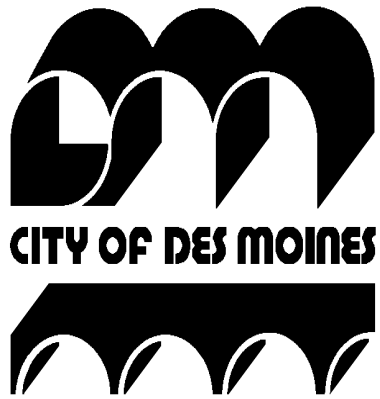


Today and
Tomorrow

A Citywide Strategic Plan

Adopted by City Council
Roll Call # 4610
December 18, 1995

1995



Safety - Bike Patrol Officer

Introduction pp 4-5

The introduction explains the importance and significance of the Citywide Strategic Document.

Contents



Local Business



Schools

The Vision pp 6-7

Before developing the Citywide Plan, the Citywide Strategic Planning Committee created a Statement of Vision as a way to guide and test the substance of the evolving strategic plan. The Vision also crystalized the Committee's hopes and dreams for the city.

The Priorities pp 8-19

There are eight goals that have been determined to be the highest priorities for the city by consensus of the Committee. The Committee identified an additional ten goals as being highly important priorities.

The Group I and Group II priorities need to be addressed before other goals if the city is to thrive and grow. The priorities address particular weaknesses and threats to the city, or they take advantage of the city's special or unique strengths and opportunities.



City Government

The Strategic Plan pp 20-73

This chapter includes the strategic plan in its entirety. A wide range of areas were discussed and analyzed by the Committee and organized by issue area. The Committee identified twelve issue areas and sixty-five goals that are important for the city.

Goals and strategic actions provide guidance to the future of the city government, the future prosperity of its citizens, and the future growth of the metropolitan area. Depending on circumstances, any individual goal may require attention and/ or investment.

The Process pp 74-79

The citizen-led Citywide Strategic Plan used standard strategic planning techniques with some unique twists developed specifically for Des Moines. This chapter explains in detail the process used by the Strategic Planning Committee from start to finish including identifying important topics, intensive subcommittee work, public meetings, crafting the Vision Statement, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and setting priorities.



Neighborhoods

Introduction

The Citywide Strategic Planning Committee members have spent the past year educating themselves in detail about the Des Moines situation in 1995 and planning for the preferred future of Des Moines. Strategic planning is a unique and absorbing experience. Many hours have been spent discussing future trends, analyzing existing conditions, evaluating city government services, and expressing hopes and dreams for the future.

This has been a year of invention and beginnings. If the process is successful, the plan will continue. As the plan is implemented it will become better, more refined, and more complete. Some of the strategies are new ideas that result from committee work and experience with staff, council members, and other board members. A few of the strategies, identified early in the planning process, are already in the beginning stages of implementation.

Individuals have different values. No one can expect this plan to please everyone. However, every strategic goal identified represents a significant level of interest by Committee members. The Committee members come from a wide variety of backgrounds and roles in

the community. All members have tried diligently to respect the spirit and greater good of the community in developing the plan and setting priorities. The result of this process is a plan of which the Committee members are collectively proud.

There have been no sacred cows in the planning process. All services and departmental roles were discussed. The Committee did not avoid politically sensitive or difficult issues. A credible plan demands no less.

As a policy document, *Des Moines Today and Tomorrow* does not detail specific projects either by name or location. A citywide plan is, by definition, inclusive in scope and broad in geography. Overall, the Committee's priorities reflect one common theme — to take care of and build upon what we have. The common goal is to protect, preserve, and promote Des Moines as a city of which we are proud.

The strategic plan suggests the relative importance of expenditures of scarce resources. The plan operates in a universe of financial responsibility but cannot truly be evaluated fiscally until the Council adopts the document as a policy statement, develops estimates of costs, and begins implementation. This is the first part of a two-part process. The Committee anticipates that the Council, City Manager, and staff will develop the policies into feasible, economically responsible, and timely actions that move the city in these directions. The Committee believes that this two-part process will engage joint efforts among City Council, staff, and the community.

It must be emphasized that the strategic plan is not a wish list. It is based on perceptions of pressing needs and investments that promise future rewards. Recommendations for developing strong fiscal resources are included in the high priority groups and, in fact, are an overriding theme of the plan. The strategies dealing with neighborhoods, maintenance, and economic development should result in increased revenues in the long run.

The Committee recommends that the citizen-led strategic planning process be continued on an annual basis. The Committee recommends that the continuing process be structured as a committee with overlapping terms of service.

Committee members have worked diligently to be informed, but not controlled, by city staff. Ideas have flowed freely and discussion evolved to prepare the strategic plan. Continuing a citizen-led strategic planning process will provide elected officials and staff with a continuing reality check.

The Vision

We aspire to be the city of choice for ourselves and future generations – beautiful, clean, and safe.

We will achieve our vision through a healthy economy, strong businesses, vital neighborhoods, excellent schools, a vibrant downtown, and extensive recreational and cultural opportunities.

We will preserve our city's friendly, hometown atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of its people.

We require innovative governance that is accessible, accountable, and efficient with a system of funding that is fair, affordable, and stable.

The Strategic Planning Committee members have listened carefully to community members and each other to develop and refine a shared vision for Des Moines' future. The intent of this vision is to provide guidance to the City Council, City Boards and Commissions, and City staff.

The entire Citywide Strategic Plan is a response to the Statement of Vision. Committee members developed strategic actions to move Des Moines toward the shared vision. The Vision Statement is a yardstick by which all current and future actions will be measured.

The Committee members hope the Vision expresses the dreams and beliefs of the community and inspires a sense of purpose for all citizens of Des Moines.



Priorities

Summary of Group I Priorities:

└ **GROUP I PRIORITY GOALS**

were identified because of their urgency and the sequence in which opportunities and threats must be addressed. The Group I priorities contain immediate, short term, and long term strategic actions for solving the financial problems of Des Moines. Several goals include intergovernmental cooperation as essential for the city's future. The city must focus on maintaining its infrastructure, promoting local businesses and neighborhood growth, rebuilding its schools, and seeking balanced fiscal prosperity throughout the metropolitan area. Residents need to be assured that city government functions efficiently.

Implicit in all goals, including the priority goals, is the improvement of the quality of life of all citizens.

- Diversify the city's revenue base.
- Support the adoption of a 1% local option sales tax, and allocate a portion of the revenue to the Des Moines Public Schools.
- Assure efficiency and economy in providing city services.
- Ensure sufficient funds are dedicated to maintenance and repair of the existing infrastructure.
- Prevent the loss of businesses and jobs to other cities within the metropolitan area.
- Promote the creation, growth, and retention of large and small businesses with long-term production capabilities and commitment to the community.
- Promote neighborhood revitalization.
- Enhance existing and establish new community policing partnerships that reduce crime and violence.

The order of presentation within Priority Group I Goals does not reflect importance.

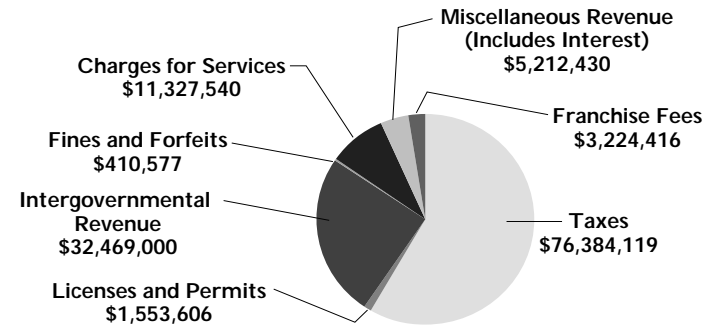
Priority

r Diversify the city's revenue base.

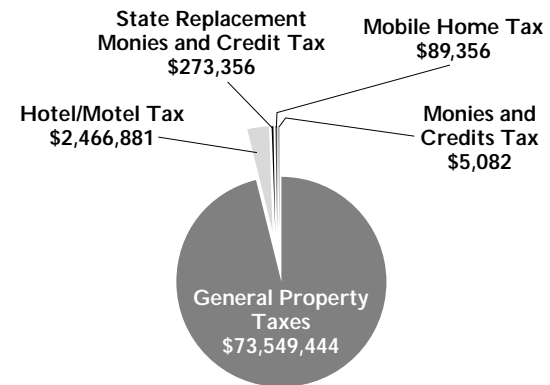
- a. Propose legislation to create a system of regional tax base sharing for new commercial and industrial property.
- b. Support the adoption of a 1% local option sales tax to lessen local dependence on property tax.
- c. Propose legislation to permit a county-wide levy to pay for costs of providing police and fire protection to tax-exempt property.

r Support the adoption of a 1% local option sales tax, and allocate a portion to the Des Moines Public Schools for infrastructure improvements.

Background



General Revenues by Source
FISCAL YEAR 1994



Tax Revenues by Source
FISCAL YEAR 1994

Source: City of Des Moines
Finance Department

Des Moines is overly dependent on the property tax. Over 96% of Des Moines' tax revenue is from the property tax. This has created problems as a result of low growth in the assessed valuation and changes in state property tax formulas.

Priority

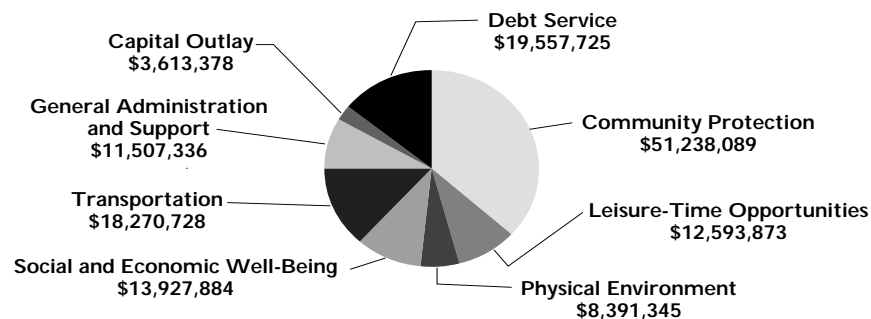
➤ Assure efficiency and economy in providing city services.

- Maintain existing infrastructure and buildings and establish reserves for new projects.
- Implement a zero-based budgeting system.
- Invest in technology systems that are efficient and cost-effective.
- Conduct and implement a Compensation Plan Study and include job descriptions that promote cross-training of duties.
- Evaluate both public and private sector delivery systems regularly to implement, over the long-term, the most efficient and cost-effective services.

➤ Ensure sufficient funds are dedicated to maintenance and repair of the existing infrastructure.

- Educate policymakers and residents on the importance of preserving and protecting the existing infrastructure.
- Improve neighborhood infrastructure as an incentive to preserve housing and stabilize neighborhoods.
- Improve the infrastructure of commercial areas and industrial parks as an incentive to retain and increase development in Des Moines.
- Establish a community volunteer program to assist in preserving and protecting infrastructure.
- Evaluate both public and private sector delivery systems regularly to implement, over the long-term, the most efficient and cost-effective maintenance and repair services.

Background



General Governmental Expenditures by Program
FISCAL YEAR 1994

Source: City of Des Moines
Finance Department

Over 1/3 of City expenditures are for community protection including Police and Fire. Debt service has become the second largest category of expenditure.



Source: City of Des Moines
Public Works Department

The City has deterred maintenance costs. The City's streets require regular routine maintenance. Current funding, however, does not provide for the recommended maintenance cycle. The constant deferral of maintenance on streets, as well as infrastructure, will ultimately result in more expensive replacement.

Priority

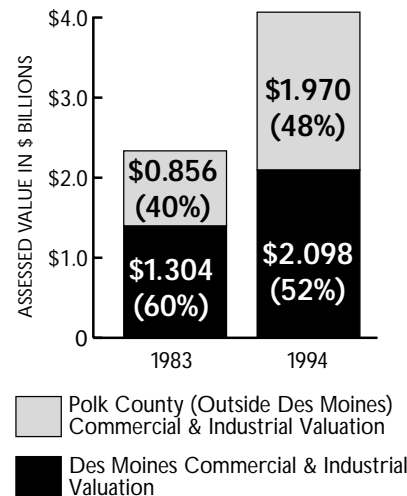
- f. Pursue joint efforts with other governmental units to economize in maintenance and replacement of infrastructure.
- g. Establish an ongoing evaluation process for identification of needed infrastructure maintenance and repair.

r Prevent the loss of businesses and jobs to other cities within the metropolitan area.

- a. Promote an environment in which metro area citizens recognize the importance of a vital downtown, strong central city neighborhoods, and healthy suburban areas.
- b. Pursue state legislation for major metropolitan areas that would restrict use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and tax abatement to areas with slum and blight conditions.
- c. Propose legislation to create a system of regional tax base sharing for new commercial and industrial property.

Background

Des Moines & Polk County Commercial & Industrial Assessed Valuation (\$ Billions) 1983 & 1994



Tax base growth is greater outside Des Moines. Des Moines accounted for 60% of area-wide industrial and commercial tax base in 1983, but only 42% of the growth in this tax base since 1983. By 1994, Des Moines accounted for only 52% of industrial and commercial tax base. A portion of metro growth is intra-metro shifts. Tax base sharing could stabilize the fiscal disparities among communities, helping all to benefit from regional growth.

Source: Assessed valuations are from City of Des Moines Assessor's Office and Polk County Assessor's Office

Priority

r *Promote the creation, growth, and retention of large and small local businesses with long-term production capabilities and commitment to the community.*

- a. Develop a coordinated citywide business assistance program (creation, retention, and expansion).
- b. Increase the supply of desirable and suitable ready-to-build sites for a variety of commercial, industrial, and residential uses.

r *Promote neighborhood revitalization.*

- a. Promote rehabilitation and reuse of older commercial areas through review and revision of zoning and building codes.
- b. Redevelop and rehabilitate slum and blighted areas and use available land more effectively.
- c. Coordinate public infrastructure improvements with economic development initiatives.
- d. Continue to improve housing as a means to promote neighborhood revitalization
 - i. Support the city's ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts by concentrating planning efforts, public and private lending funds, and site improvement resources in designated areas.
 - ii. Identify a dedicated stream of revenue for neighborhood revitalization and housing.
 - iii. Develop criteria for expending 25% of city and county housing bond funds, administered through the Neighborhood Finance Corporation, within Recognized Neighborhoods.

Background

Assessed Valuations

Two companies that have left Des Moines in the 1990s

Company	New Location	1995 Assessment
Tone Brothers, Inc.	Ankeny	\$8,989,970 with industrial exemption
Kirke Van Orsdel, Inc.	West Des Moines	\$25,104,040

Source: Assessed valuations are from Polk County Assessor's Office

Des Moines lost the added tax valuation when Kirke Van Orsdel and Tone Brothers moved out of the city.

City of Des Moines

Housing Prices within Designated Neighborhoods

% Increase from 1988-1995

	Citywide	Woodland Heights	ACCENT
Median Assessed Value	38%	43%	42%
Median Sales Value	27%	60%	25%

Source: Assessed valuations are from City of Des Moines Assessor's Office.

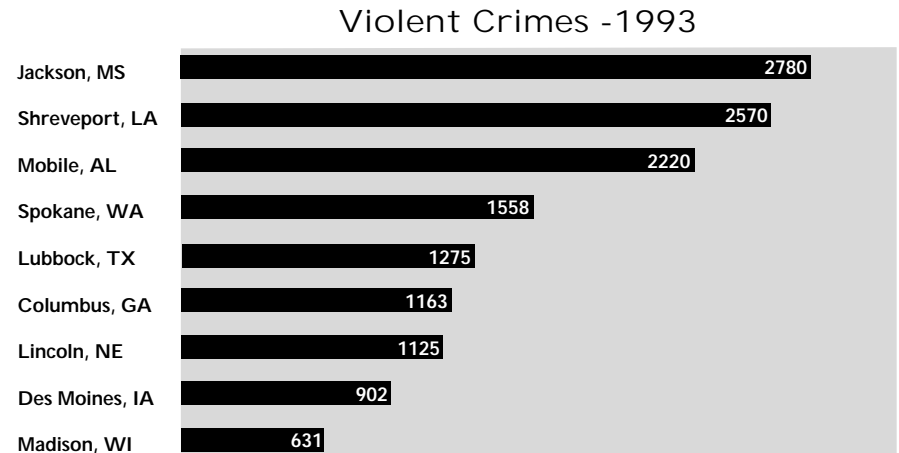
Neighborhood revitalization efforts work! The selling price and assessed value of homes within the designated neighborhoods have increased at a rate greater than the city as a whole. (Neighborhood boundaries are not exactly the same as the assessor district. Some did not become designated neighborhoods until the early 1990s.)

