

Strategic Planning Meeting #23
Tuesday, July 24, 2007, 7:00 p.m.
Bloomington Civic Plaza
1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, Minnesota 55431-3027

Call to Order

Mayor Gene Winstead called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Mayor Winstead, Councilmembers R. Axtell, S. Elkins, A. Grady, K. Nordstrom, and S. Peterson.

Absent: Councilmember V. Wilcox.

**Imagine Bloomington
2025 – Prioritizing
Strategies**

Aimee Gourlay and Larry Bakken, strategic planning process facilitators, distributed and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. They reviewed the Council's feedback during the Imagine Bloomington 2025 draft goals and strategies discussion that took place at the June 5 special strategic planning meeting. That same information was presented to the public during four open houses and through an on-line survey and was reviewed by the City's seven boards and commissions. An overview of the community's feedback on priorities was presented to Council.

Council commented on the feedback stating there were not a lot of surprises in the public's responses. While traffic has and still is a major issue, there seemed to be broad community support for the various areas of influence including City Services, Community & Housing, Education & Employment, Parks, Recreation & Open Space, People & Culture, and Transportation. They stated it appears people are more into how they feel today rather than looking ahead long-term. They are taking for granted the things the City has always done well.

Nordstrom questioned how can the City achieve being number one in education and employment.

Axtell stated the City needs to maximize enrollment without building more schools so it can get the most money for education without adding more cost.

Peterson commented there is too much overlap in the goals and that the language needs to be sharpened to draw a distinction between them and that it should be in the public's language.

Evaluation Criteria

With regard to evaluating strategies, Council was asked to consider criteria, which can help them make the best resource allocation choice between all the competing interests. They were asked to rank the goals from the most important to the least important.

Axtell suggested as the Council wants Bloomington to be a destination school district, certain risk factors describing what will happen if the City doesn't do something to ensure that will happen should also be included.

City Manager Mark Bernhardson commented the job mix is changing and that office and retail might end up providing the most jobs. Bloomington doesn't have companies in the biomed or biochip field and there is no strong telecom industry here. No leading edge stuff.

Peterson mentioned some of the top employers in the state that are located in Bloomington: The hospitality industry, Seagate, HealthPartners, Toro, and Donaldson.

Grady stated the City doesn't have any incentives to lure new business types to Bloomington.

Elkins stated the City is lacking the "cool" factor.

Peterson added it might be more important to take care of the housing stock rather than trying to develop a better job market.

Larry Lee, Director of Community Development, stated today the City builds housing for the type of jobs the City wants and then developers go out and try to find the company that will employ the people who will live in that housing.

Nordstrom stated the City needs to get realtors to sell Bloomington.

**Input on the
Public's Goals**

Bakken commented Bloomington is one of the lead players in Minnesota so the decisions made now will have an impact on the region and on the state. For example, it was cutting edge to bring the Mall of America to Bloomington. It's part of the big picture.

Winstead commented Bloomington should be on every state employer's short list. Turnover in Edina and Eden Prairie is higher than in Bloomington. People like new housing but Bloomington doesn't have new housing in the \$500,000-\$600,000 range.

Bernhardson stated the Twin Cities is competing nationally as a metro area and that Bloomington is less dependent on the rest of the state.

Following are Council's comments following the public's voting on the goals for the following areas of influence:

➤ City Services

Grady was surprised that safety keeps topping the list and wondered if that means Bloomington residents don't feel safe. It was stated safety tends to top everyone's list.

Peterson stated the best way to keep east Bloomington safe is to make sure Richfield is safe. He stated the City does a good job of providing basic safety and that some of the comments are perceived media influence.

Police Chief Laux commented the senior population in Bloomington, which is growing, feels they are potentially more at risk for crime and they have a much lower tolerance of what is unsafe. It's a perception issue with the senior population.

Bernhardson stated as people get older, they feel more vulnerable. He added when residents and businesses choose a city in which to locate, safety is a big concern, as are the schools and what is expected for residents to have a good long-term investment.

Winstead commented staff should stay the course on this one.

➤ Community/Housing

Winstead stated Bloomington is an aging community and so is its housing, therefore, tidiness is a big issue. The City needs to maintain the unkept areas to the ninth degree.

Axtell commented it would be nice to have a pot of money available to help first-time home buyers and people who want to rehab older homes.

Bakken stated Bloomington needs to be pushed as a location.

Grady inquired what the replacement population will look like when today's senior population passes on.

Lee replied it appears larger families will be replacing that generation to occupy the single-family homes. There is a new balance arriving so it's not just seniors.

Nordstrom stated the average family size worldwide has four kids.

Winstead stated having desirable housing is key.

➤ Education/Employment:

Elkins commented there are high end and low end jobs in Bloomington but not much in between.

Peterson commented it's worthwhile helping the schools to be successful, as that is what will draw people to Bloomington.

Input on the Public's Goals continued➤ Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Comments that the City should stay the course; that people are happy with the amenities.

Elkins stated the biggest complaint is water quality in the park.

Peterson suggested the City needs to think long-term how it's going to improve water quality and how to fund it going forward.

Bernhardson stated staff will get some water quality data so a comparison can be made between Bloomington and other cities.

➤ People/Culture

Axtell stated the City may need to look at doubling VEAP services, etc. but the City has a tremendous youth population that can be used as a resource.

Winstead commented Creekside Community Center serves 200 people per night at Loaves & Fishes.

Bakken inquired as to how the Council wanted to allocate resources – to the seniors or younger generations?

➤ Transportation

Bernhardson stated there were no complaints about traffic volume or all the pass-through traffic.

Winstead stated Bloomington has rush hour congestion but not all-day-long congestion.

Council's Prioritization of Goals

Jill Hutmacher explained the exercise in which the Council was instructed to prioritize the goals using the stars and dots under the same six areas of influence as was done by the public.

Gourlay reviewed the results of Council's exercise and removed the goals that didn't receive any stars.

After two rounds of voting, the Council indicated a desire to have the following goals as priorities and offered the following feedback:

➤ City Services

- Create a community where residents and visitors are safe.
- Ensure a balance of development and sustainable environment.

Grady commented Bloomington in some ways lacks a sense of community because there is no downtown, no community center or place to hang out.

➤ Community Housing

- Maximize desirability of residential and commercial areas.

➤ Education/Employment

- Optimize enrollment at Bloomington schools to ensure healthy class sizes and revenue.
- Create and maintain a balance and variety of jobs.
- Prepare for and attract new economies.

➤ Parks, Recreation & Open Space

- Maintain and enhance City park and recreational assets.
- Preserve and maintain our natural resources for ourselves and future generations.

➤ People & Culture

- Support healthy lifestyles.
- Enhance support for members of the community as they age.

Council's Prioritization of Goals continued ➤ Transportation

- Promote and/or provide enhanced alternative transportation options.
- Maintain the City's high quality transportation infrastructure at an affordable price.

Adjourn Meeting Mayor Winstead adjourned the meeting at 9:52 p.m.

Barbara Clawson
Council Secretary