
 - a. Increase predictability for permitting
 - b. Decrease permitting wait times

- c. Increase range of affordable housing options, including those with Universal Design and/or are environmentally sustainable
- 5. Address and Reduce systemic inequities
 - a. Programs to reduce income inequality across and between ages, races, and genders
 - b. Ensure engagement processes are inclusive and representative
 - c. Reduce race and class disparities in policing, justice, and public safety systems
 - **Note: these can look like goals related to systems (like CBU bill discounts/assistance), systematic approaches to government procedures, defining equity, and measuring who is engaging and in what contexts.
- 6. Inclusive and strong local economy, able to stay resilient and adaptable
 - a. Wages, jobs, and GDP outpace population growth
 - b. An increased number of employees who work in Bloomington are able to live in Bloomington
- 7. Expansion of options other than uniformed police officers for non-violent offenses
- 8. Strengthen food security networks
 - a. A local food culture is promoted and protected
- 9. Air quality is maintained at a high level and carbon emissions are reduced
 - a. Fossil fuel consumption is reduced community wide
 - b. Increased renewable energy production
- 10. Create vibrant 3rd places/neighborhood hubs
 - a. Activate vacant spaces
 - b. Invest in ensuring public spaces are high quality, engaging, and active
- 11. Waste reduction
 - a. Increased composting

We recognize there may be many methods of meeting the above priorities, they could each fall into more than one of our Outcome Based Budgeting categories or “buckets”, and may include multiple departments and city staff. Additionally, we realize that these priorities require different levels of investment and approaches, including policy updates, support of community partners, programs, and legislative change.

Third, as part of budget presentations, we are interested in hearing how certain programs and expenses are supporting these priority outcomes and splitting those expenses out to the greatest extent possible, including considering direct expenses, dedicated staff time, and if the expense falls into more than one priority area. Additionally, in recognition that some of these priority outcomes will take multiple budget cycles we are interested in department goals related to these priorities for the budget year being discussed. For example, the maintenance of city assets would include filling potholes, which requires direct expenses for materials and also staff time. An intersection redesign to enhance safety may include materials, staff time, and design work and may be considered enhancement of a city asset and also work toward our goal of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2039.

Thank you for considering these priorities when planning the 2027 budget and presentations. If you are interested in reviewing the public discussions or source materials related to the overall council conversation, full list of suggested priorities, or how the ranked list was created, you can review meetings and materials from full council meetings on December 10, 2025 and March 11, 2026 and Fiscal Committee meetings on February 13, 2026 and February 27, 2026. Please let us know if you have questions or seek further clarification on these priorities.

DRAFT

To: Common Councilmembers

From: Isabel Piedmont-Smith, Chair
Committee on Council Processes

Subj: Standard procedures with discussion at first reading AND
Council sponsorship of legislation

Date: March 30, 2026

Please find enclosed two documents from the Committee on Council Processes:

1) Standard procedures with discussion at first reading

This document is the committee's recommendation of procedures for first and second reading of legislation after the adoption of Ordinance 2026-05 on February 18. We welcome questions and feedback on this document. Hopefully, the Council can come to consensus to regularly pursue this standard procedure, which does not need to be part of the municipal code.

2) New requirement for sponsorship of legislation

This proposal from the committee would require each item of legislation to have a Councilmember sponsor. We request a vote on this idea before we work on code revisions to ensure a majority of Councilmembers support the concept.

We look forward to a discussion of these items during the April 1 regular session.

Proposed Procedures with Discussion of Ordinances at First Reading

Underlying assumptions:

There will always be a presentation of legislation, discussion, and public comment at First Reading.

There will be robust communication with the public and with city staff about the new procedures.

