

# City of El Cerrito Strategic Plan 2015 to 2020

Updated in April 2015

# Management Partners



April 2, 2015

Mr. Scott Hanin  
City Manager  
City of El Cerrito  
10890 San Pablo Ave  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Dear Mr. Hanin:

Management Partners is pleased to deliver this updated strategic plan for the City of El Cerrito. The first version of this plan was developed in 2013 using broad-based input from the community and City organization and two facilitated strategic planning sessions conducted with the City Council. This updated version reflects the changes made during the City Council study session held on March 28, 2015. In its updated form, this plan articulates the City's vision, mission, and values, as well as important goals and strategies to be pursued over the next three to five years. Changes are highlighted in yellow. The graphics for the vision statement (page 5) and the mission statement (page 6) have been modified to reflect the 2015 updates.

We look forward to continuing to assist the City of El Cerrito as it continues to integrate and align services to achieve the community's vision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Newfarmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Gerald E. Newfarmer  
President and CEO

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## Background

### ***Updating the Strategic Plan***

On March 28, 2015, the City Council held a study session to revisit the City of El Cerrito's strategic plan, which was originally adopted in 2013. During this session, Council members discussed changes to the City's vision, mission, values, goals and strategies. This version of the strategic plan incorporates those edits and advances El Cerrito on a path towards achieving its vision.

### ***Developing the Original Strategic Plan***

In June 2012 the City Council and City Manager initiated a strategic planning process to create a multi-year plan for the future. During the prior year the City Council had adopted a mission statement for the City and the strategic planning process was intended to build from there. The City of El Cerrito has a strong tradition of leadership, sound planning, prudent financial practices and a track record of accomplishment. Building on this tradition, City leaders launched a process to develop a plan that will guide decisions over the next several years.

This strategic plan provides a framework for linking identified priorities to the budget process, capital improvement program, important policy considerations, economic development initiatives, and the organization's desire for continuous improvement. Council members provided policy direction about priorities and the City's executive team provided professional input about the contents of the plan. Management Partners designed and facilitated the process and prepared the Strategic Plan.

### ***Strategic Planning Process Overview***

The strategic planning process began with an analysis of strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats (SLOT). These were identified through a series of interviews, focus groups with staff and community representatives, and through a variety of community outreach efforts,

including an Open House at City Hall, an online survey, and community events. Management Partners interviewed the Mayor, members of the City Council and the City Manager to confirm the strategic planning process and hear initial ideas.

Approximately 50 staff representatives were randomly selected to confidentially inform the process. Staff members were asked to identify the strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats of El Cerrito and to brainstorm words and phrases that define a vision of the City of El Cerrito and their vision for the future of the community. The staff focus groups were comprised of representatives from all levels of the organization, from line staff to management, and all City departments.

