



## *City Council Memorandum*

**To: Mayor Fasbender & City Councilmembers**  
**From: City Administrator Dan Wietecha**  
**Date: March 20, 2023**  
**Item: Strategic Planning Facilitator**

**Council Action Requested:**

Select and approve hiring a facilitator.

**Background Information:**

Over the last year-plus, we have used a set of Strategic Initiatives as agreed priorities in order to maintain focus and progress, drive accomplishment, and ensure regular tracking and reporting.

When the City Council approved the Strategic Initiatives in September 2021, they were expected as a guide for the next year to year-and-half. As a matter of practical effect, we have wrapped up that cycle and should begin the priorities of the next cycle. As a matter of timing, this matched well with the November election and two new Councilmembers in January.

In January 2023, the City Council had general consensus that we should develop an updated set of Strategic Initiatives this spring. The Council had several recommendations: not meeting by Zoom, preferring a day-long retreat, and keeping “down time” brief if the work is done over a series of meetings.

In February 2023, the City Council discussed a “blended” approach in between a streamlined, goal-setting approach and a comprehensive approach. The Council had particular interest in including some sort of “problem identification” in the process. This might be an environmental scan, SWOT, tying to existing plans, and/or interviews with staff and Council. Council also had a keen interest in the deliverables: report, implementation plan, and metrics to gauge progress.

I have solicited proposals from Chad Weinstein of Ethical Leaders in Action (who we worked with for the prior Strategic Initiatives) and Craig Rapp of Rapp Consulting Group (who we’ve

worked with in the past for governance training and I currently work with in a leadership development program).

Although there are relative pros and cons between each, either proposal would be an effective approach to facilitating our strategic planning process this spring.

**Financial Impact:**

\$18,000 to \$19,500

**Committee Discussion:**

City Council discussion January 3 and February 21

**Attachments:**

- Ethical Leaders in Action – Proposal for Strategic Planning Facilitation
- Rapp Consulting Group – Strategic Planning Process

	<u>In House</u>	<u>Project Focused</u>	<u>Blended</u>	<u>Comprehensive</u>
<b>Description:</b>	Sessions facilitated by City staff, likely myself. Expect this approach would be “Project Focused.”	Outside facilitator with approach that brainstorms potential projects and key issues then narrows to a manageable list of priorities for next 1-3 years.	Outside facilitator with approach in between Project Focused and Comprehensive. For example, identifying what makes Hastings distinctive instead of going through a mission/vision exercise.	Outside facilitator with multi step approach including mission/vision and SWOT analysis to identify priorities across several timeframes (1-4, 5-9, and 10+ years).
<b>Pros:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little/no direct budget impact.</li> <li>• Staff more familiar with City and topics than an outside facilitator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipate quicker process than other options.</li> <li>• Priorities will be highly implementable and readily measured.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to have the “best of both worlds.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified priorities may have greater buy-in than in other options.</li> <li>• May include listening sessions for community input.</li> <li>• May include governance and team building exercise.</li> </ul>
<b>Cons:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited staff bandwidth.</li> <li>• Limited capacity to both facilitate and participate in the retreat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator not budgeted, but likely less cost than other options.</li> <li>• May be viewed more as goal setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator not budgeted.</li> <li>• People may be dissatisfied with a “compromise” approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator not budgeted.</li> <li>• Takes longer than other options, potentially multiple meetings.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Philosophical question of overstepping City Administrator's role.</li></ul>	than as strategic planning.		
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**Options for Approaching Strategic Priorities**



March 13, 2023

Mr. Dan Wietecha, City Administrator  
City of Hastings  
101 Fourth Street East  
Hastings, MN 55033

RE: Proposal for Strategic Planning Facilitation

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Wietecha,

Thank you for inviting Ethical Leaders in Action to facilitate strategic planning for the City of Hastings. This document is offered as a proposal to do this work, engaging elected officials and staff in an efficient but substantive process aimed at developing a shared understanding of your current situation and a set of strategic initiatives to be pursued over the next 1-3 years, with clear objectives and performance indicators. Our aim will be to develop realistic initiatives based on a thoughtful assessment of Hastings and its current situation, the shared priorities of its elected officials, and the City's capacity to implement strategic efforts alongside ongoing municipal operations.

