

CITY OF ABERDEEN
Council Goals and Visioning Session
August 12, 2017 (Saturday)

Council Present: Mayor Patrick McGrady
Councilman Steven Goodin
Councilwoman Sandra Landbeck
Councilman Timothy Lindecamp
Councilman Melvin Taylor

Absent: None

Facilitator: Colonel (Ret.) Erich W. Randall, PhD, On-Point Strategic Leadership, LLC

Also Present: Randy Robertson, City Manager

The Council Goals and Visioning Session was called to order at 9:00 a.m. in the second floor administrative conference room of City Hall. The session was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

ATTACHMENT: Final report from the facilitator, 39 pages.

Aberdeen, MD's Strategic Visioning Workshop



August 12, 2017

Facilitated by
Colonel (Ret.) Erich W. Randall, PhD
erich@on-point.us

Aberdeen Strategic Visioning Workshop

Today's Agenda

- ❖ Flexible timeline – we seek attaining the desired outcomes more than the exact times

| Topic |
|--------------------------------|
| Introduction/Admin Remarks |
| Systems Thinking |
| Tame the Chaos/Grand Strategy |
| Reviewing the Homework |
| Develop Strategic Vision |
| Identify Strategic Initiatives |
| Determine Goals |
| Resource Goals* |
| Review and Comment |
| *time allowing |

What is systems thinking?

- It is looking at everything we do as interdependent to the whole
 - The “Butterfly Effect” of Chaos Theory
 - Not every effect is intended or causal in a linear fashion
 - Unpredictable results happen
- Roll the clip!
- Your challenge is to think beyond what you do on a daily basis
 - Look at how your actions effect unforeseen areas
 - Understand that what you do makes a difference to the big picture
 - Consider the possible “downstream” effects of your decisions every time



