

# Creating a Sustainable Waukee

## I. Introduction and Purpose:

The Environmental Protection Agency defines Sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

As one of the fastest growing community's in the State of Iowa, it is important for the City of Waukee to recognize the impact development and human activities have on the environment. As the City of Waukee continues to grow, policy and guidelines need to be established to make sure that development occurs in a practical, planned and sustainable manner that maintains an acceptable quality of life for generations to come.

The City of Waukee approved *The Waukee Plan*, a comprehensive development plan, in March 2008 that is intended to guide development and policy within the community for the next 20 to 30 years. Some of the major principles of *The Waukee Plan* are based upon sustainable development practices including the creation of nodal commercial development areas that would allow for denser and focused commercial activity to reduce the use of the automobile between individual businesses and services. *The Waukee Plan* also encourages strong pedestrian linkages and development that takes into consideration alternative transportation methods.

In June 2008, the Waukee Mayor and City Council completed a goal setting session that helped identify potential projects, policies and initiatives for consideration over the next 12 to 24 months. The Mayor and City Council identified the development of an environmental green initiative plan as one of four goals for further consideration.

To further explore the creation of environmentally green initiatives for the City, a Green Initiatives Committee was formed that included City staff, Elected Officials, Planning and Zoning Commissioners and interested community members. The task of the Committee was to begin to identify the goals and objectives to facilitate the establishment of green initiatives for the community and to create an action plan that can be used to help guide policy and development into the future.

This document explains the initial process that was undertaken by the Green Initiatives Committee and provides a plan of action for initial steps that should be undertaken by the City of Waukee over the next year. These initial steps will allow the City to assess the current status of the City regarding environmental impacts, educate and create interest amongst the community and initiate policy and ordinance changes that are consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of creating a Sustainable Waukee.

## 2. **Mission Statement:**

Early on in the process, the Green Initiatives Committee decided that the City itself will need to be the leader and advocate for change in creating a sustainable community by evaluating and modifying current practices and policies from within before expecting and requiring both the local and development communities to modify their habits and development practices.

As such, the Mission of this document and future implementation steps of a sustainable Waukee creates a focus on the community as a whole with the local government being the leader in its implementation.

The Mission Statement is as follows:

**Our Mission is to create a healthier, safer, and environmentally conscious Waukee that encourages and implements sustainable growth practices and maintenance of the community for both the current and future generations.**

As a major landowner, employer, building manager, fleet operator, utility owner and operator, consumer of goods and services, and service provider, the City of Waukee has both the opportunity and the capacity to bring about significant improvements in environmental quality within the community.

## 3. **Goals and Objectives:**

One of the initial tasks of the Green Initiatives Committee was to brainstorm and identify goals and objectives that should be considered in creating a Sustainable Waukee. The goals and objectives as identified below have been used to help identify the first year initiatives action plan.

- A. Complete a City Government Evaluation on Consumption/Waste
  - a. Analyze the amount of waste created with City Council Packets
  - b. Complete analysis of building lighting fixtures (internal and external) and retrofit as needed
  - c. City Government needs to lead by example
  - d. Look at the elimination of bottled water and paper products within City facilities
  - e. Look at ability to update City stop lights with LED lights
  - f. Analyze the impact of hybrid vehicles within the City's fleet
  - g. Reduce idling of City vehicles

- B. Educate Citizens regarding the environment and benefits of more sustainable practices
  - a. Survey Community support of green initiatives and practices
  - b. Establish recognition program
  - c. Website to host residential and commercial carbon test
  - d. Encouragement of participation
- C. Promotion of Ride/Share Program and other alternative transportation methods
- D. Creation of a “Green Zone” Development (example district/ development)
  - a. Educate builders – Lunch ‘n Learn
- E. Evaluate the ability and impact of adding bike lanes to new and existing roads
- F. Complete LEED Certification for key staff members for future implementation

#### 4. **First Year Initiatives Action Plan:**

The Green Initiatives Committee recommends the following action steps and timeline for specific initiatives to be completed over the next year in furthering the City of Waukeee’s effort in creating a Sustainable Waukeee. The proposed recommendations are based upon the Committee’s research, discussions and presentations that have been provided by outside professionals.