### **Project Approach Overview**

As before, our approach will be iterative and collaborative. After introductory discussions at council and staff meetings, we will conduct individual interviews with staff leaders and elected officials to develop a starting point for a situation assessment and initial concepts for strategic initiatives. We will then facilitate a day-long retreat with council and staff to solidify a situation summary organized by SWAT factors, and to draft strategic initiatives at a high level. The outcome of the retreat will be a draft document, which we will complete with additional input from staff, presented to Council in a second working session. Those efforts will provide the input necessary for a final document to be presented at a final council meeting.

### **Project Tasks and Parameters**

The following project plan is intended to describe the approach outlined above in more detail.

#### **1. Initial Investigation**

##### **a. Preparation**

- i. ELA will meet with you to determine what documents and data would be helpful for the team to review in preparation for interviews.
- ii. ELA will introduce the interview process to a City Council meeting or work session (less than 30 minutes) to provide a common foundation prior to individual interviews.
- iii. ELA will draft interview guides for council interviews and for staff interviews.

- b. Interviews
  - i. ELA will conduct individual interviews with the mayor, all council members, and staff department heads. (30-60 minutes per interview)
  - ii. ELA will facilitate a discussion with staff department heads to obtain their overall input into the City's strategic situation and potential areas for strategic initiatives. (Two hours)
- c. Documentation and Retreat Preparation
  - i. ELA will prepare an initial draft of preliminary findings to be used in a full-day retreat.
  - ii. ELA will develop an agenda and plan for the retreat and seek input from the mayor and city administrator on the plan.

## 2. Council and Staff Retreat

### a. Retreat Facilitation

ELA will plan and facilitate a full day retreat for elected officials and department heads or their designees. (Approximately six working hours plus lunch and breaks.)

- i. A draft SWAT analysis will be presented and discussed in detail.
- ii. Candidate topics for strategic initiatives will be presented as a starting point for discussion. These will be informed by the interviews and staff working session.
- iii. Participants will generate their own set of topics and goals for strategic initiatives.
- iv. A draft set of initiatives will be synthesized, with high-level objectives and other parameters in preliminary form.

## 3. Synthesis and Presentation of Strategy

### a. Plan Draft

ELA will prepare a full draft of the strategic plan based on the output of the retreat and present it to staff for revision and additional input

- i. ELA will gather staff input in a working session (Approximately 90 minutes.)
- ii. ELA will work with individual staff members as necessary to document high-level implementation plans and performance/achievement indicators.

### b. Final Plan

ELA will prepare a strategic plan document and a PowerPoint summary of that document.

- i. ELA will distribute the full document to Council and staff and use the PowerPoint to present it to Council in a meeting for input (up to 90 minutes).
- ii. ELA will make final revisions based on Council input and present it as a final document at a council meeting (up to 30 minutes).

## 4. Project Deliverables:

- a. Word-based Strategic Planning Document. This will be a compact version of a strategic plan, including:
  - i. Description of planning process used.
  - ii. Situation summary organized as a SWOT analysis.
  - iii. Strategic objectives to be achieved, with rationale for each.
  - iv. Strategic initiatives with:
    - 1. Tasks
    - 2. Timeline
    - 3. Resource estimates
    - 4. Performance/achievement indicators

