

City of Cherry Hills Village Department of Public Works Strategic Plan

Achieve the Vision

August 2011

Cherry Hills Village Public Works Strategic Plan

The Public Works Department is dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of life in Cherry Hills Village. The Department will maintain a superior infrastructure and manage our natural resources with pride, respect and integrity.

I. Introduction

This strategic plan represents our best effort on what should be driving the collective change efforts within the Public Works Department of Cherry Hills Village. The plan is not meant to be a daily service manual of functions performed by the Department of Public Works. However, it is meant to be a planning document for the Department to more effectively and efficiently provide its daily services in the future. It is expected that this document will assist the Department in achieving the City wide mission of “providing exceptional services” with a clear direction and measurable benchmarks.

The City of Cherry Hills Public Works Department's Strategic Plan is a product of the Department's improvements required to become an American Public Works Association (APWA) Accredited Agency. The plan is intended to provide a mission, goals, and measurable objectives for the Department to effectively provide services to the City of Cherry Hills Village now and in the future.

We have a significant role to play in the unique and exciting environment of Cherry Hills Village. Our citizens need us to be proactive leaders. In order to be a good leader and a good partner, we need to be strong as well as respected, responsive, and reliable to our citizens. We need to be revolutionary in our thinking in how to deliver projects while the environment in which we work continues to become more complex. Given the political and environmental constraints we face, we need extraordinary efforts to succeed. We aspire to be indispensable to our residents and they should view us as their team of professionals whom they can count on to deliver vitally needed parks and public works projects and services, on-time and within budget.

II. What is a Strategic Plan?

It is no secret that planning is a critical component of all well run organizations, whether private or public. Although this is especially true for public entities as they are responsible for spending tax payer’s dollars in the most effective manner possible. Proper planning ensures that an organization, in this case the Public Works Department, remains relevant and responsive to the needs of its residents, and continues the organization as a whole. Strategic planning provides a base line of where the department is, where it should be in the future and a strategy on how to get there. The plan provides a basis for monitoring progress, assessing results and the impact they are having on reaching the desired outcome. The plan ensures that the Department is allocating its resources including funding, and people in a proper and appropriate fashion. (McKay 2001)

A strategic plan is a road map to lead an organization from where it is, to where it wants to be in the future. Strategic planning is intended to accomplish three important tasks:

- To clarify the outcomes that an organization wishes to achieve;
- To select the broad strategies that will enable the organization to achieve those outcomes;
- To identify ways to measure progress.

Strategic planning enables an organization to look into the future in an orderly and systematic way, keeping it focused and on track. In this case, the elected officials have given guidance through policies outlined in the City's Master Plan, providing focus for staff to create and implement a departmental strategic plan. It is important to note again that the process of creating the strategic plan is just as important as the plan itself, employee participation and buy in are critical to its success.

III. **Why does Cherry Hills Village need a Strategic Plan?**

The Public Works Department will have many hard decisions to make as to what services and projects it can deliver as future funding continues to decline. This trend has been called the "New norm" for all public agencies according to the APWA. It is essential that a well thought out program for the delivery of essential public works services is developed. It is irresponsible not to have a strategic plan and operate as a reactive department as we are the stewards of the community's public infrastructure and park lands.

To best determine the direction of the Department we must establish what our values are and what we are not willing to compromise. This takes a well thought out planning process and documentation of the actions needed to succeed. Cherry Hills Village Public Works needs a strategic plan to be successful in its operations. The strategic plan that has been produced includes goals, measurable objectives, and assigned action steps that can be implemented in an effective manner.

IV. **Who Are We?**

The Cherry Hills Village Department of Public Works is comprised of 2 main divisions (Parks and Streets) with 12 full time, 2 part time, and 6 seasonal employees who possess special skills and knowledge acquired through education, training and experience to meet the public's needs. Some of the many responsibilities of the Department include:

- Maintain 50 miles of streets
- Maintain 26 miles of bridle trails, 100 acres of open space and park land
- Manage Citywide stormwater program

- Own and operate 36,000 feet of sanitary sewer lines
- Oversee all City facility maintenance
- Recreation special events
- Community art program
- Recreation reimbursement program
- Manage Denver water Total Service Agreement
- Household hazardous waste program
- Coordination of Urban Drainage stream stabilization program
- City fuel operation
- Traffic planning
- Utility franchise agreement management
- Right-of-way construction permitting
- Capital construction management
- Snow removal

V. **Mission**

The mission of the Cherry Hills Village Public Works Department is to provide a superior quality, safe and appropriate infrastructure and natural areas for all residents. By establishing positive relationships with the community the Department is able to provide effective, safe and well managed streets, parks and public facilities. The Department will be stewards of the environment and be fiscally responsible in all aspects of its operation. All Public Works employees will be highly qualified individuals and will be provided with the opportunity to continually increase their knowledge through education and training.

