



Final Report March 2008



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	3
The Process	4
Vision Statement	5
Action Plan	6
Community Partnerships	7
Economic Engine	12
Infrastructure	20
Quality of Life	32
Next Steps: Implementation	41
Acknowledgements	42



BACKGROUND

Liberty, Missouri, incorporated in 1829, was named for a principal that Americans hold dear. Residents have the freedom to choose from a host of amenities while still having a small town feel. Liberty offers a rich quality of life filled with history, commerce, parks, healthcare, and award-winning schools.

The town has grown from a small farming community to a bustling population of nearly 30,000 people. Recent awards show that city leaders have always kept “quality” top of mind.

- “Best Place to Live” *CNN/Money Magazine* (2007)
- “Best Places to Retire” *U.S. News & World Report* (2007)
- Missouri “High Performing School District” (2003-2007)
- Missouri “Teacher of the Year” (2007)
- “Preserve America City” (2007)
- “Tree City USA” (2007)
- Historic preservation honors (2006)
- Liberty Board of Education named state’s best (2006)
- Liberty finance manager named president of state organization (2006)
- Police records unit receives top rating (2006)
- Six police officers honored (2006)
- Top 10 public works director in nation (2006)
- *The Kansas City Star* “Top 10 Suburb” (2005)

Impressive awards like this have not caused leaders to be complacent. They know that as Liberty grows it will take a concerted effort to meet challenges. With guidance from the National Civic League, the city set out to discover what its citizens want and need. “Liberty...For All,” a community-guided planning and visioning process was born.

This report is the culmination of months of work by area residents and represents the community we aspire to become.

Liberty for today, Liberty for tomorrow, **Liberty...For All.**



THE PROCESS

In February 2007 the city formed a Liberty...For All initiating committee. Its job was to create the foundation for the visioning and strategic planning process and encourage citizens to get involved. The committee made a call for citizen involvement through newspaper ads, phone calls, and talks with neighbors. The goal was to organize a body that would represent as many demographic groups as possible in Liberty.

A total of 164 people, called stakeholders, answered that call. Citizens with different views, different needs, and different experiences came together to create a strategic plan for Liberty. The group that became the core of this process came from all walks of life—stay-at-home parents, small-business owners, builders, developers, high school students, college students, the list goes on. The National Civic League led the way and set some ground rules: no personal attacks; agree to disagree; everyone participates; make decisions by consensus; stay on the topic at hand; take a risk; and have fun.

Early in the process, participants chose which “Key Performance Area” (KPA) they were most interested in: Community Partnerships, Economic Engine, Infrastructure, or Quality of Life. The large group stood up and people made their choice. Amazingly—it was almost a perfect four-way split.

With Liberty...For All stakeholders now self-selected into the four KPAs, it was time to work. Each group met independently to brainstorm about their dream for Liberty.

Throughout the eight-month planning process, each KPA presented its progress to the broader stakeholder group. These presentations provided an opportunity for feedback, buy-in, and eventually agreement on the final plans. Out of that brainstorming, came concrete goals, action steps, and ultimately this report.

The Liberty...For All community vision and strategic plan that follows is the culmination of hundreds of hours of volunteer hours by Liberty’s most valuable asset: its residents.



VISION STATEMENT

Liberty is a diverse and welcoming community, inclusive of people of all income levels, races, lifestyles and religions. Residents find Liberty a safe, family-friendly and environmentally conscious community that values its unique heritage while being mindful of the need to be progressive both economically and culturally.

Liberty recognizes and preserves her heritage. The historic downtown square, historic landmarks and historic homes are preserved and valued.

Liberty entices new businesses and industries, which provide more employment opportunities, goods and services. Residential and business growth is balanced, providing a stronger tax base. The city spends tax dollars wisely so that city services can meet the needs of our growing community.

Recreation opportunities, diverse businesses and the unique history of our city promote increased tourism and make it a “destination city” within our four-state area. Residents find necessary goods, services, recreation, cultural activities and entertainment within the city limits.

Traffic flow is optimized throughout the city and infrastructure keeps pace with growth. The city and community are progressive in incorporating new technology.

Liberty encourages excellence in education for all students, including early childhood services and post-high school education opportunities.

Liberty is a cohesive community with solid relationships and good communication between city government, citizens, William Jewell College and the Liberty School District.

Citizens actively participate in implementing change in the city and share a feeling of unity, ownership and pride in the community.



ACTION PLAN

1. Community Partnerships
2. Economic Engine
3. Infrastructure
4. Quality of Life



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Chairs:
David Fulk
Ron Riggs

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Mini-vision:

To foster a greater sense of community, Liberty will actively develop, support, and expand partnerships among individuals, organizations, and institutions through Awareness, Engagement, Involvement, and Ownership.

Community Partnerships Subcategory:

Informed Citizenry

Goal:

To connect people to each other and the city, provide the city with citizen feedback, and provide information sharing using technology and media.

Rationale:

The first step of engaging citizens within the community is sharing information.

Strategy:

Citizen Engagement Advisory Task Force

Action Steps:

1. Council approval for task force.

Responsible Parties: Liberty mayor and Liberty City Council

Timeline: 1 month

Resource Options: City administrative support

2. Selection of task force members by Liberty City Council.

Responsible Parties: Liberty mayor, Liberty City Council, Community Partnership Key Performance Area members, and citizens in Liberty area

Timeline: 3 months

Resource Options: City administrative support

Detail: Task force members will consist of a cross-section of Liberty citizens.