Priority

r Enhance existing and establish new community policing partnerships that reduce crime and violence.

- a. Work with community groups and individuals to determine where problems exist and establish priorities for limited resources.
- b. Continue to support partnership programs that build relationships between the police and citizens and provide effective and efficient services to all.
- c. Work with residents in targeted areas of the city to develop special programs that address the specific needs of their areas.
- d. Direct city departments to collaborate in solving community safety problems.
- e. Continue to work with the community to eliminate criminal gang activity.

Background



Crimes include homicide, robbery, rape, and aggravated assault. Numbers given are total number of reported crimes.

Source: Crime in the United States
1993 Federal Bureau of Investigation

Des Moines is a safe city. Des Moines' crime rate is lower than that of many cities. However, the perception of crime is a great problem in Des Moines. Police officers alone cannot solve the problem.

Priorities

Summary of Group II Priorities:

R GROUP II PRIORITY GOALS

are those that because of opportunity and necessity should be addressed in the very near future. The goals continue the priorities of intergovernmental cooperation, improving the city's financial health, and encouraging tax base growth in the city itself. The goals also address housing, parks, and transportation.

The goals identified as Priority II were developed to make the city stronger for all its citizens, including low and moderate income households.

- Seek changes in state policies that adversely affect the city's financial health.
- Lessen the financial impact of tax-exempt property on city tax rates.
- Support additional activities to increase tax base growth in the existing city limits.
- Pursue annexation opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- Develop a revenue source for replacing deteriorated infrastructure.
- Reinforce the downtown as a vibrant and vital center of commerce, culture, and community.
- Aggressively pursue housing renovation and the construction of new housing.
- Collaborate with the schools and other entities to provide opportunities for education, recreation, and support for youth during nonschool hours.
- Continue professional management of the parks while encouraging and making full use of volunteers.
- Promote the concept of balanced growth by developing a comprehensive highway system.

The order of presentation within Priority Group II Goals does not reflect importance.

Priority

R Seek changes in state policies that adversely affect the city's financial health.

- a. Demand ongoing full state funding of all state-mandated property tax credits (e.g. Homestead and Veteran's exemption).
- b. Propose legislation to eliminate the linking of residential property tax assessments to agricultural land values.
- c. Demand full state funding for all new state mandates.

R Lessen the financial impact of tax-exempt property on city tax rates.

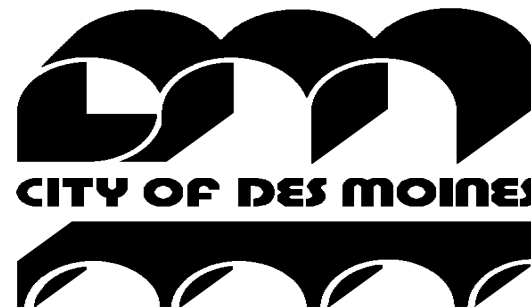
- a. Develop and implement a funding system by either Polk County or an independent metro-wide board for city-owned services and facilities which are regional in nature: Botanical Center, Convention Center, Veterans' Auditorium, Blank Park Zoo, and Department of Human Rights.
- b. Strongly encourage other cities to contribute, in proportional significance, to the operating expenses of cultural facilities that are regional in nature and nonprofit or not-for-profit such as the Science Center, Civic Center, and Art Center.
- c. Propose legislation to cause payment for police and fire protection to the city in which they are located for state- and county-owned property.
- d. Investigate other states' approaches to defining tax-exempt properties.

Background



Source: City of Des Moines Finance Department.

State policies have impacted Des Moines in a negative manner. The State of Iowa underpaid the City of Des Moines by over \$800,000 in property tax credits in 1995.



Source: Assessed valuations are from City of Des Moines Assessor's Office

The City of Des Moines spends a large amount of money providing fire and police services to the 12.5% of non-governmental property in Des Moines that is tax exempt. Much of this property serves the entire region. The Committee recommends this cost be spread at least throughout Polk County.

Priority

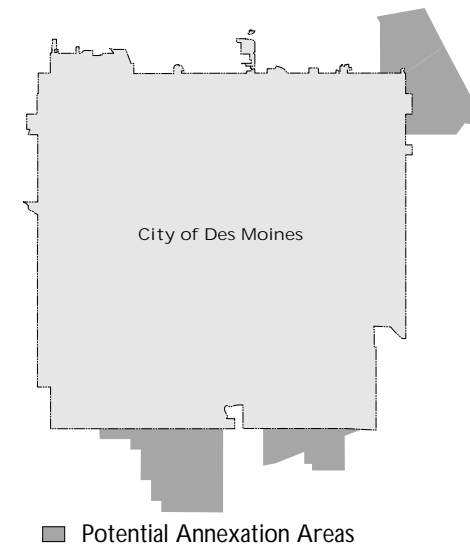
R Support additional activities to increase tax base growth in the existing city limits.

- a. Promote the development of the commercial and industrial park south of the airport.
- b. Promote neighborhood revitalization activities to expand the population of the city.
- c. Continue to provide tax abatement for renovation of existing housing and construction of new housing.
- d. Promote the downtown as a vibrant business location and residential area.
- e. Educate and request input from Des Moines citizens on community growth issues and decisions.

R Pursue annexation opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial development.

- a. Pursue annexation to the northeast, southeast, and south of the city.
- b. Improve the city's efforts to publicize the benefits of annexation.
- c. Develop a long range annexation plan.

Background



Priority

R *Develop a revenue source for replacing deteriorated infrastructure.*

- a. Allocate Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars for separation of storm and sanitary sewers within tax increment districts.
- b. Allocate a reasonable percentage of Capital Improvement Program (CIP) dollars for replacement of infrastructure.
- c. Allocate a portion of user fees for replacement of deteriorated infrastructure.
- d. Re-evaluate special assessment policies for infrastructure replacement with respect to equitable and special treatment.

R *Reinforce the downtown as a vibrant and vital center of commerce, culture, and community.*

- a. Promote the retention, growth, and creation of downtown businesses, both large and small, through marketing, economic development policies, and careful use of incentives.
- b. Develop and promote downtown neighborhoods on both sides of the rivers, as well as north and south of the commercial areas, as viable and pleasant places to reside.
- c. Assure that citizens perceive the downtown as a safe and attractive place to work, live, and play.
- d. Assure that the infrastructure of the downtown area is clean and well-maintained.
- e. Assure the continuing problem of availability and cost of parking is met innovatively and competitively.
- f. Establish a system of education and lifelong learning opportunities convenient to the downtown area.

Background

A user fee is one equitable and reliable source of funds for infrastructure improvement in which all property owners contribute according to their use. All tax-exempt properties are billed and expected to pay the utility charge. The City of Des Moines has recently implemented a storm water utility charge that is based on impervious land area.



Priority

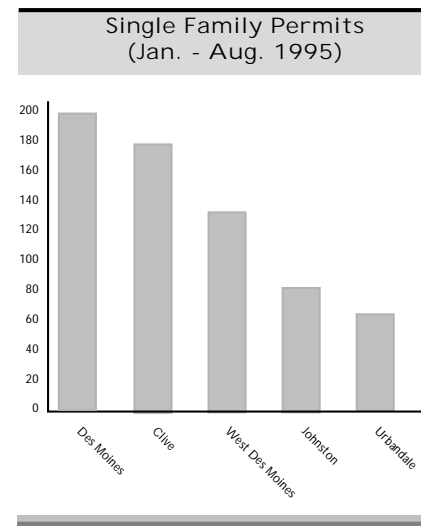
R Aggressively pursue housing renovation and the construction of new housing.

- a. Continue to provide tax abatement for renovation of existing housing and construction of new housing.
- b. Expand methods to encourage home improvement and maintenance, especially within the older areas of the city.
- c. Pursue planned annexation as a means to provide additional housing development sites.
- d. Establish a program for limited subsidies for new owner-occupied housing in infill sites where the cost of construction exceeds the appraised value.

R Collaborate with the schools and other entities to provide opportunities for education, recreation, and support for youth during nonschool hours.

- a. Tap youth as a resource for volunteer work in the community.
- b. Work to nurture youth skills through educational and government opportunities.
- c. Coordinate activities among schools, libraries, Parks and Recreation, and the cultural community to provide appropriate recreational and educational activities and optimize the use of facilities.

Background



Source: *Blueprint Magazine*
October, 1995

Des Moines has been successful in achieving a share of new housing starts in the metropolitan community. Since January of 1995 more permits have been issued in Des Moines than any other single city in Polk County. The combined total of the western suburbs (including Clive, Johnston, West Des Moines, and Urbandale), however, is 452 single family permits.

Looking at the glass as half full — the City of Des Moines is more successful than any individual suburb at attracting housing. Looking at the glass as half empty — the combined suburbs have more permits by a rate of two to one.

The Committee members value the young people in the community and believe they should be involved fully in community affairs. The city, the schools, the religious community, or the private sector can not individually provide for the needs of our youth. The Committee calls for collaborative efforts that use existing facilities to provide a more coordinated approach to providing youth services. A volunteer coordinator would help in using youth for volunteer opportunities.

Priority

R Continue professional management of the parks while encouraging and making full use of volunteers.

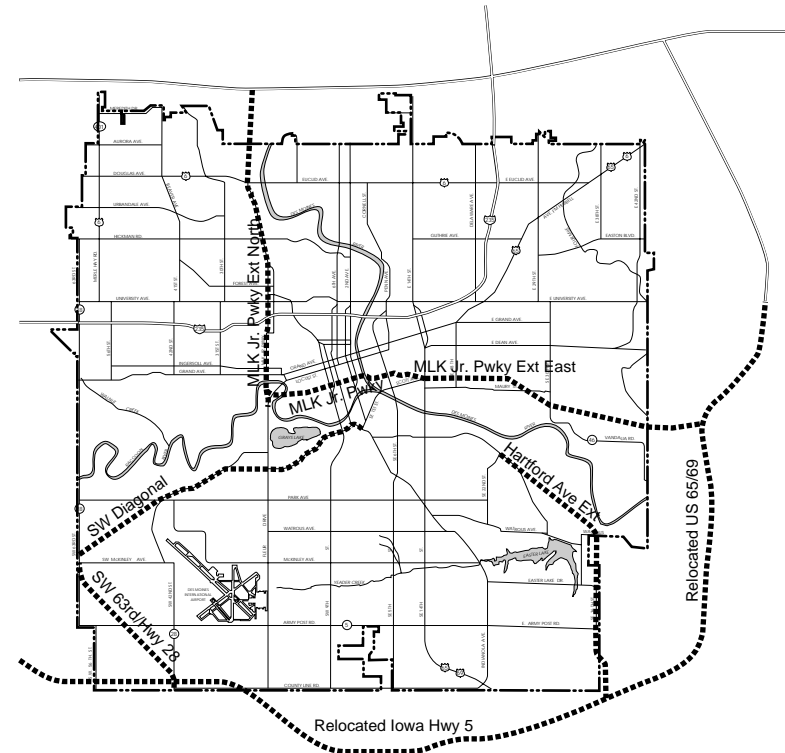
- a. Establish a professional volunteer coordinator position(s).
- b. Promote a “Corps of Volunteers” for each neighborhood park and other municipal grounds.
- c. Collaborate with the Police Department to enhance safety and security.

R Promote the concept of balanced growth by developing a comprehensive highway system.

- a. Complete the beltway around Des Moines by promoting the completion of relocated Highway 65/69 on the northeast and relocated Highway 5 on the south.
- b. Develop an arterial system throughout Des Moines
 - i. Continue efforts to complete Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to continue its extensions to the north to connect to I-35/80 and to the east to connect to relocated US 65.
 - ii. Develop the concept, preserve the right-of-way, and complete the southwest diagonal.
 - iii. Develop the concept for and complete the extension of Hartford Avenue to the east and south to provide for growth to that recently annexed part of the city.
- c. Support the Des Moines City Council position for the expansion of I-235 which seeks a balance of safety, conservation of neighborhoods, function, and beauty.

Background

Expanding citizen involvement through community volunteerism is one of the most cost effective measures the city can implement. A professional volunteer coordinator could begin to involve people in their neighborhood park, library, or other city owned facilities. Volunteers can also accomplish much needed work and activities.



Source: Metropolitan Planning Organization

Strategic Plan

Each of the goals and strategic actions included in the Strategic Plan is important, broad, and far-reaching. The Committee members believed it was their assignment to consider and develop goals and strategies for all aspects of the community.

Members recognize most of the sixty-five goals and 194 strategic actions cannot be implemented immediately; rather, the Committee has asked for focused effort on those goals and strategic actions identified as priorities.

The issue areas and goals work with the Vision Statement included on page 6. The Vision Statement reflects our values; the goals and strategic actions implement those values.

For example, there is no specific issue area on diversity. The Vision Statement does refer to celebrating the diversity of the residents of Des Moines. This value is included in all the strategic actions, and those actions are not limited to one issue area.

Issue Areas :

- Financial
- Economic Development
- Growth
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Housing
- Downtown
- Education
- Parks, Recreation, and Culture
- Transportation
- Governance

The order of presentation of issue areas does not reflect relative importance.

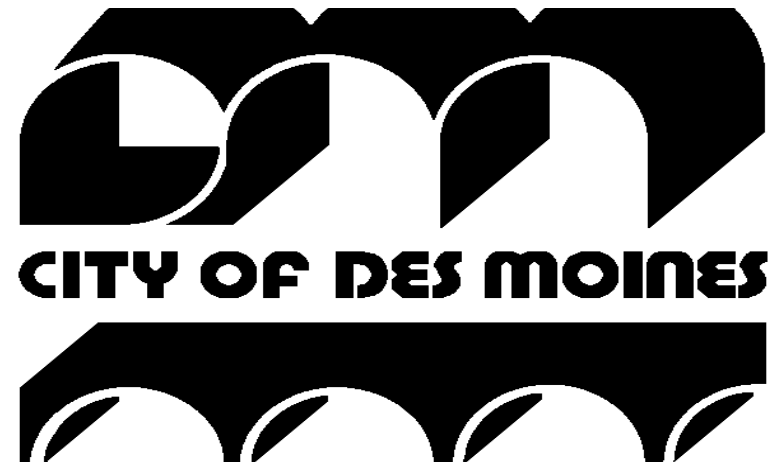
The Committee has developed goals and strategic actions for each of the 12 issue areas. No issue area exists in isolation, and overlap between issue areas does occur. Strategic actions within one topical area complement actions in other issue areas. The Committee chose on a few occasions to repeat a strategic action in more than one issue area to emphasize its importance to that overall strategy.

Panel at November Congress of Boards

The Committee chose to organize the strategic plan into twelve issue areas or categories for ease of understanding and to reflect its methodology. Some goals within issue areas may necessarily be more feasible, timely, catalytic, or affordable than others. Together the issue areas and goals represent a significant commitment of resources and an important investment in our future.

I Indicates a Group I Priority.

R Indicates a Group II Priority.



Speaker at November Congress of Boards



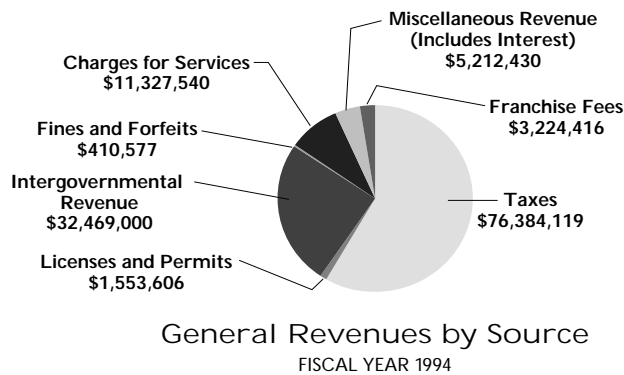
FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Develop and maintain responsible fiscal policies and practices that achieve fiscal stability while maintaining competitive tax rates and services.

The City of Des Moines faces an unstable future unless major financial problems are addressed. Prosperity surrounds Des Moines because of growth in residential, commercial, and industrial values in the four western suburbs of West Des Moines, Johnston, Urbandale, and Clive. Polk County's financial status has improved in the short-term because of money from the Prairie Meadows Race Track and Casino. Des Moines has problems for several reasons, especially a stagnant property tax base and state laws that require most city functions to be financed by the property tax.

All cities in Iowa, including Des Moines, must recognize the fiscal realities of city government operation. There are eight factors, uncontrolled by city government or city voters, that affect the future of Des Moines finances.

