



# STATE OF THE CITY

A report on Mankato's accomplishments, and a look into future opportunities.



# Mankato City Council

Dear resident,

This "State of the City" marks the culmination of Mankato's recent five-year strategic plan, Mankato's guide to service delivery. Much has been accomplished over these last five years as detailed in "State of the City." Work that needs to be completed will be moved ahead to the city's next strategic plan. This year is critical because a new strategic planning process begins. Once developed, this plan will serve citizens over the next five years.

Strategic decisions serve as the city's economic foundation to enhance livability. A lean organization, Mankato is committed to operate at a level of service customers have come to expect while looking for ways to be innovative and efficient.

Providing outstanding service remains a top priority. Please contact me or city staff any time we can be of service.



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# Vision

*Leading the way as a prosperous, diverse regional community.*

## Public Service Principles

- Responsive—Prompt to respond and serve.
- Efficient—Highest performance at greatest economy.
- Greater good—Serve for the good of the community and region.
- Innovation—Embracing new ideas and methods to improve service delivery.
- Open—Spirit of accessibility in policy making and operation.
- Neighborly—Concern and compassion for others.



## Core Values

- Respect** We treat others with courtesy and dignity and value their perspectives, embracing our differences.
- Integrity** We lead by example by being honest, doing the right thing and by having actions that reflect our words.
- Positive attitude** We use a positive approach, take initiative, are motivated to perform a good job and take pride in the work we do.
- Teamwork** Together, we collaborate on ideas and share information, resources and responsibility for the best possible outcomes.
- Accountability** We take responsibility for our actions and the completion of our work.



## Leadership Philosophy

We belong to an organization that cares about making a positive difference in the lives of others. Our work is challenging and has purpose. We listen and engage with each other and our community.

We are empowered and trusted to make good decisions that align with the Public Service Principles and Core Values. Our organization is committed to investing and developing each other. We will recognize and celebrate our collective achievements and individual accomplishments.



# Serving, protecting and engaging the community

Government is designed to serve the people. Mankato staff continuously look for ways to increase customer service quality, satisfaction and input. In addition to providing good customer service, it's important to engage citizens through city volunteer and feedback opportunities. Their contributions and input make a positive difference to the organization and those it serves.

## **Commitment: Serving and protecting the community.**

### **Our accomplishments**

**Safe and Clean Initiative continues to be successful.** The Special Service Maintenance District provides enhanced city services on the 400 and 500 blocks of Mankato's City Center. Businesses share costs and equally benefit from enhanced services, including general maintenance and clean-up. To help maintain safety, there are video surveillance cameras, enhanced lighting and police officers who patrol sidewalks, plazas and conduct nightly business walkthroughs. All have had a positive impact on less serious crime, such as alcohol-related incidents, which is down in the area.

### **Commitment to community-based policing principles.**

Statistics show that these efforts have a positive impact on the community. Serious crime is down 16 percent, and less serious crime is down 7 percent. Although Mankato has experienced a 20 percent population growth, these statistics are at an all-time low over the past 10 years. Traffic citations and moving violations are up as they should be due to enforcement of laws.

**Build relationships.** City staff engage with citizens by meeting them where they are at, such as the annual Night to Unite event. Annually, around 50 Night to Unite events are hosted throughout the city. Relationships are also built through neighborhood policing and work with six neighborhood associations: Highland, Lincoln, Washington, Tourtellotte, Trail Creek parks and the recently added Old Town Collaborative. Staff also connects with students at schools and higher education institutions to help promote a safe environment, good stewardship and citizenship.

**Focus on fire prevention and education.** Overall, losses caused by serious fires in structures is holding, with 27 fires in 2015 and 25 in 2016. Firefighters are transitioning to inspecting all rental occupancies to promote a safe and sanitary living environment for residents.

**Fire staffing coverage improved.** Work is complete on townhomes being added to the west side of the fire station at 1721 Augusta Drive. Having firefighters living closer to the station will help expand overnight coverage and enhance service to areas east and northeast of Mankato.

**Combination fire staff saves dollars.** Mankato has one of the largest combination fire staffs in the state that's comprised of full-time and part-time personnel, helping to save taxpayers \$3 million a year in personnel expenses. There's an average of six full-time fire staff during the day and eight in the evening who are available to respond to calls. In addition, 38 part-time volunteer firefighters supplement full-time fire staff, which helps increase service efficiencies and availability. All are spread across Mankato's three fire stations.

Staff are key in Mankato's ability to ensure its Insurance Service Officer (ISO) rating of 3 over the last decade. The ISO grading schedule plays an important role in insurance underwriting. High ISO ratings like the city of Mankato's generally correlate with lower insurance premiums for property owners. Ratings indicate a community's fire response system is prepared to prevent and respond to incidents, which can result in lower fire loss. Achieving a high ISO rating shows the value of quality fire services and water supply systems. High ISO rating criteria include:

- ◆ Adequate water supply to fight fire.
- ◆ Fire equipment is capable and of high performance.
- ◆ Adequate amount of highly qualified firefighters to respond to a fire quickly.
- ◆ An effective emergency reporting and dispatching system.

## **Next steps**

**Continue work with community members in neighborhoods, on schools and on campus.** Community safety involves everyone, so police officers will continue to build relationships and work on local initiatives to help make a difference.

**Eliminate duplicate service delivery areas.** Mankato's full-time firefighters assist the local ambulance service, and calls are on the rise increasing by 10 percent. It's important to determine how to better use fire staff resources so they can focus on specialized areas including the hazardous materials team, confined space rescues, regional airport suppression and building inspections of high-risk occupancies.

*Mankato Public Safety Center, 710 South Front Street, by Terri DeGezelle, Mankato.*



**Be proactive with safety.** Continue to encourage residents to connect with police by working with their neighborhood officer. Promote “See something? Say something. Call 911.”

## Our opportunities

**Build relationship opportunities.** Develop new ways to engage residents with police and problem-solve.

**Determine how to allocate fire resources in the best possible way.** This allows fire staff to focus on specialized fire prevention services including hazardous materials team, confined space rescues, regional airport suppression and building inspections to look for high-risk occupancies. It will also help the ambulance service focus on their core service of responding to medical calls and providing medical transportation services.

### Commitment: Engage and serve the community.

#### Our accomplishments

**Expanded engagement opportunities.** Citizens are encouraged to learn about and give feedback on city projects and initiatives. A few examples of recent topics where input was sought include the Community Investment Plan, Riverfront Drive mural, Mankato regional airport and park development (Guaranteed Sand and Gravel, and Sanger properties). A positive example of citizen engagement is work on the Old Town Master Plan. Two stakeholder meetings were held using participatory leadership “world café” method that included multiple small tables for conversational engagement and a facilitator. More than 160 people attended these meetings. In addition, more than 60 community members engaged through an online survey.

