



CITY OF GAUTIER

STRATEGIC PLAN

2012-2017

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LETTER FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Though Gautier is now 26 years old, in some respects we're younger than our years. Until recently, economic and political circumstances have impeded Gautier's development as a coastal, college town. Ideally located between the industrial and tourism hubs of the state of Mississippi, with two championship golf courses, thousands of acres of parklands and shorelines, and home to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College's Jackson County Campus, Gautier has long been the Gulf Coast tourists' head-scratcher: Why don't we offer more? Gautier has not lived up to our potential. Here's a snapshot why:



At Gautier's incorporation in 1986, the city absorbed old debts of the Gautier Utility District by assuming water and sewer loans. These debts made affording new capital projects difficult. In 2002, city leaders seized an opportunity to dramatically increase the tax base by annexing the Interstate-10/Highway 57 interchange. The land grab to the west, and also lands to the northeast, nearly tripled the city's land area and doubled its population.

Three years later, Hurricane Katrina hit the coast. The resulting disinvestment, out-migration, and devastated infrastructure set Gautier back to a government in its infancy. Lacking the political and community organization of its neighboring cities, Gautier failed to capitalize on federal reconstruction dollars after Katrina. Resulting revenue losses and indebtedness created turnover in city leadership that further impeded Gautier's development and also its political influence on a state and national level. In subsequent years, Gautier necessarily focused efforts on providing city services to the annexed areas.

In 2010, Gautier at last began building economic momentum by strategically focusing development efforts on our undeveloped interstate and our town center, and capitalizing on grass-roots community projects. Results are that Gautier is now turning heads for our 16-acre medical campus at I-10 and Highway 57, and also our town center master plan, anchored by a \$20 million dollar Tax Increment Financing District and plans for a redeveloping mall. In the next year, Gautier will

take the same strategic approach towards our water and infrastructure, a recreational waterfront and growing our premier parks and recreation programs.

It is with care and attention that as City Manager, I've organized a team of top-level professionals who come to the table with accomplishments under their belts, their sleeves rolled up and with something to prove for the citizens of Gautier. With a business-friendly Mayor and Council, Gautier has adopted the core principles of *People. Prosperity. Integrity.* We invite you to visit with us, and take part in our growing success.

Sincerely,

Samantha D. Abell

City Manager

INTRODUCTION

What is strategic planning? Simply put, strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next 3-5 years and how it's going to get there.

In our case, it is an effort to systematically identify the major issues faced by the City and to develop strategies to address them. Strategic planning is a process through which we critically evaluate our strengths and weaknesses, as well as outside opportunities and threats, so that strategic issues can be identified and clearly defined. Strategic issues then are key challenges or policy choices that can be addressed by the City; issues over which the City has some control.

The strategic planning process is as important as the plan itself. The process compels our community to develop a consensual vision of the future. The annual town hall meetings and a web-based needs assessment survey, brings forth a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives.

Successful planning relies on a solid understanding of where we have been as a community, where we are today, and where we hope to be tomorrow. To this end, staff collected input and data from a variety of stakeholders and asked people to identify what they perceived to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing our community.

Gautier city leaders are proud to present the City of Gautier's Strategic Plan, which serves as an organizational blueprint and foundation of how Gautier will become a safe, vibrant, innovative, healthy city, providing the highest overall quality of life possible.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The public outreach for this strategic planning process was ongoing and extensive. The participatory planning process included a neighborhoods community summit, a citywide Town Hall Meeting, two council retreats, and a web-based needs assessment survey.

Community participation consisted of residents, business owners and members of various nonprofit and other community groups. Sessions were held with all city employees and department directors. City of Gautier department directors and managers have played an integral role in internal strategic planning sessions. The participation process associated with this strategic plan was intense and highly effective.

Several topics were introduced during the sessions to gain input on the following issues:

- State of the Community
- Assessment of External Conditions
- Vision of the Future
- Reality Check
- Assessment of Municipal Services
 - What does the City do well?
 - What does the City need to do better?
- Priority Setting

The community participation process provided the community with an opportunity to provide their input and select their priorities. The results of this process for each of the topics are described in great detail in Exhibit II and III.

The community survey demonstrated that Gautier residents have a strong sense of community pride. This was reinforced by the participants of the town hall meeting. A deep connection to its settler history, the kindred frontiersmen culture of fierce independence and the waterfront way of-life remain important community strengths. There is also a general sense of overall improvement in levels and cost of service provided by the City.

VALUES

⌘ PEOPLE ⌘ INTEGRITY ⌘ PROSPERITY

We value government action that is taken openly and believe that responsive government is our first priority. We encourage citizen participation for the betterment of our community and strive to conduct business with integrity to instill public trust.

Quality of Life

We value a safe, family friendly environment in which to build our future and conduct business. We foster recreation, public safety and youth activities, and encourage support of the arts, libraries, and education. We believe in sound economic development, high standard infrastructure and responsible planning for sustainable growth.

Excellence

We value excellence in all things. Professionalism, accountability, and innovation drive our commitment to excellent customer service.

Employees

We value a work environment that emphasizes teamwork, respect and dignity and supports our employees in their efforts to provide excellent customer service.

Diversity

We value diversity in the workplace and in the community.

VISION/MISSION

The comments received by the stakeholders through the outreach process were distilled into the five mission statements that implement the Vision, provided below.

Vision

We strive to achieve efficient and responsible service; a highly trained, competent workforce; and responsible stewardship of resources.

Mission

To enhance the quality-of-life of the citizens of Gautier and our neighborhoods by providing exceptional government services.

- I. Provide a safe environment through the development of partnerships with citizens, community groups and law enforcement, emphasizing crime prevention and a variety of programs aimed at youth.
- II. Create a vibrant community by expanding our economic development efforts striving to improve education, and growing our recreational, cultural, arts and library programs.
- III. Be innovative in seeking solutions, be bold in taking on the challenges of our community and use the entire range of resources, skills and technology available throughout the community for the betterment of all.
- IV. Sustain the economic, environmental and physical health of our community by supporting new medical and health care services; creating a program of sustainable development and fostering continued job creation.
- V. Continue to enhance the quality of life for our residents by embracing our small town spirit, ensuring we maintain strong neighborhoods, valuing and strengthening intergenerational ties among citizens and providing a range of services that support the whole community.
- VI. Encourage community maintenance to aesthetically improve the City.
- VII. Recreational Waterfront. Cultivate public and private investments along the Coastline.
- VIII. Focus on the Town Center Master Plan and I-10/HWY 57 Corridor. Promote economic renewal and strategic development.
- IX. Environmentally Sustainable Local Government Policies. Develop and implement pro-environmental policies.

- X. College Park Community Revitalization. Stimulate further redevelopment opportunities.
- XI. Operational Performance and Efficiency. Focus on improving efficiency and performance.
- XII. Promote Public Safety. Reduce violent crime among youth and adults
- XIII. Customer Service. Maintain and improve the quality our customers' experiences while recognizing that the City is involved in many other important activities, these eight initiatives will be our focus as we plan future activities and deploy resources.

STRATEGIC GOALS & ACTION PLAN

Based on the Vision/Mission statements and in consideration of the community's comments, staff identified twelve categories of actions and their applicable strategic goals for this five-year strategic planning period. The categories provide an organizational framework for the strategic actions set forth in the following tables, which are the basic elements of this effort and will provide a metric to determine our progress in addressing the concerns, desires and priorities of the community.

1. Youth Engagement

Stakeholder Comments: The stakeholders who participated in the strategic planning process identified concerns with limited opportunities and activities for youth as a top priority for immediate action by the City. Their comments included:

- Need to foster and engage youth by providing activities, programs, facilities, entertainment, recreational, educational and job opportunities.
- Target ages 11 –18 with activities, jobs, youth center and mentors.
- Partner with other organizations to provide internships and share recreation facilities.
- Provide safe places for kids to hang out and expand recreational activities.

Mission Reference: Although providing opportunities and programs to foster and engage youth is a component of all Mission statements, the most applicable statements include #1, Safe Community and #4, Quality of Life.

Strategic Goal Youth 1: Collaborate with stakeholders and service providers to assess existing capacity and programs, identify needs, and make recommendations for improvement and/or expansion.

Strategic Goal Youth 2: Collaborate with service providers to continue and expand programs and services that encourage youth engagement, parental education, participation and involvement.

