

SCORE

Strategic Planning for Small Nonprofits

Presented by Alex Shapiro

Overview

Overview

This Presentation

- **Provide an introduction to preparing for and conducting a strategic planning process**
- **Will not be comprehensive**
- **There are no hard-and-fast rules; each process will depend on desired goals and outcomes**
- **One size does not fit all and not every strategic planning process needs to have similar goals**
- **Will focus on a “classic” approach to strategic planning, which will suit most small organizations**

Overview (cont.)

Types of Plans

- Annual plan
- Contingency plan
- Strategic plan



Who Has Done Strategic Planning?

A Poll

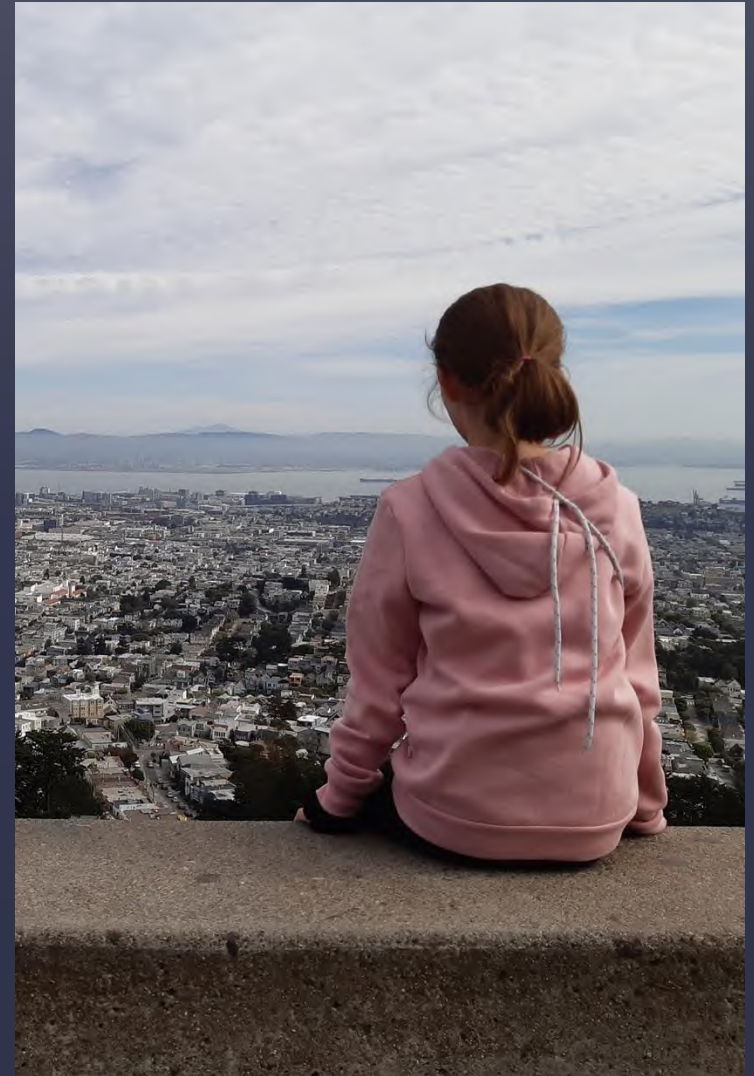
Why Do Strategic Planning?

A Poll

Overview (cont.)

Why do Strategic Planning

- Provides an opportunity to step back from daily operations to look at the big picture
- Helps to align various constituents
- Helps to establish broad priorities



Overview (cont.)

What is Strategic Planning

Some of the things strategic planning does:

- Identify goals/priorities that will best enable a nonprofit to achieve its mission
- Align various constituents around an organization's mission, vision, and values
- Identify an organization's strengths and weaknesses
- Create a broad action plan to accomplish identified goals/priorities

Some of the things strategic planning is NOT:

- Does not predict the future
- Does not replace the day-to-day needs of good leadership
- Not "one and done"
- Not quick

Overview (cont.)

