Assessing the Strategic Plans of Medium Sized Cities in Texas

By

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Abstract

This paper identifies ideal components of strategic plans for local governments and it assesses the extent to which Texas medium sized cities have adhered to the practical ideal type. The ideal components of a strategic plan have been developed through review of scholarly literature. The ideal strategic plan is organized into four categories: Organizational Background, Organizational Assessment, Organizational Needs and Desires and Organizational Future Appearance. Twenty three strategic plans, of an original twenty four mid-sized Texas cities, were assessed in comparison to the ideal strategic plan categories. Only one city did not have a strategic plan.

The cities were selected based on size; twenty four Texas cities had a population over 50,000 but less than 100,000. Population growth in Texas has caused medium sized cities to expand and this was factor in selecting them. A coding sheet was developed to assist the researcher in analysis of each city's strategic plan and descriptive statistics were used to present the data in a manageable form to describe the relationship of plan elements with ideal elements. A summary of the results explains the degree to which medium sized cities have followed the practical ideal type.

The overall assessment of the strategic plans revealed they did not meet the practical ideal type criteria established in the literature. It is noted that many strategic plans contained more than half of the total ideal type criteria and thus received a passing grade. Several elements of the 'Organizational Needs and Desires' category, which included goals, objectives and strategic issues, were present in almost all of the 23 cities.

Internal assessment, a part of the Organizational Assessment, was one of the least present elements in the documents studied in this research.

About the Author

Theodore Kosub is a native Texan, born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. The Author received his Bachelor of Science in Resource and Environmental Studies from Texas State in 2003. Prior to working for Monterey-Salinas Transit, Theodore worked for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in Air Quality Planning and in Water Quality Permitting. He has over 5 years of public service with the State of Texas. Theodore has extensive experience in environmental planning and project management. He aspires to become a city manager. He is an Eagle Scout and member of Pi Alpha Alpha, The National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. Theodore particularly enjoys the natural landscape of central Texas. He also enjoys serving the public through volunteerism and values the preservation of sacred constitutional freedoms.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

"Strategic planning will help you fully uncover your available options, set priorities for them, and define the methods to achieve them" – Robert J. McKain

What kind of document do cities use to plan for the future? Surely, there is a mechanism that enables cities to plot their future course of action. It is a simple question, with a simple answer, a strategic plan. A strategic plan is a document of critical importance, forged of essential components and guided by strategic management. In order to be successful in the dynamic world in which we live, local governments must have a road map for success. This is especially true in an era of increasing complexity and inter-connectivity.

Texas is a state of great prosperity and in the last quarter century has been one of the fastest growing states in the United States. As Table 1.1 shows, Texas population increased from 14 million citizens in 1980 to almost 21 million in 2000.

Table 1.1: Texas Population 1980-2000 (Census 2000)

Year	Population
1980	14,229,191
1990	16,986,335
2000	20,851,826

Cities across the great State of Texas are experiencing record growth and expansion. This is particularly true of medium sized cities as the population spills over from large metropolitan zones. In some instances, a doubling of population has occurred in the space of a few decades. It is important that cities of medium size plan for the future via strategic planning as failing to do so may impact the viability of the entity. For these cities to be successful, they must utilize a strategic plan as a map to their future. Professional application of strategic planning principles in medium sized cities is representative of the general rise of professional public administration in the public sector (Bryson 2004, 16-29; Koteen 1989, 25).

Strategic planning is about being ready for the future and now more than ever cities use strategic tools to get there. As former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld (Rumsfeld, A18) stated, "Think ahead. Don't let day to day operations drive out planning". Cities cannot react to challenges as they appear, they must have a plan for the future.

The planning process produces a physical document; this document is known as a strategic plan. The purpose of a strategic plan is to sharpen an organization's focus, so that all organizational resources are optimally utilized in service of the organization's mission (Allison and Kay 1997, 7). A strategic plan is a prerequisite for a successful local government in this dynamic world. In the simplest terms, strategic planning helps cities control the future (Gordon 2005, 5).

What makes a good strategic plan and what are its components? To what extent, if any, do Texas medium sized cities use elements of an ideal strategic plan? Strategic

planning is a systematic process that entities use to plan for the future. This study explores how Texas cities are controlling their future through strategic planning. The purpose of this research is threefold. First, relevant literature will be reviewed to identify the critical components of a strategic plan. From this research, the ideal standard of a strategic plan will be developed. Second, using the practical ideal type characteristics, strategic plans of Texas' medium sized cities will be assessed against the ideal model. Finally, based on this assessment, recommendations to improve strategic planning in mid-sized Texas cities will be presented.

Chapter Summaries

In the next chapter, the key elements of an ideal strategic plan are developed through a review of scholarly literature. Literature analysis will determine ideal components of strategic plans for cities. The chapter is ordered so that a linkage between the ideal model categories and the literature sources can be seen.

In chapter three, the practical ideal type will be operationalized into measureable elements. The chapter also discusses the data collection method and the statistics used to determine the research findings.

Chapter four discusses the research findings. In the findings, each category of the ideal strategic model is discussed separately and as a whole. Additionally, a summary of the results is developed to assess the extent to which medium sized Texas cities have adhered to the ideal type. Chapter five summarizes the findings in relation to the research question and provides recommendations for improvement.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature associated with strategic planning and identify its ideal elements. This chapter begins with a review and definition of the strategic plan. The chapter will also provide components that scholars consider essential for a solid strategic plan.

Theoretical Framework

The field of strategic planning emerged after World War II in the United States. Mercer (1991, 18) states that strategic planning began in the military and moved into the private sector in the mid-1950s. General Electric adopted strategic planning in the mid 1960's thereby legitimizing its use in the private sector. As the 1960's came to a close, nearly every Fortune 500 company had adopted some form of strategic planning. After gaining acceptance in the private sector, strategic planning moved into the public sector. Gordon (2005, 1) speaks to the movement of strategic planning from the private and military sectors, "The practice of strategic planning grew out of the private sector, where it gained acceptance as a means of identifying strategies for increasing corporate profits and minimizing the impacts of environmental change".

In the post war era, traditional long range planning was faulted for being too internally driven and resulted in a paradigm shift to strategic planning. Robert McNamara was the first prominent government official to utilize strategic planning

rigorously. In the 1960's, as Secretary of Defense, he instilled a strategic planning process in the Department of Defense. Since early 1970s, government leaders have become increasingly interested in strategic planning as the public sector has become more dynamic. In fact, the strategic planning field is so dynamic that Eadie (1983, 447) viewed it as a glimpse of a passing train, "The field of public strategic planning is developing so rapidly that a snapshot is quickly outdated".

At the local government level, strategic planning began to emerge in the 1980s. The public sector had seen the success of the private sector and was anxious to change the traditional method of long range planning, one which focused too heavily on internal dynamics. Funding pressure and shifting resource allocation also increased interest in strategic planning. Berry (1994, 322) asserts that many governors and state agency directors embraced strategic planning processes to better manage agency mission with limited resources.

Texas was one of the first states to require strategic plans at the state level. In 1991, Texas passed HB 2009, which required all state agencies to submit strategic plans every other year[1]. Strategic plans are currently utilized at the local level; however this chapter explores ideal elements of strategic planning found in literature from the last 25 years.

Bryson (2004, 5) gives the best example of why strategic planning has come into favor. He comments "The environment in which public and nonprofit organizations operate have become not only increasingly uncertain in recent years, but also more tightly

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[1] For more information see Sabrina Wadley's 1998 Applied Research Project, *Total Quality Management: Assessing Strategic Plans for Texas State Agencies.*

interconnected; thus changes anywhere in the system reverberates unpredictably- and often chaotically and dangerously- throughout the society". The thought is echoed by Koteen (1989, 25) who states, "Though strategic management is more predominant in the business organizations, more institutions in the public and private nonprofit sector have begin to base their program decisions on planned goals and objectives and show greater concern for their environment and its impact on their future". In the last quarter of a century, changes affecting local governments and the private sector have required that entities engage in strategic planning.

Definition of Strategic Planning

It is necessary to develop a definition of the term strategic plan before the practical ideal type is explored. Bryson (2004, 6) states, "Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it". Strategic planning can also be described as a systematic process. Gordon (2005, 1) states, "Strategic planning prescribes a systematic process that enables a community's leadership to understand the numerous future environments in which the community will exist, establish consensus about how best to achieve its most desired vision, and illuminate the actions that will most likely make that happen". For Allison and Kaye (1997, 1), "strategic planning is a systematic process through which an organization agrees on - and builds commitment among key stakeholders to - priorities which are essential to its mission and responsive to

the operating statement". Although there are many definitions for strategic planning, it can be viewed as a synthesized process by which entities plan for success.

The purpose of strategic planning for Bryson (2004, 8) is to create public value for the individual, group, organization and community. A strategic plan serves to benefit enterprises, policies, programs, projects, services or infrastructures that advance the public interest and the common good at a reasonable cost. Additionally, as noted in the literature, leaving the world a better place for future generations is a primary purpose of strategic planning. This is exemplified by Mercer (1991, 21) who defines the purpose of strategic planning as ". . . a major leadership mechanism for state and local governments to think and act strategically about how they deliver and finance their services, build the state and local economy and improve the quality of life in the coming decades". The author also points out the benefits of strategic planning in a dynamic world. Reaction to policy directives, reduction of federal funds and local fiscal woes are all areas in which strategic planning can help. Strategic planning allows decision makers to view directional alternatives and scenarios (Mercer 1991, 5). Furthermore, Mercer (1991, 18) suggests that a purpose of strategic planning is to provide management with a framework in which decisions can be made that will have an impact on the organization.

Gordon (2005, 5) provides the most succinct definition for the purpose of strategic planning by stating it is to help communities control the future. Finally, Allison and Kaye (1997, 7) comment that purpose of a strategic plan is to sharpen organizational focus, so that all organizational resources are optimally utilized in service of the organization's mission.

The Strategic Plan

The planning process produces a physical document; this document is known as the strategic plan. The time frame of a strategic plan is stated to be between 3 and 10 years. An average of around 5 years for the strategic plan is corroborated by Koteen's (1989, 76) comment that many strategic plans cover a five-year period. The literature suggests that strategic plans should answer basic questions such as, who we are, where we currently stand, where we would like to be, how we will get there and how do we track our progress.

The literature suggests that strategic plans should ideally contain: a vision statement, mission statement and value statement, an environmental assessment of internal and external conditions, objectives and goals, strategic issues, an implementation plan for obtaining goals, and evaluation and feedback periodically to determine how the strategic plan is progressing (Koteen, 1989; Allison and Kaye, 1997; Bryson, 2004; Mercer, 1991; Gordon, 2005; Herndon 2001; Bailey 1989). On these basic tenets, Bailey (1989, 170) comments, "They simply represent a near consensus among those who engage in such planning and write about it". Allison and Kaye (1997, 151) comment, "A strategic plan is simply a document that summarizes why an organization exists, what it is trying to accomplish, and how it will go about doing so". A warning to the strategic planner might be that a tool's effectiveness ultimately depends on how well it is yielded. Strategic planning should be taken seriously; it must be a methodical and holistic process.

