

# Waterloo 2030

COMMUNITY VISION

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## STRATEGIC PLAN

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PREPARED BY



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# Vision Statement

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## COMMUNITY TAGLINE

A Community of Opportunity

## VISION STATEMENT

Waterloo is a community of opportunity where everyone can prosper.

The Vision Statement will serve as a guiding principle for the work that will be done over the next eight years, taking Waterloo to the next level by the year 2030. Audacious? Maybe. Doable? Yes. It will take a level of commitment and selflessness from a large number of people. It will take consistent and constant communication to make these elements happen. It will take discipline to stay on course. It will take work, resources, and patience. But the end result is a community that is connected, proud, succeeding, elevating its youth, celebrating diversity, and leading the way across the state and nation. Waterloo is a community of opportunity. Everyone can prosper here if we all work together to meet the challenge.

# Executive Summary

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In early 2021, the City of Waterloo engaged de Novo Marketing to listen, experience, and analyze the community for current and future needs and develop a plan that provides the city with a roadmap to transformative change.

It's been an interesting and informative journey consisting of countless meetings and conversations, discussions regarding the possibilities, and a discovery of the long list of achievements and plans in the works. Yet there was a distinct disconnect in awareness regarding these activities.

Along the way, we discovered deep pockets of community pride and creative ideas to drive engagement, side by side, with a wish for the community to succeed.



Like any community work we've done, we heard our fair share of negativity, but by and large, Waterloo residents are hungry for progress and a reason to share their innate pride.

## Key Findings

Waterloo shows a commitment to youth that is unparalleled in most communities. This is a foundational block of the community and can have great economic implications if the City and its partners take specific steps to train and retain your youth.

Additionally, it goes without saying that as Iowa's most diverse city, this community must continue to harness that strength and leverage it to attract business and residents. You must also work to make this a Community of Opportunity, where everyone can prosper. Inequities and perceptions must be addressed openly.

Waterloo residents and stakeholders alike desire to "flip the script" when it comes to how Waterloo is viewed, both by residents, the wider region, state, and beyond. Additionally, the data collected supports that Waterloo has a large number of residents who are fairly neutral in their feelings toward the city they live in. This correlates to our theory of action on how to make the complacent "Moveable Middle" your best community advocates.

It's important not to confuse emphasizing positive communication with turning a blind eye to areas in need of improvement. Waterloo has worked to identify areas of inequity and has sought solutions to improve service delivery, quality of life, and improve the city in general. It's very difficult to communicate these things in a way that reaches all citizens and in a way they will engage with, which is why we lead with communications in the plan.

Finally, Waterloo has a lot of projects in the works and on the list of its recent accomplishments. At every turn, we discovered more projects or programs being planned or discussed. We strongly encourage investing in your project management capacity, being diligent and disciplined in what you take on, and finishing what you've started. Every project or element in this plan identifies where you will need to enlist and rely upon community partners and what resources you will need (to the extent we are able in a top-level plan).

In addition to the community positioning line and vision statement above, we've developed a Vision Framework for Waterloo that encompasses eight "Buckets" of work, as well as high-level tactical direction. These are meant to provide direction and guidance but are not overly prescriptive or detailed because as collaborative partnerships are formed, the methodology may change. We encourage the City and its partners to embrace the goals of each, but the road map that gets you to the end will likely change.

We've considered everything through the following three lenses:

**Equity Building:** How does this element build equity across the community?

**Economic Development Priming:** How will this position Waterloo as a community of opportunity for businesses to locate or expand?

**Sustainably Improving:** What elements of this plan take into account sustainable elements and methodology?

## Measurement & Celebrations

Many of these elements are tied together or built upon existing or proposed projects. Ensuring that measurement and celebration of benchmarks is key. Once the plan is finalized, a dashboard will be developed to help all partners involved track and communicate success with the community.

## Say it Out Loud

After the plan is finalized and partners have signed on, we recommend publicly announcing this plan in an event involving each partner, giving them and the City an opportunity to share the plan with the community and to set your intentions, loud and clear. We also recommend publicly sharing the plan and its benchmarks online, and marking the completion of those milestones with regular communication (see "Fly the W"). 8 x 8 should become a household name in Waterloo.

**FLY THE  
"W"**



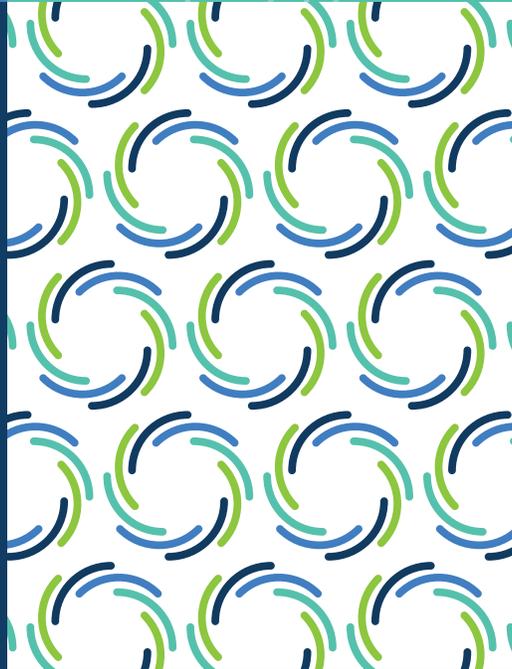
**ELEV8  
HOUSING**



**CELEBR8 &  
CONNECT  
NEIGHBORHOODS**



**WATERLOO  
WORKS**



**CROSSROADS  
DOUBLEDOWN**



**POWER UP  
DOWNTOWN**



**SPORTSTOWN  
USA**



**COMMUNITY  
OF OPPORTUNITY**



# The 8 x 8 Framework

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## Eight Ideas in Eight Years

The 8 x 8 Framework consists of eight projects or categories of work, to be achieved in eight years. Each project has suggested resources and partnerships mapped to it, but the most important element to remember is that none of this can be achieved by one department, person, or entity.



### GOAL

To develop a sense of pride and relationship between residents and the City of Waterloo, and then leverage that pride to communicate the City's attributes to external audiences.

### PURPOSE

To reinvigorate citizen involvement and pride in the community, and to develop a platform from which to market Waterloo to businesses, future residents, and visitors, impacting economic growth in the long term by telling Waterloo's story. →

## SUMMARY

“Fly the W” is the most critical point of the vision plan because it not only raises the profile of the work the City has accomplished—it’s also the turning point for how Waterloo thinks about itself. It lays the groundwork for stronger communications and can be implemented as the other vision elements are getting underway.

Fly the W is about Waterloo building pride in itself. The concept is inspired by the “W” flag that is flown when the Chicago Cubs win (this isn’t about the Cubs though, or their current record!). Over time, the “W” has come to represent the team itself, and a sense of pride and loyalty. Flying the W, in this case, means that we are not only celebrating Waterloo’s “wins,” but we are also flipping the script on how we think and talk about the community.

