

City of Polk City Goal Setting Report

November 29, 2023

Mayor

Steve Karsjen

City Council

Ron Anderson

Dave Dvorak

Rob Sarchet

Jeff Walters

Mandy Vogel

City Council Members newly elected

Nick Otis

Jeff Savage

City Staff

Chelsea Huisman, City Manager

Jenny Coffin, City Clerk

Karla Hogrefe, Fire Chief

Jamie Noack, Library Director

Cody, Olson, Building Official

Mike Schulte, Public Works Director

Jeremy Siepker, Police Chief

Jason Thraen, Parks & Recreation Director

Facilitator

Doug Boldt, City Administrator Tiffin, Iowa

Introduction

The purpose of the Strategic Goal Setting Session is to identify and prioritize the City's overall goals for the City of Polk City, Iowa. The planning session was held on November 29, 2023, and included the Mayor, City Council, and City Staff. The planning session was facilitated by Doug Boldt, the City Administrator for Tiffin, Iowa.

In preparation of the planning session, the Mayor, City Council and City Staff were asked the following questions below. Complete results of the questionnaire can be found after the Goals.

- I. Please list the top 5 to 10 **major accomplishments** of the City of Polk City over the past two years.
- II. Please list specific **issues, concerns, trends and opportunities** that you have regarding future city services, policies or operations.
- III. List any **significant initiatives, programs or policies** that you think the city should consider in the next two years.
- IV. Please list the **capital projects or equipment purchases** that you think the city should consider over the next 3 years.
- V. Please list some suggestions that the Mayor and City Council members could do in the future to improve the Council's **teamwork**, decision-making process, and ability to accomplish the stated goals and objectives.

During the Work Session all answers from the questionnaire were discussed. After in depth conversation and discussion, the Mayor and City Council have set the following goals:

Goals: within the next 2 years:

- Regional Park Project
 - Identify Funding for completion of the Regional Park Project
 - Initiate development of the Regional Park
- 3rd Street & Broadway Street Traffic Signal
 - Construct Traffic Signal at warranted major intersection
- Competitive Wages for City Employees
 - Conduct wage analysis to determine competitive wages for all city staff
 - Implement wage adjustments into the city budget
- Downtown Assessment Study
 - Prioritize findings in the downtown assessment study completed by the Downtown Resource Center

- Implement Façade Improvement program
- Library Facilities Study
 - Conduct feasibility study to determine how a Library addition and Recreation Facility will layout on recently purchased property next to the current Library

Goals: 3-10 years:

- Police Station Construction
 - Construct new Police Station on property recently purchased by the City
 - Identify funding for completion of the project
- Library Expansion/Rec Center Facility
 - Construct new Library/Rec Center Facility
 - Identify funding for completion of the project
- Communication Plan and Marketing Strategy to make Polk City a “Bike Trail” Town in conjunction with the Polk City Junction Trail project
 - Develop marketing strategy around construction of the Polk City Junction Trail project
- Add more commercial development
 - Develop a marketing strategy for adding more commercial development in Polk City
- Regional Park Planning and Construction
 - Develop a full build out plan for the Regional Park project
 - Identify funding sources for future full development of the Regional Park

Council/Mayor Questionnaire Responses

I. Major Accomplishments – past 12-24 months

- City Hall/Community Center Construction (6)
- Water Tower Construction (5)
- Polk City Junction Trail progress (connection to the High Trestle Trail) (5)
- Iowa Great Places designation (4)
- Fire Station remodel project (3)
- Acquiring additional land for future space/facility needs (3)
- Improving Fire Department staffing
- Amending FLUP to identify/designate locations for potential future commercial development
- Housing demolition on recently acquired City properties
- Lost Lakes neighborhood park construction
- Progressive commercial development philosophy and progress
- Hiring Renaissance Group for Regional Park facility study
- Negotiating CIWW participation
- Downtown Assessment
- Successfully hosting RAGBRAI
- Staff additions and compensation
- Navigating legislative changes
- Updates to city code
- STBG funding for Northside Dr/3rd Street reconstruction
- Voluntary Annexation of 2 tracks of land
- Rejected proposal to allow golf carts, ATV, UTV, on city streets