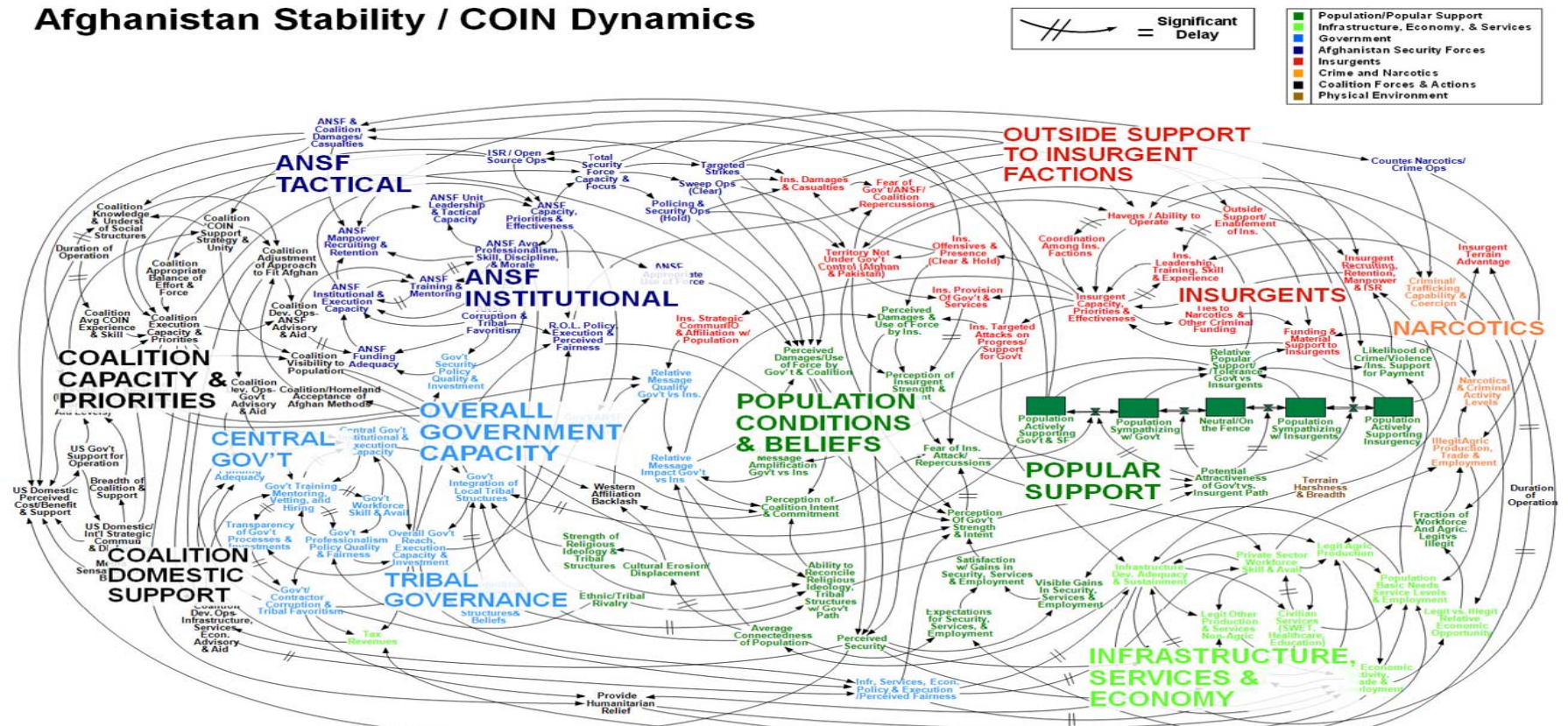
Simplicity and Complexity

- ❖ Complexity is what we are seeking to resolve
- ❖ And, as Eric Barlow states in the following TED Talk..
- ❖ Simplicity lies on the other side of complexity!

TED Ideas worth
spreading

Chaos in Aberdeen?

Afghanistan Stability / COIN Dynamics



8/23/17

PA Consulting Group. Chart published by Richard Engel in his article "So what is the actual surge strategy?", NBC News World Blog, 02 December 2009.

Why Systems Thinking at Cities?

- ❖ Increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity in the municipal environment
- ❖ This causes less familiar and more ill-structured problems with less precise guidance
- ❖ How can there be tactical excellence and strategic failure?
 - ✦ Treating the symptom instead of the problem
 - ✦ Did not adapt as the environment changed
- ❖ Need for a more adaptable culture



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Our Methodology: Tame the Chaos™

Tame the Chaos Methodology:

Allows you to excel in the eye of the hurricane by drawing energy from the chaos to establish a dynamic, ever-increasing zone of stability



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Tame the Chaos vs. Strategic Planning

| Tame the Chaos | Traditional Planning |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Problem Setting | Problem Solving |
| Conceptual – “Tabla Rasa” | Physical & Detailed |
| Questions Assumptions & Methods | Procedural & Structured |
| Develops Understanding | Develops Products for Execution |
| Paradigm Setting | Paradigm Accepting |
| Precedes Planning & Preparation | Focuses on Execution |
| Leader-Centric Methodology | Staff-Centric Process |
| Mostly Art | Mostly Science |

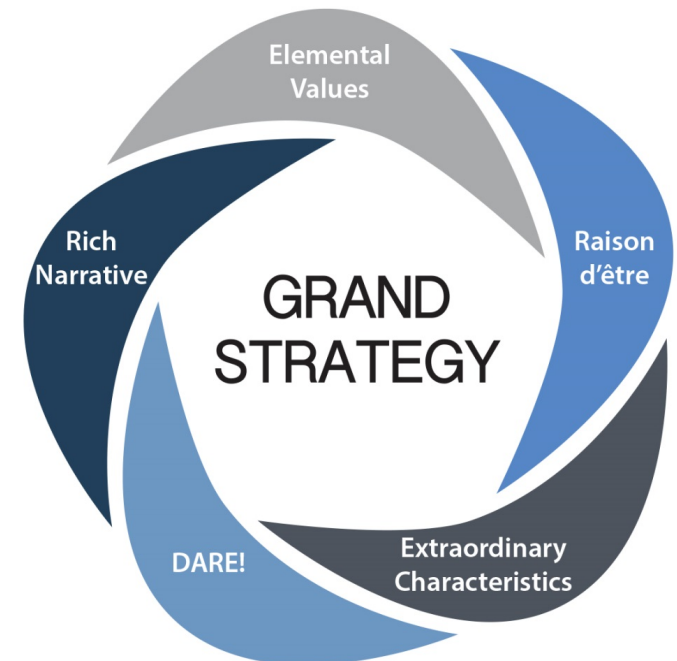
Tame the Chaos: The 2nd Element

- **Grand Strategy**

- A concept typically reserved for nation-states, has application across all organizations.
- A strong, effective Grand Strategy provides the foundation for everything your organization does.

