

# OUR ISSAQUAH

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## MEETING-IN-A-BOX

Our Issaquah:  
Citywide Strategic Plan



City of Issaquah Contact: Joanne Bisquera  
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# Meeting-in-a-Box Guide

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Thank you for facilitating this Meeting-in-a-Box on behalf of the City of Issaquah! We appreciate your willingness to conduct this exercise - community input is invaluable for the development of our goals and vision.

## Included are the following materials:

- Step-by-step instructions to guide you before, during and after the meeting
- Notes Template
- Group Sign-in Sheet
- 3 handouts for participants:
  1. Discussion Questions and Meeting Ground Rules
  2. Citywide Strategic Plan Summary - including a visual overview and summary
  3. Demographic Questionnaire

This meeting will work for groups as small as four or as many as 8 to 10 persons (larger groups might consider breaking into smaller groups). We expect this meeting to take about 30-45 minutes, but you can spend more or less time depending upon your group's interests and available time.

Please conduct your meeting and **submit results using the directions below by Monday, May 14**. If you have any questions about your meeting, please contact: Joanne Bisquera at the City of Issaquah at [JoanneB@issaquahwa.gov](mailto:JoanneB@issaquahwa.gov) or 425-837-3023.

## For this meeting, you'll need:

- About 4-10 participants
- Step-by-step instructions
- Handouts for each participant (only 1 sign-in sheet is needed)
- Participants to serve two roles: (everyone is also a participant)
  1. Facilitator
  2. Note-taker
- Pens or pencils for each participant
- Extra paper for each participant
- Flip-charts and markers (optional - if available)
- A room or other meeting area where participants can be comfortable for about half an hour, can take notes, and where it is easy for all participants to see and hear one another.

## Contact for more information:

Joanne Bisquera  
City of Issaquah  
[joanneb@issaquahwa.gov](mailto:joanneb@issaquahwa.gov)  
425/837-3023

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# Step by Step Instructions

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## A. PREPARING FOR YOUR MEETING:

**Assign roles** (these can be separate individuals or just one person):

- Facilitator
- Note Taker

**Facilitator:** the Facilitator provides the group with instructions and helps ensure that everyone has a chance to participate.

- Lead the work-group discussion topics.
- Ensure everyone feels comfortable and has a chance to speak.
- Keep the discussion on track and on time.
- Guide discussion, not have all the answers.
- Provide everyone an equitable opportunity to participate.

### FACILITATION TIPS

- Make ground rules clear at the beginning and get general agreement.
- Never talk more than your other participants.
- Guide the discussion to have participants agree upon 3-5 main issues or topics.
- Promote more detail and depth within the conversation by asking questions like:
  - \* “Why is that important to you?”
  - \* “What makes you feel that way?”
  - \* “Can you please explain or provide more detail?”

**Note Taker:** the Note Taker helps the Facilitator by taking notes on comments received during the exercise. This will help the group to accurately summarize feedback from the conversation and then use that information to report back what you learn. Use the following tips:

- Use flip charts, if available, to capture and organize comments. Use a different flip chart for each question and be sure to write the questions on each individual flip chart. If you do not have a flip chart, you can take notes on regular-sized paper.
- Organize your notes by listing the prompt (Key Takeaways, Key Actions, etc.), then noting participant comments. A notes template is included with the Meeting-in-a-Box materials.
- It is not necessary to capture comments exactly word by word (verbatim) in your notes, but rather to reflect the theme of the comment. You can always check with a participant to make sure your notes reflect the intent of a comment.
- Feel free to ask a participant (in just a few words) to repeat what they said or ask people to speak more loudly if you are having trouble hearing.
- Do the best you can to keep your notes clear, understandable and comprehensive enough for someone else to transcribe and summarize later.
- At the end of discussion after each question, make sure 3-5 items with the most agreement have been agreed upon and recorded clearly.

## B. GROUP DISCUSSION:

**1** **Facilitator:** Begin the meeting with a round of introductions. When you are ready to begin, read the following statement:

*Today we will be participating in the City of Issaquah's Strategic Planning process. This structured exercise is an opportunity for us to give input into the vision and priorities we believe the City should focus its resources on achieving. We will begin by describing the strategic planning process. Afterwards, we will move into the questions, which will give us an opportunity to provide our input on Issaquah's vision for the future and priorities.*

**Review ground rules:**

*I want to make sure we have the opportunity to hear from everyone and to get through each of the questions in the time allotted. In order to do that, I would like to review some ground rules for our discussion:*

- *Treat everyone respectfully*
- *Do not interject or speak over others*
- *Listen while others are speaking*
- *No side conversations*
- *Everyone's comments are valued*
- *It is important to hear from everyone*
- *Please be mindful of the time we have, do not speak for extensive periods of time*

**2** **Facilitator:** Read through the following questions:

**(1) What is this project about?**

*The City of Issaquah has launched work on a citywide strategic plan to affirm a shared vision for our community. This planning process will engage many people who live, work and play in Issaquah to unite around a common set of goals and priorities. Your participation will help the City align its resources with the activities that have the most value for the public.*

