

City of Rochelle

Strategic Plan

2016-2018

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MISSION

The City of Rochelle is committed to providing fiscally responsible, high quality, responsive services to our community.

VISION

Rochelle is a growing, progressive Midwestern community where high speed information technology, superior transportation systems and excellent city services provide our citizens and businesses every opportunity for success.

Strategic Issues and Strategic Goals 2016-2018

Issue #1: Economic Development – the need to promote employment opportunities for current and potential residents. The vision is to have a vibrant and diverse economy for the City of Rochelle.

Goal One: Support the development of the downtown core as a shopping and tourist destination.

- Objective: partner with existing organizations and businesses in the downtown core to identify gaps in retail offerings by June 2016
- Objective: develop a city plan to bring additional resources to improve public spaces and City-owned buildings and spaces in the downtown core by December 2016
- Objective: explore the creation of a downtown business district (Special Service Area SSA4) by June 2017. The special district could be operated by a nonprofit organization that would include commercial and residential property residents and tenants responsible for the marketing and development of the downtown core.
- Objective: support the creation and marketing of downtown festivals and events to support retail sales and community engagement (ongoing)

Goal Two: Support company expansion and recruitment, and City employment to retain a skilled workforce in Rochelle.

- Objective: expand the non-residential tax base by developing or supporting a comprehensive economic development strategy by the Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corporation by December 31, 2016.
- Objective: evaluate business regulatory processes to ensure they are up to date, effective and efficient by June 30, 2016.
- Objective: lead and facilitate collaboration efforts between with businesses, Rochelle Chamber of Commerce, educational institutions, government agencies, Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corporation (ongoing).
- Objective: Develop and/or expand internship programs in City departments to increase retention of Rochelle students to pursue skilled jobs in the City by June 30, 2016.

Goal Three: Grow City-owned Enterprises (e.g., Electric, Internet, Landfill, CIR) to generate additional revenues and payments in lieu of taxes to support General Fund programs and other community initiatives.

- Objective: Focus economic development activities on potential developments that serve to grow the City's enterprises.

Goal Four: Attract additional single family residential development projects consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

- Objective: Consider offering financial incentives to facilitate single family residential development projects.

Issue #2: Financial Sustainability - the need to match service delivery to resource constraints. The vision is to balance the needs of current residents with fiscal resources and investment in long-term growth potential. Vision is to create the most efficient, effective and equitable government services.

Goal Five: Seek opportunities for alternative service delivery of public services.

- Objective: have a clear plan to replace or repair existing infrastructure as additional resources become available by December 31, 2016.

Goal Six: Conduct on-going review of Enterprise investments to ensure they continue to service the City's Economic Development purposes and disinvest when appropriate.

- Objective: Monitor values of Technology Center and Electric Transmission Assets and disinvest if appropriate.

Goal Seven: Implement continual improvement processes for each department.

- Objective: Bench-mark policies and performance against peer organizations.
- Objective: Seek departmental accreditation when available and appropriate.

Goal Eight: Continually evaluate all debt based on interest costs and community needs.

- Objective: seek to decrease or refinance debt when meaningful interest cost savings can be achieved.
- Objective: create comprehensive criteria that will be used to evaluate return on investment for all new debt by June 30, 2016.
- Objective: have a clear payback plan for all new debt (ongoing).

Issue #3: Community Engagement – the need to increase participation in local governance from all residents. Vision is to build on the uniqueness and strengths of its residents by embracing the opportunities that a diverse population has to offer.

Goal Nine: Improve outreach and service to traditionally under-represented residents.

- Objective: Understand the needs of all local residents, their expectations and satisfaction with City services by conducting a citizen survey by June 30, 2017.

- Objective: Create communications plans to support outreach to all residents by December 31, 2017.
- Objective: Measure outreach efforts by determining if participation in local government represents the demographic makeup of the City by December 31, 2018.

Goal Ten: Encourage community involvement in governance in ways that generate community pride.

