

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026



*The City of Des Plaines'  
Roadmap to the Future*



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## ABOUT DES PLAINES

The City of Des Plaines is a beautiful suburban Chicago community encompassing 15 square miles and home to 60,675 residents.

Des Plaines is a growing, vibrant, diverse community, brimming with assets and potential in its quality of life, downtown theatre, parks, library and schools.

The City, with its proximity to O'Hare International Airport, is at the center of commerce and transportation with abundant access and connections to air, rail, transit, a network of expressways, as well as bike and pedways.

The City of Des Plaines is a top ranked community for residents and businesses. Our City has been recognized as a Better Business Town (2021), a Best Place to Live (35 out of 100, 2017) and a Best Place to Retire (one of 8 in the U.S., 2018).

The City Council consists of a mayor elected at-large and eight aldermen who represent wards. They set direction and policy for the City which is carried out by the City Manager, his leadership team and a dedicated team of 300+ employees. There is also a city-wide elected clerk.

The City operates under a Council-Manager form of government.

# CITY OF DES PLAINES

## 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

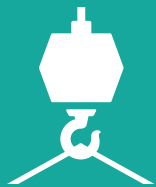
This Strategic Plan continues to serve as the City's Roadmap to the Future, building on the achievements of previous plans and new strategies that shape our future.

The Plan defines the City Council's Vision – or where we aspire to be in five years – it identifies goals that the City aims to achieve, as well as the strategies and actions that the City team will execute, in partnership with City Council.

Guiding the City's efforts at every level, this important plan influences all present and future decisions, sets direction and aligns the City team, maintains focus on priorities and enhances accountability. It provides a means to track and measure our success in the priority areas of:



### COMMUNITY CHARACTER



### RE-IMAGINED GROWTH



### INFRASTRUCTURE AND MOBILITY



### MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE





## DES PLAINES CITY COUNCIL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Des Plaines City Council subscribes to these shared values regarding our conduct and the quality of our interactions.

- Focus on the interests and success of the City as a whole.
- Be respectful of others and their perspectives.
- Actively listen and maintain open-mindedness.
- Foster a collaborative environment to achieve our shared goals.

# OUR VISION

*Des Plaines is a diverse, safe and vibrant community with a thriving economy.*

# OUR MISSION

*Enhance quality of life of our community and economic vibrancy through effective, efficient and reliable services.*





# HIGH LEVEL GOALS

These four Goals establish the Strategic Plan framework. Achievement of these Goals facilitates attainment of our Vision for 2026. No prioritization is implied by the order in which they are listed.

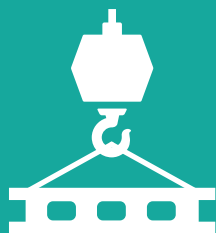
## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Further strengthen Des Plaines as a friendly, diverse, vibrant and thriving city.



## RE-IMAGINED GROWTH

Capitalize on our City's assets and opportunities to attract economic investment.



## INFRASTRUCTURE & MOBILITY

Enhance our infrastructure systems and maximize our transportation options.



## MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE

Deliver the highest standards of public service that strengthen the City as an organization and the community we serve.



# GOAL 1



COMMUNITY  
CHARACTER





# Goal 1: Community Character

*Further strengthen Des Plaines as a friendly, diverse, vibrant and thriving city.*

## Strategy 1: Sense of Community

*Engage with residents, stakeholders and partners to enrich community and personal well-being.*

**Action 1.** Embrace and celebrate our rich cultural, generational and socioeconomic diversity through community outreach, engagement and events.

**Action 2.** Actively engage residents and neighborhood groups (both in-person and online) to share information and promote public health, safety and well-being, as well as build public trust and cultivate community pride.

**Action 3.** Plan and enhance the City's existing events and consider new events using data and trends to promote community connections and togetherness.

**Action 4.** Collaborate and engage with other governmental agencies and organizations to cultivate stronger partnerships and maximize communications and community outreach efforts.

**Action 5.** Explore and leverage partnership opportunities and continue our partnership with the Senior Center and Food Pantry.



# Goal 1: Community Character

*Further strengthen Des Plaines as a friendly, diverse, vibrant and thriving city.*

## Strategy 2: Sense of Place

*Enhance social spaces, connections and neighborhood vibrancy through infrastructure investments and other programs.*

**Action 1.** Explore opportunities for expanding outdoor gathering places across the city.

**Action 2.** Maximize opportunities to create more green spaces by reclaiming underutilized properties.

**Action 3.** Expand walkway networks for neighborhood connection, outdoor activity and social interaction.

**Action 4.** Explore and evaluate City tree programs in neighborhoods to restore beauty and the benefits of connection with the natural environment.



# Goal 1: Community Character

Further strengthen Des Plaines as a friendly, diverse, vibrant and thriving city.

## Strategy 3: Spotlight on Des Plaines

Build our brand image and reputation through strategic marketing, storytelling and communications.

