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Strategic Planning Meeting – 2022
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
February 10, 2022

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Attendance

The Commissioners met at 8:30 a.m. to discuss matters related to Strategic Planning. Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis and Dave Levacy. Also present: Bill Vance, Alex Lape, Amy Brown-Thompson, Aubry Fowler, Aunie Cordle, Bart Hampson, Bennett Niceswanger, Branden Meyer, Christopher Wagner, CJ Roberts, Corey Clark, Daniel Neeley, Dave Burgei, David Miller, David Uhl, Dennis Keller, Erin Frost, James Bahnsen, James Mako, Jeffrey Porter, Jeremiah Upp, Jill Boone, Joe Ebel, Jon Kochis, Justin Messinger, Kyle Witt, Leslie Cooksey, Lisa McKenzie, Luann S Davidson, Marcey Shaffer, Marcy Fields, Michael Kaper, Nikki Drake, Rachel Elsea Raz Sabaiduc, Rick Szabrak, Rochelle Menningen, Tony Vogel, Maura Maher, and Leslie Westervelt.

Welcome

Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the Strategic Planning meeting. He then turned the floor over to County Administrator Aunie Cordle.

County Administrator Aunie Cordle opened by stating that the county began the strategic planning process the previous summer. They had sought out the assistance of RAMA to develop goals and a plan for Fairfield County. She explained that the items contained within were not time sensitive and were more of a big picture for the county.

Aunie introduced Leslie Westerfelt and Maura Maher from RAMA who would be speaking on the matter.

Presentation

Leslie Westerfelt began the presentation by stating that this has been a very fun project. Their team has heard from lots of people and gotten lots of feedback. RAMA makes the process very participatory. Small groups of people helped them to create the focus of what the community needed. It began with meeting with the commissioners to hear their main concerns, objectives, and goals.

One of the first things RAMA did was confirming the mission of the county. There are many ways the county can address the plan. The plan framework has been broken into six main pillars. The framework tells the county how to it can begin the process.

Aunie Cordle added that on the survey component, they did an employee survey and an external survey.

Maura Maher opened by saying they want the presentation portion to be conversational as they go more in depth on each pillar.

Infrastructure

Maura Maher began with the goal of the Infrastructure Pillar as being to advocate for, develop, and maintain sustainable infrastructure that supports access, connectivity, and well-being of Fairfield County. Priorities include increased broadband, improve public transport, and safe and efficient travel.

Commissioner Fix asked if there was any conversation about how the airport is included in the plan.

Maura Maher answered that yes, the airport was included and as well as how the county can support it.

Commissioner Levacy asked if the Route 33 corridor was a priority that people named.

Leslie Westerfelt that 33 was heavily referenced but they want to also spread focus to other areas that need it in addition to 33. The survey heard that improving Route 33 would facilitate travel and decrease accidents.

With no further questions or comments, Maura Maher moved to the next pillar of Social Services.

Social Services

Maura Maher began this section by stating there is a need for additional services for at-risk groups. The goal is to strengthen and support social services through coordination to better serve the target groups. However, it's difficult to get social workers in the area.

There is a desire for the improvement of services for the homeless population, especially through housing. The county wants to increase awareness of available programs.

Housing

Maura Maher moved on to the housing pillar of the plan framework. This pillar is similar to the social services pillar. The goal is to improve availability and access to safe, quality, affordable and supportive housing. Affordable housing means affordable apartments, assisted living, small family homes, etc. Affordable housing does not mean that quality must sacrifice according to the plan.

Leslie Westerfelt added that senior housing is also included in this plan.

Commissioner Levacy asked if RAMA was able to define what "affordable" meant based off the survey results.

Leslie Westerfelt responded that they did not have an exact number, but that would be included in a more in-depth assessment later in the process.

Prosecutor Kyle Witt asked if the affordable housing plan was focused on the urban areas of Fairfield County.

Leslie Westerfelt replied that we want to make it available in urban and rural areas. It will be more prevalent in the urban areas but present across the county.