Procedure for First Readings

1. Motion to introduce legislation (debatable) > Vote
2. Clerk reads by title and synopsis
3. Motion to discuss legislation
4. Full staff presentation (or presentation by CM if legislation initiated by CM)
5. Councilmember questions and comments
6. Public comment (30 minutes maximum)
7. Motion to move item to a Second Reading on X date > Vote

Notes:

- a) This procedure makes it clear to everyone that the initial intent is for the legislation to not be adopted, since there is no motion to adopt. In other words, the default is that we will only discuss the legislation that night, not take a final vote on it.
- b) If a piece of legislation is quite simple, a CM could make a motion for unanimous consent to consider the ordinance for adoption that night. If such a motion is made, seconded, and approved unanimously, then a vote on adoption could follow ($\frac{2}{3}$ required).
- c) Merging CM questions and comments allows CMs to begin floating amendments and get initial staff feedback on amendment ideas.
- d) Councilmembers should put in writing the questions they didn't get answers to and submit those by noon the following Friday (two days after the meeting). That would give city staff and/or petitioners time to answer the questions before the questions and answers are placed in the packet for the second reading two weeks after the first reading. Suggested deadline for answers to be submitted to Council staff: Thursday, noon, before the second reading.
- e) Questions raised by the public during the public comment period should be noted by the staff or Councilmember(s) who present the legislation to make sure those questions are included with the Q&A mentioned in (c) above. If Council decides to require CM sponsorship of each item of legislation, the CM sponsor would be responsible for ensuring the public's questions (as stated during the public comment period) are relayed to the appropriate person and answered.

Procedure for Second Readings

1. Motion to introduce legislation (debatable) > Vote
2. Clerk reads by title and synopsis
3. Motion to adopt legislation
4. Staff present any new information (or CM if legislation initiated by CM)
5. Councilmember questions
6. Public comment
7. Councilmember discussion
8. Vote on motion to adopt

Notes:

- a) It should be made clear that the Council does not expect a second full presentation of the legislation, but rather just a report of any new information.
- b) Staff could attend the second reading via Zoom.
- c) The Committee on Council Processes does not recommend time limits for Councilmember questions at either first or second reading at this time. Time limits could be added later or added on a case-by-case basis.

Proposal to Require Councilmember Sponsorship of Legislation

The Committee on Council Processes recommends that the Council implement a new requirement: that all legislation (ordinances and resolutions) must have a Councilmember as a sponsor. We make this recommendation for the following reasons:

- 1) Improving communication between Councilmembers and the Mayor's administration.
- 2) Helping to ensure that legislation is clear to a layperson and doesn't leave out crucial context or information necessary for Council to understand and vote on it.
- 3) Putting Councilmembers in control of bringing legislation forward

The Committee's discussion on this topic included the following:

- 1) Other legislative bodies, such as the Indiana General Assembly, require legislator sponsorship of legislation. The IGA allows each legislator to sponsor a certain number of bills each year. We could keep such limitations in mind in the future if a disproportionate number of items comes from one or more CMs.
- 2) Concern that the Mayor's administration would always go to the same Councilmember to sponsor everything. We want to make sure the work is spread evenly across CMs, and that CMs with related responsibilities sponsor relevant legislation.
 - Each city department could have one CM assigned as the person the administration goes to first to sponsor legislation originating with that department. This is meant to help the administration find a sponsor. If they have actively been working with a different CM, or course they could bypass this "go to" list.
 - The "go to" list would, as much as possible, pull in CMs that already work with the departments through board or commission liaison assignments or other relevant official appointments.

We request a vote on the motion that the Committee on Council Processes proceed with legislation to require Councilmember sponsorship of all items of legislation.

Memo

To: Council Members

From: Human Resources

cc: Gretchen Knapp

Date: March 30 ,2026

Re: Draft Job Description and Hiring Timeline Memo – Council Administrator/Attorney

I am writing to outline the proposed hiring timeline and key steps for the Council Administrator/Attorney position, along with Human Resources' suggested edits and considerations regarding the proposed job description.

Job Description Revisions and Considerations

Human Resources has reviewed the proposed job description and offers the following notes for your consideration:

- The job title must remain as Council Administrator/Attorney, as it is listed in the 2026 Salary Ordinance and aligned with applicable state statute (reference forthcoming).
- The pay grade will remain at Grade 12, as it is consistent with the City Attorney's pay grade and is in line with the state statute that the Council's attorney may not be compensated at a higher rate than the City Attorney (reference forthcoming).
- The job summary has been revised to better capture the overall scope and intent of the position. This includes incorporating elements such as strategic leadership, administrative oversight, legal counsel, and executive leadership.
- The City has transitioned away from using "Essential" and "Non-Essential" duty classifications due to confusion among applicants and staff. These have been updated to "Primary" and "Secondary."
- References to "Director" have been removed to align with the official job title.
- **Job Requirements:**
 - We recommend including a minimum of five (5) years of prior experience as an attorney, consistent with similar positions in Pay Grade 12.
 - We also recommend adding: "Demonstrated ability to effectively use Google Workspace and Microsoft Office applications, including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations, to support daily work functions."
 - We suggest removing adjectives/modifiers such as "working" from phrases like "working knowledge of public budgets," as subjective terms can be difficult to define and apply consistently.

