



CRAWFORD COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

CRAWFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
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SEPTEMBER 2020

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PROCESS

Between June and September 2020, Crawford County’s planning agency undertook a strategic plan. The purpose was to determine strategies to improve the effectiveness of the agency’s work and better align it with the county comprehensive plan.

The process included background work and three half-day work sessions facilitated by a professional consultant. The first and third work sessions involved the Planning Commission, County Commissioners, and select Planning Office staff. The second work session involved the Planning Office.

Strategies and priorities herein were developed by consensus of the Planning Commission and Planning Office with input from the County Commissioners. Where the consultant additionally provided ideas for consideration, those are so noted.



SUMMARY: TO-DO LIST

USE MISSION AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES LISTS AS A TOOL TO FOCUS WORK

See page 3. Strategic plan participants developed lists to define the planning agency's most important projects and tasks. The Planning Commission and Planning Office should officially acknowledge the priorities and initiate their use, the Commission by approval at a Commission meeting, the Office by internal policy.

INITIATE AN UPDATE TO THE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

See pages 4 & 5. A current and viable county comprehensive plan was repeatedly identified as central to county planning agency work. The Planning Office should take the lead and involve the Planning Commission in outlining a likely multi-year process, timetable, and objectives for updating the plan with a goal to begin work in 2021.

REVISIT THE COUNTY ROLE IN SALDO

See pages 4, 6, 8 & 9. In the short term, the Planning Office and Planning Commission should reconsider their work in municipal SALDO reviews to maximize value achieved and align it with an appropriate level of effort. Further, the Planning Office in the lead with involvement of the Planning Commission should evaluate, either as an outcome of an updated county comprehensive plan or as a short-term task if the priority is more imminent, options identified herein for county administration of SALDO.

INSTITUTE BETTER-DEFINED ROLES FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION

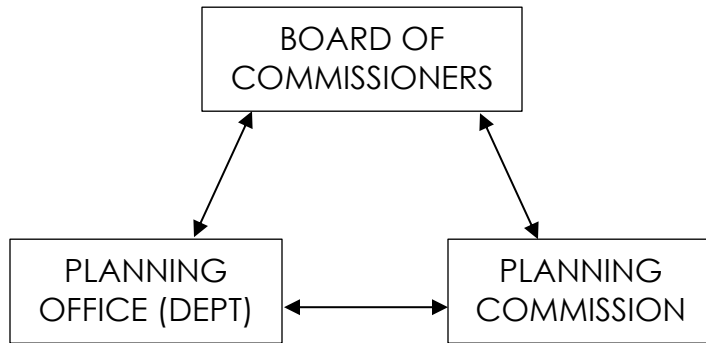
See pages 8, 9 & 11. The Planning Commission should institute better-defined roles for itself identified in the strategic plan. The Commission should also adopt measures of best practices and standards for excellence as policy and/or as a job description for Commission members.

INITIATE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

See page 10. The strategic plan identifies three priority improvements: 1) Create an application for appointment to the Planning Commission; 2) Develop an onboarding process for Commission members; 3) Develop a process and/or policy to ensure geographic representation on the Commission. The Planning Commission should take the lead in implementing the improvements. The Planning Office should provide technical and facilitation assistance.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Crawford County has a two-part planning agency. As authorized by the PA Municipalities Planning Code, there are both a planning department (Crawford County Planning Office) and a planning commission (Crawford County Planning Commission). The structure has advantages in broadening community participation, but it presents challenges in sharing roles and responsibilities.



The County Commissioners recently enacted an updated ordinance re-establishing the office and commission. The ordinance is suitable but leaves room to further clarify which body does what in shared responsibilities.

The Planning Commission has current bylaws (2017). They clearly define membership, including a recruitment process, officers, committees, and meetings.

The planning agency has a vision, and core values. These are prominently posted on the agency website.

The Planning Office staff is generally young and inclined to be creative and innovative. The Planning Commission and County Commissioners are open to new directions that emerge from a strategic planning process.