Jill Boone stated that there's a trickle-down effect we see today with housing, where people must buy houses a level lower because of prices which takes away housing from someone else.

Aunie Cordle added that vouchers are going expired and unused because there's not enough of an inventory for housing.

Leslie Westerfelt added that landlords are a key part in this process. An important factor to figure out during this plan is how to get these people to the table to provide that affordability.

County Engineer Jeremiah Upp asked why landlords might not take vouchers if it's guaranteed payment?

Aunie Cordle answered that landlords can always charge more, and they tend to favor tenants that are safer and more reliable.

JFS Director Corey Clark said that vouchers tend to be viewed as temporary solutions and landlords don't want to take on the possible risk later.

Commissioner Fix said this can all be wrapped up into the housing shortage across the spectrum. We need to figure out the impending housing crisis that will come in the next couple years from all the new jobs.

With no further questions or comments, Maura Maher moved to the next pillar of Workforce Development.

Workforce Development

Maura Maher began by mentioning how many residents of Fairfield County travel outside of the county to work. Encouraging people to work in the county is a necessity. The county has a Workforce Center, but we need to understand why people are motivated to work outside of the county, while raising awareness of hidden costs associated with not working in Fairfield County. Another incentive for people working in the county would be to assist with costs like work boots and tools.

With no further questions or comments, Maura Maher moved to the next pillar of Economic Development.

Economic Development

Maura Maher began this section by emphasizing the importance of taking advantage of the projected growth in Fairfield County. It's important, however, to consider the potential impact on rural areas and see how much land is available for development. This plan will help to develop goals for industrial growth in the county. Fairfield County has a large agricultural industry so it will be important to protect that part of the county's economy.

Economic Development Director Rick Szabrak added that the last few pillars speak to the fact that we are in the fastest growing region in the Midwest and this growth is only projected to continue.

With no further questions or comments, Maura Maher moved to the sixth and final pillar of County Operations.

County Operations

Maura Maher began this section by commending the strong leadership in Fairfield County. It's important to maintain a work environment that attracts and retains workers. RAMA wants to help optimize county operations to meet emerging needs of county employees and residents. The Fairfield County Sheriff's Office is also doing a survey to see how best to provide services and safety to county residents.

Maura emphasized the importance of leveraging technology to improve operations not only for employees, but also for county residents. The county needs to ensure a favorable working environment to retain employees.

With no further comments or questions, Maura Maher moved to closing remarks.

Closing Remarks

Leslie Westerfelt recommends the county begins its focus on taking the low hanging fruit for early wins and to kick the process off with a strong start. This will show the community we are taking their feedback seriously.

Commissioner Levacy asked Leslie and Maura if there was anything that surprised them during the process.

Leslie Westerfelt stated many people think of Fairfield County as only being rural farmland. But the county has a very robust plan for economic growth and the community seems to be aware of this. There is lots of potential and the resources that are at the county's disposal is very encouraging.

Maura Maher added that Fairfield County is a very proactive thinker and what they have found is that people move to the county without intentions of staying long, but many come to call it home.

Leslie Westerfelt added that many communities are reporting increased crime in their area, but Fairfield County does not seem to be experiencing that. It likely has to do with the proactive thinking. The stakeholders have given the RAMA team many ideas. The report the have prepared is what they want to achieve. Now it is up to the county to identify how it is going to achieve those goals.

Commissioner Fix stated that years ago when the county would do its strategic planning, it used to never get off the ground. Now the county has a more robust and attainable plan with the assistance of RAMA and the county is very excited to begin the process.

Commissioner Davis mentioned the county needs to give some though to the interactions being had with the county. Everything today is automated and it's important for the county to maintain that face-to-face element.

Commissioner Levacy added that people judge their opinion on the county off their last interaction, so we need to be conscious of those interactions.

Adjournment

With no further business, on the motion of Dave Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 9:36 a.m.

