# MILWAUKEE RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN











2017-2022



A department of MPS

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#### Introduction

Milwaukee Recreation collaborated with Heller and Heller Consulting, LLC (HHC) to update the Department's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan's intent is to:

- Confirm vision, mission, and values of the Department
- Establish future direction
- Align the organization with a common vision
- Reinforce the culture, demonstrated through values
- Create action toward accomplishment
- Strengthen organizational competencies related to strategic thinking
- Fulfill the requirements for strategic planning, as part of the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)

Leadership staff, managers, and supervisors were engaged in the process, resulting in a meaningful document for the Department. The Department, through its Vision Statement: To be the leading provider of quality and affordable recreation services in the Milwaukee community, will align its efforts around the key words of the statement. These words are repeated throughout this document and form the basis for many of the strategic initiatives.

The Milwaukee Recreation Strategic Plan includes the following areas:



#### Mission, Vision and Values

A good starting point for strategy is a review of mission and vision. Mission statements define the business or purpose of the organization. Vision statements are more aspirational; what do we hope to become?

#### Mission Statement

To enrich and strengthen the community by promoting healthy lifestyles, personal development, and fun through memorable recreational and educational experiences for people of all ages and abilities.

#### **Vision Statement**

To be the leading provider of quality and affordable recreation services in the Milwaukee community.

#### **Values**

The values define how work is done; what it is like working for Milwaukee Recreation. The values will be reinforced in the recruitment and hiring processes, staff orientation, ongoing operations, recognition systems, and the performance appraisal process. Many of the key words included in the list of values will be reinforced in the subsequent strategies. The values include:



Ensuring access to recreation services for all.



Accountability
Taking individual and collective responsibility.



Memorable Experiences
Creating special, distinctive recreation experiences.



Professional Staff
Employing staff who
possesses the core
competencies of the
department.



Quality Service Delivery

Exceeding customer
expectations through
responsive and respectful
service delivery.



Sense of Community
Providing services that
encourage personal
connections and relationships.



#### Collaborations/Partnerships

Fostering and maintaining partnerships with individuals and organizations that benefit the community.

#### **Organizational SWOT**

The process also included a review of organizational SWOT, or strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The information generated by staff included:

## STRENGTHS

- History and legacy of the Department
- Connection to the School District
- Scope of programs
- Financial resources
- Support from upper management
- Human capital resources

# EAKNESSES

- The variety of programming contributes to silos
- A lack of follow up to initial orientation process, or phase two of orientation
- A lack of consistency in holding people accountable
- Internal communication
- Accentuating strengths of employees
- Clarity of our identity
- Use and analysis of data

## PPORTUNITIES

- Increased promotion of our image/ service offerings
- Service level growth...untapped markets
- Earned revenue opportunities
- Programming for Assisted Living facilities
- Programming for preschool aged youth

## HREATS

- Deteriorating infrastructure, both internal and external
- Competing providers of services
- Safety issues
- Changes in trends
- Technology

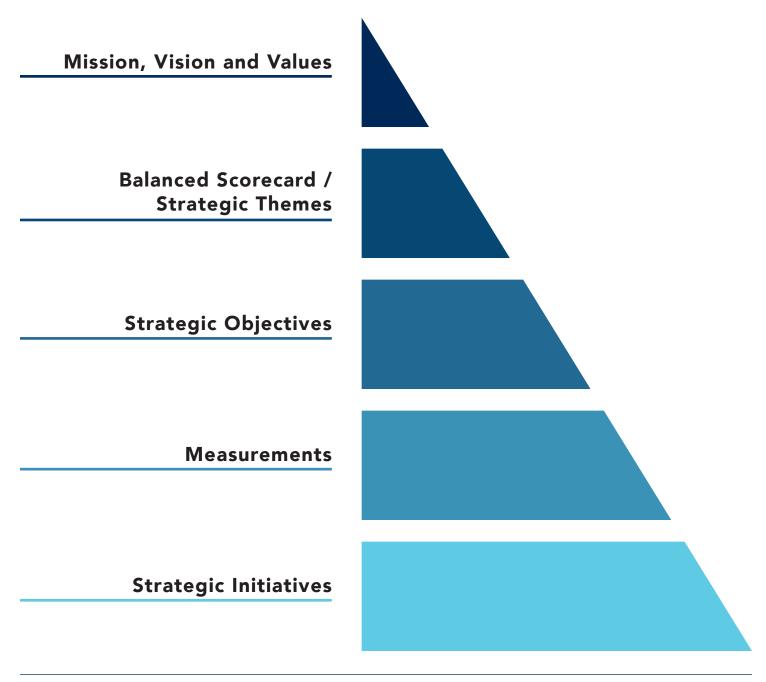
The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are an important element to the development of strategy. These areas were kept in mind in the development of the Department's strategic initiatives.

