



Sarasota's Strategic Plan for 2004-2008

Influencing Change and
Attaining Our Vision

City Commissioners, Charter Officials and Staff

2004



Figure 2 Strategic Planning Process

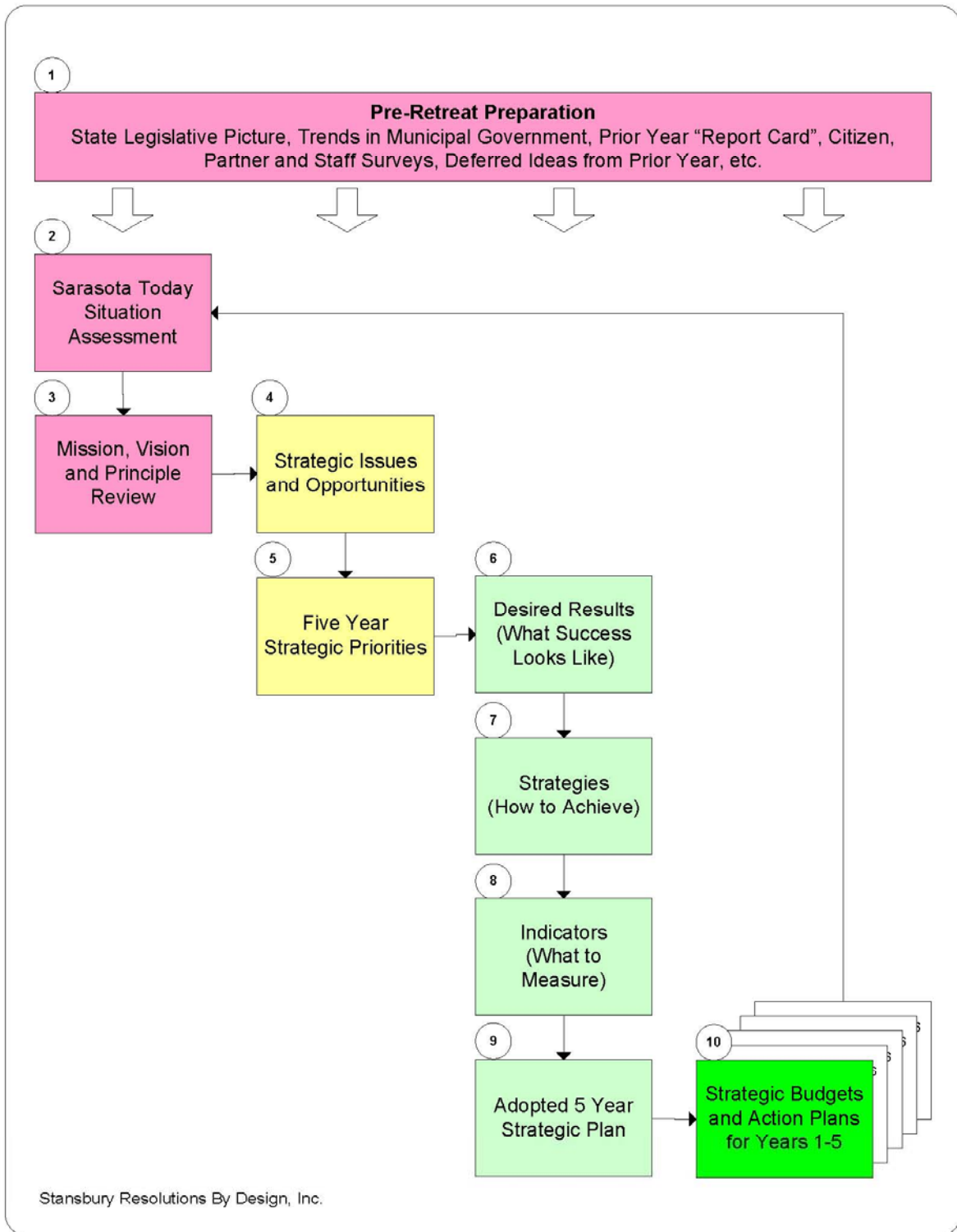
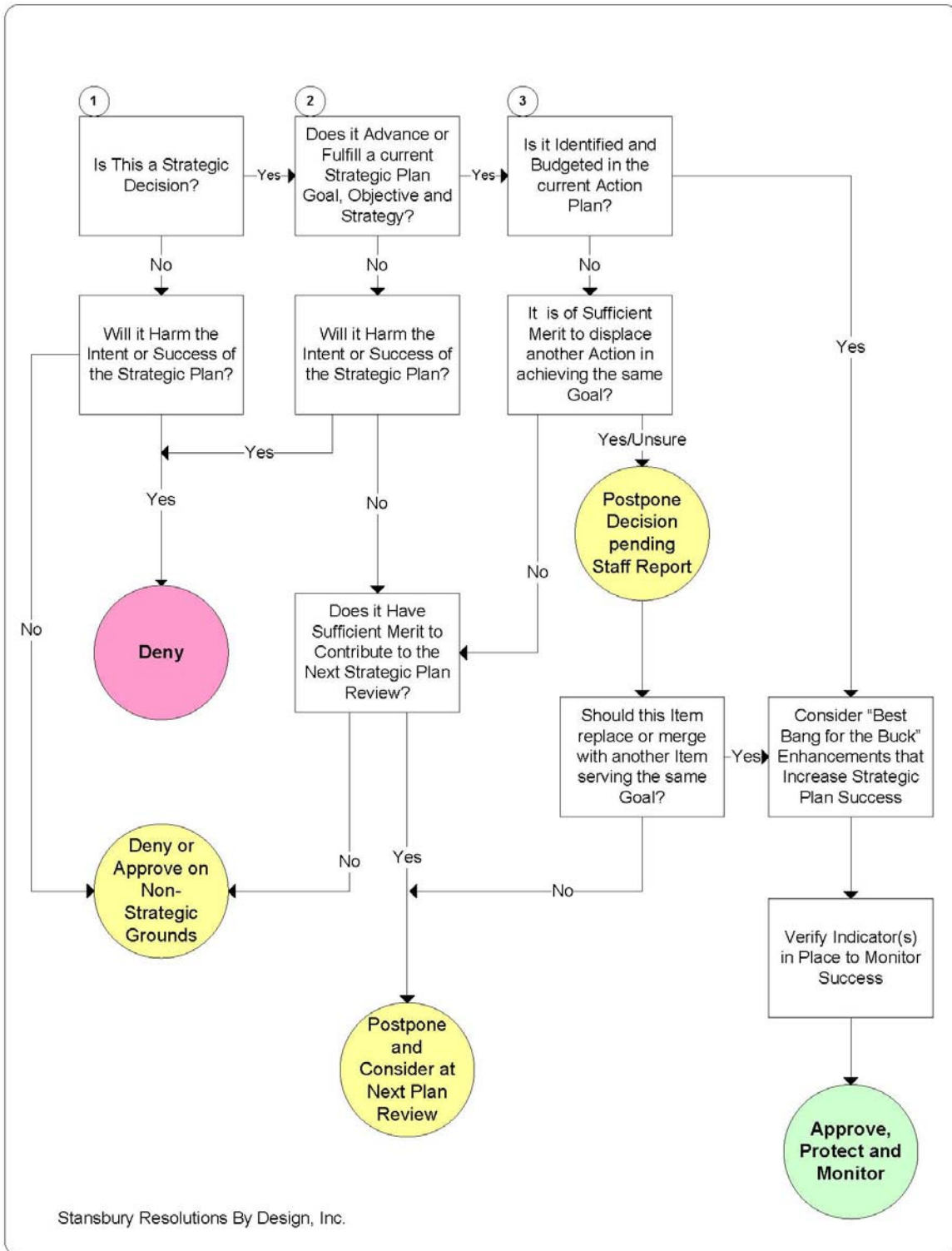