At a second series of public meetings, implementation steps and ideas were discussed. There were about 85 people in attendance. At an open house, around 90 community members viewed draft plan and voted on top priorities.

**Provide quality customer service.** Excellent customer service remains a top priority. First-call resolve and avoiding government transfer when feasible is an emphasis. Exceptional customer service and citizen satisfaction makes a difference and positively impacts the city’s brand. By offering a variety of customer options—online live chat, text messaging, a responsive website for ease of use with technology devices, 311 Mankato SeeClickFix App, online customer service and 24-hour online services, service can be delivered in ways that best suits the customer beyond a staff role. A short, easy-to-remember telephone number—311—makes it easy for customers to call with service needs.

**Offer volunteer opportunities.** Mankato’s volunteer program offers an opportunity for residents to get involved and make a difference. Volunteer efforts enhance quality of life. It helps beautify city parks, creates tree stewards, provides assistance at the animal impound or Sibley Farm in Mankato and helps bolster the Community Emergency Response Team and Volunteers in Police Service groups. City staff serve through



*Volunteers help care for flowers in Sibley Park, 900 Mound Avenue.*

efforts including youth summer fishing and soccer programs as well as area programming and events, such as the Tapestry Project, Kiwanis Holiday of Lights and Mankato Marathon, to name a few.

#### Next steps

**Begin strategic planning process.** Conduct survey through National Research Center and use information to engage citizens and set the stage for strategic planning priorities.

**Build organizational capacity.** Continue to look for new and effective ways to provide service delivery. Partner with jurisdictions to help ensure customer needs are met and resources are used effectively.

**Grow feedback and engagement opportunities.** Continue to seek citizen feedback on city projects and initiatives and build engagement opportunities. Upcoming opportunities include citizen and business satisfaction survey being done cooperatively with Mankato Area Public Schools.

**Recognize volunteers.** Due to volunteers' significance, city staff will continue to look for ways to recognize them for their efforts. An example is Malda Farnham Park for her more than 25 years of volunteer service to the city of Mankato.

**Monitoring state and local issues.** Since issues such as regional transportation can impact local jurisdictions, the Mankato City Council and staff will continue to work with the League of Minnesota Cities and Greater Mankato Growth to keep current on these issues and how they may impact the community.

## Our opportunities

**Increase and enhance citizen engagement.** Continue to expand engagement efforts to be mindful of diversity in age, gender, race and income. Determine best ways to work with citizens to help ensure adequate feedback about city projects and plans.

**Recognize volunteers.** Explore cost effective and meaningful ways to implement volunteer recognitions.

# Be a good steward of resources and the environment

Since resources are key to community livability, quality of life and growth, environmental stewardship and the ecological footprint is needed to be sustainable. Through stewardship, a difference can be made in how the environment is impacted and resources are best provided.



*A quiet evening in Sibley Park, 900 Mound Avenue, by Missy Manderfeld, Mankato.*

## Commitment: Improve parks and green spaces.

**Land purchased for a natural resources park.** Mankato purchased the Sanger, and Guaranteed Sand and Gravel properties, along Highway 66 and County Road 90, to form a jointly-owned natural resources park with Blue Earth County. A grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources helped cover purchase cost. A nature-based recreation area, this park would be used for hiking, fishing, kayaking/canoeing and river access. An open house was held for citizens to provide feedback about park usage.

### Next steps

**Determine phased-funding, development strategy and prioritize needs.** Now that voters approved a local sales tax extension, work moves forward to develop a financial strategy for funding to maintain existing structures and possible expansion.

## Our opportunities

**Partnerships are essential.** Collaborate with the community and institutions for success. Realistically, without partnerships there's no capacity to move forward with park and green space investments relying only on local sales tax.

**Continue to create citizen engagement opportunities.** Finding ways to involve and engage citizens on development of a natural resources park is key. Opportunities include establishing ways to engage citizens on recommended park improvements and hold an annual meeting for neighborhood associations.

## Commitment: Environmental and resource stewardship.

**Resource sustainability.** As one of around 100 cities recognized by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's GreenStep Cities program, Mankato, a Step Two GreenStep City, has implemented best practices that help achieve sustainability goals and cost savings, reduce energy use and encourage innovation. Over the past year, city staff has focused on energy efficiencies throughout the city.

**Partnerships create efficiencies and savings.** Mankato participates in two cost saving energy agreements which greatly contribute to energy savings for the long-term:

- ◆ Solar subscription agreements with Geronimo Energy for a total energy savings estimated at \$1.41 million over a 25-year period or approximately \$56,000 per year.
- ◆ Guaranteed energy savings agreement with Ameresco, provides \$4.6 million in improvements to city facilities and street lighting. Improvements will be paid for by the nearly \$330,000 per year of energy, operations and maintenance savings over a 17-year period.

**Increased recycling.** Decreased waste. More than 2,000 tons of materials were recycled over the past year. When recycling, less waste goes into the landfill or is incinerated. This better positions Mankato in the future because the state has moved to lessen the amount of landfill since water quality can be negatively impacted.

**Reduced carbon footprint.** Sustainable efforts helped reduce the city's carbon footprint by 2,600 metric tons per year.

**Volunteers add to organic recycling efforts.** Another organics recycling location was added for citizen convenience. In addition to the Public Works Center, 501 South Victory Drive, Sibley Park, 901 Mound Avenue, near the animal impound, is also a drop-off site.

**Street lighting replaced with Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs).** A savings of \$19,000 annually was achieved when Madison Avenue lights were replaced with LEDs. This is the largest change-out of lights done in Minnesota without public incentive. This year, the Monks Avenue and Stadium corridor



*Lighting your way in Sibley Parkway by Erick Raygor, Lake Crystal.*

street lights are scheduled for LED replacements. The cost savings is expected to be about \$4,000 per year or approximately \$72,000 over a 20-year period.

