ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES
REPORT
FEBRUARY 5, 2019

Submitted by:

Insight Performance Management Group, LLC

Executive Summary

In November 2018, the Town of Chapel Hill management reached out to Insight Performance Management Group, LLC to request an assessment of the strategic planning services conducted by the Town of Chapel Hill management to-date. The following was proposed by the consulting firm as the body and focus of work for the engagement:

- **Phase I:** Initial Consultation and Development of Scope of Work. Included an initial phone call and design of survey questions and the corresponding messages to the Town Council.
- **Phase II:** Evaluation and Assessment of Strategic Plan Progress. Included administering a survey and holding telephone interviews with the Town Council, as well as a review of strategic planning materials provided by the Town staff.
- **Phase III:** Report Development. Includes findings and recommendations.

In Phase I, the intent was to survey and interview members of the Town Council. In December 2018, the consultant partnered with the Town of Chapel Hill staff to develop a 13-item survey to be administered to the Town Council. The intent of the survey was: to assess the Town's perceptions of strategic planning efforts, to gauge effectiveness of setting strategic goals for the Town, and to identify opportunity for improvement with strategic planning services. Additionally, an overview and timeline of the project and an email message for the Town Manager to send to Town Council was provided.

In January 2019, the "Town of Chapel Hill – Strategic Planning Consulting Services Survey" was sent to nine Councilmembers of which all nine responded to the survey. Additionally, interviews took place shortly after each Councilmember responded to the survey. The goal for the interviews was to ask additional questions of the Councilmembers based on their responses. Nine follow-up interviews were completed between January 14 and January 22. A summary of responses to the survey and interview questions are included in this report. Although to protect anonymity, responses are not broken down by individual Councilmembers and no names are attached to the responses.

In addition to the survey and interviews, the consultant reviewed several documents provided by staff. The documents focused on already performed and current strategic planning efforts. A summary of what the consultant reviewed is included in this report.

Summary of Council feedback includes:

- Councilmembers would like clarity in the strategic goals for the Town and have specific measurable goals. Some believe the goals are too vague and could present confusion for other outside entities in terms of what the Town is focusing on e.g., developers may not have a clear understanding of the desired community the Town wants to have
- Councilmembers respect the role of staff but would like additional clarity on the roles of Councilmembers as that may help level-set the Council as many of the members have various tenures on the Council
- Most Councilmembers want to have a mid-level engagement with staff
- The top four goals that emerged (not in order of priority but by vote) are: Goal 6: Environmental Stewardship, Goal 4: Affordable Housing, Goal 2: Economic & Financial Sustainability, and Goal 1: Connected Community.

- Staff should consider how to best tell the story through data and other information so that there is clarity on the interrelationships amongst goals. More use of data and information on the front end and that the Councilmembers can go deep on is desired
- Overall, there is a positive perception of the Town staff and that Council should give staff the room needed to do staff work and strategic planning well
- Additionally, based on a review of responses by the "junior" members of Council i.e., less than 2 years, there seems to be a need for more specificity and engagement on strategic planning. Individuals that have been included in the process for awhile have had a hand in setting the existing strategic goals, whereas, the "junior" members did not as much. And, one individual mentioned they are not as familiar with the processes used in the past. Therefore, they were not able to give insight on past engagements with the Town Council
- As it relates to the review of staff documents, the strategic planning framework is a good start but could be streamlined to identify the differences between a strategic plan and annual action-oriented/tactical workplans at the department and project level. Overall what has been presented to Council looks great, however there are opportunities to improve information presented. Recommendations include, changing actions into strategies, pushing actions to the department annual workplans or strategic business plans, identifying costs to achieve goals and objectives, and aligning measures to be specific to the strategies, goals and/or objectives. An additional recommendation is to revisit the notion of "desired outcomes" which may be confusing for some reviewers.

In general, specific findings included:

- Finding 1: The strategic goal statements may be too vague and not specific or measurable
- Finding 2: The Town Council lacks some clarity on strategic planning, roles and responsibilities
- Finding 3: There does not seem to be a robust environmental scanning methodology that includes information and data from the external/internal environment. Some Councilmembers mentioned they are not clear on the current state of the environment (internal/external) and would like information they can "dive deep" into prior to setting or redefining strategic goals.
- Finding 4: There are too many goal statements
- Finding 5: There were positive perceptions of the process used to set the Affordable Housing goal, however there were opportunities or considerations identified by a few Councilmembers
- Finding 6: The strategic planning framework is sufficient although it can be refined and clarified with a defined time period for which to achieve the "goals."
- Finding 7: The department strategic business plans (Library example) are loaded with information that may make it difficult to assess what should be accomplished and by when

The recommendations were as follow:

- Educate the Council on what is strategic planning and what is the staff recommended process
- Redefine the framework for strategic planning to have clear insight for others on the framework relating to vision, mission, values, goals, objectives, actions that align to best practices
- Incorporate more data and other inputs into the strategic planning process that will help level-set the public and Council on the current state of the environment and the organization

- Create a clear timeline for work and activity on the corporate strategic planning and department strategic planning efforts. Redefine the strategic planning implementation approach so that there are two clear (yet related) timelines for corporate strategic planning and department strategic planning work
- Shift the strategic planning timeline to a June through December timeframe whereby the department strategic plans are created prior to the budget process. Then, after the budget process, right size both the corporate and department plans
- Be very clear on the long-term goals for the Town versus the short-term goals for the Town
- Continue leveraging the public facing performance dashboards to share information as those are a great transparent and accountability way to inform the public on the good work by the Town of Chapel Hill.

Details for the methodology, findings and recommendations are outline in the full staff report.

All-in-all, the Town of Council is on the right track with strategic planning. As a result of previous experiences with strategic planning, the Town Council is open and desires more refined strategic planning approaches. The Town Council has been praise worthy of the staff's efforts but the staff should consider more direct ways to take the Town Council through a formal and well defined process for developing not only the corporate strategic plan but also using information to adequately inform the departments' strategic planning work. By taking the recommendations into consideration and matching up with staff's experiences, the Town of Chapel Hill is well positioned to moving forward efficiently and effectively in its strategic planning efforts.

Survey and Interview Findings

A 13-item survey was administered to the Town Council in early January 2019. Out of the nine potential respondents to the survey, nine individuals responded, which resulted in a 100% response rate. Subsequently, the consultant held a phone interview with each Councilmember. The call with a ninth Councilmember needs to be rescheduled and will hopefully be done by January 26, 2019.

The following summary of results are provided below, and, in some cases, the actual comments are provided to give context to the question.

However, for all individual responses to the questions, please see Appendix A. Note: To protect the individual respondents, responses are not broken down by individual Councilmembers.

