



STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Keis and Members of City Council

FROM: Chris Heineman, City Administrator
Brenda Malinowski, Finance Director
Bill Dircks, Public Works Director
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DATE: July 14, 2021

RE: Strategic Plan Update

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE:

In September, 2019, the City Council approved the Strategic Plan which established a practical vision for the community and identified several clear steps the City will take to achieve that vision. The primary goal of the strategic plan was to establish a practical vision for the community to work towards over the next 3-5 years. This vision included the following items:

- Define town square plan
- Flexible gathering spaces that engage everyone
- Increased diversified citizen engagement
- Modernized codes and all records are incorporated into efficient, functional formats
- Sustainable core services that are accountable to the public
- Enhanced internal and external trail system
- Provide additional park amenities and opportunities to engage the community
- Revitalized key commercial corridors
- Maintain and create new housing opportunities

From this, four strategic directions were identified that would help to achieve this vision:

1. Enhancing and Empowering the Community
2. Creating Operational Efficiency
3. Maximize the City's Assets to Catalyze Development
4. Mandating Action and Accountability

These strategic directions formed the basis for a list of initiatives that could be accomplished over the next 12-18-months. City staff utilized these strategic directions and initiatives to guide the 2020 and 2021 budget processes and have continued to work on many of them over the past 18 months. As it has now been approximately 2 years since we held the initial strategic planning workshop, we thought it would be a good time to provide an update on the progress that has been made in each of these areas.

1) Enhancing and Empowering the Community

- Establish criteria and method to get youth involved.
 - Staff will be working on language that can be incorporated in the Municipal Code that would allow for youth to get involved in the Advisory Commissions.
- Identify languages to translate to City printed/written material.
 - Spanish and Hmong have been identified.
 - Pricing has been received from two translation companies and will be discussed during the 2021 budgeting process.
- Identify signage locations for wayfinding and branding.
 - Staff is currently working on wayfinding signage that will be placed at each park. \$20,000 has been budgeted in 2020 for this project.

2) Creating Operational Efficiency

- Zoning Code Update
 - The Zoning Code Update is underway with a completion date set for December 2021. The Community Development staff and consulting planner have been working through the draft beginning in January 2021 with the Planning Commission, City Council, residents, and business owners involved in the process.
- Plan and fund records conversion to electronic files
 - \$78,870 was included in the 2020 Budget (funded with savings from the 2019 Budget) for building permit efficiencies including *PermitWorks* software, online building permits, and address file scanning.
 - Currently approximately 85% of the address file scanning has been completed. \$20,604 has been spent (\$40,000 budgeted). Since 2020 all address file documents are only saved electronically in Laserfische.
 - Finance staff is still identifying solutions for electronically storing finance records.
 - Public Works staff is working on deciding which records can/should be stored electronically and will wait to see what budget funds are available.
 - Parks & Recreation staff is working on converting paper copies of records to electronic files.
- Sustainability
 - In addition to referencing the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, here are a few examples of environmentally sustainable efforts that we have implemented over the past few years:
 - 2019/2020 - The City of Little Canada utilized goats to address invasive species such as Buckthorn in several parks.
 - 2020 - Staff initiated a multi-year slip-lining project for water and sewer pipes in street and utility projects.
 - 2020 - Partnered with the DNR and Xcel Energy to establish pollinator friendly habitat in West Winds Park.
 - 2020 - Staff incorporated ultraviolet-C (UV-C) lighting disinfection with the A/C replacement project to provide cleaner indoor air treatment for City Hall.
 - 2021 - Purchased our first Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) for administration & code enforcement.

