

April 4, 2022

Mayor Berry, Vice Mayor Dalton, Commissioner Jeno, Commissioner LeCompte, Commissioner Phillips
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 March 29, 2022. 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 city's being and why it exists. The Commission worked together to create the mission statement and the new one is below:

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 who live, work, worship, and play.

The Commission then studied a variety of statistics about the global economy, the incoming workforce (the class of 2025), 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 will lead our vibrant and proud community with a commitment to excellence, safety, and enhancing our neighborhood character for future generations.

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:

- Matrix organizations (i.e Small Cities Coalition, City Attorney, etc.)
- Forward-thinking leadership
- Great staff (strong employee workforce that loves and is dedicated to Red Bank)
- White Oak Park, Stringers Ridge, and other parks and recreation areas
- Ability to have a member representative on WWTA
- Upcoming planning processes

- Compact size (not sprawling)
- Awareness of community between employees and citizens
- Proximity to Chattanooga and gig benefits
- Strong Commission (diversity among members, representation of different segments of city)
- Citizen Advisory Board ordinance, volunteers who serve on boards and commissions
- Strong financial position of the city
- State elected officials are accessible
- Middle School property – future possibilities
- Bicycle and paratransit grants
- City equipment is well-maintained and good
- Upcoming ARP projects
- Recycle center

The weaknesses identified were:

- Employee salaries need increasing
- Need for additional staff (i.e. planner, IT, economic and community development, building official, parks)
- Zoning and land use policies are needed
- Lack of affordable housing
- Business development and recruiting (need for investing money and planning)
- Some municipal facilities need upgrading
- Missing certain sports facilities that are needed in the city
- Need to be proactive against threats
- Wastewater infrastructure
- Car-centric community, need for other types in a multi-modal network (walking, biking, etc.)
- Public transit is needed
- Stormwater infrastructure, outdated stormwater ordinance, fees, and billing
- Branding of the city needed
- Lack of curbside recycling
- Public engagement is needed more
- Highway running through the city
- Land conversion status with federal government
- Lack of a library
- Lack of voting representation on WWTA (mainly voting power)
- Need for stronger relationships with various partners (schools, elected people, etc.)
- City website and digital presence
- Lack of parks on north end of town
- Art needed in different public areas
- Need for a focal point in town
- Lack of street lighting in areas
- Need regular, updated planning processes
- Inventory of community properties needed
- Organizational structure within public works needs improvement (and room for growth)
- Vision for Dayton Blvd needed

The opportunities in the area include:

- Location (close to downtown, EPB gig, work from home possible)
- Digitization (need outside partners)
- Go green (need outside partners) – vehicles, etc.
- Wi-fi in city
- Revitalization of Dayton Blvd
- Matrixed relationships (McKamey, SETD, contractors, etc.)
- Park and Rec outdoor park and activation (programming)
- Population growth in state
- Possibility to provide affordability housing
- Rising property value
- Increased density – more citizens
- Studies on area and planning consultant assistance
- Redevelopment
- Stormwater – partners, funding opportunities
- Various business areas need recruitment
- Proximity to Soddy-Daisy
- Alpine crest elementary School – what will happen to it and possibility
- ARP funding
- Red Bank schools are community schools

And finally, the threats are:

- Rising housing costs
- Lack of affordable housing
- Cyber attacks
- WWTA
- Chattanooga development impacting roads and infrastructure
- Lack of planning investment
- Inflation (affects supplies, wages, housing, etc.)
- Revenue loss due to state actions
- State and Federal preemption laws
- Possibility of county actions
- Amount of rentals – outside property owners and investors
- Severe weather events

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:

- Create adequate digital capacity (4)
- Revamp stormwater ordinance and operations and stormwater fee structure (3)
- Develop a master plan for Red Bank (3)
- Develop parks within ten-minute walk initiative (3)

- Traffic study for Dayton Boulevard (2)
- Beautification of city – throughout with an emphasis on Dayton Blvd (2)
- Develop a plan for wage increases (2)
- Create a brand for Red Bank (2)
- Take steps within city's control to improve sewer situation (2)
- Expand types of businesses through economic development or redevelopment (1)
- Establish a library (1)
- Establish park programming (athletic, music, festivals, etc.)
- Increase code enforcement in business areas
- Research and address housing issues in Red Bank
- Create a Community Development Department (stormwater, building inspection, planning, and economic development)
- Conduct a revenue feasibility study for rising expenditures and established goals
- Establish a curbside recycling program

The end result was five goals. There was a multi-way tie for the fifth goal and an additional vote was taken to determine the fifth goal. In no particular order, the goals were:

- 1) Create adequate digital capacity**
- 2) Revamp stormwater ordinance and operations and stormwater fee structure**
- 3) Develop a master plan for Red Bank**
- 4) Develop parks within ten-minute walk initiative**
- 5) Beautification of city – throughout with an emphasis on Dayton Blvd**

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 the goals. I am happy to assist you with this step as needed.

In closing, I have a couple of thoughts for you. First, I encourage you to consider assigning a Commission member to oversee each goal. This will allow someone to be focused on organizing that goal and keeping other Commission members informed about the progression towards achieving it. This plan is on top of an already full and complete workload for you and having someone focus on one goal will allow it to not become too overwhelming. Second, 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 K. Rogers

Honna Rogers
Municipal Management Consultant