



WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET®

City of Kirkwood Strategic Plan

December 2011



Preface

The City of Kirkwood exists for only one purpose and that is to serve the needs of its citizens. Having said this, the simplicity stops. Serving the needs of citizens requires the provision of services such as public works, police, fire, leisure opportunities, and the behind the scene support necessary to allow these services to be provided. In the case of Kirkwood, services such as retail electric and water are provided, along with household refuse and curbside recyclable collection. In order to meet these needs and others, planning, particularly longer term strategic planning is essential. With all of this in mind, the Kirkwood City Council undertook an extensive strategic planning process in August of 2010.

The City Council – the direct representatives of the residents – spent many hours discussing and establishing a vision, mission, and goals for City government. These three statements form the basis for all tasks and initiatives that must follow in order to make this happen. In support of the City Council and staff’s planning, several citizen focus groups were conducted along with citizen surveys. The City Council, having accomplished the above, tasked the City’s management staff with the responsibility of proposing specific objectives and initiatives necessary to achieve the established goals. Finally, the work of the management staff was discussed and consensus reached by the City Council on the content of the City of Kirkwood’s five year strategic plan.

Many hours of work by Council Members and management have gone into creating this document. The following plan is truly the work of the City Council, and all deserve appropriate recognition for their contribution. City department heads were involved in all aspects of identifying the actions necessary to fulfill the City Council’s vision. The managers’ involvement was broad and transcended departmental boundaries. Certainly, one of the most beneficial steps was fulfilled by the hundreds of citizens who shared their time and opinions, which are reflected in this plan.



Photo: The western façade of City Hall was given a facelift in 2011, with lead abatement, column repair, and a paint job.

Acknowledgment

Nothing of value ever occurs in a vacuum. Similarly, the Kirkwood Strategic Plan evolved from much hard work and diligence by many. The City Council provided the foundation for the Plan both individually and collectively.

Mayor Arthur McDonnell

Council Members

Gerry Biedenstein
Tim Griffin
Gina Jaksetic
Bob Sears
Paul Ward
Iggy Yuan

Staff

Mike Brown
Chief Administrative Officer
Georgia Ragland
Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Betty Montano
City Clerk
John Adams
Director of Finance
Kim Butts
Director of Purchasing
Kevin Campe
Director of Information Technology
Chief Thomas Openlander
Fire Chief
Mark Petty
Electric Director
Chief Jack Plummer
Police Chief
Murray Pounds
Director of Parks & Recreation
Tim Rajchart
Water Director
Todd Rehg
Director of Public Works
Beth Von Behren
Public Information Officer

A special recognition and thanks to Mr. Fred Falker

Falker Consulting Group

St. Louis, MO

For his countless hours and his personal attachment to this endeavor

City of Kirkwood Strategic Plan

Goals, Objectives, Initiatives
Submitted December 21, 2011

MISSION / VISION STATEMENTS

Mission Statement: The mission of the City of Kirkwood is to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations of Kirkwood residents through strong leadership, effective stewardship, and exceptional service.

Vision Statement: Kirkwood will be one of the most livable communities in the United States; a place recognized for its beauty, historic charm, strong neighborhoods, vibrant businesses and involved citizenry.

CORE VALUES

Responsiveness: We provide services that address our citizens' wishes and needs.

Stewardship: We prudently and efficiently manage financial and human resources while promoting a sustainable environment.

Family: We design services and facilities that enhance a family atmosphere.

Tradition: We honor our community's historic past and build upon it for the future.

Involvement: We involve our citizens in local government activities.

Respect: We value the contributions and needs of all members of our community.

Integrity: We foster the highest ethical standards.



STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Enhance the quality of life of citizens
 2. Strengthen relations between citizens and their government
 3. Support business community
 4. Improve public infrastructure
 5. Provide adequate financial resources
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STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal #1

Enhance the Quality of Life of Citizens Small town feel, historic charm, amenities, affordability, schools, safety/security, strong neighborhoods, attractiveness, stable property values, etc.

