

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2008

Present: Ald. Hess-Mahan (Chairman), Vance (Vice Chair), Albright, Danberg, Freedman, Johnson, Parker and President Baker

Absent: Ald. Linsky

Also Present: Ald. Mansfield, David Wilkinson (City Comptroller)

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. This meeting was convened to discuss and establish the committee's priorities for the 2008-2009 term.

President Baker welcomed new members of the committee and provided some background regarding its purpose, history and accomplishments. He thanked Ald. Vance for having suggested the creation of the committee to deal with long range planning issues, such as selection of a new clerk of the board and preparing a budget forecast, and for having chaired the committee since 2003. Ald. Hess-Mahan will succeed him as committee chairman and Ald. Vance will be the new vice chairman. Assistant Clerk, Shawna Sullivan, and City Comptroller, David Wilkinson will staff the Long Range Planning Committee as well as the Post Audit Committee, which is chaired by Ald. Albright.

The committee then discussed its priorities for the 2008-2009 term.

**1. Financial/Strategic Planning Initiatives**

Chairman Hess-Mahan invited David Wilkinson, the City Comptroller, to provide information concerning several financial and strategic planning initiatives.

**a. Development of strategic plan for City services for the next five years**

Mr. Wilkinson discussed the need for strategic planning. He noted that the city budget prepared by the administration is primarily an accounting document that provides information on line items in the budget but does not present service-oriented objectives that the city departments seek to achieve. Thus, while departments are accountable for assets they are not accountable for their goals or accomplishments. He further noted that the Government Finance Officers Association (GFAO) has recommended that local governments use some form of strategic planning to provide a long terms perspective for service delivery and budgeting to establish links between municipal spending and goals. He said that some of the necessary tasks involved would include goal setting and defining the means to monitor achievement. A copy of the GFAO *Recommended Budget Practice on the Establishment of Strategic Plans (2005)* is attached to this report.

**b. More effective integration of the five-year budget forecast with the budget and strategic plan**

Mr. Wilkinson noted that the five-year financial forecast prepared by the Mayor's office in consultation with the Comptroller is not effectively integrated with budget and strategic planning. By way of background, last term, the long range planning committee, the Comptroller and the Mayor's office worked together to develop a five-year financial forecast in order to assist the board with the budget review process and long-range financial planning. Mr. Wilkinson noted that one reason that the financial forecast is not integrated into budgetary and strategic planning is that the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor's office have a fundamental disagreement about the purpose for having a long range financial forecast. From the perspective of the Board, the financial forecast should be used not only to project the city's financial needs and resources but also to ensure accountability in meeting those needs, while the Mayor's office wants to retain flexibility and discretion to make decisions as to how those needs are met.

Ald. Johnson asked whether the city's department heads provide a monthly update on the financial forecast and review their progress to ensure accountability. Mr. Wilkinson said that although some departments, such as the Comptroller's office, review forecast salaries on a quarterly basis he is not aware of any formal monthly progress report or review by department heads. Ald. Vance noted that the school department's budget officer, Sandy Guryan, provides a monthly update to the school committee on budgeted expenses. Ald. Johnson suggested that the city's budget officer, Susan Burstein, should sit down with department heads to review the budget forecast and progress on a regular basis. Ald. Freedman asked what departments do to update the budget forecast and review progress. Mr. Wilkinson responded that there is no formal process. Ald. Danberg asked whether other municipalities have a formal budget forecast review process. Mr. Wilkinson stated that he was aware of at least one city, West Hartford, CT, which has a formal budget review process and noted that some city departments in Newton monitor data and update information on a regular basis, such as the Department of Public Works and the Police Department, which uses the Comstat system to track progress and information.

**c. Development of a plan of action for long term accounting and for possible initiatives to enable funding of post-retirement health benefits for City and Newton Public Schools employees**

Mr. Wilkinson noted that new reporting regulations require the recognition of the cost of post-retirement benefits for municipal employees instead of on a pay-as-you-go basis. As of July 1, the city must use an actuarial value which is \$30-32 million a year. He noted that the regulations do not change the way these costs must be funded, only that they be reported. He said that at some point state regulators may require further changes in reporting and accounting. The chairman of the Finance Committee has appointed Ald. Parker to chair a subcommittee on funding of post-retirement employee health benefits. Mr. Wilkinson stated that it is difficult to address both reporting and funding at the same time. He said that other communities are taking a more proactive approach and that it would be useful to be able to assure Moody's that Newton is taking steps toward funding post-retirement employee health benefits and that even a small

annual contribution would be a good start. In response to a question from Ald. Johnson, Mr. Wilkinson stated that Newton has partially funded retirement benefits since the 1980s. In response to a question from Ald. Freedman, he said that unfunded liability for post-retirement employee health benefits was approximately \$300 million. In response to another question from Ald. Johnson, Mr. Wilkinson stated that the cost of post-retirement health benefits were split 80/20 between the city and employees.

