



2024

Mid-year Progress Report

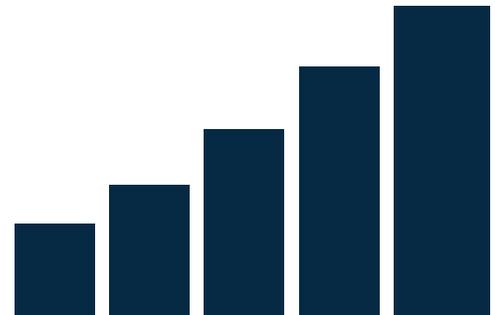


**Based on Storm Lake
City Council priority goals**

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Background

The City of Storm Lake conducted a Strategic Planning Retreat during December, 2023. The retreat's primary goal was to update the existing strategic plan for Storm Lake and to identify specific community goals and objectives for 2024. Taking part were Mayor Mike Porsch; City Council Members Maggie Martinez, Tyson Rice, Kevin McKinney, Maria Ramos, Matt Ricklefs and Council Member Elect Meg McKeon; and city administrators. In advance of the retreat, each City Council member compiled a list of important issues facing the community which was provided to the facilitator, Mark Collins with KRW Associates. City Department leaders attended a separate goal setting workshop to provide feedback on important community goals, objectives and priorities.

Planning



Visioning Process

In a visioning exercise as part of the Strategic Planning retreat, the City Council was asked to consider:

- ❓ What type of community will Storm Lake need to be in the coming years?
- ❓ What makes Storm Lake special?
- ❓ What does this community value?

The result was a “wish list” for the community of Storm Lake to accomplish by the year 2029, including:

- More Retail Businesses
- A Day Care Facility
- A Recreation Center
- Improved Public Transit
- Buena Vista County Sheriff’s Office Communications Division Multi-Lingual Phone Translation Option
- A “Non-City Hall” Meeting Venue to Improve Community Outreach
- Expanded Utilization of the Lake
- Dredge Spoils Site development
- Progress/Results from the Downtown Master Plan
- More Quality Housing
- Community Foundation
- An Economic Development Group to Facilitate Land Acquisitions

Future



Progress on Visioning

Actions have already been taken to address several of the longer-term “wish list” items:

- **More Retail Businesses** - City economic development is working to assist potential new businesses, several new business places have opened. Recruiting efforts continue with The Retail Coach, and the city continues working closely with the Iowa Lakes Corridor on business services.
- **Day Care Facility** - Location identified and secured. Committee formed to pursue a development plan.
- **Improved Public Transit** - Council has doubled contribution for taxi coupons, with more marketing for the program.
- **A “Non-City Hall” Meeting Venue** - Multiple work sessions have been held in various locations around the community to improve public outreach.
- **Expanded Utilization of the Lake** - Emphasis on recreation tourism, promotion, advertising and events. Regular beach grooming. New rental system for kayaks. Potential to seek a grant for improving boat ramp location.
- **Develop the Dredge Spoils Site** - Continued planning, discussion with Lake Improvement Commission, site tours with parks committee and other interested parties.
- **Downtown Master Plan** - Ground level planters removed, new planted pots installed, continued discussion of streetscape, working with Storm Lake United on events.
- **More Quality Housing** - Additional projects are underway with Kading Properties, The Breeze condominiums, and local developers/builders. Currently 82 new housing units planned or under construction for 2024.





Ongoing Objectives

During Strategic Planning, the following items and initiatives were identified as key objectives for 2024. After listing their priorities, the Mayor and Council provided details on the steps that would be necessary to implement the goals and objectives. Work will continue in all areas.

DAY CARE

- Transparency in ongoing work by Child Care Task Force
- Analysis of Knights of Columbus Hall site
- Establish a community foundation for fundraising and management.
- City Council to recruit members for a community foundation.

Update: It is early in the process. A Child Care Task Force has been formed with an initial meeting. The KC Hall site is not available, and alternative land was purchased by the City to assist in the development.

HOUSING

- City council to recruit members for a Community Foundation Housing Task Force.
- Negotiating with landowners may be a role for a future Economic Development committee.
- Potential consortium of local banks.
- Continue work with Regional Housing Authority.
- Small group discussions for specific land parcel discussions.

Update: Housing development continues to be strong, with multiple projects underway or planned. The City works closely with agencies and developers to encourage growth, though efforts are somewhat constrained by the “landlocked” nature of the city limits.



Ongoing Objectives

RECREATION CENTER

- Consider a feasibility study
- Partnerships including school district, medical center, university, etc. toward a project.
- Potential partnership with a private athletic facility.
- Utilizing a future community foundation.