**Protect water resources.** Since Mankato's water is one of the city's most important resources, a key initiative is to continue to be a good steward of the environment:

- ◆ With 75 percent of the city's water being drawn from shallow river wells, there's less reliance on deep aquifers. This decision aligns with scientific concern that an aquifer cannot replenish as quickly as the water being drawn from it.
- ◆ Through its treatment process, water is safe, soft and is of high quality to meet and exceed state standards. Mankato's lawn conservation program to limit lawn watering to every other day helps decrease water treatment costs and gives equipment longevity.
- ◆ Mankato's advanced wastewater treatment process helps ensure reuse water (effluent) sent to the river is of the highest quality. A partnership with a local energy company helps ensure an extremely low amount of phosphorous is discharged.
- ◆ Use from deep wells is also reduced because of the partnership with a local energy company. They use reclaimed water for cooling rather than relying on new water. By using the water for cooling, water from collector and deep well use is reduced, saving about five million gallons of water a day.
- ◆ Reclaimed water is also used in the wastewater treatment process, irrigation in Riverfront Park and green spaces, and street sweeping. Staff also works with landscapers to use reclaimed water for sod management.
- ◆ The addition of a water reclamation facility at the wastewater treatment plant results in an extremely low phosphorous discharged into the Minnesota River.
- ◆ Since more than 3,500 square miles of land funnel water through Mankato, storm water management is key to help manage run-off and decrease erosion. Storm water ponds help protect against floods, filter pollutants before water flows back to river and controls amount of water discharged into river. Programs are in place to help ensure run-off doesn't end up in the storm drain system.

**Mankato water treatment plant achieves significant water savings.** Mankato's water treatment plant upgrades achieve a water savings averaging 500,000 gallons a day (equal to daily

usage of a population of 5,000 people) and reduce impact on groundwater resources by 184 million gallons a year. Mankato was recognized with an environmental stewardship award for its water reclamation treatment process by the Minnesota chapter of the American Public Works Association.

### **Next steps**

**Continued focus on water protection and preservation.**

Ensure high-quality reuse water (effluent) is discharged to the river. Also, staff will review ways to preserve current water resources and be environmentally friendly. With the expansion of the local energy center, it's expected that they will use about five million gallons a day of effluent once fully built. Currently, approximately 2.5 million gallons a day are being used.

**Storm water management.** Review processes so water flow from storm water ponds is managed in the best way possible.

**Increase enhanced service opportunities.** Look for ways to better provide services to the public.

## Our opportunities

**Look for more ways to conserve water.** Reducing water usage positively impacts Mankato's water supply and the environment.

**Locate funding for storm water management.** Since water quality is impacted by what goes into the river, managing erosion and runoff (including urban and rural development) needs to be included because they affect the Minnesota River basin.

**Increase quality and use of reclaimed water.** Continue to look for ways to enhance quality of effluent before it goes back to the river; as well as other methods of using treated wastewater.

**Continue to meet Title 22 requirements.** Mankato's water reclamation facility was designed to treat effluent to California Title 22 because of their high standards in treating and reusing wastewater. As revisions are made to these standards, city staff must look for ways to continue to meet them.

**Develop strategy to engage surrounding jurisdictions.** Work with other cities and counties on efforts to help take the burden of erosion and water quality off of Mankato taxpayers.

*A view of the Minnesota River and downtown Mankato, by Todd Hanselman, Mankato.*

# Be a good steward of resources and the environment

## **Commitment: Invest in transportation.**

### **Focus on area's long-range transportation needs.**

Mankato's long-range transportation plan helps guide, identify and address the area's long-range needs. It's key to grow use of the Mankato Regional Airport, which state and federal funding have helped modernize to be a vibrant hub for business aeronautics and Minnesota State University, Mankato's accredited aviation program.

### **Continue to keep Mankato's streets drivable into the future.**

Street investments continue to be a priority. Mankato's roads have a paver rating of 79.7 percent. These ratings show overall road condition and performance. Staff will use Mankato's complete streets plan to help ensure street drivability, a balanced transportation system for automobiles, transit, bikes and pedestrians and focus on traffic efficiencies and safety.

**Bike lanes added.** More than 40 miles of bike lanes have been added to Mankato streets as part of the city's complete streets plan. In addition to recreation, Mankato's well-connected bike lanes throughout the city provide another transportation option.

**City bus ridership is up.** Mass transit service continues to be a viable transportation option. Over the last year, there's been a 5 percent increase in bus ridership—up from 763,315 to 784,738 passengers. At this level of use, the current system is at capacity.

## **Next steps**

**Complete Riverfront Drive corridor study.** Once study is finished and results analyzed, work will move forward to ensure Riverfront Drive operates safely and efficiently for its multiple users—automobiles, freight, transit, pedestrians and bicyclists.



*Riverfront Drive in Old Town by AJ Dahm, Mankato.*

**Begin work on Adams Street extension.** Federal funding positions this project to move forward to open up community transportation options and orderly and sustainable development on the east side of the city. This project helps increase tax base and service efficiencies, which contribute to economic vitality. In addition, the extension will help enhance safety while increasing traffic flow. Also included as part of this project is adding a sidewalk on Adams Street.

**Complete transit development plan.** This plan will guide Mankato's transit system for the next five years. Framework from most recent transit redesign study will be used and includes evaluation and recommendations for: program goals and objectives, enhanced operations/service design, capital improvement planning, funding models, management structure and partnerships. The study will address factors influencing



*Mankato is a multimodal city with options for bicyclists, automobiles and freight. Other transportation choices include transit and walking (pedestrian).*

public transit use, including parking supply and policy, fares, schedules, route design, amenities, marketing and land use, to name a few. Short-range (five years) and long-range (10 years) elements will be included.

**Safe Routes to School next steps.** A \$229,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program will be used for traffic calming and crosswalk improvements at the intersection of Riverfront Drive and Sibley Street. Construction is expected to begin this year.

In addition, the city has received a \$356,000 grant provided by the Minnesota Department of Transportation for the Safe Routes to School transportation alternatives program to install sidewalks on:

- ◆ Pfau Street (from Main Street to Madison Avenue)
- ◆ Division Street (from Glencrest Drive to East Main Street)
- ◆ Capital Drive (from McConnell to Pfau streets)
- ◆ McConnell Street (from Emerson Lane to Fair Street)
- ◆ Dane Street (from Lori Lane to Madison Avenue)

**Balance local and regional transportation.** Focus on increasing and balancing local and regional transportation because a solid multimodal system helps ensure people, goods and services can travel safely and efficiently.

**Trail developments.** It's anticipated that another mile of trails will be added during the next construction season.

Locations include:

- ◆ Highway 22 (between Bassett Drive and Hoffman Road)
- ◆ Adams Street (between Roosevelt Circle and County State Aid Highway 12)
- ◆ Hoffman Road (between Prairie Winds Drive and County State Aid Highway 12)

## Our opportunities

**Partner with jurisdictions.** Work with area counties and cities to further help develop regional transportation to benefit the public since roads extend beyond jurisdictional lines.

**Develop private and public partnerships.** Evaluate partnerships to increase efficiencies. For example, snow plowing partnerships allow city staff to concentrate on city streets while the private sectors would manage parking ramps.

**Continue efforts on Safe Routes to School.** Staff will look for opportunities to complete routes throughout the city to help enhance safety for students walking to school.