- a. 2 from each ward
- b. 2 from the Liberty ... For All Community Partnership Key Performance Area membership
- c. 2 at-large from areas near Liberty (e.g., Flintlock)

Selection committee to consider cross-sections of homeowners, business owners, service organization representatives, school representatives, church representatives, and other segments of the community.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

3. Task force to develop initial strategies and report to Liberty City Council.

Responsible Parties: Task force members

Timeline: 9 months

Resource Options: City administrative support

Detail: The strategies will include:

- a. Development of a community Web site that will allow community members to post information, notices, volunteer needs and opportunities, links to other Web sites, and the city help desk. A webmaster will be employed to construct and maintain the Web site.¹
- b. Consideration of a 311-information phone system.
- c. Consideration of electronic bulletin boards in various community locations: stores, schools, and city buildings.
- d. Consideration of expanding local newspaper coverage of local events.
- e. City council forums with constituents.
- f. Information kiosks in various locations: stores, schools, and city buildings.
- g. Expand cable channels 2 and 18.
- h. Investigate grant availability.

4. Implement approved strategies

Responsible Parties: Task force, City

Timeline: 12 months

Resource Options: Grants, Citizen donations, businesses, community organizations, and other community sources.

5. City provides ongoing task force oversight

Responsible Parties: Task force, City, Liberty City Council

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Options: City administrative support

Detail:

- a. Task force membership limited to two years with possibility of reappointment.
- b. Task force members will submit annual report to city council.

Community Partnerships Subcategory:

Engaged Citizenry

Rationale:

Liberty will thrive through awareness, engagement, involvement, and ownership of “U” (you), its citizenry.

Strategy:

Launch “Love Liberty” Campaign²

¹ Overlap and coordination with Quality of Life Key Performance Area

² Overlap and coordination with Economic Engine and Quality of Life Key Performance Areas

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Action Steps:

1. Mayor appoints a campaign coordinator. City council approves appointment.

Responsible Parties: Campaign coordinator, William Jewell students and administrators, Liberty mayor, and Liberty City Council

Timeline: Fall 2008

Resource Options: City operating budget to pay coordinator.

Detail: Campaign coordinator and two to three William Jewell interns are responsible for overseeing the three prongs of the “Love Liberty” campaign and for developing marketing strategies.

2. Create a Community Emergency Response Team, “CERT”.

Responsible Parties: “CERT” Steering Committee participants, public safety officials, Red Cross, Liberty Hospital, Clay County Health Department, Liberty School District, and neighborhoods.

Timeline: Fall 2009

Resource Options: Federal grant

Detail: Steering Committee responsible for:

- a. Identifying program goals.
- b. Adapting CERT program to the Liberty community.
- c. Gaining approval and support from elected officials.

3. Voting

Responsible Parties: Voting steering committee, Clay County Election Board, and Liberty voters.

Timeline:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| a. Establish baseline and set goals | April 2008 |
| b. Develop strategies to increase voter turnout | November 2008 |
| c. Investigate alternative methods of voting | November 2008 |
| d. Measure progress toward goal | April 2009 |

Resource Options: Foundation grant

4. Volunteerism/Philanthropy

Responsible Parties: Volunteerism/Philanthropy Steering Committee, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, and Liberty citizens.

Timeline: Fall 2009

Resource Options: Foundation grant, volunteer hours, Freedom House facilities, and Northland Community Foundation.

Detail: Volunteerism/Philanthropy Steering Committee responsible for:

- a. Identifying community needs.
- b. Naming a citizen coordinator to promote partnerships among entities through information sharing.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- c. Connecting volunteer and philanthropic opportunities.



ECONOMIC ENGINE

Chairs:
Michael Hagan
Jeff Watt

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Mini-vision:

The Liberty Economic Engine should be vibrant, well rounded and able to withstand the ups and downs of the business cycle. It should generate enough revenue to meet the current and future needs of Liberty.

Economic Engine Subcategory:

Business Growth

Rationale:

An open and transparent government, recruitment of new businesses and retention and expansion of existing businesses are vital components of strong, diverse, and balanced economic development.

Strategy:

Retain and help expand existing and recruit new businesses that provide both a balanced and diverse economy. Continue the culture change at City Hall and the community at-large. Relay this change to the businesses themselves.

Action Steps:

1. Leverage tax dollars for completion of the Flintlock Flyover and Phase II of South Liberty Parkway, including utility mains parallel to these roadways.

Responsible Parties: Liberty, Kansas City, state and federal government, and Mid-America Regional Council.

Timeline:

- a. Flintlock Flyover by 2010/2011
- b. South Liberty Parkway by 2011/2012

Resource Options: Capital Fund Tax, Tax Increment Financing, Transportation Tax, Development District Tax, and state and federal monies.

2. Leverage tax dollars to complete adequate arterial roadways that will support future city development, including utility mains parallel to these roadways.

Responsible Parties: City, Mid-America Regional Council, and state/federal agencies.

Timeline: Ongoing as funds become available through 2028.

Resource Options: Capital Funds Tax, Transportation Tax, and state/federal monies

3. Approve and complete Whitehall Station.

Responsible Parties: City, Ferguson Properties, and CBL Developers.

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Timeline: ASAP

Resource Options: Tax Increment Financing, Community Improvement District, private monies, Transportation Development District, and Neighborhood Improvement District

4. Approve and complete Whittaker's New Town development.

Responsible Parties: City of Liberty, Whittaker, Liberty Public Schools, Mid-America Regional Council, and state/federal agencies.

