







# Welcome to Our Town 56345 Strategic Framework

This tool is a companion document to the complete plan, the Strategic Framework dated May 2020. This summarizes principles and vision elements identified by the community in response to the question “What should guide our decision making?” These principles become a “compass north” to keep the community focused on its vision and strategic priorities.

What principles should guide our decision making?	What does this mean to our community?	What current assets to we have that we can build on? What opportunities exist?	What challenges and differences must be addressed?
<p><b><i>We value our children,</i></b>   <b>being a community that is a good place to raise a family.</b></p> <p><b>Our vision is to be a “Next Generation Community”</b></p>	<p><b>SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION.</b> Be intentional as a community in developing projects and programs that support our next generation: initiatives that nurture our children and youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong schools</li> <li>• Facilities that provide healthy choices for youth (community center/athletic complex)</li> <li>• Supports key to families with children</li> <li>• Promotion of health and wellness assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our school system</li> <li>• Our rich array of nonprofit leadership</li> <li>• The local foods, local agriculture, and the farmers’ market</li> <li>• Nearby bikes and trails systems, as well as other recreational amenities</li> <li>• The local medical care system and health and wellness services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to continue to focus on and invest in our school system, all of our children, at all ages, and support to their learning needs.</li> <li>• We need to overcome the lack of meaningful and healthy our-of-school choices for teenagers.</li> <li>• We need to focus on and invest in opportunities to keep youth in the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>We value and respect our environment,</i></b>   <b>maintaining our natural resources.</b></p> <p><b>Our Vision is to be known as “River City” destination</b></p>	<p><b>PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES.</b> Strive to preserve and protect our natural resources, especially our most important resource, the Mississippi River.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become known as a River City with a waterfront destination</li> <li>• Work with County, DNR, and Camp Ripley in protecting all regional natural resources</li> <li>• Support bikes and trails, and the region as a crossroads in the MN trails network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mississippi River, our greatest natural resource</li> <li>• Our central location as an important crossroads</li> <li>• Our parks and beautiful environment</li> <li>• Our bike routes and other trails nearby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to protect and invest in our greatest assets, our natural resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>We value economic opportunities,</i></b>   <b>creating paths to economic growth.</b></p> <p><b>Our vision is a community with the infrastructure to promote economic opportunity</b></p>	<p><b>REINFORCE THE LOCAL ECONOMY.</b> Develop the infrastructure for economic opportunity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen support to entrepreneurs and small businesses</li> <li>• Develop supports critical to working families: affordable housing, daycare, transportation</li> <li>• Invest in a more vibrant downtown; foster more business opportunities</li> <li>• Increase support to locally owned small businesses and entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Develop downtown as a riverfront gateway for bikes &amp; trails tourism</li> <li>• Develop light mfg., trucking, and trades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small business owners and entrepreneurs</li> <li>• All businesses</li> <li>• Veterans services &amp; Camp Ripley</li> <li>• Artists and the Creative Sector</li> <li>• Cross sector ties among tourism, environment, nonprofit sector and business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to be open to new industries</li> <li>• We need to get beyond fear of spending money and invest in community improvements</li> <li>• We need affordable daycare</li> <li>• We need to be more supportive of entrepreneurs and small, local businesses</li> <li>• We need to overcome the “negators” – people with a negative or “deficit” mindset and resistant to change</li> </ul>

