

2012-2013 Waukesha County Strategic Plan



Executive Summary

A message from County Executive Dan Vrakas

2



“I would like to thank everyone who participated in Waukesha County’s strategic planning initiative. On behalf of the citizens in our community, I want you to know how much we appreciate your time commitment to this important project.

As a AAA/Aaa bond rated county, Waukesha County values fiscal responsibility, integrity, collaboration and innovation. We also deeply value and respect the taxpayers of our County. Together, we will utilize the information outlined in this report to develop the foundation to improve County government’s strategic priorities.”



Candor. Insight. Results.

3

- > Consultant hired by Waukesha County to facilitate the strategic planning process
- > Consultant to the public sector:
 - Focus on Counties, Municipalities, School Districts and Higher Education
 - Headquartered in Chicago, offices in Milwaukee and Madison
- > Specialize in strategic planning, resource optimization, cost reduction for the public sector

Methodology – Focus Groups

4

- Three Focus Group sessions were held to solicit feedback from the public on a range of issues including:
 - What are critical issues according to citizens of the County?
 - What do citizen's deem to be most important to their quality of life?
 - What citizens and consumers prefer in regards to services?
 - How should the County pay for services and at what level of quality should they be provided?
 - What is the public's view on service delivery alternatives?
- Participants included business and nonprofit leaders, board selected participants and randomly selected citizens based on the County's jury list
- In total, over 900 citizens were invited and 63 participated in the sessions.

Executive Summary - Focus Group Results

5

- **Positive Feedback from Stakeholders:**
 - Overall county residents are pleased with the quality, level and value of services for the price they pay.
 - The most important outcomes for county stakeholders continue to be:
 - 1) a “safe” county and 2) an “economically vibrant” county.
 - ✦ Sheriff’s Patrol and Dispatch Services are critical components of ensuring a safe county.
 - ✦ The County’s strong financial position (AAA bond rating, etc.) and solid economic development programs are viewed as critical to ensuring a economically vibrant county.

Executive Summary - Focus Group Results

6

- **Opportunities for Improvement:**
 - The most important outcomes for county stakeholders are: 1) a “safe” county and 2) an “economically vibrant” county. Stakeholders support continued funding of activities related to these key outcomes.
 - Over two thirds of respondents felt that property taxes are at the right level, and (while not being considered by the County at this time) that they would consider a slight increase plausible if allowed by law and required to support continuation of priority services.
 - The vast majority of respondents support collaborative service delivery between governments – with an increased level of support (from 35 to 54%) for this since 2005.

Methodology – Employee Survey

7

- An employee survey was distributed to every employee of the County.
- The purpose of the survey was to:
 - Gauge employee understanding of the County's strategic plan
 - Understand how employee goals align with the plan
 - Identify opportunities to enhance the work environment of the County as a whole
- As a AAA/Aaa bond rated county we covered topics to reflect our values:
 - A business like approach to government
 - Respect for taxpayers
 - Delivery of high quality services
 - A strong work ethic
 - Spirit of collaboration and consolidation
 - Integrity and ethics
- Topics covered by the survey included:
 - Mission and goals of the County
 - Professional development and empowerment
 - Communication
 - Trust and integrity
 - Customer service and teamwork
 - Reward and appreciation
 - Benchmarking against a national survey of state and local governments

Methodology – Employee Survey

8

- Out of approximately 1,300 employees, 875 participated in the survey, representing about 66% of all county employees. The participation consisted of the following:
 - Manager/Supervisor: 133
 - Professional Staff: 258
 - Line/Admin: 466
 - × (18 respondents did not indicate their position)

Executive Summary – Employee Survey Results

9

- **Positive Feedback from Employees:**
 - Employees overwhelmingly like the work they do, know how to do it and are held accountable
 - Supervisors are open to hearing feedback and treat employees with respect
 - The County is focused on customer needs and fiscal responsibility
 - The County has a high level of integrity
 - Employees are willing to give extra effort to help the County succeed
 - Employees would recommend the County as a place to work and to live

Executive Summary – Employee Survey

10

- **Opportunities for Improvement:**
 - Increase opportunities for professional growth, better mentoring plans and succession planning
 - Increase recognition of work well done and boost employees' feelings of being valued
 - Enhance perception of fairness around advancement opportunities

Methodology – Best Practice Peer Analysis

11

- Baker Tilly utilized best practice research from both the public and private sectors to benchmark Waukesha County's current state
- Strategic Planning best practices were specifically peer benchmarked against the following counties:
 - Hennepin County, Minnesota
 - Johnson County, Kansas
 - Fairfax County, Virginia
 - Eau Claire County, Wisconsin
- Based on results of the best practice research and peer comparison, a gap analysis and remediation recommendations were developed

Executive Summary - Best Practices Peer Analysis

12

Positive - Currently Adopted	Opportunity
Specific Division level plans	Enhance annual review of county-wide progress by appointed strategy committee; enhance strategy governance framework with a consistent and defined point of governance
Involvement of key county stakeholders (community leaders, residents, employees)	Formal and required regular periodic citizen input plan tied to specific strategic goals and priorities for <u>all</u> core functions
	Ongoing involvement of stakeholders in outcome based groups (i.e. safe county)

Executive Summary - Best Practices Peer Analysis

13

Currently Adopted	Opportunity
Budget includes tracking of metrics	Annual review of strategy and plan progress toward outcomes – consider use of formal balanced scorecard approach
	Enhanced alignment between employee evaluation process and strategic objectives

Executive Summary - Best Practices Peer Analysis

14

Currently Adopted	Opportunity
Communication includes link on website	Enhanced communication to include more proactive communication of results to all stakeholder groups (i.e. email blasts, more frequent web updates, quarterly reporting on results)
	Enhanced communication of how employee feedback is being considered and incorporated
Link between strategic priorities and department budget allocations	Closer alignment between strategic priorities and employee development investments and efforts

Executive Summary - Primary Recommendations

15

1. Enhance the governance of the strategic plan with:
 - a) Consistent oversight body
 - b) Annual review of strategic priorities and progress
2. Adopt a balanced scorecard approach to increase the impact of the plan on financial, customer and operational outcomes
3. More regularly involve stakeholders in discussions relative to impact on strategic outcomes
4. Increase the transparency of the strategy development and outcome reporting process and proactively share successes and discuss challenges

Executive Summary - Primary Recommendations

16

5. Consider overall budget allocations in light of articulated strategic priorities (i.e. safe county – how are activities and resource allocations prioritized county-wide, not just within a department)
6. Consider additional collaborative arrangements in those areas with lower priority and/or higher costs
7. More closely align the employee evaluation process to specific strategic priorities and defined department outcomes and reward programs to achievement of such goals
8. Develop employee programs to enhance recognition and achievement of department or individual goals tied to strategy.