- The Iowa Constitution limits bonded debt to 5% of the value of the taxable property within the incorporation limits. The total bonded debt level has increased in Des Moines during the 1980s as necessary projects were financed by bond issues.
- There are limits on property tax levies for the general fund and specific funds under Iowa law. Des Moines is very close to existing levy limits.
- There is great uncertainty about what the U.S. Congress will do in continuing funding for a variety of programs operated by the city.



- The impact of the changes in the Machinery and Equipment tax is unknown.
- There is a need for legislative action or voter approval, or both, to implement many of the fiscal priorities that are proposed in this plan.
- The trends in property values, population, and concentration of tax-exempt and government property in Des Moines, compared with other cities in the area, have resulted in disparities in tax rates and services that cause people to leave Des Moines.
- The boundaries of the Des Moines Independent School District are almost the same as those of the city. The School District must rely on the same property tax base as the city. The needs of the schools are also great.
- Many tax-exempt and cultural facilities to which Des Moines provides funds are regional in nature. Des Moines taxpayers carry most of the burden for these regional benefits.

The Committee examined a large number of funding options and limited its recommendations to those that have the best chance of success. Revenue sources such as a wheel tax and local income tax were determined to have negative impacts on the city and are not likely to receive voter approval.

The Committee emphasizes that many of the solutions are long-term. There is no short-term fix for city financial problems. A 1% local option sales tax, if approved, would infuse needed monies for tax relief, school infrastructure, and city operations. If no other strategies are implemented, however, the tax disparity between Des Moines and the suburbs would actually increase with a local option sales tax. Efforts to obtain needed legislation for regional tax base sharing should begin at the same time as active support for the sales tax.

The expenditure side of city government is as important as producing additional revenue streams. Strategies for operating city government efficiently and effectively have also been developed. The Committee believes the city is generally well managed by devoted employees. Making certain that all avenues to ensure efficiency are pursued is of paramount importance.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
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1 *Diversify the city's revenue base.*

- 1a. Propose legislation to create a system of regional tax base sharing for new commercial and industrial property.
- 1b. Support the adoption of a 1% local option sales tax to lessen local government dependence on property tax.
- 1c. Propose legislation to permit a county-wide levy to pay for costs of providing police and fire protection to tax-exempt property.

The idea underlying tax base sharing is that cities should share the benefits of growing development reflecting a region-wide economy and public investments, such as highways, that tend to attract commercial-industrial development. Tax base sharing also complements ideas of regional planning objectives including viewing the cities, school districts, and rural Polk County as healthy, fiscally sound areas.

Des Moines could net several million dollars annually after approximately ten years if a tax base sharing plan was implemented. Other taxing entities, such as the Des Moines Independent School District, would also net additional funds. This figure would increase annually as the region continues to grow economically.

The following table illustrates a simplified concept of tax base sharing with many unknowns. Many factors might contribute to the distribution formula, including population and per-capita market value of property. The base year for determining when sharing would begin is also unknown. Depending on factors chosen, Des Moines' share might increase or decrease dramatically.

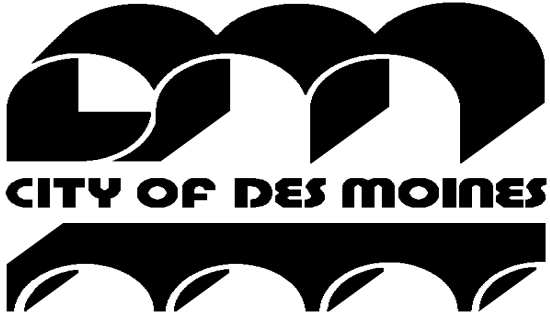


[Figure of \$2,240,000 uses the 1983 60%/40% industrial/commercial split as a distribution formula, see page 11. Also assumes taxing entities throughout Polk County contribute 40% of the commercial-industrial tax base growth since 1983 to a shared pool. Uses \$16.00 per \$1,000 as tax rate.]

Source: Assessed valuations are from Polk County Assessor and City of Des Moines Assessor.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<i>2 Assure efficiency and economy in providing city services.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2a. Maintain existing infrastructure and buildings and establish reserves for new projects.2b. Implement a zero-based budgeting system.2c. Invest in technology systems that are efficient and cost-effective.2d. Conduct and implement a Compensation Plan Study and include job descriptions that promote cross-training of duties.2e. Evaluate both public and private sector delivery systems regularly to implement, over the long-term, the most efficient and cost-effective services.	<p>In zero-based budgeting, every ongoing program and activity must be justified from the bottom up each year. A program that has been funded in the past will not necessarily be funded in the future; its value cannot be taken for granted. The Committee felt constant re-evaluation of programs and services is needed to become the competitive city of choice.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>3 <i>Lessen the financial impact of tax-exempt property on city tax rates.</i> R</p>	<p>3a. Develop and implement a funding system by either Polk County or an independent metro-wide board for city-owned services and facilities which are regional in nature: Botanical Center, Convention Center, Veterans' Auditorium, Blank Park Zoo, and Department of Human Rights.</p> <p>3b. Strongly encourage other cities to contribute, in proportional significance, to the operating expenses of cultural facilities that are regional in nature and nonprofit or not-for-profit such as the Science Center, Civic Center, and Art Center.</p> <p>3c. Investigate other states' approaches to defining tax-exempt properties.</p> <p>3d. Propose legislation to cause payment for police and fire protection to the city in which they are located for state- and county-owned property.</p>	 <p>The City of Des Moines spends a large amount of money providing fire and police services to the 12.5% of non-governmental property in Des Moines that is tax-exempt. Much of this property serves the entire region. The Committee recommends this cost be spread at least throughout Polk County.</p> <p>Source: Assessed valuations from the City of Des Moines Assessor's Office.</p>

FINANCIAL STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
4 <i>Seek changes in state policies that are currently adversely affecting the city's financial health.</i> ^R	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4a. Demand ongoing full state funding of all state-mandated property tax credits (e.g. Homestead and Veteran's exemption).4b. Propose legislation to eliminate the linking of residential property tax assessments to agricultural land values.4c. Demand full state funding for all new state mandates.	<p>In recent years, the State has not paid the full value of all state-mandated property tax credits. In order to balance the state budget, for example, the Homestead Credit has been funded at less than 80% of full value. Anything less than full funding by the state results in an unfunded mandate. Local property taxpayers are left with the paradox of funding property tax credits with property taxes. [See Summary of Property Tax Payments table on page 15.]</p> <p>Since 1986, State-ordered rollbacks have been applied to Residential Class Property and have been linked to agricultural values. This has accelerated the shift in the tax burden from residential to commercial properties. It has also made it increasingly difficult for cities to budget. While there have been significant increases in property values in Des Moines in 1994-95, agricultural valuations in the state decreased slightly. The actual amount of money received from property tax will therefore decline. Although the committee believes taxes should be as low as possible on all classes of property, the committee could not conceive of a logical connection between residential property in urban areas and agricultural values.</p>

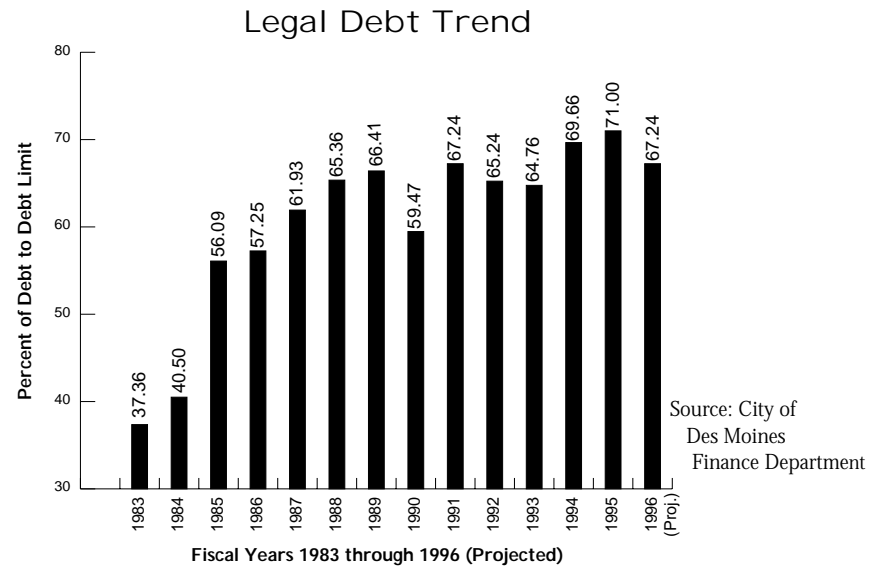
Goal

5 *Lessen the cost of debt financing and recapture and preserve top bond ratings for the city.*

Strategic Actions

5. Develop a bonded debt management plan for debt retirement and issuance.

Rationale



6 *Assure fairness in assessment policies.*

6a. Investigate fairness in property tax assessments between newly sold property and that of long-term ownership.

6b. Conduct a metro-wide study of the effect of tax abatement and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) on commercial and residential development.

Properties that are sold may have their tax valuations increase more quickly than those in long-term ownership. The Committee would like to ensure that all property owners are treated equally and fairly.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sustain a healthy and vibrant business and industrial community that promotes the entrepreneurial spirit, fosters sustainable growth, and increases employment opportunities.

The health and growth of Des Moines is related directly to its economic development. Des Moines has withstood many of the farm related recessions and industrial slowdowns that have hit Iowa hard because of its high reliance on insurance and financial jobs. This high reliance makes the city vulnerable to other recessions, however, and also provides limited choices to the work force.

Manufacturing has been and remains a key element of Des Moines' economic base. Unfortunately, industries have closed in Des Moines due to the age of facilities, manufacturing costs, and natural disasters. This has caused a loss of jobs and tax base. Some have reopened within the metropolitan area. In 1983, the taxable value of industrial property in Des Moines was \$123,497,000. By 1995, that value was \$138,161,000, an increase of only 12%. If inflation is taken into account, the taxable value on industrial property has actually declined.

Des Moines' Downtown remains a center for insurance and finance companies. Retail development has remained strong in Des Moines, particularly on the South side, but developers have failed to recognize the buying power of that portion of the City that is east of the Des Moines River. Major retail growth in Polk County has also occurred in the four western suburbs of Clive, Urbandale, West Des Moines, and Johnston.

The Committee discussed the need for continued efforts to encourage downtown development, as well as the need for a broader effort to retain and build local commercial businesses throughout the city. Neighborhood and local commercial efforts are a key part of the city's economic development and should be emphasized. Building on the base of existing industries and commercial properties is viewed as extremely important.

Committee members emphasized the need for cooperative efforts between city government and neighborhood organizations in economic development efforts. All citizens need to be aware of what is happening within their community. This proactive approach ensures that citizens have a say in what comes into their neighborhood, will welcome the business, and make it successful. It also ensures city government knows the types of business to pursue for neighborhood buildings or sites.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Promote the creation, growth, and retention of large and small local businesses with long-term production capabilities and commitment to the community.</i></p>	<p>1a. Develop a coordinated citywide business assistance program (creation, retention, and expansion).</p> <p>1b. Increase the supply of desirable and suitable ready-to-build sites for a variety of commercial, industrial, and residential uses.</p>	<p>The City of Des Moines needs to send a signal to the entire community that high quality development, committed to the community, is welcome in its downtown, business and industrial parks, and neighborhoods. This strategy and its action steps may require an inventory of publicly and privately owned sites, and acquisition of sites for resale. Greater communication among City Council members, Office of Economic Development staff, realtors, neighborhood residents, business owners, and developers to discuss the overall business climate and specific needs is also a prerequisite to success.</p>
<p>2 <i>Promote neighborhood revitalization.</i></p>	<p>2a. Promote rehabilitation and reuse of older commercial areas through review and revision of zoning and building codes.</p> <p>2b. Redevelop and rehabilitate slum and blighted areas and use available land more effectively.</p> <p>2c. Coordinate public infrastructure improvements with economic development initiatives.</p>	<p>The Citywide Committee expressed concern over zoning or building ordinances that do not promote retention of existing buildings. Zoning and building ordinances should be reviewed and modified as appropriate to encourage rehabilitation, promote public safety, and recognize the importance of neighborhoods' architectural and natural character.</p>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale									
<p>3 <i>Prevent the loss of businesses and jobs to other cities within the metropolitan area.</i></p>	<p>3a. Promote an environment in which metro area citizens recognize the importance of a vital downtown, strong central city neighborhoods, and healthy suburban areas.</p> <p>3b. Pursue state legislation for major metropolitan areas that would restrict use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and tax abatement to areas with slum and blight conditions.</p> <p>3c. Propose legislation to create a system of regional tax base sharing for new commercial and industrial property.</p>	<p>Assessed Valuations Two Companies that have left Des Moines in the 1990s</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1079 410 1709 574"> <thead> <tr> <th>Company</th> <th>New Location</th> <th>1995 Assessment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tone Brothers, Inc.</td> <td>Ankeny</td> <td>\$8,989,970 with industrial exemption</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kirke Van Orsdel, Inc.</td> <td>West Des Moines</td> <td>\$25,104,040</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Assessed valuations are from Polk County Assessor's Office.</p> <p>To illustrate the fiscal impact, two companies that have closed in Des Moines and opened new facilities in other metropolitan cities are Kirke Van Orsdel and Tone Brothers, Inc. The Tone site is currently occupied by another company, and other companies have moved into the buildings previously occupied by KVI.</p>	Company	New Location	1995 Assessment	Tone Brothers, Inc.	Ankeny	\$8,989,970 with industrial exemption	Kirke Van Orsdel, Inc.	West Des Moines	\$25,104,040
Company	New Location	1995 Assessment									
Tone Brothers, Inc.	Ankeny	\$8,989,970 with industrial exemption									
Kirke Van Orsdel, Inc.	West Des Moines	\$25,104,040									
<p>4 <i>Market the City of Des Moines and its geographical benefits aggressively to business and industry.</i></p>	<p>4a. Create an entity to market the City of Des Moines exclusively, including downtown, industrial parks, and neighborhoods, to new, expanding, and relocating businesses.</p> <p>4b. Promote new businesses which complement existing business, industry, and local resources.</p> <p>4c. Encourage a proactive, user-friendly attitude among city staff members involved in review and approvals of new development and expansion.</p> <p>4d. Market the excellent education systems available in the community.</p>	<p>The City of Des Moines' Office of Economic Development (OED) is established as an implementing agency; marketing remains the responsibility of the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. The Citywide Committee believes this is not effective because the Chamber markets the entire metro area rather than just the City of Des Moines. A new or reconfigured entity needs to take the responsibility to market the City of Des Moines.</p>									

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>5 <i>Diversify the city's economic base and create high quality jobs for a well-trained work force.</i></p>	<p>5a. Create a business attraction strategy that targets business and industry with well paying jobs which are suited for long-term growth in Des Moines.</p> <p>5b. Establish an efficient and effective government assistance program to encourage and maximize private investment and promote the entrepreneurial spirit.</p> <p>5c. Establish a business development strategy that includes nontraditional economic development opportunities such as tourism and a variety of special events and attractions.</p>	<p>The thirteen major not-for-profit cultural attractions within the City of Des Moines service 1.5 million visitors annually. It is estimated the economic impact of these attractions is \$35 million. Additional festivals and tournaments, such as the Junior Olympics in 1995, further enhance the economic development impact.</p>
<p>6 <i>Implement a metro-wide strategy to expand the available labor force to support existing and new jobs.</i></p>	<p>6a. Improve metropolitan transit services and facilities to ensure the ability of all residents to access job opportunities efficiently and economically.</p> <p>6b. Develop proactive programs that link the business sector and the metropolitan area educational systems to develop labor force skills that are needed to support existing and future job growth.</p> <p>6c. Develop a metro-wide strategy to ensure residents access to high-quality, safe, and affordable child care by acquiring needed funding and coordinating with area employers, schools and child care organizations, facilities, and providers.</p>	<p>Labor shortages are already a problem for attracting and retaining very large employers in Des Moines and central Iowa. It is truly a metropolitan problem on which intergovernmental cooperation is needed. Although a very important problem, it is a long-range problem that can not be solved by the strategic plan in the near future. As such, it was not identified as a Group I or Group II priority. If other goals are implemented, Des Moines should attract additional population and a larger labor pool.</p>



GROWTH STRATEGY

Promote balanced growth and expansion of the tax base.

Growth relates closely to all other areas in the plan. Growth goes hand in hand with transportation. Economic Development strategies are essential for growth. Growth relates closely to housing and neighborhood revitalization. Intergovernmental cooperation is imperative to have a positive impact on Des Moines and the entire metropolitan area.