FAIRFIELD
COUNTY · OHIO

STRATEGIC
REPORT

2022

SERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

FairfieldCountyOhio.gov

Introduction ⚑

Fairfield County is committed to strengthening and supporting residents and businesses through thoughtful and proactive planning efforts. To this end, the County Commissioners Office has developed a 3-year strategic plan to outline the goals, priorities, and strategies to help support a healthy and prosperous community. This comprehensive plan will act as a guide for County leadership as they make decisions, invest resources, and realize county goals in alignment with appropriate uses of ARP related funding.

RAMA Consulting, a performance management consulting firm, was selected to guide the development of the strategic plan that will help guide the organization's current and future work. *RAMA* worked with Fairfield County through an extensive stakeholder engagement process and planning sessions to develop the pillars, goals, priorities, and strategies that will guide the organization over the next three years.

Our Mission
Serve. Connect. Protect.

We work to ensure high quality services, with outstanding customer service at an exceptional value to taxpayers. We foster economic and fiscal sustainability and enhance the County's reputation as a high performing, learning, and caring organization.

We continue to:

- Enhance the quality of life through customer service.
- Improve business operations.
- Protect citizens.
- Prepare for the future by creating value and improving technology.

The County's Role

Fairfield County will play various roles when executing the goals, priorities, and strategies outlined in this plan. In some instances, the County may play multiples roles depending on the scope of work and the alignment of the tasks with the functions of county offices. The possible roles the County could play will include convener, funder, leader, and advocate.

Convener: The County will be the facilitator in helping external stakeholders to connect with networks and resources needed to achieve county goals.

Funder: The County will fund and financially support programs and initiatives that contribute to the needs and goals of the community.

Leader: The County will lead and execute the activities necessary to accomplish strategies.

Advocate: The County will engage with appropriate entities necessary to influence projects and investments that help achieve county goals.

PLAN FRAMEWORK

FAIRFIELD COUNTY · OHIO

- **Pillars:** *Key areas of action*
- **Goals:** *What are we trying to achieve?*
- **Priorities:** *What do we need to focus on?*
- **Strategies:** *How will we get there?*

PILLARS

INFRASTRUCTURE
(Roads, Broadband, Utilities)

SOCIAL SERVICES
(Mental Health, Addiction, & Youth Services)

HOUSING
(Affordable Housing & Housing Assistance)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
(Job Training & Growing a Skilled Workforce)

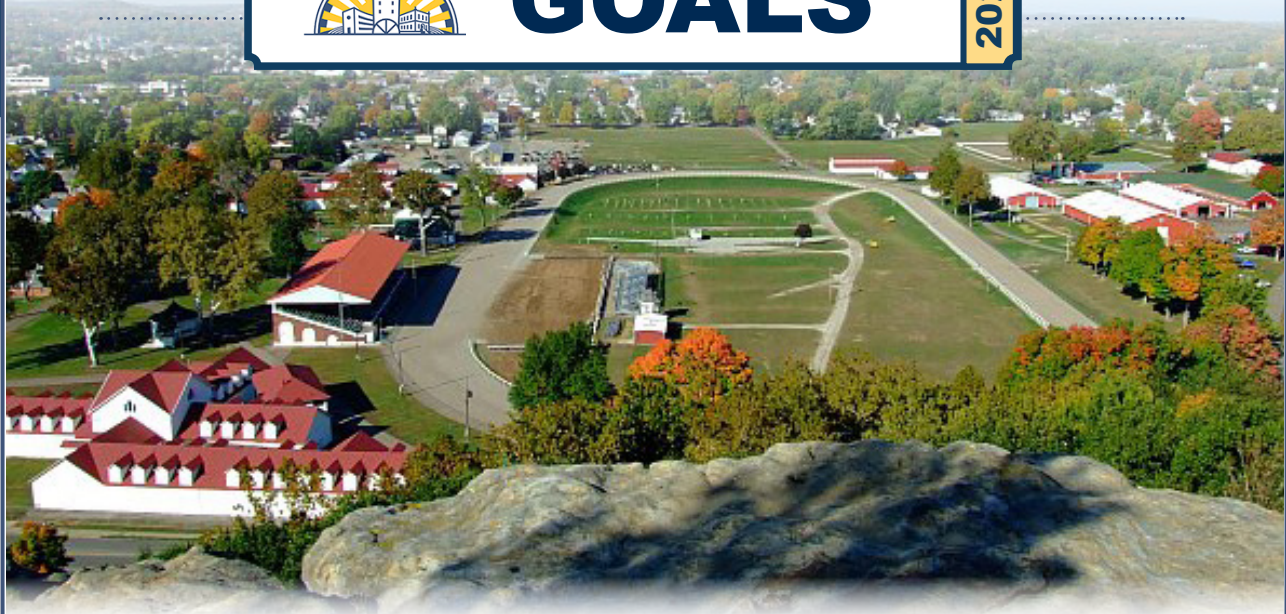### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(Driving & Managing Equitable Growth)

