

Strategic Focus Area: Public Safety



Strategic Plan

Pinellas County Government

Strategic Focus Area: Public Safety

Preliminary approval given by the BCC on August 9, 2005
Final adoption by the BCC on February 14, 2006

Distinguishing characteristics of this focus area:

This focus area concentrates on Public Safety funding responsibilities of the Board of County Commissioners, including: law enforcement (Sheriff), emergency medical services and fire administration, emergency communications, emergency management, and alternatives to incarceration programs. The focus area also includes statutory-mandated funding for the Clerk of Circuit Court, State Attorney, Public Defender, Medical Examiner, judiciary, and juvenile detention.

Environmental scan

Public Concerns, Priorities, and Service Ratings

- 81% of Pinellas citizens consider public safety services very important or important, according to 2003 Florida Survey Research Center survey findings. (FRC Survey)
- Public safety services in the same survey were given second highest priority for funding (81%), behind road construction and traffic congestion.
- Emergency management and storm warning system received 78% favorable rating in FRC Survey.
- 94% of residents who used emergency medical services gave favorable ratings. (FRC Survey)
- 79% gave favorable rating to Sheriff for protective services, assistance, or information provided. (FRC Survey)
- 80% of respondents rated law enforcement services in the County as "excellent" or "good" in 2004 Business Survey sponsored by Pinellas County Department of Economic Development.
- In the same survey, 93% rated fire protection in the County as "excellent" or "good."

Emerging Public Safety Trends

(Note: Interviews were held with public safety professionals in several Florida counties (including Pinellas) to help identify major emerging trends useful in strategic planning. These counties were: Broward, Hillsborough, Orange, Seminole, and Volusia.)

- Rapid adaptation by Sheriff's Office to emerging crime trends and public concerns; e.g. identity theft crimes, crimes against children, threat of domestic terrorism, and crimes and public safety needs associated with natural disaster response.

- Review of the cost of assuming juvenile detention responsibilities from the Department of Juvenile Justice on the premise that it may be more cost-effective for the Sheriff to provide these services than the current “blank check to the State” approach. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- Encourage development of performance-based budgeting systems for Sheriff consistent with systems that serve County Government as a whole. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- Development by Sheriff’s Office of long-range strategic plans that identify agency goals and objectives, types of services to be delivered, personnel requirements, technology needs, and sources of funding. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- A general stabilization of Sheriff’s Office providing contracted law enforcement services to municipalities.
- An increasing trend of Sheriff’s Office providing, at County expense, specialized services to municipalities, including forensic services, evidence processing, crime scene assistance, and major case investigations.
- Increasing use of centralized law enforcement dispatch services provided by Sheriff on a contract basis to interested municipalities.
- A continuing trend for Sheriff’s Office and municipal police departments to participate in joint task forces and operations, with the majority of funding provided by Sheriff. These include: narcotics and homicide task forces, integrated traffic units, integrated SWAT, dive and bomb teams.
- Participation by Sheriff’s Office and municipal police departments in unified crime-reporting systems that link critical data previously maintained separately by each agency.
- Development of countywide policies and procedures for selected law enforcement responses, including vehicle chase procedures and use of tasers. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- New construction and major expansion of county jails and corrections facilities are widespread throughout Florida counties. Development of alternatives to incarceration programs, including mental health and drug treatment programs, is a major priority for counties. Stronger leadership focused on alternatives and treatment programs coupled with a renewed focus on these programs by Public Safety Coordinating Councils are required.
- Medical costs for inmates are skyrocketing across the State. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- Continuing, incremental trend to consolidate fire services, especially unincorporated fire districts, where tax bases are shrinking due to annexations or incorporations. Tax equity and cost-effective service delivery drive these consolidations of fire districts. There appears to be more consideration of consolidation of fire services than action to do so.
- Consolidation of specific functional aspects of fire services appears to be more widespread than full consolidation. Examples of functional consolidation include: fire dispatch, training facilities and curricula, and investigative services.

