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2001 STRATEGIC PLAN

"Whether or not you need a strategic plan depends on the scope of your responsibility and the complexity of your mission."

Measuring Up by Jonathan Walters

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Where should City government focus its priorities? What role does the City have in addressing the community's most pressing challenges? How well is Lynnwood, as a city government, doing in its role to meet those challenges? The City of Lynnwood uses strategic planning to try to answer these and other questions. This process and how these questions are answered become our roadmap to the future.

Our community as well as City government has changed a great deal over the past few years. That change has focused our attention on several community challenges. It has also given us a recognition that the quality of life in our community is high and that, for the most part, we have reliable and responsive public services. The City conducted a Community Survey in February, 1998 as part of its effort to evaluate the concerns and opinions of our Citizens. Here is what we heard:

- By and large, Lynnwood citizens are satisfied with the quality of life and the quality of city government.
- Citizens value most Lynnwood's feeling of safety, its proximity to other places, its small-town feeling and the excellent city services.
- Citizens were most concerned about increasing traffic, perceived increase in crime and the loss of the small-town feeling.
- Citizens have the most contact with, and the highest praise for, Parks and Recreation, Police and Fire Services. The only significant concern was a perception of street maintenance problems, most expressed by the mention of potholes.
- Citizens generally supported proposed new or expanded city facilities, but none was enthusiastically supported by a majority of citizens.

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The Strategic Plan is developed for a five-year period and identifies the most important commitments that will help achieve the community vision. The Strategic Plan is not a static document or process. It must change to reflect the changing community. Key elements of the City's planning framework include:

- Providing the community with the means to participate in establishing the vision and direction of the City.
- Establishing a process for review of and improvement in services managed by the City of Lynnwood.
- Establishing the foundation for budgeting appropriate resources for specific outcomes.

The following sections outline the planning framework, the foundation upon which the plan is based, and the *Strategic Commitments* that are the guide posts in helping to realize the community's vision and to accomplish the City's mission.

THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS

The contents of the Strategic Plan document, along with the important questions that each is intended to address, are outlined below:

City of Lynnwood Strategic Plan-Contents

Element
1. City of Lynnwood Vision
2. Organizational Vision
3. City of Lynnwood Mission Statement
4. Operating Principles
5. <i>Strategic Commitments</i>
6. Key Indicators

Questions To Be Addressed

1. What should this community be like in ten to twenty years?
2. What should our organization be like in five to ten years?
3. What is our primary purpose as an organization?
4. What are our basic values as an organization?
5. What are the most important things we need to do as a City to move forward in support of our vision?

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6. How are we doing as a City in terms of fulfilling our mission?

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After developing this *Draft* Strategic Plan, the City will build a foundation of citizen and employee support. The process to review, comment and change the *Draft* would include:

1. An environmental assessment under SEPA.
2. Review the 2001 accomplishments.
3. Conduct a community and employee survey to identify challenges.
4. Convene community and employee focus groups to better understand the challenges.
5. Meet with the City Council in work sessions to get policy direction and feedback.

The foundation of the Strategic Plan rests on the City of Lynnwood's Vision, Core Values, the Organizational Mission and Vision, and the Organizational Operating Principles.

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1) CITY OF LYNNWOOD VISION

In the year 2020, our community will be economically stable, well governed, attractive, sustainable and have the following additional attributes.

We will live in comfortable homes in desirable and convenient neighborhoods. Our parents and children will find a variety of affordable housing opportunities.

Lynnwood will continue to grow and improve itself in ways that increase its quality and sustainability while *minimizing* the need for *just* continued physical growth and expansion.

We'll have opportunities to participate in social, cultural and governmental activities through our neighborhood organizations, through the use of telecommunications innovations and in other ways. We will express clearly our expectation of participation in all aspects of community governance. We will expect to be asked about the best ways to achieve our continued meaningful participation. We expect and rely on efficient, effective, accountable, and highly responsive local and regional governance which has a bias for action, innovation, flexibility and a free exchange of ideas.