Timeline: 2008-2030

Resource Options: Tax Increment Financing, Community Improvement District, Transportation Development District, Neighborhood Improvement District, private monies, and Entertainment District

5. Approve and complete new developments throughout Liberty: residential, industrial, office and commercial sites.

Responsible Parties: City and developers

Timeline: As needed

Resource Options: Tax Increment Financing, Transportation Development District, Community Improvement District, Neighborhood Improvement District, private monies, Industrial Revenue Bonds, and other incentives.

Detail: Examples: Heartland Meadows II, 300 acres around Ford plant, Highway 291 & South Liberty Parkway interchange.

6. Encourage new businesses by removing obstacles to development. Evaluate fees to establish a reasonable and competitive developer playing field. Work to provide more "shovel-ready" building sites.

Responsible Parties: City, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, developers, and Historic Downtown Liberty Inc.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Options: Impact Fee Committee, Industrial Revenue Bonds, and private monies.

7. Attract new retail and entertainment businesses to Liberty, including a hotel and conference center.³

Responsible Parties: City, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., and Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Options: Grants, private monies, capital tax, and entertainment tax.

8. Encourage creative reuse and/or redevelopment of underutilized spaces.⁴

³ Overlap and coordination with Quality of Life Key Performance Area

⁴ Overlap and coordination with Quality of Life Key Performance Area

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Responsible Parties: City, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., and Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Options: Redevelopment grants and tax incentives.

9. Attract and retain businesses offering quality jobs.

Responsible Parties: City, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, and Historic Downtown Liberty Inc.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Options: Various incentives

10. Review and update the Liberty Land Use Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance and Zoning Plan on a regular basis to allow for the city's changing dynamics.

Responsible Parties: City, Planning and Zoning Commission, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, and Historic Downtown Liberty Inc.

Timeline: Immediately and at least every five years thereafter.

Resource Options: General fund

11. Pursue annexation to encourage economic growth and viability.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty City Council, Liberty citizens, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, and Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce.

Timeline: As needed

Resource Options: Public and private monies

Economic Engine Subcategory:

Marketing

Rationale:

Branding Liberty and its entities will promote our city as a safe place to live, work, play, shop, and grow. Citizen pride and ownership will swell when we label our city as a tourist destination and an educational resource, highlighting Liberty Public Schools, William Jewell College, and Northwest Missouri State University.

Strategy:

Implement a brand identity that can be used by Liberty organizations to create a sense of "Pride and Ownership" in Liberty.⁵

Action Steps:

1. Develop and implement a "brand" for Liberty.

⁵ Overlap and coordination with Community Partnership and Quality of Life Key Performance Areas

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Responsible Parties: City, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., Liberty Public Schools, Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, William Jewell College, and Liberty Hospital.

Timeline: September 2008

Resource Options: Grants, public and private monies, and participating organizations.

2. Co-op marketing efforts for maximum effect.

Responsible Parties: City, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., Liberty Public Schools, Liberty Hospital, and William Jewell College.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Options: Grants, public and private monies, and participating organizations.

3. Increase marketing of Fountain Bluff Sports Complex to the community, Greater Kansas City, and the country as a premier sports venue.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty Parks and Recreation Department.

Timeline: Immediately

Resource Options: Public and private monies, Fountain Bluff complex revenue.

4. Market Liberty's historic assets: Historic Downtown Liberty, Historic Century Homes, Museums, etc.

Responsible Parties: City, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., Historic Liberty, Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, and Clay County Historical Society.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resource Options: Grants, public and private monies, and participating organizations.

5. Maximize Liberty's strengths.

Responsible Parties: City, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Liberty Hospital, Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, Liberty Public Schools, William Jewell College, and Northwest Missouri State University.

Timeline: Ongoing. Concerted effort after branding is complete.

Resource Options: Public and private monies, participating organizations, grants

Detail: Maximize strengths through aggressive marketing and presentations to internal and external audiences. Examples of strengths are Liberty Public Schools, William Jewell College, Liberty Hospital, Liberty's heritage, and national awards.

Economic Engine Subcategory:

Revenue

Rationale:

New revenue streams, with appropriate accountability to citizens, are needed to provide the quality services Liberty residents expect.

Strategy:

Increase revenue streams into the city with appropriate accountability.

Action Steps:

Note: Liberty...For All participants overwhelmingly support a no sunset provision, but recommend the city council consider nothing less than a 20-year sunset when approving final ballot language.

1. Renew Capital Improvement Sales Tax with a no sunset clause. The tax must have a minimum 20-year sunset to meet fiscal needs.⁶

Responsible Parties: City and Liberty City Council

Timeline: ASAP, no later than fall 2010.

2. Renew Transportation Sales Tax with a no sunset clause. The tax must have a minimum 20-year sunset to meet fiscal needs.

Responsible Parties: City and Liberty City Council

Timeline: January 2015

3. Existing Liberty Parks Tax dollars should be leveraged to expand trails system, city parks, and completion /expansion of Fountain Bluff Sports Complex.⁷

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty Parks and Recreation.

Timeline: 2009-2027

Resource Options: Existing Liberty Parks Sales Tax

4. Seek untapped funding sources and ensure accountability mechanisms are in place.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., Partnership for Community Growth and Development.

Timeline: Immediate

5. Increase funding to Historic Downtown Liberty Inc.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty City Council, and Historic Downtown Liberty Inc.

Timeline:

a. 50% by 2011

b. 100% by 2014

Resource Options: General fund, Entertainment District, and Economic Development Tax.

6. Increase funding to Partnership for Community Growth and Development.

⁶ Overlap and coordination with Infrastructure Key Performance Area

⁷ Overlap and coordination with Quality of Life Key Performance Area

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty City Council, Partnership for Community Growth and Development

Timeline:

- a. 50% by 2011
- b. 100% by 2014

Resource Options: General fund, Entertainment District, and Economic Development Tax

Economic Engine Subcategory:

Legislation

Rationale: State and federal legislation can have a direct impact on a community's ability to ensure its economic growth and vitality.

