



North Liberty
IOWA *Connected to What Matters*

Strategic Planning & Goal Setting Report

2024-2026





The Team

City Council

Chris Hoffman, Mayor
 EreK Settig, Council Member
 Brian Wayson, Council Member
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 Brian Leibold, Council Member
 Paul Park, Council Member

City Staff

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 Tracey Mulcahey, Asst. City Administrator
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 Grant Lientz, City Attorney
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 Nick Bergus, Communications Director
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 Shelly Simpson, Recreation Director
 Guy Goldsmith, Maintenance Director
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 Greg Metternich, Water Superintendent
 Brian Platz, Fire Chief
 Diane Venenga, Police Chief
 Drew Lammers, Waste Water Superintendent

Facilitated By



Executive Director Karen Kurt
 Consultant Adam Bentley

Overview

In February of 2024, the City of North Liberty engaged the East Central Iowa Council of Governments to facilitate goal-setting for calendar years 2024 through 2026. North Liberty has an established track record of planning for future opportunities and this project was intended to build on that success.

The vast bulk of the City's resources go to providing essential services to the community such as police and fire protection, street maintenance, water and sewer services, parks and recreation opportunities, and library services. The action steps in the strategic plan focus on how the City's resources can be leveraged to advance the City's vision through new, expanded, or reinvented services or policies.

The goals highlighted generally:

- Require significant human and/or financial resources
- Have high visibility
- Have a significant impact on the community
- Require collaboration between many departments or organizations, and/or
- Require significant council or community involvement

Performance alignment is the key to high functioning local government. Alignment starts with a vision of the community as articulated in relevant mission, vision, and values statements as well as the city's comprehensive plan. Council goal setting should translate the vision into strategic goals and

action steps. This step promotes alignment between elected officials, who are representing the interests of the community, and the staff leadership team. It is then incumbent on the staff leadership team to implement the Council's goal through department and individual work plans.

Mission/Vision/ Values

Comprehensive Plan

Capital Improvement Plan

Council Goal Setting

Annual Budget

Department Work Plans

Individual Work Plans

Visioning
Long-Term
Community-driven

Transition From
Vision to Action

Operational
Short-Term
Staff-driven

The Vision

Through the goal-setting process, leadership used the vision outlined in the City's comprehensive plan *North Liberty: Connected to Tomorrow* to guide the goal-setting process. A summary of how each goal aligns with *North Liberty: Connected to Tomorrow* as well as other regional plans can be found on page 11.

North Liberty *connected to tomorrow*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

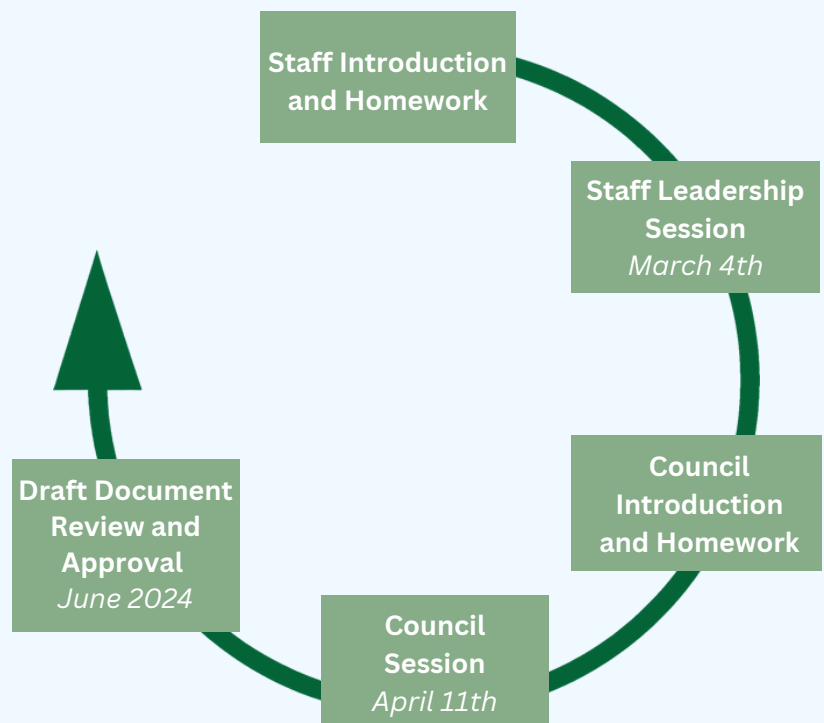
- **Land Use Tomorrow:** Development that is compatible with the components necessary for a strong and vibrant community, including mobility, environmental preservation, parks, public spaces, housing, inclusivity, and economic development.
- **Mobility Tomorrow:** How North Liberty will accommodate transportation for people walking, riding bikes, on mass transit, and in cars in an efficient manner.
- **Spaces and Places for Tomorrow:** How North Liberty grows with new parks, public spaces, and community nodes accessible to all neighborhoods and abilities to create a unique identity.
- **Our Environment Tomorrow:** What role North Liberty plays to protect the environment, mitigate climate change, and ensure environmental justice.
- **An Inclusive Tomorrow:** How North Liberty can ensure inclusive neighborhoods while meeting its demand for housing at different price points and styles to accommodate different economic and life stages.
- **Doing Business Tomorrow:** A direction for supporting new business ventures, leveraging economic strengths, and ensuring quality areas to support jobs and diversify the tax base.
- **Supporting Tomorrow:** The human and capital resources necessary to provide a high quality of life in a cost-effective manner as the City grows.