1. **How long have you been a member on the Town Council?**

   Responses range from 1 year to 9 years

2. **Selecting a response from the following scale, how well do the draft goals capture the strategic goals for Chapel Hill?**

How well do the draft goals capture the strategic goals for Chapel Hill?

Category	%
Not Sure	
Not well At All	
Somewhat Well	100%
Very Well	

■ % of Town Councilmembers
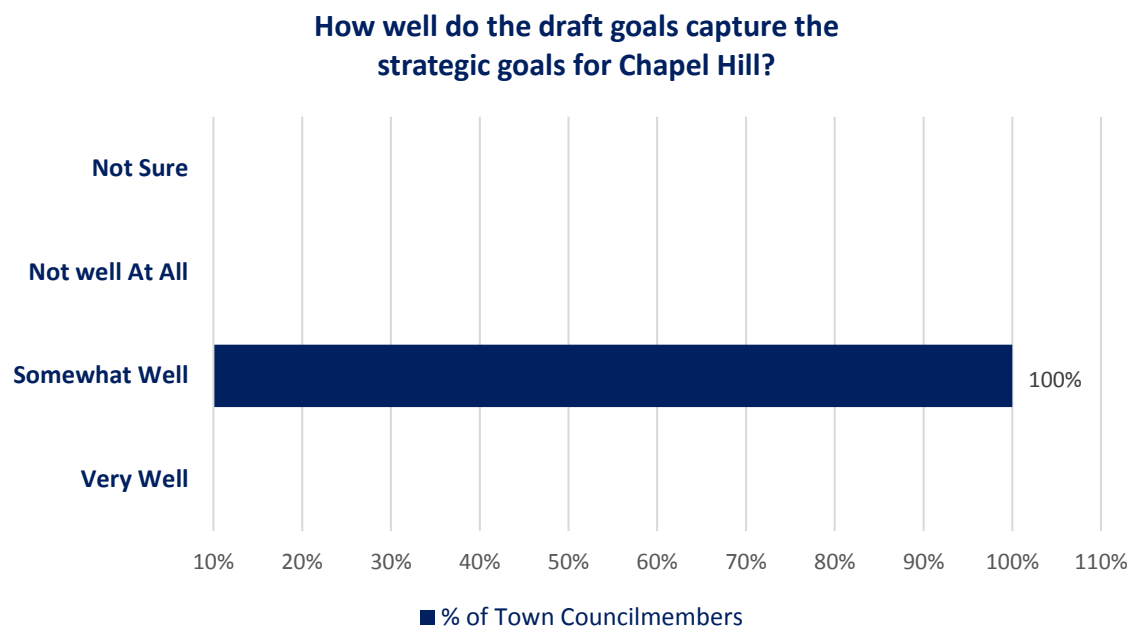
3. **What do you need from a strategic plan?** (See Appendix A for Details)

Overall, Councilmembers indicate they need a vision and a clear path forward. In addition, they need specific and actionable measurable goals. One person mentioned they need a strategic plan that can be "used in a rapidly changing environment". Another person mentioned they want "a clear definition of problems/issues to be addressed and opportunities to be pursued." Another responded mentioned that "the current goals seem more like mission goals or values" and that "it is important to see the short term, mid term and long term actions and measures that would help the town 'live' its mission."

In short, the take-a-way is that the strategic plan should give clear guidance to the Council on the direction of the community, and that the goal statements should be measurable and help the Council have a roadmap of how they will achieve its goals.

4. **What has worked well with the strategic planning goal setting efforts conducted by staff?** (See Appendix A for Details)

Councilmembers who responded mentioned that the staff has done well with getting the Councilmembers together and "getting ideas out on the table" and the information presented by the staff. What was more apparent, is that the Councilmembers like the visualization of data that was provided for the affordable housing exercise. They also liked the work done with the Affordable Housing strategic goal. One Councilperson did mention that they "haven't had much interaction with staff" but this could have been because they have only been on the Council for one year.

5. **What could be done more effectively in the past and future with the strategic planning and goal setting efforts conducted by staff?** (See Appendix A for Details)

Councilmembers stated a few areas that can be done more effectively and included, providing more clear goal statements, clearly articulating what strategic planning is and defining that specifically for the Councilmembers, defining the roles of the Councilmembers, help the Councilmembers get to specific goals and priorities and then prep the Councilmembers in advance of the meetings by giving them information to review and process.

6. **A. In FY2018, the Town Council worked with staff to build a strategic goal, work plan and metrics for affordable housing. Staff communicated that the process was effective in identifying the priorities and goals of the Town Council. Please take a moment to share your thoughts on the approach. The model used to engage the Town Council is believed to be something that can be replicated and used to engage you for the other strategic plan goals. What are your thoughts on that process used for the Affordable Housing strategic goal?** (See Appendix A for Details)
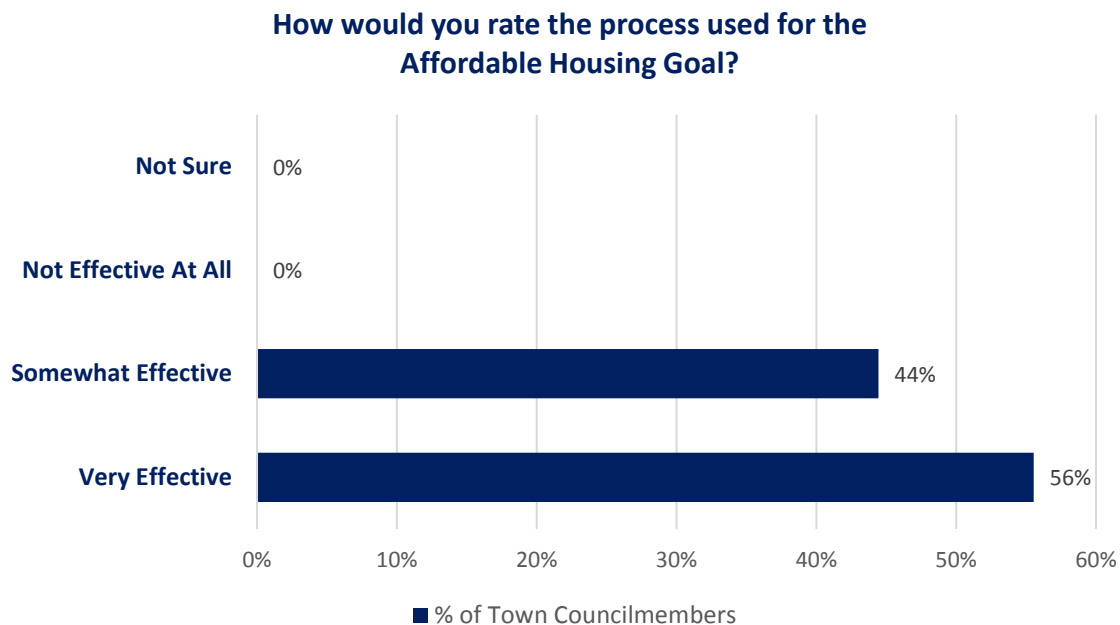
   Responses to this question varied. In short, seven out of the nine Councilmembers indicated the process used was good, and they like the ability to track the metrics and updates through quarterly reports. Two others mentioned there were some challenges with the process as they didn't see Council's ideas incorporated into the model and that the assessment focused on what partners want rather than what the town needs/wants, and that there needs to be more details and a good baseline for how affordable housing will be measured. However, overall, the Councilmembers did seemingly appreciate the efforts and like the process.