Strategic Goal Youth 3: Engage youth in crime prevention strategies and enhance youth programs that promote prevention and diversion from criminal or gang activities.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Y.1.2. Conduct comprehensive analysis and capacity building for community-wide youth services.	Comprehensive Report	Human Resources	2013
Y.2.1. Continue MDOT Summer Youth Program	Annual Application	Human Resources	Ongoing each summer
Y.2.2. Develop a Mayor's Youth Council	Coordinate with Gautier High School	Human Resources	Initiate 2013.
Y.2.3 Develop an <i>Excellence in Leadership Program</i> whereby a teacher-nominated outstanding student is recognized at the regular Council meeting.	Monthly	City Clerk	Initiate 2013.
Y.2.4. Develop relationships with youth, sports and recreation groups (i.e. sports leagues and clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc)	# of youth enrolled	Parks & Recreation	Initiate 2012.
Y.2.5. Provide a summer work fair to eligible youth to fill seasonal and year-round part-time positions for staffing sports, after-school events and other recreational programs and services		Human Resources	Initiate 2013.
Y.3.1. Engage youth in crime prevention strategies and enhance youth programs that promote prevention and diversion from criminal activities.	Report to City Council	Police/Crime Safety Officer	Ongoing.

2. Public Safety

Stakeholder Comments: The stakeholders who participated in the strategic planning process identified public safety concerns as a high priority. The issues identified include:

Police

Enlarged police station and courtroom: Since the City's incorporation, the PD has occupied the west side of city hall. Court dates resulted in lines of waiting citizens extending outside into the parking lot. With the approval of the 2010 bond issue, in 2012 the City renovated an empty commercial building within the town center for a much-needed Police and Court Justice Building. Also in 2012, the City obtained grants to fund digital uploads for vehicle cameras and utilized funds from Assets and Forfeitures to repair/upgrade digital fingerprint equipment.



Increase personnel: Re-defining patrol beat lines within the next five years would increase visible patrol and reduce response times with additional manpower. One additional FTE (full time employee) would cover three job functions as a receptionist/dispatcher at the Police Department, cross-trained in the Records division and the Court division to assist in these areas as needed. Increasing personnel in both Patrol and Services to accommodate four additional Patrol Officers (1 per shift) to strengthen service to western boundary areas along the Hwy 57, Old Spanish Trail, and I-10 areas.

Replace current motorcycle fleet: with four new Police motorcycles due to high mileage, age and maintenance. This could be done on a five year lease plan through a local lender and the yearly payment made from the assets forfeiture fund.

Start a new car purchase plan: where we start replacing our Police fleet with four to seven vehicles a year in order to keep fleet current and not to get caught having to replace the entire fleet at one time. As stated above our current fleet has nineteen (19) 2007 models which have been in service five years and will need to be replaced very soon due to mileage and

increasing repairs as needed. They are followed by three 2008 models approaching the five year mark and 10 2010 models which would have about three years to go using a five year plan as a rule of thumb. Most cars seem to have more repairs and maintenance problems as they approach ten years of service and higher mileage. Some type of replacement program with four to seven vehicles every year or every other year would keep the fleet fresh and constant on older cars coming off line.

Establish training: Coordinate with the Fire Department for mutual manning of vessel operators and crew to initiate a Marine Patrol using the City's boat on the many waterways within City limits to combat not only water-related incidents but also the prevention of water accessible burglaries and thefts.

Radio communications: The City has to find financial abilities to update its communication capabilities into the Digital bands of communication in order for us to communicate with our surrounding Cities, County, State and Federal agencies. Under our current equipment we will no longer be able to communicate with our counterparts after the year 2017. At present our counterparts can come down to our frequencies and talk to us but we cannot go up to theirs and initiate these conversations. This is very important during a natural or homeland security disaster.

Retention of personnel: Seek out funding for Public Safety through Grants for operations so that City general funds can be used for salary adjustments to ensure officers are paid commensurate with neighboring communities, to retain incumbent full time employees (FTE's) and reduce the cost of training of new officers.

Fire Safety

New Fire Station: With the approval of the 2010 bond issue, the City provided funding for a new fire station for the City's western service area. The proposed fire station is expected to be built on Brown Road approximately 3/10 of a mile east of Highway 57. This proposed fire station will reduce response times for our citizens in the extreme western portion of the City and will also help to improve our overall fire rating with the Mississippi Rating Bureau. This fire station is currently projected to have a fire engine and will be staffed by a minimum of three (3) firefighters. As usual, this fire station will respond to emergencies of all-perils. Recently the City Council approved the appointment of an architect for the design phase of the project and the fire station is currently in the design process.

Construction could start this summer and be completed by late spring.

Additional Personnel:

Along with the new fire station will come the need for additional firefighters. The Mississippi State Rating Bureau recognizes a minimum of three (3) firefighters being available on all fire apparatus capable of fire suppression operations to prevent additional deficiency points being awarded. It is therefore recommended that a minimum of three (3) firefighters per shift be hired which will equal a need for nine (9) new firefighters. Once hired, the new personnel for this fire station will receive initial training, placed on the apparatus under close supervision and scheduled for State Certification training.

Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant: In an attempt to help offset the cost of new firefighters for a two (2) year period of time, the Gautier Fire Department recently applied for a federal grant that, if approved, will fully fund the requested firefighter positions for a two (2) year period of time. This will include wages and all benefits, but does not include training, clothing and other unallowable expenses. This two (2) year period of time will hopefully allow the City of Gautier to move forward into a more favorable economic environment before having to assume the new firefighter expenses. If approved, we will employ a total of fifteen (15) firefighters to not only help staff the new fire station but also provide additional personnel to our south fire station. The grant was submitted on February 23, 2012 and notices of a favorable awarding of the grant should be provided by not later than September 30, 2012. The SAFER Grant is a highly competitive grant and a minimum of 60 must be awarded according to funding requirements.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training: The Federal Government requires all communities to participate in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in order to qualify for many types of federal grant programs. To meet this requirement, all personnel capable of responding to emergency incidents must have NIMS training and must be trained to the level of their response capability. This includes the fire department, police department, public works, finance department, and city leaders.

The fire department currently has all but one (1) personnel qualified to their level of response. The police department and public works department have attended some training sessions in the past. The FD will coordinate with other departments to identify and track personnel and training progress.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM UPGRADE: Gautier is a participant of the Jackson County Emergency Communication District, which provides the radio system for emergency communications and day-to-day operations. Due to age and needed repairs, the Jackson County Communication District must upgrade to a more efficient and modern system.

The estimated cost to upgrade or replace all analog radios is approximately \$66,000.00. In June of 2012, the Gautier Fire Department requested a grant from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program for replacement of all analog radios. The amount of the request for the grant was approximately \$105,000.00. This is a shared grant and the City share, if the grant is awarded, is approximately \$5,500. The grant will only allow purchase of new radios. Target date for completion of upgrading radios must be no later than 2017.

Fire Station Inspection Program: We are currently evaluating the need for a comprehensive fire station inspection program to get a better idea on the serviceability of our three (3) fire stations. Our program is expected to include a once a year comprehensive physical inspection of the fire stations to determine needs prior to the budget development process. This will allow us to fund target areas within the fire stations that may go undetected until deterioration occurs to the point of needing major repairs at a greater expense. This program is in the early phase of development and updates will follow.

Purchase of New Command/Support Vehicle: The current Command/Support vehicle has over 100,000 miles, is a 1999 model and is incurring repairs at an increasing rate. The replacement vehicle will be similar in design and provide command support at all incidents requiring such support, and will respond on medical emergencies when necessary. Funding of the vehicle will come from the State Rebate Insurance Fund and will not affect the General Fund. Estimated cost for the vehicle is \$140,000 to \$160,000.

Mission Reference: Providing for public safety and a secure environment is the

focus of the first paragraph of the Mission Statement.

Strategic Goal Public Safety 1: Provide quality law enforcement services.

Strategic Goal Public Safety 2: Engage community partners in crime prevention strategies.

Strategic Goal Public Safety 3: Ensure the City’s readiness to respond to and recover from disasters.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Public Safety 1. Provide Quality Law Enforcement Services.			
PS.1.1. Reduce crime rate to lowest for a mid-sized City on the Coast.	Crime report statistics	Police	2016
PS.1.2. Revise the Gautier PD web page to improve access for the community	Citizen input	Police	2013; Ongoing
Public Safety 2. Engage community partners in crime prevention strategies.			
PS.2.1. Continue to expand Neighborhood Watch Program.	Active neighborhoods and crime prevention	Police	Ongoing
Public Safety 3. Ensure the City’s readiness to respond to and recover from disasters.			
PS.3.1. Ensure all staff completes training and understands their role in the City’s emergency response activities	Provide needed training for specific levels of participants. Review existing documents related to emergency response for listed disasters.	City Council, City Manager, Administration, Police, Fire Public Works and Planning	Ongoing with annual reviews and updates as needed.
PS.3.2. Participate in annual countywide emergency preparedness exercises and meetings	Exercise opportunities provided by FEMA, MEMA, and Jackson County Emergency Management Director.	All departments subject to participation as needed.	Periodically or as needed.
PS.3.3. Submit Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to Council for adoption	Guidance being provided by Neil Schaffer. Currently under development.	City Manager	Public meetings currently being conducted. Completion date – Fall of 2012

3. Public Works

Stakeholder Comments: The major areas of concern expressed by the stakeholders who participated in the strategic planning process were related to their quality of life, health and safety:

Provide customer service, leadership, and foster an environment of teamwork and responsibility.