Part One:

The Vision–The Public Safety we need for a quality community.

1. Community Expectations: What the Community desires in public safety services. (See Figure 1.)

Community expectations express what the general citizen desires with respect to public safety services. The following expectations were identified through interviews with public safety professionals in major Florida counties (including Pinellas) and available source documents, including the Pinellas Assembly Task Force Reports:

- **EFFECTIVE SERVICES.** Services that are of high quality, delivered by well-trained professionals who respond to public needs quickly and effectively.
- **EFFICIENT AND FAIR SERVICE COSTS.** Costs of services are kept to a minimum, equitably assigned to those who receive and benefit from them, and delivered efficiently and fairly across jurisdictional boundaries.
- **SERVICES THAT EMPHASIZE THREAT REDUCTION.** The public expects informational, educational, and other kinds of services that reduce threats to public safety, whether from fire, crime, response to natural or manmade disaster, or medical emergency.

2. Results: What Pinellas County Government will deliver to meet community expectations.

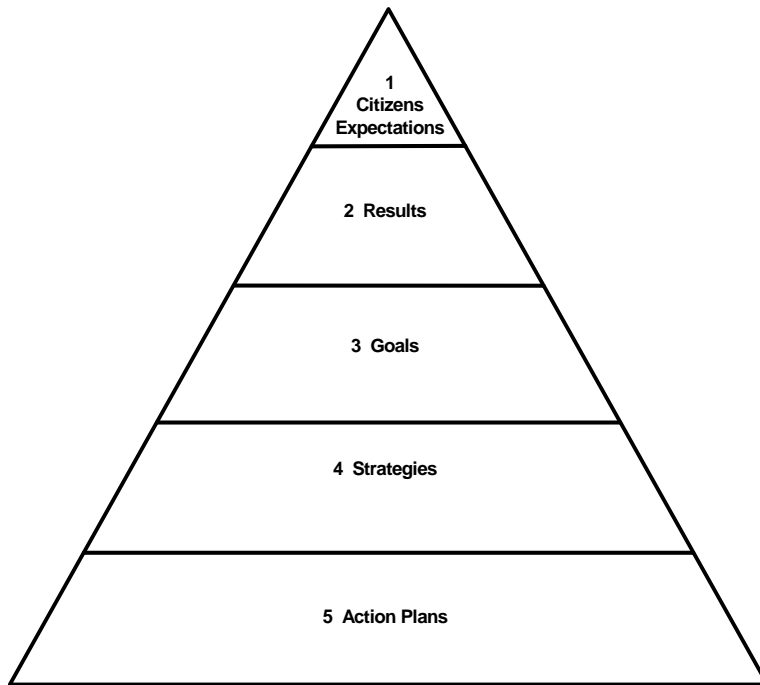
Results are impacts that a particular entity, such as Pinellas County Government, is striving to make. Within the context of general community expectations, results are the contributions of a specific entity, such as Pinellas County Government, can make toward the community expectations. As shown in Figure 1, when results are achieved, community expectations are met in part or whole.

Within a strategic focus area, the results express the “bottom line” impacts sought by the policy board.

Within the Strategic Focus Area of Public Safety, Pinellas County Government seeks the following results:

1. Cost savings and service improvements in the delivery of public safety services.
2. Reduction of jail population and recidivism growth rates, while maintaining sufficient bed space to detain those needed.
3. Tax equity, service efficiencies, and equitable assignment of costs in the delivery of unincorporated area fire services.

