



December 11, 2007

Introduction

In the fall of 2005, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) and County Administrator (CAO) began exploring the value of launching a strategic planning process. At the core of the discussion was the glaring fact that, for roughly the past decade, the increased cost of providing programs and services has exceeded the growth in the revenues available to fund those services. In addition, the BOS recognized that the county's population was changing, as were its needs. Further, the BOS identified that deferred investment in critical infrastructure, such as roads, was resulting in those assets being lost or at great risk in the future. As a result, the BOS, in consultation with its County Administrator and Department Heads, determined that a strategic plan was indeed necessary to determine how to intervene in certain trends to decrease threats to the programs and services that the County provides, and where possible, create new opportunities for the County and the community.

Strategic Issues

The initial strategic issues identified by the Board, and further refined by County Department Heads were:

1. Setting and Implementing Priorities. How do we most efficiently and effectively:
 - Set priorities and deploy the resources we have today to meet current community and performance expectations?
 - Identify additional resources?
 - Allocate resources in the future to address both short and long term priorities?
 - Carry out central oversight and support functions?
2. Demographics and Service Delivery. How will changing demographics impact the way County Government delivers services (e.g., the increasing proportion of our aging and Latino populations, the increasing gap between the “haves” and “have nots,” composition and training of our workforce)?
3. Growth and Carrying Capacity. How can the County, in concert with other jurisdictions, address issues that accompany growth and urbanization? These issues include:
 - Infrastructure carrying capacity (transportation, water, housing).
 - Increasing gang violence.
 - How to advance the “good of the whole” versus a competition among narrow interest groups.
4. Facilities and Capital Improvements. How do we best address the increasing need for facilities/capital investments?

5. Jurisdictional Roles. What is the role of county vis a vis other governmental bodies, and how do we best address the following trends?
- City, state and federal agencies taking a more active role in local service delivery systems or policy decisions, or
 - Reduced federal and state program support, leaving gaps in local services?

Analysis Phase

With these five issues as a starting point, during much of 2006 a Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) and four Work Groups, composed of staff from across the Sonoma County government organization, conducted an in-depth analysis, culminating in an **Analysis Phase Final Report: 11/1/06** (see Appendix A). The five major findings in summary form below serve as the foundation for the specific five-year goals, objectives and strategies that make up the **Strategic Plan**.

1. The County's ability to provide services, which are either mandated by the state and federal governments or desired and funded by the local community, is threatened by the fact that the costs of providing those services are outpacing revenues to support them. This financial imbalance is being largely driven by employee costs and an accumulation of unilateral decisions by the State to address their cyclical budget crises. This is especially true for General Fund supported programs and those with stagnant or shrinking state or federal funding sources. Of additional concern is that insufficient funds are being allocated to reserves that are intended to carry programs and services through periods of economic decline, when our revenues are at their lowest and the demand for services are at their highest.

Employee and Retiree Health Benefits Costs: The **Analysis Phase Report** found that "the County's ability to provide services ... is threatened by (a) ... financial imbalance (that) is largely being driven by employee costs." A significant component of this cost is health care benefits. Because of the immediacy of this issue, at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, County staff continues to work closely with active and retired employees through a labor/management committee to develop strategies for addressing the escalating cost of employee and retiree health care. The first phase of a strategy to bring medical insurance costs more in line with our labor market has already been implemented for management and unrepresented active employees. In addition, County staff, working with a labor/management committee, has been charged by the Board to bring back options and recommendations by January 2008 for addressing an unfunded liability for current and future retiree health care of roughly \$400 million. Many local governments throughout the country face similar challenges.

2. County population growth and demographic changes present both challenges and opportunities for Sonoma County's communities. While an increasingly diverse culture is a significant asset to the County, it will also alter demands for County services in the years to come. Two trends are especially notable.

First, young Latinos will represent a larger proportion of our population. Latinos in Sonoma County have become important members of our community and economy, establishing businesses, buying homes, and serving as community leaders. However, our Latino population is also disproportionately affected by challenges including:

- Economic pressure, including poverty
- Gang activity
- Low educational achievement, including unacceptably high rates of school dropouts.

Should our growing Latino population continue to be disproportionately poor, it will place increased demands on the healthcare safety net and the human services system. Enhancing educational attainment among Latino youth is essential to address the economic pressures. Further, continued recruitment of Latino youth into gang activity, unless interrupted, is likely to create further challenges for the public safety system.