Strategy:

Investigate legislative avenues and changes needed to enhance economic growth in Liberty.

Action Steps:

1. Establish a charter review committee to determine needed changes.

Responsible Parties: City, state representatives, state senators, Liberty City Council, and Partnership for Community Growth and Development.

Timeline: Fall 2010

Resource Options: Public and private funds

2. Support the Liberty School District in its effort to lobby the state legislature for changes in school bonding capacity.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty Public Schools, state representatives, state senators, Liberty City Council, and Partnership for Community Growth and Development.

Timeline: Liberty Public Schools discretion

Resource Options: Public and private funds

3. Lobby Missouri State Legislature to allow Liberty and Kansas City to have the same annexation rules.

Responsible Parties: City, state representatives, state senators, Liberty City Council, and Partnership for Community Growth and Development

Timeline: Immediate

Resource Options: Public and private monies

4. Establish a Liberty legislative liaison in Jefferson City to “rally the troops” when needed.

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty City Council, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, Liberty Public Schools, William Jewell College, and Liberty Hospital

Timeline: ASAP

Resource Options: Public and private monies

5. Review alcohol restrictions at Fountain Bluff Sports Complex.

Responsible Parties: Liberty City Council, Liberty police, Liberty Parks and Recreation.

Timeline: Immediate

6. Review alcohol restrictions at community celebrations: Heritage Festival, Fall Festival, etc.

Responsible Parties: Liberty City Council, Liberty Police, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, Liberty Parks and Recreation.

Timeline: Immediate

7. Lobby Missouri Department of Transportation for feasibility and cost of signage on I-35 that would promote Liberty tourist sites.

Responsible Parties: City, Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., and Historic Liberty

Timeline: Immediate



INFRASTRUCTURE

Chairs:

Gene Gentrup

Sarah Mundy

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mini-vision:

Liberty's transportation system would emphasize safety, maneuverability, and efficiency. Citizens could easily get around by walking, bicycling, driving, and riding. The system would promote and support economic development. City utilities would be cost-efficient and provide funding for proactive maintenance and anticipated growth. Public safety departments will have the resources to adequately protect our city. Every city department will have a professional and modern workspace with room to grow during the next 20 years.

Infrastructure Subcategory:

Transportation/Roads

Goal:

Liberty's transportation system would emphasize safety, maneuverability, and efficiency. Citizens could easily get around by walking, bicycling, driving, and riding. The system would promote and support economic development.⁸

Strategy 1:

Build the Flintlock Flyover

Rationale:

The Flintlock Flyover should be a city priority, according to the 2006 HNTB study. Developers claim if the flyover is not constructed, Whitehall Station, which could be a vital sales tax revenue source, will not be built. It will absorb increased traffic brought by Whitehall Station, ease congestion at the main Liberty interchange, and help foster economic development along South Liberty Parkway.

Action Steps:

Note: Liberty...For All participants overwhelmingly support a no sunset provision, but recommend the city council consider nothing less than a 20-year sunset when approving final ballot language.

1. Educate and encourage citizens to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.⁹
 - a. The renewed 2010 Capital Improvement Sales Tax would not cause a tax increase.

⁸ Overlap and coordination with the Quality of Life Key Performance Area

⁹ Overlap and coordination with the Economic Engine Key Performance Area

INFRASTRUCTURE

Responsible Parties: City, citizen support, Liberty Public Schools, Missouri Department of Transportation, Shoal Creek Tax Increment Financing Commission, and KCMO.

Timeline: Immediate with flyover opening in 2010.

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, City Transportation Sales Tax, funds moved from South Liberty Parkway phase 2 to Flintlock Flyover.

Strategy 2:

Improve Liberty road surface conditions.

Rationale:

About 90 miles or 58 percent of Liberty's roads have an Overall Condition Index (OCI) of less than 70. Any road below 70 OCI is considered a viable candidate for overlay or similar restorative work. A citizen survey in 2004 by the ETC institute revealed that 74 percent of respondents think street maintenance should receive the highest emphasis. That's up from 63 percent in 2000. The 2007 budget included enough money---\$600,000---to overlay three miles of roads.

Action Steps:

1. Reduce city roads with a poor OCI from 58 percent to 25 percent.

Responsible Parties: City

Timeline: Complete by 2018

Resource Options: Includes Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, City Transportation Sales Tax.

2. Educate and encourage citizens to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: Immediately with significant progress by 2012.

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, City Transportation Sales Tax.

Strategy 3:

Complete South Liberty Parkway

Rationale:

South Liberty Parkway will provide the "greatest overall impact to Liberty's traffic and economic development," according to the engineering and planning firm HNTB. It will reduce traffic congestion on main roads. Economic Research Associates says completion of South Liberty Parkway will result in city tax revenues of \$291 million over 40 years---\$75 million of that will be generated in the first 20 years.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage citizens to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.
2. Seek renewal of the Roadway Development Tax set to expire in 2015.
3. Explore partnerships with developers.

Responsible Parties: City and Citizen Support.

Timeline: Complete by 2012

Resource Options: Renewed ½-Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, City Transportation Sales Tax.

Strategy 4:

Light Rail¹⁰

Action Steps:

1. Liberty's long-term transportation plan should include "light rail."

Responsible Parties: City

Timeline: As light rail construction proceeds northward, Liberty should connect as soon as it becomes feasible.

