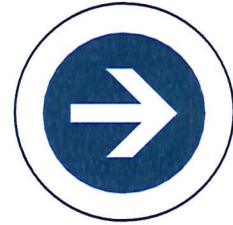


# City of Tabor

## VISION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



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## Introduction

*Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?  
That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.  
I don't much care where –  
Then it doesn't matter which way you go.*

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

In the case of Tabor, Iowa, the community does care which way it goes. This Vision Implementation Plan (VIP) or strategic plan identifies the direction expressed by the citizens of Tabor during a public planning process to create a better community.

The purpose of a strategic plan is to help organizations and communities determine where they want to go, what they want to be, and how to get where they want to go; or in other words, how to achieve their vision for the future. For a strategic plan to be more than an academic exercise that results in an impressive, but dreary document gathering dust on a shelf, it must be developed by people who are passionate about an organization's potential and its future.

Strategic planning is one of the most important responsibilities of the leadership of any organization. It is the activity that establishes a clear vision for the organization and sets appropriate strategic objectives to guide fulfillment of the vision. It also aligns appropriate resources and deployment decisions to achieve the strategic objectives and establishes measures that ensure attainment of those objectives within specified time frames.

Like all cities, the City of Tabor, Iowa, is continually faced with a myriad of challenges and opportunities. The demands on budgets, public infrastructure, and staffing underscore the need for a comprehensive and clear strategic plan. In an era of limited resources (human and financial), it is critical that citizens, leaders, and staff are focused in the same direction. The role of this strategic plan, therefore, is to provide that focus, facilitate the successful growth of Tabor, and provide a platform to purposefully advance the city as an organization.

The Tabor Strategic Plan will serve as a roadmap for the city's success over the next five to ten years. It will also serve as a tool to communicate the city's intentions to the residents, focus the direction of its financial resources and employees, and ensure that short-term goals and objectives are met in a timeframe established by the community. This strategic plan defines specific results that are to be achieved, outlines a course of action for achieving them, and details measurements to ensure the outcomes of those results. Additionally, this plan will ensure that the most important city priorities are identified, communicated, and achieved with direction and effective planning so that all may know what is expected and how to achieve success. The city will be diligent in focusing its efforts on strategic objectives that it can control and influence within the scope of its mission and vision. The implementation of this plan and the decision making around it will align with the city's values.



## Planning Process

With community-based participation at its center, an effective planning process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.

JEO Consulting Group, Inc. utilized a planning process that integrates these principals to secure broad public input. The professional planners facilitated this planning process that is: rooted in community partnerships; realistic to implement; leverages local funding with outside resources; and is based upon the uniqueness of the existing built and natural environment of Tabor. This comprehensive and community driven process is the ground work for JEO and the local leaders to collaboratively develop an actionable implementation plan that is sustainable and supported by the community.

On September 21, 2016, members of the Tabor City Council and city staff met to discuss the VIP project. Through the discussion, the city council guided the consultant on the appropriate public engagement process and the top seven areas of concern to prioritize. The specific topic areas are (in alphabetical order):

- Community Pride and Festivals
- Downtown and Historic Preservation
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Library
- Parks and recreation
- Youth Activities

On September 28, 2016, the general public was invited to review the defined topics and prioritize the topics at a strategic planning workshop. The goal of the strategic planning workshop was to establish consensus on civic betterment initiatives so the city could formulate strategies and target local resources (both human and financial) to accomplish the goals. It was agreed that a formal plan of action was needed to keep Tabor moving forward and to provide efficiency in its resources.

Participants were then asked to further define these seven topics by identifying known issues and concerns surrounding these items. This exercise offered members a deeper understanding of the strategic issues, their importance to the long-term well-being of the community, and to facilitate the ranking process for issue prioritization.

Because the Tabor Vision Implementation Plan is a living document, it should be updated regularly to reflect new accomplishments and changing priorities. As updates are needed, the city should continue to engage the community in the planning process. Through ongoing communication and collaboration, the city can ensure that the strategic plan reflects not only the priorities of local decision-makers, but also the priorities of the local citizens.



## Ranking Process

The participants were then asked to consider each of the seven strategic issues and identify their top tier priorities using a dot exercise. Members were given a total of three dots, or votes, to help rank the issue of most important to them by placing stickers on the corresponding topics. These strategic issues were referred to as “First Tier” goals, or the highest priority needs of the community, since they received a majority of first round votes of those members present. Based upon the results of the dot exercise, the first tier priorities were “Housing” (16 votes) and “Library” (11 votes). These were prioritized as the most pressing issue facing the community.

