



# *STRATEGIC PLANNING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

## **Planning Team Members**

Ken Berg, Alderperson  
Kraig Biefeld, Assistant Fire Chief/Director of EMS  
Cindi Braasch, Interim Parks Director  
Peg Checkai, Library Director  
John Coughlin, Alderperson  
John David, Mayor  
Kevin Freber, Water System Manager  
Will Gruber, City Attorney  
Jaynellen Holloway, City Engineer  
Kurt Larsen, Alderperson  
Bill Maron, Alderperson  
Emily McFarland, Alderperson  
Gregory Michalek, Fire Chief  
Jill Nadeau, Watertown TV Cable Coordinator  
Carol Quest, Health Officer/Director  
Tim Raether, Alderperson  
Tim Roets, Police Chief  
James Romlein, Alderperson  
Cindy Rupprecht, City Clerk/Treasurer  
Rick Schultz, Streets Superintendent  
Fred Smith, Alderperson  
Augie Tietz, Alderperson  
Steve Zgonc, Alderperson

## **Facilitated and Compiled by:**

Steve Grabow, Professor and Community Development Educator  
University of Wisconsin-Extension, Jefferson County Office

With Support By:  
Kim Buchholz, Administrative Specialist

August 2015



Dear Strategic Planning Participants,

First of all, I want to thank all of you for your commitment and input during the Strategic Planning Process. You were all incredible!

It is my hope that this document will help to guide us into the future. As far as I know we have never done this before, so we did explore new territory as City Staff and Elected Officials. It is a bit unusual for a Strategic Planning Team to be as large as ours, but I felt it was necessary to have total involvement. The Strategic Plan and the Executive Summary should help us provide credibility to our future planning and priority setting.

Our citizens should find this interesting and it will provide them with information on planning and priority setting. As a result of our Strategic Planning, I am glad to announce that our Employee Advisory Committee will be starting in September and I am looking for great input and inclusion from our employees.

I will also be establishing a Mayor's Implementation Team. This will be made up of 5 people from the Department Heads and Elected Officials. If you would like to be part of this let me know. I do not believe it will be a huge time commitment.

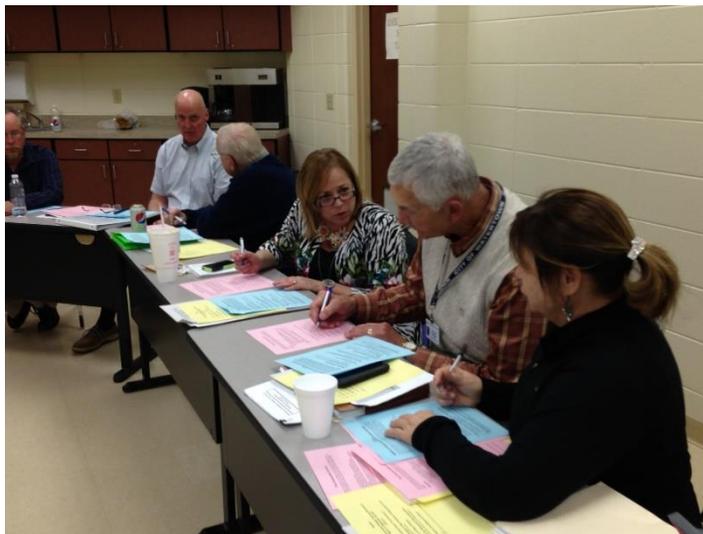
Please read the Executive Summary carefully and again, thanks for your super work!

With Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John".

John David, Mayor

# Watertown Government Strategic Plan Workshop Exercise Photos



# Watertown Government Strategic Plan

## Executive Summary

### **Introduction to the Watertown Government Strategic Plan**

The City of Watertown government has developed its first strategic plan. Strategic planning is a type of organizational planning defined as “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it.” The strategic planning process is a powerful approach for helping organizations figure out what is really important and what they should do about it. The strategic planning process helps organizations look at “the big picture”, but also leads to specific, targeted actions.

A strategic plan focuses on organizational dynamics, and typically identifies a relatively short list of strategic issues (or fundamental challenges to organizational effectiveness). A strategic plan provides a strategy or action framework to address the specific strategic issues.

