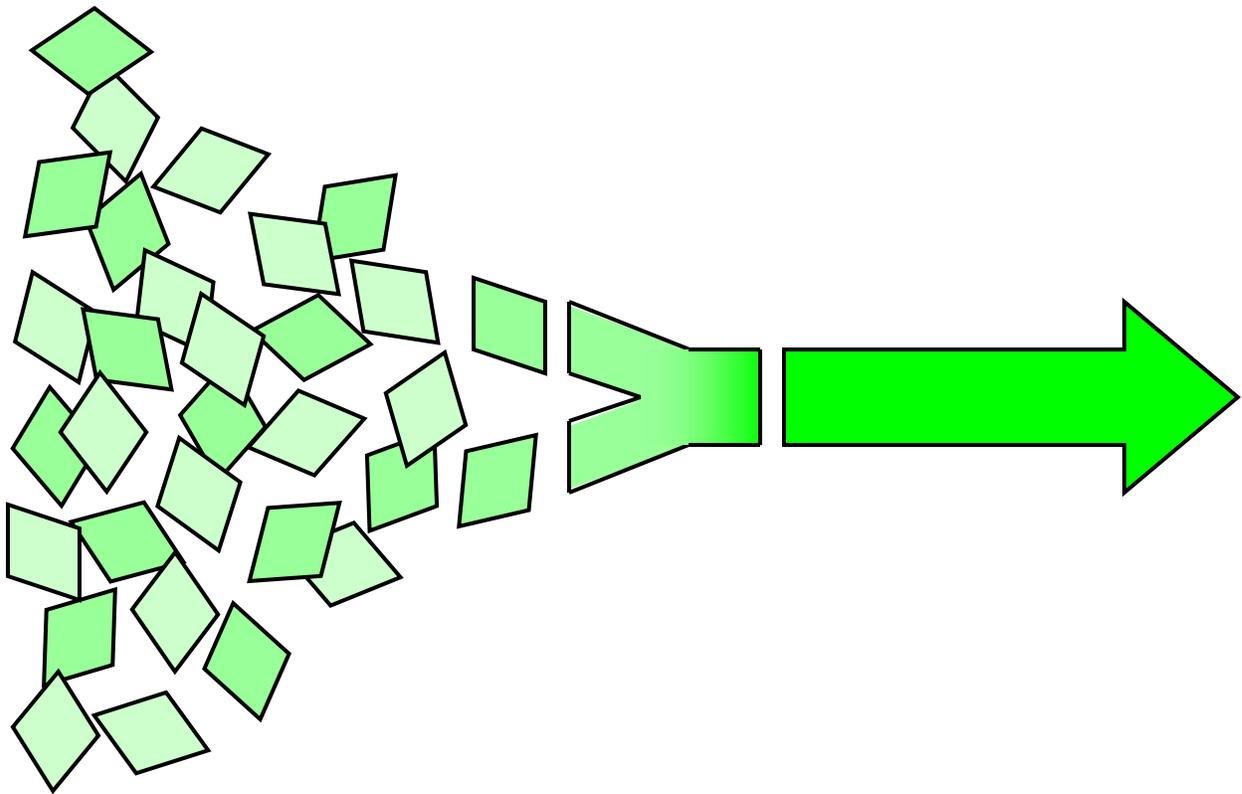


2007 STRATEGIC PLAN



ADOPTED
OCTOBER 22, 2007

2007 STRATEGIC PLAN

OCTOBER 22, 2007

CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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OVERVIEW OF THE 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic planning is a process used by an organization to systematically consider how its policies, special projects, and ongoing programs should be guided by overarching strategies to achieve organizational success in light of expected future conditions. Just as CCRPC adopted the 2006 Chittenden County Regional Plan to promote the success of Chittenden County, CCRPC has adopted this *Strategic Plan* to promote its own organizational success.¹

Organizations undertake strategic planning for different reasons.² CCRPC prepared its 2007 *Strategic Plan* principally to

- ◆ Focus CCRPC's strategic direction,
- ◆ Build common awareness among Commissioners and staff, and
- ◆ Build greater member dedication and organizational stature/prestige/trust.³

Of the many approaches for undertaking strategic planning, CCRPC chose to do "goals-based" strategic planning.⁴ This process first considered:

- ◆ CCRPC's desirable future goals (the Definition of Organizational Success on page 2) and
- ◆ The likely future conditions CCRPC will experience (the SWOT analysis that CCRPC performed at its January 2007 meeting).⁵

Based on these considerations, the Commission then prepared 18 strategies (see pages 3-5). These strategies are intended to guide CCRPC when the Commission develops and implements policies and actions in order to promote CCRPC's success as a regional planning organization.⁶

Some organizations choose to implement their strategic plans through a rigorously prepared action program that elaborates in detail who is to do what, where, when, and how. Because CCRPC is not a large or complex organization, CCRPC chose to undertake a more straightforward approach to implementing its *Strategic Plan*. In addition to a comprehensive review and revision of CCRPC's core organizational documents (such as the Mission Statement, Bylaws, and adopted policies) in light of the *Strategic Plan's* strategies, Commissioners and Staff will consult the *Strategic Plan's* strategies when

- ◆ Making future decisions, such as preparing future Work Programs (propose, select, and design projects and programs), undertaking Committee work assignments, developing new policies, and making decisions at Commission and Committee meetings.
- ◆ Implementing each task in the annual Work Program and working on other activities.

¹ The special character of strategic planning is described in Appendix 3 (page A-5).

² The potential benefits of undertaking strategic planning are described in Appendix 2 (page A-3).

³ The Commission's assessment of strategic planning's potential benefits is described in Appendix 6 (page A-14).

⁴ Goals-based strategic planning is described in Appendix 4 (page A-7) and the process and schedule CCRPC used are described in Appendix 1 (page A-2).

⁵ The tabulation of a survey of municipalities and others regarding CCRPC's performance is provided in Appendix 7 (page A-16) and the results of the SWOT analysis are provided in Appendix 8 (page A-19).

⁶ The distinctive features of a planning organization are described in Appendix 5 (page A-12).

DEFINITION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

CCRPC defines its success as

- ◆ Embodying effectiveness, leadership, relevance, and trust;
- ◆ Serving the region as a key forum for collaborative decision making; and
- ◆ Earning the public's respect.

For CCRPC to be successful, Commissioners and staff will

- ◆ Be dedicated to CCRPC's mission;
- ◆ Be purposeful in *what* activities CCRPC undertakes and *how* CCRPC performs them;
- ◆ Be flexible and nimble when appropriate,
- ◆ Be willing to both learn and teach;
- ◆ Recognize the region's social, economic and natural diversities; and
- ◆ Demonstrate integrity and engage in honest communication.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIES

Strategies guide an organization when it develops and implements policies, ongoing programs, and special projects so these efforts contribute to achieving the organization's goals and objectives. Each strategy provides a rationale both for undertaking particular efforts and for undertaking them in particular ways by answering the questions, "Why should we do this?" and "How should we do this?" Strategies are valuable because they explicitly state the organization's official consensus about the principles it should use to guide its decisions and actions.

A strategy provides guidance about actions, but is not itself an action. That is, CCRPC should "follow" each strategy, not "do" each strategy. Consequently, a strategy need not be as specific as an action statement (a strategy should not attempt to answer every aspect of who, what, where, when, and how). Because strategies are interrelated, CCRPC should consider how to make its actions follow multiple strategies simultaneously.

The following 18 strategies provide guidance on how CCRPC should promote achieving its definition of organizational success, given expected future conditions. To more clearly convey interrelationships between strategies, the strategies are grouped under four headings:

- ◆ Focus on the Components of CCRPC's Core Identity,
- ◆ Succeed through Partnerships,
- ◆ Exercise Leadership, and
- ◆ Strengthen CCRPC's Internal Operations.

All of the strategies are important: The order of the strategies is *NOT* intended to convey priority of importance or urgency.

STRATEGIES

FOCUS ON THE COMPONENTS OF CCRPC'S CORE IDENTITY

EMPLOY PLANNING PROCESSES TO MAKE DECISIONS.

