



Placerville City Council Governance Handbook

Members of the City Council 2021

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Adopted _____ 2021

The Placerville City Council Governance Manual was developed in 2021. This manual outlines practices that build and sustain positive City Council relationships. It is a living document that is regularly reviewed, and as needed, revised by the Council.

The Handbook is intended to assist Councilmembers in carrying out their roles, as well as to provide useful information to prospective Councilmembers and other interested citizens.

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Effective Governance in the City of Placerville California

The City of Placerville California is governed by the elected City Council. Governance is a fundamental function of all public agencies. Governance is the act of transforming the needs and desires of the community into policies that direct the City. The people of the City of Placerville place their faith and trust that the City Council will carry out its governance responsibilities meeting the highest standards of quality, effectiveness, and transparency. Whether in City Council Chambers, out in the community or at home, City Councilmembers are always stewards of the City!

Effective Councils

High performing Councils have four essential characteristics that are the building blocks of effective governance:

1. Governing with a shared Moral Imperative leading to a Unity of Purpose

A moral imperative is system wide, strategic and represents a deep commitment of the Councilmembers and the City Manager. It is a unifying force that leads to a Unity of Purpose, strategic goals and success indicators.

2. Creating a positive governance culture

Culture is the tone created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave. These behavioral ground rules (norms) enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

3. Structuring the work for effective governance

Effective Councils discuss and agree on the formal structure and processes used by the Council, the City Manager and City Department Heads in their functioning as a team; how they operate and do business.