Conceptual Framework

The practical ideal type is the conceptual framework that is used in this research. The conceptual framework for this study was developed through a literature review. It also incorporates some elements present in Kim Herndon's Applied Research Project *Assessing Central Texas Local Government Strategic Plans* (2001). The emphasis of local government study is expanded from Kim's central Texas cities to all medium sized Texas cities. Medium size cities were chosen so specific uniformity could be applied to the units of study. For the purpose of this research, medium sized city[2] is defined as a city with a population of 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants.

A review of the literature resulted in selecting four components contained in the ideal model and are organized as follows: Organizational Background, Organizational Assessment, Organizational Needs and Desires and Organizational Future Appearance. The model components identified are an amalgamation of views found in the literature, and are supported by Bryson's (2004, 7) ABCs of Strategic Planning model. Bryson states that his ABCs model is a capsule summary of strategic planning. The A in the model is the current status of the organization. The author has termed this component Organizational Background and Organizational Assessment. The B represents where an entity wants to be and the researcher has termed this component as Organizational Needs and Desires. Finally, C is how to get there. The author has given this component the title of Organizational Future Appearance.

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[2] Other Texas State Applied Research Projects have defined medium-sized differently. Goldberg's 2008 ARP uses the criteria of 25,000-50,000 while Colin Rice's 2009 ARP uses the criteria 25,000-125,000.

The ideal model is also mimicked by Bryson's (2004, 33) strategy cycle flow chart. Mercer (1991, 19) agrees with a similar construction, emphasizing that strategic planning begins with establishing organizational vision, goals and purposes (Organizational Background and Organizational Assessment), followed by formulation of way and strategies to achieve those purposes (Organizational Needs and Desires), and provides direction for implementation of operational or tactical planning (Organizational Future Appearance).

Table 2.1: Model Components in a Strategic Plan

Ideal Type Components	Sources

Organizational Background
• Vision Statement
  - Should be clearly expressed
  - Should be realistic
  - Should be future oriented
  - Should be tangible
• Mission Statement
  - Should be clearly expressed
  - Should define the purpose of the organization
  - Should be inspiring
  - Should explain who the agency serves and what it seeks to accomplish
• Values Statement
  - Should be clearly expressed
  - Should express an entity's fundamental values
  - Should be located near the mission and vision statement
  - Should express a higher standard that an entity strives for
	Allison and Kay 1997
	Bailey 1989
	Bryson 2004
	Bryson and Roering 1988
	Eadie 1983
	Gordon 2005
	Graham and Havlick 1994
	Grant 2005
	Herndon 2001
	Howe 1997
	Jensen 2005
	Koteen 1989
	Koteen 1997
	Mercer 1991
	Sorkin and Ferris 1984

Table 2.1: Model Components in a Strategic Plan - continued

Ideal Type Components	Sources

Organizational Assessment
• External Environmental Assessment
   - Should be clearly expressed
   - SWOT should be present
   - Common external factors such as, economic conditions, legal/regulatory, socio-cultural should be discussed
   - Should develop an overall external picture
• Internal Environmental Assessment
   - Should be clearly expressed
   - A SWOT should be present
   - Common internal factors such as demographic, managerial, technological should be discussed
   - Should develop an overall internal picture
	Allison and Kay 1997
	Bailey 1989
	Bryson 2004
	Bryson and Roering 1988
	Eadie 1983
	·Gordon 2005
	Graham and Havlick 1994
	Grant 2005
	Herndon 2001
	Howe 1997
	Jensen 2005
	Kalman and Cyert 1973
	Koteen 1989
	Koteen 1997
	Kotler and Murphy 1981
	Mercer 1991
	Mintzberg 1994
	Sorkin and Ferris 1984

Organizational Needs and Desires
• Goals
   - Should be clearly expressed
   - Should be related to factors found in the assessment
   - Should be in harmony with the objectives of the organization
   - Should contain sub-parts known as objectives
• Objectives
   - Should be clearly expressed
   - Should be precise
   - Should be measurable
   - Should be subcomponents of a goal
   - Should be time-bound
• Strategic Issues
   - Should be clearly expressed
   - Should comprise fundamental issues confronting the organization
   - Should be prioritized by importance
	Allison and Kay 1997
	Bailey 1989
	Bryson 2004
	Bryson and Roering 1988
	Eadie 1983
	Gordon 2005
	Graham and Havlick 1994
	Grant 2005
	Herndon 2001
	Howe 1997
	Jensen 2005
	Kalman and Cyert 1973
	Koteen 1989
	Koteen 1997
	Kotler and Murphy 1981
	Katsioloudes 2002
	Mercer 1991
	Sorkin and Ferris 1984

Table 2.1: Model Components in a Strategic Plan - continued

Ideal Type Components	Sources

Organizational Future Appearance
• Implementation / Action Plan
  - Should be clearly expressed
  - Should contain specific action steps and relevant details
  - Should contain a timetable, schedule or milestone years
  - Should contain human resource requirements
  - Should contain discussion of financial resources
• Periodic Assessment
  - Should express clearly an allowance for assessment
  - Should contain a specific time table in which assessment can take place
  - Should contain at least one outcome measure
  - Should contain a timeframe for updating the plan
• Feedback from Stakeholders
  - Should clearly allow for feedback
  - Should contain the process by which feedback from stakeholders is accepted
  - Should contain contacts for feedback
	Allison and Kay 1997
	Bailey 1989
	Bryson 2004
	Bryson and Roering 1988
	Eadie 1983
	Freeman 1984
	Gordon 2005
	Graham and Havlick 1994
	Grant 2005
	Herndon 2001
	Howe 1997
	Jensen 2005
	Jackson 2006
	Kalman and Cyert 1973
	Koteen 1989
	Koteen 1997
	Mercer 1991
	Sorkin and Ferris 1984

Organizational Background

'Organizational Background' is the first component of an ideal strategic plan. The literature reviewed suggested that the organizational background component of the strategic plan should include a vision statement, mission statement and value statement (Gordon 2005; Howe 1997; Graham and Havlick 1994; Grant 2005; Sorkin and Ferris

1984). This component is important because it helps to set the tone for the rest of the strategic plan.

Vision Statement

The first element of an ideal strategic plan is a vision statement. The vision statement should be a statement of what success looks like (Allison and Kaye 1997, 12). The vision statement should reflect the goals and objectives of the community and articulate a collective understanding of the ideal situation or an ideal community. The vision statement sets the tone for an idealized outcome of the entity. It is important that the vision statement reflects the community's vision.

Gordon believes that a vision statement should "reflect a certain standard of living, the pleasantness of the environment, or the general vibrancy of the community" (Gordon 2005, 29). Gordon continues that the vision statement is unlikely to change over time as it reflects the ideal of the community and that "it should be broad without being so general as to be common and should be expressive of the ideal without being inane" (Gordon 2005, 30). Koteen (1989, 43) suggests that a vision statement should be realistic, compelling, challenging but somewhat achievable, future-oriented and tangible. Literature suggests that a vision statement must be purposeful, but also realistic in attainment (Gordon 2005; Koteen 1989; Allison and Kaye 1997; Grant 2005; Graham and Havlick 1994). Setting unrealistic vision statements can result in steep disappointment when far-reaching visions are unfulfilled. A vision statement that follows all of the above mentioned suggestions looks like the following:

Alamo Heights will have a vibrant, accessible town center that will serve as a community gathering place. Natural beauty and lush landscapes will continue to be the hallmark of Alamo Heights. Excellence in all things will be a valued principle contributing to the quality of life now and for future generations. High standards of design excellence will promote architectural diversity, and choices which harmonize with the existing character.

City of Alamo Heights

Mission Statement

The mission statement defines the fundamental purpose of an organization. The mission statement is the second portion that must be contained in the organizational background section of the strategic plan. Unlike the vision statement which embodies an ideal community in the future, the mission statement provides a stated purpose for a local government. Mission statements set forth the reason for the organizations existence. Havlick (1994, 4) believes that mission statements are not just another fad in management or strategic planning, they are an essential element. Furthermore, mission statements have been around for most of the twentieth century.

A mission statement should summarize the what, how and why of an organizations work. Mission statements should be concise, but important in setting the course of the strategic plan. Allison and Kaye (1997, 63) suggest that when completed, mission statements should be simple yet powerful and purposeful statements that communicate to both internal and external stakeholders what the organization is all about.

Allison and Kaye (1997, 36) also suggest that a mission statement should contain certain features. They suggest inclusion of principles and beliefs as well as the business, or the main method through which the organization fulfills its purpose. The literature (Howe 1997; Bryson 2004; Allison and Kaye 1997; Jensen 1982; Gordon 2005; Mercer 1991) notes that a mission statement should contain the purpose and ask two main questions: why the does the entity exist and what does it seek to accomplish? Mission statements must energize, stimulate and motivate those who work within a public entity. They must be inspiring to those who are tasked with fulfilling the agency's mission. The following is an example mission statement:

> The mission of the City of San Marcos is to create a strong community, foster a high quality of life, promote neighborhood integrity, support sound community and economic development, conserve and protect the City's natural resources and the environment, and safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the City's residents.
>
>
> City of San Marcos

When an entity's vision statement and mission statement are hand in hand, an organization knows what it is doing, why it is doing it and what it hopes to achieve. Bryson comments on the two components by stating that, "mission, in other words, clarifies an organization's purpose, or why it should be doing what it does; vision clarifies what it should look like and how it should behave as it fulfills its mission" (2004, 102).

Jensen (1982, 158) reminds us that, "mission affects everything to follow, so care must be given to its consideration".

Value Statement

The literature (Gordon 2005; Allison and Kaye 1997; Howe 1997) suggests that a value statement should appear near the mission and vision statement in a strategic plan. A value statement typically reflects a forward-looking viewpoint and suggests the culture of an entity. It might represent concepts such as; integrity, excellence, dignity, fairness, accountability or empowerment. The value statement highlights the important connection between the nature of the organization's work and the inspiration which guides the individuals involved. As Bryson (2004, 116) noted, "...when an organization understands its philosophy and core values, it can more easily refuse any proposals or actions likely to damage its integrity and recognize and accept those that maintain or enhance its integrity".

A value statement is a high standard which an entity strives for. Howe offers a simple definition in saying that value statements describe the actions which are the living enactment of fundamental values held by a majority of individuals within an organization (1997, 57). One should expect to find a value statement near the beginning of a strategic plan, in the same general area as the vision and mission statement (Allison and Kaye 1997, 62). An ideal value statement would look like the following:

The City of Santa Cruz holds the values of integrity, credibility, dignity, reliability, professionalism, kindness, openness, cooperation, fairness, responsiveness, helpfulness and friendliness to be of utmost importance in our everyday actions both as a city and as individual employees. We hold these values equally important in our dealings with each other as well as in our dealings with those outside the city.