- 2021 - Staff has proposed establishing a stormwater utility to enable us to manage stormwater runoff and mitigate its negative impacts on water quality.
- 2021 – Partnered with Kraus/Anderson to conduct a facility condition assessment on City Hall and the Fire Hall. By including updates to these important assets in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the entire building lifecycle can be extended while supporting sustainability.
- 2021 - Public Works staff completed a 4-hour training on smart salt applications to reduce the use of salt and mitigate negative impacts on environment.
- 2022 – Staff is researching and considering upgrades to safety and security at City Hall such as touchless access control to monitor and regulate who is entering their buildings to ensure authorized access only.
- To be Completed:
 - Work towards more dense and diverse patterns of land development
 - Improved facilities for walking and bicycling in order to reduce driving and improve personal health
 - Allow a wide range of housing types and prices
 - Develop a land use pattern that includes places for jobs and businesses in retail or service businesses, manufacturing, business services, the professions and home occupations
 - Continued improvements in handling surface water, protecting wetlands and lakes, and growing the urban forest
- Complete staff assessment and identify areas of concern
 - Staffing increases were included in the 2020 Budget. These increases included the hiring of .50 FTE in Community Development, 1 FTE in Public Works, and additional hours for the Parks and Recreation Coordinator & Utility Billing Clerk. The Public Works Apprentice position was also advertised and hired to provide the Public Works Department with an additional employee year-round which enables the department to operate more efficiently and complete projects requiring a higher level of skill.
 - In 2021 after a Public Work Maintenance position became open, staff analyzed the needs of the Parks and Public Works departments and reorganized by adding a 3rd supervisor position rather than simply replacing the maintenance position. This will allow all of the supervisors to each have a specific area of focus and give the Public Works Director time to concentrate more on administrative duties. The Parks Supervisor was moved back under the Parks & Rec Department.

3) **Maximizing our Assets to Catalyze Development**

- Implemented Parcel Inventory
 - Comprehensive Plan Parcel Inventory: The 2040 Plan outlines Focus Areas and a Future Land Use Plan by District. The following areas have been identified as possible areas for development or redevelopment.

- Heinel property: Part of the property is being considered for multi-family development.
 - Sculley property: Part of the property is being considered for single-family residential.
 - Rice Street / County C intersection
 - Little Canada Road / County C “Triangle” intersection area
 - Small retail area along Rice Street
 - Ryan Industrial Park
 - Fra-Dor Recycling along Country Drive
 - Industrial / self-storage, etc. (Edgerton and County D)
 - City property et al (Country Drive / Nadeau Rd)
 - Gopher Electric (Little Canada Road /I-35E)
 - South Owasso/Spruce Street: This is a vacant site being considered for industrial use.
 - Rice Street/South Owasso (A&W Site): This site is being considered for a commercial restaurant use, site plans are being developed.
 - Rice Street/Demont: Several properties are being considered to be joined to accommodate high density residential multi-family.
 - 3230 Spruce Street: This property is being considered for an industrial use with \$1 Million in improvements to the facility to accommodate 180 jobs.
- Schedule ongoing meetings with surrounding agencies
 - Staff has continued to schedule ongoing meetings and develop relationships with surrounding agencies. Some examples of ongoing meetings include:
 - Ramsey County Sheriff’s Department Contract Cities
 - Metro I-Net Joint Powers Board
 - CTV Contracted Cities City Managers Meeting
 - The following are new partnerships with surrounding agencies:
 - Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Program
 - Association of Metropolitan Municipalities (Metro Cities)
 - St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce (SPACC)
 - North Metro Mayors and City Administrators (Quarterly)
 - ULI Regional Council of Mayors (Monthly)
 - Economic Development Association of Minnesota (EDAM)
 - Available Funds and Funding Opportunities
 - Available fund balances were identified and explained during the budget and CIP process in 2020 and 2021.
 - A city facility assessment report, a road-biotics street report, and TIF District study are currently being completed. These results of these studies will be used to complete a 10-Year CIP.
 - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be received in 2021 and 2022. If projects identified in the Strategic Plan are allowable uses of the ARPA Funds, these funds may be used for these projects.
 - As part of the economic recovery, additional grant and funding opportunities may become available to fund projects in the Strategic Plan.
 - Bring in developers to review market demand and their suggestions for development

- Staff has met with brokers and developers related to the Heinel property and the Sculley property over the past 12-months. Staff is also in communication with a broker about the vacant city-owned parcel between US Bank and Culvers and an appraisal has been ordered. Additional opportunities will be addressed on a case by case basis. Staff has also initiated conversations with ULI-MN staff about conducting a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) and with Maxfield Research about conducting a housing study for the city.