*A look down Main Street hill by  
Todd Hanselman, Mankato.*

# Working together to build community

**Build local community assets to inspire.** By intentionally designing public spaces for people rather than place and taking a multifaceted approach in planning, designing and management, the community can be positively impacted. Diverse partnerships with citizens, nonprofits, the private sector and organizations help make Mankato a better place. When people come together to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces (known as placemaking), it helps strengthen their connection to the community they live in. All can make a difference in what the community has to offer.

## Commitment: Build community assets that inspire and leave a legacy.

Our accomplishments

### Performing Arts Center and civic center expansion completed.

This space provides an intimate setting with outstanding acoustics for concerts, events and seating capacity for up to 2,000. An auditorium features 21,000 square feet of exhibit floor space for tradeshow, conventions and holiday parties.

The civic center expansion provides added benefit because ice can remain in arena on a full-time basis. With Minnesota State University, Mankato Maverick Division 1 men's and women's hockey being in the civic center on a regular basis it has created additional opportunities for youth hockey ice time.

Part of the expansion also includes three additional meeting rooms, which is expected to result in a 33 percent increase in bookings of conventions, tradeshow and expos. All create a positive economic impact in the community.

**Vetter Stone Plaza completion.** Made possible through a generous donation by Vetter Stone Company, the plaza uses Minnesota stone, native to the area and used around the world, at the new outdoor space of the performing arts center. Located at Second and Walnut Streets, Vetter Stone Plaza creates a gathering space that draws off of natural beauty and includes art which builds from a compressed image of the Minnesota River.

**Mural on Mankato's flood wall completed.** The mural, which features the Minnesota River, was added to the flood wall near Reconciliation Park. Work is a result of community feedback and was made possible through support and grants.

**National designation as bronze Bicycle-Friendly Community.** Cities of Mankato and North Mankato were re-designated a "bronze" Bicycle Friendly Community. The Bicycle Friendly Community program revolutionizes the way communities evaluate their quality of life, sustainability and transportation networks, while benchmarking progress toward improving bicycle-friendliness. Successful communities have a mix of citizen advocates, visionary leaders and responsive staff.

**Wish becomes a reality.** One of the recently fulfilled Mankato Wish Book items is the Sibley Park "Giving Barn" wish thanks to the Mankato Area Foundation. Within the barn, Blue Earth Agricultural History is featured to show significance of agriculture in the region.

## Next steps

**Develop mural on Riverfront Drive.** Funding has been secured to create a mural on Riverfront Drive. The arts help contribute to quality of life.

**Promote the performing arts center, civic center plaza and Vetter Stone Plaza.** As Mankato destinations, work with Visit Mankato and the City Center Partnership can help promote these venues to the public.

**Continue to engage community to help create community assets.** Look for other ways citizens can build on assets. A lot gets accomplished when individuals step forward to help make the city's wish list a reality.

**Promote Mankato's Wish Book.** Encourage citizens to leave a legacy through the opportunities in the Wish Book, or to share their ideas for the legacy they'd like to leave.

## Our opportunities

**Provide variety of opportunities for citizens to share ideas.** Engage citizens by providing multiple options to communicate ideas for city opportunities.

**Gather feedback.** Ensure adequate feedback from the community when working on community assets or legacy ideas.

Evening view of Mankato's Performing Arts Center, 1 Civic Center Plaza.



## Commitment: Create partnerships.

### Our accomplishments

**Natural resources area is a joint project.** Mankato and Blue Earth County recently partnered on a natural resources park for nature-based recreation along Highway 66 and County Road 90 (Sanger, and Guaranteed Sand and Gravel properties). This partnership will expand park space in the area.

**Continued focus on arts and culture.** Twin Rivers Center for the Arts serves as the city's arts commission. The arts community and city center contribute to economic vitality and community livability. Examples include the Mankato Marathon, CityArt Walking Sculpture contest, annual photo contest winner wrapped on signal box, flood wall mural art, Tapestry Project and Kiwanis Holiday Lights, to name a few.

**Collaborative joint organizations.** The Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) is a planning partnership of the cities of Mankato, North Mankato, Eagle Lake, and Skyline; Blue Earth and Nicollet counties; and Belgrade, Lime, South Bend, LeRay and Mankato townships and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. MAPO maintains a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive metropolitan transportation planning process to provide maximum service to citizens.

**Partnered to educate about local sales tax option.** The cities of Mankato and North Mankato along with Greater Mankato Growth aligned to educate about the extension of the local sales tax option. Seventy two percent of Mankato voters approved the extension.

**Housing study completed.** The Mankato Area Housing Study provides an analysis of overall area housing needs and includes North Mankato and Eagle Lake, other jurisdictions in greater Mankato.

### Next steps

**Secure legislation for local sales tax extension.** Upon legislator approval, work can move forward on the city's long-range plan. Staff will develop a timeframe for implementation projects the



tax revenue can be used toward. Additionally, sales tax allows other matching funds from federal, state and private sources to support proposed projects. It will also help fund regional partnerships, so work with Greater Mankato Growth and the Sports Commission could lead to development of a regional strategy for existing infrastructure.

**Meet other jurisdictions on regional topics.** Work with North Mankato staff to discuss regional parks and sales taxes.

**Work with county and school policy boards.** Continue to work with Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners and the Mankato Area Public School Board on projects and themes in best interest of public.

**Bi-annually review of housing trends.** Continue to analyze and review housing trends. Include use of information from realtor groups.

## Our opportunities

**Work with private development on housing.** Ensure living options are available and supported by private development.



*Flood wall reimaged  
by Julie Thorleifson, Mankato.*

# Build a high-performing organization through city employees

A lean organization with approximately 300 full-time employees, city of Mankato staff provide a level of quality services to meet public expectations. To be a high-performing organization, staff continues to look for ways to be more efficient, effective and innovative; have a higher level of customer satisfaction and loyalty; and engage employees by creating leaders at all levels while also increasing job satisfaction. Efforts to take this to the next level lays the groundwork for the organization's next five-year strategic plan.

## **Commitment: Develop strategy to retain, compensate and provide growth and learning opportunities for employees.**

Our accomplishments

**Organizational values determined and leadership philosophy communicated.** Employee feedback (more than 50 percent participation) resulted in articulating how the city serves the public, how staff work together and how the city leads as an organization to best serve the public. The organization has staff who care about making a difference and do challenging work that has purpose, makes a positive impact and serves the greater good of community and region. The city's vision, public



*Mankato's public utilities staff test water.*

service principles, core values and leadership philosophy will serve as the foundation for Mankato's next five-year strategic plan.

