



Wyoming  
Association of  
Municipalities  
Building Strong Communities

# Strategic Planning for Municipalities

2025 WAM WINTER CONFERENCE

NEWLY ELECTED BOOTCAMP

# Course Objectives

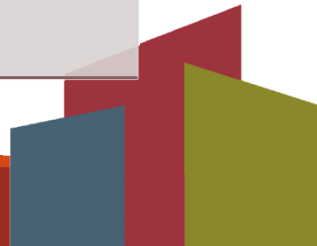
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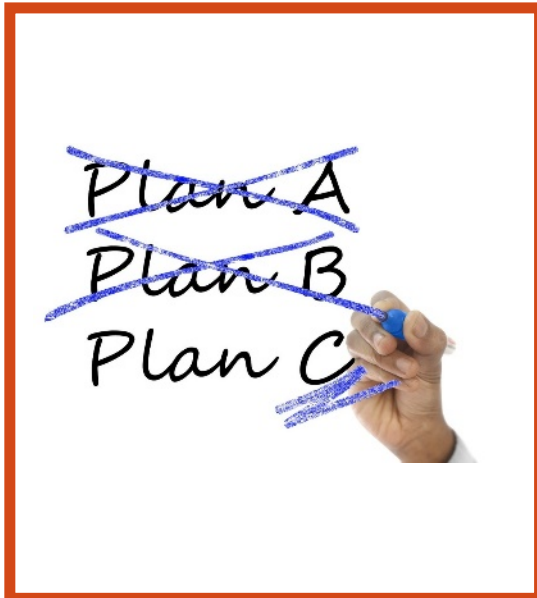
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Learn how to strategically plan for your municipality

2

Know how to implement your plans to get things done





# Why do Strategic Planning?

- Set priorities
- Focus energy and resources
- Strengthen operations
- Build consensus
- Establish agreement around intended outcomes/results
- Assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment

*"If you don't know where you're going, any plan will do."*

Peter Drucker

## Vision

- Defines where you want to be; incorporates community values

## Mission

- Defines your role in helping to achieve the vision; reflects internal values

## Values

- How you choose to operate and/or what you truly want

*Be strategic!*

All types of plans should be developed with your municipal values, your vision, and your mission in mind

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Municipal Strategic Plan

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Comprehensive Master Plan

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Economic Development Plan

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Capital Improvement Plan

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Project Plan



## Consider were you want to be in the future

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- What do we hope will be true in the future?
- What is your community's vision for the future?
- What must change?
- What could be better?
- SWOT analysis should guide planning



## Guiding Values

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- Beliefs that are shared by stakeholders in organization
- Values are what drives an organization's culture, establishes its priorities, and provides the basis from which decisions can be made
- How we choose to operate is just as important as our goals

## Guiding Values, such as...

- Integrity
- Community
- Ownership
- Respect
- Competency



# Examples of “Ownership” Value

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**I WILL NOT SAY  
“IT’S NOT MY  
JOB” OR “WE  
ARE SHORT-  
STAFFED”**



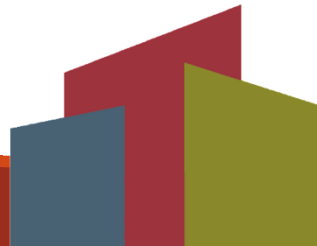
**I AM AVAILABLE  
TO ASSIST,  
ENCOURAGE  
AND HELP  
OTHERS**



**I WILL TAKE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR MY  
ACTIONS AND  
BEHAVIOR**



**I WILL THINK  
“TEAM” WHEN  
SHARING  
SUCCESSES &  
FAILURES  
TOGETHER**



*“The Cheyenne Police Department mission is ‘Protecting the Legend’ of Cheyenne by working in cooperation with citizens to lead the charge in preventing crime and defending the rights of the community”*

## What is your Mission?

Your mission is defined by ***your role*** in accomplishing the community vision

- Why do we exist?
- What contributions do we make to the community and to the quality of life for our citizens?
- What is the value we give to our citizens?

