

Draft Memo - Sauk County

Strategic Plan Proposal (Attachment B)

DATE: March 10, 2025

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FROM: Scott Freres, The Lakota Group
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RE: Sauk County Strategic Plan

As Sauk County embarks on the comprehensive planning process, integrating a Strategic Plan at the outset of their long-term planning process is a critical component of an effective and efficient process for aligning long-term goals with actionable short-term initiatives. This strategic plan aims to establish a foundational framework that guides the county's mission and operations over the next few years while seamlessly syncing with the broader objectives of the comprehensive plan.

The suggested strategic planning process begins with a county staff retreat designed to harness collective insights and set a collaborative tone. Through this retreat, department heads and Board Commissioners will engage in analyses like defining an operational vision, establishing a clear and effective mission statement, articulating objectives, and prioritizing strategies or initiatives through SWOT analysis and other tools. This effort will shape the strategic vision and mission, ensuring they reflect the county's operational aspirations and capacities for sustainable growth.

Strategic Plan Tasks

Task 1: Conduct an Internal Online LMS Survey

Conduct an online survey using Sauk County's Learning Management System (LMS) to engage approximately 650 staff members. This survey will gather input on individual and departmental needs, expectations, and perceptions to inform the strategic planning process.

Task 2: Review Survey Results

Collaborate with the Sauk County core project team to analyze the results of the LMS survey. This task will involve a detailed review to understand the staff's feedback and identify key themes and issues that need addressing in the strategic plan.

Task 3: Plan and Conduct a County Board and Department Heads Retreat:

Organize a retreat for Sauk County department heads and County Board to discuss strategic priorities, perform a SWOT analysis, and use **prioritization** exercises. This helps establish a shared understanding and collaborative framework for the strategic plan.

During the retreat, the working session will identify vision, mission statement, initiatives, priorities, and key performance indicators for potential strategic outcomes. These indicators will measure progress and guide decision-making processes effectively.

Task 4: Retreat and Engagement Summary:

After the retreat, share the outcomes and draft priorities with a broader group of staff and stakeholders for feedback. The team will use multiple feedback rounds to refine the strategic priorities and initiatives. The County Board will be provided with summaries for review and to share feedback through the project core team.

Task 5: Establish a Clear Vision and Mission for Sauk County:

Define the long-term outcomes Sauk County aims to achieve through this strategic plan. Ensure these outcomes reflect the community's aspirations, sustainability goals, and resilience objectives.

Task 6: Define and Craft Initiatives:

Based on the retreat outcomes and initial observations, craft a set of high-priority initiatives for the next **1-3-5** years. These might include categories such as Financial, Marketing, Operational, Community Engagement, Strategic Partnerships, and Technologies or thematic areas like Vibrant County, Sustainable County, High-Quality Governance, Safe County.

Task 7: Document and Communicate the Draft Plan:

Compile the insights from the retreat and feedback sessions into a draft strategic plan. This document should outline the vision, mission statement, strategic outcomes, priority initiatives, and monitoring strategies.

Task 8: Integrate Strategic Plan with Budget Cycle:

Ensure the strategic plan aligns with Sauk County's fiscal budget cycle and departmental work plans, facilitating efficient resource allocation and implementation.

Task 9: Strategic Plan Review

Conduct a final review session with department heads to finalize the strategic plan. Make necessary adjustments based on this feedback to ensure the plan aligns with Sauk County's operational goals, resources, and capacities.

If desired, launch the draft strategic plan through a public event or internal announcement.

Task 10: Approval Process

Present the final draft Strategic Plan to the Sauk County Board for draft review and approval. This presentation will include a high-level review of the strategic outcomes, priority initiatives, and more. Following the presentation, seek formal adoption of the plan by the County Board to ensure legal and operational implementation. Alternatively, this strategic plan can be integrated into the framework of the Comprehensive Plan's State of the County Report.

Overall Timeline

- Strategic Plan: 2 to 3 months (overlap with Comp Plan Phase 1)
- Comp Plan Phase 1: 6 months
- Comp Plan Phase 2: 6 months
- Comp Plan Phase 3: 6 months
- Total project duration: Approximately 20 months

This Strategic Plan process will run parallel to the kickoff of the County Comprehensive Plan and will require an all-day retreat, review meetings, and a county board update. The Strategic Plan may be approved separately by the Board or integrated into the Comprehensive Plan at the front end with the State of the County Report, as noted above.

Costs

- Strategic Plan Development: \$24,400
- Strategic Plan Reimbursables: \$1,500
- Additional In-Person Visits by Lakota (1-2 staff): \$1,500 each
- Additional Virtual Visits by Lakota (1-2 staff): \$350 each

This work task process should provide a clear pathway for developing Sauk County's strategic plan, ensuring all critical elements are addressed effectively.