The second major demographic change is our growing aging population. This group will require higher levels of service and support from health and human services systems to live independent, active lives while coping with chronic disease, disability, and other challenges of the aging process.

3. The County of Sonoma has a large number of facilities that are not adequate to meet the needs of the organization and its clients into the future because they are nearing the end of their useful life or capacity, or they could be more strategically located.¹ The County owns several major real estate assets in strategic locations that could potentially be used to accommodate its future facility needs or to generate revenue, i.e. large parcels, centrally located or convenient to population centers for which the County has control of development.
4. Other critical infrastructure, most notably roads and bridges, have long ago reached a point where the cost to maintain and replace the assets exceeds revenues from current funding strategies.² The County does not have a comprehensive long-range funding strategy that anticipates future costs of ongoing infrastructure maintenance and improvements, allocates these costs over an appropriate number of years, and funds them accordingly. In the next five to seven years, bridges, water storage and transmission facilities, and wastewater treatment infrastructure operated by County sanitation districts are at risk of joining our road system at this unacceptable condition of performance.
5. Actions by the federal government, state government, cities, tribes, districts, and other public agencies are not always well coordinated and can work at cross purposes with the needs of the County. Many of these entities and the community at large are unaware of the value of County provided services or the likely impacts if those services diminish or are lost. Unless an improved level of understanding and cooperation is proactively pursued and accomplished, effective service delivery across all jurisdictions will be compromised.

Finally, in addition to the report findings, the SPSC identified the following three characteristics that are deemed critical to ongoing success of the strategic planning process:

1. Establishing an organizational commitment to a timely and fact-based approach for making hard choices facing the county over the next five years.

¹ This is particularly true of detention facilities.

² Sonoma County has the lowest "pavement condition index" (PCI) in the Bay Area. Our score of 44 is well below the PCI score of 60, the point at which road conditions begin to rapidly deteriorate.

This approach should be evident in policy and program development, funding allocations, and operational decisions made at all levels of the organization, from the BOS and County Administrator to departmental staff.

2. Making choices and determining service priorities in a process that engages different groups in providing input into service priorities. These groups include (but are not limited to), the general public, clients of County services, County employees, and representatives of other jurisdictions, civic, business and community organizations, including non-profit organizations which provide many services on the County's behalf at lower costs.
3. Building the capacity to collect data and assemble meaningful information to support ongoing strategic decision-making and measuring performance outcomes.

Planning Phase

Based on these findings, each County Department as well as four issue-specific "Action Teams" (Facilities, Funding Roads, Criminal Justice System, Government and Community Affairs) developed a set of recommendations regarding core/baseline services, key outcomes, performance measures and specific strategies. This information was reviewed and evaluated by the SPSC and translated into the **Strategic Plan**.

It is important to note that the **Strategic Plan** focuses only on the specific key Findings identified in the Analysis Phase, that grew out of the five strategic issues identified by BOS at the start of this process. In that respect, it reflects what the BOS collectively believe are the *most* important issues that are not formally being addressed by the entire County organization; those that must be addressed in order to best serve the public in the near future. Based on the analysis, it also reflects what a cross section of staff believes are the *most* critical conditions and trends needing attention in order for County government to successfully carry out its mission.

What is Not Included in the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan does not address every issue or concern that the County faces over the next five years. Many other important County challenges and opportunities are being addressed through other policy directives, including the following:

1. The Sonoma County General Plan provides a road map for the County in its future development and growth. It addresses challenges and opportunities facing the County related to land use, agriculture and open space, transportation public safety, water supply, and noise. For further information, go to <http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/gp2020/index.html>. The process for revising the General Plan includes input from the public and expert County staff.
2. The Board of Supervisors has directed the Sonoma County Water Agency to develop a Strategic Plan for that agency, specifically focused on addressing the portion of the long-term needs of the county's water supply and wastewater management provided by the Agency directly. For further information, go to <http://www.scwa.ca.gov/>
3. As of this writing, the County is engaged in discussions with Sutter Hospital regarding the proposed transaction between Sutter Medical Center of Santa Rosa ("Sutter") and

Memorial Hospital, and the potential impact of that transaction on the community's healthcare delivery system. For information, go to <http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/admin/sutter.htm>