As a *planning* organization, CCRPC provides a special service to its member municipalities and the County by employing processes and perspectives that differ from those used in other types of decision making. Planning engages representatives of communities and constituencies and aids them to learn so the group makes decisions about important, complex, and controversial matters that build commitment to action. Planning process participants invest time and energy to learn (to consider facts, analytical perspectives, and values that may differ from what they knew at the beginning of the process) in order to prepare valid decisions and justifications that are persuasive to people who did not take part. Planning is most successful when participants suspend certainty at the beginning of the process that they already know the right facts, perspectives, and values.

PROMOTE AWARENESS OF THE REGION'S LONG-TERM FUTURE.

Municipalities and regional authorities in Chittenden County are responsible for the day-to-day administration of public services. As a planning organization, CCRPC is not responsible for these activities. Instead, CCRPC's planning policies are intended to promote the region's *long-term* future well being. To facilitate appreciation for this special character of CCRPC's planning policies by municipalities, regional authorities, the State, and the public, the Commission should continuously raise their awareness of and concern for the region's long-term future.

PROMOTE REGIONAL AWARENESS.

CCRPC is a *regional* planning organization. Natural resources (such as waterways and wildlife habitats) and human systems (such as transportation networks and the regional economy) do not respect local political boundaries. CCRPC is not expected to undertake actions to directly address concerns affecting multiple communities. However, the Commission is empowered to promote *regional* awareness of such concerns among member municipalities and others so their resulting actions are more effective and efficient.

REPRESENT THE DISTINCTIVE CONCERNS AND ISSUES OF CHITTENDEN COUNTY.

CCRPC is the regional planning organization *for Chittenden County*. As the heart of Vermont's only federally designated metropolitan area, Chittenden County has diverse planning issues that often differ in character and scale from those in the rest of Vermont's regions. For CCRPC to be successful as Chittenden County's regional planning organization, the Commission should strive to ensure that the matters that make the County distinctive work as assets, not liabilities.

BUILD CCRPC'S IDENTITY AND STATURE AS A FORUM FOR BUILDING CONSENSUS.

State statutes authorize CCRPC to be an *advisory* regional planning organization. CCRPC succeeds by persuading municipalities, regional authorities, and the public to implement CCRPC's advisory policy recommendations. Because building consensus among communities and constituencies is key to successfully persuading others to undertake recommended actions, CCRPC should strive to serve as a forum for building consensus.

ENHANCE CCRPC'S VALUE TO MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES.

CCRPC provides a variety of planning services to member municipalities. CCRPC should continuously work in partnership with municipalities to appreciate their changing needs for assistance and to identify new services and new ways to provide services.

SUCCEED THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

SEEK OUT AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS.

In the *2006 Regional Plan*, CCRPC advocates collaborative planning between the Commission, municipalities, special-purpose regional boards, and the private sector. Successful collaborative planning depends on trust and a respect for the special roles that each party plays in the partnership. Parties cannot be expected to simply wake up one day with these values. Instead, these values need to be nurtured through purposefully undertaking joint activities that are successful. Joint activities are more likely to be successful when the special capacities of partnering entities are used to best advantage.

ENHANCE THE PARTNERSHIP WITH CCMPO.

Land-use planning and transportation planning are interrelated. Therefore, the success of both CCRPC and CCMPO depend on an effective partnership. The organizations' mutual trust and respect are nurtured through purposefully undertaking joint activities that advance the goals of both organizations.

PROMOTE COLLABORATION AMONG MUNICIPALITIES, REGIONS, AND THE STATE.

Intermunicipal collaboration builds municipal experience in recognizing the regional dimensions of concerns and in addressing them cooperatively. It also helps municipalities to recognize the potential contributions that CCRPC can make to problem solving by serving as a forum for building regional consensus for undertaking needed actions and by helping municipalities to design and administer collaborative initiatives. Collaborative efforts that incorporate local, regional, and State policies simultaneously are more likely to result in long-term, sustainable success.

EXERCISE LEADERSHIP

EXERCISE LEADERSHIP.

The State has designated CCRPC as Chittenden County's only official forum for developing public consensus on matters affecting the County's future well being. This empowerment also confers the duty to perform this service by exercising leadership appropriate to 21st-century Vermont. Such leadership strives to *share power* (not hoard it) by using planning processes to build consensus on matters affecting the long-term success of our region and by using collaborative planning and partnerships with member municipalities, regional organizations, and the public.

MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.

Important concerns often appear to demand urgent attention. CCRPC succeeds by using planning processes, building awareness and consensus, and collaborating in partnerships, which all require time and trust. In pursuing these special approaches, it is important to maintain a *positive attitude*, rather than to resort to measures that jeopardize CCRPC's success out of frustration, impatience, or distrust.

BE AN ADVOCATE.

The investments in extra time and effort devoted to planning processes and building consensus pay dividends by yielding policies and decisions that are more likely to be valid and enjoy widespread support. These investments should not be squandered by devoting insufficient attention to advocating for the implementation of these policies and decisions.

STRENGTHEN CCRPC'S INTERNAL OPERATIONS

MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE AND ENGAGED COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP.

The success of a planning process depends on each participant investing time and energy to learn from background materials and to attend meetings designed to facilitate group learning and decision making. The success of these meetings depends on each participant having done this work before the meeting and being prepared at the meeting to make proposals and to express his/her reactions to the proposals made by others. Staff should be aware of and respect the limited time and energy of Commissioners and others who participate in CCRPC's planning processes. The Commission should demonstrate its appreciation for their dedication and celebrate CCRPC's successes.

ENHANCE COMMISSIONER/STAFF RELATIONSHIPS.

CCRPC is a partnership between Commissioners and staff. Like any partnership, CCRPC's success depends on the partners being aware of and respecting the special roles each partner performs. Commissioners are responsible for making CCRPC's official decisions. Staff prepares background materials and designs meetings to facilitate learning and decision making by Commissioners in order to help ensure that CCRPC's official decisions are both valid and widely supported.

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMISSION AND ITS COMMITTEES.

CCRPC's success in employing planning processes that build consensus to address issues important to the County's future well being depends on the active and engaged participation by Commissioners. CCRPC should not jeopardize the dedication of Commissioners by squandering their energies on initiatives that merely are "expected," "go through the motions," or are "the way things have been done."

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STAFF.

The Commission benefits from having a highly motivated, expert staff. CCRPC should invest in recruiting, retaining, developing, motivating, and empowering staff to better help Commissioners, member municipalities, partnering organizations, and the public.

EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS.

Not every initiative of an organization is successful. Candid assessment of the effectiveness of initiatives identifies the need to redirect efforts to more effective approaches and endeavors. CCRPC has limited resources that need to be effectively and efficiently directed to best achieve success as it has been defined by the organization as a whole.

BE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE.

The Commission should devote its limited resources to those activities that most effectively and efficiently promote the success of CCRPC, the region, and its municipalities. The Commission should be careful not to squander its resources by taking on inappropriate or unneeded tasks. It also should recognize the need to improve the efficiency of required day-to-day operations that make it possible for other Commission initiatives to be successful.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 PROCESS USED

CCRPC last prepared a strategic plan in 1999. The *FY2007 Work Program*, approved in May 2006, included a specific task for CCRPC to prepare a strategic plan. The *FY2008 Work Program*, approved in May 2007, included a specific task for CCRPC to complete and implement the strategic plan.

In July 2006, the Commission considered alternative ways of preparing the strategic plan and decided to employ a “goals-based” approach. At the August 2006 through February 2007 meetings, CCRPC reviewed four “strategic plan briefing papers,” considered the results of two surveys, prepared a “SWOT analysis” (all included in this document as appendices), and established a Strategic Planning Committee to propose key elements of the strategic plan for consideration by the Commission.

In March, the Commission approved the schedule recommended by the Committee for completion of the *Strategic Plan* (see below). The Committee proposed a draft Definition of Organizational Success (which the Commission reviewed at its April 2007 meeting) and draft strategies (which the Commission reviewed at its July 2007 meeting and finalized at its September 2007 meeting). This enabled the Commission to review the draft *Strategic Plan* at its September 2007 meeting and to adopt the *2007 Strategic Plan* at its October 2007 meeting.

