



**DATE:** For meeting of April 11, 2013

**FROM:** Karen Sherman, Senior Program Analyst

**SUBJECT:** Supplement for Item 5) Review & Discuss Draft Strategic Plan:  
Public comment from Zero Waste Humboldt regarding Draft Strategic Plan

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** None

Public comment on HWMA's Draft Strategic Plan was received from Zero Waste Humboldt on March 15, 2013. The comments were distributed electronically to HWMA's Board of Director's and posted on HWMA's website under the public comment section of the Strategic Planning page. It was not included in the April 11, 2013 Board packet. It is added as a supplement to the Board packet posted on-line. We apologize for the oversight.



**DATE:** March 15, 2013

**TO:** HWMA Board members and alternates, R3 Consulting Inc. principals, and HWMA Planning Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Jud Ellinwood, Zero Waste Humboldt Advocacy Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** ZWH's HWMA Preliminary Draft Strategic Plan Review Comments  
–THE MISSING IMPLEMENTATION SECTION.

Everyone who is receiving this letter has been part of an intense and rewarding strategic planning process that will produce a product of which we can all be proud. Everyone has generously invested an extraordinary amount of time and effort to this enterprise and shares a strong desire that implementation of the plan will fulfill the plan's identified goals. Zero Waste Humboldt also shares these sentiments. For this reason, we are expressing our concern that what we regard as an essential plan element – a section devoted to implementation of the plan - is missing from the preliminary draft document, and we strongly recommend its inclusion as the plan's last section.

Most of us have seen well-intentioned written plans become nothing more than shelf documents. So much wasted effort! This too can easily become the HWMA strategic plan's fate if commitment to creating an implementation plan and a general description of the implementation plan and its use is left out of the strategic plan.

Another plan? Consider this: There is good reason why strategic plans with an implementation component so often succeed where others fail. An implementation plan is all nuts and bolts. To quote a recent article: ***“Strategic planning is a process that includes charting a direction, determining the course, and reaching a destination. You need a plan for implementing goals and strategies in addition to identifying them, in order to reach your destination.”***

Implementation plans vary but they commonly identify who, what, when, how and resources needed for each initiative. Sound implementation plans commit organizations to:

- regular internal communication about the plan,

- tracking and measuring progress,
- conducting an annual review and evaluation, and
- adoption of annual or biennial action plans for each major initiative.

**An implementation plan should identify start and stop dates, measurable milestones – i.e., objectives - and associated timelines.**

**Tracking and summarizing progress and assessing the status of initiatives is critical to successful implementation.**

**Strategic plan information needs to be updated periodically to reflect progress and accomplishments.** Organizations need an easy way to track and summarize progress. The tool of choice is typically a matrix to show priorities and timelines for completion of objectives.

A good implementation plan identifies alternatives in case some initiatives don't work out as hoped. Planning experts advise organizations to stay focused on their destination but be flexible about the path they take to get there.

**A good implementation plan will guide actions from top to bottom of an organization's personnel hierarchy, creating consistency and efficiency at every level.**

**Good communication is a key element of successful strategic plan implementation. Regular communication demonstrates commitment to the plan; regular monitoring and progress reviews will maintain and build institutional memory for HWMA, which has had and will continue to have significant transition in governance and key management positions.**

**It will be essential that HWMA's Executive Director - and ideally a standing Board Strategic Plan Committee too - take ownership of implementation of the strategic plan and monitor progress through regular communication with senior management.**

**Keeping the HWMA planning process dynamic and ongoing is critical.** In the words of a Pennsylvania State University Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment article , *“Organizations should link the plan to their daily operations: Keep the plan visible by integrating into regular activities such as staff meetings and professional development plans. Drill down from strategies to show how they are related to daily activities.”* Whenever possible, HWMA should use the

strategic plan's stated goals as a reference point for everyday decision-making, and bring the vision and goals of its strategic plan into the ongoing activities of its staff and board. Regularly referring to the plan can improve HWMA's ability to respond creatively to new information or unforeseen circumstances, rather than being limited by it.

**Accountability is another essential element of an implementation plan. A contact person should be assigned for each initiative.** An assignment matrix or grid can be very useful to keep track of ongoing and completed activities.

Annual or biennial work plans that are based on progress reviews identify mid-course corrections and modification to reflect changing circumstances and needs. Annual work plans provide the foundation for annual budget development and identifying funding development needs.

**In conclusion, we urge the Board to incorporate - at a minimum - the following content in an implementation section located at the end of the plan body:**

- **An explicit commitment to preparing an implementation plan within six months of official adoption of the strategic plan,**
- **A specific description of the implementation plan's purpose, basic design elements and how it will be used, as in this letter.**

*Please post this letter on the HWMA Strategic Plan webpage under Public Comments and enter into the process's written record. Also, please enter this letter into the PAC March 20, 2013 written record. Thank you!*