

Effective Strategic Planning



PLANNING

Getting Your Organization Focused and Directed

Launched in 1982 by Jim and Patty Rouse, The Enterprise Foundation is a national, nonprofit housing and community development organization dedicated to bringing lasting improvements to distressed communities.

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About This Manual

What is strategic planning?

Strategic planning is an essential process in preparing to carry out your organization's mission. An effective strategic planning process provides a framework to make decisions on how to allocate organizational resources, address challenges and take advantage of opportunities that arise along the way.

Effective Strategic Planning was created for staff and board members of community development organizations. It describes the process for developing an organizational strategic plan, from preparation to development and implementation. Worksheets are provided to assist with planning tasks. The manual includes information on:

- When to undertake strategic planning
- Who should be involved
- The five elements of a strategic plan
- A case study of strategic planning
- How to organize the plan for presentation

This manual is part of the *Planning* series within The Enterprise Foundation's Community Development Library™. Other manuals in the series provide detailed information on:

- Creating business plans
- Developing community-based plans

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Introduction

Nonprofit community development organizations face an array of challenges and opportunities carrying out their missions. Failing to identify these challenges or opportunities — and plan accordingly — can lead to organizational paralysis, decline and eventual collapse. Strategic planning is an essential process in every organization's success.

Strategic planning focuses on establishing your organizational direction, setting priorities and identifying obstacles and opportunities that may limit or enable you to carry out your mission.

Through a productive strategic planning process, your organization's leadership will clarify and affirm the mission and values of the organization and define its role in the community. The process can also identify external and internal challenges and opportunities that you may encounter and help you design well-thought-out strategies to address them.

Properly used, strategic planning is a powerful tool to keep your organization energized, focused and effective.

Basic Steps of Strategic Planning

The sequence of the basic steps involved in the strategic planning process is shown below.

The Basic Steps of Strategic Planning

- Prepare To Plan
- Define and Review Organizational Vision, Mission, Activities and Values
- Do an Environmental Scan or SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) Analysis.
- Identify Strategic Issues
- Develop Strategic Goals and Objectives
- Create Implementation Plans To Achieve Goals and Carry Out Objectives
- Monitor and Evaluate Periodically and Adjust if Necessary

A community planning process can assist the organization in identifying strategic issues based on an analysis of existing conditions in the community. These issues are often used in the strategic planning process. A community plan might also identify potential roles for an organization to fill in the community. For more information on community planning, see *A Guide to Community Planning*, another manual in the *Planning* series of the Community Development Library.

Strategic planning should not be confused with other planning processes such as business planning, program planning or community planning, also referred to as neighborhood planning. Although closely related, strategic planning focuses on establishing your organizational direction, setting priorities and identifying obstacles and opportunities that may limit or enable you to carry out your mission.

Business plans and program work plans are often byproducts of the strategic planning process. After organizational priorities are set and strategic goals and objectives are articulated, these plans are used to describe the implementation details of various strategies such as budget, staffing, funding sources and evaluation activities.

Preparing To Plan

Before undertaking a strategic planning process, your organization will need to decide when it is the appropriate time to embark on such a journey. The final decision to engage in a strategic planning process should be made by the leadership or governing board. Once the decision is made, your organization will need to allocate financial, board, staff and time resources to the strategic planning process, and design a process that fits your situation.

WHEN TO PLAN

If your organization is in the early stages of formation, a strategic planning session can assist leadership in selecting an area on which to initially focus organizational resources and attention. It will also help your nonprofit establish program goals and guidelines.

For more seasoned organizations, a strategic planning process is most necessary when leadership is considering a major shift in programs or services, or if major changes in the environment or community (governmental, demographics, funding, etc.) cause a shift in focus or a redirection of resources. The process is also important if the organization has experienced rapid growth.

A strategic planning process should not be done when your organization is in the middle of a crisis or in the process of changing key board members or staff. If your leadership is focused on resolving a short-term crisis, they will not direct adequate attention and resources toward the strategic planning process. Complete acceptance or buy-in is essential for the successful implementation of the plan. This also holds true if the organizational leadership is in the middle of a transition. New leadership may not embrace a plan reflecting the philosophies and priorities of the previous leadership.

OBTAIN SUPPORT OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Before proceeding with a strategic plan, the board of directors of the organization must support the decision to undertake the process and commit to seeing it through to completion. Planning for the future success of the organization is the responsibility of the board of directors.

Failing to obtain the support and commitment of the board of the directors can result in limited input and participation from leadership. It may also lead to a strategic plan that is not fully embraced by the leadership. This sense of ownership is crucial because the board of directors will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan.

DESIGN A PROCESS TO FIT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Time is probably the most important element to consider in designing the planning process. Allow approximately three to nine months to conduct all of the tasks related to the process and additional time for review and approval by the full leadership. As mentioned earlier, if your organization is in the middle of a crisis and cannot allocate adequate time and attention to the process, leadership may wish to consider postponing the process.