- Objective: Engage, support, and network with community organizations and community leaders in the Hispanic community to support leadership development in the City and city organizations (ongoing).
- Objective: Encourage healthy lifestyle choices by promoting leisure, cultural, fitness and recreational opportunities through partnerships (ongoing).

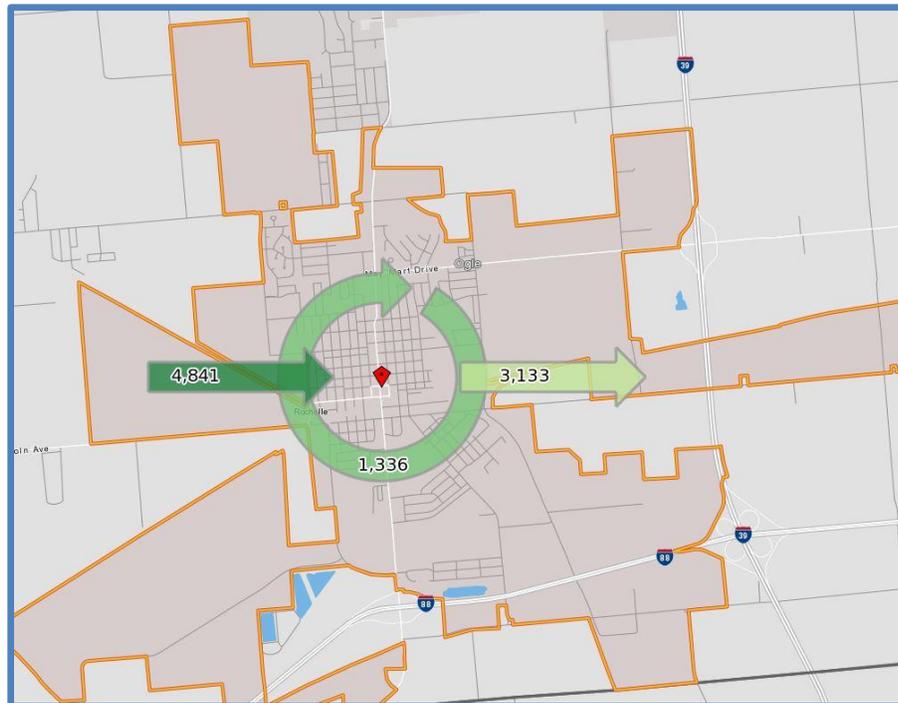
Goal Eleven: Facilitate improved intergovernmental cooperation among the units of local government serving Rochelle to achieve better planning and recognize efficiencies where appropriate.

- Objective: Form an informal Rochelle Council of Governments process whereby representatives from all units of local government gather at least annually to discuss issues affecting our community.

APPENDIX

a) Background

Rochelle is an interesting city for several reasons. It is an economic hub for the region. The figure below (<http://onthemap.ces.census.gov>) shows the number of workers coming into Rochelle for work and the number leaving each day. As indicated, more people are commuting in than leaving for work. Of the total workforce living in the City (4,469 individuals), about 30% are employed in the City while 70% (3,133) commute out. Conversely, of the 6,177 people employed in Rochelle, nearly 80% live outside (4,841). These numbers only include the City of Rochelle proper and not unincorporated areas outside of city limits for example. From the same data source, the workers commuting out of Rochelle tend to have jobs that pay more than those who commute into Rochelle.



In terms of overall demographics, the following table compares the US, Illinois and Rochelle.