Strategy 5:

Collaboration

Action Steps:

1. All infrastructure projects should include careful coordination with other concurrent projects.

Responsible Parties: City and developers.

Timeline: Ongoing

Detail: Example: Public works staff overseeing storm and sanitary sewer improvements should always be aware of current roadway and sidewalk improvements so upgrades can be made before new sidewalks and pavement are put in place.

Infrastructure Subcategory:

Utilities

Goal:

City utilities will be cost-efficient with funding for proactive maintenance and anticipated growth.

Strategy 1:

Repair and upgrade storm sewers.

¹⁰ Overlap and coordination with the Quality of Life Key Performance Area

INFRASTRUCTURE

Rationale:

Liberty's storm water system is in urgent need of more than \$24 million in upgrades.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage citizens to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.
2. Prioritize infrastructure needs so that this and other deferred capital improvements are funded immediately.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: Immediate with 50% completed by 2020

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, an increase of ¼-cent to the Parks/Sewer Sales Tax dedicated solely to storm sewer improvements, city general fund. Coordinate with other infrastructure repairs.

Strategy 2:

Repair and upgrade sanitary sewers.

Rationale:

Liberty's sanitary sewer system is in urgent need of upgrades. This is deferred maintenance that should be addressed immediately. An upgraded system will reduce inflow and infiltration, thereby reducing water treatment fees we currently pay to Kansas City.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage citizens to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.
2. Prioritize infrastructure needs so that this and other deferred capital improvements are funded immediately.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support

Timeline: Immediately

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, city general fund, and users fees.

Strategy 3:

Increase public works maintenance staff and equipment budget.

Rationale:

The current Public Works staff is not sufficient for proactive and timely utility maintenance and repair. Staffing levels have not increased significantly in more than 20 years. Additional staff combined with an accelerated and proactive maintenance/repair schedule will require additional equipment.

Action Steps:

INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Educate and encourage citizens to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.
 - a. Bonding capability will reduce city general fund demands, allowing additional Public Works staff to be hired.
2. Outsource certain Public Works tasks to save money.
3. Prioritize infrastructure needs so that pressing capital improvements are funded immediately.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: Immediately

- a. 4-5 additional staff members by 2010
- b. Add 1 or 2 staff members per year to deal with deferred maintenance and growth.

Resource Options: City general fund

Infrastructure Subcategory:

Public Safety

Goal:

Public safety departments will have the resources to adequately protect Liberty.

Strategy 1:

Increase the police department staff.

Rationale:

- Since 2000, service calls are up 50 percent, reported crime has increased 35 percent, and the number of cases assigned to detectives has increased 53 percent.
- Since 2004, committed time for patrol officers has increased 25 percent. That has reduced pro-active patrol time for crime prevention and traffic enforcement.
- During 2005-2006, blackout calls, when all officers are committed to other calls and no police officers are available to respond to incoming calls, have increased 49 percent.
- The ratio of officers per 1,000 citizens has dropped from 1.5 in 2000 to 1.3 in 2007 because of population growth.
- The metro and national average is 1.8 police officers per 1,000 citizens.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage city administration, City Council, and citizens about law enforcement needs.
2. Pursue a ballot measure through state and local channels.
3. Ask voters to approve a ¼-cent sales tax dedicated to police department needs.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty City Council, citizen support, and state legislature

Timeline:

1. Immediate
 - a. Increase police department staff by six officers.

INFRASTRUCTURE

2. 2010

b. Add enough officers to meet or exceed the metro ratio for comparable cities.

Resource Options: Proposed dedicated ¼ -cent police sales tax, city general fund.

Detail:

1. Increasing police staff by six now, will increase minimum patrol staffing per shift to five. (Current minimum staffing is four officers on duty per shift.)
2. Increasing police staff will bring the officer-to-citizen ratio up to the 2000 level, which is 1.5 officers per 1,000 citizens.
3. The metro ratio for comparable cities in 2007 is 1.8 officers per 1,000 citizens.
4. Metro ratio and national ratio are the same.
5. Target ratio is two officers per 1,000 citizens.

Strategy 2:

Pass special designated ¼-cent police sales tax.

Rationale:

- Since 2000, service calls are up 50 percent, reported crime has increased 35 percent, and the number of cases assigned to detectives has increased 53 percent.
- Since 2004, committed time for patrol officers has increased 25 percent. That has reduced pro-active patrol time for crime prevention and traffic enforcement.
- During 2005-2006, blackout calls, when all officers are committed to other calls and no police officers are available to respond to incoming calls, have increased 49 percent.
- The ratio of officers per 1,000 citizens has dropped from 1.5 in 2000 to 1.3 in 2007 because of population growth.
- The metro and national average is 1.8 police officers per 1,000 citizens.
- Excelsior Springs, Gladstone, Independence, Joplin, and other Missouri cities have recently passed similar taxes to enhance their police departments. Currently, Liberty's parks department, fire department and transportation department have dedicated sales taxes.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage city administration, City Council, and citizens about law enforcement needs.
2. Pursue a ballot measure through state and local channels.
3. Ask voters to approve a ¼-cent sales tax dedicated to police department needs.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty City Council, citizen support, and state legislature.

Timeline: Immediate

Resource Options: Money needed to put tax on ballot would be provided through the city general fund.

Strategy 3:

Improve police and fire compensation and benefits.

Rationale:

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hiring and retaining the best police and fire personnel requires salary and benefit packages commensurate to other metro cities. Currently most public safety positions enjoy competitive compensation packages. But increasing compensation is critical to ensure continued recruitment, retention, and morale. The city loses about \$57,000 when police personnel quit during the first year. It takes about one year to recruit and train replacement police officers.