In designing the planning process, the leadership needs to consider the objectives it seeks to achieve. In addition to producing the elements of the plan (such as clarification of your organization's mission and vision or identification of strategic goals and objectives), the planning process can be designed to achieve other objectives. These include increasing the sense of ownership by the board of directors in current organizational activities, strengthening partnerships with other organizations or institutions, building greater public support and understanding of the organization, and increasing the interaction between board and staff.

In the early stages, it may be helpful to survey the leadership regarding any other “non-planning” objectives to be achieved. Other factors to consider include time availability, internal capacity and access to external resources.

PLANNING ROLES

Depending on its “non-planning” objectives, your organization may decide to design a process with different levels of board, staff, consultant and external participation. However, keep in mind that the board of directors is ultimately responsible for approving and allocating the resources to implement the plan. At a minimum, the full board of directors needs to be kept informed throughout the process.

The following chart lists the advantages and disadvantages of several approaches to the strategic planning process. The selected process can be a combination of these approaches.

Plan Developed By:	Advantages	Disadvantages
Full Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ownership by leadership ▪ Board becomes more informed about programs and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time availability may be limited and scheduling difficult ▪ May not achieve staff ownership
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear understanding of operations ▪ Time flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited board involvement and subsequent ownership ▪ May detract from other staff responsibilities
Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manageable size ▪ Can include a variety of perspectives (such as board, staff, partners, constituents, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full board may not feel sense of ownership of plan details ▪ Board perspectives may be excluded
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good understanding of planning process ▪ Should produce timely and professional-looking plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited board and staff participation may lead to limited sense of ownership of plan details ▪ Limited board leadership development

After selecting a planning approach, you will need to identify your organization's capacity and resources to carry out the planning tasks. You should also fill the following roles:

- **Leader** — To keep the process moving and make sure that the people who need to be involved are. Often the board chair, strategic planning committee chair or executive director fills this role.
- **Facilitator** — To help with difficult discussions and heated debates, and to enable everyone to participate and focus on the task at hand. Keep in mind that the facilitator's ability to make decisions is limited, so key board or staff may not be the best option for filling this role.
- **Researchers, interviewers, writers** — To research, conduct interviews, perform calculations and projections, and document the process and produce the written plan. If available, this is a role that staff and volunteers often fill.

In addition to finding internal or external sources to fill the above roles, identify the following resources:

- **Financial resources** — Funding for consultant and facilitator expenses, rental of adequate space for the planning sessions, and materials and supplies needed for the planning process.
- **Skills, knowledge, expertise** — It may be helpful to have individuals with knowledge and expertise in fields related to the programs or activities conducted by your organization. These professionals may include attorneys, bankers, real estate developers, human service professionals, etc. If your organization does not have the expertise in-house, check with local colleges and universities, professional groups and clubs, and the local chamber of commerce.

After all the above elements in the plan are identified, the full design should be approved by the organizational leadership and shared with the participants in the planning process.

Elements of a Strategic Plan

Five elements comprise a strategic plan:

- Define mission, vision, activities and values
- Scan the environment using a SWOT analysis
- Identify and prioritize strategic issues
- Define strategic goals and objectives
- Establish an implementation plan and schedule

Define Vision, Mission, Activities and Values

The foundation of the strategic plan is the vision, mission, activities and values of the organization. When articulated in formal statements, they provide the framework for identifying strategic goals. The statements provide a vision or target goal for the organization to achieve and define what the organization does and why. They should be created or reviewed as the first step in formulating the organization's strategic plan. *Building and Managing a Better Board*, one of the manuals in the Community Development Library's *Governance* series, has more information and exercises on writing vision, mission, activities and values statements.

A *vision* statement tells everyone the type of community or world the organization envisions for its constituency as a result of the work of the organization.

A *mission* statement describes what the organization will do, who it will do it for and how it will achieve the vision. The mission statement is often the only statement many people will read about an organization.

An *activities* statement describes the business or general activities you will use to achieve the organization's mission.

A *values* statement describes the principles and beliefs that guide the operations of the organization.

These statements provide a filter through which important decisions for the organization and the standards for evaluating the effectiveness of your programs and activities can be screened.

As the "owners" or representatives of the membership of the organization, the board of directors is responsible for creating or modifying the mission, vision, activities and values statements. Staff members can also be involved since they are responsible for day-to-day activities and may provide a valuable perspective on the work.

Before you create or review your vision, mission, activities and values, take time to review the history of your organization. This will help refresh the memories of long-tenured board members and provide a better foundation for newer members. Schedule a retreat where board members and staff describe (chronologically) major events leading to the creation of the organization, individuals who played significant roles, victories and program accomplishments, funding sources and other supporters, and your organization's focus at various points in time.

Reviewing the history will give board members a collective sense of what role the organization has filled in the past and can assist them in deciding what it can be in the future.

VISION

Even if your organization has a vision, mission and activities statement, it is helpful to go through several exercises that may either affirm the existing statements or provide a basis to modify them.