Census Statistics	UNITED STATES	Illinois	Rochelle Illinois
Population per square mile, 2010	87.4	231.1	742.2
Population estimates, July 1, 2014	318,857,056	12,880,580	9,390
Persons under 5 years, percent, April 1, 2010	6.5	6.5	7.5
Persons under 18 years, percent, April 1, 2010	24	24.4	26.2
Persons 65 years and over, percent, April 1, 2010	13	12.5	14.5
White alone, percent, April 1, 2010	72.4	71.5	85
Black or African American alone, percent, April 1, 2010	12.6	14.5	2.3
Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010	16.3	15.8	23.5
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010	63.7	63.7	72.3
Foreign born persons, percent, 2009-2013	12.9	13.8	11.7
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2009-2013	64.9	67.5	59.7
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2009-2013	176,700	182,300	132,900
Median gross rent, 2009-2013	904	890	716
Households, 2009-2013	115,610,216	4,772,723	3,792
Persons per household, 2009-2013	2.63	2.63	2.49
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2009-2013	20.7	22.3	18
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2009-2013	86	87.3	80
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2009-2013	28.8	31.4	16.8
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2009-2013	8.4	6.9	5.5
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	12	11.1	16.6
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2009-2013	59	61.3	57.7
Total retail sales per capita, 2007 (c)	12,990	12,947	23,086
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2009-2013	25.5	28	19.2
Median household income (in 2013 dollars), 2009-2013	53,046	56,797	41,535
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2013 dollars), 2009-2013	28,155	29,666	21,169
Persons in poverty, percent	14.8	14.4	19.7

From this comparison with all of Illinois, we see that Rochelle has higher percentages of persons under 5 and persons under 18 as well as persons over 65 years of age. Residents are also much more likely to be white alone, less likely to be African American but much more likely to be Hispanic. Residents are more likely to be renters than homeowners. In terms of education, residents are slightly less likely to have graduated from high school but significantly less likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher. Rochelle also has a much higher poverty rate compared to the State or the Country.

b) Process Outline

Strategic Plan Process

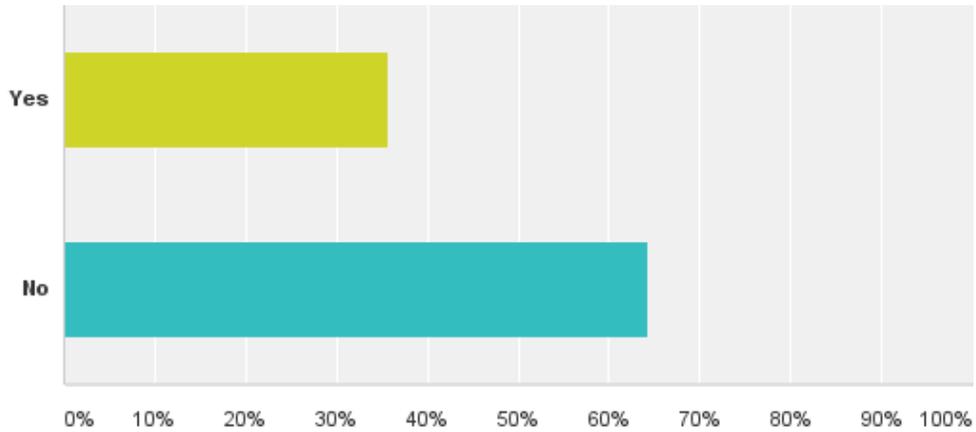
- The Consultant met with the City Manager for a tour of the City in September 2015.
- The Consultant prepared an online survey for city staff, council members and citizen advisory committee members which was sent out by the City in September 2015.
- The Consultant met with the Council and Senior Staff on October 5, 2015 for a strategic planning session; to review the previous plan, go over a strategic planning process and do a SWOT analysis with those present.
- A memo was written by the Consultant on October 21, 2015 to summarize that Board retreat and a draft of strategic issues
- A special meeting with Council and Senior Staff was held on November 2, 2015 to discuss the consultant report, build consensus on the draft strategic issues and goals
- The Consultant prepared a draft strategic plan to the Council
- The Strategic Plan is formally adopted by the Council and staff develop action plans with timelines, persons responsible and budget implications (December-January)

c) Data Collection:

a. Online Survey of City Staff

I developed an online survey to be distributed to the approximately 125 staff of the City of Rochelle. Over a period of two weeks, we received 42 replies (33.6% response rate).

Is your current position considered part of the senior management team?