SANTA CRUZ   City of Santa Cruz

Organizational Assessment

An 'Organizational Assessment' is the second component found in an ideal strategic plan. The organizational assessment contains an analysis of the entire environment within and around a local government. Bryson (2004, 123), states that "to respond effectively to changes in their environments, public and non-profit organizations must understand the internal and external contexts within which they find themselves so that they can develop effective strategies to link these two contexts in such a way that public value is created."

Often a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats (SWOT) analysis is provided in this section of a strategic plan. Mercer (1991, 40) notes that the purpose of an assessment, "is to identify select issues that are pivotal to the community's future and trends that represent both opportunities and constraints" (Mercer 1991, 40). Allison and Kaye suggest that each letter of the SWOT analysis has specific questions that they answer. The S asks what we do well. The W asks where can we improve and the O asks what changes are taking place in our environment that might allow us to better achieve

our mission. The T is noted as asking what changes in the environment do we need to guard against or prepare for in doing our work (Allison and Kaye 1997, 74). An SWOT analysis refers to data, past, present and future, that provides a base for pursuing the strategic planning process. Steiner (1979, 144) points out that another name for the analysis tool utilized here is the WOTS-UP model. It stands for weaknesses, opportunities, threats and strengths. This is an important fact to mention because SWOT and WOTS-UP are synonymous.

External Environmental Assessment

An external environmental assessment provides information on the strengths and weaknesses of the organization in relation to the opportunities and challenges it faces. The external assessment differs from an internal assessment in that it looks at opportunities and threats and asks questions such as where does an agency have room to improve service or expand. Who can it partner with? Who is a threat to the entity? Such questions are answered by the external environmental assessment. Mercer says, "Assessments of the external environment and the identification and evaluation of significant trends provide valuable input in determining just how realistic the goals and objectives selected by an organization may be" (Mercer 1991, 43).

Assessment of the external environment is important because the world in which we live is interconnected, as entities do not exist within a vacuum. Gordon (2005, 32) mentions that strategic planners should look outside of their jurisdiction and consider factors in the surrounding areas. A review of the literature (Bailey 1989, Eadie 1983;

Mintzberg 1994; Gordon 2005; Mercer 1991; Steiner 1979) suggested that common factors relating to external environmental assessments are economic, financial, demographic, technological, legal/regulatory, socio-cultural, competitive, managerial and physical. As the world becomes increasing complex, entities have become more dependent on each other. A state level decision can easily affect a local government, just as a local government decision can greatly influence a non-profit organization. As Bryson (2004, 5) noted, "Distinctions in policy areas are hard to maintain . . . the boundaries between public, nonprofit and private have eroded".

A local government's strategic plan must have an adequate assessment of the external environment. An external environmental assessment prepares the entity for changes that may affect it. Allison and Kaye (1997, 14) suggest that the assessment phase is important because the product is an understanding of the critical issues, which demand a response from the organization, as well as the most important issues that the organization must deal with and a database of concrete information that will support selection of future priorities and strategies. Simply put, the external assessment is everything which affects the organization and is occurring outside of the local entity.

Internal Environmental Assessment

The second type of environment assessment is the internal assessment. It seeks to find out what is going on within an organization. It examines the strengths and weaknesses within an organization. What level of education do employees have? How many people will retire this year? How is our service delivery within the community?

Mercer (1991, 53) comments, "All functional and operating areas of government are potential subjects of internal analysis". This part of an environmental assessment should ask questions about adequate human, physical and financial resources. Often entities are able to get a clearer picture of the internal environment because internal elements are easier to quantify and see. Allison and Kaye (1997, 80) mention that internal environmental assessments are important because assessment is not just about finding weaknesses, it is also about nurturing what is going right internally. A strategic plan needs a clear assessment of the internal and external environment. This is important because both internal and external analyses of the organization's environment are equally important (Katsioloudes 2002, 107).

Organizational Needs and Desires

The 'Organizational Needs and Desires' component is a vision of success, one that seeks to improve effectiveness. Once an entity has identified important issues that it faces, it is able to move forward with goals and objectives formulation. It is also able to identify core strategic issues. Koteen (1989, 121) notes, when strategic goals work, they are the keys to excellence and success. Strategic goals ensure that changes necessary to achieve the greatest results with available resources are accomplished. Strategic issues are directives which are imperative to an organizations proper function.

Goals & Objectives

An ideal strategic plan has clearly articulated goals and objectives (Allison and Kaye 1997; Eadie 1983; Bryson and Roering 1998; Grant 2005). The goals in the strategic plan are taken from the environmental assessment. The environmental assessment sets forth areas which require improvement through goals. A goal is a "desired outcome statement that guides a program or management function" (Allison and Kaye 1997, 102). An objective is a precise, measurable, time phased result that supports the achievement of a goal. Generally, a goal is a broad statement while objectives tend to be more specific. Goals are designed to address the expected opportunities and take maximum advantage of them while the organization resolves or minimizes any threats before they arrive.

Goals are important because they set a direction for an entity. They are usually long-term issues. According to Mercer (1991, 120), they provide a critical point of departure for an organization's program management system. Gordon's view is that, "goals are usually general statements of where the community wants to be at some point in the future" (Gordon 2005, 38). Specific mention of goals in the strategic plan helps to assure that they are treated with high importance. Bailey (1989, 168) states, "Public-sector policy making lacks a unifying criterion in goal setting like profitability in the private sector". He observes that setting goals is one of the critical aspects in strategic planning for public-sector policy makers. Bryson (2004, 218) believes that goals and strategies can be used for development of a full-blown vision of success.

Objectives are subcomponents of goals and follow goal statements. Achievement of a goal is often operationalized through several specific objectives. There is no set number of objectives; the number of objectives often depends on the goal. Objectives provide the specific attendant to concepts alluded to in a goal. For this reason, they are generally less encompassing than a goal. Allison and Kaye point out that, "all objectives should be precise, measurable and time-phased" (Allison and Kaye 1997, 135). Objectives may be broken down into two categories, outcome objectives and process objectives. Outcome objectives contain phrases such as: to increase, to decrease, and to improve. Process objectives typically contain phrases such as: to develop, to establish, and to conduct (Allison and Kaye 1997, 133). Objectives should be measurable (Gordon 2005, 40). Measurements are often included in the objective list. They encompass items like percentages, quantities and dates. Most objectives are easy to quantify or measure, but some objectives are illusive, such as the concept of enhancing community pride. An example of goals and objectives from the city of Lewisville Texas:

Goal: Provide a community where citizens and visitors are safe and secure

Objectives:
A. Ensure emergency preparedness, prevention, and timely response
B. Reduce crime rates against persons and property and prosecute criminal activity as effectively as possible
C. Match growth in FD or PD service demand and standards with appropriate staffing levels
D. Provide crisis assistance programming to victims of crime or property loss
E. Elevate the City ISO rating to below 4
F. Develop strong partnerships between Lewisville citizens (including our ETJ) and our Public Safety Departments
G. Plan for community disaster events
H. Ensure high compliance with community health and safety standards/ordinances

LEWISVILLE City of Lewisville


Strategic Issues

Bryson mentions strategic issues are important issues that must be addressed in a strategic plan. Strategic issues are fundamental challenges which confront an organization. He defines strategic issues as, "fundamental policy questions of critical challenges affecting the organization's mandates, mission, values, product or service level and mix, clients, users or payers, cost, financing structure, process and management" (Bryson 2004, 42). According to Bryson, the first element of a strategic issue is a succinct description of an issue that is a fundamental challenge confronting an entity. Fundamental challenges might involve protecting public safety, adding infrastructure or obtaining funding for city services. Literature also notes the importance of prioritization of strategic issues (Allison and Kaye, 1997; Bryson, 2004; Mercer, 1991; Gordon, 2005). Allison and Kaye (1997, 143) point out the need for strategic budgeting or prioritization. Mercer (1991, 101) notes of strategic issues, "Strategic planning is not effective until it is tied into the operational planning process". The setting of goals and objectives as well as identifying strategic issues can accomplish three things according to Mercer; the selection of the specific situation to change, definition of the direction and emphasis of change, and the setting of priorities (Mercer 1991, 121). An example of a strategic issue taken from Texas City would be:

Strategic Issue 2:

Priority – High
Timeframe: Long-term

Provide and maintain a safe environment for residents, businesses, and visitors through the use of local law enforcement.
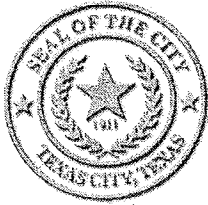
City of Texas City

Organizational Future Appearance

This is the section of a strategic plan where the how and when questions are answered. The 'Organizational Future Appearance' section of a strategic plan puts together the first three sections by stating how we will use the information we have collected to get to where we want to be. The future of an organization depends on how solutions are applied, to which Bryson offers, "developing effective programs, projects, projects action plans, budgets and implementation processes will bring life to the strategies and create more tangible value for the organization and its stakeholders as mandates are then met and the mission fulfilled" (Bryson 2004, 238). Components found in this section of a strategic plan enable entities to meet their mission and objectives.

Implementation or Action Plan

Creating a plan of what is important to a local government is not enough; entities must have implementation or action plan statements. Once a local entity has determined what goals, objectives and strategic issues are important, it needs to plan on how to go

about achieving them. This stage of the plan enables the entity to obtain the desired future outcome. At this stage, the strategic plan must contain specific actions that will enable the accomplishment of items identified in the organizational needs and desires section of the plan. Koteen (1989, 159) states that an action plan must have a series of steps that are specific segments of the work or activity. Essentially the action plan answers; what work is to be done, who is to do it, when is the work to be completed, how much will it cost and where the money will come from.

According to Bryson, the action plans should contain schedules, specific action steps and relevant details, resource requirements and milestones (Bryson 2004, 50). The action plan should detail specific strategies, which help accomplish objectives laid out earlier in the plan. The how, when and at what expense should be inserted into this section of the strategic plan. Specific discussions of human resource and financial resource requirements are important elements of the implementation plan. Entities must know who is required for an undertaking and how much the activity is going to cost. Eadie (1983, 159) refers to the implementation plan section of the strategic plan as the key accomplishment section, "this segment should identify what is really going to happen to attain the improved conditions...these should be the kinds of accomplishments that are recognizable when they happen."

Koteen (1989, 126) cautions that a major problem with strategic plans is that they are often carefully crafted with good intentions, but organizations are not prepared to implement them (Koteen 1989, 126). Critics (Koteen 1989, Gordon 2005; Allison and Kaye 1997) are apt to call these types of strategic plans 'paper tigers'. Koteen (1989,

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127), suggests that a strategic plan contain three elements for implementation: designation of initiative coordinator, multi-year funding requirements (if needed) and program modification or development (if indicated).

