

Memorandum

To: Common Council

From: John Weidl, City Manager

Date: 8/18/26

Subject-Budget, Strategic Goals and Milestones

Common Council,

Attached is the City's 2026 Mid-Year Strategic Goal Review. It is the first progress report against the five strategic goals the Common Council adopted in its recent refresh, and it was compiled from submissions by all thirteen City departments and divisions. The requested action is to receive and file the report; no Council action is required.

The report is organized by goal rather than by department, so that work spanning multiple departments is presented once, under the goal it serves. What follows is a plain summary of where each goal stands at mid-year. Every figure below is drawn from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's preliminary 2026 Statement of Changes in Equalized Values, the City's audited financial records, or department submissions, and each is cited in the attached report.

Where the five goals stand

Housing and responsible growth. 199 housing units are delivered or under development across four projects, representing an estimated \$57.8 million in private investment at full buildout. In the first six months of 2026, the City issued permits for 112 additional units: 6 single-family homes, 5 duplex buildings, and 96 apartment units. The \$1.2 million Home Renewal Program opened in April, and its first application is under review, and Down Payment Assistance awarded five loans totaling \$125,000 this year.

Communication, transparency and engagement. Every Council and board meeting is livestreamed, recorded and published, with agendas, packets and minutes posted. The City produced plain-language explainers on referendum taxes and how the municipal budget is built, and Parks and Recreation now provides the majority of its public materials in both English and Spanish.

Economic development and tax base expansion. Total equalized value grew 6.8 percent, from \$1.102 billion to \$1.177 billion, an increase of \$75.0 million in one year. Nearly a quarter of that growth came from new construction, a materially higher share than in Walworth or Jefferson County as a whole. The Summerset Marine project, representing more than \$15 million in

private investment, advanced, and the City's entrepreneurship pipeline funded two new downtown ventures through the WindUp competition, with two more advancing through CDA lending.

A vibrant, engaged, and welcoming community. The Council approved the Downtown Activation Initiative, with implementation beginning in the second half. The Library Expansion and Renovation Project is complete, and the library now serves roughly 4,100 visits each month. Partnerships with the University and the School District deepened, and the City supported community events from the Fourth of July parade to the Whitewater Storytelling Festival.

Long-term financial stability and strategic investment. Unassigned general fund balance ended 2025 at 21.3 percent of expenditures, above the 20 percent policy minimum. Debt service came in under budget at 13.9 percent of revenue, and the City retains \$25.0 million in general obligation capacity under the statutory limit. Four of the five active tax increment districts are cash flow positive and projected to close ahead of their statutory deadlines. Because new construction drives the City's allowable levy growth under state levy limits, this year's development activity generated an estimated \$105,797 in new, recurring levy authority, pending state certification, which exceeds the prior two years combined.

2026 is the baseline year

Because this is the first review against the refreshed goals, there is no prior year to compare against. Through the remainder of 2026, the City will standardize department reporting, capture baseline values for each measure named in the report (including permit activity, equalized value, fund balance, police overtime relative to calls for service, and health plan performance), and present goal-linked measures alongside the 2027 budget. This will then carry into the full strategic planning process scheduled for 2027, so that the next set of goals is built on evidence.