

City of Victoria
Strategic Plan

2019-2020



Strategic Planning Overview

The City of Victoria engaged Richard Fursman of HueLife to conduct its strategic planning process. The process was inclusive and participatory with department heads (“city staff”) and all members of the City Council participating. The strategic planning session stretched over two days on April 25 and April 27, 2019. At a high level, participants discussed the current issues and future trends, as well as aspirations, organizational goals, priorities and objectives in an effort to establish clear, strategic direction for the community for the next two years.

Strategic Planning Objectives

The primary objective of the strategic planning session was to establish clear, consensus-based direction for the city for the next two years and then actively pursue implementation of strategies to achieve that direction. It was important to establish clear goals given the many priorities facing the city and community.

City council and staff looked at current conditions and future trends in the community and discussed strategic priorities and objectives that have been compiled into a simple, focused and accountable plan that is easy to read and easy to understand and is oriented on producing variable results for the residents and businesses of our community.

The strategic plan is a tool for city leaders to identify priorities, program and services and assimilate them into common elements (strategies and goals) by organizing them into one document that serves a resource and guide for the future.

Major Themes

Transforming ideas and concepts into goals and actions was accomplished by identifying major themes (subject matters) and then developing each theme into clear strategies. During the April strategic planning session, three major themes were expressed:

Life Style

...attract local jobs

...explore opportunities for lifecycle housing

Quality of Life

...market the city as a year-round recreation destination

...expand the city’s unique and vibrant downtown

Safe and Connected

...ensure a well-planned, financially sound community with high quality services

...ensure a safe, connected, and pedestrian-friendly community

These ideas provided a foundation for developing measurable strategies, goals, and action steps for the city and community.

Strategic Objectives

Strategic objectives are statements that identify and describe specific actions or activities to accomplish during a specific timeframe which aim to achieve a measurable outcome that considers the objective to be accomplished.

Four strategic objectives were identified: expand and enhance the local economy, adopt guiding principles, build infrastructure, and diversify housing. For each of the four strategic objectives, City Council and staff also identified desired outcomes or expectations. Individual objectives have been assigned to individuals responsible for or interested in the related discipline. Those individuals will determine the action steps necessary to achieve objectives as well as the necessary implementation timeline.

Accountability

Success of the strategic plan depends on simple strategies, clear objectives and corresponding action plans that provide direction as to how the intended outcomes will be measured and accomplished.

The city manager will regularly monitor progress in accomplishment of the strategic objectives with city staff. The city manager will present to city council and the public a report on progress toward achieving the desired outcomes or expectations annually. This report will include any updates, observations or recommendations for council's consideration. The report will be made available to the public on the city's website.



Implementation/Action

In order to achieve the desired strategic objective, substantial actions will need to occur over the two-year strategic plan period to move the city toward its vision.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1

Expand and enhance our local economy

While the city has owned a vacant 13.5-acre parcel west of downtown for ten years, the current city council (coming into the strategic planning session) has not yet had an opportunity to revisit the vision for the property and provide clear direction to staff for developing the property and connecting the 13.5-acre property to downtown. One of the challenges with the property is connecting the site to downtown physically and aesthetically. In discussing the current state of the local economy, city council and staff recognize there are also opportunities to continue to develop downtown on the east side as well as through the underdeveloped properties that currently exist in the downtown area. Marketing of the city (its amenities and attractions) has been lacking in financial capital dedicated to this effort. City council and staff also recognize that a lack of infrastructure in the city's growth area south and west have also been a barrier to attracting new businesses and diversifying the city's tax base.

To improve the current state and move the city toward achieving the its strategic objective to expand and enhance our local economy, city leaders will:

1. Develop the city-owned 13.5-acre parcel west of downtown.
2. Update the downtown master plan.
3. Increase economic activity.
4. Increase jobs and diversity of tax base.

At the end of the 2-year strategic plan period, this strategic plan envisions the following results:

- Development of the 13.5-acre city-owned property will be underway with streets built and at least one building complete.
- The downtown master plan will have been reviewed and updated and implementation of the updated vision will have started.
- The small area plan will have been completed and implementation of the plan will have started.
- Determine whether to hire, partner or contract on marketing and community engagement

Table 1: Expand and Enhance our Local Economy Two-Year Actions

Develop the city-owned 13.5-acres west of downtown	Update downtown master plan	Increase economic activity	Increase jobs and diversity of tax base
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into development agreement for the 13.5 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the downtown master plan • Develop downtown design guidelines • Engage owners of underdeveloped properties • Implement parking study recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete installation of parking signs downtown • Create calendar of events and engage the public • Work with neighboring attractions to draw visitors to Victoria businesses and restaurants and create joint events • Determine whether to hire, partner or contract for marketing and community engagement • Identify marketing strategy and resources • Explore partnerships to attract visitors to Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and adopt a small area plan for the south and west growth area • Explore partnerships for south growth area • Understand barriers to development, identify solution to resolve and attract Businesses • Complete utilities to flex area (CR10/11)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2

Adopt guiding principles

The city council and staff recognize there is currently not an effective tool in place for understanding long-term decision-making and that decision-making is disconnected from strategic planning. There is no documented plan for public engagement and policies need to be updated and/or enhanced. City leaders also identified as being more of a reactionary body with a desire to be more strategic and proactive.