- b. PowerPoint Summary of the strategic plan to guide final discussion with Council.
  - c. Process documents:
    - i. Interview guides
    - ii. First draft to inform retreat.
    - iii. Retreat agenda and plan.
    - iv. Draft strategic plan for staff input.
5. Summary of Staff and Council Time Commitments (consistent with the above plan).
- a. City Administrator
    - i. Project oversight and input ad hoc throughout the process.
    - ii. Participation in Department Head efforts, below.
  - b. Department Heads
    - i. Individual interviews (1 hour per director)
    - ii. Staff Working Session 1 (2 hours)
    - iii. Retreat participation (8 hours)
    - iv. Staff Working Session 2 (1.5 hours)
    - v. Final one-on-one work to develop strategic initiatives (up to 2 hours for some directors)
  - c. Mayor and Council Members
    - i. Introductory meeting (30 minutes)
    - ii. Individual interviews (1 hour)
    - iii. Retreat participation (8 hours)
    - iv. Working Session review (90 minutes)
    - v. Final presentation (30 minutes)

## **Timeframe**

We are prepared to kick off the project as early as April, 2023, and expect that the total project duration will be 12-16 weeks.

## **Project Staff**

Charles Weinstein will be lead ELA's team and will be primarily responsible for project delivery, including primary session facilitation and primary authoring of deliverables. James Fischer will serve as co-facilitator and will assist in synthesis of deliverables. Profiles for both are available at [www.ethinact.com](http://www.ethinact.com); more detailed resumes are available upon request.

## **Fees**

We propose a fixed fee of \$18,000 for this project, which includes all professional labor including work already completed prior to project interruption.

We propose to invoice the City based on the following schedule:

- \$5,000 upon project kickoff
- \$5,000 upon completion of the council retreat
- \$8,000 upon your acceptance of the final project deliverable.

We ask that payment be due 15 days after receipt of invoice.

## Conclusion

Thank you once again for your interest in re-engaging ELA as a resource for the City of Hastings. As before, we are open to modifying our approach to best meet the needs of the City.

As noted in the above timeline, we are prepared to begin work on this project to prepare for an April kickoff upon your written acceptance of this proposal (email will suffice).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles A. Weinstein" followed by a horizontal line.

Charles A. Weinstein, Ph.D.  
President  
Ethical Leaders in Action, LLC



# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



RAPP CONSULTING GROUP

## Rapp Consulting Group - Strategic Planning Process

The Rapp Consulting Group (RCG), and its principal, Craig Rapp, have conducted over 100 local government strategic planning engagements—over forty (40) in the past five years. Primary clients are cities, counties, and special districts located in the Upper Midwest. The collaborative process used by RCG results in clear priorities, focused objectives, and targeted performance. This is accompanied by best-in-class stakeholder engagement, plan implementation and performance reporting—facilitated by a team with decades of local government and consulting experience.

### **Craig Rapp, President, Rapp Consulting Group**

Craig Rapp is a nationally recognized speaker, facilitator, and strategic advisor. He speaks and conducts workshops on subjects such as: leading in difficult political environments, alternative service delivery, and authentic leadership. The focus of his consulting practice is strategic planning, leadership development, and optimizing organizational performance. Craig has over thirty-five years of experience as a senior executive in both the public and private sectors. He was the Director of Consulting for the International City-County Management Association, City Manager in three cities, Director at a regional agency, and a senior executive in two privately held companies. He has a master's degree in public administration, a bachelor's degree in urban studies, and is a graduate of the Senior Executive Institute at the University of Virginia.

## Rapp Consulting Group - Strategic Planning Process

The following description includes all components of the strategic planning process offered by the Rapp Consulting Group. Not all components are included in every engagement. Final design determined by the client.

### Project Plan

STEP	LENGTH OF TIME	ACTIVITIES
Project Initiation	30-60 days	Project planning, interviews, senior management session
Environmental Scanning, Stakeholder Engagement	75-90 days	Environmental scan, stakeholder engagement; Internal SWOT, Value Proposition
Data review, preparation	21 days	Synthesis of scan and stakeholder data
Strategic planning	30 days	Strategic planning sessions (Data review session + strategy sessions)
Strategy implementation	45-75 days	Management & staff sessions- initiatives, action plans, performance management
Summary report	21 days	Report preparation, presentation
Yearly Update (years 2+)	30 days each year	Consultant-client review, strategy session

\*Timeline is for illustrative purposes only. Some steps performed concurrently.