Figure 1: Developing the Strategic Plan



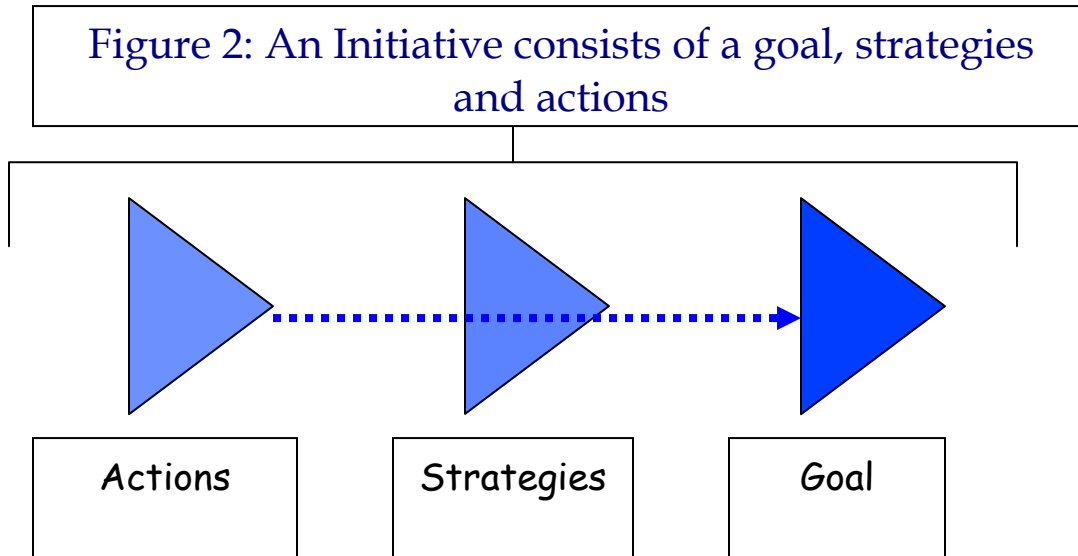
PART TWO:

Developing the envisioned public safety services through four initiatives:

Goals, Strategies and Actions to create Results

What is an Initiative?

An initiative is a program of work intended to lead to one or more of the results. It is comprised of a goal, a set of strategies or pathways that should lead to the goal, and a set of specific actions that will lead to the goal. To achieve these results, PINELLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT will engage in four initiatives. As stated, each initiative is built around a goal (and named after that goal) and uses appropriate strategies and actions (tactics) to achieve that goal as shown in Figure 2.



The public safety initiatives. Four initiatives are proposed:

- Law Enforcement Improvement Initiative
- Fire and Emergency Medical Improvement Initiative
- Jail and Corrections Improvement Initiative
- Emergency Management Improvement Initiative

3. Goals

Achieving the following goals will create in Pinellas County the desired public safety services. Achieving these goals will produce the results the County is seeking and thereby meet community expectations as shown in Figure 3.

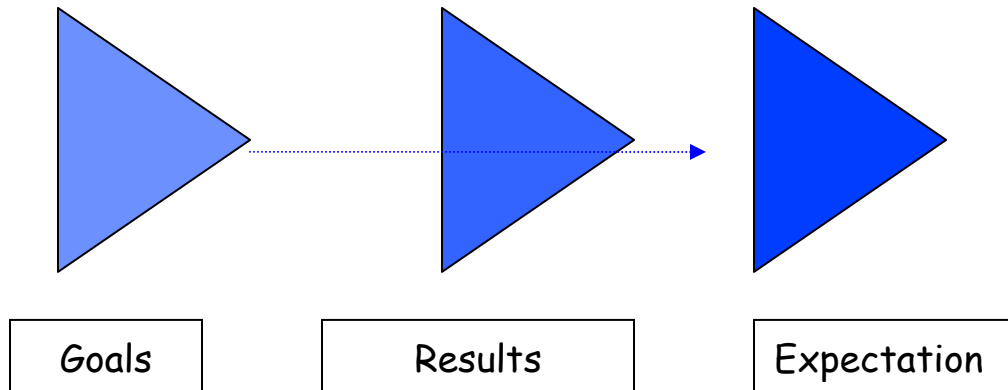
More effective and efficient delivery of law enforcement services from a countywide perspective. Improvements to the quality and efficiency of selected law enforcement services needed by law enforcement agencies achieved through centralized and collaborative service delivery and funding arrangements.

