



**Strategic Planning
Managing for Results**

County embarks on strategic plan

Chalk up another “first” in Chester County. We are the first county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—and one of a small number in the US—to undertake a strategic planning project.

But why are we doing this?

Chester County has grown and changed rapidly over the last decade. This growth led

to a decision by the Commissioners to review Chester County’s priorities for the future. The Commissioners have established a goal to increase accountability, transparency and performance in Chester County government. Hence, the development of a strategic planning initiative.

Our strategic planning process is now well underway. In a public meeting last December, the Commissioners set six priority areas (see box right) that will guide all county departments in establishing their own strategic and performance-related goals.

By the end of this year, many of our county departments will have met to set their individual goals and performance criteria. By the end of December 2010, all 54 county departments will have started to implement their individual strategic business plans.

What does this mean for you as a County employee?

For your department, the strategic plan will help in developing your business plan, give your department focus for the future and help address how you can operate more efficiently and effectively.

Individually, the strategic plan will help us all to better understand:

- The various functions of all county departments;
- Our role as part of a larger organization;
- The performance measures of our department and our specific role.

Ultimately, when your department puts its strategic business plan into practice, you will be able to make the following statements:

- *What I am doing today contributes to the County’s strategic direction.*
- *I know that what I have done has been effective.*
- *I know how much it costs to deliver our programs effectively and efficiently.*

Chester County has a good reputation as being efficient. A recent citizen survey (see page 2) backs this up. With the growth and continual change that affects Chester County, it is the desire—and goal—of the Commissioners to take Chester County from good to great. The strategic planning process will provide a good foundation to achieve our goals.

Strategic Plan priority areas

PUBLIC HEALTH	Promote and protect the public health and environment of the community
SAFE COMMUNITY	Ensure safe and secure communities
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY	Support the growth and development of a strong and vibrant economy for all residents
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS	Enhance access to, and use of, transportation systems to reduce traffic congestion
LIVABLE COMMUNITY	Manage growth and land use to preserve and optimize the quality of life in the community
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY	Continue to exercise smart financial management and maintain the County’s financial strength while minimizing the property tax burden

Community survey:
Chester County citizens voice opinions

A key part of the strategic planning process is input from county residents. Citizens' viewpoints are important because their priorities help to form the county's overall and individual department goals.

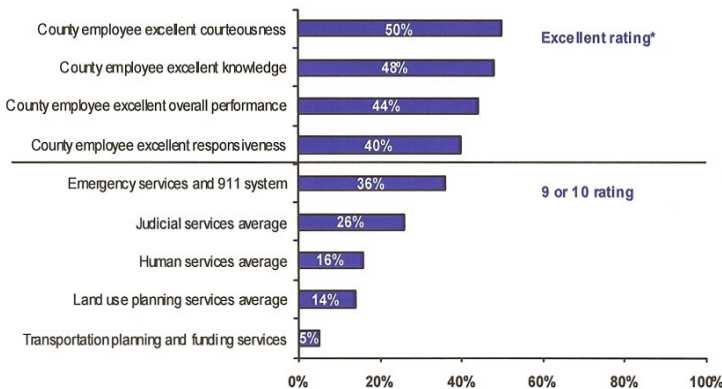
The results of Chester County citizens' opinions were revealed recently in a community survey. The survey, conducted by Franklin & Marshall College's Center for Opinion Research, showed that:

- 75 percent of county residents believe that Chester County is a good place to live.
- More than half (55 percent) of residents say that the county is an excellent place to raise a family.
- One in three citizens responded that open space is the best thing about Chester County life.

Here's some encouraging news for county employees:

- County employees received high ratings for the services provided to residents—although the performance of some county services were identified as areas for improvement.
- **Half of those surveyed rated County employees as excellent when it comes to courteousness and knowledge.**
- More than one in three citizens (36 percent) said that the county's emergency services and 911 system deserved an excellent rating.

Figure 5. County Performance Indicators, Chester County 2008



*County employee ratings were provided by respondents who had contact with a Chester County employee in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Summary of one portion of the results from the Center for Opinion Research Chester County community survey

Not surprisingly, the only areas where citizens were concerned about the services they receive were linked to Chester County's issue of rapid growth — land use planning services and transportation planning and funding.

County employees feedback on strategic planning process

Two county departments that have already met to review and redefine their strategic business goals are DCIS and Human Services.

Here, Chester County CIO Glenn Angstadt, and Deb Maccariella, Human Services Administrative Deputy, share some of their thoughts following their departments' first strategic planning sessions:

"DCIS was one of the first two departments to participate in the Strategic Planning process. Although we still have a lot of work to do, the initial sessions have already given us a new perspective. DCIS always strives to provide excellent customer service and value-added services, but using the tools provided by Weidner enabled us to see our services from a customer point of view. This opened a lot of eyes among all levels of DCIS staff who participated."

"I think many went into the process a bit sceptical...But there is always room for improvement and working through the process offered some surprising insight... Although there was a lot of uncertainty going in (to the sessions), the results were well worth the time we spent. I would recommend to those who have not yet started, go in with an open mind and trust that the process works."
- Glenn Angstadt

"The Department of Human Services just completed the initial phase of the Strategic Planning process. WOW! I was energized by the process."

"It was an excellent way to remind me of our department's real purpose. I am looking forward to the next step and following the process through to completion."
- Deb Maccariella

County employees are doing a good job in serving the citizens of Chester County.

The Strategic Planning program will help us all to establish clearly defined "instructions" we need, as departments and as individuals, to make that service great.

Chester County employees benefit. Chester County citizens benefit. So that must mean as both employees and citizens, we REALLY benefit!