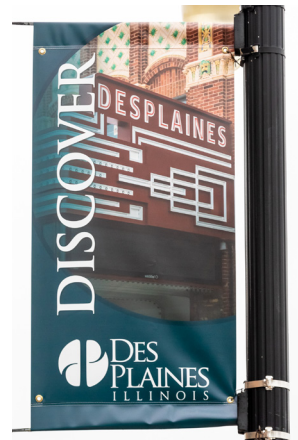
**Action 1.** Implement a marketing campaign that promotes Des Plaines as a desirable destination to live, play and do business.

**Action 2.** Continue to invest in multi-media communications and engagement to enhance transparency and strengthen public attitudes, knowledge, trust and confidence.

**Action 3.** Build satisfaction, pride and awareness in our city as a whole, and the City's brand and services through consistent marketing, communications and media coverage.

**Action 4.** Garner community input and collect data through surveys, polls and other means to help drive decisions and shape communications plans that achieve the City's objectives.

**Action 5.** Utilize new and traditional communication tools and technologies to meet the needs of residents (including in different languages) as feasible.



HISTORIC DES PLAINES THEATRE • LIVE MUSIC • DINING



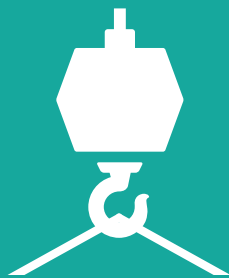
The City of Des Plaines welcomes **ALL** who live, work, and play here.



# GOAL 2



RE-IMAGINED  
GROWTH



## Goal 2: Re-Imagined Growth

*Capitalize on our City's assets and opportunities to attract economic investment.*

### Strategy 1: Downtown

*Develop Downtown as a desirable destination for shopping, entertainment, dining and living.*

**Action 1.** Build on plans to energize and modernize the experience and feel of the downtown, making it an entertainment, shopping and dining destination.

**Action 2.** Engage existing restaurants to better accommodate evening visitors, and actively recruit new restaurants to locate downtown.

**Action 3.** Continue to attract higher density and mixed-use development, including those with first floor retail and dining.

**Action 4.** Explore the feasibility of enhancing Metropolitan Square to create a gathering place for families and friends to eat, drink, shop and play.

**Action 5.** Explore options for outdoor experiences and public gathering places (dining and other).

**Action 6.** Encourage the Theatre, downtown restaurants and businesses to develop and market creative packages and incentives to attract visitors and patrons.



## Goal 2: Re-Imagined Growth

*Capitalize on our City's assets and opportunities to attract economic investment.*

### Strategy 2: Revitalization

*Continue to maximize opportunities and implement strategies to advance economic development.*

**Action 1.** Focus on Oakton corridor improvements by leveraging the TIF district and pursue adding a new train station at Oakton.

**Action 2.** Encourage entertainment and hotel expansion to enhance the Casino corridor.

**Action 3.** Explore feasibility of corridors focusing on education, science and technology.

**Action 4.** Foster relationships with potential developers and businesses to identify viable locations.

**Action 5.** Capitalize on underutilized properties, acquire strategic new properties, restore visual aesthetics and facilitate future development.



# A CATALYTIC INVESTMENT: THE DES PLAINES THEATRE



The City Council made the decision to purchase the theatre for \$1.3 million in 2018 after it sat vacant for many years. To make the project feasible, Rivers Casino agreed to provide financial support to assist with the property's purchase and renovation. The City invested \$7 million in the renovation. **The City recognized that the theatre's restoration could drive transformational downtown revitalization and economic development.**

The theatre is located in the heart of downtown Des Plaines across the street from the Metra Train station. It has the capacity for nearly 1,000 and includes two restaurants—Bourbon 'N Brass, a Speakeasy featuring a 1920s decor that reflects the Prohibition Era origins of the legendary venue—and Des Pizza, a wood-fired pizza and Rock 'n Roll experience.

"I'm extremely proud of this theatre's rebirth and appreciate the partnerships that made it happen – including our current and former elected officials, our community that we represent, Rivers Casino and Ron Onesti. A big thank you also goes to our extraordinary City team who worked behind the scenes for the last several years to bring this local gem (back) to life. I invite everyone from near and far to come for a show, and stay to eat, drink and discover Des Plaines."

*-Des Plaines Mayor  
Andrew Goczkowski*



Des Plaines Theatre Opening | October 2021

# GOAL 3



INFRASTRUCTURE  
& MOBILITY





# Goal 3: Infrastructure & Mobility

*Enhance our infrastructure systems and maximize our transportation options.*

## Strategy 1: Infrastructure

*Strategically plan and invest in capital improvements.*

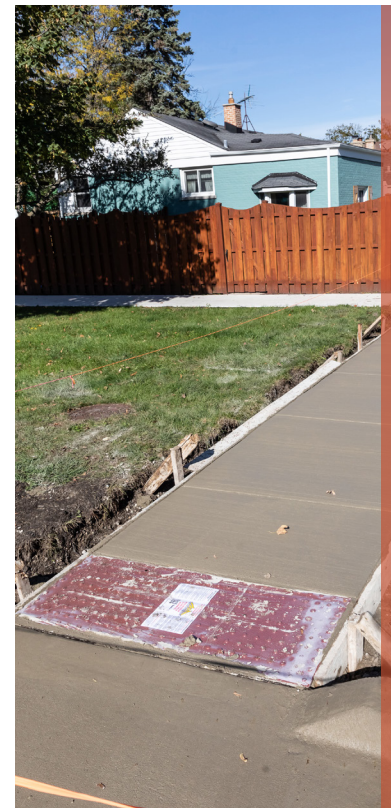
**Action 1.** Develop and utilize the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan to prioritize our capital investments.

