



City of Southfield Council Retreat Survey



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BEFORE WE MEET

I'm excited to work with you as we prepare for Southfield's City Council retreat, and I'm looking forward to hearing your perspective, learning from your experience, and helping us make the most of our time together.

If you haven't scheduled your individual interview yet, please visit southfield.valeriejaye.com to choose a time that works for you.

This survey gives you a chance to think ahead about what's working well, where greater clarity would help, and what may need attention over time.

You're welcome to print it and use the blank space below the questions to jot notes. Mark anything that stands out, and keep the survey handy for our interview. You don't need to send your answers in advance—we'll walk through it together.

Our conversations will help us understand the landscape and determine what should happen next. Some needs may be addressed during the retreat; others may become part of a longer-term roadmap. We don't need to solve everything in one meeting.

Thank you for making time to share your thoughts. I look forward to talking with you!



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1. FUTURE VISION

When you think about Southfield's future, what do you want the city to be like?

Things to think about:

- What you want residents, businesses, and visitors to experience
- What you want Southfield to be known for
- What you hope is true ten years from now

2. HIGHEST PRIORITIES

What do you believe should be the City's highest priorities over the next few years?

Things to think about:

- Outcomes the City should be working toward
- Major initiatives or needs
- Existing commitments that should remain priorities

3. PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

When there are more worthwhile needs than the City can pursue at once, how important should each of the following be in deciding what comes first?

Rate each. Circle the response that best reflects your view.

Resident / community impact

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Urgency

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Cost and available funding

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Staff capacity

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Legal or contractual commitments

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Readiness to move forward

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Long-term value

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Alignment with established priorities or plans

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

Consequences of waiting

- ☐ Very important ☐ Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Not a factor ☐ Not sure

4. PRIORITY-TO-IMPLEMENTATION

Once Council has agreed that an idea or need should move forward as a priority, what typically happens between that point and implementation?

Think about a recent example if helpful.

5. DECISION INFORMATION

When Council is being asked to consider or decide something, what information, if any, is sometimes missing, difficult to understand, or difficult to evaluate?

Check any that apply.

- ☐ What **decision** Council is being asked to make.
- ☐ **Why** the matter is coming forward **now**.
- ☐ **How it connects** to an existing priority, plan, or commitment.
- ☐ **Cost, funding source**, or future **financial impact**.
- ☐ **Staff capacity** or other resources required.
- ☐ **Alternatives** that were considered.
- ☐ **Risks, tradeoffs**, or consequences of waiting.
- ☐ **What has changed** since Council last discussed the issue.
- ☐ Where **supporting information** can be found.
- ☐ **Other / Notes:**

6. AREAS WHERE GREATER CLARITY MAY BE NEEDED

In which of the following areas, if any, do you see different understandings, gaps in information, or unclear systems, processes, or tools?

These are areas where a lack of clarity may make it harder for the City's leadership to govern and carry out its responsibilities.

Check any that apply.

- ☐ The distinct **roles and responsibilities** of City Council / Mayor / City Administrator and administration / other elected officials.
- ☐ How **City administration is structured and operates**, including reporting relationships, appointment authority, union agreements, and other organizational requirements.
- ☐ The **information available to Council for decision-making**, including what exists, where it can be found, and how information brought directly to Council is organized and presented.
- ☐ A **common language** for talking about priorities, decisions, responsibilities, projects, and next steps.
- ☐ How **ideas move from discussion to priorities** and from priorities into implementation, along with how priorities are revisited when needs, resources, or circumstances change.
- ☐ How **plans, budgets, and funding** connect to priorities.

6. AREAS WHERE GREATER CLARITY MAY BE NEEDED — CONTINUED

Check any that apply.

- ☐ The appropriate **level of Council involvement** once a priority moves into implementation, including Council members' involvement in carrying out or maintaining the work.
- ☐ How **staff capacity** affects what can realistically be taken on and when.
- ☐ How **Council decisions, agreements, and unresolved matters** are tracked and reported on, including progress, changes, delays, and new circumstances as work moves forward on a priority.
- ☐ How elected officials are kept informed about the **status and resolution of resident concerns** they raise.