Abundant shopping and employment opportunities will be available, offering a full range of goods and services, and family wage jobs.

We will be able to reach all areas of Lynnwood and beyond on a transportation network that provides a variety of means to move people: between neighborhoods; to and from work, school, and community activities; and which includes efficient public transit and a choice of non-motorized facilities. We will be able to safely walk or bicycle to local parks and recreation areas throughout our community.

One focal point of our community will be a new and vibrant pedestrian-oriented city center district with community meeting facilities, restaurants, entertainment, specialty shops, and including a mix of office and residential uses.

Local libraries, museums, community centers, recreational, historical and other special purpose facilities will meet most of our social, recreational, and cultural needs.

Educational opportunities will be available to meet the lifetime learning needs of our citizens.

We'll live in an urban forest. Our wetlands, streams, other sensitive areas and our natural environment are protected through responsible environmental stewardship and effective regulation. Our built environment will be enhanced.

This is our Lynnwood community of 2020.

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CITY OF LYNNWOOD CORE VALUES

- **Absolute honesty.**
- **A commitment towards service.**
- **Ultimate loyalty to the citizens of Lynnwood.**
- **Respect, integrity and accountability.**
- **Constant striving towards excellence.**
- **An emphasis on getting things done.**

2) ORGANIZATIONAL VISION STATEMENT

Lynnwood is a community which values and provides quiet, protected residential areas, a variety of recreational and community programs, responsive public safety and governmental services, and opportunities for successful business enterprises.

3) CITY OF LYNNWOOD MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Lynnwood is committed to meeting the needs of the community and improving the quality of life for present and future citizens by providing quality services in the most efficient and effective manner.

4) OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- Clearly defined policies and goals are translated into objectives and communicated to employees.
- Authority and responsibility are placed at the lowest possible level to facilitate decision-making.
- Orientation and training are emphasized to ensure each employee has the appropriate skills.
- Creating a positive climate to attract, hire and retain a quality work force is essential to an efficient and effective organization.
- A system of tangible and intangible rewards should be tied to achievement of goals.
- Behavior consistent with stated values is expected.
- An atmosphere tolerate of individual differences which do not affect performance is recognized as a strength.
- Risk-taking without fear of reprisal for the occasional mistake is encouraged.

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- Open communication through the organization is encouraged.

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STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

The following are the nine *Strategic Commitments* proposed for the City of Lynnwood's 2001 Strategic Plan:

1. Strong Visionary Leadership
2. Economic Health
3. Sense of Community Identity
4. Parks
5. Safe Community
6. Staff Work Environment
7. Managed Growth and Natural Resources
8. Safe and Effective Transportation Systems
9. Balancing Financial Resources to Meet Community Needs

These *Strategic Commitments* are described in more detail below.

THE PURPOSE of the City's *Strategic Commitments* is to emphasize those areas that the community and the organization have identified as needing increased recognition and effort to realize the community vision and accomplish the City's mission. To be successful we must focus on the specific challenges and expectations that the *Strategic Commitments* are intended to address. Each City service area and every employee need to understand the underlying issues inherent in these *Strategic Commitments* and to think about what we currently do - or could do - to support these commitments in achieving the community's vision.

BY DESIGN, the *Strategic Commitments* do not address all of the City's core functions and activities nor will we use the commitments to allocate all of our resources. Individual employees, programs and some entire service areas may find that their services do not directly relate to any one of the commitments. This does not diminish the value of our efforts or our commitment to quality service in these core functions. Police, fire, water, sewer and other core functions are ongoing commitments to provide essential municipal services to the citizens of our community. The *Strategic Commitments* are intended to provide focus to needs above and beyond basic services to achieve the community vision. To that end, all City service areas and employees need to ask what they can do to support the *Strategic Commitments* in their day-to-day activities. And we will all continue to use the community vision and the City's values and mission statement, *Strategic Commitments* and operating principles to guide our actions.