The Public Works Department is multi-faceted. Daily responsibilities consist of job priority setting, establishment of strategic Department goals, receiving customer calls and creating Work Orders for maintenance needs, purchasing necessary job tools and materials, troubleshooting field situations, data analysis, record keeping, project management, personnel management, and coordinating support for other Departments in the City. Accomplishing responsibilities requires routines, programs and a data storage system with searchable data and flexible report generation. Behind Customer Service, creating these programs and obtaining the technology to store and analyze maintenance data are the current focus of Public Works Administration.

Water

The City of Gautier's potable (drinking) water is safe and healthy to drink. However, due to the proximity to the Pascagoula River Basin, and the fact that we extract our water from underground aquifers, our water contains organic carbons and dissolved solids which give it a tea color, and can lead to staining and deposits in water heaters. The City is aggressively pursuing a solution to the color problem and has recently concluded a second pilot test to determine the most effective and economical process for the removal of color causing compounds from the water.

The City is also investigating the purchase of an Automatic Read Meter System (ARM) which will report meter readings directly from the meter to a central computer at City Hall. Over time, the cost savings generated by these efficiencies will cover the capital costs of the system purchase and installation, as well as buffering future cost increases in producing the water, allowing water rates to remain relatively stable.

Maintaining system pressures and providing adequate fire protection is also a key component of a viable water system. These goals are accomplished by placing water storage tanks at locations central to the population, maintaining water main lines which deliver the water to the end user, and

maintaining fire hydrants in operable conditions. The Gautier Fire Department routinely operates and tests the fire hydrants citywide, and reports any deficiencies for maintenance and repairs. A computer model of the City's water distribution system has recently been completed and we are investigating the need for additional water storage tanks and wells in strategic locations around the City.

Sewer

The City of Gautier collects all sewage generated in the City and transports this waste to the Jackson County Utility Authority (JCUA) for treatment. The City pays the JCUA for this treatment.

Because of breaks in the transportation lines, missing manhole tops, leaking pipe and manhole joints, tree roots, damaged cleanouts, etc. rain water also enters into the sewer collection system. This is called infiltration and inflow (I&I). I&I increases the amount of water we send to the JCUA for treatment, which, in turn, increases the cost of treatment to the City. In addition to this cost, depending on the amount of rainfall received and rainwater entering the system, the collection system can become overwhelmed and back-up out of lift stations and manholes into the environment.

The City of Gautier is aggressively searching for these breaks in system integrity by increasing the use of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition devices (SCADA) which electronically monitor the operations of the sewage lift stations. These units provide valuable data on pump run times and wet well elevations, which, when compared to rainfall data collected by nine (9) recently installed rain gauges around the City, allows us to focus attention on areas of increased flows during rainfall. Follow-up with visual inspection often reveals open holes in the system (Inflow).

The City also owns and operates cleaning and camera equipment which is used to identify smaller leaks in joints which allow ground water to enter the system. These types of leaks are often not detectable from the surface. Again, the data obtained from the SCADA units alerts us to long term increases in flow generally associated with ground water leaking into the system (Infiltration). Using this information, along with pipe conditions, and surface obstructions, decisions are made to either dig up and replace or line the pipe in place to eliminate these leaks.

The aging infrastructure of the sewer collection is also an area of focus as the City grows. New lift station facilities, force mains and gravity sewer lines are being planned to accommodate existing and future growth. Existing lines are also being cleaned to maintain capacity and to reduce grease build-up.

Reducing sewer overflows caused by rainwater I&I, as well as failing septic tanks will protect the environment and allow a healthy habitat for plants, fish and wild life, and will also provide a clean, safe and enjoyable environment for recreational uses. To this end, the City has partnered with Jackson County to receive grant money under the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) to install individual grinder station at approximately 60 homes in the Old Shell Landing Area to replace existing septic tanks. This project is an effort to clean, improve and protect Graveline Bayou.

Transportation

The City of Gautier maintains all streets, street signs and traffic signals within the City limits, with the exception of Highway 90 and Highway 57, which are maintained by the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). The City does, however, maintain the grass and plantings along these two highways.

The safety of the City's streets is the number one transportation priority. Also of high importance is the ability of the streets to adequately serve the traffic capacity, motorist comfort, adequate access to commercial, residential and public use areas, as well as providing an aesthetically pleasing roadside. Safe pedestrian access along the roadways is also a concern.

The City of Gautier is currently planning several projects to increase motorist safety, to provide adequate access and capacity for commercial development, intersection improvements to increase safety of the travelling public, sidewalks to provide pedestrian access, parking facilities at public buildings, and a regional parking facility to encourage carpooling for energy efficiency.

Drainage

The City of Gautier maintains all drainage facilities within the City Limits, including ditches, culverts and drainage boxes. Keeping these facilities clean and free from obstructions, structurally sound and properly sealed is of utmost importance.

The majority of drainage pipe and structures in the City have been in the ground for many years. The corrugated metal pipe which was used in the past is failing due to rust. This allows for sediment to travel through the pipe, leaving a voids which cause sink holes. When sink holes form below

roadways and adjacent to structures, repairs become very expensive. The City has identified several culvert crossings of roadways in need of replacement. These repairs are targeted in current and future budgets.

Drainage problems also arise from maturing trees along City streets and drainage channels, as well as on private property. Commercial and residential expansion can also create blockages or increase drainage flows beyond the existing capacity of the drainage. The City has identified several locations throughout needing tree removal, channel improvements, culvert replacement and drainage structure improvements. These needs are also being addressed in current and future budgets.

Most of the rainfall in Gautier eventually finds itself through the upper reaches of the drainage system to bayous connecting to the Pascagoula River and the Gulf of Mexico. These bayous can be subject to sediment and other solids carried downstream through the system. These bayous are also tidally influenced, which can deposit and trap sediment in the bayous, reducing their capacity to convey storm water flows. Hurricanes and Tropical Storms only compound these issues. The City of Gautier is working with several funding agencies in an effort to improve the City's bayous through cleaning and widening projects.

Solid Waste

The City of Gautier provides a yard debris and small household goods pick-up service for the residents of Gautier. City workers also pick up litter along the City streets, as well as illegal dump sites throughout the City. The City does not pick up garbage. This service is contracted out.

Maintenance

As much as is economically feasible, the City of Gautier maintains all public buildings, vehicles and equipment in-house, with the exception of some specialty craft items and major equipment repairs.

The current shop and warehouse facilities housing the Maintenance Department are old and in need of upgrades or replacements. The Public Works Shop on Gautier-Vancleave Road was damaged beyond reasonable repair by Hurricane Katrina, but FEMA would not allocate appropriate funds to replace this building. The building is currently being used despite missing roofing, leaking walls, and inadequate heating and air conditioning.

The City of Gautier has appealed FEMA's decision to deny the funding of a new maintenance facility to replace the damaged Public Works Shop.

With the consolidation of the Planning Department to City Hall, the building formerly used by the Planning Department is available to house the administrative offices of the Public Works Department. Building renovations are necessary prior to the occupation of the building by Public Works staff.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Water 1. Improve water efficiency by purchasing and installing an automated meter reading system.			
W.1.1. Reducing the employee hours necessary to read the meters each month	Project completion	Public Works Water	Spring 2014
W.1.2. Reducing vehicle and energy costs of driving to each meter	Project completion	Public Works Water	Spring 2014
W.1.3 Capturing low flow usage such as drips and small leaks	Project completion	Public Works Water	Spring 2014
W.1.4 Allowing customers to view usage tables and graphs of their accounts	Project completion	Public Works Water	Spring 2014
W.1.5 Detecting customer leaks and notifying them of the problem	Project completion	Public Works Water	Spring 2014
W.1.6 Providing usage data for trending and analysis	Project completion	Public Works Water	Spring 2014
W.1.7 Providing new, more accurate meters	Project completion	Public Works Water	Spring 2014

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Potable Water 2. Provide safe, affordable and clear drinking water for the citizens of Gautier.			
PW.2.1. Construct Drinking Water Treatment Plants For color removal plant	A 3-phase project	PW	Spring/Summer 2014, 2016 and 2018
PW.2.3 Construct new Water Wells and Elevated Storage Tanks	HWY 57 Tank/well Martin Bluff Tank/Well	PW	Summer 2014 Summer 2016
Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Sewer 3. Provide an efficient and sound infrastructure for collecting and transporting the City's sewage flows.			
S.3.1 Plan regional lift stations to alleviate existing sewer capacity problems	Bemis Avenue; Various	PW	Spring 2013 TBD
S.3.2 Expand the City's current SCADA monitoring system for lift stations	Ongoing programs	PW	Ongoing Program
S.3.3 Clean and TV main sewer lines	Ongoing in-house and contracts	PW	Ongoing Program
S.3.4 Line sewer mains in problem areas	Ongoing programs	PW	Ongoing Program
S.3.5 Line sewer manholes	Ongoing programs	PW	Ongoing Program
S.3.6 Purchase and install microbiological units at key manholes to decrease grease buildup	Pilot unit	PW	Spring 2013
S.3.7 Complete the design and bidding for the Old Shell Landing CIAP sewer project	Design construction	PW	Fal 2012 Summer 2013
S.3.8 Raise sewer lift station above BFE	Grant dependent	PW	TBD
S.3.9 Create a grease control program	Ordinance	PW	Spring 2013