Therefore, the survey captured responses from non-senior management staff, which adds to the validity of a good cross section of opinions represented in the strategic planning process.

Please read each statement regarding overall board governance and then determine to what extent you agree with each.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Staff have full and common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of staff.	2.44% 1	19.51% 8	65.85% 27	12.20% 5	41
Staff members understand the organization's mission and its programs/services.	7.50% 3	30.00% 12	52.50% 21	10.00% 4	40
The organizational governance structure and the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Mayor, City Manager, Managers, Directors, Advisory Boards and Committees are clear.	7.32% 3	34.15% 14	48.78% 20	9.76% 4	41
Staff have clear goals and actions resulting from relevant and realistic strategic planning.	7.32% 3	43.90% 18	46.34% 19	2.44% 1	41
Staff regularly receive policy-related decisions to guide operational activities of staff.	2.44% 1	41.46% 17	51.22% 21	4.88% 2	41
Staff members are representative of city residents.	9.76% 4	26.83% 11	51.22% 21	12.20% 5	41
Staff currently monitors and evaluates progress toward strategic goals.	9.76% 4	36.59% 15	46.34% 19	7.32% 3	41

Most staff agreed or strongly agreed with almost all of the statements. The only statements that staff overwhelmingly disagreed with were “staff have clear goals and actions resulting from relevant and realistic strategic planning” and “staff regularly receive policy-related decisions to guide operational activities of staff”. This indicates they would like more guidance and leadership in their roles.

How would you rate staff's overall performance on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high?

Answer Choices	Responses
1	7.32% 3
2	9.76% 4
3	31.71% 13
4	36.59% 15
5	14.63% 6
Total	41

Staff rated all staff as high performance (4 and 5).

How would you rate your individual overall performance as a staff member on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high?

Answer Choices	Responses
1	0.00% 0
2	2.44% 1
3	7.32% 3
4	63.41% 26
5	26.83% 11
Total	41

Staff also rate themselves higher than all staff overall.

What do you feel the greatest strengths of the City of Rochelle are today?

- **Infrastructure:** utilities, transportation, space for development
- **Economic:** location for growth, city financially stable, industry growth
- **Residents:** diversity, access to parks/open space, access to Chicagoland attractions

- **Staff:** training is encouraged, dedication of staff, caring and knowledgeable staff, innovative ideas tried, work well together, strong customer service, small responsive departments

What do you feel are the biggest challenges for the City of Rochelle today?

- **Residents:** lack of population growth, declining or flat incomes, lack of desire for people to move to Rochelle, commuter town, don't shop locally, poverty among residents, lack of family friendly appeal
- **Economic development:** declining downtown, lacking identity, negative perception of Rochelle, south side neglected, keeping small business, aging infrastructure, property taxes
- **Staff:** low employee morale, lack of staff leadership, staff not following policies, not cohesive teams working together, lack of fiscal responsibility in departments, departing employees, lack of communication among staff,

What do you think is the most untapped potential for the City of Rochelle?

- **Economic:** the utility, downtown redevelopment, more retail, tourism, supporting small business who are already here, attracting new small business, property annexation around Rochelle
- **Communicating Value:** branding, tourism, train park, quarry, downtown as a destination, good schools and low crime
- **Staff:** building up morale, improving leadership, more effective use of time and resources

Please list three to five points on which you believe the City should focus its attention in the next three to five years.

- Downtown redevelopment: more restaurants, branding, growth in small business, improve store fronts. More shopping choices in Rochelle.
- Cultural/recreational/civic events to bring the community together. Make community more appealing to attract and keep families.
- Update the infrastructure, especially water system
- Grow new single family home development.
- Improve core services while maintaining balanced budgets.
- Staff/employee morale.

b. Online Survey of Citizen Advisory Committee Members

The City of Rochelle has the following committees and boards that citizens are part of:

- Planning and Zoning Commission: 7 (plus 4 non-voting)
- Police and Fire Commission: 3
- Utility Advisory Board: 6
- Storm water Advisory Board: 5
- Airport Advisory Board: 7
- Railroad Advisory Board: 5

- Trucking Advisory Board: 3

This is a total of 36 citizens. The survey had 14 responses so a response rate of 38.9%.