#### **Strategic Plan Hierarchy**

The Plan includes a hierarchy of elements that starts with the most macro level of strategy and moves to a more micro level (moving from strategic to tactical). The starting point for any strategic planning process is the review of the mission, vision, and values. Upon review, the mission statement remained essentially the same. The vision statement was reviewed and revised and the value statements were shortened to a more manageable list.

Subsequent to the development of mission and vision, strategic themes and objectives were developed. After the themes and objectives, strategic initiatives and tactics to accomplish the initiatives were developed. Each successive element of strategy more specifically details the premise of the four themes.

The Balanced Scorecard hierarchy is presented by the pyramid shown in the following figure.



#### **Balanced Scorecard**

The Department of Recreation and Community Services Strategic Plan is based on the Balanced Scorecard, a strategy framework that emphasizes the cause and effect relationships among distinct yet interrelated perspectives: customer, financial performance, internal support processes, and organizational learning and growth needs. The Scorecard focuses on the key drivers of success that lead to the achievement of mission and vision.

The Balanced Scorecard framework includes four themes:

- Customer: To achieve our mission and vision, how should we appear to our customers?
- Financial: To succeed financially, how should we appear to our taxpayers?
- Internal Business: To satisfy our customers, which business practices must we do extremely well?
- Learning and Growth: To achieve our mission and vision, how will we sustain our ability to change and improve, and develop leaders among the staff?

Descriptions of the theme elements are outlined more specifically below.

#### **Customer: Exceeding Customer Expectations**

- Product/service attributes such as price, programs, quality, availability of services
- Customer relationships
- Service qualities such as access mechanisms, service standards, customer requirements and encounters
- Partnerships

#### Financial: Financial Sustainability

- Revenue growth
- Productivity
- Financial results
- Cost recovery
- Efficiency
- 'Tax versus non-tax revenue percentages

#### **Internal Business: Operational Excellence**

- Operations Management (maintenance practices, program development, park design)
- Customer management processes (support systems and technology)
- Innovation processes
- Regulatory and social processes (safety and environmental)

#### Learning and Growth: Staff Empowerment

- Human capital (workforce competencies)
- Information capital (organizational knowledge)
- Organization capital (culture, work environment, leadership)

Following the development of themes, Strategic Objectives were developed. The objectives are aligned with the themes and demonstrate how the Department will work toward its strategic direction. Objectives are more specific elements of strategy the Department must do well in support of the four Themes listed above.

#### Strategic Objectives

The following section lists the objectives in support of the strategic themes. These definitions were created to ensure common understanding of the intended meaning of the objective. These remain the same from the previous Strategic Plan.

#### **Customer: Exceeding Customer Expectations**

#### **Objective 1 - Create Memorable Experiences**

This objective provides guidelines and practices that create lasting impressions in the minds of customers through the creation of distinctive recreation experiences. This, in turn, results in retention of customers. This objective also includes the development of standards for managing first and last impressions, developing a process for ensuring program quality, which is a Recreation Department value, and continuous improvement to the overall service system.

#### Objective 2 - Customer Accessibility, Including Affordability

The Recreation Department values ensuring access to recreation opportunities and strives to make services as affordable as possible. Strategic initiatives include ensuring geographical balance in core program offerings, developing a consistent visual feel throughout facilities, and identifying cost of service for core programs.

#### Objective 3 - Analyze and Adapt to Changing Community Need

The Milwaukee community is constantly changing and requirements for services change as well. It is the Recreation Department's goal to stay ahead of changes and adapt offerings to different needs of the community. This includes knowing the customer through demographic information, measuring customer satisfaction and continuously asking for customer feedback, and completing a community needs assessment survey.

