



City of Stevenson

Leana Kinley, City Administrator

Phone (509)427-5970
FAX (509) 427-8202

7121 E Loop Road, PO Box 371
Stevenson, Washington 98648

To: City Council
From: Leana Kinley, City Administrator
RE: Strategic Plan Review
Meeting Date: June 20, 2024

Executive Summary:

The City Council has the opportunity to establish strategic priorities guiding how the City of Stevenson serves the public and how it uses the public's resources. Adopting strategic priorities:

- Articulates the will of the City Council,
- Sets direction for the way the City initiates and undertakes actions,
- Establishes a framework for how the City responds to actions undertaken by others,
- Provides a lens through which the actions of individual City Council members, the Mayor, and appointed City officials may be evaluated.

The top 5 strategic priorities are identified below. Each begins by describing an end-state, a statement of what success looks like in 2027 after the priority is acted upon appropriately. This end-state is then grounded by a description of recent actions related to the priority. Finally, each priority includes a list of potential tasks which may help the city advance the strategy.

If strategic priorities are adopted by the Council, staff will further analyze the potential tasks and use the strategic priorities to guide preparation of the 2025 budget and influence the way staff identifies, prioritizes and carries out its work in service to the public.

Action Needed:

Deliberation on whether to adopt, amend and adopt or abandon the strategic planning process.

Potential Motions: To adopt the Strategic Plan and tasks as presented
To adopt the Strategic Plan with changes as discussed

Overview:

The Stevenson public needs, wants, and deserves more and better services. The cost and effort of providing and improving these services exceeds the resources available. The strategic planning process is about closing that gap in a more effective, efficient, and enjoyable way which builds understanding in the face of frustrations.

The strategic priorities outlined in this memo consolidate a series of City Council discussions about how best to serve the public. A March 2nd retreat was devoted exclusively to this topic, and it was deliberated at the April 25th City Council meeting. The preparation of this memo was also influenced by the 134 respondents of a community questionnaire conducted by the City Administrator in Spring 2024.

A statement of strategic priorities should be viewed as a living document that is both rigid enough to hold the city on a chosen course over the next 3 budget years and flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of anticipated and unforeseen circumstances. A review cycle ensures the priorities

continually reflect the will of the public as it is understood City Council members they elect. These priorities were last evaluated in 2022. The high-level priorities have changed as outlined below.

Priorities by Strategies Compared	
2022 Strategic Planning Prioritization (Ranked Order of Importance)	2024 Strategic Planning Prioritization (Ranked Order of Importance)
1. Internal Processes	1. Financial Health
2. Utilities (Maintenance of Current & New Growth)	2. Utilities (Maintenance of Current & New Growth)
3. Planning & Zoning	3. Governance
4. Developments with Utilities Partners (gas, electric, broadband, phone)	4. Internal Processes
5. Parks & Outdoor Spaces	5. Planning & Zoning
6. Housing	6. Housing
7. Governance	7. Strategic Land Use & Development
8. Multimodal Transportation	8. Equipment & Assets
9. Partnerships	9. Multimodal Transportation
10. Strategic Land Use & Development	10. Partnerships
11. Financial Health	11. Parks & Outdoor Spaces
12. Equipment & Assets	12. Developments with Utilities Partners (gas, electric, broadband, phone)

What follows is a summary and outline of the top five strategic priorities, along with proposed actions.

Financial Health

End-State: The City understands its revenue-generation limitations, collects adequate revenues within those limitations, and manages expenditures to provide the best levels of service it can. We adopt a sound budget and adhere to financial policies. We build public understanding of the trade-offs necessary to maintain financial health in light of the unsustainable course of municipal service provision in the state and nation.

Context: The action items from the previous Plan have been completed (see attached plan update). Most of the discussion regarding Financial Health in 2024 was around policy, training, and communication.

Potential tasks:

- Workshop with council on knowing tools for revenue diversity (AWC or other training)
- Workshop with council on understanding revenue sources and uses (AWC or other training)
- Workshop to deep dive the Financial Policy
- Research and contract for additional financial reporting tools to improve communication
- Research and contract for support to establish financial communication templates to then be maintained by city staff

Quality Infrastructure

End-State: The City understands the public's need for urban services (those provided by the City and by others) and the infrastructure necessary to provide those services. We are proactive in the way needs are identified and addressed. We time projects of all types to realize efficiencies and avoid disruptions.

