



**County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors
Agenda Item Submittal**

From: County Administrative Office
(831) 454-2100

Subject: Update on Operational Planning Process

Meeting Date: February 26, 2019

Recommended Action(s):

- 1) Accept and file update on the Santa Cruz County Operational Planning Initiative;
and
- 2) Direct the County Administrative Office to return in May 2019 with the Proposed Operational Plan for FY 2019-21.

Executive Summary

On June 26, 2018, the Board of Supervisors approved a six-year strategic plan defining what the County stands for and what we want to achieve. The County Administrative Office (CAO) is now leading the development of a two-year operational plan and convened an Operational Plan Steering Committee (OPSC) and subcommittees to assist with this effort. This memo and attachment present draft strategies for realizing strategic plan goals and a snapshot of major projects to be completed.

Background

The Santa Cruz County Strategic Plan for 2018-2024 was approved by the Board on June 26, 2018. The plan was the result of a year-long effort led by the CAO and the Strategic Plan Steering Committee (SPSC). The SPSC engaged with thousands of County residents and staff to develop a vision, mission, values, focus areas and goals. Each of the strategic plan's six focus areas contains four goals, for a total of 24, which are presented online at www.SCCVision.us.

As outlined in the strategic plan, the County is working this year to develop a two-year operational plan for Board approval in June 2019. This first of three operational plans in the current strategic plan cycle is an important step in changing the County culture and collaborating with departments to achieve the vision of the strategic plan. Developing the operational plan is taking place concurrently with initiatives in continuous process improvement and performance measurement as well as implementation of the new two-year budget. Over time, the operational plan will fully integrate with these initiatives and the two-year budget, but the first plan is the start of this process.

The operational plan will add countywide strategies, department objectives and key steps (formerly referred to as tactics) for achieving the 24 strategic plan goals. These elements are defined as follows:

- **Countywide Strategies** – Approaches for achieving strategic plan goals.
- **Department Objectives** – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely (SMART) actions that work towards strategic plan goals and countywide strategies.
- **Key Steps** – Critical activities or steps necessary to achieve each department objective.

The following diagram shows the hierarchy of strategic plan and operational plan elements. The full inventory of department objectives and key steps will be presented in the two-year operational plan and replace department goals that were previously included in the proposed budget. The new two-year budget will include an operational plan section and references to department objectives and key steps where feasible.



Since the last update to the Board on December 11, 2018, the OPSC and subcommittees, comprised of a diverse group of leaders and subject-matter experts from each functional area of the County organization, have been drafting strategies for each strategic plan focus area. This work has been informed by input from the community and County staff, existing department and partner strategic plan goals, and draft objectives from departments.

Analysis

Strategy Framework and Development

Attached is a draft document with 24 strategic plan goals and 54 operational plan strategies. The strategy statements describe the County’s approach in achieving our goals. Each strategy is formatted as, “We will *Act* to have an *Impact*.”

For example, the strategic plan focus area of County Operational Excellence contains a goal on Customer Experience. Upon reviewing various operational plan inputs, the focus area subcommittee identified themes of proactive communication, process simplification and cultural responsiveness. The OPSC and focus area subcommittee used these themes to propose three strategies as approaches to providing equitable access to efficient, effective and culturally responsive services:

- We will *communicate clearly and proactively* to *keep the community informed and engaged*.
- We will *simplify processes* to *improve service delivery and increase customer satisfaction*.
- We will *provide culturally responsive services across County platforms* to *welcome everyone*.

SMART Objective Development

In prior years, departments submitted a goals and accomplishments section with their proposed budget narrative, with few tools or guidance in terms of consistency and follow up. The operational plan changes this first by providing a consistent countywide framework for drafting objectives that are SMART, and second by extracting the objectives into their own document where they can be measured and tracked over time.

For the first iteration of the operational plan, departments were asked to identify the major projects/initiatives that they are currently working on, with limited exceptions for new projects. This was done to help departments understand the new objective framework in the context of their current operations, and to demonstrate the magnitude of work and collaboration currently underway.