Strengths–Weaknesses–Opportunities–Threats

Top SWOT matters needing attention by the planning agency:

STRENGTH to capitalize on

- **Involvement of the County Commissioners**

WEAKNESSES needing improvement

- **Public perception**
- **Lack of focus**

OPPORTUNITIES to pursue

- **Foster innovative growth**
- **Promote uniformity of development and land use throughout the county**

THREAT to overcome

- **Disinterest of local governments in planning**

SWOT notes:

There is a connection between opportunities to foster innovative growth and promote uniformity of development in the county.

There is a connection between poor public perception, disinterest of local governments in planning, and county planning being viewed as a bureaucratic step. According to one of the participants, the public reaction is often, “Oh, the Planning Office!”

MISSION AND PRIORITY WORK ACTIVITIES

Below are the mission and work priorities for Crawford County’s planning agency. Principal among them, consistent with the Municipalities Planning Code, is the County Comprehensive Plan. Preparation of an updated county plan is a top priority. Thereafter, implementation of the plan will be a primary driver of agency work activities from SALDO reviews to grant applications to assisting municipalities with planning.

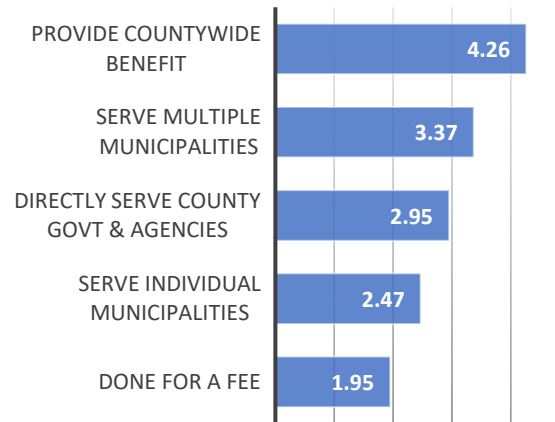
Mission focus

Preparation of the Crawford County Comprehensive Plan, and implementation of the plan by:

- Performing related long-range planning
- Assisting municipalities with long-range planning
- Educating and informing municipalities and the public about the plan and planning topics
- Implementing subdivision and land development regulations
- Seeking and facilitating effective use of outside funding
- Assisting county agencies with projects that implement the plan
- Regularly monitoring and updating the plan

Work priorities

Results from a survey of County Commissioners, Planning Commission members, and Planning Office staff indicate the following order of priority for planning agency work:



The survey also showed there is support for annually reviewing and re-setting work priorities, and for using an updated county comprehensive plan to determine work priorities.

Essential staff activities

- County comprehensive plan preparation (statutorily mandated)
- County comprehensive plan implementation
- Transportation planning and programming
- Grant applications and management
- Creation & management of GIS data

Discretionary staff activities

- Other county long-range planning
- Municipal long-range planning
- Municipal and public planning education/info
- Municipal SALDO reviews
- Local ordinance reviews
- Technical assistance and aid for municipal ordinances
- Technical assistance and aid for county projects and programs
- Consistency reviews with county comp plan
- Development and land use information clearinghouse

The above lists are a tool to focus planning agency work on the most important tasks and projects.

CURRENT PRIORITY TASKS

Three tasks were determined to have imminent priority for action:

- **County comprehensive plan.** The current plan focuses on natural gas issues which have not been realized. The plan has other deficiencies that render it hard to implement. A review and update of the plan are needed with emphasis on 1) revisiting the county's trends and issues; 2) re-establishing long-range vision and goals; and 3) better defining implementable initiatives, projects, and practices.
- **Investigate enactment of a County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).** Crawford is one of about a dozen counties in Pennsylvania without countywide subdivision and land development regulations. A county ordinance would apply in municipalities without their own ordinance and promote uniformity of development and land records across the county.
- **Revisit county planning agency review of municipal SALDO applications.** The staff spends a large amount of time on SALDO reviews, yet rated it low in importance. Planning commission members rated it high in importance and asked why it gets much attention at commission meetings if not important. The agency needs to revisit SALDO reviews to ensure they provide useful value at reasonable level of effort.

Consultant notes

MAINTAINING FOCUS

80/20 rule

20% of work activities – *the vital few* – account for 80% of the results toward goals. 80% of work activities – *the trivial many* – account for only 20% of results. The staff and commission should regularly remind themselves to focus on the 20% vital few work activities that are often harder to do but yield the greatest value.

Annual work program

The planning agency can prepare and “adopt” an annual work program to define, maintain focus on, and hold the agency accountable to priority work activities.