Please read each statement regarding overall board governance and then determine to what extent you agree with each.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
You have full understanding of your roles and responsibilities.	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	61.54% 8	15.38% 2	13
You understand the organization's mission and its programs/services.	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	69.23% 9	15.38% 2	13
The organizational governance structure and the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Mayor, City Manager, Managers, Directors, Advisory Boards and Committees are clear.	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	61.54% 8	15.38% 2	13
Your committee/board has clear goals and actions resulting from relevant and realistic strategic planning.	15.38% 2	15.38% 2	53.85% 7	15.38% 2	13

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all of the statements, indicating they have clear objectives and leadership for their committees. This is anticipated as these groups are clearly focused in one area of the city's operations.

What do you feel the greatest strengths of the City of Rochelle are today?

- **Infrastructure:** utilities, transportation
- **Residents:** friendly, diversity
- **Economic development:** location, relationships with local businesses, GREDCO
- **Emergency services:** police and fire

What do you feel are the biggest challenges for the City of Rochelle today?

- **Economic:** lack of population growth, flat income levels in community, challenging local government budgets
- **Residents:** lack of outreach to Hispanic population, getting workers to become residents
- **Infrastructure:** continual investment required, high utility rates and tax structure

What do you think is the most untapped potential for the City of Rochelle?

- **Economic:** location proximity to Chicago, downtown redevelopment, transportation location: interstate highway and rail

- **Residents:** engage the Hispanic community into Rochelle, spur small business, improve image of Rochelle to live not just work

Please list three to five points on which you believe the City should focus its attention in the next three to five years.

- Increase value of public festivals and attractions
- Develop the downtown, support small business development
- Extent rail development and add third transmission line.
- Integrate Hispanic community.
- Improve airport operations.
- Maintain and improve recreational activities (Park District).

c. Special Meeting: Strategic Planning, October 5, 2015

The Council and senior staff members reviewed the results of the online surveys of staff and citizen advisory board members. They were asked to review the results and offer any additional comments. Their contributions are indicated below. Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization whereas opportunities and threats are external.

SWOT Analysis

What do you feel the greatest strengths of the City of Rochelle are today?

In addition to the items already mentioned by the other stakeholder groups in the online surveys:

- Positive press lately regarding the livability of Rochelle, in particular how well the public schools are performing and the recreational and open space in the City, including recreational opportunities and local sports organizations
- The airport and the increased use of it, drawing people to Rochelle
- Transportation and utilities available to city residents and financial supporting the work of the City

What do you feel are the biggest challenges for the City of Rochelle today?

In addition to the items already mentioned by the other stakeholder groups in the online surveys:

- Local access to arts and culture opportunities
- Perceived lack of support from existing small businesses
- Perceived lack of fairness of tax incentives for new businesses without similar support for existing businesses
- Perceived “red tape” when it comes to developing business in the City
- Need more genuine communication internally and externally

What do you think is the most untapped potential for the City of Rochelle? Opportunities.

In addition to the items already mentioned by the other stakeholder groups in the online surveys:

- Great access to local healthcare
- Potential to attract visitors interested in historic preservation and the arts, including opportunities with the library
- Use marketing videos to attract business and residents
- Working closer with the schools to promote how well Rochelle schools are performing and partnering
- Sky diving school at the airport
- Park district opportunities for residents
- People living in Rochelle but also nearby who consider Rochelle their community too
- School athletic tournaments that draws visitors to Rochelle

What do you think are the biggest external threats for Rochelle?

