



**North Kansas City
Governing Body Retreat
Summary Report
August 2021**

Updated in May 2023

Facilitated by:



2023 Strategic Plan Update

On January 17, April 5, and April 18, 2023, the City Council discussed updates to Strategic Plan adopted in February 2022. Councilmembers shared ideas on new items to add to the City's Strategic Plan Update. After a robust conversation at the sessions, the City Council approved the new Strategic Plan Key Performance Areas and Priorities on May 2, 2023.

2023 Key Performance Areas and Priorities

I. Financial Stewardship

We are a financially stable, transparent organization with diverse revenue sources to support the ongoing function and growth of the City.

- Goal 1: Remove ongoing expenses from the Gaming Fund.
 - Pursue Use Tax.
 - Pursue Marijuana Sales Tax.
- Goal 2: Pursue Federal and State grants, both direct and pass-through.
- Goal 3: Modernize and streamline Water/Sewer billing, Business License, and all other permit processes.
 - Once complete, re-examine all Permit Fees, including impact fees.

2. Community Works

NKC offers amenities and services to enhance the quality of life.

- Goal 1: Develop resilient and sustainable green strategies.
 - Adopt a Native Tree and Plant Policy. This policy should include native grasses, pollinator plants, and trees to support natural habitats and stormwater management.
 - Once adopted, implement it at all City-owned flower beds.
 - Partner with the Missouri Department of Conservation to encourage and equip residents to plant native trees and plants on their property.
 - Consider adding a requirement for new development to incorporate the City's Native Tree and Plant Policy.
 - Work to address urban heat effect.
 - Continue Developing the City's Tree Canopy and Complete Tree Inventory.
 - Consider expanding landscaping requirements for new development to incorporate more tree canopies and green spaces.
 - Work to reduce carbon emissions.
 - Replace NKC vehicles with hybrid/electric vehicles to work toward a "Green Fleet."
 - Pursue grant funding for electric vehicle infrastructure in public spaces.
- Goal 2: Renovate Town Square and activate with programming.
- Goal 3: City Council Goals for Parks & Recreation.
 - Rebuild Howell Street playground to meet inclusive play standards.
 - Outdoor basketball courts.

3. Infrastructure

Plan for and execute capital improvements that support a sustainable community.

- Goal 1: Connect and improve transportation infrastructure, both within NKC and regionally.
 - Continue to implement the Burlington Corridor Project.
 - Continue to implement the Bike Master Plan.
 - Pursue developing and connecting trail systems.
 - Continue pursuing regional transportation systems, including public transit and KC Streetcar.
 - Improve pedestrian infrastructure, i.e., sidewalk gaps/width.
 - Update the NKC Parking Management Plan and include an accessible parking strategy.
- Goal 2: Improve and Sustain LiNKCity.
 - Complete a Fiber Technology Audit
 - Explore connecting multifamily structures to the fiber network.
- Goal 3: Address stormwater issues, such as erosion.

4. Economic Development

North Kansas City fosters a diverse and prosperous live/work/play environment.

- Goal 1: Collaborate on adaptive reuse or redevelopment opportunities, especially in areas with older building stock.
- Goal 2: Work to support housing and home ownership goals.
 - Incorporate affordable housing into any incentive request for multifamily developments.
 - Explore ways to increase homeownership opportunities.
- Goal 3: Develop programs to support small businesses located in NKC.
 - Explore a Small Business Grant Program with a focus on start-up businesses.
 - Reinvigorate the ExploreNKC program.
- Goal 4: Explore the development of City-owned land.

5. Engaged Organization

Be an employer of choice; facilitate active community involvement; foster effective two-way communication.

- Goal 1: Encourage a culture that fosters inclusiveness and open communication.
- Aggressively recruit for Boards and Commissions to reflect NKC.
- Citizens Academy
- Equity and Inclusion Committee
- Recruit for diversity in all levels of government.
- Goal 2: Develop and implement an organizational development training plan.
- Goal 3: Develop and implement a succession plan for crucial City positions.