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How the *Strategic Commitments* are Constructed

Strategic Policy Challenges: These are challenges and issues in our community that were identified by City Council Members, Staff or the Community in our stakeholder input process that the *Strategic Commitment* is intended to address.

Action Item: This is our commitment to our community to address these concerns.

Strategies: These are approaches, actions or plans identified to address policy challenges. These are intended to provide guidance to City leaders, staff and work teams in developing more specific actions and in allocating resources toward achievement of the *Strategic Commitment*.

Key Indicators: These are high-level performance measures used to indicate to the community, policy makers, and City staff how well we're doing in making progress toward achieving the *Strategic Commitments*. To be meaningful measures, they must tie back specifically to the challenges and issues the *Strategic Commitment* is intended to address.

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STRONG VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

Strategic Policy Challenges

Lynnwood's location at the intersection of two interstate highways, and other locational advantages, has resulted in the development of a community with a greater concentration of commercial and industrial uses than any of the neighboring communities. Additionally, with the changes to the central business district, the completion of the I-5/196th Street SW Interchange project, and the SR-99 widening project, a significant portion of the City's commercial district appears to be on the verge of redevelopment. The evolution to this new community will require vision and strong leadership - leadership that fosters an open and understandable decision-making process and two-way communication with the community. As the City matures, it will need strong leaders in our neighborhoods, the business sector, civic organizations and throughout the community to help shape the future of Lynnwood.

Action Item

We will develop and support leaders throughout our community and organization, who work collaboratively to communicate and achieve our community vision.

Strategies

1. Recruit and develop internal leaders at all levels of the organization.
2. Support leadership development training programs.
3. Demand excellence and accountability from managers.
4. Develop better internal management and decision-making processes.
5. Develop better community listening skills/continuous feedback at all levels.
6. Be accountable to the strategic plan.
7. Develop and implement a multi-dimensional City communication plan.
8. Support organizational improvement and involvement of employee work teams.
9. Work with the community to clarify the community vision.
10. Foster and support community leadership.

Key Indicators

1. Community survey: Rating of City leadership.
2. Survey of City Boards and Commissions.
3. Employee survey: Rating of City leadership, decision-making process or other facets of City internal service.
4. Number of applications for each vacancy on City boards and commissions

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ECONOMIC HEALTH

Strategic Policy Challenges

While newer parts of the City are thriving, older areas need reviving - especially the City center that needs to represent the City's image, heart and soul. Lynnwood is part of a regional economy linked to the greater Puget Sound metropolitan area. City imposed constraints, e.g. policies and process, may impede business recruitment and economic redevelopment.

Action Item

We will actively participate in community revitalization and create employment opportunities through business retention, attraction, and diversification both downtown and throughout the city, so people can live and work in Lynnwood.

Strategies

1. Participate in revitalization plans for the Central Business District.
2. Build upon the City's history of economic vitality and livability to support tourism.
3. Invest in infrastructure that will serve employment centers.
4. Develop land-use plans that make more efficient use of land and transportation systems.

Key Indicators

1. Amount of commercial square footage redeveloped in the CBD.
2. Growth in retail sales per capita (non-construction).
3. Percentage of Lynnwood's labor force employed in Lynnwood.
4. Lodging tax revenue growth vs. State of Washington and other cities.
5. Employment growth in "family wage" jobs.

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SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Strategic Policy Challenges

City officials need to make city government accessible to all residents and work with other organizations to provide opportunities for residents to meet, play and work together to resolve community problems. A high priority is placed on protecting neighborhoods and family environments through responsive land use planning and quality neighborhood services. Other challenges include: lack of trust in government, neighborhood aesthetics, NIMBYism, lack of an identifiable city core and threat to the small town feeling. According to the results of the February, 1998 Survey of Public Attitudes over half of Lynnwood citizens believe the quality of life is better or superior here than in other Cities.

