

Strategic Planning: Making Your Vision A Reality



Highly Effective Councils

- ❖ Think about and plan for the future.
- ❖ Establish vision and well-defined strategic priorities.
- ❖ Define results to be achieved.
- ❖ Empower employees to produce those results.
- ❖ Maintain relationships with residents and business leaders that instill confidence in council's leadership.
- ❖ Committed to protecting the city's future and provide leadership that ensures that the actions taken today produce the desired future.



The Challenge

- ❖ Was I elected to do what the people want or to govern well?
- ❖ Two simultaneous realities: the "here and now" and the "future"
- ❖ How do you really know what the "people" want?
- ❖ "Going from meeting to meeting"
- ❖ Effective leaders have strategic perspective
 - Its key for consistent, rational decision making but
 - It is an approach that many of us are not accustomed to using



What Is A Strategic Plan?

- ❖ A road map used to determine where the city currently is, where council wants it to be in the future and how to get there
- ❖ Primary method to align resources with planned initiatives to ensure that decision making is consistent, rational, efficient and effective
- ❖ A living document that is updated regularly and
- ❖ Referred to daily by council and staff at all levels
- ❖ Other plans are subordinate and assist in achieving the strategic plan



Why Do Strategic Planning?

- ❖ Each member of council may have a different agenda
- ❖ Serves as a compass – without it, differences of opinion on council disrupt progress
- ❖ With a properly prepared plan, the focus is on accomplishing council's agreed upon priorities
- ❖ Focuses council on the *Ends* to be achieved and the staff on the *Means*
- ❖ Can be used to get council, staff and the public "on the same page"



Terminology

Vision: What we (community and organization) hope to be / become.

Goals: Statements of what we intend to accomplish.

Objectives: How we intend to go about accomplishing our goals.

Tasks: Specific projects, activities, actions, etc. that we plan to work on

Benchmarks: Performance targets



Simplified Planning Process

1. Agree on planning process and approve by council action.
2. Identify goals that are external (community) and internal (organization).



An Example

- ❑ **Goal:** *Provide, improve and maintain quality streets, sidewalks and storm water systems*
- **Objective:** *Evaluate sidewalks and address concerns based on need and funding availability*



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1. Agree on planning process and approve by council action.
2. Identify goals that are external (community) and internal (organization).
3. Establish objectives that address the goals.
4. Summarize goals to create a vision statement / focus areas.



An Example

- ❖ **Vision:** Provide High Quality Services (effectively and cost efficiently)
- ❑ **Goal:** Provide, improve and maintain quality streets, sidewalks and storm water systems
- **Objective:** Evaluate sidewalks and address concerns based on need and funding availability



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4. Summarize goals to create a vision statement / focus areas.
5. Develop a “work plan” of specific tasks to achieve council’s goals.
6. Establish benchmarks for tasks so that progress and success can be measured.
7. Add time frames and identify responsible party (i.e. dept).



A Few Examples...

- ❖ **Vision:** Provide High Quality Services (effectively and cost efficiently)
- ❑ **Goal:** Provide, improve and maintain quality streets, sidewalks and storm water systems
- **Objective:** Evaluate sidewalks and address concerns and opportunities based on need and funding availability
- **Task:** Conduct sidewalk inventory and conditions assessment
- ✓ **Benchmark:** Public Works Department / By 6.30.17



A Few Examples...

- ❖ **Vision:** Provide High Quality Services (effectively and cost efficiently)
 - ❑ **Goal:** Provide, improve and maintain quality streets, sidewalks and storm water systems
 - **Objective:** Evaluate sidewalks and address concerns and opportunities based on need and funding availability
 - **Task:** *Increase funding for sidewalk repair & replacement*
 - ✓ **Benchmark:** *Increase funding by \$20k per year; City Council | Beginning FY17-18 Budget*



A Few Examples...

- ❖ **Vision:** Provide High Quality Services (effectively and cost efficiently)
 - ❑ **Goal:** Provide, improve and maintain quality streets, sidewalks and storm water systems
 - **Objective:** *Improve the condition of city-maintained streets based on priorities identified in inventory/assessment*
 - **Task:** *Appropriate \$50,000 from reserve fund to match supplemental C-Funds for street resurfacing*
 - ✓ **Benchmark:** *Resurface 5 city-maintained streets; Public Works | By 6.30.18*



A Few Examples...

- ❖ **Vision:** *Develop and maintain high quality places*
 - ❑ **Goal:** *Redevelop a downtown commercial district that is physically, economically and socially vibrant*
 - **Objective:** *Physically improve the downtown to create an environment that is attractive to investors, visitors and residents*
 - **Task:** *Implement a façade grant program*
 - ✓ **Benchmark:** *Improve 10 buildings / Planning & Dev Dept. / By 6.30.18*



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6. Establish benchmarks for tasks so that progress and success can be measured.
7. Add time frames and identify responsible party (i.e. dept).
8. Finalize the written plan.
9. Address procedures for monitoring and reporting progress.
10. Adopt plan by council action.



Some Thoughts On Facilitation

- ❖ Strategic planning sessions must be facilitated.
- ❖ The facilitator should be (or be made) knowledgeable of your city.
- ❖ Look for someone that is:
 - Skilled in small group processes
 - Task-oriented
 - Non-directive
 - Committed to full discussion of the issues
 - Committed to full participation of all council members
 - But able to keep the process moving forward



Questions?



Parting Thoughts...

- ❖ **Process matters:** If the plan isn't done properly, you won't use it.
- ❖ **Agreement:** If there isn't consensus, there isn't a plan.
- ❖ **Simplicity:** The harder it is to understand, the less it will be used.
- ❖ **Length:** The longer it is, the less it will be used.
- ❖ **Clarity:** Clearly define all tasks, assignments and time frames for completion.
- ❖ **Measurement:** Create measures to determine and/or quantify success.



More Thoughts...

- ❖ **Monitor:** Keep tabs on progress and regularly report to council.
- ❖ **Refer:** Look to the plan for guidance during the budget process, during work session discussions and when making decisions at council meetings.
- ❖ **Revisit:** Review and update regularly as addressed in plan.
- ❖ **Commitment:** Success is about commitment and determination – not an expensive and complicated plan.
- ❖ **Scalable:** Every city, no matter its size, can benefit from strategic planning provided there is a commitment to the process and plan.



Resources

Municipal Association of South Carolina

www.masc.sc

Keywords: *strategic planning*

Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)

www.mrsc.org

City of Rock Hill, S.C.

www.cityofrockhill.com/transparency