   B. Is this a process that could be replicated when identifying and setting strategic goals for the Town of Chapel Hill? Why or why not? (See Appendix A for Details)

   Responses to this question were mixed and mainly focused on the process could be used especially as it relates to the visualization of data and for setting goals, whereas others believed there is not a process that can be replicated exactly. Moreover, some offered opportunities such as "recognize the benefits and limitations of the strategic goals," "focus on a few key issues," and "present comprehensive data." Based on review of the survey responses and follow—up interviews, it seems as if the Councilmembers would appreciate an environmental scan and a heavy/deep dive focus on the data. This work should be on the front end of the process and not on the back-end. One

noticeable comment was the process was used for the Affordable Housing goal and that "[the process] may not work for other goals such as "Collaborative & Innovative Organization." Two other noticeable comments were that "the process could work for the 'Economic & Financial Sustainability' and 'Vibrant and Inclusive Community' and 'climate goals & transportation/connectivity, which are very measurable.'"

C. Selecting a response from the following scale, how would you rate the process used for the Affordable Housing Goal?

How would you rate the process used for the Affordable Housing Goal?

Response	%
Not Sure	0%
Not Effective At All	0%
Somewhat Effective	44%
Very Effective	56%

■ % of Town Councilmembers

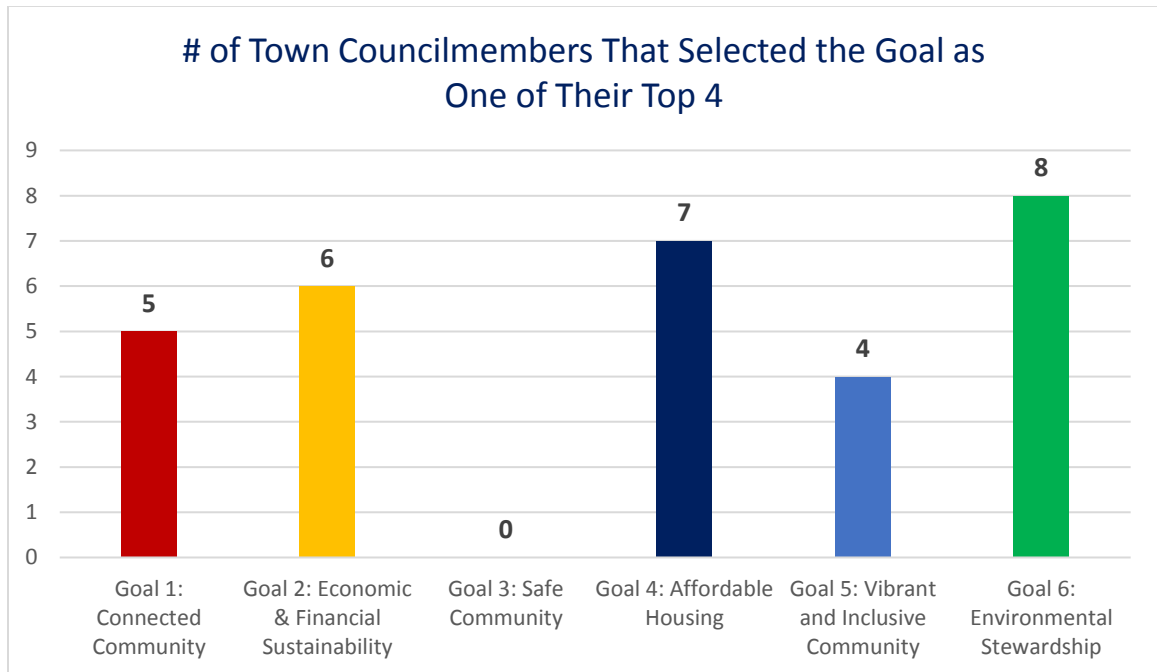Subsequent commentary was provided by individuals who responded to this question:

Very (Combined w/Extremely) Effective

- It is responsive to the desires stated by Council. It is flexible and can adapt to new information. I think it could have been useful if changes were tracked as they were made so Council could see when action was taken on a desired change or request for information.
- Part of increasing access and availability of affordable housing is connecting people to the information. Interested and prospective residents would be well served to have easy, universal direct links to what is or might be available and how they can tap into or inquire about available affordable housing. The website and dashboard is missing such a feature, and affordable housing continues to be shared via word-of-mouth rather than broadcast out in an accessible, universal manner.
- we are all speaking the same language and referring to the same data. We can share the date easily with others. Anyone can refer to the webpage and understand where we are going –
- same reasons as mentioned above. (includes the process worked great and would love to replicate it with other areas)
- I am not sure what process was used to get there, but I am pleased with the result and the way the report is being used as a way to update and report out on progress.

Somewhat Effective

- I like the KPI approach, but it needs to be more comprehensive to show various aspects of the affordable housing issue. I would like to see the trend data, location-enabled data, and the housing issue in connection with other issues like storm water, traffic, public transit, etc.
- We did get everyone in one room talking about affordable housing. Staff seemed to define affordable housing differently from council. When council asked questions, we got some version of "We'll get back to you," but we're still waiting. Council made suggestions, but they weren't subsequently incorporated into the plan.
- I think we are part of the way there, but I'm not willing to say very effective, nor am I willing to stay not at all effective. Probably something in between the two.