August 20, 2021

High-Performance Governance

Workshop Goals

- Strengthen the working relationships between and among members of the governing body
- Consider the roles of the Mayor and City Council and staff
- Identify strategic priorities for the next one to five years

Why We Serve

Each member of the governing body brings a unique perspective and hopes for the community. Likewise, staff has chosen to be in public service and make the community they serve better.

Participants were asked to come prepared to share an “opening statement” answering the following:

Elected Officials

1. I ran for elective office because...
2. I hope to accomplish...
3. I have learned/have been surprised by...

Staff

1. I chose public service because...
2. I hope NKC achieves...

High-Performance Governance

Bridging the gap between what is politically acceptable (what we want to do) and what is operationally sustainable (can we do it) Increasingly, it is becoming more difficult to foster an effective relationship between political and administrative arenas--a prerequisite for getting things done. To work together effectively, there must be an understanding that politics is about conflicting values and that while governing body members and administrative staff use the same words to communicate with each other, they actually are speaking different languages and approaching problems with different mindsets.

Based on the teachings of Dr. John Nalbandian, these discussions provided a framework to better understand the work of the governing body, leading to more effective and satisfying governance and community building.

City Council-Staff Roles

Based on the research and writing of:

Dr. John Nalbandian
Professor of Public Administration, University of Kansas
Former Mayor and City Commissioner, Lawrence, Kansas

Obstacles to Success

- Working conditions
- Perspective of staff
- Competing values

There are no right or wrong answers for competing values. They involve difficult choices, which can lead to conflict.

Characteristics of Effective Governing Bodies

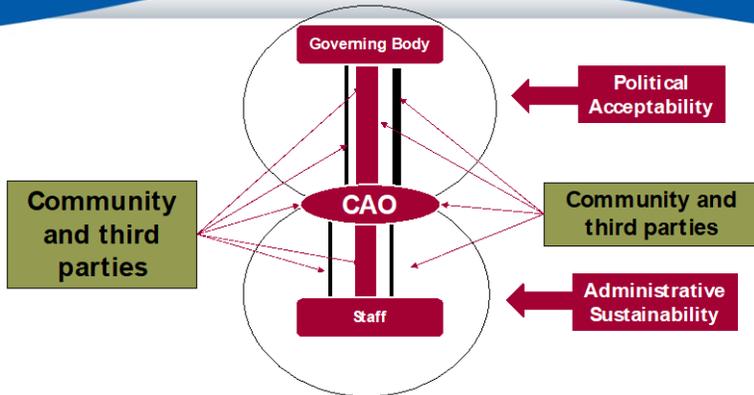
- Willingness to address difficult issues – the “big picture” problems facing the community
- Ability of the governing body to deal with the issues as a team
- Effective relationships with staff

Working in the Gap

- A gap exists and is growing between what is politically acceptable (what we want to do) and operationally sustainable (can we do it)
- Working the gap is facilitated by understanding that politics involves choices among conflicting values—no value profile is best
- And that politics and administration involve more than different behaviors; they are different ways of thinking

Competing Values

- Representation/Participation
- Efficiency/Professionalism
- Social Equity
- Individual Rights



Characteristics of Politics and Administration

	Political Acceptability		Operationally Sustainable
Characteristics	Politics		Administration
Activity	Game/allocation of values		Problem Solving
Players	Representatives/trustees		Experts-trustees
Conversation	"What do you hear?" ■ Passion ■ Dreams ■ Stories	CAO and Senior Staff in the GAP Electeds*	"What do you know?" ■ Data ■ Plans ■ Reports
Pieces	Intangible: Interests and symbols		Tangible: Information; money, people, equipment
Currency	Power (stories), loyalty, trust		Knowledge (deeds)
Dynamics	Constructive conflict, compromise, change		Predictability, cooperation, continuity

Following a review of the presentation, the governing body and staff engaged in an exercise to develop a set of norms by which they would work together.