Budget and checkbook

Apply a “budget and checkbook” mentality. The priorities on the previous page (and as may be adopted in an annual work program) represent the planning agency's work budget, what it can afford to do. If a new work task or project is proposed, the staff and commission should ask if they can afford to “write the check” for the new activity. If within the “budget” of work priorities, OK. If not, some activity(ies) will have to be removed or lessened to be able to afford the check for the new activity.

Time-tested tips for staff

- Lists are powerful management tools. Use them to emphasize important tasks. Experts suggest a daily task list.
- Break the big, hard tasks into smaller, manageable parts.
- Act more efficiently on the 80% trivial many tasks. Bunch tasks. Do several similar tasks one after the other. Touch items on your desk only once. Take care of them, move them off the desk.
- Avoid time wasters – shifting priorities, attempting too much, inability to say no, low-value meetings.

Staff notes

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Scope

- There is so little of value in the current plan that a revision will essentially be a new plan.
- Consensus was to undertake an incremental revision over a period of years and thereafter regularly monitor data and trends and revise the plan accordingly.

Building blocks for a revised comprehensive plan

- Long-range vision and goals
- Action plan components that provoke active implementation
- Extensive public engagement – and involvement of elected officials, especially the county commissioners
- Focus on things the county is responsible for, is involved in, and influences
- Focus on blight and redevelopment needs
- Goals of the plan should drive pursuit of resources (like funding) for implementation
- Manner in which the plan is accessed must be different – web-based, interactive, changeable

Staff and consultant roles

- A consultant will be needed, but staff will be heavily involved. The housing plan is a good guide for roles. Staff will do primary work in the lead. Consultant will provide technical expertise and outside perspectives.
- The planning office has two parts: 1) community planning, which would lead preparation of the revised county plan; and 2) community development, which would lead implementation of the plan.

Timing

- The remainder of 2020 is needed to determine an approach, scope, and timetable for a comprehensive plan revision.
- 2021 should be targeted for starting the revision.

Consultant notes

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Ideas for an approach to an incremental revision

- Develop an interim set of issue priorities – any in the current comp plan that are still relevant, others emerging and new – that are “hot” and need attention until a new countywide vision can be developed. Review trends from a manageable set of indicators. Hold an issues summit. Develop short-term action plan(s) for interim priority issues. Staff and agency partners.
- Develop a new countywide vision with engagement of public, officials, and agency partners. Develop strategic goals to implement the vision. Orient goals to real issues (problems, needs, opportunities) affecting the community, not the MPC template. Staff and consultant.
- In the short-term, for a manageable (small) number of goals/issues of high or immediate priority, develop detailed action plans, assemble capacity, and pursue implementation. For less immediate goals/issues, promote policies and principles that “hold the fort.” Staff and consultant.
- Annually: 1) Monitor short-term action plans – as implementation is achieved, move up other goals, do detailed action planning and capacity building, and pursue implementation; and 2) Monitor changing conditions – revisit and revise goals/issue priorities, and do detailed action planning, capacity building, and implementation of revised “hot” issues. Staff and consultant if and when needed.

Staff notes

COUNTY PLANNING ROLE IN SALDO

What is effective?

- Many municipalities desire and rely on county planning reviews, and are getting valuable help.
- SALDOs and reviews help ensure good land records.
- SALDO reviews are regular communication between the county planning agency and municipalities.
- County Planning Commission is engaged and provides good feedback.
- SALDO applications are reviewed vs. comprehensive plans.

What is not effective?

- There is too much reliance on county review. Municipalities do not take enough responsibility and control.
- Time spent on SALDO reviews is disproportionate to the value provided. Too much of the review effort is of low value.
- An opportunity is being missed to collect data like geo-referencing and utility locations.
- Infrequent monthly review by the planning commission creates occasional time crunches on staff.

What value should county SALDO reviews provide?