**Investment in employees.** Opportunities and training ensure continuous improvement. Around 40 Mankato staff were trained about high-performing organization model and how to facilitate. Mankato's new orientation program (Infuse) was introduced to help new employees be effective and become familiar with Mankato's mission to work cross-departmentally, and learn how the overall organization operates. Since compensation is factor of employee retention, a salary study has been completed and reviewed to align with regional centers of a similar market size. Employee investment and retention contributes to being a high-performing organization.

**Recognized for participation in national and statewide racial equity cohort.** Mankato joined other cities, including St. Paul, Brooklyn Center, Duluth and Bloomington, in Minnesota and the nation as part of a yearlong racial equity cohort. The work staff are doing lays the foundation for advancing racial equity, a priority for the city. A training series provided to employees launched the effort to build understanding about racial equity. An organizational plan is being drafted to develop strategies and actions to help ensure equity among people in policymaking, practices, programs, services and budgets.

**Encourage and promote employee volunteerism.** While Mankato staff have professional roles with the city of Mankato organization, they can also make a difference by serving as volunteers in the community.

*Mankato seen from the river  
by Jack Madsen, Good Thunder*

### **Next steps**

**Build a higher performing organization.** Encourage and empower employees to make decisions using the city’s vision, public service principles, core values and leadership philosophy and supporting those decisions. Encourage multiskilling; seek staff training and leadership opportunities to help city staff hone their skills.

**Complete organizational racial equity plan.** Since cultural make-up of the community is changing, an understanding of changes and needs will help the city continuously improve in the area of racial equity.

**More effective customer service.** Develop a policy to communicate a commitment to customer service and a dedication to first-call resolve whenever feasible.

### **Our opportunities**

**Ingrain vision, service principles, core values and leadership philosophy in Mankato’s work culture.** Contribute to a high-performing organization. Simple and repeatable principles contribute to a high-performing organization that link competencies and evaluation.

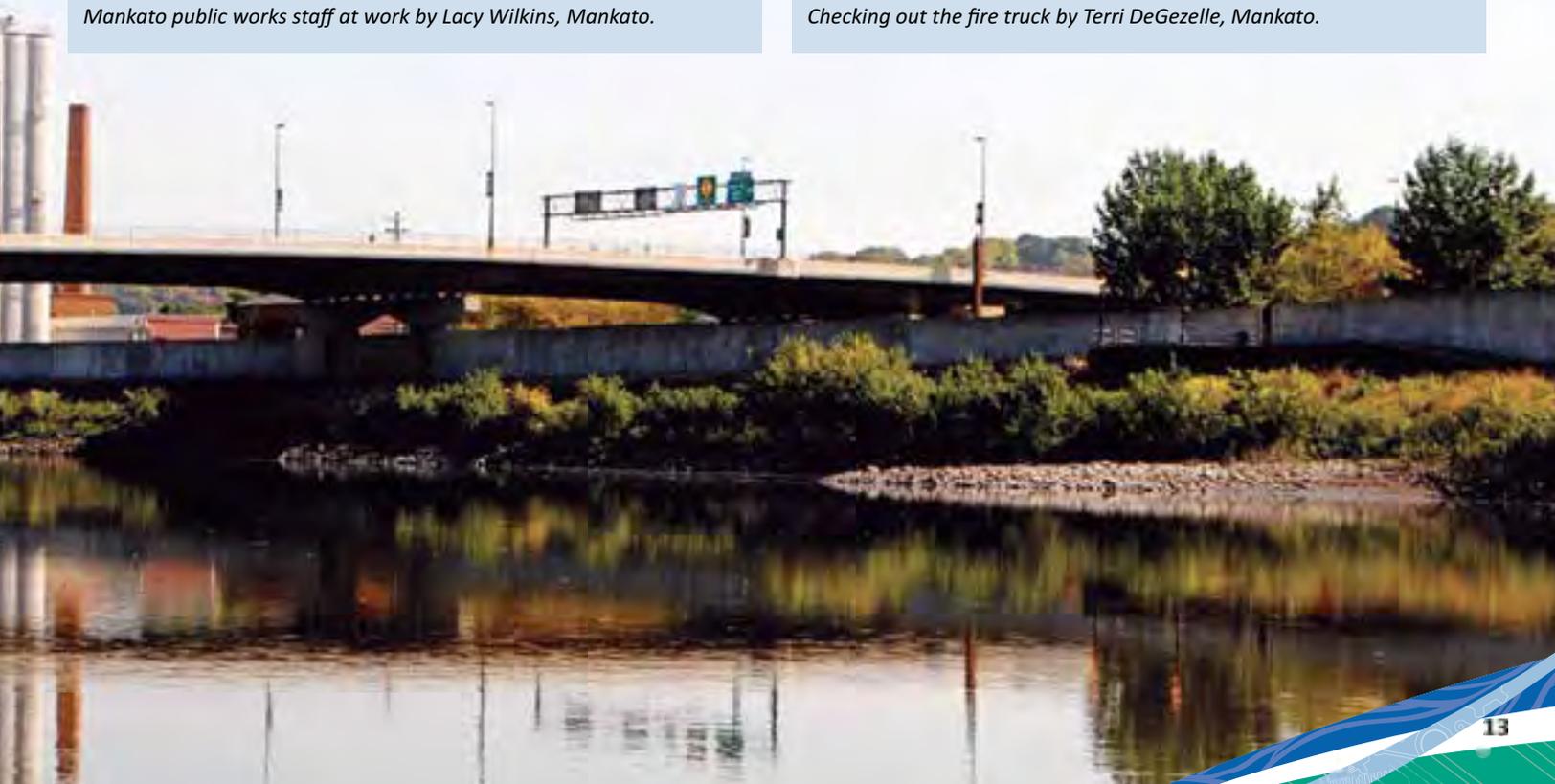
**Engage staff to understand racial equity and how it impacts their work.** Provide opportunities to learn about racial equity. Seek staff feedback on the racial equity plan; develop a racial equity tool that can be used when making city decisions.



*Mankato public works staff at work by Lacy Wilkins, Mankato.*



*Checking out the fire truck by Terri DeGezelle, Mankato.*



# Building for the future

## Sound financial planning and investments in assets

A focus on finances and assets is key to a sustainable future. Since it's important for citizens to have a solid understanding of what their government is doing, a continued commitment to its accountability, efficiency and effectiveness will remain. In addition to transparency, Mankato staff have an elevated emphasis on major transportation projects, street maintenance, transportation and growth of regional assets. Next steps will be an important focus.

### Commitments: Sound financial planning.

**A new financial system is in place.** The goals in selecting Mankato's new financial system include that it be transparent, provide clear, complete and easy-to-understand information and has analytics for better spending and revenue tracking. Accounts payable, general ledger and the budget have been implemented. A utility audit of 14,000 accounts ensures accuracy before activating the utility billing module.

