

2025-2027

STRATEGIC PLAN



COLUMBUS
WISCONSIN



www.cityofcolumbuswi.com

From the Mayor

On behalf of our elected officials and City staff, I am excited for our newly developed strategic plan, which outlines our vision for the future of our community over the next three years. This plan has been crafted with extensive input from citizens, local organizations, and stakeholders, reflecting our collective aspirations and goals.



Our strategic plan is built around four strategic priorities:

Financial Sustainability: We aim to create a balanced and resilient economic framework that supports long-term growth while meeting the needs of residents. This approach emphasizes responsible budgeting, diversified revenue sources, and prudent financial management. A financially sustainable community is better equipped to weather economic fluctuations, address social challenges, and invest in infrastructure and public services that enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Organizational Culture: Encompasses the values, beliefs, and behaviors that define how employees interact and work together. Moreover, a positive organizational culture can attract top talent and improve overall job satisfaction, leading to higher productivity and retention rates. Ultimately, the culture of an organization serves as a foundation for its success, influencing everything from decision-making to customer satisfaction.

Sustainable Growth & Development: We seek to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This approach emphasizes the importance of using resources efficiently, reducing waste, and minimizing environmental impact while promoting inclusive economic opportunities. By integrating sustainability into practices and public policies, Columbus can drive innovation and resilience, ultimately fostering long-term prosperity.

Communication & Engagement: To create a sense of belonging and collective action among residents we must be effective with our communication and engagement. Engaging residents through various channels—such as town hall meetings, social media, and community events—encourages collaboration, nurtures relationships, and empowers individuals to contribute to decision-making processes. Ultimately, strong communication and engagement serve as the foundation for a vibrant, resilient community capable of addressing challenges and seizing opportunities together.

To achieve these objectives, we will establish measurable goals and timelines, ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the process. Public forums and regular updates will allow us to engage with you, our residents, every step of the way.

I encourage you to take an active role in our strategic plan. Your opinions and ideas are invaluable as we work together to shape the future of Columbus. Together, we can build a thriving community that meets the needs of all its members.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.
Mayor Joe Hammer

Common Council

This plan was adopted by Council Resolution on January 7, 2025 and provides a framework for elected officials and staff. The Council at the time the plan was adopted consisted of the following individuals.



Ryan Rostad,
District 1



Sarah Motiff
District 1



Trina Reid,
District 2



Michael Lawson,
District 2

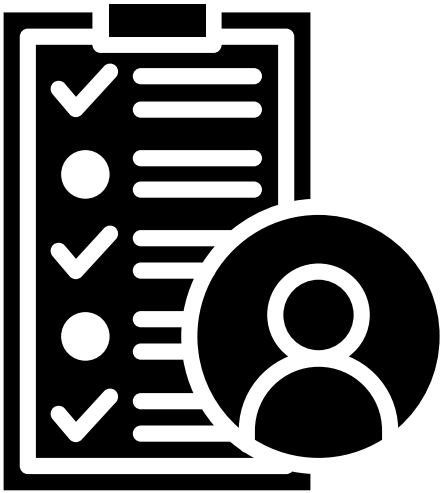


Amy Roelke,
District 3



Molly Finkler,
District 3

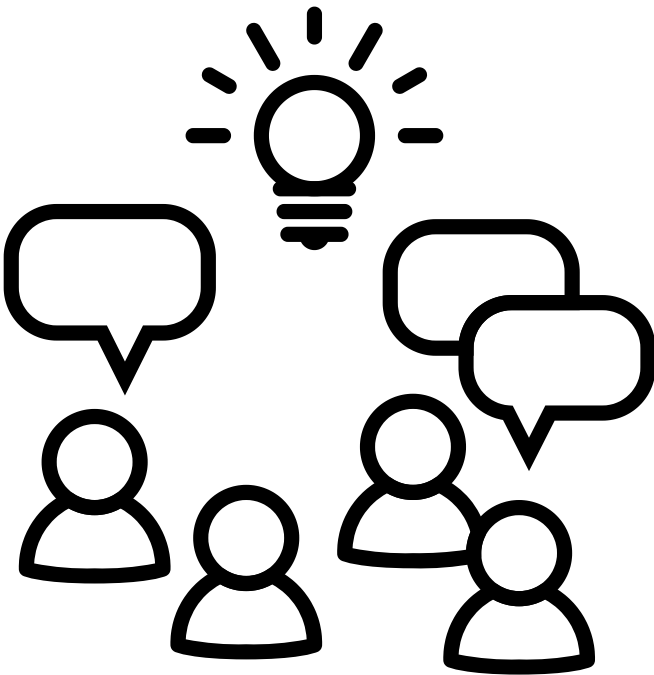
How was this plan built?