#### Financial: Financial Sustainability --

#### **Objective 1 - Establish Best Practices**

Financial and organizational accountability result when good processes exist for regular financial reporting, clear policies and controls are in place, and organizational competency is developed for excellence in financial decision making. This also results in the ability of the Recreation Department to adapt to changing financial position and sustain operations.

#### **Objective 2 - Maximize Funding Opportunities**

The Recreation Department will review methods to maximize non-tax funding opportunities. This includes the development of a system-wide approach to garnering alternative revenue opportunities. This also includes reviewing other providers of services for partnering opportunities.

#### Objective 3 - Invest in the Future

The ability to maintain facilities and infrastructure requirements will continue to be a challenge for the Recreation Department. This objective includes the development of a facility/equipment assessment to determine useful life and needs for improvements or replacement. This also includes determining

possible retrenchment of services based on declining interest in a specific program area. This will allow re-prioritization of resources based on greater need in another program or service area.

#### Internal Business Support: Operational Excellence -----

#### **Objective 1 - Create a Borderless Organization**

The ability of Recreation Department staff to communicate effectively across program areas results in efficient internal service as well as excellence in external service. Internal seamlessness and ongoing communication are vitally important and require standard operating procedures to guide staff in working effectively with others. Borderless communication builds teamwork, optimizes organizational systems, and strengthens employee morale. It also effectively integrates the adopted mission, vision, and values throughout the organization.

#### Objective 2 - Strengthen Internal and External Communications

Along with the desire to develop a borderless organization, another opportunity for improved services relates to strengthening both internal and external communication. The Recreation Department desires to create guidelines and processes to improve communication among employees as well as school district staff and other partners and stakeholders.

#### **Objective 3 - Streamline Critical Processes**

Effectively managing critical processes is a significantly important element in achieving operational excellence. Critical processes will be identified and documented. Additionally, this objective includes improvements to the part-time staff hiring process, system-wide approaches to safety, policy and procedure updates, and job description review.

#### Learning and Growth: Staff Empowerment --

#### **Objective 1 - Execute Thinking Differently**

The Recreation Department aspires to having a creative and innovative culture. This requires employee empowerment and a work environment that minimizes fear in trying new ways of offering services. The Recreation Department will work toward optimizing a "bottom-up" philosophy. Additionally, this will require identifying innovation impediments and obstacles to innovation.

#### Objective 2 - Cultivate Personal and Professional Growth

One of the values of Milwaukee Recreation is employing professional staff members who utilize best practice approaches and have awareness of industry trends. As a result, growth and development opportunities are integral toward the achievement of that value. This includes identifying training opportunities, core competencies, and identifying future human resource requirements.

#### Objective 3 - Develop a Work Environment that Promotes Accountability and Ownership

This strategic objective also supports a Recreation Departmental value, the value of accountability. This is accomplished through openness and inclusiveness in decision making. Additionally, the Strategic Plan results in increased accountability for the Recreation Department and requires a champion to oversee the plan's implementation.

#### **Strategy Map**

The following diagram shows the information listed above, the strategic themes and objectives, in a strategy map.



#### Strategic Themes, Initiatives, and Tactics

The following lists the themes, initiatives, and tactics. Initiatives are aligned with the strategic themes and objectives and provide greater specificity of how they will be implemented. In addition, each initiative includes a listing of tactics that are outlined to complete the initiative. The information also includes the relationship of each initiative and tactic to CAPRA criteria.