- Under “Supervisory/Decision-Making Authority,” we recommend removing the statement: “May make revisions to subordinate job descriptions and organizational structure,” as formal processes and approvals are required for such changes. This does not prevent the position from making recommendations, but such actions are more appropriately reflected within job duties rather than formal authority.

Hiring Timeline and Process

We can provide access to NEOGOV and arrange training for those who prefer to review applications electronically. Alternatively, we can print applications for review, as was done during the previous hiring process.

The position has been approved by the Office of the Controller with a salary range of \$101,411 to \$116,624 annually. Once Human Resources receives the finalized job description, it typically takes up to five (5) business days to post the position.

The position will be advertised on the City’s national NEOGOV job board, as well as LinkedIn, Handshake, and Indeed. If there are additional sites you would like to utilize, please let us know. We also recommend posting with the Indiana State Bar Association (ISBA); the cost is approximately \$900, and we would need direction on how this expense will be covered.

We recommend keeping the position open for twenty (20) business days to ensure a strong applicant pool. After the posting closes, it generally takes five (5) to ten (10) business days—depending on the number of applicants—for the hiring team to review applications and determine candidates for interviews. Please note that applications will be reviewed in a blind format, with identifying information (such as name, location, gender, and age) removed.

Interview questions must be submitted to Human Resources for approval, which typically takes up to three (3) business days. This step must be completed prior to interviewing and before receiving applicants’ identifying information. Once applicants are selected for interviews and the questions are approved, the identifying information will be shared.

Following the completion of interviews and selection of a finalist, background and reference checks will be conducted, which typically take up to five (5) business days. Upon successful completion, an offer will be extended.

The overall estimated time to fill the position is approximately 75 business days. This estimate includes up to 15 business days to conduct first- and second-round interviews, as well as an additional 20 business days to account for a selected candidate’s transition period (e.g., providing notice to their current employer). This estimate does not include any additional time required for Council approval, if applicable.

The selected candidate may begin employment on any scheduled Orientation Day, which occurs every other week at the start of a pay period. Orientation begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at approximately 2:00 p.m. For reference, March 30, 2026 is an Orientation Day, and the next is April 13, 2026.



POSITION DESCRIPTION CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

POSITION: ~~Council Attorney and Director of the Common Council Office~~ **Council Administrator/Attorney**

DEPARTMENT: **Council**

JOB GRADE: **12**

FLSA: **Exempt**

The incumbent serves as the principal legal advisor to the Common Council while directing the operations of the Common Council Office. This position provides strategic leadership and administrative oversight to ensure effective governance, continuity, and the efficient functioning of Council activities. The role operates in both legal counsel and executive leadership capacities in support of the Council. ~~The incumbent serves as the principal legal advisor to the Common Council and provides direction and executive oversight of Council administrative operations, ensuring effective governance, continuity, and the smooth functioning of the Council Office.~~

1. DUTIES

This job description is illustrative only and is not a comprehensive listing of all job functions performed. The following are essential duties for this position, performed with or without reasonable accommodation:

~~Essential (primary)~~ **Primary**

Advises Common Council regarding federal, state and local laws, anticipated or threatened litigation, potential liability and risks, and various legal circumstances and situations.

Reviews all legislation before the Common Council to ensure that the Council remains within its legal authority and that the legislation complies with applicable law; advises council members on whether legislation appropriately reflects policy intent.

Assists the Council in reviewing the proposed city budget for legal, procedural, and institutional implications. Keeps Council members informed of significant changes in local, state, and federal law and legislative developments affecting the City and the Council's work.

Oversees and, as necessary, contributes to the drafting of ordinances, resolutions, contracts, and other legal documents for action by the Common Council, including conducting or directing legal research as requested by the Council.