The First Tier goals were taken down from the wall and committee members were then asked to rank the remaining strategic issues. Members were given three additional dots and instructed to vote on “Second Tier” goals, or low to medium priorities of the community. Again, the strategic issue had to receive a majority of second round votes in order to be considered a Second Tier priority. Second Tier goals of Tabor include “Parks and Recreation with Youth Activities” (4 first round and 18 second round votes); “Downtown Revitalization” (7 first round and 17 second round votes); and “Economic Development” (6 first round and 9 second round votes).

Those strategic issues that did not receive a majority vote during the first and second round were placed into a “Third Tier” priority. Although these Third Tier goals did not receive enough votes to be pursued at this time, they were still identified as important projects to the city and may be part of the cities on-going improvements or part of a public private partnership opportunity. Third Tier goal is “Community Pride and Festivals”.

## Timeframe for Implementation

The final step in the strategic process was to define a timeframe for implementation of First and Second Tier goals. Four levels were used, including “short term” defined as 0-3 years, mid-term defined as 4-8 years, long term was defined as 8-10 years, and ongoing. The results of this exercise is shown below:

### Short Term Goals

- Need for Residential Housing (short term and ongoing)
- Library (short term)
- Parks and Recreation (short term and ongoing)
- Downtown (short term and ongoing)

### Mid Term Goals

- Need for Economic Development (ongoing)

## **Vision Implementation Plan**

The Vision Implementation Plan will focus on the First and Second Tier goals, as prioritized by the Tabor Strategic Planning Workshop. The format of the plan will be the same for each priority goal: stated goal, concerns/issues, objectives, actions, timelines, responsible groups/agencies, potential resources, and measurable outputs. Although the following goals are numbered, it is realized that such goals may take on different forms, be consolidated with other goals/projects or be re-prioritized based upon unforeseen issues or opportunities. In such cases, this strategic plan shall be re-examined and adopted to provide proper guidance.

***Goal #1: To improve the housing choice for all current and future residents of Tabor.***

Throughout the participation process, citizens cited the lack of quality housing as a major deterrent to growth. While the public school is a desirable amenity, the existing housing choice is very limited within the community and is a hindrance to growth.

The availability of land and infrastructure for new subdivision development with a variety of housing choices can be a key factor in reducing the cost barriers for new development. The City of Tabor should review policies and programs to facilitate private subdivision development including potential incentivizing strategies such as the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to provide lots suitable for a variety of housing types.

New homes should provide 'move-in ready' quality with modern amenities. These are currently in high demand within Tabor. New housing allows for not only housing options for future residents, retirees and families, but also allows current Tabor residents the option to upgrade or downsize, increasing the inventory of available housing. The city should encourage the development of a mix of housing types including traditional single family homes and multi-unit housing options including duplexes, apartments, condominiums, or row houses. A healthy mix of housing types can help achieve a housing stock that spans multiple demographics. Additional residential growth benefits the school district, local business and provides more households to reduce the local tax burdens.

Existing empty or developable lots within the city should be inventoried and analyzed to understand if a single family home and what size or another housing type would be desirable for the lot. Through this process the city should work with existing lot owners to prepare a list of lots that can be provided to potential home builders or developers to fit the preferred housing type and size they desire to build.

The city's existing housing stock is its largest total physical investment. The neighborhoods' quality as a living environment is largely determined by the quality of its housing structures. Conservation of the existing housing supply is very important to the vitality of the community. Consequently, Tabor should consider establishing an owner-occupied, single family housing rehabilitation program and a renter-occupied housing rehabilitation program, if demand warrants. The investment of these resources will provide the financing to significantly improve living conditions of low and moderate-income homeowners of the area; property-owners who could not otherwise afford a conventional loan. Strategically utilizing public/private resources will allow financial assistance to be provided to lower-income homeowners/landlords, at a rate which will accommodate their payback capacity.

Lastly, JEO recommends that the city take on a larger role in actively promoting and marketing housing growth to potential developers and builders. The city and school district should partner to produce marketing materials highlighting the strengths of the community and the attractiveness to potential new residents. These materials should be shared with potential residents and builders through active solicitation.

Topics Identified During the Strategic Planning Session

- New school with good reputation is attracting potential residents.
- Need incentives for builders to develop
- Lack of family housing – 3 BR, 2 Bath, 2-Car
- Need for \$100,000 - \$175,000 starter homes



- Waiting list and “silent market” as houses turn over quickly
- The city receives 3 – 5 calls per week for housing
- Need multi-family
  - Duplexes for rent (\$500-700/mth for 2brd)
  - Townhomes
  - Small Apartment Buildings (8 units)
- No housing study has been conducted
- Need housing w/lawn/snow
- Potential Fremont County housing study utilizing hometown pride.
- No lots available (for sale) in town to build a house that have infrastructure
- Demand for recent grads to return
- Opportunity to attract new residents with new Hwy 34 bridge to Offutt Air Force Base
- Full range of housing needed
- Housing rehab of existing owner and renter houses needed
  - Coordinate w/SWIPCO
- Six bank owned homes in town are difficult to get on the market