VI. **Vision**

To be a well managed highly effective department that responds to the current and future needs through creativity and innovation in order to maintain and enhance the community's essential infrastructure and natural resources.

VII. **Values**

Safety

Protecting the health and well being of the public and our employees is our #1 priority.

Professionalism

Exhibiting high standards of expertise and performance.

Accountability

Taking responsibility and ownership for our actions and their results.

Dedication

Be fully committed to the purpose and mission of the Department.

Competency

The ability to perform the necessary work through proper training and experience.

Integrity

Strictly adhering to a code of ethics and adopted values.

Excellence

Perform all tasks at a superior level and provide the highest quality service possible.

Team Work

Working with both internal and external partners to effectively provide high quality services and products.

Adaptability

Fulfilling new and challenging tasks at a moments notice.

Communication

Providing the right information to the right people at the right time.

Respect

Showing appreciation, compassion and sensitivity for others in the community and work environment.

Environmental Stewardship

Enriching the quality of life through the protection and enhancement of our natural resources.

Innovation

Solving problems through innovative and original means.

VIII. Guiding Principles

- Provide a superior, safe and functioning infrastructure system for our citizens.
- Provide all services in a safe and efficient manner.
- Provide safe and efficient equipment and a safe work environment for City employees.
- Protect Cherry Hills Village's environment and natural resources.
- Provide opportunities for education and training to all employees.

IX. Environmental Scan

The environmental scan looked at both external and internal forces that may have an impact on the Public Works Department's ability to perform its required functions within the organization. The external scan includes looking at opportunities and threats that are outside of the departments control such as:

- **Political Trends**
We must be able to react to new directives as councils change and their focuses are altered therefore as staff we must be able to react and adjust. Having a management team that is politically astute is important to the success of the department. We cannot control who is elected and we must learn to adapt quickly if we are to remain a productive and positive force within the organization. Keeping up with the political trends and informing elected officials of our operations is necessary to keeping our mission on track and moving in the right direction. The job of the

Director is to make sure that the department is doing what the politicians expect us to do in a manner that is positive for all of the residents.

- Community Values

The residents of Cherry Hills Village value the semi-rural character of the City with its open character and pastoral feel. Preservation of this character is important to take into consideration when the Department is planning for improvements and upgrades of the system. The community does not want to lose its identity and blend in with the surrounding suburban sprawl. As we approach improvements within our parks, open spaces and rights-of-way we must make sure we take into account the values the community is based on and keep our designs and improvements within the parameters that have been voiced in the master plan.

- Economic Trends

As the uncertainty with the economy continues, and with no end in sight our current funding may become the new normal. The Department must be prepared to provide basic services at the same high level that has come to be expected by our residents with less funding. Because our funding is based almost exclusively on property taxes we can expect stable but slowly declining funding until the real estate market can rebound from its current slump.

Because we are not able to rely heavily on sales tax we will not see as much fluctuation as other municipalities. One positive with the current trend is that construction costs are somewhat lower than they have been in the recent past. Many of the products we rely on are petroleum based and it has been hard to predict how these prices will trend at this time.

- Changing Laws and Regulations

As state and federal agencies enact new laws and regulations municipalities are forced to uphold these new demands with little or no new funding. These unfunded mandates continue to take money from other areas causing basic services to be cut back in order to meet these new requirements. This trend will continue in the future as funding dwindles at all levels of government and pass through dollars dry up and in most cases become nonexistent.

- Technology

Technology advancements are changing at an unprecedented pace and changing the delivery of all services including the services provided by municipalities. It is increasingly difficult to fund the cost of upgrading and purchasing new equipment to keep up with the demands of the public. Although these technologies are ultimately designed and implemented as ways to improve service delivery there are costs involved with implementing and maintaining these advancements. It is often difficult to

train employees to make sure they are proficient and can fully utilize the advancements in a positive and effective manner.

