

City of Muscatine – 2021 Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

The City of Muscatine is a rare gem ... multidimensional, resolute, hardy, naturally beautiful, and completely unique. With a fascinating history and inspiring future, this vibrant community located on the banks of the Mississippi River allows residents to thrive, families to grow and prosper, and visitors to enjoy a sense of small town charm while appreciating the many amenities usually found in larger communities ... all while basking in the glow of breathtaking sunrises and sunsets. The diversity of our community only adds to its charm while the global vision created by our manufacturing heritage generates endless possibilities for Muscatine residents. It is with this as our background ... our past, our present, and our future ... that the elected officials and staff of the City of Muscatine have developed this strategic plan that will serve as a guide to an even better future for current and future residents, and current and future businesses.

Five focus areas were established during a Strategic Planning Retreat held in October of 2020 including excellent customer service, vibrant community, healthy community, safe community, and reliable public infrastructure. Each of these areas are detailed in this Strategic Plan and will be used to develop tactical work procedures that will outline the specific tactics and tasks that will support each of these areas.

The City offers a range of services including building and construction permits, building/zoning inspections, housing inspections, public housing, street maintenance, public transport, solid waste collection including bulky waste, curbside refuse and recycling, and yard waste curbside pickup, sewer collection/treatment, public safety (EMT/Fire, Police, and Emergency Management), parking, a variety of parks, trails, and recreational programs, exhibits and programs at the Muscatine Art Center, and the many services offered by the Musser Public Library & HNI Community Center.

The 2021 Strategic Plan outlines key objectives and strategies that align with the City's priorities and comprehensive plan. While the comprehensive plan focuses on a long-range community vision, the strategic plan articulates a two (2) to five (5) year plan that moves the City toward accomplishing its long-range goals. The strategic plan is further supported by development of tactical work plans by City staff and integrated into budgets and department work plans.

VISION

Muscatine is a vibrant river community where a rich tradition of community pride and entrepreneurial spirit has created an outstanding environment to live and work. Muscatine values its history, has a strong sense of community, is rich in cultural and economic diversity, and has strong global connections. Muscatine residents, businesses, and its local government are engaged and achieve goals through valued partnerships.

MISSION

To provide effective municipal services, excellent customer services, and sound fiscal management that improves quality of life and ensures a sustainable economy.

VALUES

At the City of Muscatine, our organizational values are the foundation on which we build outstanding service for our community. These values express what is important to us and guide our behavior and how we work together.

- Integrity
- Respect
- Innovation
- Excellence
- Professionalism
- Customer Service
- Fiscal Responsibility

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Muscatine has seen many changes during the 2020 calendar year including the seating of four new City Council members in January and the hiring of a new City Administrator in July. Some of the biggest changes, however, have come in how we live our lives and conduct our business during the COVID-19 Health Crisis.

In the midst of the pandemic, elected officials and staff collaborated to develop a Strategic Plan for Muscatine that would produce the results that “Our City” expects and deserves. This plan will help us transition Muscatine into a city that not only highlights service to community members but also attracts others to visit and feel connected. As a Council, we aspire to position our city as a place where people want to live and work, and where everyone feels that they belong. We want people to love Muscatine as we do and feel connected.

Council and staff are dedicated to ensuring a high quality of life, good economics and safe neighborhoods. Residents and businesses expect value and high quality from their local government and this plan will help move the needle closer to meeting those expectations. Through public and private partnerships, participation at the state and national levels, and constant civic engagement, we will continue to invest in necessary improvements and changes as a community of innovation.

The Plan has identified five focus areas built on a foundation of our Vision, Mission, and Values. Focus areas include: Excellent Customer Service, Vibrant Community, Healthy Community, Safe Community, and Reliable Public Infrastructure. We recognize that these are ambitious goals but when we work together and hold ourselves accountable, we are confident that we can be successful. Together we can build a city that is sustainable today and in to the future. By maintaining an attitude of service that highlights partnerships and involvement by everyone, we will place Muscatine in the best possible position.

In addition to focus areas, the plan includes strategies that will be achieved through department work plans, budgets, and measuring our performance. Hitting targeted benchmarks while ensuring that every person’s voice is respected and valued will make sure that everyone has a seat at the table. This is an exciting time to serve as Mayor and I value everyone’s partnership as we lead Muscatine toward a bright future!

Mayor Diana Broderson

STRATEGIC STRENGTHS & RESOURCES

The City has identified a number of strengths and resources that the City may leverage to achieve the strategic objectives described in this document. Advantages are strengths and attributes of the City and the City organization while resources are physical, social, or economic assets that facilitate accomplishment of objectives.