**d. Conduct internal control evaluation of City operations using controls similar to some other communities**

The committee discussed the use of performance metrics to measure how well departments were accomplishing their tasks. President Baker said that the committee could start by picking a particular department and task to measure, e.g., ask DPW how it tracks snow plowing. Ald. Hess-Mahan noted that Saco, Maine has developed goals and objectives and prepares an annual performance review of various tasks performed by city departments which is published in a brief report on its website ([www.sacomaine.gov](http://www.sacomaine.gov)). The performance review is tied into the city's strategic plan, mission statement, goal setting and budget planning. He has spoken to Saco's finance director, Lisa Parker, about the strategic planning and performance review process in Saco, and has set up a conference call with Ald. Johnson and David Wilkinson to discuss it. Saco has a strategic planning committee that meets for this purpose.

It was noted that the board cannot require the city department's to conduct a performance review, which is an administrative function performed by the executive branch. David Wilkinson suggested that the board could start by having the Comptroller's Office and the Clerk's Office try goal setting and performance review, since these departments are under the control and supervision of the board. President Baker suggested it would be good to provide a view into what goes on in the Comptroller's Office.

Ald. Vance asked about the membership of Saco's strategic planning committee. Ald. Hess-Mahan said he would find out from Ms. Parker.

Ald. Johnson noted that as part of strategic planning and performance review it is important to look at the goals set to see if they are the right ones. She noted that performance metrics have to be simple and easy to measure. The process must start, however, with developing a vision for the city's future. This raises three issues. The first issue is budget planning. In the context of a proposed override, she said departments need to give targets for the upcoming fiscal year with and without an override. She noted that in Programs and Services, as part of the budget review process, she has asked departments to state their targets, objectives and accomplishments. Some departments, such as Parks & Recreation, do a better job than others in presenting their goals and stating their progress toward achieving them. The second issue is "buy-in" from the executive branch regarding the need for visioning and strategic planning. She noted that it is too late to do this for the override and the planning for NNHS. She also noted that the School Committee is engaged in strategic planning. The third issue she raised is that the need for strategic planning and performance review is a city issue and not about Mayor Cohen.

Ald. Freedman asked about the Parks & Recreation budget presentation. Ald. Johnson noted that the budget books do not provide much information about what was promised and what was delivered by each department. When the Commissioner of Parks & Recreation makes her budget presentation, she provides statistics regarding her department's goals and accomplishments and describes what goals cannot be accomplished within the budget.

Ald. Danberg noted that this is a very good start. There was further discussion about goals and objectives that could be used in the budget planning process, such as whether the school department and the city need to maintain separate information technology departments. There was also a suggestion that the city look at energy cost and consumption per square foot in public buildings.

Ald. Parker agreed that it was too late to address NNHS and the override through strategic planning, but said it was not too late to have a conversation about strategic planning. With respect to visioning, he said the city needed to look at the consequences of the override. He suggested the board might want to look at how the override ballot question is presented, e.g., multiple questions and amounts or choices of what to fund with an override. He also noted that although Parks & Recreation gives a great presentation, some of its programs are not run very well, such as the CPA projects. Ald. Johnson noted that some CPA projects are being given to departments such as Parks & Recreation that are beyond the budget or ability of staff. Ald. Parker noted that the Building Commissioner asked for \$50,000 in CPA funds to study historic preservation of the city stables, which still has not been spent a year after the board approved the funds. He said the board needs to have accountability from city departments. Ald. Albright noted that sometimes departments promise to do more than they can accomplish. Ald. Vance noted that the board always raises issues regarding the maintenance of CPA projects and is told that it can be done. President Baker said that David Wilkinson would help both the Long Range Planning and Post Audit committees to ensure accountability on all these questions. Departments need to provide adequate staffing and accounting for their activities.