- The State of Illinois and lack of fiscal leadership to pass a budget, creates fiscal uncertainty for local governments and residents
- Utility rate increases
- Aging and diverse population and how to serve all residents
- Debt management for the City
- Increasing property taxes from the School district and impact on residents
- Loss of local students leaving for professional/white collar jobs not currently available in Rochelle
- Possible stricter EPA regulations that could negatively affect business climate in Rochelle
- Aging infrastructure in Rochelle that requires ongoing investment
- Other surrounding commercial markets competing for businesses and shopping experiences

Then, participants were asked to articulate what he or she perceives to be the “preferred” or “predicted” future of Rochelle in 15-20 years. What services, programs, staffing levels, capital needs and general operations would be, or should be, present in the City? Participants were asked to write down their responses and then share with them the group. This was a brainstorming exercise – any and all ideas about the City’s future were encouraged and shared.

Vision included:

- Small town feel with big town amenities and services, safe
- Ability to live, work and play in Rochelle
- Ability for small business to locate in Rochelle and support their ongoing efforts to grow the economy and create jobs
- For the city to be financially solvent, meeting expenses, making investments in infrastructure, meeting debt obligations
- Young family friendly
- “the hub city” connecting communities and people

Next, participants were put into groups and selected any issue of their choosing to develop more fully. These issues were:

1. *Population Growth:*

- Need to be a community of choice to move to and stay in Rochelle, raise a family, get involved.
- Need professional jobs to keep young people from leaving and offer more opportunities for current residents.
- Would like to attract wider diversity of income, particularly middle and upper incomes to Rochelle, who would invest through their spending and support local businesses.
- Need to focus on the negative perception of Rochelle public schools, particularly with the HR directors of existing companies in Rochelle.

2. *Infrastructure*

- There is a strong need to maintain and replace aging infrastructure
- With limited funds available, can't do it all
- Need to prioritize needs based on condition of infrastructure
- Need to seek external funding opportunities to leverage limited city dollars

3. *City Finances*

- Necessary to stabilize funding but challenging to do given the state budget impasse
- Need to prioritize programs to allocate resources efficiently
- Focus is on diverse funding sources to cushion any shortfalls in any one area
- Currently concentrating on enterprise finances

4. *Downtown Development*

- Need many partners but city could act as a catalyst also being located downtown
- Currently there is a lack of retail diversity to attract shoppers
- Need a grassroots effort
- There has been a lack of investment in the downtown core
- Lack geographic interest like a river or boardwalk that might attract residents and visitors to linger downtown

d. Special Meeting: Strategic Planning, November 2, 2015

First, I reviewed the responsibility of the Council to lead the strategic plan, to support its implementation and build a system that will have clear action plans, responsibilities and monitoring. Next, the Council participated in a series of small team building exercises. The council agreed that they should have more face to face meetings to build on their own understanding of each other and the issues facing the community.

Then the whole group reviewed the drafted strategic issues and goals by completing two worksheets so that each issue and goal could be evaluated on a clear set of criteria. The issues were evaluated to determine if they aligned with mission, they were in fact strategic and not operational, they addressed a challenge or threat to the organization, they built on a strength or opportunity of the organization, the timing was right and there was leadership to focus on this issue or goal. Each person completed the issue worksheet and then we discussed the overall rating of each issue together. There was agreement that the three issues identified were all well supported but that some modification to the wording of those issues would make them clearer. The revisions are reflected in the new issues presented in this report.

Next, the group reviewed the draft strategic goals for each of the issue areas. They evaluated each of the nine goals using 10 criteria (mission and vision alignment, technical feasibility, technology requirements, staff competencies, budget implications, return on investment, long and short term impacts, risk assessment, timing and facility requirements). Once they completed the evaluation and scored each of the goals, each person then ranked all nine goals from 1 to 9, with 1 being the highest priority.

Each of the strategic goals were placed on paper and hung on the walls. Following evaluation, the members of Council were given red dots to indicate their top priorities. The staff were given different stickers and also indicated their top priorities. It was then easy to see where most Council and staff indicated the highest priority areas. Those priorities and commitment to those goals are reflected in the revised strategic issues and goals. Some were dropped while others were combined to reflect this process.