2007 STRATEGIC PLAN PREPARATION SCHEDULE

2007 March	Strategic Planning Committee	Review Committee Purpose Prepare Recommended Schedule Begin Stage 1 – Define Organizational Success
	Full Commission	Consider/Endorse Recommended Schedule
April	Strategic Planning Committee	Complete Stage 1 – Define Organizational Success
May	Strategic Planning Committee	Prepare Recommended Definition of Organizational Success Begin & Complete Stage 2 – Assess Current & Future Conditions Affecting Organizational Success (<i>SWOT Analysis</i>)
	Full Commission	Consider/Endorse Recommended Definition of Organizational Success
June	Strategic Planning Committee Full Commission	Begin Stage 3 – Plan to Achieve Organizational Success (<i>Strategies</i>)
July	Strategic Planning Committee	Prepare Draft Recommended Strategies #1 Continue Stage 3 – Plan to Achieve Organizational Success
	Full Commission	Consider/Endorse Draft Recommended Strategies #1
August	Strategic Planning Committee	Prepare Draft Recommended Strategies #2 Continue Stage 3 – Plan to Achieve Organizational Success
	Full Commission	Consider/Endorse Draft Recommended Strategies #2
Sept.	Strategic Planning Committee	Prepare Draft Recommended Strategies #3 Begin Stage 4 – Prepare Draft Strategic Plan
	Full Commission	Consider/Endorse Draft Recommended Strategies #3
Oct.	Strategic Planning Committee	Continue Stage 4 – Prepare Draft Strategic Plan
	Full Commission	Consider/Revise Draft Strategic Plan
Nov.	Strategic Planning Committee	Prepare Recommended Strategic Plan
	Full Commission	Adopt Recommended Strategic Plan

APPENDIX 2

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
Strategic Planning Briefing Paper #1

WHY ORGANIZATIONS UNDERTAKE STRATEGIC PLANNING

August 2006

This is the first in a series of briefing papers that are intended to help CCRPC Commissioners and staff develop and implement CCRPC's 2007 Strategic Plan. This briefing paper describes seven reasons why organizations undertake strategic planning. These reasons are interrelated with one another.

Commissioners and staff should identify which reasons are most important for CCRPC, so CCRPC's strategic planning process can be tailored to yield those benefits.

Reason #1 – Build Common Awareness

The individuals who make up an organization likely have different views as to what the organization's goals and objectives should be, what conditions will affect the organization in the future, what activities the organization should be undertaking, and how successful the organization has been. Strategic planning sessions that enable participants to share their views on these matters builds greater common awareness among all of the participants.

Benefits: Commissioners representing different types of communities and at-large constituencies learn more about each other's special perspectives; Commissioners and staff learn more about each other's special perspectives; Common awareness expedites future deliberations and reduces uncertainty and indecisiveness.

Reason #2 – Develop and Endorse Consensus

Strategic planning provides a structured process for reconciling conflicting views and for endorsing consensus views as constituting the official positions of the organization. In particular, it strives to develop consensus among the organization's members as to the goals and objectives that are considered to be critical to the organization's future success and within its capacity for implementation. If CCRPC's strategic plan endorses a set of specific strategic priorities, Commissioners would not need to re-debate these strategic priorities every time they addressed a particular decision.

Benefits: Consensus goals streamline and coordinate making a wide range of future decisions (e.g., new and revised policies, development of the annual Work Program, and design of how major projects are to be undertaken); Helps CCRPC to recognize when CCRPC action is most and least appropriate.

Reason #3 – Focus the Organization's Strategic Direction

An organization is created to fulfill a mission. An organization's mission often evolves over time. Its mission also can become diffuse as the organization gets drawn into undertaking activities to achieve a wider range of objectives. CCRPC has limited resources to accomplish the very broad set of powers and duties that the State authorizes RPCs to undertake. Like any other organization, CCRPC needs to focus its activities if it is to achieve those objectives that the Commission regards as being most critical to successfully accomplishing its mission.

A major defining feature of being "strategic" is that an organization's objectives guide its actions. The more an organization can define a focused strategic direction, the more poised it is to take action. A focused strategic direction helps an organization to be more proactive (not simply react to events), reminds members what their hard work and sacrifice are intended to achieve, and clarifies for constituents and clients why the organization deserves stature and respect.

Benefits: Targets CCRPC's efforts to achieve what is most important and to refrain from squandering efforts on less important efforts; Clarifies the importance of following through to ensure that efforts really attain desired objectives (not settling for token efforts).

Reason #4 – Improve Task Management

An organization may perform some tasks only out of habit or some of its committees may meet only because they exist. When an organization squanders its limited resources on activities that don't achieve key objectives, it jeopardizes organizational success. By reminding Commissioners and staff of the specific reasons for undertaking tasks, strategies suggest measures for evaluating task performance and for more effectively and efficiently organizing/implementing routine and special tasks.

Benefits: Identifies the strategically important activities that merit CCRPC's resources (especially Commissioner/ staff time/ energies); Identifies less important routine programs and special projects for reduction/elimination; Identifies how multiple efforts can reinforce one another; Identifies criteria for assessing whether initiatives have been successful.

Reason #5 – Set Aside a Special Time to Make Strategic Decisions

It often is difficult for organizations to find sufficient time during regular meetings to address issues that fundamentally affect the ability of the organization to succeed. Members need a special time to focus on addressing key issues when they are not distracted by the pressing deadlines of the organization's routine activities and when members can think strategically about key issues without being overly influenced by the specific considerations of a particular case.

Benefits: Preparing strategies to guide decision making in advance of when decisions must be made helps to ensure that CCRPC's strategies are fair and balanced, preserves more time for the consideration of specific factors when CCRPC makes decisions, and helps to prevent accusations of favoritism and special treatment.

Reason #6 – Prepare for (Possible) Major Change

Sometimes an organization knows in advance that a major event will occur that threatens its future ability to succeed (such as the loss of a major funding source). Strategic planning enables the organization to achieve consensus on how to maximize continued success. When the future is uncertain, an organization can benefit from considering contingency plans for addressing "what if" scenarios.

Benefits: Awareness of strategic priorities alerts CCRPC to the true consequences of possible change (including recognizing exaggerated claims); Advance awareness of fallback positions and contingency plans saves scarce time when such measures must be implemented.

Reason #7 – Build Greater Member Dedication and Organizational Stature/Prestige/Trust

When an organization's members affirm its core values and purposes, they have a greater sense of ownership in the organization's future success. When the organization's goals are clearly stated and the organization manifests its dedication to those goals, members, staff, constituents, and clients are less likely to work at cross purposes and more likely to respect and trust the organization.

Benefits: A clearer sense of CCRPC's purpose helps to motivate and guide Commissioner and staff actions; CCRPC's track record of being faithful to its stated strategic goals helps to reduce other organization's distrust and paranoia of CCRPC; A clearer CCRPC mission is the foundation on which CCRPC should consider proposed collaborations with other organizations.

APPENDIX 3

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
Strategic Planning Briefing Paper #2

WHAT MAKES STRATEGIC PLANNING SPECIAL

August 2006

This is the second in a series of briefing papers that are intended to help CCRPC Commissioners to develop and implement CCRPC's 2007 Strategic Plan.

"Planning" is like "sports," it describes a wide variety of activities that share a similar general purpose. Before engaging a group of people to undertake planning, it helps for the group to decide precisely what kind of planning it will do. Otherwise, people effectively show up with tennis rackets, baseball gloves, and hang gliders, waste time and energy arguing about whether they are playing by the right rules, and go away unsure whether the planning team won or lost.

Strategic planning is a special type of planning that uses certain methods to achieve particular objectives. This briefing paper describes what makes strategic planning special so Commissioners and staff can choose to use certain planning methods to prepare CCRPC's strategic plan.

To understand what makes strategic planning special and why there are so many ways to do it, it helps to learn a little about the history of planning. This is because strategic planning evolved from other planning approaches in order to overcome certain limitations and to succeed in special ways.

Organizations have planned actions in order to achieve desired outcomes for thousands of years. However, in the U.S., people began doing what we now recognize as planning about 100 years ago. Every 10 or 20 years since then, people have proposed doing planning in a different way. As a consequence, there is a legacy of different major conceptions of planning (for those who are interested, Table 1 tracks the evolution in major conceptions of planning leading up to strategic planning).

In the 1960s, the dominant conception of planning was that it is a special set of methods that groups should use to make improved decisions (it was no longer considered to be an obscure process used by a particular type of expert to prepare a certain type of plan). Moreover, in the 1960s and 1970s, planning focused on making public policy decisions. This meant that planning should focus particularly on involving members of the public in making decisions that are in the "public interest."

