

April 26, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Community Strategic Plan Feedback Event is April 30

For nearly a year, more than 230 citizens have devoted thousands of volunteer hours to drafting a broad-based, community-wide strategic plan for the Springfield area. Similar in concept to the Vision 20/20 strategic plans of years past, this plan is all new — a completely new process was used to develop it, and it includes a focus on a few topics that have never before been addressed in a strategic plan for our community. The plan is a 20-year vision, with a more detailed five-year action plan.

The result of this effort is 13 draft "chapters" that cover the following topics: Arts, Culture & Tourism; Early Childhood Development; Economic Development; Education & Workforce Development; Global Perspectives & Diversity; Growth Management & Land Use; Housing; Progressive City Management; Natural Environment; Public Health; Public Safety; Recreation & Leisure; and Transportation.

The draft chapters and a full explanation of the strategic planning process can be found online at: www.springfieldmo.gov/strategicplan. To view each chapter, click on the topic names under the "Create" heading on the homepage, and click "Final Chapter Goals" in the right-hand sidebar on each topic page.

An open house for public feedback will be held from noon to 5 p.m., Saturday, April 30, at the Mediacom Ice Park, 635 E. Trafficway. Public parking is available for free in the Ice Park lot and the Jordan Valley Car Park for a fee. Representatives from each of the 13 citizen planning committees will be on hand to answer questions and talk about their committee's vision for the Springfield area in 2030. There is no set program. Feedback forms will be collected at the event, and a feedback form is also available on the strategic plan website.

This plan is different than past strategic plans in a number of ways, detailed below. All of the resources cited below, and much more, are linked under the "Listen" heading on the Strategic Plan website.

- **A "big picture" starting point** — A great deal of background information was given to the planning committees before the formal planning process even began, including the results of the City Manager's 2010 "Listening Tour," five recent community "report cards" identifying Springfield's strengths and weakness in several areas, and a Horizon Scanning Report that identifies "megatrends" of the next 20 years.
- **New topics** — Six of the 13 topics listed above have never before been addressed in a strategic plan for Springfield. They include: Public Safety; Public Health; Global Perspectives & Diversity; Economic Development; and Early Childhood Development.

Additionally, the Progressive City Management chapter looks at how municipal government must adapt and improve.

- **Four cross-chapter "themes"** — Each of the planning committees was asked to keep four over-arching themes in mind – regionalism, sustainability, minimizing poverty and civic engagement – and specifically state how their chapter will address these themes. This will allow these important issues to be addressed via multiple perspectives.
- **Focus on inter-relationships** — Recognizing that none of these topics exists in a vacuum, a Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee consisting of the chairs of each of the 13 citizen planning committees plus citizens-at-large was tasked with ensuring the pieces fit together into a coherent whole. This group also focused on the inter-relationships of each topic, such as how transportation impacts public health or how public safety impacts housing trends.
- **Budget and funding** — Recognizing the state of the economy, and that responsible planning must not include unfunded "wish lists," the committees were asked, wherever applicable, to attempt to estimate costs and identify potential funding sources.
- **Voice of the "next generation"** — A high priority was placed on younger voices, from elementary school students through college and university students in town. A seat on every planning committee was reserved for a member of The Network, the Chamber of Commerce's organization for young professionals.
- **"Adoption" of chapters or themes** — In an attempt to increase civic engagement across the Springfield community, the Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee is seeking organizations to "adopt" a chapter or theme. Adopters can be civic organizations, businesses, non-profits, churches, government entities or any other type of organization. These groups will not be the stakeholders responsible for carrying out the plan's goals, nor will they be responsible for funding any part of the plan. Instead, the adopters will be responsible for grading the community's progress on the plan annually, and will be asked to keep their topic on the community's "radar screen" do ensure the plan goes into action.

This process was initiated by the City of Springfield and Greene County, but it has been led and powered by the ideas, vision and expertise of citizens. The strategic planning process is not yet over. Citizen feedback at this stage is critical, and is being sought through the April 30 open house and online. The Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee and the 13 planning committees will then use the feedback to finalize their chapters. After that, the plan will be sent to City Council and the Greene County Commission for review and approval.

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