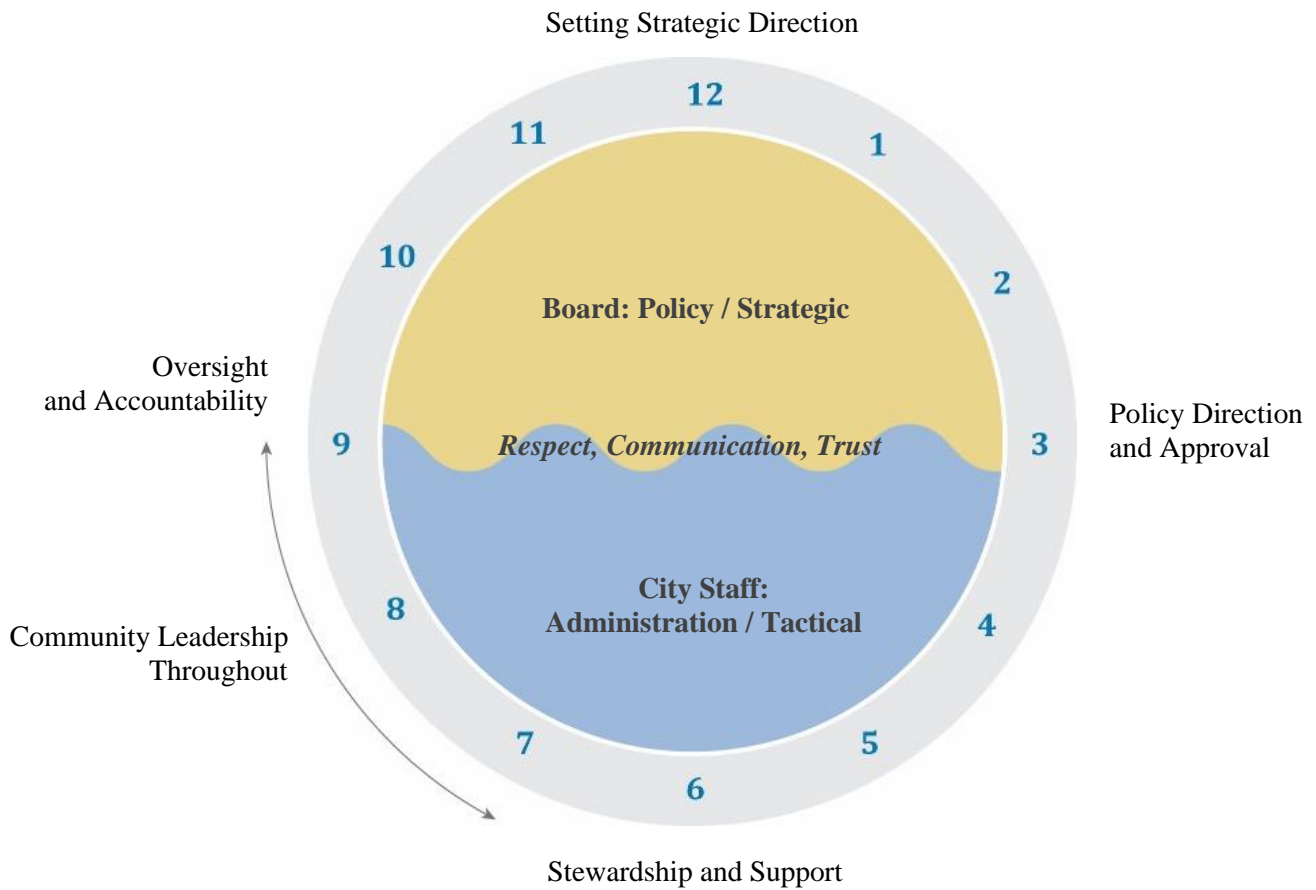
Unity of Purpose

Unity of Purpose is the common focus, mission, values, and goals City Councilmembers share about the organization and the residents they serve. A unity of purpose is a clear and unambiguous sense of purpose, a moral imperative, that becomes the inspiration behind all City Council efforts and the lens through which those efforts are viewed. A unity of purpose helps members transcend their differences to fulfill a greater purpose. A unified City Council is collaborative, cohesive, committed, and consistent.

In all relationships, dealings and transactions, Councilmember’s act with integrity, openness, respect and honesty. Through these values the City Council strives to earn and convey trust. The City Council retains public trust through efficient and cost-effective stewardship of resources.

Roles & Responsibilities

One of the most important characteristics of an effective City Council is their understanding and agreement on their roles and responsibilities. Generally, governance is about setting policy by defining the “what” of the organization, and administration is focused on the “how” policy gets implemented. If the discussion is focused on long-term outcomes, it tends to be strategic; if it is about short-term objectives or incremental steps, it tends to be administrative. Since the line between policy and administration can vary from topic to topic or issue to issue, it is essential that the City Manager and the City Council have a clear, mutually agreed upon understanding of how their roles and responsibilities will be defined.



Source: California School Boards Association

The primary responsibilities of the Placerville City Council

<p>Set the strategic direction for the City</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the long-term moral purpose and vision is established for the City. • Identify strategic priorities and goals.
<p>Establish the governance structure for the City Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire the City Manager and set policy for the hiring of other personnel. • Establish budget priorities and adopt the City budget. • Adopt ordinances and policies. • Effectively utilize various committees, and commissions.
<p>Provide support</p>	<p>After establishing the structure, the City Council– through their plans and actions – have a responsibility to support the City Manager and department heads as they carry out the direction of the Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear and consistent direction. • Support and advocate for programs and policies adopted by the City Council. • Provide policy direction that supports programs and aligns resources. • Support staff carrying out the Council’s direction. • Hold the City Council accountable for high quality governance and adherence to City Council protocols and policies.
<p>Ensure accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the City Manager accountable for achieving the goals set by the Council. • Monitor and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs approved by the Council. • Monitor the fiscal health of the City.
<p>Demonstrate community leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and involve residents and other stakeholders in appropriate and meaningful ways in setting the priorities, goals, objectives, and major programs of the City. • Communicate clear information about City policies, the fiscal condition and progress on goals. • Identify issues through ongoing interaction with a wide variety of stakeholders. • Become and remain immersed in the needs and concerns of residents. • Be visible and accessible.

Governance Mindset

In order to carry out these responsibilities Councilmembers understand the need to govern with a shared governance mindset and a central moral purpose.