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Transportation 4. Provide safe, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing transportation facilities.			
T.4.1 Improve Allen Road to accommodate future commercial establishments	New boulevard	PW	Fall 2013
T.4.2 Town Center infrastructure projects	TBD	PW	TBD
T.4.3 Widen Martin Bluff Road – Gautier-Vancleave Road to Roy’s Road	New road and pedestrian facilities	PW	Spring 2014
T.4.4 Intersection Improvements along Old Spanish Trail	Safer intersections	PW	TBD
T.4.5 New access road at Highway 90 and City Park	Visible and convenient access road	PW	TBD
T.4.6 New access road at Highway 90 and Mary Walker Drive	Visible and convenient access road	PW	TBD
T.4.7 Construct bridge and raise road at Old Spanish Trail and Graveline Road	Safer roadway	PW	TBD
T.4.8 Elevate old Spanish Trail at Magnolia Tree drive	Safer roadway	PW	TBD
T.4.9 Purchase computer and software for traffic signal maintenance	Satisfy state requirements	PW	TBD
T.4.10 Beasley Road Improvements	Safer roadway	PW	Fall 2012
T.4.11 Frontage Road Improvements	Safer roadway	PW	TBD
T.4.12 Dolphin Drive Improvements	New boulevard for town center	PW	TBD
T.4.13 Graveline Road Improvements	Safer roadway	PW	TBD

T.4.14 Construct Park and Ride at Gautier-Vancleave Road and Frontage Road	Public convenience efficiency	PW	TBD
T.4.15 Construct alternate access to Hickory Hills area – Frontage Road to Martin Bluff Road	Emergency access alternate ingress/egress	PW	TBD
T.4.16 Construct alternate exit to Westgate Parkway	Emergency access alternate ingress/egress	PW	TBD
T.4.17 Construct Bridge on Martin Bluff Road at Brookside Drive	Commercial access	PW	Summer 2013
T.4.18 Construct connector road – Beasley Road to Gautier-Vancleave Road	Emergency access alternate ingress/egress	PW	TBD
T.4.19 Purchase tractors with finishing mower decks	Improve workforce efficiency	PW	TBD
T.4.20 Purchase a mini excavator	Improve workforce efficiency	PW	TBD
T.4.21 Purchase Scagg mowers	Replace aged equipment	PW	TBD
T.4.22 Purchase a Bobcat with front mounted mowing deck	Improve channel maintenance program	PW	TBD
T.4.23 Provide additional parking at City Hall	Public access to facilities	PW	TBD
Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Drainage 5. Provide adequate drainage facilities and clean and accessible bayous and waterways for wildlife, recreation and drainage.			
D.5.1 Clean and remove sediment from City bayous	Improve storm water system	PW	TBD
D.5.2 Construct Detention Pond/Parks upstream of outfalls into bayous	Mitigate sediment transport to bayous	PW	TBD
D.5.3 Perform Channel Improvements to City channels	Improve storm water system—reduce flooding	PW	TBD

D.5.4 Replace failing pipe under roadways	Public safety/storm water system maintenance	PW Drainage	As necessary
D.5.5 Repair or replace failed culvert and structures	Public safety/storm water system maintenance	PW	As necessary
D.5.6 Construct new facilities to accommodate current and future flows	Expanded infrastructure	PW	TBD
Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Solid Waste 6. Provide for planned pick-up of yard debris as well as cleaning of roadside litter and illegal dump sites.			
SW.6.1 Strengthen the Garbage Pick-up ordinance to eliminate commercial debris	Improve aesthetics and staff efficiencies	PW	Summer 2013
SW.6.2 Create a litter control program	Improve aesthetics promote economic development	PW	Summer 2013
SW.6.3 Post "No Dumping" signs	Defer litter	PW	On going
Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Maintenance 7. Maintain public facilities, vehicles and equipment to provide for safe use and prolonged usable life.			
M.7.1 Renovate the old Planning Department Building	Improved efficiency and public access	PW	Fall 2012
M.7.2 Construct a new Maintenance Facility	Improved efficiency	PW	TBD

4. Economic Development/Planning

The Economic Development and Planning Department oversees economic development, neighborhood services, planning, code enforcement, building inspections, flood plain management, and events and civic engagement activities for the City of Gautier.

Economic Development

Stakeholder Comments: Comments regarding Economic Development and Job Creation received much attention from stakeholders during the priority voting process. These comments are outlined below:

Job Creation

- Increase efforts to bring jobs; more professional jobs are needed, not just big box, technical
- Encourage entrepreneurial opportunities
- Increase small business resources
- Ensure existing companies remain
- Provide better opportunities—better jobs, better education

Economic Development

- More retail and commerce.
- Improve infrastructure.
- Construct a town green for festivals and for people to have a place to gather.
- Encourage more tourism opportunities

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
EDP1: Town Center revitalization through the encouragement of redevelopment and the elimination of blight.			
Mall Redevelopment	New mall constructed at Singing River Mall	EDP	2013-14
Plan and construct urban park north of new mall	New park constructed	EDP	2013 and ongoing
EDP2: Promote healthcare industry cluster strategy at I-10 / SR 57 corridor to increase jobs and tax base.			
Plan and construct Town Center interconnected street grid with service alleys north of the mall	New roads constructed	EDP, PW	2014 and ongoing

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Cultivate medical / commerce park at I-10/57 interchange	Reconstruct Allen Road as boulevard from Robinson Still Road to Lake	EDP	2013 and ongoing
Cultivate medical / commerce park at I-10/57 interchange	Medical buildings constructed	EDP	2013 and ongoing
EDP3: Foster efforts for business recruitment and expansion.			
Provide incentives to encourage restaurants	Number of restaurants	EDP	2013 and ongoing
Explore ways to leverage economic and quality of life value of MGCCC	Economic report	EDP	Winter 2013
Support business-focused organizations	Participate in local business organizations	EDP	Ongoing
Research economics of waterfront tourism and opportunities for expansion	Economic report	EDP	2013

Planning

How do we protect the neighborhoods we love and plan for inevitable growth and change? While some want to preserve a snapshot of today's Gautier, we know that change is a given. Where should new businesses locate? How should they be built? The City recently adopted a Unified Development Ordinance and new Zoning Map to address many planning issues. Over the next five years, we will further calibrate our laws and regulations to advance a prosperous and safe Gautier that strengthens neighborhoods.

How and where a community grows impacts a City's finances, economy and quality of life. The places we live, work, shop and play shape our lives and who we are. One's experience in a place helps form us as individuals and a community. Proper planning ensures that in our quest for economic prosperity and jobs, we don't shortchange either long-term commercial opportunities or residential growth.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
EDP4: Ensure policies encourage sustainability and provide for future growth.			
Develop a parks and recreation master plan	Parks and Recreation report to Council	EDP, PW, CM	Winter 2012
Develop a walking, bicycling and paddling master plan	Council Adoption	EDP	Spring 2015
Develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan	Council Adoption	Jackson County, EDP, FD, PD, PW et al	Winter 2012
Revisory ordinance to the UDO, Phase 1	Council Adoption	EDP	Winter 2012
Commercial, industrial, and multifamily architectural guidelines	Council Adoption	EDP	Winter 2012
Revisory ordinance to the UDO, Phase 2	Council Adoption	EDP	Summer 2013
Neighborhood Plans Developed	Council Adoption	EDP	2 per year starting in 2013

Assist with planning of after school youth activities like youth sports	Council approval of plan	HR, EDP, PW, CM	Spring 2013
Participate in regional planning efforts	Contribution to regional plans	EDP, PW	Ongoing
Develop Special Management Area plan	Council Adoption	EDP, Jackson County, Ocean Springs, DMR	Summer 2014
Develop Shepard Park Master plan	Council Adoption	EDP, PW	Spring 2013

Quality of Life / Neighborhood Services

Stakeholder Comments: Stakeholders raised a wide range of topics broadly categorized as enhancing the quality of life in neighborhoods. The issues covered such diverse topics as the need for increased code enforcement activities, additional efforts towards animal control, illegal dumping concerns, expansion of a range of resource programs serving the community and increased ways that neighbors can affect positive change in their neighborhoods.