- Diversity of knowledge, ideas, culture, and population
- Great place to raise a family
- Opportunities for the community to expand both physically & economically
- Hometown feel in the Midwest Heartland
- Good mix of retail, manufacturing, and commercial businesses
- Low unemployment rate
- Easy access to U.S. Interstate 80, U.S. Highway 61, and Iowa Highways 38, 22, and 92
- Unique location on the Mississippi River
- Access to rail and a municipal airport
- Close access to a broad range of regional facilities, services, and activities
- Physical/natural beauty
- A history of corporate and private support for community projects
- A track record of completing community projects
- Outstanding outdoor recreation and sports facilities, trails, and parks
- 4-star, AAA downtown hotel
- Local hospital and municipal ambulance service
- Modern facility for Musser Public Library/HNI Community Center
- Art Center accredited by American Alliance of Museums
- Network of non-profits working to improve quality of life in Muscatine Location of
- Eastern Iowa Community College campus
- Within commuting distance of several universities and colleges
- An engaged City Council that desires to move the community forward
- Knowledgeable, dedicated City staff
- Engaged community members
- Local utility with high-speed internet service
- An outstanding record of distinguished budgeting practices

FOCUS AREAS

During the strategic planning process, the City Council identified broad areas of focus for the City organization over the next two (2) to five (5) years. Intentional focus in these areas will assist the City in realizing strategic opportunities by leveraging identified strengths and resources. Focus areas identified include:

➤ EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Provide excellent customer service to our residents, businesses, and visitors through effective citizen outreach and engagement, employee training and improved organizational processes.

➤ VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Enhance and improve the vitality of our community core and gateways including the Grandview Avenue Corridor, Park Avenue Corridor, Riverfront, and Downtown areas to support a thriving economy, vibrant neighborhoods, and a high quality of life and place.

➤ HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Enable a healthy community through quality affordable housing, outstanding recreational amenities, and accessible quality healthcare.

➤ SAFE COMMUNITY

Provide exceptional public safety and community services to ensure a safe community in which residents may live, work, and play.

➤ RELIABLE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Continue to update and implement the City's Capital Improvement Plan to ensure reliable, safe, public infrastructure that addresses community needs.

STRATEGIES

Each focus area is supported by strategic objectives that describe how the City will accomplish its strategic goals. The strategies below provide a framework for how to operationalize broad goals.

EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Provide excellent customer service to our residents, businesses, and visitors through effective citizen outreach and engagement, employee training and improved organizational processes.

STRATEGIES

1. Conduct proactive outreach to citizens by providing timely and accurate information to the public through a variety of communication channels (e.g. website, social media, print newspaper, etc.)
2. Evaluate and modernize the City's tools and systems that customers use to interact with the City.
3. Empower employees with the tools needed to address customer needs at the lowest organizational level.
4. Provide customer service training to employees and ensure that customer service principles are integrated into employee performance goals and evaluations.
5. Develop and support a culture of process improvement within the City organization with a focus on LEAN principles.
6. Implement and capitalize on advanced technology to improve customer service.
7. Solicit input from the community to determine needs and desired services and facilities.

Strengths, Resources, & Critical Success Factors

- Capable and knowledgeable staff with a diversity of skills and a commitment to excellent service
- Staff expertise in process improvement
- Membership in the Iowa LEAN Consortium
- Evaluation of current processes and systems with which our customers and citizens interact.
- Resources and tools for customer service training
- Staff ownership and commitment to customer service principles
- Champions throughout the organization to lead process changes.

VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Enhance and improve the vitality of our community core and gateways including the Grandview Avenue Corridor, Park Avenue Corridor, Riverfront, and Downtown areas to support a thriving economy, vibrant neighborhoods, and a high quality of life and place.

STRATEGIES

1. Develop and implement subarea community plans for the Grandview Avenue Corridor, the Park Avenue Corridor and the downtown in collaboration with key stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and industries with a focus on revitalization and placemaking.
2. Complete planned roadway improvements, including the Grandview Avenue Corridor Revitalization Project and the 2nd Street Streetscape Project.
3. Initiate planning for the Park Avenue Corridor Revitalization Project.
4. Continue to implement components of the Riverfront Master Plan.
5. Support multi-jurisdictional cooperation for improvements to the Muscatine-Louisa County Levee projects.
6. Evaluate opportunities to leverage the Muscatine Municipal Airport and its location in the community.
7. Serve as a catalyst for a thriving downtown economy by partnering with downtown businesses and the Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GMCCI).
8. Develop wayfinding throughout the community to enable residents and visitors to locate assets and businesses throughout the community.
9. Create quality places that people want to work, live, and play in and that contribute to community health, happiness, and well-being.