**Objective #1-1: Provide an environment that encourages and promotes residential development.**

Action Steps:

1. Conduct a Housing Study to quantify and qualify the present housing needs of Tabor. Present the results of the Study to the public and private housing developers.
2. In conjunction with the school district, prepare marketing materials that highlight the strengths of the community and attractiveness to potential new residents.
3. Hold a Housing Developers/Builders Summit to discuss housing demand opportunities and local policies.
4. Actively solicit potential housing developers/builders within the region.
5. Review the goals and policies contained within the adopted Tabor Comprehensive Development Plan and Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision Regulations that support housing development.
6. Develop public/private partnerships, where necessary, to facilitate new housing development.
7. Consider all public financing options that may be used to promote, incentivize, and stimulate housing development on infill properties and new developments including the use of tax increment financing (TIF).
8. Prepare an inventory of available infill properties and the desired housing types and sizes for each.
9. Visit with peripheral landowners and discuss the ability to obtain purchase options on their property that can be shared with potential housing developers.
10. City should consider purchasing nuisance lots that need cleaned up and then sell to a developer or build houses on.
11. Creation of an incentive to lower or reduce the risk to a builders and developers.

Timeline: 2017

**Objective #1-2: Consider adjacent land to the City's jurisdiction to be legally annexed into the corporate limits.**

Action Steps:

1. Identify potential land and new subdivisions to be legally annexed.
2. Conduct an annexation study on specified sites to determine feasibility, cost-benefit and legality of the annexation.
3. Consider the initial and ongoing cost of extending public infrastructure/utilities to these new areas.
4. Consider the potential revenues generated of these new areas.
5. Determine the cost-effectiveness of annexing these specific sites.
6. Hold a public hearing of the Tabor Planning Commission and City Council to solicit public input on the annexation.

Timeline: 2018

**Objective #1-3: Provide financial assistance for the rehabilitation of the City's existing housing stock.**

Action Steps:

1. Develop a Housing Rehabilitation Program. Discuss any issues that hindered the efficient and effective implementation of past housing rehabilitation programs.
2. Where appropriate, formulate and officially adopt revised guidelines which will govern the fair and effective implementation of Tabor Housing Rehabilitation Program. Include specific language that addresses the responsibilities of the homeowner during the compliance period.
3. Continue to identify local, regional, state and federal resources available for housing rehabilitation activities.
4. Consider applying for funding to establish the Housing Rehabilitation Program with SWIPCO.
5. Package and secure funding for housing rehabilitation activities.
6. Structure resources to accommodate payback potential of low- and moderate-income homeowners.
7. Consider Program Guidelines that would govern the implementation of a Tabor Renter-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program. Review Guidelines from previous Programs implemented in other communities. Discuss any issues that may have hindered the implementation of those programs.
8. Formulate and officially adopt revised guidelines which will govern the fair and effective implementation of Tabor Renter-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program. Include specific language that addresses the responsibilities of the landlord during the compliance period.
9. Secure funding for a renter-occupied housing rehabilitation program.
10. Structure assistance to accommodate payback potential/return on investments for landlords that own rental properties in the study area.

11. Advertise the Tabor Housing Rehabilitation Programs, using local media outlets, online resources, direct mailing, and/or social service agencies.
12. Conduct a town hall meeting to discuss eligibility requirements for participation in the Program.
13. Accept applications from eligible homeowners; verify eligibility.

Timeline: 2017-2019.

Responsible Groups/Agencies

Tabor, Tabor Planning Commission, Tabor residents, SWIPCO, city staff, property owners, media outlets, social service agencies, private developers, Mills County Economic Development (for portion of community in Mills County), Fremont Pride, Fremont County Economic Development, and local lending institutions.

Potential Resources

Local lending institutions, Tax Increment Financing, private funds, Iowa Energy office, Iowa Finance Authority, Iowa Economic Development Authority, and U.S.D.A. Rural Development Programs.

Measurable Outputs

The existing housing stock can be measured through the number of homes, variety of types of homes, and the net property values of the city.

Improving the quantity, quality and appearance of the city's housing stock is a short-term and ongoing priority of the community



**Goal #2: Construct a safe, aesthetically-pleasing, scale-appropriate, energy-efficient, fully accessible, technologically advanced Public Library.**

A Public Library is more than a repository of books and computers--it is an essential part of the community. As a tax supported, free public library, its purpose is to serve the diverse informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs and interests of all the residents of Tabor. The Tabor Public Library strives to maintain excellent service by:

- Providing a wide variety of resources that reflect the City's interests and needs.
- Promoting literacy, lifelong learning and intellectual freedom.
- Providing the technological infrastructure necessary to support quality library services.
- Fostering interaction among diverse groups by serving as a focal point for library and community activities.