- Different for each municipality
- Compliance review vs. municipal SALDO – review effort could be lessened by addressing most substantial, not all, regulatory elements
- Review against county priorities, issues, facilities – i.e. county comp plan

Options for county involvement

- **Enact a county SALDO**
- **Promote county administration of municipal SALDO** (authorized by the Municipalities Planning Code)
- **Develop a county model SALDO**, promote to municipalities
- **Combination of a county model SALDO enacted by municipalities and administered by the county**

Points of discussion from work sessions

COUNTY PLANNING ROLE IN SALDO

- If the county enacts a SALDO, it would apply to municipalities without a SALDO. Municipalities with a SALDO would still have to send applications to the county for non-binding review.
- Some municipalities may choose to repeal their SALDO to come under a county SALDO if enacted.
- For municipal SALDO applications, the county is required by the MPC to sign indicating it reviewed a plat before the plat may be recorded, but the county is not required to submit a technical review or comments to the municipality.
- Is inconsistency of development with good planning a problem of the plans submitted or the ordinances? The consultant suggested comprehensive plan consistency is achieved by the regulations in the ordinance. A plan meeting regulations should be consistent with the comp plan. If not, the ordinance should be amended.
- A better county comprehensive plan will help make the county SALDO role more effective.

Consultant notes

COUNTY REVIEW OF SALDO APPLICATIONS

- The county should reconsider its SALDO reviews to align level of effort with value achieved. What do municipal clients need and want? What aspects of review will be most valuable to them? How can county comprehensive plan goals be best served? How can reviews be effectively communicated as a resource for municipalities not a bureaucratic intervention?
- The county could consider varying arrangements with municipalities. It could provide a full compliance review for municipalities that rely on and will use it. Or the county could provide only an internal check and a signature on the plat for municipalities that want no intervention. Review fees could vary accordingly. Where development plans have impact beyond the regulating municipality or implications for the county comp plan, the review could promote those interests.

COUNTY PLANNING CLIENTS

The primary clients Crawford County’s planning agency works for, serves, and benefits are:

- **Municipalities**
- **Citizens**
- **County commissioners**
- **Applicants for SALDO**

The county commissioners are more seen as the overseer and the primary body to which the county planning agency is accountable.

The county planning agency also sees itself as accountable to the citizens of the county, to municipalities with which the agency has contracts for services like grant administration, and to municipalities which rely on county planning for SALDO application reviews.

COUNTY PLANNING VALUES

Below is a consensus list of 10 values – principles, beliefs, and interests – identified by strategic plan participants. These guide what Crawford County’s planning agency is and does, and what it stands for.

- Uphold the interests of the communities, neighborhoods, and people of the county.
- Utilize and safeguard the county’s resources (achieve win-win).
- Promote and safeguard county’s quality of life.
- Be good stewards of the economy, society, and the environment.
- Be transparent.
- Act with a high level of professionalism.
- Be accessible and approachable.
- Follow American Planning Association planning ethics principles.
- Engage the community. More voices make better plans.
- Value the process.

The values are consistent with and build on a set of core values the county planning agency currently promotes on its main webpage.

- Communication
- Sustainability
- Engagement
- Community
- Integrity/Ethics

PLANNING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The consultant suggested **Three Big Planning Roles:**

- THINK FUTURE (No other county agency has this as a primary role.)
- ADD VALUE (To the quality and character of Crawford County and its communities.)
- INNOVATE (Maintaining the status quo will not accomplish county goals. The status quo is riskier than change.)

Of the three bodies involved in planning, the County Commissioners and Planning Office have well-defined roles. The Planning Commission role falls somewhere in between and is not as well-defined. Roles of the three bodies are outlined below.

County Commissioners

Under the Municipalities Planning Code, the elected governing body has decision-making authority. The Commissioners set planning policy for the county. They adopt and make official the county comprehensive plan. They hire staff and appoint PC members.

Planning Office

Planning staff are hired by the County Commissioners to do the daily work of the planning agency. They are trained professionals that perform the various tasks of the planning agency mission.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is an advisory body. Its roles vary from county to county. Some are active “champions” of county planning. Some are simply rubber stamps. The Municipalities Planning Code provides broad guidance to commission roles.

The recent county ordinance that re-established the county planning agency identifies responsibilities for the County Planning Commission. They are broad and not well-distinguished from Planning Office responsibilities. Strategic plan participants brainstormed more detailed value-adding roles for the County Planning Commission in three primary areas of responsibility.

