

Final Report for Strategic Planning Services
November 2008



Utilities Department
The City of Las Cruces
Las Cruces, NM

Submitted by:



DMBE-Certified Woman Business Enterprise, Certificate Number 650963
P.O. Box 1300
Midlothian, VA 23113
(804) 627-3194 Tel
(804) 897-0093 Fax
www.zelosinc.com

Table of Contents

Approach	3
Draft Strategic Plan.....	4
Critical Issues.....	5
Critical Issues Mapped to Initiatives.....	10
Alignment.....	11
Approach for Finalizing the Plan	12
Approach for Implementation	12
Appendix A: Sample Charters for Implementation and Ad Hoc Teams.....	14
Appendix B: Ad Hoc Team Charter Template	16
Appendix C: Performance Data Collection and Reporting Template	17
Appendix D: Utilities Board Priorities for Strategic Plan – 11/13/08	18

Approach

On November 13, 2008, the Utilities Board participated in a facilitated training session to:

- Review the City's planning efforts
- Become familiar with the Utilities Department planning process, and
- Provide input into the Utilities Department strategic plan

On November 14, 2008, the Utilities Department leadership met to incorporate the Commissioners input into the plan and to discuss an implementation strategy.



Products and Services		Customers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water Services• Wastewater Services• Gas Services• Solid Waste Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utility Customers in the Las Cruces Area	
Mission		
Providing reliable, safe and cost-effective utility services to customers in the Las Cruces area		
Values – City-wide Values		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Integrity2. Excellence3. Customer Focus4. Fiscal Responsibility5. Goal-oriented Management		

Critical Issues

Internal Issues:

1. Recruitment & retention of qualified employees – current needs & future requirements
2. Adequate/appropriate funding
3. Bureaucratic hurdles (internal to the City including interdepartmental)
4. Ability to build infrastructure at the rate of growth and development as well as maintain existing infrastructure
5. Maintain compliance with new standards and new issues that may not be identified
6. Safety and education of employees and the general public
7. Clarify the customer base and their impact on systems (i.e., customers outside the City of Las Cruces)

External Issues:

8. Managing the public's perception that capacity is not adequate
9. Customer base wanting more for less – increasing expectations
10. Reliable, sustainable supply
11. Political hurdles including State and Federal requirements
12. Rates that reflect actual costs
13. Economic downturn could slow development as well as customers' ability to pay
14. Possibility of a future "no growth" community stance

GOAL 1.0 (Typically 3-5 goals)	OUTCOME MEASURES & Target (At least one per goal)	OBJECTIVES (Typically 3-5 objectives per goal)	INTERMEDIATE MEASURES & Target (At least one per objective)	INITIATIVES AND TASKS (Initiatives and Tasks can impact one or more objectives)	FISCAL YEAR (The year the initiative will begin)	ESTIMATED COST (Estimate the resources required to fund the initiative)
1.0 Ensure access to sustainable utility services	-# of system failures that cause interruptions of service	1.1 Provide quality infrastructure by maintaining existing and provide for growth	-Milestones met in the rehab plans -Milestones met for master plans	1a Long term plan for rehab 1b Continue to develop master plans in coordination with private sector / other agency development plans 1c Continue to develop 40-year water plan 1d Develop surface water treatment implementation plan 1e Research State and Federal funding sources 1f Comprehensive financial plan (cost of service updates, impact fee updates, service charges) 1g Development, implementation and update of the organizational structure (Mercer Study) 1h Develop plan for utility facility needs 1i Resolve RGNGA issues 1j Track and monitor legislative and regulatory activity		
	-# of times high pressure gas system is within 10% of intermediate pressure	1.2 Identify, plan and obtain future supplies to meet projected demands	-Milestones met in 40-year water plan and long term gas plan			
	-Meet targeted fund balances -Development fees meet debt service	1.3 Identify and obtain funding requirements -Appropriate rates and charges -Appropriate development fees -Additional funding sources	-% comparison of Costs of Service Studies to actual outcomes -Milestones met in financial plan			
	-# of times water system gets into the production capacity threshold	1.4 Identify and obtain necessary resources to ensure sustainability (Manpower, equipment, facilities)	-Milestones met for facilities plan -# of emergency procurements			
		1.5 Protect existing resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply management, conservation and reclamation • Source water • Vulnerability and security 				

