

City of Bel Nor, Missouri
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Bel Nor, Missouri 63121



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Strategic Planning – Public Session One

Date: July 22, 2026

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Unity Church

Call to Order

City Administrator Rachel St. Pierre called the second public strategic planning session to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to continue the City's strategic planning process by discussing how local government functions, how community priorities are funded, and how residents can effectively participate in municipal decision-making.

Review of Previous Session

The City Administrator summarized feedback received during the first public strategic planning session.

Recurring themes identified from resident input included:

- Preserving Bel Nor's historic character and neighborhood identity.
- Maintaining tree-lined streets and walkability.
- Improving streets and sidewalks.
- Increasing communication and transparency.
- Strengthening property maintenance efforts.
- Expanding parks, community events, and regional partnerships.

The discussion emphasized that these themes would continue guiding future strategic planning sessions.

Understanding Local Government

Residents discussed why understanding municipal government is an important component of strategic planning.

Topics included:

- Responsibilities of local government.
- Shared responsibilities with St. Louis County, MoDOT, utility providers, and private property owners.
- The importance of understanding jurisdiction before developing community priorities.
- How realistic planning depends upon understanding governmental authority and available resources.

Activity: Who Is Responsible?

Residents participated in an interactive exercise identifying which governmental entity or property owner would be responsible for various community issues.

Examples discussed included:

- Residential street maintenance.
- Crosswalk installation.
- Trees on private property affecting visibility.
- Traffic calming.
- Speeding concerns.
- Infrastructure maintenance.

Discussion highlighted that many issues involve multiple governmental partners and often require coordination between the City, outside agencies, contractors, and residents.

Rental Registration Program Discussion

Residents asked questions regarding the City's rental registration and inspection program.

Discussion included:

- Board responsibility for establishing policy.
- Staff responsibility for administering adopted programs.
- Continued enforcement of rental registration requirements.
- Importance of consistent follow-up and tracking.
- Use of administrative systems to improve compliance and reduce manual tracking.

The City Administrator explained that operational oversight, inspections, and enforcement continue under the adopted program.

Understanding Municipal Budgets

The City Administrator provided an overview of municipal budgeting, including:

- Restricted versus unrestricted funds.
- Operating expenses.
- Capital improvements.
- Separation of duties.
- Budget planning.

- Revenue sources.
- Grant opportunities.
- Long-term financial planning.

Residents discussed why municipalities cannot always immediately fund community requests and why projects are frequently completed in phases.

Budget Prioritization Activity

Residents participated in a group budgeting exercise designed to balance competing priorities using a hypothetical municipal budget.

Participants considered:

- Operating expenses.
- Police services.
- Playground improvements.
- Traffic calming.
- Speed bumps.
- General Fund reserves.
- Emergency contingencies.
- Inflation.
- Deferred maintenance.
- Future capital planning.

Each group presented its reasoning for prioritizing certain projects while delaying others.

Discussion emphasized:

- Balancing immediate needs with long-term planning.
 - Maintaining financial reserves.
 - Preparing for unexpected emergencies.
 - Evaluating community priorities.
 - Considering alternative funding opportunities.
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Municipal Revenue Discussion

Residents discussed municipal revenue sources, including:

- Sales taxes.
- Business licenses.
- Grants.
- Shared revenues.
- Historical changes in revenue.

Discussion also included opportunities to increase revenues through grants, fees, and economic development.

Resident Participation

The City Administrator reviewed multiple ways residents can participate in local government outside of attending public meetings.

Discussion included:

- Contacting elected officials.
- Contacting City staff.
- Reporting concerns.
- Public meetings.
- Surveys.
- Sunshine requests.
- Email communication.
- Public records.
- Community outreach.

Residents discussed the importance of making participation accessible for individuals with varying communication preferences.

Public Records and Communication

Examples were reviewed illustrating appropriate methods for:

- Reporting infrastructure concerns.
- Requesting City records.
- Suggesting community improvements.
- Following Board actions.
- Accessing meeting agendas and minutes.

- Utilizing Sunshine requests when appropriate.

The distinction between general service requests and formal public records requests was explained.

How Ideas Move Forward

The City Administrator reviewed the general process by which community ideas become municipal projects.

Discussion included:

1. Identifying the concern.
2. Determining responsibility.
3. Gathering information.
4. Conducting research.
5. Estimating costs.
6. Obtaining Board authorization.
7. Following up on assigned tasks.
8. Implementing the project.
9. Evaluating project outcomes.

Residents discussed the importance of research, planning, budgeting, and public involvement before projects are implemented.

Future Strategic Planning

Residents discussed future strategic planning meetings and continued community engagement.

Discussion included:

- Increasing public participation.
- Continuing educational workshops.
- Posting planning materials online.
- Improving communication regarding future meetings.
- Maintaining a centralized strategic planning resource page.

Several residents expressed appreciation for the educational format and suggested making portions of the planning process available as permanent public resources.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded at approximately **7:30 p.m.**

City Hall Hours: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday | 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 18th DAY OF August, 2026.

Anna Vogel

Anna Vogel, Mayor

ATTEST:

Savannah Jones

Savannah Jones, City Clerk