7. **As it relates to the existing goal statements, what would you say are the top four goals you want the Town leadership to help you focus on for the next three-years? [Note: There are currently seven goal statements and while all goals are important, the Town leadership will need to focus on at least the top four goals in their efforts to set the three-year strategic plan for the Town of Chapel Hill.]**

# of Town Councilmembers That Selected the Goal as One of Their Top 4

Goal	#
Goal 1: Connected Community	5
Goal 2: Economic & Financial Sustainability	6
Goal 3: Safe Community	0
Goal 4: Affordable Housing	7
Goal 5: Vibrant and Inclusive Community	4
Goal 6: Environmental Stewardship	8

8. **Are there any of the existing draft goal statements that should be refined? If so, which ones and why?**

   General Comments:

   - All need tweaking
   - One of our goals needs to include a statement on community engagement… i.e., applying innovative approaches to increase range of input, achieve better outcomes for the community as a whole
   - Yes! Most of them. They are too vague
   - Respect for others is an expressed aspiration of the Town that runs through the culture of the Town's operations and staff but should be included in the goal of being a "Collaborative & Innovative Organization."
   - I think that all the goals are appealing politically, but they are "squishier" than I would like them to be.
   - I think that we need a coherent theme to connect different goals. The theme should reflect the identity and priorities of Chapel Hill
   - I don't know that any of them are exactly what we need, but perhaps they need to be as broad and amorphous as they are in order to encompass large bodies of work.

   Goal 1: Connected Community

   - Well written, doesn't need much editing
   - Building "connected communities"
   - Traffic monitoring & improvement, bike/pedestrian connectivity, especially in the low income communities

   Goal 2: Economic & Financial Sustainability

   - Needs to be refined
   - I think "financial" and "economic" sustainability are different. Our financial sustainability has to do with balancing the budget, maintaining our credit rating, paying off our debt/not taking on too much debt, and maybe even rebalancing our tax base to have a better residential to commercial ratio. I see these as important goals, certainly, but not requiring the attention of a strategic plan because I trust the Manager and Budget Director to keep us on that path. However "economic sustainability" has to do with building jobs (and the infrastructure necessary to recruit businesses to our town), learning what entrepreneurs want in a business location and providing that, investing in start ups, investing in innovation/technology, etc. I think those are goals that are more complex and worth our focus. I would like to see this goal refined to reflect that.

   Goal 3: Safe Community

   - Add the word "equitable" to this goal

   Goal 4: Affordable Housing

   - Keep at it

Goal 5: Vibrant and Inclusive Community

- A vibrant town and community by improving public spaces and events, bring people of different social, economic, and culture backgrounds together
- Have stronger language than "a place for everyone" that really takes on equity, lgbtq, immigration, income inequality – what does it really mean to be inclusive
- Vibrant and Inclusive Community   To enrich the lives of those who live, work, and visit Chapel Hill by building community and creating a place for everyone.   This is lovely but super fluffy. What does it mean to "enrich" someone's life? What is "building community"? It's buzzword salad. Let's get specific. What do we really want to do? Build connections? Provide opportunities for togetherness?
- Goal 5: Too broad; break it up and fold it into Goals 1, 2, 3 & 4.

## Goal 6: Environmental Stewardship

- Needs to be drastically rewritten to be more specific measurable
- Environmental climate action plan
- Environment and climate response wrt storm water, green spaces and tree protections, protecting the eco- and economic – vulnerability areas/low communities in the new climate environment
- To strategically manage the Town's infrastructure and natural environment by promoting resiliency and sustainability. We should strike the word "promoting" because it means almost nothing. If I even just talk about sustainability, I am promoting it. I had ideas for how to rewrite this in another answer.

Goal 7: Collaborative & Innovative Organization

- I am not crazy about this goal, would be better if we could turn it outward
- Too vague; what does it mean?
- Goal 7 only talks about town being collaborative internally. It should also talk about our collaboration with other organizations.

9. **What are your thoughts on the levels of engagement Town of Chapel Hill staff have had with the Town Council as it relates to strategic planning? Is there anything praise worthy? Are there areas of opportunity for improvement?** (Note: For this question, I have combined question 10 below with the responses here so that the Town staff can see responses to this question by level of engagement.)

10. **Selecting a response from the following scale, what level of engagement would you desire to have with the staff when setting the goals for the Town Council?**

What level of engagement would you desire to have with the staff
when setting the goals for the Town Council?

■ Low Engagement   ■ Mid-Level Engagement   ■ High Engagement
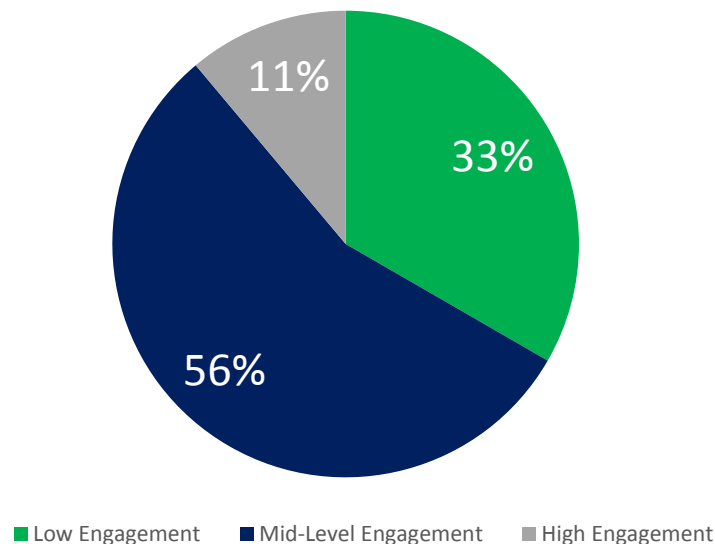
High Engagement: The Town Council sets the mission, vision, goals, and objectives (sub-goals) and staff bring back actions, reporting metrics and budget alignment (3 respondents):

- I think the Town staff tries very hard and is quite responsive. For me the major problems are that the Council simply does not spend sufficient time on this work and that we do not have enough in-depth conversations among ourselves. Even work sessions are not conducive to the real discussions that are necessary for an effective process and good outcomes.
- Culture up to this point seems to be staff will come up with plan. I'm hoping that will change under new town manager. Strategy needs to be defined. Goals are different from strategy. For example, in FLUM exercise, staff seemed to have underlying assumption that all land needs to be developed to produce maximum revenue. But that conflicts with council's goal that people who work here be able to live here. Many jobs in service industry and with our main employers, UNC & UNC Health Care and soon Wegmans, don't pay much.
- Some of our younger members of staff understand metrics and goal setting with visuals very well. They are responsive to Council requests and are very respective when they may not agree with the direction Council is trying to go. Our staff works very hard to carry out the Council vision, but sometimes the Council is not as clear as it should be! We need to make sure that we are looking at big picture views first and not working in isolated boxes. Sometimes zooming out and working back in is a much better long term result. Our Planning Department seems to focus too narrowly. We need to

look at all development proposals from a wholelistic view and not just parcel by parcel. The Council goal is to increase Economic Development, create local jobs and grow businesses that are already here. We need better ways to work with staff and businesses to make that work instead of always putting hurdles in the way. Taking 12 months to get a permit is not going to promote businesses wanting to be in our community. We really need a Climate Action Plan and to get back on track with being an Environmental Leader in our state. We have not devoted the resources to this important issue and our residents are demanding action - this includes stormwater, tree canopy, renewable energies and more.