Throughout this process, we’ve seen intense pride, yet a disconnect between what residents believe is happening and what is actually being accomplished. “Fly the W” is a process that begins with developing effective internal communications and a relationship between the city and residents that gives them the tools to engage and share, which then shifts to an external campaign designed to position Waterloo for the future.

Fly the W is about showing off your wins and telling the world that Waterloo is a Community of Opportunity, where everyone can prosper. We recommend a visual identity to complement the vision statement/community motto and a full communications plan that will help residents build a relationship with their city and empower them as superfans to fly the flag.

And yes, we do envision a flag. We want the City and residents alike to fly it loud and proud. The Waterloo flag will represent optimism, hope, and opportunity and will be used as a symbol of program success across all eight projects. When Waterloo has something to celebrate, it’s time to **Fly the W!**

## TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### City Identity

Beginning with how Waterloo represents itself, work with a professional agency to lead a process to develop a community brand that represents Waterloo. This should involve input from City leaders and incorporate work with youth to develop a City logo indicative of the pride the superfans have for the community.

The City logo should be flexible to accommodate branding for neighborhoods and city initiatives, while clearly conveying the pride of the community.

### City Pride Campaign

Develop a pride campaign that allows citizens to tell their stories of a “Community of

Opportunity” and then share those stories internally and externally. The Pride Building Campaign should collect and share these stories and serve as a vehicle for residents to share their pride in the community in other ways. The flags will be used as a recognition program for various elements of the vision plan, resident awards, and also be available for residents to purchase. Partnering with Experience Waterloo, the city can collaborate on content to maximize the impact of these efforts.

## City Communications Platform

Develop and implement a city-wide communications plan that helps citizens connect to the community and stay informed on important issues. The City Communications Platform should encompass multiple communication tools so that all citizens have the opportunity and ability to easily stay informed.

At a minimum, the City of Waterloo should develop an integrated platform that uses the following communications methods:

**MY WATERLOO:** A printed, mailed, quarterly glossy magazine (format TBD) that shares Fly the W featured stories, successes, important updates, construction timelines, and easy access to city programming schedules, as well as a directory of departments.

**FLY THE W:** Monthly email news that links to programs and updates, is housed on the city website, and shares one Fly the W feature each month. (Opt-in all customers who share an email address for municipal billing. Email will allow them to unsubscribe.)

**WEBSITE:** Develop a segment of your website to house all stories from the Fly the W campaign (use blog functionality) and other assets, such as the Waterloo Leads series.

**TEXT ME:** Implement an SMS text messaging program for updates regarding city programs, construction updates, city-sponsored events, and for emergency communications.

**THERE’S AN APP FOR THAT:** Partner with a City-specific app developer for communication regarding city programs, construction updates, submission of photos for My Waterloo publication, reporting of issues (nuisance properties, potholes, etc), and for a directory of contacts.

**UP YOUR PROFILE:** Consistently push out all stories and subjects listed above on the following platforms using a social media management platform:

- Facebook
- Youtube (Waterloo TV)
- Twitter
- Instagram

Engagement on these platforms maintains a two-way dialogue. This will require additional City resources in the form of program management and staff. This cannot be done at current staffing levels.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Add citizen communications via WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, as well as a phone number to City Hall. Commit to a one-hour response time during business hours. Again, this cannot be done at current staffing levels.

## LENSES

### Equity

Ensure the platform makes consistent communication available across multiple mediums so that all citizens can access it. Ensure communications are written and distributed at an accessible level for all.

### Economic Development

Year two expands the campaign to reach audiences with a message of pride and opportunity, while positioning Waterloo as a **community of opportunity**.

### Sustainability

While resources are primarily digital, there is a “paper” element to all of this. Ensure that we are using recycled content and that a message is included to recycle “My Waterloo” when finished. All communications should be used, when appropriate, to showcase sustainable projects and commitments to the community.

## MAPPING RESOURCES

<p><b>CITY STAFF</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Wendy Bowman (FTE)</li> <li>■ IT department</li> <li>■ <b>Hire:</b> Business Manager or Project Manager (FTE) and Communications Coordinator/Resident Experience Specialist (FTE)</li> </ul>
<p><b>CITY RESOURCES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Costs associated with hiring and distribution</li> <li>■ Costs associated with Fly the W videos</li> </ul>
<p><b>POTENTIAL PROJECT PARTNERS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>VGM:</b> printing, distributing My Waterloo</li> <li>■ Other sponsors to defray costs of My Waterloo &amp; tech costs</li> <li>■ Flag sponsor</li> <li>■ <b>Experience Waterloo:</b> content assistance and distribution</li> </ul>

## OUTSIDE RESOURCES

- Agency or freelance support
- Tech resources for App, SMS texting
- All in one marketing platform for Email, Blog, and Social Media Management Platform (Recommendation: Hubspot)

## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

(All dates are expressed as Calendar Year, not City Fiscal Year)

OCTOBER 2021	Begin branding process and first <b><i>Fly the W</i></b> stories/videos
FEBRUARY 2022	Redeveloped community identity with neighborhood logo versions, completed
MARCH 2022	<p>Roll out of new community brand and Fly the W campaign/video series</p> <p>Begin to implement the flag campaign and neighborhood identification signage</p> <p>Roll out of new city communications platform with full training of City staff</p> <p>Begin collecting emails for the newsletter and opting in all water customers to newsletter AND SMS (with an easy unsubscribe/opt-out)</p>
APRIL 2022	Develop an external strategy plan
JULY 2022	First "My Waterloo" hits mailboxes
ONGOING	Quarterly distribution of My Waterloo, Bi-monthly release of videos (6 total)

SEPTEMBER 2022

Launch external campaign (**Community of Opportunity**) targeting workforce and business attraction

CONNECTS TO OTHER 8X8 GOALS

All

# ELEV8 HOUSING

## GOAL

Redevelop, renovate, or improve 800 residences in Waterloo in eight years by providing access to capital.

## PURPOSE

To develop momentum around homeownership, affordable housing, property improvement, and decrease problem rental properties in Waterloo, creating neighborhoods that reflect a Community of Opportunity.

## SUMMARY

Transforming Waterloo into a Community of Opportunity means increasing access to capital for those who struggle to obtain it, streamlining processes and applications, and developing a master housing plan to get from your current state to one where neighborhoods are consistently improving, homeownership is on the rise, and homeowners take pride in their property.

Formation of ELEV8: Charter and fund an autonomous Community Development Corporation and form or participate in a Neighborhood Finance Corporation style partnership (See Polk and Linn Counties) and/or a Revolving Loan Fund and incentivized forgivable loans to increase access to capital for residents who seek to obtain homeownership or improve their existing residence but lack the traditional avenues to achieve it, and are located within identified neighborhoods/demonstrate need.

## TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The most important aspect of this element is identifying and contracting with the consultant or contractor who has the expertise in Community and Neighborhood Development Corporations, while properly resourcing the work to get the job done. The entire first year of their work will be focused on identifying and streamlining processes, developing the housing master plan, and bringing all parties to the table to complete the tasks at hand.