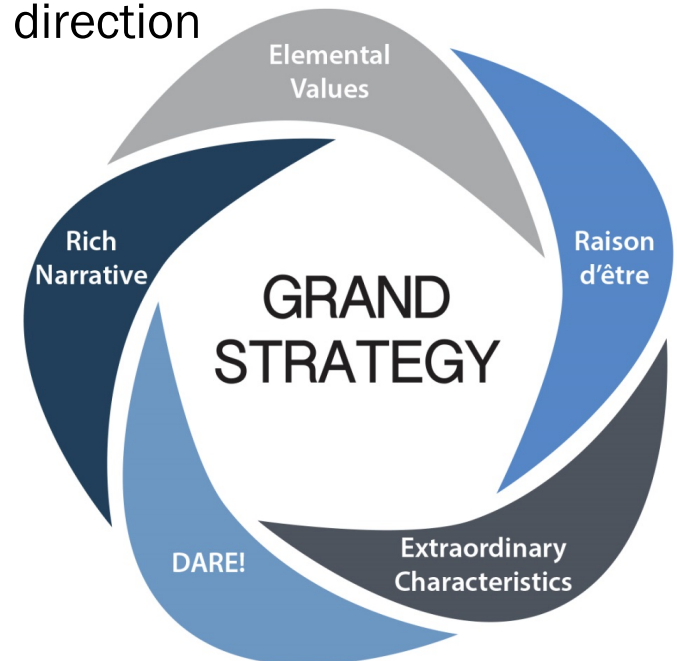
- **Components of Grand Strategy**

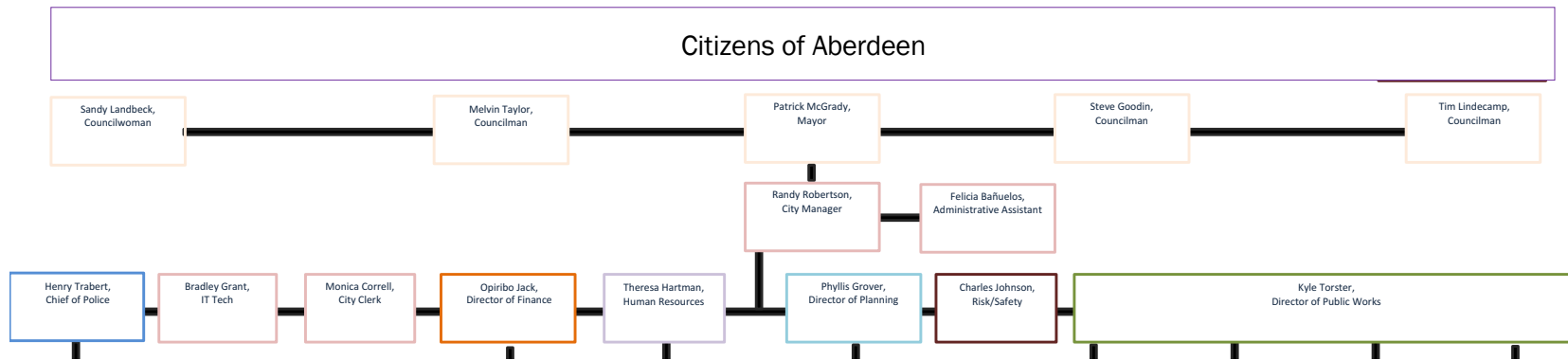
- **Elemental Values:** The most basic, unwavering guiding principles
- **Raison d'être:** The fundamental reason for your organization's existence
- **Extraordinary Characteristics:** The aspects of your organization that make you exceptional and unique
- **DARE!:** Like a supercharged vision statement, describes your Dynamic, Awe-inspiring, Risk-taking Expedition
- **Rich Narrative:** A vibrant, detailed, written description of your entire Grand Strategy