Mid-Level Engagement: The Town Council sets the mission, vision and goals, and staff bring back the objectives (sub-goals), actions, reporting metrics and budget alignment (5 respondents):

- I think the staff has tried very hard to engage with us, but I'm just not sure we have the expertise in strategic planning that we need in staff who really are not trained in this area specifically. Our previous manager I think just tried to use his usual suspects for every project, so we didn't really get experts to guide the process, with staff working under that person.
- I appreciate that the staff has worked so hard to create a model process in the affordable housing goal that is worth replicating in other goals. I appreciated that the staff came back to Council for feedback along the way on how to shape and mold the dashboard tool.
- I have only had the one retreat so far, so not much to compare.
- I think it is the Council's job to provide clear vision and high-level priorities for the staff and then get out of their way. It is the manager's role to work with each dept. to ensure that there is alignment between the Council's goals and the workplan level activities. I think the housing and community dept has done a very good job of listening to Council's interests and turning that into a clear workplan and timeline with measurable outcomes. I would like to see that happen across departments and I would like the Manager to push back on Council when we change our minds or ask for something that is outside of the priorities we have set.

Low Engagement: The Town Council sets the mission and vision only and staff bring back the goals, objectives, actions, reporting metrics and budget alignment (1 respondent):

- The town staff are very responsive to the Council requests, but I feel the staff can help the Council to better understand the big pictures of the town by having more information opportunities to review/discuss, the overall health/performances of town's operation, a town-wide traffic studies, status of housing situations, businesses and employment, public facilities and infrastructure, storm water and environment issues etc.

11. **If there is a different level of engagement you think the Town Council should have with staff? If so, please specify below.**

    (Selected **High Engagement**):

    - I would like to see council and staff working as partners to come up with strategy and plan to implement. Council members don't have planning expertise, but we know what our constituents are telling us. Staff could be helpful in letting us know what's feasible, tradeoffs and unintended consequences.
    - It is working better under the new manager!

(Selected **Low Engagement**):

- I would like to have a monthly data sessions for the council to better understand the status of the town. It can be organized in a similar way as the Economic development monthly meeting, participation is encouraged but not required. Or we can have a council data and performance committee to follow up with the town staff on the strategic planning and performance monitoring

12. What additional commentary do you have on why you selected the level of engagement you did?
(See Appendix A for Details)

Overall, responses suggested that the Council needs to entrust the work to the staff and that Council should remain at a higher-level or (stay in its lane) allow staff to do the work hired to do.

13. What additional information can you provide that would assist the consultant and the Town leadership in enhancing strategic planning efforts with the Town Council? (See Appendix A for Details)

Overall, responses were good. Some respondents are thankful that the staff did this survey and are happy they were given a chance to respond. Another respondent mentioned that the organization needs to think long term to be successful. Additionally, another respondent recognized the challenges of strategic planning given the turnover on Council. And, finally, one individual recommended to hire outside assistance.

Review of Staff Documents and Findings

A review of staff documents was also conducted as part of the consultant assessment of strategic planning services. Staff provided the following documents for review:

1. Draft Strategic Plan Framework Council Work Session – 1.10.2018

2. Draft Strategic Plan – Source Data 052418

3. FY19 Business Plan – Library – Final

4. FY18Q3 Affordable Housing Qua (1)

Overall, the information included in the documents was well put together. However, there are areas that can be improved upon and that will give the Town Council (maybe the public) and staff clarity on what will be accomplished over a defined time period, which was not readily apparent when reviewing the strategic plan framework and the draft strategic plan.

Document 1: Draft Strategic Plan Framework Council Work Session

- Positive findings include:
  - Defined timeline of work from October 2017 through May 2018. Having this gives individuals clarity on work to be performed. One recommendation is to have staff to develop a similar for a "go forward" timeline
  - The sources of content were good and clear in terms of what inputs were included in the strategic planning work
  - The strategic planning in local government slide is good with detailed information for vision, mission, values, goals, objectives and actions. These do align to what is seen in the best practices' arena
  - The approach to reporting is good and dashboards allow for persons to consume the information in an efficient and timely manner.
- Opportunities include:
  - Be sure to include more inputs into the strategic planning process that include data and analytics, external environmental information that informs the work the organization does, etc. This is key as part of the "go-forward" for staff
  - The implementation approach, while important, is lacking the details that should give someone a specific idea as to how the strategic plan is implemented. There is a connection between the strategic plan and the departmental business plan, but you may want to show the timeline for implementation for: 1. Strategic plan and 2. Departmental business plans (separate implementation timeline but that shows the connection between the "corporate" strategy and the department strategy
  - The process for business planning and alignment to budget can be shifted to a model for June through December (strategic planning timeline with the business plan infrastructure developed) and then use that information to inform the resources needed (to be discussed during the budget process) to execute the business plans. Doing so will link budget specifically to the business plans. As a side note, the business planning approach may need to be less detail rather than more

detail. The detail (i.e., the execution of the business plan) can come after the budget decisions have been made.

Document 2: Draft Strategic Plan Source Data

- Positive findings include:
    - o The document as laid out is well. (Please see the specific recommendations for repackaging the goals, objectives, outcomes, etc.)

Document 3: Public Library Business Plan (Example structure)

- Positive findings include:
    - o The cover page, the mission, values and service pledge
    - o The amount of detail in the business plan
    - o The budget summary information, personnel data and demographics are good. This information is akin to the environmental scanning information that was used to inform the plan development
- Opportunities include:
    - o In the document layout, be very clear on what the long-term goals are for the department and then what the one-year priorities and/or actions are for the department
    - o The level of information in the plan is very detailed and that may be too much for public consumption so that the Town of Chapel Hill will need to determine what is the most pressing information to share. Some organizations have created a detailed document and others have created a public "slimmed down" version of the strategic plan
    - o Reorganize the information to show the linkage between the goals and costs/measures. Maybe consider repackaging information from long-term goals, short-term goals (1-year), objectives, actions, costs, measures, etc.
    - o The project details may be too much for the public consumption. If needed for the department information, that is okay, but if this is the same amount of detail shared with the public, it may be too much

Document 4: Affordable Housing Quarterly Report

- Positive findings include:
    - o The report layout is good from a standpoint of community indicators and specifically
- Opportunities include:
    - o A synthesis of the data and information to help others determine what is the "story" on the information and data presented
    - o There is a lot of detail in the report, which is good, but staff may want to streamline the quarterly report and focus only on the highlights i.e., through an executive summary of information. Doing so will call to the top the most important information or finding for the reader. The more detailed information can remain in the core section of the report for persons that want to consume additional information at their leisure

Document 5: Dashboards: (Goals and Objectives + Affordable Housing Quarterly Report)

- Positive findings include:
    - The dashboards are nice to share the data and information with the consumers of the information
- Opportunities include:
    - The dashboards should be maintained to show current fiscal year information

Recommendations

The following are offered as recommendations for the Town of Chapel Staff to consider:

Finding 1: The strategic goal statements may be too vague and not specific or measurable

Recommendation 1: Based on the consultants' review of the existing goal statements as well as feedback provided by the Town Council, there is opportunity for the existing goal statements to be clarified to read more like measurable goal statements. Two options are offered for staff consideration.

