

2004 Strategic Planning Report

The 2003 Strategic Planning Steering Committee compiled and presented this report to the Olathe City Council on March 25, 2004. This is the result of community meetings conducted with approximately 700 Olathe stakeholders and will be taken to the public for further refinement.

Public Services (and Administration)

The strategy for 2023 is for a full-service City that is recognized for customer service (responsiveness) and service delivery excellence. Residents receive and enjoy quality services in all areas of City service delivery. All basic service responsibilities such as water, wastewater, solid waste, storm water management, snow removal and environmental health are supported by a professional, customer-focused and efficient cadre of public servants. Infrastructure needed to support those services is consistent with and reflective of development and redevelopment demands by citizens. Costs of those services are borne by users and competitive with other regional service providers. These services are fully integrated with, supported by and coordinated with other City services and other governmental service providers.

Strategic Target: Achieve Public Administration Excellence

- City should offer single point of contact as an information source (Ombudsman) for all levels of government.
- The City's finances should be communicated in a convenient, clear, and accountable manner to the citizens of Olathe.
 - Establish a five-year operational expenditure plan as well as maintain a five-year capital improvement plan.
 - Publicly report on both plans at least annually. Publicly report so that the city manager and department directors are accountable for expenditures.
 - Achieve budgetary efficiency and effectiveness in all service areas.
- City should expand the use of technology to improve services when financially feasible.
- City should maintain a cost-benefit advantage with other regional governments while providing excellent services.

Strategic Target: Utilize "Pay-For-Use" Services Whenever Possible

- City should plan for future facility needs. The City should position itself to maintain adequate service levels for:
 - Water, wastewater, solid waste, recycling and storm water.
- City should balance the cost of new development and the needs of existing customers. City should not outgrow its infrastructure.
- City should establish policies which address the needs for long-term growth and its impact on existing services.

Strategic Target: Focus on Core Services

- City should focus on and continually define and refine its core business services.
- City should plan for future facility needs. The City should position itself to maintain adequate service levels for core services such as:
 - Fire, police, snow removal, animal control, housing, street lights, road construction and maintenance.
- City should balance the cost of new development and the needs of existing customers. City should not outgrow its infrastructure.
- City should establish policies which address the needs for long-term growth and its impact on existing services.
- City should investigate different and cost-effective ways of performing non-core services.
- City shall cost-effectively meet or exceed all service level standards in the region.
- City should plan and fund for maintenance and expansion of all city facilities and assets, i.e. cars, buildings and equipment.

Diversity

The strategy for 2023 is for a welcoming, diverse community that recognizes and celebrates the cultural richness that results from the respect of all people. The community actively identifies and promotes (empowers) leaders from all segments of the community. It is recognized as a place where diversity thrives in a positive and harmonic atmosphere. Inclusiveness and cooperation are the hallmarks of City government programs.

Strategic Target: City Government Shall Reflect Community Diversity

- City shall recruit a diverse and qualified representation in all positions and levels of city government.
- City should identify and pursue best practice models used by other organizations to embrace diversity.

Strategic Target: Work Continuously to Creatively Promote Understanding of Diversity

- City should work aggressively to understand the racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and special needs of the public. The City should:
 - Respect the identities of all cultures,
 - Challenge all prejudices whenever possible, and
 - Initiate programs that provide services in formats that are accessible to all community members.
- City should establish a public advocate to provide services that are accessible to the diverse members of the community. The City should promote opportunities that encourage all cultures to have:
 - A voice in community, events and activities,
 - Open discussion of issues that affect the community, and
 - Understanding, interaction and communication.

- City should welcome minority businesses in Olathe.

Strategic Target: Capitalize on Existing Strengths

- City should recognize and respect the historical contribution of diverse cultures within the community.
- City should establish and promote opportunities for all Olatheans to find work, enjoy a home, and secure a future.
- City should partner with public and private entities to offer language learning programs such as English Language Learners and American Sign Language.
- City should actively promote balanced, fair, and safe housing opportunities where everyone feels welcome.
- City should consider opportunities to promote general public awareness that most Olatheans strive for the same goals no matter their religion, race, ethnicity, special needs, or cultural background.

Transportation

The strategy for 2023 is for a well-planned, effective, safe transportation network system for the public. This includes an emphasis on efficient traffic circulation and travel times for motorists and pedestrians. Congestion is mitigated by design and management innovations that support pedestrian and vehicular access. The impact of barriers that restrict traffic flow, such as highways and railroad traffic is minimal. The community supports a public transportation system that provides alternative methods to families, visitors and employees.

