Memorandum 13-057 Strategic Planning

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TO: Mayor Wythe and Homer City Council
FROM: Walt Wrede
DATE: April 17, 2013
SUBJECT: Strategic Planning
Introduction
Mayor Wythe and I have had several discussions over the past few weeks about the need for the City to be more strategic and focused regarding how it goes about setting its priorities and establishing its Budget and Capital Improvement Program. She has alluded to that several times during recent meetings; most recently when we returned from Juneau and she commented about changing how the CIP List is developed and presented. In addition to that, staff members in the City Manager's office have been discussing internally how beneficial it would be if the City adopted a mission statement that clearly defined its mission and core responsibilities. The benefits of strategic planning and developing a mission statement are complimentary and it makes sense to discuss them at the same time.
The purpose of this discussion paper is to stimulate Council discussion about strategic planning and the City's core functions. This paper also included a rough, suggested action plan for achieving these goals. The action plan does not contain target or deliverable dates because the Council already has a lot on its plate and summer is fast approaching; a time when many of us will not want to be sitting in meetings. The idea is simply to generate Council discussion about the basic concept. If Council wants to move forward, a detailed plan can be developed and approved at subsequent meetings.
Problem Statement
The City of Homer has many adopted plans which all contain goals, objectives, and action items. They all require significant time, funding, and resource commitments if success is to be achieved. These plans include the Comprehensive Plan, Spit Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action Plan, Transportation Plan, Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, Town Center Plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Water and Sewer Master Plan, Land Allocation Plan, and Capital Improvement Plan. All of these plans are important components of the City's overall "master plan" and they contain goals and objectives that reflect Council and community priorities.
Ideally, these plans should be implemented together in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. It would be beneficial to establish priorities in a holistic manner keeping all of the adopted plans in mind. We (both the staff and the Council) work hard to achieve the goals in these plans but we don't do it in a prioritized way. We tend to focus on the goals that that are easily achievable or have political momentum behind them, and we do so as time, opportunity, and budget permits. We need to establish a hierarchy of priorities, and a plan to implement the plans, so to speak. Strategic planning and developing a tight mission statement can help immensely. If this is done correctly, the City budget and its CIP List should truly reflect Council and community priorities and help to keep us all focused on those priorities.
Benefits of Strategic Planning and a Mission statement
There are a wide variety of benefits associated with strategic planning and developing a mission statement. They include, but are not limited to:
• Budget Documents and the CIP List should reflect the City's core mission and its identified priorities
• The staff will have a clear message about Council priorities and can be more focused and efficient.
• Prevention of mission creep. The City is constantly asked to take on more and more programs and responsibilities. Clearly identifying the core mission and priorities will slow mission creep and unintended budget growth.
• Increased productivity, efficiency, and quality of service. It is often better to do a few things well than a bunch of things in mediocre fashion.
• Strategic planning and a mission statement will make it easier to respond to anticipated budget shortfalls in future years.
Suggested Action Plan
Step 1: Data and Information Collection. This step includes deliverables from the staff.
Draft Mission Statement . City Manager's Office

Report on All Capital Projects Current and Pending Public Works
Review of All Plans Including Goals Achieved,
and Goals to be Accomplished; a Report to Council Planning
Step 2: A workshop or workshops for presentation of deliverables and discussion
Step 3. Solicit input from Boards and Commissions re: City priorities and mission statement
Step 4: Town Hall Style Open House: Public input on core mission and priorities.
Step: 5: Strategic Planning Sessions. All day for several days. Could be facilitated by staff or a paid consultant.
Step 6: Draft Mission statement and Strategic Plan for public review. Hold Hearings.
Step 7. Approval.

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