> Option 1: Maintain the existing goal statements but provide clarity in meaning i.e., see some of the suggestions provided by the Town Council. The existing goal statements will remain as the top layer, broad and somewhat aspirational and could be considered Goal Areas of which everything else will fall under to include objectives (sub-level goals that are specific and measurable), strategies, actions (could go into a workplan), and measures. (Consultant supported recommendation)

> Option 2: Re-write the existing goal statements to be specific and measurable. Should only keep as a top layer if the statements are clear. The layers to follow will be strategies, actions (could go into a workplan), and measures.

Finding 2: The Town Council lacks some clarity on strategic planning, roles and responsibilities

Recommendation 1: Based on responses to some survey questions as well as interview questions, there seems to be a lack of clarity on the role of Council. Therefore, it is recommended that staff have specific roles for Council vs. staff. One suggestion is to use the survey responses (and get consensus) on the type of engagement Council wants to have with staff. Although there were only five Councilmembers that wanted mid-level engagement, it is strongly suggested that staff gain some consensus on what all Councilmembers would want for engagement. Doing so will help set the tone for the existing Council and future Council's. One Councilmember suggested that the Town Manager should be very direct with the Council and state, for example, "The Council's role is x and the staff's role is y, you set the vision, mission and goals and let staff figure out the how."

Recommendation 2: Staff should determine the role of the "public" in the strategic planning process. One recommendation is to include the community voice via surveys (lower level of community engagement) and focus groups (higher level of community engagement) to obtain such data. The information will be gathered during an environmental scanning exercise to be performed prior to revising or redefining the Town's strategic goals. The information may also inform the Council on what its strategic goals and priorities should be for the next three to five years. Additionally, there is a recommendation that the data – once received by the public – is segmented by demographic group to allow for greater understanding of individual and group needs. Once the data is analyzed in such format, it should be shared with the Council to enhance understanding of the various community need.

Recommendation 3: A specific definition (perhaps new initiatives or problems you are trying to solve) of strategic planning should be created and shared with the Council. One approach is to leverage the basic strategic planning model (goals, objectives, strategies, measures). The annual execution of the high-level strategic plan can be brought down into annual actions and projects on workplans (Town Manager and Departments). Another approach is to strategically tie the budget to strategic planning and coin the

term "strategic business planning" (goals, objectives, strategies, costs (for a defined time period and what it will take to achieve the goals), and measures). Like the statement above, the information can be included on annual workplans. The latter is more robust and can be more complex but is doable.

Finding 3: There does not seem to be a robust environmental scanning methodology that includes information and data from the external/internal environment. Some Councilmembers mentioned they are not clear on the current state of the environment (internal/external) and would like information they can "dive deep" into prior to setting or redefining strategic goals.

Recommendation 1: Leverage best practices for environmental scanning, synthesize the information gathered and share at a high-level (synthesis format) and/or deep-level with the Council. Note, this exercise should occur prior to setting or refining strategic goals and is important for the Council to understand the current state in the community. The Council wants more time to dive into the information before deciding the direction of the Town. Given the appreciation many of the Councilmembers have for the work staff performs, in addition to "informing" Council on the front end of strategic planning work, it is recommended to continue leveraging dashboards, quarterly reports, etc. to keep the information in front of the Councilmembers. This way, when it is time to determine the strategic goals/priorities for the Council, the information will be readily available for them.

Finding 4: There are too many goal statements

Recommendation 1: After consultant review and feedback from Councilmembers, there is opportunity to shrink the number of goals to no more than five (consultant recommendation). Some Councilmembers mentioned they are confused with the "collaborative and cohesiveness" goal statement. The consultant recommends that this one is removed and is absorbed into the other goal statements as perhaps a sub-level goal. Doing so keeps the collaborative and cohesive nature of work aligned with the specific strategic goals. Additionally, the Safe Community goal statement could be eliminated as it was not: 1. Selected as a top priority by Council 2. If the community is already safe, what is the problem you are trying to solve. Therefore, maybe it rolls off until it needs to be revisited later perhaps in a future planning cycle.

Finding 5: There were positive perceptions of the process used to set the Affordable Housing goal, however there were opportunities or considerations identified by a few Councilmembers

Recommendation 1: Consider the process used for the affordable housing goal, but specifically take into consideration the Town Council's perceptions on the process used as it may not work for all goals. One Councilmember mentioned that while the process used for the Affordable Housing goal was good, there was not really any thought or consideration into how everything will be paid for in the end. They mentioned it seemed as if everyone decided what the Town was going to do but didn't have the funding solidified yet (e.g., bond referendum). Moreover, they mentioned "how do we know we have the right # of housing units to achieve. Did we get information from the public and do we know what the demand is?" Another Councilmember mentioned that focusing on affordable housing is important but that there is an interrelationship amongst all goals (the staff and Council should take a holistic view of all goals and see the relationship amongst the goals), and so staff should identify the theme that the Council should focus on over the next several years.

Finding 6: The strategic planning framework is sufficient although it can be refined and clarified with a defined time period for which to achieve the "goals."

Recommendation 1: After review of the documents provided, the current strategic planning framework includes goals, objectives and actions. The consultant recommends that the actions (tend to be tactical and can be somewhat confusing in strategic planning language) become specific strategies (tend to specify the how something will be achieved but at a broader level) to be used to achieve the objectives, and the actions become the tactical work that is performed (in detail) via annual workplans. This way, the specific details to achieve objectives are kept at a high-level (i.e., strategies) in the larger Town strategic plan but managed at a lower-level (i.e., actions in workplans) in the departments' strategic business plans. Given the 100 proposed actions currently identify in the Town strategic plan, this may be too much to share with the Council, while the strategies can be one to one (if preferred) and based on current assessment i.e., no more than 21 strategies. The goal should be that the Town strategic plan contains your highest level of focus while the details are outlined in annual workplans, etc. With regards to the measures, if possible, staff should tie the outcome measures to each strategy or specific objective. Doing so will help the Councilmembers know exactly what the focus is and how it will be measured. Giving clarity in this area is key.