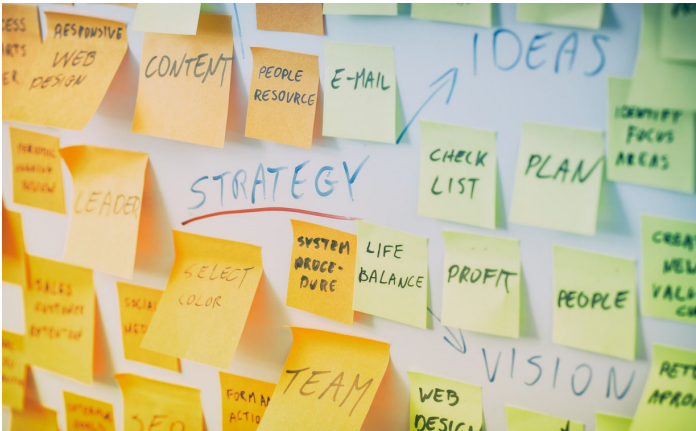




# Articulate a Vision for the Future

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- Think of the future in the present tense
- What is your community like? Who lives there? Why do they stay? What is unique? What do you value?
- What should be retained? What should be dropped? What is missing that should be created?
- **Ask: *What if?***



# Brainstorming your Vision

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Economically diverse

Forward-looking

Fun, recreation

Growing in a planned, sustainable way

Opportunities to live, work and play

Hometown pride

Attractive community

Value of youth in community

## Vision Statement

Saratoga prides itself on its people, its rustic community heritage, its first-class outdoor recreational opportunities, and its constant quest to dream big





## Best practice: Plan to plan

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- What is the best process to develop your particular plan?
- Start by clearly identifying a need for the plan
- Consider your limitations & constraints
  - Time and money
  - Expertise and technical assistance
  - Need for a facilitator?
  - Best practices are successful strategies that have a proven track record

# If there is a clear need for the plan, then move on to consider the planning process itself

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## **Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science**

In crowdsourcing, agencies submit an open call, generally through the Internet, for voluntary assistance from a large group of individuals to complete defined tasks. Similarly, in citizen science, participants assist with science-related tasks, such as collecting and analyzing data, and interpreting and reporting results.

## **Idea Generation (Ideation)**

Agencies ask participants to submit ideas to address a specific issue or problem, and may allow them to comment on ideas submitted by other participants, and vote to express their support for an idea.

## **Open Data Collaboration**

Agencies mobilize participants to share, explore, and analyze publicly-available data sets, and to use the data to conduct research, design data visualizations, or create web and mobile applications and websites that help people access and use the data.

## **Open Dialogue**

Agencies collect and respond to information, observations, and perspectives from a range of citizen, experts and stakeholders. They can do this using online tools, such as websites or interactive webinars, and in-person meetings or forums.

## **Prize Competition or Challenge**

Agencies identify a problem to solve or a specific goal it wants to achieve, and ask members of the public to submit potential solutions. The agency evaluates these proposals, and provides a monetary or non-monetary award to selected winners.

What level of environmental scan is needed?

Who are the stakeholders?

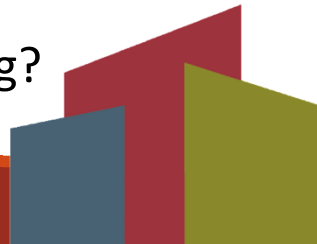
How should the public be engaged?

Who should participate and when?

How should the community and/or partners provide feedback on the plan?

Is there general agreement on the direction, or is your community at a crossroads?

How will the plan be used in decision-making?



# Three Fundamental Questions

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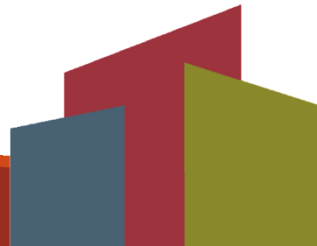
WHERE ARE WE  
NOW?



WHERE DO WE  
WANT TO BE IN THE  
FUTURE?



HOW DO WE GET  
THERE?





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## Community & Economic Development for Municipalities

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## Municipal Budgets

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# How many plans does it take to run a municipality?