Some Goals and Objectives

- **Identify organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT)**
- **Establish organizational priorities for the short-term, mid-term, and long-term**
- **Identify measurable goals/objectives for the priorities**



Preparation

Preparation

Strategic Planning Committee

- **Top staff and top Board members should lead the process**
- **Recruit and convene committee**
 - ❖ **Board members**
 - ❖ **Staff members**
 - ❖ **Other key stakeholders**



Preparation (cont.)

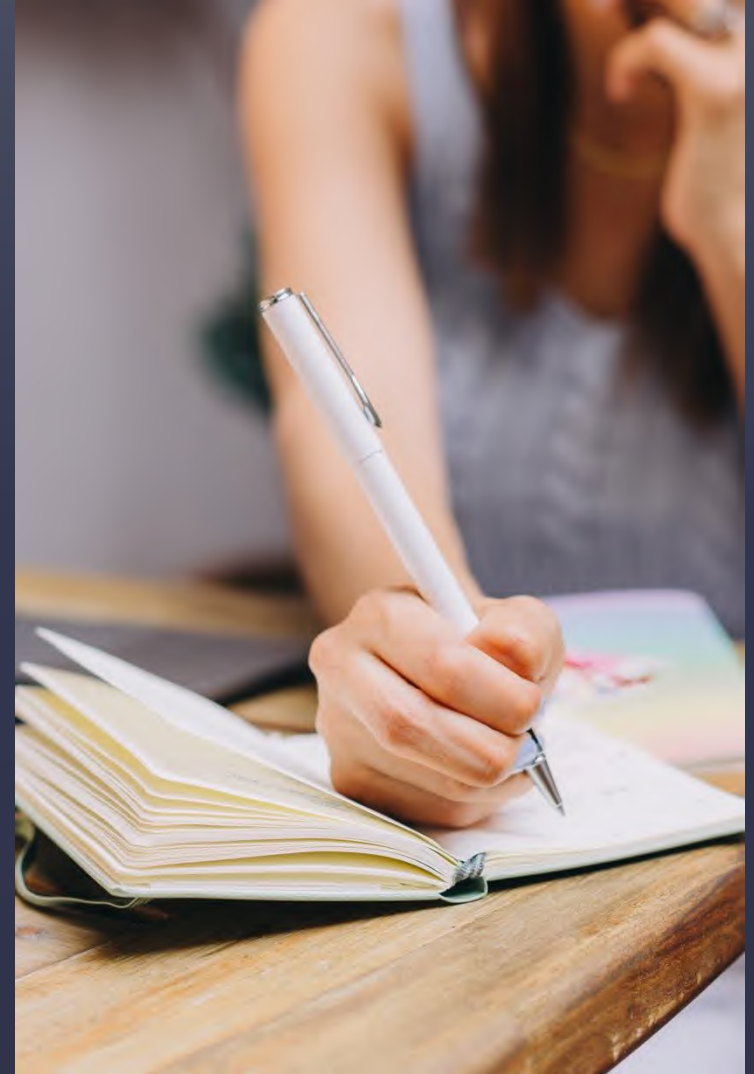
Initial Steps

- Determine scope of strategic plan including desired outcomes
- Establish a budget and schedule
- Hire consultant, or find a facilitator, if appropriate
 - ❖ Provides expertise in strategic planning organization and process
 - ❖ Can ask the difficult questions or invite difficult conversations with objectivity
 - ❖ Can objectively keep the process on track, as well as facilitate session(s) and facilitate the delivery of a final document
- With facilitator/consultant, determine strategic planning process structure needed to achieve desired outcomes
- Identify important issues that should be addressed in the process

Preparation (cont.)

Initial Steps *Documents Produced*

- **Committee contact information roster**
- **Planning schedule with agenda for first full meeting**
- **List of key questions/issues for various stakeholder groups**



Who Should Participate?

A Poll

Preparation (cont.)

Participants

- **Board members**
- **Staff leadership**
- **Staff members**
- **Clients**
- **Other possible stakeholders, such as donors, community leaders, etc.**



Preparation (cont.)