Des Moines reached its peak population of 208,000 in 1960. After declining in population during the 1970s and 1980s, Des Moines' population stabilized in the 1980s and has continued to increase in the early 1990s according to census estimates. Polk County's population has grown throughout this time period, 6% during the 1970s and almost 8% during the 1980s. The growth in the metropolitan area has been mostly to the west during those decades.

The City's boundaries were established by an act of the Iowa General Assembly in 1890. Des Moines has had only two major annexations since that time: the Bloomfield annexation in the mid 1950s and the southeast and southwest annexations in the late 1980s. Before the annexations of the 1980s, Des Moines was out of land to develop for new growth. Much of the land that existed within the city was scattered in sites that were hard to assemble, had no sewers, or had environmental problems.

The Citywide Committee has devoted many hours to developing strategies to increase growth within the existing city limits and to increase Des Moines' land area through annexation. The photographs on this page are examples of housing and business growth that is currently ongoing.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Pursue annexation opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial development.</i>^R</p>	<p>1a. Pursue annexation to the northeast, southeast and south of the city.</p> <p>1b. Improve the city's efforts to publicize the benefits of annexation.</p> <p>1c. Develop a long range annexation plan.</p>	<p>An annexation plan should consider today, tomorrow, and several years to the future. The plan should consider both fiscal costs and benefits and other community needs and objectives.</p>
<p>2 <i>Support additional activities to increase tax base growth in the existing city limits.</i>^R</p>	<p>2a. Promote the development of the commercial and industrial park south of the airport.</p> <p>2b. Promote neighborhood revitalization activities to expand the population of the city.</p> <p>2c. Continue to provide tax abatement for renovation of existing housing and construction of new housing.</p> <p>2d. Promote the downtown as a vibrant business location and residential area.</p> <p>2e. Educate and request input from Des Moines citizens on community growth issues and decisions.</p>	<p>The City has provided resources to develop industrial parks in order to attract and to retain businesses.</p>



INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Implement a policy of timely maintenance of publicly-owned buildings and infrastructure to protect the city's substantial investment. Develop attractive infrastructure projects that promote new growth in residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Most older cities are reaching the end of the design life on their publicly owned infrastructure. Des Moines is no exception. Failure to extend the useful life of infrastructure facilities through timely preventive maintenance has resulted in the need for more costly replacement. The practice of postponing maintenance has continued to the present.

In general, the Citywide Committee has defined infrastructure as including streets, curbs, sidewalks, sewers, bridges, and city-owned buildings. Basic facilities included in Des Moines' infrastructure are 810 miles of streets, 44 major bridges, 724 miles of sanitary sewers, 251 miles of storm sewers, and 700 miles of sidewalks. Along with the airport, City buildings, and parks, Des Moines' infrastructure has a current-day replacement value of over \$2.4 billion. A system of this size requires timely maintenance to ensure maximum design life.

Annual Street Maintenance Requirements

Street Type	Type of Maintenance	Recommended Miles	Current Miles	Deferred Miles
Portland cement concrete (PCC)	Routine	35	30	5
	Reconstruction	175	2	155
	Replacement	7	1	6
PCC with asphalt overlay	Routine	31	24	7
	Reconstruction	16	63	97

Source: City of Des Moines
Public Works Department.

Many of the city's infrastructure facilities have exceeded their design life and are approaching 100 years of age. For this reason, much of the city's infrastructure will need major rehabilitation or replacement within the next decade or two. Example: there are approximately 13 miles of combined storm and sanitary sewers constructed of brick or segmented clay pipe which are now in need of relining or replacement. Although the brick in these sewers may remain stable for a long period of time, the mortar has deteriorated and excessive flows may cause a collapse at any time. Therefore, preventive maintenance is required.

To promote economic development and provide competitive services, the city needs to construct new, as well as maintain the existing, facilities. Examples of new facilities that need to be funded are the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and major improvements to the city's stormwater drainage facilities. In addition to function, citizens expect new infrastructure to contribute aesthetically to the community. Adding aesthetic features to a bridge or expressway is a necessity for the community but does add to the costs.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Ensure sufficient funds are dedicated to maintenance and repair of the existing infrastructure.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Educate policy makers and residents on the importance of preserving and protecting the existing infrastructure. 1b. Improve neighborhood infrastructure as an incentive to preserve housing and stabilize neighborhoods. 1c. Improve the infrastructure of commercial areas and industrial parks as an incentive to retain and increase development in Des Moines. 1d. Establish a community volunteer program to assist in preserving and protecting infrastructure. 1e. Evaluate both public and private sector delivery systems regularly to implement, over the long-term, the most efficient and cost-effective maintenance and repair services. 1f. Pursue joint efforts with other governmental units to economize in maintenance and replacement of infrastructure. 1g. Establish an ongoing evaluation process for identification of needed infrastructure maintenance and repair. 	<p>Over the long run timely maintenance of the existing infrastructure is a cost-effective means of extending its useful design life and encourages pride in the city, neighborhood stabilization, and economic development. The table on the previous page illustrates the extent of deferred maintenance in the city's street system. Deferred maintenance is defined as "the delayed repairs and upkeep that would be required to restore an asset to its normal operating capacity."</p> <p>The city's 200 miles of high-use arterial and collector streets require regular routine maintenance. Current funding, however, only provides for the resurfacing of 7.7 miles of the 200 miles per year. This constitutes a preventive maintenance cycle of once every 26 years. To achieve a more reasonable twenty-year maintenance cycle, the number of miles resurfaced per year should be increased by up to 30% with a corresponding increase in funding.</p>

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>2 <i>Develop a revenue source for replacing deteriorated infrastructure.</i>^R</p>	<p>2a. Allocate Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars for separation of storm and sanitary sewers within tax increment districts.</p> <p>2b. Allocate a reasonable percentage of Capital Improvement Program (CIP) dollars for replacement of infrastructure.</p> <p>2c. Allocate a portion of user fees for replacement of deteriorated infrastructure.</p> <p>2d. Re-evaluate special assessment policies for infrastructure replacement with respect to equitable and consistent treatment.</p>	<p>The older part of the city has a major problem with a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. This system has deteriorated and struggles to accommodate increased flows following heavy rainfall. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is one source of funding that could be used within the Tax Increment Finance Districts to separate storm and sanitary sewers. TIF dollars are in demand for many projects in the downtown, but the existing infrastructure, including the combined sewer system, needs to be given priority to ensure continued prosperity in Des Moines.</p>
<p>3 <i>Establish a system of reserves for new public infrastructure projects that will serve to fund ongoing maintenance and repair of those projects.</i></p>		<p>The Committee urges the city to learn from past deferred maintenance mistakes. When beginning a new capital project, costs and maintenance systems should be considered in the planning stages.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
4 <i>Commit sufficient funds to retrofit city facilities for accessibility for disabled persons.</i>	4. Determine the most effective and economic way to adapt buildings, parking areas, parks, and playgrounds for accessibility.	The city abides by guidelines for accessibility to buildings and facilities by individuals with disabilities under the American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. These guidelines are to be applied during the design, construction, and alteration of buildings and facilities covered by Titles II and III of the ADA to the extent required by regulations issued by Federal agencies, including the Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation, under the ADA.



PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY

Enhance the safety and security of all Des Moines residents and visitors by providing a high quality of police and fire protection in all areas of the city.

Public Safety is uppermost in everyone's mind and is an important service provided by the City of Des Moines. Perception of crime within Des Moines is often a greater problem than actual crime. Newspapers and television reporters flock to crime scenes, thereby projecting the image that the City of Des Moines is overrun with drive-by shootings, drugs, and property crime. This crime perception is damaging to all other aspects of the community. Positive marketing efforts have to be made to correct Des Moines' image in the neighborhoods and schools.

The overall incidence of reported crime has been declining slightly in Des Moines, but the demand for police service has been increasing dramatically. There has been a 43% increase in those trips that require an immediate response from a police officer between 1989 and 1995. Part of this increase is due to the trust that the police department has established with the neighborhoods.

The Citywide Committee did not believe it was within its purview to analyze and determine whether there is an adequate number of police on the streets. The Committee examined ways in which police could work with other city departments and citizens to prevent crime from occurring. It also explored how physical improvements within neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations could play a role in reducing crime without adding to the police force. Lastly, the committee hoped to increase the visibility of the police through community programs such as PAL or DARE and to make the city so attractive that police officers will decide to live within the city.

Adequate police protection for all members of the community was continually emphasized in Committee discussion. Police officers and the entire community need to do more to build partnerships in areas of the city where violent and drug related crime are higher. The Police Department shall continue to provide service to all people in Des Moines in a professional and impartial manner.

The Des Moines Police Department uses a system known as community policing that emphasizes

- Community participation is crucial in the identifying and solving of public safety problems.
- The ownership/responsibility for violence in the community is with the citizens of the community.
- Society cannot accept unlawful behavior.
- All must determine how limited resources should be used to meet the increased demand of police service.

The professional fire and emergency services provided by the city are a strength of the community that is often ignored. The Citywide Committee offered strategies to improve and enhance fire safety education and to improve the billing and collections procedures for emergency ambulance service. Cooperative efforts to share costs, such as sharing duties with the Red Cross or soliciting funds from insurance companies for fire safety education, need to be explored.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Enhance existing and establish new community policing partnerships that reduce crime and violence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Work with community groups and individuals to determine where problems exist and establish priorities for limited resources. 1b. Continue to support partnership programs that build relationships between the police and citizens and provide effective and efficient services to all. 1c. Work with residents in targeted areas of the city to develop special programs that address the specific needs of that area. 1d. Direct city departments to collaborate in solving community safety problems. 1e. Continue to work with the community to eliminate criminal gang activity. 	<p>The Police Department received 242,072 calls for police service in 1993. This is an increase of 45% since 1986 and an increase of 26% since 1989. Vice and Narcotic complaints have increased 900% since 1986, when crack cocaine hit the streets.</p> <p>Rather than focusing on numbers of police officers, the Citywide Committee focused on working with the community to place officers and other resources where they would be most effective. Officers are most effective when they work with other departments and residents to reduce crime. Increases in police calls are in part a result of greater trust in the Police Department and cooperative efforts with other city departments and organizations.</p>

PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>2 <i>Establish new and enhance existing crime prevention programs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2a. Continue police programs that work with youth and the school system, such as the police athletic league.2b. Develop innovative policies that encourage police officers to reside in the city and increase their visibility.2c. Promote a sense of individual citizen responsibility for security and safety.2d. Develop a program to educate that unlawful behavior should not be tolerated.2e. Develop a program to make gang membership unfashionable.	<p>The Des Moines Police Department, through volunteer time and on the job work, provides activities designed to prevent criminal activities among kids. These include the Police Athletic League (PAL), Police Explorers, and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE). More needs to be done with partnerships throughout the community, however, in order to provide opportunities for youth.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>3 <i>Enhance the quality of fire and emergency services.</i></p>	<p>3a. Review reimbursement policies to provide the most cost-effective service for emergency medical care.</p> <p>3b. Assure that annexed areas are provided with the same high level of quality fire service as the rest of the city.</p> <p>3c. Develop agreements with surrounding municipalities to ensure effective service throughout the metropolitan community.</p>	<p>The services provided by the Fire Department are basic services provided to the community and its visitors. Innovative approaches and cooperation with other agencies are needed to deliver the same high quality service at a reasonable cost. The Committee recommends the city administrators and policy makers encourage a culture that allows the Fire Department to explore these partnerships.</p>
<p>4 <i>Enhance fire safety prevention and education.</i></p>	<p>4a. Expand the fire department's efforts to inform the public about the need for fire safety.</p> <p>4b. Pursue sources of revenues to defray costs of fire safety education.</p>	<p>The United States has one of the highest rates of fire incidents in the civilized world. Fire safety education is a proactive approach to one element of the problem. Carelessness on behalf of occupants may relate to an attitude of "we are insured." The Fire Department should continue its fire safety education efforts, but the city should also explore ways in which partnerships with insurance and other business firms could assist in defraying the cost of fire education.</p>



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Promote and celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of Des Moines Neighborhoods and their contribution to the vitality of the city. Provide support to preserve and enhance the value of Des Moines Neighborhoods.

Restoring a sense of pride in our neighborhoods ensures that the whole city benefits. Neighborhoods are a microcosm of many of the issues that have been addressed in other areas of the strategic plan including public safety, infrastructure, commercial services, and housing. Neighborhoods, as much as any segment of the strategic plan, relate to the vision of our city as beautiful, safe, and clean.

Neighborhood organizations are one mechanism to create pride and ownership in our neighborhoods. Neighborhood organizations have grown in number and strength in Des Moines over the past several years. In November of 1995 there were 35 Recognized Neighborhoods.

Neighborhood organizations can accomplish a great deal but cannot work in isolation. Des Moines has begun a successful program for neighborhood revitalization that provides planning at the neighborhood level, a committed source of money for infrastructure improvements, and money for housing loans through a private non-profit organization called the Neighborhood Finance Corporation.

- A “Recognized Neighborhood” is a neighborhood organization that has by-laws, officers, and meets regularly. Essentially, the city government is aware of the neighborhood organization’s existence, has a contact person, and keeps the neighborhood informed of happenings.
- A “Designated Neighborhood” has gone through the neighborhood selection process of the Neighborhood Advisory Board. Special funds are available to such neighborhoods for housing loans, infrastructure improvements, and city planning staff.

The perception that downtown business owners and neighborhood residents are at odds with one another was discussed by the Citywide Committee. The concentration of community resources to rebuild the downtown, particularly that portion of money dedicated for the downtown through Tax Increment Financing, has led to accusations that the downtown has prospered at the expense of the neighborhoods. Committee members searched for a balanced approach that emphasized the importance of the downtown but also continued to assert that neighborhood revitalization efforts be continued and expanded. Funding must continue to be provided for new infrastructure within neighborhoods, and funding must be supplied for housing financing through the corporate entity, the Neighborhood Finance Corporation.

Principles of the Neighborhood Planning Process

- Must be a neighborhood “grass roots” approach
- Must build confidence of neighborhood residents to reinforce revitalization gains
- Must focus geographically on planning and implementation
- Ongoing process— No quick fixes

Resource Allocation

- Limited City funds should be used to leverage other dollars
- Funding support must be based on sound financial criteria
- Implementation must be comprehensive and visible
- Resource distribution should be fair and equitable

The concentration of resources within a Designated Neighborhood was supported by the Citywide Committee in its strategic actions. However, members cautioned that the overall success in housing and infrastructure conditions within the designated neighborhoods and the resulting increase in prices created more disparity between those neighborhoods that have access to resources and those that do not. Expansion of the program was viewed as the best approach to solving the problem.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Continue to improve housing as a means to promote neighborhood revitalization.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Support the city's ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts by concentrating planning efforts, public and private lending funds, and site improvement resources in designated areas. 1b. Identify a dedicated stream of revenue for neighborhood revitalization and housing. 1c. Develop criteria for expending 25% of city and county housing bond funds, administered through the Neighborhood Finance Corporation, within Recognized Neighborhoods. 	<p>Since its incorporation in 1991, the Neighborhood Finance Corporation has assisted 1,001 units of housing within the designated neighborhoods (through November 1995). This is a total of \$28 million in loans and \$4.6 million in grants. The results of this assistance have been improved housing conditions and values as seen in the table on page 12.</p>
<p>2 <i>Promote neighborhood identity through recognized neighborhood associations so that all citizens are represented.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2a. Provide organizing support for emerging neighborhood associations and continue support of existing neighborhood organizations. 2b. Provide continuing funding assistance for operations of recognized neighborhood organizations. 2c. Expand notification efforts to neighborhoods regarding city and board actions that affect the neighborhood. 2d. Develop and implement leadership training for neighborhood residents. 	<p>The most effective neighborhood organizations are those with an informed membership. The City and individual neighborhood associations need to strive to keep all citizens aware of changing conditions and decisions that are being made. Neighborhood organizations often need financial and organizational help in order to be effective at keeping members informed and involved. The City and community businesses could help this effort by providing funding, copying services, mailing help, or meeting rooms.</p>

