

# **STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR 2024-2025**

January 15, 2025

## **PRIORITY PROJECTS:**

1. Tri-SUD Water Agreement. **(Initiated communication with Tri-SUD)**
2. Water Master Plan Update in Cooperation with Tri-SUD.

(The City of MP and Tri-SUD's water systems are intertwined. The City provides water to Tri-SUD through 14 connection points on all sides of the City limits. Items #1 and #2 are complimentary. The current agreement between the City and Tri-SUD has caused a strain between agencies. Tri-SUD is evaluating the construction of a new water plant. As growth continues within the City and Tri-SUD's service area it is imperative that both agencies are coordinated to serve the growth and provide adequate service. It is my opinion that our current and future coordination and partnership is critical to providing the most cost-effective and reliable service.)

3. EDC Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation Update. **(Initial Draft provided by MPEDC Attorney)**

4. **Wastewater/Sewer Master Plan Update.** The City Wastewater System must plan for its future, as it is with the plant expansion. My concern is that the collection system has not yet been planned as it relates to future growth. Our plant expansion is meaningless if we do not have an adequate collection system to get it to the plant. Based on our comprehensive plan and input from MPEDC and others we will come up with a dependable plan that will foster new development and growth instead of being a hindrance.

5. **Capital Improvement Projects:** Schedule, Management, and bi-monthly City Council Updates. Information and communication with the City Council and the community are critically important.

The City of Mount Pleasant has and is spending millions of dollars on CIP Projects. Bi-monthly reports at the City Council Meetings are very important in informing the City Council of our status and a great way to communicate with the residents as to what is happening in our City.

Our current CIP projects are work in progress, in preliminary planning, or not yet initiated. The reports will be provided through the following Departments.

- Water, Wastewater, Parks, Streets, Airport, Fire, etc.

6. City Council Recruitment: City Manager, City Attorney. (**City Manager Recruitment in Process.**)

**Completed Recruitment** and appointed HR Director and Finance Director.

7. **Enhance Community Engagement.** (An example would be our joint effort with the Chamber of Commerce by presenting the State of the City Address. This could also include attending neighborhood meetings, Council workshops, etc.)

8. **Improve Board and Commission Relations.** Joint meetings and/or communications.

9. **Economic Development focus within the City Limits or within our ETJ.**

Emphasis on developing the City of Mount Pleasant Industrial Park. (The Mount Pleasant Business Park is development-ready and located within the city limits. Infill development is best planning, local job creation, property tax, and sales tax revenue generating. Work with MPEDC on marketing, recruitment, etc.) Provide the City Council with bi-monthly reports on efforts.

10. **Local Business support.** Prioritize Downtown Business, the heart of Mount Pleasant. (Sales Tax Revenue collections are down. During the tree-lighting event, I witnessed the attendees visiting the local businesses to an extent I had not witnessed before. Events such as this will promote local businesses, generate sales tax revenue, and most importantly provide “a place” where the community can gather. Drawing people into our Mount Pleasant and supporting downtown events for our residents will support all businesses throughout the entire City. I suggest the City Council support our Downtown Mainstreet and Downtown Merchants by allocating \$25,000 towards downtown events. I realize our financial situation is a challenge, however, spending money on community priorities that will potentially generate a return on the investment is a win/win.) Should the City Council appropriate additional funds for Downtown, the Mainstreet Board would be asked to work with the merchants and propose a plan to the City Council to explain how they anticipate utilizing those funds.

**Finance:** The City of Mount Pleasant’s financial condition has deteriorated over the past several years. During the City Council budget hearings last fall, the City Council had to reduce spending by making significant reductions. Their actions stopped the decline and stabilized the budget for this current year. As with any fiscal year budget, it is an estimate of revenues and expenditures. The economy’s health can cause fluctuations in revenue collections and unexpected expenditures can negatively impact a budget’s bottom line. Regular and frequent monitoring and communication of the financial status should be accomplished through monthly reports and transparency, especially if challenges arise.

The actions listed below will be followed by City Staff reporting at City Council Meetings during this fiscal year.

11. Monthly Budget Reports. (Initiated in December and occurring each Month forward)
12. Quarterly Investment Reports. **(Ongoing each quarter)**
13. Council Presentation budget – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter.
14. Budget Review – 6 Months. Amend if necessary.
15. Audit of fiscal year 2023-2024 (Current Budget) Goal: March.

**Planning and Development Services:**

16. Zoning Code Review and Update. Consistent with Comprehensive Plan. (\$60,000 already spent) November 2024 City Council discussion.
17. Discussion of Park Dedication Fees. (\$40,000 already spent).
18. Provide assistance to developers and applicants with, “Step by step process guide”.
19. Improve the Development Review Process.
20. Review the fee schedule to ensure fair and competitive.

**Human Resources:**

21. Update of City Personnel Policies and Procedures. **(95% completed).**
22. Recruitment: City Engineer.
23. Succession Planning. “Grow our own talent!” **(Ongoing: TML Supervisory Training 1-7-8-2025)**

24. Consider updating of City Compensation Plan. (Current one is 5 years old)

25. Establish Performance Reviews for all employees annually.

**Miscellaneous Items:**

26. Review and make recommendations to the City Council for Vehicle Replacement versus Leasing. (The leasing vehicle's annual cost is \$650,000).

27. Review and make recommendations for a cost-effective IT service provider. (Current main provider: Datamax. New contract approved with Bryan IT) **Completed December 2024.**

**28.** Update the sound system in Council chambers. (Restricted funds that can only be used for this purpose have accumulated over several years. These monies will enable us to address this issue without any financial impact on the General Fund or any other Fund).

**General:**

29. Focus on and enhance transparency both within the organization and with the community. **(Example: State of the City Address)**

30. Focus on Customer Service and Rebuilding Trust. (The focus would be on rebuilding trust. Staff and the City Council would create an action plan.)