4. To address a broader range of concerns regarding health care, the Board of Supervisors established the Community Health Improvement Action Council to (1) develop initiatives to improve overall community health, and (2) find solutions to local health care delivery problems. The Council is scheduled to report to the Board with initial recommendations in September, 2008. For more information, go to <http://www.sonomahealthaction.org/>

The Planning Phase concluded with an opportunity for public comment on a draft version of this Strategic Plan. The Board of Supervisors held a series of meetings throughout the County to present the key findings and the Draft Plan, including community meetings in each Supervisorial District and meetings targeted to key stakeholders, including Community-Based Organizations, employee bargaining representatives, businesses, educators, and City Mayors and Councilmembers. The County also received input via a web page dedicated to this project. This final version of the Strategic Plan has been revised based upon comments from these meetings and the web page.

Continued public input will be welcomed as part of the Implementation Phase. The County will particularly seek increased communication with our Latino, senior, and educational communities as we develop and implement more specific plans. Information will be available at the County's Strategic Planning web site, <http://www.sonoma-county.org/strategic/index.htm>.

Preamble

Mission

The core mission of the Sonoma County government organization is to protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being and quality of life for all of the people of Sonoma County. In order to carry out this mission and assess progress, County policy-makers and staff need to be:

- Goal directed,
- Outcomes oriented and
- Fact based.

A healthy thriving county requires community relationships that foster full engagement on shared goals with *all* segments of the community. It also requires credible leadership and coordinated development and administration of County policies, programs, and services. The County is fortunate to have highly professional and valued employees providing these services every day.

To accomplish that mission, however, we have to be honest with ourselves about the challenges we face today and into the future.

Making the Hard Choices Today for a Positive Tomorrow

Based on the research in the **Analysis Phase Final Report**, and regardless of which priorities emerge, there are a set of conditions and trends that will require the County to make some "hard choices" about future direction over the next five years in policy, funding, and administration of programs and services. This will require a commitment to move

away from a year-to-year incremental approach to decision making to a longer-term priority based approach. There simply are not enough resources for the County to be “all things to all people”. This will also require that policy-makers and staff, and ultimately the public, will need to make the shift from a client and/or special interest focus, to a more global focus on the greater good that considers the interests of the whole County enterprise and the whole community.

For example, while not every County Department is mentioned in the Strategic Plan, every Department, Division, and employee will need to contribute to successfully addressing the conditions and trends facing the County over the next five years. In some cases that will mean finding ways to be more efficient in one area so that more resources are available in other areas. In other cases, it will be a matter of aligning specific work plans in support of countywide initiatives.

Even if the County is able to find greater efficiencies, strategically focus its efforts and maximize current resources, given the trends and conditions outlined in the **Analysis Phase Report**, the County may still not be able to fully fund all of the programs and services that are given a higher priority. In that case, the public may have to make the hard choice as to whether it wants to pay for those unmet needs through fees, taxes, or other new sources of revenue.

And yet whatever choices get made, when we are successful we will have a more cohesive, more involved community, where partnerships and collaboration among multiple jurisdictions and all segments of the community will be the norm. In particular, jurisdictions that may not ordinarily work together will do so for the betterment of our common constituencies. As a result, we will be able to devote an increasing share of County and other community resources to proactive and preventive solutions rather than reactive approaches to our programs and services, where the people of Sonoma County will enjoy a better quality of life.

Options

An important observation made by both the SPSC and Work Groups in their examination of these options is the interdependency of the various issues. One of the ways these five findings are interrelated is the impact of the “fiscal imbalance” currently facing the county. No matter what goals we set or strategies we pursue, we have to do so in a way that takes into account the need to balance the budget. Another is how both changing demographics and the growth in demand for criminal justice system services need to shape how the County pursues its core mission. While we believe that prevention and early intervention are the most cost-effective ways to address an array of community needs, the fiscal requirements for addressing the County’s *acute* health, human service, law enforcement, and infrastructure needs leave few resources available for these “upstream strategies” under current fiscal conditions and trends.

As an example, 70% of our jail inmates have substance abuse problems (e.g., alcohol or methamphetamine) that underlie their criminal behavior. And 17% have underlying mental health issues. Much of this *is* treatable. But without sufficient resources to provide such treatment, these inmates become a drain on the large and expensive County and City criminal justice systems (jail, prosecution, public defense, probation, city police, sheriff etc.).