Code Enforcement

- Increase effective code enforcement—lawns, foreclosed properties, poor property maintenance.
- Code Enforcement is responsive—greater demand
- Publish and distribute code enforcement information, put teeth into the enforcement effort

Animal Control

- Provide more services, especially regarding stray or vicious dogs
- Demand for Animal Control services is increasing

Illegal dumping and litter

- Address illegal dumping and litter
- Provide landfill access without charge to reduce desert dumping

Neighborhood Connecting

- People know their neighbors, walk in their neighborhoods, and utilize local parks
- Expand the neighborhood improvement program—assist seniors, provide tree removal.
- The City's highly ranked primary and secondary schools, scenic waterways, historic properties, beautiful tree cover, and small town

charm need to be built upon. Residents value their proximity to the shoreline and natural amenities. Bicycling and paddling trails need to be designated, signed, and promoted with high quality maps and materials. These and other quality of life improvements can be accomplished with little cost, but will reap real rewards with resident and tourist alike.

- The Sandhill Crane Refuge, Indian Point Preserve and Shepard State Park provide the City with ample greenspace. However, the City lacks adequate neighborhood parks and city-wide recreation opportunities. If Gautier is to keep and attract new families, then we must improve the quality of our after-school and recreation programs.

Schools/Education

- Support and promote MGCCC

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
EDP5: Enhance neighborhoods through programs and services; fostering partnerships between the City and other community-wide resources.			
Obtain grant funds to improve walkability around schools	New sidewalks, crosswalks and related improvements constructed around schools	EDP, PW	2014-2016
Facilitate blueway trails on Mary Walker and Sioux Bayou	Paddling brochure, mile marker signs and related materials	EDP	Summer 2013
Improve neighborhood entrances	New or maintained signs and landscaping	EDP	5 per year
Facilitate blueway trails on Bayou Pierre (Shepard State Park)	Paddling brochure, mile marker signs and related materials	EDP	2014
EDP6: Respect the City's history and leverage these resources to improve quality of life and increase tourism.			
Historic preservation and restoration of Historic Black Schoolhouse	Building complete	EDP, PW	Winter 2015
Historic preservation and restoration of Oldfields Mansion	Building complete	EDP, PW	Winter 2017
Signage and related tourism support	Signs and collateral material complete	EDP, PW	Summer 2013

EDP7: Foster partnerships with MGCCC and other organizations relating to education, job creation, and quality of life.			
Explore partnerships with MGCCC, School District and churches	Report to City Manager	EDP	Ongoing
Increase and improve senior activities	Assistance with obtaining grant funds	EDP	2013, ongoing

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
EDP8: Protect neighborhoods from unsafe conditions, blight and deterioration with programs, policies and assistance.			
Investigate a Code Enforcement App to further citizen reporting	Director's review of options memorandum	EDP	2013
Address unfinished structures	Demolition or completion of unfinished structures	EDP	2013
Adopt International Property Maintenance Code	Council adopts International Property Maintenance Code	EDP	2013
Address abandoned and/or dilapidated commercial structures and grounds	Demolition or completion of unfinished structures and grounds	EDP	2013, ongoing
Update old, dilapidated trailers	Fewer old, dilapidated trailers	EDP	2013, ongoing
Change of use from trailers to single-family residential where appropriate	Fewer trailers in R-1 zoning district	EDP	2013, Ongoing
Address abandoned and/or dilapidated residential structures	Demolition or completion of unfinished structures	EDP	2013, ongoing
Remove slabs	Fewer slabs	EDP	2014, ongoing
Address blight of junk vehicles, outdoor storage and unmaintained yards	Fewer blighted properties	EDP	2012, Ongoing
Address illegal dumping and move-out evictions waste	Less waste left on properties; special pick up service/fee	EDP	2013, ongoing

Building and Zoning Administration

Stakeholder Comments: Stakeholders expressed desires to increase the rate of development, as well as ensure neighborhoods are not negatively impacted.

Building codes and floodplain standards ensure the safety of the occupants and others in the community. Ranging from fire protection to resilience during a storm, the City reviews and inspects buildings to safeguard residents, workers and visitors.

Growth

- Better coordinate growth with services, adequate public safety; empty commercial buildings could be used for youth, farmer’s market and/or entertainment.
- Coordinate amenities with development (schools, parks, shopping centers);
- Get big enough to have the services and resources we need but not so big that we lose our hometown feel.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
EDP8: Safeguard the public’s interests with policies, procedures and codes for buildings, floodplain management and zoning.			
Adopt 2012 IBC	Council Adoption	EDP	Fall 2012
Adjust Fee Schedule	Council Adoption	EDP	Fall 2012
Lower CRS Rating	Floodplain Manager takes necessary steps to meet FEMA’s criteria for lower CRS rating	EDP	2014
Maintain Utility GIS Files	GIS files compete	EDP	2013
Sign Inventory	GIS file complete	EDP	2013
Street light inventory	GIS file complete	EDP	2013

Events and Civic Engagement

Mayor and Council have recognized that City events improve the livability, economy, and image of the City of Gautier. To that end, preferred City events have provided effective promotion of the City's image and brand as "Nature's Playground", an economic return to a larger number of individuals, community organizations, or businesses (through attracting visitor spending), and/or have had wide public participation or benefits.

Currently City events include:

- Mardi Gras Parade
- Easter Egg Hunt
- World Changers Week
- The Mullet and Music Festival
- The Christmas Stroll
- The Christmas Parade

This Strategic Plan recognizes that there is a range of benefits available, and that depending on the nature of the event, the benefits vary from event to event. It also recognizes that a series of events provides a sense of vibrancy to the City and offers opportunities to enhance the experience of both citizens and visitors. Thus, a major goal of this plan is to build on our firm foundation to achieve greater benefits through better promotion of existing events (through alignment of branding and improved marketing), through development of existing events (creatively building upon existing elements), and also through exploring opportunities to integrate new events into a yearly cycle that matches the City's vision, goals, and image. To this end the inclusion of two to three new events within the next year is proposed.

New events may include:

- Antique Fair
- Community New Years' Eve Block Party at Town Center
- Veteran's Day Parade and Ceremony at Veteran's Tower
- Fishing Tournament at Mary Walker Bayou

Gautier residents volunteer more than the national average and desire more opportunities to contribute. School, church and senior center activities are the most popular types of volunteer activities in Gautier.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
EDP10: Create and sustain select community events for the enjoyment of residents and tourists.			
Act as liaison to implement an agreed upon calendar of community events	Events occur	EDP	Fall 2012
Establish and build capacity of an organization to sponsor community events	Designate existing or incorporate new organization	EDP	Ongoing
Support community events with staff and City resources	Event attendance and sales tax receipts	EDP	Winter 2012
Engage more volunteers for community events and neighborhood improvement projects	Number of volunteer hours; Volunteer database; Web site with volunteer opportunities	EDP	Winter 2012, ongoing
Fundraise for community events	Dollars and in-kind contributions	EDP	Yearly

Administration

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
EDP11: Build capacity of organization to professionally meet the needs of City residents and businesses.			
Continuing Education for Staff	Certifications received, Sessions Attended, etc.	EDP	Ongoing
Communicate with residents and broader public regarding EDP issues	News articles on EDP issues. Social networking measures.	EDP	Ongoing
Update the EDP portion of the City Website	New content and design on Website	EDP and consultant	Winter 2012, ongoing

5. Recreation/Parks/Trails/Open Space

Stakeholder Comments: A number of stakeholders requested more trails and bike paths. Increased recreation programs and park amenities were also important topics for participants. The highest priority comments are listed below:

- Create a Master Plan for Buddy Davis Park
- Create a Master Plan for Shepard State Park
- Create a Master Plan for Bacot Park

Comments on recreation, trails and open space are provided in Exhibit II.

Mission Reference: #2, vibrant.

Strategic Goal R1: Provide a diverse program of activities for residents of all ages at all parks and recreation facilities.

Strategic Goal R2: Continue to coordinate and provide special events and programs for residents of Gautier.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Recreation: Build capacity of recreation programming and facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors.			
Maintain and improve Shepard State Park	Master Plan and grant funding	EDP; Rec Advisory Commission	2014
Maintain and improve Bacot Park	Master Plan	EDP; Rec Advisory Commission	2014
Maintain and improve Buddy Davis Park	Master Plan	EDP; Rec Advisory Commission	2014
Construct Frazier Park bathroom facilities	Completion	PW	2013

6. City Clerk/Municipal Finance

Stakeholder Comments: While there were no comments at the strategic planning sessions that directly mentioned municipal finance as an area of concern, sound financing is essential for achieving the strategic goals that have been identified by the community.

Mission Reference: All aspects of the Mission Statement touch on municipal finance considerations.

Strategic Goal Finance 1: Conduct comprehensive analysis of all benefit programs for purposes of cost containment.

Strategic Goal Finance 2: Generate revenues to maintain and/or enhance services provided by the City.