Figure 3 Strategic Decision Tree



2. OUR CITY GOVERNMENT'S MISSION, VISION AND GOALS

A. Mission

The City Commissioners and staff deliver the policies, decisions and actions needed to serve the short and long term needs of our citizens. We keep our Vision in focus while paying attention to the details of managing our fiscal and other resources with care, and providing services and facilities that reflect community priorities and goals. In performing these duties, we foster collaboration and respect for different points of view, and encourage extensive and effective participation from those affected by our work. We make timely choices that reflect fairness and a good understanding of the impacts of alternative proposals. These decisions are carried out effectively to address the health, safety and welfare of those we serve.

B. Vision

The successful fulfillment of our mission results in Sarasota being “A Place Where Urban Amenities meet Small Town Living.”

C. Strategic Goals

- Viable, safe and diverse neighborhoods and businesses that work together.
- An attractive, environmentally-friendly community that is safe and livable and provides an array of cultural and aesthetic enjoyments.
- A responsible and accessible government that has sound financial and administrative practices.
- An economically sustainable community.
- Well-maintained and future-oriented infrastructure.
- A workplace that attracts and retains an outstanding workforce.

STRATEGIC CONCERNS, GOALS AND DESIRED RESULTS

A. Issues and Opportunities of Strategic Importance

The Commissioners and Charter Officials, with input from staff, identified and prioritized many issues and opportunities of critical importance for the next five years. The question being answered was:

“Is there a critical issue or opportunity of strategic importance to the City that you believe needs to be addressed by one or more strategies in the next five years?”

The collaborative answers resulted in the following prioritized list of strategic initiatives, which were updated in April of 2005. Priorities are intended to guide action plans and budgeting. However, no strategic initiative is to be discarded. All are important.

Rank	Strategic Concerns for 2005-2009 Plan Period
1 st	Fiscal Responsibility
2 nd	Attainable Housing*
3 rd	Economic Development*
4 th	Neighborhood Planning
5 th	Transportation Innovation and Collaboration
6 th	City/Stakeholder Communication and Engagement
7 th	Implementation of the Newtown Redevelopment Plan
8 th	Revitalization of Public Housing
9 th	Natural Environment
10 th	Policing Philosophy
11 th	City as a Challenging, Fulfilling Employer
12 th	Historic Preservation
13 th	Public Open Space and Recreation
14 th	Arts, Culture and Entertainment Quality and Accessibility
15 th	Recognizing Needs of Barrier Islands
16 th	Gateway Planning
17 th	Intergovernmental Collaboration
18 th	Aesthetics
19 th	Fostering Resident/Business Owner Collaboration
20 th	Code Updates
21 st	Annexation

** A very close link exists between attainable housing and economic development. Both problems must be worked on together to ensure livable wages and housing for the citizens of Sarasota.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- ◆ Viable, safe and diverse neighborhoods and businesses that work together.
 - Neighborhood Planning
 - Affordable Housing
 - Policing Philosophy
 - Historic Preservation
 - Recognizing Needs of Barrier Islands
 - Implementation of the Newtown Redevelopment Plan
 - Revitalization of Public Housing
- ◆ An attractive, environmentally-friendly community that is safe and livable and provides an array of cultural and aesthetic enjoyments.
 - Arts, Culture and Entertainment Quality and Accessibility
 - Aesthetics
 - Natural Environment
 - Gateway Planning
 - Public Open Space and Recreation
- ◆ A responsible and accessible government that has sound financial and administrative practices.
 - Fiscal Responsibility
 - Intergovernmental Collaboration
 - City/Stakeholder Communication and Engagement
- ◆ An economically sustainable community.
 - Economic Development
 - Fostering Resident/Business Owner Collaboration
 - Implementation of the Newtown Redevelopment Plan
- ◆ Well-maintained and future-oriented infrastructure.
 - Transportation Innovation and Collaboration
 - Annexation
- ◆ A workplace that attracts and retains an outstanding workforce.
 - City as a Challenging, Fulfilling Employer

B. DESIRED RESULTS

The Commissioners and Charter Officials also provided direction to staff on developing responses to their initiatives. These statements will guide staff as they create strategic goals and measures to ensure that the City of Sarasota moves in the direction of the Commissions' vision. They did this by answering the statement

"A successful strategy for this strategic concern will result in:"

1. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
 - a) The capital program is managed in accordance with required levels of service.
 - b) Capital improvements incorporate maximum levels of grant funding.
 - c) The annual, in-depth CIP review process includes a written report from all departments that establishes the need for all projects.
 - d) High-quality projects are completed on time and within budget due to proper oversight techniques.
 - e) Maximum services are provided at reasonable costs.
 - f) The City's organization of departments; allocation of resources, and budget reflects the implementation required to achieve strategic goals.
 - g) The Strategic Plan and the budget process now incorporate all approved programs and processes such as the Financial Sustainability Study, the Newtown Redevelopment Plan, the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Parks + Connectivity Master Plan, etc.
 - h) Existing businesses and business clusters are nurtured, new businesses and business clusters are in place, and the local economy is diversified due to creative and constructive regional partnerships.
 - i) The City evaluates a theoretical annual 10% budget-cut as a means of identifying efficiencies and re-assessing all programs and projects.
 - j) Put as much of City-owned land back on the tax rolls as possible.
 - k) Determine appropriate/acceptable LOS when determining the millage rate.

2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING
 - a) An adequate supply of new and renovated well-designed, quality, affordable housing for low and middle-income residents of the City is evolving through increased public/private partnerships.
 - b) Developers and builders are providing new and rehabilitated housing through City incentives.