To the extent we believe that these conditions and trends are here to stay, this leaves the County three options;

- 1) Make the hard choices associated with reallocating current resources to address the highest priority needs,
- 2) Find additional sources of revenue, or
- 3) “Stay the course”.

The likely outcome of “staying the course,” or maintaining the status quo, is a continuing across the board reduction in the quality of services provided by the County. For example, in order to propose a balanced budget these last six years, the County Administrator had to “shave” approximately 1-2 percent, per year, from departmental budgets during a period of unprecedented increases in property values and related tax revenues. Over the next few years and beyond, we fully expect to see much more moderated tax revenue growth requiring even deeper cuts. These cuts could result in fewer staff and office hours for a range of community services; less ability to respond to any but the most urgent, acute health, criminal justice and human service needs; the County’s road conditions, already the worst in the Bay area, continuing to deteriorate; and reduced ability to enforce regulations governing public health and environmental protection. In the near term, the cumulative impact has been manageable. In the future, the service degradation is inevitable under a status quo scenario.

If we don’t want to pursue “staying the course,” the “reallocating resources” option means the County’s past practice of across-the-board funding increases or cuts to all departments would have to give way to more targeted investments in higher priority areas offset by deeper cuts in lower priority areas. For example, life and safety services would continue to take precedence over more discretionary programs. If one rolls the clock forward five years, we may be required to reduce or eliminate prosecution of certain misdemeanor offenses in order to provide for adequate jail services, or cut parks/recreational opportunities for youth to maintain acute alcohol and other drug services, or reduce maintenance on roads that have low use to fund maintenance of roads that have higher use.

And then there is a third option, one where in addition to reallocating resources from lower to higher priority needs, the County engages the community in discussing their willingness to provide new sources of revenue to address specific needs that can’t be met any other way, i.e., to both minimize the negative impact of cuts on still very important, but lower priorities, and to be able to make investments in infrastructure, programs and services that are more cost-effective over the long-term, and increase the quality of life for the people of Sonoma County.

Regardless of which option is chosen, as noted above, the County will need to significantly increase community engagement in helping develop and implement the path forward. Doing so, however, will require that the County demonstrate that it can do all of the following:

- A. Ensure that the County’s goals reflect the public’s values as implemented through allocation of resources in the annual operating plan and budget, capital plan, and other projects of countywide significance.
- B. Ensure that the work of the County at all levels is goal directed, outcomes oriented, efficient and fact based; including, policy decisions that are informed by accurate, complete, and timely information.
- C. Consistently evaluate resource allocation decisions to make sure we are dedicating our resources to our core functions, and that our core functions continue to reflect

- D. Actively engage residents, local jurisdictions and regional agencies, tribal, state and federal governments in working with the County to set policy, manage resources and deliver services in a way that reflects a deep understanding of the impact the County has on people's lives and, an appreciation of the challenges the County faces in carrying out its mission.

What follows, then, is a detailed description of a specific set of goals, objectives, and strategies for advancing the County's mission with reference to each of the major Findings. While the purpose of the Strategic Plan is to help County government focus its resources on the highest priority goals, the community's expectations and needs will inevitably be even broader. This makes implementation of the Strategic Plan all the more challenging because it requires a careful balancing of the highest priorities with those broader expectations.

Strategic Plan: Goals Objectives and Strategies

I, II...=Goals

A, B...=Objectives

1, 2...=Strategies

a, b=More detail on strategies

Finding 1.

The County's ability to provide services, which are either mandated by the state and federal governments or desired and funded by the local community, is threatened by the fact that the costs of providing those services are outpacing revenues to support them. This financial imbalance is being largely driven by employee costs (more specifically rising employee and retiree benefits costs) and an accumulation of unilateral decisions by the State to address their cyclical budget crises. This is especially true for General Fund supported programs and those with stagnant or shrinking state or federal funding sources. Of additional concern is that insufficient funds are being allocated to reserves that are intended to carry programs and services through periods of economic decline, when our revenues are at their lowest and the demand for services are at their highest.