<u>Planning Commission role in preparation of an updated comprehensive plan:</u>	<u>Planning Commission role in implementation of an updated comprehensive plan:</u>	<u>Planning Commission role in SALDO reviews:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff and consultant work. • Provide insights based on knowledge of the geography and people of the county. • Help with community engagement. Assist with public meetings. • Be a two-way information conduit with each Planning Commissioner’s home community, including outreach to community groups. • Help study county situation and conditions. • Be an advocate of the plan. • Brainstorm with staff. Would certain planning strategies make sense, be effective, and be acceptable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a liaison to municipalities. Provide information and help with education. • Advocate (sell) the plan. • Ensure implementation is reasonable, doable, affordable. • Do periodic evaluations of implementation progress and results. • Be the “champion” for plan implementation. • Ensure equitability in implementation. • Ensure proposed projects, development, and actions are consistent with the plan. • Involve Planning Commission committees in implementing aspects of the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide review and comments in addition to those of the staff. • Reinforce and add clarity to the staff review. • Add perspectives and points of interest from the diverse backgrounds of Planning Commission members. • Time involved in County Planning Commission review buys time for municipal review. • There is value in independent oversight by a body of community members.

There was discussion about the appropriate role of the Planning Commission in administrative matters such as Planning Office budget and personnel management. In the past, the Planning Commission did exercise some administrative oversight. However, it was agreed there is potential for conflict in direction to staff if coming from both County Commissioners and Planning Commission.

Consensus was reached on a protocol for Planning Commission involvement in administrative matters.

Consensus on administration of the Planning Office:

1. County Commissioners direct administration.
2. Planning Commission can and should evaluate roles and relationships between Planning Office and Planning Commission so long as consistent with County Commissioners' direction.
3. County Commissioners may ask for help on admin matters, such as hiring. Planning Commission will oblige.
4. Further evaluation of county boards, which will include the Planning Commission, is ongoing.
5. Point of communication for Planning Commission questions and concerns is the Planning Director.

Consultant notes

CRITERIA FOR SALDO REVIEWS

The County Planning Commission does not have defined criteria as a basis for its input on SALDO reviews. Members said they rely in their experience and judgment to assess what is or is not a good development proposal.

It is a good practice to have review criteria. It makes the SALDO review process more predictable for applicants. They should know what it takes to earn a favorable review. Criteria lessen the potential for reviews to be arbitrary.

Three criteria are typically used by county planning agencies in reviewing municipal SALDO applications:

1. Compliance with the regulations of the municipal subdivision and land development ordinance. Counties may do a compliance review as a backstop to the municipal review or to provide the sole compliance review as a service to the municipality.
2. Consistency with the county comprehensive plan. Since comprehensive plans are large and much of Crawford's is outdated, it would be a good exercise for staff and commission to extract and establish a written set of relevant development policies and principles that can be used in SALDO application reviews.
3. Impacts across multiple municipalities. The county is in the position to represent broader interests when there is a major development proposal impacting multiple municipalities that themselves are not by law afforded a review opportunity. Again, it would be useful to establish a written set of policies and principles rooted in the county comprehensive plan for review of major development proposals.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Strategic plan participants reviewed and discussed characteristics of effective boards and board members (see next page). Planning commissions are different than boards of directors, but nonetheless have service and trust responsibilities that deserve high standards of performance. The County Planning Commission should consider instituting for itself some measure of best practices and standards of excellence as policy and/or as a job description.

Participants discussed ideas for improving membership and functions of the Crawford County Planning Commission. There was an exercise to list ideas then place dots by the ideas believed to be most important.

Ideas for improving Planning Commission membership and functions:

- Have criteria for SALDO reviews (3)
- Use the Planning Commission’s committee structure to share agency work (1)
- Develop an onboarding process for Commission members (6)
- Include a “rating system” for evaluating candidates for appointment (3)
- Change the meeting time to attract younger members with jobs (3)
- Use a Planning Commission member diversity matrix
- Have an application for appointment to the Planning Commission – Include questions for information sought – Be careful with the questions (8)
- Have a County Commissioner on the committee reviewing candidates for appointment (2)
- Make sure there is diversity on the review committee – Make sure it is not “stacked” to favor certain candidates (2)
- Ensure geographic representation on the Planning Commission (4)
- Involve the local government associations in making nominations (2)
- Keep in mind new directions that could be taken, like county administration of municipal SALDOs, in making appointments

Consensus on the highest priority improvements:

- **Create an application for appointment to the Planning Commission**
- **Develop an onboarding process for Planning Commission members**
- **Ensure geographic representation on the Planning Commission**

BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE FOR BOARDS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Sources: Debra Thompson, Strategy Solutions, Inc.
Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations
Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards, Richard T. Ingram, Published by BoardSource

Legal Standards for Boards

1. *Duty of care* – Act in an informed, rational, and reasonable manner.
2. *Duty of loyalty* – Act in the best interest of the organization’s mission and welfare.