This public policy making conception of planning frustrated businesses. They also wanted to use the formal processes of planning to help them to make important decisions about actions to achieve desired outcomes. However, businesses did not want to feel bound to involve the public in their decision making processes nor to incorporate public interest principles into their desired outcomes.

To meet these needs, management experts proposed doing a special form of planning they called "strategic planning." Strategic planning focused on identifying strategies to promote achieving predetermined goals and objectives. Because goals and objectives were predetermined, it was argued that there was no reason to consider the public interest or to involve the public.

Strategic planning caught on with business in a big way. Over time, organizations and governments interested in making themselves appear more businesslike began to do strategic planning, especially when they also did not want to feel bound to reconsider established goals and objectives.

As a consequence, there now is an extremely large market for consultants from various backgrounds (business, education, management, communications, and planning) who propose a dizzying array of decision making methods that they describe as "strategic planning." Rather than catalogue all of the various approaches to doing strategic planning, it is advisable for CCRPC to be guided by this definition:

Strategic planning is a process that an organization uses to systematically consider how its policies, special projects, and ongoing programs should be guided by overarching strategies to achieve the organization's key goals and objectives defining organizational success.

Table 1
EVOLUTION IN THE MAJOR CONCEPTIONS OF PLANNING
LEADING TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

EARLIEST INFLUENCE	NAME*	PRINCIPAL THEMES	HOW THIS CONCEPT OF PLANNING WAS TOUTED AS BEING DIFFERENT THAN PREVIOUS APPROACHES
1890s	City Beautiful Movement	Business/community leaders (without regard for community participation) retain architects/urban designers who prepare plans for cities that are designed to be beautiful & fulfill certain key functions. The plan is what is important & planning is not given much attention (the process yielding the plan is essentially an expert using artistic judgment to design beauty).	Cities don't just happen, they are produced by people. Because people can produce cities to be beautiful & function well, people should strive to do so. Plans prepared by experts that show how beautiful a city could be will motivate people to take the actions to do so. Only a person with extraordinary artistic vision & skills should dare to contest a plan.
1900s	Efficient City Movement	Business/community leaders (without regard for community participation) retain civil engineers who prepare plans for infrastructure systems so that cities will function more efficiently. The plan is what is important & planning is not given much attention (the process yielding the plan is essentially a scientist performing many arcane calculations & making professional judgments to properly design an efficient, well-functioning system).	It's nice to be concerned about having a beautiful city, but a city will decline if its infrastructure doesn't function well & work efficiently. Plans that show how a city's infrastructure systems should be built, maintained, & expanded to reduce wasted resources will motivate people to take actions to make it so. Only a person with the appropriate scientific training can make the calculations & professional judgments necessary to dare to contest a plan.
1910s	Community Master Planning	Local governments retain expert planners & lawyers to prepare regulations to make private land development conform to the community's official master plan. Public participation becomes characteristic; the scope of relevant issues in the plan grows (e.g., environment); & interest focuses on the interrelationships of the various special issues that are addressed by "comprehensive" master plans. Most recently, there has been renewed interest in grounding plans on principles of good design (new urbanism & smart growth), rather than using social science & natural science to analyze the impacts of development.	In a democracy, efforts to shape the community call for public action. Governments can regulate private development so it doesn't create harms & is more coherent. When a government regulates, it must follow certain rules. Some rules relate to establishing the reasons that justify the imposition of regulations. Officially adopted plans that document public preferences for what the community is intended to be in the future satisfy those rules. Other rules relate to the character of the processes governments use to make plans & regulations official. Planning should follow these process rules so that resulting plans are official.
1920s	Economic Planning	Governments retain experts in particular fields to prepare plans addressing the conditions, problems, & remedies of a particular "system."	Cities aren't the only things that don't just happen. Entire "systems" (e.g., the economy or transportation) should be analyzed & managed to obtain better outcomes. Plans do not have to be comprehensive to be helpful, especially if they are "in-depth." Planning can address physical development & non-physical systems. Non-physical systems can be assessed & managed with little or no regard to spatial location & spatial variation.
1920s	Regional Planning	Governments retain experts in particular fields to prepare plans that address the conditions, problems, & remedies of "regions" (spatial areas that form coherent "systems").	Natural & social systems (e.g., watersheds & economic regions) have boundaries that do not coincide with government jurisdictions. Plans that are cognizant of the spatial boundaries of systems can help to overcome fragmented & piecemeal attention to these systems.
1950s	Planning as a form of Decision Making (Policy Analysis)	Governments & organizations retain planners to guide them through processes to make decisions (develop policies) that address any type of concern. The focus should be on the process; the plan only documents the process's outcomes. A very large number of special versions have evolved, based on different conceptions of the nature of decisions (policies) & decision making (policy making).	Planning isn't defined by the subject it addresses (e.g., cities) & it isn't simply the process of writing a "plan." Planning is a process that has special features for making improved decisions potentially about any subject. Preparing a plan is one of many ways to help implement decisions produced by a planning process.

*Different names have been used to describe each of these conceptions of planning.

APPENDIX 4

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
Strategic Planning Briefing Paper #3

PROPOSED GOALS-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

September 2006

This is the third in a series of briefing papers that are intended to help CCRPC Commissioners and staff to develop and implement CCRPC's 2007 Strategic Plan. It describes a four-stage "goals-based" strategic planning process (the approach CCRPC chose at its July 24th meeting).

Strategic planning is a process that an organization uses to systematically consider how its policies, special projects, ongoing programs, and other actions should be guided by overarching strategies to help ensure that the organization's goals and objectives are achieved. The process is disciplined in that it raises specific questions in a certain order to keep the process focused and productive.

An organization uses strategic planning to better understand one or more of the following:

- ◆ Where it wants to go,
- ◆ Where it is going,
- ◆ How it can get to where it wants to go, and
- ◆ How it will know if it got there.

To achieve these objectives, it is proposed that CCRPC's strategic planning process have the following four stages with the following general features. *This proposal is intended to serve as a discussion guide: Commissioners and staff are encouraged to suggest refinements and alternatives.*

Stage 1 – Define Organizational Success (Where Does CCRPC Want to Go?)

- ◆ Goals-based strategic planning begins by asking participants to define what success means for the organization in terms of **key goals and objectives** (often derived from the organization's mission/vision statement). In 2003, CCRPC adopted the following **mission statement**:

**To serve Chittenden County and its communities
through an effective regional planning process
characterized by communication, facilitation, education, collaboration, and technical assistance.**

In the first stage of CCRPC's strategic planning process, participants should identify the key goals and objectives of CCRPC's mission by considering such questions as

- ◇ What does it really mean "to serve Chittenden County and its communities?"
 - ◇ What makes a regional planning process "effective?"
 - ◇ What defines success in "communication," "facilitation," "education," "collaboration," and "technical assistance" as these terms relate to CCRPC fulfilling its mission?
- ◆ CCRPC is a **public organization** created by State statute with specific duties and limitations. At CCRPC's strategic planning retreat at St. Michaels College in January 2005, the Commission prioritized the basic statutory duties of RPCs (see Figure 1 at the end of this briefing paper). *Participants also should review this prioritization and identify which of these duties are so important that how well the Commission performs them defines the Commission's success.*
 - ◆ CCRPC is a **planning organization**. Consequently, *participants also should be guided by four basic features of planning organizations that will be described in the fourth briefing paper.*

Stage 2 – Assess Current & Future Conditions Affecting Organizational Success (Where is CCRPC Going?)

- ◆ Goals-based strategic planning next calls upon participants to analyze the organization’s current and future situation and to **identify likely factors that will affect its future ability to succeed**.
- ◆ Frequently, this assessment is structured in some way, such as a **SWOT analysis** (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats). Strengths and Weaknesses typically are defined as being internal to the organization, while Opportunities and Threats are external to the organization. Participants first identify all of the realistically possible factors in a category and then assess for each (1) the likelihood it will occur and (2) the type/degree of impact it will have on success.
- ◆ This assessment can be done in part or entirely in advance of the actual strategic planning sessions through **written surveys or oral interviews** to conserve time.
- ◆ This assessment can be done by the Commission and staff or also by CCRPC’s **customers** (e.g., municipal boards/planning commissions/staff, public interest organizations in the County or State, and members of the public), **allies** (e.g., GBIC, LCRCC, CCMPO, neighboring or all RPCs, and State agencies) or **other entities** (e.g., management consultants).