I. Make the most efficient and effective use of current resources.

- A. Establish quantitative and qualitative targets to measure the County's performance in promoting the safety, health, well-being, and quality of life for the residents, families, and communities of Sonoma County.
 - 1. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) will provide direction to the County Administrative Officer (CAO), working with Department Heads, to define and establish the key measures by which the County assesses its performance in both the short and long term.
 - 2. Increase staff capacity for leadership by increasing Board delegation of authority to staff commensurate with a higher degree of accountability in achieving the County's core objectives as demonstrated through performance measures.
- B. County performance will meet or exceed established performance targets.
- C. Reduce operating costs and increase productivity.
 - 1. Invest in process improvements and automation and explore outsourcing.

2. Increase the use of technology to deliver customer services and provide direct customer access to data, information, and records.
3. Increase the County's capacity and develop resources (including: partnerships with other jurisdictions and private and non-profit organizations) to provide prevention, intervention, and treatment services at the earliest and lowest risk levels.
 - a. Initially focus on strategies involving coordination of criminal justice, child support, community development, health, and human services departments.
- D. Manage employee and retiree health costs in order to continue to offer financially sustainable, cost effective, quality health plans for active and retired employees.
 1. Meet and confer with employee bargaining units upon the expiration of their respective MOUs, or sooner if agreed, as well as the joint labor management committee.
 2. By January, 2008, develop alternative retiree health plans for the Board of Supervisors consideration.
 - a. Meet with active and retired employees in a facilitated, labor/management committee setting, using an interest-based problem solving approach to assist County staff in developing alternative retiree health plans.
- E. Allocate additional one-time resources to adequately fund reserves to carry the County through inevitable downturns in revenue cycles.
- F. Resist adding new programs or services unless they further the goals, objectives, and strategies identified in the Strategic Plan, provide a commensurate and reliable funding stream, and provide for sufficient County control of service delivery levels and methods.

II. Enhance the County's fiscal soundness through the expansion and increased diversification of General Fund and other revenue sources.

- A. Maintain and preserve current sources of revenue.
 1. Prioritize and dedicate county resources to the core service areas³ that all residents use and need.
 2. Offer County services to other jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations to increase economies of scale and reduce unit costs, without compromising delivery of core services.
 3. Improve revenue collection of current taxes and fees that support current services and programs.
 4. Advocate for changes in laws that protect county revenues.
- B. Increase current sources of revenue and add new sources.
 1. Advocate for changes in laws to enhance county revenues.
 2. Investigate public support for enhancing revenues through taxes linked to specific programs or services.
 - a. Evaluate the pros and cons of seeking additional locally generated revenues.
 - b. Gauge public support through surveys or "advisory" ballot measures.
 3. Increase investment income without unduly increasing risk.
 4. Lobby to:
 - a. Halt the shift from State-funded to locally funded programs.
 - b. Pursue full reimbursement of State-mandated costs.

³ Existing services and program or service levels that have been either mandated, are prescribed by funding sources, or have evolved from historical Board of Supervisor or Departmental direction.

- c. Ensure the County receives its equitable share of State revenue for State-funded programs.

Finding 1: Success Indicators

As we are successful at accomplishing Goals I and II, the County's resources (i.e., people and money) will be managed and utilized in a cost-effective and fiscally sound manner, the County will be devoting the resources it currently has to their highest and best uses, and the County's funding decisions will reflect community priorities. Specific measures of our success will include:

1. Achieving high performance against benchmarks comparing Sonoma County's outcomes to other 'high performing' organizations/companies of like mission.
2. Evidence of continuous program and service per unit reduction in costs without eroding outcomes.
3. Recurring revenues match recurring costs and support a prudent level of reserves.

Finding 2.

County population growth and demographic changes present both challenges and opportunities for Sonoma County's communities. While an increasingly diverse culture is a significant asset to the County, it will also alter demands for County services in the years to come. Two trends are especially notable.

First, young Latinos will represent a larger proportion of our population. Latinos in Sonoma County have become important members of our community and economy, establishing businesses, buying homes, and serving as community leaders. However, our Latino population is also disproportionately affected by challenges including:

- Economic pressure, including poverty
- Gang activity
- Low educational achievement, including unacceptably high rates of school dropouts.

Should our growing Latino population continue to be disproportionately poor, it will place increased demands on the healthcare safety net and the human services system. Enhancing educational attainment among Latino youth is essential to address the economic pressures. Further, continued recruitment of Latino youth into gang activity, unless interrupted, is likely to create further challenges for the public safety system.