The City of Tabor should work with the local stakeholders to identify future plans for the future Public Library. Stakeholders should consider the existing site location would likely be cost-prohibitive due technology upgrades and the removal of architectural barriers associated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The layout of the existing Public Library is not accommodating for classroom programs or events.

A new facility should be equipped with state-of-the-art technological amenities and provide adequate space for current needs and ample room for continued expansion of the Library's collection and services. Local stakeholders should give strong consideration to the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of incorporating the new Public Library with youth activities to benefit the entire community.

Concerns/Needs

- Have architectural concept that needs to be refined
- Would like to start ASAP
- Need funding to construct the new library
- New facility will need better internet
- A new facility could house a tourism office and provide a space for youth activities
- Existing Facility:
- Too small for books collection
- Need classroom for summer reading (90 kids/summer)
- Need a computer lab space
- No Parking
- Not ADA accessible
- Has and will continue to be a teen gathering (Wednesday and Saturday)
- The library has significant Historic data (Genealogy) for the area

**Objective #2-1: Complete design a future Public Library which will accommodate the physical, spatial, educational and technological needs of Tabor.**

Action Steps:

1. Continue working with a licensed professional architectural/ engineering consultant to prepare a programming plan for the future Public Library.
2. Refine the program plan as necessary.
3. Consider the spatial needs of the Public Library against the spatial needs/functionality of the youth activities for a multi-use facility.

4. Calculate the land needs requirement for the new Public Library.
5. Finalize the location for the new facility.
6. Prepare and approve the final site design schematic/opinion of cost.

*Timeline:* 2017.

***Objective # 2-2: Identify potential resources (both human and financial) for the construction of the new Tabor Public Library.***

1. Meet with the Fiscal Agent for the City of Tabor to determine the long-term debt capacity of the community/responsible entity.
2. Identify local, regional, state, federal and in-kind resources for construction of the future Tabor Public Library.
3. Commence fund-raising efforts to solicit public and private contributions for the construction of the new Tabor Public Library.
4. Achieve maximum project impact by leveraging local funds with "outside" resources.
5. Package all financial resources for the construction of the new venue.

*Timeline:* 2017-2018.

***Objective #2-3: Construction of the new Public Library.***

1. Conduct an environmental review process, as required by the project's public funding agencies.
2. Enter into a professional services contract with a professional architectural/engineering firm to develop plans and specifications for the project, as well as for construction observation/management services.
3. Develop plans and specifications for the future Tabor Public Library, pursuant to the responses offered by regulatory agencies and the requirements of public funding sources (International Energy Conservation Code, Americans with Disability, Historic Preservation, etc.).
4. Submit plans and specifications to the public agencies (as appropriate) for their review/approval.
5. Secure necessary permits/approvals from public agencies.
6. Bid phase to include advertising, letting and contract award to lowest responsible/responsive bidder.
7. Construction related activities.

*Timeline:* 2017-2018.

Responsible Group/Agency

City of Tabor, residents, Public Library Foundation, and Tabor Public Schools.

Potential Resources

Conventional General Obligation Bonds, Tabor Capital Improvement Fund, Tabor General Fund, Sales Tax, USDA Rural Development Community Facility Loan Program, private donations, local volunteers, Iowa West Foundation, Community Development Assistance Act - Tax Credit Program, and local fund raising events.

#### Measurable Outputs

Construction of a new facility equipped with state-of-the-art technological amenities, parking and adequate space for current needs and ample room for continued expansion of the Library's collection and services.

### ***Goal #3: Development and Implementation of a Parks and Recreation Plan***

In an era where municipal budgets leave little room for non-essential services/facilities/programs, it is vital that local residents outline their recreational priorities to provide direct guidance to local decision-makers. These efforts will ensure that limited local resources are supporting only those programs and amenities that are desired by residents.

A professional park planning firm can assist the city in soliciting public input on asset identification/prioritization. Item to be considered include: splash pad, softball fields, trails, playground equipment, skate park, tennis/basketball courts with winter ice skating, park layout and cost opinions. This professional consultation will ensure that the outdoor recreational interests of today's generations are met so that the park will provide long-term service to the community.

Through our discussions with the city council, city staff and stakeholders it was obvious that additional recreational amenities are desired within the community including water features, new playground equipment, skate park, and additional softball fields. Expansion of the trail system is desirable to continue the connectivity of this trail to other areas of the city by creating a complete loop. Such amenities could assist the community with additional residential growth by attracting more young families to Tabor.