- c) The City works toward specific, measurable affordable housing targets with regional partners, making appropriate code changes and offering incentives.
- d) Public housing is renovated or replaced through partnerships between the City and HUD, HACS, Sarasota County and the private sector.
- e) Increase in Federal, State, and County partnerships and funding.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- a) New and expanded mixes of business occur Citywide, resulting in higher wage jobs.
- b) The quality, quantity, and wages of jobs in all areas of the City are increased.
- c) Desirable businesses have been added through incentives and opportunities created by public/private partnerships.
- d) Desirable developments are fostered and expedited through a streamlined regulatory process.
- e) A skilled labor force is in place resulting from a closer working relationship with local educational institutions.
- f) The City is making great strides in ensuring a livable wage and safe, affordable housing for all workers.
- g) The City is implementing the Downtown Master Plan and the Newtown Redevelopment Plan.
- h) A North Trail Plan encouraging mixed-use redevelopment and helping to link educational institutions with business incubation and support centers is adopted and implemented.
- i) A privately-owned conference facility exists within walking distance of a diversity of quality lodging establishments through City/County facilitation efforts.
- j) The private sector contributes to our Vision.
- k) The permitting process is faster, with staff dedicated to ensuring that the system is friendly and understandable to all applicants.
- l) A “fast track” service expedites the relocation of new businesses to the City, offering information on available development sites and buildings (including reuse opportunities), guidelines for TIF funds, and coordinated permit reviews.

4. NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

- a) The Community Forum focuses on citywide initiatives and concerns with increased participation of our citizens in developing and prioritizing City goals and objectives.
- b) The City's Neighborhood Department is widely-regarded as one of the best in Florida.
- c) Neighborhood associations prioritize both their neighborhood and city-wide desired goals and objectives.
- d) New opportunities for neighborhood participation in grant programs, capital improvement programs, zoning, etc. extend beyond the neighborhood action strategies included in the Neighborhood Action Strategy program.
- e) One-by-one, the City adopts and implements neighborhood action strategies for all neighborhoods.
- f) All neighborhoods have equal access to the City's resources.
- g) All streets are named and signed, providing local identity and reducing emergency response times.
- h) Neighborhood enhancement plans are adopted increasing the authority and responsibility of neighborhood associations to solve their own problems.

5. TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

- a) Broad multi-modal transportation programs are increasing the quality of life and the City's economic development.
- b) The City is collaborating with federal, state and regional partners on transit-related development and is meeting specific ridership targets.
- c) Traffic congestion management is successful, and access into the City hub is improved.
- d) The City excels at providing many convenient, pleasant and safe opportunities for walking, biking and using public transportation.
- e) A water taxi system and integrated land transit system links lodging establishments, tourist venues, the barrier islands and the downtown.
- f) A water and helicopter ambulance service is meeting the special needs of barrier island residents through the City's facilitation efforts.
- g) Pedestrian oriented access across major thoroughfares make walking and bicycling easier and safer.

6. CITY/STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT
 - a) The City's neighborhoods have opportunities to identify and prioritize neighborhood goals and objectives.
 - b) An effective City of Sarasota civic communication program is in place that promotes neighborhood distinctiveness while maintaining the larger picture of Sarasota's citywide needs and quality of life.
 - c) Neighborhood and condominium associations are always notified of City-initiated actions, land use policies and problems in their area.
 - d) Thousands of citizens attend the City's annual open houses engaging in a worthwhile participatory process.
 - e) The City is much-lauded for its innovative and successful website communication methods and the ongoing efforts of an information officer.
 - f) All citizens have easy and direct access to City government, and can reach dedicated liaison people who know the organization, facilitate helpful links and follow up on how well inquiries were handled.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEWTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
 - a) North Sarasota has vibrant commercial areas and new low- to moderate-income housing.

8. PUBLIC HOUSING REVITALIZATION
 - a) Janie Poe, Bertha Mitchell, and the Courts have been replaced with quality mixed income housing, while still preserving the residents right of return.

9. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
 - a) The water quality in Sarasota Bay is maintained and improved.
 - b) The beach renourishment program continues with enhancements.
 - c) There is an expanded tree canopy throughout the City through a strong street tree program, private contributions, landscaping and maintenance.
 - d) Air quality is improved through traffic congestion management and other innovative means.
 - e) Comprehensive, best-practice City policies ensure environmental protection and energy conservation and offer a model to our citizens.
 - f) Public education results in better tree replacement, better stormwater nutrient reduction, increased recycling, more Florida Yards, and more efficient irrigation.

