Subcommittee Usage in Municipal Government

Kaylinn Escobar
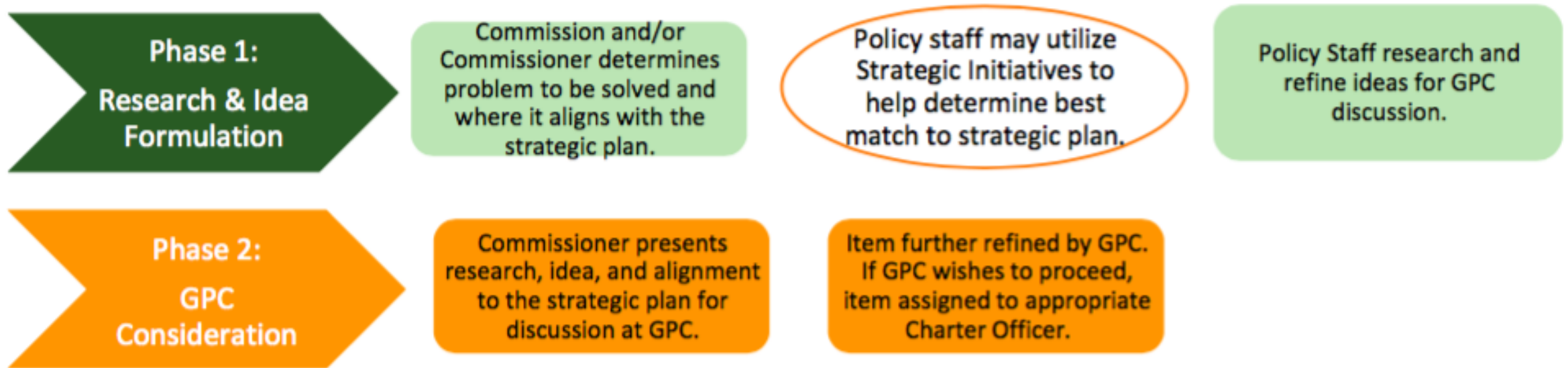
Policy Research Fellow

Office of the City Clerk

General Policy Committee, May 26th, 2022

Item # 211211

Policy Research Process

Phase 1:
Research & Idea Formulation

Commission and/or Commissioner determines problem to be solved and where it aligns with the strategic plan.

Policy staff may utilize Strategic Initiatives to help determine best match to strategic plan.

Policy Staff research and refine ideas for GPC discussion.

Phase 2:
GPC Consideration

Commissioner presents research, idea, and alignment to the strategic plan for discussion at GPC.

Item further refined by GPC. If GPC wishes to proceed, item assigned to appropriate Charter Officer.

Overview of the Presentation

- Definitions
- History of Subcommittees in Gainesville
- Present Committee Usage in Gainesville
- Alternatives to Supplement Subcommittees
- Advantages and Disadvantages to Extensive Subcommittees
- Applications in Florida and in other states