# Strategic Planning Steps

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Identify & Include Stakeholders

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Collect Objective Data

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Gather Input

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Create Draft

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Review, Revise, & Finalize

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Disseminate & Publish

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Implement Action Steps

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Monitor Performance

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Report On Progress

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Continually Update



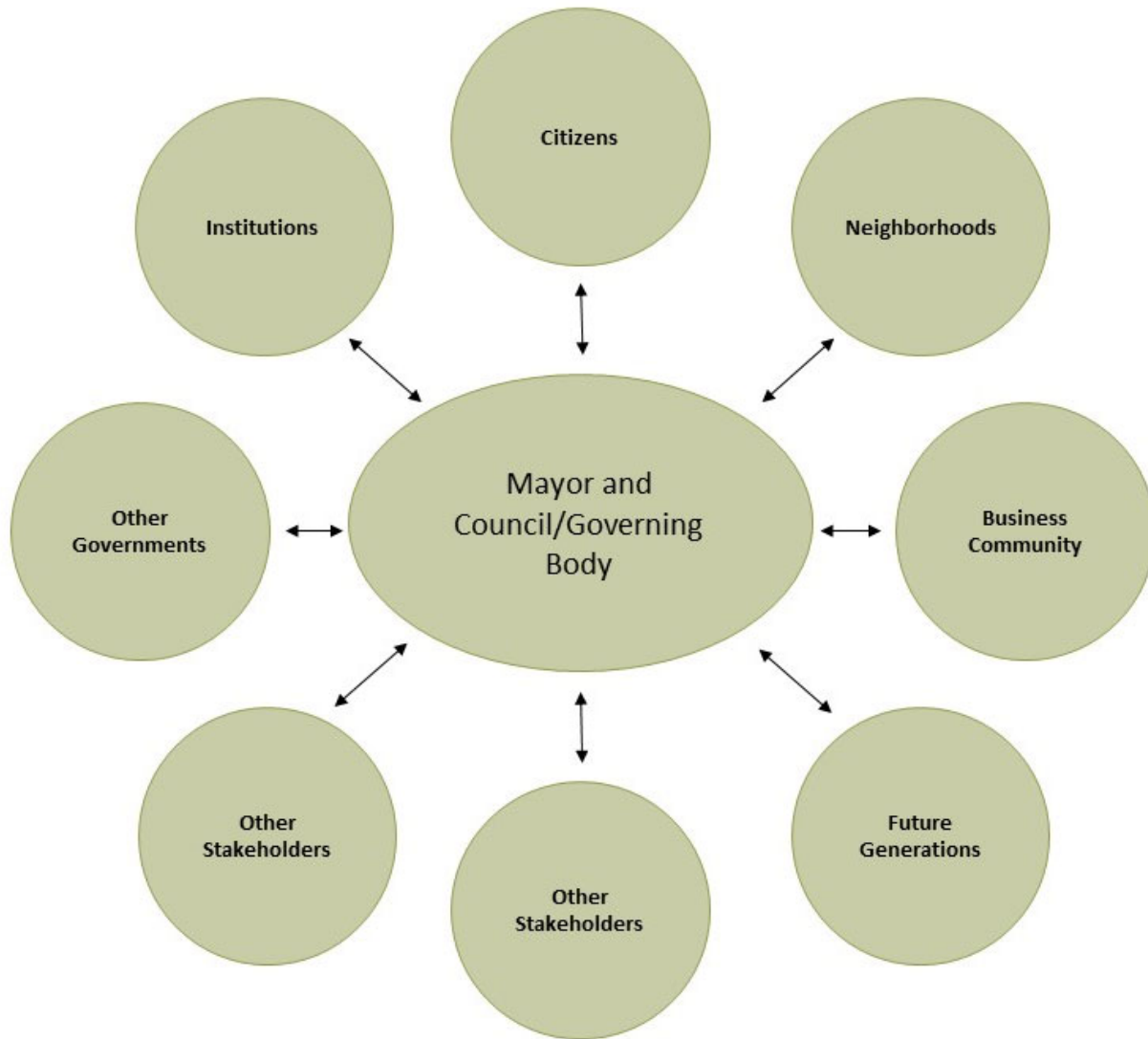
## Identify & Include Stakeholders

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Think broadly to include organizations, residents, and others who will be affected by the plan

- Local elected leaders
- Key staff
- Other local governments, joint powers, etc.
- Businesses
- Taxpayers
- Residents
- Nonprofit organizations

***ALWAYS include the public/press/media***



# Stakeholder Analysis

# Where Are We Now?

Present condition – find out through an environmental scan:

- Stakeholder Analysis
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Assessment
- Data Collection
- A thorough assessment will give you a “snapshot” in time as a reference point



## SWOT ANALYSIS





# Collect Background Documents

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What are the critical background documents?

- ✓ Fiscal (Budget, Audit, Program Analysis)
- ✓ Legal (Municipal Code, State & Federal Law)
- ✓ Plans (previous strategic plan, Master Plan, Economic Development Plan, etc.)
- ✓ Other (WAM budget guidance, CREG reports, community surveys, etc.)

