



GIS Strategic Planning

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Rather than speaking on artful maps or demonstrating killer apps or spatial models to save the world, we'll talk about a much less visual, analytical, or exciting --- yet very important, yet often overlooked, aspect of GIS...

Planning for it's organization, expansion, healthy use and sustainable future.

Drawing from our recent experiences with preparing a strategic plan for LOJIC.

This is the ugly, backroom, thankless work that will never win an ESRI award...but keeps us all growing, moving forward...and employed !

What we'll touch on...

- A little strategic planning background
- Our need for a strategic plan
- Our pre-planning activities
- Developing our strategic plan
- Our next steps...

In our short time today we'll briefly touch on....

A little academic background to strategic planning...why it's important and some components in the planning process;

A bit of the organizational and financial landscape that drives LOJIC's strategic planning effort;

Some of the activities, dialog and information gathering that provided a good foundation for our planning work;

Our process for grappling with defining our strategic issues and formulating a specific set of goals and objectives to steer our future – sometimes frustrating, sometimes painful, but always informative and constructive process;

And where we are in the process and what are our next steps into plan implementation.

Why Plan ?



- Improves organizational focus among all participants.
- Promotes collaboration across the entire organization.
- Defines measurements of success (and failure).
- Translates strategies into programs, projects, products.
- Fosters accountability among participants.

Why plan? Why go through the effort? What's the point?

Collaborative planning...working together to design a future...has many benefits...regardless the purpose.

It forces concerted attention on what we're doing, how we're doing it, and for whom;

It makes us think about appropriate metrics for scoring our successes...and failures;

Deliberate planning forces us to not only set targets and goals, but also to create a roadmap to achieve these goals.

Strategic Planning

- A systematic process through which an organization agrees on, and builds commitment among key stakeholders to, priorities that are essential to its mission and are responsive to its environment.

Allison & Kaye, 2005

- A creative process for identifying and accomplishing the most important actions in view of organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

A.D. Chandler, 1962

- A systematic way to manage change, create the best possible future, and guide the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve priorities.

Connelly, 2005

Strategic planning, at its best, is a highly collaborative process for defining how we intend to collectively achieve our vision of success;

Strategic planning openly acknowledges our weaknesses and obstacles to success as well as our strengths and opportunities for growth;

Grounded in reality and embracing change -- strategic planning maps out how we will use the talents and tools at our disposal to fulfill our mission as best we can.

Simple Strategic Planning Model

Interests + Environment = Strategy

Where...

Interests = *what the organization wants to achieve*

Environment = *conditions controlling decisions*

Strategy = *plan for attaining interests given environmental opportunities and constraints*

Strategic planning combines our view of a desirable horizon with a pragmatic feel for the road;

It is a melding of “goals and guardrails”...as one person put it.

Strategic planning articulates what we want to accomplish along with an “eyes wide open” understanding of where we are and what we have to work with.

****Examples of Interests and Environment****

10-Step Strategic Planning Process

1. Agree on a strategic planning process
2. Identify organizational mandates
3. Clarify organizational mission and values
4. Establish an effective organizational vision
5. Assess internal and external environments
6. Identify strategic issues
7. Formulate plans of action to manage issues
8. Review and adopt the plan
9. Develop an effective implementation process
10. Reassess strategies and planning process

From J.M. Bryson, 1995

Address the 10 steps...

LOJIC Strategic “Environment”

- Old partnership agreements expired
- Newly merged Louisville Metro government
- New faces at the table
- Need for more equitable financing
- Competition for static resources
- Challenges and opportunities of new technologies
- Need for program prioritization
- Regional growth opportunities

Address the points...

Our Accomplishments

- Successful 20-year growth history
- Sustained model partnership
- Peer awards and recognition
- Veteran core technical support staff
- Veteran core user staff
- Emphasis on training and self-sufficiency
- Investment in the technology
- Collaboration among partners and core staff
- Expressed desire for continued partnership

We openly acknowledge and celebrate where we are and how we got here...

Planning the Plan

- **Planning Team:** LOJIC Policy Board and ESRI representative
- **Timeframe:** Fall '06 to Spring '07 (Prior to FY08 Budgets)
- **Format:** Regular monthly meetings, at minimum
- **Guidance:** Contracted facilitator (RKX Consulting, Inc.)
- **Input:** Core staff, Decision Makers, Users
- **Research (Internal):** Historical budgets, expenditures, resource summaries
- **Research (External):** Contracted PlanGraphics, Inc.
- **Products:** Incremental outlines, budget projections, interagency agreements, a final written plan

It's vital to layout the plan for building the plan...