The main intent of the First Year Initiatives Action Plan is to create a baseline of information for the City which will help to establish measures and actions for future years of implementation. The other component of the first year is to educate and promote sustainable practices to the general public and development community and identify champions for the future phases of implementation.

- I. **City Department Assessment** – *An assessment process is the quickest way to educate residents, business owners, and city staff of the waste created by existing procedures/habits and to provide tangible proof that going green saves “green” (\$). Each city department will be responsible for measuring the amount of waste their department creates on a monthly basis.*
  - a. **Create assessment** – *an assessment will be created based upon the most widely measured resources consumed in an office place such as paper, electricity, water, fuel, etc.*
  - b. **Educate City Departments** - *to ensure that the assessment is completed correctly, it is imperative that each department understands what is being expected of them so that they can provide detailed and accurate results.*
  - c. **Assess Departments** – *A one-month assessment will be conducted in order to establish a baseline measurement of each department’s consumption of resources.*
  - d. **Present Assessment Results** – *results from each department will be presented to City Council to inform members of the current status of each department.*

- e. **Establish modifications/ needed Improvements to Department policies and facilities** – Every department is different and as such each department cannot be expected to achieve the same level of reduction in consumption. Each department will need to identify areas they feel reduction cannot be accomplished and also provide improvement areas where reduction can be made. Certainly we will not expect officers to reduce their fuel consumption by “x” amount if it puts public safety at risk.
  - f. **Develop Department specific reports** – After each department has identified areas of improvement and reduction, each department will aid in creating reports specific to their department that will be used to assess the department during the implementation process.
  - g. **Implement use of monthly/quarterly/annual reports** – we’ve now established a baseline and a measuring tool specific to each department. In order to measure the savings of going green we will begin a continuous assessment at the start of the fiscal year.
2. **City Employee Education/ Training** – We can’t improve or educate others if we don’t know what’s wrong and how to correct the problems/ issues ourselves.
- a. **Present** – We need to have an all employee seminar to educate everyone on the purpose, objective, and process of going green as a city.
  - b. **Discuss** – Once all employees have be briefed on the intent of going green as a city they need to understand how they fit in to the process. This will be accomplished at a department level with each department head being responsible for holding their own session(s) to make sure everyone within the department understands what is expected of them. This will also provide the appropriate time to evaluate existing policies and procedures at a department level.
  - c. **Identify Employee Training** – As we transition into being more conscientious of green practices and principles, certain departments and individuals will need to become better educated on current green practices related to their job/field. This may include:
    - i. **Identify LEED Certification Applicants** – if the city begins to incorporate LEED requirements into building and development processes, certain staff may need to be certified to aid in the review of these types of projects and assist in city LEED projects as they arise.
    - ii. **Identify Building Code Seminar Participants**
    - iii. **Identify Software/ hardware users** – this could be as simple as identifying employees that would benefit from upgraded software or hardware that is more efficient and less wasteful.
3. **Create a Community Visioning Proposal** – The most important part of the greening process is to have a community base that truly embraces and supports such efforts. The visioning process will allow the city council and staff to identify the community’s interests and directive.

- a. **Conduct a Community Interest Survey**
    - i. Website Based
    - ii. Mailed Form
  - b. **Review of Survey**
  - c. **Engage** Interested Residents – *for the city to move forward, the process needs to be in resident hands. Sometimes this process doesn't start itself and the city has to aid/organize interested people.*
  - d. **Create Citizen Action Group** – *once a group of residents has been identified, give them some direction and put them to work! It is important to have the community be the driving force if this effort is truly a Waukee vision.*
4. **Revise City Policy** - This is the time to create city policy focused on objectives we expect of ourselves as well as the resident/property/business community to achieve over a defined period of time. In essence, these policies will create or define our plan.
- a. **Identify** policy changes/ additions – *the types of policies to be explored should include such topics as green building codes/design, incentives to sustainable practices, green requirements related to city investment/participation in development, etc. The intent should be to become more comprehensive in our approach and expectation of activities occurring within the city.*
  - b. **Draft** policy revisions
  - c. **Implement** policy changes/ additions
5. **School District Facilitation** – *We need the School districts support. Buildings and environments created by the school district last can last for generations, so it will be important to have their support and involvement. It will also be imperative that we keep them informed as to the benefits green building/policy can bring to the school district.*
- a. **Include** school district in Green Initiatives Committee
  - b. **Identify** potential school site/ building guidelines
  - c. **Draft** new City Ordinance revisions
  - d. **Implement** Ordinance Revisions
6. **Business Facilitation** – *Next to the school district, the local businesses may be the most important entity to include in the greening process. The commercial environment has a lasting impression on its community and can make or break the way a community is viewed by visitors and commuters to Waukee.*
- a. **Identify potential revisions to development requirements** – *it will be important to identify the City's direction with future development requirements before discussing any possible changes with the business community to make sure we have our best foot forward during discussions.*
  - b. **Begin discussions with existing businesses and engineering/ architectural firms** – *To avoid as much resistance to change as possible, it will be beneficial to discuss our thoughts and recommendations before implementing them.*