To create the vision, board members should provide answers to the following questions:

- As a result of the work of the organization, how will the community or the lives of the organization's constituents be changed?
- What will the community look like? How will its members interact?
- How will the organization be perceived in the community? What will be its image? When people describe the organization, what terms will they use?

Your vision will serve as the overall goal for which strategies will be developed to achieve.

Sample Vision Statement:

Create a community in which all residents are housed in safe and quality housing regardless of their household income.

MISSION

The mission describes the approach the organization will take to achieve the vision. To articulate your mission, board members should answer the following questions:

- What will the organization do to accomplish the vision?
- What types of services or products will the organization provide (housing counseling, housing construction and rehabilitation, educational services, economic development services, etc.)?
- Who will be the primary beneficiaries of these activities?

Sample Mission Statement:

Increase the amount of affordable housing and home ownership in Ward 10, Washington, D.C., and help those residents achieve better lives.

ACTIVITIES

The activities of the organization, which describe what your organization will do to achieve its mission, should be summarized in one sentence. Board members should discuss specifically what business or activity their non-profit will use to reach its mission and why.

Sample Activities Statement:

Develop affordable housing and other services, such as child care and job training, and help residents access our services.

VALUES

Values are your core beliefs and principles. They define why you carry out your mission the way you do and help develop strategic objectives and work plans. To define your organization's values, board members should answer the following questions:

- Why is it important for this organization to carry out its activities?
- In all of the organization's activities, what should be the underlying principles that cannot be compromised?

Sample Values Statement:

Neighborhood residents must be involved in key decisions affecting their lives.

In many organizations the vision, mission, activities and values statements are integrated into one comprehensive "mission statement." Other organizations use a combination of two statements. If you decide to have one statement, it is important that all the elements of mission, vision, activities and values are included. It is equally important that this statement be clearly written and kept short and direct, since your mission statement is listed in most of your publications and proposals.

Scan the Environment Using a SWOT Analysis

After defining or affirming the vision, mission, activities and values, the next stage is identifying strategic issues. To accomplish this task, the board must look at conditions and trends in the physical, social, economic and political environments that may have a positive or negative impact on your organization's ability to achieve the vision and carry out its mission. The board must also assess internal strengths and weaknesses.

This type of assessment is referred to in the industry as a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A SWOT analysis can consist of a combination of individual interviews, surveys, focus groups, research of relevant socioeconomic trends, and an internal organizational assessment of the administrative and program-related capacities of the organization. The methods used by the organization to gather the information required for the SWOT analysis will be based on the financial and human resources available.

The overall scope of the SWOT analysis will be based on your mission. For example, a non-profit community development organization with the mission of developing affordable housing might examine the external environment to identify trends in federal or state housing policy, future funding availability for housing-related activities, in addition to local and regional housing market forecasts.

It might also examine trends in the construction industry regarding costs and building technologies, capital market conditions and changes in bank lending practices, demographic and socioeconomic trends, and future planned activities that may have a positive or negative impact on the condition of its target area or neighborhood. The overall goal of the SWOT analysis is to identify factors or conditions to which the organization can build strategic responses.

The internal analysis of the organization should review and assess your organization's capacity and performance in the areas of:

- Administrative policies and procedures
- Composition, capacity and performance of the board of directors
- Staff capacity
- Fund-raising capacity
- Financial status
- Financial management systems
- Volunteer resources
- Facilities
- Program performance and effectiveness
- Public image

In conducting the SWOT analysis, you may wish to approach all or a combination of the following sources:

- Clients and constituents
- Community leaders
- Private and public funding sources
- Legislators, government officials and government agencies at the federal, state, county and local level
- Local and regional planning agencies
- Research departments of local universities
- Local organizations engaged in similar activities
- Advocacy or public interest groups focusing on related issues
- Neighborhood institutions
- Other key stakeholders

In collecting information for the SWOT analysis, it is important that a consistent format be used, especially if multiple researchers and data collectors are used. A consistent format must also be used for conducting interviews. Draft a set of interview questions for use by all the interviewers who will be conducting individual or focus group sessions. Make the questions open-ended, such as:

What activities does the organization do especially well? How do you explain this?

What other needs of the customers are already served by the organization?

Are there other organizations or companies that provide even better service to our customers?

After collecting all the data from the various sources contributing to the SWOT analysis, try to categorize or group the findings under similar themes such as:

- Economic (status of and projected changes in local employment and other relevant markets)
- Legal and political (the current and projected future climates)
- Regional (important themes affecting the entire area)
- Technological (current and future impact of technology)
- Population (broad trends affecting the target market)
- Competition (current and projected future status of suppliers of similar products or services)
- Social (current and projected local social factors such as the presence of community groups and the level of community cohesiveness)
- Physical (current and projected factors impacting the built environment)

Further categorize the findings on population under such themes as:

- Demographics (age, gender, race, religion and family size)
- Needs, wants and interests (the specific consumer preferences of the target market)
- Values and lifestyles (broader choices that underlie the specific consumer preferences)
- Socioeconomic status (based on household size, income and wealth)

Within these categories, identify potential opportunities and possible barriers to achieving the organization's mission.

