CITY OF
OWATONNA

2025 - 2027 Strategic Plan

Our roadmap to create a better tomorrow

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CITY OF OWATONNA

April 1, 2025

Dear Owatonna community members,

Once again, City leadership has dedicated time and concerted effort in the first quarter of the year to discuss and determine what the future for Owatonna looks like. Hearing from directors of all City departments, taking into account our Comprehensive Plan adopted last year and sharing feedback from our neighbors, community leaders, business owners and others, we have crafted our Strategic Plan for the next three years.

The Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for decision-making. We have identified five strategic priorities that we will focus on over the next three years. Progress on them will be monitored and shared regularly. Our Strategic Plan will remain fluid and adaptable. It will evolve with annual reviews based on progress, conditions and the City's changing needs. These strategic priorities encompass and replace our previous four key focus areas of infrastructure, economic vitality, quality of life and efficient effective government.

The plan will take shape through its outcomes, strategies and goals:

- Outcomes refer to the desired result that will be achieved. These aspirational declarations represent positive change and define the realization of the City's Purpose and Values.
- Strategies will be realized through deliberative planning and actions. They are flexible and adapt and adjust to changing and evolving conditions.
- Goals are designed to include specific action items that can be tracked and measured. These cross over every department in the organization.

Your elected City officials and staff are committed to bringing this plan to life. You can look forward to hearing about how decisions and projects connect to the plan. As always, community input is essential as the plan guides the work we have ahead of us. Together, we will use it to do our absolute best to create a better tomorrow for you and for future generations.

At your service,
Matt Jessop, Mayor
City Council Members: President Kevin, Vice President Doug Voss, Dan Boeke, Nathan Dotson, Don McCann, David Burbank, Brent Svenby
Kris M. Busse, City Administrator
City of Owatonna

PURPOSE:

We Create a Better Tomorrow

VALUES:

Better Together

We are one team of diverse perspectives and talents working to create a better tomorrow for Owatonna. We support each other, listen to understand, and respectfully challenge each other—always recognizing and trusting that we will succeed more as a team than on our own.

Community Stewardship

We are here to proactively care for, protect and serve our community. We understand that our community trusts and empowers us to do our work responsibly, with integrity and utilize resources efficiently and effectively.

Pride in Our Work

We care, we show up prepared to work and we strive for excellence in all that we do. We commit to continuously learn and improve each day. We believe if it's worth doing, it's worth doing well.

Strategic Priorities

To achieve our vision to create a better tomorrow, we have five strategic priorities. Each has specific outcomes, strategies & goals.

Our Public Amenities

Outcome: The best quality of life anywhere in Southern Minnesota.
Strategy: Provide functional and modern amenities and facilities that accentuate our community assets to serve all residents in our community.

Goals:

- Support the work of the Public Safety Center Task Force.
- Implement an asset management planning process for short and long-term usage and viability.
- Collaborate with local partners to enhance community amenities.

Economic Prosperity

Outcome: Collaborative, innovative, sustainable and diverse economic engine.
Strategy: Encourage public and private investments that create an environment that supports businesses, creates jobs and expands the tax base.

Goals:

- Create housing solutions.
- Leverage the Degner Owatonna Regional Airport to boost economic development.
- Continue supporting downtown as an economic hub.

Financial Security

Outcome: Strategic investments in our City and community that serve taxpayers.
Strategy: Create an understanding of the City's fiscal capacity to guide the City Council and staff in making important financial decisions.

Goals:

- Prepare a comprehensive, proactive financial plan while maintaining our Moody's Aa1 bond rating.
- Finalize the financial plan for the Public Safety Center.
- Create resiliency in the City staff's financial knowledge and acumen.

A Premier Employer

Outcome: A great place to work.
Strategy: A thriving and resilient culture that attracts and retains top talent by living and breathing our values of better together, pride in our work and community stewardship.

Goals:

- Continue enhancing organizational culture.
- Develop a proactive staffing plan aligned with the growth of the City.
- Grow and enhance tools that support employees at all levels.
- Create a successful transition plan for the new City Administrator.

Our Neighbors

Outcome: Connected, informed and engaged community members actively serving our City.
Strategy: Timely and intentional sharing of information that informs and educates community members on the good work of the City and stimulates their personal investment in Owatonna's future.

Goals:

- Assess the communications program to ensure it connects with the target audiences.
- Explore creative ways to engage the citizens in City government.

Strategic Priority:

Our Public Amenities

Outcome: The best quality of life anywhere in Southern Minnesota.

Strategy: Provide functional and modern amenities and facilities that accentuate our community assets to serve all residents in our community.

Goal: Support the work of the Public Safety Center Task Force

Action Items:

- Identify and secure site location
- Create user groups (departmental) to help with the design

Goal: Implement an asset management planning process for short and long-term usage and viability

Action Items:

- Develop priority criteria for Street Improvement and Infrastructure projects that maintains minimum Pavement Management Index (PMI)
- Incorporate long term funding strategies in the Financial Management Plan that aligns with minimum PMI

Goal: Collaborate with local partners to enhance community amenities

Action Items:

- Community Center exploration
  - Research design concepts
  - Research funding options within a defined timeline strategy
  - Cost analysis
- Library renovations
  - Develop Request for Proposals (RFP) for architects to determine scope and feasibility of the renovation
- Continue to apply for grants and pursue opportunities for advancing trail connections in alignment with the trail master plan

Strategic Priority:

Outcome: Collaborative, innovative, sustainable and diverse economic engine.