#### Topics Identified During the Strategic Planning Session

- Need family amenities to attract new households
- Splash Pad – (None in the region and Glenwood is building a new pool)
  - All ages could utilize
  - Best location would be at City Park
- Good youth activities but need a place for teens to hangout
- New Park features
  - Tennis Courts (ice skating in winter)
  - Skate Park
- No softball fields for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade girls
- Dance and music lessons downtown now by private entity
- Need better or developed sidewalks for safe route to school and coordinate with trails efforts
- Trails
  - Grant with SWIPCO for trail north of school in progress
  - Want a complete loop trail with:



- Hard surface
  - Future exercise stations
  - Possible tie to regional trails
- Youth and teen activities space needed, the new library facility is a good option

**Objective #3-1: Evaluate the recreational needs of Tabor families and residents and develop a long term Recreation Master Plan**

Action Steps:

1. Expand the park board to comprise of parents, students, coaches, seniors, and outdoor recreational enthusiasts to encourage better communication between residents, the city, school and the youth sports organizations.
2. Consider the current and desired usage of the city park system.
3. Outline current programs/facilities that are offered in Tabor, whether publically- or privately-sponsored.
4. Determine the programs/facilities overall strengths and weaknesses.
5. Identify potential opportunities and threats to the long-term sustainability of these programs/facilities.
6. Survey the residents of Tabor about the need for new playground equipment, splash pad, softball field improvements, skate park, trails and other potential programs/facilities desired by local residents.
7. Coordinate with the school to identify shared resources and any gaps or overlapping of programs.
8. Summarize the findings and publicize the results.
9. Review and update park system maintenance procedures.
10. Develop a Recreation Master Plan to include:
  - a. Procure the services of a professional planning consultant to develop a Recreational Master Plan for the Tabor parks and trail system.
  - b. Hold a town hall meeting to discuss how residents plan to use the city park and trail system.
  - c. Identify and prioritize park amenities that will encourage maximum usage for community, social and family, and general affairs.
  - d. Develop a park schematic showing location of existing amenities.
  - e. Consider measures to integrate recreational opportunities and community amenities via walking/biking trails.
  - f. Develop a plan showing the layout of a future park and trail improvements and their relationship to each other.
  - g. Prepare cost opinions for planned park and trail improvements.
  - h. Develop a phasing plan for the implementation of the proposed improvements.
  - i. Identify the appropriate public agencies and/or community organizations that will be responsible for the implementation and ongoing oversight of the programs.
11. Consider the most appropriate resource (human and financial) to undertake the park and trail projects.
12. Conduct local fund-raising activities.
13. Pursue public/private monies to offset the construction cost of the projects.

Timeline: 2017- 2018

**Objective #3-2: Implement priority and cost-effective park improvements/programs.**

Action Plan:

1. Consider the feasibility of implementing the Tabor Recreation Master Plan in phases.
2. Implement feasible/viable programs/facilities desired by local residents.
3. Develop and support programs which encourage activities where families can participate together.
4. Create a handicap accessible playground and park areas
5. Explore the utilization of buildings owned by multiple organizations for community projects or activities (i.e. school theater area for community monthly film, city community center for more activities needed by school kids, etc.)

Timeline: 2018 - Ongoing

Responsible Groups/Agencies

Tabor City Council, Hometown Pride, local sports associations, Tabor residents, Public School District, local businesses and outdoor recreational enthusiasts.

Potential Resources

Local monies, Local Option Sales Tax, private donations, private foundations, volunteer efforts, fee for use, concession stand proceeds, Iowa West Foundation, Transportation Alternatives, SWIPCO.

Measurable Outputs

The creation and implementation of a Tabor Recreation Master Plan

Developing and Implementing a Recreation Master Plan for the community is a short-term goal of the city.

**Goal # 4: *Improve the appearance and viability of the downtown business district.***

The image of the downtown area is vital to the community's overall perception of itself and to the region. Image can impact the economic viability either by attracting consumers or pushing consumers out of the area. To attract consumers, the image and environment of the downtown area must be friendly, inviting, and at a comfortable scale.

Tabor's principal entrance to the community is Highway 275 (a highly traveled north-south corridor). This entrance offers visitor's a first impression of the community; the cardinal attribute that portrays Tabor as a quality place to visit, work, live, play and invest. However, the highway ushers traffic through the community with a narrow the downtown area. Thus, efforts for expanding parking or adding streetscape to attract tourism to the historic downtown can be challenging but not impossible.

It is through the implementation of downtown revitalization efforts that residents can expect to witness economic and civic progress. A thriving downtown builds a positive self-image for the community; creates job opportunities; attracts new industry; strengthen service and retail job markets. It will also symbolize a community's confidence, vitality and long-term viability; saves tax dollars; stabilizes and improves the area's tax base. A revitalized downtown will protect the investments already made in downtown infrastructure, while attracting new private investments, preserving the community's historic resources, and enable property-owners to maintain commercial buildings while preserving a critical component of the community.

