



MID-YEAR REPORT 2025

Paving the Way for Innovation,
Efficiency, and Sustainable
Growth in Our Community.

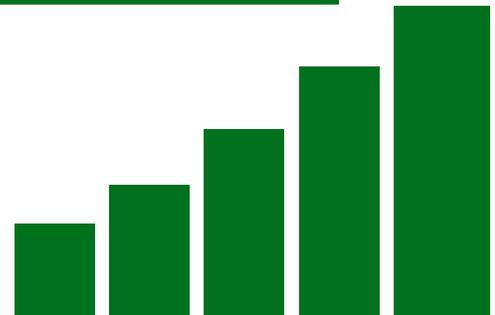


CITY OF STORM LAKE

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BACKGROUND

The City of Storm Lake 2025 Strategic Planning Retreat was held on December 6, 2024 at King's Pointe Resort.

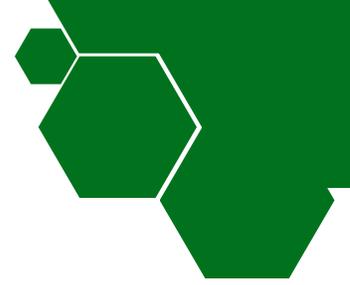
The retreat's primary goal is to identify specific community goals and objectives for 2025. Participating were Mayor Mike Porsch, City Council Members Maggie Martinez, Meg McKeon, Kevin McKinney, Maria Ramos and Matt Ricklefs. Also in attendance was City Manager Navratil, Assistant City Manager Derragon, and City Clerk Martinez.

At the beginning of the planning session, the Mayor and Council reviewed the 2024 Progress Report and Department Directors' Strategic Plan. The council then took part in a visioning process to determine priorities for the year ahead. City staff works throughout the year to progress toward meeting those goals.

PLANNING



VISIONING PROCESS



As part of the annual Strategic Planning retreat visioning process, the City Council is asked to consider:

1. What type of community will Storm Lake need to be in the coming years?
2. What makes Storm Lake special?
3. What does this community value?

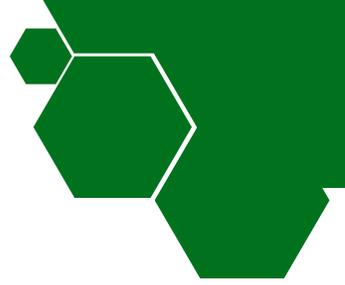
The following key priorities were identified for the next five years:

- **Water & Wastewater Upgrades**
- **Economic Development for Retail & Restaurants**
- **Street Resurfacing & Maintenance**
- **Fire Department modernization and expansion**
- **Potential for a Recreation Center**
- **Continued Housing Development**
- **Establish a Daycare Center**
- **Nature Area Development**
- **Police Recruitment and Retention**

After listing their strategic goals, the Mayor and Council were asked to detail the process necessary to implement the objectives.



FUTURE



ONGOING OBJECTIVES

During Strategic Planning, the Mayor and Council determined the steps that would be necessary to implement their key goals and objectives. Work will continue in all areas.

WATER/WASTEWATER

- Water Department upgrades
- Design/land acquisition for new water plant
- Seeking grant opportunities

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Consideration of purchasing property
- Development Committee/Board for Investors
- Small Business Development coordination with Storm Lake United
- Retail Coach Reporting
- Update from City Staff regarding Economic Development efforts
- Retention & expansion support for business succession

STREET RESURFACING & MAINTENANCE

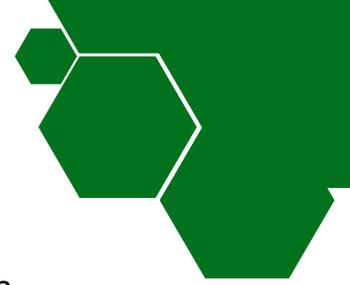
- Proactive resurfacing and maintenance
- Placement of overlay line item in budget
- Pay for classes and training for new staff