The strategy framework above highlighted the goal of Customer Experience. Several major projects/initiatives will eventually be expressed as SMART objectives and aligned with one or more County strategies. For Customer Experience, these include:

- Building Permit Process Improvements
- More Spanish Language Outreach
- Reducing Wait Times at Clinics
- Over 30 PRIMO Improvement Projects

Departments submitted SMART objectives and key steps in November and are revising them based on subcommittee and CAO feedback. These revisions will be resubmitted at the end of February. Once reviewed, each SMART objective will be aligned with one or more County strategies and goals.

Community Engagement

Similar to the strategic planning process, the CAO is leading a community engagement effort around the operational plan. Specifically, the County will engage with three audiences: key informants, County commissions, and the community.

Key informants are defined as those with subject-matter expertise in a strategic plan focus area and are most effective when they serve as a representative proxy for their peers that share this subject-matter expertise. Key informants will be invited to participate in focus groups, organized by focus area, at the end of March. Invitees were nominated by the focus area subcommittees and approved by the OPSC.

This presentation will also be put on the agenda of several County commissions for their feedback, and each presentation will be tailored to the subject-matter expertise of the respective commission. Staff is targeting the March and April meetings of over 15 commissions, including the Mental Health Advisory Board, Planning Commission, Regional Transportation Commission, Community Corrections Partnership, and Latino Affairs Commission.

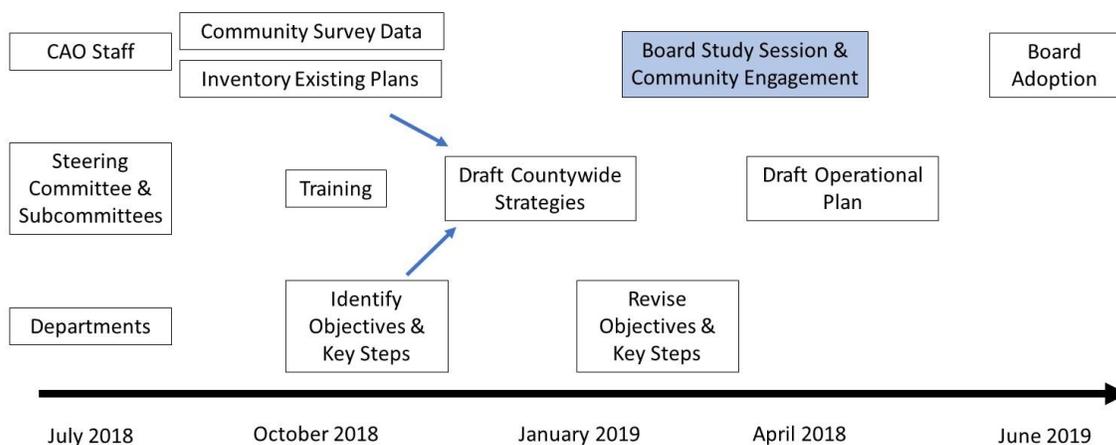
Finally, the County will host three community open houses in April for members of the public to learn about and provide feedback on the draft strategies. The events will be staged so that community members can learn about any focus area that interests them from a subject-matter expert in that area. The open houses will be held in north, mid and south county locations, and Spanish language assistance available at all three events.

Using this feedback, the OPSC and subcommittees will finalize the proposed strategies to ensure that County approaches consider diverse, representative perspectives. The revised strategies will then be matched with SMART objectives and key steps to complete the proposed operational plan.

The CAO intends to return in May 2019 with the proposed operational plan for Board consideration and feedback. A final plan will be brought to the Board for approval in June 2019, as shown below.



Operational Planning Timeline



Strategic Plan Element:

6.D (Operational Excellence: Continuous Improvement) - The development of the two-year operational plan is the next step in strategic plan implementation, and represents the blueprint for how the County will achieve its vision for a healthy, safe and more affordable community.

Submitted by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Recommended by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- a Vision Santa Cruz County (weblink)
- b Operational Plan Draft Strategies