- Communications, Gas, and Power – The tree preservation/utility undergrounding plan is complete. A partner is identified to improve broadband services throughout the community. Partnerships are strengthened between urban service providers and the City. Through these partnerships scheduling of improvement and maintenance projects are synchronized. Appropriate maintenance minimizes disruption of each and all urban services.
- Parks – Completion of at least one project from the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan occurred. The level of service for parks and associated assets have been determined and documented. Regular inspections and appropriate maintenance preserve the quality of park assets and enjoyment of the parks' users.
- Sewer – Construction is complete on the wastewater treatment plant, all pump stations, and the Cascade Avenue Sewer (Project S-01). Design or construction of at least one collection system project is underway. Regular inspections and appropriate maintenance protect public health and water quality.
- Stormwater – System improvements have been identified through an assessment of the stormwater system. Improvements are considered as part of street improvement projects. Regular inspections and appropriate maintenance allow the system to function without damaging public assets or private property.
- Streets – Construction is complete on the First Street Overlook and Lasher Street improvement projects. Design or construction of another improvement project is underway. Preservation projects are strategically approached to coincide to the extent practicable with underground utility projects (water, sewer, communication, gas, power) and have occurred in all 5 sectors of town. Regular inspections and appropriate maintenance provide a safe and convenient experience for system users.
- Water – A strategy for long-term water supply is in place. Water projects identified in the Capital Facilities Plan are evaluated for inclusion with sewer and street projects. Regular inspections and appropriate maintenance provide clean, safe, and reliable water to customers.

Context: Maintenance of current infrastructure was identified on the plan and the bulk of these projects are included in the Capital Improvement Facilities Plan. Improvement and maintenance projects above the staff approval authority are further defined in the Capital Improvement Plan. All transportation projects are also included in the Transportation Improvement Plan. Discussion was around funding of infrastructure, which connects back to the Financial Policies and Financial Health priority. There is also a connection with the Community Look & Feel priority.

Potential tasks:

- Hire a consultant to establish the rates to establish a Stormwater Utility (2025)
- Establishing a set of scoring criteria for projects, which may include:
 - Corridor/Dig Once project
 - Opportunity/Development pending
 - Addresses resiliency (included on Hazard Mitigation Plan)
 - Customer/Community support or requested

- Cost
- Timeline
- Effort
- Existing Condition/Need
- Expansion/ Replacement/Maintenance

Community Look & Feel

End-State: The City embraces the challenge of creating a keeping a community which is worthy of our jaw-dropping setting. Sun and rain come and go, forests are grown and harvested, community members are born, move and die. Stevenson is a place of permanence amongst change. Our built environment underscores this.

Context: This priority was not explicitly identified by the City Council in the last plan and its inclusion was the result of the community survey conducted by the City Administrator after the 2023 City Council retreat.

Potential tasks:

- Establish a high enforcement area along Cascade Avenue, First Street, Rock Creek Drive, and Second Street to ensure they are free from the visual blight of unkempt buildings, overgrown vegetation, and accumulated equipment, trash and vehicles.
- Ensure nuisances are enforced—through voluntary and compulsory means.
- Hire a Facilities Maintenance Worker to focus on streetscape, parks and sidewalks (2025).
- Consider new downtown design standards.
- Consider tree preservation and planting standards in land development.

Governance

End-State: The City functions despite dissent. We build trust.

Context: The previous plan focused on providing tools and training for the council to better understand roles and deep dive into topics, leading to the monthly workshops. The recent discussion seemed to focus on knowing and complying with the roles and responsibilities of the position, improving communication, and overall conduct around disagreements. This was also identified in the community survey as an area that needed improvement, encompassing council and staff. It also centered around a lack of trust and causes the most burden for the city. When the City elected officials and staff are viewed as untrustworthy, it stalls everything and impacts morale resulting in a less effective and efficient agency. Meetings get longer, consultant costs increase and staff experiences burnout.

Potential tasks:

- Don't seek unanimity over decisions
- Accept written dissenting opinions by the next council meeting
- Identifying what it takes for a government to be trusted

Internal Processes

End-State: The City employs knowledgeable and capable staff to perform job duties as defined in job descriptions. The City has access to the tools and equipment required to perform tasks efficiently and effectively. Actions occur on the basis of adopted policies, standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Context: The focus for the prior plan was on staff tools, training and resources, emergency planning and staffing structure. Most of these tasks have been completed and an update is attached. The recent discussion was around having documented processes, procedures, and policies available and understandable for staff, council and the public. This was also reflected in the community survey along with improvements to the website to make finding information easier.

Potential tasks:

- Research and contract for support to improve the website structure and create new webpages for process documentation, policies and procedures. May be combined with Financial Health task.
- Plan and implement a communications strategy as part of every City project.
- Create, review, and revise processes and procedures as needed with priority focused on customer-facing activities such as permitting, code enforcement, and billing.
- Send every employee to at least one professional development training per year.
- Conduct in-house professional development on City equipment, and SOPs.
- Define regular inventory, maintenance and replacement schedules for City-owned tools and equipment.
- Develop and document contract (including grant) management protocol.

Next Steps

Staff will evaluate the potential tasks listed herein, in the context of all 5 strategic priorities for City Council deliberation during the 2025 budget process. Evaluation may include graphics such as that below to depict the relative strategic impact of each task. A similar evaluation can occur as other tasks are identified after the budget is developed.

