

**Capital District Regional Planning
Commission
Strategic Plan**

FY 2016-2018

December 2015

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STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Executive Director of the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) along with the Board is accountable for the development and coordination of strategic and financial planning for the organization. In January 2015, Jon Allen of Performance Matters, Inc. was hired by CDRPC to facilitate a strategic planning process for the organization and to assist in the development of a FY 2016-2018 strategic plan.

In February 2015, the Consultant met with each of the CDRPC staff to solicit their input on the major strengths/weaknesses of the organization and the major challenges they foresee for the agency. Their feedback and assessments were summarized in the form of a SWOT Analysis. In addition, historical financial data was also shared with the Consultant to provide a context for the strategic planning process.

During the spring of 2015, a series of interviews were conducted by the Consultant with key external stakeholders of the agency and with each of the CDRPC Board Officers.

Finally, in May 2015, a survey of CDRPC Board members was conducted to gather their feedback on the strategic direction for the Commission as well as their input on the effectiveness of the Board.

A planning session with the CDRPC Board Officers was held in June 2015. The purpose of the planning session was to discuss the feedback from key stakeholders as well as the Environmental Scan (SWOT Analysis) developed from staff input. This information was then used to develop a set of five and then narrowed down to four Strategic Initiatives for the agency to focus on over the next three years.

The Consultant and the Executive Director, with input from the CDRPC Staff, then drafted a set of specific action steps related to each of the Strategic Initiatives. There will be some budgetary impacts with the implementation of this plan and an estimate of those dollars was provided to the Board.

Based upon the background information that was compiled from these various activities, a first draft of a strategic plan document was prepared by the Consultant for review and feedback by the Executive Director and Board's A&F Committee. The second draft was then discussed at the October 2015 Commission meeting. This document represents the results of the feedback received and was approved at the December Commission meeting.

ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission

The Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) is a regional planning and resource center serving Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties. CDRPC provides objective analysis of data, trends, opportunities, and challenges relevant to the Region's economic development and planning communities. CDRPC serves the best interests of the public and private sectors by promoting intergovernmental cooperation; communicating, collaborating, and facilitating regional initiatives; and sharing information and fostering dialogues on solutions to regional problems.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Staff and stakeholder interviews contributed to a scan of CDRPC's internal and external environment. Using the SWOT Analysis technique the information gathered was classified into internal strengths (S) or weaknesses (W), and external opportunities (O) or threats (T).

Internal	<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very positive image and strong reputation for quality of information provided, its long history of success and the integrity of agency leadership. 2. Staff have strong local networks and are well connected. 3. Staff report that there is a high morale level. 4. Positive fund balance and operating reserves. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding is contingent on support from counties. 2. Somewhat outdated IT platform and the need for one that is more "user-driven". 3. Lacking sophistication in how the agency is marketed, i.e. branding and website.
External	<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the visibility and "branding" of the agency. 2. More outreach and networking with stakeholders to identify their needs that could be contract work such as project management for local planning departments, BID's, Chambers and Municipalities. 3. Explore ways to have a greater presence on social media with the support of a contract/part time social media strategist. 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding has been somewhat flat and the agency is dependent upon a few number of funders/grants that could be eliminated. 2. Risk of becoming "redundant" as the availability of online data has reduced the agency's role as the only "go to" source for data. 3. Retirement of the ED will likely result in a loss of institutional knowledge.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- I Develop an integrated communications and outreach plan to promote the role and value of the Commission and continue to explore opportunities for expanded regional partnerships

- II Continue to provide and seek opportunities for facilitation and project management contracts, within the constraints of funding opportunities and staffing, that increases the role of CDRPC in supporting local, inter-municipal, and regional collaboration initiatives

- III Invest in the agency's IT platform to enhance in-house accessibility of information among staff and maintain a more user-friendly website while ensuring the agency's value-added in the interpretation of the data to the region's stakeholders

- IV Implement a leadership succession planning process to minimize the loss of institutional knowledge and to create a smooth, well-orchestrated transition for the Executive Director (ED) position

**CDRPC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2015-2017
ACTION STEPS**

Strategic Initiative
Develop an integrated communications and outreach plan to promote the role and value of the Commission and continue to explore opportunities for expanded regional partnerships

Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Target Dates
Prepare an RFQ to solicit and hire a Marketing/PR firm to develop a communication strategy	Executive Director	2016 Q1
Create a communications program to promote a clear and consistent message about CDRPC's Mission and Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop collateral materials for staff use in outreach activity including workshops and conferences as well as one on one meetings with stakeholders • Continue to explore ways to achieve a broader dissemination of information about CDRPC, including presence on social media outlets 	Marketing/PR Firm Executive Director	2016 Q2
Continue to increase level of community visibility and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct in-person visits to key stakeholders and county officials • Host meetings at CDRPC • Keep Commissioners informed of program activities in order that they may serve as Ambassadors to the organization • Utilize the web site and other social media outlets as a portal for information about the Commission 	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	Ongoing

**CDRPC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2015-2017
ACTION STEPS**

<p>Implement a proactive approach to communicate and celebrate the successes related to regional collaboration initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare periodic press releases to local papers • Identify outcomes/results from CDRPC supported projects • Prepare a 50th Anniversary celebration during 2017 	<p>Marketing/PR Firm Executive Director Office Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing 2016 Q4</p>

**CDRPC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2015-2017
ACTION STEPS**

Strategic Initiative	Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Target Dates
Continue to provide and seek opportunities for facilitation and project management contracts, within the constraints of funding opportunities and staffing, that increases the role of CDRPC in supporting local, inter-municipal, and regional collaboration initiatives	Pursue funding opportunities as they arise in line with the Commission's Mission and staff expertise	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	Ongoing
	Respond to requests for assistance in line with our overall mission and program objectives	Executive Director	Ongoing
	Continue with agency presence and participation in regional initiatives including Transportation, Economic Development, Water Quality, and Climate Smart Communities program activities	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	Ongoing
	Continue to promote the agency as a regional data and GIS resource center	Program Manager Executive Director	Ongoing
	Identify and expand relevant items of regional interest to be included in our semi-annual land use and planning workshop series	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	2016 Q2

**CDRPC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2015-2017
ACTION STEPS**

Strategic Initiative

Invest in the agency's IT platform to enhance in-house accessibility of information among staff and maintain a more user-friendly website while ensuring the agency's value-added in the interpretation of the data to the region's stakeholders

Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Target Dates
<p>Undertake a collaborative effort with staff to determine and document programmatic work flow procedures and identify areas of collaboration and data sharing</p>	<p>Executive Director CDRPC Staff</p>	<p>2016 Q2</p>
<p>Evaluate engaging the services of an IT professional to conduct a system audit to determine strengths and weaknesses of the organization's current information technology system including the phone system and existing equipment (e.g. projector, printers). The audit should include a review of options and whether or not the organization would benefit from such resources related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of cloud computing and collaborative platforms, • network bandwidth use and demand, • software/hardware needs, purchasing and licensing procedures • computer back-up procedures, and other matters as deemed necessary 	<p>Executive Director CDRPC Staff</p>	<p>2016 Q2</p>

**CDRPC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2015-2017
ACTION STEPS**

Continue to implement enhancements to the CDRPC website and schedule ongoing updates, including scheduling and responsibilities for ongoing and annual updates	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	Ongoing
Develop and launch an online GIS mapping application accessible through the Commission's website, which would provide the public with a tool to visualize and analyze census data within the Capital Region	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	2016 Q1
Provide training for staff in new and emerging online data and mapping tools which will be integrated into the organization's website for presentation and visualization of data	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	2016 Q1 Ongoing
Consider hiring a part-time employee or an intern with experience in communications to assist with the dissemination of information through the website and social media platforms	Executive Director CDRPC Staff	2016 Q2

MONITORING STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

In order to effectively monitor the implementation of this Strategic Plan, the following guidelines are critical.

- Clear accountability**
- Appropriate resource allocation**
- Specific timetables**
- Quantifiable key measures and indicators**
- Regular ongoing assessments of progress**

The 2016-2018 Strategic Plan was approved in December of 2015 by the CDRPC Board with implementation to begin immediately and funds required for the first year of the plan being allocated as part of the annual budgeting process. Progress updates should be presented by the Executive Director to the Board on a quarterly basis.

It is recommended that at the start of each year during the plan, the detailed action steps for the coming year be reviewed and modified as appropriate for each Strategic Initiative. Use of these detailed action steps with the designation of the staff member(s) responsible, will serve to create individual accountabilities for implementation of the strategic initiatives.

In addition, the CDRPC Board is encouraged to formally revisit the plan at least every eighteen months through some type of planning session to update the Environmental Scan and to confirm on the relevancy of the Strategic Plan Initiatives.