Hallmarks of an Effective Board

1. Has clear roles and responsibilities
2. Focuses time and attention on important issues
3. Restructures board & its work to get important things done
4. Views board composition as strategic
5. Uses evaluations to learn rather than criticize
6. Has the confidence to take risks
7. Has a constructive relationship with staff
8. Communicates openly and honestly
9. Works together as an effective corporate unit

Building Planning Commission Leadership

1. Strategically assess the composition of the commission – demographics, geography, knowledge, abilities – and recruit new members accordingly.
2. Provide orientation to new members.
 - a. Planning commissioner’s “manual” including relevant plans and working documents
 - b. Orientation meeting
 - c. Pairing with a planning commission mentor
 - d. 3-month follow up
3. Conduct periodic training and encourage members to attend external training.
4. Conduct periodic self-assessments of performance.

Ten Commandments for an Effective Board Member

1. *Be prepared for and attend meetings.* If you are too busy to do your homework, you are too busy to serve.
2. *Actively listen* to staff, guests, and fellow board members. You may find comments and questions that make sense.
3. *Maintain courtesy, civility, and decorum*, particularly with an upset or troublesome guest or board member. Set an example for others.
4. *Carefully choose your words* in a board meeting. Someone will remember exactly what you said.
5. *Avoid conflicts of interest.* It is not just a good idea, it is the law. Do not invent a conflict in order to avoid voting. Recognize that the board operates in the sunshine.
6. *Avoid even the appearance of impropriety.* Perception is often as important as reality. Do not use your office or position to gain an advantage over another board member.
7. *Avoid back room and parking lot deals* when it comes to board issues. It is a bad practice and, depending on the issue, may border on unethical conduct.
8. *Never commit your vote* until you have heard all sides of an issue. Frank discussion and collaboration are not just buzzwords.
9. *Govern the programs, don’t manage them.* Keep your eye on the vision the board has set out. Staff exists to carry out the vision and decisions.
10. *Exercise stewardship, not ownership.* The money you will be spending belongs to the taxpayers and public. Any official position you hold is only temporary. Hand it over in better shape than you received it.

APPENDIX

FLIPCHART LISTS, WHITEBOARD LISTS, AND SURVEYS FROM WORK SESSIONS

SWOT exercise from work session #1 – What are the most important **S**trengths to capitalize on, **W**eaknesses to be improved or fixed, **O**pportunities to seize, and **T**hreats (or obstacles) to overcome? Participants brainstormed the below lists, then placed dots on matters most needing attention.

Strengths (# of dots)	Weaknesses (# of dots)	Opportunities (# of dots)	Threats (# of dots)
Skilled staff (1) Passionate volunteers Good new office space Diversity of PC and staff Staff conducts selves professionally Involvement of the county commissioners (3) Staff & PC are connected, involved representing different communities Represent the county well Have gotten grants Technology Info sharing Collaboration with outside entities Timely and efficient meetings Work done between meetings by subcommittees with staff help Separation of PC and PO work and duties, no duplication (1) A lot of ideas produced Structure of PC and PO	Public perception (3) Orientation for new PC members (1) Slow going building capacity of subcommittees Lack of focus (3) Over extended – More to do than staff or time for Lack of understanding by PC of MPC and prescribed PC roles Viewed variably by municipalities & public as a bureaucratic step, not a resource (2) County has spoon fed municipalities for 30 years Poor training for municipalities (2) Too much focus on negatives Lack of authority (2)	Promote uniformity of development, land use, etc. throughout county (3) Same, particularly of understanding of MPC New staff Technology and workspace utilization (1) Better staff support for subcommittees Additional resources and services to municipalities Economic and social shifts will change the “landscape” (1) Foster innovative growth (4) Build relationships with partner agencies County planning agency is needed Changing nature of funding and need for admin help	COVID 19 Capacity – every budget season (2) Challenge of changing workplace trends Lack of implementation Lack of uniform enforcement Perception of government interference Disinterest of local governments in planning (3) Unregulated development – egg on the face of county planning (1)