Distribute relevant documents to **entire** planning team and stakeholders (consider making all documents available online)





## SWOT Assessment

What are the **STRENGTHS** of our local government organization? (Internal)

What are the **WEAKNESSES** of our local government organization? (Internal)

What **THREATS** might our community face that we need to be on guard for? (External)

What **OPPORTUNITIES** might be presented to our community? (External)

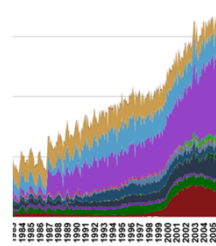
# Environmental Scan of Trends

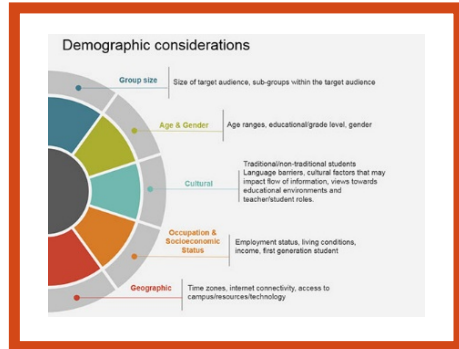
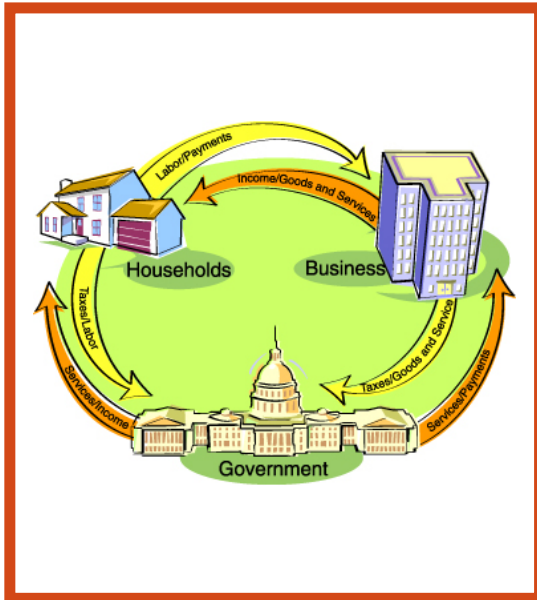
Analysis of trends can often be more informative than a snapshot of one moment in time

- Demographics & Economics
- Social
- Technological
- Environmental
- Political
- Regulatory or legal impacts



oming - Monthly Gas Production



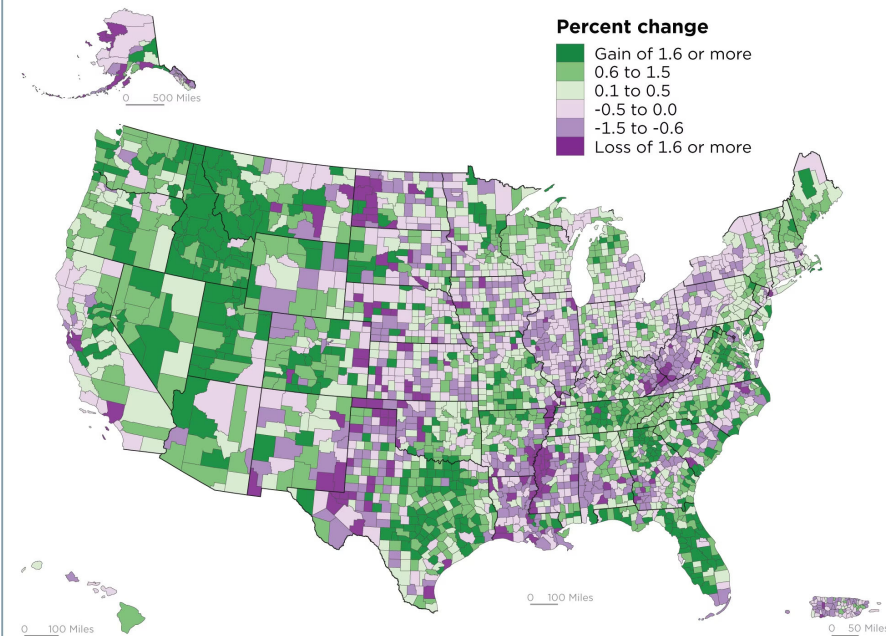


# Data Collection

- Demographic and economic information
- Needs assessment
- Financial condition
- Infrastructure status
- Citizen surveys
- Other indicators

