



County of Santa Cruz

County Administrative Office

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Meeting Date: December 12, 2017
Date: December 4, 2017
To: The Board of Supervisors
From: Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer
Subject: Update on Strategic Planning Process

On October 17, 2017, the County Administrative Office (CAO) presented the final framework and timeline for the strategic planning process, called "Vision Santa Cruz County," and staff was directed to return on today's agenda with an update following engagement efforts planned in fall.

Background

As previously explained, the purpose of strategic planning is to establish a long-term vision for the County and set a course of action through (1) overarching focus areas and (2) specific goals and objectives. This will require assessing the current landscape and trends, engaging internal and external stakeholders, and drafting and adopting a multi-year strategic plan and a shorter-term operational plan, which would inform County budget development.

Staff began preparing for this process by comparing existing models and formats in other counties and cities, reviewing department and subject-area plans, and receiving input on strategic plan development. This work led to the identification of five key strategic plan elements:

- **Vision** - reflects the collective understanding of the ideal situation
- **Mission** - identifies the County's role in pursuing the community's vision
- **Values** - provide the foundation on which the strategic plan is constructed
- **Focus areas** - represent strategic initiatives, which organize the goals of an organization into a limited number of categories or themes
- **Goals** - provide generalized statements of what the community wants to achieve

consistent with its vision

Since the end of August, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee (SPSC) has been meeting weekly to finalize the strategic planning process that will lead to the development of these elements. We intend to provide robust internal and external engagement of the County's numerous stakeholders through a variety of in-person, electronic and other methods.

In September, engagement efforts kicked off with employees, starting with department heads and participants of the Learn, Engage, Apply and Perform (LEAP) Program, the County's new leadership academy. The strategic planning process also has been introduced at department staff meetings.

There continues to be strong public interest in participating in the strategic planning process. More than 700 members of the public have signed up to receive updates, including how to participate.

Employee Mixers

To engage more employees at all levels, the SPSC arranged four "Strategic Planning Employee Mixers" at the end of October and beginning of November. The mixers attracted a total of 218 employees, as shown below.

Participation in Employee Mixers

Date	Location	Participants
10/30/17	701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz	97
10/30/17	18 West Beach Street, Watsonville	26
11/8/17	1080 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz	77
11/8/17	1430 Freedom Boulevard, Watsonville	18
	Total	218

Our strategic planning facilitator, Angela Antenore, led these one-hour sessions, which provided an overview of the strategic planning process and obtained input on the County's vision, mission and values. The input received was used in structuring the community forums and survey.

Counting department heads, LEAP participants and other staff, we were successful in engaging at least 10% of the County workforce between September and November. Additional staff have participated through the community survey, which is discussed below.

Community Forums

During November, the SPSC arranged five “Strategic Planning Community Forums” at locations around the County in coordination with the Board. Attendance at the forums grew throughout the month, ending with a total of 207 participants, as shown below.

Participation in Community Forums

Date	Location	Participants
11/9/17	Highlands Park Senior Center, Ben Lomond (D5)	25
11/15/17	Civic Plaza Community Room, Watsonville (D4)	35
11/18/17	Twin Lakes Church, Aptos (D2)	34
11/28/17	Simpkins Family Swim Center, Live Oak (D1)	61
11/30/17	Pacific Elementary School, Davenport (D3)	52
	Total	207

With the goal of transparency and inclusivity, the community forums were open to all constituent groups, including residents, boards, commissions, special districts, service providers, businesses and community-based organizations, and we notified these groups through email, flyers, handouts, newsletters, social media and websites. The SPSC also visited each City Council at a regular meeting to announce the strategic planning process and forums.

Local facilitators, Cynthia Cuéllar and Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, led these two-hour sessions based on direction from the CAO and Ms. Antenore. Similar to the mixers, the forums provided an overview of the strategic planning process and obtained input on the County’s vision. Additional activities were held to identify key changes and trends in the County as well as internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and barriers) of the County in responding to the issues.

While Spanish translation was available, the forums did not attract any monolingual speakers. The CAO and Ms. Cuéllar are exploring the possibility of holding a similar session in Spanish during December.

Community Survey

In November, the SPSC released a community survey to internal and external stakeholders. The online survey, which is available in English and Spanish, briefs respondents on the role of County government and seeks input on the County’s vision, values, strengths and weaknesses. It also asks for views on emerging issues and trends in the County and provides survey respondents with the opportunity to answer an

open-ended question on what the County needs in order to become a better place to live, work or play.

The survey has been distributed widely and will remain open through December. To date, more than 1,100 responses have been submitted. The public can access the survey at www.santacruzcounty.us/sp. Residents have been notified of the survey through Twitter and the NextDoor social media platform. The survey also has been featured in local media and emailed to more than 100 local nonprofits and service providers as well as more than 200 members of County Boards and Commissions. Furthermore, we are working with the County Office of Education to send it directly to parents and families at local schools.

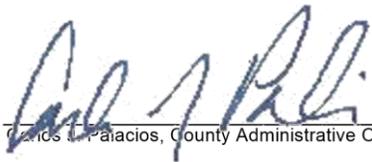
To increase participation and target certain demographic groups, staff are conducting pop-up engagement at various local events, including farmers' markets throughout the County, the Santa Cruz Flea Market at the former Skyview Drive-in Theater, senior dining centers, and service day at the Veterans Hall. The County is also funding targeted social media outreach through Facebook, both Countywide and in specific neighborhoods with a high number of Spanish speakers.

Next Steps

Engagement efforts have generated a large amount of data and information, which staff are in the process of compiling and reviewing to look for common themes. It remains our goal to provide a foundation for the draft vision, mission, values and focus areas in January. This will be followed by a series of goal setting events, including focus groups and/or forums with county employees and community members. To date, more than 700 people have indicated an interest in participating in these events.

It is, therefore, RECOMMENDED, that the Board accept and file this report and direct staff to return on or before January 23, 2018 with a further update on the strategic planning process.

Submitted by:



Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

12/4/2017