There are several worksheets provided at the end of this manual to assist organizations in collecting and grouping the findings of the SWOT analysis. An example of using these worksheets, along with the resulting strategic plan, is found in the Case Study of Strategic Planning section.

Identify and Prioritize Strategic Issues

After all the data from the SWOT analysis have been gathered and categorized, the full board of directors should convene to review the findings. Based on the identified opportunities and threats, the board should decide which of these conditions or situations are having the greatest impact on its ability to fulfill the vision of the organization and which opportunities must be capitalized upon immediately to achieve the organizational vision.

To select strategic issues, the board should look at the estimated cost of not dealing with identified strategic issues in terms of financial resources or loss of public credibility and the ability of the organization to successfully deal with each. It should also review the internal strengths of the organization. Once established, the board should prioritize the identified strategic issues to more efficiently allocate limited resources to addressing the identified strategic issues.

Use the following ground rules in selecting strategic issues:

- **Choose no more than five.** Keep your list short. There are countless issues that affect your organization, but the more you have, the less you can focus on those that are most important.
- **Select issues that you can affect.** The lack of income in your community may have a strong impact on residents, but if your organization does not create jobs or otherwise improve the local economic situation, lack of income is not your issue. Stick to what you can change, if change is needed, and be realistic in that assessment.
- **Donor interests are relevant, but not overriding.** Foundations, government agencies and other donors have their own agendas and priorities. It is important to know what those are, but only as input into the organization's decisions.

- **Each external issue will be mirrored internally.** Internal capacities are needed for external effect. Whether the external issue involves communication or program development, the internal issues will be current capability and future resource allocation.
- **Come back to the mission.** Each strategic issue should relate directly to the mission statement of the organization. "Opportunities" have the possibility of enhancing the organization's ability to fulfill the mission, while "Threats" have the possibility of detracting from the organization's ability to fulfill the mission.

After identifying and prioritizing strategic issues, the full board of directors may wish to form strategic issue subcommittees to analyze and further define each and develop strategic goals and objectives for the full board to review and approve. These committees can consist of board members, staff, constituents and outside specialists.

Define Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic goals are the desired outcome of addressing strategic issues. Each strategic goal should be a direct outcome of a strategic issue, each of which is directly related to the organization's mission statement.

Strategic objectives summarize the tasks and activities that must be undertaken to achieve a strategic goal. Where goals may be fairly general, objectives are often quantifiable.

Example:

A community development organization identifies the low home-ownership rate among area residents as a strategic issue preventing it from achieving its vision of a vibrant, functioning and healthy community. Its strategic goal?

To increase the home-ownership rate among low- and moderate-income residents in the neighborhood

The strategic objectives for the next fiscal year related to this goal might be:

1. Enroll 150 families in home-ownership preparation classes.
2. Rehabilitate 50 vacant dwellings for sale to low- and moderate-income households.
3. Construct 25 new homes and sell them to low- and moderate-income buyers.

Strategic goals and objectives can also be internally focused.

Example:

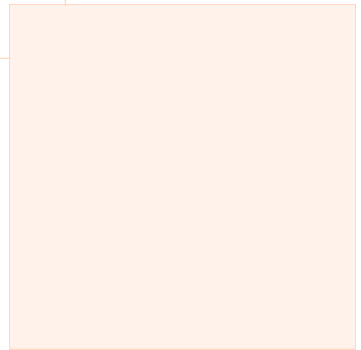
An economic development organization identifies a limited capacity in the organization's ability to accurately track and report the long-term placement rate of its clients in successful permanent employment opportunities. This organization sets as a strategic goal:

To upgrade the internal information management capacity of the organization

The objectives created relating to this strategic goal are:

1. Upgrade existing equipment or acquire new equipment to increase case management capacity.
2. Hire staff to manage management information system functions and train staff in the operation of new technology.
3. Develop internal systems and procedures to produce regular reports to the board, funding sources and other contacts.

Strategic objectives can lead to the creation of work plans to describe tasks in more detail. The end result should be achieving the strategic objective. Detailed work plans should be created by staff and, if necessary, reviewed by the board.



Establish an Implementation and Monitoring Schedule

The final element of the strategic plan is the implementation and monitoring schedule. This should describe the parties responsible for completing the tasks related to the strategic objectives and provide a timetable for completion. The implementation plan should describe the resources required to achieve the objectives, identifying existing organizational resources to be allocated. Strategies to obtain additional required resources should also be described.

Establish a schedule to periodically monitor and evaluate the progress of the organization in implementing the various strategic objectives. If internal or external conditions have changed, it may be necessary to revisit the planning process and assess the validity of the strategic goals and objectives.

See the Case Study of Strategic Planning section for examples.

