

City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Regular Meeting

Item Reports6

Council discussion and instruction to staff concerning the City of Scottsbluff Strategic Plan 2022 draft.

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City of Scottsbluff Strategic Plan 2022

On November 29, 2021 the City Council held a strategy planning session to discuss the future direction of the City related to the following areas: Business and Housing Development, Education Development, Infrastructure Development, and Recreational Development. In attendance there were 12 City Officials, and 8 community members. Discussion was facilitated by Brittany Hardin of Nebraska State Department of Economic Development.

The following are the top short term and long term goals for each subsection. They have been categorized by their feasibility of being achieved within the current resources of the city.

- **Business Development Top Priorities:**

- Short Term Goals:

- Develop marketing plan via TCD incubator space availability. Immediate follow-up necessary to establish partnership with TCD regarding entrepreneur development.

- This Goal is feasible, it is advised to partner with TCD to co-market the space. Future meetings are planned to discuss more in depth with the new director. I would recommend revising the goal to the following

- Establish a plan utilizing multiple community resources to co-market the TCD business incubator space fostering organic business growth.

- Create centralized location to provide information and resources for new business owners in the community (local, regional and state incentives programs). City offices could provide an ideal location as a one stop shop for resources.

- This Goal is feasible, it is advised to move this to a long-term goal as the number of agencies that are a part of the resources is 8 or 9. A one-stop shop will require improved relationships with other agencies and a location that would be centrally located in Scottsbluff/Gering. City Offices are limited on space and capacity to become the one-stop shop. I would recommend the following as a revised goal

- Build community relationships and buy in to establish a one-stop location in Scottsbluff/Gering that foster a cooperative

environment for cross agency collaboration for the best interest of businesses.

- Long Term Goal:
 - Work with WNCC to create placement programs that would connect business owners and students by serving as host families for students during the summer months to increase internship opportunities.
 - This item is feasible; however, I believe it should be categorized as a long-term goal for Housing and Educational Development
 - Create additional business incubator in Scottsbluff that would connect entrepreneurs to banks and investors specifically interested in assisting new business owners.
 - I do not believe this is a feasible nor required. The current incubator was full when it started and has an adequate space. The idea of an incubator is to grow them for a short period of time and have access to business coaching and other resources so they can grow out of the space and move into other available spaces in the community that are available. The current space is underutilized and resources are finite making this an unnecessary focus on community resources. I recommend removing this goal.
- **Housing and Educational Development Top Priorities:**
 - Short Term Goals:
 - Continued connection with local realtors to sell and market existing properties
 - This is not an actionable/quantifiable item. I understand the importance, but unsure how the city can influence housing unit growth through realtors. The goal proposed does not impact the problem related to housing shortage or quality of housing. I advise that the goal be revised to the following two goals
 - Develop a focused engagement plan to encourage new developers and builders to look for opportunities in Scottsbluff including working with existing landowners of empty lots or undeveloped subdivisions fostering growth.
 - Develop a focused engagement plan for redevelopment that focuses on engaging investors in redeveloping under utilized buildings and housing in the East Overland and Downtown Corridors.
 - Monitor and evaluate local permit regulations for owner-occupied rehabilitation and contractors.
 - All of this will be managed as a part of normal city processes including the grant application process and permit reports that are generated monthly. I recommend removing this as a propose goal.
 - Long Term Goals:

- Create affordable housing for all income levels for owner occupied rehabilitation via local and state programs.
 - We are already doing this with the owner-occupied rehabilitation program through PADD and the Rural Workforce Housing revolving fund. I think the core issue is a shortage of developers and contractors. The incentives are there to offer, we just need applicants to take on projects. I think this line of thought is encompassed in the short-term goals above.
- Initiate local efforts to attract more subcontractors to Scottsbluff, which would focus on building companies that offer additional services such as HVAC, plumbing and electrical work.
 - This goal could compliment the short-term goals with developers. I think it is more of an immediate need than long term.
- Establish partnership between WNCC and City of Scottsbluff to expand SB High School's woodworking program to include HVAC, plumbing and electrical training. Could include large building mock-ups for student training
 - These partnerships are already in place and they have been working to expand resources and opportunities because of local company demand. They have expanded internship opportunities; the challenge is attracting/encouraging students to take that path. I recommend removing this goal, while it is important it is out of the City's control and both SBHS and WNCC are working to strengthen those programs.
- Begin efforts to open a local homeless shelter through in-kind donations and volunteer work.
 - I place this in a higher priority than long term goals. I have been contacted and have had a number of meetings related to establishing a program-based shelter. There are future meetings planned in the near term to determine feasibility and how the City could assist. I recommend moving this goal short term since it is already in motion.
- **Infrastructure Development Top Priorities:**
 - Short Term Goals (10 years)
 - Monitor and evaluate ways to reduce regulatory burdens for infrastructure development.
 - Staff continuously monitors state programs and Legislation even proposing, advocating and testifying at public hearings in Lincoln. I recommend keeping this goal
 - Continue advocacy of PAWS program
 - This project has seemed fall behind in the priorities of the region. Reactivation of this program should be a priority as we are in a period of drought and the awareness will again become relevant. I recommend keeping this goal.
 - Create efforts to establish a local compost facility

- We have an active local compost facility that serves Scottsbluff and Gering located at the old landfill. I recommend removing this goal.
- Work with local/state leaders on resources for downtown infrastructure (restroom) development
 - There are many resources and grants for these types of projects. The challenge is finding a location to place an adequate restroom facility that can serve downtown and the 18th Street plaza. I recommend changing the goal to this
 - Improve the downtown area by adding a centrally located restroom to encourage longer stays and more events in the downtown area that can further support the downtown businesses.
- Long Term Goals (10+ years):
 - Create community and regional relationships to further develop rail sites and addition of flights and terminal at Regional West Airport.
 - While a commendable goal the challenge with rail site development is funding. LB 40 which was passed last year has available funding for projects related to improving rail site development a location needs to be identified to take advantage of this part of the goal. I recommend revising this into 2 goals
 - Seek sites along the local rail line to develop a rail park to attract and augment/diversify industry in Scottsbluff
 - As for flights and a terminal at the Western Nebraska Regional Airport this is out of the control of the city. I would advise revising the goal to the following
 - Work with the Western Nebraska Regional Airport to develop and market parcels of land for commercial and light industrial development and seek out aviation related businesses that would increase local air traffic and encourage growth in and around the airport.
- **Recreational Development Top Priorities**
 - Short Term Goals:
 - Create community surveys to prioritize green space development sites and trail development sites
 - I would keep this goal.
 - Long Term Goals:
 - Create trail and green space development based on community input
 - I would revise this goal to the following
 - Utilize Community Input to develop a master plan for parks, trails and green space through out the community
 - Begin steps to prioritize the development of major recreational hub in the community, which may include:

- Senior Center
- Aquatic Center
- Field House
 - I think this goal should be moved to short term goals since the council has adopted a resolution for LB 357 for the development of an aquatic center. And revise the goals as follows.
 - Work with community partners to develop a regional recreation facility that will encourage workforce recruitment and retention and that will improve the quality of life for Scottsbluff and the region.

Other:

Once specific priorities have been established, work with local and regional economic development officials to purchase vacant buildings (Albertsons and K-Mart).

- These are both challenging goals as they are former commercial enterprises locked up in commercial leases that would need to be bought out. The only mechanisms to take on these projects would be through eminent domain until the leases run out. I would remove these goals for the purposes of this document and focus on marketing the properties closer to the end of the leases.