COUNTY OPERATIONS
(Internal Operations & Policies)

GOALS

1 *Advocate for, develop, and maintain sustainable infrastructure that supports equitable access, connectivity and wellbeing of Fairfield County residents and businesses.*

2 *Strengthen and support social service programs through broader coordination to better meet the needs of residents.*

3 *Improve availability and access to safe, quality, affordable and supportive housing throughout the County.*

4 *Grow and support a skilled workforce to meet the needs of current and future local employers.*

5 *Facilitate and drive economic growth through effective planning, promotion, and development.*

6 *Optimize County operations to meet the emerging needs of Fairfield County employees and residents.*

PILLAR: INFRASTRUCTURE
(ROADS, BROADBAND, UTILITIES)

GOAL #1: Advocate for, develop, and maintain sustainable infrastructure that supports equitable access, connectivity and wellbeing of Fairfield County residents and businesses.

1.1: <u>Identify and assess opportunities to increase broadband access throughout the county.</u>
1.1.1 - Advocate for areas of the county that do not have sufficient access to broadband.
1.1.2 - Work with broadband service providers to assess access and affordability.

1.2: <u>Improve public transportation options to better meet local needs.</u>
1.2.1 - Encourage alignment of bus service routes and times with county economic and workforce development plans.
1.2.2 - Consider alignment with future plans for public rail transportation.
1.2.3 - Support activities and initiatives identified in the Master Plan for the airport that align with the county's strategic direction.

1.3: <u>Ensure all residents and businesses have access to critical utility services.</u>
1.3.1 - Assess and coordinate the installation of water and sewer to developing areas (commercial & residential) consistent with established local development plans.
1.3.2 - Assess the needs for commercial power in underserved areas.
1.3.3 - Assess the needs for commercial natural gas in underserved areas.

1.4: <u>Identify solutions to ensure safe and efficient travel throughout the county.</u>
1.4.1 - Better support the completion of necessary Transportation Improvement District projects throughout the county.
1.4.2 - Prioritize and coordinate efforts to address traffic congestion issues.

PILLAR: SOCIAL SERVICES
(MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION, & YOUTH SERVICES)

GOAL #2: Strengthen and support social service programs through broader coordination to better meet the needs of residents.

2.1: <u>Expand capacity to provide effective social services for targeted populations.</u>
2.1.1 - Coordinate mental health and addiction services to maximize resources and capacity to serve.
2.1.2 - Identify gaps and coordinate youth services to maximize resources and capacity to serve.
2.1.3 - Increase recruitment and retention efforts for social service professionals.

2.2: <u>Improve services to be more responsive to the homeless population.</u>
2.2.1 - Develop ongoing outreach programs to meet the mental, physical, and or addiction needs of the homeless in a manner that promotes respect and trust.
2.2.2 - Include / expand supportive case management services for emergency shelters to promote transition to permanent housing.

2.3: <u>Increase awareness of available services and resources.</u>
2.3.1 - Increase education regarding available mental health and addiction services.
2.3.2 - Increase awareness of available youth services programs.