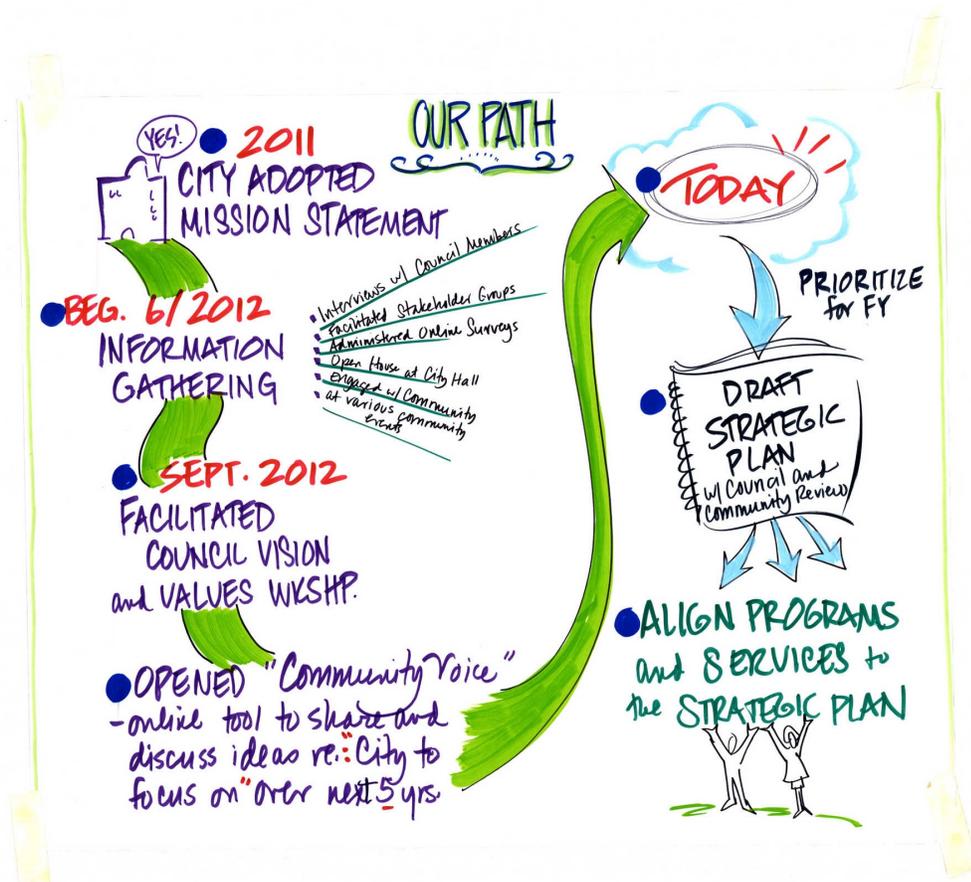
Six focus groups of community stakeholders were held to solicit input and ideas about what makes the City of El Cerrito special. As with the staff groups, participants were asked for their perspectives on the strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats of El Cerrito.

In addition, to further engage the community and hear perspectives about what makes El Cerrito unique, the City held a public open house. City staff attended community events and administered an online public forum. These efforts informed the creation of a vision for the City's future and helped to prioritize goals and strategies.

Finally, an online survey was administered to solicit input from members of the public. Using words and phrases identified through the online survey Management Partners created "word clouds" that visually present perceptions of the City today and a desired future five years from today. Those word clouds are included as Attachment A.

Management Partners provided guidance to staff who prepared an environmental scan of current and future factors influencing the City. The combination of broad-based qualitative input and quantitative trend data laid the foundation for a highly interactive study session with the City Council. A graphic recorder captured the results of the Council workshop conducted on January in a visual, "storyboard" format.

A graphic representation of the strategic planning process is presented on the following page.



The City of El Cerrito Strategic Plan sets a clear vision for the organization and establishes goals and strategies to move in that desired future direction. In addition, the plan articulates the organization’s values and the behaviors that support them.

Figure 1 shows the core elements of the strategic plan.

Figure 1. El Cerrito Strategic Plan Components

A glossary of terms is provided in Attachment B.

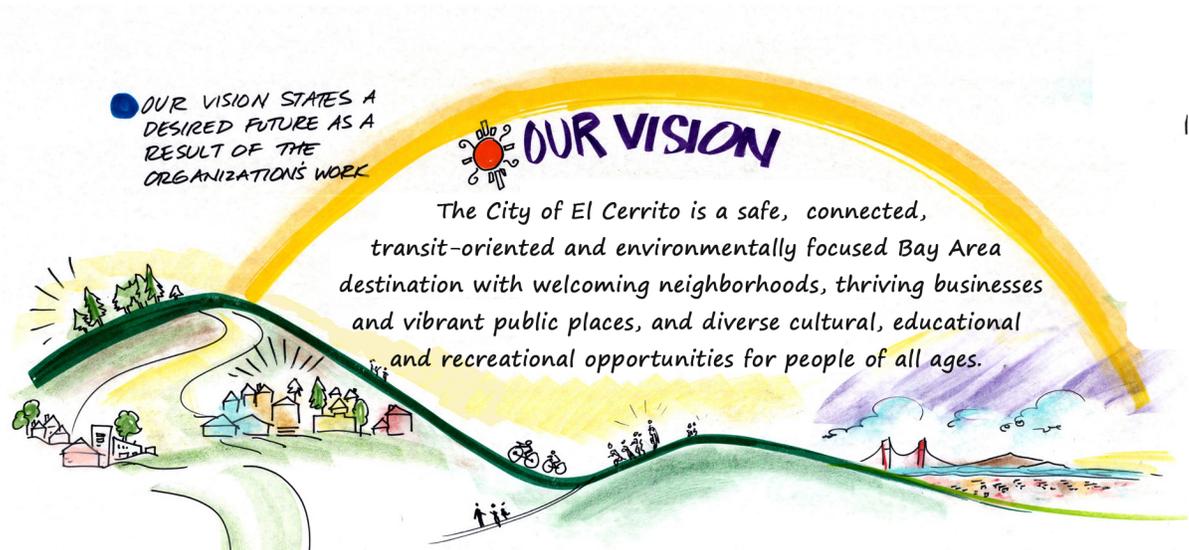
These elements are graphically presented in the strategic plan. A summary presentation of the strategic plan elements is included as Attachment C.