Recommendation 2: When reviewing the draft strategic plan, the desired outcomes seem to be strategies to support the strategic objective. A few things to consider are 1. Clarify the outcome statements (if staff want to continue with this structure) and make them actionable and measurable, or 2. Eliminate the desired outcomes and determine what strategies should be put in place along with pushing the "desired outcomes" down to the annual action plan level. The Town staff can still report out on the "desired outcomes" but in a different format.

All in all, the strategic objectives need to also be measurable and specific. Some are clearer than others like "develop a public transit model…" but others are not clear like "foster local and regional transit options." What does this really mean and how can you impact or influence "it." More importantly, when specifying any goal/objective/strategic objective statement, given the legal implications on ensuring there is alignment with what the Town says it wants with what the developers respond to, it becomes even more important to be clear in any statement aligned to the strategic plan(s).

Finding 7: The department strategic business plans (Library example) are loaded with information that may make it difficult to assess what should be accomplished and by when

Recommendation 1: Streamline the department strategic business plans to highlight the top most important layer of information the reader needs i.e., goals, objectives, strategies, annual actions, measures and costs. The specific details should be moved to an annual workplan (not the department strategic business plan) that will breakdown the strategic business plans into one year increments of work via the annual workplans. For example, if the Library had a 3-year strategic business plan with the top most layer of information, the annual workplans would then have the details. Consultant: We may need to discuss in person.

Appendix A: Individual Responses

Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, and 13. Other details are included in the body of the report. Note, none of the raw responses were edited for grammar or modified for clarity.

3. What do you need from a strategic plan?

Open-Ended Response

- Set the vision and goals and articulate the steps - and metrics - to achieving them.
- I need the goals not to be so vague that they can encompass everything. For example: "To enrich the lives of those who live, work, and visit Chapel Hill by building community and creating a place for everyone." Any developer with any project can point to "a place for everyone" as proof that they are meeting our strategic goals. I need the goals to have clear deliverables that help us achieve the goals. For example, "To strategically manage the Town's infrastructure and natural environment by promoting resiliency and sustainability." is both vague & virtually impossible to measure. I would much prefer to see it written in a way with more accountability like "aggressively pursue climate action plan goals in order to improve our x by x% by 2022"
- a path forward. a blue print for what we want to achieve and how we are going to get there - and how long it might take us to get there
- Specifics, so we can see whether we are following the plan and moving in the direction we intend to
- I need a strategic plan to offer clear guidance and direction in a rapidly changing environment as it pertains to the natural, physical environment, technological environment and business environment.   I would also like for a strategic plan to express, to the greatest extent possible, the roles and expectations of the Mayor & Council, the staff and the public.   I need a strategic plan to provide a framework for effectively engaging and including underrepresented communities (in regards to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, class) as the Town pursues each of its goals, actions and steps. A framework for assessing the impacts on such communities should also be a part of this framework.
- A fact-based assessment of the situation leading to a clear definition of problems/issues to be addressed and opportunities to be pursued leading to clear goals, measurable objectives and specific actions to achieve the goals/objectives
- A coherent vision of who we are, our values, strengths and weakness. What are the challenges we are facing as a town? What are the resources to help us achieve out goals? And how to set priorities? What are the major changes in the foreseeable future in technology, climate, and demographics ? How are they going to affect our town and how to prepare and position ourselves for these future changes?
- The goals listed above seem more like mission goals or values. A strategic plan would be a list of short term, mid term, and long term actions and measures that would help the town "live" it's mission. The mission is what we want. The strategic plan is how what we want looks and is operationalized.
- I need something that communicates where we want to go and then gives a roadmap of how we plan to get there. Something that includes the how, when and who of our plan, a way to have

accountability and a way to know if we are reaching our goals (and if not, what needs to be modified or changed in order to get back on track).

4. What has worked well with the strategic planning and goal setting efforts conducted by staff?

Open-Ended Response

- I don't have a sense of what has been done by staff. It hasn't been visible to me over the last year. As new Council members, we were presented a draft plan at last year's retreat but we did not have much input into it.
- affordable housing chart/report is the best we have so far. clear goals, clear measurable deliverables, easy to decipher
- Affordable Housing strategic plan, the Connected Communities Plan are good examples of progress that people can understand and refer to. It sets goals and expectations
- Getting all council members to participate
- Getting ideas and goals out on the table has worked well. Council colleagues and I have had no issue expressing our desires and putting them out there as it pertains to strategic planning and goal setting. Staff does a good job of collecting this information and showing this back to us. Staff has also done a good job of following up on some of the strategic goals we've created around affordable housing and transportation via dashboards that track progress on these goals.
- Iterative process. Council concerns responded to.
- Large community involvement and input
- Information gathering and action plans
- The aspirational, communications-oriented language

5. What could be done more effectively in the past and future with the strategic planning and goal setting efforts conducted by staff?

Open-Ended Response

- We need to spend more time on it and dig deeper.
- build in measures and better accountability
- We need a better agreed upon list of priorities and values - the ones we have are vague. The visuals are great and when on the website we can point the public to those places and let them see where we are and where we are going.
- Give us things to think about and respond to ahead of our group discussion, so we come into the meeting prepared with ideas and questions. For instance, recently we were asked to stick game pieces on maps. The resulting maps didn't reflect our best thinking as it was more spur-of-the-moment and favored those with a vision of aggressive development.
- More clearly articulating what a strategic plan is and ensuring everyone is operating with the same understanding can be done more effectively.   More clearly illustrating where each piece of Council feedback on strategic planning and goals go or are funneled to could be done.   We could better articulate what the roles of the different actors are in this process (e.g., staff, Council, consultant) and how it compares, to say, the budgeting process, could be done.
- A more data-driven, fact based approach rather than relying on Council members' perceptions.
- The council should take the public responses as valuable INPUT, a form of raw data, and to formulate its coherent theme and vision. The town staff could help the council to understand how different components of the town system work, present balanced information to show the pros and cons of each initiatives, connections/tradeoffs between different goals, and a cost-effectiveness analysis of different approaches to achieve them.
- Let council create plan and staff operationalize.
- There need to be more tangible goals where we can measure progress; stated outcomes that we are aiming for. We need to get out of the aspirational and down to the planning and implementation level, where we say who, how, how much, and when. We need the staff to embrace accountability for outcomes.

6a. In FY2018, the Town Council worked with staff to build a strategic goal, work plan and metrics for affordable housing. Staff communicated that the process was effective in identifying the priorities and goals of the Town Council. Please take a moment to share your thoughts on the approach. The model used to engage the Town Council is believed to be something that can be replicated and used to engage you for the other strategic plan goals. What are your thoughts on that process used for the Affordable Housing strategic goal?

Open-Ended Response

- Again, I came in when this was already in place but I do like it and is effective in tracking strategies, priorities and progress.
- yes, I think it is working great and would love to replicate it with other areas
- It was very good. We brought the concept back from our Boulder, Co trip. The visuals and 1 page (I know it is more) is very helpful. Staff listened to Council input and added the information Council requested while not making it too busy. We get quarterly updates in the same format and that is very helpful. There are visible metrics that we can see if we are meeting our goals - that is very informative to reality!
- I don't see evidence that staff paid attention to council's ideas. Affordable housing was not defined. Staff came up with seemingly arbitrary numbers of units with no thought to how to pay for them or who would live there or whether that area would be convenient to grocery stores, buses, workplace.
- The process used for the Affordable Housing strategic goal was good. Over the course of time, staff has come back to Council with a prototype dashboard feature for tracking progress and with quarterly reports illustrating how it is used. I feel like staff has done a good job of being responsive to points and questions that Council has raised based off of these reports generated and the different iterations of the dashboard tool. I think the process can be used for other strategic goals, but not all of our other strategic goals. It appears to be somewhat more difficult to use the same process for goals such as: "Collaborative & Innovative Organization." Whereas, the process could be used for goals such as "Economic & Financial Sustainability" and "Vibrant and Inclusive Community."
- There was clear consensus on the need for affordable housing in CH and the need for the Council/Town to address it. The metrics of what is to be achieved were good. However, there was not, in my opinion, a good assessment of the needs by income level nor a good road map for melding the efforts of the Town and our non-profit partners. It relies too much on reacting to what partners want to do rather than what the Town wants/needs to be done.
- "What gets measured gets done, and what gets done gets improved". I am all for using KPI's to set our goals and tracking our performances. I also believe the data need to be comprehensive capturing different aspects of an issue and showing data with location information as well as a trajectory. Here is an example of a comprehensive response on Kansas City downtown issue. https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/state-of-the-downtown-kcmo/dashboardpage-1536332968941-9209508365-532225
- I think the staff was responsive to the desires of council to create a visual tool to share information about affordable housing strategic plan. I think there still needs to be a parallel document with additional detail that the summarized tool can be connected to / refer to.

- I thought it was a bit challenging to get to a place that felt measurable and effective, but I think we got part of the way there. I still think the AH strategic plan lacks some necessary components, but even getting the dashboard with a baseline of where we started and where we currently are is a start. Getting baseline information took a very long time, and it's hard to figure out the rest without having our arms wrapped around the scope.

6b. Is this a process that could be replicated when identifying and setting strategic goals for the Town of Chapel Hill? Why or why not?

Open-Ended Response

- I see this as the workplan level. We need to update and be clear on high level goals and priorities (Council level) and then each dept should have a plan similar to the Housing Dept plan.
- yes. especially for climate goals & transportation/connectivity which are very measurable
- Yes for most of what we do. It helps us decide if we are making effective use of our resources or if the goals are not realistic given our staffing and funding.
- No. Council members spout platitudes that sound good; staff come up with goals they think they can achieve. No one is looking at who is living in town, who needs to live in town, what challenges they face, how can we help overcome those challenges, are we making policy to match what we say our goals are. No way to measure our progress.
- Again, the process could be replicated for identifying and setting strategic goals in some instances and not in others. For goals, where metrics may be hard to capture or assess progress, this process may not be as appropriate for these kind of goals.
- It can, but I believe that we need more data-driven situation analyses up front.
- As I said above, I would like to see the continuation of this effort but would like to see us focus on a few key issues and present comprehensive data to understand the social, economic and environmental aspects of performances.
- I think it can be replicated. I think it is important to identify the benefits and limitations of whatever is created.
- I haven't seen one yet that I'd want to replicate exactly.

12. What additional commentary do you have on why you selected the level of engagement you did?

Open-Ended Response

- I would like to see the Council "stay in its lane" more than I think it currently does. We need to respect the role of the Manager and not micromanage or go beyond providing policy direction.
- I think staff has the expertise necessary for setting objectives that help us achieve our goals. Higher engagement on the part of the Council feels like too many cooks in the kitchen.
- This newer Council has not really wrestled with setting the priorities and goals. We adopted the old ones but now are in a place to have good discussions on what we would like to see. Want to give this Council a chance to set priorities and sub-goals to see what they would like to do.
- The vast majority of staff do not live in town, so they don't have skin in the game when it comes to creating a livable town.
- Unlike Council, town staff is entrusted with the day-to-day operations. Council sets a vision and broad goals. Staff is better equipped to handle the steps of getting Council toward its stated goals because of the day-to-day nature of their work. As staff does this work, I think it is appropriate and needed to keep Council periodically update and to solicit feedback on its work.
- I believe the Council should be setting the mission and vision and have the staff who have professional knowledge to bring back the goals, objectives, and action plans with frequent feedback from the council to see if the development is on track.
- I think staff is in the best position to bring back sub-goals, but council should have ultimate approval/ability to tweak or ask for something different if necessary. Staff will probably know best what they see on the ground, so they should generate most of that work.

13. What additional information can you provide that would assist the consultant and the Town leadership in enhancing strategic planning efforts with the Town Council?

Open-Ended Response

- Be bold!
- this survey is great - let's do more! I like having the opportunity to sit with information, consider it, and reply to it in my own time (with a deadline of course), and for my colleagues to also reflect and weigh in. Most meetings could/should be an email. Any time staff/consultants can use a mechanism like this to get feedback from Council, I would strongly support.
- We need to be thinking long term. There are things that need to be set into place now for the future to be successful. We have opportunities but we also have choices that affect what our community will be and look like in the future. The pressure of growth has forced us to be a reactive government instead of a vision setting government. We have limited land space and what do we want the priorities to be on those spaces as we grow and redevelop - we have to make choices that set us on a path towards economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and affordable sustainability.
- It would be interesting to find out why staff live where they live. Housing staff conducted a focus group with town employees on where they would like to live and what type of housing. But I don't see that the information has been applied to any ideas for housing proposals.
- I think strategic planning has been particularly challenging given the huge turnover on Council in the past three years or so. Given the lack of institutional memory, there is a need for more in depth research and analysis and subsequent discussion by the Council.
- I have background in developing medical outcome studies, survey design and advanced data analysis and modeling. Will be glad to help in any way I can
- We really need an expert to guide the entire process, not town staff. The staff knows their area, but they should not be expected to facilitate and guide strategic planning.