Other / Notes:

7. ONBOARDING / ROLE PREPARATION

Thinking back to when you began your current role, what did you have to learn or figure out along the way that would have been helpful to understand earlier?

Check any that apply.

- ☐ How **City government is structured and operates.**
- ☐ The **responsibilities and limits** of your role.
- ☐ The **roles of other elected officials and staff.**
- ☐ How **decisions and priorities** move through the City.
- ☐ **Budgeting, funding, and capital planning.**
- ☐ **Meeting procedures and legal requirements.**
- ☐ **City plans, policies, and terminology.**
- ☐ **Where to find information** or who to ask.

Other / Notes:

Follow-up:

What, if anything, would still be helpful for you to understand more clearly now?

8. WHAT IS WORKING WELL

What is working well in the way Council and administration currently get the City's work done?

Things to think about:

- Information sharing
- Preparation for decisions
- Council and administration interaction
- Issues moving from discussion to action
- Practices or processes that help

9. WHAT MAKES THE WORK HARDER

Think about conditions that make the work take more time, require more effort, or create unnecessary uncertainty.

Check any that apply.

- ☐ **Processes** that are unclear, inconsistent, or more complicated than necessary.
- ☐ **Information** that is missing, difficult to find, or arrives too late.
- ☐ Unclear **expectations** about what should happen, who should act, or what comes next.
- ☐ **Tools** that do not support the work well or are not used consistently.
- ☐ Unclear **roles or responsibilities**
- ☐ **Timing or sequencing** that makes the work harder.
- ☐ **Practices** that create unnecessary steps, uncertainty, or repeated discussion.
- ☐ **Other / Notes:**

10. WORKING THROUGH DISAGREEMENT OR CONFUSION

When there is disagreement, confusion, or something does not go as expected, what tends to make it harder for the group to work through it and move forward?

Check any that apply.

- ☐ Unclear roles or **expectations**.
- ☐ People **feeling uncomfortable asking questions** or saying they misunderstood something.
- ☐ The disagreement or confusion **feeling personal**.
- ☐ Difficulty keeping the focus on **resolving the original issue**.
- ☐ **No clear way to resolve the issue** or determine what happens next.
- ☐ **Other / Notes:**

11. FUTURE-STATE NEEDS / ROADMAP

When this work is completed, how important is it to you that each of the following is clearer, better defined, or more consistently understood?

Rate each by circling the response that best reflects your view.

A shared understanding of the City's current priorities, commitments, resources, and constraints.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

A common language for talking about priorities, decisions, responsibilities, initiatives, projects, and next steps.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

How potential priorities are evaluated and selected.

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- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

How priorities are translated into clear goals and intended outcomes.

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- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

How the work needed to achieve a priority is organized into initiatives, projects, and actions.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

11. FUTURE-STATE NEEDS / ROADMAP — CONTINUED

When this work is completed, how important is it to you that each of the following is clearer, better defined, or more consistently understood?

Rate each by circling the response that best reflects your view.

The roles and responsibilities of Council, administration, and other City leaders as work moves from direction into implementation.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

How funding, staff capacity, timing, and other resources are considered before work is taken on.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

What information Council needs to make decisions and how that information is organized and made available.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

How decisions, agreements, responsibilities, and next steps are tracked.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

How progress, changes, delays, and new circumstances are reported and discussed.

-
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ Very important | ☐ Important | ☐ Somewhat important | ☐ Not a priority for this work | ☐ Not sure |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

11. FUTURE-STATE NEEDS / ROADMAP — CONTINUED

When this work is completed, how important is it to you that each of the following is clearer, better defined, or more consistently understood?

Rate each by circling the response that best reflects your view.

A regular rhythm for reviewing priorities, progress, changes, and emerging needs.

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not a priority for this work
- ☐ Not sure

How progress, decisions, and accomplishments are communicated to elected officials and the community.

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not a priority for this work
- ☐ Not sure

How results are assessed and priorities are revisited as circumstances change.

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not a priority for this work
- ☐ Not sure

What current and future City leaders need to know and understand to perform their roles.

- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not a priority for this work
- ☐ Not sure

Other / Notes:

12. CATCH-ALL

Is there anything else you think I should understand before the retreat?