

2018 Strategic Plan

- Connected and Accessible Community
- Educations, Arts and Culture
- Responsive, Efficient Government
- Strong Public/Private Partnerships

2022 Strategic Plan

- Safe and Welcoming Community
- Quality Communications and Engagement
- Effective Land Use

2024 Strategic Plan

- Connected and Accessible Community
 - Vibrant Arts and Culture Experiences
 - Responsive, Efficient Government
 - Strong Public/Private Partnerships
-
- Safe and Inclusive Community
 - Quality Communications and Engagement
 - Effective Land Use
-
- Strong and Reliable Infrastructure

Connected and Accessible Community

We pride ourselves on building and growing partnerships to achieve our vision. We partner with regional and state governments, nonprofits, the private sector, and neighborhood associations, to name a few. If you live, work, or play here, you want to be involved and you have a voice. Diverse interest groups work together to tackle problems. Neighborhood engagement efforts enable residents to express thoughts, visions, and concrete plans that build a connected and engaged community.

Whether you drive a car, take the bus, ride a bike or walk, getting around Freeport is easy. Public transportation is widespread, frequent, and reliable. Sidewalks, greenways, and nationally recognized bike facilities get us where we want to go safely and keep us active and healthy. State-of-the-art fiber networks support our emerging economy and connect every part of our community to every part of the world.

2018



2024



CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY

Goal:

Our community is easy to navigate and connected globally by high-speed internet connections. Whether you drive a car, use Pretzel City transit, a ride-share or taxi, ride a bike, or walk, getting around Freeport is easy. Public transportation is widespread, frequent, and reliable. Sidewalks, greenways, and nationally recognized bike facilities get us where we want to go safely keeping us active and healthy.

Key Strategies:

- Support Fiber Network Expansion through public/private partnership
- Increase bike lanes and bike/pedestrian pathways to major attractions, i.e., schools, downtown, parks, shopping, Jane Addams and Pecatonica River Trails
- Explore expansion of Pretzel City Area Transit (PCAT) services for a possible route in addition to on-demand services
- Support the Dubuque/Rockford passenger rail committee to bring a train/commuter stop to Freeport

RECENT PROGRESS



A complete 5G network is growing and will be in place for all residents in the next few years



Bike path projects have received grants for improvements and expansion



Ride-share policies have been passed to allow ride-share programs to operate in Freeport

Premier Education, Arts and Culture

Freeport ensures the best education for our young people and adults. We support an environment that recruits and retains the best teachers while attracting families. Freeport takes pride in working with institutes of higher learning that educate our future leaders, train our workforce, and foster our entrepreneurs. Our institutions afford the opportunity for all citizens to reach their highest potential through education and career training.

Freeport's arts and culture sector offers people of all ages opportunities to learn and participate in extraordinary cultural and outdoor experiences. Distinctive cultural districts are linked to Freeport's bustling commercial districts. Open spaces, bike paths, parks, greenways, community gardens, and edible landscapes are abundant throughout the city. The river is accessible for recreation and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

2018



2024



VIBRANT ARTS AND CULTURE EXPERIENCES



Goal:

Freeport's art and culture sector offers extraordinary cultural events, learning opportunities, and outdoor experiences for people of all ages. Distinctive cultural districts are linked to Freeport's bustling commercial districts. Open spaces, bike paths, parks, and greenways are abundant throughout the city. The river is accessible for recreation and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

Key Strategies:

- Launch the Arts and Culture Commission
- Support cultural festivals and events to engage and build connections among diverse groups
- Facilitate Art Museum transition to new location
- Explore the establishment of an Art District and Cultural District

RECENT PROGRESS



Chicago Avenue Streetscape
Project completed

Responsive, Efficient Government and Public/Private Partnerships

Our City responds quickly to community needs through open channels of communication internally and with the community. We use our debt capacity and revenue wisely in order to maintain and improve the City's infrastructure. We strive to control our costs and still provide the highest possible level of service. We have a diverse revenue base that enables us to plan far into the future and to benefit from our growth. City government is trusted and transparent. We use the latest technologies and methods to communicate with, engage, and empower community participants.

Our public and private partners have a demonstrated unity of purpose. Our individual and corporate citizens generously invest in our community through partnerships and public/private projects that enrich the quality of life in the city.

2018



2024



RESPONSIVE, EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT



Goal:

Freeport's City Government responds quickly to community needs through open channels of communication internally and with the community. We use our debt capacity and revenue wisely to maintain and improve the City's infrastructure. We strive to control costs while providing the highest possible level of service. We have a diverse revenue base that enables us to plan for growth far into the future. The city government is trusted and transparent. The community is empowered to participate with the Government using the latest technologies and communication methods.