(Implementation plan example: see appendix A)

Assessment and Feedback

It is important to assess the previous strategic plan's progress and measure stated goals. It is also important to gain feedback from stakeholders and members within an organization during and after the strategic plan has been formulated. The presence of assessment and feedback mechanisms in a strategic plan allow for greater effectiveness of the plan.

Assessment

Assessment helps to determine how an entity progressed from a previous strategic plan. Since strategic plans are long-term documents, the literature suggests that they should be periodically re-evaluated (Allison and Kaye, 1997; Bryson, 2004; Gordon, 2005). Bryson (2004, 50), suggests that performance management, "enables stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan and enables manages to evaluate performance of individuals and agencies tasked with accomplishing the tactics and objectives of the strategic plan." Ultimately, a strategic plan is designed for all stakeholders that are in some way influenced by the local entity. Some entities provide a scorecard of previous progress toward goals and objectives, highlighting their progress from previous strategic plan objectives.

It is important for an entity to monitor performance so they can improve weak points in their strategic planning process moving forward. This is facilitated through incorporation of a time table or specific time frame for strategic plan updating. An organization must also know what has been planned on paper verses what has actually occurred since the plan was put into action. Of this, Koteen (1989, 206) comments, "...monitoring performance is defined as determining actual verses planned performance."

Allison and Kaye (1997, 90), believe that program evaluation or assessment can be boiled down to four questions that assess the progress of each program found in the strategic plan. The four elements of "program evaluation" are collectively known as impact measures. Impact measures have been derived from the literature review (Bryson 2004; Allison and Kaye; Herndon 2001; Gordon 2004).

The first impact measure, known as an outcome measure, speaks to the cost of the program. It asks what staff qualifications are required and what physical elements provide success. "Outcome measures provide local governments with quantifiable examples of how well an organization is at achieving objectives" (Herndon 2001, 28). She asserts outcome measures are indicators used to assess the future progress of the strategic plan. Known as an output measure, the second impact measure assesses implementation. In terms of numbers or percentages it gages the success of an entity in conducting the activities it planned. The third impact measure assesses the outcomes and asks if the goals of the program have been met. It is known as an efficiency measure. Finally, the last impact measure, explanatory measure, asks what the broader impact of

the program has been. It seeks to determine what consequences, both intended and unintended have occurred. Gordon comments of these measures, ". . . they can be used to help make decisions about whether constituent services are being provided in the most effective and efficient manner" (Gordon 2005, 50). This chart gives examples of the impact measures:

Table 2.2 Impact Measures

<u>Strategy</u>: Hire 25 firefighters to provide timely fire protection in the city

Outcome Measure	The amount of time it took in minutes to respond to the fire.
Output Measure	The number of firefighters hired.
Efficiency Measure	The cost per firefighter.
Explanatory Measure	The average firefighter response after hiring 25 firefighters. Improved response time based on the additional 25 firefighters.

Bailey mentions the importance of assessment in the strategic planning process. He mentions that the final stage of the strategic plan is used receive feedback, "since a strategic plan is broadly written, its impact must be assessed in broad terms- almost a societal audit" (1989, 170). The strategic plan is a living document so it is essential that they are periodically updated and reevaluated (Allison and Kay 1997; Bryson 2004; Gordon 2005; Howe 1997). Sometimes communities are too busy muddling through day to day operations to reevaluate the existing strategic plan. On this topic Gordon (2005, 62), believes many communities address this problem by including a schedule for review, updating and re-planning in the strategic plan.

Feedback

It is necessary for stakeholders to feel that they are considered when a strategic plan is created or updated because their exclusion could spell trouble for city staff, the strategic plan or the community. The personnel contacts for feedback concerning the strategic plan must be contained within the document. Strategic planning often engages stakeholder feedback at the onset, however it is important continue after a plan is developed as well. Allison and Kaye (1997, 35) note that when a strategic plan is community-based and contains involvement from stakeholders, it will make for a better plan. A process must also be in place for feedback. Stakeholders must know how to participate in the process. Mercer (1991, 140) offers one final thought on the last stage of the strategic planning process. He offers advice that the final step is by no means the only point of implementation, emphasizing implementation must be considered throughout the planning process as the strategic plan is a dynamic tool. A simple feedback tool found via the City of Seaside's website might look like this:

2005 Strategic Plan Feedback

Give Us Your Thoughts & Ideas. Read our Strategic Plan and tell us what you think. Select this link to download the 2005 Strategic Plan

Your comments and opinions are very important to the City of Seaside. We read every message received. However, due to a high volume of comments, we are unable to provide a personal response to each message. Please be assured we appreciate you taking the time to provide feedback on our Draft Strategic Plan. Please leave us your comments in the form below.

City of Seaside

Conclusion

The literature offers an ideal construct for the strategic plan. The amalgamation is made up of four main components, each serving to link specific elements of the strategic plan. The elements found under the component categories can be further broken down into sub-elements which are essential to the specific element. The organizational background component section contains the elements of a vision statement, mission statement and value statement. The organizational assessment component contains the elements internal and external environmental assessment. The organizational needs and desires component section contains the elements of objectives, goals and strategic issues. The final section of the ideal strategic plan, the organizational future appearance component is comprised of; implementation or action plans to obtain goals and assessment and feedback. Knowing what makes an ideal strategic plan is important to the research community because as Babbie (2004, 5) says, "The basis of knowledge is agreement." With agreement on the ideal standard, strategic plans can become more effective.

The components that this researcher has arranged into four distinct components represent the ideal type. As Shields comments, "Practical ideal types can be viewed as standards or points of reference" (1998, 215). Ideal types are not fixed, but the literature has shaped the fundamentals of what the author of this ARP considers the ideal-type strategic plan.

Chapter 3
Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to assess strategic plans in Texas medium sized cities. The four components of the practical ideal model, developed for the strategic plan, are used to direct data collection during the assessment of medium sized Texas cities' strategic plans. This chapter discusses the data collection methods and the statistics used to ascertain the findings of research.

Methodology

The research technique used in this study is content analysis of existing city documents. Content analysis was chosen because it allows for assessment of each strategic plan. Content analysis makes it possible to assess how medium sized Texas cities' strategic plans compare to the ideal model developed from the review of literature.

This method presents the researcher with the most economic way, in terms of time and money, to identify essential elements of strategic plans of the subject cities (Babbie 2004, 323). The research technique is also repeatable, if the researcher makes a mistake; it is easy to repeat the process. It is also preferable because the information comes directly from the city and is the same information available to the average citizen. Finally, for the purpose of this research, content analysis of existing documents is more reliable than other methods (Babbie 2004, 324).

Content analysis is the preferred tool, although content analysis does have its limitations. Babbie (2004, 324) states that content analysis is limited to recorded communications. This means that data must be recorded or written to be analyzed. If strategic plans are not written, they cannot be analyzed. Content analysis is also a purely descriptive method. It can describe what is there, but it may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern (what but not why).

Sample

Twenty four Texas cities were contacted in person or via the internet to obtain copies of their strategic plans. Plans for: Midland, Odessa, Denton, College Station, Baytown, Bryan, Sugar Land, Longview, Round Rock, Victoria, Harlingen, Temple and Flower Mound were found on city websites. Strategic plans for: San Angelo, Killen, Tyler, Lewisville, The Woodlands, Richardson, McKinney, Galveston and Missouri City were emailed from city staff to the researcher. The City of Port Arthur mailed a copy of their plan to the researcher. North Richland Hills did not have a strategic plan. Table 3.1 summarizes descriptive information for each city in this research and the location of each city can be found on a map[3] in Appendix E.

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[3] The researcher has constructed a map similar to one found in Micah Grau's 2008 ARP, *Using a Model Municipal Performance Measurement System to Assess Mid-size Texas Cities' Systems.* The map found in this study has one additional entry, The Woodlands Township.
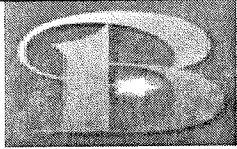
Table 3.1: City Description

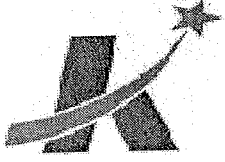| Entity Name	City Logo	Census 2000 Population	Date of Incorporation	Form of Government	Interesting Fact
Baytown		66,430	1948	Council-Manager	First off shore drilling in the state of Texas took place in 1916.
Bryan		65,660	1871	Council-Manager	The area was originally settled by members of Stephen F. Austin's colony.
College Station		67,890	1938	Council-Manager	Home to one of the largest universities in Texas, Texas A&M.
Denton		80,537	1857	Council-Manager	The City is named after John B. Denton, a Texas pioneer and militia man captain.
Flower Mound		50,702	1961	Council-Manager	The town derives its name from a 12.5 acre mound on the southern edge of its boundary that is covered with wildflowers.
Galveston		57,247	1883	Council-Manager	The Port of Galveston was established by the government of Mexico following the successful revolution from Spain.
Harlingen		57,564	1910	Council-Manager	Was named an all American city in 1992.

Table 3.1: City Description - continued
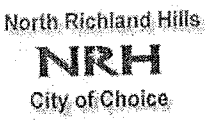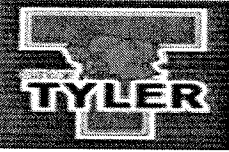
Killeen		86,911	1901	Council-Manager	The City is heavily dependent on one of the largest military bases in the nation, Fort Hood, for economic activities.
Lewisville		77,737	1925	Council-Manager	The city is home to the 3rd largest university in Texas, University of North Texas.
Longview		73,344	1871	Council-Manager	The Great Texas Balloon fest is held every July amid great fanfare.
McKinney		54,369	1859	Council-Manager	Both the city and county are named after a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, Colin McKinney
Midland		94,996	1885	Council-Manager	The city is the childhood hometown of George W. Bush.
Missouri City		52,913	1956	Council-Manager	Oil was first discovered in the area in 1919.
North Richland Hills		55,635	1953	Council-Manager	The city has been named by Money Magazine as of the top 100 livable cities in the US.
Odessa		90,943	1927	Council-Manager	Founders promoted the area as being geologically similar to the Odessa region of the Ukraine.

