

Community Tagline:  
*A Community of Opportunity*

*Waterloo is a community of opportunity where everyone can prosper*

## Executive Summary

It's been an interesting and informative journey, consisting of countless meetings and conversations, discussions regarding the possibilities, and a discovery of the long list of achievements and plans in the works, yet a distinct disconnect in awareness regarding these activities.



## 8x8: Waterloo Vision 2030 Eight Big Accomplishments in Eight Years

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Along the way, we discovered deep pockets of community pride and creative ideas to drive engagement, side by side with a wish for the community to succeed. Like any community work we've done, we heard our fair share of negativity, but by and large, Waterloo residents are hungry for progress and a reason to share their innate pride.

### KEY FINDINGS

Waterloo as a community shows a commitment to youth that is unparalleled in most communities. This is a foundational block of the community and can have great economic implications if the City and its partners take specific steps to train and retain your youth.

Additionally, it goes without saying that as Iowa's most diverse city, this community must continue to harness that strength and leverage it to attract business and residents. You must also work to make this a Community of Opportunity, where everyone can prosper. Inequities and perceptions must be addressed openly.

Waterloo residents and stakeholders alike desire to "flip the script" when it comes to how Waterloo is viewed, both by residents, the wider region, state, and beyond. Additionally, the data collected supports that Waterloo has a large number of residents who are fairly neutral in their feelings toward the city they live in. This correlates to our theory of action on how to move the complacent "Moveable Middle" to be your best community advocates.

It's important not to confuse emphasizing positive communication with turning a blind eye to areas in need of improvement. Waterloo has worked to identify areas of inequity, sought solutions to improve service delivery, quality of life, and in general improve the city. It's very difficult to communicate these things in a way that reaches all citizens, in a way they will engage with, which is why we lead with communications in the plan.

Finally, Waterloo has a lot of projects in the works and on the list of its recent accomplishments. At every turn, we would find another project or program being planned or discussed. We strongly encourage investing in your project management capacity, being diligent and disciplined in what you take on, and essentially finish what you've started. Every project or element in this plan identifies where you will need to enlist and rely upon community partners (and identifies them where possible) and indicates to the extent we are able in a top-level plan the resources you will need.

In addition to the community positioning line and vision statement above, we've developed a Vision Framework for Waterloo that encompasses 8 "Buckets" of work, as well as high-level tactical direction. These are meant to provide direction and guidance but are not overly prescriptive or detailed because as the collaborative partnerships are formed, the methodology may change. We encourage the City and its partners to embrace the goals of each, but the road map that gets you to the end will likely change.

We've considered everything through the following three lenses:

- **Equity Building** - How does this element build equity across the community?
- **Economic Development Priming** - How will this position Waterloo as a community of opportunity for businesses to locate or expand?
- **Sustainably Improving** - What elements of this plan take into account sustainable elements and methodology?

#### **MEASUREMENT & CELEBRATIONS**

Many of these elements are tied together, or build upon existing or proposed projects. Ensuring that measurement and celebration of benchmarks is key. Once the plan is finalized, a dashboard will be developed to help all partners involved track and communicate success with the community.

#### **SAY IT OUT LOUD**

After the plan is finalized and partners have signed on, we recommend publicly announcing this plan in an event involving each partner, giving them and the City the opportunity to share the plan with the community and to set your intentions, loud and clear. We also recommend publicly sharing the plan and its benchmarks online, and marking the completion of those milestones with regular communication (see "Fly the W"). 8 x 8 should become a household name in Waterloo.



# **EIGHT BIG IDEAS IN EIGHT YEARS**

## **The 8 x 8 Framework**

Community of Opportunity: Eight Ideas in Eight Years

The 8 x 8 Framework consists of eight projects or categories of work, to be achieved in eight years. Each project has suggested resources and partnerships mapped to it, but the most important element to remember is that none of this can be achieved by one department, person, or entity.