## Where Counties are Growing

Percent Change in Population by County: 2020 to 2021



United States<sup>®</sup>  
**Census**  
Bureau

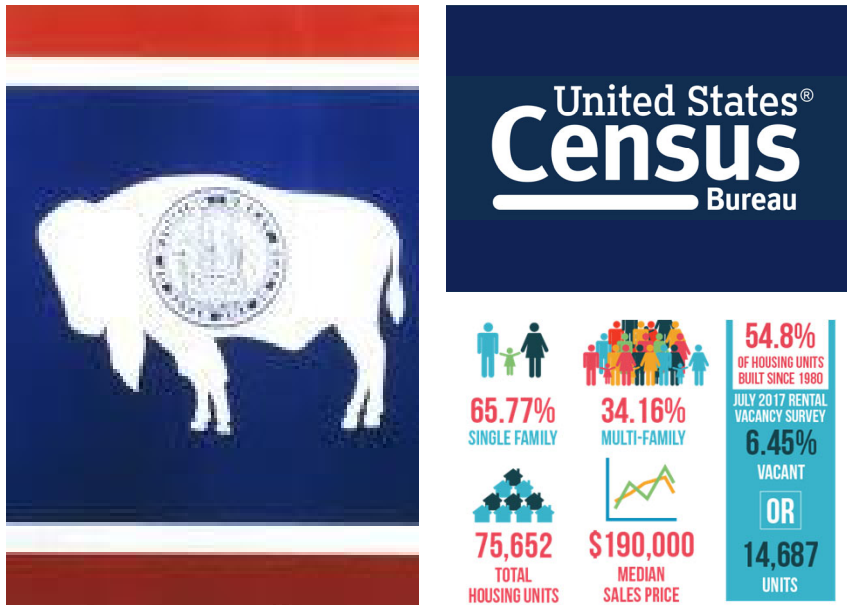
U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,  
Vintage 2021 Population Estimates

# Tips on Collecting Objective Data

- Use official public data whenever possible (free, verifiable & trusted)
- Consider asking WBC or UW to help
- Trends are usually more important than a snapshot of a moment in time
- Create appropriate charts and other illustrations that graphically convey information so it's not just numbers

# Collect Objective Data



- Where and what is the data?
- Population and social demographics
- Start with official sources like Census Bureau and State
- Economic measures and financial indicators
- Follow unemployment rate, sales tax, and mineral production for your county
- WCDA and WY Division of Economic Analysis provide great reports

Gather subjective input from citizens and others

- Seek first to understand, then to be understood
- Public meetings are typically poorly attended (unless the issue is controversial, and then loud voices show up)
- Everyone has a different perspective – find the common ground



# Gather Input

- Values, ideas, support
- Subjective and objective data
- Public meetings, surveys, focus groups
- Perceptions, rumor mills, press coverage, public comments can affect outcomes



How do we get  
there from  
here?

How do we turn our  
vision into a reality?

*Your plan should reflect  
specific actions that  
must be done to achieve  
success*





# Setting Goals and Objectives

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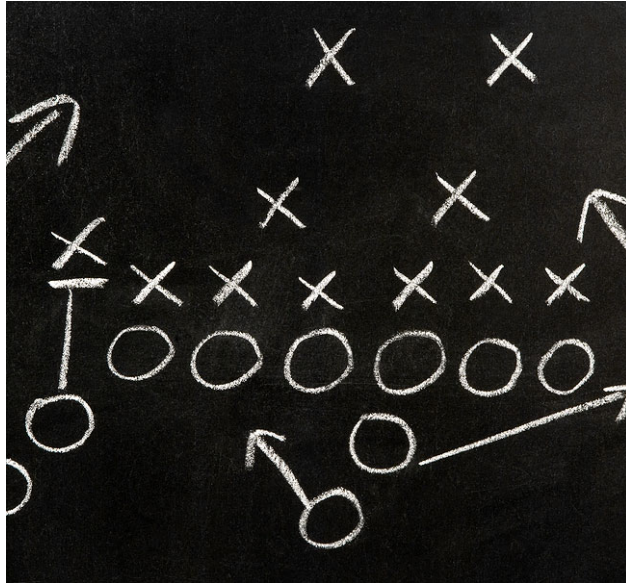
**Goals**: Specific projects, programs or efforts that collectively form a strategy that reflects your vision and values