A revitalized streetscape and building façade improvements can be beneficial to Tabor and enhance the image within the downtown area by creating an environment that will continue to be inviting and friendly to the consumer. Streetscape development and image may not seem like economic development, but these concepts can play a vital role in the economic development process. The implementation of these recommendations will be primarily the responsibility of the building and business owners. However, programs providing low interest loans, for redevelopment, will provide a means to spread the cost of improvements over a period of time. These loans should be repaid with the principal and interest going to assist other building owners. Assisting these projects or improvements area-wide can be supported by benefit districts.

JEO recommends that the city embrace a downtown identity. This begins with identifying a downtown district, but also look to incorporate the side streets. Architectural standards for new development within this district including side streets should be adopted as design guidelines or an overlay zoning district. Additional public parking opportunities on side streets and more pedestrian friendly features should be investigated that would assist with the growth of existing businesses or the attraction of new businesses to the district. The purchase and installation of a community kiosk to improve public communication could also be beneficial.

The downtown area should be marketed to align with the overall economic development vision of the city. JEO recommends marketing towards additional retail, eateries, wine/bar/whiskey dispensaries, or other destination or history based businesses that would encourage additional tourism to the city and becoming a visitor's destination. Thought should be given to sponsorship of civic events/programs within the downtown area. Such events/programs may include: street dances, cultural celebrations, performing arts, concerts series, soap box derbies, bed-races, etc. These events/programs not only promote economic activity, but they reestablish the downtown as the center of civic life, fostering a sense of celebration and exploration.

Lastly, the city should consider taking a role in the redevelopment of existing empty downtown storefronts either through incentivizing practices for small business. The new library should be a key building in the downtown. Additional uses of a public owned storefront could include a co-op style of business that depends upon volunteer labor for operations, incubator spaces that offer office space or multi-tenant space to new startups, or partnerships with the local school system to provide on the job training to current students in the operation of a business.

#### Topics Identified During the Strategic Planning Session

- Storefront façade improvement need
- Coffee shop with good internet
- Empty store fronts



- No empty lot for a new business to be constructed
- Weber Bldg. (mural) should go away
- Replace mural on Main Street
- Have a Grocery store and doctor office (new)
- Bump outs w/truck (farm-market) consideration
- Landscape
- Street lighting
- Fremont County Hometown Pride (new)
- Coordinate w/Mills County (north)
- Only 2 lots available downtown
- Need professional services
- If Weber Building is torn down and new library is built, then lot by Casey's could be available for parking
- Teen gathering space needed
- It is the entrance to community (north)
- Parking
  - Possible change of on street parking to a new lot
  - Oversized parking across from Casey's would be a good location
  - No library parking today
- Pocket park
  - Shelter, green, trees
  - Use for special events

**Objective #4-1: Evaluate the physical condition of the Tabor downtown business district and consider additional streetscape and façade improvements.**

Action Steps:

1. Inspect the physical condition and capacity of the downtown area including, but not limited to, streets, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, grade changes, parking, surface drainage and underground utilities.
2. Inspect the existing building facades and provide recommendations of improvements.
3. Meet with business-owners to evaluate the future needs and deficiencies of the downtown area.
4. Provide opinion of costs to correct physical deficiencies and facades.
5. Prepare the Tabor Downtown Condition Report.
6. Develop a Business District Master Plan to incorporate elements of the Tabor Downtown Condition Report and visioning process to encourage a unified downtown revitalization strategy.
7. Hold a meeting with downtown stakeholders to unveil the Business District Master Plan.
8. Revise the plan as necessary to ensure that it reflects the needs, thoughts, and desires of residents and downtown business-owners.
9. Develop downtown design guidelines to protect the investments and ensure building aesthetics.
10. Present the Business District Master Plan to the Tabor Planning Commission and City Council for their review, approval, and implementation.

11. Consider downtown stakeholder's willingness and financial capacity to support implementation of the Business District Master Plan.
12. Meet with the city's fiscal agent to determine the bonding capacity of Tabor.
13. Identify local, regional, state and federal resources for downtown improvements.
14. Prepare plans and specifications for downtown revitalization activities.
15. Hold a town hall meeting to solicit public input on the plans and specifications.
16. Make necessary revisions and submit the plans and specifications to the Tabor City Council for final approval.
17. Implement the proposed improvements.
18. Consider new parking areas for downtown by purchasing unused lots or lots in the flood plan areas.
19. Encourage and provide incentives for youth or residents to start-businesses or franchises
20. Explore a possible link to the Innovation Center in UNL campus
21. Market downtown businesses on the outskirts of the town.
22. Provide incentives to help temporary fixes to second floor levels while phase 2 (major recondition is being considered) to stop the deterioration of the historic buildings.
23. Investigate options for both the renovation and uses for the 2nd floor levels of the downtown business structures

Timeline: 2018 - 2019.