The structure of the Waterloo Housing Corporation should encompass the following:

- A hired director with experience in C/NDCs and a past history of success
- A board of directors consisting of the following:
  - **Funding sources** for the administration of the program (Gaming, JDC Foundation, McElroy Trust, Business Partners, Etc)
  - **Financial institutions** that will participate in access to capital programs
- Veridian, LSB, etc.
  - **Developers** who have demonstrated commitment to core neighborhoods
  - **NGO Representatives**
- Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity Director
- Other housing groups with a track record for change
  - **City Staff:** Noel Anderson/Rudy Jones (Ex officio)
  - **A City Council Liaison** (Ex officio)
  - **City Legal Counsel** (Advisory)

The second component to this plan will be to reduce the number of deteriorated rental properties. Redevelopment of landlord regulations/ordinances and strict enforcement on all levels of violations, with increasing fines, coupled with a strong landlord incentivization program will work to decrease the number of problem properties, while potentially turning over housing stock. Carve out some capital for rental property improvements.

## LENSES

### Equity

ELEV8 exists to provide pathways to homeownership, elevate neighborhoods and build pride and purpose among residents, and connect traditionally underserved populations to capital and counseling to build long-term financial stability and prosperity for residents.

### Economic Development

Identifying and addressing distressed properties will generate significant improvement within neighborhoods, create new housing opportunities in the community, and improve the way the city is perceived by current and future residents and businesses seeking to invest in Waterloo. →

As a tie-in to the Fly the W campaign, Waterloo should become the city in Iowa known for reinvesting in its neighborhoods and workforce.

### Sustainability

ELEV8 addresses sustainability in a multitude of ways. The preservation and improvement of existing housing stock reduces the need for new building materials while improving energy efficiency. Additionally, all new builds and some rehabilitations can be required to incorporate energy efficiencies, and incentivize solar installations by partnering with a regional solar co-op.

### TACTICAL POINTS & BENCHMARKS

It's critically important that a full-time executive or consultant be identified and hired to see this process through. While city staff will be involved, the goal is to accelerate housing rehabilitation and building based on income need. As a secondary goal within this project, problem rental properties need to be addressed, which will require resources from city staff.

### MAPPING RESOURCES/PARTNERS

It's critically important that a full-time executive or consultant be identified and hired to see this process through. While city staff will be involved, the goal is to accelerate housing rehabilitation and building based on income need. As a secondary goal within this project, problem rental properties need to be addressed, which will require resources from city staff.

RESOURCE/PARTNER	USE/ROLE	ESTIMATED COST
Executive Director/ Consultant	Oversees the organization that develops and implements the plan	\$90-150k/year
Working capital	Capital raised by the City and partners and allocated for forgivable loans and Revolving Loan Fund; If possible use designated ARP funds combined with local investment	\$10 million year 1 (RLF after requires less)
City Staff	Work closely with ED/Consultant to develop a master plan, streamline processes	

Partners, Funders & Board	Blackhawk Gaming Association, Financial institutions, Ali Parrish, committed developers	N/A
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## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

(All dates are expressed as Calendar Year, not City Fiscal Year)

<b>OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER 2021</b>	Partner conversations begin, board identified, conversations with other communities around best practice organizational structures (City staff)
<b>JANUARY 2022</b>	Initial funding secured, corporation formation begins; NFC feasibility determined
<b>APRIL 2022</b>	Director/Consultant identified, board in place; NFC or other funding mechanism identified and begins to take shape
<b>APRIL-AUGUST 2022</b>	Master Housing Plan Development begins; City liaisons and ED/Contractor develop a fast track for permitting, pre-qualify contractors, and compile information
<b>SEPTEMBER 2022</b>	Budgets, funding, program requirements, and structure in place
<b>OCTOBER 2022</b>	Loans/Funding/Grants and Projects begin to be awarded; All projects tracked for progress and final reporting to determine if requirements are met; RLF begins

**ONGOING**

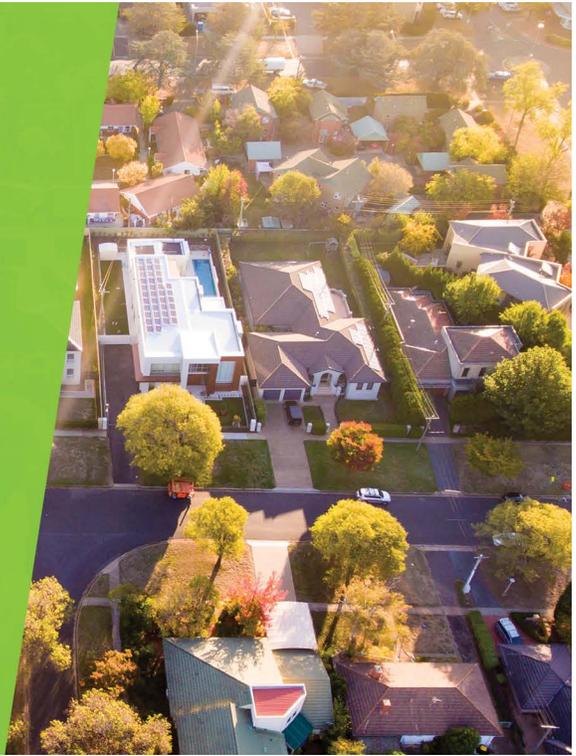
Tracking and measurement begin with goal to complete 100 projects (at all levels) per year

Elev8 works with City "Fly the W" project to celebrate completed projects and milestones; Houses with completed projects and/or rebuilds receive the Waterloo Pride flag (As flags begin to go up in neighborhoods, community sentiment will also improve)

**CONNECTS TO OTHER 8X8 GOALS**

Fly the W, Community of Opportunity, Celebr8 & Connect

# CELEBRATE & CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS



## GOAL

To leverage Waterloo's rich tradition of neighborhoods by celebrating and connecting them with the community and region at large.

## PURPOSE

To unite residents in pride and hold all neighborhoods and areas of the city at equal value, and to elevate opportunities to experience the unique cultures and personalities of each neighborhood.

## SUMMARY

As the City embarks on its campaign to share its story and ***Fly the W***, the work that has and will be done by neighborhoods should interconnect.

When you enter a neighborhood, you should know it. Not because it's better or worse, but because it is displayed with pride throughout. By leveraging the existing neighborhood organizational structure, the City can provide a sense of consistency, safety, and accessibility, and help residents feel connected to where they live, which impacts retention, helps improve neighborhoods in need of attention (Elev8), and builds pride not only in Waterloo but in our unique and diverse neighborhoods.

## TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further define neighborhood characteristics and strengths.
- Identify places where neighborhoods are disconnected or barriers exist between them and

work with City planning to develop walkways.

