The eclectic mix of music, arts, natural beauty, historic downtown, Kent State University, and an international business presence is a hallmark of the Kent community. Community building is a cornerstone of Kent's heritage that is continued through strategic planning and visioning that takes today's dreams and transforms them into the community projects of tomorrow.

Strategy Matters

Strategic planning is a way for our community to work together to figure out where we want to go, what paths we think can take us there, and how well we know when we've arrived.

It's a customized process that we use to put our assets, resources, conditions and opportunities, and integrate them into a winning formula for Kent. There are no right or wrong answers in strategic planning; just different directions unique to our community.

The measure of success is not in the complexity of the plan but in its fit and ability to be put to work. This isn't planning for planning sake; it's planning with the purpose of getting something done. Getting things done depends upon relying local resources and community leadership for the common purpose of our future home town. A good strategic plan does that.

Strategic planning starts with our mission, vision and values. From there, as a community we set goals and identify strategies that we think can achieve those goals. The City staff then develops action plans (who will do what and when) to implement those strategies, and lastly the City Council funds those action plans (people and dollars) through the annual budget process.

Strategic Intent

Being strategic is as much about choosing what not to do as it is choosing what to do. With so many diverse public services our mission can be a mile wide if it means we have to work extra hard to stay focused, fight against mission creep, and make sure everything we do is aligned with the goals of our community all of the time.

Aiming and sustaining the path towards our true north isn't easy. Not a day goes by where our alignment isn't challenged by unforeseen circumstances. We struggle with learning how to say no to good opportunities that may not be the best fit with our immediate strategic objectives.

Most people understand that trying to do everything for everyone is the fastest way to get nothing done but that level of strategic discipline is tough to muster in public service. Who are you going to say no to? To some extent, everything is important to someone, but we have to use our strategic plan as a filter to keep focused on what's most important.

It's a tool for us to manage our way towards progress rather than relying on dreaming and hoping for the best.

Planning Ahead

Someday, Tomorrow, and Eventually are the worst times to start planning and that's why we make sure planning is a part of what we do everyday.

Everyday planning requires disciplined thought to plan the work and disciplined action to work the plan. Achieving this level of discipline takes practice. It's not a special session at an annual retreat, it's a year-round job.

Planning is not about predicting the future; it's about preparing for the future. It's having a strategy for all seasons. It's contingencies, options and back-up plans for when the real world doesn't follow the script. It's believing that the best way to survive a crisis is to avoid it altogether. It's imagining a better future and making it happen.

Our Promise

We promise to be ready for the future and to learn from our past. We promise to focus on our core services to meet whatever needs lie ahead. We promise to be flexible and adjust to changing conditions. We promise to do all that we can to improve productivity and position ourselves for sustained excellence. That's our promise to Kent.

Living up to this promise will not be easy. It means sacrificing future and present needs, balancing fiscal pressures, and protecting the public welfare – all the while maintaining the public trust. With nothing short of our future at stake we plan to rise to meet these challenges each and everyday.

Strategy Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Strategy Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Future Priorities and Goal Setting for Annual Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Previous Year End Review and Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Monthly City Council Activity Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>On-Line Strategic Planning Resources and Updates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategy Priorities

As a result of hundreds of hours of community meetings, Council meetings and survey data, the community has set the following broad strategic priorities for Kent:

- Financial Health and Economic Development
  - “to be a prosperous and livable city for all citizens”
- Natural Resources
  - “to protect and promote the City’s natural resources”
- Quality of Life
  - “to enhance quality choices through physical and social environment”
- Community Safety
  - “to be an exceptionally safe city”
- Communities within the City
  - “to strengthen the quality and enhance the value of neighborhoods”
- City / University Synergy
  - “expand collaborative opportunities that enrich the community experience”
- Governmental Performance
  - “to provide the best services at the lowest cost”

Mayor and Members of City Council

Jerry Fiala, Mayor & President of Council
Ward 1 Garret Ferrara
Ward 2 Jack Amrineh
Ward 3 Wayne A. Wilson
Ward 4 John M. Kuhar
Ward 5 Heidi L. Shaffer
Ward 6 Tracy Wallach

Ward 7 Tracy Wallach
Ward 8 Dave Ruller
Ward 9 Michael DeLeone

City Service Values

Quality matters in everything we do. Professional and courteous service. Productive use of resources. Efficient, affordable and for innovative and creative solutions.

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