23 Survey Responses



Community Forums on June 10th, July 10th, & September 11th



Council updates and presentations on May 21st, August 5th, November 19th and December 17th



Staff Input Opportunities on June 13th & June 25th

OBJECTIVE 1 (Financial Sustainability)

Develop a rolling ten-year capital improvement program (CIP) that allows for future debt planning.

Performance Measure

1. Plan is reviewed annually to include updated capital needs and review that projects align with current needs.
2. Annual review of debt obligations and potential new debt for capital investments.

OBJECTIVE 2 (Sustainable Growth & Development)

Develop a City Facilities Plan

Performance Measures

1. Complete plan by December 2025.
2. Incorporate completed Public Safety Facility & Space Needs Assessment completed by Bray & Associates.
3. Integrate a facilities plan with financial planning to show reality of implementing facilities plan by September 2026.

OBJECTIVE 3 (Sustainable Growth & Development)

Create an improvement plan for downtown Columbus that includes utilization of TIF, facade loan program(s), historic preservation tax credits, and State Economic Development Assistance programs.

Performance Measures

1. Complete plan with involvement of the Plan Commission, CDA, and CHLPC by December 2026.
2. Number of TIF agreements and or loans issued.

OBJECTIVE 4 (Financial Sustainability)

Utilize all financial tools available

Performance Measures

1. Number of grants applied for and obtained.
2. Number of completed TIF agreements.
3. Tracking other outside funds obtained.

OBJECTIVE 5 (Organizational Culture)

Conduct an organizational assessment and create a long-term staffing plan that meets and maintains City obligations and commitments.

Performance Measures

1. Develop annual departmental training plans by December 2025.
2. Development and consistent use of an exit interview completed by Human Resources.
3. Establish plan for cross-training opportunities across departments by December 2026.
4. Develop an Employee Engagement Survey Plan by December 2025 and conduct an annual survey to measure engagement.
5. Create succession plans within all departments by December 2025.
6. Create Departmental Strategic Plans (every five to eight years).

OBJECTIVE 6 (Organizational Culture)

Leverage technology solutions to enhance efficiencies in service delivery to streamline processes, reduce costs, and improve the quality of services.

Performance Measures

1. Ensure that all full-time and seasonal recruitment processes occur utilizing NeoGov Insight in 2025 and beyond.
2. Provide Muni-Code training refresher bi-annually for staff and committee users.
3. All departments utilize NeoGov Learn training to schedule and distribute training programs.
4. All full-time staff complete annual review process utilizing NeoGov Preform software by December 2025.
5. Implement new permit software to increase the number of city services available online by December 2027.

OBJECTIVE 7 (Organizational Culture)

Provide resources to develop an employee recruitment and retention program that includes training and professional development activities.

Performance Measures

1. Track number of applicants received via job fairs/table events.
2. Develop an internship program by December 2027.
3. Develop a mentorship program for new hires with initial emphasis on high-turnover departments by December 2026.
4. Create a safety committee to track improvements in employee safety by March 2026.
5. Serve the community through volunteering efforts within the City two to three times a year.
6. Establish clear onboarding procedures for all new employees and in each department by June 2026.

OBJECTIVE 8 (Sustainable Growth & Development)

Development of a comprehensive Business Retention & Expansion program.

Performance Measures

1. Complete plan by January 31, 2025.
2. Number of visits completed annually.

OBJECTIVE 9 (Communication & Engagement)

Inform the community about City accomplishments, roles and responsibilities, and progress toward strategic initiatives through all City communication channels.