4) **Mandating Action and Accountability**

- Set calendar for special City Council meetings
 - Hold regular City Council Workshops for updates on the Strategic Plan progress. Additional special City Council meetings can be scheduled based on specific projects or initiatives that warrant additional time. One possible example includes a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) for a specific corridor or development/redevelopment area in Little Canada.
 - Special Strategic Plan Discussion Workshops held:
 - June 10, 2020
 - January 13, 2021
 - February 10, 2021
 - July 14, 2021
- ID Format for tracking progress (Zoning Code)
 - Comprehensive Plan
 - The 2040 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2020.
 - Zoning Code Update Progress
 - The Zoning Code Update will be completed in December 2021.

City of Little Canada Strategic Plan

Strategic Direction:

Enhancing Identity and Empowering Community

Strategic Initiative	Completed Year 1	Completed Year 2	To be Completed
Establish criteria and method to get youth involved	Identified language to update Municipal Code to get youth involved in the Advisory Commissions	Continue to move forward with the adoption of new language and work with local schools to identify and recruit youth commissioners	Staff will be working on language that can be incorporated in the Municipal Code that would allow for youth members to be involved in the Advisory Commissions: Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission. Annual visit to schools.
Increased Community Engagement	Languages identified for translating City Newsletter	Newsletter translated in Spanish and made available online	Continue to translate newsletter into Spanish.
Enhance/Broadcast our Identify	Replace wood park entrance signs with minimal maintenance poly signs at each park.	Park & Rec. Commission recommendation to move forward. Working with signage company to get accurate pricing and final design.	Order and install new entrance signs with budgeted CIP money.
	Started working on interpretive signage for each park and budgeted money to complete project.	Continue working on wayfinding and interpretive signage at each park.	Complete design and install signs. Continue to identify locations throughout park system for other interpretive or wayfinding signage.

Creating Operational Efficiency

Strategic Initiative	Completed Year 1	Completed Year 2	To be Completed
Implementation of zoning code revision		The Zoning Code Update is underway with a completion date set for December 2021. The Community Development staff and consulting planner have been working through the draft beginning in January 2021 with the Planning Commission, City Council, residents, and business owners involved in the process.	To be completed December 2021.
Electronic Records Conversion	75% of address file scanning completed and 90% of files prepared for scanning		Identify funds to be included in 2022 budget for electronically storing remainder of records.

City of Little Canada Strategic Plan

Strategic Direction:

Optimize Organization Structure	Completed staff assessment. Added .50 FTE to Community Development and 1 FTE in Public Works.	Increased hours for the Parks and Recreation Coordinator. Hired a Fire Inspector. Re-organized Public Works Dept-added a 3rd supervisor	Additional hours at front desk to enhance customer service.
Identify Resources: Sustainability	Utilized goats to address invasive species such as Buckthorn in several parks. Staff initiated a multi-year slip-lining project for water and sewer pipes in street and utility projects. Partnered with the DNR and Xcel Energy to establish pollinator friendly habitat in West Winds Park. Staff incorporated ultraviolet-C (UV-C) lighting disinfection with the A/C replacement project to provide cleaner indoor air treatment for City Hall.	Purchased our first Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) for administration & code enforcement. Staff has proposed establishing a stormwater utility to enable us to manage stormwater runoff and mitigate its negative impacts on water quality. Partnered with Kraus/Anderson to conduct a facility condition assessment on City Hall and the Fire Hall. By including updates to these important assets in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the entire building lifecycle can be extended while supporting sustainability. Public Works staff completed a 4-hour training on smart salt applications to reduce the use of salt and mitigate negative impacts on environment.	Work towards more dense and diverse patterns of land development Improved facilities for walking and bicycling in order to reduce driving and improve personal health Allow a wide range of housing types and prices Develop a land use pattern that includes places for jobs and businesses in retail or service businesses, manufacturing, business services, the professions and home occupations Continued improvements in handling surface water, protecting wetlands and lakes, and growing the urban forest Staff is researching and considering upgrades to safety and security at City Hall such as touchless access control to monitor and regulate who is entering their buildings to ensure authorized access only

Maximizing our Assets to Catalyze Development

Strategic Initiative	Completed Year 1	Completed Year 2	To be Completed
Implement Parcel Inventory	The 2040 Plan outlines Focus Areas and a Future Land Use Plan by District.	The parcels to be tracked have been identified and are being updated as development opportunities occur.	On-going effort to track existing properties and add new properties as they become available.
Leverage partnerships for shared resources/projects			