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>3 <i>Encourage and assist residents to take ownership and responsibility for their own neighborhoods.</i></p>	<p>3a. Develop new and enhance existing partnerships between neighborhood groups and the police department to assure safety and security throughout all neighborhoods.</p> <p>3b. Direct all city departments to cooperate with recognized neighborhood associations to develop activities and projects within neighborhoods.</p>	<p>In beautification as well as safety issues, effective enforcement depends on a partnership between neighborhood residents and the enforcement agency. Beautification and appearance issues are difficult and costly to enforce and cause ongoing conflicts within neighborhoods. Enforcement of beautification issues should follow a concept similar to community policing and involve both the enforcement agency and the residents of the neighborhood. Education has to become a part of the neighborhood and enforcement agency's duties in order to stop repeated violations.</p>
<p>4 <i>Aggressively enforce city ordinances that promote beautification, safety, and appropriate land use.</i></p>	<p>4a. Cross-train staff from different city departments to improve the consistent and aggressive enforcement of beautification and zoning ordinances.</p> <p>4b. Be proactive in resolving the legality of nonconforming uses of property.</p> <p>4c. Vigorously enforce health and safety ordinances through the use of maximum fines and injunctions against property owners.</p> <p>4d. Fund the enforcement of the city's existing Abandoned Housing Ordinance.</p> <p>4e. Pursue solutions for environmental problems, such as underground storage tanks, odor problems, and pest control.</p> <p>4f. Develop and enforce sign regulations and utility standards that complement the surrounding neighborhood.</p>	<p>Public nuisance houses, beautification violations, and inappropriate land use violations can turn a neighborhood from an attractive environment to an unsafe area where people do not choose to live. Enforcement of all ordinances should be proactive and not on a complaint basis. Cross-training of staff across departmental lines was viewed as the only way in which to deliver effective service.</p> <p>Enforcement of any ordinance is a double-edged sword. Enforcement must be tempered with education so that violations do not continually recur.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>5 <i>Encourage the establishment and preservation of appropriate neighborhood commercial services.</i></p>	<p>5a. Facilitate understanding among local businesses and residents by encouraging participation in neighborhood associations.</p> <p>5b. Concentrate neighborhood commercial districts at appropriate accessible business centers.</p> <p>5c. Assure that building and zoning ordinances promote the retention of traditional neighborhood commercial areas.</p> <p>5d. Promote commercial redevelopment and rehabilitation in context with the neighborhood character.</p>	<p>Neighborhood commercial districts promote a certain vitality and establish a sense of community in addition to providing needed commercial services. In those areas with established commercial districts, correct renovation or new construction continues to protect the character of the neighborhood.</p>
<p>6 <i>Work closely with residents to develop, approve, and implement neighborhood action plans for each Recognized Neighborhood.</i></p>	<p>6a. Develop conservation zoning to protect those neighborhoods with unique design and land uses.</p> <p>6b. Promote rehabilitation, redevelopment, and site improvements that are in context with the neighborhood character.</p> <p>6c. Analyze the impact of increased density on neighborhoods and, if needed, develop methods to deal with any negative impacts.</p>	<p>The character and density of an existing neighborhood should be protected for economic and livability reasons. Increasing the density of existing buildings within an established neighborhood adds to congestion, increased demands on infrastructure, and inappropriate changes to a building. This has, in turn, caused disinvestment and decline in the neighborhoods.</p>

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
7 <i>Preserve architecturally/historically significant structures, open space, and parks.</i>	7a. Increase public awareness of Des Moines' history, architecture, and open space environment. 7b. Develop and improve policies and ordinances that help government protect historic buildings, structures, districts, and neighborhoods. 7c. Integrate preservation of historic and traditional neighborhoods into community goals and community decision making.	<p>The City of Des Moines' unique and rich history is manifested in the design of its neighborhoods, the development of its open spaces, and the architecture of its buildings. The natural environment combined with the human-made environment give Des Moines its "sense of place." Committee members want to protect those qualities that make Des Moines attractive to residents and businesses. The opportunities exist in our housing, our parks, and our downtown. These qualities distinguish Des Moines from the surrounding cities.</p>





HOUSING STRATEGY

Preserve and improve the city's supply of existing good quality housing. Encourage high quality new development with competitive marketing appeal.

The City of Des Moines offers a diversity of housing not found elsewhere in the metropolitan area. Housing choices range from apartment complexes to unique landmark properties to traditional houses and starter homes to expensive new subdivisions. Des Moines is confronted by the challenges posed by an aging housing stock, deterioration of the associated infrastructure, and a market that has promoted suburban communities in the competition for new housing and home buyers. Des Moines now has the opportunities offered by tax abatement, neighborhood revitalization, and large areas of vacant residentially zoned land on Des Moines' southwest and southeast sides.

The Citywide Committee began its approach by examining the current state of housing in Des Moines. It spent additional time on issues of affordable housing, particularly those housing options for households with incomes at the lowest level. Although neighborhood revitalization and housing stock are related and overlap, distinct goals and objectives were created for each.

Des Moines has fallen short in selling the merits of its housing stock and neighborhoods. Des Moines has traditionally been a city with high rate of home ownership. Housing prices have increased in Des Moines, as they have in much of the county, with the resulting conclusion that buying in Des Moines is a good investment. Home ownership in Des Moines may be less expensive than rental in complexes in suburban communities. Promotions should focus on the character of Des Moines and the large amount of quality affordable housing throughout the city.

Encouraging owners to maintain and invest in existing homes continues to require a multi-faceted approach. Tax abatement encourages large scale renovation but does not encourage home maintenance of roofs, siding, and foundations. Residents should be assured that homes in Des Moines are a good investment and warrant maintenance. Some home owners need assistance with maintenance to protect the housing stock as well as the household.

Quality rental housing should be available for all those persons who are in the market for rental housing. Quality rental units cannot be achieved through subdivision of large homes into many poorly configured units. The loss of population and private default on many structures has led to an opportunity to reduce density in many structures in the inner city.

The need for metropolitan cooperation and agreement is extremely important for housing issues but was almost nonexistent in 1995. Because of condition and age of housing stock, Des Moines has been viewed as the only community in which assisted housing should be offered in the metropolitan area. Objectives have been developed to promote work with the county and suburban communities to offer more housing choices for residents.

Des Moines housing stock is older than the surrounding areas. Almost a third of Des Moines housing stock was built prior to World War II and over 60% built prior to 1960. This quality housing provides the majority of the reasonably priced housing in the metropolitan area .

Source: 1990 Census



Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Pursue aggressively the renovation of existing housing and the construction of new housing.</i>^R</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Continue to provide tax abatement for renovation of existing housing and construction of new housing. 1b. Expand methods to encourage home improvement and maintenance, especially within the older areas of the city. 1c. Pursue planned annexation as a means to provide additional housing development sites. 1d. Establish a program for limited subsidies for new owner-occupied housing in infill sites where the cost of construction exceeds the appraised value. 	<div data-bbox="1108 347 1478 607" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="1554 721 1965 834">This house was declared a public nuisance after a fire in a rental unit. A home owner was able to renovate the house to a single family owner-occupied dwelling.</p>
<p>2 <i>Ensure that rental housing and owner-occupied housing is maintained in good repair and contributes to the neighborhood in a positive way.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2a. Enforce vigorously and consistently the Des Moines Housing Code. 2b. Review all the city's codes that affect rental to assure that maintenance and repair standards are included that can lengthen the life of dwellings. 2c. Require formal review and neighborhood notification prior to increasing dwelling unit density in an existing residential property. 2d. Maintain publicly-owned subsidized housing to a high standard. 	<p data-bbox="1079 915 1982 1127">Des Moines' existing housing stock represents a great resource for the city. Even if an additional 5,000 units were to be built within the city limits, those units would contribute less than 10% to the total number of housing units. Maintain the existing housing stock through housing codes, education, and marketing needs to be a major focus. The city should take a strong role to ensure that both rental and owner-occupied housing are maintained.</p>

HOUSING STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>3 <i>Market the city's existing good quality, affordable housing.</i></p>	<p>3a. Develop a marketing plan for the city to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. promote the city's history as well as the character and charm of the city's neighborhoods and the uniqueness of our older homes;ii. educate metro-area residents on the economy of home ownership;iii. inform the public that there is a wide variety of housing available in Des Moines. <p>3b. Educate and inform metro-area residents on the practical steps toward achieving home ownership.</p> <p>3c. Develop language regarding our intolerance of perceived redlining among real estate agents.</p>	<p>There is a need to market Des Moines' quality housing in order to become the "city of choice." The older residential areas represent established neighborhoods with mature trees and gracious homes often unavailable elsewhere in the metropolitan area. Des Moines also has large areas of new housing that are comparable to suburban development. Informing real estate agents, TV and newspaper personalities, and potential residents of the advantages of living in Des Moines should be a continuous activity.</p>
<p>4 <i>Demonstrate the city's long-term commitment to housing by cooperating in the development of a regional strategic housing plan.</i></p>	<p>4. Join with all other metropolitan governments to employ a housing consultant to develop a regional strategic housing plan in coordination with a citizen task force.</p>	<p>Housing is a regional asset and a regional concern. To show long-term commitment to housing and all citizens of the metropolitan area, regardless of income, cities and Polk County need to cooperate to develop a strategic plan for housing.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>5 <i>Ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable housing throughout the metropolitan area that is</i></p> <p><i>i. safe and sanitary, available in a range of prices for low and moderate income households;</i></p> <p><i>ii. available in a variety of types of rental and owner-occupied units;</i></p> <p><i>iii. well-managed and includes basic amenities consistent with the neighborhood and needs of the family.</i></p>	<p>5a. Ensure that new housing is compatible in design with the surrounding neighborhood.</p> <p>5b. Provide rehabilitation assistance to retain and conserve the existing good quality, affordable housing in the city.</p> <p>5c. Work with neighborhood groups and metropolitan governments to disperse subsidized housing throughout the metropolitan area so that residents are provided with a choice of housing location.</p> <p>5d. Continue to pursue funding sources for affordable housing from the State and Federal government.</p>	<p>All citizens of the metropolitan area deserve access to affordable housing in the city of their choice. City of Des Moines and Polk County officials have been working to provide funding for neighborhood revitalization projects. From the Committee's research, it appears suburban communities have been only minimally involved in providing affordable or low cost housing.</p> <p>Housing is a complex issue and cannot be solved by providing only one type of solution or one kind of housing unit. Both rental and home ownership opportunities must be offered. Affordable housing developments need to be evaluated for their impact on the architectural character of existing neighborhoods and for the amenities they provide to residents.</p> <p>Des Moines has a multifaceted approach and major commitment to affordable housing. According to the 1996 Des Moines Consolidated Plan, almost \$3 million of Community Development Block Grant dollars was allocated for support of rehabilitation of existing housing for low and moderate income households. In addition, the City of Des Moines Department of Housing Services (DHS) administers a total of 3,320 units of assisted housing serving over 6,600 residents. Although there are some Section 8 housing certificates outside the City of Des Moines, the vast majority of units are located within the city limits. Since 1990, the city has committed over \$1 million annually toward neighborhood revitalization lending efforts administered through the Neighborhood Finance Corporation.</p>



DOWNTOWN STRATEGY

Through commerce, culture, and community, develop downtown as the world business center of choice.

A separate strategic plan, *Destination Downtown*, was developed for the Des Moines Downtown. *Destination Downtown* involved a joint effort between the private sector, represented by the Downtown Partnership, and the City of Des Moines. Because of the work of the Destination Downtown Steering Committee, the Citywide Committee did not attempt to analyze in depth or rethink the downtown issues. Major goals of the Downtown plan have been integrated into the Citywide Strategic Plan. In addition, the downtown was considered when Citywide Committee members discussed issue areas of culture, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization.

The integration of the downtown and citywide plans worked because the plans have a great deal in common. The Committees used a similar process of identifying issues, visioning, goal setting, and prioritization. The plans are complementary in their vision statements and at the goal level.

Downtown Des Moines can generally be described as the area bounded by Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway on the west, the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers on the south, East 14th Street on the east, and Interstate 235 on the north.

Downtown Des Moines is a strong financial and employment center. Of the total employment in the City of Des Moines in 1990, 29% is located in the downtown area. New buildings are under construction and the community is looking closely at both the east and west sides of the downtown for more development opportunities. Office/commercial, institutional, and cultural activities generate the majority of the activity in the downtown. In addition, the downtown provided \$26,588,785 in tax revenues in 1992. This is an essential contribution to Des Moines' tax base.

Residential development has been difficult to attract in downtown Des Moines. The downtown empties out at 5:00 p.m. The proposed Hillside Neighborhood has had difficulties with financing. While the downtown area has witnessed approximately a 28% increase in housing units between 1970 and 1990, downtown has not become the populated center it was in earlier decades. Downtown neighborhoods are important for the future.

Benefits associated with being in a downtown for either a business or residential development must outweigh development costs. Downtown Des Moines is an exciting place to be. It has an urban character, distinguished architecture, and a concentration of cultural activities. Unfortunately, development in the downtown costs more than equivalent development in fringe and suburban areas. This is caused by the dynamics of land cost, development intensity, and site availability.

The Citywide Committee and Destination Downtown Steering Committee have recognized the importance of investing in the downtown and the importance of investing in the surrounding neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown. Neither Committee viewed the improvement to neighborhoods and the improvement to downtown as mutually exclusive goals. Rather, both the Committees recognized that renovation of adjacent neighborhoods and strong linkages to the downtown provide a diversity of residential choices for the downtown labor pool as well as those seeking an urban life-style.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale	
<p>1 <i>Reinforce the downtown as a vibrant and vital center of commerce, culture, and community.</i>^R</p>	<p>1a. Promote the retention, growth, and creation of downtown businesses, both large and small, through marketing, economic development policies, and careful use of incentives.</p> <p>1b. Develop and promote downtown neighborhoods on both sides of the rivers, as well as north and south of the commercial areas, as viable and pleasant places to reside.</p> <p>1c. Assure that citizens perceive the downtown as a safe and attractive place to work, live, and play.</p> <p>1d. Assure that the infrastructure of the downtown area is clean and well-maintained.</p> <p>1e. Assure the continuing problem of availability and cost of parking is met innovatively and competitively.</p> <p>1f. Establish a system of education and lifelong learning opportunities convenient to the downtown area.</p>	<p>Many believe downtown is at a “crossroads”—still strong but facing significant threats. The following is a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified by the Downtown committee that were included in the <i>Destination Downtown</i> Plan.</p>	
		<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Growing employment center ■ Competitive advantage to other downtowns ■ Central location and transportation network ■ Commitment to central city neighborhoods ■ Civic, cultural, and recreational attractions ■ Distinguished architecture and capital city 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High Taxes ■ Population shifts westward ■ Development is being steered outside Des Moines ■ Values vs. costs of investing downtown are not equal ■ Lack of multi-modal access ■ Not popular destination for people
		<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proximity to concentration of businesses ■ An urban location with land available and without congestion ■ Existing attractions including the riverfront ■ Commitment to investing in adjacent neighborhoods 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ City of Des Moines is facing financial difficulties ■ Perception that the suburbs are “the place to be” ■ Perception that there is no economic and little social advantage to being downtown ■ No synergy between major attractions



EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY

Strengthen and promote the excellence of all educational institutions in the city.

The Citywide Committee dealt with education as an integral part of the community. Educational institutions are defined as including the public and private school systems, private and public colleges and universities as well as the Des Moines Public Library. Opportunities for life long learning will help the community attract business, industry, and residents as well as enriching the lives of citizens.

The future of the public schools is fundamental to the future of the city. Although enrollment has declined in the past twenty years, over 90% of the children in Des Moines attend the public schools. This is not a statement that can be made about other older cities around the midwest such as Kansas City or Chicago.

The Committee's recommendations focus on cooperative efforts between the city and its school systems. There is no intention to provide curriculum or policy advice to the governing body of any school. The need for cooperation between the two taxing bodies was discussed often.

Each public school's facilities are important to the neighborhood in which it is located. The neighborhood school should be the center for community vitality and could be used for many more hours of the day. Joint efforts for libraries, parks, and multiple use of gymnasiums could make the school the hub for the neighborhood and for people of all ages.

There is no question that the Des Moines Schools need significant infrastructure improvements to remain competitive with suburban schools, provide the best quality education to children, and to become neighborhood centers. The public school system planning initiative "Vision 2005" details funding needs and funding sources to make the needed improvements to the schools. The Citywide Committee endorsed the adoption of a 1% local option sales tax and sharing a portion of those proceeds with the schools as a way to begin funding infrastructure improvements for the schools.

The Des Moines Public Library is a great educational resource for the community, but its budget has been slashed over the years. It, like the public schools, is in need of physical repair and money for materials for use by residents. The need for collaborative efforts with other public and private libraries is also emphasized.