**Objectives**: Expected outcomes, results or deliverables attained by achieving specific goals

- Can be short-term (1 year or less) or long-term

## Implementation – Make it so!

- ✓ Take action!
- ✓ Establish milestones – steps to make it happen
- ✓ Create and follow a timeline (from start to completion)
- ✓ Enable leaders
- ✓ Build accountability
- ✓ Who else needs to be involved?
- ✓ Create a specific action plan to accomplish each goal and objective





**The key to a successful plan is to implement specific actions**



**Incorporate the plan into your operations (budget, staff, etc.)**



**Manage all operations in a manner that consistently supports your vision and mission**



**Support all action steps, even those implemented by others**

**Break it down into specific action steps**

<b>Goal: Develop Options for Navigation and Mobility Throughout Community</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Players</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Completion of Trails Master Plan	Enhanced pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle routes	Long Term; over 10 years	City Council, County Commissioners, property owners, developers, engineers	WYDOT, developers, property owners; 1% Sales Tax
Implement Safe Routes to Schools Plan	Safer school access	Underway and will be completed with 1-2 years	City, Engineer, Public Works, Police Department	WYDOT, school district
Develop plan for bicycle routes and lanes within City	Better overall mobility	Mid to Long Term; 5-10 years	City, Engineer, Public Works, Police Department	WYDOT; Safe Routes to Schools

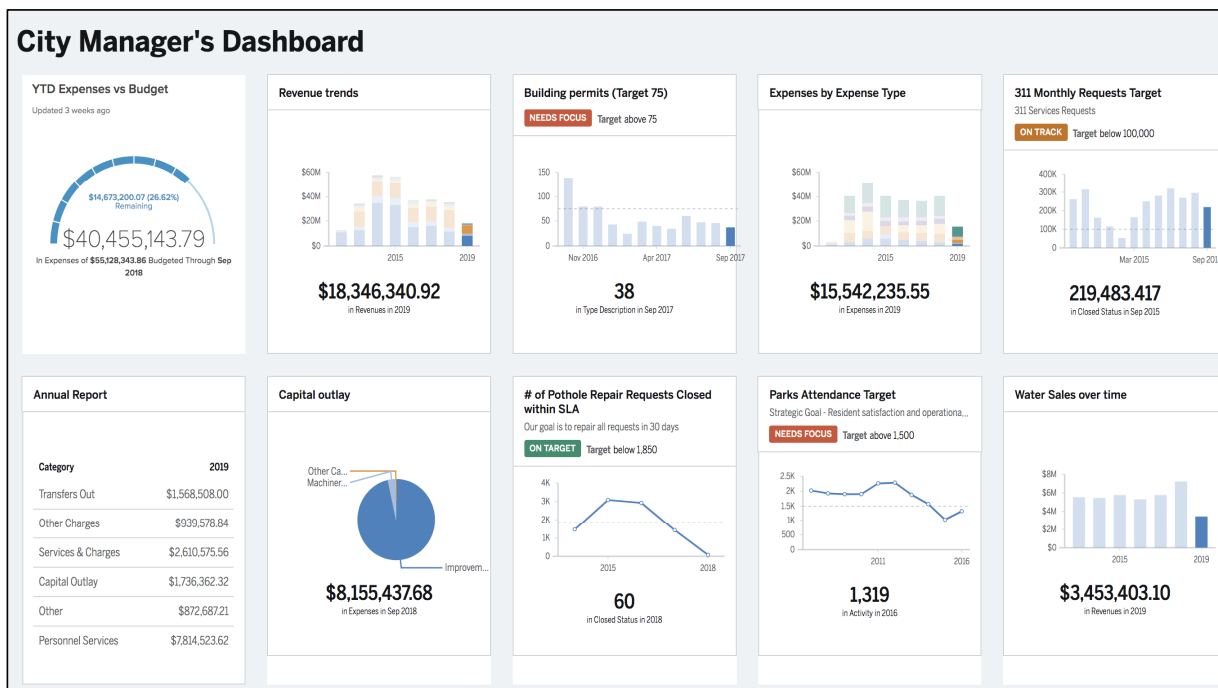
## Implementation - Action Plan



## Monitor Performance

- Regularly review progress
- Annual, quarterly, or monthly review
- Performance measures should be clear to all
- Incorporate performance into department reviews & employee evaluations
- Adjust when/as necessary
- Keys: Accountability, transparency, and effectiveness
- Celebrate successes!