Key Strategies:

- Increase forgivable loan and grant programs to maximize taxpayer dollars
- Facilitate cross-department collaboration and use of technology to improve efficiency, explore project management software
- Increase staff development and succession planning efforts by using Individual Development Plans to map career paths and continuing education
- Complete a job audit and update of job descriptions and staffing map
- Integrate the Capital Improvement Plan with the City's Comprehensive Plan (timeline) and the Strategic Plan (priorities) to ensure alignment of funding and implementation

RECENT PROGRESS



More than \$33 million in grant and forgivable loan funding has been secured over the past 3 years from outside Freeport to improve our streets, fire and police service, and neighborhoods



Succession planning efforts have led to internal promotions and retention improvements



Capital Improvement Plans are in place

Responsive, Efficient Government and Public/ Private Partnerships

Our City responds quickly to community needs through open channels of communication internally and with the community. We use our debt capacity and revenue wisely in order to maintain and improve the City's infrastructure. We strive to control our costs and still provide the highest possible level of service. We have a diverse revenue base that enables us to plan far into the future and to benefit from our growth. City government is trusted and transparent. We use the latest technologies and methods to communicate with, engage, and empower community participants.

Our public and private partners have a demonstrated unity of purpose. Our individual and corporate citizens generously invest in our community through partnerships and public/private projects that enrich the quality of life in the city.

2018



2024



STRONG PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS



Goal:

Public and private partners are aligned and create clear value for the citizens of Freeport and its partners. We work closely with local, regional, and statewide economic development partners by aligning our work with shared resources. Individual and corporate citizens generously invest in our community through partnerships, including public/private projects that enrich the quality of life in the city.

Key Strategies:

- Economic Development - increase activity and partnership efforts to:
 - improve retention of existing industry
 - attract new industry and business to create jobs
 - engage with area workforce development partners to increase access to a skilled workforce
 - establish shovel-ready sites for new business development
 - provide support for small businesses, e.g. startup tools, basic biz services, business registration, etc. with a focus on women-owned & people of color-owned businesses
- Partner to provide internship and mentoring opportunities that create pathways to skills and career opportunities
- Stephenson County - increase coordination of services and development objectives with the County e.g., trails, airport, 911, roads/bridges
- Healthcare - work with healthcare institutions to improve wellness outcomes and create new opportunities
- Park District - coordinate land use and maintenance efforts to attract resources and provide high-quality recreation areas
- Community Initiatives - be at the table with community-led initiatives to identify opportunities for engagement and partnerships

RECENT PROGRESS



The City and County share equipment to avoid duplication of equipment costs and partner on road projects like Walnut Road and Pearl City Road maintenance



New partnership opportunities are being explored with FHN to improve wellness outcomes and emergency preparedness



Engagement with the Greater Freeport Partnership supported implementation of new TIF initiatives and urban planning efforts



Partnered with the Park District to complete the Burchard Street Reconstruction

Safe and Welcoming Community

Our community is safe and welcoming. Our police, fire, and emergency management systems are well equipped and staffed by a team of people who foster a community service approach to their work, resulting in lower crime rates and faster response times. The community appreciates and supports their work.

People from all backgrounds feel welcome in any part of our community. The City's policies and practices encourage equity and inclusion.

2022



2024



Key Strategies

- Increase police force census to support proven strategies such as community policing, gang units
- Hire and retain a diverse team (police, fire, and throughout City staff) to reflect the community we serve
- Deploy technology to reduce gun violence and improve efficiency of the police force
- Evaluate fire department structure, equipment, and capital needs vs. similar communities
- Ensure neighborhoods and buildings are well kept to help change the narrative around safety in our community

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



Goal:

Our community is safe and inclusive. Our police, fire, and emergency management systems are well-equipped and staffed by a team of people who take a community service approach to their work, resulting in lower crime rates and faster response times. The community appreciates and supports their work.

People from all backgrounds feel welcome in any part of our community. The City's policies and practices foster equity and inclusion.

Freeport's neighborhoods are safe and affordable with a small-town feel that attracts families and a growing workforce. Our neighborhoods are connected to the many parks and recreation areas. Residents have ownership of their neighborhoods and take pride in them.

