



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: September 11, 2012
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Tme: 30 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Chandra L. Wallar, County Executive Officer, 568.3400
Director(s)
Contact Info: Dennis Bozanich, Assistant to the CEO, 568-3400

SUBJECT: Strategic Planning Process: Options for Board Participation

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board:

- Receive and file *Overview of Strategic Planning* presentation
- Consider directing the County Executive Officer to:
 - Initiate a countywide strategic planning process, options include:
 - “Public-first” planning process,
 - “Board-first” planning process or
 - “Go together” planning process.
 - Prepare required processes, research and documentation necessary for the Board to identify and approve for planning purposes the information listed above

Summary Text:

Modern organizations regularly prepare and implement strategic planning processes to increase stakeholder focus on organizational priorities, efficiently allocate resources, increase accountability for outcomes and implement the actions required to create the organization’s desired future. The approaches to (or methods of) strategic planning are a flexible set of processes that involve the Board, the public, budget prioritization and department operations. The mix of these processes can be valuable in influencing the timeliness, quality, results and ease of implementation of the final strategic plan. The hearing today provides the Board with information on strategic planning necessary to provide guidance and direction to the County Executive Officer to implement a strategic planning effort for the County of Santa Barbara.

Background:

The last strategic planning process (Strategic Scan) in the County of Santa Barbara was in 2005. In 2007, staff undertook “planning to plan” steps to update the 2005 Strategic Scan. The Strategic Scan was a compilation of metrics that monitored long term, current and projected status on key focal areas to assist in planning and policy development. Primarily, the Strategic Scan provided objective, high level detail upon which policy development could rely.

Prior to beginning the strategic planning process, the Board has options to consider and potentially provide staff with direction. One key question is who should (e.g. the Board or public or both integrated) take the next steps at reviewing, identifying and formulating the components of the strategic plan? All stakeholders (e.g. Board, advisory bodies, public at large, department leaders, etc.) would have opportunities to participate.

What is strategic planning and why’s it important?

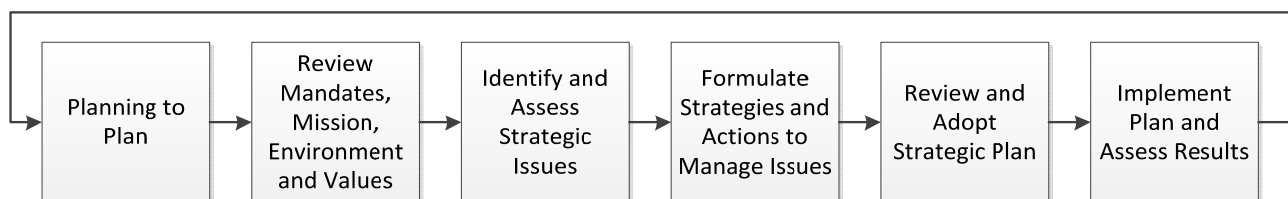
A best practices white paper on strategic planning published by the Government Finance Officers Association states that strategic planning is a management tool to help organizations:

- Assess the current environment,
- Assess and respond to changes in the environment,
- Envision the future,
- Increase effectiveness,
- Develop commitment to the organization’s mission, and
- Achieve consensus on the strategies and objectives for achieving that mission.

Strategic plans, ultimately, help us to clearly understand where we are, decide where we want to be in the future and the strategies and actions required to get there.

A wide variety of stakeholders contribute uniquely to strategic planning. The public is an outstanding source for understanding prioritized needs and expectations. Department leaders are uniquely charged with aligning program mandates with the organizational mission, available resources and established priorities. The budget process allocates resources in alignment with policy priorities. Finally, the Board of Supervisors is well suited to articulate the organization’s mission and values, the current strategic issues and required strategies to manage those issues

Contemporary strategic planning in private and public sector organizations has several phases in addition to high-level data collection. The diagram below provides a basic flow chart of the strategic planning process steps:



Strategic Planning Process Steps in Detail

County Executive Office Staff has spent the last few months *Planning to Plan*. Processes and procedures have been identified for each step of the process including:

- Creation of tentative schedules,

- Assessing the organizational readiness to engage in strategic planning,
- Identification of specific deliverables,
- Assessment of methods to integrate public engagement, department planning and process improvement and priority-based budgeting.

Formal strategic planning processes typically begin with a ***Mission, Mandate & Environmental Assessment***. The purpose of this initial assessment is to analyze critical elements of the strategic and operational environment by clarifying organizational mandates, mission (or purpose) and values. Also critical at this step is to perform internal and external environmental assessments. Traditionally, this has been called a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) but more processes have begun to substitute Challenges for Threats. The key tasks include:

- Identify service mandates
- Identify County of Santa Barbara's purpose
- Conduct internal strength/weakness and external opportunity/threat assessment

The Board has the options to implement strategic planning in several ways, but this process could begin as soon as next month. At the end of this initial stage, the Board with help from stakeholders, public and staff will have a list of programmatic mandates, a draft County mission statement, draft values statement and a completed SWOT analysis.