Staff Questionnaire Response

I. Major Accomplishments – past 12-24 months

- City Hall Construction (8)
- Fire Station Remodel (7)
- Purchased land for future city needs (5)
- Start of trail construction to connect the High Trestle Trail (4)
- Water Tower construction (4)
- Purchased land for future Police Station (3)
- Fire Engine Ordered
- Ambulance Ordered
- Bringing in more commercial development
- Van Dorn Pocket Park
- Demolition of houses on purchased property for future Police Station
- Consultant hired for Regional Park project
- Downtown Assessment study
- Continue to complete some street repairs annually
- New Public Works office spaces
- Hiring Building Official

Mayor/Council Questionnaire Responses

II. Issues and Concerns

1. Communication with the General Public (3)
2. Fostering a better relationship with business owners (3)
3. Regional Park funding challenges and issues (2)
4. The working relationship between the City and Go Polk City to more effectively work on economic development together
5. Communication with Boards and Commissions
6. Infrastructure to support future commercial development
7. Offering competitive wages and benefits to city personnel; larger metro cities can offer higher wages
8. Rising costs of managing the City's brush pile
9. Perceived city/public communications challenges
10. Support and funding for construction of a new Police Station
11. Communication with Businesses
12. Traffic congestion during peak travel hours
13. Lack of athletic facilities/congestion at existing facilities
14. Lack of multi-family housing
15. Lack of commercial real estate
16. Future staffing needs
17. Dependency on residential taxes
18. Establishing clear and structured narratives for city spending
19. Ensure that the city's technical resources are secured against cyber criminals
20. Volunteer coordination and roles (commissions, organizations)
21. Taxation and Debt
22. Sanitary system that is near capacity and will limit future growth
23. Amenities on and around the square such as new lighting, rework parking around the square, and moving overhead utilities underground

24. Need to address and plan for increased traffic flow through City
25. Possibly less TIF and getting those dollars that are already NOT coming back to Polk City
26. How to provide more fields and parks for youth and adults
27. Look for ways to keep the budget down without raising taxes

Staff Questionnaire Responses

II. Issues and Concerns

1. Staffing Concerns (8)
2. Commercial Growth (4)
3. Sports Complex safety (2)
4. Continue progress on the facility plan (2)
5. Lack of Revenue (2)
6. Infrastructure for commercial growth
7. Police outgrowing building
8. Downtown appearance
9. Downtown pedestrian/traffic safety
10. 3rd Street traffic numbers and congestion
11. Need for traffic signal at 3rd and Broadway St.
12. Acquire property for future commercial development
13. Continue to look for solutions to bridge the communication gap about city operations
14. Need to address the current brush pile issues
15. Private sump lines running to the street surface
16. Need to expand sanitary sewer to new areas to promote new growth
17. Operational Equipment Needs
18. House File 718
19. Residential Rollback changes
20. Community Engagement
21. Traffic/public safety with busier roads
22. Lack of commercial property available for development
23. Constant changing of city budget rules by the State

Mayor/Council Questionnaire Responses

III. Significant Initiatives or Programs – within the next 24 months

1. Regional Park Project and identifying funding for completion (5)
2. Improvements to enhance safety and traffic 3rd and Broadway (5)
3. Town Square beautification, including vaults for electrical panels (2)
4. Improvements to enhance safety and traffic 3rd and Van Dorn
5. Identify policies, etc, that could be barriers to entry for future commercial developers, and determine whether updates should be considered
6. Work to develop and understand the potential need for affordable housing
7. Sale of 3rd and Davis Street property
8. Adding Communications staff
9. Adding Finance Director
10. Iowa Great Places designation
11. Downtown Assessment study, including the façade improvement program
12. City brush pile policy and plan
13. UTV policy
14. Replacement of Fire Engine
15. Library Facilities feasibility study
16. Neal Smith-Woodhaven connector project
17. Improve walkability downtown
18. Identify and prioritize action items from downtown assessment
19. Connecting and engaging with the community
20. Volunteer and Commission recognition
21. Enable commercial development
22. Programs and policies to make Polk City friendly to seniors