- Develop authentic neighborhood identities that can exist in tandem with the City brand, developing an iconic symbol for each that dovetails with the City identity, with distinctive and recognizable elements.
  - **Develop sidewalk stencils** for each neighborhood and develop a distribution and locations plan for heavily trafficked areas for each neighborhood (See Spread Love Not Viruses photo).
- **Using the icons and color palettes**, create wayfinding throughout the city to help residents and visitors explore our neighborhoods.
- **Develop neighborhood gateway signage** that connects and celebrates each neighborhood with unique and sculptural artwork and representation, and tap into the artistic community to creatively build them.
  - **Consider tiled mural projects** that involve citizens and create iconic artwork identifying the neighborhood. (See “All Together Now” example) and/or use icons and stencils to create identity points throughout each neighborhood.
  - Celebrate neighborhoods through festivals, events designed to bring people into neighborhoods to explore, and feature stories in the Fly the W Communications platform.
  - **Example event:** *I Run this City: Neighborhood Exploration Series*
- **Features routes to walk, run, and bike** through each neighborhood, each weekend May-August, and featuring neighborhood businesses

The second component to this plan will be to reduce the number of deteriorated rental properties. Redevelopment of landlord regulations/ordinances and strict enforcement on all levels of violations, with increasing fines, coupled with a strong landlord incentivization program will work to decrease the number of problem properties, while potentially turning over housing stock. Carve out some capital for rental property improvements.

## LENSES

### Equity

Holding all neighborhoods at the same value helps break down barriers and allows everyone to feel pride where they live and develop a sense of belonging. It also helps to develop a visual identity for each neighborhood that works with the City and other neighborhoods and builds a system that feels cohesive and connected.

### Economic Development

By elevating how we talk about our neighborhoods and supporting efforts to improve and beautify them—developing a wayfinding system that not only helps people connect, but shows the City’s commitment to neighborhoods—we position Waterloo as a Community of Opportunity for residents and businesses. →

## Sustainability

As the City embarks on sustainability issues, it presents an opportunity to provide education to residents through your neighborhood organization network.

## MAPPING RESOURCES/PARTNERS

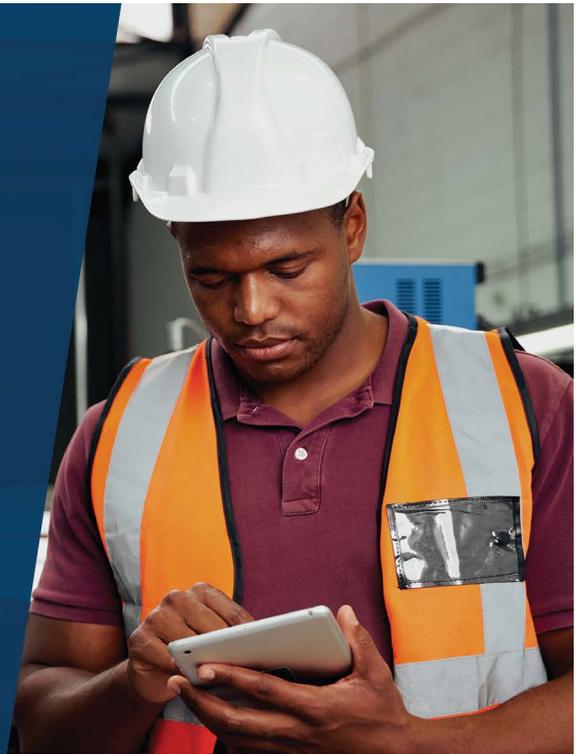
RESOURCE/PARTNER	USE/ROLE	ESTIMATED COST
Neighborhood Services Coordinator/Communications Coordinator	City staff	N/A
Neighborhood Leads	Volunteers	N/A
Philanthropy	Funding	Amount needed TBD
Artists & Designers/Signage Developer	Development of gateway signage	\$170,000 (assuming \$10k per neighborhood)

## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

<b>OCTOBER 2021</b>	Neighborhood coordinator begins work on developing a full timeline and estimated needs
<b>NOVEMBER 2021</b>	Neighborhood leads engaged in icon process for Fly the W and neighborhood planning Neighborhood icons developed in conjunction with the new City Logo/Fly the W
<b>DECEMBER 2021</b>	Neighborhood leads work together to plan interconnected events and series to launch in the spring

<p><b>NOVEMBER - MAY 2022</b></p>	<p>City communication staff works with neighborhoods to collect stories and news for Fly the W, develop the plan for neighborhood gateway art and stencils/murals, and identify locations for all, and compile information</p>
<p><b>JANUARY 2022</b></p>	<p>Fundraising begins for Celebr8 Neighborhood Gateway artwork</p>
<p><b>JUNE - AUGUST 2022</b></p>	<p>First events/series begin Stencils applied throughout neighborhoods</p>
<p><b>AUGUST 2022</b></p>	<p>Gateway art program calls for artists and concepts</p>
<p><b>CONNECTS TO OTHER 8X8 GOALS</b></p>	<p>Fly the W, Community of Opportunity, Elev8</p>

# WATERLOO WORKS



## GOAL

To grow a diverse and skilled workforce in Waterloo that connects people and employers for mutual growth.

## PURPOSE

Identify the immediate and future skills needed to help Waterloo thrive by both “Growing Our Own” and recruiting talent here by connecting newcomers to the community.

## SUMMARY

Over the past decade, Waterloo has seen a population decline that is unsustainable in the long term and must be reversed. We can work to reverse this trend by expanding on the school’s commitment to the Career Center, leaning heavily on community partners who provide opportunities for upskilling, and partnering with Grow Cedar Valley initiatives to improve industry access to a skilled workforce while recruiting new residents.

The need for a skilled workforce will continue to drive demand. By fostering existing and potential partnerships to meet the needs of industry sectors in the region, (including Manufacturing 4.0 and supply chain technology), Waterloo can grow its own workforce and attract and retain business.

Developing messaging (Fly the W) and programs that help newcomers see themselves in a career and as a valued member of the community are also a priority. By leveraging partnerships with Grow Cedar Valley/Live the Valley, and groups such as 24/7 Blac Professional

Advancement, neighborhood groups, and more, we envision a program that helps prospective residents “Plug In” to Waterloo. This program would allow newcomers to match with a community member who is willing to answer questions and help them develop a network, choose a neighborhood, and connect to a career.

Additionally, the development of a program (Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge) that allows employers to set and achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion goals such as equal pay and advancement, and tools to help them connect to diverse candidates, with recognition and benchmarking will serve to strengthen the workforce. (See EPIC Corporate Challenge for an example of a program based on female professional development in Iowa). This program should be tracked in a dashboard with quarterly recognitions. Companies that achieve these goals receive a Fly the W flag and can display the achievement icon on their websites, and should be identified on local job boards as participants in the program.

Publicly recognizing companies that partner with area educational institutions to hire local graduates and trainees (as well as those participating in the Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge) presents a dual opportunity to incentivize local employers, but also serves as a public relations opportunity for the city.

## TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify local skills needed for current and future employment and ensure programs evolve to teach/upskill those needs and offer paths to employment. Incentivize employers to hire local graduates and residents who complete upskilling programs with publicized recognition and financial incentives.
- **Fly the W:** Publicly recognize graduates of the Career Center and local programs, colleges, and universities with a “signing ceremony,” utilizing the Waterloo flag program.
- **Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge:** Challenge local employers to self-select to participate in and set goals and benchmarks for equity in hiring and advancement.
- **Launch “Plug In”:** A high-quality community mentor site that matches potential newcomers to volunteer community members that will help them “plug in” to Waterloo and establish roots (in conjunction with “Live the Valley”).
  - “Plug In” becomes Waterloo’s Workforce attraction competitive edge.

## LENSES

### Equity

By working to build a strong workforce while targeting equity in hiring and compensation, we help more citizens achieve prosperity through better-paying opportunities and the opportunity to develop financial stability and growth. →

## Economic Development

A stable workforce is critical to business growth and leads to higher paying, higher quality jobs in the region. The efforts also show a commitment to diversity in employment that most lowa communities can't compete with.

## Sustainability

This component is not identified at this time.

## MAPPING RESOURCES/PARTNERS

RESOURCE/PARTNER	USE/ROLE
City Staff - Economic Development, Communications & Grow Cedar Valley	Partner leads
Waterloo Schools/ Career Center 24/7 Blac Professional Advancement Live the Valley Community Mentors Neighborhood Organizations Waterloo Businesses & Large employers One City/Momentum One Cedar Valley UNICUE HCC UNI	Committee and program participants in Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge, Upskilling programs, development of recognition programs, and communication opportunities

## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

<b>OCTOBER 2021</b>	Partner leads meet to discuss the full plan and timeline, identify and ask all additional partners, and identify potential funding sources
<b>NOVEMBER 2021 - MARCH 2022</b>	Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge fully developed and timeline built to include website for sign up, communications, determination of who is administering the program, and verifying data

<b>NOVEMBER 2021 - JANUARY 2022</b>	Planning for “Plug In” and initial committee meetings for “Grow our Own” programs with area schools and programs taking place
<b>FEBRUARY 2022 - JUNE 2022</b>	Development of Plug In mentoring program; Website built and initial batch of mentors trained
<b>MAY 2022 - AUGUST 2022</b>	Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge launched; participant sign up
<b>JULY 2022</b>	Plug In Community Mentorship program launched in conjunction with Live the Valley (Available to prospects who are moving to Waterloo, or accepting a position in Waterloo); Sign-up is a link off Live the Valley and employer websites
<b>AUGUST 2022</b>	Fly the W stories identified for publication
<b>SEPTEMBER 2022</b>	Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge launched with a goal of 20 participants
<b>SEPTEMBER 2022 - AUGUST 2023</b>	Data compiled, new participants accepted into WCEC; Plug In actively seeks new residents to match to mentors; All programs and schools in conversations with employers regarding new skills and training programs needed for the modern workforce
<b>SEPTEMBER 2023</b>	First Waterloo Corporate Equity Results announced and lauded

**ONGOING**

Working in partnership with City staff, GCV, and other Waterloo Works program partners, continue to connect potential residents to opportunities and match them with mentors and community organizations

**CONNECTS TO OTHER 8X8 GOALS**

Fly the W, Community of Opportunity

5

## CROSSROADS DOUBLEDOWN



### GOAL

Re-energize Crossroads Mall area into a sports/recreation themed gravitational center.

### PURPOSE

To create gravitational pull between Lost Island amusement/water park and downtown, attract tourism, and re-energize lost retail space in the heart of Waterloo's shopping and hotel district by leaning into one of Waterloo's most popular recreational pastimes.

### SUMMARY

In order to purposely redevelop the mostly vacant Crossroads center, a partial redevelopment of the property that utilizes empty box stores to build an indoor/outdoor recreational golf facility (or similar recreational/entertainment-based attraction) has been identified as having the ability to create a gravitational pull to the area.

Additionally, the City and investor partners may choose to consider other development that focuses on experiences and attraction, rather than attempting to backfill empty space with retail. If the right project is identified and built, complimentary retail will materialize. Additional concepts could involve virtual or augmented reality experiences, gaming hubs, and real-life recreational opportunities such as rock climbing, indoor paddle boarding, pickleball, etc.

**WORKING CONCEPT:** Perfectly situated between the amusement and waterparks, the casino, and downtown Waterloo, **Crossroads Greens** will be a high-tech facility that allows participants of all ages and abilities to play golf and enjoy themselves in a year-round facility. →

Additionally, local schools can partner to use the facility during off-hours to offer off-season practice to teams.

Similar to a TopGolf facility, we envision **Crossroads Greens** with indoor golf options, access to food and beverages, and a rooftop option that allows players to golf with a view of the region.

**Crossroads Greens** will attract visitors from well beyond the region and is perfectly situated near multiple hotels and restaurants. It is centrally located to other attractions such as museums, cultural/sports attractions downtown, and Lost Island water and amusement park.

Retail as we knew it is not redeveloping in most regions without a significant gravitational pull. In coordination with city development staff and Grow Cedar Valley, Waterloo can selectively work to attract the type of services and retail that will be supported by this type of facility.

More opportunities to attract biking tourism to the city will center around this area as the trail along Hess and LaPorte road is constructed and avenues are built to connect crossroads to downtown.

## TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Partner with local developers to pursue purchase or partnership with ownership of Crossroads Mall.
- First, pursue Top Golf subsidiary franchise, and if not feasible, seek investment partners to develop the business plan and necessary elements/capital for a simulation-style facility with a food and beverage component. Waterloo has existing technology experts that could potentially build a gamified experience.
- Assist developers in identifying additional incentives and capital. The city should remain involved to help move this project along swiftly and proactively keep ahead of requirements.
- The city may likely retain some ownership/involvement of the facility, but it is unknown at this time what that may be. *Dependent on investors and funding.*

## LENSES

### Equity

Allowing for use of the facility for free or reduced cost to schools allows all students interested in golf to further develop their skills.

### Economic Development

Development of this attraction will result in a gravitational pull to Waterloo for visitors and help market the city as more attractive to the future workforce.

## Sustainability

As an indoor-outdoor facility, opportunities exist to implement solar into this process. Additionally, by developing in town and not at the edges where new and additional infrastructure must be built, the City effectively repurposes this property.

## MAPPING RESOURCES

RESOURCE/PARTNER	USE/ROLE
Mayor, City Development Staff	Help to identify all the needs and establish communication on the redevelopment of the property; Run feasibility study of the facility
Investors/Developers	Invest in the facility/share ownership and development of the property
Local leaders involved in technical development	Assistance in developing the business plan and technical needs of the facility
Crossroads Mall Ownership	TBD

## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

OCTOBER 2021 - DECEMBER 2022	Feasibility with Mall ownership and investor/funding identification and business plan development
FALL 2022 - FALL 2023	Study and understand options for technology and facility needs (Which direction? Franchise? Develop?); Look to potential partners with engineers and software development companies to build a system that can potentially be replicated for a future company, headquartered in Waterloo

<b>OCTOBER 2022 - OCTOBER 2023</b>	Funding - investments and commitments; to be led by the initial committee
<b>NOVEMBER 2023</b>	Business plan formalized
<b>JANUARY 2024</b>	Plans launched to the public
<b>SPRING 2024</b>	Finalization of plans regarding ownership and business partnership or structure of the organization
<b>2025</b>	Initial demolition begins
<b>2025 - 2026</b>	Construction
<b>2026 - 2027</b>	Facility completed
<b>CONNECTS TO OTHER 8X8 GOALS</b>	Fly the W, Community of Opportunity, Sportstown USA

## POWER UP DOWNTOWN



### GOAL

Keep Waterloo's core downtown evolving to meet the needs of future generations, supporting and showcasing arts and cultural opportunities and creating an experience like no other.

