



Municipal Technical Advisory Service INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

March 4, 2023

Mayor Berry, Vice Mayor Dalton, Commissioner Fairbanks-Harvey, Commissioner Phillips, Commissioner Wilkinson
City of Red Bank
3105 Dayton Boulevard
Red Bank, Tennessee 37415

VIA ELECTRONIC

Dear Red Bank City Commission:

Thank you for allowing MTAS to participate in the Commission's strategic planning process on February 28, 2023. It was a great retreat and I firmly believe that the results were worth the time and energy.

As you recall, we began the session with an overview of the strategic planning process. The objectives of the process were to create a mission statement, scan the internal and external environments, create a vision statement, then to devise goals to guide the city in achieving its vision, and finally to have fun. I believe we successfully fulfilled all of the stated objectives.

We discussed the different roles that elected officials and staff perform and the percentages of time that each group should devote to planning. The Commission should spend a greater amount of time in planning (steering) than any other group in the municipal government.

The first task was to create a mission statement. A mission statement should explain the purpose of a town's being and why it exists. The Council reviewed the current mission statement and made some changes to last year. The new mission statement is:

The City of Red Bank is a safe and thriving small-town community with an engaging, transparent government that builds on our rich history, provides excellent and efficient services, and welcomes all.

The Commission then studied a variety of statistics about the global economy, the incoming workforce (the class of 2026), U.S. labor data, state information, Hamilton County facts, Chattanooga facts, and then finally Red Bank-specific statistics. Using all of this information, the Commission then was charged with coming up with a vision statement that builds upon the city's mission and takes it to the next level; a desired future state. The vision statement is below:

Red Bank celebrates our vibrant and inclusive community by pursuing excellence, enhancing safety, and embracing our neighborhood character.

The next step was to do a SWOT analysis – identify the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats facing the City of Red Bank. These were not necessarily agreed on by the entire team but were items offered by individual members.

The strengths that were listed include:

- Planning by the Commission
- Successful implementation of Commission plans
- Current and new staff who expanded capacity and competency
- Growing understanding of strategic planning throughout the year and city areas
- Comprehensive plan
- Demographically representation of the population on the Board
- Citizen advisory boards

- Drive to pursue better bike/pedestrian connectivity
- Budget excellence by staff and CMFO
- Limited amount of debt
- Stringers Branch creek
- Desirable real estate market
- Private investment in the city
- Recycle center hours
- Pickleball and outdoor recreation facilities
- Excellent stewardship of equipment and resources by staff
- Solid leadership by the commission, city manager, and department heads
- Hard-working employees
- Key External Relationships: McKamey Animal Center, SE Tennessee Development District, CARTA, Mutual Aid partners (esp. HCSO and CFD), Hamilton County (esp.: 911, GIS, recycling, Trustee), State of TN (esp. MTAS), utility providers (TN American, Chatt Gas, Hixon Util, EBP (power & fiber), WWTa), Transportation Planning Organization, Small Cities Coalition, a host of key contracts (esp. City Attorney Arnold Stulce, Administrative Hearing Officer Jim Exum, IT services with RJ Young, etc.), and multiple nonprofits (esp.: Trust for Public Land, Red Bank Boxing Club, Red Bank Pool Advisory Committee, Red Bank Soddy-Daisy Charitable Foundation, etc.)
- Potential of city-owned properties
- 10-minute walk to park commitment
- Small city being insulated and independent from Chattanooga
- Current and impending grants
- Improved grant writing capabilities
- Well-allocated ARPA plan
- Dayton Boulevard
- Community pool
- Geography forces us to have smart growth
- Compact size
- Bicycle Boulevard
- Tight-knit, invested, and involved community
- History of the city (RB Foundation)

The weaknesses identified were:

- Stagnant commercial spaces
- Underutilized community parcels
- Some commercial areas aren't thriving due to location
- Lack of planning and investment in the past
- Staffing numbers and positions
- Reliance on WWTa for moratorium relief
- Aging city infrastructure
- Lack of a city center, community hub/gathering place
- Pedestrian/bicycle/non-car center transportation ways on Dayton Blvd
- Pedestrian/bicycle/non-car center transportation ways outside of Dayton Blvd
- Lack of economic development and recruitment

- Public transportation
- No free library access for residents
- No community center services
- Reinstitute Red Bank Young Woman of America
- Slow-moving processes of projects
- Dayton Blvd is a stroad
- City facilities that need updates
- Lack of parks activation in programming
- Lack of public art and supportive regulations of murals and public art
- Lack of high-demand recreation (i.e. walking trails, basketball, soccer, skate park)
- Speeding on Ashland Terrace
- Pass-through traffic
- ADA accessibility
- Lack of periodic focus groups for public impact
- Outdated and ineffective SW policy and insufficient fees
- Separate sanitation fee
- Separate stormwater fee
- Road maintenance program needed, PCI, bridges, overpasses, etc.
- Restrictive zoning (regarding an accessory dwelling unit, usually called an ‘ADU’, which is a secondary housing unit on a single-family residential lot)
- Lack of street lighting in areas
- Restrictive zoning (Short-Term Rentals)
- Zero bike lanes in Red Bank
- NIMBY mindsets
- City entrances – no Gateway beauty
- Non-compliance status with federal conversion agreement
- Lack of city branding or identity
- Lack of parks and sidewalks in north Red Bank
- No continuous sidewalk networks
- Transportation study needed (currently in process)
- Lack of complete streets policy to address multi-modal needs
- Lack of city-sponsored senior program
- Lack of curbside recycling and/or composting
- No multi-year programming in cities
- Traffic-pattern issues
- Speeding on long residential roads, lack of traffic calming

The opportunities in the area include:

