

From Konnor Slaats, July 15, 2026:

I reflected on our work plan and progress since our Council meeting last April, especially as we prepare to welcome several new members. I've been thinking about how we could build on our existing working structure and create a more consistent cycle of discussion and output that Council finds valuable.

I'm wondering if we could pilot some documented working norms for the remainder of the year. This is similar to how we've operated over the past year, but with clearer stages and expectations.

Because technology questions likely won't arrive as clearly defined asks from Council, I think CTAC can serve as both a technology-sensing and advisory body: identifying emerging issues, framing the questions that may eventually matter to Council, and then focusing our deeper work on a small number of validated priorities.

At a high level:

Commissioners surface signals → CTAC frames potential questions → Council validates and prioritize major work → a small number become active advisory projects.

For Signals, Exploration, and active work, commissioners would route them through the staff liaison for advance distribution and pre-reading.

Stage 1 (Signals): commissioners periodically bring forward a short, half-page summary of technology-related work they think CTAC should be aware of like:

- Emerging technology trends
- Something a peer city is doing
- Emerging policy or resident-impact question

The summary would answer:

- What's happening?
- Why might this matter to St. Louis Park?
- What policy or strategic question could this eventually create for Council?
- Why might CTAC be useful?

In-meeting, we'd spend no more than 10-15 minutes discussing these items and decide to watch, explore, or close them. Items worth watching could remain on a simple backlog for the future.

We could try rotating responsibility so 2 commissioners bring signals monthly and adjust the approach over time.

Stage 2 (Exploration): CTAC decides that a signal needs more investigation, so one or two commissioners do a limited amount of research to answer: is there a meaningful and actionable question here?

The output would be no more than one page, with the primary goal of framing a clear problem statement. For example: "What principles should SLP use to determine whether a resident-facing digital service provides sufficient and distinct public value?"

Checkpoint: before recommending deeper work, we check against four criteria

- Is there a real public or city decision underneath it?
- Does CTAC add something that staff might not naturally provide?
- Is this appropriately strategic rather than operational?
- Will this be relevant to Council or another commission

Questions that pass this test could be added to the existing backlog as high-potential future work. We could then periodically bring the highest-priority questions to Council (through our annual check-in, or through the formal communication process) to understand which questions Council would find most valuable for CTAC to pursue.

Stage 3 (Active work):

Active work would have a clear problem statement, a deliverable, a target date, a lead commissioner and contributors. The output would vary depending on the question. Some might warrant larger advisory papers, while others may only need a short briefing or response.

For a large project, I think we can use a model similar to what we're doing:

- **One lead/editor:** keeps the work moving by outlining the content, integrates the final product, identifies key decisions. They can create some content but shouldn't be expected to do nearly all of it.
- **Two or three contributors:** each own a defined slice of research or analysis

Stage 4 (Approval and completion): Full commission can critique, debate, and approve the final version to send to Council.

Across a three-year term, this would let commissioners rotate through different roles and give us a more formal structure. I would expect us to have only one or two substantial projects at a time, but the exact number and team structure could flex based on the work and commissioner capacity.