Strengths, Resources, & Critical Success Factors

- Development potential, including lands along the Grandview Avenue Corridor
- Outstanding recreational amenities (Kent-Stein Park, Soccer Complex, Trail System, Dog Park)
- Availability of Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- A Federal Opportunity Zone designation
- Iconic Pearl of the Mississippi (clammer) sculpture
- Unique Riverfront water feature
- LED bridge lights visible from riverfront and downtown
- Engaged stakeholders & partners
- Identification and engagement of development partners that align with the community vision.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Support a healthy community through the availability of quality affordable housing, outstanding recreational and cultural amenities, collaboration with community and healthcare partners, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

STRATEGIES

1. Complete and implement the Housing Plan in collaboration with a broad group of stakeholders and partners (including the Housing Collaborative and based on the Housing Demand Study), the HUD-approved Public Housing Plan, and other available documents and data.
2. Support the provision of a full range of housing types to meet the needs of a demographically diverse population.
3. Address vacant and nuisance properties to create new opportunities for housing and to support a vibrant community.
4. Support housing projects that increase the availability of quality housing that is affordable to a broad range of income levels by leveraging Tax Increment Financing and other incentives.
5. Leverage City-owned land to support affordable housing goals.
6. Explore innovative approaches to affordable housing development including land banking, revolving loan funds, and other tools.
7. Collaborate with community and healthcare partners to enhance services and improve the health and well-being of the community.
8. Continue to invest in and develop community recreational and cultural amenities that contribute to a healthy community and attract visitors.
9. Create and implement strategies to increase access to healthy food in the Grandview Avenue Corridor.

Strengths, Resources, & Critical Success Factors

- Completed Housing Demand Study (2017)
- Housing as a funding priority
- An existing Housing Counseling Program
- The Muscatine Fire Department Ambulance Service as a leading EMS agency and critical part of the community health care system.
- A community commitment to life-long learning through programs offered by the library, art center, and parks & rec departments.
- Identification and engagement of development partners that align with the community vision.

SAFE COMMUNITY

Provide exceptional public safety and community services to ensure a safe community in which residents may live, work, and play.

STRATEGIES

1. Meet or exceed community expectations regarding the quality of level of police, fire, and emergency services.
2. Invest in critical public safety infrastructure and equipment to maintain the expected level of service while managing capital costs.
3. Develop and implement master plans for public safety based on facility needs, call volume, population, and increasing demands for service.
4. Implement effective recruitment, training, and succession planning programs to ensure staff remain current in their fields and service levels are maintained or improved.
5. Implement technology tools, data collection, and assessment to streamline activities and improve efficiency and effectiveness of routine and emerging activities.
6. Continue to implement community policing principles and programs to build positive police-community relations
7. Continue to invest in active fire and injury prevention public education and code enforcement programs.
8. Continue active participation in state-level EMS and Fire organizations and partner with training institutions to further the quality of EMS practitioners and future employees

Strengths, Resources, & Critical Success Factors

- The Muscatine Fire Department Ambulance Service as a leading EMS agency and a critical part of the community health care system
- Effective community policing and emergency prevention programs
- Public trust in public safety departments and staff
- Highly trained, highly skilled, innovative workforce
- Strong partnerships within City Departments and within the community as a whole
- Data-driven approach to public safety and decision-making
- Civic-minded departments that proactively engage with the community on and off duty.

RELIABLE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The City will continue to update and implement its Capital Improvement Plan to ensure reliable, safe public infrastructure that meets community needs.

STRATEGIES

1. Continue to evaluate and prioritize capital investments utilizing multiple criteria such as fiscal wellbeing, desired service levels, state and federal mandates or legal requirements, and asset condition and operation.
2. Invest in master plans when appropriate and implement those plans as funding becomes available and is approved by City Council.
3. Implement asset management practices to maintain and replace aging assets while maintaining service levels.
4. Integrate placemaking into capital projects when feasible to create quality community spaces that are safe, attractive, and support community connectivity.
5. Implement capital projects and programs as identified in the Capital Improvement Plan, including:
 - Park Avenue 4 to 3 Lane Conversion
 - Pavement Management Program
 - West Hill Sanitary Sewer Separation Project (WHSSP)
 - Grandview Avenue Corridor Project
 - Mississippi Drive Corridor Reconstruction Project
 - 2nd Street Streetscape Project

Strengths, Resources, & Critical Success Factors

- A current Capital Improvement Plan (2019)
- Asset Management Software (PubWorks)
- Capital Projects that are already underway (e.g. 2nd Street, WHSSP, Park Avenue Conversion)
- Existing Master Plans including the Sidewalk and Trails Master Plan and the Riverfront Master Plan
- Talented, skilled and engaged staff to maintain infrastructure "in-house"
- City-owned equipment and budgeted resources and materials to provide preventive and corrective maintenance to infrastructure