To improve the current state and move toward achieving the city’s strategic objective to adopt guiding principles, city leaders will:

1. Develop a long-term financial management plan/strategy.
2. Increase public engagement.
3. Develop and apply new workflow to evaluate success of strategic vision/plan.
4. Develop and document shared vision for “Big Victoria” (the city’s growth area south and west of the current boundaries).

At the end of the 2-year strategic plan period, this strategic plan envisions the following results:

- All city policies will have been reviewed and updated.
- City staff and elected officials will provide a consistent reaction/answer from anyone.
- Clear protocols for meetings will have been adopted.
- The public will have greater opportunities to be engaged and remain informed.
- City leaders will have increased public trust.

Table 2: Adopt Guiding Principles Two-Year Actions

Develop a long-term financial plan/strategy	Increase public engagement	Develop new workflow to evaluate success of strategic vision/plan	Develop vision for “Big Victoria”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine desired debt and tax levels • Develop a 5-10-year financial plan • Update the CIP thru consensus of goals • Establish a business subsidy policy • Evaluate funds and ensure intent matches uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for public engagement • Enhance public outreach through variety of communication mediums • Create a plan for citizen engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reformat staff reports and templates • Tie all decisions, projects, actions back to vision • Develop policies related to reporting • Workshops will take a “deep dive” on topics to set direction/policy • Evaluate policies and correct deficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop “Big Victoria vision • Create infrastructure map • Develop policies to execute shared vision • Staff implement vision and monitor and report on progress

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3

Build infrastructure

In some cases where plans for projects, initiatives or priorities have existed, funding has sometimes fallen short causing a delay in or refinement of the project, initiative or priority. For example, a funding plan has not yet been identified for the completion of Wassermann Park, and while trail gap connections is a priority for the city, adequate funding does not currently exist for the city to achieve its trail gap priorities. With Victoria a growing community, city facilities at Public Works and City Hall are either at or nearing capacity and investment in technology must continue and/or be enhanced in order to meet the expectations of the public and deliver services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

To improve the current state and move toward achieving the city’s strategic objective to build infrastructure, city leaders will:

1. Establish partnerships with school districts.
2. Develop 5-year park/trail plan.
3. Complete Wassermann Park and identify a funding plan.
4. Complete 1-2 trail connections.
5. Develop a city facility plan.

At the end of the 2-year strategic plan period, this strategic plan envisions the following results:

- Wassermann Park will be completed.
- At least one trail connection will be completed.
- 1-2 controlled intersections will have been built (in partnership with the County).
- A master facilities plan will have been developed identifying near-, mid-, and long-term needs.
- Marsh Lake Road improvement project will be completed.
- Land for new school(s) options will have been identified.

Table 3: Build Infrastructure Two-Year Actions

Establish partnerships with school districts	Develop 5-Year Park/Trail Plan	Develop city facility plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with ISD 112 for future school site(s) in Victoria and plan for it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Wassermann Park • Complete Marsh Lake Road improvement project • Complete 1-2 trail connections with one being Bavaria trail • Complete 2+ controlled intersection crossings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete space needs assessment for City Hall, Fire and Public Works • Develop plan to address cold storage needs and build it • Develop staffing plan to address growth of city in order to meet service demands/levels • Explore yard waste options for residents and develop plan

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #4

Diversify housing

There is currently a limited range of housing options in the community including senior, affordable and workforce housing. With the city on pace of reaching approximately 150+ new residential permits annually, city leaders want to ensure there is a diverse housing product available to attract and maintain residents at all stages of life.

To improve the current state and move toward achieving the city’s strategic objective to diversify housing, city leaders will:

1. Develop a plan to welcome and support lifecycle housing.

At the end of the 2-year strategic plan period this strategic plan envisions the following results:

- 1-2 senior housing projects will be complete.
- Residential development will continue around the Marsh Lake Road area.
- Utilities will have been built south of Marsh Lake.

Table 4: Diversify Housing Two-Year Actions

<i>Develop plan to welcome and support lifecycle housing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine/evaluate the need for senior housing• Build 1-2 senior housing developments• Develop a plan to welcome and support lifecycle housing• Explore residential development opportunities around Marsh Lake Road

Two-Year Work Plan (2019-2020)

For each of the four strategic objectives, city leaders identified imperatives. These imperatives serve as the work plan (i.e. a “to do” list) for the City through the end of 2020 to address the Council focused guidance.

