

City of Smithville Strategic Plan

2015-2017

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

“When you establish a destination by defining what you want, then take physical action by making choices that move you towards that destination, the possibility for success is limitless and arrival at the destination is inevitable.”

— [Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*](#)

“If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up someplace else.”

— [Yogi Berra](#)

Introduction

This update to the City of Smithville Ongoing Strategic Plan is brought forward upon the substantial completion of the previously approved Strategic Plan. The previous plan, approved by the Board of Aldermen in January of 2011, was a five year plan designed to improve the communications and planning frameworks of the City government. As of summer 2014, staff determined these efforts were substantially complete, creating the need to update the plan for the next steps in development.

It has been the Board of Aldermen's goal to establish Smithville as a strong contender in the future growth of the Northland, to be on the leading edge of quality of life issues, community involvement and economic development. The continued planning process will allow the governing body to exercise control over the direction of the community, guiding it to the desired destination.

The City of Smithville began its strategic planning process in January 2007 with a presentation about the benefits of strategic planning and discussion of various approaches that could be used to develop a strategic plan. City officials desired a process that could:

- Provide a way to think about the future without imposing constraints
- Allow growth to happen gracefully and with forethought

- Encourage more dialogue about the future
- Create a framework to coordinate and integrate various City plans and initiatives
- Outline short, medium, and long-range action plans to accomplish the City's strategic goals
- Focus City efforts on what's most important and contribute to more efficient use of resources through multi-year budgeting
- Assign accountability for implementing strategic action plans

The plan was not adopted by the Board of Aldermen in 2007. It was reintroduced by City staff in 2011 and adopted by resolution of the Board. By 2014, many of the items dealing with improved communications with residents and other agencies had been addressed.

The strategic plan will continue to be the staff's guide through the upcoming months, determining the direction of efforts and resources for the City. The strategic plan will continue to be more than a list of projects to be undertaken and issues of concern for the city. It is a detailed plan that sets out how the City of Smithville will address those identified issues for the benefit of all citizens.

Strategic planning is an important aspect of community development and achievement. A strategic plan establishes a framework, sets goals and directs city staff how to accomplish and achieve those goals. The framework also allows the governing body and staff to track milestones of achievement.

Although the strategic plan is generally a multi-year program, with a comprehensive review at the end of the predetermined period, the plan is to be evaluated annually. New information and conditions are considered during the annual review and introduced into the plan. This will assure that the plan is constantly serving as a guide for the true improvement of the city. The Board of Aldermen will continue to be guided throughout the life of the strategic plan by the stated Community Values.

Community Values

Values articulate a conceptual image of an organization's "desired future" and offer a compelling description of what the organization wants to be in the future. Establishing community values promotes consistency within an organization and offers a reference point for major decisions.

A set of community values was set by the Board of Aldermen, incorporating input from the community. The values reflect the concepts and assets to be preserved and built upon over the course of the next several years:

Community Value 1: Smithville will be known for its friendly atmosphere. Residents and visitors will enjoy the City's inviting downtown and public square which serve as the venue for small town festivals and time-honored celebrations.

Community Value 2: People will seek Smithville as a place where they can work, establish families, and set down roots. They will be drawn by the area's natural beauty and its many opportunities to pursue recreational activities from boating and swimming to day hikes and evening strolls.

Community Value 3: City residents will have more information available about City services and issues. More residents will be involved in their community and will participate in City elections and programs.

Community Value 4: City residents will appreciate Smithville's approach to balanced development, which recognizes that the City is first and foremost a residential community. Future retail and service developments will respond to residential needs and promote the livability of Smithville's neighborhoods.

Although not identified during the initial exercise is the expectation of financial responsibility on the part of elected officials and City staff in managing public funds. Tax payers and residents desire and expect good financial management, maximizing benefit for funds spent.

The actions set forth in this update of the Strategic Plan should reflect and promote these shared community values.

