



Governor's Sterling Award & Sustained Best Practices



Using the Strategic Plan to Drive Results

Description of Best Practice:

The City Commission and staff commit to spending a day and a half together at the biennial Strategic Planning Workshop to review data and create a new plan for the future. Staff provides participants with a manual full of summaries and highlights from the many sources of information used to analyze the City's financial condition, operational performance, customer requirements, and the forces at work in the economic, demographic, and legislative environment.

One tool, the Situational Analysis, acts as the basis for the City's short- and long-range planning efforts. It completes the ultimate feedback loop, where organizational direction from the City Commission is not set until market information, customer input, performance data, and all other inputs are considered.

At the most recent Strategic Planning Workshop, we set the scene by asking to begin with the end in mind— and for the end to include “big hairy audacious goals.” Presentations included the most recent residential and business survey results, the current financials as well as the five-year financial forecast, legislative issues, community demographic trends, SWOT analysis, Key Intended Outcomes (KIOs) and initiative updates, and the “environmental scan.” After the presentations, the commissioners shared their visions and staff went to work organizing the comments and suggestions that had been captured on a “bucket list.”

Results:

The result was a drastic transformation of the City's Strategic Priorities. On day two, staff offered a rough draft of five new priorities: A Family-Friendly Community, A Thriving Business Community, An Active, Healthy Community, An Attractive Community, and A Professional, High Performing Organization. The next step was to evaluate which Key Intended Outcomes (KIOs) and departmental performance measures align to the new Strategic Priorities.

Strategy is converted to action during the business planning and budget process. Departments are asked to design their budgets to support the new priorities and goals. The departments determine how they can best utilize their resources. If new resources (such as staff or equipment) are needed, then these additional resources are requested as part of a new Business Plan initiative. The proposed Business Plan initiatives that align best to the Strategic Priorities and pass the financial feasibility test are recommended to the Commission for approval. Two examples of how Business Plan initiatives align to Strategic Priorities, which, in turn, drives results are summarized below.



Strategic Priority	Intent	Initiative	Result	
A Family-Friendly Community	...assuring public safety	Burglary Enforcement and Reduction (BEAR) Unit	-Crime Rate per 100,000 population reduced from 2,688.8 in 2011 to 2,485.3 in 2012 to 2,278.2 in 2013	
			-The number of burglaries decreased from 633 in 2011 to 572 in 2012 to 389 in 2013	
An Attractive Community	...preserve and enhance the community's appearance	Enhance Litter Removal	-99% Business Survey rating of cleanliness of City streets and public areas	
		Enhance Recycling Program	-Pounds of recycled material per capita is increasing from 98.98 in FY2012 to 103.37 in FY2013 to 114.2 FYTD 2014	

Application:

Strategic Planning is a process, a process than can be replicated by another organization. As with most of our processes, the City of Coral Springs applies the Plan-Do-Check-Act framework.

Strategic planning starts with examining the present, envisioning the future, and choosing how to get there. The next step is making it happen. We begin gathering data two months before the workshop. For instance, the SWOT survey occurs in January and the environmental scan pieces are written in February while a professional survey company conducts the residential or business survey. The workshop is held in March.

We designate a time and place for the workshop, explain roles and responsibilities of the participants, and set expectations. We review data trends and discuss the outcomes we wish to achieve. One of the biggest challenges is keeping participants at the “35,000 feet level,” so we capture their ideas on a separate flip chart and promise to revisit them during the business planning workshops.

A strategic plan is just a plan. The plan is only as good as the organization’s ability and willingness to follow it. Therefore, it is important for leadership to “lead by example” by making decisions grounded in data and linked to the plan. It is also helpful to implement a Business Plan to bridge the high-level Strategic Plan and the ground-level budget.