**Restructured budget.** Mankato's budget has been restructured with the goals of creating transparency, clearly identifying priorities and providing a more in-depth look at city finances. Now a fund-based budget, it's easier to track and follow spending and shows how funds are transferred within the organization to fund operations. This new structure aligns with the city's organizational principles—responsive, efficient, greater good, innovation, spirit of openness and neighborly.

**Created solid financial foundation through less debt.** Mankato continues to hold a strong AA credit rating. Policies are in place to improve debt management and borrowing in general for operating and capital replacing costs. A strategy is to use the pay-as-you-go model rather than incurring debt to maintain existing facilities and assets.

## Next steps

**Continue to build financial system.** Accounts receivable and human resources, including payroll, will be added to help increase transparency, staff efficiency and effectiveness through items such as report management. Utilities, permits and licenses will also be added to the system. All will help improve processes, efficiencies, accuracies and billing consistency.

**Develop model to help ensure adequate service level is provided and reinvestment in assets.** Solid financial and debt management principles have helped Mankato become less reliant on Local Government Aid (LGA). Due to market shift, the city may pay a greater share of property taxes while receiving less state aid.

### Commitments: Investments in assets.

**Capital asset plan review completed.** An asset planning framework was developed with Ameresco to help review and optimize capital and operating needs. As part of this, capital funding was also reviewed. Results helped map a plan for decision-making, including investment spending impacts on capital asset planning, asset sustainment, financial stewardship and stakeholder impact.

**Community Investment Plan updated.** Projects and funding for Mankato's Community Investment Plan have been identified for the next year as the city begins another five-year capital improvement process. Public feedback helped shape plan development.

**Mass transit facility completed.** Work on the mass transit facility is complete. The facility complies with sustainable building guidelines and positions the city to become a regional mass transit provider. Within the facility, there is more interior bus storage space, a maintenance area and bus wash to help maintain and preserve these assets.

*Intergovernmental Center,  
10 Civic Center Plaza*



### **Mankato's civic center expansion completed in collaboration.**

- ◆ Mankato's civic center, a premier regional facility, creates economic value. The expansion provides more opportunities for new business. Additions include Minnesota State University, Mankato Maverick Division 1 men's and women's hockey teams and visiting team locker rooms, training and conditioning spaces, hockey operations, coaches' offices, team and recruiting spaces.
- ◆ A performing arts center with outstanding acoustics provides space for concerts and events in an intimate setting that seats 2,000.
- ◆ Vetter Stone Plaza made possible through generous Vetter Stone Company donation serves as outdoor space of the performing arts center.

### **Old Town Master Plan adopted by the Mankato City Council.**

Plan elements include:

- ◆ Preservation and culture.
- ◆ Renaissance and renewal.
- ◆ Connections and linkages.
- ◆ Partnerships to build a village.

Key initiatives are pedestrian/connectivity enhancements, traffic modifications, historic preservation, incorporation of public art, commercial and residential rehabilitation, design standards compatible with established building mass and composition, redevelopment opportunities and forming partnerships. While plan adoption does not specifically approve each potential project or implementation tactic, it provides a framework. Public feedback helped shape the Old Town Master plan.

**Sales tax extension approved.** Since voters approved to extend Mankato's local half-percent sales tax, there will be revenue, other than property tax, to help improve existing and future infrastructure needs and other quality of life projects to support vitality of assets that provide benefit to the community.

### **Next steps**

**Maximize investment.** Develop criteria to help evaluate and prioritize public projects. Citizen feedback will be important as city projects are prioritized.

### **Build a more comprehensive Community Investment Plan.**

Since needs are greater than resources, to help better plan, prioritize and identify needed projects, an idea is to increase the city's five-year Community Investment Plan to 10 years.

**Elevate promotion of civic center, a premier facility, with partners.** Continue to promote the civic center and performing arts center as a premier regional facility by working with the City Center Partnership and Visit Mankato.

**Prioritize community needs and plans.** Expanding use of revenue from the local sales tax option will finance \$47 million in construction and improvement of public safety emergency communications, flood control and levy system improvements, regional water quality, expansion of multimodal transit facilities, existing and new recreational facilities, matching grants for publicly owned historic museum, supportive housing, senior citizen center and improvements to governmental entities outside the city of Mankato.

## **Our opportunities**

**Develop strategy to work with less LGA.** In anticipation of less local state government aid, develop a strategy to help reduce taxpayer burden.

**Explore funding solutions.** Look for opportunities to maintain facilities and assets without incurring debt.



*Old Town storefronts on Riverfront Drive by Shoshana Bruner, Mankato.*

*Mankato's mass transit facility at the Public Works Center, 501 South Victory Drive.*

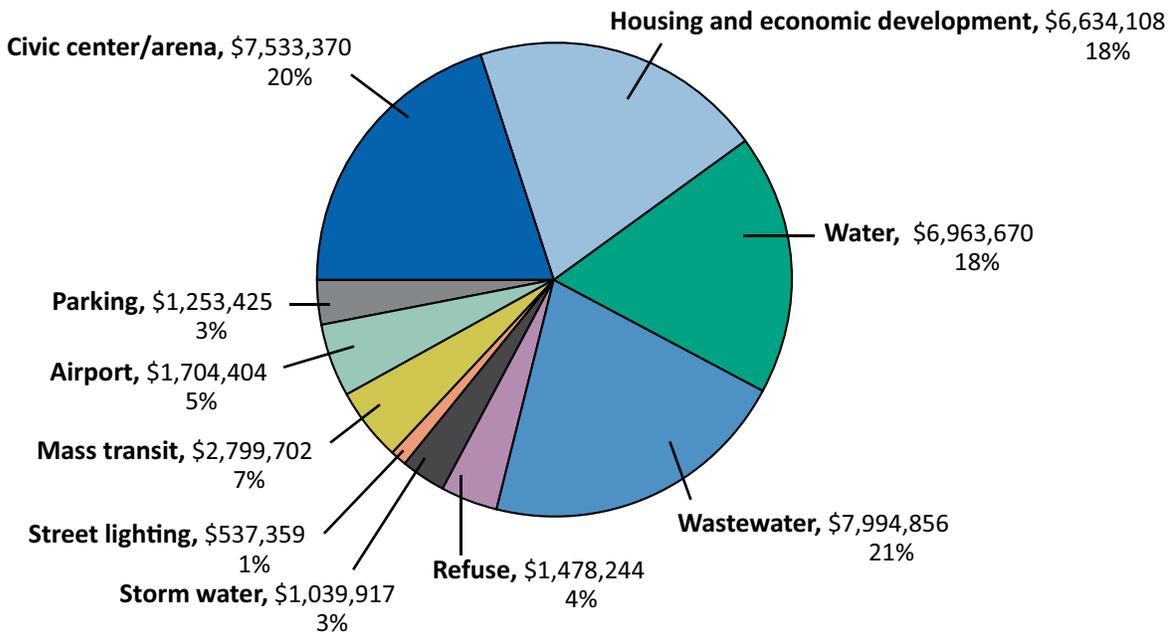
# A look at your finances

Financial information as of December 31, 2015.