President Baker said that the override would be debated in other committees. He thought it was important to determine what the taxpayers are getting for their money. He noted that question will be dealt with in the short term through the override but that the long term required planning ahead for the city's needs. He suggested that there may be things which various departments are doing that could be shared with the committee. This could be an opportunity to ask the questions that do not ordinarily get asked.

Ald. Johnson suggested that the committee continue to pursue items 1.b. and 1.d. She said that Programs & Services would take up 1.a. She also said there was a need to connect the financial forecast and reality because of the override. The city needs to look at metrics and get information about performance out to the public and tell them what the city departments are doing and why. President Baker suggested putting together a set of goals for the committee and then figure out where to go from there.

Ald. Mansfield raised three issues. First, he asked about the connection between Post Audit and Long Range Planning (see discussion below at 3.b.). Second, he noted that the idea of

goal setting by departments and performance monitoring and review, i.e., a performance based budget, had been discussed years ago and nothing ever happened. Third, with respect to the override, he said the question to ask is: is this really what city departments would do if it does not pass or is it a political strategy?

Ald. Johnson said that in the short term the city needs to deal with FY2009-2010 and in the long term needs to deal with what the city will do going forward. President Baker noted that there is a systemic problem. He suggested looking at measures the board hasn't looked at before such as fires prevented or crimes prevented.

Ald. Freedman identified two issues: (1) the strategic planning and performance review process must be driven by the executive department; and (2) he would like to look at trended data about Newton, including surveys. Ald. Parker said that the city has survey data which can be obtained and data which shows that customer satisfaction has declined. Ald. Albright asked what good is performance data without information on staff, resources, etc. Ald. Freedman said that if we have some existing data it will at least give us a place to start. Ald. Johnson noted that any satisfaction survey depends on subjective factors and that to use it as a tool survey results must be paired with results from prior years. Ald. Vance asked about response rates. Ald. Parker said approximately 17,000 responses were received out of 30,000+ households that were sent surveys. President Baker suggested comparing the satisfaction surveys to what Saco's results. Ald. Parker noted that the Senior Center does intensive user surveys. Ald. Danberg said she is concerned that if each department creates their own survey the questions will only ask for data the departments want to hear and may not relate to performance. For example, the number of building fires could be going down because of a stricter fire code rather than the fire department's fire prevention efforts.

David Wilkinson noted that the budget is entirely an accounting document and not a planning document. He said he thought that department heads would like to be asked what they want funds for.

President Baker suggested that the committee find out more about the School Committee's strategic planning process.

**e. Process for further pursuit of Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations and Comprehensive Plan goals**

There was a brief discussion about what the city has done to follow up on the report and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Ald. Johnson asked whether the city had joined the state employee health plan (GIC). Ald. Hess-Mahan noted that the Municipal Partnership Act requires that 70% of the union representatives on the municipal employee committee must assent to join the GIC. At present, Newton is still negotiating with the public employees unions. David Wilkinson noted that Springfield and other cities that are in financial distress have the option of joining the GIC without consent from the unions.

The committee will continue its discussion of the BRC recommendations and Comprehensive Plan goals at future meetings.

## 2. Aldermanic support initiatives

### a. Review roles and responsibilities of assistant clerks and support staff

President Baker noted that David Olson has been a tremendous asset to the Clerk's office. He also noted that there will be some personnel changes in the near future and that it was therefore a good time to review the roles and responsibilities of assistant clerks and support staff. He thought that the combination of experienced and new staff could provide more support to the board. For example, the board relies on department heads for most information but might be able to get more research out of the Clerk's office.

Ald. Parker suggested using student interns to do research. Possible sources include local political science or government student programs, which give academic credits for internships. He noted that it will require some supervision from staff in the Clerk's office. He suggested interns could research specific issues and draft memos for the board. Ald. Mansfield emphasized that a student intern must be connected to a staff person who can supervise and serve as a liaison with the academic institution. Ald. Danberg said she thought this was a great idea. She noted that business schools also have internships. Ald. Johnson stated there was a need for succession planning within the Clerk's office and that a student intern would provide staff with an opportunity to develop their supervisory and management skills, i.e., mentoring the mentor. Ald. Vance noted that some of the best work product from the BRC came out of student intern research from the JFK School of Government.