Background Information

- Definitions
  - ==Subcommittees==: standing committees that discuss and examine issues within one predetermined field. Also frequently referred to as committees.
  - ==Ad hoc committees==: designed for the purpose of solving a clearly defined issue within a limited time frame
  - ==Advisory boards/committees:== provide advice from a citizen perspective to the mayor and commission
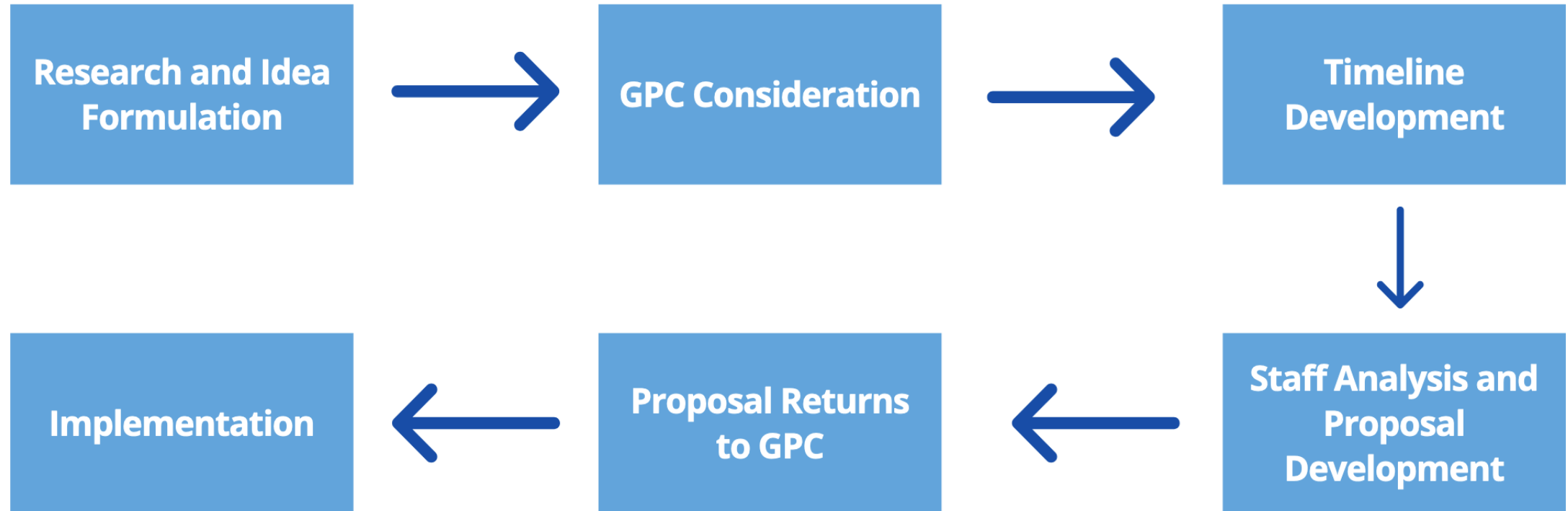
City of Gainesville: Past

- 8 subcommittees, met monthly + General Policy Committee (full body) was added in 2014

Subcommittee Name	Make-Up
Regional Utilities Committee	4 commissioners
Recreation, Cultural Affairs, and Public Works Committee	2 commissioners
Equal Opportunity Committee	2 commissioners
Community Development Committee	2 commissioners
Public Safety Committee	2 commissioners
Audit and Finance Committee	Mayor & 1 commissioner
Legislative and Organizational Policy Committee	Mayor & 1 commissioner
Economic Development and University Community Committee	3 commissioners

City of Gainesville: Past (cont.)

- Most subcommittees dissolved in 2016 due to the following concerns:
  - 9 monthly meetings - increased staff time
  - 2-3 commissioners per committee, increased commission commitment
  - Recommendations had to be heard again by full Commission
  - Long referral lists, items forgotten
  - Items not sufficiently analyzed during meetings
  - Difficult to prioritize items

City of Gainesville (GPC Model)

Research and Idea Formulation	→	GPC Consideration	→	Timeline Development

Implementation	←	Proposal Returns to GPC	←	Staff Analysis and Proposal Development

City of Gainesville: Present

- Several <u>advisory boards</u>
- 2 <u>ad hoc</u> committees, will dissolve once completed
  - Environmental Justice Subcommittee
  - Digital Access Subcommittee
- 2 <u>standing</u> committees / **subcommittees**
  - Audit Committee
  - Finance Committee
- Commission membership on several <u>outside committees</u>
  - Library Governing Board, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, etc.

Alternatives to Subcommittees

- Advisory Boards
  - Health/Safety
  - Economic Development/Planning
  - Administration
- Ad Hoc Committees
  - Time-limited committees to address short term needs with stronger recommendations
- Workshops
  - Meeting that allows commissioners to discuss topics without voting or taking official action
  - Can lead to a better understanding of goals/priorities of each commissioner
  - Less time commitment, would not change structure

Potential Disadvantages to Subcommittees

- May weaken city manager oversight of policy areas.
- Florida Sunshine law grants public access to governmental proceedings at state and local levels.
- May diversify responsibility too greatly among commissioners.
- Greater time commitment for staff and commissioners.