Preparation Activities

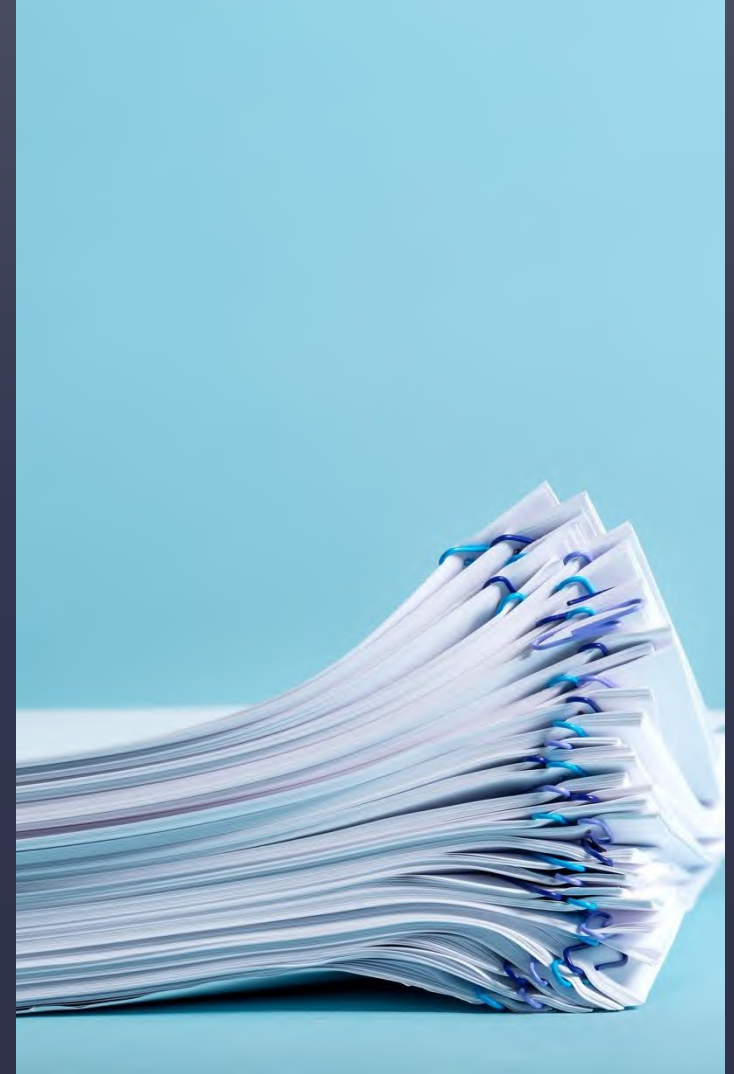
- **Organizational self-assessment**
- **Stakeholder meetings/input/feedback:**
 - ❖ **SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats**
 - ❖ **Discuss organization's "competition"**
 - ❖ **Needs addressed by organization**



Preparation (cont.)

Preparation Activities *Documents Produced*

- **Summary of stakeholder input**
- **SWOT analysis**
- **Competition analysis**
- **Questions raised by stakeholders**
- **Organizational history/analysis**



Questions?

Implementation

Implementation

Sessions *Mission/Vision/ Values*

- **Mission statement describes an organization's reason for existence**
- **Vision statement describes what ideal state or condition the organization wants to see and achieve**
- **Values statement is the list of principles that guide and direct the organization and its culture**



Implementation (cont.)