## City of El Cerrito Strategic Plan

The City of El Cerrito is committed to achieving a shared vision for the organization and its community. The vision, mission and values below are the result of a thoughtful and inclusive process designed to set the City on a course that meets the challenges of today and tomorrow. A glossary of terms is provided in Attachment B.

### OUR VISION

The City of El Cerrito is a safe, connected, transit-oriented and environmentally focused destination with welcoming neighborhoods, thriving businesses and vibrant public spaces, and diverse cultural, educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages. The vision is visually depicted below.



The City's *vision* sets the focus for the future. It is a statement of where the organization is going.



## OUR MISSION

The City of El Cerrito serves, leads and supports our diverse **and transit-rich** community by providing exemplary and innovative services, public places and infrastructure, ensuring public safety, and creating an economically and environmentally sustainable future. The mission is visually depicted below.

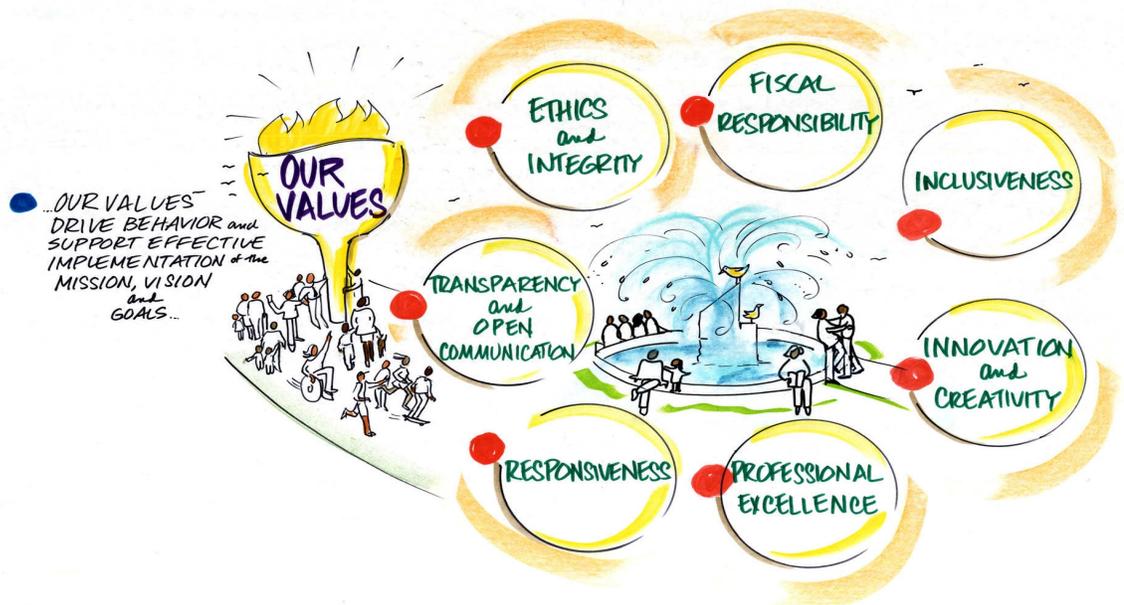


The City's *mission* is a statement of the purpose of the organization. It fundamentally defines what the organization stands for and what it will do.

## OUR VALUES

Our values drive behavior and support effective implementation of the mission, vision, and goals. The City's values include:

- Ethics and Integrity
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity
- Innovation and Creativity
- Professional Excellence
- Responsiveness
- Transparency and Open Communication
- Sustainability



Each of these organizational values has associated behaviors that can be demonstrated throughout the organization. The behaviors that were identified by executive staff and the City Council are listed below.