- g) A new City staff position is accountable for overseeing all issues, projects and procedures as they relate to the natural environment.

10. POLICING PHILOSOPHY

- a) Policing is community-based, with an expanded Community Resource Team (CRT) program.
- b) Neighborhoods are served by service centers having police components.
- c) Officers on walking beats and bicycles are a common sight through a progressive community policing program.
- d) The police department is highly-regarded for having the best-educated, best-trained and best-paid officers around.
- e) Discriminatory profiling and behavior is virtually non-existent, and all complaints and crimes are addressed promptly and courteously.
- f) Traffic abatement is augmented through friendly warnings and ticketing.

11. CITY AS A CHALLENGING, FULFILLING EMPLOYER

- a) There is stable employment through the financial viability and sustainability of the city.
- b) The City is competitive in the areas of pay plans and benefits. It is named one of the top municipal employers in the nation. Employee benefits such as flex-time, day-care assistance and fee reimbursements for training, education and physical fitness efforts result in a workforce with high morale, motivation and productivity.
- c) Development programs as well as employee recognition programs have advanced staff careers and retention rates.

12. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- a) There are stricter requirements for preserving historic buildings and archeological sites by restoration, building relocation, tax credits and other incentives.
- b) The City and County have adopted the same ordinance and merge their process with control over City resources remaining with the City Commission.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION
 - a) A City trust fund ensures continuing implementation of the Parks & Connectivity Master Plan and the maintenance of public parks and public spaces is improved by using best-practices.
 - b) The maintenance of parks and open spaces reflects desired levels of service.
 - c) There is a park in every neighborhood.

14. ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY
 - a) The City remains a catalyst for the expansion of affordable and accessible arts, culture and entertainment.
 - b) Arts and cultural organizations that existed in 2003 remain today.
 - c) A new performing arts hall draws crowds.
 - d) An excellent Cultural District Master Plan is sparking the development of a diverse, inclusive and vibrant theater and arts culture in downtown Sarasota.
 - e) The public art program and art loan program have exceeded expectations: there is art and sculpture at the city's gateways, in virtually every park and public space and in major commercial and residential developments.

15. RECOGNIZING NEEDS OF BARRIER ISLANDS
 - a) The specific needs of the barrier island community are recognized and compared to the entire community in areas such as traffic, stormwater management, beach nourishment, hurricane preparedness, and other needs.
 - b) New policy, financing and planning initiatives ensure a high-quality of life for residents and protection of the barrier islands' natural environment.
 - c) There is a strategy in place that promotes hotel and motel growth rather than condominiums, resulting in increases in bed tax revenues.
 - d) New ways of financing barrier island improvements supplement the traditional tourist bed tax.

16. GATEWAY PLANNING
 - a) North Trail, South Trail, Fruitville Road, and US 301 offer improved entries to the City having high visual quality and a sense of arrival.
 - b) A guidelines program fosters excellent land use and development along the city's approaches and gateways.
 - c) Welcome signs link to the City-wide signage system, orienting visitors to points of interest.

17. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION
 - a) The City Commission meets regularly, constructively and productively on important issues with other regional governmental leaders in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
 - b) The City convenes an annual summit of all regional and local governmental entities in the area.
 - c) The City is a member of the Southwest Regional Planning Council.
 - d) Interlocal Agreements with Sarasota County are reassessed and evaluated regularly.
 - e) The Planning Board and other advisory boards regularly hold joint meetings to address common issues and share best-practices and policies.

18. AESTHETICS
 - a) An aesthetic image extends across the City through signage, landscaping, design guidelines, and a Smart code that ensures excellent architecture and urban design.
 - b) The City streets, alleys, parks, rights-of-way, and beautification projects are clean and well-maintained.
 - c) No capital improvement project is undertaken in the absence of adequate funds to maintain it.

19. FOSTERING RESIDENT/BUSINESS OWNER COLLABORATION
 - a) The residential neighborhoods and business community are partnering with each other for the benefit of the city.
 - b) Differing interest groups are communicating with each other in constructive ways, and working to develop common goals, objectives and ideas for resolving specific local problems.

20. CODE UPDATE PROGRAM
 - a) City codes are reviewed, evaluated and updated on a systematic and timely basis.

21. ANNEXATION
 - a) The City has explored potential annexation policies and their implications in advance of making any decisions.
 - b) The citizens are better informed of the advantages and disadvantages of annexation.