Table 3.1: City Description - continued

Port Arthur		57,755	1898	Council-Manager	Noted musician, Janis Joplin, was born in Port Arthur.
Richardson		91,802	1925	Council-Manager	The city was first settled in the early 1840's
Round Rock		61,136	1845	Council-Manager	The city was originally known as the settlement of Brushy Creek.
San Angelo		88,439	1903	Council-Manager	San Angelo State University calls San Angelo home.
Sugarland		63,328	1959	Council-Manager	The city was originally founded as a sugar plantation and is home to Imperial Sugar Company.
Temple		54,514	1882	Council-Manager	The city was originally founded as a railroad town.
Tyler		83650	1907	Council-Manager	During the civil war, Tyler was the site of the largest confederate ordinance plant in Texas
Victoria		60,603	1839	Council-Manager	The town is home to the state's second oldest newspaper, the Victoria Advocate.
The Woodlands		55,649	n/a	Will incorporate in 2014	A large master planned community that is in the process of incorporation.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for the study is strategic plan of medium size cities in Texas. The titles of the plans varied, as well as length and format. Table 3.2 lists important information along with how a copy of the strategic plan was obtained. It should be noted that the strategic plans were sometimes listed as/or included in comprehensive or master plans.

The criterion of medium size is a city with a population of between 50,000 and 100,000. Based on the United States Census 2000, there are 24 mid-sized Texas cities. The largest city in the study is Midland with 94,930 citizens while the smallest is Flower Mound with 50,702 citizens.

Table 3.2: Unit of Analysis

City	Name of Document	Year Adopted	Number of Pages	Web Pages	Where Reviewed
Baytown	Baytown Comprehensive Plan 2020	2006	over 100	yes	internet
Bryan	Bryan Comprehensive Plan 2006	2006	over 100	yes	internet
College Station	Strategic Plan 2009	2008	under 100	yes	internet
Denton	The Denton Plan 1999-2020	1999	over 100	yes	internet
Flower Mound	Flower Mound 2001 Master Plan	2001	over 100	yes	internet
Galveston	2001 Comprehensive Plan	2001	over 100	yes	email
Harlingen	Harlingen 2020 Comprehensive Plan	2001	over 100	yes	internet

Table 3.2: Unit of Analysis - continued

City	Name of Document	Year Adopted	Number of Pages	Web Pages	Where Reviewed
Killeen	Vision 2030	2008	over 100	yes	email
Lewisville	Lewisville Strategic Plan	2005	under 100	yes	email
Longview	Longview First 2010 Strategic Planning Initiative	2006	under 100	yes	internet
McKinney	McKinney Comprehensive Plan	2004	over 100	yes	email
Midland	Midland Master Plan 2025	2005	over 100	yes	internet
Missouri City	Draft Comprehensive Plan 2009	Draft	under 100	yes	email
North Richland Hills	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Odessa	Odessa Comprehensive Plan	1988	over 100	yes	internet
Port Arthur	Port Arthur Strategic Plan	1994	over 100	no	US mail
Richardson	2008 Comprehensive Plan	2008	over 100	yes	internet
Round Rock	Game on, 2060	2009	under 100	yes	internet
San Angelo	San Angelo Strategic Plan	2003	over 100	yes	email
Sugar Land	Vision 2025	2009	under 100	yes	internet
Temple	Temple Tomorrow	2009	under 100	yes	internet
Tyler	Tyler 21 - Comprehensive Plan	2007	over 100	yes	email
Victoria	Victoria 2020 Comprehensive Plan	2001	over 100	yes	internet
The Woodlands	The Woodlands Strategic Plan : 2034	2009	under 100	yes	email

Data Collection Method

A coding sheet has been developed from the reviewed literature to assist in the analysis of each local government's strategic plan. The coding sheet will be marked as criteria met or not met corresponding to whether or not the item criteria have been fulfilled. The coding sheet consists of 44 elements which should exist in the ideal strategic plan. The information will be extracted from each strategic plan and marked on the coding sheet. The researcher points out that the elements of the ideal model are dynamic and may be imperfect. The model does however; represent the "best available" tool. Table 3.3 summarizes the connection between the framework and the data collection method.

Table 3.3: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

Ideal Components of a Strategic Plan	Criteria met?
I. **Organizational Background** A. Organizational Background 1. Strategic plan should have a vision statement a. A vision statement should be clearly expressed b. A vision statement should be realistic c. A vision statement should be future- oriented d. A vision statement should be tangible 2. Strategic plan should have a mission statement a. A mission statement should be clearly expressed b. A mission statement should define the purpose of the organization c. A mission statement should be inspiring d. A mission statement should explain who the agency serves and what it seeks to accomplish 3. Strategic plan should have a value statement a. A values statement should be clearly expressed b. A values statement should express an entity's fundamental values c. A values statement should be located near the vision and mission statement d. A values statement should express a higher standard which an entity strives for	Yes/No

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Table 3.3: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework - continued

Ideal Components of a Strategic Plan	Criteria met?

II. Organizational Assessment
 	
A. Organizational Assessment
    1. Strategic plan should have an external environmental assessment
        a. An external environmental assessment should be clearly expressed
        b. A SWOT analysis should be present in the external environmental assessment
        c. An external environmental assessment should contain external factors such as economic, legal, regulatory and socio-cultural
        d. An external environmental assessment should show a complete picture of what is happening outside an entity
    2. Strategic plan should have an internal environmental assessment
        a. An internal environmental assessment should be clearly expressed
        b. A SWOT analysis should be present in the external environmental assessment
        c. An internal environmental assessment should contain internal factors such as demographic, managerial, technological and educational
        d. An internal environmental assessment should show a complete picture of what is happening inside an entity
	Yes/No

III. Organizational Needs and Desires
 	
A. Organizational Needs and Desires
    1. Strategic plan should have goals
        a. Goals should be clearly expressed
        b. Goals should be related to factors found in the environmental assessment
        c. Goals should be in harmony with the objectives of the organization
        d. Goals should contain sub parts known as objectives
    2. Strategic plan should have objectives
        a. Objectives should be clearly expressed
        b. Objectives should be precise
        c. Objectives should be measureable
        d. Objectives should be subcomponents of a goal
        e. Objectives should be time bound
    3. Strategic plan should strategic issues
        a. Strategic issues should be clearly expressed
        b. Strategic issues should be comprise fundamental issues confronting the entity
        c. Strategic issues should be prioritized by importance
	Yes/No

Table 3.3: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework - continued

Ideal Components of a Strategic Plan	Criteria met?

IV. Organizational Future Appearance
 	
A. Organizational Future Appearance
  1. Strategic plan should contain an implementation plan
    a. Implementation plan should be clearly expressed
    b. Implementation plan should contain specific action steps and relevant details
    c. Implementation plan should have a timetable, schedule or milestone years
    d. Implementation plan should discuss human resource requirements
    e. Implementation plan should discuss financial resource requirements
  2. Strategic plan should allow for periodic assessment
    a. Allowance for periodic assessment should be clearly expressed
    b. A specific timetable for which assessment can take place should be present
    c. Periodic assessment section should contain at least one outcome measure
    d. A timeframe for updating the strategic plan should be present
  3. Strategic plan should allow for stakeholder feedback
    a. Opportunity for feedback should be expressed clearly
    b. Process by which feedback from stakeholders is accepted should be listed
    c. Contacts for feedback should be listed
	Yes/No

Statistics

Descriptive statistics will be utilized to summarize the information collected through content analysis of the strategic plans. Descriptive statistics will allow for a broad over-view of medium size cities in Texas, highlighting how they meet the ideal standard for a strategic plan. Of descriptive statistics, Babbie (2004, 443) notes, "Scientific analysis involves the reduction of data from unmanageable details to manageable summaries". Each city will be assigned a pass or a fail based on all elements found in the strategic plan which correspond to the ideal model. Each element will be worth 2.27 percent. Pass or Fail will be assigned with the following ranges; Pass > 50%

and Fail < 50%. Any city that does not have a strategic plan will be given an automatic fail. The strategic plans will be obtained via the internet, via receipt from city staff at the researchers request or obtained in person at city offices. In the event that a city fails to respond or if a strategic plan does not exist, it will be noted in the table of record.

Human Subject Protection

This study is exempt from human subject protection as it does not involve the use of human subjects. The research is exempt under 45 CRF, Part 46, and Section 101(b)(3).

Conclusion

Chapter three provided an overview of the methodology used to gather data from Texas medium sized cities' strategic plans. It also discussed the link between the conceptual framework and the data collection instrument. Chapter four explains the assessment of the plans as compared to the ideal city strategic plan.

Chapter 4
Results

Purpose

This chapter showcases the findings from medium sized Texas cities strategic plan using content analysis. The results presented in this chapter are representative of twenty three strategic plans reviewed (one city did not have a strategic plan). Each component for the ideal model strategic plan is discussed separately. Additionally, a summary of the results shows adherence of Texas medium size cities to the practical ideal type. The chapter is organized by the four components identified in the conceptual framework: Organizational Background, Organizational Assessment, Organizational Needs and Desires and Organizational Future Appearance.

Descriptive Statistics

Of the twenty four cities, twenty three had some form of strategic plan. Only the City of North Richland Hills did not have a strategic plan. There were 44 required elements in the ideal strategic plan. When the raw data was analyzed to determine descriptive statistics, the following items were of note. The average number of elements found in the strategic plans which matched the ideal type was 23.9, out of a possible high score of 44. The Mode was 18. The standard deviation was 6.9. The strategic plan with the most ideal elements is Bryan with a total score of 36, while the strategic plan with the lowest number of ideal components was Longview with a total score of 10. Based on a pass requirement of 22 of 44 elements, sixteen of twenty three cities with a strategic plan

passed. The only city without a strategic plan (North Richland Hills) failed outright. Analysis of the four component sections will be discussed below.

Organizational Background

The literature reviewed suggests that the Organizational Background section of a strategic plan should contain: a vision statement, a mission statement and a value statement. Table 4.1 outlines the elements and results from the content analysis for the Organizational Background. The number of cities that met the standard for vision statement with all required elements was 14 or 58% of all cities assessed. The city of Bryan's vision statement is: "Bryan is a thriving, historic, diverse city where people are proud of their heritage, compassionate to one another and enjoy their family oriented community to the fullest" (City of Bryan, Comprehensive Plan 2006). Some vision statements were short and succinct while others comprised a much as a page and a half. Cities that showed a vision statement in their strategic plan almost always met the standard for completeness.

Mission statements were found in 17 of the 23 strategic plans. The number of strategic plans which met the standard for incorporation of all required elements was 15 or 65% of the total. The City of College Station's mission statement is: "On behalf of the citizens of College Station, home of Texas A&M University, we will continue to promote and advance the community's quality of life" (College Station Strategic Plan, 2009). Through a review of strategic plans, it was evident that some strategic plans contained either vision and mission statements in conjunction, while some contained one or the

other. Of the strategic plans reviewed, 39% contained both an ideal mission and vision statement.

Value statements were located in 11 of the 23 strategic plans. The number of strategic plans with value statements that met all required elements of the ideal was 9 or 39% of the total. Some of the value statements were hidden in the larger text and were not clearly stated. An example of two value statements comes from the City of Galveston's 2001 Comprehensive Plan:

> A better future for children – Provide a quality education and personal skill development for all children. Create opportunities for them to serve their community to improve the quality of life. Collaboration and Accountability – Create opportunities and make it easy for people to participate in decisions that impact their daily lives. Work together towards win-win solutions, enhancing the spirit of our community

Strategic plans which contained an ideal vision statement, mission statement and a values statement numbered only 4 or 17% of the total.