Objective A: Promote environmental conservation and sustainability.

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

- **Strengthen existing recycling program by adding multi-family dwellings, businesses and public facilities**

- I. **Who is responsible:** Director of Public Works (primary), Public Information Officer (PIO) (assisting).
- II. **How it will be accomplished:** Working with St. Louis County Health Department and private haulers, formulate a plan to add business and multi-family recycling.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:**
FY 2012/2013
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Increased recycling and customers served.



Photo: New carts were delivered to Kirkwood residents as part of the Curbside Recycling launch in January 2011.

- **Improve consumers' ability to manage energy consumption through use of smart technologies and allow City to use data to optimize market purchases and better manage outages**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** Electric Director
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Selection and installation of new meters, software, and interfaces that will allow for automated meter reading. Customers will be able to see their hourly consumption and modify their HVAC equipment and behavior to optimize their energy consumption and budget. Kirkwood Electric will have meters that provide valuable data on the

distribution system to optimize market power purchases, transformer purchases, and distribution system design. Specific outage information makes for more efficient outage restoration. Remote shut off of meters eliminates site visits.

- III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2013-FY2017
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** (Evaluating: Customer satisfaction with program. Aggregate savings for customers. Savings for Kirkwood Electric.) Customer peak load or load growth reduction. Annual energy reduction. Percentage system installation of equipment.

- **Develop comprehensive citywide plan for protecting/planting and sustaining trees**

- I. **Who is responsible:** Asst. CAO (primary), Public Works Director and Urban Forestry Commission (assisting)
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Staff will provide assistance researching tree ordinances and any information the Urban Forestry Commission believes is needed. The commission will make a recommendation to the City Council.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** Prior to 12/31/2012
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** City Council enacts a tree ordinance protecting street trees and approves a plan for planting public trees.



Photo: Members of the Urban Forestry Commission and volunteers-at-large plant new trees in and around Kirkwood, as part of the "50 Trees for 50 Years" tree-planting campaign.

Objective B: Maintain safe and attractive neighborhoods.

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

- **Strengthen community-based policing efforts.**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** Police Chief
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Transition Neighborhood Watch program from its traditional format to an electronic format where anyone can sign up for electronic alerts. Continue CERT training to seed neighborhoods with appropriately trained volunteers. Expand relationships with the Police Chaplains, service clubs, and volunteer-oriented groups. Take advantage of opportunities, including training opportunities, to better involve and equip less-tenured officers with public interaction.
 - III. **When it will it be accomplished:** FY2012/13
 - IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Type and number of citizen complaints, feedback from individuals and groups assisted, citizen survey results; officer evaluation scores.

- **Improve code enforcement program/efforts.**

- I. **Who is responsible:** Police Chief (primary), PW Director (assisting)
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** A review of Kirkwood ordinances and best practices identified from other agencies will be used to establish a plan to better handle violations through the enforcement process including final disposition with the court. More flexible means of resolving issues outside of traditional methods will be discussed and proposed, including the viability of utilizing volunteers to help seniors and other residents without sufficient means to bring their properties into compliance. The cost and benefit of adding proactive enforcement in addition to addressing complaints will be assessed.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** Review of ordinances and best practices completed by April 1, 2012. Implementation of changes made during FY2012/13. Appropriate communication of changes to residents and training of personnel completed in FY2012/13.
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Number of property maintenance issues brought into compliance. Level of community satisfaction with appearance of community increased.

Objective C: Develop plan to renovate or build new community center.

- I. **Who is responsible:** Parks and Recreation Director, Park Board
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Determine interest of community in improving the community center through a public survey process. If public response warrants it, conduct a study of the existing community center facility and examine options for improvements using a consultant and an ad hoc committee including recreation staff, Park Board, Council and/or citizens at large (complete by 2014). Examine options for partnership with organizations such as schools, colleges, quasi public organizations and other municipalities in creating a new or revised community center facility (completed by ad hoc committee by 2015).
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** 2015/16
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Success will be noted by development of a report outlining options and estimated costs for possible improvements to the community center facility, along with identification of potential partners and funding mechanisms.



