

OVERVIEW OF REPORT ON RESTRUCTURING AND REIMAGINING RICHMOND VIRGINIA CITY COUNCIL

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Project Overview

PMG was engaged by the City to **review and evaluate the current operations and organizational structure of the Council Offices and make recommendations** as to any restructuring of the Council Offices **PMG determines to be necessary.**

Analysis included:

- evaluation of the City's governing structure (e.g., Charter)
- a review of the roles, staffing levels and management of Council Offices
- interviews of 31 City Council/Chief of Staff office representatives
- review of 31 City Council/Chief of Staff office job descriptions
- review of 2017 Operational Policies & Procedures Manual and 2006 Matrix Consulting Group Legislative Staffing Study

Themes from Interviews and Research

- **Need for increased collaboration on Council**
 - environment of competition among Council Members when drafting pending legislation
 - a reported lack of cohesive efforts
 - significant potential for duplication of efforts
- **Insufficient sharing of information equally among Council Members in a timely manner**
 - agendas are not sufficiently set prior to meetings, e.g., last-minute information is often added on the day of meetings without sufficient detail
 - members of Council, including its leadership, are not always privy to conversations and information made available to other members of Council

Themes from Interviews and Research (cont.)

- **Inconsistent and poorly defined expectations for the liaisons**
 - feedback indicates the liaison positions are over-worked possibly due to a lack of clearly defined consistent employment expectations
- **Meeting management challenges**
 - agendas are reportedly too malleable
 - time limits on comments are not observed
 - extraneous discussions distract from intended business items
- **Insufficient staff participation in legislative development**
 - papers may be developed without policy expertise or oversight
 - may result in redundant efforts
 - creates challenges in managing staffing assignments

Themes from Interviews and Research (cont.)

- **Standing Committees are not perceived to be responsive to the will of Council**
 - may take up issues at the request of committee chairperson rather than Council
 - allow Council directed actions to die in committee due to excessive continuances
 - refer too many issues back to Council without recommendation
- **Council Chief of Staff Position is not clearly defined**
 - Council Chief of Staff needs to be an active leader who works with Council to develop and implement strategic efforts, not just a provider of administrative support

Recommendations Overview

41 recommendations were identified:

- Council Process Improvement (13 recommendations)
- Council Efficiency and Effectiveness (12 recommendations)
- Existing Policy Amendments (5 recommendations)
- New Policies (1 recommendation)
- Staffing Levels and Skills (2 recommendations)
- Role of Council Offices (6 recommendations)
- Changes to City Charter (2 recommendations)

PMG's Top 10 Recommendations

1. Council Members retain the ability to initiate legislative proposals and analysts (instead of Liaisons) are responsible for researching and producing papers
2. Drafting of pending legislation should proceed in an open way that increases collaboration and enhances the transparent flow of information
3. Revise Council mission statement to include a statement of duty to work as a cohesive unit to serve the residents of Richmond by efficiently advancing their interests through the legislative process
4. Create a prioritization of concerns on an annual basis that will give clear direction to the Office of the Council Chief of Staff, the Office of the City Attorney, the Office of the City Auditor, the Office of the Assessor, and the Office of the City Clerk

PMG's Top 10 Recommendations

5. Council be continually informed about the content of discussions between the Council Chief of Staff and Council leadership
6. Council's Rules of Procedure be amended so that resolutions may only be entertained by Council when they speak to local issues over which Richmond City Government has jurisdiction
7. Council Chief of Staff should work to develop improved relationships with aspects of the City Administration that are available to support recruitment, retention, definition of employment expectations, and professional development of needed staff members
8. Develop an orientation program for newly elected officials