Priority activities exercise from work session #1 – The consultant reviewed planning agency responsibilities under the PA Municipalities Planning Code. Participants brainstormed a list of activities the county planning agency should perform. Planning commission members placed dots on those believed to be most important. Then planning commission priorities were compared to staff priorities determined at an earlier work session.

Responsibilities under PA MPC	Participants’ list of activities (# of PC dots)	Staff list of activities (# of dots)
Prepare a comprehensive plan (required for county), promote it to the public Prepare a subdivision and land development ordinance, administer it if so designated Prepare a zoning ordinance, make recommendations on amendments Make recommendations for an official map ordinance Undertake planning studies and surveys Recommended a capital improvements program Prepare building code and housing codes Make recommendations on proposed projects and programs Hold public hearings and meetings Present testimony before any board Interact with other departments and agencies Maintain records of actions	Review SALDO applications/plats (4) Prepare comprehensive plan Implement comprehensive plan (2) Review comprehensive plan for possible change (3) Undertake studies like housing studies – priority for the county County option for building code enforcement Educate and inform municipalities and the public (6) Build a culture of planning (1) Interact with departments and agencies Manage & apply for grant funding (2) Promote intergovernmental cooperation “Investigate” a county SALDO (6) Services to municipalities (or more) for fee (3) Be “public facing” – more “presentation to” and “accessibility to” the public Promote county planning web page & social media	Long-range planning for county (priority) and municipalities (5) Manage transportation funding (4) Apply for and manage grants – for county and municipalities (4) Local ordinance reviews (3) Office admin, operations, filing (3) TA and advisory aid for county projects and programs (2) Creation and management of GIS data (2) TA and advisory aid for municipal ordinances (2) Consistency reviews with county comp plan Local SALDO reviews Development and land use info clearinghouse

County planning agency clients exercise from work session #1 – Participants wrote on a notecard who they believed are the clients. Each participant read his or her list of clients. Lists were recorded on flipchart. Repeats were counted.

County planning agency clients (# of repeat listings) A=accountability
Municipalities (9) A
Applicants for SALDO (3)
Citizens (8) A
County commissioners (4) A
County government
Tourism visitors
Surrounding counties
Development community
Community groups
Regional partners
Grant applicants

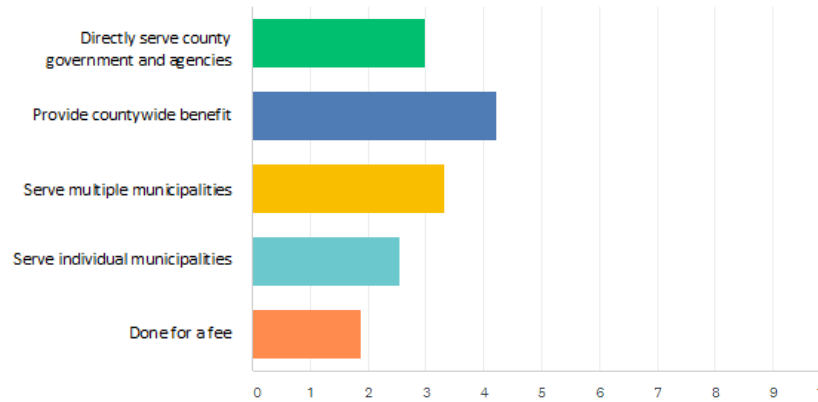
Essential activities survey from work session #2 – Below are the current activities performed by the planning office. Staff, before the work session, indicated if they believed any to be mandatory and ranked each as essential or discretionary. The tally is shown.

