

DOUGLAS COUNTY

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT



JULY 2008

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it (Bryson, 1995). The strategic planning process is really about getting people together to talk about what is important, and then doing something about it. The process allows organizations to:

- ◆ Examine the environment in which they exist and operate
- ◆ Explore the factors and trends that affect the way they do business and carry out their roles
- ◆ Seek to meet their mandates and fulfill their missions
- ◆ Frame the strategic issues they must address
- ◆ Find ways to address these issues

The benefits of strategic planning are numerous. An organization can increase effectiveness and efficiency; improve understanding through better learning; make better decisions; enhance organizational capabilities; improve communication and public relations; and increase political support.

Steering Committee

The Douglas County strategic planning process was facilitated by Fariba Pendleton and led by a steering committee comprised of Doug Finn, Dave Ross, Steve Koszarek, Julius Erlenbach, Christopher Markwood, Roger Engle, Meg Thoreson, Jack Sweeney, Sue Hendrickson, Michelle Wick, Ann Doucette, Pat Schanen, and Gayle Wahner. This committee was staffed by Fariba Pendleton and Denese Odermann.

Input

Many individuals including but not limited to citizens, community partners, employees, department managers, and the county board provided valuable input throughout the process.

Strategy Teams

The teams lead by Steve Koszarek, Pat Schanen, Dennis Arras, and Mary Klun identified strategies and action plans for each of the identified goals. Individuals who served on these teams included: Candy Anderson, Steve Rannenberg, Renée Middleton, Mary Drobot, Kelly Thimm, Sue Sandvick, Alan Jacques, Jason Serck, Randy Jones, Dave Podratz, Ann Doucette, Vicki Hajewski, Sue Hendrickson, Mark Schroeder, Lin Helinius, Jim Borgeson, Kaye Tenerelli, Andy Lisak, Dan Woods, Christine Ostern, Karl Seckinger, Jon Harris, Jim Latvala, Julie Ruikka, and Shannon Pettit.

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Douglas County Mission:

The mission of Douglas County is to provide cost-effective services, with equal access to all citizens; to continue and enhance partnerships; to responsibly manage our resources and plan for the future.

Douglas County Vision:

The work of Douglas County government is to provide collectively what cannot be accomplished by citizens individually.

Douglas County Core Values:

Integrity, Service, Quality, Efficiency, Communication, Stewardship, Foresight.

Douglas County Strategic Goals:

1. Attract and retain capable and responsive staff and board members that provide vision and leadership necessary to effectively communicate and respond to the changing needs of Douglas County citizens.
2. Develop and maintain an organizational structure that enhances operational efficiency, customer service, and effectiveness in addressing the needs of Douglas County.
3. Actively pursue partnerships with key public and private stakeholders at local, state, and federal levels to ensure cost effective delivery of mandated and non-mandated services.
4. Create and maintain a positive infrastructure and resource base while balancing environmental stewardship with growth to enhance the quality of life in Douglas County.

GOAL #1

Attract and retain capable and responsive staff and board members that provide vision and leadership necessary to effectively communicate and respond to the changing needs of Douglas County citizens.

Strategy A

Develop position descriptions where possible and logical that allow employees to promote via a career ladder concept through the accomplishment of core competencies.

Action Plan: *Core competencies are developed as a dynamic, flexible vehicle and should be updated by department management on a regular basis.*

Strategy B

Develop a performance coaching and evaluation system based on the core competency model that tracks the completion of performance evaluations at least two to three times per year. Employees in probationary status will be required to have three coaching sessions during their probationary tenure to assure development and sound decisions by the department in terms of future status.

Action Plan: *Human Resources/Administration maintains records of all employees due for a performance coaching evaluation. Once a department manager/director completes a coaching evaluation, it is submitted as complete to Human Resources in a form of a "tickler" file. If a department manager/director is recommending a core competency promotion for an employee, this is always correlated with the performance coaching session.*

Strategy C

Re-convene the leadership and management skill development process on a mandatory basis for all county board supervisors, department supervisors, managers, and department directors and possibly open up to employees desiring management roles in their growth and development plans.

Action Plan: *Implement trainings in areas such as: performance coaching and evaluation; leadership role modeling for staff; time management; legal actions in disciplinary procedures; interviewing and hiring strategies; facilitating effective meetings; developing effective presentations; management communication strategies; building and sustaining high performance work teams; finance skills for non-financial staff; developing a strategic plan; county board academy/citizen academy.*

GOAL #2

Develop and maintain an organizational structure that enhances operational efficiency, customer service, and effectiveness in addressing the needs of Douglas County.