Stage 3 – Plan How to Achieve Organizational Success (How can CCRPC Get to Where It Wants to Go?)

- ◆ Participants next develop **strategies** that promote achievement of the organization’s key goals and objectives, in light of the organization’s likely future situation.
- ◆ It is important that participants appreciate in advance of their deliberations what a “strategy” is and what it is not.
 - ◇ A strategy has **three key aspects**:
 1. It is part of the “**big picture**” of the organization’s fundamental goals and objectives: It is a central organizing principal that integrates actions.
 2. It is a **rationale for actions**: It answers the questions, "Are we doing the right thing?" and “Why are we doing this?”
 3. It is a **prospective working hypothesis**: As a tool to aid in making subsequent decisions, it needs to be reevaluated periodically against changes in the organization’s goals and objectives and in the conditions the organization is experiencing.
 - ◇ A strategy is **not** a
 1. **Trivial reason** for undertaking only one insignificant action;
 2. **Incomplete or unpersuasive** explanation for why an action should be undertaken; or
 3. **Substitute for** the subsequent exercise of **judgment and leadership**.
- ◆ For each proposed strategy, participants should assess how **good** it is using agreed upon criteria (e.g., realistic, politically acceptable, lawful, affordable, practical/efficient) and prioritize the strategy’s **importance** to the organization’s success.
- ◆ Participants also should consider whether CCRPC’s charter/bylaws and the State statutes on RPC duties/powers (see Figures 1 & 2) **authorize implementation** of each proposed strategy. If they do not, CCRPC should decide whether to revise the strategy or to amend its charter/bylaws. Because this often requires further research, this step is often postponed to strategic plan implementation.

- ◆ Some organizations also engage in **action planning** (who will do what when) to implement agreed upon strategies as a part of the organization’s plan for success. Because this frequently involves much more detailed and time-consuming analysis, CCRPC should
 - ◇ **Postpone** action planning to when it implements the strategic plan’s recommended strategies (e.g., when it develops subsequent work programs and proposed policies) or
 - ◇ **Delegate** to designated CCRPC Standing Committees responsibility for proposing action plans to implement (key) strategies.

Stage 4 – Document the Process’ Recommendations (How will CCRPC Know If It Got to Where It Wants to Go?)

- ◆ The strategic plan document should clearly establish for future use the strategic planning process’ **recommendations**. Although writing the plan typically comes weeks after the participants have stopped holding strategic planning sessions, it nevertheless is a key stage in the process.
- ◆ CCRPC’s strategic plan should be prepared by an ad hoc committee of **Commissioners and staff**, rather than by a consultant or outside facilitator.
- ◆ The authors should be given a **deadline** for preparing a draft plan for **review** by the Commission and the Commission should take some **formal action** to approve the final version.
- ◆ The plan typically **describes the process and recommendations** (especially highlighting the **strategies** that are intended to guide future actions). To aid in making future assessments of progress in attaining goals and of the successfulness of strategies, the plan also should identify **implementation and assessment measurements**.
- ◆ CCRPC’s strategic plan should be **communicated** to audiences designated by the Commission.
 - ◇ Current and future **Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners, and CCRPC staff** should be given copies of the strategic plan and it should be used in their orientation.
 - ◇ The strategic plan should be **incorporated into the routine processes** for developing the Commission’s annual work program, proposed policies, and bylaw amendments and should be consulted when the Executive Director prepares the annual State of the Commission report.
 - ◇ Many organizations establish specific times for **re-evaluation of the plan’s strategies** (such as the anniversary of the plan’s preparation or as a routine part of work program development).
 - ◇ Some organizations provide for **status reports** on the progress of attaining key goals as a regular meeting agenda item (although this is most often when an action plan has been developed for attainment of specific goals).
 - ◇ Because the strategic plan will document the rationales for CCRPC’s prospective actions, the Commission should
 - ❖ Give **copies** of the plan to (and perhaps presenting it at meetings of) **allies and customers**;
 - ❖ Showcase the process and plan in CCRPC’s **newsletter and annual report** to municipalities.
 - ❖ Post the strategic plan on CCRPC’s **website** so that it may be easily accessed.
- ◆ Some descriptions of the goals-based approach of strategic planning identify **two additional stages**:
 Stage 5 – **Evaluate the Planning Process** (at the end of the final strategic planning session or shortly thereafter, participants assess how well different aspects of the process worked) and
 Stage 6 – **Celebrate Achievements** (reward participants for their efforts in producing the plan and motivate participants, nonparticipating members of the organization, customers, and allies to support implementation of the plan).

These stages should be considered “luxury items” that will be attempted only if resources permit.

Figure 1
SUMMARY OF CCRPC-PRIORITIZED RPC STATUTORY DUTIES
CCRPC STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT – ST. MICHAELS COLLEGE – JANUARY 2005

1. **Promote the mutual cooperation of its municipalities** and assist and advise municipalities, compacts and authorities within the region to facilitate economic development programs for the appropriate development, improvement, protection and preservation of the region's physical and human resources. *(Note: CCRPC interprets this duty very broadly to mean more than just conventional "economic development" activities.)* [24 VSA 4345a (1)]
2. **Prepare a regional plan** and amendments that are consistent with the goals established in section 4302 of this title, and compatible with approved municipal and adjoining regional plans. [24 VSA 4343a (5)]
3. Develop strategies specifically designed to **assist municipalities in defining and managing growth and development that have cumulative impacts**. [24 VSA 4345a (10)]
4. **Cooperate** with the planning, legislative or executive authorities of neighboring states, regions, counties or municipalities **to promote coordination of planning for, conservation and development of the region and adjoining or neighboring territory**. [24 VSA 4345a (4)]
5. **Prepare**, in conjunction with the commissioner of the department of housing and community affairs, **guidelines for the provision of affordable housing in the region**, share information developed with respect to affordable housing with the municipalities in the region and with the commissioner of the department of housing and community affairs, and consult with the commissioner when developing the housing element of the regional plan. [24 VSA 4345a (7)]
6. **Confirm municipal planning efforts**, where warranted, as required under section 4350 of this title and provide town clerks of the region with notice of confirmation. [24 VSA 4345a (8)]
7. At least every five years, **review the compatibility of municipal plans**, and if the regional planning commission finds that growth in a municipality without an approved plan is adversely affecting an adjoining municipality, it shall notify the legislative body of both municipalities of that fact and shall urge that the municipal planning be undertaken to mitigate those adverse effects. [24 VSA 4345a (9)]
8. **Appear before district environmental commissions** to aid them in making a determination as to the conformance of developments and subdivisions with the criteria of 10 V.S.A. § 6086. Appear before the **public service board** to aid the board in making determinations under 30 V.S.A. § 248. [24 VSA 4345a (13) & (14)]
9. If a municipality requests the assistance of the regional planning commission in coordinating the way that its plan addresses projects of **substantial regional impact** with the way those projects are addressed by its neighbors' planning efforts, the regional planning commission shall convene an ad hoc working group to address the issue. [24 VSA 4345a (18)]
10. **Provide technical and legal assistance to municipalities** in the preparation and maintenance of plans, capacity studies and bylaws and in related implementation activities. [24 VSA 4345a (3)]
11. As part of its regional plan, **define a substantial regional impact**, as the term may be used with respect to its region. This definition shall be given due consideration, where relevant, in state regulatory proceedings. [24 VSA 4345a (17)]
12. **Prepare implementation guidelines** that will assist municipalities and the regional commission in developing a planning process that will attain, within a reasonable time, consistency with the goals established in section 4302 of this title. Guidelines, which may be revised at any time, shall be prepared initially by July 1, 1989. [24 VSA 4345a (6)]
13. **Hold public hearings**. [24 VSA 4345a (15)]
14. Before requesting review by the council of regional commissioners or the services of a mediator pursuant to section 4305 of this title, with respect to a **conflict that has arisen between adopted or proposed plans of two or more regions or two or more municipalities located in different regions**, appoint a joint interregional commission, in cooperation with other affected regional commissions for the purpose of negotiating differences. [24 VSA 4345a (16)]
15. **Advise municipal governing bodies with respect to public financing**. [24 VSA 4345a (2)]
16. **Review proposed state capital expenditures for compatibility with regional plans**. [24 VSA 4345a (11)]
17. **Assist municipalities to review proposed state capital expenditures for compatibility with municipal plans**. [24 VSA 4345a (12)]