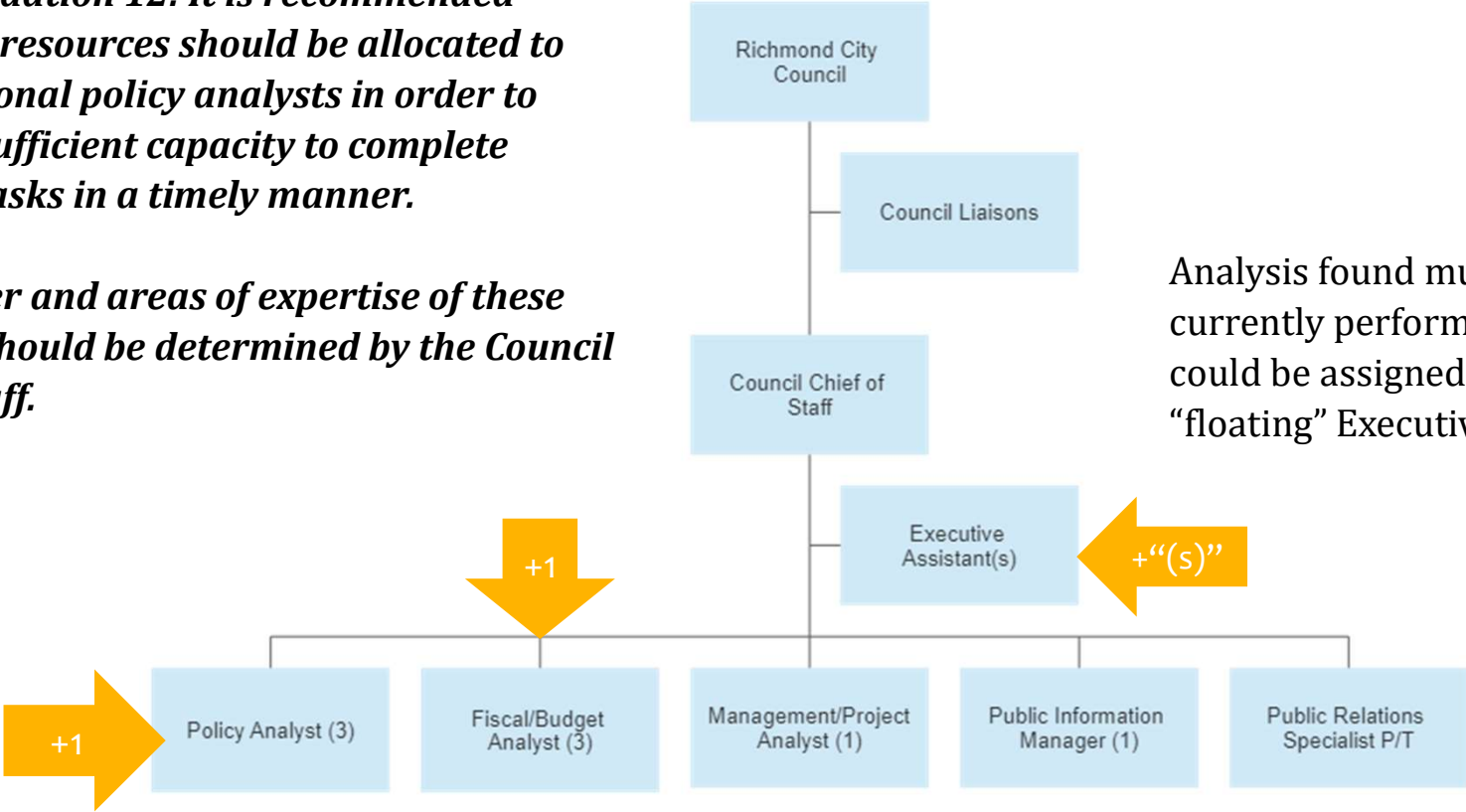
PMG's Top 10 Recommendations

9. Job description for the liaison positions be clear and consistent and outline the appropriate tasks to which they may be assigned
10. Council Liaisons meet on a regular basis, not to share all details regarding the individual Council Member's intentions, but to share ideas, find areas of agreement and redundancy, and better understand the likelihood of generating consensus around certain issues when possible

Other Recommendations: Staffing Levels

Recommendation 12: It is recommended additional resources should be allocated to hire additional policy analysts in order to generate sufficient capacity to complete assigned tasks in a timely manner.

The number and areas of expertise of these positions should be determined by the Council Chief of Staff.



Analysis found much of the work currently performed by liaisons could be assigned to analysts or “floating” Executive Assistants. “



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