City Council Governance Mindset

System Thinking	Governance is a systems job.	Individual Councilmembers understand that they are elected to govern the entire City and that cities are extremely complex systems. A systems thinker has transitioned from single issue, narrowed thinking to a fundamental understanding of how all pieces in the organization connect.
Strategic Focus	Governance is a strategic job.	Effective City Councilmembers always maintain a strategic focus in their work. They understand that individual Councilmembers do not have the authority to intervene into the administration of the City. They understand that they are on the City Council to govern the City. City Councilmembers approach all their responsibilities with a clear focus on serving all people of Placerville and achieving the strategic outcomes they have set.
Preparation	Effective City Councilmembers are always prepared.	Members of the Placerville City Council are committed to doing the deep learning necessary to make decisions based upon high quality information, evidence, and data.
Manner	Effective City Councilmembers model civic behavior.	Effective City Councilmembers understand that how they govern is often more important than what they say or do. Working toward a common goal with other independently elected Councilmembers in a collaborative setting requires patience, understanding, respect and most importantly, common courtesy. They are always respectful of other members' opinions.

Vision:

We are a welcoming, active, and business-friendly rural foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history.

Mission Statement:

The City of Placerville shall provide a safe, efficient, effective and responsive government for the well-being of its residents, businesses, and visitors.

CITY VALUES

Sense of Community Placerville is a working community rich in culture and diversity, with, great parks and trails, and safe well-kept neighborhoods.

Leadership The City of Placerville is non-partisan, fiscally responsible and values honest, ethical leadership.

Service and Quality Dedicated to providing well planned infrastructure and high quality services to meet current and future needs.

Business Friendly Ardent supporter of local commerce and private property rights.

Economic Prosperity Seeking economic development that provides good paying jobs, and a range of housing options and community amenities that meet the needs of our citizens and visitors.

Placerville City Council Governance Principles

In recognition of this critical role the City Council has adopted the following Governance Principles:

- We are committed to the highest quality governance and will grow our governance capacity on an ongoing basis.
- We will govern as a team in a collaborative culture, in partnership with the City Manager, driven by a shared mission and a unity of purpose.
- We will govern in an accessible manner committed to openness and transparency and a strong productive relationship with the community.
- We will govern the entire City with a strategic focus and from a systems perspective, not favoring one part of the City over another.
- We will make decisions based upon high quality data, be results oriented in a culture of inquiry and thoughtful discussion.

Guided by these Governance Principles, the City Council will embrace effective governance standards and strategies that encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors which enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence. Working as a team, the Councilmembers and the City Manager leverage the efforts of the professional staff by:

- Setting direction for the organization reflective of the community's priorities.
- Creating a supportive framework for action in the City.
- Holding the City accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms.
- Providing support to staff through behaviors and actions; and
- Demonstrating community leadership on behalf of residents

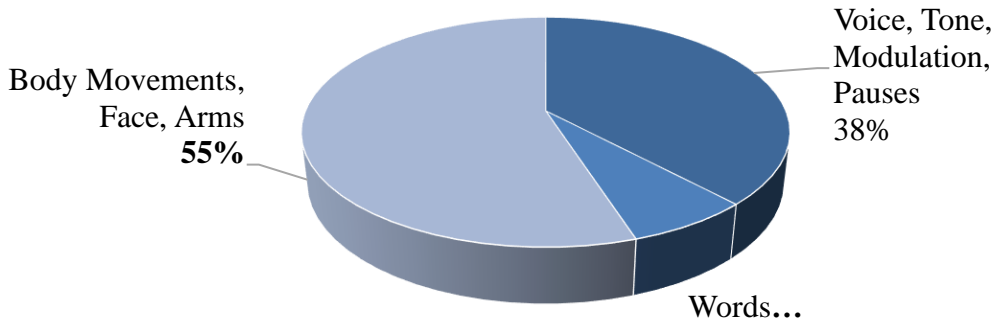
Norms for a Positive Governance Culture

An excellent governance culture is characterized by a City Council that operates in an environment of trust, respect, and professional demeanor at all times. The City Council sets the tone for the entire City in how it carries out its governance responsibilities.

Norms within which we agree to work

- Respect and consider diverse and opposing viewpoints; Respect each other's thinking and value individual contributions.
- Assume positive intentions.
- Be open to challenge your own beliefs and ideas; Stay open to new ways of doing things
- Accept that constructive disagreement often yields the best decisions. It is important that nothing is taken personally.
- Check for understanding as well as agreement.
- Deny the battle, we engage in respectful dialogue.
- When there is a disagreement, attempt to offer either a desired outcome, a solution, or share why it is a concern.
- Celebrate success – take time to recognize small steps or progress toward goals.
- Work toward the future, learning from the past.