Form a Strategic Planning Team of "owners" or highest level possible;

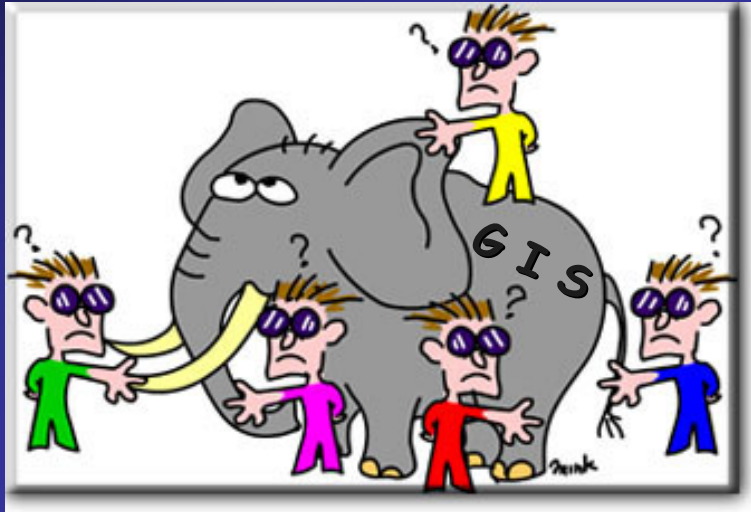
Commit to a timeframe to complete the plan; schedule and format of meetings;

Must have a facilitator, ideally unbiased outsider skilled in facilitation and collaborative strategic planning;

Do your homework of gathering wide range of customer input and research on historical operations of your GIS organization;

At the start, define what products you expect from the plan in the way of incremental and final materials...know when you're finished with the initial effort.

What a GIS Should Be...



Understand and embrace the fact that people with varying viewpoints, agendas, missions, priorities, and areas of responsibility are going to different definitions of the ideal GIS...

It is impossible to come together and leave your biases, beliefs and experiences behind...

If properly managed, differences can create synergy, creativity and community.



Whether personal, professional or institutional...strategic planning has a central thread...

What's important to you and how you'll conduct yourself?

What future do you see for yourself, how you define ultimate success?

What's your purpose, why you or your organization exists, and for whom?

What are the most important things you want to accomplish?

What are the key alternatives or directions you can steer toward success?

What spread of programs, projects, and actions you should take on and how should resources be committed.

Our Statement of Values

The basic principals that guide and inspire our work and actions...

Partnership: We will keep the needs, best interests and success of our partners at the forefront of our actions.

Collaboration: We will seek the cooperation and involvement of our user community toward the most effective applications of geospatial technology.

Stewardship: We will responsibly and securely maintain and promote our community's significant investment in geospatial resources.

Excellence: We will maintain proficiency in technical skills and provide innovative geospatial technology solutions.

Service: We will provide responsive, knowledgeable, effective support to meet our community's needs for geospatial resources.

Professionalism: We will adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards according to the URISA GIS Code of Ethics.

You can't define strategies until you articulate what you hold dear...

What are your beliefs, standards, ideals; what gets you out of bed each workday?

What guides, motivates and inspires your work...and it is more than a paycheck !

Should be framed as a short statement of group action...

"We promise to..."

"We will do..."

Post your values for the world to see, wear them on your sleeve.

Our Vision Statement

Internal and external image of the future we seek to create; what we will look like if we are supremely successful...

Our Internal Vision:

To be the premier provider of geospatial data and application services throughout the Louisville Metro region in a self-sustained, cost-effective and highly customer-focused manner.

Our External Vision:

To provide easy and open access to all forms of geospatial information about our community to all who may need it.

Layout your vision of an attainable, successful future...

A simple, brief statement of how the world will be a better place when we succeed;

It is a statement of how we want insiders and outsiders to see us;

Vision statement is an articulation of how we will operate, what we will have, and how we'll look to ourselves and to others.

Crafting your vision statement isn't as easy as it sounds; do it collaboratively and plan on many drafts, comments, and more drafts.

Our Mission Statement

Statement of our purpose and business; why and for whom do we exist.