Photo: The Kirkwood Community Center

Objective D: Improve service quality and level of customer satisfaction.

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

• **Make City services more accessible and convenient**

- I. **Who is responsible:** Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Evaluate service delivery points in City facilities. Redesign ways

in which public accesses City services with goal of putting needs of customers first.

Create more online capabilities, expanded service hours, and make some services available at multiple locations to reduce need for multiple trips and/or longer trips.

- III. **When it will be accomplished:** FY2012/2013 and ongoing
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Reduced wait times, improved customer satisfaction, reduced cost of providing services.



Photo: The new service windows at City Hall under construction, Summer 2010.

• **Train/equip staff to provide excellent service**

- I. **Who is responsible:** Asst. CAO
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Department Heads will continue to be responsible for departmental technical training. The ACAO will be responsible for seeing that all employees are acquainted with organizational values and the strategic plan. Training on organization-wide topics such as diversity, customer service, and sexual harassment will continue to be offered as well as new employee orientation, as needed.
- III. **When it will be accomplished:** FY2012/13
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Organization training plan developed, training offered, feedback evaluated.

• **Create an environment to attract and retain talented personnel**

- I. **Who is responsible:** Administration/Council
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Utilize the assistance of compensation and benefits experts to ascertain if employees are being paid appropriately and competitively and if benefits package is competitive. Maintain a civil and supportive workplace where employees grow and thrive. Budget for and equip personnel with resources to do their jobs.
- III. **When it will be accomplished:** Ongoing
- IV. **Metric/how evaluate:** Pay and benefit benchmarks are evaluated; employee turnover and morale is monitored.

Goal #2

Strengthen relationship between citizens and government Improve communication. Increase trust. Increase citizen engagement. Keep citizenry informed.

Objective A: Improve communication between government and citizens.

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

- **Implement an effective mass notification (robo call) system**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** Electric Director (primary), PIO (assisting)
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Research will be conducted on appropriate systems, an RFP written and issued, selection made and approved, and installation completed.
 - III. **When it will it be accomplished:** FY2012/FY2013
 - IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Percentage of population covered by system; feedback from departments and end users.

- **Increase use of social media and online capability**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** PIO
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Cultivate a user community. Continuously promote social media use. Investigate new social media outlets, such as YouTube. Develop social media guidelines for staff and provide training on guidelines and use. Survey residents informally about their social media use. Establish goals, develop timelines, and execute a results-based digital media strategy for the City and in partnership with other entities (businesses, school district, and library).
 - III. **When it will it be accomplished:** FY2013
 - IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Use of online analytics. Some outlets offer their own metrics that count subscribers or followers. Consider an outside firm to monitor social media influence.

- **Develop outreach program to increase opportunities for contact between representatives of the government and citizen and business groups**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** PIO
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** More attendance at Chamber events. Improved communication with students at Kirkwood High School and St. Louis Community College-Meramec (via student-run newspapers). Regular schedule of



Photo: Kirkwood's City Council held one of its regular meetings at The Magic House while City Hall was under renovation. Town Hall meetings are typically held away from City Hall.

Town Hall/Listening sessions. Establish a speakers' bureau for council members to talk to citizen and business groups.

- III. **When it will it be accomplished:** Ongoing
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Track and evaluate number of speaking opportunities, attendance at meetings, and coverage in student papers.

Objective B: Increase transparency of government.