The second major demographic change is our growing aging population. This group will require higher levels of service and support from health and human services systems to live independent, active lives while coping with chronic disease, disability, and other challenges of the aging process.

III. Enhance the capacity of County programs and community systems to more effectively meet the changing needs of individuals, families, and communities in Sonoma County.

- A. County programs and services better serve Latino, seniors, and low-income populations.

1. Increase the effectiveness of our interaction and engagement with different segments of the community through proactive outreach and by increasing overall language capabilities and cultural competence of our workforce proportionate to the community need.
 2. Enhance our engagement with the growing senior and low-income populations, identifying their unique service needs.
 3. Better identify and strengthen the community-based assets and support systems (existing networks, community leadership, volunteers, etc.) that our senior, Latino, and low-income populations can bring to bettering the entire community.
- B. Reduce the probability of at-risk individuals entering the Criminal Justice system.
1. Maintain and strengthen the criminal justice continuum to more effectively address public safety issues at the lowest risk levels for all members of the community, including:
 - a. Early detection of and diversion from minor criminal activity, substance abuse, and mental health issues
 - b. Early adjudication to free up expensive jail beds for only those who should be incarcerated.
 - c. Suitable accountability and sanctions for offenders.
 - d. A continuum of supervisory options for offenders diverted or released from jail.
 - e. Effective rehabilitation to break the cycle of crime.
 2. Invest in strategies with long-term benefits (e.g., prevention of social problems and chronic diseases, alcohol and other drug services, restorative justice, victims' services, homeless services, gang intervention, etc.) to strengthen the capacity of individuals and families to address their problems and to reduce demand for "downstream" (e.g., jail, welfare/economic assistance) programs over the long-term.
 3. Explore and use best practices in assessment, intervention, and treatment and identify agencies/organizations best positioned to deliver the services.
 4. Build upon existing collaborative relationships (i.e., with schools, CBOs, cities, the State, etc.) to provide the best possible services, best use of resources including opportunities to co-locate, and prevent duplication of service to maximize outcomes and conserve resources.

Finding 2: Success Indicators

As we are successful at accomplishing Goal III, the County will be providing the best, most appropriate programs and services to people in need, and the recipients of County programs and services will be getting the highest quality, most effective services within given resources. Success also means that by demonstrating the efficiency and effectiveness of the County's program and service delivery system with current resources, the County is better positioned to ask the public to consider funding investments that over the long-term will allow us to more quickly move up the continuum from acute, reactive approaches to prevention, capacity building approaches. In addition, the County and community will benefit from the civic participation and program partnerships provided by these emerging populations. Specific measures of our success will include:

1. Increasing customer/client performance outcomes on measures of County programs and services.
2. Increasing public understanding of the services and programs provided by the County (including: outcomes, challenges, and opportunities).
3. Increasing public satisfaction with County program and service delivery.

In all cases, it is important that we see overall improvement among all segments of the community.

Finding 3

The County of Sonoma has a large number of facilities that are not adequate to meet the needs of the organization and its clients into the future because they are nearing the end of their useful life or capacity, or, could be more strategically located. The County owns several major assets in strategic locations that could potentially be used to accommodate its future facility needs or to generate revenue, i.e. large parcels, centrally located or convenient to population centers for which the County has control of development.

IV. Plan, procure, operate, maintain, and manage Sonoma County's facilities and real estate assets at their highest and best use, such that they provide the best value to the County.

- A. Reduce overall costs and increase revenue generated by County-owned facilities and real estate assets.
 - 1. Develop a real estate plan that:
 - a. Reduces the number of major complexes managed and maintained by the County, and more intensively utilizes those that remain, primarily at the County Administration Center.
 - i. Increase heights of buildings and density of development at County-owned sites to allow greater concentration and co-location of County services and free-up valuable County assets for other uses or to generate revenue.
 - b. Appropriately co-locates County services, including those that serve common clients and can improve services with co-location, and administrative functions that can benefit from proximity with each other.
 - c. Locates adult justice and detention functions, and other core government services at the County Administration Center.
 - 2. Develop and evaluate options to reduce, fund, or distribute the cost of facility ownership, including:
 - a. Partner with private entities to develop County property where the project includes County facilities.
 - b. Ground lease or sell unused County land for market value to generate revenue that could be used for new buildings, facility improvements, or purchase of more strategically-located property.
 - 3. Partner with other public entities to share facilities to get 'closer to the customer' and co-locate overlapping and compatible services. This also furthers the Board's goals on reducing vehicle trips and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - 4. Work with State agencies to coordinate facilities planning and management at the local level, e.g., new state courthouse facilities.
- B. Secure and maintain ongoing funding sources for major repairs and replacements.
 - 1. Charge users of County-owned facilities and other physical assets their fair share of major repair and replacement costs.
 - 2. Examine the potential for new voter approved resources to construct major projects such as the jail expansion, which is currently in the planning stage.