Table 4.1: Organizational Background Frequency

Organizational Background	Criteria	Number of cities meeting the Criterion (N=23)
Vision Statement	- Should be clearly expressed	14
	- Should be realistic	15
	- Should be future-oriented	15
	- Should be tangible	15
Mission Statement	- Should be clearly expressed	17
	- Should define purpose	16
	- Should be inspiring	16
	- Should be explain who the entity serves and what it seeks to accomplish	15
Value Statement	- Should be clearly expressed	9
	- Should express fundamental values of the entity	9
	- Should be found near mission and vision statement	10
	- Should express a higher standard the agency strives for	10

Organizational Assessment

The Organizational Assessment section of a strategic plan allows a city to assess what is happening internally and externally in its sphere of influence. The external assessment, which develops a big picture of what is happening outside an entity, should contain common factors suggested in the table below. The internal assessment must also show the big picture, but it accomplishes this from looking inward. Table 4.2 outlines the elements and results from the content analysis for the Organizational Assessment. Cities must acknowledge strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities to be able to chart proper goals, objectives and strategic issues.

The number of strategic plans that contained elements of an external assessment was 15. The number which met the standard for all required elements of the ideal for external environmental assessment was 6 or only 26% of the total. Many strategic plans contained elements of external assessment, but few had traditional SWOT analyses.

Internal environmental assessment was found far less frequently in the strategic plan assessment. Of 23 cities reviewed, only 8 had some elements of an internal assessment. The number of cities that met the standard for ideal internal assessment and included a SWOT analysis was 3 or 13% of the total

.

Table 4.2: Organizational Assessment Frequency

Organizational Assessment	Criteria	Number of cities meeting the Criterion (N=23)
External Assessment	- Should be clearly expressed	15
	- Should be contain a SWOT	6
	- Should contain a discussion of external factors such as economic, legal, regulatory and socio-cultural	14
	- Should provide the large picture of what is happening outside an entity	13
Internal Assessment	- Should be clearly expressed	8
	- Should be contain a SWOT	3
	- Should contain a discussion of external factors such as demographic, managerial, technological and educational	8
	- Should provide the large picture of what is happening inside an entity	4

Organizational Needs and Desires

The Organizational Needs and Desires section of the ideal strategic plan is a vision of success. It is a section that seeks to improve effectiveness. The items which accomplish this are goals, objectives and strategic issues. Table 4.3 outlines the elements and results from the content analysis for the Organizational Needs and Desires component.

In all cities with a strategic plan, goals were found during the researcher's assessment. All 23 cities or 100% of those assessed, contained goals. The number of strategic plans that met the standard of the ideal of a goal component was 9 or 39% of the total. Goals of many cities did not correspond directly to factors found in the environmental assessment. An example of a goal from the City of Lewisville: "Provide necessary public safety facilities, personnel and equipment" (Lewisville Strategic Plan, 2006).

Similar to the prevalence of goals, some elements of objectives were found in nearly all strategic plans, 20 in total. The number of cities which met the ideal standard for objectives was greatly reduced to only 9 or 39% of the total. Many cities did not include a time horizon for specific objectives of a stated goal. An example of an objective without time-framing can be found in City of Lewisville's strategic plan. Some of these objectives are: "1. Upgrade and replace equipment, 2. Provide funding for personal protective equipment, 3. Ensure adequate funding for utility accounts and overtime" (Lewisville Strategic Plan, 2006).

Strategic issues are important because they represent fundamental challenges which confront an entity or city. Elements of strategic issues were found in nearly all, or 96% of cities with an existing strategic plan. Many cities did not prioritize strategic issues based on importance, so only 30% of the strategic plans assessed met all the elements of the ideal standard. Notably, the number of strategic plans that contained at least some of the required elements of goals, objectives and strategic issues was roughly 9 out of 10. The number of strategic plans that met the ideal standard for goals, objectives and strategic issues was 3 or 13% of the total plans studied. An example of a strategic issue from the City of Lewisville is: "Provide a community where citizens/visitors are safe and secure" (Lewisville Strategic Plan, 2006).

Table 4.3: Organizational Needs and Desires Frequency

Organizational Needs and Desires	Criteria	Number of cities meeting the Criterion 9N=23)
Goals	- Should be clearly expressed	23
	- Should be related to factors found in the environmental assessment	9
	- Should be harmonious to entity purpose	23
	- Should contain sub-parts known as objectives	19
Objectives	- Should be clearly expressed	20
	- Should be precise	18
	- Should be measureable	11
	- Should be sub-components of goals	15
	- Should be time bound	9
Strategic Issues	- Should be clearly expressed	22
	- Should be fundamental issues confronting the entity	19
	- Should be prioritized by importance	17

Organizational Future Appearance

The Organizational Future Appearance section of the ideal strategic plan implements the goals and objectives of an entity. This section contains an implementation plan which accomplishes an entity's wish list. This section also allows for periodic assessment of a strategic plan and outlines the opportunity for stakeholder feedback. Table 4.4 outlines the elements and results from the content analysis for the Organizational Future Appearance.

The implementation plan component was found in roughly ¾ of the strategic plans that were reviewed. Of the 23 strategic plans that were reviewed, many failed to address human resource requirements necessary for implementation, although, many of the strategic plans noted financial requirements for implementation. Strategic plans which met all of the ideal elements of an implementation plan accounted for roughly a quarter of all plans reviewed.

Periodic assessment allows for strategic plans to be updated as necessary based on changing needs or emerging issues. It also allows one to assess past performance. Roughly 50% of cities that had a strategic plan had some elements of assessment. Only one quarter of cities with a strategic plan had an outcome measure. In total, only 2 cities met the ideal standard and contained the required elements for complete periodic assessment. An example of an outcome measure from the City of Harlingen that had a previous goal of wastewater improvement and expansion is: "developed additional storage capacity, two new tanks at M.F. Runnion Treatment Plant" (Harlingen's 2020

Vision Comprehensive Plan). An example of a timeframe for updating the strategic plan

from the City of Harlingen's Vision 2020 is:

> Circumstances will continue to change in the future and the Vision
> 2020 plan will require modifications and refinements to be kept up-to-
> date and current. Some of its proposals will be found unworkable and
> other solutions will continue to emerge. Needed refinements and
> changes should be carefully noted and thoroughly considered as part of
> the Annual Plan Updates and 5-Year Major Plan Revisions.

Stakeholder feedback is the final component of the Organizational Future

Appearance section. This part of a strategic plan allows public and private stakeholders

to comment and participate in the strategic plan. Nearly all strategic plans analyzed listed

contacts for feedback. Almost ¾ of plans assessed allowed for stakeholder feedback.

The total number of plans which met the ideal standard dropped to only two because the

process by which feedback was accepted was not clearly stated. For instance, there

wasn't a time frame or specific location to give feedback. In an example of stakeholder

feedback allowance, the City of Flower Mound states "The 2001 Master Plan is available

for download below or purchase through the development services department for $75.

For questions, comments or more information on the plan please call…" (Flower Mound

2001 Master Plan).

Table 4.4: Organizational Future Apperance Frequency

Organizational Future Appearance	Criteria	Number of cities meeting the Criterion 9N=23)
Implementation Plan	- Should be clearly expressed	17
	- Should contain specific action steps and relevant details	16
	- Should have a timetable, schedule or milestone years	14
	- Should discuss human resource requirements	7
	- Should discuss financial resource requirements	13
Periodic Assessment	- Should allow for periodic assessment	11
	- Should provide a timetable by which assessment can take place	5
	- Should contain at least one outcome measure	6
	- Should contain a timeframe for updating the strategic plan	8
Stakeholder Feedback	- Should allow for stakeholder feedback	16
	- Should contain process by which feedback is accepted	2
	- Should contain feedback contacts	21

Total Strategic Plan Elements

When elements of a strategic plan are considered as a whole, many cities pass when the requirement is containing 50% or more of some of the ideal model components. Since there were 44 elements contained in the ideal plan, 22 or greater is considered a passing score. These being the criteria, ¾ or 18 of the cities meet some of the ideal components for a strategic plan. No strategic plan completely meets the ideal standard. Table 4.5 summarizes this information.

Table 4.5: Total Element Frequency

City	Total Ideal Elements Contained in Plan	Pass (≥22) or Fail (<22)
Bryan	36	pass
Harlingen	35	pass
Temple	33	pass
The Woodlands	31	pass
Denton	29	pass
Victoria	29	pass
Lewisville	x	pass
San Angelo	x	pass
Tyler	x	pass
Galveston	x	pass
Flower Mound	x	pass
Midland	x	pass
Baytown	x	pass
McKinney	x	pass
Missouri City	x	pass
Round Rock	x	pass
College Station	x	fail
Sugarland	x	fail
Port Arthur	x	fail
Richardson	x	fail
Killen	x	fail
Odessa	x	fail
Longview	x	fail
North Richland	x	fail

x = score protected for performers other than the top 6

Comparison of Findings

In comparing the research findings of Herndon's ARP and this research project, it is important to note that this study occurred almost a decade later. It also important to note the researcher in this study assessed strategic plans of all Texas medium sized cities. Herndon assessed only cities in the central Texas area and their proximity to the capital might have influenced their professionalism. Furthermore, it should be noted that the researcher in this study required a greater number of specific elements in accordance with the ideal standard.

Table 4.6: Comparison - Central Texas Governments and Texas Medium size cities

Components of a Strategic Plan	Local Governments in Central Texas (Herndon) N=16	Medium Sized Cities in Texas exhibiting some elements (N=23)
Vision Statement	50%	65%
Mission Statement	6%	74%
Value Statement	44%	48%
External Assessment	69%	65%
Internal Assessment	25%	35%
Goals	69%	100%
Objectives	69%	87%
Strategic Issues	63%	96%
Implementation Plan	37%	74%

Chapter 5
Conclusion

Purpose

This final chapter summarizes the findings of the research in relation to the practical ideal type strategic plan. The chapter will conclude with recommendations in regard to this research and provide avenues for future research.

Research Summary

The summaries of findings from this research are summarized in a table 5.1. This table lists ideal components, met some criteria, met some criteria percentage, met all criteria and met all criteria percentage. A commentary on each ideal category will follow.