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

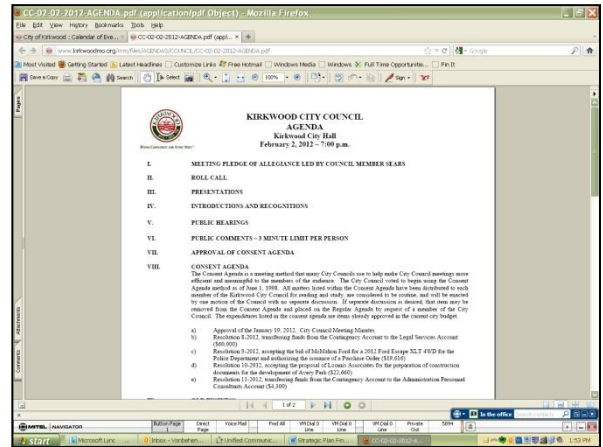
- **Move to electronic agendas and make all back-up documentation available online.**

- I. **Who is responsible:** City Clerk (primary), Purchasing Director and Director of MIS (assisting)

- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Investigate what has worked well in other communities and determine the benefits and downsides of paperless agendas. Issue a Request for Proposals for submittals of viable software packages available. Recommend purchase of hardware and software to the City Council. Place full City Council meeting packets on the Website in advance of meetings.

- III. **When it will it be accomplished:** Fiscal Year 2015

- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** City Council moves to paperless agenda. All documentation for City Council meetings is placed on the Website in advance of the scheduled meeting. Evaluate citizen feedback on the transparency of our process and the ease of accessing documents on the Website. Periodic reports are generated as to the number of Website hits made on the paperless agendas.



- **Provide online access to board and commission agenda item submittals.**

- I. **Who is responsible:** Staff liaisons and PIO

- II. **How will it be accomplished:** When board and commission agendas are sent to PIO to be placed on the Website, material submitted by applicants/petitioners that would be given to the board and commission members prior to their meeting will be scanned as a pdf and emailed to the PIO to be placed on the Website with the meeting agendas.

- III. **When it will it be accomplished:** Fiscal Year 2012/2013

- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Agenda item documentation is scanned and transmitted with the meeting agenda to the PIO for placement on the Website.

Objective C: Provide opportunities for additional citizen involvement by improving use of volunteers.

- I. **Who is responsible:** Asst. CAO
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Explore with staff and Council what activities/projects the City might benefit from by using volunteers, and where such volunteers might be found. Based on that discussion, design a volunteer coordinator job description and explore ways of filling that position either with a part-time staff member, interns, or a volunteer.
- III. **When it will it be accomplished:** FY2013/14
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Track volunteer hours and number of volunteers. Calculate what cost of activities/projects would have been if not accomplished with volunteers.



Photo: Kirkwood volunteers plant vegetables and other plants in the Kirkwood Community Garden in Kirkwood Park.

Objective D: Increase partnerships between City and other entities.

- I. **Who is responsible:** PIO, ACAO, City Clerk, Mayor/Council
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Partner with Chamber on events and messaging (provide training and encouragement to businesses to utilize social media, especially Foursquare). Partner with SBD to develop “Shop Kirkwood First (SKF) campaign. Partner with library and school district on literacy and information initiatives (e.g. ‘One Book” community reading initiative). Develop a “walkability” campaign for the SBD to counteract negative parking perception.
- III. **When it will it be accomplished:** 2012/13
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Number of event attendees, social media metrics (Twitter, Google Alerts, Foursquare sign-ups), number of businesses signed up for SKF, number of participants in “One Book.”

Goal #3

Support business community Develop areas to create a positive business environment that will lead to increased revenue.

Objective A: Attract new and retain existing businesses.

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

- **Find ways of determining vacancies and show those via GIS and Website**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** Director of MIS (primary). GIS Division working with Engineering, Building Commissioner, Realtors and SBD (assisting).

- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Group will discuss ways that vacancy information can be gathered and make a recommendation on the best method of sharing that information with potentially interested parties.
- III. **When it will it be accomplished:** FY2013
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Vacancies for the City are measured and information displayed to the public.