JOHN BRIGHT #2 COVERED BRIDGE

Built in 1881, John Bright #2 covered bridge originally spanned Poplar Creek on Bish Road near Baltimore, Ohio. It is named after pioneer settler John Bright, whose family farm was located near the original site. August Borneman of Lancaster, the leading bridge builder in the area, built the 70-foot span for a cost of $927.50. The bridge features a rare inverted bowstring truss and a unique metal sway bracing system. Sometime later a wooden arch was added. In 1975, John Bright #2 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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OHIO UNIVERSITY LANCASTER
THE LANCASTER FESTIVAL
THE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2013

12-23

PILLAR: HOUSING
(AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING ASSISTANCE)

Goal #3: Improve availability and access to safe, quality, affordable and supportive housing throughout the County.

3.1: **Identify needs and opportunities to improve housing options and supportive services for County residents.**

3.1.1 - Assess the housing needs and supports of high-need populations and identify strategies for improvement.

3.1.2 - Coordinate efforts of local housing partners to identify collective priorities and implementation plan.

3.1.3 - Advance policies to support additional housing inventory within the county.

PILLAR: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
(JOB TRAINING & GROWING A SKILLED WORKFORCE)

Goal #4: Grow and support a skilled workforce to meet the needs of current and future local employers.

4.1: **Align job/skills training programs with the needs of current and future employers.**

4.1.1 - Invest in programs that meet the needs of current and future employers and build a pipeline of skilled workers.

4.1.2 - Promote local career pathways to students and work with educational institutions to develop a skilled workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

4.2: **Promote awareness and education around the advantages of Fairfield County employment opportunities.**

4.2.1 - Analyze current total compensation for local employers and make recommendations for adjustments.

4.2.2 - Use Fairfield 33 Alliance to promote the benefits of employment in Fairfield County.

4.3: **Support efforts to remove barriers to employment such as childcare, transportation, material needs, etc.**

PILLAR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(DRIVING & MANAGING EQUITABLE GROWTH)

Goal #5: Facilitate and drive economic growth through effective planning, promotion, and development.

5.1: <u>Assess and understand opportunities and challenges for commercial development in the county.</u>
5.1.1 - Identify areas for future commercial development and potential hurdles.
5.1.2 - Educating local entities to align tax and incentive policies to meet local development needs.
5.1.3 - Collaborate and support the Fairfield 33 Development Alliance.
5.1.4 - Assist businesses in the identification of solutions to support retention, success, and growth.

5.2: <u>Develop planning goals for industry growth within the county.</u>
5.2.1 - Prioritize attraction and retention efforts for critical and or high-growth, high-wage industries (examples: manufacturing and healthcare).
5.2.2 - Ensure that the land use plan is being followed to maintain a strong agricultural base throughout Fairfield County.
5.2.3 - Implementing economic development activities that align with the Fairfield Growing Plan.

PILLAR: COUNTY OPERATIONS
(INTERNAL OPERATIONS & POLICIES)

Goal #6: Optimize County operations to meet the emerging needs of Fairfield County employees and residents.

6.1: <u>Ensure County government remains responsive to citizen needs and concerns.</u>
6.1.1 - Develop an outreach process to engage citizen feedback to better understand their needs.
6.1.2 - Highlight County programs and initiatives to educate public about county government functions.
6.1.3 - Collaboration with other jurisdictions to streamline government interactions (i.e., building process)
6.1.4 - The Sheriff's office will complete a survey to gain a better understanding of community needs in regard to policing and public safety and make necessary adjustments based on feedback.

6.2: <u>Continue to leverage technology to improve county operations and efficiencies.</u>
6.2.1 - Continue implementation of virtual options to support county service delivery and workforce.
6.2.2 - Upgrade current technologies to standardize operations.
6.2.3 - Evaluate new technology (virtual reality, GIS/ Location software, public safety software, etc.) to support better training and planning efforts.