The Process

The goal setting process involved two facilitated sessions: one with staff leadership and one with the elected officials as well as the City Administrator. All participants were given reflective questions prior to the workshops. The four-hour staff goal setting workshop was held on March 4. Staff leadership reviewed accomplishments from the past two years, participated in an environmental scan, brainstormed potential future goals, and



prioritized those goals. A similar workshop was held with the City Council on April 11. Council members reflected on potential challenges and opportunities as part of the environmental scan. Council members reviewed the work completed by staff and added their accomplishments and goals. Council members finished their work by prioritizing the potential goals provided by both staff and council members.



Highlights from 2022-2024

Provided below are some of the highlighted accomplishments from 2022-2024. The accomplishments are organized based on sections of the City's comprehensive plan, with the recognition that some accomplishments may support multiple sections of the plan. Some of these accomplishments were initiated during this timeframe while others were completed within it.

Items with an asterisk () were identified as a priority during the last goal-setting process.*



Land Use Tomorrow

- Updated North Liberty's comprehensive plan*
- Facilitated development of sites for University of Iowa Healthcare and Steindler Orthopedic Clinic
- Modernized and updated North Liberty's Zoning Code
- Revamped the Centennial Park master plan *

Mobility Tomorrow

- Completed trail improvements city wide
- Added on street bike routes in areas of the city
- Completed Ranshaw Way phase five which included pedestrian infrastructure and utility improvements*
- Completed Dubuque Street improvements including widening of the road, pedestrian improvements and landscaping
- Initiated the Penn Street Bridge Pedestrian Crossing to improve safety and accessibility

Spaces and Places Tomorrow

- Completed construction of new City Hall*
- Acquired property for the construction of a second fire station*
- Improvements made to numerous recreation based amenities including Centennial Park, the Northside Park, and Tennis/Pickleball court improvements

Environment Tomorrow

- Exceeded water quality standards under increasingly stringent regulations
- Implemented Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping for stormwater management
- Began collecting salt usage data for snow removal
- Conducted city-wide lead and copper pipe review
- Installed large subsurface stormwater detention system at the new City Hall site

Inclusive Tomorrow

- Launched the North Liberty Youth Council*
- Added interns and made staff changes related to community mental health opportunities (mental health liaison, ABLE instructor)
- Successfully joined Kulture City and developed a partnership with the NAACP to promote civil rights, social justice, and community well-being
- Hosted events aimed at building inclusivity including welcome week and the summit on youth mental health
- Sustained the Neighborhood Ambassador program

Doing Business Tomorrow

- Launched City Slate Platform with sponsorships totaling \$250,000 annually.
- Added multiple positions within the city including police positions, events coordinator position, and desktop technician position*
- Reimplemented new business plaques
- Worked with regional partners on economic development programs

Supporting Tomorrow

- Increased franchise fee rates for park improvements*
- Finished a wastewater facility plan and began a water facility plan
- Implemented Library AIM cards for the Iowa City Community School District
- Decreased Fire Department average turnout time from 9 minutes to 3 minutes with staffing changes

Environmental Scan

The Environmental Scan identified elements in the external environment that may impact the City moving forward. These forces, largely outside the City's control, represent future challenges, opportunities or both.