Strategy: Encourage public and private investments that create an environment that supports businesses, creates jobs and expands the tax base.

Goal: Create housing solutions

Action Items:

- Explore options for a City housing development project

Goal: Leverage the Degner Owatonna Regional Airport to boost economic development

Action Items:

- Develop runway expansion and facilities plan with timeline

Goal: Continue supporting downtown as an economic hub

Action Items:

- Reduce the number of existing City-owned vacant buildings downtown

Strategic Priority:

Financial Security

Outcome: Strategic investments in our City and community that serve taxpayers.

Strategy: Create an understanding of the City's fiscal capacity to guide the City Council and staff in making important financial decisions.

Goal: Prepare a comprehensive, proactive financial plan while maintaining our Moody's Aa1 bond rating

Action Items:

- Develop a comprehensive Financial Management Plan
- Evaluate and update the city's financial management policies
- Continuously improve the Capital Improvement Plan process and communication

Goal: Finalize the financial plan for the Public Safety Center

Action Items:

- Pursue state bonding to support the projects
- Research additional possible grants for the Public Safety Center

Goal: Create resiliency in the City staff's financial knowledge and acumen

Action Items:

- Evaluate and update procurement and processing for efficiency
- Provide project accounting and reporting to assist departments in monitoring their project budget
- Continuing to train and develop staff on financial tools/software
- Create customizable OpenGov reports to increase accountability and efficiency for staff

Strategic Priority:

A Premier Employer

Outcome: A great place to work.

Strategy: A thriving and resilient culture that attracts and retains top talent by living and breathing our values of better together, pride in our work and community stewardship.

Goal: Continue enhancing organizational culture

Action Items:

- Strengthen staff resilience through enhanced cross-training, professional development and documenting standard operation procedures

Goal: Develop a proactive staffing plan aligned with the growth of the City.

Action Items:

- Develop a staffing plan integrated into the Financial Management Plan

Goal: Grow and enhance tools that support employees at all levels

Action Items:

- Advance the integration program for new employees and elected officials
- Develop and implement a custom leadership development program for City employees.

Goal: Create a successful transition plan for the new City Administrator

Action Items:

- Promote opportunity to create a strong pool of all interested and qualified candidates
- Support the Council in administering the selection process to identify the next City Administrator who aligns with the City's purpose and values
- Develop comprehensive employee integration program to ensure a successful transition for both the individual and the organization

Strategic Priority:

Outcome: Connected, informed and engaged community members actively serving our City.

Strategy: Timely and intentional sharing of information that informs and educates community members on the good work of the City and stimulates their personal investment in Owatonna's future.

Goal: Assess the communications program to ensure it connects with the target audiences

Action Items:

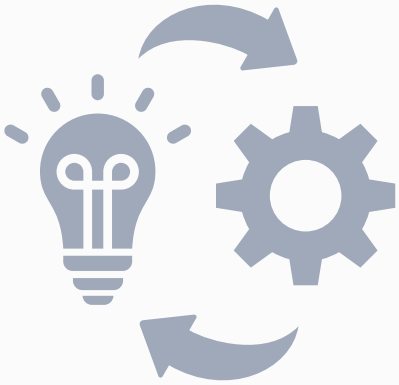
- Conduct a resident survey to obtain timely feedback on important topics and the effectiveness of current communications

Goal: Explore creative ways to engage the citizens in City government

Action Items:

- Explore creative ways to share the State of the City message in our community
- Promote a Public Safety Citizens Academy
- Leverage technology to gather input regularly

Implementation Plan



- City Council will be asked to adopt the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan
- Launch internal & external communications
- Leadership team will develop Action Items & integrate into staff work plans & goals
- A dashboard will be created to track and communicate progress on Action Items
- Agenda and Purpose Memo formats will be reimagined to demonstrate alignment
- Quarterly management team meetings will be held to discuss status of Action Items
- Goals & Action Items will be considered as 2026 operating & Capitol Improvement Project budgets are developed
- Staff will provide two status reports annually to City Council in July & December
- City Council, Mayor and City staff will formally review Strategic Plan annually to make updates as needed
- Achieving Goals and Action Items will be celebrated

Communication Plan

Objectives:

- Create awareness about the plan and the process for developing it
- Provide regular updates on progress made on goals
- Create effective engagement opportunities for community members to provide input
- Expand employee understanding of how the plan guides individual work and progress on meeting goals

Timeline: April through December 2025

Audiences: internal audiences include City employees, elected officials, and board and commission members; external audiences include residents, business owners, commuters and community stakeholders such as the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism, Steele County and Owatonna Public Schools.

Communication Channels: website, video, social media, newsletters, news release, collateral materials, meetings, emails.

City Leadership

The Owatonna City Council meets at 7 pm on the first and third Tuesday of each month at City Hall, 540 West Hills Circle. Contact Council Members with questions, suggestions and concerns. Agendas, Minutes and Council Packets are available in the Agenda Center on the City's website: owatonna.gov/agendacenter.

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