

# **City of Ottumwa, Iowa Goal Setting Report**

**March 19, 2008**

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**Mayor:**

**Dale M. Uehling**

**City Council:**

**Shannon Addison**

**Gordon Aistrope**

**Keith Caviness**

**Bob Meyers**

**Mitch Niner**

**City Staff:**

**Joseph Helfenberger, City Administrator**

**Ann Cullinan, City Clerk**



**Facilitated by:**

***Jeff Schott***

***Institute of Public Affairs***

***University of Iowa***

**CITY OF OTTUMWA, IOWA  
GOAL SETTING SESSION  
2008**

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# **CITY OF OTTUMWA, IOWA**

## **GOAL SETTING SESSION**

### **2008**

#### **Introduction**

The City of Ottumwa requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials.
3. Preparation of this final report.

#### **Goal Setting Work Session**

City Council Members and the Mayor held a work session conducted by the IPA on March 19, 2008. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Dale M. Uehling and Council Members Shannon Addison, Gordon Aistrope, Keith Caviness, Bob Meyers, and Mitch Niner. Also in attendance and participating in this meeting were City Administrator Joseph Helfenberger and City Clerk Ann Cullinan.

A preliminary session with department heads was held earlier on March 19. In attendance and participating in this meeting were City Administrator Joseph Helfenberger, City Clerk Ann Cullinan, Police Chief Jim Clark, Fire Chief Steve O'Connor, Human Resources Manager Janet Richards, City Planner Dave Shafer, Public Works Superintendent Steve Edgington, Director of Cemeteries, Health, Inspection and Solid Waste Health Jody Gates, Transit Director Pam Ward, Public Works Director Larry Seals, Public Information Coordinator Tom Rodgers, Water Pollution Control Facility Superintendent Bob Bruett, and City Attorney Tom Kintigh.

## **Major Accomplishments**

The following were identified as major accomplishments during the past two years:

- Completion of Bridgeview Events Center
- Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Project:
  - Completion of Phase 1
  - Beginning of Phase 2
  - Developed financial plan through Phase 3
  - Developed long-term control plan
- Continued street improvements
- Expansion of trail system
- Grant funding for streets and trails improvements
- Recognition of Main Street Program
- Economic development – new and expanded businesses:
  - Expansion of Al-Jon
  - Expansion of WimbcO Tank
  - Job Corps Center at Industrial Airport
  - Developments in the Omeco Industrial Park
  - Developments at the Airport Park
  - Millard Refrigeration Services expansion
  - Parks family developments
  - Frog Legs, Inc.
  - On-going expansions of Cadbury Schweppes – ABC Bottling
  - Expansion of John Deere – 200 jobs added
- Hiring/promoting competent individuals for key staff positions:
  - New City Administrator
  - New Police Chief adding emphasis on community relations
  - Other department heads
- Officially recognized as a “Keep Iowa Beautiful” city as a result of “Make Ottumwa Shine” committee’s application
- Signage placed around town to benefit visitors and citizens
- Sexual orientation clause added to Non-Discrimination Ordinance (in process)
- Implementing cardboard ban at landfill
- Additional emphasis on nuisance canvassing and abatement
- MS4 permit program
- Prairie Hills Senior Housing and Good Samaritan housing expansion
- Adoption of International Building and Fire Codes
- Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping system
- Beltway opening
- Adoption of updated City Personnel Policies
- Multi-year contracts with all city bargaining units

## **Major Accomplishments (continued)**

- Waste Water Treatment Plant improvements:
  - Addition of new process control software
  - 40% completion of communication system between plant and pump stations
  - Installation of emergency generators at sewage pump stations
  - Completion of Water Pollution Control Facility Plan
- K Avenue reconstruction
- Increased corporate aviation use of airport
- Airport improvements:
  - 13/31 lighting improvements
  - Terminal area apron and ramp improvement project
  - Improvements to door pockets at large hangar
  - Construction of new maintenance building
  - Building #39 demolition
  - Improvements scheduled for large hangar
- Strong regional retail and outlots available for development
- Fareway Store rezoning and future development
- Public interest and reinvestment in downtown – Synovate project