### Strategic Plan Development

#### Project Initiation: Project planning, Governing Board engagement, kick-off meeting

Prior to initiating action, the consultants will review the results of the previous strategic plan to gain insight into themes and current priorities of the organization. Following this, a project kick-off meeting with the Chief Administrative Officer and the leadership team will be held for the following purposes: (1) verify expected outcomes; (2) present an overview of the process; (3) review mission, vision and values to determine the need for updating; (4) discuss & guide staff on environmental scanning and developing an organizational profile; (5) clarify and finalize the details of the engagement process for the governing board, stakeholders and staff; (6) review issues-including any unique challenges.

Interviews with members of the governing body will be conducted to introduce the consultant(s) and acquire the perspective of the elected officials regarding the current environment, challenges and issues. A session with staff at all levels will be held to explain the strategic planning process, what to expect, and how it fits into a results-oriented management system. This meeting will also be used to describe the survey that will be administered to employees and/or governing board to provide feedback into the strategic planning process. Activities include:

- a. Review previous strategic plan and performance results
- b. Facilitate meeting with Chief Administrative Officer and leadership team
- c. Prepare for and facilitate governing board & employee feedback (if included)
- d. Summary of meetings—outline of process

## Assess the Operating Environment

The first step in the strategic planning process is a review of the operating environment. This is accomplished in three ways: (1) an Environmental Scan; (2) an Organizational Profile; and (3) a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.

### Activity #1 – Conduct Environmental Scan

Under the guidance of the consultant, the client develops the environmental scan which is a systematic review of major environmental factors affecting the organization's operating environment such as: financial and economic conditions, demographics, political and intergovernmental relations, citizen and stakeholder issues, technology changes, environmental sustainability, and the regulatory environment.

- a. Develop and distribute environmental scan documents
- b. Provide staff support as required

### Activity #2 – Develop Organizational Profile

An organizational profile is a baseline description of the organization prepared by staff with the guidance of the consultant. It provides detailed information regarding the human and capital resources of the organization and the strategic context for operations. Specifics regarding governance, organizational structure, work processes, staff capacity and capabilities, and the strategic environment are included. This serves as an on-going reference document for the board and leadership team.

- a. Prepare and distribute guides/examples
- b. Provide staff support, review as required

### Activity #3 – Administer SWOT Questionnaire

A SWOT questionnaire is administered to all strategic planning participants. This provides a leadership perspective on the current environment—both internal and external. The results are aggregated to ensure anonymity and maximize candor. The data generated is delivered at the strategy retreat.

- a. Prepare and distribute questionnaire
- b. Summarize data

## Engage the Community and Stakeholders

Concurrent with the environmental scanning effort, the consultant conducts a stakeholder engagement process. This effort seeks to understand community needs and expectations, and determine whether the organization's mission, vision, values, and priorities are aligned with those expectations. The final elements and specific format for this effort will be determined by the client and may include in-person and online facilitated interactions with stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders are defined by the client, but generally include community groups and members such as: the business community, schools, seniors, facility users/patrons, faith groups, historically underrepresented and hard-to-reach populations. Optional approaches for gathering community input include:

- Focus groups—facilitated and conducted by the consulting team with groups identified by the client. Sessions consist of 8-12 individuals from each of the selected stakeholder groups.
- Community forum(s)—facilitated community discussions conducted by the consulting team using audience participation technology (APT). Participants vote anonymously via electronic keypads, responding to questions relevant to the strategic planning process. Participation is open to the entire community and/or by invitation as determined by the client.

- Online survey of stakeholders—these surveys can be focused on an array of external and internal groups and/or the entire community. Administered by the consultants using POLCO© or similar technology. Internal groups could include advisory boards or community leaders.
- Statistically valid resident satisfaction survey. This differs from the previous online survey insofar as it relies on a methodology that assures high confidence of results and a validated margin of error. The National Community Survey by POLCO© is used for this purpose.