Governing Body Expectations of Staff	Staff Commitments to Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute policy • Provide expertise • Clear and timely communication • Provide alternatives for recommendations, including specifics regarding one option is preferred over others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to the betterment of NKC. • We are committed to conduct ourselves in a professional manner. • Keep items confidential • Educate ourselves, keep up on best practices and provide the best technical expertise we can • Provide the best information possible to be as transparent as possible • Implement Council’s direction • Bring forth staff concerns • Help Council problem solve • Be proactive in communicating with council and residents • Be open minded.
Governing Body Commitments to Staff	Staff Expectations of Governing Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear questions, intentions and direction • Resources to be successful • Respect their input and expertise • Show up prepared and engaged • Respect their time • Support staff in implementation of polity direction • Patience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be respectful • Clear direction • Ownership of their direction • Conduct themselves in a professional manner • Staff is on the same team as Council. • Act in the best interest of the City as a whole • Come prepared for meetings • Understand there is a process and it takes time • Don’t bad mouth staff • Maintain and keep confidential information • Follow the chain of command • Understand there are limitations of staff capacity

The first day of the retreat concluded with the governing body reflecting on its ongoing work together.

April 2023 Goal Setting

In its tradition of strong local government, the Mayor and City Council met to review progress on existing goals, identify its hopes for the community, and coalesce around strategic priorities.

To ensure that this process results in a viable valuable management tool, the following actions should be considered.

Implementation Plan: This process identified five Key Performance Areas and priority goals. The Mayor, City Council, and staff should work together to identify objectives for each of those priority goals. In other words, what actions are necessary to achieve the priority goals, in what timeframe should they be achieved, and by whom.

Resource Allocation: These goals should be used as a guide when considering both financial and human resources. Implementing the plan will require necessary funding as determined in the annual budgeting process. As well, linking staff work to the strategic priorities not only moves toward those priorities being realized, but also helps staff to come together around common goals.

Communication: Efforts should be made to publicize the results of this process and progress that is made in achieving it. In addition, the plan should be communicated with stakeholders so that they are aware of the City's continued efforts.

Vision

*We are a vibrant, connected community with
deep roots and a future focus.
We are a safe, welcoming destination with ample
amenities for all!*

Key Performance Areas and Priorities

1. Financial Stewardship

We are a financially stable, transparent organization with diverse revenue sources to support the ongoing function and growth of the City.

- Goal 1: Pursue Federal and State Grants, both Direct and Passthrough.
- Goal 2: Remove Ongoing Expenses from the Gaming Fund.
- Goal 3: Modernize and Streamline Water Billing, Business License, and all other Permit Processes. Once complete, Re-examine all Permit Fees.
- Goal 4: Pursue Use Tax.

2. Community Works

NKC offers amenities and services to enhance the quality of life.

- Goal 1: Continue to Implement the Bike Master Plan, Trails, and Connections to Regional Transportation Systems.
- Goal 2: Complete Town Square and Activate with Programming.
- Goal 3: Continue to Fill in Gaps in the Tree Canopy and Complete Tree Inventory.
- Goal 4: Streetcar.

3. Infrastructure

Plan for and execute capital improvements that support a sustainable community.

- Goal 1: Improve and Sustain LiNKCity, and Complete a Fiber Technology Audit and Connect Multifamily Structures to the Fiber Network.
- Goal 2: Replace NKC vehicles with hybrid/electric vehicles to work toward a “Green Fleet.”
- Goal 3: Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure, i.e., Sidewalk Gaps/Width.
- Goal 4: Address Erosion Issues in NKC.

4. Economic Development

North Kansas City fosters a diverse and prosperous live/work/play environment.