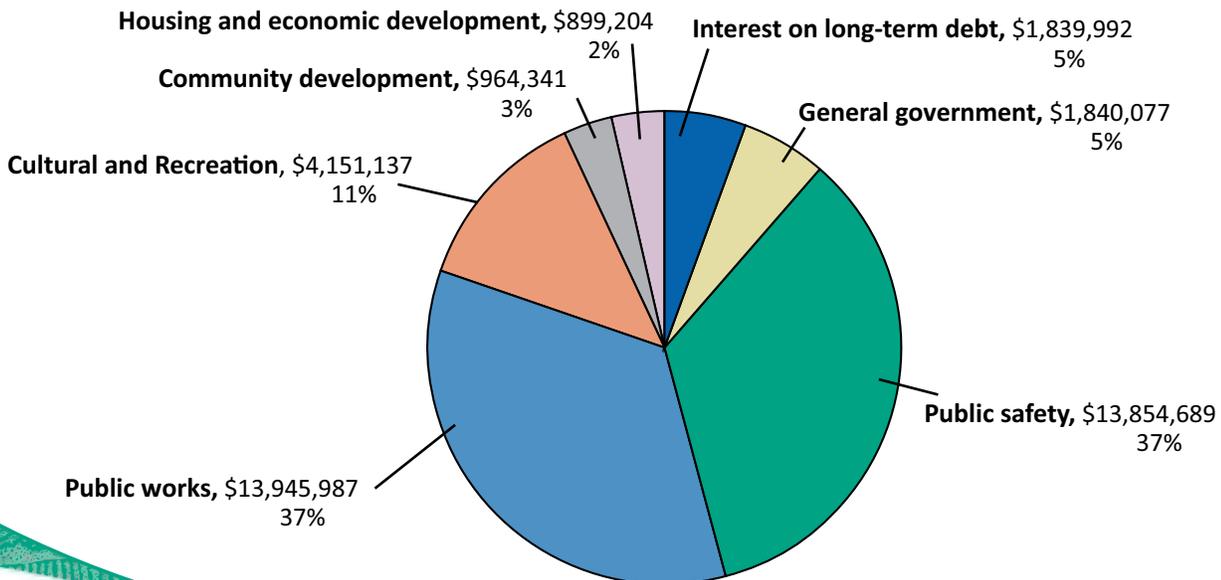
| City of Mankato balance sheet |                      |                        |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
|                               | Government activity  | Business-type activity | Total                |
| Assets                        | \$216,233,314        | \$234,815,055          | \$451,048,369        |
| Liabilities                   | \$81,390,953         | \$73,812,649           | \$155,203,602        |
| <b>Total net position</b>     | <b>\$134,842,361</b> | <b>\$161,002,406</b>   | <b>\$295,844,767</b> |

| City of Mankato statement of activities |                     |                        |                     |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
|   | Government activity | Business-type activity | Total               |
| Revenues                                | \$16,026,315        | \$48,901,768           | \$64,928,083        |
| Expenses                                | \$37,495,427        | \$37,939,055           | \$75,434,482        |
| Transfers                               | \$25,348,825        | \$7,157,704            | \$32,506,529        |
| <b>Increase in net position</b>         | <b>\$3,879,713</b>  | <b>\$18,120,417</b>    | <b>\$22,000,130</b> |

## STATEMENT OF BUSINESS-TYPE ACTIVITY EXPENDITURES



## STATEMENT OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES



## City of Mankato fast facts

|                       |  | 2011         | 2012         | 2013         | 2014         | 2015         | 2016         |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Population            | Population   | 39,967       | 40,459       | 40,409       | 40,837       | 41,044       | 41,406       |
|                       | Annual population change (percentage)  | 0.08%        | 1.2%         | -0.1%        | 0.9%         | 1.6%         | 1.4%         |
| Civic Center          | Civic Center economic impact   | \$40,659,089 | \$40,267,657 | \$41,623,559 | \$39,882,629 | \$42,836,939 | \$41,010,277 |
|                       | Number of events   | 444          | 433          | 428          | 436          | 362          | 477          |
|                       | Total attendance   | 207,126      | 204,433      | 212,808      | 199,435      | 204,711      | 220,045      |
| Community Development | Building inspections performed   | 4,470        | 4,100        | 3,552        | 4,100        | 3,607        | 3,469        |
|                       | New single family, detached  | 70           | 53           | 96           | 49           | 56           | 79           |
|                       | New Multi-family units   | 64           | 306          | 91           | 293          | 549          | 104*         |
|                       | Building permit valuation  | \$18,609,300 | \$28,603,300 | \$22,767,900 | \$33,344,500 | \$49,583,500 | \$29,273,800 |
| Public Information    | 311 total calls  | 28,642       | 29,175       | 30,199       | 36,228       | 49,388       | 48,403       |
|                       | City of Mankato social network subscribers   | 2,280        | 3,001        | 3,906        | 4,917        | 5,891        | 7,389        |
| Public Safety         | Part I crimes (violent)  | 1,963        | 2,056        | 1,893        | 1,599        | 1,765        | 1,509        |
|                       | Part II crimes (non-violent)   | 3,067        | 3,121        | 3,004        | 3,059        | 3,134        | 3,239        |
|                       | Structural building fires  | 21           | 32           | 23           | 25           | 27           | 25           |
|                       | Medical/Ambulance Assist Calls   | 1,167        | 1,162        | 1,260        | 1,564        | 1,725        | 1,714        |
|                       | All other fire calls   | 1,047        | 955          | 961          | 1,069        | 977          | 879          |
|                       | Number of volunteers (Volunteers in Police Service; part-time and reserves; Community Emergency Response Team) | 70           | 100          | 100          | 175          | 200          | 205          |
| Public Works          | Boulevard trees maintained   | 12,375       | 12,540       | 13,441       | 14,322       | 14,479       | 14,536       |
|                       | Parks maintained   | 45           | 45           | 48           | 48           | 49           | 49           |
|                       | Inches of snow plowed  | 98           | 37           | 48           | 48           | 42           | 37           |
|                       | Lane mileage maintained  | 428          | 430          | 439          | 465          | 482          | 485          |
| Public Utilities      | Annual amount of water treated (billion gallons)   | 1.866        | 1.974        | 1.8          | 1.8          | 1.84         | 1.85         |
|                       | Annual amount of wastewater treated (billion gallons)  | 3.137        | 2.396        | 2.6          | 2.94         | 2.931        | 3.158        |
|                       | Refuse processed (tons)  | 7,167.3      | 6,455.2      | 7,339.1      | 7,096.6      | 6,943.5      | 6,784.5      |
|                       | Recycling processed (tons)   | 1,916.8      | 1,758.9      | 1,631.6      | 1,511.8      | 2,291.5      | 2,255.3      |
| Transit               | Ridership  | 380,630      | 478,281      | 678,158      | 751,779      | 763,315      | 784,738      |
|                       | Route miles  | 269,350      | 273,461      | 267,901      | 297,321      | 335,803      | 341,044      |
|                       | Para transit - ridership   | 10,374       | 9,587        | 9,764        | 10,004       | 9,938        | 9,246        |