6.3: <u>Ensure a favorable working environment for county employees.</u>
6.3.1 - Proactively solicit feedback from employees to improve the work experience.
6.3.2 - Utilize employee engagement activities to develop actionable recommendations.

RAMA's Planning Model - LPD

LEARNING →

PLANNING →

DOCUMENTATION →

Shared understanding of the organization's current and future state

- Environmental scan
- Literature review
- Stakeholder engagement
  - Key Infomart Interviews
  - Electronic Surveys
  - Focus groups
  - Community Summits
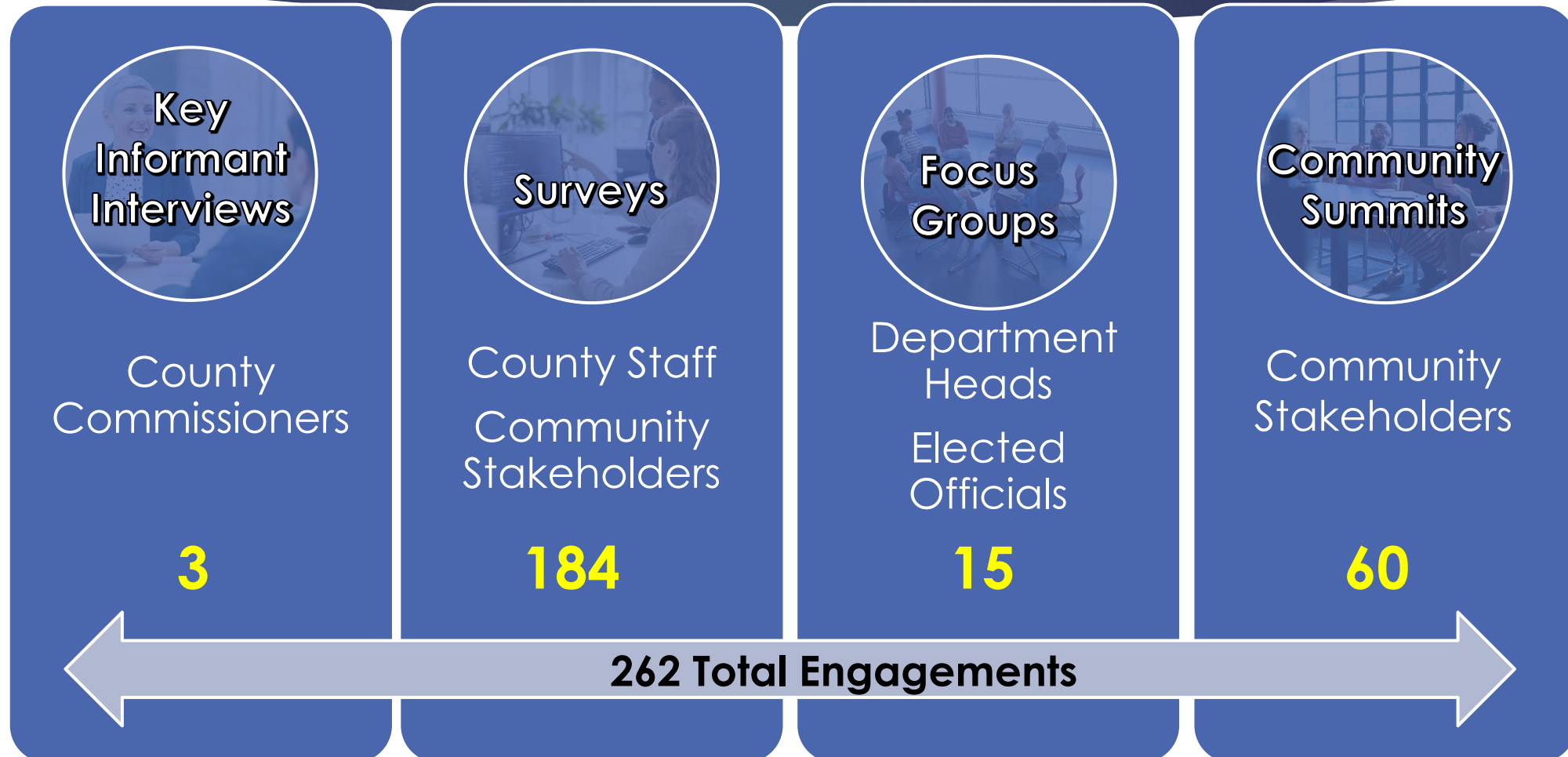- Preliminary Report