Table 5.1: Findings Summary

	Met Some Criteria	Met Some Criteria Percentage	Met All Criteria	Met All Criteria Percentage
Organizational Background				
Vision Statement	15	65%	14	61%
Mission Statement	17	74%	15	65%
Value Statement	11	48%	9	39%
Organizational Assessment				
External Environmental Assessment	15	65%	6	26%
Internal Environmental Assessment	8	35%	3	13%
Organizational Needs and Desires				
Goals	23	100%	9	39%
Objectives	20	87%	9	39%
Strategic Issues	22	96%	3	13%
Organizational Future Appearance				
Implementation Plan	17	74%	6	26%
Periodic Assessment	11	48%	2	9%
Stakeholder Feedback	11	48%	2	9%
Overall average		**67%**		**31%**

Organizational Background

Overall medium sized Texas cities fared well in meeting the ideal standard for Organizational Background. Fifteen cities had some form of vision statement in their strategic plan, but only fourteen met the ideal standard. Seventeen cities had some elements of a mission statement and fifteen of these cities met the ideal standard. Some elements of value statements were found in the strategic plans of eleven cities, but only nine of these eleven cities met the ideal standard. Several cities were adept at including ideal Organizational Background elements in their strategic plan. Cities that excelled include: Bryan, College Station, Round Rock and The Woodlands. It should be noted that very few cities had all three components of the Organizational Background in their strategic plans.

Organizational Assessment

Organizational Assessment fared poorly in the strategic plans of the 23 cities studied. Only six strategic plans met all requirements for the external assessment. The internal assessment fared worse, with only three strategic plans meeting the ideal requirement. Some cities did a commendable job of including Organizational Assessment ideal elements. Two cities, Lewisville and Temple stand out. Most of the assessments were outward looking with little regard to internal city dynamics. This is particularly interesting as many cities' strategic plans took great pain to describe external activities.

Organizational Needs and Desires

Organizational Needs and Desires components were exceptionally prevalent. In fact, eighteen of the 23 strategic plans contained: goals, objectives and strategic issues. In assessment of the strategic plan, it is noted that many cities met some of the elements but did not meet the ideal standard. This seems to suggest that cities have grasped the concept, but require additional work in this area. For ideal elements of goals and objectives, only nine cities met the ideal standard. For ideal elements of strategic issues, only three cities met the ideal standard.

Organizational Future Appearance

Organizational Future Appearance scoring was hurt by a lack of ideal criteria for each element. Many strategic plans contained an implementation plan element, but many implementation plans were lacking in specific details such as time-frame or resource requirements. Only six cities met the ideal standard for the implementation plan element of an ideal strategic plan. Assessment and Feedback adherence to the ideal standard was even less, with two plans meeting the standard. In general, it appears that cities do not have channels which allow for open communication concerning a strategic plan nor do they have schedules for updating the plan.

Total Elements

Although no city met the ideal standard for a strategic plan, when viewed as a whole document, the majority of cities met at least a fifty percent of the ideal

components. This serves as important information because it shows that cities are

engaging in strategic planning via inclusion of some ideal elements. Viewing total

elements contained in a strategic plan out of an ideal number of 44 serves as a balance

when viewing the four individual component categories above. With this information,

the reader can see that cities are creating strategic plans that in some cases contain a

majority of ideal elements. Table 5.2 summarizes the findings.

Table 5.2: Element Summary

City	Total Ideal Elements Contained in Plan	Percent of Total Ideal Elements (44)
Bryan	36	82%
Harlingen	35	80%
Temple	33	75%
The Woodlands	31	70%
Denton	29	66%
Victoria	29	66%
San Angelo	28	64%
Lewisville	28	64%
Galveston	27	61%
Tyler	27	61%
Midland	x	x
Flower Mound	x	x
McKinney	x	x
Baytown	x	x
Missouri City	x	x
Round Rock	x	x
Sugarland	x	x
College Station	x	x
Richardson	x	x
Port Arthur	x	x
Killen	x	x
Odessa	x	x
Longview	x	x
North Richland	x	x

x = score protected for performers other than the top 10

Summary of the Ideal Model

Overall, the data indicates that cities meet some aspects of the ideal model while not meeting others. It is worth noting that the some criteria met overall percentage in table 5.1 is close to research explored in Kim Herndon's 2001 ARP which assessed strategic plans of central Texas local governments. The average of containing some ideal elements in her research was 65% while in this research, it was 67%. The model in this research suggests that as a whole, medium size cities are touching on important elements of the ideal strategic plan. The entities with the highest scores were the City of Bryan, the City of Harlingen and the City of Temple.

Although medium sized Texas cities do not meet the ideal standard for strategic plan documents, they have clearly been influenced by strategic thinking. While this researcher has constructed the best available model, it is important to note the imperfection inherent to any human invention. It is hard to define what exactly makes a painting a masterpiece; different people will consider different colors, strokes or styles to be superior. By the same token, people might agree that a cookie or cake tastes wonderful, but they will have differing opinions as to what ingredients make it taste so. As a group, medium sized Texas cities contain many aspects of the ideal strategic plan.

Recommendations

Strategic plans provide direction for cities, for the stakeholders and for the citizens that live in those communities. This researcher was impressed at the availability of the strategic plans. City staffs were typically helpful in locating the planning

documents and the physical documents were available online in all but one case. This marks a noticeable improvement from prior research as Herndon (2001, 75) noted difficulty in obtaining strategic plans from phone calls to city staff or via research on the internet. Citizens of Texas medium sized cities can rest assured that they have access to perhaps one of the most important city documents. The researcher offers his recommendations for improvement below and these suggestions are contained in table 5.3.

It might be worthwhile for cities to invest in developing strategic documents on their own or in-house. Of the strategic plans reviewed, many were developed in conjunction with or exclusively by third party consultants. Perhaps if cities did their own strategic planning exclusively in-house, they would be able to more thoroughly develop concepts like internal assessment or value statements. It might also improve the trust and confidence of citizenry in city administration.

Vision statements, mission statements and value statements need to be incorporated into strategic plans to make the plan reflective of the future direction of the city. Frequently a city had one or two of the elements, but seldom had three. The inclusion of all three is imperative for a strategic vision.

Furthermore, cities must do a better job in assessing the internal environment. Although many cities did an exemplary job of assessing external conditions, very few went into detail about what was happening inside the entity. This researcher thinks it exceptionally important to address key human resource requirement factors such as average age, educational attainment, years of service, city facility conditions, those

coming to retirement and training to name a few. An entity has to know what the big picture is on the inside, instead of delegating the task to a select few in the HR department. All efforts to plan will be fruitless if internal strengths and weaknesses are not known. A presentation of formal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analyses for both internal and external assessments is beneficial in meeting the ideal standard. Texas mediums sized cities should consider this when constructing future strategic plans.

Every city has goals that it seeks to accomplish in planning for the future. Ideally goals are comprised of sub-components known as objectives. Many cities did not allow for a time component in their objectives. It would be most helpful if they did.

On a related note, implementation plans came up short several times when compared to the ideal standard. Although cities termed a section implementation or used the phrase implementation plan, many did not contain time-schedules or adequate discussion of financial and human resource requirements. The implementation plan is really the heart of the strategic plan because it is the expression of change. If a city does not have a sound plan for implementation, how can it get to where it wants to be? This is also worrisome for citizens of cities. They do not want to feel the consequences of a 'paper tiger' or empty plan; they want to see an implantation plan with teeth. An implementation plan that is complete provides clear, tangible direction that those in a community can monitor.

Finally, cities must make greater effort in reviewing and updating their strategic plans. Reviews that take place every year or two are well suited to strategic plans.

Updates that occur in this time frame allow for goals to be removed or updated and strategic issues to be added. The strategic plan is a living document after all, so the way it is maintained must reflect that. Periodic updating also allows for incorporation of citizen feedback to the existing plan. Citizens and community needs change over time.

One final recommendation is that strategic plans should communicate a means to give feedback more easily. The means to give feedback for draft and existing strategic plans was notably absent in review of strategic plans. Strategic plans must be sensitive to the needs and desires of the citizens within a community. Ultimately a strategic plan is created by city administration, but it is the tax-paying public citizen that the plan must ultimately serve. Citizens benefit from thoughtfully constructed strategic plans. Table 5.3 summarizes this researcher's recommendation.

Table 5.3: Recommendations Summary

Recommendations for City Strategic Planners
• Work toward developing a strategic plan in-house so that the plan improves trust of the average citizen and imparts community specific character. • Be sure to include the three components of vision, mission and value statements. Inclusion of all three offers the highest level of clarity about the direction of the city. • It is worthwhile to do a more through internal assessment of the city. With this information in hand, a city knows what it is working with. • Both external and internal assessments can benefit from inclusion of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. It is helpful to see both side of the coin. • Implementation plans must contain time-frame elements as well as discussion of human and financial resource requirements. • The time-frame for updating strategic plans should be clearly noted and the documents should allow for periodic updating. Strategic plans are living documents. • Mechanisms for public feedback must be clearly expressed and the process must be easily understood by those in the community.

Future Research

To better understand the elements associated with cities' strategic plans, additional research is needed. Strategic planning is a dynamic field often subject to changes from sector professionals and strategic planning literature. Just as strategic planning is ever changing, the need of cities to plan for the future is constantly changing. With these two facts in mind, this researcher offers the following suggestions for future research.

One topic worth exploring might be to see how large Texas cities are meeting the ideal standard. Since they generally have more resources and serve a larger population base, large cities may more closely meet the ideal standard.

Another area worth exploring is to see to what extend specific groups of stakeholders influence strategic planning at the local level. Are the citizens fairly represented or do private entities have more influence in strategic plan construction? As a follow up, to what extent does ongoing stakeholder input have in updating or shifting priorities within a strategic plan.

A final recommendation for future research might be to study how severe economic impacts affect strategic planning. The recent downtown had forced property values downward and this has lead to a general revenue decline of property related taxes. As most local governments get the majority of their funding through this mechanism, the issue may be worth of study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as Dr. William Hastie, a noted civil rights activist said, "Strategic planning for the future is the most hopeful indication of our increasing social intelligence". The more public administrators engage in thoughtful and skillful strategic planning the better citizens will fare in their communities.

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APPENDIX

Attachment A

City of Midland Implementation Plan

City Council
Major Projects

Top Twelve Priorities
(March, 2009)

Implementation Plan
(June, 2009)

MUNICIPAL COURT BUILDING
Priority # 2
HIGH PRIORITY
- Examine possibilities and costs for a new or renovated
Municipal Court Building

PRIORITY RATING
- #2 Major Projects/Infrastructure

TEAM
- Robin Smith, Judge
- Court Staff
- Building Services representative
- Court Users (Legal, P.D., Fire, Animal Control, Code, Etc.)

