

**City of Linden  
Strategic Plan 2027  
Workshop Summary  
June 28, 2022**

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**I. Overview**

On Monday, June 27, 2022, and Tuesday, June 28, 2022, the City of Linden Mayor, Council Members, and City Manager met to discuss the strengths and challenges faced by the City and develop a vision for the future. The following morning, the Manager and Department Heads met separately and then with Staff for their input on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges, and possible key goal areas. During the final session, the Mayor, City Council, Manager, and Department Heads met to review the ideas and suggestions and create the major goal areas, key objectives, and one-year tasks. This summary represents the discussions.

**II. City Council Vision Tour 2027**

- **A new water system**
- **Outdoor dining – river**
- **Improved Infrastructure**
- **A thriving community with a variety of businesses**
- **A bustling downtown**
- **The Mill Pond area is the hub**
- **LAFF pathway trailhead**
- **Collaborations with area organizations and jurisdictions**
- **Facilities**
- **"Windshield" aesthetics**
- **Burials at Cemetery - Columbarium**
- **Green friendly policies**

### III. Goal Areas with Key Objectives and One-Year Tasks

#### GOAL AREA I: Enhance Attractive Community

(Pam Howd, Councilor and Brooke Card, City Treasurer)

##### Key Objectives

- Improve the windshield appeal – routine maintenance city wide
- Treat the Mill Pond area as the community hub
- Support environment-friendly policies
- The Mill

##### One-Year Tasks

- 1) Code enforcement
- 2) Main Street program
- 3) Millage
- 4) Environmentally friendly education
- 5) Supporting the new community development director with tools and staff support.

#### GOAL AREA II: Infrastructure

(Ray Culbert, Councilor, Don Grice, DPW Director, and Brian Will, Fire Chief)

##### Key Objectives

- New water system
- Improved roads
- Improved municipal facilities
- Cemetery – Columbarium
- Staff retention

##### One-Year Tasks

- 1) Pick a direction for the new water system
- 2) Create a plan for improving the roads based on millage outcome
- 3) Plan for the municipal facilities
- 4) Decide on the cemetery Columbarium
- 5) Address staff retention

## **GOAL AREA III: Enhanced Quality of Community Life**

**(Brenda Simons, Mayor Protem, Heather MacDermaid, Councilor, and Scott Sutter – Police Chief)**

### **Key Objectives**

- Thriving downtown with a variety of retail
- Downtown events —~~bustling Friday nights~~
- Outdoor dining – river
- LAFF Pathway – trailhead
- Recreation – collaboration with Southern Lakes Parks

### **One-Year Tasks**

- 1) Resolve the Loose issue
- 2) Develop a marketing strategy for Economic Development
- 3) Secure a resolution for easements for LAFF

## **III. Next Steps**

1. The Manager and team will review, revise and propose a final strategic plan to the City Council.
2. After formal adoption, the Council will:
  - Hold monthly discussions regarding some elements of this strategic plan.
  - Six to seven months after adopting the plan, the Councilors, Manager, and department heads will review the strategic plan and revise it appropriately.
  - Twelve to thirteen months after formal adoption, the Council and Staff will review and revise the plan and identify the one-year tasks for 2023 and 2024.
3. Future decisions by the Council should be reviewed in light of the strategic plan.

### *Appendices:*

1. *Council SWOC – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges*
2. *Top Challenges and Suggestions identified by Staff*
3. *Linden Numbers*

*Respectfully submitted:*

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*June 29, 2022*

## Appendix 1

### Council SWOC – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cute-Attractive Community</li><li>• Strong sense of community</li><li>• Safe</li><li>• Outdoor activities</li><li>• Historic small-town feel</li><li>• Attractive</li><li>• Natural resources</li><li>• Location</li><li>• Healthy businesses</li><li>• Strong Staff</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deferred maintenance</li><li>• No commercial tax base</li><li>• No space for growth</li><li>• Diverse retail</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Millage</li><li>• Linden people</li><li>• Re-development in some areas</li><li>• Water system</li><li>• DPW property</li><li>• Mill Building</li></ul>	<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water system</li><li>• DPW property</li><li>• Mill Building</li><li>• Roads</li><li>• Limited tax base</li></ul>

## Appendix 2

### Top Challenges and Suggestions identified by Staff

Challenges	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funding</li><li>• Infrastructure – roads, utilities, and facilities</li><li>• Perception</li><li>• Staff retention</li><li>• Facilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funding: bonding, millage, SAD's (?), grants, etc.</li><li>• Secure funding for infrastructure</li><li>• Perception: retention, work environment stability</li><li>• A "Day in the Life"</li><li>• Residents and businesses open houses</li><li>• Trust the Department Heads and back your people</li></ul>

## **Appendix 3**

### **Linden Estimated Numbers**

Today Linden's elected and appointed leaders are forced to address issues and challenges that have long been deferred, avoided, or ignored. As indicated, the price tags are very high because the bills have not been paid incrementally over the past decades.

- Water challenges - capacity and infrastructure in the ground \$4 million
- Roads - \$15 million-plus
- Mill Upgrade \$3-4 million
- Vehicles - \$.75 million (not including the Linden Fire Department)
- Facilities – \$10-12 million

Revenue potential:

- Public Safety millage approx \$620 thousand annually (If approved)
- Income – All Funds approx \$5-6 million (General, Major/Local Streets, Sewer, Water, DDA)
- Fund balance – Percentage of each fund
  - General 45% , Major 16%, Local 30%, DDA 131%, Sewer 284%, Water 63%