Strategic Target: Work to Promote Effective Traffic Flow

- City shall improve east/west traffic flow. For example the City should continue efforts to develop:
 - The 127th Street overpass,
 - The 159th Street connection, and
 - The College Boulevard corridor
- City shall consider traffic mitigation needs and safety issues when developing and constructing infrastructure projects.
- City should consider infrastructure projects that improve circulation patterns in and around downtown.
- City should consider opportunities that move traffic north/south in west Olathe.
- City infrastructure funding priorities should be assessed in terms of enhancing traffic flow while maintaining and improving existing transportation systems.
- City should use state-of-the-art technology to improve traffic flow.
- City should consider opportunities that improve and expand sidewalks, bike paths, bus turnouts, and shelters.

Strategic Target: Support Mass Transit Efforts in the Community

- City should work to provide every citizen easy access to mass transit systems.
- City should lead and coordinate planning efforts (“studies”) with other governmental units (e.g. Johnson County, MARC) to use resources more effectively.
- City should support public transit services for moving people within the community, for example, meeting the employment concerns of area businesses and requirements of our special needs population.
- City should actively pursue all modes of mass transit systems as appropriate.
- City should provide physical facilities to encourage mass transit initiatives.
- City should work to provide an economic self-sufficient mass transit system.

Strategic Target: Deal Aggressively with the Railroad Problem

- City should explore ways to facilitate traffic flow given existing rail line infrastructure. The City should continue efforts to develop overpasses (underpasses) East and West of downtown.

Public Safety

The strategy for 2023 is for a community that is perceived by its citizens as the “safest” community in the metropolitan Kansas City region. That perception is not limited to fire and police services. Safety includes environmental, emergency services, and life-safety issues related to housing, hospitals and schools. Public Safety resources are coordinated and linked to other service agencies. People feel secure and free from the threat of crime and disaster whether man-made or natural. Residents are involved in and informed about all facets of public safety.

Strategic Target: Pursue Safety Professionalism Excellence

- City should establish and maintain a diverse and high quality public safety staff.
- City should provide on-going training and certifications for public safety personnel.
- City should pursue best practice models that enhance community relations and outreach programs to inform the public about public safety services.
- City shall provide a framework for increased citizen involvement in public safety activities such as the policy setting and review processes.
- City shall respect personal freedoms when pursuing community safety needs.
- City shall ensure equitable enforcement and prosecution of the law.
- City should encourage a customer service philosophy between public safety staff and the public.
- All public safety functions should promote:
 - Community programs which increase awareness and positive interaction between public safety staff and the community (e.g. teenagers, racial minorities, deaf, mentally and physically impaired citizens), and

- Innovative training programs that embrace our diverse and rapidly changing community. This could include efforts to enhance school safety, non-English speaking residents and the deaf community.

Strategic Target: Promote Multi-dimensional Efforts to Ensure that Olathe is a Safe Community

- City should maintain high standards that support safety needs of the community. The City should recognize standards that promote quality construction, police, fire, medical, and environmental practices.
- City should expand all efforts that encompass public safety issues including, but not limited to, disaster preparedness, emergency service response times, and environmental safety.
- City should leverage opportunities that encourage safety consciousness. The City should also consider efforts that:
 - Improve safety in schools and other public settings.
 - Improve safety on City streets, in parks and on community trails, and improve home, office, and business safety practices.

Strategic Target: Provide Safety Resources

- City should provide adequate staff and resources to enforce public safety standards.
- City should establish a public safety master plan with a five-year horizon, updated annually, and including appropriate, professional assessments based on Olathe's needs.
- City should provide necessary resources such as full-time sign language and multilingual interpreters, bilingual signage, and warning systems to address the safety needs of the hearing impaired and growing diverse population.
- City should use technology to enhance community safety and improve effective service delivery within all elements of the municipal court system.
- City should be proactive and pursue best practice models concerning areas such as:
 - Railroad safety, hazardous waste management, building code development and enforcement, and
 - Public involvement and inclusion efforts to identify and respond to public safety issues.
- City should coordinate safety resources with Johnson County programs to avoid duplication, reduce costs, and improve effectiveness.

Economic Sustainability

The strategy for 2023 is for a community that balances economic development with prudent financial management practices. It is a City that maintains the lowest possible tax rate while maintaining a commitment to high quality service. Economic development is measured against service demands. The City is known for its responsible and

innovative use of all available funding sources. Revenues and expenditures are balanced. Citizens have a clear understanding of service costs and benefits. Services costs are equitably borne by both the corporate and residential segments of the community. Olathe's prosperity includes high-quality office development and boasts of high-tech corporate centers that provide high quality jobs for residents and regional recognition for the community.