STRATEGY 1

Expand and enhance our local economy

Action	Assigned Staff	Timeline
Develop city-owned 13.5-acre parcel west of downtown		
Enter into development agreement with a developer(s) to develop the 13.5 acres	Pat Smith	In Progress
Update downtown master plan		
Review and update the downtown master plan	Pat Smith	April 2020
Develop downtown design guidelines	Pat Smith	Sept. 2019
Engage property owners with underdeveloped properties in downtown area to understand their dreams, goals, visions for developing their properties	Pat Smith	June 2019
Implement parking study recommendations	Pat Smith	Dec. 2020
Increase economic activity		
Complete installation of parking signs in downtown area	Pat Smith	In Progress
Create calendar of events and engage public (e.g. social media, ads)	Gwen Campbell	Ongoing
Develop marketing materials to promote further investment in Victoria	TBD	March 2020
Work collaboratively with neighboring attractions to draw visitors to Victoria and create joint events	TBD	Ongoing
Determine whether to hire, partner, or contract for marketing and community engagement	Dana Hardie	Sept. 2020
Identify marketing strategy and resources	Dana Hardie	Dec. 2020
Explore partnerships to attract visitors to Victoria	TBD	Ongoing
Increase jobs and diversity of tax base		
Prepare and adopt small area plan for the commercial/industrial district near County Roads 10 and 11	Pat Smith	Nov. 2019
Explore partnerships for south growth area development	Pat Smith	Ongoing
Understand barriers to development, identify solution(s) to resolve and attract businesses	Pat Smith	Dec. 2019
Complete utilities to flex area (CR10/11)	Cara Geheren Pat Smith	Dec. 2020

STRATEGY 2

Adopt guiding principles

Action	Assigned Staff	Timeline
Develop long-term financial plan/strategy		
Develop long-term financial plan/strategy	Trisha Pollock	Dec. 2019
Determine desired debt and tax levels	Trisha Pollock	Ongoing
Update CIP through consensus of goals	Dept. Heads	Ongoing
Establish a business subsidy policy	Pat Smith	Dec. 2019
Evaluate funds and ensure intent matches uses	Trisha Pollock	Ongoing
Increase public engagement		
Create opportunities for public engagement	Gwen Campbell	Ongoing
Enhance public outreach through variety of communication mediums	Gwen Campbell	Ongoing
Create a plan for citizen engagement	TBD	Dec. 2020
Develop and apply new workflow to evaluate success of strategic plan/vision		
Reformat staff reports and templates	Cindy Patnode	Sept. 2019
Tie all decisions, actions, projects back to vision (via reporting)	All	Sept. 2019
Develop policies related to reporting	Dana Hardie	Dec. 2019
Utilize workshops to take “Deep Dive” on individual topics to set direction and establish policy	All	Ongoing
Evaluate policies and correct deficiencies	Dept. Heads	Dec. 2019
Establish and document a shared vision for “Big Victoria” (future growth area of city south and west of current city boundaries)		
Develop “Big Victoria” Vision	Pat Smith	July 2020
Create infrastructure map identifying infrastructure needs and related locations in growth area	Cara Geheren	Dec. 2020
Develop policies to execute shared vision	Pat Smith	Sept. 2020
Staff implement vision and monitor and report on progress	Pat Smith	Dec. 2020

STRATEGY 3

Build infrastructure

Action	Assigned Staff	Timeline
Establish partnerships with school districts		
Work with ISD 112 for future school site(s) in Victoria and plan for it	Pat Smith	Nov. 2019
Develop 5-year park/trail plan		
Identify grant opportunities and apply for grants	Ann Mahnke	Ongoing
Determine alignment and cost for trails	Ann Mahnke	In Progress
Begin construction of Wassermann Park	Ann Mahnke	March 2020
Complete 1-2 trail connections	Ann Mahnke	April 2020
Complete Wassermann Park	Ann Mahnke	Dec. 2020
Complete Marsh Lake Road improvement project	Cara Geheren	Dec. 2020
Complete 2+ controlled intersection crossings	Cara Geheren	Dec. 2020
Develop city facility plan		
Explore yard waste options for residents and develop plan	Ann Mahnke	Sept. 2019
Complete space needs assessment for Public Works, Fire and City Hall	Dana Hardie	April 2020
Develop a plan to address cold storage needs	Ann Mahnke	April 2020
Develop a staffing plan to address growth of city to meet service demands/levels	Dana Hardie	June 2020

STRATEGY 4

Diversify housing

Action	Assigned Staff	Timeline
Develop plan to welcome and support lifecycle housing		
Determine/evaluate the need for senior housing	Pat Smith	Complete
Build 1-2 senior housing developments	Pat Smith	Dec. 2020
Develop a plan to welcome and support lifecycle housing	Pat Smith	May 2020
Explore residential development opportunities around Marsh Lake Road	Pat Smith	Ongoing

Conclusion

As the City of Victoria continues to move forward and develop, it will be important for city leaders to maintain focus, prioritize, effectively communicate, and most importantly – work together to responsibly grow without losing the quality and character that make Victoria unique and desirable for residents. Constructive feedback and contributions are welcome and encouraged. Residents can always reach their council members by attending a city council workshop or meeting or reaching out directly via phone or email. Contact information for city council members and staff can be found on the city’s website at www.ci.victoria.mn.us or by calling city hall at 952-443-4210.