

TRANSFER OR POOLING OF PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

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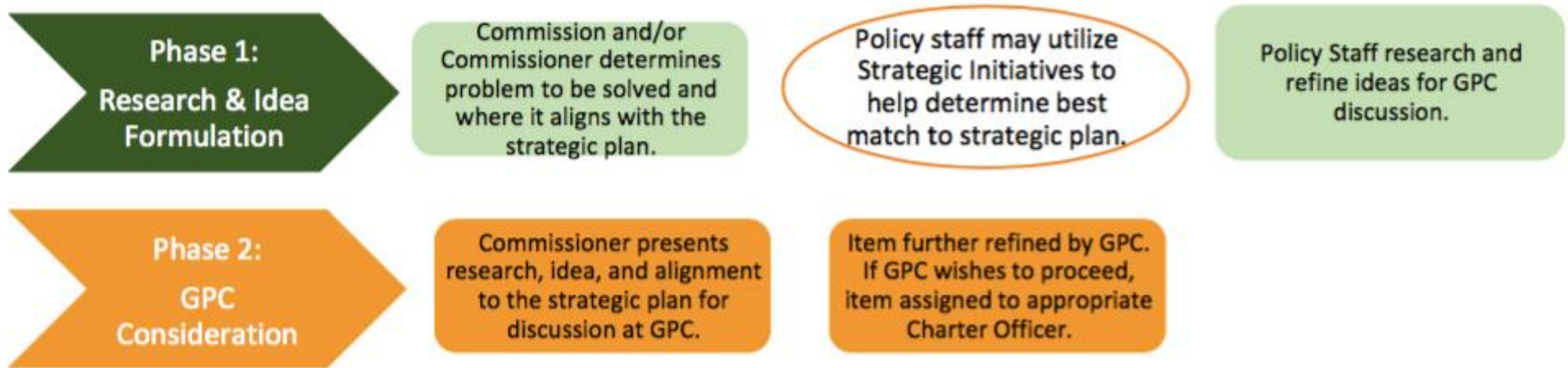
Office of the City Clerk

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Item #2023-09

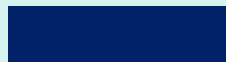


POLICY RESEARCH PROCESS



CITY OF GAINESVILLE

- **General Public Comment** – each speaker is limited to a max of 3 minutes to speak to items not on the agenda.
- **Early Public Comment** – speakers are permitted to comment on any or all items on the agenda. Speakers are limited to 3 minutes when speaking to one item, and 5 minutes when speaking to multiple items
- **Regular Public Comment on Agenda Items** – each speaker is limited to a max of 3 minutes and may only speak on the item being considered.





DEFINITIONS

Public Hearing: Scheduled period of time for members of the public to speak on legislative or quasi-judicial items that are included in the meeting's agenda.

Public Comment: Period of time reserved for members of the public to speak on items that are not items which will have a designated public hearing time.



NO PUBLIC COMMENT DEFERRAL POLICY

Hollywood, Florida

- Speaking citizens are given 3 minutes to speak and pooling of time is not allowed.

Miami Dade County, Florida

- Speaking citizens are given 3 minutes to speak and pooling of time is not allowed.

Jacksonville, Florida

- Members of the public may speak for 3 minutes maximum with no pooling of of time to other speakers allowed.

Santa Barbara, California

- Council voted to end pooling of comment time in early 2023. Prior to this, individuals were allowed to ask other members of the public to fill out slips and give their time to one individual. Each individual was allowed two minutes of speaking, with each individual allowed up to 10 minutes of pooled time.
- Reversal was due to certain individuals consistently overtaking the public comment period.



NO PUBLIC COMMENT DEFERRAL POLICY

Orlando, Florida

- There is a general time limit of 3 minutes to speak per issue. Non-repetitive comments are encouraged, and large groups are requested to name a spokesperson so as not to take up multiple time slots. The spokesperson does not receive additional time.

Hendersonville, North Carolina

- Speakers are limited to 4 minutes each, and no time shall be yielded or transferred to another speaker. Groups supporting the same position are encouraged to designate a spokesperson, but that spokesperson will not receive additional time.



PUBLIC COMMENT DEFERRAL POLICIES

Alachua County, Florida

- Audience members are given 3 minutes to speak on agenda items, with additional time given at the discretion of the Chair.
- The Chair may allow for pooling time for persons who are in attendance and wish to give their time for someone else in attendance, if the Chair determines pooling time will provide for more efficient or effective meeting conduct.

Tallahassee, Florida

- The Chair may require, at a meeting in which a large number of individuals wish to be heard, that a representative of a group speak on behalf of the group and may designate the length of time the representative may speak. Otherwise, comments are limited to 3 minutes.

Clearwater, Florida

- Groups may elect a representative who is given 3 minutes, plus an additional minute for each person in the group the individual is representing, up to a max of 10 minutes. Comment cards are provided to track those who waive their right to speak.




PUBLIC COMMENT DEFERRAL POLICIES

College Station, Texas

- Speaker remarks are limited to 3 minutes. An individual may speak for 10 minutes on behalf of a group of 5 or more. The 5 or more individuals must sign up through the registration form and be present when the speaker is introduced. Those signing may not also speak individually.

San Antonio, Texas

- Individuals are given up to 3 minutes to speak. Organizations may have a total time of 9 minutes to speak if 3 representatives are registered and present when the speaker is called. However, the Chair may reduce this time at their discretion.