What principles should guide our decision making?	What does this mean to our community?	What current assets to we have that we can build on? What opportunities exist?	What challenges and differences must be addressed?
<p><b><i>We value a welcoming, hospitable community,</i></b></p>  <p><b>ensuring we're a place where everyone has a sense of belonging.</b></p> <p><b>Our vision is a community known as a welcoming, hospitable, inclusive community where everyone has a sense of belonging.</b></p>	<p><b>PRACTICE HOSPITALITY and WELCOME.</b> Work assertively to overcome divisions in the community. Practice hospitality and welcome. The community is hungry for paths to strengthen bonds and build bridges, to overcome the barriers and silos that divide us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop paths to strengthen a sense of interpersonal connection</li> <li>• Work with a wide variety of community groups to cultivate a spirit of hospitality and welcome</li> <li>• Develop projects that build bridges of understanding across age, ethnicity and socio-economic status.</li> </ul>	<p>A breadth of agencies and work already in place as a foundation for building a more welcoming community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith communities</li> <li>• The nonprofit sector</li> <li>• St. Francis Community</li> <li>• Foundations</li> <li>• Sourcewell</li> <li>• The business community</li> <li>• Sprout and the farmers' market</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories across time and cultures</li> <li>• Connections through the generations</li> <li>• Openness and curiosity to learn together</li> </ul>	<p>We need to overcome discrimination in all of its forms.</p> <p>We need to overcome the “negators” – people with a negative or “deficit” mindset and resistant to change.</p> <p>We need to be open to new ideas.</p>
<p><b><i>Build on our creative assets, using creativity, culture and the arts</i></b></p>  <p><b>as important advantages vital in the appeal for establishing a commitment to place.</b></p> <p><b>Our vision is a community with a cohesive pride of place.</b></p>	<p><b>Build on the power of arts, creativity and culture</b> in building bonds and bridges across differences that divide us – in service to a strengthened pride of place and more unified commitment to the future.</p> <p><b>COMMEMORATE OUR RICH HISTORIC TRADITIONS</b> – Native, pioneer, and community development; building on these important foundations, while balancing this with a focus on a rich community future and celebrating who we are through culture, creativity and the arts.</p>	<p>The community hopes to further use creativity, culture and the arts as critical in the appeal for establishing a commitment to place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate celebration, public art, performance and visual arts to create community pride</li> <li>• Honor arts and creativity as essential, intrinsic human expressions by elevating importance in community</li> <li>• Use as positive vehicles for finding and celebrating common ground, optimism and excitement for a shared future</li> </ul>	<p>We need a stronger recognition of the power of arts and culture in community development.</p> <p>As we build a vibrant, healthy future, preserve our small-town sensibility. Develop projects that encourage pride of place and engagement in a wide variety of ways in the community that preserve our small town feel as we strengthen our future.</p>
<p><b><i>Bolster Health and Wellness</i></b></p>  <p><b>Further strengthen Little Falls as a health community through rural community wellness and vitality initiatives.</b></p>	<p><b>FURTHER SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF INITIATIVES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local foods, farm to table</li> <li>• Local agriculture</li> <li>• Farmers' market</li> <li>• Bikes and trails</li> <li>• Wellness initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>We need to work to build the connections and immediate value of working on local food networks, trails and recreation, and other initiatives to strengthen our next generation.</p>

# Guide for Discussion

The community was very clear in its hopes and dreams for the future, as outlined in the Strategic Framework. This discussion guide and decision-making rubric are provided as tools to inform decision making aimed at advancing our community's roadmap into our collective future. Please use these as a key element in the deliberative process as new initiatives are proposed for community investment.

The Initiative under consideration: \_\_\_\_\_

Description:



On which principle and vision element does this initiative focus?	How does this initiative support and advance this core principle and vision element?	In what ways can this initiative engage and build on core assets or opportunities?	How can this initiative address a challenge blocking progress toward our vision?

# A Decision-Making Rubric

The intention is not to suggest that a “5” is a desired score, but rather to invite the discussion around the appropriate scoring and understanding of urgency.

Impact on long term community resiliency <i>Are we investing effort into an initiative today that will have impact on envisioned future?</i>	1 Surviving Fighting a fire.	2 Stabilizing Addresses a functional or financial target	3 Securing Task focused. Aids business as usual.	4 Thriving Long-term customer focused vision.	5 Transformational Compelling driver of a vision of tomorrow.
Level of community participation and involvement in decision making <i>Has there been broad &amp; balanced participation in vetting this initiative?</i>	1 Informed	2 Consulted	3 Involved	4 Collaborated	5 Empowered
Advances community principles and vision as named by community in Our Town 56345 <i>Are we investing effort today that will have impact on our envisioned future?</i>	1 Not considered	2 Poorly responsive	3 Somewhat responsive	4 Responsive	5 Highly responsive
Draws upon and builds important community assets and strengths <i>Are we forming or strengthening partnerships and other community assets &amp; strengths?</i>	1 Not at all	2 Poorly considered	3 Somewhat considered and drawn upon	4 Well-identified and drawn upon	5 Anchored in important community assets
Considers and includes focus on overcoming key challenges <i>Are we appropriately weighing potential short- term negative consequences against the potential positive outcomes?</i>	1 Driven by special interest alone	2 Minimal or “veiled” effort to address a key community challenge	3 Only somewhat of an attempt to overcome a key challenge	4 Important effort to address community differences	5 Transforming; overcoming challenges/differences
Nurtures new and next generation leadership development <i>Are we cultivating new leadership—younger and representative of new demographics—as we shape this initiative?</i>	1 No thought for leadership development	2 Minimal plan to move beyond traditional leadership	3 Acknowledgement and some effort to encourage new leadership	4 Important steps and processes to encourage new leadership	5 Highly responsive effort to build a next generation of community leaders
Appropriately balances short term and long-term fiscal sustainability.. <i>Are we pursuing investment in our future with as much passion as short-term cost savings?</i>	1 Unsustainable	2 Poorly sustainable	3 Somewhat sustainable	4 Sustainable	5 Highly fiscally sustainable