



CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

Date: April 4, 2013

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

Through: Wanda S. Page, Deputy City Manager

From: Bertha T. Johnson, Budget and Management Services Director
Jay F. Reinstein, Strategic Initiatives Manager

Subject: Strategic Plan Update and Adoption

Executive Summary

In April 2011, City Council adopted the City's first Strategic Plan to identify long-term direction, short-term goals, and action steps for the organization. Since the adoption of the strategic plan, more strategic decision-making is occurring throughout the organization. Now more than ever, data is being used to make decisions and to tell a better story to the residents through the strategic plan dashboard. City departments are collaborating more frequently and working less in silos due in large part to the structure of the plan and the leadership of the organization.

In September 2012, the first major update of the citywide strategic plan began, enabling staff, residents, and key stakeholders to provide input on the existing objectives, measures, and initiatives. This update and realignment was an opportunity to assess the plan in its entirety and make modifications and add new objectives, measures, and initiatives.

The Strategic Plan contained many departmental measures and initiatives, which have since been moved to departmental strategic plans. When the initial citywide plan was crafted in early 2011, there were no departmental plans implemented, necessitating the temporary placement of departmental measures in the citywide strategic plan. We also did not want to lose sight of the initiatives that were developed with staff, resident, and stakeholder input.

Community and staff input are essential with any successful strategic planning process. As one of the steps to update the strategic plan, the City engaged residents, key stakeholders, City staff, and the Partners Against Crime districts (PACs) in visioning sessions and surveys. The purpose of the engagement component was to understand the various groups' vision of the five strategic plan goals and their ideas for activities that the City can undertake to realize these visions. Information obtained from the sessions was used to guide the Strategic Plan update.

Recommendation

The Administration recommends that City Council adopt the three-year strategic plan.

Background

In April 2011, City Council adopted the City's first Strategic Plan to identify long-term direction, short-term goals, and action steps for the organization. Since the adoption of the strategic plan, more strategic decision-making is occurring throughout the organization. Now more than ever, data is being used to make decisions and to tell a better story to the residents through the strategic plan dashboard. City departments are collaborating more frequently and working less in silos due in large part to the structure of the plan and the leadership of the organization.

In September 2012, the first major update of the citywide strategic plan began, enabling staff, residents, and key stakeholders to provide input on the existing objectives, measures, and initiatives. This major update was an opportunity to assess the plan in its entirety, make modifications, and add new objectives, measures, and initiatives.

Community and staff input are essential with any successful strategic planning process. As one of the steps to update the strategic plan, the City engaged residents, key stakeholders, City staff, and the Partners Against Crime districts (PACs) in both visioning sessions and surveys. The purpose of the engagement was to understand the various groups' vision of the five strategic plan goals and solicit their ideas for specific activities that the City can undertake to realize these visions. Information obtained from the sessions was used to guide the Strategic Plan update.

To obtain input from residents, City staff conducted three community meetings. The meetings were held at North Regional Library, South Regional Library, and Holton Career and Resource Center during September 2012. Residents discussed two of the strategic goals during each meeting. The responses were recorded on flip charts and later analyzed for common themes. Residents were asked the following three questions about each of the goals during their meeting:

1. What does this goal look like to you? For example, what does a Safe and Secure Community look like to you?
2. Of the list generated, what should be the first area of focus? The second? The third? A group consensus is not required, but the City is interested in identifying those areas that generally rise to the top.
3. What specific projects or activities should the City take on, or continue with renewed effort, to achieve these priorities?

City staff, key stakeholders, residents, and PACs completed an online survey that mirrored the questions asked at the community sessions. There was also an employee focus group conducted for those employees in the operations departments (Solid Waste, General Services, Water Management, Fleet

Management, and Public Works) without e-mail access. This group also answered the identical questions that were presented at the community sessions.

In some cases, it was necessary after gathering all of the internal and external data, that new goal initiatives were created that aligned with the common vision themes. A few examples areas follows:

- Goal 1- **Vision theme:** Well trained workforce → **Initiative:** Enhance and promote apprenticeship internship programs with state and local partners
- Goal 2- **Vision theme:** Fast response times → **Initiative:** Utilize Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) on emergency apparatus to reduce response times
- Goal 3- **Vision theme:** Environmental Stewardship → **Initiative:** Teach Environmental Stewardship (e.g. Education and training about energy, solid waste, and water)
- Goal 4- **Vision theme:** Well trained employees → **Initiative:** Maximize employee development through training opportunities (joint city/county)
- Goal 5- **Vision theme:** Green and open spaces that are well maintained → **Initiative:** Develop facility, parks/open space and equipment asset management plans

As a part of the strategic plan update process, the Joint City/County initiatives were identified in the plan and aligned to the most appropriate City and County goals. In the summer of 2011, City and County staff began to meet to discuss strategic plan alignment and potential joint city/county initiatives. These initiatives which focus on youth, health and wellness, housing, sustainability, and community beautification, were recommended by the city and county goal champions and presented to the City and County Managers for approval.

This collaboration among the City, County, and Durham Public Schools has built bridges and relationships as well as improving communication between the entities. The ability to share resources limits redundancy ultimately saving taxpayer dollars.

Issues/Analysis

The Strategic Plan will:

- Enable the City Council to set direction for the organization and establish priorities;
- Set the stage for budgeting, resource allocation, delivery of services, performance measurement, and evaluation;
- Provide standards of accountability for people, programs, and allocated resources;
- Develop better and more effective communication throughout the organization and community.

Alternatives

City Council can choose not to adopt the Strategic Plan and/or direct staff to continue refining the plan for consideration by City Council at a later date.

Financial Impact

N/A

SDBE Summary

N/A

Attachments

1. Strategic Plan Goal Pages