- **Create an economic development plan**

- I. **Who is responsible:** CAO
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** The following steps would be carried out to gather existing pertinent data and information:
 - Conduct a staff analysis of data relating to business licenses, sales tax, zoning demographics, historic trends, and geographic features of the City
 - Gather input from entities such as the Kirkwood Industrial Development Authority, Kirkwood Business Development Corp., Planning and Zoning Commission, Chamber of Commerce and property owners, St. Louis County Economic Council, etc.
 - Evaluate all public and private underserved property not used for park purposes for development potential.
 - Investigate the efforts of other cities and seek best practices.
 - Present findings to the Kirkwood City Council.
 - The above information, and any other that may become evident, would be collected before a business development consultant would be recommended and retained. It is important to note that there will be a sizeable cost for well qualified consulting services in this field.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2013/14
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Plan is developed and a recommendation for implementation made to council. Increased number of business licenses issued. Maintain a catalog of Kirkwood businesses and track changes. Document changes in sales tax and business license revenues. Identify other metrics that the above strategy and analysis make meaningful.



Photo: The Couch-Heinzelmann building in downtown Kirkwood was renovated in 2010 and now houses several businesses.

Objective B: Identify and formulate plan to address infrastructure insufficiencies that are blocking development/redevelopment efforts where such improvements make financial sense (Woodbine/Magnolia water flow for example).

- I. **Who is responsible:** Electric Director (primary), Water Director and Director of MIS (assisting)

- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Map created depicting potential development regions with current and proposed infrastructure plans.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2013-FY2017 in conjunction with redevelopment/land use plan.
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Map completed with support documentation.

Objective C: Increase walkability, address long-term parking needs, and enhance the appearance and charm of the downtown

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

- **Propose changes in traffic signals on Kirkwood Road for enhanced pedestrian access (and handicap accessibility)**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** Electric Director (primary), Asst. CAO (assisting).
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Propose changes to traffic signal displays and timings and obtain support from SBD and then Council.
 - III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2013-FY2017
 - IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** All proposed intersection modifications are completed.

- **Study and implement improved infrastructure (lights, curbs, sidewalks, etc.), aesthetics, and pedestrian safety measures**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** PW Director (primary), Police Chief (assisting).
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:**
 - Evaluate current conditions
 - Study other communities downtown walkability initiatives
 - Formulate a plan to make improvements to the infrastructure
 - Coordinate with the traffic signal upgrades along Kirkwood Road
 - III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2012/2013
 - IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Upgrades to infrastructure completed

- **Develop a comprehensive long-term plan for increasing available parking**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** CAO
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Discuss parking issues/problems with SBD and business people. Engage Council in a dialogue on the current practice of renting lots that businesses would still use for patron parking. Evaluate potential changes to zoning ordinance with instituting parking requirements for businesses entering the downtown or alternatively paying into a parking fund. Investigate the potential for a transportation district or other means of funding a plan for access to free or reasonably priced parking in the SBD. Develop and submit to Council a plan to meet the current and future parking needs of the public in the downtown area.



Photo: Children in costume go trick-or-treating through Downtown Kirkwood during the 2011 Halloween Walk.

- III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2012/2013
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Plan is developed that is capable of providing for long-term parking needs for the SBD.

Goal #4

Improve public infrastructure Future generations. Effective stewardship. Public safety. Strong leadership. Stable property values. Overall livability.

Objective A: Improve condition of streets and sidewalks.

Initiatives/Projects/Actions:

- **Develop long-term plan for repair of streets/sidewalks**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** Public Works Director
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Prepare bond issue proposal and place before voters. Once approved, begin contractual repair of prioritized street projects.
 - III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2013/2014
 - IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Street repair priority list is reduced.
- **Address streetscape aesthetics including trees, streetlights, etc.**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** PW Director (primary), Electric Director, Asst. CAO (assisting)
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** Develop plan for stakeholder input, form a committee with members from P&Z and Urban Forestry, and work with them to develop the vision and recommendations for changes to ordinances, policies, and procedures necessary to implement that plan long-term.
 - III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2015
 - IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Plan completed and adopted.
- **Develop a plan for Kirkwood to be a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly community**
 - I. **Who is responsible:** PW Director (primary), Parks and Recreation Director (assisting)
 - II. **How will it be accomplished:** A study of the existing Trail Plan included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Capital Plan for improving/replacing streets will be conducted. The goal of the study will be to determine where the two plans overlap and then establish a priority list of opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycling opportunities when street improvements are made,