The strategic planning process used for the Watertown Government Strategic Plan is based on the approach developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Strategic Planning Team. Steve Grabow, a Professor and Community Development Educator with UW Extension, facilitated the development of the strategic plan. Mayor John David was the project coordinator, and the “Planning Team” was comprised of the Mayor, Alderpersons and Department Heads (See List of Planning Participants on the report cover). The process included these specific steps:

- Planning the process and stakeholder analysis (Section 1)
- Assessing formal and informal mandates (Section 2)
- Determining core values (Section 3A) and the mission of the organization (Section 3B)
- Assessing the internal and external environment of the organization (Section 4)
- Vision Sketch (Section 4)
- Framing potential issues and identifying strategic issues (Section 5)
- Formulating strategies and an action agenda (Section 6)
- Plan Implementation (Section 7)
- Reviewing and adopting the strategic plan, monitoring and reassessment of the plan, further implementation considerations (Section 8- Plan Management )

The planning process consisted of ten workshops. This document represents a compilation of “Proceedings Reports” which documented the status of the process. The Appendix contains orientation resources, workshop agendas, the initial timeline and other resources. This document was finalized at the conclusion of the process.

## **Section 1 - Stakeholder Analysis**

The planning team performed a Stakeholder Analysis in which those individuals or groups that are affected by or affect City government were identified. Over 30 external stakeholders (outside of the City government) were identified. The planning team identified 12 internal stakeholders. These stakeholder groups were organized by “primary stakeholders” and “secondary stakeholders” to help figure out which stakeholders might warrant extra attention for this cycle of planning.

Primary stakeholders groups identified by the planning team include:

- ❖ Taxpayers
- ❖ Business Community
- ❖ Elected Officials
- ❖ City Employees

The planning team then developed performance criteria for these stakeholder groups. This exercise helped the planning team think about the criteria that stakeholders might use to judge the performance of City government.

## **Section 2 - Formal and Informal Mandates**

The planning team identified, generalized and characterized important “formal” or codified mandates. The planning team also identified “informal” mandates which are those activities that are expected from stakeholders. The planning team then shared perspectives on how they viewed the implications of formal and informal mandates for future City direction.

## **Section 3 – Core Values, Mission Statement and Motto**

### **Core Values:**

The planning team generated a list of 27 potential “core values” in responding to these questions:

- What do we really care about in relating to key stakeholders?
- What is our philosophy as to how we would like to be viewed?
- What are the values that we should have that help indicate how the City wants to operate?

The planning team identified six cores values that they would like to emphasize. These values along with some clarifying descriptors are:

#### A. Responsiveness

- a. Responsive to citizen calls, concerns, questions
- b. Responsive to community’s needs while seeking out and being open to new ideas.

#### B. Integrity

- a. Hold to identified core values.
- b. Do what you say you will do.
- c. Open-minded to any and all opinions or ideas
- d. Apply laws fairly and evenly.

- C. Approachability/Accessibility
  - a. Value an “approachable” community: where the mayor, elected officials and all city employees are accessible to residents and business persons, current and future.
- D. Accountability
  - a. People doing what is expected of them in doing their job (elected and departments)
- E. Fiscal Responsibility
  - a. Value being fiscally responsible and using our money wisely.
- F. Knowledge and Learning
  - a. Value the seeking of knowledge and life-long learning.

### **Mission Statement and Motto:**

The planning team also was asked to respond to these questions about City government’s purpose or mission:

- ❖ What are the basic social and community needs that we address?
- ❖ What is our fundamental purpose as a City government organization?
- ❖ What are we here to do?

This resulted in 10 potential Mission Statements. The planning went through several sessions and multiple exercises to refine its Mission Statement. Subsequently, a Mission Statement for City government was approved.

### **City of Watertown Mission Statement:**

***“To provide and promote community and quality of life in accordance with the City’s core values and vision.”***

There was interest in developing a shorter version of the mission for use in various City communication pieces, and to succinctly describe the purpose of city government. A Motto for City government was approved.

### **City of Watertown Government Motto:**

***“Watertown: Community and Quality of Life”***

## **Section 4 - Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities/Hopes and Challenges (S.W.O.C.) Analysis**

The planning team responded to these four elements to help clarify the condition of the organization (City of Watertown Government). The strengths and weaknesses exercise looks at the past and present, and are assessments of the internal organization. The scan of challenges and opportunities/hopes looks into the future. The S.W.O.C. analysis supplies an overall systems view of the organization, and it brings to the surface clues for identifying key strategic issues and the contours of effective strategies. The opportunities and hopes exercise provides an early foundation for vision statements of Watertown in the community setting as well as an organization.