Plan Presentation

The strategic plan is primarily an internal document to be used for guidance and evaluation; however, many funding sources require organizations to submit them. Therefore, attention should be given to the presentation of the strategic plan. A well-organized plan will enable the reader to find and understand its most important elements. Whenever possible, avoid the use of industry-based jargon and describe acronyms that might confuse lay readers and future generations of leadership who may review it.

Before distribution, be sure your strategic plan includes:

- **Cover Page**

Make sure your cover page contains:

- The name of the organization, division or program that is the focus of the plan
- The words “strategic plan” in the title
- The date the plan was completed or revised

- **Executive Summary**

No more than two pages, this section should briefly describe:

- The most important elements of the plan
- Its purpose
- Its projected implementation period

It should also list the strategic goals and highlight the objectives.

- **Table of Contents**

Some readers may only be interested in certain sections. Number each page and make sure the table of contents is accurate.

- **Attachments**

Review the plan’s attachments and make sure they are numbered or lettered and properly sequenced as they are referenced in the text.

Case Study of Strategic Planning

Sunrise Valley is a large neighborhood in a large city. Located close to downtown, it was once a vibrant African-American community, with doctors, teachers and laborers making up a close-knit, family-driven fabric.

The past decades were not kind to Sunrise Valley. Good factory jobs were lost, higher-income families moved to the suburbs and deteriorated housing became the norm rather than the exception.

The memory for what had been in Sunrise Valley helped to inspire a strong effort to turn things around. A new and visionary mayor, himself a former resident of the area, joined with a large, progressive foundation and neighborhood residents to build a new community. Community Partnership (CP) was the organization founded to lead this effort.

Three years after its inception, the CP board determined that it was not achieving its agenda. It contracted with a technical assistance agency, Help Inc., to gather information for a SWOT analysis and to lead the board in strategic planning sessions.

The results of these efforts follow.

Case Study

SWOT Analysis Worksheets

SELECTING INFORMATION-GATHERING METHODS

Method	# of People Interviewed or Surveyed	Topic or Issue Areas for Research	Who Will Do It?	Date to Be Completed By
Individual Interviews	31 — key staff, all board members, key foundation donors	All SWOT topics	Help Inc.	April 15
Small Group Interviews	6 — each work division interviewed as a group	Internal communication/ coordination, setting and monitoring goals	Help Inc.	March 31
Written Surveys	100 — community residents	CP communication, resident goals	Help Inc.	March 1
External Research	3 — community health, crime and job experts	Social indices	Help Inc.	March 1
Internal Research	None			

The information needed for strategic planning comes from five sources: community residents, CP board members, CP staff, donors and political supporters of the organization, and experts with information on social statistics (such as the health of infants born in Sunrise Valley).

INTERNAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ANALYSIS

Summarize the results of your internal SWOT analysis on this worksheet. You should include both internal and external perspectives where appropriate.

	Rank: 5=very good; 3=satisfactory; 1=poor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Admin. Policies and Procedures	X				
Governance		X			
Programs and Services		X			
Fund Raising					X
Financial			X		
Staffing			X		
Volunteers				X	
Image			X		
Facility		X			
Planning	X				
Evaluation	X				
Resident Participation		X			

CP successfully garners funding and political support, but it fails to deliver the fruits of that sponsorship. The organization successfully attracts residents to volunteer in its social programs, but it does not plan for or monitor the achievements of these programs. Nor does it assess its efforts in leading a broader effort for social change. The community views CP as being directed by its donors, accounting for the poor marks in a key area: resident participation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN — TRENDS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis, summarize the trends affecting your organization's general environment in each category below.

	Trends
Economic	Area continues to decline economically: few retail stores remain, unemployment is high
Legal and Political	Still strong local and regional political support
Regional	Regional economy strong
Technological	Neighborhood has just begun to have modern communications capacities
Demographic	Population is declining, but more working people are living here because of newly built housing
Competitive	Other neighborhoods resent political and funding focus on Sunrise Valley and have begun making their resentment known
Social	Strong neighborhood identity and numerous local volunteer groups such as PTAs, churches, clubs and civic organizations
Physical	Deteriorating infrastructure; vacant businesses and residences attract vandals and crime; aging buildings are expensive to maintain or renovate

The population in Sunrise Valley is still very poor, but there has been a recent addition of working class home owners in a newly built part of the community. Competition for funding and political support is heightened, as other neighborhoods in the city want the funds that Sunrise Valley receives as a matter of course.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN — OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis and the trends on the previous page, summarize the opportunities and threats presented by your organization’s general environment in each category below.

	Opportunities	Threats
Economic	Strong regional economy creates jobs	
Legal and Political	Current political support enables CP to move forward	Lack of resident control; loss of political support to other neighborhoods
Regional	n/a	
Technological	A wired community communicates better	
Demographic	Newer population brings stability to Sunrise Valley	Needs of current population may overwhelm organization
Competitive	n/a	
Social	Strong sense of neighborhood	
Physical	Historic architecture	Decaying vacant buildings attract vandals, drug activity, and discourage investment

Lack of strong resident involvement in decision making threatens to impair CP’s efforts — and to dissolve funding and political support. New home owners are an opportunity to breathe fresh life into the organization, but the need of the current population for social programs continues to divert CP from achieving its goals.