- Escalating Demands
Over time citizens continue to demand more from their local governmental bodies. We are required to respond to a whole new variety of issues that in the past we have not had to think about. Local governments at times must be all things to all people. Citizens want municipalities to be responsible for every issue that arises, while they are not willing to admit they may be part of the problem and are unwilling to help be a part of the solution. We must continue to respond to these new demands and community problems in a sensible and diplomatic manner. We cannot ignore these demands, but we need to be cautious about being too heroic by taking on too much and spreading ourselves too thin to be effective at what we really need to be focusing on.

X. SWOT Analysis

S.W.O.T stands for **S**trength, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats. This is common term used in the strategic planning process. The SWOT is an internal analysis of the entity outlining what the Department is good at, what can be improved upon, what prospects are available and what dangers may inhibit its ability to provide service and infrastructure.

Current Strengths

Cherry Hills Village Public Works Department realizes that our strengths contribute to the high quality of life our residents enjoy and we strive to continue to look for ways to build on these strengths. The broad knowledge and technical expertise of the Department's staff has given us a strong reputation for competence and efficient service delivery. Our employees take pride in quality performance and the ability to maintain high standards, while providing responsive and timely service. We maintain this high performance standard by investing in staff development through training programs, tuition reimbursement and other employee development opportunities.

Safety is the highest priority we promote in the workplace both for the employees and the public we serve. We have a strong safety program, which is continually updated to promote and reward for these high standards being obtained. Safety will always be of the utmost importance to the Department benefiting both the employees and the public.

Other Department Strengths Identified

- Customer Service
- Street maintenance
- Park maintenance
- Internal communication
- Snow plowing
- Cooperative Spirit
- Budget conscience

Leadership
Customer Respect
Teamwork

Weaknesses (Challenges)

As a public works agency we are challenged by such a small high end community where expectations are higher than typically seen and demands continue to rise. We have come to realize that we must adapt the way we approach our work to meet these demands and challenges in a positive and proactive manner. We look forward to collaborating with the community to identify their priorities and design public works programs and services that meet their expectations now and in the future.

As revenues shrink, problems with an aging infrastructure must continue to be addressed including roadway deterioration, aging sewer pipes, more demands on parks and open space amenities as well as facility needs for all City departments. Staff must develop goals to address all of these issues and find creative ways to fund and build these important projects.

Other Challenges Identified:

- Environmental compliance
- Current technologies
- Time constraints
- Staffing levels

Opportunities

There are many opportunities that are available to the Department that need to be utilized to advance our efforts to provide the highest quality service available. The process of becoming an accredited agency through APWA is one that will strengthen the Department and legitimize the superior services which we provide. The Department currently enjoys positive political and community support because of the effort by all employees to deliver superior service and projects in a timely and financially conscious manner. This positive support will continue to provide us with opportunities to improve how we do business.

Additionally, there are opportunities such as:

- Grants
- New Technology
- Certifications and Trainings

Threats

There are many external threats that are out of the Department's control that will continue to threaten our ability to provide high quality public works services. As property tax valuations decline competition for limited funds will force the Department to do more with less. Staff must continue to find new and innovative ways to overcome these threats.

Other threats include:

- Rising costs of material and labor
- Weather fluctuations
- Citizens attitudes and unrealistic requests
- Unfunded mandates
- Loss of institutional knowledge

XI. **Strategic Priorities (Goals)**

The following goals are the major priorities of the Department based on the internal analysis, information obtained from other departments, general direction given from elected officials and the known priorities that have been expressed by citizens during the master planning process.

Goal 1: Ensure that all Public Works employees have a healthy, safe and secure workplace.

Objectives

- Provide employees with all necessary Personal and Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure that all duties can be carried out in the safest possible fashion.
- Continue to develop an innovative and updated safety program.
- Reward all Public Works employees for preventing injuries and accidents on the job.
- Strive to have zero preventable accidents each year.
- Conduct surveys among all Public Works employees on their feeling about safety and security on the job.
- Support safety training programs by providing time and funds to conduct an appropriate program.
- Appoint two member team to plan and implement yearly safety training program.
- Fund rewards program for meeting all implemented targets.
- Meet yearly with insurance provider to ensure compliance and conformity with all policies.
- Develop comprehensive safety procedures and manual.