Tame the Chaos: The 2nd Element

- Offers a common framework that is the essence of your organization. It is *who you are*.
- Work in harmony to build foundation for Strategic Design and Detailed Plans
- Provides means to readily communicate strategic direction
- Does not depict your final destination.
 - It describes the next waypoint in your journey.
 - Typically a 3-5 years look, reviewed annually
- **Next Step: Develop Strategic Approach**
 - **Transformational**
 - When you are changing
 - This is a holistic undertaking
 - **Elucidation**
 - When you are met with a complex problem
 - Focus is stabilizing that problem





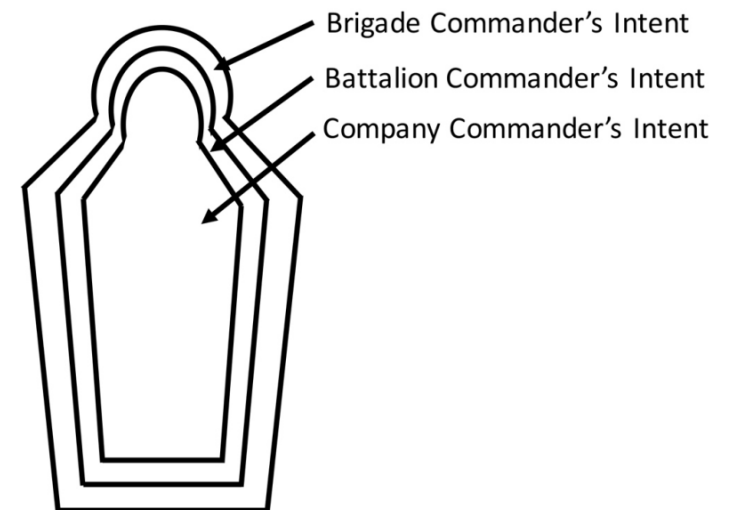
Everyone plays a key role in the success of Aberdeen!

- Flat organizational structure
- City Council at the top!
- You play a huge role in establishing vision and strategic objectives
- But... the entire team is critical to the City's success
 - Everyone on the team must work in synch to get things done!
 - Vision is key – resources will need to be allocated to strategic objectives

Ensure “Nested Concepts”

Be Sure To Understand “Nested Concepts”

- Know “commander’s intent” two levels up
 - On the outside is your boss – the citizens
 - Next is you, the City Council
 - On the inside the City Manager
 - Further inside will be Department Heads
- See how everything is interconnected?
 - Everyone works toward the same intent
 - But with the freedom to maneuver in their own area of responsibility