Snapshot of Des Moines Schools

	1975	1995	Projected 2000
School Population	39,027	31,602	31,287
Minorities	12.2%	22.5%	28%
Percent Graduating	70%	86%	90%
Percent of Both Parents Employed	28%	70%	80%
Percent of Single Parents	12%	25%	28%

Source: Des Moines Independent School District

Significant changes have occurred in the composition of the Des Moines schools in the two decades from 1975-1995.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Support the adoption of a 1% local option sales tax, and allocation of a portion to the Des Moines Public Schools for infrastructure improvements.</i></p>		<p>The City of Des Moines would receive an estimated \$22 million in additional tax revenue if a 1% local option sales tax were approved by voters. Sharing a portion of this revenue with the public schools would make a great difference in beginning implementation of the Vision 2005 plan. Because of the pressing needs of the schools and because quality schools are so important to the current and future residents of Des Moines, the Citywide Committee recommended adopting and sharing this revenue source.</p>
<p>2 <i>Expand the cooperative efforts among policy makers of the City of Des Moines and the Des Moines Independent School District.</i></p>	<p>2a. Establish periodic meetings of the City Council and School Board where cooperative efforts are discussed and planned.</p> <p>2b. Facilitate communications and programs among neighborhood groups and the neighborhood schools.</p>	<p>The City Council of Des Moines and Des Moines Independent School District Board have liaison members. The Citywide Committee believed that communications among policy makers should be enhanced beyond this level. The elected boards may want to meet jointly at regular intervals to discuss joint projects and promotion of the school district and city. At a minimum, liaison members may want to attend additional meetings with the other board.</p>

EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale												
<p>3 <i>Develop ways in which the City of Des Moines and the Des Moines Independent School District could cooperate for cost-efficiency.</i></p>	<p>3a. Investigate the potential cost savings of combining city and school operations and implement where feasible.</p> <p>3b. Collaborate on infrastructure projects that affect both school and city property.</p>	<p>City of Des Moines Housing Prices near Cattell & McKinley Elementary Schools % Increase from 1988-1995</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>City Wide</th> <th>Columbus Park</th> <th>Union Park</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Median Assessed Value</td> <td>38%</td> <td>35%</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Median Sales Value</td> <td>27%</td> <td>50%</td> <td>41%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Assessed valuations are from City of Des Moines Assessor's Office.</p> <p>Housing in neighborhoods in which the schools and city have cooperated on projects has increased in value more quickly than housing across the city as a whole.</p>		City Wide	Columbus Park	Union Park	Median Assessed Value	38%	35%	29%	Median Sales Value	27%	50%	41%
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<p>4 <i>Coordinate the use of public school-owned and city-owned facilities for an expanded variety of uses.</i></p>	<p>4a. Use school buildings and grounds before and after school hours for neighborhood centers, including the gyms and pools for city recreational programs.</p> <p>4b. Coordinate city and after-school recreational and educational activities to provide broader choices for youth.</p>	<p>A premise of the Vision 2005 plan is that neighborhood schools are the anchor for a strong neighborhood. The school campus is the focus for the neighborhood. Neighborhood schools are found throughout the city, but larger elementary and middle schools are the norm in the suburban communities. Using the schools for expanded hours provides close-to-home recreational opportunities for persons of all ages and an opportunity for cost savings that does not exist elsewhere.</p>												
<p>5 <i>Increase communications between public and private post-secondary educational institutions and the city to facilitate cooperative efforts and growth.</i></p>	<p>5. Encourage City Council members to meet with the President or Board of local educational institutions on a regular basis.</p>	<p>C colleges and universities often have to expand into residential neighborhoods to accommodate physical growth. This can create conflicts between neighbors and the educational institution instead of the win-win situation needed to promote both educational institutions and neighborhood revitalization. Plans for expansion should involve city officials and neighborhood residents early in the process to consider the impact an institution has on the city's tax base, city's cultural activities, and neighborhood's character.</p>												

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale																		
<p>6 <i>Recognize the Des Moines Public Library System as the primary life-long learning institution and information resource for the community.</i></p>	<p>6a. Create an organizational and operational environment in the library system that facilitates equitable access to a wide variety of information.</p> <p>6b. Develop dependable funding sources, in addition to the city budget, that ensure the availability of information in a variety of formats and in quantities appropriate to demand.</p> <p>6c. Update automation and technology throughout the library system for the most efficient and cost-effective access to information.</p> <p>6d. Evaluate existing facilities to ensure physical environments that optimize the provision of library services.</p> <p>6e. Collaborate with other city departments, educational institutions (including private schools), businesses and other types of libraries to provide greater access to information and to eliminate unnecessary duplication.</p>	<p>Snapshot of Des Moines Public Library (1994 -1995 Fiscal Year)</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total library materials circulated to the public</td> <td>1,450,573</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total library materials used by public in library</td> <td>735,696</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of people visiting the library</td> <td>1,047,804</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of people assisted in person or over phone</td> <td>381,224</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of persons dialing into library catalog from home or business</td> <td>24,821</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of registered borrowers</td> <td>168,565</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of library sponsored programs</td> <td>3,082</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of people attending library sponsored programs</td> <td>88,865</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of people using library's Home Page</td> <td>400 and growing</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Total library materials circulated to the public	1,450,573	Total library materials used by public in library	735,696	Number of people visiting the library	1,047,804	Number of people assisted in person or over phone	381,224	Number of persons dialing into library catalog from home or business	24,821	Total number of registered borrowers	168,565	Number of library sponsored programs	3,082	Number of people attending library sponsored programs	88,865	Number of people using library's Home Page	400 and growing
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Source: Des Moines Public Library

The public library is an essential public service and a community resource center. It provides diverse information in a variety of formats for all customers. It is committed to enriching the lives of children and adults and encouraging all to become life-long learners.



PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE

Provide safe, creative and attractive parks, recreational facilities and programs, and open spaces that enrich the quality of life and serve the needs of the community.

Recreational facilities and cultural facilities were named in identifying Des Moines' current strengths and its opportunities for future growth. The city is known for wonderful parks such as Greenwood and Grandview and the adjoining bike and hiking trails. The Des Moines owned and managed Botanical Center and Blank Park Zoo are jewels of the city. The private not-for-profit Art Center, Civic Center, Science Center, and other facilities make Des Moines a strong community.

These cultural attractions were also identified as a weakness in terms of tax base and the subsidies they required. Each facility promotes tourism and brings jobs and dollars to the whole community. Each facility offers education and cultural opportunities for the citizens of the whole community and all of Iowa. The tax burden of each of these facilities is not shared with all citizens of the metropolitan area and the State; it is borne by citizens of Des Moines.

Des Moines has done a good job of contributing to privately owned not-for-profits through the Hotel/Motel tax and supporting city-owned cultural facilities through operating budgets. With the financial problems now facing the city, however, some type of funding support from the other communities is needed if we are to continue to provide a strong cultural center. Unfortunately, some suburban communities have actually cut back on a commitment to culture and the arts in favor of property tax relief. This creates more of a burden for Des Moines property owners.


The City of Des Moines adopted a Park and Open Space Comprehensive Master Plan early in 1995, *Parklands: A Celebration of Des Moines' Community Spirit*. The Citywide Committee worked within the framework of that master plan, respecting the large amount of work and citizen input that had gone into the plan. As strategic goals were developed in light of city priorities, however, the Committee focused most of its time on the need for volunteerism in the parks, cooperative ventures, and infrastructure. These three strategies will result in cost savings and encourage community pride in ownership of the parks.

The needs of youth in after-school hours were an important concern of the Committee. Fragmentation of youth opportunity systems, i.e. schools, church youth groups, and privately offered programs, were cited as problems. There are many service and cultural organizations in the community that offer programs and activities, but no overarching body exists that promotes youth and youth needs. The Youth Coordinating Board is the first step in this process, but it needs additional resources. The Committee believes the city should ensure that the youth of our community have adequate programs and service through cooperative efforts from all segments of the community.

Coordinating volunteers and promoting youth activities are goals that will cost money initially. Neither of these goals can be accomplished unless many of the financial goals are achieved. The rewards of implementing youth activities and coordinating volunteers will be among the cost-effective goals if one considers the final results.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Continue professional management of the parks while encouraging and making full use of volunteers.</i>^R</p>	<p>1a. Establish a professional volunteer coordinator position(s).</p> <p>1b. Promote a “Corps of Volunteers” for each neighborhood park and other municipal grounds.</p> <p>1c. Collaborate with the Police Department to enhance safety and security.</p>	<p>Volunteerism is a way to expand resident involvement in the achievement of the vision of the city and help it become a truly great place to live and work. Volunteers can accomplish a variety of tasks for the parks, libraries, and other city services. Volunteers can help with events and special projects, they serve on Boards and Commissions, they help improve neighborhoods, and they lend a hand to our nonprofit organizations. However, a coordinator is needed to use volunteer time and energy effectively.</p>
<p>2 <i>Collaborate with the schools and other entities to provide opportunities for education, recreation, and support for youth during nonschool hours.</i>^R</p>	<p>2a. Tap youth as a resource for volunteer work in the community.</p> <p>2b. Work to nurture youth skills through educational and government opportunities.</p> <p>2c. Coordinate activities among schools, libraries, parks and recreation, and the cultural community to provide appropriate recreational and education activities and optimize the use of facilities.</p>	<p>Collaborative efforts should involve sharing recreational facilities among private and public entities, but just as importantly should build work and social skills for youth. Mentor programs, internships, and volunteer work in government and the private sector were all discussed as ways in which to involve youth in the community.</p>
<p>3 <i>Establish timely maintenance and repair of park facilities and existing infrastructure.</i></p>	<p>3a. Establish revenue sources to maintain and repair park facilities and existing infrastructure.</p> <p>3b. Establish a corps of volunteers to preserve and protect the existing infrastructure.</p>	<p>The replacement value of the infrastructure within public park lands (not including buildings) is estimated to be \$43.4 million. Like streets and sewers, maintenance of this system has been deferred. Revenue sources and innovative ways to accomplish maintenance must be established to protect this important investment.</p>

PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>4 <i>Preserve historically and architecturally significant parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces.</i></p>	<p>4a. Assure harmonious materials are used in the repair and replacement of landscapes and buildings.</p> <p>4b. Assure that new structures and landscaping are compatible in design with the surrounding areas.</p>	<p>Historic parks and park structures are an asset to the city and a unique marketing tool for Des Moines in the metropolitan area.</p>  <p>The Drake University Municipal Observatory, located in Waveland Park, has been designated a city landmark and is eligible for The National Register of Historic Places.</p>
<p>5 <i>Collaborate and coordinate with public and private entities to provide the best and most efficient recreational programs.</i></p>	<p>5a. Work with public and private schools to optimize the use of facilities.</p> <p>5b. Share existing recreational facilities rather than constructing new separate facilities, when possible.</p> <p>5c. Involve the business community in parks maintenance and development through “Corporate Partnerships.”</p>	<p>The monies allocated to parks and recreation in the City of Des Moines have been decreasing while the public’s expectations have been rising. Involving the private sector in improving and building new recreational facilities is one way that these expectations can be met. Corporate partnership funds could be developed to increase leisure services to meet the public demand.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
6 <i>Market the Parks and Recreation Program as an asset for economic development.</i>	<p>6a. Educate the public to the economic benefits of outstanding park and recreation facilities and programs offered by the city.</p> <p>6b. Establish a business development strategy that includes nontraditional economic development opportunities such as tourism, historic preservation, and a variety of special events and attractions.</p>	<p>Outstanding parks, recreational programs, and cultural facilities should be a marketing device for attracting business.</p>

7 <i>Work with surrounding municipalities to ensure the costs and benefits of regional parks and cultural properties are shared by all metropolitan residents.</i>	<p>7a. Develop and implement a funding system by either Polk County or an independent metro-wide board for city-owned cultural services and facilities which are regional in nature: Botanical Center, Convention Center, Veterans' Auditorium, and Blank Park Zoo.</p> <p>7b. Strongly encourage other cities to contribute, in proportional significance, to the operating expenses of cultural facilities that are regional in nature and nonprofit or not-for-profit such as the Science Center, Civic Center, and Art Center.</p>	<p>Polk County residents, Des Moines, and the suburban communities must begin to think of the metropolitan area as a community. Many metropolitan cities contribute to cultural organizations, but some have cut back their contributions in order to lower property taxes. There are a number of cultural institutions to which cities contribute in addition to those shown in the following table.</p>
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Hotel-Motel Tax Comparison:

1995-96 Tax Allocations by Metro Area Communities to Regional & Cultural Facilities

City	Civic Center	Art Center	Science Center
Des Moines	\$120,000	\$80,000	\$30,000
Altoona*	0	0	0
Ankeny	12,500	825	825
Clive	5,000	5,000	5,000
Johnston	714	714	714
Polk Co.**	25,370	16,947	16,947
Urbandale	18,000	11,143	12,857
West Des Moines	18,527	12,351	12,351
Windsor Heights	732	732	732

* Altoona allows all organizations to petition for Hotel/Motel Tax dollars
 ** Polk Co. estimate for 1995-96

PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>8 <i>Develop a citywide trail system to connect recreational facilities, parks, schools, libraries, historical sites, cultural centers, and places of public interest.</i></p>	<p>8a. Coordinate the construction and maintenance of city recreational trails with other public and/or private bicycle, walking, and other recreational groups in the metropolitan area.</p> <p>8b. Develop a clear parkland addition or deletion policy.</p>	<p>In recent years citizens have been concerned about the way in which parks are disposed of and purchased. The Park and Recreation Board has been concerned about the cost of maintaining many parks and public space. A clear policy involving the Park Board and neighborhood residents should be developed before park property is sold or purchased.</p>
<p>9 <i>Invest in quality of life efforts that provide residents a culturally rich community.</i></p>	<p>9a. Build partnerships between cultural organizations and city departments to improve delivery of service to the community.</p> <p>9b. Work with cultural facilities to provide programs for youth.</p> <p>9c. Continue financial support of cultural facilities.</p>	<p>Cultural facilities contribute to the quality of life for our youth and for the community as a whole. Quality of life efforts, whether they are primarily oriented toward art, music, or science, make the community a better place to be and need to be supported by all taxing bodies through policies and funding.</p>





TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

Promote transportation services and infrastructure to enhance industrial, commercial, and residential growth and facilitate the efficient movement of people and commerce.

Transportation is a key element for ensuring continued growth for the City of Des Moines and the metropolitan area. This is true not only for population growth and development, but also with respect to the impact on jobs and the availability of employees to fill those positions. Transportation is tied directly with land-use planning on a local and regional basis. Without a major change in development patterns, the automobile will remain the only viable method of transportation in the Des Moines Metropolitan area.

A comprehensive highway system is one of the best methods to support balanced growth in Polk County. Balanced growth is defined as growth spread equally throughout the county rather than expanding only in one direction. New highway proposals are very long range and take a number of years from development to completion. The Committee discussed the direction of the plans currently under development by the city and the state.

The Citywide Committee emphasized the need to avoid short run transportation decisions that foreclose future alternatives. The existing and future abandoned railroad rights-of-way offer opportunities for alternative transportation systems including but not limited to additional biking and hiking trails, new highway or diagonal arterials, or a monorail system. While a monorail system does not make economic sense, the rights-of-way should be left open in public ownership for future development choices.

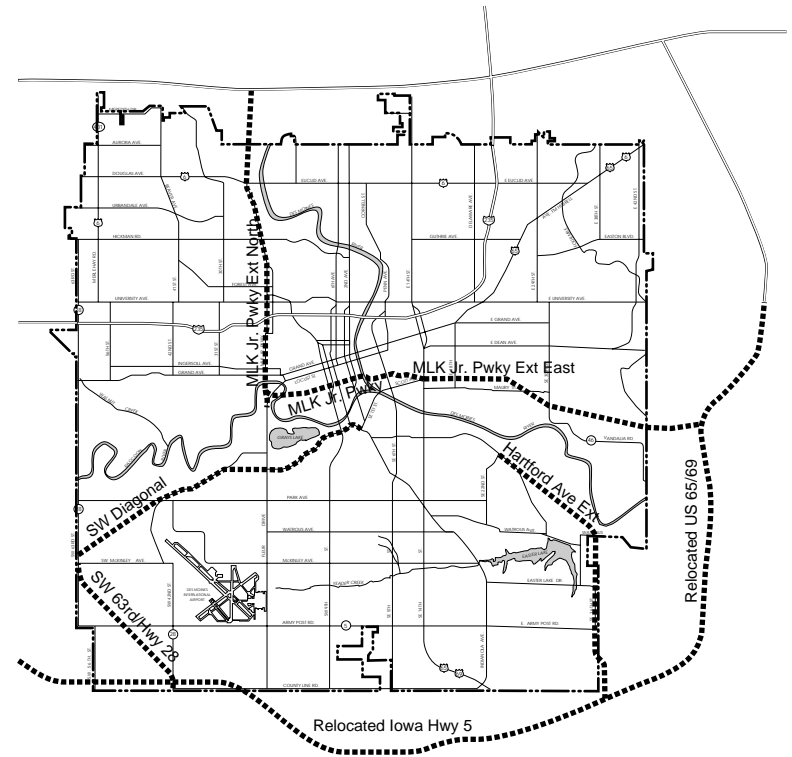
The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) fulfills a crucial need for Des Moines and the metropolitan area. The Committee identified public transit as a weakness in the community, and the loss of additional funds for that purpose as a threat to the city's well-being. In the past ten years erosion of federal support has resulted in the MTA becoming a skeleton system. A strong commitment is needed to restore a full service public transit system.