All stakeholder engagement options include:

- Discuss approach with client and project team
- Prepare background materials
- Conduct process with selected approaches
- Summarize results

### **Determine Challenges, Priorities, Outcomes, Targets**

Following completion of community engagement, the leadership group develops the plan, beginning with a review of the information and feedback collected, followed by a retreat where strategic challenges are identified, and priorities, outcomes and performance targets are determined:

#### Strategic Planning Session #1- Review Stakeholder Feedback, Scan, Profile

This session is held prior to the strategic planning “working sessions” (session 2, 3) and is dedicated to reviewing the results of the stakeholder feedback, the environmental scan, and the organizational profile. The consultant presents feedback results, and the staff presents the scan and profile. The session concludes with a facilitated discussion amongst the governing board regarding issues raised.

- Prepare and summarize data
- Present to governing board
- Facilitate discussion

#### Effective Governance Session

An interactive session for the elected officials, leadership team, and senior management team will be conducted to familiarize the group with best practices in governance and create team cohesiveness. Governance topics covered will include – roles and responsibilities, teamwork, candid communications, handling conflict, understanding differences (using DiSC© profiles), and decision-making.

#### DiSC© Personality/Style Assessment

The DiSC© personality/style assessment will be administered to all participants. The results will be used during the session to enhance understanding of style different and the impacts on team cohesion and decision-making.

#### Strategic Planning Session #2- Examine Operating Environment, Identify Strategic Priorities (could be combined with Session #3)

This session includes the governing board and leadership team and focuses on reviewing or confirming organizational purpose, examining the operating environment, and establishing priorities. The group addresses organizational value proposition, the mission, vision, and values, and updates them accordingly. A facilitated process is held yielding a list of organizational challenges and a set of 4-6 strategic priorities. The group’s effort will be informed by the results of the community engagement process and the information generated by the scan, profile, and SWOT questionnaire.

- Develop meeting process
- Review and integrate survey, environmental scan, profile, SWOT information
- Facilitate session and group exercises
- Summarize results

Strategic Planning Session #3 –Establish Desired Outcomes, Key Indicators, Targets (could be combined with Session #2)

This session is dedicated to defining a set of outcomes, key performance indicators, and targets used to establish accountability and achieve results. It may also address issues not completed at the previous session. Using a facilitated process, the group determines a set of strategic priorities, then develops and aligns outcomes and targets with the priorities.

- a. Prepare background materials
- b. Review previous session discussion/results
- c. Facilitate session
- d. Summarize results

## **Operationalize into a Work Plan**

Following the development of a plan delineating outcomes and performance targets, the process moves to implementation. Via facilitated process, staff from many levels develop strategic initiatives—the projects that enable achievement of targeted performance. This is followed by creation of action plans—detailed steps required to implement initiatives. To ensure accountability and transparency, the actions are tracked and reported. This is done via an in-house process or via a software solution—determined by the client.

Strategic Plan Implementation—Develop Strategic Initiatives/Action Plans

This session is conducted with the staff at multiple levels across the organization. The session focuses exclusively on developing strategic initiatives and detailed action plans for each strategic priority, in line with identified outcomes and targets. Action plans need to be developed in sufficient detail to establish accountability and make the effort real. The session includes a review of the strategic planning process and guidance on action planning. If appropriate, it will also include initial exposure to the interface with implementation software.

- a. Meeting/discussion with CAO/Project Manager
- b. Review previous session discussion/results
- c. Prepare background materials
- d. Facilitate session
- e. Summarize results

Strategic Plan Implementation- Work Plan refinement and integration

This session is conducted with staff at multiple levels and focuses on refining the work of the previous session to achieve integration of effort across service areas. It includes training on the interface with implementation/dashboard software, if chosen. Performance reporting is presented along with forms and/or software solutions.

- a. Meeting/discussion with CAO/Project Manager
- b. Review previous session discussion/results
- c. Prepare background materials
- d. Facilitate session/train employees
- e. Summarize results

Strategic Plan Implementation- Work Plan finalization

This session is conducted with staff at multiple levels and will focus exclusively on final integration issues related to action plans, vertical and horizontal coordination, timing of project deadlines, and software input. This will include the review of staff work by the consulting team.