Performance Measures

1. Increase the use of WisVote for creating registrations and absentee requests or obtaining poll/ballot information by 20% by calendar year end through additional public outreach areas.
2. Development of a Resident Guide in 2025 and complete annual review and updates.
3. Increase engagement on social media, specifically tracked by number of posts made annually.
4. Continue efforts to provide paperless City communications.
5. Develop a city video or podcast that is distributed monthly by December 2025.
6. Develop plan to implement remote options to attend City meetings by December 2026.
7. Implement an annual community survey program that serves as a tool to update and enhance communication and services to a diverse community by September 2027.

OBJECTIVE 10 (Communication & Engagement)

Provide a variety of engagement opportunities for residents to seek information about the community.

Performance Measures

1. Create a Local Citizen Academy (course for residents to participate in and learn about city services) by December 2026 with at least 10 participants.
2. Increase the number of community events (table/booth) where a City representative/information is present.
3. Develop a monthly mobile city hall (elected officials and city staff attend community events to be available to citizens) that provides additional citizen engagement opportunities for elected officials and city staff.
4. Investigate options for a centralized Citywide citizen request portal and app by December 2027.

OBJECTIVE 11 (Communication & Engagement)

Strengthen partnerships & relationships

Performance Measures

1. Collaboration and partnerships developed with School District including the development of an annual Council/School Board meeting.
2. Collaboration and partnerships developed with neighboring jurisdictions including Columbia and Dodge County.
3. Collaboration and partnerships developed with community organizations.
4. Collaboration and partnerships developed with local businesses

OBJECTIVE 12 (Financial Sustainability)

Review all current revenue sources and identify possible new non-levy revenues to pursue.

Performance Measures

1. Annually review property tax-based support for all departmental operations that have revenue-generating activities.
2. Develop a citywide sponsorship/partnership fundraising approach that is coordinated across all departments. Create list of sponsorship activities by December 2025. Create list of potential capital projects for sponsorship/donation by August 2025.
3. Annually review, and increase, if reasonable, the cost recovery for City services that have revenue-generating activities.

OBJECTIVE 13 (Sustainable Growth & Development)

Rewrite zoning code to modernize, promote development and reduce barriers.

Performance Measures

1. Complete process by Spring 2026

OBJECTIVE 14 (Organizational Culture)

Develop Vision & Mission Statements for the Organization

Performance Measures

- Statements completed by September 2025.

OBJECTIVE 15 (Sustainable Growth & Development)

Enhance our focus on quality of life services.

Performance Measure

1. Complete review of 2021 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP).
2. Complete update of CORP by December 31, 2026 to be eligible for DNR grant funding.
3. Complete a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the community by December 31, 2025 that will allow the City to be successful in leveraging grant funds for implementation.



Putting the Plan into Action

Now that the plan has been adopted, the focus shifts towards implementation and execution. This involves breaking down the plan into actionable steps, assigning responsibilities, and establishing timelines. Regular monitoring and evaluation are essential to help ensure alignment with organizational goals and adaptability to changing circumstances. Additionally, communication plays a crucial role in keeping stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the implementation process. We hope you stay involved as we work through accomplishing our vision.

Keeping Track of Progress

How are we doing? We'll let you know.

The City will monitor progress toward our Strategic Plan goals and objectives, as well as report on the performance measures. Tracking keeps us transparent and holds us accountable.

The City will provide the community with an annual report and year-end Common Council presentation. Community members can expect to understand what the City is working on and the benefits that will result for residents, businesses, and the community overall.

Quarterly

City leadership will provide the City Administrator with updates on progress toward each strategic priority and goal.

Twice A Year

The City Administrator will provide the Common Council with an update on progress toward each strategic priority and goal, including successes and challenges.

Annually

The City Administrator will provide a year-end report detailing progress on each strategic goal and objective. The report will be presented to the Common Council and posted on the City's website for community access.

The Council will review the plan annually to update progress, identify future objectives, and remove those that have been completed.