Communication is the currency of effective Councilmembers; it is both verbal and non-verbal



Community Engagement

The Placerville Councilmembers collectively and individually wish to be perceived by the public as follows:

Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughtful, objective and data-driven in decision making. • Deeply committed to achieving the Council’s strategic goals and priorities. • Engaged in strategically focused discussion and decision-making, providing policy direction consistent with Placerville City priorities. • Recognized for leadership and innovation. • Knowledgeable about City wide issues.
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to consideration of every view. • Collaborative and responsive in addressing community needs.
Accessible & Equitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and responsive. • We listen to the community. We are transparent, we explain our thinking so that they know we listened and took the input into consideration when making our decisions. • Always treat the public and staff with respect and dignity.
Community Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable leaders, nimble in addressing issues on the continuum of City-wide matters. <p>Able to educate the public on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles, responsibilities, and authority of the City Council. • Process for addressing community issues and concerns. • Providing guidance for community input and engagement.

Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Definition

Effective Councils operate with formally adopted protocols that provide an operational framework for how City Councilmembers will work together. Protocols are descriptions of the “way we do things here” and are important as guides for what is an acceptable and unacceptable process and behavior. Protocols exist whether they are specifically identified or not. When they are not overtly stated, they become the habits by which groups perpetuate behaviors, some of which can become detrimental to the effective operation of the Council.

Unity of Purpose-Setting Direction

Topic	Protocol: Strategic Planning - Role of the City Council
Rationale	<p>A component of a highly developed governance system is reaching agreement on the strategic direction and building coherence up and down the system. Critical to our success is proactively establishing a multi-year plan that presents a meaningful vision of the future and long-term strategic goals indicating where resources are to be concentrated to accomplish strategic outcomes. The strategic plan sets the direction and establishes the strategic priorities.</p> <p>The strategic plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports good decision making• Drives alignment of all processes –integral to all that we do.• Communicates our vision and our priorities.
Protocol	<p>The City Manager will prepare an annual governance calendar that includes the annual budget process and the timeline for developing and confirming the City of Placerville’s strategic priorities and allocation of resources.</p> <p>Recommendations concerning the Strategic Plan come from the City Manager and leadership following an environmental scan and analysis, input from departments and employees, outside partners and stakeholders, and residents.</p> <p>Following Council adoption of the Strategic Plan’s goals and high-level objectives, departments will develop operational plans, in concert with the City Manager, to support the Strategic Plan goals, which in turn, align with the City budget. Similarly, the City’s Strategic Plan is shared with advisory bodies to facilitate alignment of their focus and efforts.</p>

Topic	Protocol: Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance is a strategic function. The primary responsibility of any governing body is to set the strategic direction for the organization. • The Council meeting is a meeting to conduct City business in public. The Council has an obligation to set an example of good government in action for the community and will follow agreed upon protocols. • Council meetings provide an opportunity to articulate the Council position and reasoning behind a decision in a positive manner. • Well-run efficient meetings model leadership, promote trust and confidence and demonstrate planning for the future and strategically moving the City forward.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council demonstrates, to the public, that the Council maintains focus on City priorities through professional and respectful deliberation. The Council will be explicit about how the strategies, actions and successes relate to the City’s strategic priorities and goals. • All Councilmembers come to the meetings prepared, having thoroughly reviewed the background materials, and having asked questions about the meeting packet before the Council meeting, as appropriate. • Councilmembers share accountability for deliberations that spend the ‘right’ amount of time on the ‘right’ things while valuing the input of each member of the governance team. • Annually and as needed the Council will schedule study sessions and conversation meetings linked to the City’s strategic priorities.