Photo: Trolley tracks were uncovered during street reconstruction at the corner of Woodbine and Clay in 2009.

based on the trail plan. Research will be conducted to determine any potential funding sources that may help with funding such enhancements.

- III. **When will be accomplished:** Prior to the development of the capital budget for 2013/14.
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated** (Increase and improve sidewalks, bike paths, places for bikes, other pedestrian and bicycle friendly measures): A report containing the following items will be presented:
 - A description of current conditions on those streets identified in the trail plan.
 - A priority list of street enhancement projects that will improve routes designated in the trail plan, including objectives for each street project and estimated costs for the pedestrian/cycling enhancements.
 - A list of potential funding sources for pedestrian/cycling enhancements including types of projects funded, potential amounts available and application processes.

Objective B: Develop and implement a long-term water main replacement plan (1% minimum annually)

- I. **Who is responsible:** Water Director
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Water rates are increased to fund operating expenses, debt service, capital expenses and a 1% main replacement rate.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY2012/2013
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** By tracking the amount of water main replaced on an annual basis (currently being done).



Photo: Inside a water main trench.

Objective C: Continue to upgrade Kirkwood Electric's line voltage to 12kv.

- I. **Who is responsible:** Electric Director
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Electric Department will continue to plan for and budget resources to replace and upgrade electric lines and transformers to achieve the upgrade to the more efficient 12kv voltage.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** Ongoing
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** By tracking the amount of electric lines replaced on an annual basis (currently being done).

Objective D: Plan for and develop infrastructure for Citywide wireless use that supports City operations.

- I. **Who is responsible:** Electric Director (primary), City wireless committee (assisting).
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Develop an RFP for a City wireless solution that would allow City workers remote access to applications, records, and files, including work order systems, mapping systems, system control and monitoring, and state and

county records. Anticipated benefits of the system would include meter reading staff reduction, significant operations efficiencies (e.g., filing reports and closing work orders from the field), and equipment optimization. The project could be funded with an annual payment for a 15-20-year time period with a buy/lease back arrangement. Committee would evaluate submittals, recommend a vendor, and begin installation following City Council approval.

- III. **When will it be accomplished:** If funds available, process could be started in 2012 with full installation complete in 2013/14.
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Extent of wireless coverage in the City, number of radios installed, number of applications capable of using the system, number of users accessing the system.

Objective E: Develop comprehensive plan for managing, using, locating and maintaining city facilities.

- I. **Who is responsible:** Asst. CAO (primary), Purchasing Director (assisting)
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Develop an RFP for consultant experienced in this area.
- III. **When will it be accomplished:** FY 2012/13
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Comprehensive plan developed and presented to City Council. Plan will include cost/benefit analysis of major components.

Goal #5

Provide adequate financial resources

Objective A: Provide recommendations to Council on funding mechanisms, tax rates, user fees, grants and other revenue to accomplish approved capital and operating budget expenditures.

- I. **Who is responsible:** CAO
- II. **How will it be accomplished:** Presentation and communication of annual capital and operating budget; budget message and other specific recommendations as needed.
- III. **When it will it be accomplished:** Annually
- IV. **Metric/how evaluated:** Adequate resources provided; strategic and capital plan projects funded; city services provided; economic development plan's sustainable financial strategy results in increased sales taxes.