Update: Has not yet been addressed at the council level. Capital investment and operation costs remain an obstacle.

STORM LAKE UNITED/PROMOTION

- Director should not be a City employee.
- Require an SLU business plan.
- City to continue to handle tourism duties.

Update: Storm Lake United has not yet determined a director. SLU staff has presented plans to the city council, and city funding has been determined. City staff has assisted where needed in events preparation and promotion. The City has performed travel and tourism duties including promotion, advertising and assisting in King's Pointe marketing.

OTHER IMPORTANT COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES

- Spoil Site: Move forward with plans and field tours for spoil site. **Update:** Planning continues, funding to be determined, tours underway.
- Study Sessions: Council meetings to finish with topics and suggestions for study sessions. **Update:** Fully implemented.
- Meeting sites: Consider holding council study sessions in community locations outside City Hall. **Update:** Sessions have been held in locations including the high school, King's Pointe Resort and Chautauqua Shelter as a form of community outreach. Additional sessions can be held as needed.



Departmental progress reports

Economic Development

- Conducted 23 Business Retention and Expansion Visits (BRE).
- Updated LOIS (national online location analysis tool that promotes available site and building inventory for Storm Lake.)
- Strategic business planning assistance for entrepreneurs prior to opening their businesses.
- In partnership with the Retail Coach met with stakeholders and potential franchisees for recruitment of new retail.
- Connected owners of vacant buildings with entrepreneur(s) starting a new business.
- Completed Strategic Plan for Child Care and formed The Storm Lake Child Care Steering Committee and purchased potential site.
- Added Child Care page on the city website to provide online access to topics and subjects such as: How to start a day care, requirements for child care providers, finding child care, assistance in paying for child care and child care resources.
- Worked with the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), to conduct a Downtown Assessment to raise awareness, educate, and encourage the local community to implement practical recommendations from the Downtown Assessment Report.
- Appointed an Ad Hoc Downtown Signage Committee to work to improve design and communication on appropriate signage in the Central Business District.
- Selected Maxfield Research & Consulting to complete a Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment Study.



Departmental progress reports

Public Library

- Telehealth Room Open House, January 4
- Preschool Story Time with Alex, new youth program, twice monthly.
- New Fire Alarm System installed by Power Solutions, February
- Spanish Story Time with Ana, new Saturday youth program.
- Library Director's AI webinars with American Library Association.
- Library Director's National Library of Medicine (Telehealth) Zoom Meeting
- Community Connect Program (Financial Literacy Program for Kids – Grant from American Library Association and Capitol One), February.
- Library Director participated in State Library Test Webinars with Dr. Beth Wahler, Social Work in Library, February-March
- State Inspection of New Boiler System, March
- American Library Association announced Library Director presentation accepted for National Conference, San Diego on Telehealth, online tasks March-May
- Pokemon Club with Alex, new Saturday youth program, March
- Kids Yoga and Mindfulness, new Saturday youth program, March
- First Graders and their Families at the Library (literacy) March/April
- Second Grade Job Fair Tour at Library, April 25-26
- Community Service Navigators' Open House, library partner, April 26
- Community Connect Program (Digital Literacy Program – Grant from American Library Association and Capitol One), May
- Summer Reading Program begins, Puppet Show, June 4
- Storm Lake Public Library Telehealth Presentation, American Library Association National Conference, San Diego, June 29
- LED light conversion at library, July 17-18
- Summer Reading Program Finale, Ice Cream, August 1



Departmental progress reports

Fire Department

- Replaced 3200 feet of hose, including supply and attack line as part of the 5-year complete replacement plan.
- Obtaining battery-powered extrication equipment that will replace a hydraulic powered system that was unable to cut today's vehicle alloys.
- Obtained a new battery-powered ventilation fan will allow firefighters to access difficult to ventilate areas easier and without needing powered access.
- Continued to expand public outreach initiatives: participating in Kids' Fest, Star Spangled Spectacular, school events, etc.
- Utilizing Fire Safety House, Sparky mascot and handout materials to educate children.
- Planning for a fall Open House and Fire Prevention Week activities.
- Will host a regional fire school in August, offering a fantastic training opportunity to departments from across the state
- Continued recently-created programs like Sound the Alarm for Seniors and Community Connect to help aid protection and response in emergency situations.
- Numerous training exercises including a propane tank response.
 - Increased efforts to recruit volunteer firefighters.