Opportunities

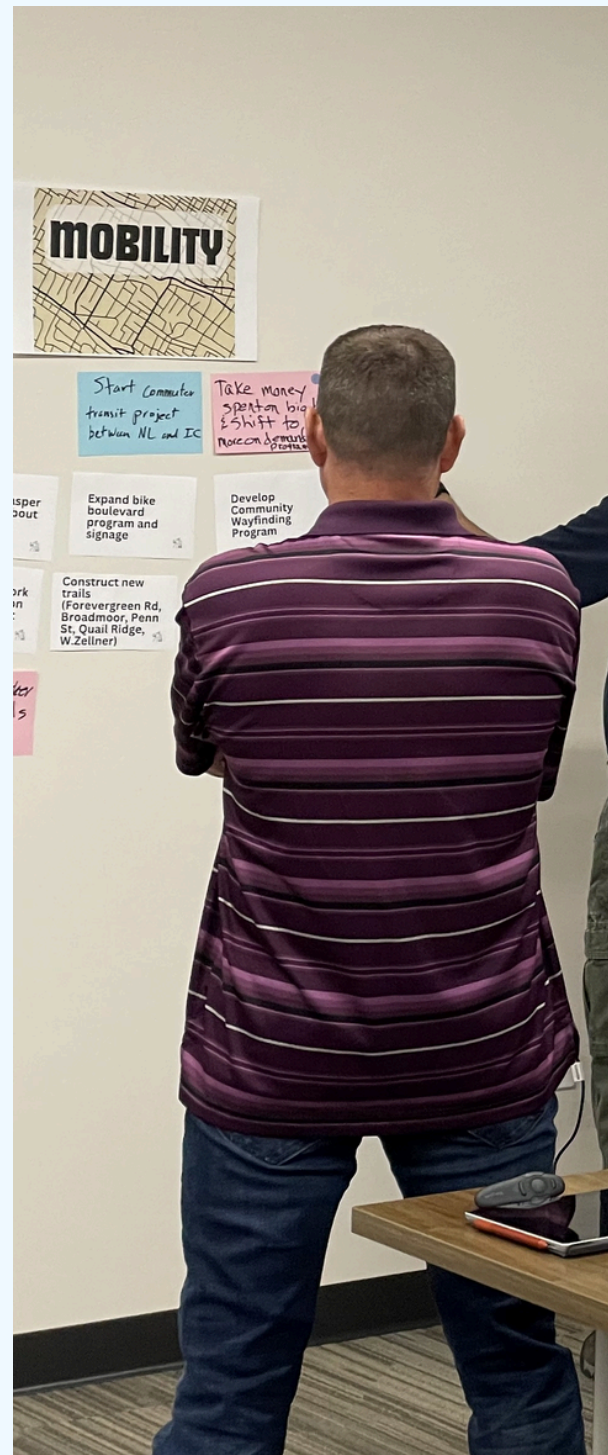
- Prime location
- Federal funding opportunities
- Greater regional cooperation
- UIHC campus expansion
- Westward growth/Soloman entertainment district
- Utility upgrades

Challenges

- Loss of local control through state legislation
- Reduced funding due to caps on property tax growth
- Lack of public engagement/volunteers
- Inflation/increasing costs to provide services
- Workforce recruitment
- Housing affordability
- Distrust in government/misinformation

Opportunities and Challenges

- Growth
- Demographic changes
- Interstate 380 expansion



Significant Capital Projects

2024-2026

1

FY 24 Centennial Park Improvements

Construct pavilion and outdoor performance venue in Centennial Park (\$11 million)

2

FY24 Parkland acquisition for new park

Acquire Northside park land as identified in the park plan (\$2.5 million)

3

FY24 New Trail Segments

Construct trail in front of Penn Meadows Park where segment is missing (\$157,000) and construct trail along North Liberty Road and Penn Street from Abraham Road to Molly Street (\$1.1 million)

4

FY 25 I-380 Penn Street Bridge Replacement

Replace or widen Penn Street bridge that crosses I380. Repair concrete east and west of Penn Street Bridge (\$15 million)

5

FY25 North Liberty Fire Station Upgrades

Evaluate options for remodel and expansion to existing fire station. FY 26 Construction improvements