### Value: Ethics and Integrity

- Keeps the public's interest always in mind
- Abides by professional codes of conduct
- Exercises good judgment
- Does the right thing even when no one is looking
- Knows and follows ethical rules
- Adheres to individual and organizational professional standards in the conduct of the organization's business

- Has the courage to say no
- Is accountable
- Stands for something
- Sets the example
- Remains steadfast
- Is willing to admit failures/faults
- Puts others first (emotional intelligence)

### **Value: Fiscal Responsibility**

- Ensures responsible spending of the City revenues with services delivered in the most cost-effective, efficient manner
- Maintains financial reserves consistent with City Financial Policy
- Adheres to best practice financial policies and practices
- Attracts outside funding and resources when appropriate
- Forecasts
- Maintains fiscal discipline
- Addresses unfunded liabilities

### **Value: Inclusiveness and Respect for Diversity**

- Treats others with dignity and respect
- Demonstrates a welcoming attitude at all times
- Demonstrates sensitivity to the needs, concerns and opinions of others
- Incorporates inclusiveness into programs and services
- Cultivates a broad and diverse network to exchange ideas and make decisions
- Models inclusive behavior when interacting with staff and the community
- Values and promotes full utilization of workforce diversity
- Successfully manages differences in primary language and culture
- Encourages and promotes a work environment in which all individual differences are valued, respected and welcomed
- Seeks or provides resources to promote and support inclusiveness
- Resolves complex issues by balancing needs of diverse groups
- Demonstrates compassion

### **Value: Innovation and Creativity**

- Solves problems creatively and is open to new ideas
- Creates new ways of moving the organization forward to achieve its mission

- Fosters new and creative thinking and solutions
- Identifies new ideas/methods/techniques and embrace those that lead to improvement
- Uses emerging technology with purpose
- Takes risks (calculated)
- Encourages thinking outside-the-box
- Fosters empowerment
- Make it safe to make mistakes and to learn from them

### **Value: Professional Excellence**

- Demonstrates respect
- Is dedicated
- Is dependable/reliable
- Keeps skills and knowledge current
- Exhibits excellent interpersonal skills
- Provides stewardship
- Identifies/forecasts issues
- Is solution-oriented
- Pays attention to detail
- Displays humility
- Sees the public and City employees as sources of creative ideas and effective solutions
- Has and communicates a vision
- Inspires results and effective teamwork
- Communicates and listens effectively
- Makes the hard decisions
- Sets the example; mentors others to be successful

### **Value: Responsiveness**

- Seeks and utilizes community input
- Listens/responds actively
- Is timely
- Keeps others informed and up to date
- Keeps commitments and does what is said will be done; is reliable
- Engages – two way interaction
- Fulfills commitments and keeps promises that are made