Figure 2
SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL GENERAL RPC STATUTORY POWERS

Any regional planning commission created under this chapter may:

- ◆ **Undertake studies and make recommendations** on land development, urban renewal, transportation, economic, industrial, commercial, and social development, urban beautification and design improvements, historic and scenic preservation, the conservation of energy and the development of renewable energy resources, and wetland protection. [24 VSA 4345 (6)]
- ◆ **Require of each municipality in its area and all state agencies such available information** as relates to the work of the regional planning commission. [24 VSA 4345 (8)]
- ◆ In the performance of its functions, **enter upon land**, with prior approval of the landowner, to make examinations and surveys. [24 VSA 4345 (9)]
- ◆ **Retain staff and consultant assistance** in carrying out its duties and powers. [24 VSA 4345 (10)]
- ◆ **Undertake comprehensive planning**, including related preliminary planning and engineering studies. [24 VSA 4345 (11)]
- ◆ **Carry out, with the cooperation of municipalities within the region, economic development programs** for the appropriate development, improvement, protection and preservation of the region's physical and human resources. [24 VSA 4345 (12)]
- ◆ **Perform such other acts or functions as it may deem necessary or appropriate** to fulfill the duties and obligations imposed by, and the intent and purposes of, this chapter. [24 VSA 4345 (13)]
- ◆ Regional planning commissions may **receive and expend monies from any source**, including, without limitation, funds made available by the participating municipalities, and by the agency of commerce and community development, out of state funds appropriated to that agency for this purpose. [24 VSA 4346 (a)]
- ◆ RPCs are also governed by laws that generally apply to public bodies in Vermont, such as the **Open Meetings Act** and **Freedom of Information Act**.

APPENDIX 5

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
Strategic Planning Briefing Paper #4

WHAT MAKES PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS SPECIAL

October 2006

This is the fourth in a series of briefing papers intended to help CCRPC Commissioners to develop and implement CCRPC's 2007 Strategic Plan. This briefing paper reviews what makes a planning organization different from other types of organizations in order to aid Commissioners and staff in tailoring generic strategic planning methods to suit CCRPC's special needs as a planning organization.

In its essence, planning is the act of consciously shaping actions to achieve desired future outcomes. People routinely do a variety of planning tasks in their everyday lives such as planning the route to work and scheduling meetings. Planning is a basic aspect of adult rational behavior that is second nature for most people.

The term "planning" describes both (1) what people do in their everyday lives and (2) what organizations and communities do to promote the achievement of desired future outcomes. This often results in people mistakenly assuming that they should use the approaches they use in planning their everyday lives when they participate in planning undertaken by organizations and communities. However, organizational/community planning is very different from everyday planning and calls upon participants to employ special perspectives and to perform special actions that would be absurd for individuals to use in everyday planning.

Planning is not the only way that organizations and communities make decisions. It is a special way that calls upon participants to employ particular perspectives and approaches in order to produce decisions that have important characteristics. As outlined in Briefing Paper #2, over time people have proposed many different ways of doing planning. Each type of planning is more or less appropriate to different types of organizations making different types of decisions. The type of planning that is most appropriate for CCRPC when it makes most of its decisions has the following four fundamental characteristics. *Consequently, when CCRPC undertakes strategic planning to become more successful as a planning organization, it should especially strive to advance these four special characteristics.*

- 1) **Social** – Democratic societies value involving in planning processes the people who will implement the planned actions or who will be affected by the outcomes. Consequently, planning purposefully
 - ◆ Engages representatives of implementers and affected parties to participate more fully and
 - ◆ Uses special methods to aid groups of representatives to make decisions that will enjoy widespread acceptance by people who have not been directly involved.

When CCRPC undertakes strategic planning, it should especially consider strategies that advance its central function of engaging representatives to make group decisions that enjoy widespread acceptance.

- 2) **Learning** – To help to produce the best decisions, the participants in a planning process are asked to learn: To consider facts, analytical perspectives, and values that may be different from what each person knew at the beginning of the process. This has several important implications for planning organizations.

First, planning strives not only to produce decisions, but also valid and persuasive justifications for those decisions. Consequently, it is important for each person who participates in a planning process to learn facts, analytical perspectives, and values that provide valid justifications for the group's proposed planning decisions and to assess which justifications are likely (and unlikely) to be persuasive to people who did not take part in the planning process.

Second, each person participating in a planning process is asked to invest time and energy to learn new facts, analytical perspectives, and values (often from background materials) and to attend meetings designed to facilitate learning and decision making by the group. People who are unable or unwilling to invest the requisite time and energy to learn should refrain from participating in a planning process. Staff who assist the participants in a planning process need to be aware of and must respect the participants' limited time and energy.

Third, planning is most successful when the participants consciously embrace a learning perspective. That is, at the beginning of the planning process, participants suspend certainty that they already know the right facts, perspectives, and values (that they already know the right decisions and justifications). People who suspend certainty are willing to learn new facts, to explore new ways of considering what facts mean, and to listen to the perspectives of other participants in order to become more confident that the group ultimately makes the best decisions for the best reasons.

Suspending certainty does not mean that participants should be passive recipients of learning, spoon-fed to them by staff or experts. Instead, each participant should actively take part in helping the group to learn by critically assessing the strengths and weaknesses of proposed actions, outcomes, and rationales. Suspending certainty only means that a participant is equally willing to assess their own preconceptions.

Some participants resist learning because they view it as a confession that they did not already know something important. They resist suspending certainty because they believe that a person's authority or credibility is based on being more knowledgeable than other people. A person who does not suspend certainty often mistakes the purpose of a planning process to be persuading other participants to agree to his or her preconceptions. This perverts the process from being planning to being merely debate. It changes the objective from "What do we agree on?" to "Who wins?"

When CCRPC undertakes strategic planning, it should especially consider strategies that advance its central function of aiding groups to learn so they make the best decisions and justifications.

- 3) Decision Making – Planning is not simply an occasion when people get together to learn. Planning also involves making decisions, such as resolving issues, making choices, and setting priorities.

Routine, easily made, or trivial decisions do not merit the extra efforts of planning: Groups typically are asked to undertake the special efforts required by planning in order to make valid and persuasive decisions about important, complex, and controversial matters.

Because values are crucial to interpreting the meaning of facts, values shape people's opinions whether planning decisions and rationales have merit. Some past conceptions of planning have argued that planning should strive to be "value free." However, when groups do planning, they should perform the critical role of testing the political acceptability of proposed actions, outcomes, and rationales.

When CCRPC undertakes strategic planning, it should especially consider strategies that advance its central function of aiding groups to make valid and persuasive decisions about important, complex, and controversial matters that involve value considerations.

- 4) Affect Actions – The decisions resulting from a planning process are intended to shape future actions in order to achieve future desired outcomes. Planning strives to identify not merely the actions that are needed, but also the ways to make it more likely that those actions are taken. Planning is a process for building commitment to action.

Some past conceptions of planning assigned responsibility for implementing actions to the realm of politics, not planning. However, this all-too-often resulted in planning that insufficiently considered whether recommendations were capable of being implemented, whether people were motivated to bear the costs of implementing them, and whether people affected by the resulting outcomes would support them. This all but guaranteed that the resulting plans sat on shelves.

When CCRPC undertakes strategic planning, it should especially consider strategies that advance its central function of building commitment to action.



APPENDIX 6

September 18, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners, Staff
FROM: Tim Fluck, Deputy Director
SUBJECT: CCRPC Strategic Planning Survey Results

Background

At CCRPC's August 28th meeting, the Commission reviewed seven reasons for doing strategic planning but did not identify the importance of each reason for CCRPC's strategic planning process. Staff surveyed Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners, and staff about this. This memorandum tabulates the results of that survey (see attached) and proposes features of CCRPC's strategic planning process to achieve these benefits.

Results

Thirty-one Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners, and staff responded to the survey (about 60% of the 53 total people in these three groups). Respondents varied in their opinions of how important each of these seven reasons are to CCRPC's strategic planning process. There tended to be more consensus about the more important reasons.

