



### **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. This year, the County is once again updating and re-energizing 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 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. This year's strategic planning focus groups will kick off in the fall.

When focus groups were conducted in 2005, respondents indicated that they desired 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 to share governmental services were also widely supported, while contracting for services was supported on a narrower range of specific criteria.

Taken as a whole, focus group members were open to government exploring new ways of doing business. Most seemed 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 felt that the County should focus on its core services and should consider reducing or eliminating nonessential and non-governmental activities. 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 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 which is updated annually. This year, 2013, will mark the greatest update to the plan since 2005. The document will continue 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.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING OVERVIEW *continued...***

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**

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**Major Departmental Strategic Outcomes and Objectives for 2013**

**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:	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Target
County's Bond Rating	AAA/Aaa	AAA/Aaa	AAA/Aaa

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

Key Outcome Indicator: New construction growth in the County's equalized value.

Performance Measure	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Actual
\$ Amount of New Construction **	\$397.6 million	\$320.1 million	\$406.4 million
% of Change	0.8%	0.64%	0.82%

*\*\*Amounts shown are prior year values for the subsequent year budget. Also, new construction is based on the State Department of Revenue figures with adjustments reflecting demolition of buildings.*