

CASE STUDY

MCMINNVILLE,
TENNESSEE



CD²
CONSULTING

McMinnville's New Era for a New Strategic Plan

KEY OUTCOMES

There's a reason city managers say you need to plan your work and work your plan. Without a plan, cities open themselves up to inconsistencies in policies, wasted resources, reactive decision-making, and missed opportunities.

Leading up to this strategic plan, it was difficult for the city to know where to focus its efforts. This strategic process gives the city administration direction, which ripples throughout city hall and the community.

- 625 survey responses
- 27 focus group members
- 6 new strategic priorities



To have someone like Cory who has been boots on the ground in all these other communities and has all these ideas with her, that was very valuable. Cory took control of the process and was instrumental in bringing it all together and keeping us focused. I don't think it would have been as smooth as it was without her.

-Nolan Ming, McMinnville City Administrator



McMinnville Profile

Population: 13,681

Operating Budget: \$27 million

Gov Structure: Mayor-Aldermanic

Services: Community survey,
focus groups, strategic planning

A deliberate methodology to build out from the community

In McMinnville, Tenn., as a newly elected roster of council members quickly approached budget season, stakes were high given a one-time \$4 million allocation from American Rescue Plan. They needed to put those dollars to their best use, and wanted an evidenced strategy to ensure their actions were effective.

City Administrator Nolan Ming said he heard a million different ideas for spending the ARP funds, but making sense of it was a challenge. The city hired CP2 Consulting to identify the common themes from residents and zero-in on big priorities so the city could provide the most public value.

STRATEGIC SOLUTION

CP2 Consulting started the strategic planning process by gathering data via online and written input surveys to make sure that all community members, regardless of how tech-savvy they are, could participate. Then, the team organized a series of focus groups with residents to explore community strengths and opportunities in more detail. Finally, city leaders, including staff and elected officials, participated in a strategic planning retreat to work in cross-functional teams to identify and discuss major themes from the data.

The process ensured no one voice was louder than the next and that all responses would be considered with equal weight.

As the groups talked, key issues and priorities became clearer, and they avoided the “squeaky wheel” dilemma. Alderman Deitra Dunlap said the process was eye-opening.

“The thing that helped me the most was having those cross-functional groups where you work with someone you may have never worked with before,” Deitra says. “You hear what’s important to people outside of your own lens of life—that was the biggest thing to me.”

The groups discussed the top three areas they wanted the city to focus resources on over the next three years and ended the strategic planning process with six vetted priorities:

- Proactive engagement
- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Public safety
- Reliable infrastructure
- Financial security
- Economic growth and development

Identifying the Overlap



OUTCOMES

Now equipped with information from all corners of the city—the community, the business community, city staff, and more — the city council gained clear priorities to guide tough budgetary decisions.

Now, when city staff or elected leaders think about the budget, or new budget requests, there's accountability in supporting what the community is asking for.

“Instead of a pet-project here and there we're able to look at the public input and know where they want us to focus our efforts,” City Administrator Nolan Ming says. “That's so valuable in helping us prioritize the taxpayers' money.”

Already, the strategic plan is informing decisions. Alderman Deitra Dunlap said she's able to weigh decisions based on the priorities of the community. For example, survey results showed 40% of residents want more dollars spent on repairing the city's aging infrastructure. As a result of the strategic plan, an additional \$200,000 was prioritized for street projects.

With the plan now in place, CP2 Consulting will continue to work

with McMinnville on a quarterly basis to address lingering questions or find new solutions to roadblocks. The entire engagement lasts more than a year to ensure the city's plan is moving forward and implemented effectively.

“I'd recommend any community undertake the same kind of process if they're having issues trying to prioritize competing priorities without clear direction,” Nolan says. “I feel like this plan will help give us direction on a daily basis.”

This work has resulted in more than a plan. It builds up relationships and across departments and neighborhoods. Having a stronger team of city staff benefits all residents.

“Now McMinnville has this strategic plan that's going to guide their budget, their decision-making process, and it was done in a deliberate, methodological, analytical way,” says Cory Poris Plasch, President of CP2 Consulting. “Everyone can look back and see how we got to a decision. ... McMinnville is going to be a better place in three years because everyone's pulling in the same direction.”

About Us

CP2 Consulting is a strategic planning and organizational development company that works with local governments to create and implement strategic plans that achieve measurable outcomes, preventing your plan from gathering dust on a shelf. We work with the organization, individual departments, and your staff to find common values and goals that move your organization forward.

WE HELP THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Strategic Planning
Implementation of Existing Strategic Plans
Organizational Culture



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