- a. Meeting/discussion with Chief Administrative Officer or Project Manager
- b. Review and feedback on staff work
- c. Prepare background materials
- d. Summarize results

## Plan Updates, Continuation

Each year following initial plan adoption (Years 2-5), the consultant will work with the client to review and update the plan.

- a. Review strategic plan process, prepare background materials
- b. Facilitate retreat
- c. Summarize results

## Options - Pricing

TYPE OF PLAN	OPTIONS	PRICE*
“Getting Organized” Plan <i>45-60 days</i>	Online intake assessment, SWOT, Strategy session, Initiatives advice, Report	<b>\$12,500</b>
Strategic Plan- Limited <i>60-75 days</i>	Project planning, management session, SWOT, Strategy session, Initiatives/Action Planning session, Report	<b>\$19,500</b>
Strategic Plan for Operations <i>75-90 days</i>	Project planning, leadership interviews, management session, Environmental Scanning, SWOT, Focused Community Engagement, Strategy sessions, Initiatives/Action Planning sessions, Report	<b>\$27,500</b>
Strategic Plan- Comprehensive <i>90-140 days</i>	Governance session, leadership interviews, management session, Environmental Scanning, SWOT, Expanded Community Engagement, Strategy sessions, Implementation-Alignment-Performance management, Report	<b>\$35,000+ TBD based on scope**</b>
Strategic Plan- Transformational <i>120-180 days+</i>	Governance session, leadership interviews, Initiation session, Environmental Scanning, SWOT, Comprehensive Community Engagement, Strategy sessions, Implementation-Alignment-Performance management, Software-enabled results tracking-reporting, Report	<b>TBD based on scope**</b>
Strategy Update – Annual	Client-consultant review of progress; SWOT; Facilitated strategy session; Plan Update	<b>TBD based on scope**</b>

\*Travel not included

\*\*Final price dependent upon engagement methods chosen

## Examples of Strategic Plans, Implementation

Examples of strategic plans, environmental scans, and do-it-yourself performance reports are available at: [Examples of Strategic Plans, Initiatives/Action Plans, and DIY Performance Reports](#)

The Rapp Consulting Group has business alliances with POLCO® and Envisio®. They are best-in-class providers of stakeholder engagement and performance management. An example of how Envisio's software and dashboard solutions are being implemented by a Rapp Consulting group City is found here:

**City of Maplewood, MN** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48vqbpOpNyo&t=0s>

**POLCO** [www.POLCO.us](http://www.POLCO.us)

**Envisio** [www.envisio.com](http://www.envisio.com)

<https://www.envisio.com/envisio-public-dashboard>

## Clients

The primary clients served by Rapp Consulting Group are cities, counties, and special districts. The organizations vary but are generally similar in size and complexity. The following are a representative sample of engagements over the past five years:

### STRATEGIC PLAN ENGAGEMENTS

City of Bloomington, MN  
 City of Blaine, MN  
 City of Shakopee, MN  
 City of Chanhassen, MN  
 City of Savage, MN  
 City of Northfield, MN  
 City of Prior Lake, MN  
 City of Richfield, MN  
 City of West St. Paul, MN  
 City of Waconia, MN  
 Village of Gurnee, IL  
 City of Lockport, IL  
 Village of Lombard, IL  
 Village of Lemont, IL

Village of Roselle, IL  
 Village of Glen Ellyn, IL  
 Village of Oswego, IL  
 Village of New Lenox, IL  
 City of Burlington, WI  
 City of River Falls, WI  
 Dakota County CDA, MN  
 Washington County CDA, MN  
 Lisle-Woodridge Fire District, IL  
 Roselle Park District, IL  
 Roselle Public Library District, IL  
 Oswego Public Library District, IL  
 Northfield EDA, MN  
 Lakeville EDC, MN