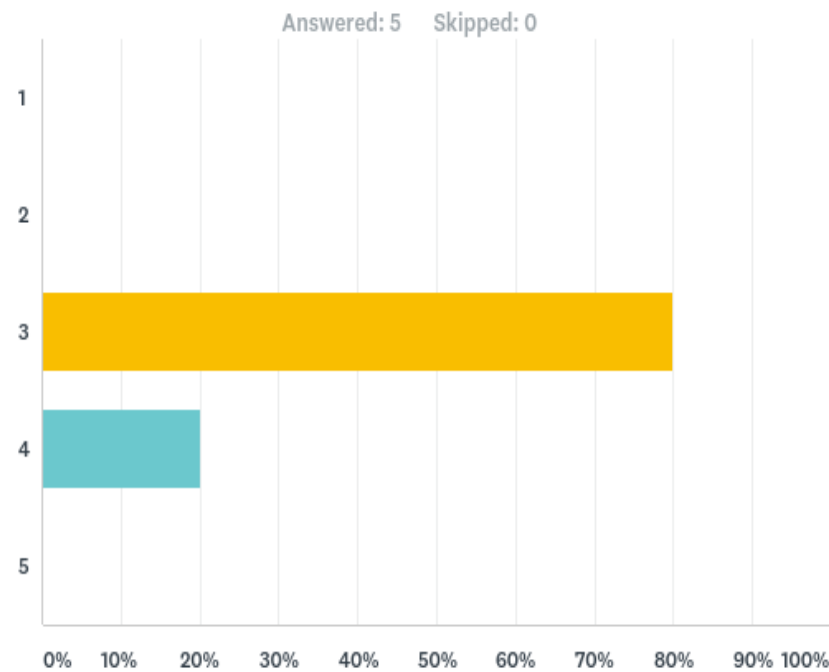


Reviewing the Homework Results

- Key Issues Addressed:
 - Strategic Initiatives
 - Short-term Goals
 - Effectiveness of the Team
 - Vision for the future (in an unconstrained Environment)
- Findings: (There is consensus in several areas!)
 - Downtown Development
 - Parks and Recreation needed
 - Public Safety paramount
 - Strategy and Planning are needed
 - Council can work together better
 - Staff is highly effective
- Let's Review the Specifics...



Q2 What is the likelihood these initiatives will be achieved?



What can be done? (from Survey)

What can be done to make Strategic Initiatives a reality?

- Begin awareness initiative with County
- Educate the Council/ planning commission on the Strong Towns approach
- Make it easy for businesses to locate in Aberdeen
- Participate in Sustainable Maryland initiative.
- Opportunity for citizen involvement
- Set priorities for fixing our roads/water lines and towers/ sewer lines
- Working out a deal for water acquisition
- Work with police and schools for education
- Adoption of Development Code
- Having a more focused strategic planning meetings
- Person-to-person messaging to get people outside
- Interacting at the civil society level
- Dedicate minimum funds in each budget

Measuring Success (from Survey)

How will you know you've accomplished the Strategic Initiative?

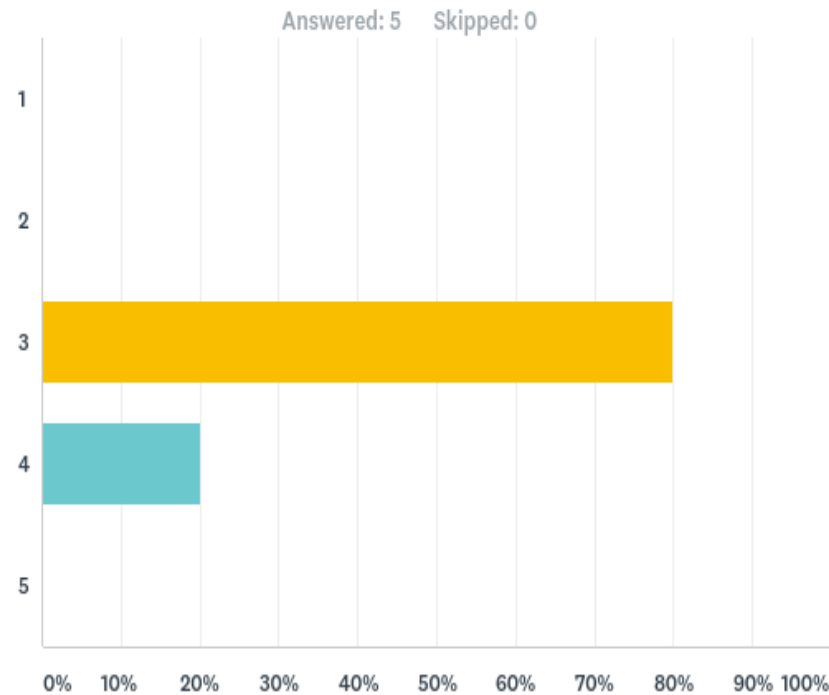
- How city agendas are presented
- Eliminate Parking minimums
- Evaluate rationale for water/sewer hookup fees
- More locally-owned businesses to take a risk on us rather than big, wall-street run businesses.
- Increased total number of new businesses in community
- Sustainability certification from Maryland
- Develop strategic plans with goals
- Feedback from city business community
- No new debt for new projects until our current position is secured
- Water towers are fixed, water lines are fixed, I&I is minimized.
- Lowering of heroin fatalities
- Passing of new Development Code
- Feedback from average citizen from all sectors
- Running out of space for community events
- Parks always bristling with folks of different ages playing, sitting, or walking
- People having the desire to do projects and feeling empowered to do it
- Constant review of budget
- Recreational center constructed
- Minimizing setback requirements

Goals (from Survey)



Goals (from Survey)

Q6 What is the likelihood these goals will be achieved?



