



City of Eufaula Strategic Visioning
Council Retreat
August 23, 2019

Introduction

The City Council of Eufaula held a Strategic Visioning Retreat on Friday, August 23, 2019 for the purpose of developing a clear strategic vision for the future. Strategic Government Resources (SGR) was enlisted to facilitate the retreat. All of the Council Members and the Mayor were in attendance as well as the City Manager and Department Heads. Dr. Scott Willingham, Senior Vice President for SGR, facilitated the strategic visioning process. This report is a summary of the key points discussed and the Strategic Pillars that the Council identified for their vision.

The Strategic Visioning Cycle



The facilitator overviewed the above “Cycle of Strategic Visioning/Planning,” indicating that the workshop would begin the process at “CC Envisions.” The facilitator recommended the council follow through with the cycle.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Together, the Council worked through a SWOT analysis. While there was some variety in what was decided, there was widely held agreement in these four topics. The results are as follows:

STRENGTHS

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Good to Excellent School District
- Our friendly people
- Safe City
- Our history

- Our diversity
- Tourism
- Art community
- Lake Eufaula
- Community pride
- Self respect
- Good infrastructure
- Good vision
- Involvement of the churches
- Good volunteer base
- Higher retirement income

WEAKNESSES

- Health Care
- Infrastructure
- Employment at all levels of income
- Economic growth
- Internet provided
- Water system
- Roads
- Housing
- Poverty
- Hard to pass a bond
- Graduates don't come back to Eufaula
- Promoting Eufaula
- Recruiting new retail
- High drug abuse and murder rate
- Communicating and informing various segments of the city
- Community involvement

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth
- Tourism
- Location
- Good place to raise a family
- Retirement
- New commercial properties become available

- New businesses
- Promoting our friendliness

THREATS

- U.S. Government changing legal standings of land ownership
- Lower income senior adult population
- Drugs
- Negativity
- Complacency
- Small town's declining while people move to larger cities

Reputational Drivers discussed during the Council Retreat

The council was asked to think aspirationally about what kind of reputation they wanted their city to have. Here were the themes discovered and discussed:

- Vacation destination
- Sportsmen destination--taking advantage of hunting, boating, parasailing, etc.
- Downtown revitalized
- Stopping place for travelers with photo opportunities
- Attractions for those who do not fish, boat or hunt. Something for everyone.
- Riverboat town
- Holiday destination
- Celebrating Indian heritage
- Art and art education (connecting resident artists to visiting artists and aspiring artists)

Pressing Needs of the Citizens

The Council was asked to discuss what they perceived to be some of the most important pressing needs of citizens--things that cause them to pound the table and that keep them up at night. They discussed these as a group. These are the responses:

- Water distribution
- Sewer
- Streets
- Enforcing ordinances
- Determine building/renovation plan for City Hall and Fire Department.
- Increase revenue
- Economic development
 - Bring in new businesses
 - Address being landlocked by annexing towards the west

Strategic Pillars for the Future

The Council was asked to prioritize the big “pillars” toward which they should direct the city. These should span beyond the one year horizon and reach forward towards five to seven years. They worked on this as a unified group.

These are not ranked in terms of importance. They are all considered to be crucial for the fulfillment of their vision. After working through the list together, the Council identified 5 Key Pillars for the future:

- Reliable Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Tourism and Recreation
- Health Care
- Financial Sustainability

Mile-markers for the Strategic Pillars

The Council identified some key “Mile-markers” for each of the Strategic Pillars that would indicate that they were moving in the right direction and at the right speed toward establishing each Pillar. These are meant to give the Staff direction as they develop a work plan that is in alignment with the Strategic Vision of the Council.

- **Reliable Infrastructure**
 - Water distribution (year 3)
 - Water plant (years 5-7)
 - Water tower/storage (years 5-6)
 - Sewer -- conduct sewer system study (years 2-3)
 - Sewer -- Review sewer system study and present action plan for sewer upgrades (year 4)
 - Sewer -- cost analysis (year 4)
 - Roads -- conduct roads system study (year 5)
 - Roads -- Review roads system study and present action plan for roads upgrades (years 5-6)
 - Roads -- cost analysis (years 6-7)
- **Economic Development**
 - Conduct a needs study for housing, retail, lodging (year 1)
 - Improve social media (year 1)
 - City Council inventories available properties for retail, lodging and housing (years 1-2)
 - Hire a marketer to solicit retail and lodging
 - Staff and City Council prepare an economic development package
 - Hire ED staff (perhaps with shared responsibility to Tourism) (years 3-7)

- **Tourism and Recreation**
 - Build splash pads (year 1)
 - Petting zoo (year 2)
 - Wetlands (years 2-3)
 - Improve visitor signage (years 2-3)
 - Enhance beach area for residents and visitors
 - Establish art connection (resident artists to visiting artists)
 - Amusement park/Boardwalk (year 7)
 - Sporting Complex -- conduct sporting complex study
 - Sporting Complex -- review sporting complex study
 - Sporting Complex -- cost analysis
 - Hire Tourism Director (perhaps with shared responsibility with ED) (years 3-7)

- **Health Care**
 - Attract new MD's (years 1-2)
 - Hire replacements for retiring MD's (years 1-2)
 - Small ER facility (years 3-5)
 - Enhance Walking Trail (years 3-5)

- **Financial Sustainability**
 - Staff will research funding sources for City Council (year 1)
 - City will maintain scheduled rate increases (years 1-7)
 - Investigate grant funding as revenue source (year 1)
 - Identify preferred new revenue pathway (years 2-3)
 - Take action steps with new preferred revenue pathway (years 3-7)

Recommendations

SGR recommends that the Council adopt these Strategic Pillars and Milestones at a regular Council Meeting, and that the plan be reviewed regularly to determine what progress is being made and how the plan needs to be adjusted to keep it relevant. In order to facilitate the best governance environment and to maintain clarity on the roles of Council and Staff, it may be helpful to review the city's current protocol for Council in engaging with staff and reaffirm their commitment to it.