### **Value: Transparency and Open Communication**

- Operates in such a way that others can easily see one's actions

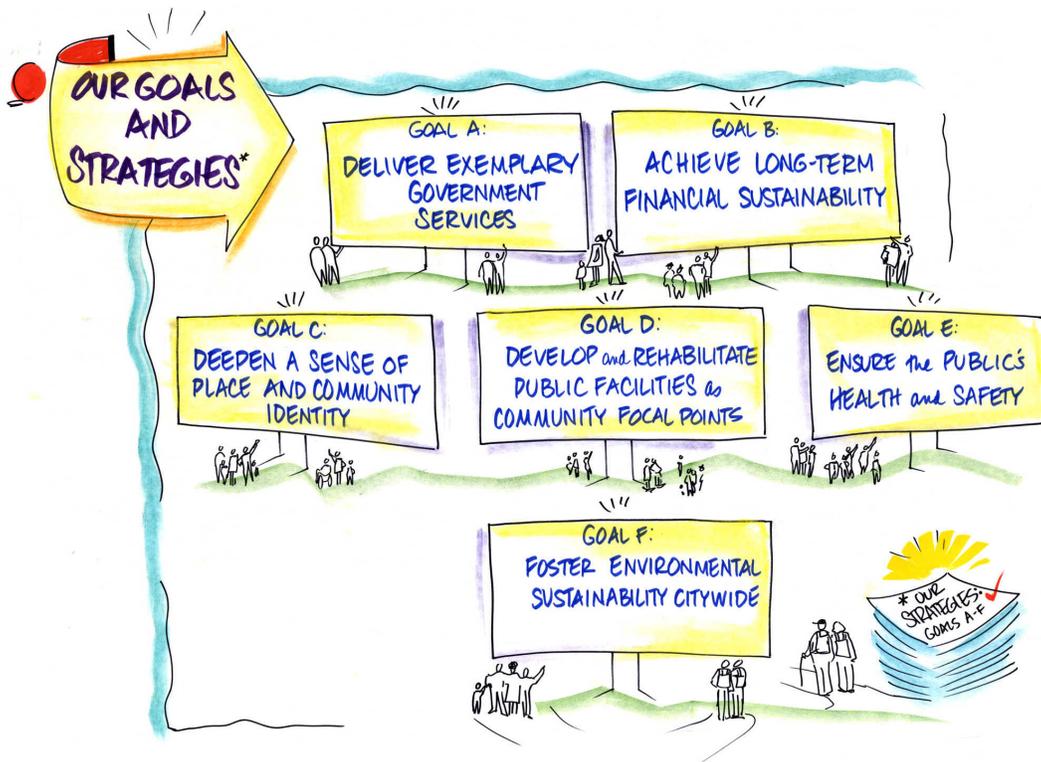
- Champions public transparency laws to enhance accountability and builds trust in government
- Follows open meeting laws in conducting the public's business
- Facilitates public participation in open meetings; encourages candor and welcomes input; **receptive to criticism**
- Provides free and easy access to information regarding matters of public interest
- Provides timely, accurate information that is easy to access and to understand
- Seeks ways to increase community participation and inclusion in government
- Considers media, technology and other channels to reach the public
- Listens carefully and remains open to different perspectives
- Explains policies, issues, and changes
- Develops creative ways to get the public productively involved
- Engages in open, honest communication
- Actively seeks citizen participation; strives to keep the public informed and educated about community issues
- Listens to other perspectives with an open mind and a sincere desire to understand

### **Value: Sustainability**

- **Take responsibility for the long-term health and well-being of residents and City employees**
- **Champion policies to protect, preserve and restore the natural environment**
- **Take steps to minimize waste and conserve resources**

## ***GOALS AND STRATEGIES***

Goals are multi-year in nature. The timeframe for achieving goals is typically five to ten years. Strategies are the means to achieve the goals. The timeframe for implementing strategies can span several years as specific programs and projects are undertaken. It is recommended that the Council review the goals and strategies again in three to five years.



## Goal A: Deliver exemplary government services

### **Strategies**

- Increase productivity and efficiency by utilizing data-driven analysis to ensure appropriate resource allocation.
- Promote employee development and professional growth.
- Recruit and retain a talented and effective workforce.
- Ensure City programs and services are inclusive of people of diverse backgrounds.
- Develop and strengthen relationships with public and private partners, residents, businesses, schools, and community groups.
- Maintain emphasis on providing excellent customer service.

## Goal B: Achieve long-term financial sustainability

### **Strategies**

- Maintain financial discipline by establishing decision-making guidelines to evaluate whether or when to pursue a new project or program.

- Ensure policies, procedures and systems represent best practices in financial management.
- Maximize opportunities for existing and expanding businesses.
- Explore opportunities for public/private partnerships.
- Continue to pursue and support opportunities for new funding, including outside grants and ballot measures.
- Develop a financial plan to address ongoing and deferred maintenance of facilities and infrastructure.
- Develop a plan to ensure that Citywide revenue meets the cost of providing Citywide services, including adequate reserves for unanticipated revenue shortfalls.
- Track and promote State and Federal legislation that would create new funding opportunities.

### **Goal C: Deepen a sense of place and community identity**

#### ***Strategies***

- Promote strong neighborhoods.
- Celebrate the City's diversity by welcoming residents of all ages and cultures and encouraging their civic involvement.
- Adopt a Revised General Plan that meets the needs of the community now and in the future.
- Develop a vision for underdeveloped and underutilized properties through advanced planning efforts that encourage investment and/or new development.
- Develop an Economic Development action plan to build on our strengths, including our diversity, arts, culture, and environmental sustainability.
- Review and update policies on preservation of historic and cultural resources and develop an inventory of historical and cultural assets in the City.
- Encourage dense business nodes to minimize or eliminate automobile traffic.
- Identify, promote, and/or develop entertainment, recreational, and leisure activities for people of all ages and demographics.
- Promote arts and culture and community celebrations.
- Develop plans for the City's 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary (2017).
- Be a strong partner with the schools.

