

Office of the County Executive

Strategic Plan 2014-2016

“As County Executive, I am committed to delivering the highest quality programs and services possible while keeping the interests and the pocketbook of County taxpayers at the front of my mind.” – Waukesha County Executive Daniel P. Vrakas



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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. Over the past few years, the County has updated and re-energized the process by holding stakeholder focus groups, conducting an environmental scan and working with departmental strategic planning coordinators to update their plans.

Through the strategic planning process, the County established links between core values, business functions and measurable program outcomes across all departments. Strategic planning ultimately helps the County identify and set priorities so that service delivery modifications can be made to better assist and serve its citizenry.

To help guide the process, the County has established a cross-departmental Strategic Planning Steering Committee to guide the process and help identify priorities. In 2012-2013 the committee led a process to update and reenergize the strategic planning process. The process, which began with several months of work with the consulting firm of Baker Tilly LLC, included constituent focus groups, environmental scanning, and an employee survey and employee workgroups.

This year, the County worked with department heads and strategic plan preparers to update each department's plans to reflect the findings from the updated process.

Focus groups that were held in 2012 and 2013 indicated that, overall, County residents are pleased with the quality, level and value of services. In addition, it is clear that most important outcomes for county stakeholders continue to be a "safe" and an "economically vibrant" county. Results of the focus group efforts clearly stated that residents want high quality services at a low cost.

The consultants examined and analyzed peer counties in the State of Wisconsin and nationwide to identify benchmarks in which to evaluate Waukesha County. From this process, the County determined that a process to review strategic plans and objectives must be implemented

annually to ensure that each department proactively and consistently updates their progress toward strategic goals.

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

County 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.”

County Vision Statement:

“Waukesha County...leading the way with quality and value.”

County Core Values:

- Collaboration
- Ethics and Integrity
- Innovation
- Teamwork
- Efficiency
- Communication
- Diversity
- Seeking Cost Savings
- High-Quality Customer Service

County-Wide Key Strategic Outcomes:

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

- A safe county
- An economically vibrant county
- An environmentally responsible county
- A well-planned county
- A county that assists at-risk citizens
- A county that provides customers with quality programs and services
- Cost effective services delivered with competence and skill

Office of the County Executive, Statement of Purpose:

As chief executive officer of county government, the County Executive serves the citizens of Waukesha County by protecting and promoting their welfare, safety, health, and quality of life. The County Executive is responsible for managing administrative functions of County government, which are not vested in other elected officials. County government policy is established in partnership with the County Board of Supervisors, boards and commissions and the County Executive.

Environmental Scan & Analysis:

During 2012-2013 three focus group sessions were held:

- County Board-recommended participants
- Business and non-profit leaders
- Taxpayers selected at-random via the County's jury pool

The sessions, facilitated by the consulting firm of Baker Tilly, were held at the Retzer Nature Center planetarium. The groups of citizens were educated with a *Government 101* presentation and were asked over 150 questions on a variety of topics pertaining to County government.

Focus Group Results:

County residents ranked their top priorities:

1. Public Safety (Sheriff's Dept. and Courts System)
2. Health and Human Services Programming
3. Infrastructure/Public Works
4. Parks and Land Use

These results closely mimicked the focus group results from 2005 which have since driven our County budget. The County will continue to ensure that the County budget and the stated priorities of County residents are aligned (see Objective 10).

Specific feedback from stakeholders:

- The County's strong financial position (AAA bond rating, etc.) and solid economic development programs are viewed as critical to ensuring an economically vibrant county (see Objectives 1 & 2).
- The most important outcomes for county stakeholders continue to be: 1) a "safe" county and 2) an "economically vibrant" county (see Objective 2).
- The environment continues to highlight the need maintain a low tax rate and tax levy while maintaining essential services and infrastructure (see Objective 3).
- Overall county residents are pleased with the quality, level and value of services for the price they pay (see Objective 10).
- Over 90% of respondents indicated support for the sharing of services was a good idea or acceptable depending upon circumstances (see Objective 9).

Employee Survey:

In 2013, Waukesha County issued a first of its kind survey of Waukesha County employees on the issue of Strategic Planning the purpose of the survey was to:

- Gauge employee understanding of the County's strategic plan
- Understand how employees goals align with the plan

- Identify opportunities to enhance the work environment of the County as a whole

The survey was distributed to every employee of the County. Questions were written to reflect our self-identified County values. 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)

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 has a high level of integrity
- Employees would recommend the County as a place to work and to live
- 69% of County employees agreed that there was a focus on Fiscal responsibility at the County level and 72% believe their own department focuses on fiscal responsibility
- 75 % of respondents also agreed the County provided services in a businesslike manner
- An overwhelmingly 87% of employees strongly agreed or somewhat agreed they were willing to give extra effort to help the County succeed
- Well over half of employees agreed that their supervisor helps them develop to their fullest potential (65%), their responsibilities make good use of their abilities (78%) and they have the resources needed to do their job well (66%)

Areas of improvement as identified by employees:

Communication:

- Changes which affected them were communicated prior to implementation (48%)
- Leaders of the County were open to input from employees (36%)
- Their supervisor provides them with regular information about what's important to the County (45%).