Potential Advantages to Subcommittees

- Provides city commission with greater oversight of city departments and larger policy issues
- Commissioners can track progress of policy more closely
  - Allows commissioners to give input on policy progress at multiple stages
- More time to discuss topics in subcommittee meeting than in a General Policy Committee meeting

Case Studies

Limited/No Subcommittees

- Tallahassee, FL
- Lakeland, FL
- Port Saint Lucie, FL
- Cape Coral, FL
- Pembroke Pines, FL
- Fort Lauderdale, FL
- Miramar, FL
- Hollywood, FL
- Orlando, FL

Extensive Subcommittees

- Jacksonville, FL
- St. Petersburg, FL
- Tacoma, WA
- Augusta, GA
- Scottsdale, AZ
- Bend, OR

Limited/No Committee Usage

- Citizen Advisory Boards and Ad Hoc Committees
  - Port St. Lucie
  - Fort Lauderdale
  - Miramar
  - Orlando
  - Hollywood
  - Pembroke Pines
- Commission involvement on select committees
  - Lakeland
  - Cape Coral
- Commission Workshops
  - Tallahassee

Jacksonville, FL

- City/council municipality in conjunction with Duval County
- Standing committees
  - Finance Committee; Land Use and Zoning Committee; Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health and Safety Committee; Rules Committee; and the Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee.
- Each standing committee has ~7 councilmembers
- Additional *special* committees that address specific issues

St. Petersburg, FL

- Strong mayor + 8 council members
- 8 Council Committees
  - 4 council members + 1 alternate member
  - Committee chair + Vice-Chair
  - Budget Finance and Taxation Committee; Housing, Land Use and Transportation Committee; Legislative Affairs Intergovernmental Relations Committee, etc.
  - Mayor not included
- Decision moves as a recommendation to council (now including mayor)

Tacoma, WA

- Council-manager
  - Mayor and 8 councilmembers
- 5 subcommittees, or Council Committees
  - 4 council members and an alternate, appointed by the mayor and approved by the council
  - The Chair and Vice-Chair are selected within the committee
  - Community Vitality and Safety; Economic Development, etc.
- Council of the Whole is similar to GPC
- Utilize study sessions (like workshops)
- Key consideration – staffing capacity

Augusta, GA

- Utilizes standing committees
- Commission meetings occur twice a month with committee meetings between commission meetings
- Each of the 5 committees has 2 commission members in position of chairman and vice chairman
  - Mayor does NOT have position on committees
  - 4 members TOTAL on each committee
  - Administrative Services Committee; Engineering Services Committee; Public Safety/IT Committee

Scottsdale, AZ

- Council-manager
  - Mayor and 6 councilmembers (including vice mayor)
- Council meets twice a month
  - Also holds "study sessions" to provide direction to staff and discuss City issues
- 3 subcommittees
  - Audit Committee, Council Subcommittee on Education, Economic Development Subcommittee
- Also utilizes advisory boards and committees in addition to subcommittees