Topic	Protocol: Use of Council Conversation Meetings
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the Council’s responsibility to establish a philosophical framework - grounded in the City’s core beliefs and mission - that will serve as the foundation for staff developed plans of action. • The Council wishes to create an environment where open and candid discussion of governance and strategic issues and beliefs are encouraged and can lead to an enhancement of Council decision-making. The purpose is to uncover areas of agreement and concern and to promote a shared and deep understanding of topics and issues that the governance team will address. Council conversation meetings allow City Councilmembers and the City Manager the time for candid dialogue and discussions to develop the shared understanding that leads to the Council’s ownership of the City’s priorities.

Topic	Protocol: Use of Council Conversation Meetings
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will schedule conversation sessions as needed to provide opportunities to explore governance and strategic issues in more depth. • Conversation sessions are public meetings subject to the provisions of the Brown Act and no action is taken. • The conversation meetings are designed to be both educational and collaborative. The process is rooted in dialogue and deliberation, not in debate. <p>Conversation sessions are designed for several purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on and strengthen the governance infrastructure, e.g., governance principals, norms, and protocols. • To develop the criteria for problem-solving, action-planning, and decision-making. • To provide an opportunity for the City Councilmembers and the City Manager to discuss progress on goals, programs, and issues from the big picture, philosophical perspective.

Roles and Responsibilities

Topic	Protocol: Interactions with City Staff
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance of the City relies on the cooperative efforts of elected Councilmembers who set the direction and City staff who implement the Council policies and direction. Every effort should be made to show mutual respect for the collaborative efforts of each. • Critical to Councilmembers' ability to make informed and wise decisions is timely and equal access to information. With five independently elected Councilmembers, it is essential that there be a well-defined, clear process of communication.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Manager and Councilmembers agree to work directly with department heads when requesting information. But will always be sensitive to staff workload and time restrictions. Any requests made by Councilmembers requiring City resources will be brought to the City Council for review and approval. • No individual Councilmember may direct or cause action to be taken by any City staff. Direction to staff may only be mandated by a majority of the Council through formal action. Great care will be taken to assure that suggestions or comments by individual Councilmembers are not interpreted as direction to staff. • Councilmembers are dependent upon the quality of information provided by the staff and encourage the City Manager and department heads to keep them informed about successes and challenges facing them.

Topic	Protocol: Evaluating the City Manager
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City Manager evaluation is an important leadership tool to focus and align all City efforts. The evaluation process must be clear and fair. It should be goals based, data driven, collaborative and ongoing.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The governance team understands that the manner in which the City Manager is evaluated serves as a model for evaluations throughout the City. Important to this is a collaborative process that ensures on going feedback and no surprises. Annually, in December/January, The Council will conduct an evaluation of the City Manager, using an agreed upon evaluation process. The process shall include opportunities for each Councilmember to participate. The Mayor will compile the results ensuring that the evaluation represents the consensus of the Council.

City Council Operations

Topic	Protocol: Public Comment in City Council Meetings
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council meetings are meetings of the Council held in public to conduct the City’s business. Important to the work of the City are Council meetings that are professional, stay on track and ensure timely decisions. Councilmembers want to ensure that multiple voices of the community are heard that the process for community input is clearly defined and that community members feel welcomed and are encouraged to participate.
Protocol	<p>The City Council welcomes and encourages public engagement and participation at City Council meetings. The mayor will open and close all public comment opportunities reminding the public of the process listed below: that comments are welcomed, and individual Councilmembers will not personally respond or engage in debate or conversation with the presenter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speakers are encouraged to complete a comment form. If a speaker wants a response, they are required to complete a contact form or provide contact information to the City Clerk. Each speaker’s public comment is limited to three minutes (general rule) per agenda item. The time may be reduced if there are many people wanting to speak.

Topic	Protocol: Electronic Communication During Council Meetings
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting of the City Council is a meeting to conduct Council business in public. • Use of electronic mail (email), notes, and all digital communications shall conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety, and ethics as other forms of City – Council related communication. • If a Councilmember is sending or receiving messages regarding a public issue being discussed, those messages are public records and can be requested by any member of the public, even if the messages are typed on a personal smartphone or personally owned computer
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Council meetings, Councilmembers will not access electronic messaging systems other than the relevant agenda and corresponding documents. Accessing such communication could be construed as receiving public comment without the benefit of having the community member in person to address their concerns. • To ensure that matters are decided based on evidence made available publicly before and during the hearing, Councilmembers will not consider information received electronically during such public hearings. Council meeting agendas will include a statement to this effect to ensure the public is aware that electronic communications will not be reviewed or considered. • Other uses of electronic devices during meetings should be limited to instances where a family or business situation makes the communication necessary, at the discretion of the Councilmember. • All new Councilmembers agree to attend a Brown Act Training within the first months of their tenure in office.