GOAL 2.0 (Typically 3-5 goals)	OUTCOME MEASURES & Target (At least one per goal)	OBJECTIVES (Typically 3-5 objectives per goal)	INTERMEDIATE MEASURES & Target (At least one per objective)	INITIATIVES AND TASKS (Initiatives and Tasks can impact one or more objectives)	FISCAL YEAR (The year the initiative will begin)	ESTIMATED COST (Estimate the resources required to fund the initiative)
2.0 Make the Utilities Department a career destination	-Turnover rate <i>(you may want to segment out turnover rate for hard to fill positions)</i> -Average number of qualified applications per position -% of #1 offers accepted	2.1 Provide professional learning and growth opportunities	-% of employees that increase certification / qualifications while in their jobs -Average training hours per employee and number receiving training	2a Implement recommendations of the organizational study including use of a designated human resource staff person (Mercer Study) 2b Maximize the use of individual development plans to include increasing training and certifications 2c Conduct exit interviews within Utilities 2d Partner with universities and other higher learning organizations for creative recruitment 2e Participate in job fairs targeted to need 2f Conduct focus groups or survey staff to determine valued flexibilities and offer as appropriate 2g Reward and recognize the right stuff 2h Establish career paths even within class and grade 2i Establish a mentorship program 2j Ensure employees have the resources required to do the job		
		2.2 Provide a competitive compensation package	-Info from class and comp study related to utilities			
		2.3 Increase access to workforce flexibilities	-# of workforce flexibilities available -Participation rates for available flexibilities			
		2.4 Market / Promote / Brand the Utilities Department	-# of new hires resulting from targeted recruitment efforts			
		2.5 Recruit for good fit	-% of employees leaving or reassigned during probation period			
		2.6 Create a positive productive work environment				

GOAL 3.0 (Typically 3-5 goals)	OUTCOME MEASURES & Target (At least one per goal)	OBJECTIVES (Typically 3-5 objectives per goal)	INTERMEDIATE MEASURES & Target (At least one per objective)	INITIATIVES AND TASKS (Initiatives and Tasks can impact one or more objectives)	FISCAL YEAR (The year the initiative will begin)	ESTIMATED COST (Estimate the resources required to fund the initiative)
3.0 Deliver services in a professional manner	-Complaints by category	3.1 Equip staff with the skills to be good problem solvers / negotiators	-# of customized scenario trainings / # trained -Associated complaints	3a Provide departmental training in utility customer service 3b Educate staff to increase front line decision making (Establish blue and red rules) 3c Create a formalized complaint resolution system 3d Explore the possibility of provide pre-design services for utilities (for fee) 3e Develop education tools (to include checklists) for customers 3f Develop accountability system for customer service 3g Increase opportunities and meaningful methods to engage the public (make it stick)		
		3.2 Establish or revamp standards for key processes and communicate them to customers and stakeholders	-# of standards set -% or ability to meet those standards			
		3.3 Empower staff to make decisions	-# of job aids developed to assist customers -# of services targeted for staff training on Utilities policies and procedures			
		3.4 Inform and educate customers and stakeholders				

GOAL 4.0 (Typically 3-5 goals)	OUTCOME MEASURES & Target (At least one per goal)	OBJECTIVES (Typically 3-5 objectives per goal) NOTE: CHANGE THE WORDING TO BE POSITIVE	INTERMEDIATE MEASURES & Target (At least one per objective)	INITIATIVES AND TASKS (Initiatives and Tasks can impact one or more objectives)	FISCAL YEAR (The year the initiative will begin)	ESTIMATED COST (Estimate the resources required to fund the initiative)
4.0 Deliver utility services in an environmentally responsible manner	-# of opportunities implemented from environmental audit	4.1 Promote community awareness through outreach and education	-# of recycle drop off sites -# of citizen educational /awareness events by type	4a Expand website content 4b Offer workshops 4c Brochures & media 4d Develop recommended guidelines and specs for environmental landscaping/nature-scaping 4e Increase landscaping and nature-scaping for utility projects		
	-Per capita water use data	4.2 Minimize environmental and cultural disturbance and improve aesthetics in utility projects in a cost effective manner	-% of total projects that reflect 4.2	4f Establish an environmental stewardship project for staff that teaches concepts and delivers results		
	-Recycled material as a proportion of total tonnage	4.3 Promote environmental stewardship by staff	-#of measures implemented by type	4g Establish a project to explore alternatives for environmental requirements for contracted services		
		4.4 Incorporate environmental practices into contracted services	-% of contracts containing environmental requirements	4h Increase drop off centers 4i Conduct an environmental audit to determine cost-effective opportunities		
				4j Identify incentives for contractors for the use of environmental products, services and practices 4k Educate the public on the value 4l Evaluate existing and new environmental efforts upstream and downstream for true environmental value		