What can be done? (from Survey)

What can be done to make Goals a reality?

- Don't know
- Transparency
- Get the City Council to approve of ordinance to eliminate parking minimums
- Continue to encourage McKenzie group to advocate for the city
- Appoint Chair for sustainability committee
- Discuss all with council
- Listening to others view
- Open discussions with tenants at Stadium and get to a deal that benefits the City
- Work at State for Grant to fund for planning
- Working together
- Get the City Council to approve of ordinance to eliminate or minimize setbacks
- Be fiscally responsible and get county to assist
- Poll citizens on site
- Submit grant application

Measuring Success (from Survey)

How will you know you've accomplished the Goals?

- By listening to community
- New businesses
- Committee organized, staffed, and meeting with objectives
- Feed back from business owners
- Communicate with county
- Real negotiations with Tufton
- Deal is made that stops the cash-flow crisis regarding stadium
- Procurement of planning grants
- Response from its citizens
- Ordinance is adopted
- Site selected, concept plan formulated

Council Effectiveness (from Survey)

How effective is the Council? What can be done?

Effectiveness

- ❖ Very little
- ❖ The City Council is 100% committed to Aberdeen
- ❖ Many city tasks are beyond the scope of the knowledge of the Council
- ❖ Emotions often control actions rather than long-term perspective
- ❖ On a scale of 1-10 probably a 7
- ❖ Quite ineffective
- ❖ None

Improve Effectiveness

- ❖ Transparency
- ❖ Members doing research on topics of mutual interest and regularly sharing notes on same
- ❖ Council pushing back against staff when issues are brought that are not initiated by Council
- ❖ Council asking questions when they have them instead of going with the flow and complaining about it later
- ❖ Unity
- ❖ Learn consensus
- ❖ Communication

Staff Effectiveness (from Survey)

How effective is the Staff? What can be done?

Effectiveness

- ❖ Good
- ❖ Highly effective. All departments are diligent and competent. Everybody has a natural inclination toward parochialism of the specific department, but most staff does a good job with the big-picture stuff.
- ❖ Awesome
- ❖ Quite effective
- ❖ Poor

Improve Effectiveness

- ❖ More leeway, less restrictions on doing their jobs
- ❖ Always asking "How could this be done differently?" and when dealing with other departments, the public, and other government agencies-- never say "no" but instead say "Yes, and here's how we can make it happen."
- ❖ More support from the council
- ❖ Staff ineffectiveness does not present as a major problem for us
- ❖ Communication

Strategic Vision Characteristics


Characteristics of a Strategic Vision:

- 👍 Easy for people to understand
- 👍 Written usually in a half page(ish)
- 👍 Communicated in 60 seconds
- 👍 Intellectually solid
- 👍 Has emotional appeal
- 👍 Can be understood by those who will have to change

“People will ‘get it,’ and will, if you do it right, buy into it.” ~John Kotter

Aberdeen's Strategic Approach

- ❖ Will Improve with “Tame the Chaos” – but still a valuable to make educated guess:
- ❖ Elucidation Strategy
 - ✦ Mitigating a Complex Problem
 - ✧ Grounded in Grand Strategy
 - ✧ Focuses on mitigating a complex problem
- ❖ Transformational Strategy
 - ✦ Change
 - ✧ Grounded in Grand Strategy
 - ✧ Will have many aspects
 - ✧ Can include multiple Elucidation Strategies



You chose a Transformational
Strategy – We can help build this



Brainstormed Vision Ideas

What are some ideas for your vision?

Mentimeter

Love to live Smart growth
Sustainability Safe Live all stages of
life

More businesses moving into
Aberdeen

Place where people love to live

Develop better working relationship
with county.

