



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 17-660, **Version:** 1

---

### **City Council Meeting Date:**

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Ben Martig, City Administrator

Review and Discussion of Strategic Planning Process.

### **Action Requested:**

Discussion only.

City Administrator Martig intends to execute the agreement and proceed with details of strategic planning process in partnership with Mayor Pownell and the consultant Mr. Rapp.

### **Summary Report:**

The Northfield City Council met in February and March of 2015 to begin the process of developing a strategic plan for the City of Northfield. Two Work Sessions were conducted by David Unmacht with Springsted & Associates, who is now the Executive Director of the League of Minnesota Cities. The first session was for the City Council only and the second session included the City of Northfield Leadership Team. The draft report from those sessions are included as an attachment. As you are aware, the process was never completed and has been on-hold for various reasons and intended to begin anew following the new year.

The intent to continue with the strategic planning process was supported through the identification of the following “goals and opportunities” identified in the City Administrator position profile used in the 2016 recruitment for City Administrator:

- A. Effectively facilitate the development of a shared vision for the City.
- B. Develop implementation strategies to put the vision into motion.
- G. Facilitate a process for growing the tax base by implementing a strategic City Council vision for growth that is consistent with the community’s norms and perspectives.

I believe that continuing with the strategic planning effort is also consistent with my administrative duties to “develop short and long-range plans, goals and objectives including Council goals and objectives; implement City-wide programs and policies that are consistent with goals and objectives of the Council.”

I believe the past work was valuable and can serve as a background for a new effort to initiate a formal strategic plan for the City of Northfield. However, we have new leadership in the office of the Mayor and Council positions as well. It is imperative to have ownership of the process and goals and as such we must build a new foundation with a comprehensive process with an independent facilitator to allow the time, professional, and involvement of staff.

I have completed an assessment of the past strategic planning processes including interviews with the former consultant Mr. Unmacht, staff and Council Member feedback upon my “on-boarding” process. Additionally, I have conducted an analysis of professional consulting service options in consideration of the scope of services as well as timelines to initiate the process in a timely manner. I believe Mr. Rapp will provide exceptional services to us and he is available to initiate the process.

I have been in consultation with Mayor Pownell as it relates to the formulation and development of this strategic planning initiative. I will be providing further information in a supplemental memo. However, in the meantime I would encourage the Mayor and City Council to contemplate thoughts on the public participation expectations and outcomes they would like to see.

**Alternative Options:**

- a. Council may have interest in pursuing a broader solicitation of consultants.
- b. Re-evaluate the scope of the plan to consider a more long term planning tool.

**Financial Impacts:**

The proposal cost would be between \$11,450 and \$17,150 plus expenses dependent upon the level of stakeholder outreach and engagement. There are budgeted funds that have been set aside for the purpose of comprehensive planning in 2017. I am recommending the full use of outreach and engagement so anticipate the full amount of \$17,150.

**Tentative Timelines:**

In accordance with the contract proposal, the following consultant timelines are proposed for each phase:

Project begins (10 days)	- Project initiation activities
Data gathering/engagement (45 days)	- Environmental Scanning, Focus Groups
Strategic planning (30-45 days)	- Strategic Planning sessions, Initiatives
Final report (20 days)	- Final report

I would plan a detailed schedule to be initiated following contract approvals.