Bend, OR

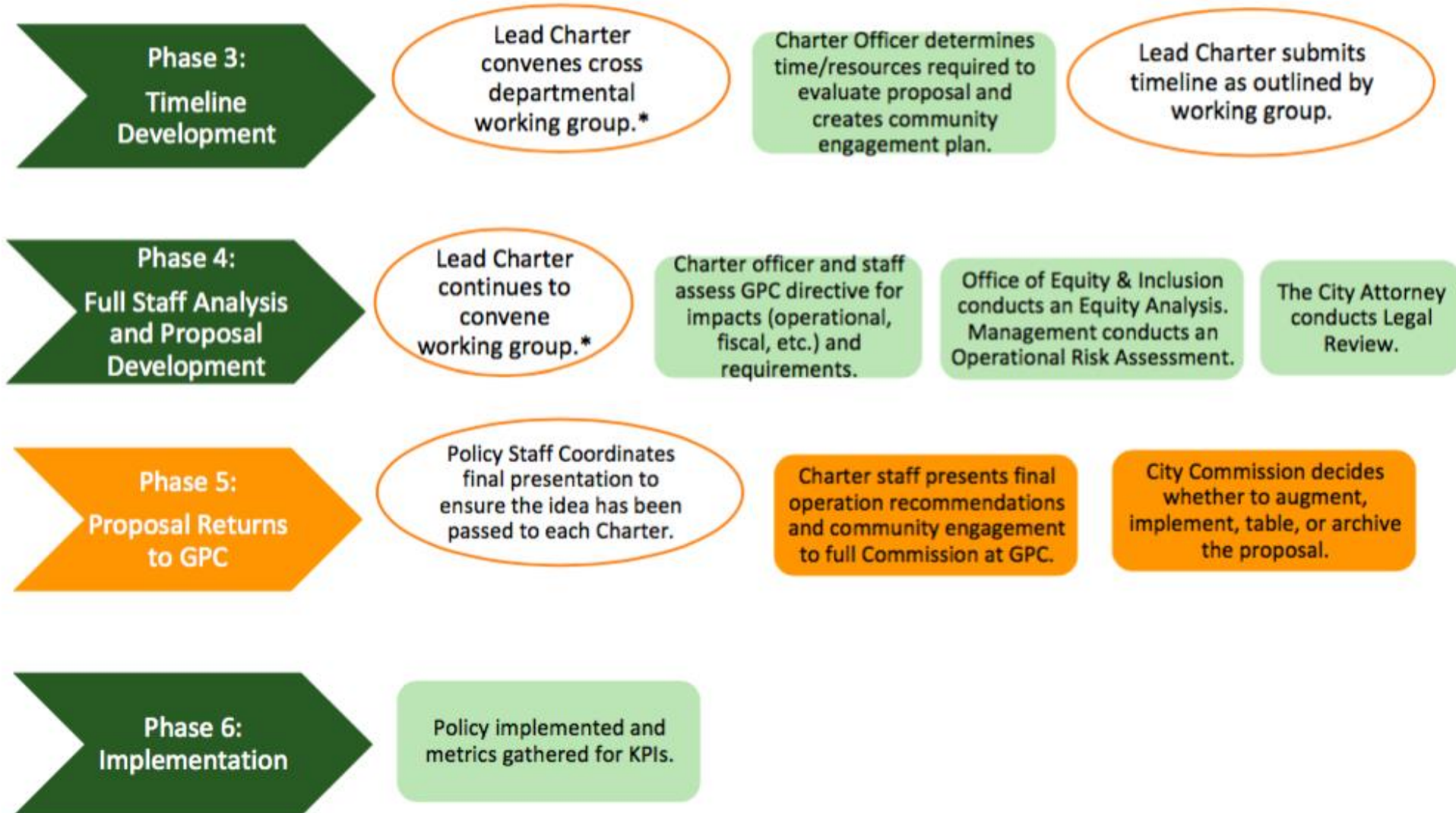- Council-manager
  - Mayor, mayor pro-term, 5 councilors
- City council meetings twice a month
- Subcommittee meetings once a month
  - Community Building Subcommittee
  - Stewardship Subcommittee
- 3 councilors and representatives from relevant advisory boards/committees
- Allow preliminary policy guidance to staff with input from advisory boards
  - Provides recommendations to council as a whole

Summary

- Subcommittees: standing committees that discuss and examine issues within one predetermined field. The City of Gainesville had an extensive subcommittee structure prior to 2016.
- Alternatives
  - Advisory boards
  - Ad hoc committees
    - Both often used throughout Florida and in Gainesville today
  - Workshops/study sessions
    - Not used in Gainesville
    - Examples in Tallahassee, Tacoma, Scottsdale

Policy Research Process

Phase 3: Timeline Development

- Lead Charter convenes cross departmental working group.*
- Charter Officer determines time/resources required to evaluate proposal and creates community engagement plan.
- Lead Charter submits timeline as outlined by working group.

Phase 4: Full Staff Analysis and Proposal Development

- Lead Charter continues to convene working group.*
- Charter officer and staff assess GPC directive for impacts (operational, fiscal, etc.) and requirements.
- Office of Equity & Inclusion conducts an Equity Analysis. Management conducts an Operational Risk Assessment.
- The City Attorney conducts Legal Review.

Phase 5: Proposal Returns to GPC

- Policy Staff Coordinates final presentation to ensure the idea has been passed to each Charter.
- Charter staff presents final operation recommendations and community engagement to full Commission at GPC.
- City Commission decides whether to augment, implement, table, or archive the proposal.

Phase 6: Implementation

- Policy implemented and metrics gathered for KPIs.

Discussion?