Upon clarifying what services are required, defining why and how the County provides those services, the ***Strategic Issue Identification & Prioritization*** phase of the planning process will prioritize key policy choices that affect the mission, mandates, services, organizational structures, service costs or service user experiences. This is really the heart of planning. Strategic issue framing helps to drive support of strategy development and implementation. Key tasks during issue identification and prioritization phase includes a separation of operational and strategic issues, referral of the operational issues to the appropriate department for further assessment and action and a risk assessment of each strategic issue. In some of the planning schedules this will be completed before the end of the calendar year. At the end of the issue identification and prioritization phase, the Board, public and departments will have an inclusive list of strategic issues, a prioritized list of those of strategic issues and the beginning of Functional Group Operational Improvement Teams among departments to begin the process of managing and responding to the most critical issues.

During the ***Strategy Formulation and Action Planning*** phase of the planning process, the Board, with stakeholder support will create a set of strategies to address priority issues so the County can fulfill its mission and goals. During this stage, possibly right after the beginning of the year, the Board will prepare and review strategy statements, and review the Functional Group Operational Improvement Teams' suggestions including cross-functional plans to address highly complex issues that may be identified in earlier phases. At the end of this phase, specific strategy statements and action plans will be compiled with the earlier deliverables into a complete strategic plan with all of the supporting documentation linked to the conclusions.

The Board will have the option to formally ***Review and Adopt the County's Strategic Plan***. This formal adoption importantly marks the transition from planning to implementation. Successful adoption will result from a shared agreement by the Board and key stakeholders that the County's Strategic Plan provides the guidance and direction on issues, priorities and action that will increase the organization's ability to match public needs with public resources to create public value.

Following the adoption of the strategic plan, the Board, departments and the public will begin to work together to **Implement and Reassess** (over time) the strategies, values, mission and goal throughout the organizational structure, processes and people. Implementation and resources allow the plan to achieve results and create public value. The implementation phase will help to create understanding of what needs to be done, by whom, when, where, how and why and will require all involved with implementing the plan to change and create a shared commitment to success. During implementation there will be a careful review and debriefing of the strategic planning process to improve the process the next time. Departments will likely need to establish “de-bugging teams” to address the inevitable implementation obstacles and additional public input will be collected to assess the strategic planning process from the public’s perspective.

Strategic Planning Roles

Suggested Strategic Planning Roles for the Board of Supervisors:

- Identify County Mandates, Mission and Values
- Identify internal strengths and weaknesses
- Identify external threats and opportunities
- Identify critical strategic issues
- Receive public priority feedback
- Identify and approve strategies to address critical issues
- Direct strategy implementation through budget, outcome measures and department action plans

Suggested Strategic Planning Roles for Stakeholders and the Public:

- Participate in public hearings on mandates, mission, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, critical issues and strategies
- Participate in Public Priorities Online Survey
- Participate in public hearings on the survey results and analysis
- Provide suggestions for methods of ongoing public input into priorities
- Provide feedback that maintains focus on the strategic issues, priorities, execution and results

Suggested Strategic Planning Roles for Department Leaders:

- Contribute to the development of the Public Priorities Survey
- Conduct program inventory and review
- Review current mandates, mission and objectives
- Align departmental mission and program objectives with County mission, strategies and public priorities within mandates
- Identify performance standards
- Update outcome measures
- Conduct process improvements in alignment with mission and public priorities

It is anticipated that developing, integrating and implementing a County Strategic Plan will take a period of many months. Yet, the lessons learned from the planning efforts will be valuable in making policy and budget decisions almost immediately. Broad stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process will increase the effectiveness of the County over the next three to five years.

Implementation Options for the Strategic Planning Process

Staff has identified three major options for implementing the County’s strategic planning process. There are additional possible sub-options for the Board to consider as well, but the three major options are:

- **Option A – Public first** – Intended to collect public input on mission, values, strengths, weaknesses opportunities, challenges, strategic issues and strategies from surveys and focus groups before consideration by the Board. A possible timeline and illustration of this option can be found at Attachment A.
- **Option B Board first** – This option would initially collect input from the Board and Department Directors on mission, values, strengths, weaknesses opportunities, challenges, strategic issues and strategies then gather feedback on the information from the public through surveys and focus groups. See Attachment B for possible timeline and illustration.
- **Option C – Together** – This option would integrate the first two options by incorporating public input on mission, values, strengths, weaknesses opportunities, challenges, strategic issues and strategies with the Boards discussions on the topics in a more timely fashion. Public input would be gathered sooner than in Option B.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Expenses for the strategic planning process are anticipated to be limited to existing staff time and minimal additional costs for public engagement/survey software.

Attachments:

A – Option A – Public First - Sample strategic planning process diagrams and timeline

B – Option B – Board First - Sample strategic planning process diagrams and timeline

C – Option C - Together - Sample strategic planning process diagrams and timeline

Authored by:

Dennis Bozanich, Assistant to the County Executive Officer

cc: