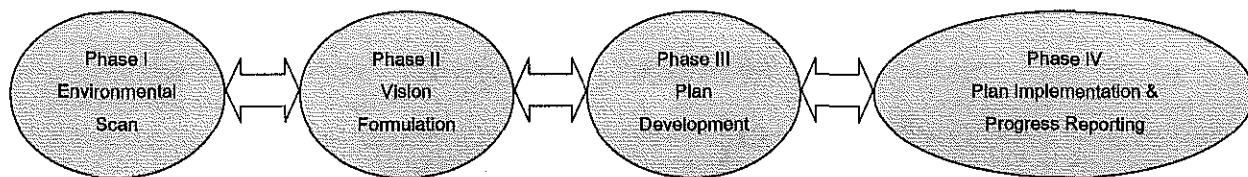


STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is the process by which leaders of an organization determine *what* it intends to be in the future and *how* it will get there. To put it another way, they develop a *vision* for the organization's future and determine the necessary priorities, procedures, and operations (*strategies*) to achieve that vision. Included are measurable goals which are realistic and attainable, but also challenging; emphasis is on long-term goals and strategies, rather than short-term (such as annual) objectives. Strategic planning assumes that certain aspects of the future can be created or influenced by the organization. It requires a cooperative effort between the Commission and staff through the use of a planning committee and commission discussion. The planning process answers:

- What can we do to operate better?
- What can we do to grow?
- How do we deliver on the mission and make a distinctive impact, relative to resources?

The planning process is outlined below:



Phase I – Environmental Scan

An environmental scan (e-scan) is a process for discerning and documenting facts and trends in the operating environment of the organization that are likely to offset the organization in its future work. It is often put in the framework of a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. Strengths are internal characteristics, qualities, and capacities that are doing well and are part of the reason for the organization's accomplishments. Weaknesses are internal qualities that need to be improved.

Opportunities refer to external activities or trends that the organization may benefit from, connect with or take advantage of to grow its performance. Threats are external activities or trends that threaten the current and future success of the organization.

E-scans will consider the following:

- Demographic trends
- Economic trends
- Technological trends
- Potential partners and competitors
- Operating methods
- Perceived performance by stakeholders and citizens
- Financial resources
- Human resources

E-scans will be conducted in the following areas:

- Recreation programs
- Organizational assessment
- Partnerships
- Competitors
- Financial

Phase II – Vision Formulation

The vision statement describes the organization in the future. The mission statement conveys in a compelling way the difference the organization is aiming to make in the world. Core values are fundamental values at the heart of the organization. They hold the organization accountable to itself.

Currently, staff are conducting the e-scans and preparing a vision, mission, and value statement. This information will be provided to the Commission in October. The Commission and staff will utilize this information to prepare action strategies and performance measures at the November Commission meeting.

Phase III – Plan Development

Strategic direction is a statement about the approach the organization will take toward its work over a specific period of time. It is utilized to establish goals and performance measures to achieve the desired outcomes.

A draft of the strategic direction, goals and performance measures will be provided in October for discussion at the November Commission meeting. Following the November Commission meeting, the plan will be revised, if needed, and presented for approval at the December Commission meeting.