Topic	Protocol: Bringing up new ideas - Deciding on whether to move forward on an idea
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council encourages fresh and innovative thinking and seeks ways to support continual learning and improvement. • Councilmembers agree to a process that will support bringing forward new ideas while maintaining the focus on established City priorities. • The Council is mindful of resources and the impact of decisions on the City resources.
Protocol	<p>New ideas are brought to the Council using the following process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: a Councilmember brings an idea, including background and support for the idea, to the City Manager or during Council comments at a Council meeting. The City Manager may recommend this idea be brought to the entire council for consideration.

Topic	Protocol: Bringing up new ideas - Deciding on whether to move forward on an idea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 2: the idea may be considered during agenda planning. • Step 3: the new concept/idea may be held for consideration during the City’s annual goal setting process. <p>New ideas will be weighed against the impact on staff’s ability to accomplish City goals. Consideration will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact of new idea on agreed upon City priorities, and goals. ▪ Diversion of staff time, and energy from their primary responsibilities relative to achieving City goals.

Topic	Protocol: Self-Monitoring of City Council Effectiveness
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a governance self-assessment process demonstrates accountability to the community and the intention of the governance team to strengthen and improve governance practices. • Governance self-assessment sessions are an opportunity to reflect on Council effectiveness and measure adherence to adopted governance protocols.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Council supports continuous improvement through ongoing evaluation of governance effectiveness. • The Council will participate in at least one workshop annually to review governance team agreements and processes and to participate in a self-evaluation process. The assessment process will align with assessment of progress on the City’s priorities. During the assessment process, the Council may consider any amendments to processes or protocols and schedule consideration of any new programs/policies/protocols resulting from the self-assessment.

Topic	Protocol: New Councilmember Orientation
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the City Council must be knowledgeable about the complexity of the organization they are governing, and the full range of services, facilities and programs provided by the City. • Perhaps the most important way a Council can sustain its positive governance culture, and remain a cohesive, unified, vibrant decision-making team is through the purposeful on boarding of new Councilmembers.

Topic	Protocol: New Councilmember Orientation
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council recognizes the importance of welcoming and helping transition newly elected Councilmembers into the public experience. • The City Manager will prepare orientation materials for new Councilmembers and schedule an initial meeting to both establish early and direct communication and provide information necessary to understand the complex organization of the City. • As new members join the City Council, the City Manager will coordinate with department directors to provide an orientation, allowing an opportunity to meet key staff and provide tours of City facilities. Department heads, or their designees, will offer orientation to newly elected Councilmembers regarding the departments' key responsibilities and functions. • The Council agrees that there is need for new Councilmembers to have an initial introduction to Council culture. The Council will schedule a governance discussion meeting to provide an opportunity to share personal aspirations and to review, discuss and re-confirm the adopted governance protocols as documented in the Placerville City Council Governance Manual.

City Council in the Community

Topic	Protocol: Handling Complaints from the Community
Rationale	<p>The most important trait a Councilmember can cultivate is the ability to listen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councilmembers understand the importance of being accessible, consistent, and fair in dealings with complaints and concerns from the community.
Protocol	<p>Councilmembers will make visible their dedication and commitment and clarify their authority as one of five in all decisions and actions.</p> <p>The Council values open communication and timely resolution of issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When approached with an issue or concern that is outside of the formal complaint process, Councilmembers agree to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen respectfully and openly. • Remain neutral, understanding that only one side of the issue is being heard. • Remind the community member that no individual Councilmember has the authority to solve the issue. • Encourage addressing the issue with the person who can most directly help them with their concern. • Councilmembers will notify the City Manager of the issue or concern, as appropriate.