



## STAFF REPORT

DATE: May 18, 2021

**REGULAR**

**AGENDA ITEM:** 2021-2022 Work Plan

**SUBMITTED BY:** Kristina Handt, City Administrator

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Council and Department Heads held a work session on April 13, 2021 to develop the 2021-2022 work plan. The discussion was facilitated by Phil Kern and included a review of the city's mission and values, an environmental scan of the city to identify strengths, weakness, opportunities, challenges and trends. This led to the development of a list of goals for 2021-2022 that were voted on by council and staff.

### **ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:**

What goals should council adopt in the 2021-2022 work plan?

### **PROPOSAL:**

A copy of the 2021-2022 work plan prepared by Phil Kern is attached.

There were seven goals that received support from a majority of the Council and multiple staff members. Additionally, there were three goals that had support, but not a majority from either group of the leadership team.

### **2021-22 Recommended Goals**

1. Complete City Center and have all staff/equipment moved in
2. Complete water supply projects
3. Develop and implement a communications plan, including image-improvement
4. Develop an economic development plan and strategy
5. Research and consider retention and recruitment strategies for staffing
6. Continue organizational audits to identify staffing, process and service improvements to develop a 5-year plan for each Department with appropriate metrics and dashboards in order to create a culture of continuous improvement
7. Develop a pavement management program/plan

### **Other Brainstormed Goals**

- Creating a community park in the old village area
- Exploring options to assist public safety employees with living in the City
- Consider workplace wellness program

Are goals 1-7 still the goals the council would like to focus on for the next year and a half? It seems highly unlikely that the city will complete goal 6 for all departments in the short term (2021-2022). Are there parts (or certain departments) of this goal that should be prioritized?

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

TBD

### **OPTIONS:**

- 1) Adopt the goals identified in the draft work plan
- 2) Amend the list and then adopt the goals in the draft work plan
- 3) Do not adopt goals for 2021-2022

**RECOMMENDATION:**

***“Motion to adopt the goals identified in the draft 2021-2022 work plan.”***

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Draft 2021-2022 Work Plan

# City of Lake Elmo

## 2021 Goal Setting Report

### Session Overview

On April 13, 2021, the City Council, City Administrator, and Department Heads gathered for a work session to discuss goals and priorities for the City in the coming years. The participants included Mayor Charles Cadenhead, Councilmember Dale Dorschner, Councilmember Lisa McGinn, Councilmember Jeff Holtz, Councilmember Katrina Beckstrom, City Administrator Kristina Handt, Assistant City Administrator Jake Dickson, City Clerk Julie Johnson, Finance Director Sam Magureanu, Public Works Director Marty Powers, Fire Chief Dustin Kalis, and Planning Director Ken Roberts.

The primary objective of the session was to develop a 2021-22 Workplan, a document that provides agreed-upon priorities that will guide the organization's primary work for the coming years. The process involved four components - revisiting the existing mission and organizational values, a discussion of key attributes and characteristics of the community, a present assessment of the City and organization, and development of 2021-22 Goals and Workplan. The participants utilized large group discussion and collaborative brainstorming to accomplish the objectives and develop the final product. It is recommended that staff and the City Council conduct a final review of the outcomes prior to adoption and implementation.

### Mission and Values Statements

For any working team, it is essential for success to develop an understanding for the long-term direction and the elements necessary to reach that objective. Organizations in the public and non-profit sector are often referred to as mission-based organizations, meaning the ultimate measure of success is accomplishing the mission rather than profit or monetary-based measures. In the public sector, mission and vision statements provide definition to the what, why, and how all of the organization's team members perform their roles. This applies to elected, appointed, and hired members of the organization equally - all should act and perform with the mission and values in mind.

The City has spent time in the past identifying the qualities, characteristics, and elements of the City that were most cherished and appreciated. At the start of this session, the participants discussed the elements of the community of which they were the most proud. This discussion provided the group an opportunity to discuss both the organizational attributes and the community features that are both unique and are important to the fabric of the City.

Some of the key qualities, characteristics, and elements included the following:

- Involvement, there are a lot of people involved in the direction of the community
- Ability to keep taxes low, amongst the lowest in the metro
- History of the community, high standard of living
- Relative stability, no longer in the media headlines for negative reasons
- Beauty of the City, natural resources and parks
- Growth while maintaining a strong sense of the past
- Change in how the City Council functions
- Community has a lot of assets and opportunity for positive change
- City is growing while protecting undeveloped, rural areas
- Strong public safety services, maintaining a volunteer fire department
- People getting involved with commissions

Common themes were shared and reinforced by multiple participants - themes that were part of the discussion as it transitioned to reviewing the organization's mission and values statements. Among the questions posed to the group as it reflected on these two important organizational elements were as follows:

Is the Mission Statement a short, concise, and memorable statement that identifies why the organization exists?