### b. Volunteer citizens' commission with specialized skills and expertise to advise and assist Board in developing and dealing with various docket items

Ald. Vance said there was a need for independent research as a "reality check" on information provided by department heads and the administration. Based on his experience on both the school committee and board of aldermen he felt the board should have the resources to analyze such information. He said a volunteer citizen commission with specialized skills and expertise to advise the board in developing and dealing with business that comes before the board was worth exploring.

### c. Continuing education opportunities

Ald. Vance noted that Human Resources has funds available to support continuing education travel expenses. The National League of Cities holds conferences that the board might consider sending people to. He also noted that the Rappaport Institute at the JFK School of Government has seminars on municipal government.

Ald. Mansfield noted that the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) dues cover various functions and that Rob Gifford is a voting member. He also noted that the

Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) also holds events and conferences. He suggested the Clerk's office inform aldermen when and where there are MAPC and MMA events that might be of interest.

Ald. Danberg noted that presenters at the MMA annual meeting are always willing to share information and talk about what they are doing in their communities. She suggested that the Long Range Planning committee list some topics and ask aldermen about their interest and possibly set up forums.

Ald. Albright suggested brown bag lunches to share information with representatives from city departments or other communities. Ald. Johnson noted that some aldermen have time constraints that prevent them from participating during the day.

Ald. Mansfield suggested on nights when the business before the board is relatively light and the meetings are likely to end early the committee could schedule a presentation to follow first call. President Baker said that the logistics involved might make it difficult.

Ald. Freedman suggested that aldermen who have specific interests in certain areas could arrange something for themselves. President Baker said that he would talk to the Clerk about resources for continuing education opportunities.

Ald. Johnson suggested having department heads come to committee meetings to talk about new initiatives and share information about the operations of their departments.

Ald. Hess-Mahan asked Ald. Danberg to look into arranging a presentation for the next committee meeting in March.

### **3. Board of Aldermen management initiatives**

#### **a. Possible re-organization/delegation of responsibilities of committees**

President Baker discussed issues relating to the organization and/or delegation of responsibilities of board committees. He noted there were barely enough aldermen to serve as chair and/or vice chair on each of the standing committees. He said that the Traffic Council had recently been reconstituted and given more responsibility. He also noted that he and Ald. Mansfield are working on revising Land Use committee rules to allow for additional public hearings each month to relieve congestion in the schedule. The schedule for Land Use public hearings was originally set to allow all of the aldermen to attend.

President Baker asked the committee to think about the structure and organization of the committees. He noted that former Ald. Basham had worked for some time on reducing the number of committees. He emphasized that substantive committees require a critical mass of aldermen to participate in order to properly vet items. Without proper vetting, every item would go on second call for discussion on the floor of the board. He also noted there cannot be too few

members on each committee because it would tend to concentrate power within a group of just a few aldermen.

Ald. Johnson suggested merging Real Property Reuse with either Land Use or Public Facilities. The committee discussed past efforts to eliminated Real Property Reuse, in which it was noted that the committee was originally created so that items related to the reuse of city-owned property would not have to be referred to three different committees.

Ald. Danberg noted that other than Land Use, the committees that meet on Tuesday do not meet frequently enough to provide continuity and require that members must become reacquainted with subject matter at every meeting.

**b. Coordination of Long Range Planning and Post Audit committees**

President Baker noted that the Long Range Planning Committee and the Post Audit committee had related responsibilities with respect to the effective implementation of board actions. He said that he intended to coordinate the activities of the Long Range Planning and Post Audit committees and, to that end, had assigned City Comptroller David Wilkinson and Assistant Clerk Shawna Sullivan to staff both committees.

**4. Aldermanic communications**

**a. Efforts to increase and improve communications by Board to the public**

President Baker noted that the board and NewTV were working on short video presentations by each alderman to be posted on the aldermanic website. In addition he noted that the city's monthly community newsletter has a section on the board of aldermen. He also noted that that board has its own webpage on the city website with a format that was different from city departments.