FIRE DEPARTMENT MODERNIZATION AND EXPANSION

- Modernization of rigs
- Expansion of services (inspections)
- Consideration for more full-time staff
- Locating grant opportunities

STRATEGY

PROGRESS ON VISIONING



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

- **Water and Wastewater Upgrades** - A new 1.75 million gallon water tower is nearing completion. Planning toward a future new water treatment plant is progressing. An advisory committee is currently being formed.
- **More Retail Businesses** - City economic development is working to assist potential new businesses, and several new business places have opened. Recruiting efforts continue, in partnership with The Retail Coach agency. The city continues working closely with the Iowa Lakes Corridor on business services.
- **Street Resurfacing and Maintenance** - Several streets were resurfaced with blacktop during the summer of 2025. New crack-filling equipment has been obtained with staff completing training.
- **Fire Department** - Two new fire trucks have been ordered to modernize the fleet.
- **Recreation Center** - Efforts continue to gauge community interest and involvement.
- **Housing Development** - On the heels of major additions to the community’s housing options, additional developments are under consideration. 82 new housing units were completed in 2024, 74 in process for 2025.
- **Day Care Facility** - A location has been identified and purchased. A committee is continuing to work toward a project.
- **Nature Area** - A plan is in place to develop a currently-unused location into a Nature Park. A first step would be to encourage native plantings and develop hiking trails. Potential grants are being investigated.
- **Police staffing** - Efforts are to include promotion of salary and benefits in hiring, and encouraging officers’ community involvement.





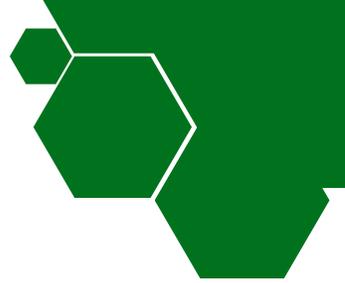
DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Police Department

Achievements since January 2025

- Hosted the Blue Blood Drive.
- Offered Active Shooter Training for city staff.
- Conducted Rescue Task Force Active Shooter Training for the SLFD.
- SLPD Detectives cleared a series of residential and vehicle burglaries.
- Assisted in Guatemalan Consulate Outreach event.
- Assisted Sleep in Heavenly Peace to build and deliver beds for Storm Lake families in need.
- Hired new Patrol Officer Villhauer.
- Assisted with Mexican Consulate Outreach Event.
- Issued public statements to our immigrant community about changes in immigration policies to help stem fears and misinformation.
- Managed a violent armed standoff on Oneida Street that lasted 19 hours; the suspect fired hundreds of rounds at police with assault rifles. Over 100 officers from multiple agencies were involved with this incident.
- Attended the Makhabusa Festival for Boun Magha Puja Day, and Laotian New Year event, at the Buddhist Temple.
- Assisted Storm Lake High School with a Student Leadership Event.
- Assisted with public safety and emergency management during the April storm.
- Hosted Coffee with a Cop at VeSo Coffee.
- Offered outreach at the Gingerbread House.
- Celebrated Police Week with the 2024 Police Awards Ceremony.
- Outreach event at East Early Elementary School
- Deployed multiple YumVee Patrols for neighborhood outreach.
- Completed a body camera refresh/replacement for all outdated body cameras.
- Concrete rehab/repair in North parking lot.
- Purchased defensive tactics training mats for the facility.
- Completed facility repairs at the West 7th impound.
- Judged Storm Lake Elementary School 4th Grade Debate event.
- Sponsored a youth softball team through CE.
- Delivered the welcome speech for the Memorial Day Parade of Flags event.
- Obtained body armor through the FBI Legacy Armor Program.
- New K-9, Duke trained and sworn into service.
- Hosted Tacos with a Cop event at Seneca Park.
- Hosted a study visit from Pelham PD officers.
- Conducted a summer bike safety talk at Storm Lake Elementary School.
- Participated in Kids Fest event.
- Conducted alcohol and tobacco compliance checks at all licensed businesses in the city.

