

Ypsilanti City Council Goal-Setting Report

**Prepared by Jeffrey L. Bernstein
Department of Political Science
Eastern Michigan University**

January 25, 2021

Overview of the Process

The Ypsilanti City Council and Department Heads met on January 12, 2021, and January 19, 2021, to develop this goal-setting document for the coming year. Prior to the first meeting, the equivalent document from last year was shared with the attendees, and they were instructed to generate their own goals to be shared with the facilitator. At the first meeting, a series of goals within each area was generated, combining unrealized goals from last year, as well as new goals that arose from the discussion. At the second meeting, the goals from the first session were reconsidered – edited, condensed, or eliminated as needed – and then voted on by the Council and Staff members.

The goals were divided into three main areas – Community Engagement, City Infrastructure, and Council and Staff – and were further divided into sub-goals. Goals were voted on separately within each area; each attendee at the meeting was given a set number of votes within each focus area, generally equaling approximately half the goals listed in that area.

The votes presented here are tabulated separately for Council and Staff. As a general rule, there was agreement between the two on the prioritization of goals.

The range of goals included here are wide-ranging and touch on many facets of city governance. The ordering of goals is obviously something that will need to be addressed further as the year goes on, as the Council and Staff wrestle with operationalizing this list, and adjust to changes that might be necessitated as new challenges arise. We have certainly learned in the best year that the most carefully-constructed goals are but a suggestion to be offered before fate intervenes.

I would like to publicly acknowledge Tamia van Geloven, a senior political science major from Eastern Michigan University, for her assistance in this process and in the compilation of this report.

It was my honor to work with you all on this process. I am happy to answer any further questions on this report as desired, and wish you all the best of luck in the coming year on the process of implementing these goals. Best wishes for a safe and productive year!

Jeffrey L. Bernstein
Department of Political Science
Eastern Michigan University
734-417-5540

Community – Connection	Council	Staff	Total
Refresh and upgrade city website and functionality, including accessibility for visually impaired	7	8	15
Develop comprehensive communication plan – including hiring director	7	7	14
Seek governmental partnerships/agreements with neighboring cities	4	7	11
Enhance Board and Commission training and ensure that people are attending these trainings	5	6	11
Nominate qualified candidates (including youth members) to commissions to fill membership rosters	6	4	10
Improve council meeting preparation and transparency in communication	5	5	10
Review City Charter to consider if it should be amended	4	5	9
Engage the public in issues concerning the removal of Peninsular Dam	4	2	6
Provide equipment for entertainment at Frog Island Amphitheatre	2	4	6
Revitalization campaign for city motto	2	2	4
Install 3-4 flyer kiosks for better communication	1	3	4
Create/sponsor Ypsi Art Prize to incorporate Public Art opportunities	1	1	2
Utilize funding for public art on city trucks (YCS art students)	1	1	2

Community – Safety	Council	Staff	Total
Hire a social worker within YPD for support and crisis intervention	5	8	13
Implement Community Policing philosophy to enhance safety of all residents, businesses, and visitors	5	7	12
Work with police, citizens, and other groups to eradicate gun violence and shootings	6	4	10
Increase City Council involvement in security for entire community	4	5	9
Work with county on mental health response	3	5	8
Create a Mental Health Response Team	6	2	8
Use mental health millage money for mental health response team	4	3	7
Address security problems for downtown business owners	1	6	7
Work on issues of COVID safety and vaccines for city officials and residents	4	3	7
Collaborate with EMU social work program on mental health response	1	6	7
Support Barrier Busters program at county level	3	3	6

Infrastructure – Commons	Council	Staff	Total
Allocate funds to repair city sidewalks	5	9	14
Continue to upgrade existing park facilities and maintenance	5	7	12
Create community warming space	7	5	12
Complete road improvement projects as fiscal constraints allow	4	6	10
Re-establish the Parks and Rec Department	4	5	9
Provide more resources for DPS for summer and winter maintenance	4	5	9
Improve physical accessibility to city government buildings	4	4	8
Remove Peninsular Dam: do engineering study	3	4	7
Establish more equity in parking permits	4	3	7
Continue to upgrade existing park facilities and maintenance	2	4	6

Infrastructure – Housing	Council	Staff	Total
Establish policy for making current housing more affordable to address issues of housing insecurity	6	5	11
Continue to support housing trust that has been established	5	6	11
Remove barriers to housing for homeless citizens	5	5	10
Develop city property and non-city-owned property for housing	3	5	8
Increase support for housing commission for addressing security concerns	3	4	7
Work in partnership with EMU to address housing needs	3	4	7
Pursue equitable rezoning	3	2	5

Infrastructure – Safety	Council	Staff	Total
Explore new and creative options for increased traffic calming and crosswalk safety in neighborhoods and main streets	7	6	13
Replace Police In-Car Camera System	4	6	10
Install crosswalk on Huron at RAC	3	7	10
Install Hawk light on Hamilton and Michigan Ave	5	5	10
Survey city signage and update as needed	4	6	10
Install 4-way stops at dangerous intersections	5	2	7
Eliminate the slip lane at Huron and Cross	4	3	7
Fix River Street	1	2	3
Research and make proposals for “Snow Buddies” program for winter maintenance	2	0	2

Infrastructure – Sustainability	Council	Staff	Total
Increase recycling (current levels are about 50% lower than the region)	6	9	15
Explore moving from recycling bins to recycling carts apply for grants for carts	3	9	12
Update emergency management plan	4	8	12
Digitize financial records	4	7	11
Allocate funding to an alternative fueling system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	4	6	10
Create resilience hubs throughout the city, at least one in each ward, for emergencies	4	2	6
Convert grass medians to rain gardens to reduce mowing	3	1	4
Send Council members and staff to Michigan Catalyst Community Academy for training	1	2	3
Attain carbon neutrality for city (government)	1	0	1

Infrastructure – Buildings	Council	Staff	Total
Equitably develop long-term vacant sites in the city, including Water Street	7	5	12
Develop a plan to provide regular maintenance schedules for city facilities	2	7	9
Increase rental inspections to catch up from COVID-related slowdown	2	3	5
Increase vacant and dangerous building enforcement	3	1	4

Infrastructure – Office	Council	Staff	Total
Reduce manual process and automate	2	4	6
Clean and organize office	2	3	5
Implement an environmentally friendly office	3	1	4

Council/Staff – Workflow	Council	Staff	Total
Do a compensation study of non-Union employees to structure the salary scale	6	9	15
Explore regional transit and available grant funding	6	7	13
Complete the Master Plan and Sustainability Plan and update the Parks and Recreation plan	4	7	11
Complete MDNR	5	5	10
Hire Records Clerk to increase efficiency and keep windows open Fridays	3	5	8
Reorganize third floor so everyone checks into a central front desk	3	5	8
Explore fail-safe way to stay in compliance with financial infrastructure	3	2	5
Investigate Congressional Partners-Foot in the Ground Federal Grant Writing Agency	3	2	5
Create equitable solutions for city protocols and practices	2	1	3

Council/Staff – Development	Council	Staff	Total
Evaluate staff pay and implement employee raises	5	9	14
Develop positive staff/council work relations (communication, team-building, etc.)	4	8	12
Develop a student program with WCC, EMU. And YCS for city and civic work with council and city staff	6	4	10
Implement training for leadership for employees – internal leadership program	3	7	10
Evaluate council pay scale	3	5	8
Improve customer experience by holding training for frontline staff	1	6	7
Create framework for organization diversity and inclusion through more effective recruiting, staffing, and promotion for city staff	3	4	7
Develop additional administration support for council	5	2	7