**(2) What is a Strategic Plan?**

*A strategic plan is a document used to help guide the City's priorities, goals and actions. It creates a roadmap used by the Mayor, City Council and Staff to achieve community-wide goals.*

**(3) Why are we a part of this?**

*The City of Issaquah would like to engage with a broad cross-section of people who live, work and play in our community. Understanding the vision and priorities of community members will help guide the strategic plan and thus its goals and actions in the near-term. The City is taking steps to encourage community members to provide input including this Meeting-in-a-Box, community pop-up booths at various events, focus groups and an online survey.*

**3** **Facilitator:** Distribute the “Issaquah Strategic Plan Process” handout. Read the following statement:

*This graphic represents the process the City of Issaquah is currently undertaking to develop a community based strategic plan. There are three phases to this process.*

*We are currently in Phase 1 (“Who We Are”), which includes a variety of opportunities for community input. At the end of Phase 1, the City will have a clear understanding of the vision, mission, values and strategic priorities of community residents.*

*During Phase 2 (“Where We Want to Go”), City staff work groups will use the input from Phase 1 to develop goals and objectives. These goals will then be checked with the community.*

*During Phase 3 (“How We Will Get There”), implementation work groups will create action plans and performance measures to evaluate progress with those actions. At the conclusion of this phase, a community-based strategic plan will be reviewed and adopted by the City Council.*

*As you can see, there are a lot of components to this process we didn’t discuss. If you are interested in learning more, I will provide you with contact information for City representatives involved in this process at the end of this meeting (provide them with the email listed at the beginning of this guide)*

**4** **Facilitator:** Begin the meeting by reading through and discussing the following questions one at a time. (REMEMBER - GIVE TIME FOR DISCUSSION, THEN STARTING WITH QUESTION #2 TRY TO GUIDE THE GROUP TO AGREE UPON 3-5 MAIN ISSUES/TOPICS FOR EACH QUESTION). **Note Taker:** begin taking notes.

*Now that we’ve learned a little bit about the strategic planning process, we can begin the questionnaire which gives us an opportunity for our voices to be heard. Let’s go around the room and discuss:*

(1) What do you personally value about Issaquah?

**Facilitator:** allow the group to brainstorm and encourage sharing of a variety of ideas.

(2) What aspirations do you have for Issaquah in the next 15-20 years?

**Facilitator:** allow each person an opportunity to share thoughts. Remember, the goal is open discussion, not to win a debate. After an initial discussion of the second question, have the **Note Taker** briefly review the group’s responses. Have the group identify the main 3-5 issues.

(3) Why is that important to you?

**Facilitator:** for each of the aspirations identified in Question 2, follow a similar process and identify why they are important.

(4) What are the challenges we face in reaching these aspirations?

**Facilitator:** for each of the aspirations identified in Question 2, follow a similar process and identify challenges.

(5) What changes are needed to reach these aspirations?

**Facilitator:** for each of the aspirations identified in Question 2, follow a similar process and identify what changes are needed to reach them.

**5 Facilitator:** Once the discussion has concluded read the following statement:

*The City of Issaquah would like to thank everyone for participating and providing their invaluable input and opinions. Your voices have been heard and will be closely analyzed to create a vision for Issaquah that represents the entire community.*

*In order to help the City understand the range of participants in the Meetings-in-a-Box, we have an optional, anonymous demographics survey. Please take a moment to complete this information.*

*If you have any additional questions, I can provide you with contact information for City representatives involved in this process. Additional information is also available on the City's website: [issaquahwa.gov/OurIssaquah](http://issaquahwa.gov/OurIssaquah)*

*(Note Taker: provide all meeting notes and demographics to the **Facilitator**)*

## C. REPORTING YOUR RESULTS:

**Facilitator:** Now that you have completed the meeting, you have two options to deliver your group's results.

### OPTION 1:

1. Transcribe the flip chart or your notes by using our online tool:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MIAB-Submission>

*This tool provides step-by-step instructions on how to input all of the information you have gathered.*

### OPTION 2:

2. Take clear pictures of each clearly labeled notes page or flip chart and send them as attachments to:

[JoanneB@issaquahwa.gov](mailto:JoanneB@issaquahwa.gov)

2a. The subject of your email should read: "Meeting-in-a-Box" by "Group Name"

*2a Example: Meeting-in-a-Box by Russian Orthodox Group*

2b. The body of the email should include a brief description of your group and the number of participants.

*The City of Issaquah thanks you and appreciates your time and willingness to conduct this exercise.*





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## Citywide Strategic Plan Meeting in a Box

*Q1: What do you personally value about Issaquah?*

**Key Takeaways:**



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**Citywide Strategic Plan Meeting in a Box**



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## Citywide Strategic Plan Meeting in a Box

**Q2: What aspirations do you have for Issaquah in the next 15-20 years?**

**Key Takeaways:**



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Q3: Why is that important to you?

**Key Takeaways:**



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**Q4: What are the challenges we face in reaching these aspirations?**

**Key Takeaways:**



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Q5: What changes are needed to reach these aspirations?

**Key Takeaways:**