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DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Police Department

Achievements since January 2025 continued

- Provided security for the No Kings protest event.
- Provided Security for a Rob Sand event.
- Managed a suspicious package incident at Walmart with the Storm Lake Fire Department and the State Fire Marshal's Bomb Squad.
- Assisted the Iowa Department of Insurance and Financial Services in hosting a No Scammers training event at King's Pointe.
- Produced/promoted public safety videos in English and Spanish to raise awareness about the new Iowa Hands-Free Driving Law.
- Attended the Boun Pravet Festival at the Watlao Simongkhoun Chantharam Buddhist Temple.
- Managed public safety operations for the Star Spangled Spectacular July 4th events.

Training programs since January 2025

- Sexual Assault Investigation (2 officers) – 16-hour training
- Field Training of new officer (360 hours)
- Supervising Patrol Critical Incidents – 16-hour training
- Conquering the Search Warrant (2 officers) – 16-hour training
- Undercover Social Media Investigations – 16-hour training

- Rescue Task Force Tactical Response Training (3 officers) – 24-hour training
- Advanced Roadside Impairment and Detection Enforcement (2 officers) – 16-hour training
- Swat Team Leader Development Training – 40 hours
- K9 Handler Training – 160 hours
- Taser Instructor Certification – 16 hours
- Protecting Families Conference – 8 hours
- Report Writing – 8 hours
- Active Threat Tactical Response Training (3 officers) – 16 hours
- Firearms – All officers department training
- Tactical Interviewing and Deception – 32-hours
- Basic Field Training Officer School – 24 hours
- Drug Recognition Expert Recertification – 8 hours
- Active Shooter Response – All officers training
- Bloodborne Pathogens/Hazmat Communications – All officers department training





DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Fire Department

Achievements since January 2025

- Hired Fire Department's first full-time inspector. Fire Inspector Severson and Captain Fevold are both Certified Fire Inspectors in the State of Iowa. This service fills a vital role in prevention, by ensuring that buildings meet safety and fire code standards, that safety equipment is working properly, and providing education for property and business owners on fire prevention.
- Conducted several outreach programs, including a fire truck visit to Gingerbread House, and presentations at the elementary schools.
- Onboarded two additional volunteer firefighters.
- Responded to local needs such as an apartment house fire incident, and assisted other area departments as requested.
- Replacement and addition of additional radio and pager units.
- Obtained an additional battery ventilation fan, combi tool for vehicle extrication and 800' of replacement supply hose.
- Took part in Kids' Fest with the SLFD Safety Education House.
- Marched in the Star Spangled Spectacular parade with the SLFD historic hose cart unit.
- Continued a vigorous training schedule, including an ice rescue training on the lake ice.
- Budgeted for future needs including two fire trucks to modernize the fleet, which are now on order.





DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Public Services

Achievements since January 2025

PARKS

- Cleaned up from seasonal storm damage and removed damaged trees.
- Cleared and replanted landscape areas in the outdoor waterpark.
- Repaired fountain at Awaysis Park and returned it to service.
- Cleaned out drainage basin areas at Awaysis Park parking area.
- Installed a new water fountain station at Chautauqua Park (grant funded).

STREETS

- Repaired concrete - N. Emerald Drive, Radio Road, Sunrise Park Road, PD parking.
- Trimmed or removed damaged or dead trees at numerous locations on residential parking.
- Responded numerous times for trees and branches down from multiple storms.
- Completed storm sewer jetting - Michigan/W. 6th, Vestal/7th, Erie/W. 9th, Lake/2nd.
- Received delivery of new mastic mixer trailer and conducted training for road repairs.
- Completed storm sewer repairs - E. Milwaukee, N. Emerald, 9th Street.