The Des Moines International Airport's impact on economic development and job growth cannot be underestimated. It is owned by the City of Des Moines and governed by an administrative agency board appointed by the City Council. Approximately 1,771 jobs are linked directly to employment at the airport and related services. An additional 2,042 jobs are supported indirectly by the airport. Cargo carried by all-cargo carriers operating at the airport has increased at an average annual rate of 22% from 1986 to 1991. The airport is self-supporting and has been operating with a surplus. However, the city's current fiscal difficulties create problems for airport expansion. Revenue sources are needed to finance improvements to the runways and the terminal. The city has a limited ability to issue additional debt. The airport may need to issue airport revenue bonds or rely on Polk County to issue general obligation bonds.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
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1 *Promote the concept of balanced growth by developing a comprehensive highway system.***R**

- 1a. Complete the beltway around Des Moines by promoting the completion of relocated Highway 65/69 on the northeast and relocated Highway 5 on the south.
- 1b. Develop an arterial system throughout Des Moines
 - i. Continue efforts to complete Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to continue its extensions north to connect to I-35/80 and east to connect to relocated US 65.
 - ii. Develop the concept, preserve the right-of-way, and complete the southwest diagonal.
 - iii. Develop the concept for and complete the extension of Hartford Avenue to the east and south to provide for growth to that recently annexed part of the city.
- 1c. Support the Des Moines City Council position for the expansion of I-235 which seeks a balance of safety, conservation of neighborhoods, function, and beauty.



Source: Metropolitan Planning Organization

Balanced growth is defined as growth spread equally throughout the county rather than only expanding in one direction.

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Action	Rationale
<p>2 <i>Support transportation policies that reinforce investment in older neighborhoods and improve traffic flow in Des Moines.</i></p>	<p>2a. Maintain and improve existing city streets, striving for a balance between the rates of decline and repair.</p> <p>2b. Balance the need for through automobile traffic in neighborhoods with the pedestrian and bikeway needs of residents.</p> <p>2c. Design the improvements to major streets consistent with the surrounding land use, particularly to enhance residential areas.</p>	<p>Automobile traffic can have detrimental impacts on the quality of life in a neighborhood. Traffic decisions must involve the residents of the neighborhood and consider both through and local traffic. Function and beauty should also be considered when developing and improving roadways. Major streets should enhance the unique beauty of individual neighborhoods. That is the secret of civic charm.</p>
<p>3 <i>Explore alternative means of transportation.</i></p>	<p>3a. Preserve existing railroad rights-of-way for bike trail or other transportation uses.</p> <p>3b. Implement a phased master plan for a logical and extensive system of dedicated pedestrian/bikeways throughout the city.</p> <p>3c. Work with metropolitan governments to provide linkages to the regional bikeway system.</p>	<p>Bikeways provide an alternative source of transportation and expanded recreational opportunities. The city should continue to pursue grant opportunities as well as work closely with the metropolitan governments to develop bikeway systems.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>4 <i>Support public transportation as an essential service for the City of Des Moines and metropolitan area.</i></p>	<p>4a. Find alternative funding to replace the federal funds that are lost.</p> <p>4b. Provide a full service transit system that assures efficient and economical access to job opportunities.</p> <p>4c. Develop a convenient public transportation shuttle to connect the State Capitol complex and downtown areas of employment, retail, and housing.</p>	<p>Many comments at the Congress of Boards concerned the importance of transit and its financing . The Committee agreed with the comments on the whole. However, the City Council has authorized a study and established a committee to look at funding and service issues for the metropolitan transit authority. The Committee members did not want to be more spectific until the study was complete.</p>
<p>5 <i>Support the future development of the Des Moines International Airport, including its concept as an intermodal facility.</i></p>	<p>5a. Promote and support the development and redevelopment of the airport consistent with the approved Airport Master Plan.</p> <p>5b. Promote and market expansion of passenger airline, air cargo, and general aviation activities and services.</p> <p>5c. Promote and support efforts to make the airport more of an intermodal facility.</p> <p>5d. Ensure the form of airport governance enhances the airport's ability to obtain necessary capital funding.</p> <p>5e. Continue to use the airport as a tool for economic development.</p>	<p>The airport is a crucial part of Des Moines and the region's economic development strategy. Maintaining and building at the airport is necessary to retain and attract new business. The airport should pursue efforts to create new sources of revenue for development, redevelopment, and operation. Historically the airport has obtained city bonds for capital improvements. Improvements in the future may create the need for issuing airport revenue bonds or providing County general obligation bonds for Airport Capital Improvement.</p>



GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

*Provide an efficient system of city government that is honest, accessible, and inclusive.
Ensure Des Moines cooperates with other metropolitan governments for the betterment
of the city and the metropolitan area.*

Cooperation among different communities and government entities was a continuing theme throughout the strategic planning process. Every issue area has goals and strategic actions that can be strengthened through cooperation with another taxing body. Committee members believed this cooperation is so important that it might be forgotten in its importance as an overriding theme if it was not given a section of its own.

The Citywide Committee began its work in November of 1994. In that same month, an overwhelming majority of Polk County residents cast their votes against a proposed charter form of government. Recognizing the political impracticality of consolidating governments in the next few years, the Citywide Committee focused on cooperative efforts between communities and taxing bodies.

The City of Des Moines cooperates with a number of agencies and communities through 28E Agreements to share costs and ultimately save taxpayer monies. The term "28E Agreement" refers to the chapter in the Iowa Code that allows such agreements to be developed. The purpose of a 28E is to permit state and local governments in Iowa to make efficient use of their powers by enabling them to provide joint services and facilities. The ICA sewer project, Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Metro Solid Waste were formed by 28E Agreements.

The City of Des Moines is carrying the cost of some services that benefit the entire community. These include the burden of tax-exempt facilities, regional parks, and facilities like the Convention Center. Cooperation among communities could permit the tax burden to be more equitably distributed. The Committee saw this as a "win-win" situation in which the entire metropolitan area would benefit.

Governance within the City of Des Moines was also discussed. Efficiency and economy in government, involving citizens in decision making, and ensuring that elected officials, appointed board members, and city staff always have the highest of values and ethics in dealing with the public are all key points in achieving the community's vision statement.

Volunteerism as a way to expand resident involvement in government was a continuing topic of discussion. Volunteers can accomplish a variety of tasks in city parks, city libraries, and other buildings and special events. Volunteerism is an effective way to accomplish more while also encouraging residents to take ownership of their city. A professional coordinator or coordinators is needed to increase volunteerism.

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>1 <i>Cooperate with metropolitan governments to provide efficient services for the metropolitan community.</i></p>	<p>1a. Continue existing and develop new intergovernmental agreements that will provide efficient services for citizens of Des Moines and the entire metropolitan community.</p> <p>1b. Create a task force of members who represent the County, all school districts, and all cities of the County to confront the serious problems of homelessness and imminent homelessness of children and adults.</p>	<p>According to a study completed by Drake University, <i>Homeless Children and Families in Iowa, the 1994 Summary</i>, there are 2,988 homeless persons in Des Moines, including 755 youth. Many of these persons may have come from different cities and towns throughout the County. The problem of homeless persons does not start or stop at the city limits.</p>
<p>2 <i>Demonstrate the city's long-term commitment to housing by cooperating in the development of a regional strategic housing plan.</i></p>	<p>2. Join with all other metropolitan governments to employ a housing consultant to develop a regional strategic housing plan in coordination with a citizen task force.</p>	<p>Housing is a regional asset and a regional concern. To show long-term commitment to housing and all the citizens of the metropolitan area, regardless of income, the County and all cities of the County need to cooperate to develop a strategic plan for housing.</p>
<p>3 <i>Diversify the metropolitan area's revenue base.</i></p>	<p>3a. Support the adoption of a 1% local option sales tax to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. lessen local government dependence on property tax; ii. infuse monies from those living outside the metropolitan area into the metropolitan tax base. <p>3b. Propose legislation to create a system of regional tax base sharing for new commercial and industrial property.</p>	<p>One reason that the city's triple A bond rating was lowered to double A was the city's dependence on the property tax. Any sales tax would need to be at least Polk County wide and would help all cities diversify revenue.</p>

GOVERNANCE STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale																																																																																																									
4 <i>Work with metropolitan governments to ensure the continued economic health of the metropolitan community.</i>	4a. Promote an environment in which metropolitan area citizens recognize the importance of a vital downtown, strong central city neighborhoods, and healthy suburban areas.	<p style="text-align: center;">Polk County Municipalities 100% Valuation Growth 1978 to 1994</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>City</th> <th>1978 100% Valuation</th> <th>1994 100% Valuation</th> <th>1994 Inflation* Adjusted</th> <th>% Growth Inflation Adjusted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Des Moines</td><td>2,700,314,588</td><td>5,206,238,540</td><td>6,129,548,451</td><td>-15.06%</td></tr> <tr><td>Alleman</td><td>7,735,837</td><td>13,454,061</td><td>17,559,875</td><td>-23.38%</td></tr> <tr><td>Altoona</td><td>77,543,292</td><td>210,071,009</td><td>176,018,516</td><td>19.35%</td></tr> <tr><td>Ankeny</td><td>233,778,515</td><td>680,945,856</td><td>530,662,887</td><td>28.32%</td></tr> <tr><td>Bondurant</td><td>18,389,756</td><td>38,098,190</td><td>41,743,618</td><td>-8.73%</td></tr> <tr><td>Carlisle</td><td>258,179</td><td>585,190</td><td>586,050</td><td>-0.15%</td></tr> <tr><td>Clive</td><td>120,329,122</td><td>580,006,629</td><td>273,139,725</td><td>112.35%</td></tr> <tr><td>Elkhart</td><td>2,559,594</td><td>7,035,695</td><td>5,810,121</td><td>21.09%</td></tr> <tr><td>Grimes</td><td>26,419,409</td><td>90,609,549</td><td>59,970,438</td><td>51.09%</td></tr> <tr><td>Johnston</td><td>69,593,636</td><td>303,521,460</td><td>157,973,284</td><td>92.13%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mitchellville</td><td>15,908,114</td><td>34,188,171</td><td>36,110,443</td><td>-5.32%</td></tr> <tr><td>Pleasant Hill</td><td>99,976,913</td><td>166,822,133</td><td>226,941,459</td><td>-26.49%</td></tr> <tr><td>Polk City</td><td>15,746,044</td><td>40,664,744</td><td>35,742,554</td><td>13.77%</td></tr> <tr><td>Runnells</td><td>3,066,174</td><td>7,597,771</td><td>6,960,027</td><td>9.16%</td></tr> <tr><td>Sheldahl</td><td>1,188,680</td><td>2,442,852</td><td>2,698,231</td><td>-9.46%</td></tr> <tr><td>Urbandale</td><td>291,413,356</td><td>1,162,517,811</td><td>661,490,440</td><td>75.74%</td></tr> <tr><td>West Des Moines</td><td>414,195,673</td><td>1,816,604,490</td><td>940,198,767</td><td>93.21%</td></tr> <tr><td>Windsor Heights</td><td>97,942,893</td><td>198,960,329</td><td>222,324,358</td><td>-10.51%</td></tr> <tr><td>Rural</td><td>523,317,983</td><td>966,649,403</td><td>1,187,899,716</td><td>-18.63%</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>4,719,677,758</td><td>11,527,013,883</td><td>10,713,378,960</td><td>7.59%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>*100% Values were multiplied by 1994 Consumer Price Index of 1.2699387.</small></p> <p><small>Source: Polk County Auditor's Office</small></p> <p>Only four communities have experienced significant real growth in their inflation adjusted valuations — Clive, Johnston, Urbandale, and West Des Moines. Even Ankeny, which has been growing in population, has only a 28% increase in valuation when adjusted for inflation. Almost half of the communities in Polk County, including Des Moines, have lost valuation when adjusted for inflation.</p>	City	1978 100% Valuation	1994 100% Valuation	1994 Inflation* Adjusted	% Growth Inflation Adjusted	Des Moines	2,700,314,588	5,206,238,540	6,129,548,451	-15.06%	Alleman	7,735,837	13,454,061	17,559,875	-23.38%	Altoona	77,543,292	210,071,009	176,018,516	19.35%	Ankeny	233,778,515	680,945,856	530,662,887	28.32%	Bondurant	18,389,756	38,098,190	41,743,618	-8.73%	Carlisle	258,179	585,190	586,050	-0.15%	Clive	120,329,122	580,006,629	273,139,725	112.35%	Elkhart	2,559,594	7,035,695	5,810,121	21.09%	Grimes	26,419,409	90,609,549	59,970,438	51.09%	Johnston	69,593,636	303,521,460	157,973,284	92.13%	Mitchellville	15,908,114	34,188,171	36,110,443	-5.32%	Pleasant Hill	99,976,913	166,822,133	226,941,459	-26.49%	Polk City	15,746,044	40,664,744	35,742,554	13.77%	Runnells	3,066,174	7,597,771	6,960,027	9.16%	Sheldahl	1,188,680	2,442,852	2,698,231	-9.46%	Urbandale	291,413,356	1,162,517,811	661,490,440	75.74%	West Des Moines	414,195,673	1,816,604,490	940,198,767	93.21%	Windsor Heights	97,942,893	198,960,329	222,324,358	-10.51%	Rural	523,317,983	966,649,403	1,187,899,716	-18.63%	Total	4,719,677,758	11,527,013,883	10,713,378,960	7.59%
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	4b. Pursue state legislation for major metropolitan areas that would restrict use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and tax abatement to areas with slum and blight conditions.																																																																																																										
	4c. Improve metropolitan transit services and facilities to ensure the ability of all residents to take advantage of job opportunities efficiently and economically.																																																																																																										
	4d. Develop proactive programs that link the business sector and the metropolitan area educational systems to develop labor force skills that are needed to support existing and future job growth.																																																																																																										
	4e. Develop a metro-wide strategy to ensure residents access to high-quality, safe, and affordable child care by acquiring needed funding and coordinating with area employers, schools, and child care organizations, facilities, and providers.																																																																																																										

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>5 <i>Work with metropolitan governments to ensure the costs and benefits of cultural and tax-exempt properties and facilities are shared by all residents.</i></p>	<p>5a. Develop and implement a funding system by either Polk County or an independent metro-wide board for city-owned services and facilities which are regional in nature: Botanical Center, Convention Center, Veterans' Auditorium, Blank Park Zoo, and Department of Human Rights.</p> <p>5b. Strongly encourage other cities to contribute, in proportional significance, to the operating expenses of cultural facilities that are regional in nature and nonprofit or not-for-profit such as the Science Center, Civic Center, and Art Center.</p> <p>5c. Propose legislation to permit a county-wide levy to pay for costs of providing police and fire protection to tax-exempt property.</p> <p>5d. If a county-wide levy cannot be approved, propose a service charge be assessed on tax-exempt properties for the cost of providing police and fire protection.</p>	<p>A service charge on tax-exempt property to pay for the cost of police and fire protection would be the last choice of Committee members to lessen the financial impact of tax-exempt properties. These facilities contribute to the community through cultural and charitable services and facilities. Such facilities often require operating subsidies from government to meet expenses so that the service charge may actually be paid by government. Committee members believe a better alternative is to ensure that the costs of the tax-exempt facilities are spread throughout the County and not directly assessed to the tax-exempt property.</p>
<p>6 <i>Cooperate on regional issues such as transportation, recreational trails, and growth to benefit all metropolitan cities.</i></p>	<p>6. Work with metropolitan governments to provide linkages to the regional bikeway system.</p>	<p>Forging new partnerships among communities is essential to the success of any of the strategic actions dealing with parklands and recreation. Recreational trails and parkways must be planned and accepted by all municipalities and the surrounding counties to have a workable system. An equitable system of funding also needs to be developed and shared among communities and the County. Community cooperation for this kind of project can enhance the livability of the entire region and is a "win-win" type of community enhancement.</p>



GOVERNANCE STRATEGY (continued)