- ◆ **Focus Strategic Direction** was considered essential by 80% of the respondents. *CCRPC's strategic planning process should devote sufficient time for participants to develop consensus on the priority of strategies that achieve the Commission's goals and objectives.*
- ◆ **Build Common Awareness** was considered essential by about half of the respondents. *CCRPC's strategic planning process should gather and disseminate information among participants. This can be achieved in different ways (e.g., by conducting surveys/interviews in advance of strategic planning sessions and sharing results during the process or by holding sessions for information sharing).*
- ◆ **Build Greater Member Dedication & Organizational Stature/Prestige/Trust** was considered essential by about half of the respondents. *CCRPC's strategic planning process should reinforce the "integrity" of the process among participants and CCRPC should make nonparticipants aware of the process' recommendations and CCRPC's implementation of them.*
- ◆ **Develop & Endorse Consensus** was considered essential or important by most respondents. *CCRPC's strategic planning process should set aside sufficient time during sessions for participants to develop consensus on proposed recommendations.*
- ◆ **Improve Task Management** was considered essential or important by most respondents. *CCRPC's strategic planning process should set aside sufficient time during sessions for participants to clearly articulate recommended strategies.*
- ◆ **Set Aside a Special Time to Make Strategic Decisions** was considered important by most respondents. *CCRPC's strategic planning process should take place principally at special sessions, rather than during regular Commission or Committee meetings.*
- ◆ **Prepare for (Possible) Major Change** was considered important by most respondents. *CCRPC's strategic planning process should set aside time for participants to consider the likelihood that factors affecting the Commission's future success will occur.*

Additional comments from respondents are divided into two groups: (1) reasons for doing strategic planning and (2) how to do strategic planning.

TABULATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING BENEFITS SURVEY
(n = 31)
SEPTEMBER 18, 2006

Major Benefit (Listed in Order of Most Points to Least Points)	Importance to CCRPC's Strategic Planning			
	Essential (3 Points)	Important (2 Points)	Not So Important (1 Point)	Worthless (0 Points)
Focus Strategic Direction (87 Total Points / Ave. = 2.8)	25	6		
Build Common Awareness (76 Total Points / Ave. = 2.5)	15	15	1	
Build Greater Member Dedication & Organizational Stature/Prestige/Trust (75 Total Points / Ave. = 2.4)	16	12	3	
Develop & Endorse Consensus (70 Total Points / Ave. = 2.3)	13	13	5	
Improve Task Management (67 Total Points / Ave. =2.2)	12	13	5	1
Set Aside a Special Time to Make Strategic Decisions (62 Total Points / Ave. = 2.0)	8	15	8	
Prepare for (Possible) Major Change (55 Total Points / Ave. = 1.8 / n=30)	4	18	7	1

Additional Comments

Reasons for Doing Strategic Planning

Bring CCRPC into a new era where we can really play a role in shaping how Chittenden County will look in the future. CCRPC needs to elevate its visibility to the general public.
 Important that Commissioners understand CCRPC's strategic plan and speak publicly about it.
 Strategic planning is important for any organization.
 Systematic deployment of goals is important.
 The RPC needs to focus its attention on strategic initiatives to facilitate real change on the ground. To be successful, the RPC must focus its energy on the highest leverage activities, which can only happen if the Commission provides clear direction on strategic priorities.
 Building membership dedication/trust is very important in a common-interest organization (e.g., a board of a nonprofit). Are Commissioners dedicated to the organization itself or to representing their town/ constituency?
 The strategic planning process could be useful in changing self-interest to group (i.e., regional) interest.
 CCRPC's strategic planning process should contribute to an evolution yielding a more efficient organization.

How to Do Strategic Planning

Define the issues/problems to be solved.
 Skeptical that consensus can be achieved.
 The organization should find reasoned discourse as a strength of a diversity of views with Commissioners not feeling "intimidated" to voice them. Consensus is less important—and probably not as healthy an indicator for the organization if it discourages honest, respectful discussion.
 While development of a consensus is essential, consensus could become obsolete very quickly given the Commission's relatively frequent turnover.
 Should do a 2-day retreat.
 Provide for staff input.

APPENDIX 7

TABULATION OF CCRPC PERFORMANCE SURVEY

DECEMBER 12, 2006

(25 RESPONSES, BUT NOT EVERY PERSON/ORGANIZATION RESPONDED TO EVERY QUESTION)

1. Please indicate how important it is for CCRPC to successfully perform each of the following:

Functions (Listed in Order of Most-to-Least Importance)	Essential (4 Points)	Very Important (3 Points)	Important (2 Points)	Not So Important (1 Point)	Worthless (0 Points)
Assist & Advise Municipalities (81 Points / 3.38 Average)	13	7	4		
Prepare a Regional Plan (80 Points / 3.33 Average)	15	3	4	2	
Promote Coordinated Planning among Municipalities, the State, Public Interest Organizations, & Business (71 Points / 2.96 Average)	7	11	4	2	
Review Municipal Plans & Confirm Municipal Planning Programs (69 Points / 2.88 Average)	9	4	10	1	
Promote Cooperation among Municipalities (56 Points / 2.61 Average)	7	6	5	4	1
Participate in Act 250 & Section 248 Proceedings (55 Points / 2.39 Average)	5	6	5	7	

Comments: CCRPC's mediation for inter-municipal endeavors would be critical.

In assisting & advising municipalities, sustainability and energy planning should receive a very high priority.

Might rate "Assist & Advise Municipalities" higher if CCRPC's track record was more comprehensive on this front.

That said, many municipalities in the County have "robust" planning/zoning offices, so CCRPC assistance is not as critical as facilitating inter-municipal communication.

Most important task is for CCRPC to prepare a widely accepted Regional Plan.

2. Please indicate which term best describes how good a job CCRPC does in performing each of the following:

Functions (Listed in Order of Best-to-Worst Performance)	Excellent (4 Points)	Very Good (3 Points)	Adequate (2 Points)	Deficient (1 Point)	Failure (0 Points)
Prepare a Regional Plan (69 Points / 3.00 Average)	8	8	6	1	
Review Municipal Plans & Confirm Municipal Planning Programs (63 Points / 2.86 Average)	7	5	10		
Assist & Advise Municipalities (59 Points / 2.68 Average)	6	6	7	3	
Promote Coordinated Planning among Municipalities, the State, Public Interest Organizations, & Business (53 Points / 2.41 Average)	2	9	7	4	
Promote Cooperation among Municipalities (46 Points / 2.42 Average)	2	9	4	3	1
Participate in Act 250 & Section 248 Proceedings (42 Points / 2.33 Average)	1	7	7	3	

Comments: Communication is key with municipalities; could be an area for improvement.

GIS data has been very helpful and mapping is excellent.

One municipal governing body chose not to complete a survey, but sent a letter saying that "CCRPC is doing a great job & they have no issues at this time." They also appreciated CCRPC's outreach.

VELCO support was lacking.

3. Please identify any particular projects, programs, or activities that CCRPC DOES WELL:

GIS & mapping services & assistance. **8 responses**

Regional Plan. **6 responses**

Support to local planners/staff. **4 responses**

Applying for & receiving grants.

Coordination of the RSEP program.

Does well on participating in State processes, but not sure if as well on municipal processes.

Good job assisting municipal governments having a voice in the Act 250 process & in general usually.

Intermunicipal cooperation.

Open space planning.

Promotes regional dialogues on issues such as housing, growth centers, economic forecasts, et al.

Recent work on housing.

4. Please identify any particular projects, programs, or activities that CCRPC DOES, BUT NOT WELL ENOUGH:

Need more timely reviews of municipal plans. **3 responses**

Make members aware of activities (especially small towns). **2 responses**

Need, better, clearer advice on municipal plan adoption process & possible areas of improvement. **2 responses**

Balance the interests of smaller & larger municipalities (consensus is not always the best way formulate policy).

Coordination on regional issues.

Energy policy.

Meeting face-to-face with elected boards.

Provide a clearinghouse of information on planning issues so CCRPC is a planning resource akin to the APAs.

Provide greater leadership & focus on regional projects (e.g., Northwest Vermont Project).

Regional plan.

Securing cooperation between municipalities.

Technical assistance to municipalities.

"Tooting our own horn" so the public knows the outstanding work that is done.

5. Please identify any particular projects, programs, or activities that CCRPC DOES NOT DO, BUT SHOULD DO:

CCRPC already has plenty to do.

Climate change coordination.

Don't stretch resources too thin.

Energy planning.

Help small-town planning commissions with communication, outreach, & education.