The input was organized into theme or possible preliminary issue areas. The planning team identified many strengths in the operation of Watertown government. The assessment also revealed an honest effort at identifying weaknesses. External challenges or outside factors that could negatively affect the City were also listed. There were varying degrees of agreement and disagreement from the strengths, weaknesses and challenges assessment. Since the “Opportunities and Hopes” section was intended to prompt the future “vision of success” for both City government and the broader Watertown community, there was an effort to gauge consensus among the members of the planning team.

The significant assessment work in Section 4 significantly informed the development of possible issues in Section 5. In addition, the results from the “Opportunities and Hopes” exercise became the basis for the Consensus Vision Statements shown below.

### **Watertown Government Vision Statements (Referred to as a Vision Sketch):**

The consensus vision statements are based on the identification of opportunities and hopes for the future. A vision statement is a “description of a desired end-state” or a “description of what is desired to be in place at a future point in time”. This vision sketch describes what a successful and desired City of Watertown (both in the setting of Watertown and within city government) could look like in the future.

### **PHYSICAL AND TANGIBLE VISION IN THE SETTING OF WATERTOWN**

#### **Consensus Vision Statements (in the Setting of Watertown)**

**Watertown will have:**

##### **A. Community/Commitment/Culture/Livability/Destination**

###### **Downtown/Main Street**

- a. The potential for new building ownership on Main Street.
- b. Spurred economic vitality in downtown, attraction of sought-after, high impact business presences; and diminished negative connotations linked with the City.
- c. A revitalized downtown.
- d. An inviting, family-friendly downtown with more events and entertainment.
- e. Downtown becoming 10 times what it is right now.

### Corridors/Riverwalk/Recreation/Trails

- a. The river walk extended and a long walk or bike path along the river that goes through a lot of the City.
- b. A developed riverfront in a way that attracts economic and recreational development.
- c. A multisport complex that becomes a reality (now).
- d. A completed Interurban Bike Path from Watertown to Oconomowoc.
- e. A high speed/commuter rail service with a stop in Watertown.

### Heritage/Place

- a. A new Watertown that capitalizes on our past.
- b. Promotion and enhancement about the positives of Watertown, including
  - o River
  - o Water
  - o Recreation
  - o People
  - o Downtown
  - o History
  - o Industry
  - o Safe Community
- c. People that feel they are a part of this wonderful community along with believing it is a great place to live.

### Events/Attractions

- a. New community events that attract families
- b. A developed city as a “go to” place.
- c. Success by taking advantage of its strategic location between Madison and Milwaukee and as a destination community for people and businesses.

### Culture/Arts

- a. Support for an updated, 21<sup>st</sup> century library and cultural center that provides beneficial resources for our community and enhancement for our downtown community.
- b. The arts sharing the “front seat” with sports and recreation.

## **B. Economy/Jobs/Demographics**

- a. A visionary commitment for industrial growth (for example, to our existing Tax Incremental Finance Districts and the continuing plans for adding new industrial land).
- b. Increasingly pro-active efforts to promote economic growth by city government and para-governmental organizations.
- c. Increased economic development.
- d. Building off of existing business/citizen/city partnerships and expansion into new areas.
- e. Meaningful involvement and contribution to City government representation, operations and economic growth by younger demographics.
- f. Our location becoming more obvious for doing business and attraction (opportunity to use our location as a benefit).
- g. Building upon our city’s many attributes, including its solid economy and its reputation for business friendliness, technology and innovation; making it an ideal place for our employees to live and work.

### **C. Growth**

- a. An increase in housing and population for the middle to higher income demographic.
- b. Both residential and commercial growth providing a healthier financial bottom line so that remaining a full service City is less of a challenge.
- c. On-going brainstorming about economic and community initiatives that will provide motivation for residential/business growth and development.

### **D. Respect/Image/Perceptions**

- a. A new city “brand”.
- b. Ideas from the “Branding Initiative” are planned for, come to fruition and are implemented each year.
- c. Signs placed all over Watertown with positive expressions that are driven home.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL, GOVERNMENTAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE**

### **Consensus Vision Statements (for the City Government Organization and Operation)**

#### **Watertown will have:**

#### **A. Relationships/Participation/Sharing/Communication**

- a. Opportunities for regionalization and consolidation of services.
- b. Partnerships with potential donors and givers who have interest in particular projects, help in financing and help see projects through to completion.
- c. The whole city working together on new ideas for moving forward.
- d. Increased community support and involvement.
- e. Opportunities to partner with traditional and non-traditional groups and individuals.
- f. People who are talking-up Watertown.