Photo: The current City Council. Front row (L to R): Tim Griffin, Mayor Art McDonnell, Iggy Yuan. Back row: Gerry Biedenstein, Paul Ward, Gina Jaksetic, Bob Sears.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

Goal #5 of the Strategic Plan speaks to the matter of financial resources. Rather than attempting to quantify costs to achieve each objective, the following describes the various sources of funds. It speaks to sources of funds, impact on the taxpayer and the taxpayer's role in the approval process.

Pursuing the objectives contained in this draft constitute a carefully considered strategy for achieving the strategic goals articulated by the Council. Carrying out the initiatives, projects, and actions associated with each objective will require the City to invest both financial and non-financial resources. The availability of resources may guide the Council on establishing priorities and timing. Timing is important in that the Strategic Plan is a five year plan. Implementation of various parts of the plan can be adjusted so that costs are spread out to better match available resources.

All activities require money in one way or another. There are numerous sources of funding for City programs and initiatives. Most have legal limitations as to how the sources are accessed. General sources are traditional receipt of taxes of all sorts, fees, intergovernmental revenue, and long-term financing. The detail associated with each of these sources and others as well follows:

Property Tax

The City levies several property taxes for distinct purposes. Almost all increases in property taxes require a simple majority approval of the voters. The exception is the utilization of state law that allows a city to recover property tax dollars when property assessments fall. The need to capture such funds is important not only to move forward with the strategic plan implementation, but day-to-day services. In years where there is not an assessment, Kirkwood has the option to increase property tax rates to a previously established voter approved level. Such optional increases require Council approval and for most of the property tax rates, increases to the voter approved levels would result in significant increases in revenue.

Sales Tax

Kirkwood government is very reliant on sales tax to fund general services, parks and recreation, and capital expenses. Fortunately, the City has seized the opportunity to obtain voter support for several sales tax opportunities. However, the City is subject to volatility in the economy at least in the short run. Long-term the most notable positive impact is to support existing businesses, encourage new retail, and seek ways in which development can play a major role. The latter is subject to community controversy, but it is the most effective means to shore up funding for not only day-to-day operations, but for implementation of strategic initiatives. The ongoing debate over point of sales



Photo: Sales tax revenue from Kirkwood businesses helps fund general services, parks and recreation, and capital expenses.

and pooled sales taxes distribution may or may not improve Kirkwood's ability to rely on sales tax revenue. Until there is some resolution to the debate, current sales tax levels will only be affected by economic trends and new development.

Bond Issues and Debt

Many of the strategic objectives can be financed by establishing yearly priorities and funding as much as possible. However, there are several initiatives that will need more additional funding than will be available from traditional tax receipts. Most notably, the desire to improve the safety and drivability of City streets can only be addressed through the sale of voter approved bonds. The use of bonds not only provides the level of funding needed, but also permits our citizens to decide on the value of road rebuilding.

The City's water mains have been the focus of attention over the past few years in an attempt to reach an acceptable level of replacement. The desired replacement rate is 2% annually, but 1% is much more realistic and a rate that we have yet to achieve. Water revenues come solely from user rates, whether it is used to pay debt or fund capital. Revenue bonds are an option, but not a practical one. The water fund has made good progress on replacing water mains the last few years due to the issuance of debt. The Citizen Finance Committee has recommended balancing debt versus pay-as-you-go and our water fund now needs to rely on pay-as-you-go operational revenues for the ongoing replacement of water mains. Water rates will need to be increased and continually increased to achieve the replacement goals.

Grants

The availability of grant funding is limited, particularly in the financial climate of 2011. The City has used grant funds successfully for park development, train station improvements, recycling opportunities, and for designated needs and programs in the police department. Seeking grant money, particular the more obscure grants, is difficult and requires dedicated resources to locate them and assess the short-term, long-term, and sometime obscure "strings" that can be attached. Nonetheless, Kirkwood needs to continue its vigilance within resource availability. Grant money will likely not support day-to-day services.

Donations

Donations while always welcome and appreciated will likely never play a role in funding government services. Donations have significance for the Kirkwood R-7 School District by the nature of their mission. The same environment does not exist in local government.