Action Item

We will strengthen the connection and understanding among all people in our community and between our community and city government by enhancing opportunities for public involvement and dialogue.

Strategies

1. Support community events that create opportunities for community gatherings.
2. Work with other community organizations to understand and address community problems.
3. Help develop more community activities and employment opportunities that target youth.
4. Make sure City services are accessible to all members of the community.
5. Work in partnership to expand access to and improve effectiveness of local human services agencies.
6. Expand and promote volunteer activities in the city.

Key Indicators

1. Citizen survey: Rating of contact with City employees
2. Citizen survey: Satisfaction with livability of the City and their neighborhood
3. Number of public events in the community
4. Youth survey: Trends in key results
5. Level of volunteerism in the community

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PARKS

Strategic Policy Challenges

Due to the limited amount of vacant land in the City, the timing of acquisition and the location of park and open space lands is important if the City wants to maintain a balance of land uses and meet the proposed level of service standards. The availability of funding to provide new parks and recreation facilities is a critical issue. Alternate funding sources such as user fees, impact fees, grant funds, bonds and partnerships with other agencies, non-profit organizations and the private sector need to be considered for future park and recreation needs. To reduce the demand on existing parks and recreation facilities within the city limits, the acquisition of parkland in future growth areas is a major consideration. It may be desirable to pursue joint acquisition and development of such sites with Snohomish County. Non-resident use of parks and recreation facilities often exceeds resident use, sometimes creating an inequitable burden on City residents. This situation must be considered when planning and programming future park facilities.

Action Item

We will responsibly manage public parks and develop financial plans to balance resources with the community's priorities and vision.

Strategies

1. Establish priorities for the acquisition of park land.
2. Increase use of public and private partnerships
3. Work with the community to prioritize land acquisition.
4. Identify the costs of specific services and service levels and the impact of growth - relate to specific fees.
5. Develop a three to six year financial forecast that includes operating costs, capital costs and a plan to finance both.
6. Seek new and innovative funding sources

Key Indicators:

1. Citizen survey: Rating of the value of City services.
2. Comparison of park and open space indicators with other comparable cities.
3. Overall cost per capita of park related services per 1,000 population.

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SAFE COMMUNITY

Strategic Policy Challenges

Growth, increased community expectations for city services, unfunded mandates, and other economic pressures have placed increasing demands on city government, but financial resources are inadequate to meet the growing needs. Recent election and community survey results suggest a reluctance by taxpayers to support new or increased taxes and a concern with how current tax dollars are spent. To restore public trust in government and increase public perception of value in government services, city government must demonstrate fiscal responsibility by prioritizing, increasing efficiencies, and other measures to most effectively use existing resources.

Action Item

We will responsibly manage public funds and develop financial plans to balance resources with the community's priorities and vision.

Strategies

7. Communicate to the community how the City utilizes public funds and the challenges it faces to provide services
8. Increase use of public and private partnerships
9. Work with the community to prioritize services and consider eliminating some services or transferring services to other public or private providers
10. Streamline work processes and increase service capacity without increasing public cost
11. Identify the costs of specific services and service levels and the impact of growth - relate to specific fees if applicable
12. Develop a three to six year financial forecast that includes operating costs, capital costs and a plan to finance both
13. Seek new and innovative funding sources

Key Indicators:

4. Citizen survey: Rating of the value of City services
5. Comparison of various financial indicators of the City over time (trends), as well as comparison with other comparable cities
6. Overall cost per capita of basic City services and specific services (police, fire, others) General government employees per 1,000 population
7. City utility rates v. average in Snohomish County
8. City tax revenues per capita trend and taxes as a percent of total revenues

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STAFF WORK ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Policy Challenges

Growth, increased community expectations for city services, unfunded mandates, and other economic pressures have placed increasing demands on city government, but financial resources are inadequate to meet the growing needs. Recent election and community survey results suggest a reluctance by taxpayers to support new or increased taxes and a concern with how current tax dollars are spent. To restore public trust in government and increase public perception of value in government services, city government must demonstrate fiscal responsibility by prioritizing, increasing efficiencies, and other measures to most effectively use existing resources.