LOJIC Mission:

To build, maintain and proactively support a comprehensive Enterprise GIS that promotes information sharing and the effective use of geospatial technology for the benefit of our partners, our customers and our community.

Define your mission...

This is a brief statement...it should fit on a T-shirt...of why we exist, our reason for being, our purpose...and for whom do we exist...Who are our customers...really?

This speaks to the heart of your GIS's existence.

All your plans, programs, actions, expenditures and budget requests should be "mission-driven" and "mission-centric".

The mission of your GIS must be the yardstick against which you measure your performance and success.

We Laid Foundation

With Core Staff:

- Brainstorming values, mission, vision
- Staff surveys (key projects, SWOT's, recommendations)



With Decision-makers:

- GIS Visioning Workshop conducted by ESRI
- Interviews with Policy Board members



With Our User Community:

- Detailed On-line User Survey
 - Background info, level of knowledge and usage
 - Experiences and interactions with LOJIC staff
 - Future needs and vision for the future of LOJIC



We began with brainstorming with LOJIC staff to kick-start values, mission, vision;

Staff surveys, SWOT, major projects, needs, recommendations.

ESRI facilitated a 2-day GIS Visioning Workshop for administrators; attended by 30+, presentations of diverse uses of LOJIC, finalized mission/vision statements...NGT exercises..."What do we want LOJIC to be?"

Detailed 24-question on-line survey to obtain user feedback on:
User background, depth of GIS knowledge and level of usage;
Relative magnitude and level of satisfaction in dealings with LOJIC staff;
Data/application/support needs and their particular vision for LOJIC's future.

231 users responded to the survey...far beyond expectations...indicated the importance of GIS to daily operations and tasks.

We Got Professional Help

Facilitation: *RKX Consulting, Inc.*

- Assemble information and interviews
- Schedule and lead meetings
- Incremental plan outline
- Draft strategic plan document

Research: *PlanGraphics, Inc.*

- Profiles of other GIS sites
- Analysis of funding alternatives
- License/User fee best practices
- Business case brief

We hired consultants 1) to assist with facilitating our strategic planning effort and, 2) to perform external research and define a set of alternatives for our future governance and financing...

Our Strategic Questions

- What is the most effective and sustainable form of governance and organizational structure?
- What are the most equitable and sustainable method of joint funding to secure LOJIC's long-term viability?
- What is the most appropriate level of core technical staffing to ensure effective system maintenance, growth and ongoing user support?
- What are the institutional and technological barriers to GIS integration across all agencies of local government and utilities?
- What level of GIS technical skills is required at specific user agencies?
- How can the LOJIC partnership expand to include other entities across the region?

We began by framing several key strategic questions concerning...

The most appropriate form of organizational structure and governance...ie, Policy Board, Technical Committee, IT “hit team”, user groups;

Appropriate levels of staffing;

Organizational and technical barriers to integration and growth;

Appropriate range of skills needed at various user agencies;

How we take LOJIC “regional” to mirror Metro’s vision for a regional city and to mirror reality...many concerns are regional, such as stormwater management, transportation, economic development, emergency response, etc...

Our Strategic Questions

- What can be done to increase interagency and public communication and awareness of the benefits of LOJIC?
- How can GIS technology, particularly web-based and service-oriented architecture, be used to make LOJIC easier and more widely accessible to partner agencies and the public?
- What are simple but effective procedures for improving project workflows by defining processes for...
 - getting projects on the LOJIC staff official work list?
 - assigning/approving project priorities and required resources?
 - defining/documenting user expectations and commitments for projects?
 - project management, tracking, reporting and adjusting priorities?
- What are the most important set of GIS projects as application needs?

Improving internal/external communications and awareness of LOJIC resources and capabilities;

Leveraging new technologies and SOA to make LOJIC more open and accessible;

Improving workflows for defining project scope and priority, appropriate resource allocations, tracking resource usage;

Consensus identification of mission-critical GIS applications.

Our Strategic Goals

1. LOJIC as regional geospatial center of excellence
2. Develop self-sustaining organization and governance
3. Implement consumable web-based SOA tools
4. Deliver cost-effective services and customer support
5. Expand community outreach and education

Our Planning Team identified five overarching strategic goals to drive LOJIC's future growth, integration and development...

To promote and grow LOJIC to be the hub of an 11-county regional GIS partnership;

To work toward self-sufficiency in governance, operations, and funding;

To implement Service Oriented Architecture and deploy web services that can be shared and consumed by other applications; make LOJIC more "Google-like";

Apply best practices to deliver more cost-effective services and user support;

Promote awareness of the benefits of GIS, better educate users, and share technical knowledge across our region.