There was a discussion about how the Board could do a better communicating with the public through the media. President Baker noted his frustration that the media had not covered the Board's goals and accomplishments as reported in the president's annual report. Ald. Hess-Mahan noted that it is helpful to issue a short press release to the media with important information that the Board wants to publicize. Ald. Johnson suggested having the Clerk meet with the editors of the Newton TAB and/or Globe West to come up with protocols for publicizing information about the Board's activities. Ald. Danberg agreed that it made sense to assign a specific person, such as David Olson, as a spokesperson to disseminate information to the media and respond to inquiries about the Board's activities.

Ald. Mansfield suggested that NewTV should air committee meetings as well as meetings of the full board. President Baker noted various logistical issues with videotaping and airing committee meetings involving disruption and inconvenience caused by lights and video equipment in small committee meeting rooms compared with the Chamber. He reiterated some



of the issue involved in arranging to air and simulcast the meeting with the Mayor in Room 209 in an overflow room for members of the public.

President Baker said he will continue to discuss the feasibility of videotaping and airing committee meetings with NewTV.

**b. Communication between the Board and the Mayor's office**

The committee discussed the fact that on several recent occasions, the Mayor's office had provided important information about Newton North and other subjects to the media prior to distributing it to the Board. President Baker said that, after speaking with Jeremy Solomon, the Mayor's office had made conscious efforts to inform the Board prior to making such information available to the media. Members of the committee expressed concern that communication between the Mayor's office and the Board still needs improvement.

Ald. Danberg noted that improving communications about emergency situations or major crimes should be easier to fix than other kinds of information. Ald. Albright noted that at a committee meeting to discuss emergency preparedness, the police department representatives were not particularly interested in having to keep aldermen in the information loop. Ald. Danberg noted that sometimes even the Mayor's office does not receive timely information. She noted that when she witnessed a traffic accident that downed power lines and knocked out power in Newton Centre she called the Mayor's office on her cell phone and discovered he was not informed about it until 20 minutes or so later. She said processes to inform aldermen about important information should be put in place and that protocols for informing the Board should be put in writing. Ald. Vance noted that in his experience the School Committee is generally better informed about school related information. He talked about using a telephone chain to share important information.

Ald. Hess-Mahan said that he had called earlier in the day to invite the Mayor's communications director Jeremy Solomon to this meeting to discuss these problems but that he had a scheduling conflict. He suggested inviting Mr. Solomon to the next meeting to have a discussion about improving communications between the Mayor's office and the Board. Ald. Johnson noted that there have already been multiple conversations with Mr. Solomon and that, if he comes to the next meeting, he should be prepared to offer proposed solutions to these communications issues.

Ald. Hess-Mahan said he would talk to Mr. Solomon about these issues and invite him to come to the next meeting with possible solutions to address the problems raised at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alderman Ted Hess-Mahan, Chair



## RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

### **Recommended Budget Practice on the Establishment of Strategic Plans (2005) (BUDGET)[1]**

**Background.** Strategic planning is a comprehensive and systematic management tool designed to help organizations assess the current environment, anticipate and respond appropriately to changes in the environment, envision the future, increase effectiveness, develop commitment to the organization's mission and achieve consensus on strategies and objectives for achieving that mission. Strategic planning is about influencing the future rather than simply preparing or adapting to it. The focus is on aligning organizational resources to bridge the gap between present conditions and the envisioned future. While it is important to balance the vision of community with available resources, the resources available should not inhibit the vision. The organization's objectives for a strategic plan will help determine how the resources available can be tied to the future goals. An important complement to the strategic planning process is the preparation of a long-term financial plan, prepared concurrently with the strategic plan. A government should have a financial planning process that assesses the long-term financial implications of current and proposed policies, programs, and assumptions. A financial plan illustrates the likely financial outcomes of particular courses of actions.

Strategic planning for public organizations is based on the premise that leaders must be effective strategists if their organizations are to fulfill their missions, meet their mandates, and satisfy their constituents in the years ahead. Effective strategies are needed to cope with changed and changing circumstances, and leaders need to develop a coherent and defensible context for their decisions. National Advisory Committee on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB) Recommended Practices provide a framework for financial management, which includes strategic planning.