Action Item

We will responsibly manage public funds and develop financial plans to balance resources with the community's priorities and vision.

Strategies

14. Communicate to the community how the City utilizes public funds and the challenges it faces to provide services
15. Increase use of public and private partnerships
16. Work with the community to prioritize services and consider eliminating some services or transferring services to other public or private providers
17. Streamline work processes and increase service capacity without increasing public cost
18. Identify the costs of specific services and service levels and the impact of growth - relate to specific fees if applicable
19. Develop a three to six year financial forecast that includes operating costs, capital costs and a plan to finance both
20. Seek new and innovative funding sources

Key Indicators:

9. Citizen survey: Rating of the value of City services
10. Comparison of various financial indicators of the City over time (trends), as well as comparison with other comparable cities
11. Overall cost per capita of basic City services and specific services (police, fire, others)
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MANAGED GROWTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Strategic Policy Challenges

The February, 1998 Survey of Public Attitudes identified "a small town feel" as an important feature for making Lynnwood an attractive place to live. How do we preserve that feature while accommodating the growth that has made us the 3rd largest city in Snohomish County? Planning efforts need to focus more on people and on preserving and protecting the character and livability of our neighborhoods. Land use, infrastructure and support systems need to be made more compatible - working together to provide aesthetically pleasing mixed use development and support a growing economic base. All residents need to have access to parks, shopping, schools, affordable housing, open space and trails. Our heritage and natural resources - an essential part of our community's character - need to be preserved. Finally, we need to recognize that despite our efforts to manage growth, people and businesses, will be living closer together.

Action Item

We will improve our ability to plan and manage growth to protect the environment, enhance the livability and character of our neighborhoods, and provide for a range of retail and employment opportunities.

Strategies

1. Encourage the involvement of citizens and neighborhood associations in the City's planning processes.
2. Encourage the development of a fully integrated community with a compatible mix of housing, jobs, shops, and public spaces connected by well-planned multi-modal transportation system.
3. Preserve the historic features that provide a sense of identity for the community.
4. Model environmental and habitat stewardship in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of projects and facilities.
5. Encourage a broad range of housing choices to meet community needs.
6. Promote coordinated planning with our regional partners.
7. Ensure coordination between growth and public services.
8. Develop internal, local and regional partnerships to implement federal, state, and local environmental program goals, objectives, policies, and regulations.

Key Indicators

1. Citizen survey: Satisfaction with the quality and compatibility of new development
2. Affordable housing index (or relationship of market rents to income).
3. Water quality in the City's water sheds.
4. Percentage of people living within 1/2 mile of schools, parks, commercial areas, or transportation corridor.
5. The funding gap between the cost of capital facilities and the funds available.

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SAFE AND EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Strategic Policy Challenges

According to the participants in the February 1998 Survey of Public Attitudes, one of the greatest concerns relates to increased traffic congestion. That congestion leads to cut-through traffic through neighborhoods, more running of red lights or speeding when the traffic finally clears. Safety becomes a real concern for parents of children and for other pedestrians. Fueling the traffic problem is the dependence on automobiles and the lack of alternatives - adequate sidewalks, bike trails and transit services. Significant redevelopment, the rising cost of maintaining an expanding system and the need for immediate road improvements all create needs that cannot be met with current funding sources.

Action Item

We will develop and support a comprehensive, urban transportation system that provides alternative modes of mobility through cooperative planning and the funding of important capital projects.