Sessions *Mission/Vision/ Values Example*

Santa Fe Community Foundation

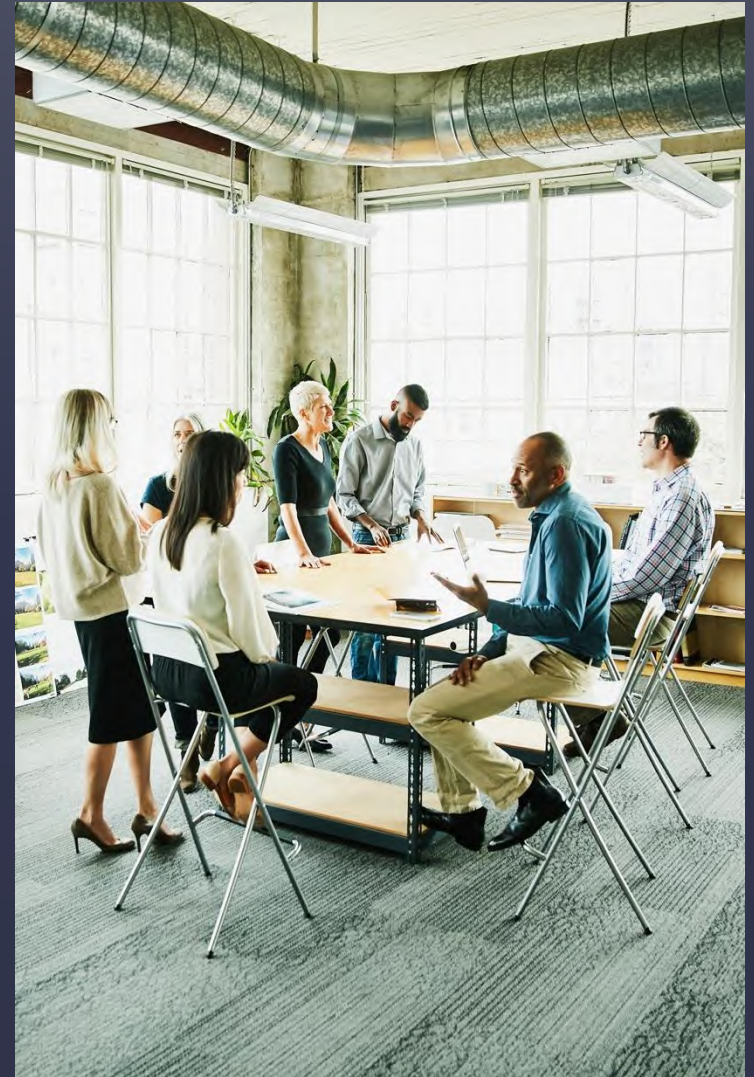
- **Mission:** The Santa Fe Community Foundation inspires philanthropic generosity, strengthens nonprofits, and fosters positive change to build a more vibrant, healthy, and resilient region.
- **Vision:** We envision a thriving northern New Mexico, where all people can find opportunity, build connections, and contribute to the well-being of their communities.
- **Values:**
 - ❖ Equity – We recognize the systemic injustice in our community and commit to prioritizing equity and belonging in how we operate and the work we do.
 - ❖ Perseverance – While responsive to immediate challenges, we stay committed to long-term strategies and investments that strengthen our region's capacity to navigate social, economic, and ecological change.
 - ❖ Listening – As a trusted learning organization, we initiate and engage in authentic, respectful dialogue to understand, include, and respond to the rich diversity of voices and ideas in our region.
 - ❖ Generosity – We strive to expand the understanding and practice of philanthropy and to engage the generosity of wealth, knowledge, and the spirit of all people in northern New Mexico.

Implementation (cont.)

Sessions *Envision*

Where do you want to be in three/five years?

- **New programs/services?**
- **Old programs/services?**
- **Scope of programs?**
- **Geographic reach?**
- **Other?**



Implementation (cont.)

Sessions *Gaps*

What are the gaps between the present and the future (as envisioned)?

- **Leadership and staffing?**
- **Funding?**
- **Facilities?**
- **Other?**



Implementation (cont.)

Sessions *Trends*

What uncertain trends, scenarios, developments might be possible? How will your organization respond?

- **Pandemic?**
- **Economic downturn?**
- **New competition?**
- **Sudden new opportunities?**



Implementation (cont.)