Strategic Goal Finance 3: Seek private sector sponsorships to encourage businesses to participate in local events and activities.

Strategic Goal Finance 4: Integrate strategic planning goals in the Annual Budget document.

Strategic Goal Finance 5: Utilize technology to improve City's finance-related services offered to citizens, businesses, other government agencies, and internal City departments.

Strategic Goal Finance 6: Monitor the City's financial health through fiscal responsibility.

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Finance 1. Conduct comprehensive analysis of all benefit programs for purposes of cost containment.			
F.1.1. Conduct compensation and benefits survey by comparing to selected jurisdictions	Completed Survey	HR; Finance	Annual
F.1.2. Complete analysis of all benefits, make recommendations and implement changes or introduce new programs (if applicable)	Recommendations/ Implementations	HR; Finance	Annual

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Finance 2. Generate revenues to maintain and/or enhance services provided by the City.			
F.2.1. Generate revenue for the City by promoting and developing sports tourism	Program Implementation	EDP	Annual
F.2.2. Implement new revenues and/or increase ongoing revenues	Research and Implementation of Revenue Sources Based on Voters	HR; Finance	Annual

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Benchmarks/Completion Date
Finance 3. Utilize technology to improve City's finance-related services offered to citizens, businesses, other government agencies, and internal City departments.			
F.3.1. Provide payroll information to employees electronically	Implementation of Paperless Timesheets, Pay Stubs, and W2's	Finance/City Clerk	Annual
F.2.2. Provide electronic methods for Accounts Payable exchanges	Implementation of Internet Invoice Submission & Payments through Wires	Finance/City Clerk	Annual
F.3.3. Expand Internet payment options for City services	Citizen and Developer Internet Receipts Processed by Departments	Finance/City Clerk	Annual
F.3.4. Monitor internal control and financial reporting procedures	a) Clean Audit Opinions Obtained and Sustained; b) Auditor Management Comments Addressed	Finance/City Clerk	Annual

7. Human Resources

Stakeholder Comments: Comments from the employees were compiled at the organizational strategic planning sessions. Those comments were reviewed, evaluated and utilized to generate the Values Statement as described in the Preamble. Comments provided by the employees include:

- A vision to provide the best customer service than any other city in the county
- Employees want to be responsive, and respect timely responses from others
- Encourage City employees to be more involved in the community
- Teamwork is important

Actions	Deliverable/Completion Metric	Responsible Department	Expected Completion
Work Environment 1. Meet or exceed all mandated training and legal requirements. Institute citywide best business practices and policies.			
Perform review of Employee Rules & Regulations	Revised/Updated HR Rules	HR	Every 2 years
Update and revise Records Retention Policy	Revised/Updated Records Retention Policy	City Clerk/Admin	Every 2 years
Provide ethics training to all City Council Members, Commissioners, staff, etc. to ensure compliance with law every two years	Ethics Training to CC & Boards	HR/City Attorney	Annual
Prepare Standardized Agreements in as many areas as possible	Revised/Updated HR	City Attorney/ Public Works/Admin	Annual
Work with departments to develop and implement a succession plan	Completion of Succession Plan	HR	Annual
Develop an in-house training curriculum for management positions	Need Analysis / Training Sessions.	HR	Annual
Survey employees and analyze data to determine effectiveness of existing Wellness programs	Completed Survey/Data	HR	Annual
Annual Benefit/ Wellness Fair and employee appreciation picnic	Program Implementation	HR	Annual

FINAL THOUGHTS/VISION

Through this Strategic Plan, the City of Gautier strives to...

- Embrace the future as we effectively plan for and manage the physical, cultural, intellectual, technological, and individual growth and development of all aspects of the community.
- Recognize the importance of our youth as the future of the community and our seniors as providing critical links to our past and a great resource to mentor youth and young families.
- Seniors and youth are accorded special attention and resources in recognition of their unique and critical roles in the community.
- Gain its strength from the cohesion and quality of its neighborhoods. Neighbors in Gautier know one another, help others in need, take pride in the quality of the social and physical environment of their neighborhoods, and take an active role in helping the youth and seniors that reside within and surrounding the neighborhood.
- Be a small town offering big city amenities. Shopping and entertainment are available in town and few residents and businesses feel the need to leave the valley for shopping, purchasing supplies, or having a great time on the weekends, evenings, and vacation days. Theatrical and cultural arts activities are readily available and of a quality that satisfies the most critical observer.
- Allow you to reach your career goals right here at home through providing a wide variety of employment opportunities.
- Be a City on the move with several viable transportation alternatives to use of automobiles, an effective roadway transportation system, and a regional airport that provides service to and from many destination cities. The transit system is state of the art, is integrated with a network of multi-use trails, and is easy, pleasant, and safe to use. Few residents travel outside of Gautier for work and other purposes.
- Proactively address its own challenges at the earliest stages possible through direct intervention, the effective use of community partnerships, and other creative methods.
- Be a healthy, active, fun, sports oriented community with quality outdoor and sports related activities for persons of all ages and activity levels to enjoy. Gautier protects the resources that the earth provides and uses every available means to achieve a clean and sustainable environment.
- Place the highest priority on the effective education of the young and the provision of life-long learning opportunities for those no longer in formalized school settings. Schools are the hub of each neighborhood providing after school and intergenerational opportunities for the community.

Exhibit I - Gautier's Strategic Planning Process

FACILITATORS AND STAFF

Mayor and Council
City Manager
Department Directors
Grant and Project Manager
Code Enforcement Officer
Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator
Crime Prevention Officer

Project Objectives

The following sections describe in more detail the process undertaken by the City of Gautier to create the Strategic Plan.

1) Integrate Community into Planning

Approximately 275 residents and community members participated in the community strategic planning process, in addition to employees participating in the internal strategic planning process.

The process enables the community to fully participate in the development of the plan. Contrary to the City's long term General Plan, strategic planning is a much more dynamic process, is less focused on data and structure and can be flexible enough to meet the needs and desires of the community.



2) Create a Shared Vision

Participants collectively identified the characteristics of an ideal community and find areas of common ground. All comments were reviewed and incorporated into the Vision Statement.

3) Clarify Purpose

The strategic planning process enables participants to clarify/identify the purpose or sense of direction in which the organization wants to proceed. Comments were reviewed and incorporated into the Action Plan.

4) Identify Issues/Trends

The strategic planning process identifies the major issues facing the community today. Additionally it considers the trends that are just below the surface or which are just coming into view.

5) Tests/Validate Current Assumptions

Local government must often move forward and represent the community's views even though the views are not clearly known. Local officials must make certain assumptions upon the limited input they received and municipal organizations move forward to implement such objectives. The strategic plan process enables the City of Gautier to validate whether or not the City is on target.



6) Identify Community Resources

One of the objectives of the process is to identify where the resources are and what trends may affect them. Where resources are identified as scarce, it is important to conserve them and share based on need and priority.

7) Improve Community Networking

Strategic planning is a group dynamic process that requires teamwork to address community issues. The process enables City staff to work together with other stakeholders for a common objective. The process enables the community to build bridges and get to know one another better and help them function as a team. The interaction with one another in discussing community issues is as important, if not more so, than the end product – the Strategic Plan.

8) Increase Understanding of Local Government

The strategic planning process not only serves as a catalyst for receiving information, but also serves as a means to impart information in terms of the issues and difficulties facing local government. Having participated in the process, the community will have a better understanding that there are many complex issues facing their elected officials and City staff. Finally, the participants should come away knowing that the municipal organization can only work on a few major problems at a time, based upon its limited staff and financial resources.

9) Develop Action Oriented Planning

By developing an action oriented plan with specific tasks to accomplish, people will be able to see the results of their efforts and know that the strategic planning process was not simply a series of discussions, but a real dynamic, participatory planning process.

The City of Gautier's Action Plan was developed at the end of the strategic planning process based on the input received from the community and city staff.

Table I

Community Strategic Planning Process

- I. State of the Community
 - a. What are the major issues facing the community today?
 - b. Do we have a clear sense of direction?
 - c. Is the direction universally supported throughout the community?
 - d. What is our community health/climate?
 - e. The Planning Period for this plan will be 5 years.
- II. Assessment of External Conditions
 - a. Who are those who make up our service population? Trends?
 - b. Who are the regulators? Trends?
 - c. Who are our competitors? Trends?
 - d. Who are our resource providers? Trends?
- III. Vision of the Future
 - a. What will our environment and community look like at the end of our planning period, based upon the immediate issues and emerging trends?
 - b. What is in store for the future if we do nothing, something, a lot?
 - c. What are the key issues the community must address in this planning process?
 - d. Describe key demographic indicators, e.g. number of dwelling units, population shift, economics, demographics, financial data.
- IV. Assessment of Municipal Services
 - a. What do we do well? What are our strengths?
 - b. What do we do poorly? What are our liabilities?
 - c. What would you like to see more of/less of?
- V. Review Point/Priority Setting (Review Steps I through IV)
 - a. Review comments made throughout the day.
 - b. Do the current issues, emerging issues, and trends suggest we change, add to, or build on to our current mission statement?
 - c. Prioritize the issues/trends/vision objectives, which must be addressed during the planning period.
- VI. Community Vision Statement
 - a. What is our vision for the community?
 - b. What should our image be?
 - c. What makes us different from other cities?
- VII. Action Plan
 - a. How do we get where we want to go?
 - b. Who will do what, when and how?
 - c. How do we approve our new mission/community vision strategy into action?