Action Steps:

1. Increase public safety benefits and compensation packages

Responsible Parties: City, citizen support

Timeline: As funding is available.

Resource Options: Proposed dedicated ¼-cent police sales tax, existing fire sales tax, city general fund

Strategy 4:

Increase fire department personnel to meet national fire protection association (NFPA) standards and match population growth.

Rationale:

Fire department service calls—especially medical calls—increase with population growth. Now, two to three safety personnel staff each truck—that’s well below the NFPA standard of four people per truck. Increasing staff to 80 percent of the NFPA standard would amplify firefighter and citizen safety. According to the Liberty Fire Department, it needs to hire 15 firefighters to meet that goal.

Action Steps:

1. Add needed Fire Department staff

Responsible Parties: City, citizen support

Timeline:

- a. When funds become available through the current Fire Sales Tax.
- b. When response time and minimum standards dictate.

Resource Options: City general fund, city Fire Sales Tax.

Strategy 5:

Increase municipal court staff.

Rationale:

The court now has 2.5 employees with sufficient coverage on court nights, according to city staff. A growing population will bring more traffic and code citations. Thus, more court dates will mandate increasing the court staff person from part time to full time.

Action Steps:

1. Monitor court caseloads and docket.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support

Timeline: As needed

Resource Options: City general fund

Strategy 6:

Increase animal control staff.

Rationale:

Population growth will warrant additional personnel in animal control, which now has 2.5 employees.

Action Steps:

1. Monitor animal control needs.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: As needed

Resource Options: City General Fund

Strategy 7:

Create new database and technology tools for Municipal Court staff.

Rationale:

A growing population will bring more traffic and code citations. Police and court databases should interface for efficiency.

Action Steps:

1. Gather input from court and police staff regarding current collaboration obstacles.
2. Encourage allocation of funding to create and maintain new database.

Responsible Parties: Police, city IT personnel.

Timeline: Immediately

Resource Options: City general fund, renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.

Infrastructure Subcategory:

Facilities

Goal:

Every city department will have a professional and modern workspace with room to grow during the next 20 years.

Strategy 1:

Construct new police facility.

Rationale:

INFRASTRUCTURE

A new police facility will free room for other crowded departments in city hall. Logistically, it is more efficient and safe to have the police department and the municipal court in the same building. The police department will need more space as staff is increased.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage the public to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.
2. Lobby for state legislation, allowing a ¼-cent sales tax dedicated to police department needs.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: Begin by 2010.

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, dedicated ¼-cent police sales tax, lease purchase, private donation/ownership, debt levy.

Strategy 2:

Construct new municipal court facility.

Rationale:

A new court facility will free room for other crowded departments in city hall. Logistically, it is more efficient and safe to have the police department and the municipal court in the same building.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage citizens to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.
2. Lobby for state legislation, allowing a ¼-cent sales tax dedicated to police department needs.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: Begin by 2010.

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, dedicated ¼-cent Police Sales Tax, Lease Purchase, private donation/ownership, and debt levy.

Strategy 3:

Construct new public works and parks maintenance facility.

Rationale:

The current public works and parks maintenance facility is inadequate to store material and equipment. More space will be needed as the city grows and employees increase.

Action Steps:

INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Educate and encourage the public to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: Completed by 2014

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, Parks Sales Tax, lease purchase, private donation/ownership, and debt levy.

Strategy 4:

Construct new animal control facility

Rationale:

The current animal control facility, constructed in 1972, is typically at 100 percent operating capacity and constantly needs maintenance. A total of 97 animals were euthanized in September 2007 despite efforts to increase adoption. More space will help reduce the number of animal euthanizations.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage the public to renew the ½ -cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.
2. Lobby for state legislation allowing a ¼-cent sales tax dedicated to police department needs.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support

Timeline: Completed by 2010

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset, ¼-cent dedicated Police Sales Tax, private donations, private and public partnerships, and grants.

Strategy 5:

Construct additional fire stations.

Rationale:

More fire stations will be needed as the population grows to ensure acceptable response times. Current response times are adequate.

Action Steps:

1. Educate and encourage the public to renew the ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset.

Responsible Parties: City and citizen support.

Timeline: Dictated by response time.

Resource Options: Renewed ½-cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax with no sunset and Fire Sales Tax.

Strategy 6:

INFRASTRUCTURE

Assess potential for collaborative infrastructure planning with “New Town” to promote connectivity in Liberty¹¹

Rationale:

The “New Town” development is projected to add 15,000 people to the north side of Liberty. It will be important to foster connectivity between existing Liberty and “New Town.” Connectivity can be promoted through careful infrastructure planning and collaboration on new and shared facilities: parks, community center, and new high school. Liberty needs to determine how “New Town” will affect current and future infrastructure needs.

Action Steps:

1. Complete a needs assessment.

Responsible Parties: City, citizen support, and Liberty Public Schools.

Timeline: Immediate

Resource Options: Parks Sales Tax Fund, and general fund.

¹¹ Overlap and coordination with the Quality of Life Key Performance Area



QUALITY OF LIFE

Chairs:

Ann Dugdale
Joe Dugdale
Amy Duncan

QUALITY OF LIFE

Mini-vision:

Drawing on our civic pride and our distinct identity of Liberty as a strong, independent city, we reinforce and celebrate a shared vision through traditions and through internal and external communication strategies and public relations efforts. Visitors and citizens alike see and enjoy an attractive, pleasing, and welcoming appearance to our city. We make decisions in the city with reference to a shared artistic vision and to policies that are “green.” Liberty is a city with opportunities for visitors and residents to find recreation, entertainment, and enrichment. Liberty is a city where residents find connections, both physical and psychological. Our citizens connect to each other and to resources through channels of movement that accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. We find community in shared, open spaces and venues for gathering. Our shared sense of identity and vision connects all citizens and encourages a climate of inclusion.