Oversees the preparation and distribution of legal documents, legislation, agendas, and related legislative materials for Common Council meetings, and ensures that Council meetings are conducted in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local law, including public notice and accessibility requirements. Attends Council meetings, advises on legal and procedural matters as required. Communicates and meets with City departments and other stakeholders as needed to resolve issues, facilitate legislative work, and support Council operations.

Supervises, and when necessary, conducts legal research, prepares court cases, and represents the Council in litigation and in various legal proceedings.

Ensures adequate staffing at Council committee meetings and ensures posting of agendas and information packets for such meetings. Serves on the City's collective bargaining team when directed by the Council.

Ensures appropriate response to resident and media inquiries concerning Council business.

Oversees processes for receiving, referring, tracking, and following up on constituent concerns to help ensure that matters raised with the Council are directed appropriately and addressed in a timely manner.

Oversees the development, submission, administration, and monitoring of the Council department budget in coordination with appropriate staff and consistent with Council priorities.

Directs the annual review of department activities, services, and operational effectiveness, and oversees the preparation and submission of related reports.

Serves as ~~Director of the Council Office~~ the Council Administrator/Attorney for the Common Council, providing strategic leadership, vision, and continuity of operations across Council terms, and supervises and directs the Deputy Administrator/Attorney, Assistant Administrator/Legal Research Assistant, interns, and other Council staff as assigned, including setting priorities, reviewing work, and supporting professional development.

Non-Essential (secondary)

Answers telephone, greets office visitors, determines nature of call, responds to inquiries and/or routes caller to appropriate person or department.

Performs related duties as assigned.

Takes all reasonable steps to maintain a safe work environment.

2. JOB REQUIREMENTS:

J.D. degree, licensed attorney in the State of Indiana with a minimum of 5 years of prior experience.†

Knowledge of local, state and federal laws, regulations, and codes and ability to apply that knowledge to various circumstances that pertain to the City.

Ability to direct and supervise others and provide guidance for Council members.

~~Working Knowledge~~ knowledge of public budget development, administration, and oversight sufficient to supervise the Council department budget and advise on related institutional issues

3. LEVEL OF SUPERVISION AND RESPONSIBILITY:

Received

Consults regularly with the Common Council regarding major legal, policy, governance, and administrative matters. Reports directly to the Council, and work is reviewed primarily for alignment with Council objectives, legal sufficiency, and overall effectiveness.

Exercised

Works with substantial independence and exercises a high degree of professional judgment in carrying out the responsibilities of the position. Provides executive oversight of the Council office within general policy direction and supervisory boundaries established by the Common Council.

Directs work of Council Deputy Administrator/Attorney and Council Assistant Administrator/Legal Research Assistant and any Council Interns.

In conference with the Council President, and consistent with applicable City policies and Human Resources procedures, exercises supervisory authority over Council staff, including recruitment, interviewing, selection, work assignment, performance management, professional development, discipline, and, where appropriate, decisions concerning termination. ~~May make~~

~~revisions to subordinate job descriptions and organizational structures to improve Council office effectiveness.~~

4. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

The work is highly complex and requires the application of advanced legal knowledge, policy judgment, and administrative leadership to address novel, sensitive, and high-impact issues facing the Common Council and the City of Bloomington and its residents. The incumbent must interpret and apply a broad range of laws, regulations, and procedures while simultaneously managing competing priorities, and operational constraints; upholding the Council's role as legislative body and final fiscal authority. The role regularly involves time-sensitive decision-making with significant legal, institutional, and public consequences, often in situations where guidance may be limited or precedents are unclear.

Provides balanced, well-reasoned, and objective legal and strategic advice to Council members, particularly where legal risk, policy disagreement, or competing institutional interests are present. Often provides legal opinions during public Council meetings.

Incumbent should expect irregular hours given the Council's schedule. This will include evenings and on occasion weekends as necessary for time sensitive completion of tasks and to address unforeseen complications. The Common Council generally holds regular session meetings on Wednesday evenings.

Work environment is a modern office with no unusual physical demands.

5. PERSONAL WORK RELATIONSHIPS:

Maintains frequent contact with officials, petitioners, local, state and federal agencies, and the general public in often unpredictable circumstances, making significant policy and legal recommendations. Must maintain professional working relationships with all department heads.

Contacts often require incumbent to utilize tact and the use of persuasion to gain cooperation in the face of differences of opinion.