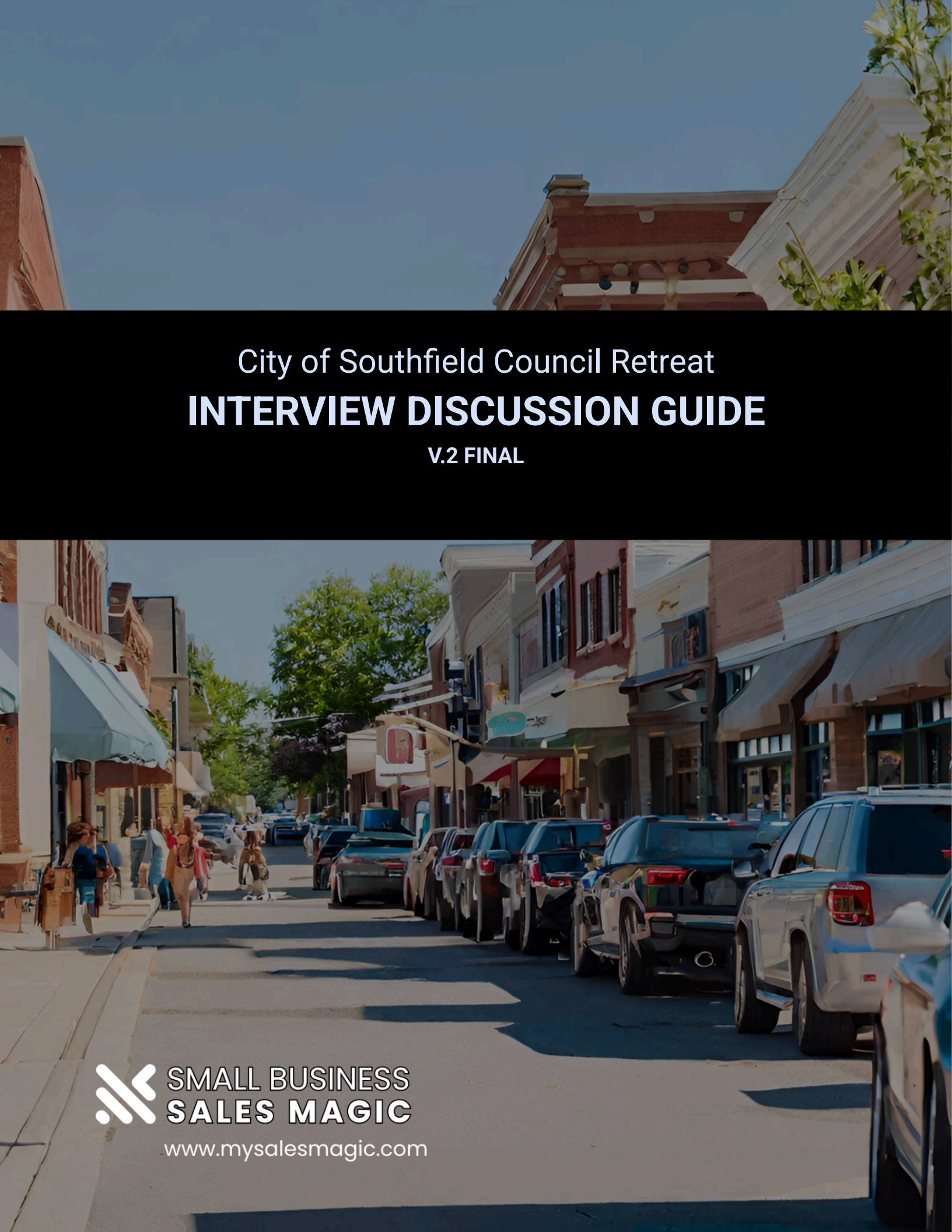




City of Southfield Council Retreat **INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDE**

V.2 FINAL



SMALL BUSINESS
SALES MAGIC

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ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

This guide is for your individual pre-retreat conversation. It is not the retreat agenda, a required survey, or an assignment you need to complete.

WHERE YOUR CONVERSATION FITS

Your individual conversation is the DISCOVER phase — before the retreat.



These interviews will help me understand what's working, where greater clarity may help, and what deserves the group's attention.

I will then look across conversations for themes and differences in perspective. The focus is the working environment and the systems, processes, tools, information, expectations, education, and practices that support the work — not evaluating individual people.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The themes and priorities that surface will be used to design the retreat agenda so that at the retreat we can come to a shared understanding of the current state, prioritize what needs attention, and determine action needed to move forward.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

USE THE GUIDE IN THE WAY THAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU

1 PRINT IT

Write notes by hand.

Nothing to submit.

2 USE IT FOR REFLECTION

Keep it open as a visual reference during your interview.

Nothing to submit.

You do not need to complete or submit anything before we meet.

AS YOU CONSIDER THE QUESTIONS

Focus on the conditions around the work – not on individual personalities.

HELPFUL FOCUS

- Systems and processes
- Tools and information
- Expectations and education
- Shared practices

Thank you for making time for this conversation. The questions we will discuss in our individual interview begin on the next page. I look forward to talking with you.

Valerie Jaye

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Future Vision

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

Things to consider:

- 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. 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
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Urgency

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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Cost and available funding

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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Staff capacity

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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Legal or contractual commitments

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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Readiness to move forward

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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Long-term value

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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Alignment with established priorities or plans

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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Consequences of waiting

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a factor	Not sure
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3. 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?

Consider a recent example if helpful.

4. 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:**

5. 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.

5. 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:**

6. 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?

7. What Is Working Well

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

Things to consider:

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

8. What Makes The Work Harder

Consider 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:**

9. 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:**

10. 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
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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
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How potential priorities are evaluated and selected.

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a priority for this work	Not sure
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How priorities are translated into clear goals and intended outcomes.

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a priority for this work	Not sure
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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
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10. 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
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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
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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
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How decisions, agreements, responsibilities, and next steps are tracked.

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a priority for this work	Not sure
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How progress, changes, delays, and new circumstances are reported and discussed.

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a priority for this work	Not sure
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10. 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
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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
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How results are assessed and priorities are revisited as circumstances change.

Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not a priority for this work	Not sure
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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
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Other / Notes:

11. Final Thoughts

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