Activity	Mandatory	Essential	Discretionary
County comprehensive plan preparation	6	6	0
County comprehensive plan implementation	0	6	3
Other county long-range planning	0	4	2
Municipal long-range planning	0	3	3
Municipal and public planning education/info	2	5	1
Municipal SALDO reviews	0	4	2
Transportation funding management	1	3	3
Grant applications and management	0	6	1
Local ordinance reviews	2	3	2
TA and aid for municipal ordinances	0	4	2
TA and aid for county projects and programs	1	5	1
Consistency reviews with county comp plan	0	5	1
Creation and management of GIS data	0	5	1
Development and land use info clearinghouse	1	2	4

Work priorities survey conducted between work sessions #1 and #3.

Given that the amount of work the planning staff and planning commission can do is limited, what should be the priorities? Please rank the following in order of priority for county planning agency work.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 1



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Planning work and projects that directly serve county government and agencies	16.67% 3	22.22% 4	16.67% 3	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	18	3.00
Planning work and projects that provide countywide benefit	44.44% 8	38.89% 7	11.11% 2	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	18	4.22
Planning work and projects that serve multiple municipalities	27.78% 5	22.22% 4	11.11% 2	33.33% 6	5.56% 1	18	3.33
Planning work and projects that serve individual municipalities	11.11% 2	16.67% 3	22.22% 4	16.67% 3	33.33% 6	18	2.56
Planning work and projects that are done for a fee under contract arrangement	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38.89% 7	11.11% 2	50.00% 9	18	1.89

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below regarding county planning agency work priorities.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER DISAGREE NOR AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
The county planning agency should maintain a strict protocol, based on the responses to question #1, for work priorities.	11.11% 2	16.67% 3	11.11% 2	38.89% 7	22.22% 4	18	3.44
The county planning agency should periodically, such as annually, set work priorities to fit the agency's abilities.	0.00% 0	15.79% 3	10.53% 2	31.58% 6	42.11% 8	19	4.00
An updated county comprehensive plan and its action plan for implementation should have a primary role in setting work priorities.	10.53% 2	5.26% 1	10.53% 2	47.37% 9	26.32% 5	19	3.74

Planning Commission characteristics exercise from work session #3 – Participants created a list of characteristics that should be emphasized for Crawford County Planning Commission members.

Characteristics of effective Planning Commission members:

- Be prepared and attend meetings
- Be a team player
- Think about the big picture
- Set clear expectations of committee roles and time commitment
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Be comprised of a strategic representation of the county
- Uphold the laws of subdivision and zoning ordinances

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ethical Principles in Planning, American Planning Association

A guide to ethical conduct for all who participate in the process of planning as advisors, advocates, and decision makers.

<https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicalprinciples/>

Just What is the Job of a Planning Commissioner?, PlannersWeb

An article that examines many different aspects of the job of a citizen planning commission member.

<http://plannersweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/523.pdf>

Annual work program samples

Links to three samples of a planning agency annual work program. The samples from Chester County, PA, and Northern Neck, VA, are simple and brief. The sample from Teton County, WY, is detailed and lengthy and not practical for Crawford County, but provides cues of information – like connection to the comprehensive plan, staff involved, and estimate of time/cost – that may be useful enhancements to a simplified list.

<https://www.chescoplanning.org/aboutus.cfm>

<http://www.northernneck.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Annual-Work-Program-NNPDC-FY19.pdf>

<https://www.tetoncountywy.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/610>

Consultant notes

POST-PROCESS SUGGESTIONS

Regularly revisit the SWOT priorities. Monitor the degree to which strategic plan actions have an impact on SWOT priorities. For example, did following mission and work priorities lists and having an annual work program improve the agency's lack of focus?

Don't stop with completion of priorities identified in the strategic plan. Further work can be done on matters for which there was lack of time in the strategic plan process – better definition of roles, in addition to the comprehensive plan and SALDO reviews, where the Planning Commission and Planning Office have shared responsibilities; more improvements to Planning Commission membership and functions.

Planning Commission meetings did not arise as a concern in the strategic plan process. Meetings are the principal means for the Planning Commission to conduct work. The Commission and staff should ensure meetings serve to implement the strategic plan. Meetings should:

- Focus on work priorities (the 80/20 rule), apply better-defined Planning Commission roles, and follow through on improvements identified in the strategic plan;
- Be more idea-generating and solution-finding work sessions and less staff reports and reactions; and
- Seek consensus on ideas and solutions where most are in favor and the rest can live with it instead of majority votes where 51% are happy winners and 49% are unhappy losers.