## How do our taxes compare?

|   | 2015 population | Taxable tax capacity | Tax capacity per capita | Average city tax rate | Actual city LGA | LGA per capita  | Certified city levy | City tax per capita | Average total NTC rate | City tax/LGA composition per capita |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Austin  | 25,111          | 10,898,972           | 434                     | 44.958%               | 7,984,340       | 318             | 4,900,000           | 195                 | 118.290%               | 513                                 |
| Duluth  | 86,597          | 64,694,048           | 747                     | 33.378%               | 29,264,120      | 338             | 21,631,077          | 250                 | 132.820%               | 588                                 |
| Mankato                                       | 41,727          | 38,085,304           | 913                     | 43.624%               | 6,938,495       | 166             | 16,620,526          | 398                 | 105.976%               | 564                                 |
| Moorhead                                      | 41,901          | 28,167,963           | 672                     | 39.452%               | 7,128,746       | 170             | 11,112,845          | 265                 | 120.917%               | 435                                 |
| Rochester                                     | 111,907         | 111,977,436          | 1001                    | 51.103%               | 7,190,925       | 64              | 57,224,405          | 511                 | 127.560%               | 575                                 |
| Saint Cloud                                   | 67,010          | 43,964,129           | 656                     | 47.191%               | 12,006,847      | 179             | 20,758,014          | 310                 | 129.667%               | 489                                 |
| Winona  | 27,591          | 17,973,699           | 651                     | 38.023%               | 9,800,483       | 355             | 6,839,353           | 248                 | 98.257%                | 603                                 |
| Comparative rank                              | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup>      | 2 <sup>nd</sup>         | 4 <sup>th</sup>       | 7 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup>     | 6 <sup>th</sup>     | 2 <sup>nd</sup>        | 4 <sup>th</sup>                     |
| Avg. greater MN cities over 25,000 population | 55,128          | 42,201,722           | 766                     | 44.811%               | 11,066,351      | 201             | 19,004,811          | 345                 | 125.722%               | 546                                 |
| Avg. metro cities 25,000-49,999               | 32,202          | 30,396,189           | 944                     | 42.986%               | 412,148         | 13              | 14,579,529          | 453                 | 124.936%               | 466                                 |

Comparative rank is set up to compare each city on a 1 to 8 basis, with 1 as the highest number and 8 as the lowest

## How does Mankato compare with other regional centers?

| Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) | 2015 core city population | MSA median house value | MSA median household income | MSA core city employment percentage | MSA unemployment rate | Minnesota city unemployment rank (MSA core city) | MSA core city retail sales (per capita) | National lowest cost of doing business rank (MSA) | MSA GDP growth % (2014-2015) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|---|------------------------------|
| Duluth                              | 86,597                    | \$147,300              | \$48,905                    | 96.30%                              | 4.7                   | 174  | \$17,584.46                             | 12  | -4.08%                       |
| Mankato                             | 41,727                    | \$172,400              | \$53,437                    | 97.40%                              | 2.8                   | 15   | \$29,044.29                             | 8   | 3.17%                        |
| Moorhead                            | 41,901                    | \$193,600              | \$54,590                    | 97.60%                              | 2.2                   | 2  | \$14,163.61                             | NR  | 1.29%                        |
| Rochester                           | 111,907                   | \$173,700              | \$64,897                    | 97.50%                              | 2.8                   | 15   | \$21,148.97                             | 31  | 2.88%                        |
| St. Cloud                           | 67,010                    | \$168,100              | \$55,603                    | 96.60%                              | 3.3                   | 47   | \$19,059.28                             | 11  | 2.82%                        |
| Comparative rank                    | 5 <sup>th</sup>           | 3 <sup>rd</sup>        | 4 <sup>th</sup>             | 3 <sup>rd</sup>                     | 2 <sup>nd</sup>       | 2 <sup>nd</sup>                                  | 1 <sup>st</sup>                         | 1 <sup>st</sup>                                   | 1 <sup>st</sup>              |

*Fountain on Minnesota State University, Mankato campus  
by Megan Westermayer, Mankato*





# NEW FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS 2017 TO 2022

Mankato's Strategic Plan is a road map that leads the way by guiding city decisions about service delivery.

## PHASE ONE – GATHER

January – March 2017

- ◆ Knowledge gathering and analysis
- ◆ Review and benchmarking of past and existing strategic plans
- ◆ Review of community indicators
- ◆ National citizen and business survey
- ◆ Mailed and web options
- ◆ Employee survey
- ◆ Intergovernmental meetings
- ◆ School district, cities, county, state and regional
- ◆ Senior leadership retreat



## PHASE TWO – REVIEW

March – May 2017

- ◆ Review inputs and analyze
- ◆ Discuss knowledge collected
- ◆ Community focus groups
- ◆ Define themes
- ◆ Council review



## PHASE THREE – STRATEGIC GOAL SETTING

May – July 2017

- ◆ Council retreat
- ◆ Define strategic response and implementation tactics
- ◆ Objectives
- ◆ Senior leadership retreat
- ◆ Key strategies
- ◆ Short- and long-term goals
- ◆ Departmental operational plans
- ◆ Draft plan



## PLAN PHASE FOUR – STRATEGIC PLAN DUE

July – September 2017

- ◆ Conduct final review of short- and long-term goals and key strategies
- ◆ Adopt Strategic Plan
- ◆ Communicate plan to internal and external audiences



## PHASE FIVE – IMPLEMENTATION

September – December 2017

- ◆ Bi-annual budget for 2018 - 2019
- ◆ Department operational plans
- ◆ Community Investment Plan
- ◆ Implementation progress reports and benchmarking