The 2015-2017 Strategic Plan

The strategic goals included in the City of Smithville's 2015-2017 Strategic Plan are listed below and accompanied with specific objectives. Responsibility for implementing the Strategic Plan rests with the City Administrator, who will in turn

delegate specific actions to other staff members, holding them accountable for developing and executing specific action plans that support each strategic goal and objective. Action plans should include a deadline and identify resources needed to accomplish the plan.

Ongoing efforts from the previous Strategic Plan framework will also be included here.

Strategic Goal 1: Continued citizen engagement in local government. In the previous plan, city officials noted the availability of public information and citizen outreach were areas in need of improvement. Staff has developed an aggressive program to provide residents with necessary information about community activities and improvements using conventional approaches and social media. The program allows for new approaches in communications as they arise. An ongoing dialogue with citizens supported by good public information is vital to Smithville as it continues to make major decisions on the level of services and public improvements to be provided and how to finance those activities.

Strategic Goal 2: Continue the Capital Improvement Planning Process. In 2014, the Board of Aldermen completed a Capital Improvement Plan for the 2015-2020. The Board also acquired the services of a financial advisor to assist in determining the best ways in which to finance the plan. The ongoing implementation on the CIP should be a priority of the Board of Aldermen and staff.

Strategic Goal 3: Unified Image for the City. This item was discussed in the past several months, but not well defined or implemented. A cohesive image and look for the City will be important to set ourselves apart from other communities and head into the future. The unified image for the City can include the seal, tagline, letterhead and more. The purpose of this goal is to create a sense of unity and professionalism for visitors, residents and City staff alike.

Strategic Goal 4: Development of a Comprehensive Plan Update. A comprehensive plan will direct current and future Boards and staffs on development of the community and its services over the course of twenty to twenty-five years. Staff is ready to begin the comprehensive planning process with the Board of Aldermen,

Planning and Zoning Commission and the public. Educating the public on the expectations and outcomes of the Comprehensive Planning process become an activity covered by Strategic Goal 1.

Strategic Goal 5: Development of policies that govern activities of the City. Too often Smithville has found itself addressing situations where previous practice and new circumstances present difficult issues. Many times these issues have been worked out in a case by case fashion. This cannot continue to be our pattern. Staff has begun the process of implementing policies to address issues faced by the City without the added pressures of an ongoing, active complaint. Development of these policies allow the Board of Aldermen to determine how best to address situations in accordance with the community values set forth in this document and standard practices in government.

Strategic Goal 6: Strengthening the City's position with other governments, entities and civic partners. The duty of planning and implementing the aspects of the plan belong to the City. Other groups can partner with the City to fulfill some of the goals and aspects of the plan as established by the Board of Aldermen, but it will be the responsibility of the City to assure these activities meet the spirit and intent of the City's mission. To this end, the City has created policies that will assist elected officials, staff and potential volunteers and partners maintain the focus on the City plan.

Implementation

The following actions are provided to help the Board of Aldermen and City staff to establish the ongoing strategic planning process:

Action 1. The City Administrator will assign a staff person who will have primary accountability for accomplishing each strategic objective and establish a date for completion. Where completion dates are more than one year away, the City Administrator can ask the responsible staff person to identify intermediate action steps and establish completion dates for each step.

Action 2. Executive staff will determine the process that will be used to keep staff and the Board of Aldermen focused on implementation of the strategic plan. Newsletters, employee meetings, management team meetings, and updates to the Board of Aldermen are a few of the methods available to accomplish this task. The City Administrator will schedule at least one mid-year update on strategic planning activities. The Board of Aldermen can use this mid-year meeting to evaluate progress to date and, if desired, make revisions to the strategic plan.

Action 3. The best approach to share this information with the public and various stakeholders will be determined by staff and the Board of Aldermen. Periodic reports to the community will be made in order to build support for the City's strategic plan and to encourage other individuals and groups to form partnerships with the City to achieve the strategic goals.