Does the Mission Statement provide direction to top priorities City staff, Commissions, and other stakeholders within the organizational team?

Do the Values Statements support the Mission Statement and provide ongoing, long-term directions regarding the culture and leadership of the City?

### **Draft Mission and Values Statements**

Previous Mission Statement: The mission of the City of Lake Elmo is to provide planned, quality public services consistent with the City's character in a fiscally responsible manner.

The group discussed the mission statement and found challenges with the portion of the statement "consistent with the City's character" and discussion led to the removal of this phrase. The importance of both planned and quality in the delivery of services was

reiterated, along with emphasis placed on being fiscally responsible. The last amendment to the mission statement involved the addition of a commitment to act in partnership with the community, adding to the organization's purpose statement the importance of continuing work collaboratively with its stakeholders.

### **Recommended 2021 Mission Statement:**

**The mission of the City of Lake Elmo is to provide planned, quality public services in a fiscally responsible manner in partnership with our community.**

Following its work with the Mission Statement, the leadership team turned its attention to its values statements, which serve as the shared statements for all within the organization. These statements provide the expectation for organizational culture and provision of services within the City.

### **Previous Value Statements:**

- Ethics and Integrity – We believe that ethics and integrity are the foundation of public trust and confidence and that all meaningful relationships are built on these values.
- Visionary Leadership and Planning – We believe that the very essence of leadership is to be visionary and innovative while planning for the future.
- Excellence and Quality in the Delivery of Services – We believe that service to our residents is our reason for being and commit to delivering services in a professional, cost-effective, and efficient manner.
- Fiscal Responsibility – We believe that fiscal responsibility and prudent stewardship of public funds, both short-term and long-term, are essential for citizen confidence in government.
- Open and Honest Communication – We believe that open and honest communication is paramount for an involved citizenry and fosters a positive working environment for employees.
- Respect for the Individual – We believe that citizens we serve are to be treated with the utmost respect and deserve the best treatment the City can provide.
- Thoughtful Community Building – We believe in the development of our community through thoughtful, careful planning that is communicated in a positive manner that enhances the process.
- Professionalism – We believe that continuous improvement and innovation is the mark of a professional organization and we are committed to applying this principle to the services we offer and development of employees.

- **Accountability** - We believe in decision-making processes that are based on facts, data, and the prioritization of community interests above the individual.

The group responded that these value statements still were applicable and have helped provide direction for the organization in the past. There was discussion regarding the value of “Thoughtful Community Building” and how the stated value could be improved. Without objection, the group suggestion was to redefine this value as “Community Engagement” and focus the statement around the idea of creating and fostering an environment where the community’s stakeholders are encouraged to be active participants.

### **2021 Value Statements:**

- **Ethics and Integrity** – We believe that ethics and integrity are the foundation of public trust and confidence and that all meaningful relationships are built on these values.
- **Visionary Leadership and Planning** – We believe that the very essence of leadership is to be visionary and innovative while planning for the future.
- **Excellence and Quality in the Delivery of Services** – We believe that service to our residents is our reason for being and commit to delivering services in a professional, cost-effective, and efficient manner.
- **Fiscal Responsibility** – We believe that fiscal responsibility and prudent stewardship of public funds, both short-term and long-term, are essential for citizen confidence in government.
- **Open and Honest Communication** – We believe that open and honest communication is paramount for an involved citizenry and fosters a positive working environment for employees.
- **Respect for the Individual** – We believe that citizens we serve are to be treated with the utmost respect and deserve the best treatment the City can provide.
- **Community Engagement** – We believe that creating and fostering a community with engaged, active, and informed stakeholders is necessary for a healthy city.
- **Professionalism** – We believe that continuous improvement and innovation is the mark of a professional organization and we are committed to applying this principle to the services we offer and development of employees.
- **Accountability** - We believe in decision-making processes that are based on facts, data, and the prioritization of community interests above the individual.

## 2021 Environmental Assessment

Following its mission and values statement discussion, the group conducted an environmental scan of the City and organization. This activity is designed to consider the present state of the community from a variety of perspectives. In a large group setting, participants were asked to consider its strengths, weaknesses, and explore trends, opportunities, and challenges. The scan provided the basis for the group's efforts later in the work session to develop the goals that will guide the organization in the coming years.