Quality of Life Subcategory:

Identity

Goal:

Drawing on our civic pride and our distinct identity of Liberty as a strong, independent city, we reinforce and celebrate a shared vision through traditions and through internal and external communication strategies and public relations efforts.

Strategy 1:

Improved community Web site presence.¹²

Rationale:

Residents and visitors do not have a central site where they can access and post information regarding city services, volunteer opportunities, community activities, community events, and private opportunities or offerings. The site would promote Liberty to visitors and help residents to discover all that Liberty has to offer.

Action Steps:

1. Hire a full-time webmaster to create and maintain the site.
 - a. Involve local businesses, government and the private sector to encourage their linkage to the site (e.g., stores, churches, clubs).
 - b. The site would begin with a master home page that is attractive, marketable, and user-friendly (www.libertymo.com or something similar). When “Liberty, Missouri” is typed in a search engine, this site would be the first to come up. The site would include links to the City of Liberty, Liberty Public Schools,

¹² Overlap and coordination with the Community Partnerships Key Performance Area

QUALITY OF LIFE

Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, Partnership for Community Growth and Development, Liberty Hospital, Liberty businesses, professional services, Liberty Parks Department, Liberty attractions and entertainment, Liberty library, etc.

1. See www.westonmo.com as a model.
- c. The site is to promote Liberty and is therefore a Liberty site as opposed to a “Liberty area” site.
- d. The site should be informational and promotional, a clearinghouse for information, reinforce common branding, and include both the public and private sector.

Responsible Parties: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Strategy 2:

1. Clear delineation at major Liberty entrances.

Rationale:

The lines between Liberty and Kansas City are blurred both literally and figuratively. Lack of clear delineation at major Liberty entrances contributes to loss of revenue and loss of distinctive identity.

Action Steps:

1. Create a task force to consider all aspects of this project.
2. Create distinctive markers at the five main Liberty entrances.
 - a. Landmarks should reinforce common branding.

Responsible Parties: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: Possible grant funding for monument at primary Liberty entrance (Highway 152), Liberty Arts Council

Strategy 3:

Common branding throughout all Liberty entities.¹³

Rationale:

¹³ Overlap and coordination with the Community Partnership and Economic Engine Key Performance Areas

QUALITY OF LIFE

Liberty's rapid growth is fragmenting and separating our community. Without common branding, (theme/slogan/logo/visual image) visitors and residents will be less certain of Liberty's identity and resources.

Action Steps:

1. Creatively and extensively use the work already in progress by Partnership for Community Growth and Development and Historic Downtown Liberty Inc.
2. Use the brand/logo in the city Web site, street signs, beautification projects, etc.

Responsible Parties: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Quality of Life Subcategory:

Aesthetic

Goal:

Visitors and citizens alike see and enjoy an attractive, pleasing, and welcoming appearance to our city. We make decisions in the city with reference to a shared artistic vision and to policies that are "green."

Strategy 1:

Create and promote aesthetic goals for public and commercial properties

Rationale:

Some public areas, particularly in commercial and high-traffic areas, need improvement visually to enhance community pride and minimize visual clutter.

Action Steps:

1. Create a task force of business owners and residents to discuss goals for the appearance of our city.
2. Encourage creative ways to promote beautification.
 - a. Recognition programs and other incentives.
 - b. Explore programs from other communities, e.g., "America in Bloom."

Responsible Parties: Beautification task force

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: Grants

Strategy 2:

Create and promote "green" standards for Liberty.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Rationale:

Residents need more opportunities and perhaps incentives to adopt “green” practices. The city needs to adopt and to promote “green” standards and practices in order to use resources wisely and to be cost-effective.

Action Steps:

1. Create a task force and ultimately hire a “green coordinator” for Liberty.
2. Explore the “LEED Standard” (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and other “green” programs from other communities.
3. Improve the Liberty Recycling Center.

Responsible Parties: “Green” task force/coordinator

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: Creative partnerships and grants.

Strategy 3:

Develop a plan for landscaping and open spaces that focuses on beautification and increased cost-effective resource management.

Rationale:

Landscaping in the city is inconsistent and many areas need improvement.

Action Step:

1. Ask Liberty Parks Department to create a taskforce that will identify, prioritize, and set goals for areas needing attention.

Responsible Parties: Landscaping Task force, City of Liberty, and Liberty Parks Department

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Quality of Life Subcategory:

Experience Liberty

Goal:

Liberty is a city with opportunities for visitors and residents to find recreation, entertainment, and enrichment.

Strategy 1:

Develop city parks, gathering spaces, and activities that appeal primarily to all age groups while maximizing available land.¹⁴

¹⁴ Overlap and coordination with the Economic Engine Key Performance Area

QUALITY OF LIFE

Rationale:

Currently parks are designed to primarily appeal to young children. Other age groups (teens, young adults, adults) and park-goers with special needs do not have many recreational opportunities at city parks.

Action Steps:

1. Convene focus groups to clarify special needs, signature attractions, and desired improvements.
2. Increase awareness of the Liberty Parks Charitable Fund.

Responsible Parties: Liberty Parks Department and Liberty Parks Board.

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: Liberty Parks Charitable Fund and Liberty Parks Department.