**Objective #4-2: Develop a vision for downtown revitalization.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Foster cooperation and communication among downtown business-owners through the establishment of a Business Association.
2. Hold a working conference with downtown stakeholders to create a vision for the redevelopment of the downtown area.
3. Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the downtown.
4. Survey local residents about spending habits to identify economic leakages within the downtown business district.
5. Identify other potential niches that will make the Tabor downtown a visitor's destination that will lead to lasting economic activity.
6. Identify potential programs/measures to incentivize new businesses, including startups and small businesses, to locate in the downtown district.
7. Create a marketing plan for the downtown area with the proposed Tabor Community Association
8. Recruit businesses that are consistent with the Business District Master Plan and the City's Economic Development Plan.
9. Identify potential programs/measures to incentivize downtown property-owners to renovate their building façades.
10. Evaluate the need/desire/potential for urban landscaping within the downtown area.
11. Consider wayfinding signs along Highway 275 to educate visitors/travelers about the various goods and services found in Tabor.
12. Sponsor civic events/programs within the downtown area.

Timeline: 2018-on going.

Responsible Groups/Agencies

Tabor City Council, Tabor Planning Commission, Tabor Downtown Association/business-owners, Tabor residents, SWIPCO, Mills County Economic Development, Fremont County Economic Development, and Hometown Pride.

Potential Resources

General Obligation Bonds, Special Assessment Districts, Local Option Sales Tax, Community, Tax Increment Financing, private monies, Business Improvement District, private foundations, Iowa Arts Council, Iowa Economic Development Association, Rural Enterprise Assistance Act (REAP), Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Community Development Assistance Act, Federal Home Loan Bank – Joint Opportunities for Building Success, Small Business Administration and USDA Rural Development.

Measurable Outputs

Tabor will develop and implement a Downtown Revitalization Plan that will incorporate the community's goals and sustain the historic buildings while enhancing the economic viability of the community.

The continued success of existing businesses and the attraction of new business to the downtown area. Improving the downtown business district is a short-term and ongoing goal of the city.



**Goal # 5: Promote economic development within the City of Tabor.**

Community and government leaders across the country have, for the past few decades come to the realization that they not only can, but must initiate programs to enhance their local economies. Governments have sometimes provided enormous subsidies to try to entice large businesses to build manufacturing plants within their communities; while others have started small loan funds to encourage "micro-enterprise" businesses or created "incubators" that provide office space and services to a variety of small businesses. Results of these rural economic development efforts have been decidedly mixed.

"Smokestack chasing" has lost favor with many rural economic development practitioners because of the unintended impact it has had on community systems and local fiscal restraints. In these difficult environments, Tabor must have a clearly focused and structured economic development strategy that is consistent with the vision statement and values contained within the city's Comprehensive Plan. This guide is an important first step in attaining the city's long-term commitment of job creation, retaining the local youth in the community, increased tourist traffic within the city, filling vacant store fronts, growing sales tax revenues, and promotion of city as an attractive place to visit, live, work, and invest.

Most often, successful organizations are achieving their goals as a result of having community support for a well-conceived "plan of action" which serves as a blueprint for an economic development program. An economic development plan for the city could serve as a powerful, yet focused guide for the community in formulating intervention strategies that will allow the city to achieve economic development successes. Likewise, the Plan must emphasize the importance of preserving the high quality of life enjoyed by local residents, and supports community values such as environmental preservation, small town atmosphere, recreational facilities, and human resources.

JEO recommends targeting businesses and opportunities that will support the tourism opportunities of the city and/or that would benefit from the high traffic counts along Highway 275 and home based businesses for new residents that do not have to commute to the metro area daily. Such niche businesses could include additional boutique retail shops, eateries, niche wine/beer/whiskey dispensaries, or destination businesses to name a few. The city must decide what incentives, if any, could be made available to new or relocating businesses. Incentives could include the use of an incubator, a grant/loan program, special programs for entrepreneurs or the implementation of tax increment financing (TIF) strategies.