Critical Issues Mapped to Initiatives Error! Bookmark not defined.

Critical Issues	Supporting Initiatives
1. Recruitment & retention of qualified employees – current needs & future requirements	
2. Adequate/appropriate funding	
3. Bureaucratic hurdles (internal to the City including interdepartmental)	
4. Ability to build infrastructure at the rate of growth and development as well as maintain existing infrastructure	
5. Maintain compliance with new standards and new issues that may not be identified	
6. Safety and education of employees and the general public	
7. Clarify the customer base and their impact on systems (i.e., customers outside the City of Las Cruces)	
8. Managing the public’s perception that capacity is not adequate	
9. Customer base wanting more for less – increasing expectations	
10. Reliable, sustainable supply	
11. Political hurdles including State and Federal requirements	
12. Rates that reflect actual costs	
13. Economic downturn could slow development as well as customers’ ability to pay	
14. Possibility of a future “no growth” community stance	

AlignmentError! Bookmark not defined.

City Goal	Aligned Utilities Goal
1. Create a work environment through which we are recognized as an employer of choice	2.0 Make the Utilities Department a career destination
2. Provide a safe and secure community, now and for generations to come	2.0 Make the Utilities Department a career destination 4.0 Deliver utility services in an environmentally responsible manner
3. Preserve, enhance and celebrate our unique hometown identity	1.0 Ensure access to sustainable utility services 4.0 Deliver utility services in an environmentally responsible manner
4. Encourage, develop and diversify for a vibrant local economy	1.0 Ensure access to sustainable utility services 3.0 Deliver services in a professional manner 4.0 Deliver utility services in an environmentally responsible manner
5. Sustain and enrich opportunities to enjoy life	1.0 Ensure access to sustainable utility services 4.0 Deliver utility services in an environmentally responsible manner
6. Maximize our City's resources through creativity and innovation to become a high-performing organization	1.0 Ensure access to sustainable utility services 2.0 Make the Utilities Department a career destination 4.0 Deliver utility services in an environmentally responsible manner
7. Deliver superior service to our citizens, ever doing our utmost to treat you right	3.0 Deliver services in a professional manner

Approach for Finalizing the Plan

Prepare the plan for final adoption by the Utilities Board:

- Map the initiatives to the critical issues
- Ensure the plan is understandable for all stakeholders
- Distribute to the Utilities Board members for review and suggestions for Outcome Measures
- Schedule Utilities Board agenda item for plan adoption

Official Launch

- Identify the various audiences for the plan and determine which parts to share with each audience, i.e., goals & objectives only; goals, objectives & initiatives; entire plan with measures
- Message should include components of how the plan will build on an already good organization – “Good to Great” concept and “What’s in it for me?”
- NOTE: We talked about William Bridges’ “Managing Change” model. This model references that people cannot reach a new beginning until they let go of the past and transition to something that is different. This takes time and leadership support.
- Every employee should receive a copy of the abbreviated plan. A personal introduction by the Director and/or key leadership staff. There was discussion about the possibility of an open house with Utility Board members present. This might require multiple meetings or a specific timeframe to accommodate all schedules. Consider an easy to read, branded format for the distributed version.

Approach for Implementation

Systems and structure:

- The Utilities Board will receive information from the Implementation Team through Board meetings and work sessions
- The Department of Utilities leadership will oversee the plan’s implementation
- Identify roles and responsibilities for Implementation Team members (See Appendix A for a sample charter template.)