- Goal 1: Collaborate on Redevelopment Opportunities, Especially in Industrial Areas and Affordable Housing.
- Goal 2: Develop a Small Business Grant Program with a Focus on Start-up Businesses.
- Goal 3: KCATA – Evaluate Current Contract and Service Levels.
- Goal 4: Continue Implementation of the Burlington Corridor Plan

5. Engaged Organization

Be an employer of choice; facilitate active community involvement; foster effective two-way communication.

- Goal 1: Aggressively Recruit for Boards and Commissions.
- Goal 2: Develop and Implement an Organizational Development Training Plan.
- Goal 3: Develop and Implement a Succession Plan.

Key Performance Areas and Priorities Mentioned, but Not Prioritized as Goals

Staff understands that these areas are important to the City Council, and will weave them into projects when possible. They may also be elevated to Goals as other Goals are achieved.

Financial Stewardship

- Pursue Marijuana Sales Tax.
- Explore the development of land use options for city-owned land.

Community Works

- Butterfly gardens.
- Rebuild Howell Street playground to meet including standards (Parks & Recreation).
- Outdoor basketball courts (Parks & Recreation).

Infrastructure

- Develop a native plant/tree policy.
- Parking study, including ADA parking.
- Consider the heat island effect.

Economic Development

- Update the Economic Development Policy.
- Work on expanding ExploreNKC branding.
- Work on City of NKC branding.

Engaged Organization

- Recruit for diversity in all levels of government.
- Encourage a culture that fosters inclusiveness and open communication.

August 21, 2021 Goal Setting

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Vision

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Key Performance Areas and Priorities

6. Financial Stewardship

We are a financially stable, transparent organization with diverse revenue sources to support the ongoing function and growth of the City.

- Goal 1: Implement Use Tax
- Goal 2: Implement Parks & Recreation Sales Tax
- Goal 3: Remove ongoing expenses from the Gaming Fund
- Goal 4: Consider debt issuance for major projects i.e., with water infrastructure

7. Community Works

NKC offers amenities and services to enhance the quality of life.

- Goal 1: Expand parks/green space at River Forest Park
- Goal 2: Implement complete streets, including levee trails
- Goal 3: Streetcar
- Goal 4: Rebuild Howell Street playground to meet inclusive standards

8. Infrastructure

Plan for and execute capital improvements that support a sustainable community.

- Goal 1: Improve and sustain LiNKCity
- Goal 2: Replace NKC vehicles with hybrid/electric vehicles to work toward a “Green Fleet”
- Goal 3: Complete a fiber technology audit
- Goal 4: Remove crosswalks that lead nowhere

9. Economic Development

North Kansas City fosters a diverse and prosperous live/work/play environment.

- Goal 1: Incent redevelopment, especially industrial areas, and affordable housing
- Goal 2: Develop housing repair and maintenance programs
- Goal 3: Offer sidewalk dining/parklet permits
- Goal 4: Resolve high school parking/general parking
- Goal 5: Develop small business grant program

10. Engaged Organization

Be an employer of choice; facilitate active community involvement; foster effective two-way communication.

- Goal 1: Provide competitive compensation and benefits package with policies that support individuals families
- Goal 2: Expand educational assistance/reimbursement
- Goal 3: Implement paid family-leave policy

Full Summary

Attending the workshop were:

Elected Officials

- Bryan DeLong, Mayor
- Anthony Saper, Ward I
- Wes Graves, Ward I
- Lisa Tull, Ward II
- Jesse Smith, Ward II
- Zachary Clevenger, Ward III
- Adam Roberts, Ward III
- Amie Clark, Ward IV
- Ana Pellumbi, Ward IV

Staff

- Kim Nakahodo, Interim City Administrator
- Anthony Sands, Public Works Director
- Casey Campbell, HR Manager
- Dave Hargis, Fire Chief
- Kevin Freeman, Police Chief
- Nick Hawkins, Finance Manager
- Sara Copeland, Community Development Director
- Stephen Roberts, Information Technology Manager
- Thomas E. Barzee, Jr., City Counselor
- Victoria Meier-Ressler, Parks and Recreation Director
- Crystal Doss, City Clerk

August 21, 2021

Understanding the Current Environment

Interim City Administrator Kim Nakahodo provided a progress report regarding accomplishments since the 2018 strategic planning session.