More effective and efficient delivery of fire and emergency medical services. Achievement of cost savings and efficiencies for fire and emergency medical services, and more equitable assignment of the costs of fire services.

improvements to provisions of public shelters for use during disasters. Increase the number and quality of public shelters used during disasters, including pet friendly facilities and housing for mission-critical employees.

implement more effective means to manage the rates increases and recidivism in the inmate populations of the county jail and correction facilities. Long-term reduction in the need for new jail and corrections space and associated operating costs; reduction in rate of recidivism through treatment programs, particularly for drug offenders; and provision of adequate bed space on a timely basis.

Figure 3: Accomplishing goals leads to results which meet expectations

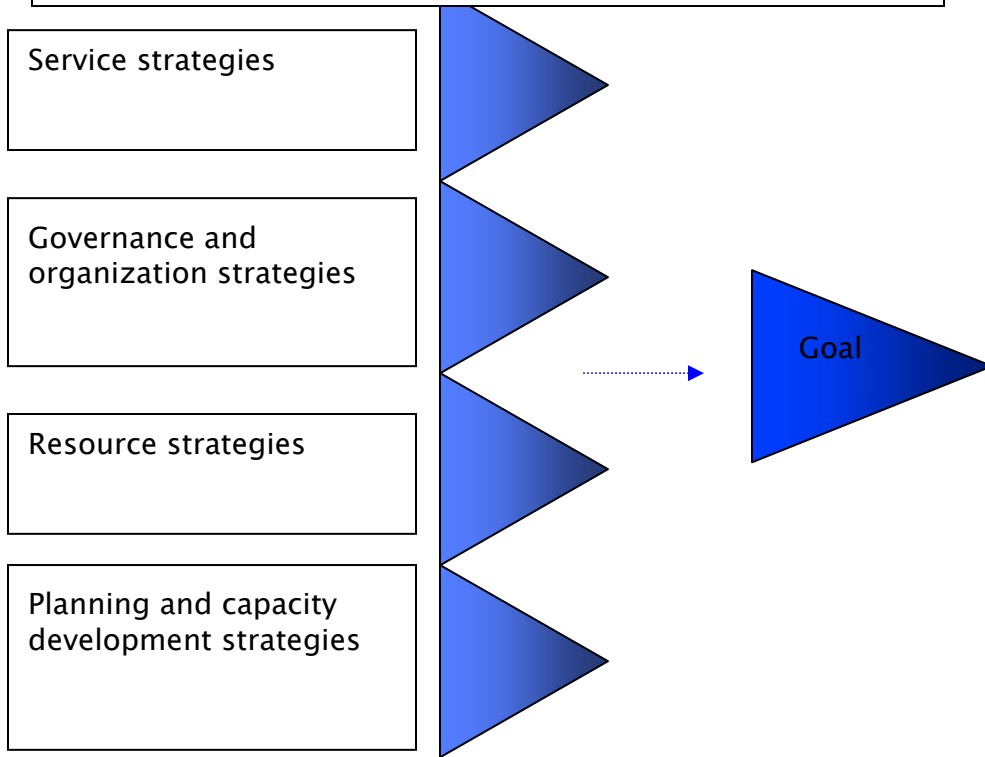


What is strategy?

Strategy is figuring out the best approaches to reach your goals. PINELLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT has the following types of approaches to achieve its public safety goals.

- Service strategies. These strategies encompass what services will or will not be provided and how they might be enhanced.
- Governance and organizational strategies. These strategies address who will provide and manage various services.
- Resource strategies. These strategies include varying ways to fund and staff services.
- Planning and capacity development strategies. These strategies encompass changes in the field and plans to be developed; also how both organizational and staff capacities will be developed to meet those changes.