Prioritize initiatives:

- The Implementation Team should prioritize initiatives based on the Utilities Board priorities and initiatives that could produce some easy, high profile success stories. (See Appendix D for a listing of the Board’s Priorities.)
- Create a timeline or roadmap for implementation

Employee engagement:

- Ensure all staff, including new employees, can articulate their contribution to the plan
- Develop collateral to support the plan (examples: mouse pads printed with mission and goals; mugs; key chains, caps, etc.)
- Develop a communication plan to keep the plan visible
- Utilize employees in ad hoc teams to participate in the implementation of initiatives (This will require that supervisors and managers free up staff to participate in ad hoc teams for the “good of the whole” and not just for the “good of the section.”)
- Publicly recognize staff whose actions and participation support the strategic plan

Keep it alive, fresh and visible:

- At a minimum, quarterly:
 - Report performance measures data. Phase this in as systems are created for data collection and analysis where they do not currently exist. (See Appendix C as a tool for clarifying performance measures.)
 - Use charts to display data. A picture is worth a thousand words and can also help to identify trends and patterns
 - Report progress to key stakeholders including staff
- Annually review the plan and make adjustments as required

Appendix A: Sample Charters for Implementation and Ad Hoc Teams

Charter – Implementation Team

Introduction: (Background)

Purpose:

Members of the Implementation Team will oversee the execution, monitoring and maintenance of the strategic plan. The team will consist of:

(Team membership)

This document will detail the roles and responsibilities for the Implementation team.

Roles and Responsibilities for the Implementation Team:

Plan Owner:

- Serves as the head of the Implementation Team
- Chief promoter of the strategic plan
- Empowers others in the structure to have access to information and resources to successfully execute the initiatives of the plan

Plan Coordinator:

- Manages team logistics to include meeting coordination, agendas, progress reports, etc.
- Coordinates and manages the information within the team and outside of the team as required
- Briefs the Plan Owner

Team Members:

- Support and promote the concepts and procedures associated with the strategic plan and its implementation
- Prioritize strategies and develop a roadmap for implementation.
- Identify appropriate ad hoc teams for the purpose of initiative implementation. Work with ad hoc teams to provide needed guidance and support. Ad hoc teams will report progress to the Implementation team.
- Champion the implementation of the strategic plan.

Required Action:

Action
A. Participate in Implementation Team meetings (Frequency TBD)
B. Prioritize strategies for implementation
C. Develop a roadmap with timelines for implementation
D. Develop a reporting, monitoring structure for tracking progress
E. Identify and work with ad hoc teams for the development of project plans to operationalize strategies

Appendix B: Ad Hoc Team Charter Template

Goal _____ Objective _____ Initiative _____

1. Introduction / Background

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Ad Hoc team is to:

3. Roles & Responsibilities for Team

Implementation Team Member:

Team Leader:

Team Members:

(Other):

4. Membership

The membership for the team will be:

5. Deliverables

6. Timeline

7. Limitations

8. Governance / Ground Rules

- a. Membership shall not exceed _____ people
- b. Decisions will be made only when there is a quorum _____
- c. The team will meet on a _____ basis
- d. Others

Appendix C: Performance Data Collection and Reporting Template

Measure	
Accountable Individual	
Data Reported	
Definition of Measure	
Data Collection Lead	
Data Point(s) of Contact	
Key Terms/ Definitions	
Measurement Process	
Reporting Frequency and Instructions	
Comments	

Appendix D: Utilities Board Priorities for Strategic Plan – 11/13/08

The Board identified their main areas of focus for strategic guidance would be
Goal 1.0: Ensure access to sustainable utility services

Specific priorities identified:

1. Ongoing acquisition of water rights, particularly surface water
 - a. Explore or research the opportunity to buy farm land to obtain water rights
2. Continue surface water treatment
3. EBID – continue dialogue
4. Increase cooperative efforts to obtain resources (i.e., equipment for generating green sources of electricity)
5. Improve the quality of life for customers and stakeholders
6. Brand and promote the Utilities Department
 - a. Consider the Mercer Study recommendation for hiring a Public Relations staff member
7. Deliberate educational effort to increase the public's awareness about the water supply
 - a. 40-year water plan
 - b. Partner with the university
 - c. Clear, understandable message