## **Goal D: Develop and rehabilitate public facilities as community focal points**

### ***Strategies***

- Develop a plan to address ongoing and deferred maintenance of facilities and infrastructure.
- Continue the facilities assessment to prioritize and strategize investment (i.e., library, public safety facility, senior center, community center).
- Revisit and update the Structural Facilities Management Plan.

## **Goal E: Ensure the public's health and safety**

### ***Strategies***

- Provide transparent information on crime and address perceptions of safety through outreach and education.
- Utilize environmental design techniques to deter and prevent crimes
- Apply data-driven analysis to target law enforcement and fire resources and enhance safety.
- Maintain disaster preparedness programs and ensure emergency response plans are current.
- Continue multi-division/department teamwork to ensure and enhance the community's safety through a thorough, efficient and comprehensive plan review, permitting and inspection process.
- Continue to work with local partners (i.e., BART, the school district, other communities, East Bay Regional Park District) on a coordinated approach to public safety.
- Utilize community-oriented policing and problem solving.
- Utilize a diverse array of crime prevention techniques (e.g., School Resource Officer [SRO] program, Traffic Unit, Bike Patrol, etc.).
- Explore innovative and best practices for promoting public health (e.g., smoking ordinances, nutrition, obesity prevention, living wage, and strategies to promote walking/biking).

## **Goal F: Foster environmental sustainability citywide**

### ***Strategies***

- Be a leader in setting policies and providing innovative programs that promote environmental sustainability.
- Promote environmental education to facilitate behavioral changes by working with the school district and other community groups.

- Implement polices to promote waste diversion (i.e., **mandatory commercial recycling and green waste**).
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation to the single occupancy vehicle.
- Implement **and monitor** the City's Climate Action Plan to:
  - Reduce vehicle miles traveled (by creating a well connected, pedestrian, bicycle and transit-oriented urban forms that will make it easier for residents and visitors to leave their car behind.)
  - Facilitate energy and water efficiency and greater **use and generation** of clean energy
  - Reduce the amount of waste generated in El Cerrito
  - Make municipal operations more resource efficient and environmentally friendly

This set of goals and strategies will guide and inform the City's annual priority-setting and resource decision-making processes and serve as a broad framework to achieve the exceptional quality of life expected and experienced by the residents of El Cerrito.





## Attachment B – Glossary of Terms

The following graphic shows the key components of a strategic plan.

A ***vision*** sets the focus for the future. It is a statement of where the organization is going.

A ***mission*** is a statement of the purpose of the organization. It fundamentally defines what the organization stands for and what it will do.

The ***values*** of an organization drive the goals created and the process of implementation. Values provide the basis for how the organization and its members will work to achieve the mission and vision. Examples include professional excellence, innovation, responsiveness, and integrity.

***Goals*** set the framework that guides the direction and focus of the organization, budget decisions and allocation of other resources, such as staff time. They are “up on the balcony” wide views of opportunities for change and improvement and state the desired future. Goals or strategic priorities provide the “why” (larger meaning and context) of the specific actions the agency takes. They help the executive team decide which of the many worthy projects should be done and when, within available resources. Goals must be meaningful and attainable.

***Strategies*** are the means to achieve the goals. They describe an approach or method and begin to answer the question: How will we go about accomplishing the goal? They may include broad areas to pursue, rather than individual projects. To assure that the goal is achieved, later in the process each objective must be assigned to an individual, with resources identified, and incorporated into a work plan.

An ***implementation action plan*** is the blueprint for carrying out the strategic plan. It contains the detailed steps that must be taken to assure that the goals and strategies are achieved. Action plans provide a framework for determining specific timelines, assignments, and resource allocations. They are designed to be a management tool to help the organization assure that goals are attained and are well-suited to periodic check-in about progress, changes or challenges.

# Attachment C – Graphic Representation the Strategic Plan