# Report On Progress



- Create a comprehensive report or template that fits the plan
- Provide written and verbal reports, as appropriate
- Post progress updates on same website where plan is posted
- Outcomes should clearly move the community closer to the Vision
- Keep the public informed of significant achievements AND setbacks



Most plans can quickly become outdated (some are as soon as they are created)



Develop a method to update the plan when performance monitoring suggests need for change



Strategic plans do not become better with age; however, the cumulative impact of good plans can steadily improve your community



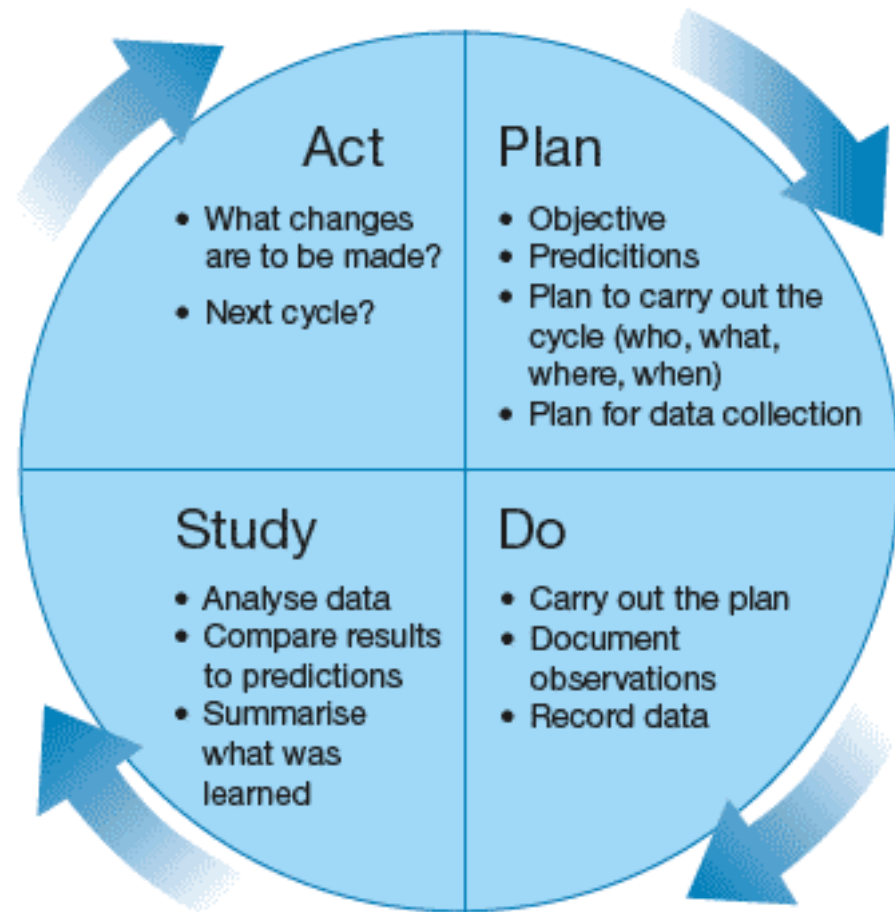
Set a window of time for consideration of updating the plan or creating a new one

## Continually Update

# Continually Update

*W. Edwards Deming's cycle of continuous improvement:*

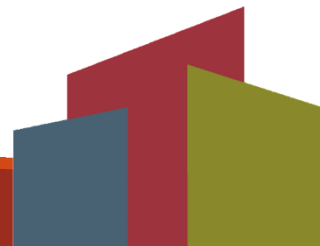
**Plan, Do, Study, Act**



Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Change
?	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Confusion
Vision	?	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Anxiety
Vision	Skills	?	Resources	Action Plan	Resistance
Vision	Skills	Incentives	?	Action Plan	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	?	False Starts

Why do plans fail to create the desired change?

Consider Managing Change with Strategic Planning (Dr. Mary Lippitt)





Questions about Strategic  
Planning for Municipalities?

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# Thank You!

*This presentation was prepared by Community Builders, Inc., a Wyoming-based consulting firm specializing in community and economic development, under contract and in cooperation with the Wyoming Association of Municipalities.*

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