Figure 4: Four types of strategies can be used to achieve the goals



4. Strategies & 5. Actions

Within each initiative, there are specific pathways or strategies that PINELLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT seeks to deploy or influence in order to achieve public safety goals. Along each pathway there are specific actions that would occur. The strategies and some of the actions the County can use are described in the following Initiative description.

Law enforcement improvement initiative

Goal: MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES FROM A COUNTYWIDE PERSPECTIVE.

Service Enhancement Strategies

- Support establishment of countywide emergency radio channel for monitoring and assistance without relays through dispatch.
- Support coordinated mobile data efforts by law enforcement agencies.
- Support coordination of consolidated electronic traffic tickets.
- Support establishment of a coordinated countywide records depository.
- Support development of a streamlined approach to traffic records.Support upgrade of countywide radio system emergency capabilities.

Organization and Governance Strategies

- Support provision of countywide fingerprint services by Sheriff.
- Support Sheriff provision of countywide offender and predator management and notification.
- Support contracts with cities for Sheriff law enforcement services.
- Support creation of centralized law enforcement records system.
- Encourage countywide policies and procedures for selected law enforcement responses, including vehicle chase and use of tasers (Added after first BCC workshop).

Planning Strategies

- Develop and consider a study on countywide forensic services provided by Sheriff.
- Develop and consider a study on Countywide property and evidence storage and disposal provided by Sheriff.Develop and consider a study on Sheriff provision of countywide prisoner transport from arresting agency location to county jail.
- Develop and consider a study on consolidated law enforcement dispatch.
- Develop and consider a study to address ways to contain inmate medical costs, in particular hospital care and billing for care. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- Encourage Sheriff to develop a strategic plan for the Sheriff's Department, and to coordinate with the development and implementation of the County's strategic management system. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- Evaluate the cost/benefits of assuming Juvenile Detention responsibilities from the State including the alternative of the Sheriff to provide these services rather than the current "blank check" approach. (Added after first BCC workshop.)

Funding and resource management strategies

- Encourage Sheriff to use performance based budgeting consistent with the County's budget system. (Added after first BCC workshop.)
- Support the above strategies through a mix of fees, contract revenue, and general revenue

Fire and emergency medical improvement initiative

Goal: MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF FIRE SERVICES AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.

Service enhancement strategies

- Pursue improvement of countywide ISO rating.
- Establish minimum standards for marine and water rescue operations.

Governance and organizational strategies

- Support regionalization efforts of fire agencies where shown to be beneficial.
- Determine means to address tax/fee inequities.
- Support joint purchasing among fire agencies.

Funding and resource strategies

- Pursue alternative funding for specialty teams.

Planning Strategies

- Develop and consider a study of establishing a “true priority” dispatch system.
- Develop and consider a study of using county authority to set levels of service standards (not just minimum standards) for the delivery of fire and emergency medical services.
- Support Charter Review Commission analysis of potential benefits of some consolidation of fire services.

Jail and corrections improvement initiative

Goal: IMPLEMENT MORE EFFECTIVE MEANS TO MANAGE THE RATES OF INCREASES AND RECIDIVISM IN THE INMATE POPULATIONS OF THE COUNTY JAIL AND CORRECTIONS FACILITIES.

Planning Strategy:

- Consider options for use of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council or some other appropriate mechanism to serve as a forum to evaluate, debate and recommend more effective means to manage the rates of increases and recidivism in the inmate populations of the county jail and corrections facilities, and to provide sufficient bed space to detain those needed.

Emergency management improvement initiative

Goal: IMPROVEMENTS TO PROVISION OF PUBLIC SHELTERS FOR USE DURING DISASTERS.

Planning Strategy

- Develop and consider a plan for more public shelter options during disasters, addressing the question of “hardening” appropriate county facilities, and other public and private facilities for use as shelters. Address need for pet friendly shelters and housing of mission-critical employees.