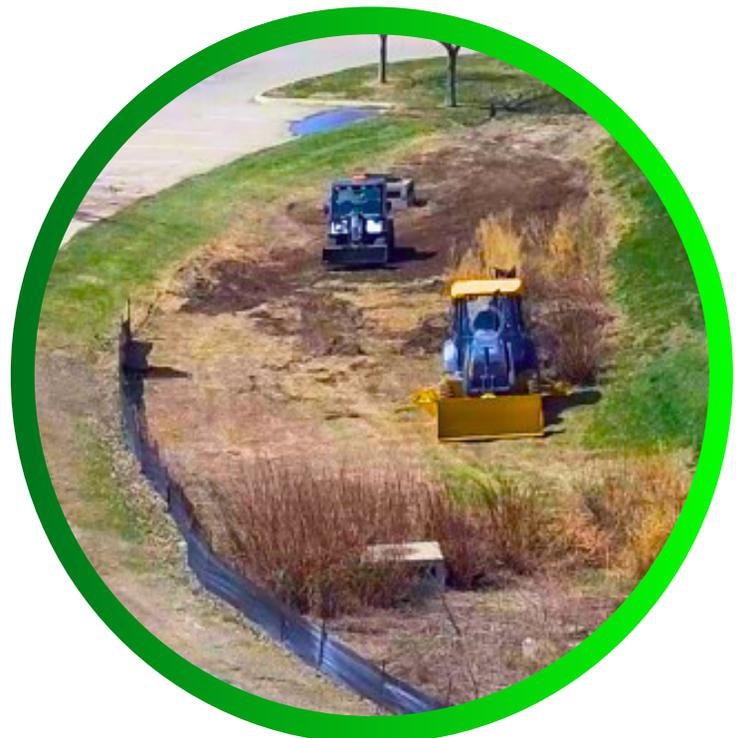
- Asphalt overlay project completed - Seneca Street.
- Asphalt overlays project completed - Angier, Shoreway and Northwestern.

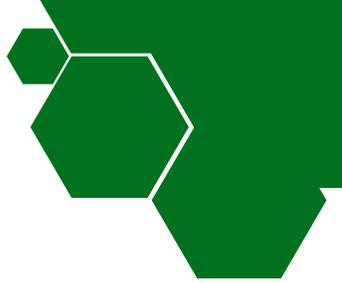
GOLF COURSE

- Moved 10 trees from nursery location onto golf course.

EVENTS

- Set up and removed barricades for several community events.





DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

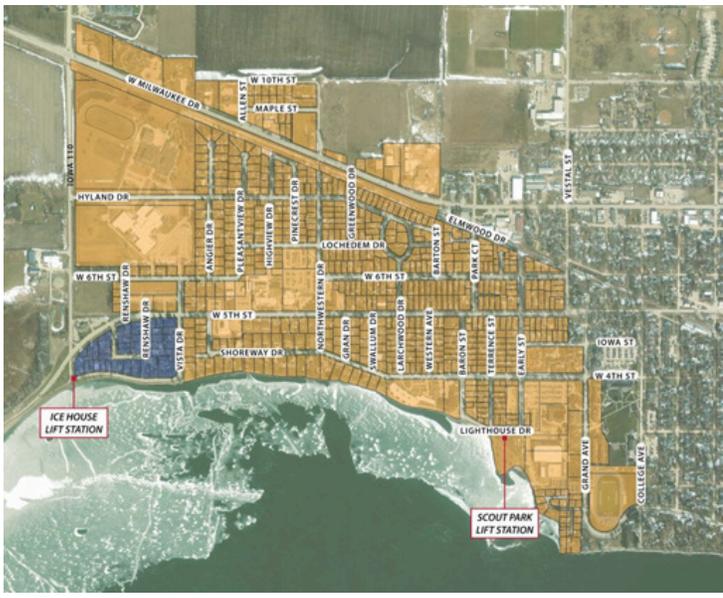
Water Department

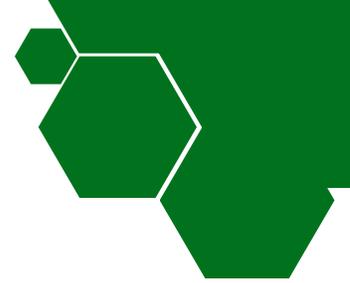
Achievements since January 2025

The period has been a landmark one for the City of Storm Lake Water and Wastewater departments. The new City 1.75-million-gallon water tower neared completion, with construction on pace to finish in October. This project is a once-in-a-generation accomplishment, the first tower constructed in Storm Lake since the early 1990s. The City also started the process of designing, and ultimately constructing, a new water treatment facility. Moving forward, an ad-hoc committee will assist with planning and funding option recommendations.