Finding 3: Success Indicators

As we are successful at accomplishing Goals IV, the County will be making the highest and best use of its facilities and real estate assets. Specific measures of our success will include:

1. A decreasing number of unproductive assets.
2. An increase in the extent to which facilities and real estate assets facilitate more effective service delivery.
3. Increasing stability in funding for the maintenance of facilities and real estate assets such that their value is enhanced over the long-term.
4. Increasing value of facilities and real estate assets through maximizing joint-development potential.

Finding 4

Critical infrastructure, most notably roads and bridges, have reached a point where the cost to maintain and replace the assets exceeds revenues from current funding strategies. The County does not have a comprehensive long-range funding strategy that anticipates future costs of ongoing infrastructure maintenance and improvements, allocates these costs over an appropriate number of years, and funds them accordingly. In the next five to seven years, bridges, water storage and transmission, and wastewater treatment infrastructure are at risk of joining our road system at this unacceptable condition of performance.

V. Proactively address:

- 1. Unmet needs in the County's waste management and water and wastewater treatment infrastructure.**
- 2. The failing transportation infrastructure so that it can be maintained and operated to provide safe, reliable and accessible movement of people and goods throughout the county.**
- A. Ensure transportation systems and services are providing efficient and effective current and future movement of goods and people.
 1. Utilize the results of a comprehensive management audit, currently underway, to establish and implement a Transportation and Public Works strategic work plan that addresses the cost effective delivery of all core services, including:
 - a. A multi-year, prioritized maintenance plan focused countywide on the arterial and collector road system, developed with meaningful stakeholder participation, and approved by the Board.
 - b. Develop a bridge replacement plan that includes a plan for implementing seismic retrofits of bridges, maintaining emergency response accessibility to bridge infrastructure, and maintaining access to remote and/or private property for servicing bridges.
- B. Increase the reliability, consistency, and functionality of the County's transportation and roadway systems.
 1. Reduce wear and congestion on roadways by supporting and implementing alternatives to single-occupant auto travel through education and incentives that promote:
 - i. Car-pooling
 - ii. Pedestrian/Bike lanes and pathways
 - iii. Public Transit (e.g. Sonoma County Transit and SMART)
 - iv. Freight rail service
 - v. Tele-commuting and Tele-service delivery and other technology.

2. Pursue city/regional/state partnerships to improve coordination of transit and roadway systems.
 - a. Improve coordination with cities on transit and road system planning, road and land development and management.
 - b. Improve regional coordination to address transportation flow between cities and between the County and neighboring counties.
- C. Develop resources to provide for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of County roads.
 1. Change County policies or practices to allow for resource allocation to focus on maintenance and capital improvement of the highest-priority services and infrastructure.
 2. Establish County Service Areas for creating localized funding sources to finance pavement and other improvements.
 3. Lobby for increased Federal and State gas tax to address local infrastructure needs.
 4. In concert with cities, evaluate the pros and cons of a regional funding source or regional traffic mitigation fees.
- D. Develop efficient and environmentally sound removal and management of the County's solid waste that is coordinated and integrated with other jurisdictions and achieves: reduced volume, increased recycling, controlled future trends in costs, and increased rating on a statewide index of diversion from landfill disposal.
- E. Develop the institutional capacity to assist in proactively addressing water resource management and small community wastewater treatment in areas not served by SCWA systems.

Finding 4: Success Indicators

As we are successful at accomplishing Goal V, the public will experience improvement in the reliability, accessibility, and safety of its transportation infrastructure. Our waste, water, and wastewater infrastructure will be contributing to increased purity of water and air and reductions in greenhouse gasses. Specific measures of our success will include:

1. Development of a long-term fiscally viable plan for infrastructure maintenance and improvement.
2. Improvements/increases in quality measures of the County's roads and bridges.
3. A reduction in roadway claims, injuries, accidents, and deaths.
4. Continued increase in the total waste diversion rate.