**Action 2.** Accelerate street and sidewalk replacement, maintaining a focus on filling sidewalk gaps.

**Action 3.** Continue to invest in water and sewer systems, including replacement and upgrades.

**Action 4.** Expand green infrastructure to support stormwater management objectives.

**Action 5.** Continue implementation of the Five-Year Stormwater Management Plan.



## Goal 3: Infrastructure & Mobility

*Enhance our infrastructure systems and maximize our transportation options.*

### Strategy 2: City Facilities

*Invest in municipal facilities to support and advance service delivery and performance.*

**Action 1.** Continually conduct needs assessments of municipal facilities and uses to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

**Action 2.** Strategically plan and invest in municipal facilities based on needs assessments.

**Action 3.** Provide and maintain essential public facilities, utilities and capital equipment.



## Goal 3: Infrastructure & Mobility

*Enhance our infrastructure systems and maximize our transportation options.*

### Strategy 3: Transportation

*Enhance connections, reduce congestion and improve safety.*

**Action 1.** Pursue plans to build the Algonquin Road Bridge Project. This priority project will replace the existing at-grade railroad crossing with an overpass to improve traffic flow and response times for emergency vehicles, as well as reduce vehicle emissions.

**Action 2.** Explore the elimination of one-way streets to improve traffic flow.

**Action 3.** Continue to enhance walkability and bikeability across the city so that it is a viable and popular means of transportation.

**Action 4.** Enhance wayfinding signs to bring awareness to Des Plaines attractions and connect people to downtown, the theatre and shopping.



*Algonquin Road Bridge Conceptual Drawing*



# GOAL 4

MUNICIPAL  
EXCELLENCE



## Goal 4: Municipal Excellence

*Deliver the highest standards of public service that strengthen the City as an organization and the community we serve.*

### Strategy 1: Strategic Leadership

*Work as a team to effectively deliver on our mission, and position the City as a municipal leader.*

**Action 1.** Utilize the Strategic Plan and City Council Guiding Principles to focus our direction.

**Action 2.** Partner with City employees as essential assets and ambassadors in fulfillment of the Strategic Plan.

**Action 3.** Engage employees around the City's values and expectations to drive exceptional customer service, innovation, performance and success.

**Action 4.** Engage with professional associations through speaking engagements and networking events to strengthen the City's reputation as a highly professional, high-performing, values-driven organization.

**Action 5.** Invest in emerging leaders in the organization through training and professional development.



## Goal 4: Municipal Excellence

*Deliver the highest standards of public service that strengthen the City as an organization and the community we serve.*

### Strategy 2: Financial Stability

*Continue to maintain focus and commitment to long-term fiscal planning and budgeting best practices.*

**Action 1.** Adhere to financial best practices.

**Action 2.** Continue to focus on minimizing financial risk **through proactive measures.**

**Action 3.** Prioritize police and fire pension funding.

**Action 4.** Focus and prioritize grant opportunities, as feasible.

**Action 5.** Continually evaluate and assess financial tools (TIF districts, property purchases, incentives).

**Action 6.** Maintain financial stability and sufficient financial capacity for present and future needs.

**Action 7.** Support planning for long-term needs and organizational sustainability.

**Action 8.** Provide the financial stability needed to navigate through economic downturns.



**2021 Triple  
Crown Award!**

*1 of only 200 Triple Crown  
winners in the country*



## Goal 4: Municipal Excellence

*Deliver the highest standards of public service that strengthen the City as an organization and the community we serve.*

### Strategy 3: Municipal Services

*Deliver reliable, responsive, effective and efficient public services.*

**Action 1.** Commit to a high standard of performance by continued integration of best practices across departments, collaboration and innovation to produce optimal results.

**Action 2.** Optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of services to reduce costs and improve service quality.

**Action 3.** Continue to focus on the most efficient and effective public safety response through inter-agency cooperation, enhanced dispatch service and interoperability, or unified radio system.

**Action 4.** Enhance transparency to build public trust in the City and services through tools and technology (police body cams, website).





## Des Plaines Elected Officials

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Andrew Goczkowski  
Mayor



Mark Lysakowski  
Alderman  
Ward 1



Colt Moylan  
Alderman  
Ward 2



Sean Oskerka  
Alderman  
Ward 3



Artur Zadrozny  
Alderman  
Ward 4



Jessica Mastalski  
City Clerk



Carla Brookman  
Alderman  
Ward 5



Malcolm Chester  
Alderman  
Ward 6



Patsy Smith  
Alderman  
Ward 7



Shamoan Ebrahimi  
Alderman  
Ward 8

## City Manager

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Michael G. Bartholomew



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