Additional achievements:

- Water Plant staff successfully passed the Iowa DNR regularly scheduled 3-year sanitary survey.
- Completion of Well 21 construction.
- Well 22 work in progress, to be operating this fall.
- Well 18 rehabilitated for additional service.
- Returned Well 4 to online service.
- Made successful emergency repairs to Well 14 by Water Plant staff and contractors.
- Completed the Water System annual water use permit and consumer confidence report for the Iowa DNR and the public.
- Treated 728,377,000 gallons of raw water into potable water for the public.
- Shared water conservation education information with the community.





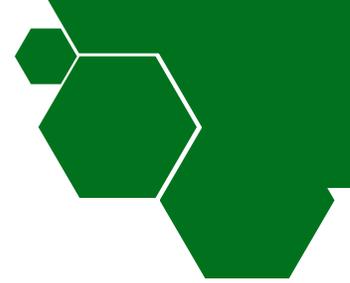
DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

BUILDING & CODES

Achievements since January 2025

- Completed final inspection for the last duplex housing project along West Sixth Street.
- Kading Group construction of a new townhouse development on West 10th Street neared completion. Forty-two percent of the mixture of duplex, four plex, and six plex units (of the total of 76 new dwelling units) were occupied and final inspections of these units is complete. Remaining units were framed up to be complete later this year.
- Worked with the third phase of the Early Elementary School. The new wing was scheduled to open to students this fall.
- The Building and Fire Department staffs completed final inspections of Buena Vista University's four-story dormitory.
- The Department inspected the new Buena Vista University Strength and Conditioning Center to be ready for the academic year.
- Worked with Buena Vista University on the new Wrestling Room project.
- Performed the annual sidewalk inspection program.
- Completed rental housing inspections and registration along with the Fire Department staff.
- Inspected a new MRI location at BVRMC which was cleared for use.
- Worked with Merrill Manufacturing on a temporary facility at their North Lake Avenue location to allow them to maintain operations while developing a repair strategy after April windstorm damages.
- Staff successfully completed their Insurance Services Office audit.
- Worked with several new businesses for the renovation of existing buildings into restaurants, coffee shops, and retail establishments, as well as many home additions and renovations.





DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Public Library

Achievements since January 2025

- Wrote ALA Public Programs/Capital One Hot Spot Grant Continuation. The program provides funding for financial and digital literacy programs and books.
- Wrote ALA United for Libraries/Penguin Random House Grant for Friends of the Library, special programs and books.
- Hosted Election Polling Place #2 in March.
- Housed University of Iowa Outreach Program and Community Service Navigator for the Micronesian Community.
- Teamed with BVU Community Resource program for an intern based at the library, graduated May 2025.
- Installed new shelving and restocked books and materials in April.
- Conducted multiple student tours in May.
- Offered Poet Zoom program for National Pride Month in June.
- Installed new book displays, and hosted a reception for donor Jerry Kahl in June.
- Offered Summer Reading program, beginning in June.
- Continued development of youth programming and activities, including Child Yoga and Mindfulness, Pokemon Club, Aquacadets and Story Time.
- Offered a Summer Blockbusters movie program
- Launched a Dual Language Reading program, in partnership with Storm Lake Community Schools.
- Hosted a BV Naturalist presentation.





DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Communications

Achievements since January 2025

- Led planning for Kids' Fest, a growing event that has created much enthusiasm for the community. The festival served an estimated 1,500 children in 2025.
- Promoted continued development of Harmony Garden project.
- Represented the City on local/regional Hometown Pride teams, added website.
- Arranged DNR litter bag program.
- Assisted with marketing and promotion for King's Pointe Resort and waterparks, including new billboard designs.
- Created #escapetheordinary Storm Lake tourism campaign and social posts
- Created advertising for travel guides, magazines, and local event advertising.
- Contributed travel stories, photos and reels for Travel Iowa state distribution.
- Participated in the Iowa Travel & Tourism conference.
- Assisted all departments and partner agencies with public information, flyers, advertising and promotion.
- Served as liaison to media for inquiries.
- Maintained City Volunteer and Donor guides.
- Wrote successful grant for boat ramp improvement project for 2025-2026.
- Wrote grant for Trees Forever to replace storm-damaged trees.
- Worked with emergency management on planning and public information needs.
- Took photos and videos for social media.
- Wrote council meeting update articles.
- Assisted Farmers' Market with promotion.
- Served on Hunger Dialogue committee.
- Served on Employee Engagement committee.
- Served with Friends of the Library as VP.
- Grant research as needed.
- Writing City Code informational series.
- Issuing press releases as needed.
- Creating videos for City website and YouTube channel.





DEPARTMENTAL PROGRESS REPORTS

Economic Development

Achievements since January 2025

- Conducted 17 Business Retention and Expansion Visits (BRE).
- Assisted several business owners with succession/leadership transition planning.
- Worked with developers to identify suitable land for future housing projects.
- Maintained and updated LOIS national online location analysis tool that promotes available site and building inventory for Storm Lake.
- Met with 11 local entrepreneurs and providing strategic business planning and site location assistance.
- Assisted business relocation to temporary sites due to storm damage dislocation.
- Attended DEV 25 Economic Development Conference.
- In partnership with the Retail Coach, identified and met with stakeholders and potential franchisees for recruitment of new retail.
- Worked to fill vacant properties by connecting the building owners with entrepreneur(s) starting a new business.
- Assisted in data collection of for Maxfield Research & Consulting to complete a Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment Study.
- Built a Webinars, Workshop & Podcast page on the city website to provide online access to topics and subjects to help new and existing business owners grow their business and expand their career skills.
- Facilitated Ad Hoc Downtown Signage Committee meetings and presented findings to the City Council during workshops to update Sign Regulations.
- Added 75 new housing units in 2025.
- Maintained regular contact with the IEDA, SBDC, Iowa Workforce Development, ILCDC, The Retail Coach, SLU, The Foundry and ICCC pertaining to grants, loans, business and financial planning, and development opportunities.

Projects & Events Gallery



Construction neared completion on 1.5M gallon tower



Construction began on three lift station replacements.



Harmony Garden completion was planned.



DNR grant was secured for boat ramp dock/restroom.



New, more accessible library shelving was installed.



City teamed with BV Recycling Center for Clean-up Day.

Projects and Events Gallery



Kids' Fest event added new partners, turnout strong.



Hometown Pride Committee worked on beautification



City purchased a potential site for a child care center.



Planning for Nature Area development.



Renovated Snack Shack reopened for the season



Storm Lake Proud cleanup projects were successful.

Projects and Events Gallery



A new campground playground was installed.



Water station added at Chautauqua Park, grant funded.



In-house statewide advertising targeted tourism.



Signage Committee recommended ordinance updates.



Streets repaired/resurfaced, new equipment added.



New real-time camera published live on City website.

Rising to the Challenge

On the night of April 17, two powerful storm cells moved through the community, with estimated in-line wind speed of 70 miles an hour. The event caused significant damage and cut power to much of the City. The crisis tested all of the City's emergency response capabilities. City workers and community members responded with tremendous effort and volunteerism. Cleanup stretched for two weeks and delayed other planned City work, but the heartwarming teamwork fully illustrated Storm Lake's ability to bounce back stronger than ever.

The City would like to once again thank everyone who helped with the recovery.

