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Elgin mayor to leaders: Select a goal

BY ELENA FERRARI



Elgin Mayor David Kaptain challenged the city council to pick strategic objectives to work on during his annual state of the city address Wednesday at the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

Rick West | Staff Photographer

Elgin Mayor David Kaptain issued a challenge Wednesday to his colleagues on the city council: Take the strategic plan seriously and pick an objective to work on.

The five-year [strategic plan](#) details 20 objectives such as using technology for a safe community, fostering a clean environment and promoting city amenities. It will take effect Jan. 1 after adoption by the council, expected Dec. 20.

During his state of the city address Kaptain said he will work on the objective of enhancing public schools via partnerships with businesses to ensure an educated and prepared workforce.

"My involvement is going to start today," he said in his speech during the Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce's annual breakfast at Elgin Community College.

Kaptain said he'll work with city staff members and Chamber President Carol Gieske to help create "an interface" between Elgin Area School District U-46 and businesses. He wants to reach corporations and small businesses alike "so young people can have an opportunity to find out what's out there for them."

Kaptain asked council members to meet with him and City Manager Rick Kozal in the next few months to pick their own objectives and devise a plan of action.

"We as the council can send a message to the community that we are going to work hard, we are going to do our best to fulfill the vision that (residents) have for the city," Kaptain said.

Councilman Terry Gavin said he will focus on the enhancement of neighborhoods through code compliance, an area of need according to a generally positive community survey done this summer. "We are all focused on moving the ball forward."

Kaptain touted the city's AAA bond rating, 40-year low in crime and improving transportation.

A Pace bus Park-n-Ride location opened in December 2016 at Randall Road and Interstate 90, and another is expected to open Dec. 18 at Route 25 and I-90. Metra will replace a bridge over the Fox River to speed up the flow of commuter and freight trains.

The city is seeing "good growth" in its industrial sector but there are lowered expectations for commercial development in the western portion of town, mirroring trends across the suburbs, Kaptain said. Residential development is seeing an uptick, he said.

"If we stay the course, Elgin will be a suburban leader in residential and industrial development," Kaptain said. "I firmly believe that."

The city's proposed \$258 million budget next year includes \$1 million in cuts and \$4.2 million in additional revenue from gasoline, sales and hotel/motel taxes. The property tax levy is expected to stay flat for city operations, and the levy for police and fire pensions would increase by 2 and 6 percent, respectively.