Strategies

1. Promote a concurrency policy that preserves and protects neighborhoods.
2. Develop innovative ways to increase funding for local and regional transportation infrastructure.
3. Strengthen regional partnerships to help solve local and regional transportation problems.
4. Where appropriate, use the latest technology to help solve transportation problems.
5. Develop more pedestrian, transit and bike infrastructure.
6. Maintain City streets in good condition.

Key Indicators

1. Travel times on selected corridors vs. standards
2. Percentage of lane miles in "good" condition.
3. Traffic accidents or deaths per million miles of vehicle travel in the City.
4. Average reduction in speeds on residential streets of concern.
5. Citizen survey: Percentage of citizens rating traffic congestion as one of their top three community challenges.

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BALANCING FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Strategic Policy Challenges

Growth, increased community expectations for city services, unfunded mandates, and other economic pressures have placed increasing demands on city government, but financial resources are inadequate to meet the growing needs. Recent election and community survey results suggest a reluctance by taxpayers to support new or increased taxes and a concern with how current tax dollars are spent. To restore public trust in government and increase public perception of value in government services, city government must demonstrate fiscal responsibility by prioritizing, increasing efficiencies, and other measures to most effectively use existing resources.

Action Item

We will responsibly manage public funds and develop financial plans to balance resources with the community's priorities and vision.

Strategies

1. Communicate to the community how the City utilizes public funds and the challenges it faces to provide services
2. Increase use of public and private partnerships
3. Work with the community to prioritize services and consider eliminating some services or transferring services to other public or private providers
4. Streamline work processes and increase service capacity without increasing public cost
5. Identify the costs of specific services and service levels and the impact of growth - relate to specific fees if applicable
6. Develop a three to six year financial forecast that includes operating costs, capital costs and a plan to finance both
7. Seek new and innovative funding sources

Key Indicators:

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THE NEXT STEPS

Simply identifying the City's new *Strategic Commitments*, strategies and key indicators will not lead to tangible improvement in City services and in our community. For the City to actually meet the new *Strategic Commitments* will require a higher degree of focus and public accountability for City services. Operational Plans for our service areas, translating those plans into resource allocation and annual monitoring of the Strategic Plan's key indicators will help provide this focus and accountability.

OPERATIONAL PLANS

As identified in the City's planning framework, implementing the strategies included in the new *Strategic Commitments* will require a fresh cycle of operational planning by City departments. Many City services already have "operational plans" in place while others use similar planning and management tools to guide their activities. While their format can range from simple to very complex, effective operational plans establish expectations for staff activities and results. Key elements of operational plans include specific action-oriented goals, discrete and focused work activities and a balanced set of performance measures.

Resource Allocation

Ideally, the updated Operational Plans will be directly tied to the City's biennial budget. The linkage serves to strengthen the relationship between resource allocation and specific results. While this is our goal, we have work to do to more effectively link the Strategic Plan to the City's budget process. In the 2001 - 2002 budget process we are taking some initial steps including making targeted investments that directly relate to the strategies included in the *Strategic Commitments*. As we complete and update our Operational Plans our challenge will be better align them to the City budget.

Monitoring the Key Indicators

The Key Indicators included as part of the *Strategic Commitments* clearly outline our expectations for results. To meet these expectations will require us to place greater emphasis on collecting and reporting data that show the progress we've made. We plan to use a variety of data sources to hold ourselves accountable internally and to the community. These sources will include:

- An annual community survey
- Periodic employee surveys
- Performance comparisons to other cities
- Biennial review and update of budget and financial policies
- Annual reporting on the Plan's key indicators

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Periodic Reviews

Finally, the Plan itself will need to be revisited to make sure it continues to focus City government on the community's most important issues. This will involve periodically reviewing the trends in key indicators and gathering additional information on the challenges facing the community. Develop infrastructure and make other investments to address economic and neighborhood development needs (ex: Mill Plain extension, Upper Main, etc.). Work in partnership with other local and state organizations to aid local economic development including business retention and attraction efforts.