TARGET POPULATION TRENDS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis, summarize the trends affecting clients, funding sources, and community and regional stakeholders in each category below.

	Clients	Donors	Community and Regional Stakeholders
Demographic (Race, Ethnicity)	African-Americans		
Needs, Wants	Better opportunities, stronger community; self-sufficiency	Examples of success	Sunrise Valley to be a model for other communities
Values, Lifestyles	Less crime, more jobs, more playgrounds	Communications and children's issues	
Socioeconomic Status	Lower income, with an increase in working households		

Sunrise Valley residents are clear in what they want for the community: better housing, more gardens and playgrounds, and less crime. Donors and other outside stakeholders want CP to present and implement a model for comprehensive community development.

TARGET POPULATION — OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis and the trends, summarize the opportunities and threats affecting your organization’s clients, funding sources, and community and regional stakeholders under the categories below.

	Opportunities	Threats
Demographic (Race, Ethnicity)	Community strongly identifies itself as an African-American community	
Needs, Wants	Community wants more control; donors want results	CP not relevant to earlier vision
Values, Lifestyles	Churches, neighborhood associations, parents can be more broadly involved	CP operating programs that do not lead to self-sufficiency
Socioeconomic Status	Increased income revenue for the community	Problems of population too large to solve

The overriding threat to CP is that it is no longer relevant to the vision of positive community change shared by community residents. CP is operating social programs — certainly not a bad thing, but not what the organization was expected to do — and not managing them well. In addition, the organization is threatened by the perceived lack of resident control, which can lead to lessened donor and political support.

On a more positive note, there are many informal and formal associations and organizations in Sunrise Valley — from parents’ groups to churches — that might be willing to work with CP in achieving the residents’ vision of community development.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Summarize the results of the strategic planning sessions by listing organizational goals and corresponding objectives. Clearly differentiate between *internal* goals (for example, strong fiscal management or a more diverse board of directors) and *external* goals (for example, developing more affordable rental housing or providing job opportunities for neighborhood residents).

Goals	Objectives
Internal Goal 1 More resident involvement in governance	Objective 1 Put more residents on board. Objective 2 Create advisory board for nonresidents.
Internal Goal 2 Monitor CP's implementation of strategic plan	Objective 1 Create benchmarks. Objective 2 Survey residents. Objective 3 Produce annual reports.
External Goal 1 Communicate to residents	Objective 1 Establish computer-based technology. Objective 2 Collect and distribute relevant information to residents. Objective 3 Prioritize communication within daily activities.
External Goal 2 Provide training for residents	Objective 1 Find local experts. Objective 2 Schedule and implement training with local experts. Objective 3 Train residents as trainers.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING SCHEDULE

Define specific tasks for each objective developed in the strategic planning process. For each task, list the responsible persons, expected start and finish dates, amount of funds, volunteer personnel and other resources allocated to the task.

Objective	Task	Whose Responsibility?	Timeline	Resource Allocation
More residents on board	Create board nominating committee	Board chair	Next meeting: July 13	
	Gather list of potential board members	Nominating committee	Within two weeks of board meeting: July 13–27	
	Contact potential members	Nominating committee	July 27–31	
	Interview potential members	Nominating committee	August 1–12	
	Recommend candidates to board	Nominating committee	August 14: board meeting	
	Select new board members	Board	August 14	
Advisory committee for stakeholders	Create advisory committee	Board	July 13	
	Select potential members	Executive committee	July 20	
	Contact potential members	Executive committee	July 21–August 10	
	Select advisory committee members	Board	August 14	

These two objectives are best achieved within a tight time frame. The board chair created a nominating committee, charged with selecting and interviewing potential resident board members and recommending people for inclusion to the full board. CP’s executive committee acted as nominating committee for a new advisory board.

Strategic Plan

The board's strategic planning committee, assisted by a professional facilitator, evaluated the information gathered through the SWOT analysis. The committee defined its mission, goals and objectives during three working sessions. The resulting plan was written up and approved by the committee and presented to and approved by the board.

Because CP was an organization that represented the entire Sunrise Valley community, the board decided to present the plan at an open meeting in the neighborhood. A preamble was added to the plan, showing the context of the plan to community residents.

Sample Strategic Plan

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN

Preamble

Community Partnership (CP) was created in 1994 to help the Sunrise Valley neighborhood implement its vision for community change.

Over the years CP lost its focus. The organization drifted into operating social service programs — doing *for* the residents rather than helping them do *for themselves*.

CP's board of directors, comprised primarily of residents, unanimously thinks the organization needs to change. Community change can happen in Sunrise Valley and CP should play a useful role in the transformation — but only if it is community-led, community-driven and community-focused.