Departmental progress reports

Communications

- Leading planning for Kids' Fest, a growing event that has created much enthusiasm for the community.
- Planning and public information for Harmony Garden project.
- Application and organization for Hometown Pride program.
- Assisting with marketing and promotion for King's Pointe Resort and waterparks.
- #destinationstormlake tourism campaign.
- Creating advertising and promotional materials including new programmatic ad program.
- Travel stories, photos and reels for Travel Iowa state distribution.
- Attended state Travel & Tourism conference.
- Assisting all departments and partner agencies with public information.
- Serving as liaison to media for inquiries.
- Updated City Volunteer and Donor guidebooks.
- Planning for future boat ramp improvement projects.
- Working and training with emergency management.
- Daily photos and videos for city social media.
- Downtown tours for visiting economic development officials.
- Assisting Storm Lake United in preparations and promotion for local events.
 - Assisting Farmers' Market with promotion.
 - Hunger Dialogue committee.
 - Friends of the Library Board.
 - Grant-writing as needed, including Iowa Cultural Grant application.
 - Press releases and articles as needed.
 - Creating videos for city website.





Departmental progress reports

Police

Outreach events since Jan 2024:

- Bingo with a cop
- Youth girls and boys basketball camp
- Movie with a Cop
- Meet us at the Market
- YumVee Patrols
- National Night Out
- Prime Time Event
- School Summer Lunch Program Outreach

Training since Jan 1, 2024:

- Advanced Patrol Tactics (2 officers)
- Investigating Sex Crimes
- Kratom Education
- Homicide Crime Scene Investigation
- Iowa Narcotics Association Conference (2 officers)
- Finding the Leader in You Leadership training
- Firearms Instructor Certification Training (2 officers)
- Rifle Instructor Certification Training
- Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification
- Death and Homicide Investigation
- Force on Force Scenario and Safety Instructor Certification (2 officers)
- Handgun Red Dot and Low Light Instructor Certification
- Advanced Impaired Driving Enforcement
- High Threat Close Quarter Combat Instructor (2 officers)

- Tactical High Threat K9 Patrol Tactics
- Basic SWAT Training (2 officers)
- Drug Interdiction Techniques
- Hostage Negotiation

Equipment upgrades since Jan 2024:

- Replaced Supervisor's Vehicle
- HVAC upgrade on the PD Building
- Desk Upgrades, Lieutenants Office
- Upgraded Command Post, MRAP & Entry Team radios
- Purchased Force on Force Training equipment



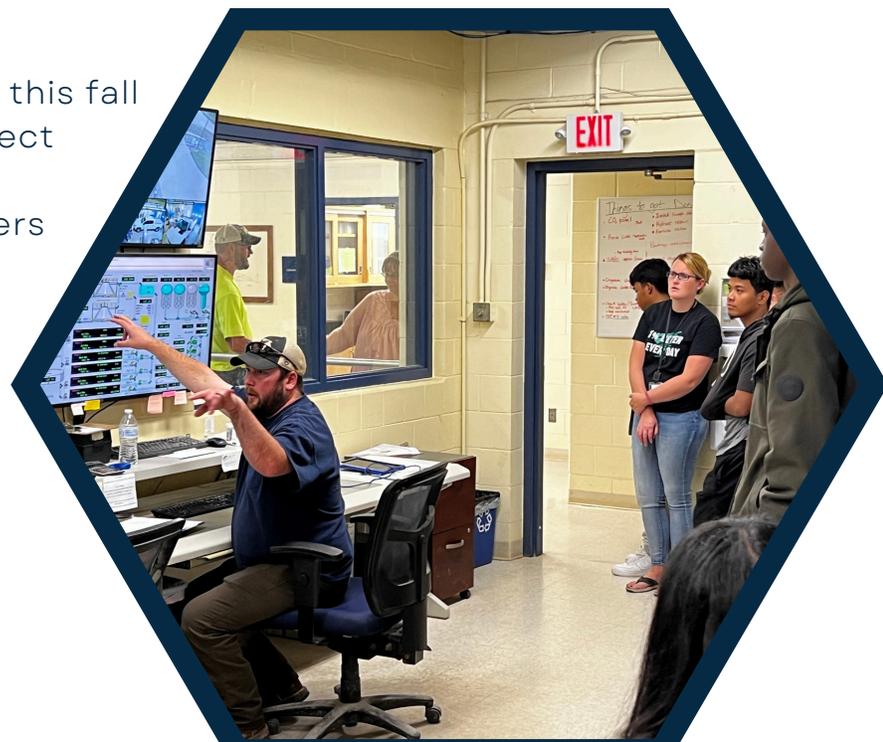


Departmental progress reports

Public Services

WATER & WASTEWATER

- Service line Inventory
- Inspected and rehabbed basin 2 at water plant.
- Working with contractor installing new CO2 system
- Started construction on water tower 5
- New sewer installed on Memorial Rd as part of the project
- Installed multiple valve and lengths of water main on Memorial Road
- Installed bypass valving at Scout Park Lift Station
- Replaced ARV on Scout Park force main
- Sealed 44 sewer manholes
- Coated west A-basin at WWTP
- Received a grant to replace bowers at WWTP
- Well 21 has been started and will be put online this fall
 - Well 22 awarded and starting this fall
 - Scout Park and Icehouse project awarded and starting fall
 - Continuing installing SP readers on homes and business to make meter reading more efficient
 - Two water test wells
 - Designed and have a DNR permit to do a full replacement of College and 3rd lift station