#### **Exceeding Customer Expectations**

- 1. Research and identify customer market opportunities, using demographic and psychographic information. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 3.4.3 and 10.4, and potentially 10.3 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Create an analysis of projected demographic changes for the next five years. (CAPRA 10.3, 3.4.3)
  - Identify underserved populations in the community. (CAPRA 10.3)
  - Complete a Needs Assessment survey to identify unmet need. (CAPRA 10.4,10.3, 3.4.3)
  - Develop customer profiles for core program areas using psychographic information. (CAPRA 3.4.3)
- 2. Develop a System Wide Service System. (Deliverables should align with the CAPRA 10.6.1 and potentially 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 4.1.6, and 6.1.1 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Create a service quality framework.
    - o Create a cross functional team of employees to oversee the service system. (CAPRA 10.6.1)
    - o Develop customer defined standards and staff adherence to standards. (CAPRA 10.6.1)
    - o Identify key customer requirements for core program areas. (CAPRA 10.6.1, 6.1.1)
    - Create a system wide approach to measuring customer satisfaction. (CAPRA 10.6.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3)
    - Implement a customer loyalty program. (CAPRA 10.6.1)
    - Deliver ongoing customer service training for all staff. (CAPRA 3.4.3)
    - Create a recognition system for excellent service. (CAPRA 4.1.6)

#### Financial Sustainability

- 3. Develop a process to identify, secure and increase alternative revenue to supplement programming. (Deliverables should align with the CAPRA 5.1.4 standard and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Assign responsibility for researching alternative revenue to an individual or team of employees in order to have a strategic approach to alternative revenue. (CAPRA 5.1.4)
  - Create a strategic overview that identifies various forms of alternative revenue such as foundations, corporate sponsorships, and grants. (CAPRA 5.1.4)
  - Establish a work plan of assigned responsibilities, time frames of desired completion, and results. (CAPRA 5.1.4)
  - Track results of efforts with a metric of identifying the percentage of tax vs. non tax revenue. (CAPRA 5.1.4)
- 4. Identify potential funding gaps in three to five-year budget projections. (Deliverables should align with the CAPRA 5.1.1 standard and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Adopt cost recovery goals outlining subsidy levels for core program service categories. (CAPRA 5.1.1)
  - Update current pricing policy with consideration for creating reasonable pricing for exceptions. (CAPRA 5.1.1)

#### **Operational Excellence** -

- 5. Create more cross-departmental and intra-departmental collaboration. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 3.3 and potentially 10.1 and 10.2 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Assess employee satisfaction toward cross departmental collaboration. (CAPRA 3.3)
  - Utilize a cause and effect diagram to identify major causes of barriers. (CAPRA 10.1, 10.2)
  - Identify solutions to minimizing barriers among program areas. (CAPRA 10.1)
  - Implement solutions and reassess employee satisfaction. (CAPRA 10.6.1)
- 6. Improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness through the identification and improvement of critical processes. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 10.1, 10.3 and 10.4, and potentially 3.5, 5.2.2.1 and 7.1.1 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Identify the most critical external customer processes in need of improvement. (CAPRA 10.2, 10.3, 10.4)
  - Provide staff with training on management of process. (CAPRA 10.1.2)
  - Create process improvement teams to work on improving the selected process. (CAPRA 10.5)
  - Evaluate improvement efforts. (CAPRA 10.5)
- 7. Develop methods to recruit and retain quality staff, including part-time staff. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 4.1.2, 4.1.8 and 4.1.13 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Identify turnover rates of key areas. (CAPRA 4.1.2)
  - Develop an exit interview process for part-time, seasonal and full-time staff. (CAPRA 4.1.13)
  - Develop an employee satisfaction measurement system to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses within the working environment. (CAPRA 4.1.2)
  - Calculate the cost of turnover and track as a key metric. (CAPRA 4.1.2)
  - Research market rates of pay for part-time staff and adjust based on market rates. (CAPRA 4.1.8)
- 8. Create a system to measure organizational performance. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 10.3, 10.1, 10.1.1, 10.1.2, 10.2, 1.2, 2.5, 5.3.4 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Create an annual report. (CAPRA 10.1, 10.1.1, 10.1.2, 5.3.4, 5.4, 10.2, 1.2)
  - Measure the strategic plan progress and track on a quarterly basis. (CAPRA 2.5, 10.1, 10.1.1)
  - Develop key performance indicators for the Department and track on a quarterly basis. (CAPRA 10.2, 1.2)
- 9. Develop parameters to ensure there is equity across systems and programs. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 6.3, 6.3.1, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.1.8, 4.1.13 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Use GIS to identify where customers come from and how that distribution relates to where programs are offered. (CAPRA 6.3, 6.3.1, 4.1 through 4. 3)
- 10. Review and refine mission, vision and values. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 1.4 and 1.5 standards and suggested evidence of compliance).