### PURPOSE

To support a vibrant and growing downtown that is attractive to residents and visitors by engaging artists in improving and lighting downtown to increase safety and make it more colorful and fun at night.

### SUMMARY

It's time to turn on the lights! Building on dreams and plans, connect each aspect of downtown with attractively lit walkways infused with interactive art and an opportunity to "play" with light. The challenge is to develop an overall strategy that combines light, movement, and art to engage downtown patrons while increasing safety.

**THE CHALLENGE:** while we're dreaming and stringing lights, we need to think about where that energy is coming from. Partnering with MidAmerican Energy, use LED lighting and develop solar power opportunities for the lighting, for electric vehicle charging stations, and for businesses looking for alternative power options. We recommend approaching MidAmerican as a major partner in these efforts including having a representative on this board.

### TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Theme downtown promotions as "Powered Up" to continue to energize your downtown assets. →

- Working with lighting engineers, develop interactive lighting and projection.
- Develop art on streets, sidewalks, and flat surfaces, and then focus lighting that changes and highlights different aspects of the art.
- Use high-quality projection to showcase digital art in places visible from the highway.
- Enhance the new Veterans Way with lighting and artwork that includes interactive elements to learn more about Waterloo Veterans' history.
- Develop a museum arts and culture trail with embedded artwork, graphics, and signage to promote museums and cultural offerings.
- Every flat surface, vertical or horizontal, is an opportunity for art and community identity work. Electrical boxes near street lights, sidewalks, and the sides of buildings are all potential canvasses. Inventory all available surfaces and then determine how to best utilize them in interactive and interesting ways.
- Identify 16 locations that would be ideal for electric car charging stations. Develop a plan to install two electric car charging stations per year, sponsored by a renewable energy partner.
- Launch a feasibility study to understand and identify areas of the river downtown that could become "playable" elements.
  - Create an interactive element to the river that allows for safe use of the river on light watercraft, downtown.

## LENSES

### Equity

Keeping downtown vibrant and a place employers seek to locate creates accessible jobs in the core. Developing safe and navigable pathways at night encourages more people to patronize downtown and enjoy the free forms of entertainment and recreation and support local establishments.

### Economic Development

It is incredibly important to continue to invest in downtown to maintain a thriving area attractive to business, housing, and supporting retail and services. A downtown serves as the heart of a community and is vital to keeping and attracting businesses.

### Sustainability

All elements should be designed to use minimum resources, develop reusable power sources, and reduce waste.

## MAPPING RESOURCES/PARTNERS

<b>RESOURCE/PARTNER</b> (All members of the <i>Power Up!</i> Collaborative Committee)	<b>USE/ROLE</b>
City Staff	Planning and design, oversight
Mainstreet Waterloo	Identifying projects/opportunities and connecting to funding
Experience Waterloo	Project ideation guidance, promotion, and communications
Local and Regional Artists, Consultants	Artwork and interactive elements
Employers	Develop solar options and sponsor development and installations
Philanthropy	Assist in funding initiatives to <i>Power Up!</i> Downtown Waterloo

## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

<b>FALL 2021</b>	Identify <i>Power Up!</i> Downtown Collaborative (committee/task force)
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<p><b>NOVEMBER 2021 - JUNE 2022</b></p>	<p>Develop comprehensive lighting, augmented reality, projection, and wayfinding plan for all of downtown; Identify partners, funding, and procure grants; Plans that existed before the vision plan to be incorporated</p>
<p><b>NOVEMBER 2021 - AUGUST 2022</b></p>	<p>Study solar installation and locations for EV charging locations; identify partners, funding, and timeline</p>
<p><b>WINTER 2021 - SPRING 2022</b></p>	<p>Develop plans, designs, and art installation needs as well as wayfinding and informational signage, arts/culture trail connections, etc.</p>
<p><b>2022 - 2023</b></p>	<p>Implement and install lighting according to the master plan, artwork, and signage</p>
<p><b>FALL 2022</b></p>	<p>Rollout plan for 2 chargers per year (16 total), with locations and carbon-neutral footprint</p>
<p><b>2023 AND BEYOND</b></p>	<p>Continue installations as feasible; continually refresh projected artwork</p>
<p><b>CONNECTS TO OTHER 8X8 GOALS</b></p>	<p>Fly the W, Community of Opportunity, Connect &amp; Celebr8</p>

# SPORTSTOWN USA



## GOAL

Sportstown USA plants our flag as the most rec-friendly and sports-focused town in Iowa. We support positive opportunities for youth, while also playing host to the midwest, due to our outstanding facilities. While focusing on sports in this case, these opportunities present local opportunities for arts and culture through expanded performance space and event venues.

## PURPOSE

To generate excitement, develop youth, and drive investment and economic impact from year-round visitors.

## SUMMARY

**THIS. IS. WHERE. THE. SPORTS. ARE.**

Building off *Crossroads Doubledown*, Sportstown USA plants our flag as the most rec-friendly and sports-focused town in Iowa.

1. Potentially redevelop Cattle Congress Grounds for a large flexible venue for arena-level sports, concerts, the fairgrounds of the future, and add a retractable roof for year-round activity.
2. Assess long term needs to support local and traveling sports and recreational needs, and build a secondary sports complex that accommodates those from an indoor perspective (Techworks/Crossroads/Cattle Congress).

3. Invest in additional fields and outdoor sport supporting facilities, potentially located near the former greyhound racing site, that can hold multi-day tournaments, camps, and clinics and offer traveling teams benefits such as:
  - Nearby playgrounds with water features for cooling off/occupying kids.
  - Shaded seating that doubles as a warming shelter in cold weather play.
  - On-site locker rooms for teams that can double as storm shelters.
  - Bright lighting which allows for play into the evening, powered by solar.
  - Surrounding irrigation and water retention, which presents as a water feature.
4. Work with middle and high schools to assess existing needs for aquatic facilities.
  - Potentially develop a citywide aquatic center that has indoor/outdoor facilities and serves as a municipal pool as well as a practice space for existing school-based/combined teams. An indoor-to-outdoor facility should be placed at Gates Park and allow for more access to the pool for students and residents.
5. Support connectivity of all facilities and neighborhoods via trail system and/or bike lanes, adequate sidewalks, and crossings.

## TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a comprehensive sports and recreation plan.
- Launch market study to determine activities that provide the most opportunity for travel and are not oversaturated.
- Launch a sports and event attraction task force in conjunction with Experience Waterloo.
- Ensure distribution of newer facilities and access to neighborhoods and trail systems across the community.

## LENSES

### Equity

Developing free or reduced-cost access to facilities that are supported by out-of-town traffic provides additional positive activities for youth and families. Facilities should not be concentrated in one part of town and should be connected via trails, bike lanes, transit, and safe crossings.

### Economic Development

By developing facilities that meet local needs, this enhances the city's amenities and quality of life/attractiveness, while developing facilities to capitalize on recreational and sports markets that need new/updated or additional opportunities for competitions.

### Sustainability

All facilities should keep conservation and environmental impact (including becoming carbon-negative) in mind, and adhere to the highest standards for environmental design.

## MAPPING RESOURCES/PARTNERS

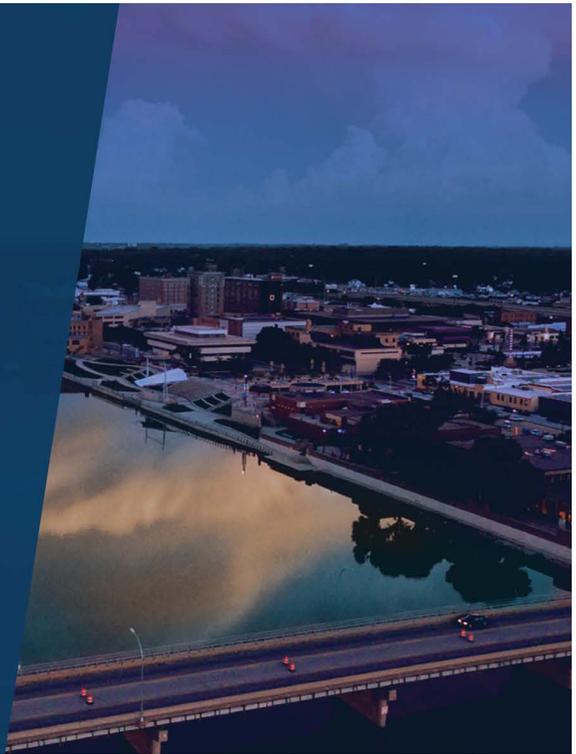
RESOURCE/PARTNER	USE/ROLE
City Staff - Parks & Recreation	Info collection/planning/administration, ensure that the bigger picture goals are maintained
Investors/Philanthropy	Financial support and investment
Athletic Directors/WLSD officials	Input on community needs
Current Facility Directors/Organizations	Collaborate on existing and future needs
Experience Waterloo	Lead market study; partner to communicate and market

## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

<b>FALL - WINTER 2021</b>	Development of task force (see partners above) to oversee and lead the study, bring investors and partners to the program, and ensure that current and future needs are considered
<b>SPRING 2022</b>	Launch market study; identify all potential sites, current venues/locations that need to be improved or modified and collect estimates; Committee meets to discuss progress, concepts, and partnerships

<b>WINTER 2022 - 2023</b>	Final study results shared with the task force; Final project direction determined
<b>WINTER - SPRING 2023</b>	Venues/plans finalized; partners and fundraising needs identified
<b>SUMMER 2023 - 2025</b>	Fundraising where needed underway
<b>SUMMER 2023</b>	Plans with financing/investment/support in place are visualized and shared; Initial renderings and plans are developed
<b>SPRING 2024</b>	First projects break ground (remaining projects to follow as funding is secured)
<b>CONNECTS TO OTHER 8X8 GOALS</b>	Fly the W, Community of Opportunity, Crossroads Doubledown, Connect & Celebr8 Neighborhoods

# COMMUNITY OF OPPORTUNITY



## GOAL

Waterloo is a Community of Opportunity, where everyone can prosper.

## PURPOSE

Eliminate barriers that keep Waterloo residents, and the community as a whole, from reaching its true potential, creating an equitable, thriving, and sustainable community for future generations.

## SUMMARY

How does a city become a “Community of Opportunity?”

- By eliminating barriers to success and prosperity, we become a more equitable and sustainable city:
  - **EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS:** upskilling, access to quality affordable childcare, language assistance, placement, etc.
  - **TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS:** making transportation a given.
  - **INFORMATION BARRIERS:** access to high-speed internet and fiber for both individuals and businesses.
  - **CONNECTION BARRIERS:** partnering with mentors and programs that help people succeed.
- By creating systems that help to level the playing field while helping people to be a part of their own success story:
  - Elev8
  - Celebr8 & Connect Neighborhoods
  - Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge

## TACTICAL ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TRANSPORTATION:

- Become “fare-free” and eliminate rider fees on busing in Waterloo
- Extend routes into transportation “potholes”
- Make routes more friendly and simple by converting to “out and back” routes
- Extend hours of service for busing
- Partner with businesses to create vanpools that support workforce development

### 2. EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS:

- Develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion Benchmark Program (Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge—see Waterloo Works) that incentivizes businesses for setting and achieving goals that result in equal employment, fair and equal pay across gender and ethnicities, hiring programs that focus on training, and employing underserved populations

### 3. INFORMATION ACCESS:

- Complete plans to implement broadband access city wide by 2025
  - Develop a sliding scale for broadband access
  - Develop the infrastructure to nimbly meet business needs and keep and attract employers in the core and throughout the city, including new development

## LENSES

### Equity

Eliminate barriers for Waterloo residents and level the playing field for success in order to truly meet the community vision.

### Economic Development

Supporting the workforce efforts of local employers and ensuring that the infrastructure exists for high-speed fiber internet for businesses, homes, and schools will help Waterloo attract more businesses with better pay to the city.

### Sustainability

Start with self-assessment and incorporate feasible recommendations over the next eight years to achieve a higher rating as a city in 2030.

## MAPPING RESOURCES/PARTNERS

RESOURCE/PARTNER	USE/ROLE
City Staff	City staff appropriately identified by barrier
Community partners for each barrier and as notated in each of the categories	Ensure stakeholders from all sectors are involved at the table: arts and culture, community development, tourism and attraction, economic development, education, sports, and recreation
Metro Transit Authority	MTA Leadership
The right internet provider/infrastructure system	Partner with the city to find the right solution to expanding broadband access city-wide, prioritizing high-speed fiber to business-focused areas
Experience Waterloo	Lead market study; partner to communicate and market

## TIMELINES / BENCHMARKS

<b>FALL - WINTER 2021</b>	Kick off the 8 x 8 plan with city departments; Collaborating partner orgs announced
<b>WINTER 2021 - EARLY 2022</b>	All committees in place and reporting
<b>NON-TIME SPECIFIC</b>	Identify funding and partnerships to make transportation fee-free (Tie in to Fly the W communications)
<b>ONGOING</b>	Continue to work with consultants and committees on internet access, expanding transportation options, and moving DEI (Waterloo Corporate Equity Challenge) forward