#### **B. Planning/Vision/Mission/Change**

- a. Commitment to City strategic planning.
- b. Recognition that change is coming.
- c. Movement towards the vision of a community actively incorporating the coming changes.
- d. Enhancements to our existing resources, and attraction of investment by others with the same objectives.
- e. A strategic plan with increased emphasis on promoting/marketing of our city’s strengths and improvement in our overall situation.
- f. Forward movement in our City with changes for the best.

#### **C. Leadership/Mayor/Elected Officials**

- a. A progressive thinking mayor and city council with a willingness to try new approaches.
- b. Modified leadership and decision-making positions to create more continuity and experience.
- c. Involvement by all players (Madison College, school district, Maranatha University, Hospital, downtown business leaders, etc.) to help advance a plan resulting in a greater chance of success.
- d. Leaders and employees who are all on the same page and set examples for the City.

#### **D. Staff/Employees/Departments**

- a. Staffing opportunities including the ability for the City to create the following minimum new full time positions – Finance Director, Human Resources Director and Information Technologies Specialist.
- b. Combination of departments in locations that utilize skilled staff and eliminate duplication of trucks and equipment.
- c. Someone designated as a “Special Events Coordinator” to take some of the pressure off the department heads.

#### **E. Technology/Social Media**

- a. Marketing of Watertown’s assets using the same tools and processes being used by the businesses and people we want to attract.
- b. Marketing of the City’s tremendous assets while recognizing that using traditional marketing methods will yield a poor result. (The business and individuals that we want to attract are not using “old school” methods).

#### **F. Infrastructure/Stock**

- a. Funding to update infrastructure.
- b. Updating of public areas with these areas being up to code.

#### **G. Operations/Organizational Structure**

- a. Less impact from federal and state mandates that have adverse effects on the City’s budget with the City being left to manage its budget to the needs of its citizens.
- b. An end to zero (0) tax levy growth budgets (this is first!).

## **Section 5 – Strategic Issues**

The planning team generated a list of 22 issues based on what they believed were some of the fundamental challenges facing Watertown. Each issue was framed as an open-ended question with many ways of responding. The team initiated extensive dialogue sessions to help characterize the essence of the issue or dilemma. The planning team used a “Decision Matrix Tool” to individually assess the strategic nature of five potential strategic issues. The planning team affirmed five strategic issues (representing the most important or fundamental of issues facing Watertown) based on a review of the results from a decision matrix tool and dialogue around the impacts of issues on the future of City government.

### *Governmental or Organizational Issues*

#### **1. Staffing/Employees Issue:**

What can we do to fill the staffing gaps we have at the City? How are we going to respond to the many up-coming retirements in the City staff (particularly full time staff; not just department heads)?

#### **2. Organizational Structure Issue:**

What are the ways we can address our operational structure to make it more efficient and functional?

3. **Capital Funding/Resources Issue:**

How can we respond to our extraordinarily expensive yet crucial capital needs in light of our present inadequate and restricted capacity to fund them?

*Community Issues*

4. **Economy/Jobs/Demographics Issue:**

What are ways for the City to emphasize its vision, role, and interests in partnership with key economic development organizations (i.e. Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium (JCEDC), Watertown Economic Development Organization (WEDO), Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), Chamber, etc.)?

5. **Community/Culture/Livability Issue:**

What can we do to keep the City more up-to-date and desirable to live while attracting others?

## **Section 6 - Strategy Formulation**

The purpose of this step is to create a set of strategies to address the five priority strategic issues that have been selected. A strategy is defined as a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, projects or actions initiated by the organization. Strategies respond to the challenges and open-ended question from each strategic issue.

This section summarizes the major initiatives and strategy ideas to be emphasized in the plan. This is the summary list of priority strategies that are recommended for implementation. The participants used these 24 major initiatives to further identify those key “implementation bodies” (individuals, groups, committees, organizations, new entities, etc.) that will be key leaders in plan implementation. It is expected that lead implementation bodies will follow-up with additional strategy detailing, sequencing of tasks and other implementation activities.

### **Strategic Issue I. Staffing/Employees:**

- Major Initiative A - Develop career paths for advancement in departments.
- Major Initiative B - Develop future City leaders.
- Major Initiative C - Adjust existing financing, budget and benefits mechanisms.
- Major Initiative D - Refine human resources and personnel practices.

### **Strategic Issue II. Organizational Structure:**

- Major Initiative A - Initiate new ways to share and enhance departmental efficiency.
- Major Initiative B - Consider refined or new models of organizational structure.
- Major Initiative C - Create department performance measures, appropriate evaluation systems and new processes.