#### **Staff Empowerment**

- 11. Develop an overall approach to career growth, professional development and succession planning. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 4.6.1 and 4.1.3 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Create individual career development plans and complete for full-time staff. (CAPRA 4.6.1)
  - Develop a Departmental leadership training program for all supervisors and aspiring supervisors. (CAPRA 4.1.3, 4.6.1)
  - Develop a continuity plan for senior leadership positions. (CAPRA 4.6.1)
- 12. Develop a plan to ensure that staff have the needed competencies now and for the future. (Deliverables should align with the CAPRA 4.2 in conjunction with 4.3 and 4.6.1 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Create a human resource plan that identifies future competencies. (CAPRA 4.2)
  - Identify core competencies by position level. (CAPRA 4.2, 4.3)
  - Create training opportunities for identified competencies. (CAPRA 4.6.1, 4.2)
- 13. Develop a plan to educate, mentor, coach and reward employees (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 4.1.7 in conjunction with the 4.1.9 standard and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Update the employee manual. (CAPRA 4.1.7)
  - Create an employee recognition program. (CAPRA 4.1.7, 4.1.9)
  - Create formalized job sharing and cross training opportunities. (CAPRA 4.1.7)
  - Provide supervisors with training on mentoring and coaching. (CAPRA 4.1.7)
  - Create a mentorship program. (CAPRA 4.17)
- 14. Develop a program that supports independent thinking and encourages creative action. (Deliverables should align with CAPRA 1.4.2, and potentially the 6.1.2, 9.1.3, 10.1, 10.1.1, and 2.9 standards and suggested evidence of compliance.)
  - Create an in-house training program that provides education about independent thinking and creative action. (CAPRA 1.4.2)
  - Create guidelines for staff that outline the Department's approach to independent thinking and creative action. (CAPRA 1.4.2, 2.9, 6.1.2, 9.1.3)
  - Assess the results of the efforts. (CAPRA 1.4.2, 10.1, 10.1.1)

#### Implementation Guidelines

The following is a listing of suggestions for successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. It represents the commitment and discipline required to integrate the process into daily operations.

- The Plan becomes the guidepost for the Department. When decisions or responses to the community are needed, the Plan becomes the reference point for decision making and whether or not new issues or responses to the community are of higher importance than what's been established as existing direction.
- Strategic Plan information should be included as part of the new employee orientation program.
- Post a summary or shortened version of the Plan on the Website and track results on the site as well. It may also be helpful to print a short summary of the Plan's progress to distribute to interested partners and community members.
- A staff person or team should have responsibility of being the project manager or "champion" of the Plan's implementation to ensure success. This staff person is responsible for monitoring the Plan's progress and works with staff to effectively integrate the Plan with operations.
- A leader will be assigned to manage the process. Each initiative generally requires a team of employees to work on completing the initiative through a cross functional team and is headed by someone who is responsible for the initiative's completion.
- Regular reporting of the Plan's progress should occur. Break the Plan into separate fiscal years and report one year at a time, as an ongoing annual work plan. Each initiative for the year includes a list of tactics that support its completion. The tactics are developed prior to each year for the upcoming list of initiatives. It is the project leader's responsibility to report on his/her initiative, included in a monthly or quarterly report. A suggestion is to input each year's data on a spreadsheet that lists the Themes, Objectives, and Initiatives start date and completion date, and which staff person is responsible for the Initiative's completion.
- At the end of the year, perform an annual review and documentation of the initiatives.
- Update major stakeholders on the Plan's implementation and results on an annual basis.
- Conduct staff meetings on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to review the Plan's progress. The performance appraisal process should reflect the completion of the Strategic Plan Initiatives as an evaluation criterion. Also, performance criteria should be aligned with values of the Department such as innovation, accountability, and excellence.
- Complete an annual just-in-time review of the next year's Initiatives to determine if priorities have changed. This can be included at an annual retreat in which successive years' initiatives are discussed as part of the annual budget process. Initiatives should tie into the budget process.
- Post a chart of each year's initiatives on office walls in administrative areas with a check-off column designating completion as part of a visual management program. Staff meetings should regularly include discussion of strategy. This will help to emphasize the Plan's importance and the Department's commitment to execution.
- After each year of the Plan, the staff should review the Plan's process and re-tool any parts of the process that need improvement.
- If there are ideas for new strategies that arise throughout the year, include them on a written "parking lot" and review them as part of the annual just-in- time review to determine if they supplant any existing initiatives.