In its first assessment activity, the group was asked to consider all of the things that identify as strengths of Lake Elmo, both as a City and the organization itself. Participants were encouraged to think of projects, services, actions, and policies. The responses included the following:

- Residential development, growth is happening
- Hiring of new staff and filling position vacancies
- Recruitment within the Fire Department
- Identifying and reacting to staffing needs
- Vehicle and equipment replacement - good policy and implementation
- Departments are working very well together, staff are open and responsive
- Community as positive momentum
- City is in a strong financial position
- Making progress with water hookups for residents
- Community commitment to parks and people contributing to improvements
- Taking a good look at parks and how they serve the people
- City has been drama-free, Council and staff are working well together to stifle drama
- Commitment internally to operational audits
- Cooperation amongst staff
- Both historical and professional knowledge amongst staff

After discussing the strengths, participants turned their attention towards reviewing City and organizational areas that need improvement. These items are areas that presently challenge the organization and City. Specifically, individual members of the group brainstormed the following perspectives:

- Proactive planning - understanding the vision, plan, and having a roadmap moving forward
- Developing a five-year plan, metrics/dashboard to have a clear understanding of where things are headed

- Time and resources to conduct internal assessment analysis
- Perception - history and previous struggles have created reputation
- COVID and quantity of work
- Setting expectations and defining how to move forward
- Roadway infrastructure
- A lot of bills coming due that will be hard to meet
- Long-term deferred maintenance planning (infrastructure, parks, trails, etc.)
- Opportunity for new promotion of the community, control a positive narrative
- Communication messaging and internally is an opportunity
- Inability to get residential volunteers to commit to schedules
- Community engagement, finding ways to connect residents and the City

Following the assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, the group moved on to brainstorming anticipated opportunities, challenges, and trends that may impact the City. Forecasting potential external changes or impacts is a key step in the process to help leadership anticipate pressures and opportunities that may arise. To guide this process, the participants followed a STEP model of analysis, thinking about trends and external impacts in the areas of socio-cultural, technical, economical, and political. Thinking about the ongoing opportunities and challenges in each of these areas provides a variety of important perspectives for the City in the coming years.

Within this context, the group identified the following trends and potential impacts:

- Expectations for answers/information every day and all day, creating challenges for staff with work/life balance
- Instant gratification for information and services - challenge it creates for services, financial and economic impacts
- People working from home - impacts staff and businesses
- Technology - ability to perform online meeting
- People are outside more, more demands for parks services
- Less commuting time for residents working from home and what does that offer
- Technology challenges for the City with staff navigating work from home
- People moving into Lake Elmo from the bigger cities - opportunities in the City for land and property
- Will work from home become a standard in employment long-term?
- More points of contact and interactions with staff - complaints, building permits, etc.
- Sustainability initiatives at other levels of government, open space allows opportunities
- Diversification of the workforce is a challenge



- Water conservation, neighboring White Bear Lake issue
- Housing density demands - neighboring levels of higher density housing in Woodbury - will that demand be pushing us? Is that a good thing for us?
- Demand is driving up land prices and housing prices, lack of affordability and diversity of housing stock creates issues (fire department volunteers was used as an example)
- Having land available, perhaps the growth of data centers, tech centers, and distribution centers would be good business targets
- 2021 Federal Stimulus and the flexibility of its use
- Investment in infrastructure at the federal level
- Wellness programs in the workplace

## Development of 2021-2022 Short-term Goals

The fourth part of the goal setting process leaned on the outcomes of the previous three parts in order to develop a goals platform for the coming years. Participants were given time to revisit the group's visioning activities and the environmental assessment results in order to individually brainstorm goals. After sharing individual ideas, the group refined the proposed goals into goal statements. The goals were then consolidated by like topics and each participant was asked to rank the goals each individually hoped the City could accomplish. After sharing the priorities with the group, the outcome resulted in groupings of potential goals.

There were seven goals that received support from a majority of the Council and multiple staff members. Additionally, there were three goals that had support, but not a majority from either group of the leadership team.

### **2021-22 Recommended Goals**

1. Complete City Center and have all staff/equipment moved in
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**Other Brainstormed Goals**

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The draft of the goals program is ready for review and adoption by the City Council, which will key implementation by City staff. The City has invested quality time and effort into the review of mission and values, along with the development of a goals program. As the City has in the past, ongoing review and measurement against the adopted goals will be an important action step for staff and the City Council.

In conclusion, it was my pleasure to work with your team on this important project. This goals program will provide organizational clarity for both the Council's decision-making process and the day-to-day service delivery by City staff. The commitment of the leadership team to devote time and critical-thought throughout this process has resulted in a comprehensive assessment of the organization and City, along with a plan for the coming years.

Prepared and submitted by Phil Kern on behalf of the City of Lake Elmo.