- d. Have we addressed the all of the major issues and emerging trends in our action plan?
- e. What existing programs should be kept, modified, eliminated, or implemented?

VIII. Plan Update/Review

- a. How are doing on completing our action items to date?
- b. In what areas shall we reshape our vision of the future?
- c. What projects remain uncompleted?
- d. Do we need to change our strategy (mission/vision statement)?
- e. What has happened to our environment since the plan was developed?

**Table 2
Strategic Planning Process**

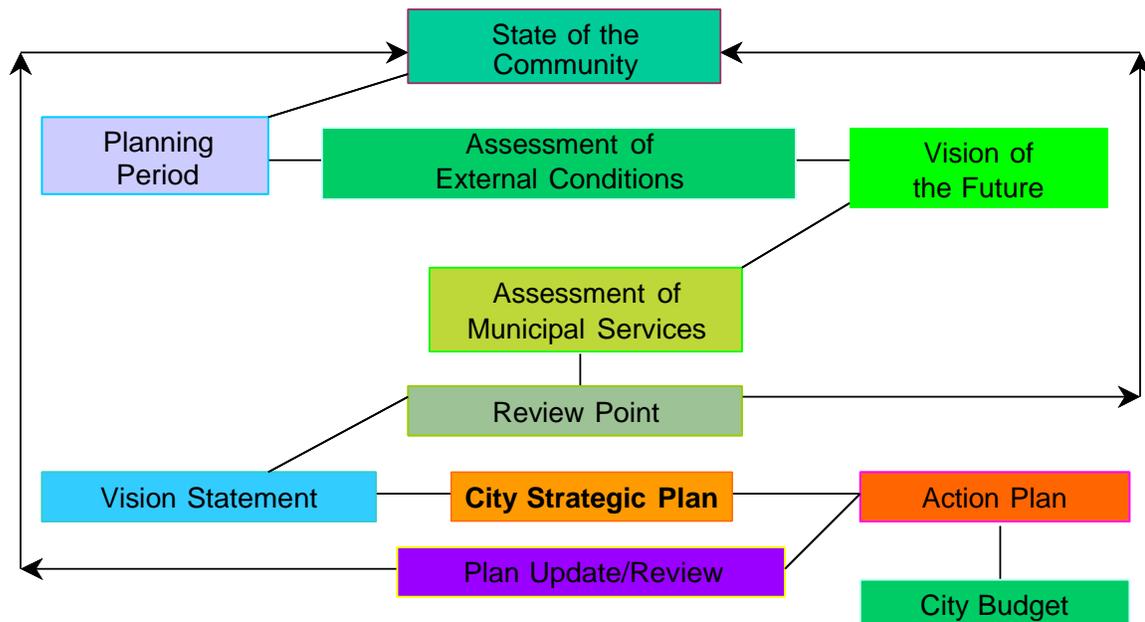


Exhibit II - COMMUNITY INPUT - ASSESSMENT OF CITY SERVICES

Having identified major community issues and trends as well as envisioning alternatives of what Gautier might look like at the end of the planning period in 2013, participants were asked to analyze the community's capabilities and resources. Additionally, they were asked to assess the City organization's ability to meet present and future demands, which will be placed on Gautier. Primarily, they were to identify what the strengths and liabilities of the community are. This is based upon public expectations of the community and, specifically, the City of Gautier. The group exercise began by identifying strengths, or things the City does well. Then the group turned their attention to identifying liabilities, or things to which we need to devote more time and attention. They were encouraged to remember that overall the community is doing exceptionally well, but that there is always room for improvement.

TOWN HALL MEETING NOTES

March 08, 2012

In an effort to expand the opportunity for involvement to the most people possible in the City, the City Council hosted a community outreach meeting at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Participants heard the Mayor's State of the City Address and separated by groups into their Wards to discuss issues both city-wide and neighborhood specific. Staff acted as facilitators with councilmen engaging citizens for feedback. Written comments were incorporated into the materials listed here.

“What's your vision for Gautier?”

WARD 1

Priorities

- Bayous –need to slow sources,
- Excessive speeding on residential streets
- Trash pick up
- Water bills –large bills, poor water quality ,stains clothing & brown color
- Dee's game room-(eyesore)
- Street paving –in progress but slow

- Lighting on Gautier bridge
- Sign –Point Clear entrance

Good

- Medical facility on interstate
- Nature walk
- Indian Point
- Town Center/roundabout
- Police Department
- Veteran’s Tribute Tower
- Sidewalks
- College & Schools

Bad/Concerns

- Mary Walker Bayou –silt and sedimentation
- Street Lights
- Mall
- Carwash
- Point Clear fishing pier
- CSX property

Ward 2

Need Improvements

- Street lights in neighborhoods
- 2 Pavement/roads in College Park
- Uniform police officer at Bacot Park (During games, secure ballpark fence)
- Road/ Pavement to Indian Point
- There is a need for better supermarkets so we do not have to drive to Ocean Springs.
- Nice Restaurants, more family
- Skating Rink needs improvement
- More enticements
- Overhead bridge on Ladnier Rd (Sometimes the train gets stopped)
- Soccer Complex
- The Old Place
- Sidewalks
- Crane Refuge
- Shell Landing

Green

- Shepard State Park
- Boys & Girls Club seating
- Seating areas
- 32 acres (town center)
- College
- High school football stadium

Pink

- Roads (De La Forrest)
- Mall
- Skating Rink on Ladnier Rd
- Street Lights in residential areas
- Overhead bridge on Ladnier Rd

Ward 3

Issues

- Speed Limit signs (lack of)
- Soundview Dr.
- Sewer issues on Bemis
- Oldfield House
- The construction of half built building next to Oldfield house
- Cemetery next to Oldfield (Lewis House)

Likes

- 12 Oaks
- Sheppard State Park
- Mary Walker
- City Park
- Estuarine Center

Dislikes

- Car wash Hwy 90
- Boat Man
- Mall
- Jerry Lee's trailers
- Oldfield house
- Old construction next to Oldfield house
- Speed limit signs

Ward 4

Concerns

- Land trade around I-10/ Gautier Vancleave Rd
- Paving –Northwood Hills ,Homestead & Martin Bluff
- Grocery Stores
- Car wash unfinished on Hwy 90
- Striping on Martin Bluff Rd. (access road)
- Preserving Graveline Bayou
- Situation between Baywood Commons & Northwood Hills (overgrowth)
- Bike path lane with lighting along Gautier-Vancleave Rd & all of Martin Bluff Rd

Likes

- City Park
- Soccer fields & ball fields
- Library
- Golf courses
- Old Place
- High School
- City Hall

Ward 5

Concerns

- No sidewalks- roads are narrow, needs widening
- Safety of children
- Only one road out of Hickory Hills
- North of I-10 is part of the city
- Only 1 access road out of Hickory Hills
- Dip near Brookside

Likes

- City Park
- Town Center
- College
- Senior Center (outgrowing)

Dislikes

- Blighted Properties
- Run down trailer parks

What does the City do well?

- Programs and special events
- Parks are gems
- Library programs
- Proactive, open public safety services and officers
- Mayor, Council and Staff remain accessible and open
- Expand partnerships
- Local media positive and key partner in communications
- Air quality
- Economic development –Mall area
- Public Safety, responsive fire and police
- Engages & listens to citizens in participation of vision/changes – Strategic Plan Process, communication/meaningful participation of citizens, more avenues for meaningful citizen participation
- Responsive City Council, access to Mayor, City Council pays attention
- Neighborhood Service Programs
- Redevelopment effort of town center is great
- Code Enforcement works with developers
- Happy to see Gautier grow up

What does the City need to do better?