CP's board adopted a three-year strategic plan as its road map for assisting in the transformation of Sunrise Valley.

Mission

Community Partnership (CP), in equal partnership with the residents of Sunrise Valley, seeks to effect a positive transformation — intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and economically — for all residents and the entire community.

In order to accomplish this, CP will become:

- A community-led, service-oriented, professionally operated organization
- An efficient information and resource clearinghouse
- Sensitive to the difficulty of change for individuals and the community as a whole
- A conduit for connecting community residents to quality information and instruction on topics that can build stronger people and a stronger community

Goals and Objectives

Currently CP is largely a manager of social service programs. That will not be its focus in the future. CP intends to return to its original role as a *catalyst* building *capacity* within the community. The new CP will have four primary functions:

- Collecting and distributing timely, relevant information on resources available to the community. (The CP board envisions that information will be gathered and provided through an efficient and community-responsive use of sophisticated communications technology.)
- Teaching, training and arranging for training of subjects that will restore the fabric of the community, empowering residents to achieve enhanced mental and physical health and eliminate the scourges of drugs and crime. The primary topics for training to address are:
 - Citizenship and participation in the community
 - Leadership development
 - Effective parenting
 - Accessing resources that may increase individual and community income, wealth, skills, opportunities and choices

CP will respond to community demand for training and teaching in other specific topics that contribute to a stronger community.

CP's approach in providing and arranging for teaching and training includes:

- *First*, using quality trainers and teachers available already in Sunrise Valley
- *Second*, finding quality trainers and teachers outside the community
- *Simultaneously*, training community residents on how to instruct, so they can share their knowledge and wisdom with other residents
- *Last*, training and teaching by CP staff only when other resources are not available or do not match community demand
- Monitoring the performance of agencies, including CP, in achieving measurable goals, sharing results with the community and recommending appropriate corrections:
 - CP's monitoring will include annual reappraisals of this three-year strategic plan.
 - CP will create measurable benchmarks for its own performance, and will assist other agencies in establishing clear benchmarks of performance.
 - CP will survey and solicit feedback from program participants.
- Updating community planning, so that:
 - The community and other partners in the transformation of Sunrise Valley have input and control over their destiny.
 - The community and other partners understand their roles and responsibilities within the broader picture.
 - Benchmarks can be established to measure progress and adjust agency, partner and community plans.

Communications

CP will actively seek to increase positive communications with all of its partners in transforming the Sunrise Valley community, including residents, by:

- Prioritizing communications as part of its daily operations — communications from CP about resource availability and progress in achieving community-based goals and communications to CP about resident needs and partner plans and activities

Governance

CP will change its governance structure to better incorporate the views and interests of all stakeholders in the transformation of the community by:

- Changing its board composition to include staff and residents throughout the community
- Creating an advisory board of partners

Program Criteria

CP does not seek to become a permanent institution within Sunrise Valley; rather, CP's ultimate success can be measured by whether the organization has helped to empower the Sunrise Valley community and its residents to achieve their individual and community goals without CP or other institutions.

Correspondingly, CP will not seek to operate a program unless it meets the following criteria:

- The program fills an unmet need within the community.
- The program promotes self-sufficiency among the participants.
- The program is or can become fiscally self-sufficient.
- CP provides a better operational, fiscal and philosophical fit for the program than any other community-based institution.
- The operations and fiscal realities of the program can be accommodated by CP.
- The program is aligned with CP's strategic plan.
- The program has a strong monitoring and evaluation component.

CP staff and board will use these criteria to assess current programs and any new programs that may be available for the Sunrise Valley community.

Strategic Planning SWOT Analysis Worksheets

SELECTING INFORMATION-GATHERING METHODS

Method	# of People Interviewed or Surveyed	Topic or Issue Areas for Research	Who Will Do It?	Date To Be Completed By
Individual Interviews				
Small Group Interviews				
Written Surveys				
External Research				
Internal Research				

INTERNAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ANALYSIS

Summarize the results of your internal SWOT analysis on this worksheet. You should include both internal and external perspectives where appropriate.

	Rank: 5=very good; 3=satisfactory; 1=poor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Admin. Policies and Procedures					
Governance					
Programs and Services					
Fund Raising					
Financial					
Staffing					
Volunteers					
Image					
Facility					
Planning					
Evaluation					

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN — TRENDS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis, summarize the trends affecting your organization's general environment in each category below.

	Trends
Economic	
Legal and Political	
Regional	
Technological	
Demographic	
Competitive	
Social	
Physical	

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN — OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis and the trends on the previous page, summarize the opportunities and threats presented by your organization's general environment in each category below.

	Opportunities	Threats
Economic		
Legal and Political		
Regional		
Technological		
Demographic		
Competitive		
Social		
Physical		

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TARGET POPULATION TRENDS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis, summarize the trends affecting clients, funding sources, and community and regional stakeholders in each category below.

