

# **Summary Report for City of Storm Lake Strategic Planning Retreat**

The Storm Lake Strategic Planning Retreat was held on October 12, 2021 at the Storm Lake Public Library. In attendance at the session was the Mayor, four City Council Members, the City Manager, Assistant City Manager and the City Clerk. Following the four-hour planning retreat, City Department Heads were invited to participate in an overview presentation by the facilitator, Mark Collins.

## **The agenda for the Strategic Planning Retreat included the following:**

- 1.) Welcome/Introductions
- 2.) Group Expectations (What do we want to accomplish today?)
- 3.) Validate Current Vision and Mission Statement for Storm Lake
- 4.) Working as a Team for Good Governance (PowerPoint)
- 5.) Strengths - What are we Doing Well?  
Challenges/Opportunities - Where Can We Improve?
- 6.) Identification of Strategic Focus Areas for Storm Lake (e.g., Infrastructure, Economic Development, Lake Health & Improvements, Affordable Housing, Downtown Development)
- 7.) Designate Strategic Focus Areas as Short-Term (1-2 years), Mid-Term (3-5 years), or Long-Term (5-20 year horizon)
- 8.) Measuring Success (What are our benchmarks for a "job well done" and how will we communicate the results to our community members?)
- 9.) Wrap Up - Additional Ideas, Comments and Suggestions

**After reviewing the mission statement for the City of Storm Lake, the Mayor and Council viewed a PowerPoint presentation on “Good Governance” that emphasized working collaboratively as a team for the overall benefit of the community.**

## **The Mayor and Council then listed Storm Lake’s strengths and positive attributes.**

- An engaged City Council with a strong Mayor
- Co-existing Community Ethic
- A Community-Oriented Police Department with a strong relationship with constituents
- Community (City Staff) put forth a Team Effort, highlighting the positives of the City
- Great food choices
- Positive press and media articles
- Residents relocate to Storm Lake after living in other locations
- High Quality of Life

- Strong Family Values
- Success of Community Organizations like SALUD
- Attractive and well-maintained Lake area
- Overall Cleanliness of the Community
- Successful Community Projects
- Locally Owned Banks

**The following items were listed by the Mayor and Council as Community Challenges:**

- Limited retail and shopping opportunities
- Need for more career options
- Finding the right balance for business and commerce
- One “exciting thing” to attract people to Storm Lake
- A Community Center
- More activities for young people
- A variety of entertainment venues
- A Community Partnership to develop a Skate Park
- Resistance to change from longtime residents
- Parental Engagement
- Culture Gap, ability to successfully connect with multiple ethnic populations
- Housing
- No Community Foundation

**The following items and issues were identified as Strategic Focus Areas (Mayor/Council Priorities) for Storm Lake:**

- Fiscal Responsibility (provide a more user-friendly budget overview)
- Infrastructure (e.g., Roads, Natural Gas, Water/Wastewater, Internet Connectivity, Weed Control, Trees, Lake Health)
- Housing
  - Single family
  - Upward Mobility
  - Development Incentives
  - Partnerships (e.g., Banks)
  - Housing Authority
  - Lack of Entry Level Housing (e.g., under \$100K)
  - Importance of In-Fill Development
- Recreation - primarily focused on residents and community members
- Spill Site Area Development
- Economic Development
  - Diverse Jobs, opportunities for upward mobility
  - Tourism
  - ED Diversification
  - Navigate Geographic Constraints (e.g., City growth on its boundaries)
  - Continue to develop internet connectivity and fiber expansion
  - Support Retention Efforts and Programs for Existing Businesses

Succession Planning for Local Businesses

Promote an Incubator

Support new ED Director and provide him with clear direction on City's goals

Promote Public/Private Partnerships

Develop an Organized Program for Business Outreach (ED Director)

- Tourism

Maintain Storm Lake as a destination

Support Storm Lake as an attractive and viable retirement location

Investigate options for more overnight stays

Promote Kayak venues on the Lake and more bikes and e-bikes on city trails

- Emphasize and Promote more Community Participation and Involvement

- Support Downtown Development Revitalization Efforts

- Community Child Care Upgrades and Improvements (role for the City?)

**At the conclusion of their discussion of Strategic Focus areas, the Mayor and Council then conducted an exercise to identify the most important items and issues. In rank order, the following items/issues were given the highest ratings:**

- 1.) Community Recreation
- 2.) Economic Development
- 3.) Community Participation/Involvement
- 4.) Business Retention
- 5.) Housing
- 6.) Infrastructure
- 7.) Spill Site Development
- 8.) Diverse Jobs/Upward Mobility
- 9.) Tourism
- 10.) Business Outreach
- 11.) Succession Planning for Local Businesses
- 12.) Fiscal Responsibility
- 13.) Retirement Destination

**In a final overview session, there was an important discussion about opportunities for community outreach and communicating with Storm Lake residents about ongoing City programs, projects and priorities. Potential options included a citywide community survey, a community newsletter (Report to the Community) and "City-fest" outreach event.**