**Recommendation.** The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that all governmental entities use some form of strategic planning to provide a long-term perspective for service delivery and budgeting, thus establishing logical links between authorized spending and broad organizational goals. While there is not a single best approach to strategic planning, a sound strategic planning process will include the following key steps:

- (1) Initiate the Strategic Planning Process.* It is essential that the strategic plan be initiated and conducted under the authorization of the organization's chief executive (CEO), either appointed or elected. Inclusion of other stakeholders is critical, but a strategic plan that is not supported by the CEO has little chance of influencing an organization's future.
- (2) Prepare a Mission Statement.* The mission statement should be a broad but clear statement of purpose for the entire organization. One of the critical uses of a mission statement is to help an organization decide what it should do and, importantly, what it should not be doing. The organization's goals, strategies, programs and activities should logically cascade from the mission statement.
- (3) Assess Environmental Factors.* A thorough analysis of the government's internal and external environment sets the stage for an effective strategic plan. A frequently used methodology for conducting an environmental assessment is a "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis. Strengths and weaknesses relate to the internal environment, while analysis of opportunities and threats focuses on the environment external to the organization.

Local, regional, national, and global factors affecting the community should be analyzed, including (a) economic and financial factors, (b) demographic trends, (c) legal or regulatory issues, (d) social and cultural trends, (e) physical (e.g., community development), (f) intergovernmental issues, and (g) technological change.

Also, a government should develop mechanisms to identify stakeholder concerns, needs, and priorities. Among the mechanisms that might be employed to gather such information are (a) public hearings, (b) surveys, (c) meetings of community leaders and citizens interest groups, (d) meetings with government employees, and (e) workshops for government administrative staffs and the legislative body.

*(4) Identify Critical Issues.* Once the environmental analysis has been completed, the next step is to use the resulting information to identify the most critical issues. Issue recognition should reflect stakeholder concerns, needs, and priorities as well as environmental factors affecting the community.

*(5) Agree on a Small Number of Broad Goals.* These written goals should address the most critical issues facing the community. It may be necessary to define priorities among goals to improve their usefulness in allocating resources.

*(6) Develop Strategies to Achieve Broad Goals.* Strategies relate to ways that the environment can be influenced (internal or external) to meet broad goals. A single strategy may relate to the achievement of more than one goal. There should be a relatively small number of specific strategies developed to help choose among services and activities to be emphasized. Use of flowcharts or strategy mapping is encouraged in the design of strategies. To optimize the success of these strategies, opportunities should be provided for input from those who will be affected.

*(7) Create an Action Plan.* The action plan describes how strategies will be implemented and includes activities and services to be performed, associated costs, designation of responsibilities, priority order, and time frame involved for the organization to reach its strategic goals. There are various long-range planning mechanisms available to enable organizations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action.

*(8) Develop Measurable Objectives.* Objectives are specific, measurable results to be achieved. Objectives and their timelines are guidelines, not rules set in stone. Objectives should be expressed as quantities, or at least as verifiable statements, and ideally would include timeframes.

*(9) Incorporate Performance Measures.* Performance measures provide an important link between the goals, strategies, actions and objectives stated in the strategic plan and the programs and activities funded in the budget. Performance measures provide information on whether goals and objectives are being met.

*(10) Obtain Approval of the Plan.* Policymakers should formally approve the strategic plan so it can provide the context for policy decisions and budget decisions.

*(11) Implement the Plan.* Organization stakeholders should work together to implement the plan. Moreover, the strategic plan should drive the operating budget, the capital plan, and the government's other financial planning efforts

*(12) Monitor Progress.* Progress toward planned goals should be monitored at regular intervals. Organizations should develop a systematic review process to evaluate the extent to which strategic goals have been met.

(13) *Reassess the Strategic Plan.* Many external factors, such as the national or regional economy, demographic changes, statutory changes, legislation, mandates, and climate/environmental changes, may affect the environment and thus achievement of stated goals. To the extent that external events have long-range impacts, goals, strategies and actions may need to be adjusted to reflect these changes. New information about stakeholder needs or results may also require changes to the plan. It is desirable to minimize the number of adjustments to longer-term goals in order to maintain credibility. However, governments should conduct interim reviews every one to three years, and more comprehensive strategic planning processes every five to ten years, depending on how quickly conditions change. Performance measure results need to be reviewed more frequently than the strategic plan.

[1] Key elements of this recommended practice are drawn from *Recommended Budget Practices: A Framework for Improved State and Local Governmental Budgeting* of the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting and from GFOA's recommended practice on "Performance Measurement: Using Performance Measurement for Decision Making – Updated Performance Measures"

Approved by the GFOA Executive Board, March 2005