Departmental progress reports

Public Services

PARKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Continued removal of ash trees, stump grinding and re-seeding.
- Lakefront brush trimming
- Planning for Harmony Gardens install and library site project
- Street repairs and pothole filling
- Paving extension at alley near West Railroad Street
- Collecting debris from storm damages
- Citywide Clean Up
- One Million Trees project with DNR, Alliant Energy in April
- Maintenance and improvements at Sunrise Pointe Golf Course
- Preparations for Chautauqua Park playground install
- Sidewalk repairs as needed
- Kids' Fest park preparations
- Pickleball courts preparations
- Memorial Road and utilities project
- Replanting of rain gardens on Erie Street
 - Barricades for various community events
 - Planning for water bottle stations install
 - Repairs for Memorial benches
 - Docks install and maintenance
 - Planning for potential boat ramp area improvements.





Departmental progress reports

Building & Codes

The Department works hard to equitably enforce building, zoning, and code enforcement regulations throughout the community with the least amount of disruption to the developers and citizens. The department plays a vital role in safely building, remodeling, or creating new businesses.

- There were new homes and duplexes constructed in Emerald Park and along West 6th Street. The Department collaborated with the developers to coordinate our efforts to ensure a smooth process.
- The Kading duplex development and single-family manager dwelling were completed and are fully occupied now, providing 170 new housing units.
- The Department worked with the Kading group earlier this year to start a 76-unit townhouse development started on West 10th Street.
- The new ICCC two story education building is nearing completion.
- The second phase of the Early Elementary School opens to students this fall.
- Buena Vista University is constructing a four-story dormitory.
- Storm Lake Honda added a new addition to their dealership.
- United Bank of Iowa added additional office space.
- Vison Care remodeled the former Faust building for their business.
- United Community Health Center completed an addition to the east end of the facility.
 - **Memorial Road/utilities upgrade project is progressing.**
 - Kwik Star is constructing a new convenience store and car wash along East Lakeshore Drive.
 - New City 1.75-million-gallon water tower is underway.
 - The Department has also worked with several new businesses in the renovation of existing buildings into restaurants, coffee shops, and retail establishments.



Major Projects



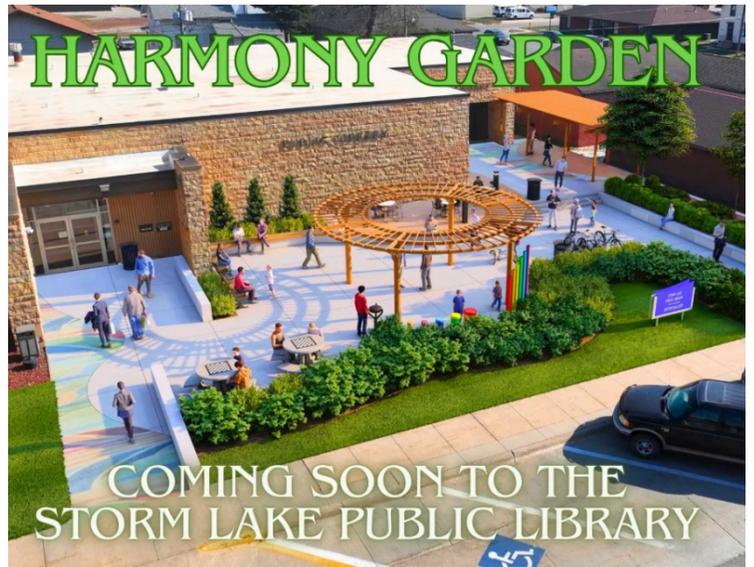
Construction for city's largest-ever water tower



New playground with Paxton Trust donation



Dedication for new pickleball complex



Harmony Garden development underway



Multi-million-dollar waterparks renovation/upgrades



Memorial Road paving and infrastructure upgrades

Major Projects



Kids' Fest event: new site, great turnout



City buildings converted to energy-saving LED systems



Child Care study completed, committee formed.



Planning toward future spoil site development



Signage committee follows Downtown Master Plan



City pioneers programmatic travel advertising