6

FY25/FY26 New Trail Segments

Construct trail in Freedom Park, along FGR and Dubuque Street (\$765K)

7

FY26 West Forevergreen Road/South Jasper Ave/North Park Roundabout

Joint project with Tiffin and Coralville to construct a roundabout and related improvements at the intersection, including new trail segments from Covered Bridge Blvd to Tiffin (\$5 million)

8

FY26 North Stewart Street Reconstruction

Reconstruct North Stewart Street from Penn to Cherry Street (\$1.5 million)

9

FY26 Ranshaw Way Improvements

Widen Ranshaw Way with full build out between Hawkeye Drive and Forevergreen Road including trails, curb and gutter, and landscaping (\$10.7 million)

10

FY25-27 Community Center Parking Lot

Rehabilitate Community Center parking lot in 3 phases (\$1.1 million)

City Goals 2024-2026



1

Consider future of Fire Station 1 and address fire staffing needs.

Explore options for renovation, expansion, or relocation to better serve the growing community's fire protection needs. Implement a plan to address current and future fire staffing shortages.

Champion: Fire and Administration

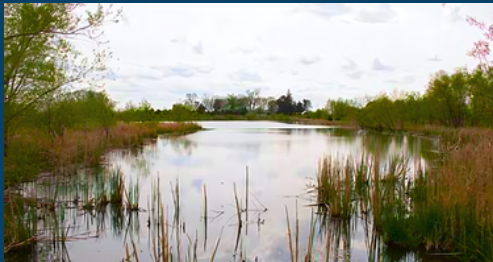


2

Construct roundabout at Forevergreen Road and Jasper.

In partnership with the cities of Tiffin and Coralville, implement a safety improvement project at the intersection of Forevergreen Road and Jasper by constructing a roundabout to reduce traffic accidents and improve traffic flow.

Champion: Administration, Streets, Planning



3

Establish and adopt citywide climate goals.

Set ambitious yet achievable goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing renewable energy use in North Liberty. Develop a plan outlining strategies to achieve these goals.

Champion: Administration & Planning



4

Increase teen engagement and programming

Continue to identify the interests and needs of North Liberty teens. Develop and implement engaging programs, after-school activities, leadership development workshops, or volunteer opportunities to increase teen participation in the community.

Champion: Community Relations, Library & Recreation

City Goals 2024-2026



5

Create and implement a public art program.

Establish a public art program that incorporates art installations, murals, or sculptures into public spaces throughout North Liberty. This can enhance the city's visual appeal, foster cultural identity, and encourage community pride.

Champion: Library, Community Relations, Parks



6

Explore Economic Development Marketing and Engagement Opportunities

In collaboration with Greater IC, Think IC, Better Together 2030 and other potential economic development partners, evaluate marketing strategies and opportunities to better engage and support the North Liberty Business Community.

Champion: Administration, Planning & Community Relations



7

Add outdoor basketball courts and other recreation amenities.

Identify potential locations and secure funding for the construction of new outdoor basketball courts and other desired recreational facilities, such as tennis courts, skate parks, or dog parks.

Champion: Parks



8

Shift transit funding from fixed route to on-demand service.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the current fixed-route transit system. Explore a pilot program or phased transition towards a more flexible on-demand service model that caters to real-time rider needs and potentially improves efficiency.

Champion: Administration & Planning

Alignment Crosswalk		North Liberty Comprehensive Plan							Regional Plans
		Land Use Tomorrow							
		Mobility Tomorrow							
		Spaces and Places Tomorrow	X						
		Environment Tomorrow							
		Inclusive Tomorrow							
		Doing Business Tomorrow	X						
		Supporting Tomorrow	X						
		Better Together-Johnson County							
		Envision East Central Iowa							
1	Consider future of Fire Station 1 and address fire staffing needs.			X					
2	Construct roundabout at Forevergreen Road and Jasper.		X	X			X	X	
3	Establish and adopt citywide climate goals.	X	X					X	X
4	Increase teen engagement and programming.			X		X			
5	Create and implement a public art program.			X				X	X
6	Explore Economic Development Marketing and Engagement Opportunities						X		X
7	Add outdoor basketball courts and other recreation amenities.			X		X		X	X
8	Shift transit funding from fixed route to on-demand service.		X			X		X	



Prepared by: East Central Iowa Council of Governments
Your Regional Planning Agency