Goal 2: Achieve a high level of Customer Service and Satisfaction.

Objectives

- Develop methods to measure customer satisfaction.
- Upgrade and maintain customer service response system (requests for service).
- Increase citizen understanding of the function, practices and procedures of the Public Works Department.
- Improve employee customer service skills.
- Enhance core services by defining service standards.

- Continue to participate in neighborhood and community meetings to establish personal contacts throughout the City.
- Develop customer service feedback tools.
- Enhance Public Works section of the City website.
- Improve tracking system for service requests.
- Develop an online service request process.
- Better utilize the City's website to communicate information to residents about upcoming and ongoing maintenance and construction activities.
- Provide Customer Service related training to all Public Works employees.

Goal 3: Ensure and enhance the quality of life for all residents by implementing proactive programs to improve all City owned rights-of-way and natural resource areas.

Objectives

- Develop and implement a community art program.
- Improve the aesthetics of City rights-of-way through trash and weed abatement, landscaping, hardscaping and other methods of enrichment.
- Implement traffic calming/pedestrian safety program that is innovative and original.
- Continue to improve and update all entry features at major entrances into the City.
- Work with newly created Art Commission to place community art in appropriate right-of-way locations.
- Develop program to improve all entry features and right-of-way-plantings.
- Continue to provide the necessary resources to keep the City's rights-of-way free of trash and well maintained.
- Update and strengthen right-of-way permit process to ensure compliance and enforcement are adequate to protect all City infrastructure.
- Continue to improve all pedestrian crossing and trail connections that are in direct contact with vehicles in right-of-way.

Goal 4: Operate, maintain and improve the City's streets to optimize its intended function, serve the residents' needs, protect property, health, and safety of the users and meet the needs of the public in the future.

Objectives

- Strive to maintain the highest quality streets in the region and state.
- Continue to fund aggressive maintenance programs to ensure longevity of pavement.
- Improve drainage facilities to prevent possible damage to public and private property.
- Hold utilities and contractors accountable for all damage caused by utility work in the right-of-ways.

- Work with Code Enforcement to ensure compliance with all right-of-way maintenance and construction rules and regulations.
- Develop new long range street maintenance plan.
- Fund training to ensure staff is well educated on the newest and most innovative street maintenance products and techniques.
- Evaluate all street drainage and improve where necessary to ensure longevity of roads and eliminate flooding hazards.
- Educate the public on the dangers of improper drainage due to poorly designed landscaping.
- Continue to improve the tracking system for all street cut permits issued in the City of Cherry Hills Village.
- Keep all vegetation properly maintained in right-of-ways to minimize damage to vehicles and road surfaces.

Goal 5: Develop and maintain an exceptionally qualified and well-trained staff to carry out the Department's mission and charge.

Objectives

- Empower employees to use their knowledge and expertise to improve services and solve problems.
- Provide resources so employees can meet expectations and overcome deficiencies.
- Develop performance management and training program to increase technical and leadership skills.
- Reward employees for innovative problem solving and creative solutions.
- Maintain a safe and fair work environment for all Public Works employees.
- Develop and implement succession plan to effectively recruit and retain well qualified employees and ensure critical staffing needs are met.
- Continue to develop and update training programs for all Public Works employees.
- Continue to support funding of the City's tuition reimbursement program.
- Monitor Public Works staffing levels to ensure department can deliver core services at an appropriate level.
- Develop and implement Public Works behavior standards.
- Continue to offer competitive wages and benefits to recruit and retain well qualified employees.
- Provide the most advance technological equipment feasible to help employees work more productively.

Goal 6: Ensure that our activities provide the best results and benefit for our customers through strict budgeting processes and fiscal responsibility.

Objectives

- Continue to provide appropriate levels of service through proper staffing levels.

- Ensure adequate funding to keep streets at an above average surface quality.
- Look for innovative ways to save money and increase production and quality.
- Invest in quality equipment to minimize long term repair costs.
- Budget adequate funds to provide superior snow removal service.
- Invest in road maintenance program to minimize the need for replacement.
- Evaluate each activity within Public Works for cost savings and improve methods in the field to ensure efficient time management.
- Continue to seek support for the street maintenance program from elected officials.
- Reward employees for new and innovative processes that save the Department time and money.
- Continue to replace equipment at appropriate intervals to ensure maintenance costs are held to a minimum and down time does not affect production.
- Provide the highest quality snow removal program in the state and keep this a source of pride for the community and the staff.
- Continue to educate elected officials on the necessity of a first rate maintenance program as the most efficient way to ensure road longevity and lower long term costs.