Goal 1: Regional GIS Center

Objectives:

1. Become the “Center of Excellence” for geospatial services in 11-county region.
2. Establish a regional geospatial database warehouse portal.
3. Seek out opportunities for innovative partnerships and collaborations.

Become the resource for regional GIS technology;

Maintain highly trained, skilled staff;

Maintain environment for ongoing GIS R&D and best practices.

Maintain standards and action plan for high quality data development and “publishing”;

Define and prioritize core regional data that LOJIC will serve;

Ensure data interoperability and ease of use.

Assess regional GIS needs;

Develop new business relationships based on projects and products needs;

Establish business development expertise within LOJIC;

Develop ROI statement on the benefits of LOJIC.

Goal 2: Self-sustaining Organization

Objectives:

1. Operate as a stand-alone business enterprise.
2. Transition to an independent operational model.
3. Expand the consortium to more user agencies.
4. Establish a self-sustaining cost model.

For FY08 establish separate cost center/enterprise within MSD;
During FY08 evaluate more cost effective fiscal agent situation.

During FY08 evaluate organizational alternatives, ie, 501c3 or c6;
Recommendations for transition to more independent status.

In 5 years, 50% of annual budget from licensees, subscribers;
Define levels of partner, licensee, subscriber responsibilities and benefits;
Firm up LOJIC Policy Board composition and functions.

Cost model to accommodate varying participation;
Support partner efforts to generate revenue from LOJIC;
Implement consistent product pricing policies.

Goal 3: Implement SOA and Catalog

Objectives:

1. Develop a strategic GIS technology migration plan.
2. Collaboratively develop skills in building shared web-services.
3. Embed GIS in all possible business practices.

Implement ESRI ELA, ArcGIS 9.2 (9.3), and ArcGIS Server;

Collaborate with users to jointly develop web services for consumable tools;

Collaborate with users to migrate away from hold-out legacy systems.

Seek out solutions using ESRI products or other to spatially enable all possible appropriate business processes;

Goal 4: Cost-effective Services and User Support

Objectives:

1. Use Service Level Agreements to guide service delivery to end users.
2. Develop a prioritized annual workplan.
3. Use most cost-effective resource model for services.
4. Model best practices in expanding support and development roles.

Allocate resources via SLA and monitor/report resource usage;

Develop prioritized annual workplan coincidental to budget process, reviewed quarterly;

Implement staff “sharing” to supplement resources and collaborate on data/applications development;

Be more flexible and open to the use of outside resources whenever appropriate;

Develop a succession plan for core staff.

Goal 5: Promote GIS Knowledge

Objectives:

1. Engage diverse entities across the community to raise awareness of GIS resources and capabilities.
2. Assist executives and managers to better utilize GIS in their business operations.
3. Facilitate user communication, education and knowledge exchange.

Using various media sources and outlets, increase familiarity and recognition of LOJIC as our community's authoritative resource for spatial data and applications;

Utilize marketing strategies to promote growth and increased use of LOJIC;

Engage administrators and decision-makers across the community to cultivate ideas for expanded use of LOJIC;

Facilitate frequent and open exchange of information among users through newsletters, FAQ page, user group meetings, and other forums.

Our Next Steps

- Firm up our full written plan and present to users
- Explore organizational and financial options
- Finalize ELA and administration procedures
- Craft projects/programs to meet goals
- Craft new license agreements
- Renew governance groups
- Cultivate new regional relationships

We still have much work to do...

GIS Strategic Planning

“A vision without a task is but a dream.

A task without a vision is a drudgery.

A vision and a task can change the world.”

From a church in Sussex, England, c. 1730

Hopefully this short presentation has given you a snapshot of the elements of strategic planning, how we approached developing a strategic plan for LOJIC, and the direction we want to take our GIS in the future.

I also hope this little show has, in some small way, challenged you to think more strategically about your GIS.

Our is still a very cool, beautiful technology that we need more than ever to do our work, manage our assets, inform our fellow citizens and help us all work faster, smarter, better.

GIS Strategic Planning

Change is mandatory.

Growth is optional.

I have no idea who first said this, but it sounds like something maybe Bill Gates would say.

Thanks for listening. Got any questions ?

Thanks for your attention. Questions?