Strategic Target: Aggressively Promote Economic Development Efforts

- City should continuously strive to pursue opportunities that promote the well being and economic health of the community. The City should pursue prudent, responsible actions that:
 - Develop and implement sustainable growth strategies and incentives that balance commercial and residential development.
 - City infrastructure enhancements should support and bolster economic development efforts.
 - City should capitalize on proximity to transportation hubs such as the interstate, railroads, and local airports as economic development opportunities.
- City should create a unique identity in the Midwest in order to attract necessary commercial and residential development.
- City should continue to recognize and capitalize on existing businesses by providing incentives for retention and expansion.

Strategic Target: Moderate Debt Usage to the Greatest Extent Possible

- City should continue to promote a “pay as you go” philosophy. The City should also maintain policies that balance the costs and benefits of debt.
- City should continuously strive to improve its credit rating.

Strategic Target: Diversify City Revenue Sources

- Diversify revenue sources to reduce the risk of relying too heavily on a single source by balancing revenue streams between residential and commercial interests.
- Identify and evaluate alternative revenue sources including those requiring legislative actions.
 - Explore the idea of establishing a dedicated source of funding for transportation, public safety, and active life styles.

Downtown

The Vision for downtown Olathe in 2023 is a government and business center that is integrated with the neighborhoods. Downtown embraces its role as the county seat and is mix of government and professional services, commercial businesses, retail development, housing, cultural/entertainment venues, and pedestrian oriented environment. Access to

and within the downtown is provided by attractive modes and linkages and includes sufficient parking. This vibrant community provides an environment that is safe, visually pleasing, accessible, comfortable and that respects the existing architecture.

Strategic Target: Promote a Vibrant Downtown Area

- City should create a memorable destination which includes authentic and diverse public places expanding the range of attractions.
- City should revitalize the area by building on the strengths of the past as a foundation for the future.
- City should achieve a more unified and equitable downtown by improving the transportation system by minimizing barriers due to at-grade train lines and providing regional transportation alternatives that reach the area.
- City should work to integrate neighborhoods with a mix of infill housing and services for local neighbors.

Strategic Target: Pursue Innovative Economic Development Opportunities

- City should pursue private/public partnerships.
- City should support resource allocations that revive development for new and existing businesses and residents.
- City should consider financing options such as, tax increment financing and abatements, prioritizing capital improvements, providing redevelopment grants, and offering low interest loans and other types of financial incentives.

Strategic Target: Continually Monitor Downtown Development Efforts

- City should take incremental steps to phase in the Envision Olathe plan including all corridors with priority on Santa Fe.
- City should report on revitalization efforts annually and revise as needed.

Active Life Styles

The strategy for 2023 is for well-maintained and mature parks and for recreation programs that promote wellness for residents to enjoy. Programs exceed traditional “parks and recreation” program and includes such things as quality green-space, exercise, sportsmanship, community events, youth, adult and senior activities, historical, arts and entertainment venue, and community fellowship. The active-life-style system is dynamic consisting of opportunities for both active and passive participation promoting a healthy lifestyle, and life-long learning. It provides safe, accessible programs and recreational opportunities at parks and other city facilities. The City is a place where the community is amply landscaped in order to enhance visual beauty.

Strategic Target: Unify Community Parks and Recreation Activities

- City should continue to pursue the development of first-class recreational facilities and promote a signature parks system. City should work to effectively unify parks and recreation activities, community events, historical and arts programs.
- City should leverage recreational facilities to support youth and adult programs.
- Update and Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Strategic Target: Actively Market Signature Parks and Program

- City should capitalize on parks and other amenities to attract residential and economic development.
- City should partner with the Chamber, County, and School District (and other interests) to leverage recreational resources more effectively to attract regional events.
- City should use parks and programs to foster a sense of community.
- City should continue expanding the trail system in cooperation with the County.

Strategic Target: Seek and Secure Long Term, Permanent Partners and Funding for Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities

- City should pursue innovative and permanent funding. For example:
 - Seek and gain corporate sponsorships,
 - Seek an adequate funding source to fund operational needs,
 - Continue Parks and Recreation Sales Tax for capital acquisitions only,
 - Partner with other organizations and governments,
 - Encourage direct contributions to support the Parks Foundation and endowments, and
 - Utilize user fees and grant revenues.

Strategic Target: Fund and Develop Community Centers

- City efforts should serve the diverse recreational interests of community stakeholders through the construction and staffing of strategically placed centers throughout the city.