

St. Joseph County Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2019 – 2024



July 2019

St. Joseph County Mission Statement

The mission of St. Joseph County Government is to provide statutory and constitutional services in a fiscally responsible manner worthy of the dignity and respect of all County citizens.

Non-mandated services requested by citizens shall be evaluated and prioritized within the same context of fiscal responsibility and public trust. The basis for providing such services shall include, ***but not be restricted to: the safety and wellbeing of the public, the protection and improvement of natural resources, and the expansion of economic opportunities for all citizens.***

St. Joseph County Government as stewards of people and resources promotes equal opportunity for all, and hereby encourages the talents, creativity and leadership of all County employees in striving for prompt, courteous, respectful and efficient delivery of services.

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan for St. Joseph County includes a vision, goals, and strategies that will guide resource allocation and work planning for the next 5 years. A strategic plan is a blue print for action that will be used to effectively focus County resources over the next five years. It is a Plan that will be used by the Board of Commissioners in fulfilling obligations to St. Joseph County. The Plan is intended to be a living, breathing document that will be adjusted to respond to evolving needs and conditions. A shared vision and set of goals will be used to achieve the levels of performance and service of which the County is capable of. A primary purpose of a strategic plan is to establish the collective priorities for action by the Board of Commissioners so that the State of the County will continue to improve and be recognized by all as a place to live, work, and play.

This is a time of dynamic change. Even while we are welcoming many positive initiatives and achievements throughout the County there is also increased demand for shrinking financial resources that support County programs, services, and infrastructure. At the same time, there is a need for leadership to address needs and priorities that encompass health and human services, employment, natural resources and recreation, infrastructure, and overall community development.

The need to unify the County's governing body around clear priorities and actions and opportunities was an important catalyst for initiating this process, as is the need to communicate the vision, missions and strategic goals with our many stakeholders.

OVERVIEW

On June 3 and 4, 2019, the St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners, Administrator, elected and appointed department heads met to discuss and identify a shared vision and direction for St. Joseph County. The two-day process began with a discussion surrounding the opportunities and challenges facing the County and the implications for the future. The second step was to establish a “2024 Vision Tour” for the County. Lastly, the leadership group identified major goal areas, key objectives, and actions to be taken in the first year of this five-year plan.

Key elements of the Strategic Plan provide a roadmap for where the County is going. The following items were discussed as *potential* areas to research as part of a “2024 Vision Tour”.

A visitor that tours St. Joseph County in 2024 will see the following:

- Housing for boomers
- Market Senior service and housing (COA, VETS, etc.)
- Market walkability, recreation, and community for a lifetime
- Expand recreational opportunities
- All county buildings are efficient, accessible and improved
- Updated County facilities (Jail, Court House, and Animal Shelter)
- Continued local government relations including roads and bridges
- Continued economic development efforts
- Increase in good paying jobs
- Education promotion – especially for skilled trades – school and college programs
- Improved level of health care
- Staff retention and development
- Upgraded technology – (Internet/G5)
- Enhanced program for Juveniles

MAJOR GOAL AREAS

To fulfill the Board Vision for 2024, St. Joseph County will focus on three major areas of strategic focus:

- I. ENHANCED COUNTY SERVICES**
- II. IMPROVED COUNTY LIVEABILITY/ATTRACTIVENESS**
- III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/JOBS**

- I. GOAL AREA ONE – ENHANCED COUNTY SERVICES;** The County shall be led by strong leaders with actions that are fiscally responsible, technological innovative with a focus of communicating and providing safety to all citizens.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Enhanced juvenile program
- Staff retention and leadership development
- Upgraded technology (5-G) continued
- Upgraded County facilities (Jail, Courthouse, Animal Shelter)
- County Wide ambulance service
- Continue to be fiscally responsible and transparent

Strategies (One Year Tasks) – Enhanced County Services

- Continue to move forward with Courthouse Master Plan
- Research obtaining a consultant for Jail and Animal Control building upgrades
- Conduct a study for the Juvenile Center
- Research and review possible outdated jail technology and set time frame for improvements
- Research the possibility of a Mental Health Court
- Review Court technology for case management systems
- Succession planning – training for employees

- II. GOAL AREA TWO – IMPROVED COUNTY LIVEABILITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS;** This includes recreational development, being good stewards of our natural resources, to be a county where citizens can receive quality health care.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Continue to expand recreation
- Review and research marketing strategies
- Housing and Services for seniors
- Improve the level of support for health care including mental health

Strategies (One Year Tasks) – Improved County livability and attractiveness

- Assessment of best practices for handling the impact of increased drug related crimes
- Research the development of a collaborative tourism group
- Monitor success of the Rivers Enrichment Center and Residence
- Human Services Commission – work collaboratively to bring more focus and solutions regarding Mental Health
- Execution of the 5-Year Master Plan for parks

III. GOAL AREA THREE – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS; To have viable job options and prosperous communities.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Attract employers with good paying jobs
- Coordinate, support and facilitate skilled trades educational programs
- Coordinate with local governments
- Market the County
- Improve County-wide internet services to 5-G

Strategies (One Year Tasks) – Economic Development and Jobs

- GIS Data: Review fees
- Establish a partnership with VA Vocational Rehab that uses veterans' skills and bring them into the workforce.
- Be a champion for Career & Technical Education (CTE) efforts.
- Form a County-wide government relations group
 - County convene a group to meet regularly to talk about and solve county-wide issues
- Develop a marketing plan. For example, inventory community assets.

CONCLUSION

This is the first step of a comprehensive strategic planning process to envision the desired future of St. Joseph County. It also embodies our commitment to be efficient and forward thinking with County resources. Upon adoption, the County Administrator, and Elected and Appointed Department Heads will review this plan to identify initiatives and targets to support the strategies. They will give special attention to the one-year tasks. Future decisions and actions that the Board of Commissioners or Department Heads might make should be discussed if they impact (positively or negatively) the County's Strategic Plan.

This is meant to be a living document that can be revised as needed. The goals and strategies will be revisited regularly and reported on as progress is made.