	Clients	Donors	Community and Regional Stakeholders
Demographic (Race, Ethnicity)			
Needs, Wants			
Values, Lifestyles			
Socioeconomic Status			

TARGET POPULATION — OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Using the information gathered in the SWOT analysis and the trends, summarize the opportunities and threats affecting your organization's clients, funding sources, and community and regional stakeholders in each category below.

	Opportunities	Threats
Demographic (Race, Ethnicity)		
Needs, Wants		
Values, Lifestyles		
Socioeconomic Status		

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Summarize the results of the strategic planning sessions by listing organizational goals and the corresponding objectives. Clearly differentiate between *internal* goals (for example, strong fiscal management or a more diverse board of directors) and *external* goals (for example, developing more affordable rental housing or providing job opportunities for neighborhood residents).

Goals	Objectives
Internal Goal 1	Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3
Internal Goal 2	Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3
External Goal 1	Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3
External Goal 2	Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3

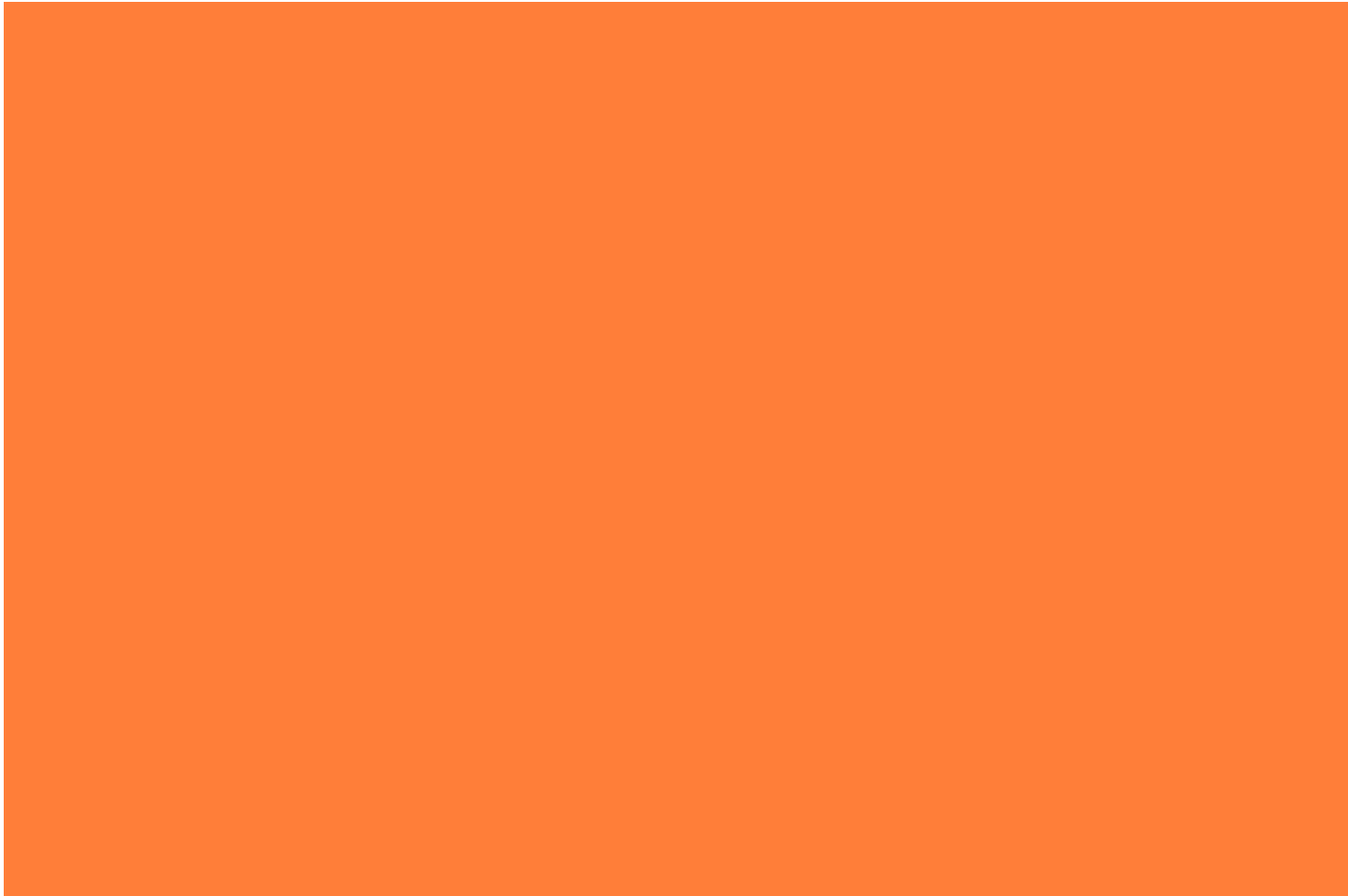
IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING SCHEDULE

Define specific tasks for each objective developed in the strategic planning process. For each task, list the responsible persons, expected start and finish dates, amount of funds, volunteer personnel and other resources allocated to the task.

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Notes

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