



City of Gunnison Strategic Planning

The Need for Strategic Planning

The City of Gunnison uses the council–manager form of government, wherein City Council is responsible for the legislative function of the municipality such as establishing policy, passing ordinances, appropriating funds, and developing an overall vision. The Manager's role is to implement the policies and course that has been established by the Council. This form of government is recognized as the structure most conducive to the efficient, effective, and ethical management of local communities.

Recently, the City Manager met with members of council to formulate some goals. The need to create and implement a Strategic Planning process was a primary result of that discussion. Ken Coleman's April 17, 2015 memo states the process will be, "an initial step in the annual budget development where Council and staff meet to formulate priorities for our organization. These will determine what further budget items are included to support these set priorities and are incorporated into the work plan."

By launching a strategic plan, the City of Gunnison can ensure:

- 1) Priorities are used to inform all decision making processes including resource allocation during creation of the annual budget and establishment of employee work plans,
- 2) Continuity during changes in leadership, and
- 3) Relatively scarce resources are focused on longer-term objectives, especially throughout the year when "putting out fires" and responding to constituent requests.

Staff recommends implementing the strategic process that has been developed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The new process should allow the City of Gunnison to:

- Understand change, forecast change and set a course of action to manage the expected implications of change
- Engage the community and create enthusiasm for the future
- Prioritize goals in line with available funding
- Cause decision making to be proactive rather than reactive
- Promote trust, honesty, and respect between and among decision makers and members of the community
- Tie the strategic direction directly to work plans, employee performance and budgeting

Process for Strategic Planning



The strategic plan is a living document. As shown above, the strategic planning process is continuous and is connected to other planning documents such as the capital improvement plan and the annual budget. The priorities that have been established during the planning process inform resource allocation decisions during the budgeting process and establishment of work plans.

Although it is important that the plan doesn't change dramatically from year to year, as soon as the plan has been "completed", an environmental scan must take place to determine whether the plan should change. The definition of the word *strategic* is, "relating to the identification of long-term or overall aims and interests and the means of achieving them." Since most strategic goals cannot be accomplished within one year, changing the plan dramatically from year to year can inhibit progress. However, assessing progress includes determining which tactics are working and reaction to changing local conditions.

Timeline

The timeline below demonstrates there are many moving parts related to planning at the City of Gunnison. This timeline is a draft presentation of planning efforts to be undertaken.

DATE	EFFORT	DESCRIPTION
05/12/15	Municipal Election	Regular Municipal Election for the City of Gunnison
05/19/15	Council Organization	Discussion for Council and Staff protocol
05/19/15	Strategic Plan Input Template	Input template is available for the strategic plan for use by the public, Council, community leaders, and City staff.
05/20/15	Baseline Data Distribution	Distribution of baseline data for Council review including, planning documents, economic studies, budgets, etc.
06/01/15	Strategic Plan Input Due	Cutoff for receipt of strategic planning input templates.
06/02/15	Draft Capital Improvement Plan	Submission of the draft Capital Improvement Plan for Council review
06/02/15	Goal Setting	Determination of strategic goals for the strategic plan and assignment of team leaders for each goal
06/09/15	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	Adoption of the Final Capital Improvement Plan
06/16/15	Goal Refinement	Review of strategic goals after a "cooling-off" period and assignment of team leaders to strategic goals.
07/07/15	Objectives and Tactics Presentation	Team leaders present their draft objectives and tactics for each strategic goal to Management Staff.
07/20/15	City Fest	Public input is invited for strategic plan priorities and capital projects
07/21/15	Strategic Plan Presentation	Presentation of the draft strategic plan to City Council.
07/28/15	STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTION	Adoption of the strategic plan
08/03/15	Budget Kick-Off	Distribution of budget manual, worksheets and preliminary wage analysis
08/25/15	Abstract of Assessments	Assessor must submit abstract of assessments reflecting assessed values of property in the County by class and subclass to the Division of Property Taxation and must also submit a preliminary certification to all taxing entities CRS 39-2-115
08/21/15	Contracts for Service Applications	Distribution of contracts for service guidelines and the application for funding to community organizations
08/21/15	BUDGET SUBMITTAL DUE	All budget worksheets and special budget requests are due
09/11/15	Special Requests	City staff meets to consider special requests for capital projects, budget enhancements, IT equipment and new staff. Deadline for

		Contracts for Service applications.
10/02/15	SPB Deadline	Deadline for changes to the Staff Proposed Budget. Begin creation of the Staff Proposed Budget document.
10/13/15	STAFF PROPOSED BUDGET	Submittal of the Staff Proposed Budget to City Council. <i>Municipal Home Rule Charter deadline: October 15</i>
10/20-11/17/15	Budget Work Sessions	Council meets with staff to consider input revises the Staff Proposed Budget as they deem necessary
10/20/15	Grants and Contracts	Grants & Contracts for Service presentations from applicants
11/10/15 7:00 PM	BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING	Public hearing on the proposed budget. Notice of the time and place of the hearing must be published at least 5 days prior. <i>Municipal Home Rule Charter deadline: November 15</i>
11/24/15	First Reading of Budget	First reading of ordinances for the mill levy, budget and prior year amendments
12/08/15	BUDGET ADOPTION	Council adopts on final reading an ordinance for the budget and an ordinance of the annual appropriations. <i>Municipal Home Rule Charter deadline: December 15</i>
12/08/15	Additional Appropriations	Final reading for July through December budget amendments.
12/10/15	Final Assessed Valuation	Final deadline for County Assessor to certify changes in assessed valuation to local jurisdictions and the Division of Property Taxation (CRS 39-1-111 (5)) <i>Statutory deadline: December 10</i>
12/22/15	Mill Levy Certification	Board of County Commissioners certifies all taxing entities' mill levies to the County Assessor. <i>Statutory deadline: December 22</i>
01/31/16	Budget Document	Final budget document sent to Division of Local Government and available on the City website
02/28/16	Strategic Plan Assessment	Assessment of progress made on Strategic Plan.