Staff Questionnaire Responses

III. Significant Initiatives or Programs – within the next 24 months

1. Continue commercial growth and focus on putting in infrastructure to support it (6)
2. Police Station planning and construction (5)
3. Regional Park progress (5)
4. 3rd and Broadway traffic signal (4)
5. Trail connectivity (3)
6. Communication/Marketing position (2)
7. Downtown improvements (2)
8. Expand the Building Department (2)
9. Purchase new rescue boat (2)
10. Increased staffing for growing department needs (2)
11. Replacement of rescue truck with ladder truck
12. Replacement of Extrication tools
13. Hiring a Fire Marshal
14. Competitive wages of city employees
15. Exterior uplift of Fire Department Building
16. Miller Park Shelter House Remodel
17. Work with consultant to develop a visual concept of what Library expansion will look like; possible with indoor rec facility
18. Update all city outdoor warning sirens
19. Public Works Storage Building addition
20. Downtown District Design Standards and Grant Program
21. Building Official department software/employees to handle code enforcement, permits, inspections, adding rental inspection process
22. Fire Department vehicles and equipment
23. Traffic/Public Safety with increasing growth and activity
24. Improving/adding public facilities for community use

Mayor/Council Questionnaire Responses

IV. Long-term Significant Initiatives or Programs – 3-10 years

1. New Police Station and funding the project (3)
2. Library Expansion/Rec Center (2)
3. Iowa Great Places and downtown assessment recommendations (2)
4. Determine whether additional improvements should be made around the Town Square to enhance safety and traffic flow
5. Paving the parking lot north of the Town Square and creating trailhead
6. Completion of all phases of connection to the High Trestle Trail
7. Completion of other trail connections- East. Broadway Trail & DeerHaven to Home State Bank
8. Communications plan and marketing strategy to make Polk City a “Bike Trail” town in conjunction with the Polk City Junction Bike Trail
9. Addition of center turn lane on Bridge Road
10. Functional completion of Regional Park
11. Bring City Engineer in-house
12. More affordable housing options
13. More commercial development
14. Additional quality of life amenities; recreational facilities, recreation for all
15. Regional Park later phases
16. Enable commercial development

Staff Questionnaire Responses

IV. Long-term Significant Initiatives or Programs – 3-10 years

1. Regional Park Planning/Construction (8)
2. Library Expansion (4)
3. New Police Station (4)
4. Affordable housing (3)
5. Downtown Square Improvements (2)
6. Continued assessment of staffing levels and department safety needs (2)
7. Purchase land for Fire Station #2
8. Continuous Staffing needs for City Administration
9. Indoor Recreation
10. Install sump line interceptor lines to collect household sump pump discharge
11. Keep the Fire Departments equipment updated
12. Decommission old water tower
13. Human Resources Department
14. Parks Department expansion to allow for more event planning and programming
15. Library Resources for the community
16. Commercial Growth
17. Updating to current building/electrical code year and newer energy standards for construction
18. Repurpose old City Hall Building

Mayor/Council Questionnaire Responses

V. Teamwork

1. Continue the work sessions
2. Open communication
3. Communication has been pretty good, and we've worked together effectively in recent years. I hope to see that continue, especially as we have new council members coming on board
4. Hire Communications Officer
5. Hire Finance Director to assist with in-depth budgeting and planning
6. Understand the concept of a Bike-Friendly community initiative
7. Create vision and new tagline and communicate it to our residents
8. Better communications with GoPolkCity on economic development and other issues
9. Staff meetings broadcast to Council and Commissions as non-interactive webinars
10. Team Building Work Shops
11. Ensure that the City's goals are clear, measurable, and fully understood
12. Leadership development
13. Empower volunteers and commissions
14. Role clarity of staff
15. Role clarity of council appointments and additional responsibilities
16. All inclusive meetings
17. Continuity in city proceedings
18. Compromise

Staff Questionnaire Responses

V. Teamwork

1. Work Sessions to discuss needs vs. wants (2)
2. Continued communication from staff to City Manager to City Council
3. Have an open mind
4. Utilize subject matter experts
5. Find the common goal
6. Continue forward
7. Focus and prioritize the actual needs of the city first vs. personal interests
8. Trust the staff
9. Understand the difference between a Council business meeting and what is known as town hall meetings, if there is a topic or project that needs more of an open forum, the City Council could opt to hold a separate town hall meeting, similar to what we did with the City Hall/Community Room project for more of an open dialogue with the Council
10. Continue to follow chain of command with elected officials-City Manager-City staff
11. Try to focus on the positivity of the community during reports and particulars, always makes the Council meetings fun to be a part of