Strategy 2:

Explore ways to attract and develop private businesses that add to the “Liberty Experience.”¹⁵

Rationale:

A lack of “activity-oriented” private business in Liberty takes entertainment dollars outside city limits. Liberty residents currently go to other cities for enrichment experiences like ice skating, themed restaurants, indoor sports complexes, venues for concerts and entertainment, and multi-use facilities for gatherings.

Action Steps:

1. Refer to the Economic Engine Subcategory: Business Growth.
 - a. We would like to encourage businesses that provide family-oriented activities.

Responsible Parties: Historic Downtown Liberty Inc., Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce, and Partnership for Community Growth and Development.

Timeline: Immediate and ongoing.

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Strategy 3:

Create venues, facilities, and community practices that support our youth and provide them opportunities for recreation and connection.

Rationale:

Liberty has a lack of safe and acceptable youth opportunities for gathering, socializing, and entertainment.

Action Steps:

¹⁵ Overlap and coordination with the Economic Engine Key Performance Area

QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Create a Liberty youth task force.
2. This group will develop goals and specific plans to address the above strategy.

Responsible Parties: City, Liberty law enforcement, Liberty Parks Department, Liberty Public Schools, Ministerial Alliance, community leaders, parents, and junior and senior high school students.

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Quality of Life Subcategory:

Connectivity¹⁶

Goal:

Liberty is a city where residents find connections, both physical and psychological. Our citizens connect to each other and to resources through channels of movement that accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. We find community in shared, open spaces and venues for gathering. Our shared sense of identity and vision connects all citizens and encourages a climate of inclusion.

Strategy 1:

Accommodate safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle traffic.¹⁷

Rationale:

Pedestrian and bicycle traffic is currently unsafe and difficult to navigate in many parts of town.

Action Step:

1. See Infrastructure Subcategory: Transportation/Roads.
 - a. We support connecting green spaces, parks, and major areas of town.

Responsible Parties: Liberty Parks Board, Liberty Planning & Zoning Commission, and Liberty developers

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Strategy 2:

Improve wayfinding signage within city limits

Rationale:

¹⁶ Overlap and coordination with the Community Partnerships Key Performance Area

¹⁷ Overlap and coordination with Infrastructure Key Performance Area

QUALITY OF LIFE

Signage within Liberty is not effective in providing direction to areas of attraction. As our city grows, neighborhoods become an important source of identity and connection. Neighborhoods could be strengthened by a sense of being a “community within a community” with the addition of distinctive signage.

Action Steps:

1. Create a task force to assess current deficiencies and communicate with city, county, and state entities responsible for signage.
2. Coordinate with common logo/branding if appropriate and possible.
3. Begin with city wayfinding signage and then eventually work toward neighborhood delineation.

Responsible Parties: Task Force

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Strategy 3:

Improve mass transit opportunities.¹⁸

Rationale:

Current mass transit opportunities are inadequate—both internal and external routes are needed.

Action Steps:

1. See Infrastructure Subcategory: Transportation/Roads.
 - a. We support improving mass transit in Liberty, including light rail.

Responsible Parties: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Strategy 4:

Promote connection through affinity groups and community programs.¹⁹

Rationale:

Liberty residents need more ways to connect. Fast population and geographic growth is causing our community to quickly become more fragmented. We need to find ways to strengthen community bonds.

¹⁸ Overlap and coordination with the Infrastructure Key Performance Area

¹⁹ Overlap and coordination with the Community Partnerships Key Performance Area

QUALITY OF LIFE

Action Steps:

1. Communicate events people can participate in via Liberty community Web site and other media.
 - a. Events would include clubs, programs, interest groups, book clubs, quilting groups, walking clubs, and family history enthusiast.

Responsible Parties: Proposed Webmaster, volunteer coordinator, and Liberty Parks and Recreation.

Timeline: To be determined through implementation committee and appropriate subcommittee(s)

Resource Options: There are many activities currently in place through churches, clubs, etc.



NEXT STEPS: IMPLEMENTATION

This report does not signal the end of the Liberty... For All project, but rather it is just the beginning. From here, an implementation committee comprised of representatives from each Key Performance Area is ready to work with City Council, staff and any other appropriate organizations to move forward on the goals and action steps outlined in the final plan.

The final report will be posted on the City's Web site at www.ci.liberty.mo.us/LibertyForAll. Updates and progress reports will be posted to the Liberty... For All Web page and included in future issues of the Liberty Citizen newsletter.

Initial KPA representatives on the Implementation Committee:

Community Partnerships: Jackie Kennedy & Jim Waterman
Economic Engine: Ralph Litten & Jeff Watt
Infrastructure: Karen Mische & Steve Lund
Quality of Life: Bob Kennedy



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Wittman, Kelly
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Young, Bob

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By the Book
By the Scoop
Cici's Pizza
Commerce Bank
DarLyn's Signs of Expression
Duncan, Greg – City Council Member
Ferguson Properties
Hearthside Homes
Historic Downtown Liberty, Inc.
Hometown Hearing and Audiology
Hy-Vee
King, Nick – City Council Member
Liberty Area Chamber of Commerce
Liberty Public Schools
M&I Bank
Martin, Anna Marie- City Council
Member
McCann, Cheryl - McCann's
Bookkeeping and Tax Service
The Parry Group
Parry, John – City Council Member
The Partnership for Community Growth
& Development
Phillips, Harold- City Council Member
Pony Express Bank
Price Chopper
Prudential Carter-Duffey
Rader, Kenan
Stasi Sports, LLC
Steinkamp, Bob - Mayor
Watt, Jeff- J.W. MedBrace
Woods, Henderson, LLC

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