

Vision Pinellas Strategic Plan



Frequently Asked Questions

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1. So just what is 'strategic planning' all about anyway?

Strategic planning is an organization's process for defining its goals & strategies over a period of time. It helps to set priorities and make budget decisions. Strategic planning helps leaders to anticipate changes in the environment and adjust accordingly, and it establishes shared goals & strategies to help align everyone's activities with the direction of the organization.

2. Why should Pinellas County have a strategic plan?

As local community leaders, we need to better anticipate and deal with change. With challenging issues like homelessness, hurricane preparedness, jail overcrowding and the lack of affordable housing, solutions to such increasingly complex problems demand an approach that helps us prioritize issues across our organization and is aligned with what our overall strategic goals are. Considering our local government's increasing budget pressures and higher citizen expectations, we need to work together as leaders to find local solutions to our community's local problems.

3. How did all this strategic planning business get started?

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) began the strategic planning process in 2005. Citizen surveying was done to determine what our citizens wanted for the County, and a series of follow-up workshops with the BCC were held to determine the County's strategic goals and associated strategies that we might use to accomplish those goals in the future. Strategic business plans were developed by six cross-departmental teams (called Strategic Focus Area (SFA) teams) in 2006. That's when the County's strategic plan, called *Vision Pinellas* was formed. Newly constituted SFA teams will continue to implement the County's strategic business plans going forward.

4. So what is Vision Pinellas all about?

Strategic plans and business plans have been developed for six Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs). Those six SFAs include:

- [Effective Government](#)
- [Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation & Culture](#)
- [Public Safety](#)
- [Transportation, Utilities, & Stormwater](#)
- [Economic Development, Redevelopment, & Housing](#)
- [Health & Human Services](#)

An SFA is a common grouping of County services and programs. Each SFA area has a team with representation from several related County departments. One such SFA team is described here so you can see what one looks like: The Economic Development, Redevelopment, & Housing SFA Team consists of County leaders from the following areas:

Economic Development
Community Development
Building & Development Review Services
Justice & Consumer Services
Human Services
Planning
The Convention & Visitors Bureau
Airport
Communications
Public Works

5. Who has been involved in the strategic planning process so far?

Our citizens were some of the first community leaders to become involved in the County's strategic planning process. They were asked for their input in the process of developing the strategic goals and strategies by the Board of County Commissioners. County Administration sponsors the strategic planning process, and the Effective Government Strategic Focus Area (SFA) Team includes all of the County's assistant county administrators and each of the other

five SFA team leads. There are 10 to 15 County employees who serve on each of the six SFA teams.

6. Who else needs to get involved in the County's strategic planning process?

This year, one of our strategic planning process goals is to communicate Vision Pinellas throughout county government and to our citizens who might like to learn more or get involved. We are working closely with department directors, managers and supervisors to make them aware of Vision Pinellas. We are also working diligently to inform local citizens about Vision Pinellas, so that they can both learn more about what's going on and to become involved with us if they'd like to learn more about making our County's future better.

7. What do we hope employees gain from Vision Pinellas?

We hope employees gain a framework to understand the big picture and how they fit into the overall strategic goals of our county. Our departments need to be aligned in achieving these goals and this might mean working differently and collaborating more often by strategic focus area and not just by departmental lines.

8. How will we measure the success of Vision Pinellas?

Through BCC presentations, we will be delivering quarterly reports updating the Board on where we are concerning some of our goals and identifying the action items that are accomplished. Each strategic business plan has performance measurements that are used to measure how well we are doing as well.

9. How will Vision Pinellas help us through the budget process?

Vision Pinellas helps keep us focused on our priorities and provides a policy framework for the FY08 budget process. By identifying the strategic goals of our county, we can determine where our spending priorities should be as well.

10. With all the budget issues going on, is this the right time to be doing strategic planning?

At times when priorities are changing and leaders need to be communicating at their best, strategic planning is most important. Part of strategic planning is prioritizing the most important things to do and doing those first. As a result, strategic planning gives us a forum for debate and sharing of ideas that many times otherwise doesn't exist for citizens, BCC and other community leaders.