Photo: The new tennis courts at Kirkwood Park were funded by grants from the Municipal Park Grant Commission of St. Louis County, the Kirkwood School District, and the United States Tennis Association (USTA), as well as the half-cent Parks and Recreation Sales Tax Fund.

Contracts

The City looks for opportunities to capitalize on areas that we have capacity and expertise in and provide services to other jurisdictions. Currently, Kirkwood provides police and fire services to the City of Oakland, and payroll services to Rock Hill. The GIS division has created map books for neighboring fire departments. The police department also provides police resource officers to Kirkwood high school and middle schools through a contract with the R-7 school district. Other law enforcement jurisdictions contract with us to use our indoor firing range. The City will continue to look for contractual opportunities when it makes financial sense to do so.

Drug Forfeiture

The police department supplies regional task forces with manpower. Officers assigned to such task forces receive valuable training, experience, and contacts with other jurisdictions throughout the region. The department under this program receives a portion of the value of seized assets as a result of the task forces' work.

Permit and Other User Fees

The main philosophy of charging user fees is to equitably apportion costs associated with a given service or activity received by a resident. Typical user fees are charged for access to the ice rink, aquatic center, and facility rentals; even building permits are truly user fees. Such fees are established taking into account the direct full cost of services. It is appropriate to consider user fees as general revenue for budgeting purposes. In the aggregate, fees are a substantial component.



Photo: The Kirkwood Aquatic Center charges daily user fees, sells summer swim passes, and offers swimming and water exercise classes to individuals and families and who live in Kirkwood, Glendale, and Oakland.

Utility Customer Revenues

Retail charges for the use of water and electric in many respects are user fees. When an individual uses more water, they pay more. Utility fees are, however, different in that all citizens receive the benefits of the community owning and operating these utilities and offering the service of water and in most homes electricity. The rates that establish the charge are designed to yield funds to fully support the water and electric service. This means that not only day-to-day activities are paid from retail rates, but capital improvements as well.

The City's long-established policy has been to return revenues that exceed expenditures in the water fund back into implementing capital water projects, including water main replacement. Similarly, the electric rates are designed to yield sufficient revenue to pay for similar day-to-day operations, which includes not only the full cost of wholesale power, but also, the support of capital projects, such as substation construction, and voltage conversion. In addition, a long-standing policy of the City Council is an annual dividend of up to \$1,000,000 from the electric fund to the general fund for general government services such as police, fire and streets. This

transfer represents a “return on investment” that is paid to all residents as owners of these utilities.

Sanitation and recycling services to residents is not technically a utility, but the City considers it as such. The City provides residential street side refuse, recyclables, and yard waste collection. The City also has a limited number of commercial customers. Revenues derived from customer payments are used to pay for employees, trucks, fuel, and disposal costs. The sanitation department generates at best a relatively modest “profit”.

General Conclusions

Clearly, there is a relationship between finances and the strategic plan. The document is a well-considered document outlining the needs of Kirkwood in order to achieve the City Council’s vision and goals. As such, the direction and challenges outlined are actions, most of which will require money that will always come from the residents. The plan is a five-year plan that will be prioritized by this and future councils within the available funds. While efforts are ongoing to get the best value for operating expenses such as contractual services and commodities, realistically, stagnant revenues will not let us even keep the status quo let alone achieve the actions proposed here to advance the Council’s goals. Building a future requires resources.

Among one of the most important resources available to the community is the City’s workforce. Maintaining such a workforce requires both Council and community support. Such support takes many forms but adequate training, benefits, challenges, and compensation are major components.

As this plan is reviewed and discussed with the community, it is very important that it be understood that this plan, like all plans, is subject to change as the City’s environment changes. The strategic plan is a guide for the benefit of all city councils, current and future. Like a map to any destination, it may seem clear at the outset but surely detours, breakdowns, and road closures can be expected and the route will need to be changed.