#### **Definitions**

The following list of key words describes the definition of the terminology used for the Strategic Plan. They are listed according to how they fall within the hierarchy of strategy, from the most macro to the most micro elements.

**Mission** - describes the business of the organization. The mission also defines the core purpose of the organization and why it exists.

**Vision** - desired future of the organization. The vision should be a "stretch" for the organization, but possible to achieve in approximately five years. It should state a measurable achievement.

**Values** - describes the way the Department operates. Values are meaningful expressions of describing what is important in the way we treat out employees and guests and relates to the internal culture of the organization.

**Balanced Scorecard Perspectives** - the four perspectives include Customer, Financial, Internal Business, and Learning and Growth. The perspectives demonstrate cause and effect relationships in the completion of strategy. All of the Strategic Initiatives are aligned with these perspectives.

**Strategic Themes** - broad brushed, macro-oriented organizational sense of direction that relates to the four Balanced Scorecard perspectives of Customer, Financial, Internal Business, and Learning and Growth.

**Strategic Objectives** - concise statements describing the specific elements an organization must do well in order to execute its strategy.

**Key Performance Indicators** - the indicators are a measurment system that support the Strategic Objectives. The measures are normally quantitative indicators and capture numbers, dollars, percentages, etc. Measures assist the staff with the ability to determine organizational performance.

**Strategic Initiatives** - the specific programs, activities, projects, or actions an organization will undertake in an effort to meet performance targets. The strategic initiatives are detailed with specific tactics or work activities needed to complete the initiative.

**Tactics** - tactics are subordinate to the initiatives and detail the steps necessary to complete an initiative.

# MILWAUKEE RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN: 2017-2022



**EXPECTATIONS EXCEEDING** CUSTOMER

> SUSTAINABILITY FINANCIAL

> **OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

> **EMPOWERMENT** STAFF

opportunities. Tactic 1: Research customer market

- Create an analysis of projected demographic Identify underserved populations in the changes for the next five years.
- Complete a Needs Assessment survey to community. identify unmet need.
- Develop customer profiles for core program areas using psychographic information
- Create a cross functional team of employees to oversee the service system

Tactic 2: Develop a system-wide service system.

- Identify key customer requirements for core Develop customer defined standards and staff adherence to standards.
- program areas. Create a system wise approach to measuring
- customer satisfaction
- Deliver ongoing customer service training Implement a customer loyalty program.
- Create a recognition system for excellent

programming. and increase alternative revenue to supplement Tactic 1: Develop a process to identify, secure

Opportunities Maximize Funding

> Invest in the Future

- Assign responsibility for researching approach to alternative revenue of employees in order to have a strategic alternative revenue to an individual or team
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- Establish a work plan of assigned completion, and results. responsibilities, timeframes of desired
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- Adopt cost recovery goals outlining subsidy
- levels for core program service categories
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Strengthen Internal and External Communication	
Streamline Critical Processes	

intra-departmental collaboration. Tactic 1: Create more cross-departmental and

- Assess employee satisfaction toward cross departmental collaboration.
- Utilize a cause and effect diagram to identify major causes of barriers.
- Identify solutions to minimizing barriers
- Implement solutions and reassess employee

improvement of critical processes effectiveness through the identification and Tactic 2: Improve organization efficiency and

- Identify the most critical external customer
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  Provide staff with training on management
- Create process improvement teams to work on improving the selected process

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Evaluate improvement efforts

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- Measure the strategic plan progress and track on a quarterly basis.
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- Create individual career development plans and complete for full-time staff.
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- Identify core competencies by position level Create training opportunities for identified

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  Provide supervisors with training on
- mentoring and coaching. Create a mentorship program

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where programs are offered Use GIS to identify where customers come from and how that distribution relates to

Tactic 6: Review and refine mission, vision and



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