Topics Identified During the Strategic Planning Session

- Daycare needed for working families
- School has plans for early childcare
- Approximately 6 in-home daycares now
- Limited community land for new buildings
- One building available now
- Need professional services:
  - HVAC
  - Electric
  - Plumbing
- Would like specialty shops such as a comic book/skate shop
- Better internet service
- Business succession planning is needed

**Objective #5-1: Establish an Economic Development Culture within the City.**

Action Steps:

1. Define the economic development vision for the City of Tabor Mills County Economic Development and other development groups with key interest and insight. Consider key industries for which the city desires to market to the community. JEO recommends a vision around recruiting and incentivizing businesses that will support and grow the value added agriculture and the tourism opportunities for the city including destination type businesses within the retail and service based industry. Focus on development of 'start-up businesses' and expanding current businesses to their 'next stage' of development should be strongly emphasized.
2. Establish clear public policy as it relates to dedicating resources for economic development activities.
3. Establish economic development goals, objectives, action steps and timelines. Creation of an entrepreneurial atmosphere to encourage the development of new business.
4. Creation or utilizing an established program such as "Junior Achievement" or new program that trains our youth from K-12 specifically about: 1) community development, 2) leadership, 3) jobs and 4) entrepreneurship.
5. Involvement of youth in the interaction of more community organizations, service groups, city committees and/or youth dignitaries for the city council.

Timeline: 2020.

**Objective #5-2: Examine the economic profile of Tabor and external factors that may influence future economic development efforts**

Action Steps:

1. Establish a broad-based city Economic Development Committee.
2. Hold focus group sessions to discuss trends in the city business community (business startups, failures, expansions or relocations).
3. Review economic indicators (housing starts, employment, unemployment, per capita income, net taxable sales, and existing business make-up) to establish a baseline.
4. Survey the city business community to gather information on product/service, number of employees, future plans, and strengths/barriers to economic development within the City.
5. Survey city residents on a periodic basis to gather information on pertinent demographics, income, commuting patterns, purchasing characteristics, and community economic development needs.
6. Consider the economic composition of Tabor to determine its susceptibility to business cycles, comparative advantages, potential value-added business prospects, economic clusters, and other factors that will lead to economic sustainability.
7. Consider the capacity of existing public infrastructure/utilities to support future economic development efforts including high speed internet connectivity.
8. Consider the capacity of public safety (fire protection, law enforcement) to support further economic development efforts.
9. Analyze the existing housing situation in Tabor to maintain a sufficient housing stock.

10. Review the city's Land Use Plan/Zoning Ordinance to ensure adequate/appropriate space for business expansion/recruitment.
11. Inventory available business space within the existing downtown area and along Highway 275.
12. Pursue additional real estate acquisition for future residential and business development areas.
13. Periodically review the opportunities and constraints associated with economic development within Tabor.
14. Consider the opportunities and constraints of a “commuter” population base. Involve a yearly Pull-Factor analysis of workforce that commutes.
15. Consider the opportunities and ways to reduce threats of new economic expansion within the immediate area, especially throughout southwest Iowa.
16. Consider the leakages (purchases made in other communities by residents of Tabor) of the local economy.
17. Consider the availability of “shovel ready” sites within the city.

Timeline: 2020-on going.

**Objective #5-3: Develop strategies for promoting/fostering economic development in the Tabor.**

**Action Steps:**

1. Organize a local Economic Development Corporation and/or coordinate with Mills County Economic Development.
2. Identify businesses that have enormous growth potential within the local economy including existing and new businesses, value-added businesses, and new opportunities that slow economic leakages.
3. Outline intervention strategies that respond to specific barriers and opportunities that face city businesses (job training, housing affordability/availability, labor market skills, and new marketing strategies including regional marketing efforts, public infrastructure, and economic development resources).
4. Identify new development areas within the community which are suitable for economic development.
5. Identify local and regional partners for economic development, including financial assistance partners, technical, educational and job training partners, improve communication among business and government leaders, and foster cooperation among industry coalitions, and local residents.
6. Review activities associated with city festivals and identify other activities that may enhance the economic impact resulting from community events. Actively promote any of the civic celebrations on a regional basis.
7. Review the use of a local option sales tax to be a reinvestment into promoting and marketing existing businesses.
8. Creation of Tabor as a “Destination Location” for events and/or services.
9. Develop a marketing plan that focuses on common business sectors.
10. Coordinate with other rural communities that follow Highway 34 or 275 to market together.



11. Creation of succession planning with existing local businesses to ensure the business continuity to the next generation and create new business ownership opportunities for local youth.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Responsible Groups/Agencies

City Council, Planning Commission, city staff, private business and residents, Mills County Economic Development, SWIPCO, and Iowa Western Community College.

Potential Resources

Local Funds, Tax Increment Financing, Local Option Sales and Use Tax, U.S.D.A. Rural Development Programs, Utility Providers, Iowa Finance Authority Programs, Iowa Economic Development Association, Iowa Department of Roads, U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration.

Measurable Outputs

Increased economic development in the community can be measured by the number of businesses and new businesses within the community. It also can be measured through the number of jobs and net taxable sales collected over time.

Improving the local economy is a mid-term and ongoing goal of the city.