Stakeholder Input

One of the most important aspects of any strategic planning process is that it allows contributions of information and ideas from a variety of sources. Similar to brainstorming, the initial process should accept input from many stakeholders and sources, including:

- City council members
- City staff
- Other local leaders and government representatives
- Individuals
- Other organizations
- The press

The private sector often uses a tool called SWOT analysis, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Governments have different objectives than a for-profit organization, but the SWOT implementation has some lessons to be learned in that the City's strategic direction should be focused on the following:

- 1) **Opportunities.** What new projects or initiatives should be undertaken by the City? Recognizing that resources are limited, these projects or initiatives may take advantage of increased revenues or redirection of resources from existing uses.
- 2) **Strengths.** As discussed above, since embarking in a new direction can require reduction of services in other areas, it is important to review services that are widely accepted as necessary and effective. Perhaps the level of service should be expanded, or at least maintained. Too many strategic plans state new goals, but fail to incorporate ongoing priorities.
- 3) **Issues or Challenges.** Since there are no perfect solutions to many problems and there are often wide opinions on how to address certain problems, it is important to look at issues that, if left unaddressed, will have a negative impact upon the community. Issues can be due to internal problems within the City of Gunnison organization or influencing the City based on external factors such as the economy, demographic trends, decisions of other organizations and governments, etc.

A templated approach to glean input from the stakeholders may be a good starting point for a strategic discussion. An open forum for input will prevent the City from operating in a vacuum.

As City Council meets to consider input, it is also important to study:

- Comprehensive plans and master plans
- Economic impact reports
- Surveys
- Intergovernmental agreements

Format

While many organizations plan strategically, they often use a variety of different terminology. The City of Gunnison will move forward using Goals, Objectives and Tactics as presented by the ICMA.

Goals

Goals usually address long-term issues and they must be directly tied to the vision statement of the City of Gunnison. They do not include a great deal of specificity. Rather, they are a generalized statement of where the City of Gunnison wants to be at some point in the future. Goals can include a focus on economic vitality, sustainability, healthy communities, public safety, transportation and an assortment of other areas.

An example goal is, "Strengthen the leadership, vision, and planning of the City of Gunnison."

Objectives

Each goal statement in the strategic plan will be followed by one or more objectives and they begin to provide the specificity and measurability.

An example objective is, "By July 31, 2015, the City of Gunnison will adopt its first strategic plan."

Tactics

Tactics represent action steps or strategies to accomplish the measurements designated in each objective. They are generally presented in a logical order.

Some example tactics are,

- *May 15, 2015 – solicit input for a strategic plan*
- *May 19, 2015 – determine whether the existing mission and vision statement for the City needs to be modified*
- *June 2, 2015 – work session to identify broad strategic goals*
- *June 16, 2015 - work session to refine broad strategic goals, confirm Council support for the stated goals, determine rough objectives associated with the goals and identify team leaders for each goal*
- *June 17-July 7, 2015 – City staff works to identify objectives and associated tactics to accomplish the goals.*
- *July 21, 2015 – work session to consider proposed objectives and tactics*
- *July 28, 2015 – strategic plan adoption*

Conclusion

The world and community is changing at a rapid pace. It is important to recognize that the City of Gunnison can help shape the community and influence our city's future direction. Initiating a strategic planning process allows our organization to provide an even higher level of service and address community issues in a well thought out way. Even with a solid road map to guide us, it is important to incorporate flexibility into this approach. The plan should allow the City to respond more effectively and ultimately serve the best interests of our citizens.

CITY OF GUNNISON STRATEGIC PLANNING

PUBLIC INPUT FORM

The City of Gunnison is seeking input for the upcoming strategic planning process. Your valuable input will be used to help develop the future direction for the City of Gunnison, will be shared with the City Council as they develop their Strategic Plan. **What, in your opinion, is the most important thing that the City should focus on over the next five years?**

To aid in your consideration of this important question, please answer **one** of the below questions.

- 1) **Opportunities.** What new projects or initiatives should be undertaken by the City? Recognizing that resources are limited, these projects or initiatives may take advantage of increased revenues or redirection of resources from existing uses.

- 2) **Strengths.** As discussed above, since embarking in a new direction can require reduction of services in other areas, it is important to review services that are widely accepted as necessary and effective. Perhaps the level of service should be expanded, or at least maintained. Too many strategic plans state new goals, but fail to incorporate ongoing priorities.

- 3) **Issues or Challenges.** Since there are no perfect solutions to many problems and there are often wide opinions on how to address certain problems, it is important to look at issues that, if left unaddressed, will have a negative impact upon the community. Issues can be due to internal problems within the City of Gunnison organization or influencing the City based on external factors such as the economy, demographic trends, decisions of other organizations and governments, etc.

In the event your idea is chosen for inclusion in the Strategic Plan, may we contact you for any follow-up questions? Yes No

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

* Only input that is constructive and respectful will be seriously considered.

Please return the completed form to:

City of Gunnison
Finance Director
PO Box 239
Gunnison, CO 81230

Please Check One:

- City of Gunnison Resident
- City of Gunnison Business Owner
- City of Gunnison Employee
- Gunnison County Resident
- City of Gunnison Visitor
- Other _____