Key Strategies:

- Increase police force census and implement proven strategies for reducing crime, including a 3-pronged staffing approach that includes community service officers, law enforcement, and social workers to reduce crime
- Hire and retain a diverse team (police, fire, and throughout City staff) to reflect the community we serve
- Upgrade the community's police station
- Deploy more technology to reduce gun violence and improve the efficiency of the police force. Increase camera locations and drone use in high-crime areas
- Ensure neighborhoods and buildings are well kept, improving safety by:
 - Adding a Planner Position
 - Expanding enforcement time for the code enforcement team
 - Increasing penalties and streamlining injunctive release process for issues like tree removal and trash cleanup
- Continue funding and implementation of the Demolition/Blight Reduction program
- Improve neighborhoods by developing a program to activate vacant lots
- Maintain Tree Removal/Replacement Program to remove 50-60 trees annually

RECENT PROGRESS



More than 350 dead trees removed while also earning Tree USA recognition in 2021-2022



Increased demolitions and budget for demolition of blighted properties by 3x



Fire Department staffing has improved and equipment has been upgraded



40% increase in people of color on the police force this year

Quality Communications and Engagement

We are an inclusive, diverse, and growing community comprised of engaged citizens. Freeport is a community where everyone can participate. The City shares information and keeps citizens informed of progress and opportunities to participate. People are engaged in a variety of programs using multiple channels to reach our diverse population of citizens.

If you live, work, or play here, you want to be involved and you have a voice. Diverse interest groups work together to tackle problems. Neighborhood engagement efforts enable residents to express thoughts, visions, and concrete plans that build a collective and engaged community.

Key Strategies

- Home Rule Referendum
- Create a City of Freeport communications plan

2022



2024



QUALITY COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Goal:

Our city's communication and engagement efforts are designed to connect with an inclusive, diverse, and growing community. The City shares information and keeps citizens informed of progress and opportunities to participate through multiple channels. If you want to be involved, you are welcome to participate, and you have a voice. Diverse interest groups work together to tackle problems.

Key Strategies:

- Make bi-lingual (English - Spanish) communications available for all key documents and outreach efforts (web, newsletter, etc.)
- Expand City participation in community events to increase visibility and improve connections with residents
- Improve storytelling and data-sharing efforts to better highlight the progress being made in Freeport
- Establish a mentorship program to create jobs for young people

RECENT PROGRESS



Communication Director position established to drive improved communication



Home rule was successfully maintained, maintaining critical Federal funding support



Communication plan in place

Effective Land Use

We make long-range land and development plans. Land use within the City is designed to create opportunities for housing, businesses, and new amenities for citizens to enjoy. The City creates master plans for land to encourage development in the downtown, new housing in neighborhoods, and the creation of green spaces in the flood plain and elsewhere in our community. Partners, developers, and citizens inform these plans and generate value from the City's land use policies.

Key Strategies

- Review City Centre Plan and complete downtown master plan
- Complete master plan for 3rd Ward flood mitigation area
- Create vacant/abandoned property inventory and master plan
- Create Burchard Hills master plan
- Zoning map/policy updates
- Create a 5-year plan for Albertus Airport

EFFECTIVE LAND USE

Goal:

We make long-range land and development plans. Land use within the City is designed to create opportunities for housing, businesses, and new amenities for citizens to enjoy. The City creates master plans for land to encourage development in the downtown, new housing in neighborhoods, and the creation of green spaces in the flood plain and elsewhere in our community. Partners, developers, and citizens inform these plans and generate value from the City's land use policies.

Key Strategies:

- Explore the development of a downtown master plan to spur development
- Complete the 3rd Ward flood mitigation project and strengthen communication with residents about the future of this area to improve progress
- Create a strategy for activating vacant properties owned by the City
- Identify and engage with developers to spark and align investment
- Create a residential/workforce housing development strategy for areas like Burchard Hills and others to increase available housing
- Create a 5-year plan for Albertus Airport focused on attracting private use and investment

2022



2024



RECENT PROGRESS



PDM grant extended to 2024 for completion of 3rd Ward Flood Mitigation project



Zoning Map/Policy updates completed



Vacant/Abandoned property inventory mapping completed

STRONG, RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE



Goal:

Freeport's infrastructure is reliable and supports the needs of residents and economic growth. Our streets and sidewalks are well maintained, and our water and sewer systems are up to date. We use data to track problems and make decisions about where to spend resources.

Key Strategies:

- Implement Street Improvement Plan by paving 8 miles of street per year using data including traffic count and condition of the street, curb, approaches, water, sewer, and storm mains to plan each replacement project
- Double funding to expand the Sidewalk Plan
- Execute water/sewer/storm sewer improvement projects on a 2-year rotation including:
 - Increase stormwater cleaning program
 - Secure funding for Well #12
 - Complete Walnut Street Lift Station
 - Implement Phase 1 of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements and plan for future phases of Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Improve Public Works Facilities – develop a plan and budget
- Improve Public Works Wage Structure to increase recruitment & retention

RECENT PROGRESS



Street condition maps, water, sewer system, and other infrastructure conditions are being mapped in the City's GIS system to help make improvements more efficient



Well #11 brought online



Approximately 3 miles of streets have been replaced annually over each of the past 3 years