Participants were then asked to reflect on the following questions:

What other successes have there been?

- Dagg Park
- Dog Park
- Parks director and programming
- New “resident facing” businesses
- WTP renovation
- Staff and directors
- One North bike lanes
- Inclusion committee
- Small business accommodations during COVID
- CARES funding for businesses
- Operation Safe
- Increased residential units
- Rental inspection process improvements
- Bike master plan
- Community for all ages
- Grants – fire, Burlington Corridor
- Baseball field improvements
- Grocery store approval
- New progress for website

What lessons have been learned?

- When stall, prices go up
- Adapted, found government nimble through COVID
- Verify engineering costs
- Prepare for those most vulnerable
- The value of local government
 - Expectation, strengths, weaknesses, limitations
- Importance of building relationships

Vision Statement

To begin, participants were asked to discuss what kind of community they want North Kansas city to be and what they want to be known for.

- Low crime
- Financially stable
- Great amenities
- Free high-speed internet
- Healthy activities
- Welcoming to people
- Business friendly
- Clean
- Diverse
- Engaged residents
- Walkable/multimodal/connected
- Unique small businesses
- A+ infrastructure
- Small town feel
- Family friendly
- Varied entertainment opportunities
- Vibrant downtown

Participants then broke out into three groups to draft vision statements. Based on those drafts, consensus was reached on the following vision statement.

*We are a vibrant, connected community with
deep roots and a future focus.
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amenities for all!*

Key Performance Areas

As participants reflected on the newly developed vision statement, they engaged in an exercise to identify North Kansas City’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in achieving that vision. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization; opportunities and threats are external to the organization.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Location Staff LiNKCity Transportation network Unique businesses Infrastructure People Amenities Great staff Engaged council Great amenities Form-based zoning Clean Diverse revenue stream Manageable size Location Engaged legislative body Business relations Casino Parks system Public safety	Identity (NKC vs KCN) Infrastructure Landlocked Limited land Land scarcity/limited housing stock Old infrastructure Contamination Unfinished projects
Opportunities	Threats
#MOLEG Transportation network Regional connections Partnerships Hot market Opportunity zone New residents Levee trail Playground – River Forest Park Howell Park update Grants Unused city property Partnerships with MML, NLC, Streetcar	#MOLEG ULTs Climate COVID-19 MO general association Illiquid commercial real estate Flood Mighty MO State and federal legislation COVID-19 Economy/jobs

Goals and Priorities

Considering the key performance areas (KPAs), all participants were provided the opportunity to identify initiatives within the KPAs. They then participated in an exercise to prioritize those initiatives. The results of the exercise follow. (**Red** dots indicated general priority and **Blue** indicated the most important over the long term).

Financial Stewardship		
We are a financially stable, transparent organization with diverse revenue sources to support the ongoing function and growth of the City.		
Goal	Red	Blue
Implement Use Tax	5	-
Implement Parks & Recreation Sales Tax	4	
Remove ongoing expenses for the Gaming Fund		
Consider debt issuance for major projects i.e., with water infrastructure	2	-
Make plans for ARPA funds	-	
Explore development or land use options of vacant city-owned property	-	
Identify other revenue sources		-
Integrate strategic planning with budgeting		-
Implement interactive online budget tool	-	-
Create long-range financial plan	-	-
Build out a transparency portal and project portal	-	-
Update financial policies i.e., fund balance	-	-
Consider financial aspects of incentives	-	-
Use financial incentives to direct public benefits	-	-
Implement more streamlined water billing system	-	-
Re-examine all permit fees i.e., cost recovery, excise fees	-	-
Accomplish self-sufficiency within Water & Sewer rates	-	-
Be mindful and intentional when abating taxes	-	-