People want to make investments

Revamp downtown Aberdeen. Long-
term deal with Tufton. Park & Rec
building and support

Open dialogue with council

People feel safe at home and in the
community

1)development of down town
Aberdeen

Park and Rec building and support

Talk, eat, do business together and
share life experiences

People can live near their families

Draft Strategic Vision Statement

❖ Your Vision Elements

- Element 1. Love to Live.
- Element 2. People feel safe at home and in the community.
- Element 3. Wealth of opportunity.
- Element 4. Sustainability

❖ Draft Strategic Vision Statement:

- **Aberdeen: a place where people love to live... a vibrant, growing city with a proud history and bold future.**

You should work on the words (and the ellipsis) to hone this into exactly what you desire to be the new vision statement.

Brainstorming Strategic Initiatives



Aberdeen's Strategic Initiatives

Initiatives necessary to support the vision

Your Strategic Initiatives:

- ❖ Strategic Initiative 1. Pursue Economic Development.
- ❖ Strategic Initiative 2. Develop two community nodes.
- ❖ Strategic Initiative 3. Improve Quality of Life.

SMART Goals & Reality Check

- ❖ Goals should be SMART in nature
 - ❖ Specific
 - ❖ Measurable
 - ❖ Attainable
 - ❖ Relevant
 - ❖ Time-Bound
- ❖ Reality Check!
 - ❖ Goals must be resourced
 - ❖ Must grow the pie or reallocate resources from other areas
 - ❖ Remember – if these are your priorities, they must be supported!

Brainstorming Goals: Strategic Objective 1

Brainstorm Goals: Economic Development

Mentimeter

Favorable develop Code
 itseffects quality of lif
 Zoning for light manufact
 Agreement wTufton 2021
 accessory dwellings
 Completion of rte 22
 retail recruitment
 Open APG middle gate 2020
 Event planning at stadium
 National level businesses
 Agreement w harf on build
 Locate existing informati
 Move meth and probation
 Incentives for tech
 Annex north of 95
 Dev Code restructured
 Commerical bus Nose 1
 Jobs
 Evaluate hookup fees
 Commerical bus Node 2
 Transportation
 Housing

Strategic Initiative 1 - Goals

Economic Development

- Goal 1.1: The addiction clinic and probation facilities are relocated no later than 18 months after leases terminate
- Goal 1.3: Increase commercial business development in Node 1 by five new businesses no later than 2/1/19
- Goal 1.4: Increase retail business by ____% no later than ____ {inform this goal by expert}
- Goal 1.5: Obtain resolution on Ripken Stadium ensuring no later than 9/30/17
- Goal 1.6: Develop Incentives for businesses to locate in Aberdeen not later than 1/1/18
- Goal 1.8: Facilitate 250 more jobs in Aberdeen in 18 months

☐ Specific?

☐ Relevant?

☐ Measurable?

☐ Time-Bound?

☐ Attainable?

Brainstorming Goals: Strategic Objective 2

Brainstorm Goals: Community Nods 1 & 2

Mentimeter

Water tower

Community events
Marketing of Moose
Contact developers
Ensure infrastructure
Types of businesses
development plan for ctr
Marketing of School
Advertising
Retail development
Bus Recruitment
Annexation proposal
Move meth probation
Plan for mixed use
Comm Ctr concept plan
Develop train station
Decide location comm ctr
Comm Ctr Location decisio
Library renovations
Library rennovations
Community input
Community input
Incentives
Subsidizes
Time lines

Strategic Initiative 2 - Goals

Develop Nodes 1 and 2

- Goal 2.1: Create plan to develop Node 2 not later than 5/1/18
 - Goal 2.1.1 Council will evaluate hiring a planner not later than 1/1/18
 - Goal 2.1.2: Annexation north of I-95 proposal
 - Goal 2.1.3: Council will approve planning and design funding in FY19 budget
 - Goal 2.1.4: Council will approve construction funding in FY20 budget
- Goal 2.2: Create a plan to sell city owned real estate not later than 1/1/18
 - Goal 2.2.1 Moose Lodge
 - Goal 2.2.2 Sell 34 North Philly (School)
 - Goal 2.2.3 Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Lots
- Goal 2.3: Determine the way forward to redevelop sites on the east side no later than 1/1/18
 - ☐ Specific?
 - ☐ Measurable?
 - ☐ Attainable?
 - ☐ Relevant?
 - ☐ Time-Bound?