PARTNERS
- Architectural Firm

ACTION STEPS
- Select Architect
- Select Facility and Site
- Funding

- Construction

TIMELINE
- Firm Selection – 60 days
- Firm Selection – 8 months
- Funding Vehicle – 9 months

Midland-Retreat Report and Strategic Plan 41
March 25-26, 2009

- Construction – 1 - 3 years

COST
- $1.5 Million funded through 2009 CO Bonds for architectural Study
- Estimated $6.6 Million for construction

REPORTING Time
- Quarterly Updates

Attachment B

RE: Strategic Plan

From: **Tony McIlwain** (xxxx@ci.killeen.tx.us)
Sent: Fri 9/4/09 1:00 PM
To: theokosub@hotmail.com
    〱 1 attachment
       2030strat...pdf (1471.0 KB)

Hello Sir,

Here is a copy of the City's strategic plan, also known as Vision 2030. The City is currently undergoing an effort to create a comprehensive plan. There is no data on line for that as yet. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Thanks,

Tony McIlwain
City Planner

From: Ray Shanaa
Sent: Friday, September 4, 2009 9:34 AM
To: Tony McIlwain
Subject: FW: Strategic Plan

Can you help Mr. Kosub?

From: Theo Kosub [mailto:theokosub@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2009 5:57 PM
To: Ray Shanaa
Subject: Strategic Plan

Hello -

I was searching your website but I was unable to locate the city's strategic plan. Is one available online? If so could you direct me to the appropriate link?

Thank you,
Theo

Attachment C

Coding Sheet

	City	Plan Name	Year adopted	# of pages	Webpage?	Where reviewed
Elements						
Organizational Background	Item present?					
1a	
1b	
1c	
1d	
2a	
2b	
2c	
2d	
3a	
3b	
3c	
3d	
Organizational Assessment	
1a	
1b	
1c	
1d	
2a	
2b	
2c	
2d	
Organizational Needs and Desires	
1a	
1b	
1c	
1d	
2a	
2b	
etc	
etc	

Attachment D

College Station – Strategic Plan 2008-2009

In College Station, we strive to set the bar. We conduct daily business as a City aiming to provide our citizens with the best quality of life possible. The City Council and City staff work hard to ensure that we are moving in a direction that is best for the overall character and betterment of our community based on the voices and opinions of those living in College Station. A highly qualified workforce, an extremely engaged citizenry and a set of focused goals are the cornerstones of what make this a successful community.

As a rapidly growing city, we recognize the importance of neighborhood integrity as well as responsible growth in our communities. We focus on forward thinking policies that retain the integrity and standard of service to which our citizens have become accustomed. Efforts made to Green College Station and constructing a new City Hall are endeavors this City pursues in order to reach the next level.

The Strategic Plan is a collaboration of the City Council and the numerous City departments working together to create a cohesive forward direction for College Station in the upcoming years. Updates were made to the plan as a result of the City Council's annual strategic planning retreat. In addition to adding the two new strategic issues of Neighborhood Integrity and Green College Station, other policy goals and direction are interspersed throughout the document.

Following, you will find an outline for the goals and practices we have set to achieve in the near future so that each citizen may enjoy a greater quality of life than ever before.

Mission Statement

On behalf of the citizens of College Station, home of Texas A&M University, we will continue to promote and advance the community's quality of life.

Community Vision Statement

College Station, the proud home of Texas A&M University and the heart of the Brazos Valley, will be a vibrant, progressive, knowledge-based community which promotes the highest quality of life by ...

- ensuring safe, tranquil, clean, and healthy neighborhoods with enduring character;

- increasing and maintaining the mobility of College Station citizens through a well planned and constructed inter-modal transportation system;
- expecting sensitive development and management of the built and natural environment;
- supporting well planned, quality and sustainable growth;
- valuing and protecting our cultural and historical community resources;
- developing and maintaining quality cost-effective community facilities, infrastructure and services which ensure our city is cohesive and well connected; and
- pro-actively creating and maintaining economic and educational opportunities for all citizens.

College Station will remain among the friendliest and most responsive of communities and a demonstrated partner in maintaining and enhancing all that is good and celebrated in the Brazos Valley. It will forever be a place where Texas and the world come to learn.

City of College Station Core Values

To Promote

- The health, safety, and general well being of the community
- Excellence in customer service
- Fiscal responsibility
- Involvement and participation of the citizenry
- Collaboration and cooperation
- Regionalism: be active member of the Brazos Valley community and beyond
- Activities that promote municipal empowerment

Organizational Values

- Respect everyone
- Deliver excellent service
- Risk, Create, Innovate
- Be one city, one team
- Be personally responsible
- Do the right thing – act with integrity and honesty
- Have fun

Using the community vision, mission statement, and values as a spring board, the College Station City Council has set the strategic direction for the city government through development of ten *Strategic Issues* and supporting *Policy Initiatives*. The Strategic Plan

focuses organizational resources and identifies those intentional actions to be undertaken by city government to achieve the desired outcomes.

Citywide Safety & Security

Safety and security of College Station citizens is imperative. We want to ensure all citizens and visitors to the community feel safe while enjoying the quality of life offered by College Station.

Policy Initiatives

- Invest in our public safety infrastructure to provide consistent and high quality public safety services
- Benchmark our public safety services with other similar communities to ensure we are setting the pace at a national level

Effective Communications

Effective two-way communications with both internal and external audiences is essential to the continued success of the many programs and services offered by the City of College Station. Utilizing a variety of media and technology, we will strive to market our services, communicate our mission and values, engage our citizens in the decisions of city government while telling the College Station story to our elected officials, employees, citizens, community partners, and others nationwide.

Policy Initiatives

- Implement a communication strategy which continually informs our citizens about the city government
- Market the City of College Station as a superior service provider
- Cultivate citizen trust by fostering and practicing open, accountable and responsible government
- Interact with appointed committees to ensure the City Council's vision and expectations are known and adhered to when discussing policy

Growing Sustainable Revenue Sources Balanced with Needs

The ability of College Station to finance quality services, meet demands of growing our infrastructure and provide for the quality of life quotient for the community, requires fiscal soundness and growing our revenue sources. We will adhere to sound business practices which obtain true value for dollars spent, diversify our revenue sources through identification of innovative revenue strategies, and implement financial policies which protect city resources.

Policy Initiatives

- Develop innovative income strategies to diversify and strengthen income base
- Re-evaluate and update financial policies to ensure they continually meet our needs as a city government
- Improve business practices to ensure we achieve the best value for dollars invested

Destination Place to Live and Work

We want College Station to be a destination city which attracts visitors, residents, businesses, and investment. In promoting and maintaining a high quality of life, we want to be a community which provides diverse opportunities for work, entertainment, livable neighborhoods, and business development. We want College Station to be among the best cool places to live in the United States.

Policy Initiatives

- Invest in infrastructure and programs that create a sense of place for College Station citizens
- Identify and invest in those programs and activities that promote College Station as a cool place to live, work , and play

Exceptional Multi-modal Mobility

The rapid growth of College Station is impacting our ability to provide an efficient public and private transportation network to ensure mobility and safety to our citizens. Development of an efficient multi-modal transportation system is needed to promote a healthy local economy and support the community's quality of life.

Policy Initiatives

- Develop a transportation plan that supports the development of College Station in regard to its land use and transportation needs
- Implement our transportation plan to improve our overall transportation network and support development of the community
- Improve operational efficiency of our existing transportation network
- Implement state of the art transportation management programs and systems
- Lobby for state and federal transportation funds to continually improve our transportation systems

Sustainable Quality City Workforce

Our employees are our most valued asset. We want to ensure the City of College Station work environment is exceptional while encouraging innovation and creativity. We want to be able to attract the best and brightest and retain highly competent individuals who serve the citizens of College Station.

Policy Initiatives

- Create a work environment that attracts and retains quality employees

Exceptional Infrastructure and Core Services

Our core mission is the delivery of exceptional services to our citizens. Our infrastructure is the backbone of our service delivery system and we will continually make prudent investments to grow and maintain all infrastructure to support our delivery of services. We will expect our core services to be to of the highest quality. We expect our services to our customer to be focused, timely and cost effective.

Policy Initiatives

- Ensure our infrastructure is well maintained and expands to meet the needs of our citizens and various city services
- Provide core city services that are customer focused, cost effective and of the highest quality

Diverse Growing Economy

We want to promote through effective policies and programs the continued growth and diversification of our economy. We will provide leadership to encourage the diversification of our economy while actively collaborating with our community partners to produce economic benefit to all citizens.

Policy Initiatives

- Develop and implement specific plans to enhance and diversify our tax base
- Develop and implement plans which promote redevelopment of strategic areas of College Station
- Seek economic development opportunities and partnerships which position College Station as a national center for bio-technology
- Enhance tourism with the development of needed infrastructure to support the tourism segment of our economy

Neighborhood Integrity

Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of our city. Neighborhoods are where we live, raise our families, and socialize with our friends and neighbors. In many ways our city is only as strong and sustainable as our neighborhoods. Our challenge is to welcome the increasing number of students while retaining the strength and vitality of our neighborhoods.

Policy Initiatives

- Promote comprehensive planning and management of growth
- Ensure College Station remains a highly livable city driven by quality of life
- Improve the capacity of neighborhoods to deal with planning and quality of life issues
- Orient service delivery toward neighborhoods
- Enhance the City's enforcement tools to better address the rental market
- Educate key stakeholders and the community
- Promote the development of sustainable neighborhoods that address the needs of various population groups

Green College Station

Sustainability and resource conservation has become a constant on the local government landscape. There is a clear case to be made for sustainability and conservation of resources in College Station. Our emphasis on the quality of life for the community

demands that we aggressively work towards creating a culture in the community which embraces sustainability as its mantra.

Policy Initiatives

- Include renewable green energy in a portion of our purchased power while reducing the overall energy consumption
- Reduce our overall per capita water consumption
- Develop mechanisms to reuse water in the community
- Reduce the overall volume of waste generated in the community while developing environmentally sound and economically feasible means to dispose of waste
- Develop specific strategies to promote efficient use of our land while protecting our natural resources
- Promote open and green space as a prominent component of our community character
- Inventory global warming emissions in the City operations as well as in the community and set realistic reduction targets

City of College Station
Council Vision Statement Summary 2008-2009

- Continue development of Neighborhood Integrity Strategy
- Encourage neighborhood development targeted for students
- Analyze financial long term stability of the city - making growth pay for itself
- Promote strong intergenerational parks
- Define opportunities for improved business and industrial growth
- Continue building foundation for Green College Station Initiative
- Convention Center: Future direction
- Improve overall political health within city government and promote communication between various stakeholders
- City Hall/ City Center: Goal, Strategy, Actions
- Evaluate alternative transportation options and address transportation issues
- Increased interaction with appointed committees to ensure the Council's vision and expectations are known
- Secure infrastructure for the next 20+ years
- Create an accessible wireless system
- Improve hike and bike trails

City of College Station

City Management Priorities 2008-2009

- Fill vacant upper management positions
- Green College Station initiatives
- Successful completion of 2008 bond issue
- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Capital Improvement Projects progress
- Address City Hall needs
- Make Hotel Convention Center a reality
- Complete overhaul of Neighborhood Services structure
- Complete Police Management Review and HR Classification Study
- Continue to identify ways to motivate and re-energize staff
- Seek creative ways to fund City government and new initiatives

Attachment E

Location of Cities