Employee professional development:

- Well under half of employees strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the County has a mentoring plan in place for succession planning in the event of retirements and vacancies (29%)
- Most employees surveyed do not believe they have adequate opportunities for professional growth
- Less than half of employees agreed that if they do good work, the County may consider them for promotion (40%) and that the County's policies for offering advancement are fair (33%).

Rewarding and recognizing employee performance:

- Less than half of employees agreed that the County gave them enough recognition for work that is well done (40%)
- 40% of employees feel valued by County leadership
- Less than half of County employees believe their pay is fair for the work they perform

Summary of opportunities for improvement:

- Improve inter-departmental communication
- Increase collaboration and employee input
- Educate employees on the values of strategic planning
- Increase opportunities for professional growth, better mentoring plans and succession planning
- Increase recognition of work well done and boost employees' feelings of being valued

Major Office Strategic Outcomes and Objectives 2014-2016

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. *This objective is shared with the County Board Office (see objective 6, Key Outcome Indicator #1).*

Action Steps:

- Introduce an annual County Executive’s Budget that keeps taxes consistently low (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Work with members of the County Board throughout the budget process to encourage support of a budget that respects County taxpayers (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Participate in annual meetings with the national bond rating agencies to advocate for a AAA/Aaa rating (County Executive and Chief of Staff)

Performance Measure: 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.

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
County Bond Rating	AAA/Aaa	AAA/Aaa	AAA/Aaa	AAA/Aaa

Objective 2: Create an environment that promotes County-wide economic development.

Action Steps:

- Introduce an annual County Executive’s Budget that supports businesses by keeping taxes consistently low (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Introduce an annual County Executive’s Budget that supports businesses by properly maintaining the County’s vital infrastructure (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Participate in the quarterly M7 regional economic development meetings (County Executive)
- Support the Waukesha County Economic Development Corporation (All Staff)

- Serve as an Ex Officio member of the Waukesha County Business Alliance Board of Directors (County Executive/designee)
- Serve as member of the Governor’s Council on Workforce Investment (County Executive)
- Hold annual County Executive award luncheon recognizing Waukesha County businesses (All Staff)

Performance Measure:

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
Ranking of tax impact on a \$2.5M business vs. contiguous counties	1/7	1/7	1/7	1/7

Objective 3: Minimize the County tax impact on a homeowner and provide for a consistently low tax burden for the high quality services provided.

Action Steps:

- Introduce an annual County Executive’s Budget that keeps taxes low (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Work with members of the County Board throughout the budget process to encourage support of a budget that respects County taxpayers (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Work with members of the State Legislature to ensure that programs mandated by the state are properly funded at the state level and do not rely on local taxpayer support (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Support LEAN initiatives within the County (All Staff)

Performance Measure:

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
At least 5th lowest tax rate in WI	3/72	3/72	3/72	3/72

County-Wide Key Strategic Outcome: Cost effective services delivered with competence and skill

Objective 4: Ensure the constant evolution of the strategic planning process.

Action Steps:

- Lead the Strategic Planning Steering Committee as a permanent body charged with oversight and review of individual departmental strategic plans (Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant)
- Assist County Departments in meeting the new objectives of the updated strategic plan (All Staff)
- Communicate objectives and deadlines with Department Heads and strategic planning representatives (Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant)
- Distribute annual employee survey (Chief of Staff)
- Oversee Countywide strategic plan update (Chief of Staff)

Performance Measure: Determine how many of the 10* County Departments headed by an appointee of the County Executive submit annual updates to its strategic plans.

	2012 Actual**	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
Plans submitted by Department Heads	7/10	10/10	10/10	10/10

**This number includes the Office of the County Executive*

*** No plans were submitted in 2013 due to County-wide strategic planning update*

Performance Measure: Determine how many of the 7 County Departments headed by an elected official submit annual updates to its strategic plans.

	2012 Actual*	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
Plans submitted by Elected Officials	-/7	4/7	6/7	7/7

** No plans were submitted in 2013 due to County-wide strategic planning update*

Performance Measure: Determine how many of the 18* Department’s strategic plans contain the new objectives and meet the stated goals by 2016.