Brainstorming Goals: Strategic Objective 3

Brainstorm Goals: Quality of Life

Mentimeter

Road repairs More restaurant
Library renovations After school area
Walking-bike paths Clean up vacant props
Family oriented programs New housing
Community center City bike and walk trails
Recreation More retail opportunities Jobs better paying
Community events P-R complex wbuilding
Crosswalk stop signs Parks and rec
Meth and probation
senior ctr
swim park

❖ Strategic Initiative 3. Definition.

- Goal 3.1: Develop a concept to create Parks and Recreation Complex, Community Center, Library not later than 1/1/18.
- Goal 3.3: Clean up vacant properties through property code enforcement by ____% annually not later than ____ {needs to be informed by city staff}
- Council reviews property code enforcement and approves amendments not later than 7/1/18
- Goal 3.4: Increase crosswalk safety by ____% not later than ____ {needs to be informed by city staff}
- Goal 3.5: Evaluate possibility of multipurpose fields at Swim Center not later than 1/1/18
- Goal 3.6: Develop a plan to improve road repairs to 3% annually not later than 7/1/18

☐ Specific?

☐ Relevant?

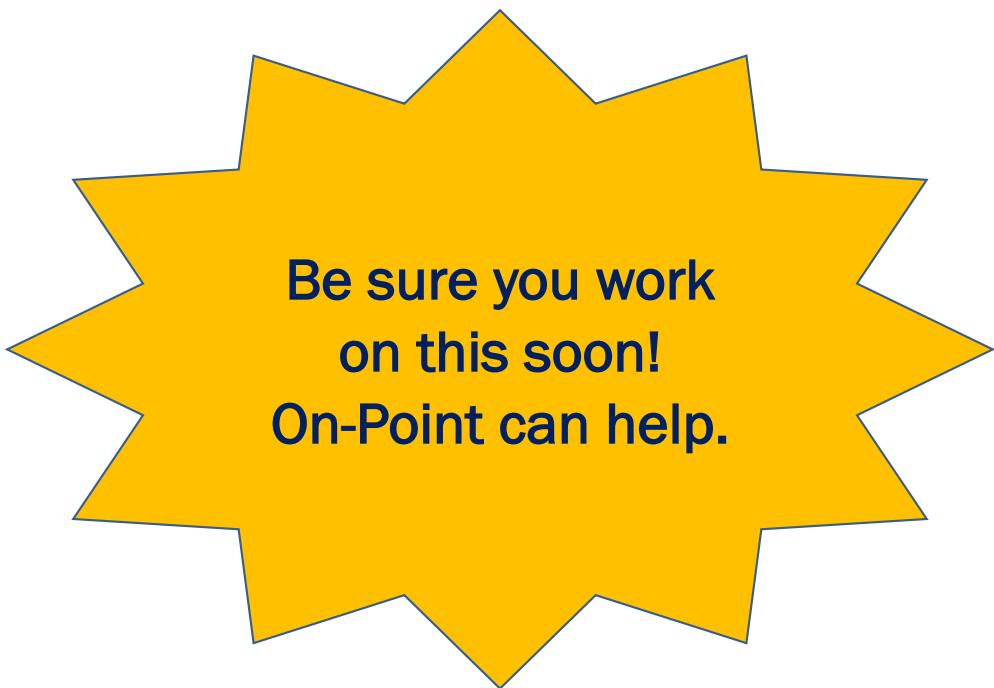
☐ Measurable?

☐ Time-Bound?

☐ Attainable?

❖ Required Resources

- Goal 1.1:
- Goal 1.2:
- Goal 1.3:
- Goal 2.1:
- Goal 2.2:
- Goal 2.3:
- Goal 3.1:
- Goal 3.2:
- Goal 3.3:



**Be sure you work
on this soon!
On-Point can help.**

*Thank you again for allowing us to be a part of
your Strategic Visioning and Goal Setting
Session!*

*Ronda and Erich Randall
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