Sessions *Priorities*

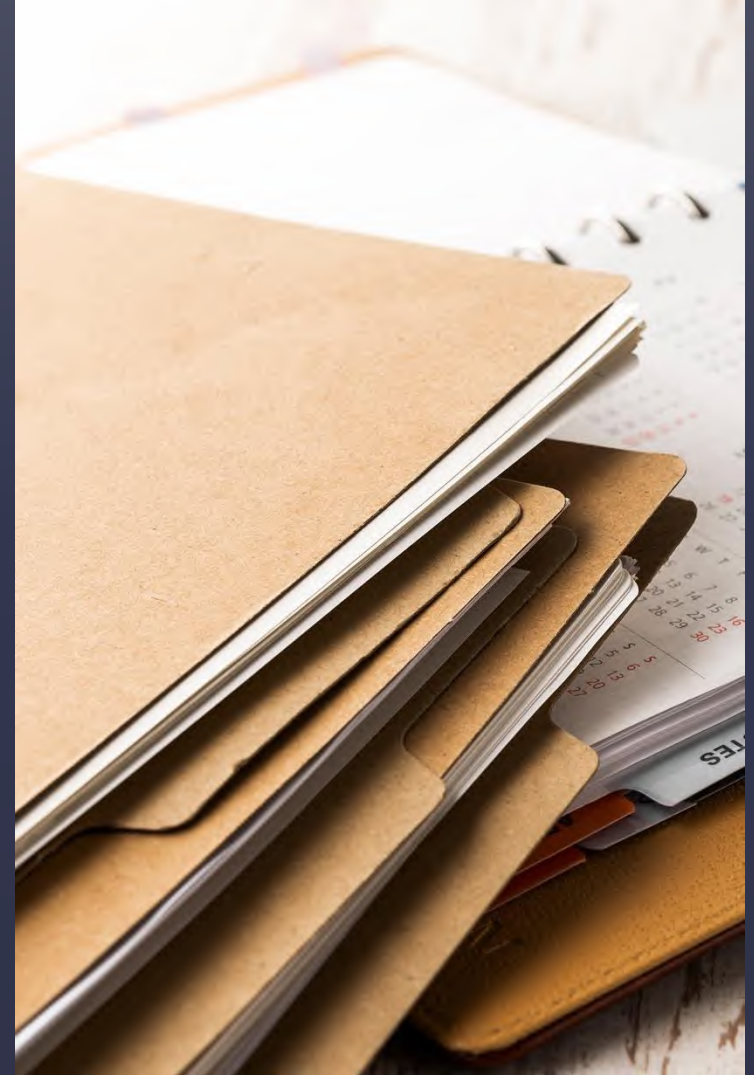
Review and determine top priorities.

- **Winnow output from the previous sessions and build consensus around organizational priorities (ideally, no more than 5)**
- **Create intermediate measurable goals and objectives for each priority**
- **Estimate timeframe for achieving each goal**

Implementation (cont.)

Sessions *Documents Produced*

- **Reports for each session, capturing details and summarizing**
- **Overview of priorities, including desired outcomes, intermediate goals, and timeframe**



Implementation (cont.)

Final Report *(to be shared)*

- Introduction and executive summary
- Background and appropriate historical information
- Overview of issues/questions discussed by participants, as well as methodology
- Overview of session(s)
- Each priority with the reason and ultimate desired outcome, as well as intermediate goals
- Timeframe for achieving goals
- Description of process for tracking progress



Questions?

Next Steps

What Are They?

Next Steps

Most Important Part!

Turn priorities into operations

- Have a reporting process that tracks progress in achieving priorities and intermediate goals
- Staff should develop work plans that specifically address attainment of goals and priorities
- Staff leadership should report progress to the Board on a regular basis



Next Steps (cont.)

Most
Important
Part!

- **At appropriate intervals, Board meetings should include an agenda item for reviewing priority progress**
- **Schedule periodic evaluation sessions whose sole purpose is to assess the progress in the strategic plan. Monthly is WAY too often and every other year is WAY too infrequent.**

Don't ...

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Don't start a strategic planning process when/if the organization is in crisis. Resolve that immediate situation first.
- Don't assume all strategic planning processes are the same. Each one must be designed to suit the needs of an organization at that time.
- Leave ego at the door.
- Strategic planning is not one and done. The process provides a roadmap, so use it to operate your organization.
- Don't let too much time pass between evaluations and don't wait until the end of one strategic plan to start thinking about another one.

Resources

Nonprofit Association of Washington

<https://nonprofitwa.org/learn/learning-library/fundamentals/>

Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations

Michael Allison/Jude Kaye

The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution: Real-Time Strategic Planning in a Rapid-Response World

David La Piana

Questions?