STRATEGIC PLANNING OVERVIEW

Strategic planning is the process of determining long-term goals and then identifying the best approach for achieving those goals. Waukesha County has been using strategic planning tools for over a decade, and in 2005, government officials invested time and resources to reinvigorate this important, forward-thinking process. It established linkages between strategic planning of core business functions and measuring program outcomes across all departments. Strategic planning ultimately helps the County identify priorities so that service delivery modifications can be made to better assist and serve its citizenry.

In order to begin the process of identifying core business functions and priorities, the County established a cross-departmental Strategic Planning Steering Committee to guide the process and to coordinate four focus groups with stakeholders that included: advocates, vendors, and service providers that regularly work with County government personnel; municipal elected officials; citizens appointed by elected officials to participate; and residents that were randomly selected using the Circuit Court Jury Trial Selection system. A total of 96 people took part in the effort that led to the collection of qualitative data. Responses were recorded and displayed during the sessions, and in some cases sparked questions, discussion, or debate among the participants.

Overwhelmingly, focus group respondents indicated that they desire the highest quality service at the lowest possible cost. Fiscal responsibility and low taxes were consistently emphasized. To maintain low tax rates, participants generally supported a variety of measures, from the establishment of alternative service delivery arrangements to reducing or eliminating non-essential services. Cooperative efforts with other jurisdictions' shared governmental services were also widely supported, while contracting for services enjoyed support on a narrower range of specific applications.

Taken as a whole, focus group members were open to having government explore new ways of doing business. Most seem willing to accept slower or less convenient service if necessary to keep tax rates low, though most would prefer that the County find ways of reducing costs without sacrificing quality. In addition, they feel that the County should focus on its core services and should consider shedding tertiary activities and non-government enterprises. Any tax increases would need to be well defined and solidly justified to find support among the focus group participants.

Defining essential and non-essential services can be a difficult undertaking, but focus group respondents provided the steering committee a sound understanding of the services areas that they value. Public safety functions, such as law enforcement, child protection, road safety, and health inspections, were most important, with economic vibrancy following close behind. Services that support limited groups or the non-mandated, non-core operations of County government were more likely to be chosen as candidates for service reductions.

STRATEGIC PLANNING OVERVIEW *continued…*

With the help of a consultant, steering committee members rigorously analyzed the data that was collected at the focus group sessions. Using this information, they charted a course for a new strategic planning process that resulted in the creation of a new mission statement, vision statement, core values, strategic outcomes, and plan format linked directly into the County's budget.

The County continues to be a leader by strategically providing high quality services at the lowest possible cost via shared services, public/private partnerships, collaborative efforts, and technology investments to redesign how the County does its business and streamline business processes.

The strategic plan is a living document and will be updated annually to reflect best practices in meeting the needs of Waukesha County residents.

Mission Statement:

"The mission of Waukesha County government is to promote the health, safety and quality of life of citizens while fostering an economically vibrant community. We are committed to delivering effective, high quality programs and services in a courteous and fiscally prudent manner."

Vision Statement:

"Waukesha County…leading the way with quality and value."

Core Values:

Excellence, Customer Service, Fiscal Responsibility, Collaboration, Integrity, and Innovation

County-Wide Key Strategic Outcomes:

Strategic Outcomes provide departments with a framework for identifying core priorities and establishing program goals:

1. A safe county.
2. An economically vibrant county.
3. An environmentally responsible county.
4. A well-planned county.
5. A county that assists at-risk citizens.
6. A county that provides customers with quality programs and services.
7. Cost effective services delivered with competence and skill.

Departmental budgets are tied to the Strategic Plan in the following manner:

- Budget initiatives are organized under County-Wide Key Strategic Outcomes.
- Objectives focus on areas that utilize significant budget resources.
- Key Outcome Indicators identify how the measure is an indication of success.
- Performance Measure data demonstrates level of achievement over multiple years and targets for the upcoming budget year.

For reference, please see the example illustrated below:

General Fund County Executive Outcomes/Objectives

Major Departmental Strategic Outcomes and Objectives for 2010

County-Wide Key Strategic Outcome: An economically vibrant county

Objective 1: Maintain exemplary financial management practices to help lower borrowing costs and the tax rate.

Key Outcome Indicator: The bond rating status is reflective of the County's diverse and growing tax base, personal income levels, solid financial position and flexibility, and low debt burden.

Performance Measure:	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Target
County's Bond Rating	AAA/Aaa	AAA/Aaa	AAA/Aaa

County-Wide Key Strategic Objective: A county that provides customers with quality programs and services

Objective 2: Provide constituents with timely, courteous and professional assistance and service.

Key Outcome Indicator: Percent of positive, unsolicited responses generated from the Citizen Comment Card above the department standard of 80%.

Performance Measure:	2009 Actual	2010 Target	2010 Estimate	2011 Target
Percent of positive survey responses	85%	80%	85%	87%