# Methodology & Input Summary/Timeline

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## KICK-OFF MEETING WITH THE WATERLOO VISION STEERING COMMITTEE

Stakeholders kick-off and input session #1 .....	February 12, 2021
Stakeholders follow-up survey for additional input .....	February 13, 2021

## COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Tavis Hall / Andy Van Fleet .....	April 28, 2021
Ally Parrish & David Deeds - Habitat for Humanity/Housing Initiatives .....	May 26, 2021
Rudy Jones .....	June 7, 2021
Cattle Congress with Blake/Sally Hollis, Mike Young	
Miscellaneous calls/communications with SPARK presenters:	
Kizzie Mason • Jeff Kaplan • William Heathershaw • Sarah Topliff • Joy Briscoe/Amy Miede	
Tavis Hall • Ali Parrish • Mike Young • Carrsan Morissey	

## OTHER MEETINGS

Police Chief	
Randy Bennett .....	May 26, 2021
Kyle Durant INRCOG	
David Sturch	
Cary Darrah/Grow Cedar Valley	
Community Survey .....	March 9 - April 8, 2021
Meeting with U of I Initiative for Sustainable Communities .....	June 14, 2021
Check-in with Steering Committee/prep for Council Session .....	March 26, 2021
Vision Work Session with Council & Department Heads .....	March 29, 2021
Additional survey sent to Council & Department Heads .....	March 30, 2021
Waterloo Neighborhood Coalition .....	April 17, 2021
Driving Tour of City with Mayor .....	April 28, 2021
SPARK Event (10 presenters) .....	June 8, 2021
Zoom Roundtable with African American Community Leaders .....	June 14, 2021
Stakeholder Update and Input Meeting #2 .....	June 29, 2021
Multiple meetings with Mayor/Wendy Bowman	
Presentation to Waterloo City Council Working Session (Discussion) .....	August 30, 2021

# Measurement and Success

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Establishing the City staff member and at least one partnering organization to jointly lead each of the eight initiatives is critically important to success. The 8 x 8 plan will only succeed with a high level of communication, collaboration, and accountability.

City and partner leads will have access to a shared Google sheet with the initial goals of this plan and the structure to establish their timelines and benchmarks, subsequently to keep as the ultimate measure of success. This sheet should be maintained and overseen by each committee with accountability to the Mayor's office.

## Critical Steps

1. Identify/ask lead staff and partners for each initiative (initiative refers to the eight categories—there may be multiple working committees under each). These leaders will form the 8 x 8 Leadership Team.
2. Roll out the 8 x 8 plan to stakeholders and the public introducing the partners and the city vision statement.
3. Establish expectations for committees and working groups and reporting structure (Google Sheet) and recognition and celebration of successes.
4. Establish quarterly meetings of the 8 x 8 Leadership Team to review worksheets and progress.

# Appendix

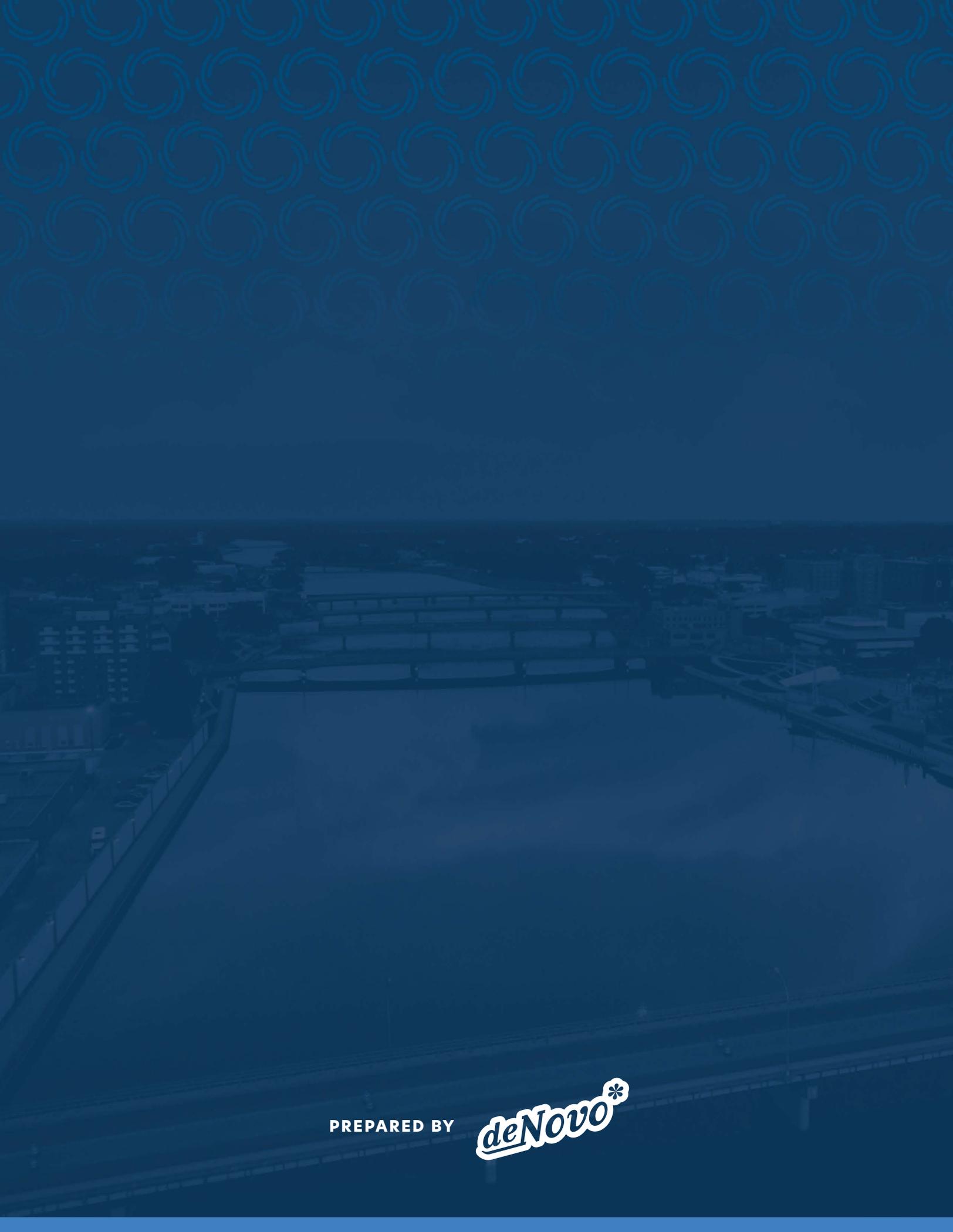
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## Additional Supporting Data and Documents

Link to Waterloo Community Survey: [bit.ly/Waterloo2030](https://bit.ly/Waterloo2030)

## Supporting Documents and Other Studies

Blackhawk County Gaming Association Long Range Planning 2020-2025  
John Deere/Global Communities Study  
University of Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Cities  
Historic Rehabilitation and Neighborhood Revitalization / David Deeds



PREPARED BY

*deNovo*\*