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>7 <i>Ensure efficiency and economy in providing city services.</i></p>	<p>7a. Maintain existing infrastructure and buildings and establish reserves for new projects.</p> <p>7b. Implement a zero-based budgeting system.</p> <p>7c. Invest in technology systems that are efficient and cost-effective.</p> <p>7d. Conduct and implement a Compensation Plan Study and include job descriptions that promote cross-training of duties.</p> <p>7e. Evaluate both public and private sector delivery systems regularly to implement, over the long-term, the most efficient and cost-effective services.</p>	<p>Investing in the latest technology systems can provide more efficiency at less cost than other innovations. Financing technological systems in the face of Des Moines' budget problem is a large concern. Even if technology is added incrementally as funds permit, the city should have an overall vision and plan for implementing the right types of technology. Without such a plan, bad decisions can be made that waste money rather than contribute to efficiency.</p>
<p>8 <i>Continue strategic planning efforts.</i></p>	<p>8. Continue to convene a citizens' strategic planning committee on an annual basis to ensure goals are being achieved.</p>	<p>A citizen-led strategic planning process provides elected officials and staff with a continuing reality check. It allows a wide range of citizens to become involved in the future of the community through public hearings and other public meetings. It also encourages innovative thinking on broad strategic issues that face the city. Lastly, strategic planning is by definition continuing — it is never done!</p> <p>Strategic planning for the City of Des Moines requires education about a variety of city functions but also requires innovative, fresh thinking. Future committees should consist of new members but provide some overlap with the 1994-1995 Committee. A citywide strategic planning committee could be appointed annually and include some members from the previous committee along with new City Council appointments.</p>

Goal	Strategic Actions	Rationale
<p>9 <i>Expand resident involvement in the decisions that affect the community.</i></p>	<p>9a. Develop paid volunteer coordinator positions to work with volunteers on community improvements.</p> <p>9b. Educate and inform the public about community issues and decisions.</p> <p>9c. Develop and implement informational programs and leadership training for residents.</p>	<p>Volunteer coordinators could assure the right people and resources are available to work with city staff and resources to address problems. The Coordinator could also work with other agencies and resources, such as the Iowa Commission on National and Community Service, the United Way of Central Iowa, and numerous private sector resources, to utilize volunteers and get things accomplished.</p>
<p>10 <i>Ensure all citizens receive responsible and respectful treatment in matters of governance from City Government officers, employees, and board members, including, but not limited to, providing thorough and complete information, issuing permits, reviewing projects, and inspecting properties.</i></p>	<p>10. Establish training to assure all city officers, board members, and employees understand the conflict of interest provisions in the city code and any applicable ethical standards.</p>	<p>Providing accessible and accountable government depends on the elected officials and the quality of appointed board members and employees. All employees and others associated with the city should strive to provide the best of service to all citizens and businesses of Des Moines. To deliver this service, employees and board members should be trained in conflict of interest matters and customer service as well as techniques to improve job skills.</p> <p>A code of ethics does not currently exist for city employees or appointed board members. Such a code should be developed, using input from employees and board members, and be well-publicized so that all employees know what is expected of them in providing fair and equitable service.</p>

Getting Started

The Need for a Strategic Plan

The strategic planning process began with a City Council decision that the City of Des Moines needed a strategic plan. Mayor John “Pat” Dorian and Council Members Preston Daniels and Christine Hensley were appointed on December 20, 1993, to propose the method for establishing the strategic planning process. The Council’s action stated that the Strategic Plan was intended to address the full spectrum of issues that affect the city’s future, including but not limited to, fiscal matters, public safety, infrastructure, metropolitan growth management, intergovernmental relations, and economic development. Given existing budget problems, the strategic planning process was the only major new initiative implemented by the Des Moines City Council in 1994.

Forming the Committee — September and October 1994

The City Council approved the process early in 1994 for appointment of the members of the Citywide Committee. Twenty-nine individuals were to be charged with the task of developing the Des Moines Strategic Plan. Each Council member was to appoint three members to the committee, and an additional eight members were to be recommended by the council appointees. This framework permitted the 21 council appointees to examine the Committee’s composition and to request additional appointments from areas of the community that appeared to be underrepresented.

The Council appointees established a nominating subcommittee to suggest the additional candidates. The City Council was requested to appoint additional members from Drake University, the Neighborhood Advisory Board, the Plan and Zoning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the Council was asked to appoint a high school student to represent youth concerns and appoint two other citizens who are very active in the community.

The Ward IV Council member declined to participate in the development of the Plan and the appointment of the Committee members. The Committee requested that the Mayor and each at-large Council person nominate an additional member to the committee with special considerations to be given for residents of Ward IV.

This selection process produced a Committee composed of individuals from all walks of life who are involved in a wide variety of volunteer and other community activity. Members are active in neighborhood organizations, school improvement, civil rights, sport and other recreation activity, women’s issues, and general community improvement. The members work in or are retired from many different occupations including education, insurance, law, design and architecture, and industry. Some of the members have lived in Des Moines their entire lives and others are relative newcomers. There are members who live on the east side of the City, the west side, the south side, and the north side. The ages of the members range from teenage to those in their sixties and seventies. The membership is gender balanced and diverse in ethnicity and race.

City Staff Steering Committee

City staff provided technical expertise throughout the plan development process. Directors and Assistant Directors provided initial background and information for the Committee members and attended meetings related to their area of expertise. City staff also researched Committee ideas and offered input and evaluation into the process. The Committee members listened as closely to staff members as they listened to all persons involved in the process. In writing and prioritizing the goals, the Committee members worked diligently to use all the information provided to them and propose the ideas that would be best for the future of Des Moines.

Identification of Issues — November and December 1994

During the first two Committee meetings, the members brainstormed about the important issues that face the City of Des Moines and its residents. Committee members completed questionnaires to identify strengths and weaknesses confronting Des Moines as a way to crystallize their views as individuals and as a Committee. Letters were sent to members of all the City Boards and Commissions to obtain input concerning issues that should be considered by the Committee.

Research

Retreats and Subcommittees —January through May 1995

The Committee decided to hold three Saturday morning retreats during the months of January, February, and March. These retreats were designed to expand the Committee members' knowledge of specific services and functions, the fiscal condition of the City, and the implications of regulations imposed by federal and state government on the City.

The structure of this Plan and its key ideas are subdivided along the lines formed by a subcommittee process. Eight subcommittees of the Citywide Strategic Plan were organized. Individual members chose which subcommittee to join and many members served on more than one subcommittee.

Committee	Chairperson
•Fiscal	Merle Fleming
•Infrastructure	Catherine Deitz-Kilen
•Economic Development	Jonathan Narcisse
•Public Safety	Tim Tarbell
•Housing and Neighborhoods	Sonja Roberts
•Transportation and Growth	Dan Flaherty
•Recreation, Culture, and Education	Meg Carey
•Youth	Ruth Ann Gaines

The purpose of each subcommittee was to

- Establish a data base
- Select key issues on which to focus
- Develop mission statements and large goals
- Submit the mission statements and goals for consideration by the Committee
- Present information to and answer questions from the full Committee at general meetings

Retreats:

Retreat I — *January 7, 1995 Des Moines Airport*

- **Fiscal Condition of the City** - by Mark Durham, CPA, Assistant Director, Research and Budget Department
- **Economic Development** - by Scott Stricker, Economic Development Administrator
- **Infrastructure** - by Harold Smith, City Engineer
- **Youth** - by Sgt. Mike Leeper, Police Department, and Don McLaughlin, Assistant to the Director, Parks and Recreation

Retreat II — *February 4, 1995 Police Academy*

- **Transportation Issues** - by James Thompson, Director, Traffic and Transportation
- **Growth Management and Annexation** - by James Grant, Director, Community Development
- **Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization** - by Gary Lozano, Assistant Director, Community Development
- **Crime and Public Safety** - by Asst. Chief Nickolas Brown, Police Department

Retreat III — *March 4, 1995 Waveland Club House*

- **Leisure Time and Recreation** - by Don Tripp, Director, Parks and Recreation
- **Library** - by Laura Isenstein, Director, Public Library
- **Education** - by Dr. Earl Bridgewater, Des Moines Public Schools
- **Downtown and River Front** - by Patricia Zingsheim, Principal Planner, Community Development

Copies of these documents are available at the City's Community Development Department.

Outreach

Communications with City Council and other City Boards and Commissions

City Council established a liaison committee consisting of Christine Hensley, Preston Daniels, and Mayor John “Pat” Dorrian to work with the Citywide Committee. The Committee presented its early work to the Council at a special Council meeting on February 27, 1995. Members of the Committee also met with Council members in person or by telephone to keep them informed about the work of the Committee.

Committee members who represented the Plan and Zoning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the Neighborhood Advisory Board reported regularly on the strategic plan process and progress. In addition, subcommittee chairs and others attended and gave presentations to the Plan and Zoning Commission and Neighborhood Advisory Board. A joint meeting of the Youth Subcommittee of the Citywide Committee and the City’s Youth Coordinating Board was held.

Coordination with *Destination Downtown*

A separate strategic planning process and 23 member committee was created for developing a strategic plan for the Des Moines downtown. The planning process was a joint effort between the city and Downtown Partnership, Inc. Subcommittees of the two strategic planning committees met during the development of the two plans and at the Downtown Plan’s conclusion. Members of both committees stressed the many similarities in the two plans, including the process of issue development, visioning, goal setting, and prioritization. There is a high correlation of intent and strategic goals and virtually no conflict at the goal level of the plans. The Citywide Strategic Plan incorporates many of the Downtown goals.

Public Meetings — June and July 1995

Public meetings were held in each of the five Des Moines high schools during the last week of June and early July. Citywide Committee members provided a short slide presentation of the Plan’s process and the subcommittee work to that point and received comments and answered questions. Attendance varied at the five locations, but there was active participation by citizens at each meeting. The subjects raised varied. Citizen comments often focused on the fiscal condition of Des Moines and its position in relation to the suburbs and rural Polk County. For example, the needs of young people, city and neighborhood partnerships, and the need for mass transit were emphasized at the East High meeting. All comments were considered in the next step—Decisions! Decisions! Decisions!

Working with a Facilitator

The members of the Committee concluded that an outside facilitator was needed to help move through the key steps of strategic planning. Tim Shields, Director of the Institute of Public Affairs, University of Iowa, facilitated five meetings to create a vision statement, finalize goals, and develop consensus. With Shields’ assistance, the Committee worked through the Vision Statement word by word, the goals and strategic actions line by line, and reached consensus on the priorities.

Final Steps

Action Subcommittee — August, September, October 1995

An Action Subcommittee was formed for the task of preparing the language of the goals and the strategic actions that are intended to implement the plan. The members of the Action Subcommittee met weekly for three months to develop a written draft of a plan from the subcommittee work and the input received at the public meetings. These meetings were tedious but resulted in language that refined and accurately expressed goals and actions. That work is the basis for the Plan's development. The full membership of the Committee amended and adopted the subcommittee's work during a series of follow-up meetings.

Developing the Vision — August 1995

Facilitator Shields assisted the Committee in development of the key components of the Vision Statement. The Committee reviewed the reports of the subcommittees, the presentations by city staff members, and the input received from other citizens in the public meetings. The Action Subcommittee met and prepared the statement for presentation to the August meeting of the entire Committee when final minor touches were made. The Vision Statement which appears on page 6 of this Plan was adopted by the Committee and sent to City Boards and Commissions and neighborhood groups in an August newsletter.

Identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

The Action Subcommittee engaged in an exercise known as SWOT which stands for four words: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The exercise is a method that is used to identify the perceived impact of a goal or action on the city. In other words, the exercise is a means to help develop the rationale for goals that are contained in this Strategic Plan.

Further SWOT activities were undertaken to help members of the Subcommittee evaluate the goals that they had developed. Subsequently, four committee members and Community Development Director Jim Grant conducted two lengthy sessions to evaluate forty-two goals on a scale from zero to four to estimate the impact each goal would have on an identified strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat. The resulting numbers were used to analyze the impact a specific goal might have on strengths and opportunities or weaknesses and threats to the City of Des Moines. The exercise resulted in the identification of nineteen distinct goals which were presented to the Citywide Committee as a beginning for its priority decisions.

Final Prioritization — October 1995

The final prioritization by the Citywide Committee began with the nineteen goals developed in the SWOT process. Twelve additional goals were added to the list for consideration as top priority goals. Facilitator Shields assisted the members to place the goals into four priority groupings. The process produced eight Group I Priorities upon which there was remarkable consensus, four Group II Priorities, nineteen Group III Priorities, and the remaining thirty-three goals were placed in a fourth group.

An Editing Subcommittee reviewed all the Committee's goals and action strategies on October 25 and presented its recommendation to the Citywide Committee on November 1, 1995. The subcommittee recommended no changes to the Group I Priority goals because of the Committee's strong consensus but did recommend a few changes to the other priorities.

The Committee adopted the Strategic Plan Draft priorities on November 1 as follows:

Group I Priority Goals:	Eight Goals (Two combined at Nov. 1 meeting)
Group II Priority Goals:	Ten Goals (Four selected October 18 plus six moved up from Priority III goals)
Group III Priority Goals:	Forty-six Goals (The Priority #3 and #4 groups were combined in one general #3 group for clarity of presentation.)

Adoption

Congress of Boards — November 1995

A Congress of Boards was called for November 9, 1995. The draft Strategic Plan was presented to members of City Boards and Commissions and the general public at the Botanical Center. The draft document was distributed and a short presentation of the Group I and Group II priorities was made by Committee members. Most of the meeting was devoted to questions and answers regarding the Draft Plan. The comments were generally favorable and almost all of the questions were answered by reference to strategic actions included in some section of the Plan.

The Congress was attended by Members of the Plan and Zoning Commission, Neighborhood Advisory Board, Youth Advisory Board, Sister Cities Commission, Enterprise Community Steering Committee, Urban Renewal Board, Public Housing Board, Access Advisory Board, Des Moines Action Board, and Des Moines Water Works Board. Members of the Des Moines City Council and Des Moines Public School Board also attended.

Several changes were made at a follow-up meeting to reflect concerns of those who attended the Congress of Boards. Language was added to ensure that all goals were intended to improve the lives of all citizens of Des Moines, regardless of income. Several comments concerning mass transit were discussed by the Committee, but it is believed further study is required. Transit problems are among the issues that could be considered by an ongoing strategic planning committee if it is established as recommended by the current Committee.

Adoption by City Council — December 1995

The final action to be taken by the Citywide Committee was presentation of the Plan to the Des Moines City Council on December 18, 1995. The Plan, including its priorities, was adopted by a vote of 7-0 with the following resolution:

1. The Citywide Strategic Plan, entitled *Des Moines Today and Tomorrow*, is hereby adopted;
2. The Citywide Strategic Plan is hereby referred to the City Manager for an action plan to be developed within 180 days that includes programs, cost estimates, and schedule;
3. The Citywide Strategic Plan Committee meet with the City's Legislative Committee to review proposed legislative actions; and
4. The action plan to be developed by the City Manager shall address the recommendation of an ongoing Citywide Strategic Planning committee, with some overlap of members, to be appointed to ensure accountability, credibility, and continuity.

Citywide Strategic Planning Committee

Name in [] is Council Person or organization that appointed the Committee member.

William M. Dikis, Chair
[Daniels]

Meg Carey
[Daniels]

Louise Stern Ladin
[Hensley]

Phil Riley
[Committee]

Sheldon Biber, Vice-Chair
[Hensley]

Al Cabbage
[Committee/Drake]

Matt Lozier
[Committee/Youth/ High School Student]

Sonja Roberts
[Committee/Plan & Zoning Commission]

Ruth Ann Gaines, Vice-Chair
[McPherson]

Catherine C. Dietz-Kilen
[Daniels]

Marty Mauk
[Committee/Neighborhood Advisory Board]

Joseph Schaefer
[Vlassis]

Linda Cottingham, Vice-Chair
[Destination Downtown, Dorrian]

Virgil Douglas
[Flagg]

Jonathan R. Narcisse
[Vlassis]

Clarke Stewart
[Committee/Chamber of Commerce]

Mary Brubaker
[Flagg]

Jacqueline Easley
[Daniels/ Des Moines Public School Board]

Robert Neriem
[Flagg]

Dr. Fred W. Strickland, Jr.
[Dorrian]

Inga Bumbarly-Langston
[Hensley]

Daniel Flaherty
[McPherson]

Prasong “Pak” Nurack
[Committee]

Tim Tarbell
[McPherson]

David Bush
[Committee/Park & Recreation Board]

Merle W. Fleming
[Flagg]

Richard Pennington
[Dorrian]

Amy Williams
[Vlassis]

Special thanks to

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