### **Strategic Issue III. Capital Funding/Resources:**

- Major Initiative A - Establish a multi-year capital program process.
- Major Initiative B - Use authorities and districts to assist the City.

#### **Strategic Issue IV. Economic Development:**

- Major Initiative A - Create formal partnerships and defined roles with other organizations.
- Major Initiative B - Expand and revitalize industrial sites and infrastructure.
- Major Initiative C - Implement downtown redevelopment plans.
- Major Initiative D - Address business strengths and needs.
- Major Initiative E - Commit City resources to economic development.
- Major Initiative F - Use planning, marketing and communication tools.
- Major Initiative G - Apply innovation in community and economic development methods.

#### **Strategic Issue V. Community, Culture and Livability:**

- Major Initiative A - Apply the new City brand.
- Major Initiative B - Commit to efforts aimed at the arts and culture.
- Major Initiative C - Initiate activity around a new major sports center.
- Major Initiative D - Look into new festival and event opportunities.
- Major Initiative E - Implement health, fitness and wellness activities for City employees.
- Major Initiative F - Focus efforts toward “Silent Sports” and the City’s assets.
- Major Initiative G - Support community caring and community building.
- Major Initiative H - Establish creative funding and philanthropy opportunities.

### **Section 7 - Plan Implementation**

Plan implementation is defined as the carrying out of strategies, and the incorporation of strategies into the relevant organizational systems (in City government and the community). This typically requires the empowerment of many different individuals and groups who represent the lead “implementation bodies” (individuals, groups, committees, organizations, new entities, etc.). The planning team identified those individual and groups that could play important roles in the implementation of the 24 specific major initiatives.

The planning team further recognizes that both existing groups and new groups will need to be mobilized to successfully implement the ideas in this plan. While this is difficult to generalize, a few areas of emphasis are listed below:

#### **Existing Implementing Bodies**

- City policy committees, City department managers, City staff
- Educational community
- Community and economic development organizations and partners
- Consultants and technical advisers

#### **New or Proposed Implementing Bodies**

- Mayor's Plan Implementation Coordinating Team (New 5-Person Team) - to launch and guide plan implementation.
- Employee Advisory Committee (New) - to enable ideas and feedback from department employees.
- Implementation Action Teams (New Formal and/or Informal Work Groups) - to lead the detailing and refinement of major initiatives and strategies, identification of needed actions, sequencing of tasks and other implementation activities.

It is assumed that the composition of these promising implementing bodies will be refined and adjusted as the strategic plan is communicated and shared broadly throughout the government and community structures.

## **Section 8 - Review, Approval and Other Plan Management**

### **Review and Approval:**

The planning team recommended that the plan be taken to the City Council for formal review and approval. The planning team also discussed the sharing of the plan with the Watertown community and many partners. While specific mechanisms for sharing the plan were not discussed in detail, there was strong affirmation for sharing the plan broadly and extensively after the City Council approves the plan.

### **Plan Monitoring, Reassessment and Updates:**

The purpose of this plan management step is to consider mechanisms for plan oversight, monitoring implementation and making provisions for periodic assessment of plan effectiveness and updates. In the plan implementation section, the establishment of a Mayor's Plan Implementation Coordinating Team was identified. A key function will be to provide overall coordination, guidance and plan monitoring.

Regarding evaluation and check-in on plan effectiveness, the planning team has recommended an annual progress review. It is assumed that the planning team used to develop the strategic plan (all City department heads and all elected officials) will reconvene for this annual assessment session. The planning team committed to this session in May 2016 to see how far the City and community has progressed.

The planning team also discussed when a full, extensive strategic plan process should be repeated. The planning team recognizes the significant commitment and effort involved in a full strategic plan process, and recommends a five-year interval for this periodic strategic plan update.

### **Additional Implementation and Plan Management Considerations:**

While the plan implementation section describes many important ideas around plan implementation, the planning team had a rich discussion around the meaning of this planning effort and some of the practical considerations and reminders of how this plan can be used. Individual planning team members offered their reflections on this strategic plan process and the context for using this as a guide for Watertown's future:

#### **Reference and Resource**

- “This plan is a reference point for future actions.”
- “We can use this plan to reflect back to and use as a resource for decision-making.”

#### **Agreed-upon Strategies**

- “Here are our strategies that we agree to and have reached consensus on.”
- “All of our strategies will be on-going.”

#### **Plan Adjustments and Refinements**

- “This plan will not be set in stone (Things change!)”
- “This plan will be fluid.”