Finding 5

Actions by the federal government, state government, cities, tribes, districts, and other public agencies are not always well coordinated and can work at cross purposes with the needs of the County. Many of these entities and the community at large are unaware of the value of County provided services or the likely impacts if those services diminish or are lost. Unless an improved level of understanding and cooperation is proactively pursued and accomplished, effective service delivery across all jurisdictions will be compromised.

VI. Engage with the public and other jurisdictions to mutually define and build support for policies, programs and services that benefit the entire community.

- A. Increase participation across all segments of the community in all forms of civic engagement, e.g., elections, public hearings, community meetings, and web/internet communications.

1. Increase public participation in County sponsored two-way communication opportunities.
 2. County policy-makers and staff increase participation in Community Based Organizations and forums
 - a. Increase visibility of county employees' participation in volunteer and other community activities (e.g., Day of Caring etc.).
- B. Achieve measurable changes in other jurisdictions', the community's and the public's awareness, understanding, confidence in and support for County policies, programs and services and their role(s) in making the service delivery system work.
1. Increase education and outreach to the public, cities, state and federal government and regional agencies on the interdependencies of actions by one on the others.
 2. Increase community involvement in defining priorities and values driving County policies, programs, and services.
 - a. Translate key documents and create specific outreach efforts to engage non-English speaking communities.
 - b. Recruit staff with expertise in working with seniors
 - c. Increase congruence between the community's perception and the realities of public safety.
 3. Adopt and implement the following communication practices and principles:
 - a. The County's governmental and public engagement communications are:
 - Honest and forthcoming.
 - Consistent across the organization.
 - Concrete and focused on measurable outcomes.
 - Informing the discussion and communicating trends.
 - Connecting with the values of the intended audience (identifying what's important to the intended audience and target what is valued).
 - b. The County's communications are strategically focused and consider all of the following:
 - Who the audience is.
 - What we want to achieve or change.
 - How we will know that we've achieved the objective.
 - c. Wherever appropriate, the County seeks to be a community convener around important quality of life issues. These efforts include:
 - Enable and empower the community to carry the message about the value of County services and the fiscal challenges to providing those services.
 - Develop partnerships with other public agencies and private organizations to address key challenges.
 - Explore convening stakeholder groups such as technical advisory committees or commissions to address inter-jurisdictional approaches to optimizing the delivery of services.
 - Employ "interest-based" strategies to work with other jurisdictions to address common problems.
 - d. The County develops broad consensus around the factual dimensions of key issues before discussing potential solutions. A key strategy to support this is for the county to make a fundamental shift in public

- e. Effective communication depends on building mutually respectful relationships with the community and with other local jurisdictions.
- C. Increase the County's leadership in, and influence on, national and state level decision-making on issues that that impact the County.
 - 1. Focus efforts on improving the fairness of Federal and State revenue allocation strategies to enhance the availability of discretionary funding at the level of government where program accountability occurs.
 - 2. Lobby for policies that promote effective management and coordination of State and County facilities planning and management.

Finding 5: Success Indicators

As we are successful at accomplishing Goal VI, County staff will become more visible to all segments of the community. There will be much greater public understanding, and other jurisdiction policy-maker and staff understanding, of the role of the County in contributing to the quality of life of all the people of Sonoma County. Sonoma County's influence in the State legislature and regarding federal policy will also increase. Specific measures of our success will include:

- 1. Increased County government representation and participation in CBOs and other community activities.
- 2. An improved community perception about County Government, i.e., the County is an increasingly credible convener of policy discussions and problem solving, and is perceived as a reliable source of information about local conditions and needs.
- 3. Increased accomplishment of objectives in the County's annual legislative program.

Next Steps

Following approval of this final Strategic Plan by the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator will bring a plan for implementation to the Board. This plan will include a series of projects on the highest priority topics in the Plan. Some of these topics, such as health care costs for employees and retirees and increasing the county's capacity to meaningfully engage the public, are underway. Others will require new initiatives. The overall efforts will need to balance on-going operations and the county's ability to take on numerous major initiatives. The County Administrator will bring the Implementation Plan to the Board by late Spring or early Summer of 2008.