PUBLIC COMMENT DEFERRAL POLICIES DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Tampa, Florida

- Allows for the pooling of time up to a 10-minute maximum during public hearings only (not during public comment). Individuals may designate a spokesperson, relinquishing their speaking time. A speaker's waiver form must be filled out and signed. Speaking time is one minute per name on the waiver, up to a max of 10 minutes.
- During public comment, pooling of public comment time is prohibited and each speaker may speak for up to 3 minutes.

James City County, Virginia

- During a public hearing portion of a meeting, a group may designate a spokesperson and make a comment representing the group for up to 15 minutes. A group is four or more individuals physically present during a meeting, with three or more yielding their time to the chosen spokesperson.
- Pooling of public comment is not allowed during regular public comment and each speaker may speak for up to 5 minutes.

POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES TO POLICY

Advantage

An individual who has more than three minutes to speak to an issue may be able to develop a more cohesive and detailed argument for or against an issue than several people who are limited to three minutes.

Advantage

Allowing for the pooling of time may reduce the duplication of arguments made in front of the Commission.

Advantage

Allowing for the pooling of time may reduce the number of people who will speak in front of the Commission, resulting in a shorter public comment period.

POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES TO POLICY

Disadvantage

Keeping track of who has spoken to an issue and who wishes to pool their comment time may become an administrative challenge.

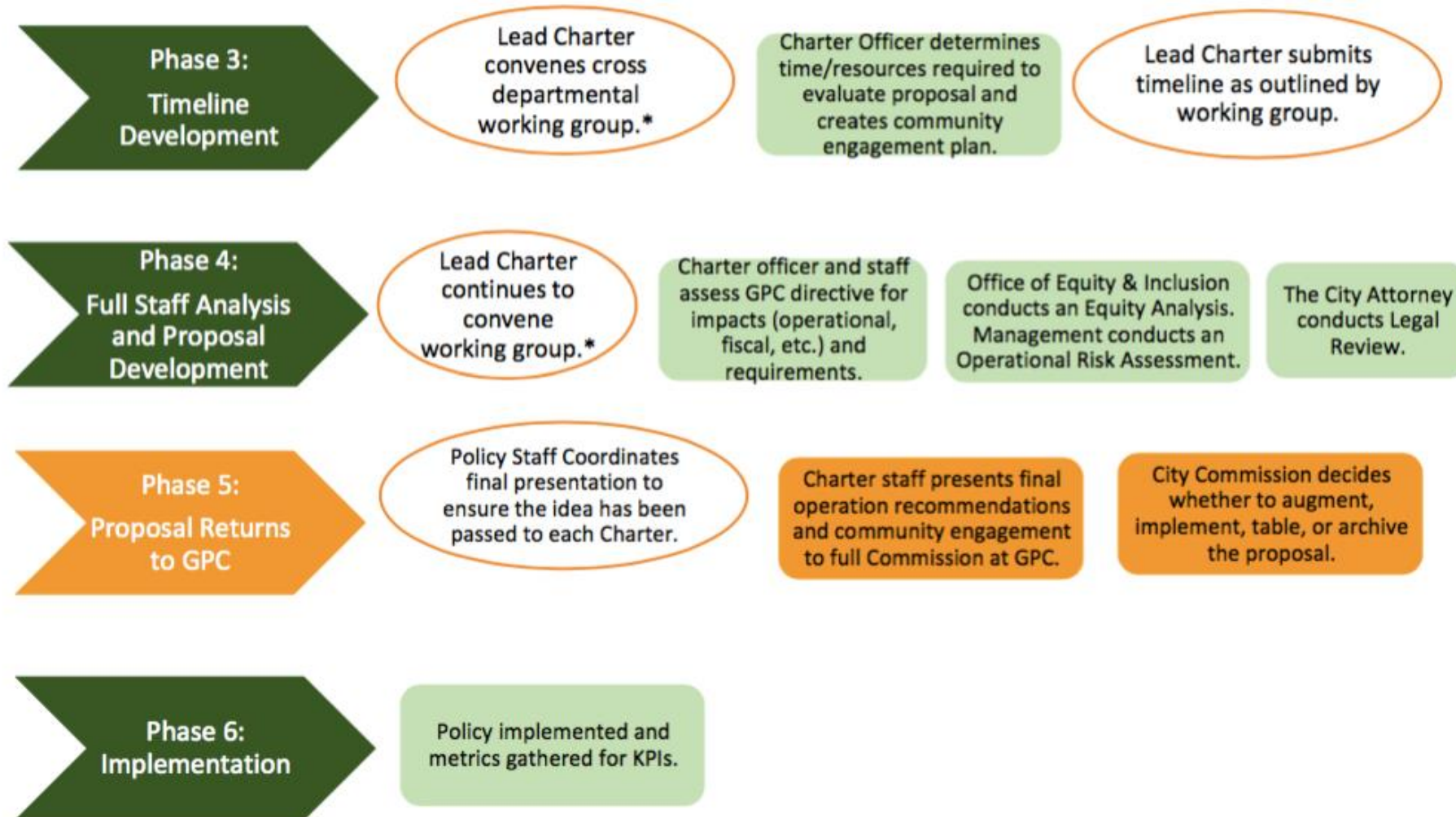
Disadvantage

The pooling of time may only be used by select groups, resulting in certain individuals routinely being given more time to speak to items than others.

Disadvantage

If the amount of time a representative is given is equal to or greater than the amount of time individual would receive, it could result in longer public comment periods.

POLICY RESEARCH PROCESS





DISCUSSION?