- Multi-modal transportation
- New library
- Elementary school in Red Bank
- New parks and trails
- Economic development to capitalize on area growth

- Opening of Walden's Ridge Park
- Former Red Bank middle school site
- Community center
- Curbside recycling/composting
- Maintain the recycling center
- Rising property values
- Potential for affordable housing initiatives and/or policies
- Expanding community events
- Green infrastructure (solar, native plants, stormwater infrastructure)
- Revitalization/beautification of Dayton Boulevard
- HCDE properties
- Restore, Return, Relief campaign
- Add programming to Parks and Recreation
- Control spending within the town
- Better connectivity to Chattanooga and North Shore
- Increased density (housing and population)
- Leadership stability
- Planning and investment (piggyback off of regional area plan)
- State senators and representatives hold high positions at the state level
- Bi-partisan infrastructure grants possibility
- Continue to seek assistance from faith-based organizations and churches to help residents
- Public art
- Gateway beautification
- New website
- Community garden
- Intra-neighborhood connectivity within the city
- Stormwater planning and flood mitigation
- GIS mapping of utilities
- Favorable perception (i.e., media, public)
- CARTA
- Electric vehicle adoption (i.e., city vehicles, charging stations)
- Sign ordinance changes (specifically public art, murals, and billboards)
- ARPA money
- Non-profit philanthropic and community organization partnerships
- Diversification of tax revenue sources
- Community schools
- Location of city
- Increased engagement of volunteerism from residents
- Relationships with other elected officials (outside of city) and utilities
- Traffic studies and improvements (traffic calming measures) and our roads
- Urban transportation grant
- Grants in general (reward)

- Northshore Greenway Study
- Other studies done in the area
- Opportunity to purchase land to extend Bicycle Blvd
- Opportunity to create city parks throughout the city on unused spaces
- Stringers Branch creek
- Access to rich outdoor resources

And finally, the threats are:

- Housing affordability
- Vacant buildings
- Misuse of land resources
- Chattanooga development affecting roads and infrastructure
- Moratorium not lifted
- Capacity for growth (enough?)
- Schools losing Title 1 status
- Number of rental properties to homeowners
- Cyber security
- Non-compliance with NPS
- Lack of tunnel upgrade/maintenance
- Inflation
- Climate change (especially flooding)
- Threat of flooding
- Pedestrian/cycling safety
- Lack of communication with other elected officials and administration
- Natural hazards (i.e., tornadoes, flooding)
- Possibility of no elementary school in the city
- Loss of identity as a middle-class community/gentrification
- Developing parks without incoming park revenue
- State and federal preemption laws
- Irresponsible development (i.e., due to higher property values, lack of policy, or policy that allows it)
- County disinvestment (i.e., library, schools)
- Lack of accountability for rental homeowners, landlords, and property management company
- Overpopulation of certain businesses
- Threat of economic downturn
- Revenue loss due to state actions
- Aging infrastructure

Next, each Commission member worked individually to identify goals and objectives that: address the key issues, meet the mission of the City and help the City to achieve its vision. Each member took a turn listing a goal until all goals everyone had were listed on a chart. Commission members were given five stickers and asked to place them on the chart. The number of votes received is in parenthesis beside each goal listed:

- Revamp the stormwater ordinance, processes, and fee structure. (2)[3]
- Multi-modal transportation network improvements. (4)
- Develop a comprehensive plan, including fulfilling land conversion agreement and former Red Bank Middle School site. (5)
- Create a Red Bank Community Library and Civic Center. (5)

- Enhance cyber security for the city's digital pursuit. (1)
- Create a comprehensive GIS mapping of infrastructure and utilities. (1)
- Make a plan for and implement proactive economic and community development. (0)
- Develop parks, trails, and recreation services. (2)[4]
- Establish a capital improvement program. (1)
- Determine options for affordable housing policies. (2)
- Pursue adequate sewer capacity. (0)
- Present options for curbside recycling and/or composting. (0)
- Enhance the gateways to the city (including beautification). (2)
- Evaluate and improve adequate first responder capacity, including for natural disasters. (0)
- Establish a city public art program. (0)

The end result was five goals. After the first round of voting, there were three goals selected and a four-way tie for the following two goals. A second vote was taken, and the commission chose two more goals. The Commission also assigned a board member to each goal and that name is in parenthesis beside the goal. In no particular order, the goals were:

- 1) Revamp the stormwater ordinance, processes, and fee structure. (Vice Mayor Dalton)**
- 2) Improve Multi-modal transportation network improvements. (Mayor Berry)**
- 3) Develop a comprehensive plan, including fulfilling the land conversion agreement and the former Red Bank Middle School site. (Commissioner Phillips)**
- 4) Create a Red Bank Community Library and Civic Center. (Commissioner Fairbanks-Harvey)**
- 5) Develop parks, trails, and recreation services. (Commissioner Wilkinson)**

The final step in the process of strategic planning is to create a list of programs and policies (objectives) that will help the city achieve its goals. I am happy to assist you with this step as needed.

It is important to note that in addition to the Commission, City Manager Martin Granum also participated fully in the day. He contributed in all steps but did not place a final vote to select the goals.

In closing, this is an ambitious plan and one that should be a living document; examine it regularly and adjust as needed but always keep the vision in mind when doing so. I encourage you to set a time now for review, whether that is three, six, or twelve months away.

Giving up a full afternoon, especially during the work week, was a big sacrifice on the part of the elected officials. You are all to be commended for their active participation and tenacity throughout the process.

I look forward to completing the process with you and the Commission and hope that you will contact MTAS if we can be of any assistance to the city in achieving its goals and vision.

Sincerely,



Honna Rogers
Municipal Management Consultant