

# City of Hudson Strategic Plan

## Goal 3 Observations

Submitted by Mr. D. Hanink – Ward 1 Councilman 4/28/13

### TOPIC AREA 3.1: PROVISION OF CITY SERVICES

#### 3.1.1: Determine Hudson's priorities for non-utility community services.

Using a citizen's task force as the initial action is unnecessary, or at least premature, in the process. Hudson has a city manager, assistant city manager, and staff department managers who are experienced and knowledgeable. The process then could be something on the order of the following:

1. Develop a list of services that a city could provide. This ought to be a one-day exercise at the most if the participants take some time individually to prepare.
2. Force rank those services, beginning with the most essential as #1. This could occur on the same day as the first step above.
3. Identify which ones are currently provided to Hudson residents, also as part of first day.
4. Judge the quality of each service currently provided. This assessment could incorporate benchmarking of the service.
5. For any service not achieving acceptable performance levels, estimate what resources and time would be required to improve it. Include ranges and important assumptions.
6. For any service currently performing at acceptable levels but with scope for expansion or further improvement, define what that scope would be and provide an estimate of the required resources and time. Again, include ranges and important assumptions.
7. For services on the list but not currently provided, define the potential scope of the service and estimate the resources and time to provide it with ranges and important assumptions.
8. Present analysis and recommendations to council.
9. Council determines next steps depending upon the findings and recommendations.

We all can anticipate some of the additional services that might be requested. There may be a time for some incorporation of citizen input, but not until something along the lines above has been done. It seems appropriate to me that we step back and consider the entire service picture and our funding capabilities before we risk becoming embroiled in debates about expansion of city offerings.

#### 3.1.2: Determine Hudson's direction for utilities.

Task C (3.1.2C) is the most important in this section. Reducing I&I to better manage our NEORSD costs is critical at least to those homeowners and businesses served by it. Presumably there may be similar opportunities for those served by Akron. I assume that

dealing with storm and sanitary system segments approaching end of life is a related issue to pure I&I.

There are subtasks for Task C. The first is defining the problem: determining its extent and nature. Effort has been underway for some years to camera the storm and sanitary sewer systems of the city. There must be some data regarding the sources of most I&I and other issues. What is the timetable for completion? (Hopefully it is soon.) What are the findings?

The result of this could/should be shared with council as the next step, even prior to final recommendations.

The third task would be to formulate recommendations that would, of course, include the estimate of resources and time to correct the problem(s) as well as potential legislation in support of the solution.

It is not obvious that completion of Task C by early 2015 is reasonable.

Task E (3.1.2.E) regarding HPP is obviously impacted by Task D, the build out projections. However, there has been a long-range plan in effect by HPP, as referenced by Mr. Comeriato at a recent workshop. Without waiting until 2016 for the results of Task D, what have been or are the drivers of HPP now? What is currently HPP's plan that has been underlying the 5-year plan? This should be the subject soon of a council workshop and can serve as a precursor for a new plan in the time stated.

### **3.1.3: Develop a performance measurement and reporting system....**

This is substantially complete or completed. The Revelstone software has been selected and funded. A report to council is appropriate. The report may center on capabilities of the system with findings or conclusions drawn from it to be reported at a later date. A report could be a crisp written one with discussion as necessary.

## **TOPIC AREA 3.2: IMPROVED GOVERNMENT FACILITIES**

This is targeted for a September 2013 completion. It would be useful to prepare the council for the final recommendation by presenting the needs assessment prior to completion of the recommended plan and associated costs.

## **TOPIC AREA 3.3: HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **3.3.1: Ensure that Hudson continues to attract...**

### **3.3.2: Maintain a competitive compensation program....**

It seems to me that these are not separate. I think it is important for the city manager to share his assessment of his team and its bench strength with the council on a regular basis, as stated in 3.3.2.B.

Task C (3.3.2.C) is conduct a citywide classification study. I hope that this will produce or encourage a formal organization structure that is flat and maximizes the potential for job assignment flexibility. This ought to consider data from the private sector as well as governmental units.

As a general comment, “competitive” can mean different things to different people. In my mind, it does not imply having to be the highest paying organization with the best benefits. Certainly people are due fair compensation for their skills and energy. Compensation should also recognize the total package that people are provided in which to work. That would include the working environment (is it safe, open, honest, appreciative with advancement and skill building opportunities) and the quality of the tools/equipment/processes that are provided.

### **TOPIC AREA 3.4: REGIONAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY**

#### **3.4.1: Encourage/promote city employee participation....**

It is unclear to me why an incentive program stated in 3.4.1.B is required to encourage employees to develop more efficient services. That ought to be a component of every person’s job and duly recognized in his or her performance appraisals. Suggestion programs become administrative problems. Extraordinary contributions can always be recognized in an extraordinary way, consistent with any limitations with bargaining units (which limitations ought to be removed over time). And certainly at the manager and department supervisor level devising and implementing ways to improve service and efficiency should be considered when the city manager assesses his team’s capabilities.

#### **3.4.2: identify regional collaborations...**

This implies benchmarking, which is fine. In some dimension, 3.4.3 could be collapsed/combined with this one. Obviously “shared operational challenges” implies other dimensions than cost and processes, such as state and federal legislation.

### **TOPIC AREA 3.5: FINANCIAL RESOURCES & FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Item 3.5.2 is really unnecessary as it is stated in the city’s mission and implied by all the foregoing activities.

More important is further developing the strategic planning process and integrating it with the 5 year plan and annual budget processes. In my view the strategic plan should not be an effort undertaken once every five years as, for example, the Chinese reportedly run their country. Rather, our current effort should be regularly reviewed as to progress and evolve to become a “living” document. Some of those reviews could be simple status reports against the time and goal statement; other more extensive reviews can be incorporated into the departmental/functional workshop reviews, such as the one we have had with Chief Robbins but with the content of the meeting drawn from the Strategic plan and the output reaffirming the financial plan of the annual and five year budgets. I would expect this approach to reduce the time required to create the five-year plan and annual budget and provide a more thorough understanding of competition for

limited resources. Of course, the effort this past year to get the strategic plan off the ground has been time consuming but that should be an investment in a better process going forward. We need to set a master calendar and to establish a supporting rhythm. Once that is done, the city will have a robust continuing process for planning its operations and objectively assessing its needs and opportunities in a comprehensive way. This should also support development of an updated comprehensive plan with much less time, cost and other resources,