Intermunicipal communication & cooperation should be a top CCRPC priority. Propose (1) Have routine meetings with 2-3 neighboring municipalities to identify & resolve challenges, (2) Chittenden County listserve to inform & promote discussion of countywide issues, (3) Regular speaker series (like Essex/Williston), (4) Reinstate quarterly/monthly planners lunches.

Planning Advisory Service.

Prioritize work tasks with our mission & do those well.

Promote & investigate the concept of regional utilities (especially sewage treatment).

Push County governance (hot one, yes, but there must be efficiencies at the expense of local controls).

Recognize that growth is going to occur & that the core areas where development, traffic, etc. is paramount to open spaces, wildlife preservation, bicycling, etc.

Serve as a clearinghouse of grant information for towns & organizations.

Support a regional landfill on Redmond Road in Williston.

6. Please mention anything else that you believe CCRPC should know in order to better guide the Commission's actions over the next five years:

Provide assistance with growth center designation process (especially buildouts). **2 responses**

Beware of "mission creep" → Don't take on new projects just because grant exists.

Build work items on issues that address the needs of multiple municipalities.

Encourage more communication between CCRPC Commissioners & their local Selectboards, Planning Commissions, & staff.

Explore if a County public works department might save towns money; Is there a model where this has been done?

Help with growth center planning.

Institute regular initiatives at coordinating with other regional organizations.

Need to participate more in local governments.

Pay more attention to rural town needs.

Recognize that all municipalities cannot and should not be all things to all people. Balance the interests of urban & rural municipalities. Too slanted toward protecting interests of rural municipalities & certain special interest groups.

Study the "affordability issue" → Discover the extent of the problem & put it into context, offer solutions, look beyond housing.

7. Please indicate which ONE of the following best describes you or the organization on behalf of which you are responding:

<u>Type of Respondent</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>	<u>Percentage of All Respondents</u>
Member of the Public	0	0.0%
Non-Profit Organization	1	4.0%
For Profit Organization	0	0.0%
Conservation Commission	0	0.0%
Municipal Governing Body	2	8.0%
Municipal Planning Commission	9	36.0%
Municipal Manager/Administrator	4	16.0%
Municipal Planning Staff	4	16.0%
State Agency or Official	1	4.0%
Regional Planning Commission	1	4.0%
Regional Service Provider	1	4.0%
Other	1	4.0%

APPENDIX 8

RESULTS OF THE JANUARY 22, SWOT WORK SESSION

Table 1 Prioritized Strengths & Weaknesses

How well does CCRPC currently accomplish each Strength / Weakness?	How important is each Strength / Weakness to CCRPC's success?	
	MORE IMPORTANT	LESS IMPORTANT
SHOULD BE BETTER	<p><u>STRENGTHS</u> Commissioners Regional Partner Relationships Member Municipality Relationships Technical Assistance Leadership in Advocating Regional Issues Results Oriented Voice in Legislature on Planning Issues</p> <p><u>WEAKNESSES</u> Strategic Planning Absent Committees (Attendance Poor, Structure Cumbersome, Missions Unclear) Communication / Outreach with Media / Members / Public Lacking Protocols for Routine Updates of Data, Forecasts, Models, & Studies Lacking Attentive Representation of All Municipalities Lacking</p>	<p><u>STRENGTHS</u> CCRPC Meetings Act 250 Participation Role in Bringing Municipalities Together Training for New Commissioners</p> <p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p>
WELL ENOUGH	<p><u>STRENGTHS</u> Staff Regional Plan Funding / Resources</p> <p><u>WEAKNESSES</u> Decision Making Processes Financing Precarious Work Program has Too Much to Accomplish Leadership Cautious, Disengaged, Not Dynamic or Proactive</p>	<p><u>STRENGTHS</u> Vision Statement State Agencies' Relationships</p> <p><u>WEAKNESSES</u> Commissioners' Commitment Limited Commissioner-Staff Relationships Weak Regional Partners Do Not Include Natural Resource Organizations</p>

Other Strengths Identified in the Survey

Being a Resource / Info Clearinghouse
 Ability to Institute Change & Take Advantage of Opportunities
 Reputation with Municipalities & Planners
 Offices (Meeting Space, Ample Parking)
 Annual Work Program & Budget
 Committees Able to Specialize on Focus Areas
 Making All Commissioners Feel Valued
 Securing Outside Grants
 Software Programs on County Scale
 Technology (In-House Network, Internet Capacity, Up-to-Date Hardware, Software Diversity)
 Thorough Data Analysis
 Well-Structured Planning of Activities

Other Weaknesses Identified in the Survey

Commissioners Turnover High, Morale/Esprit-de-Corps Low
 Commissioners Engagement with Own Municipality Limited
 Commissioners Knowledge / Appreciation of Issues Limited
 Commissioners Regard Role to be a Municipal Representative (Not Appreciate Differences in Reg'l/Munic. Planning)
 Commitment to Excellence Lacking
 Commitment to Reg'l Problem-Solving & Reg'l Identity Weak
 Incompetence
 Internal Operations
 Involvement in Certain Issues Lacking (Broadband. NW Reliability Project) & in Others Too Much (Transportation)
 Market Forces Not Understood
 Needs of Large & Small Members Not Met Equally
 Network w/ Technical Experts & Planning Partners Lacking
 Process Excesses
 Regional Plan Not Accessible to Average Reader
 Staff Morale Low
 Staff Professional Development Limited
 Technical Assistance Insufficient
 Tendency to Focus on Easy Tasks with Minimal Impact that Precludes Addressing More Challenging Projects
 Training for New Commissioners Insufficient
 Understanding of RPC Role

Table 2 Prioritized Opportunities & Threats

How likely is each Opportunity / Threat to continue in the future?	How important is each Opportunity / Threat to CCRPC's success?	
	MORE IMPORTANT	LESS IMPORTANT
MORE LIKELY	<p>OPPORTUNITIES Collaborations w/ Other Planning Organizations to Provide Outside Funding & w/ Increasingly Responsible / Environmentally Friendly Citizenry to Address Environmental Issues (such as Climate Change & Renewable Energy) Forum for Regional Visioning on Issues such as Reorganization of Services & Northwest Vermont Increase Communication w/ Municipalities & Foster Proactive Relationships w/ Municipalities</p> <p>THREATS Funding Cuts / Stagnation Municipal Relations Role in Community Unclear / Relevance to Municipalities & State Lacking People who Disagree w/ CCRPC's Vision of the County or Regional Planning NIMBYism Suspicion of Regional Initiatives Misconceptions / Misjudgments about CCRPC & RPC Role</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES Online Communication Brownfields Democratic Majority in Statehouse Provide More Services to Municipalities to Raise Revenues</p> <p>THREATS Statutory Authority for RPCs Advocacy Groups Define Debates & Polarize / Entrench Stakeholders Job-Loss Mentality Advocacy Groups Define Debates & Polarize / Entrench Stakeholders</p>
LESS LIKELY	<p>OPPORTUNITIES CCRPC's Visibility to the County & Public Relations to Herald Accomplishments Regional Conflict Resolution (such as Williston Landfill)</p> <p>THREATS CCMPO Does Not Treat CCRPC as Partner (Not Take CCRPC's Vision of County Seriously, Perpetuates Status Quo) Unfunded Mandates (from State) Voice in Act 250 Lacking</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES Vermont is "Tabula Rasa" ("blank slate") Need a Day-Long Retreat to Go Over Wide Range of Topics</p> <p>THREATS State Office of Planning Lacking / State Priorities Democratic Rituals (Roberts Rules) Federal & State Government Incompetence in Other Organizations Personal Crusades <i>Regional Plan</i> Objectives Unbalanced (Action Items) Vested Interests</p>

Recommended Measures to Improve CCRPC's Success

Increase Role in Convening People on Regional Issues
 Catastrophic Climate Change should have Greater Priority
 Develop Tools to Assist in Land Use Education
 Improve Enabling Legislation
 Land-Use Patterns, "Green" Construction, & Alternative Energy Sources that Promote Greenhouse Gas Reduction should be Promoted

Local Outreach to Define/Depict Each Town's Contribution to County's Quality-of-Life
 Mass Transit Should be Promoted (Work with CCMPO)
 Seek Greater Share of State Funding
 Show Town's We're Partners
 Staff – Keep Experienced, but Don't Increase until RPC Function Is Clearer