	2012 Actual**	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
Plans submitted by Elected Officials	7/18	15/18	17/18	18/18

**This number includes the Office of the County Executive*

*** No plans were submitted in 2013 due to County-wide strategic planning update*

Objective 5: Effectively integrate strategic goals and objectives into the annual County budget process, staff goals and performance evaluations.

Action Steps:

- Modify the current employee evaluation form to incorporate strategic planning objectives (Chief of Staff)
- Incorporate the County’s strategic goals and objectives into the County Executive’s annual review of Department Head performance (County Executive and Chief of Staff)

Performance Measure: Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of the County Executive’s Office staff understands how their work and assigned goals directly contribute to the overall success of the County in meeting its key strategic priorities.

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
% of Staff agreeing with statement	100	100	100	100

Objective 6: Develop internal strategies to improve communications within and between of the County Executive’s Office and other County Departments.

Action Steps:

- Distribute annual employee survey for data collection (Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant)
- Continue to development website content (Executive Assistant)

- Oversee management of Communication Coordination Committee (Executive Assistant)
- Hold bi-monthly Department Head meetings (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Hold Cabinet meetings twice monthly (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Hold regular staff meetings(Chief of Staff)
- Facilitate the distribution of All-County emails (All Staff)

Key Outcome Indicator: The County Executive’s Office will have at least one shared objective with another County Department.

Key Outcome Indicator: The County Executive’s Office shall have a communication plan on paper and strategy to communicate important information to employees.

Performance Measure: Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of the County Executive’s Office staff have answered the following statement affirmatively: “I agree that information and knowledge are shared openly within my department.”

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
% of Staff agreeing with statement	100	100	100	100

Objective 7: Ensure that staff of the County Executive’s Office has a training plan established to provide professional development and to deliver services with competence and skill.

Action Steps:

- Utilize the employee training database being developed by the Division of Human Resources (All Staff)
- Meet with staff to discuss their long-term goals (Chief of Staff)
- Incorporate training and professional development into the annual employee evaluation (Chief of Staff)

Performance Measure: Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of the County Executive’s Office staff have answered the following statement affirmatively: “During my annual performance evaluation with my direct supervisor, I discussed my training needs and opportunities for professional development.”

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
% of Staff agreeing with statement	NA	80	100	100

Objective 8: Facilitate a work environment that rewards and recognizes employees that exemplify Waukesha County Core Values.

Action Steps:

- Discuss County Core Values at staff meetings (Chief of Staff)
- Incorporate County Core Values in the annual staff performance evaluations (Chief of Staff)

Performance Measure: Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of the County Executive’s Office staff understands the County Core Values.

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
% of Staff agreeing with statement	NA	80	100	100

Performance Measure: Through the annual employee survey, ensure that a minimum of 80% of the County Executive’s Office staff has answered the following statement affirmatively: “I agree that I can be recognized for extra effort while demonstrating the County Core Values.”

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
% of Staff agreeing with statement	NA	80	100	100

Objective 9: Increase the number of collaborative efforts and partnerships between the County and other governments, private sector businesses or non-profits to maintain high quality services at a cost savings to taxpayers.

Action Steps:

- Hold quarterly Waukesha County Cooperation Council meetings (All Staff)

- Meet with local officials countywide on an annual basis to offer county services and identify potential partnerships (County Executive and Chief of Staff)
- Through the County budget process, identify potential cost savings by elimination of duplicative government services (County Executive and Chief of Staff)

Key Outcome Indicator: Maintain a list of all government services in which the County has partnered with another entity.

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
Number of privatized services	64	67	69	70

Performance Measure: Identify tax savings and/or cost avoidance directly associated with a new consolidation, collaboration or partnership.

	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2015 Target	2016 Target
Dollars saved/Costs avoided				

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

Objective 10: Introduce an annual County Budget that is aligned with the priorities, and meets the expectations, of County residents.

Action Steps:

- Hold focus groups to solicit feedback from County residents (Chief of Staff and Executive Assistant)
- Hold budget town hall meetings to inform citizens of the County’s current fiscal outlook and receive feedback on budget priorities (County Executive and Chief of Staff)

- Support LEAN initiatives and other cost saving programs throughout the County (All Staff)

Performance Measure: Through focus group sessions and other methods of surveying public opinion, determine if the counties budget by functional area closely matches the public’s stated priorities.

Public Ranking during latest environmental scan	2013 Actual Ranking	2014 Target Ranking	2015 Target Ranking	2016 Target Ranking
1.) Public Safety (Sheriff & Courts System)	1 (40%)	1	1	1
2.) Health and Human Services Programs	2 (25%)	2	2	2
3.) Infrastructure and Public Works	3 (11%)	3	3	3
Parks and Land Use	4 (8%)	4	4	4