## **Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities**

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

- Operating deficit at Bridgeview Center
- Annexation
- Sewer separation costs – over \$195 million
- Operating deficit at Beach Ottumwa
- General Fund issues:
  - Percentage of General Fund for public safety
  - Public safety budgets
  - Impact of General Fund pressures on public safety services
  - Need for increase in sworn and non-sworn police personnel to reduce lengthy response times and crimes going uninvestigated
  - Shrinking General Fund money available for non-public safety operations
- City/County cooperation
- Extending sewers to serve Beltway area
- Expansion on Beltway
- Continuing street improvements
- To be recognized as the regional hub that we are

## **Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities (continued)**

- Promote positives of Ottumwa
- Economic development – seek and cultivate relationships that will bring jobs that range from minimum wage to middle income executive positions
- Need for a student-based entrepreneurial program to focus on creating future business owners and entice them to locate in Ottumwa
- Need to increase property tax base
- Flat revenues with growing infrastructure needs (streets, bridges, sewers, water mains)
- Combat negative opinions about city staff and city projects
- Attracting and retaining top quality applicants for key city positions
- Diversity issues
- Gang issues
- Financial impacts of state and federal mandates
- Need to assure a full and accurate count in upcoming 2010 census
- Retirement of key employees in next several years
- Need to increase road construction funding by \$2 million per year
- Impact of increasing fuel and utility costs
- Continued increase in streets damaged by water main breaks
- Need to coordinate water main replacement with street repair projects
- Deteriorating housing stock
- Need for energy conservation
- Alternatives to landfilling (recycling, waste-to-energy projects, etc.)
- Support growth of existing industries
- Upkeep and appearance of residential neighborhoods
- Increasing sewer rates
- Waste water treatment capacity – without additional capacity, cannot handle or treat new industrial growth
- Beautification of major highways through town
- New housing developments
- Preserving existing affordable housing stock
- Improve infrastructure in neighborhoods
- Need for additional rental housing units
- Utilize existing and/or new downtown buildings for housing
- Need for senior housing (town houses, condos)
- Housing to accommodate major employment expansion
- Airport infrastructure
- Need for municipal services and annexation to accommodate community growth
- Potential loss of federal funding of regional drug task force
- Need for commercial air service
- Need to 4-laning of Highway 63 south to Missouri
- Contracting for services at golf course

## **On-Going Priorities**

The following were identified as on-going priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period:

- Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) program
- Waste Water Treatment Plant improvements
- Street/bridge improvements
- Establish storm water utility
- Installation of emergency generators at pumping stations
- Continue trail development
- Implement long-range park plan – subject to available funding
- Bridgeview Event Center operations
- Continue nuisance abatement program
- Development of airport beltway area
- Continue planning regarding casino license
- Golf course – contract for services
- Continuing relationship with OEDC to promote economic development
- Continue to develop city-county relationship

## **Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives**

The participants reviewed potential projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period (listed in priority order):

- 1 Review Fire Department framework – identify alternatives, evaluate costs/benefits
- 2 (Tie) Promote/market the airport
- 2 (Tie) Develop energy conservation program

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered by the Mayor and City Council members is attached as **Exhibit A**.

## **Organizational Effectiveness**

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After review and discussion, the Mayor and City Council selected the following steps to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Strengthen emphasis on allowing City Administrator and department heads to carry out their duties without interference to allow them to be effective in performance of their duties
- Improve communications between council and staff prior to council meetings; assure City Administrator is kept in the loop
- Conduct strategic planning session for community
- Annual goal setting session and annual evaluation to review previous goals and track progress
- Mayor/Council team building
- Extend Capital Improvements Program to five-year cycle
- Establish volunteer program to match volunteers with projects
- Encourage Water Department to implement Capital Replacement Program and encourage replacement of water mains after certain number of breaks
- Do a better job of telling the city's story using multiple communications media
- Continue to improve community unification
- Provide training at least every two years on open meetings/public records laws to elected officials, board/committee members, and staff

**Note:** The agenda for the Goal Setting Session and the Preliminary Questionnaire are attached to this report as **Exhibits B** and **C** respectively.

## **Final Comments**

It was a pleasure to assist the City of Ottumwa with this goal setting process. I was extremely impressed with the level of cooperation and positive attitudes of the elected officials and city staff.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur.

It is recommended that city staff prepare an “action plan” for accomplishing the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. The action plan should then be presented to the Mayor and City Council for review and approval. It is also recommended that staff review with the Mayor and City Council the status of implementing the goals on a quarterly basis.

Jeff Schott  
Institute of Public Affairs  
University of Iowa  
March 20, 2008

## Exhibit A

# City of Ottumwa, Iowa Goal Setting Session – 2008

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### **SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED**

- Support Main Street endeavors
- Burn ban ordinance
- Review Fire Department framework – identify alternatives, evaluate costs/benefits
- Implement LEAN management concepts
- Mandatory annual inspections of all rental residential and commercial properties
- Identify methods to reduce city share of employee benefits
- Hire full-time grant writer to seek funds for all departments
- Develop program to promote in-fill housing development
- Seek to lower ISO rating
- Place outdoor wireless security cameras in downtown area
- Expand recycling for multi-family housing units
- Increase Mayor and Council compensation
- Prohibit semi trucks from driving through the city; establish a truck route
- License or issue permits for commercial and independent lawn services and snow plowing
- Develop program for graffiti elimination and beautification efforts
- Set signage standards for downtown businesses – no board or hand-painted signs
- Promote/market the airport
- City funding for regional drug task force if federal funding is cut or eliminated
- Develop program to achieve full, accurate census count in 2010
- Promote positives of Ottumwa
- Develop and implement college student entrepreneurial program
- Develop energy conservation program

**Exhibit B**

**AGENDA**

**CITY OF OTTUMWA  
GOAL SETTING SESSION - 2008**

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**WEDNESDAY MARCH 19, 2008  
5:00 PM – 9:00 PM  
Bridge View Center**

1. Introductions and Opening Comments
  - a. Name, Tenure, and Background
2. General Overview of the Meeting and the Goal Setting Process
  - a. The Ground Rules for this session
3. Progress Report and Update –2005 Strategic Planning Report
4. Review Recent City Accomplishments (2005 - 07)
5. Review Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities
6. Identification of On-Going Priorities
7. Identification of New Programs, Policies, Projects, and Initiatives
  - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
  - b. Ranking of Priorities
8. Discussion regarding organizational effectiveness
  1. Statement of Purpose
  2. Review Results of Questionnaire
9. IPA Report to the Mayor and City Council – 2008 Goal Setting Process
  - a. Development of Action Plan
  - b. Importance of Quarterly Updates
10. Questions, comments, and suggestions
11. Adjourn

Exhibit C

**GOAL SETTING SESSION – 2008  
CITY OF OTTUMWA  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The City of Ottumwa’s Goal- Setting Planning Session will be held on Wednesday March 19, 2008, at 5:00 PM at Bridge View Center. The purpose of the session will be to identify and prioritize the City’s overall goals and objectives for the next two years.

A preliminary session with department heads will be held on the same day at 10:00 AM in the city hall.

In order to prepare for this session, you are requested to identify key issues and potential objectives that will be reviewed and discussed at the session. Please complete all sections of this questionnaire. If you need additional space, please feel free to attach additional page(s).

**Major Accomplishments**

Please list the major city accomplishments over the past two years. These accomplishments could be as large as a street project or as simple as a newly adopted city policy. The items do not need to be in any particular order.

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**Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities**

Please list specific issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that affect future city services, policies, finances or operations (for example, loss of population, major new economic development success or resolving a policy question). You do not need to identify potential solutions to your concerns.

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**Significant Initiatives or Programs**

Please list any initiatives, programs or policies that you think the City should consider in the next two years (for example, downtown revitalization, updating employee job descriptions, adopting a policy on open burning, conducting an annexation study, reviewing water and sewer rates, etc.)

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**Organizational Effectiveness**

Please list several things that the Mayor/City Council and/or staff could do in the future to improve organizational effectiveness, decision-making process, teamwork and the ability to accomplish the City's stated goals and objectives.

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**RETURN OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please return this questionnaire to Barb Sasseen by **Monday, March 10, 2008.**