

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Important Considerations and Steps

As important as plan development is, equally important is ensuring that the County has an effective structure and process in place to implement the Plan. Once the County Strategic Plan is developed, take the following steps to facilitate accountability, action and success, and to ensure the Plan stays relevant in a changing environment.

❶ Resource Assessment

Once priorities are identified, assess the resources (human, financial, infrastructure, systems and other) required to successfully implement and sustain Plan goals and priorities. The assessment may result in the need to adjust Plan priorities before approval or to develop strategies to secure additional resources.

❷ Plan Approval

The County Strategic Plan is an important governance and management tool, representing shared agreement and ownership of outcomes and actions that will advance the mission of the County in the coming planning cycle. As such, it should be formally approved by the Board as the strategic focus, direction and priorities for the next several years.

❸ Assignment and Delegation

The work of the Board, Staff and any workgroups should be informed by the priorities from the Strategic Plan, and clearly linked to the Plan through such means as workgroup charges, Board meeting agenda items, Department performance goals and action plans, etc. Groups should be clear on what they are expected to accomplish, by when, what resources they have access to, when they need to report, and how the work links to the overall goals and priorities of the County as reflected in the Strategic Plan.

❹ Monitoring, Measuring, Reporting Process

Once implementation of the Plan is in process, agree on a procedure for how progress will be tracked (plan monitoring), how success in meeting the milestones in the Plan will be assessed (plan measurement), and when and how plan progress and accomplishments will be reported to the Board and to County constituents (plan reporting).

❺ Plan Updating Process and the County Planning Cycle

The Strategic Plan is a living set of decisions that should be refreshed on a regular basis. The environment and the impact of emerging trends and issues can quickly outdate a Strategic Plan if steps aren't taken on a regular basis to identify and understand these changes and assess their implications on County goals and priorities.

At a minimum on an *annual basis*, the Board and staff leadership should:

- 1) assess any change in the environment
- 2) check progress on current priorities
- 3) identify any adjustment needed in Plan milestones, and
- 4) set priorities for the next year.

Every *three years or so*, a broader review should be done to take a fresh look at strategic issues, to reset milestones for another three years, and to set priorities for the coming year. When significant change in the external environment has occurred, it may be wise every *five years or so* to also review the County Strategic Framework (mission, vision, long-term goals, and values statements) to ensure that the very purpose, focus, and long-term direction of the County continues to define the organization that can meet the needs and expectations of constituents as they change.