Goal 7: Proactively comply with or exceed all environmental and quality standards in the areas of stormwater, air quality and wastewater.

Objectives

- Continue to improve and develop stormwater and sanitary sewer systems to reduce flooding, backups and improve environmental quality.
- More accurately map the City's storm sewer system.
- Improve public works shop and yard drainage and containment of hazardous materials.
- Consider environmental issues when purchasing new equipment including air quality and fuel efficiency.
- Develop worksite stormwater guidelines for all City projects.
- Continue efforts to consolidate sanitary sewer holdings and turn over to a more appropriate district to ensure efficient management on a more appropriate scale.
- Work with residents to utilize Urban Drainage programs to help stabilize all of Little Dry Creek as it runs through the City.
- Budget funds to locate and map all underground storm sewer pipes owned and operated by City of Cherry Hills Village.
- Develop a policy for new vehicle acquisitions and environmental concerns.
- Work with the City Engineer to develop a site plan for Public Works yard improvements to ensure environmental compliance and stewardship.
- Implement written procedures and standards with all in-house construction projects.

Goal 8: Promote a vibrant, first rate park and trail system with aesthetically pleasing and environmentally sensitive designs and maintenance practices.

Objectives

- Develop and implement regularly scheduled routine, reactive, and preventive maintenance programs.
- Renovate and design parks to reflect universal, state-of the-art design and meet the needs and desires of the community.
- Identify, and actively seek all state, federal, and local grant opportunities when or where appropriate.
- Protect and restore the natural environment during all operations.
- Create an innovative, efficient, and effective parks organization that is responsive to the community's changing needs.
- Develop a comprehensive foot bridge inventory and maintenance program to ensure the safety of all users.

Goal 9: Achieve and maintain the status of an APWA Accredited Agency.

Objectives

- Improve the professionalism of Public Works Department
- Show legitimacy of the Department through achievement of professional standards.
- Be a leader in providing high quality Public Works services to a small community.
- Continue to perform initial Self Assessment for APWA accreditation and complete by March 2013.
- Compile Comprehensive Public Works Operating Procedures Manual in anticipation of accreditation.
- Become an accredited agency by January of 2014.

Goal 10: Implement a plan for more systematic repair and maintenance of the City's facilities to ensure a sustainable work environment.

Objectives

- Focus on full-scale repairs not quick fixes
- Provide and maintain City buildings and facilities that are attractive, functional and customer-friendly.
- Provide appropriate equipment and facilities for employees to work efficiently and safely.
- Incorporate "Green Building" standards when practical into the City's facility rehabilitation and construction projects.
- Incorporate energy efficient products and materials when performing repairs, upgrades and retrofits on all City owned buildings .
- Determine maintenance needs in each years budget cycle to ensure that timely and essential repairs and maintenance are carried out.

Goal 11: Develop a well rounded succession plan to ensure institutional knowledge is retained as long term employees leave their position with the Department.

Objectives

- Develop a plan to record institutional knowledge that may be lost as long-time employees move on or retire.
- Develop new leaders from within the organization to move into key management positions as they are vacated.
- Continue to offer an educational reimbursement program to encourage employees to expand their knowledge and management skills.
- Provide opportunities for middle management employees to interact with residents, elected officials and other departments to expand their knowledge of the entire City operation.
- Continue to support job specific training opportunities that enhance skills needed to move up in the organization.
- Support interaction with other jurisdictions to promote information exchange and cooperation.

XII. Strategic Implementation

Strategic implementation involves executing the objectives and making the necessary adjustments along the way to accomplish the goals and achieve the vision. To ensure that the goals are met and the vision is realized, Cherry Hills Village Public Works Department is committed to following through by recording progress and milestones as the plan is implemented. The team will check in yearly to ensure the plan is being followed and adjustments will be made as needed. There must be accountability if the plan is to be successful, and staff is committed to making changes for the improvement of the Department. Additionally the mission, vision and values will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to support the overall mission of the City.