Strategy A

Develop, sustain, and monitor key strategic measures for each department.

Action Plan: *Each department head will conduct a SWOT analysis to develop measurable and achievable goals, through the creation of work plans and measurable outcomes, for their department in the following areas.*

Strategy B

Develop, sustain, and monitor a multifaceted marketing and service access plan.

Action Plan: *Each department will evaluate, by conducting a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current accessibility through web access, telephone and face-to-face customer service. Marketing plan/strategies will be developed by each department e.g. web page/links, brochures, PEGA (Public Education and Government Access), news releases, customer surveys etc. and reviewed yearly. Administration will encourage the use of automation while maintaining high-quality personal service.*

Action Plan: *Development of a computer station in both the Court House and Government Center to be linked only to the County web pages with information regarding services to be accessed by the public.*

Action Plan: *Explore possibility of designating an individual to provide leadership to Douglas County marketing/public relations plans.*

Strategy C

Develop, sustain, and evaluate the formation of “functional work groups” of departments with related services to improve levels of communication between departments.

Action Plan: *Functional Work Groups should consist of representatives from departments providing related services, for example: Legal and Judicial - Corporation Counsel, District Attorney, Judicial Court Commissioner, Clerk of Courts, Emergency Management, Medical Examiner, Sheriff/Jail.*

Strategy D

With the projected decrease in the size on the County Board in 2012 and acknowledging the increased burden on board supervisors serving on various committees, we need to continue efforts to delineate roles and responsibilities of the administrator, department managers and board supervisors.

Action Plan: *Develop and conduct a schedule of trainings on the roles and responsibilities of the administrator, department managers, and board supervisors.*

GOAL #3

Actively pursue partnerships with key public and private stakeholders at local, state, and federal levels to ensure cost effective delivery of mandated and non-mandated services.

Strategy A

Strengthen our partnership with neighboring governments to promote better services.

Action Plan: *Meet with the leaders of the Cities of Superior and Duluth and of St. Louis, Carlton, and Lake Counties to identify common issues and identify the critical liaisons for support and collaboration.*

Action Plan: *Expand communication with local towns and villages and the private sector. Continue to include citizens and private business in county work groups and committees. Establish an Intergovernmental Cooperation Council with towns and villages. Schedule a County Board meeting in rural area annually. Develop and promote the county website to towns and villages, including a presentation and training at Towns Association meeting.*

Strategy B

Productive communication with State and Federal authorities at a county board and department level.

Action Plan: *The county board and departments will initiate/maintain effective working relationships with the appropriate state agency and/or organization.*

Action Plan: *Encourage department leadership in Superior Days to strength Northwest Wisconsin county and state contacts.*

Strategy C

Effective and increased citizen contact in County government.

Action Plan: *Provide monthly information to the news media and utilize the county website.*

Action Plan: *Provide information and access to educational resources; such as the “Superior/Douglas County Leadership Program”, University of Wisconsin-Superior, and local high schools.*

Action Plan: *Engage citizens on committees or other governmental work groups.*

Action Plan: *Develop a County Academy to promote knowledge of county government.*

GOAL #4

Create and maintain a positive infrastructure and resource base while balancing environmental stewardship with growth to enhance the quality of life in Douglas County.

Strategy A

Develop plans to encourage economic growth, maintain infrastructure and preserve the beauty of our lands, waters and air.

Action Plan: *Continue to use and support on-going county plans to maintain infrastructure and develop land and water use strategies.*

Action Plan: *Host county-wide forums for all citizens and businesses to find a common value system that will provide agreement for economic development and the environment.*

Action Plan: *Research what type of businesses development has been successful in other areas of the world that were economically like Douglas County is now, but have found a way out of economic depression. (Like Ireland and Finland). Use their strategies to design a plan for Douglas County.*

Action Plan: *Put together development incentives such as the ability to offer mitigation credits at an affordable price; ready to move into development sites with utilities and clear ownership; have assistance available with Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), and provide carbon credits etc.*

Action Plan: *Create a team of specialists through retainer, current staff or new hires that know economic development, marketing, federal grant writing, land acquisition, etc. to represent the county and make sure the county is on track and protected from costly errors.*

Strategy B

Douglas County has committed to being an Eco-County; therefore, growth in the “green sectors” and sustainable practices should be encouraged.

Action Plan: *Explore and encourage alternative power and green technology as a business growth opportunity for the county and to be used by businesses as possible.*

Action Plan: *Develop a list of activities, projects, opportunities that Douglas County can use to promote and encourage green concepts, green building, demonstrate and educate the public on green and sustainable practice.*