- Litter and dumping control
- Uniformity of appearance and sense of belonging
- Code enforcement for poor property maintenance
- Communication - community doesn't know what the City does/offers
- Coordination of events
- More effort to bring jobs
- Dispersing dense development areas
- Involvement in school issues - bonds, safety, etc
- Roadway maintenance, routine and during construction
- Address traffic issues
- Expand recreational opportunities for youth - gym, after school
- Greater sensitivity to pedestrians, improved safety on streets, more crosswalks
- Improve safe routes to school
- Tighter gang enforcement
- Strategic Plan Process in high school and elementary schools
- Better pet (dog) parks
- Brochures – brag about what we do well

- Illegal Dumping - place to dump trash
- More community collaboration to engage businesses and organizations
- Street lighting for safety

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS/PRESERVATION

- Need a “Drains to Bay” awareness campaign to reduce litter in gutters
- Education/outreach in schools, public events on water conservation, energy, recycling
- Preservation of oak trees, open space
- Erosion control; dredging and bayou restoration

AESTHETICS

- Litter - Regularly scheduled litter pick up – especially plastic bag litter
- Make merchants responsible for trash generated by their stores
- Develop programs to discourage illegal dumping/off road vehicles
- Encourage neighborhood watch programs for community empowerment/reporting
- Waste receptacles should be kept in special places to avoid public sight
- Neighborhood clean-up programs/events at parks, etc.
- More uniformity in city aesthetics to create an identity
- Combat graffiti/vandalism by encouraging linking/grouping of communities/activities
- Improve Code Enforcement response for unkempt yards front yard vehicle parking

COMMUNICATION

- Comprehensive Calendar of school, City, public events for distribution of materials
- Youth guides that lists jobs, core training programs such as the life guard program
- Develop a two way communication – Better dissemination of emergency information
- Use of public events to share information
- Establish/expand communication tools for reporting community concerns

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The encouragement of more industry, good jobs
- Need a Gautier Chamber of Commerce

JOBS

- Continue to lure a variety of employment opportunities for college-education young adults and seniors, and also more manufacturing-based jobs.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Improve roadway maintenance
- Clear water
- Widening of roadway between 30th & 35th Streets

RECREATION

- Organized Activities for children and youth 18 – 24. Indoor gym. Local activities.
- Need a water park

- Encourage more after-school activities – public and private

TRANSPORTATION

- Improve/develop mass transportation – number & frequency of buses
- Improve public transportation to provide youth an opportunity to compete for jobs

EDUCATION

- Continue/expand partnerships with schools for after-school programs
- Neighborhood schools within walking distance

FACILITIES/ACTIVITIES

- Outdoor activities/centers to promote healthy lifestyles, volleyball, basketball, multi-use trails
- Dog Parks

HOUSING ISSUES

- Improve the ratio of owners to renters
- Balance/control on the number of Section 8 dwellings
- Housing for the disabled

SENIORS

- Gautier – We should be the Retirement Hub of the Region
- Develop senior/retirement communities (gated/ungated)
- Single story (smaller) housing for “empty nesters”

TRAILS

- All varieties of trails needed: bicycle, walking, equestrian
- Greater/contiguous trail network to connect routes & communities
- Routes should connect outdoor youth activity areas/locations
- Promote, enhance and expand recreation trails

Exhibit III – Community Needs Survey

1. Do you live within the city limits of Gautier?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		95.5%	233
No		4.5%	11
answered question			244
skipped question			1

2. Do you work within the City of Gautier?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No, I work within Jackson County.		28.8%	70
No, I work outside the City and Jackson County.		9.9%	24
I am retired or not currently working.		33.7%	82
Yes I work at: (please specify)		27.6%	67
answered question			243
skipped question			2

3. What are the top reasons you and your family live in Gautier? Choose three (3).

		Response Percent	Response Count
Community Atmosphere		18.4%	44
Affordable and Quality Housing		20.5%	49
Safe Community		14.2%	34
Employment Opportunities		5.0%	12
Proximity to the Shoreline and Natural/Wildlife Amenities		25.5%	61
Born and/or Raised in the Area		37.2%	89
Proximity to Family and Friends		41.4%	99
Low City Taxes		3.8%	9
Proximity to Work		31.8%	76
Nationally-Ranked, High Quality Schools		3.8%	9
Shopping and Dining Opportunities		1.3%	3
Recreation and Sports Opportunities		5.9%	14
Proximity to Military Bases and Military Industry		7.5%	18
Other (please specify)		14.6%	35
answered question			239
skipped question			6

4. Overall how would you rate the quality of life in Gautier?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent-Gautier offers ample opportunities to live, work, and play in a safe neighborhood.		2.5%	6
Good-Small areas for improvement but plenty of opportunities to live, work and play.		30.9%	75
Fair-Some opportunities to live, work and play in a somewhat safe neighborhood.		46.1%	112
Poor-Little opportunity to live, work and play; and areas are unsafe.		14.8%	36
Don't know (please specify)		5.8%	14
		answered question	243
		skipped question	2

5. Would you pay an extra 20 cents for a \$20 restaurant meal, if you knew the extra 1% would be used only for sports and recreation programs for children and seniors, and build a sports complex in the City?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		78.8%	189
No		21.3%	51
		Comments	74
		answered question	240
		skipped question	5

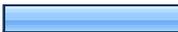
6. What is your perception of current environmental quality in the City?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent -- Gautier is a clean and healthy place to live.		2.0%	5
Very Good -- Gautier is a relatively clean and healthy place to live.		12.7%	31
Good -- Gautier is a healthy place to live, but there is room for improvement.		61.9%	151
Neutral -- Environmental quality is not important to me.		2.9%	7
Poor -- Gautier is not a very healthy or clean place to live. Improvements are needed.		17.2%	42
Very poor -- Gautier is an unhealthy and unclean place to live. Much improvement needed.		3.3%	8
answered question			244
skipped question			1

7. How important is the water quality of our bays, bayous, river, wetlands and Gulf to you?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Very Important		69.8%	169
Important		25.6%	62
Unimportant		1.7%	4
Don't Know		2.9%	7
answered question			242
skipped question			3

8. Identify your top three (3) concerns for Gautier.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Business and Job Growth		65.7%	161
Need for Culture and Entertainment		32.7%	80
Too much asphalt/vacant lots		13.9%	34
Crime Rate and Safety		37.1%	91
Housing and Insurance Affordability		26.5%	65
Increased Housing choices		2.4%	6
Maintaining Community Atmosphere		17.6%	43
Parks and Recreation Programs		27.8%	68
Quality of Roads		16.3%	40
School Facilities and Programs		14.7%	36
Solid Waste Management (Garbage, Litter and Recycling)		6.5%	16
Water/Sewer Systems Adequacy or Lack of Services		32.7%	80
Other (please specify)		25.3%	62
		answered question	245
		skipped question	0

9. Do you feel you can make a difference for the better in your city?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. Volunteers can organize and community projects can succeed.		73.4%	171
No. Not enough people care. My actions won't make a difference.		12.4%	29
Somewhat. (Explain)		14.2%	33
answered question			233
skipped question			12

10. How many times have you volunteered in your community in the last 12 months?

		Response Percent	Response Count
More than 12 times.		16.7%	39
More than 3 and less than a dozen times.		33.5%	78
Less than 3 times.		49.8%	116
Examples of places you have volunteered:			60
answered question			233
skipped question			12

11. Which of the following would encourage you to volunteer more for your community?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Volunteer opportunities listed on City webpage.		41.9%	98
Better opportunities for children's activities such as performing arts and recreation.		30.3%	71
Better opportunities for adults and seniors.		38.9%	91
None of the above. I don't feel my time would make a difference, so I choose not to volunteer.		6.4%	15
Other (please specify)		12.4%	29
		answered question	234
		skipped question	11

12. Overall, the roads within the City meet the needs of citizens.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree. We have the roads we need, and they're in good shape.		4.1%	10
Agree. The City will soon be repairing/paving existing roads and otherwise, they're good.		32.7%	80
Neutral. We need new roads and improved roads; however, the City's progress is satisfactory.		38.4%	94
Disagree. The City's progress to build and repair our roads is unsatisfactory.		16.3%	40
Strongly disagree (Please explain)		8.6%	21
		answered question	245
		skipped question	0

13. Do you favor the installation of bicycle paths along local roadways?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. I would like to use my bicycle outside my neighborhood.		67.9%	161
No. Bicycles are for neighborhoods and parks only.		32.1%	76
		answered question	237
		skipped question	8

14. List the City services in order of least importance. Number (1 to 8), with 1 being LEAST important and 8 being MOST important.

	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
Provide tourist attractions and/or recreation facilities which bring needed revenue.	4.75	1,144	241
Build and improve roadways and infrastructure.	4.48	1,075	240
Ensure clear drinking water.	5.48	1,315	240
Provide excellent parks and recreation opportunities.	4.53	1,087	240
Help build cooperative relationships between developers and the City.	4.70	1,129	240
Educate the public on issues affecting quality of life.	4.05	964	238
Partnerships to share costs & facilities	3.98	948	238
Fire and police safety.	5.12	1,234	241
	answered question		241
	skipped question		4

15. Overall, are you pleased with the manner in which the City is currently developing?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes. I see progress to bring new development and create opportunities to work and play.		47.9%	114
No. (Explain.)		52.1%	124
	Comments		136
	answered question		238
	skipped question		7

16. Share your thoughts on how we can improve our city services.

	Response Count
	149
answered question	149
skipped question	96