Community Works		
NKC offers amenities and services to enhance quality of life.		
Goal	Red	Blue
Expand parks/green space at River Forest Park	5	-
Complete Streets and Levee Trails	-	4
Streetcar	2	1
Rebuild Howell Street playground to meet inclusive standards	2	-
Basketball courts	2	-
Improve relationships with organizations that provide services to the homeless population	2	-
Offer child/adult care through People Care Services	-	2
Enhance partnerships with Human Services Agencies	1	-
Build out network in Bicycle Master Plan	1	-
Plant more trees throughout the City	1	-
Offer subsidized curbside composting	1	-
Explore removal of recycling pick-up and move to a centralized location	1	-
Complete skate park improvements	1	-
Offer career training/counseling	-	-
Expand bike share	-	-
Offer additional events in Town Square	-	-
Build a butterfly garden	-	-
Organize farmer's market inside a grocery store	-	-
Install additional public art	-	-
Keep and expand family programming	-	-
Improve sidewalks in Ward IV	-	-

Infrastructure

Plan for and execute capital improvement that support a sustainable community.

Goal	Red	Blue
Improve and sustain LiNKCity Network	3	3
Replace NKC vehicles with hybrid/electric vehicles to work toward a “Green Fleet”	-	5
Complete a fiber technology audit		
Remove crosswalks that lead nowhere		-
Develop native plant/tree policy		-
Consider heat island effect		-
Upgrade pedestrian infrastructure i.e., sidewalk width and gaps		-
Implement open data plan/standardization	-	-
Overhaul and update GIS	-	-
Improve sidewalks in Ward IV	-	-
Develop facilities management/maintenance plan	-	-
Decorate sidewalks	-	-
Parking meters downtown	-	-
Levee District coordination	-	-

Economic Development		
North Kansas City fosters a diverse and prosperous live/work/play environment.		
Goal	Red	Blue
Incentivize redevelopment more aggressively, especially industrial areas and affordable housing	6	-
Develop housing repair and maintenance programs	3	-
Offer sidewalk dining/parklet permits	2	-
Resolve high school parking/general parking	2	-
Develop small business grant program	1	-
Develop business marketing program	1	-
Complete the downtown streetscape project	1	-
Support continued implementation of Burlington/Armour Complete Street	1	-
Continue relationship with NKCBC, Clay Co EDC, River North, etc.	1	-
Increase residential owner-occupant opportunities	1	-
Continue to support public art	1	-
YMCA/LiNKCity contracts	1	-
Connect bike lanes to Ward IV	-	1
Acquire key properties that are vacant and/or underutilized	-	-
Support streetcar	-	-
Work with KCATA to expand BRT and bus routes in NKC	-	-
Grocery store	-	-
Develop pocket parks	-	-
Propose NKC/NNI home ownership partnership	-	-

Engaged Organization		
Be an employer of choice; facilitate active community involvement; foster effective two way communication.		
Goal	Red	Blue
Offer above-market pay and benefits	2	1
Expand educational assistance/reimbursement	2	-
Implement paid family-leave policy	2	-
Aggressively recruit for Boards and Commissions	1	-
Recruit for diversity in all levels of government	1	-
Develop effective communication methods for stakeholders	1	-
Offer organizational development training	-	-
Encourage a culture that fosters inclusiveness and open communication	-	-
Offer progressive employee policies	-	-
Improve internal communications and employee engagement	-	-
Implement employee spotlight	-	-
Create a citizen's academy	-	-
Create a youth council	-	-
Organize post-COVID employee banquet	-	-
Create employee days for engagement	-	-
Provide dinner for late work sessions	-	-
Implement succession planning	-	-
Find funding for specialized training	-	-