- c. **Draft** code/ ordinance revisions
  - d. **Implement** Revisions
7. **Revise City Code** – *Our city codes and ordinances will need to reflect city policy.*
- a. **Identify** Code Changes
  - b. **Draft** Changes/ Revisions
  - c. **Implement** Changes/ Revisions

**5. Timeline for completion of First Year Initiatives Action Plan**

Waukeee's Key Green Steps															
Year	2008					2009					2010				
Month	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February
Step															
City Department Assessment	Create	Educate	Assess	Present	Establish	Develop	Implement								
City Employee Educational Training				Present		Discuss			Train						
Community Visioning Proposal				Conduct Survey		Review	Engage		Create Action Group						
City Policy Revisions					Identify	Draft	Implement		Analyze						
School District Facilitation							Identify		Discuss		Draft				Implement
Business Facilitation									Identify		Discuss	Draft			Implement
City Code Revisions											Draft				Implement

## **Appendix:**

### **Green Initiatives Committee Members**

William Peard, Mayor  
Darlene Stanton, Council Member  
Dan Dutcher, Planning and Zoning Commissioner  
Frank Hoifeldt, Planning and Zoning Commissioner  
Dierck Oosten, Resident  
Eric Rose, Waukee School District  
John Gibson, Public Works Director  
Linda Burkhardt, Finance Director  
Troy Mappes, Police Sergeant  
Ben Landhauser, City Planner  
Brad Deets, Development Services Director

### **Minutes of Green Initiatives Committee Meetings**

September 15, 2008: 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

City staff presented the purpose and provided the background regarding the Green Initiatives Committee. Discussion of common green initiative themes occurred. Staff presented several plans and initiatives that have been implemented by other communities and organizations. The Committee completed a small group brainstorming activity that was intended to identify specific goals and initiatives. The Committee reconvened as the larger group and discussed the small groups goals and initiatives and identified those that were similar between the individual smaller groups. Staff requested the Committee to begin thinking of mission statements for the following meeting.

October 13, 2008: 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Kevin Nordmeyer, Architect with RDG Planning and Design gave a presentation on sustainable building practices and lead a discussion on how the City could move forward on creating a specific plan for the City of Waukee. The presentation included a definition of green/sustainability, history of concepts in Iowa, current concepts in Iowa, green planning



process for communities and future direction. The Committee continued discussions on goals and mission statements.

October 29, 2008: 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Frank Cownie, Mayor of the City of Des Moines joined the Committee to provide insight on what the City of Des Moines is doing regarding sustainable practices. The discussion included the initial process that the City of Des Moines went through, initiatives, organization membership, private/public projects that have occurred and suggestions to Waukee. The Committee decided that it would be appropriate for staff to complete an initial draft of a document that started to identify the initial action steps that should be completed to begin the implementation of sustainable practices within Waukee.

November 17, 2008: 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

The Green Initiatives committee met to discuss a draft version of a first year action plan. Eric Rose, Director of Operations for the Waukee Community School District, participated in discussions on behalf of the school district and provided insight into the current operations and practices used by the school district for their facilities. Suggestions were made by the committee to revise the mission statement to include an environmental context to the statement. Further discussion centered around future action items the committee felt should be initiated and addressed in the document such as the use of incentives for businesses/development and the potential for creating a “green zone” that could act as an example district for sustainable building and development practices. Committee members continued to voice strong opinion of having the school district involved and participating in the ongoing initiatives. The committee directed staff to make the suggested edits to the document and would be in support of proceeding to present the document to City Council for their approval and adoption.