Goal and strategy development, action planning

- Leadership Planning Retreats
- Planning workshops
- Strategic Plan Framework
- Workplan development

Documentation of future direction, implementation planning

- Executive summary
- Final Strategic Plan
- Communications & Rollout Support
- Key Message Development
- Implementation Plan

Stakeholder Engagement

Key Informant Interviews	Surveys	Focus Groups	Community Summits
County Commissioners	County Staff Community Stakeholders	Department Heads Elected Officials	Community Stakeholders
3	**184**	**15**	**60**

262 Total Engagements

Confirming the Mission

Serve. Connect. Protect.

We work to ensure high quality services, with outstanding customer service at an exceptional value to taxpayers. We foster economic and fiscal sustainability and enhance the County's reputation as a high performing, learning, and caring organization.

The County's Role

▶ **Convener**: The County will be the facilitator in helping external stakeholders to connect with networks and resources needed to achieve county goals.

▶ **Funder**: The County will fund and financially support programs and initiatives that contribute to the needs and goals of the community.

▶ **Leader:** The County will lead and execute the activities necessary to accomplish strategies.

▶ **Advocate**: The County will engage with appropriate entities necessary to influence projects and investments that help achieve county goals.

Plan Framework

Pillars: Key areas of action

Goals: What are we trying to achieve?

Priorities: What do we need to focus on?

Strategies: How will we get there?

Plan Pillars

PILLAR: INFRASTRUCTURE
(ROADS, BROADBAND, UTILITIES)

PILLAR: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
(JOB TRAINING & GROWING A SKILLED WORKFORCE)

PILLAR: SOCIAL SERVICES
(MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION, & YOUTH SERVICES)

PILLAR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(DRIVING & MANAGING EQUITABLE GROWTH)

PILLAR: HOUSING
(AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING ASSISTANCE)

PILLAR: COUNTY OPERATIONS
(INTERNAL OPERATIONS & POLICIES)

PILLAR: INFRASTRUCTURE
(ROADS, BROADBAND, UTILITIES)

Stakeholder Feedback

▶ Continued growth requires thoughtful planning

▶ Broadband access and road infrastructure and maintenance were identified as top priorities

▶ Public transportation was identified as an opportunity by numerous stakeholder groups

PILLAR: INFRASTRUCTURE
(ROADS, BROADBAND, UTILITIES)

GOAL #1: Advocate for, develop, and maintain sustainable infrastructure that supports equitable access, connectivity and wellbeing of Fairfield County residents and businesses.

Priorities

| Assess opportunities to increase broadband | Improve public transportation | Access to critical utility services | Safe and efficient travel |

PILLAR: SOCIAL SERVICES
(MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION, & YOUTH SERVICES)

Stakeholder Feedback

▶ Addiction and mental health have a large impact on homelessness and crime within the county

▶ There is a need for more programs and greater collaboration to provide necessary social services, particularly to at-risk populations

▶ There is a need for additional social workers to meet the community need as well as better marketing of existing programs

PILLAR: SOCIAL SERVICES
(MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION, & YOUTH SERVICES)

GOAL #2: Strengthen and support social service programs through broader coordination to better meet the needs of residents.

Priorities

Expand capacity to serve targeted populations

Improve services for the homeless population

Increase the awareness of available resources

PILLAR: HOUSING
(AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING ASSISTANCE)

Stakeholder Feedback

- There is a need for increased affordable housing

- Identify support services and recovery housing for high need populations

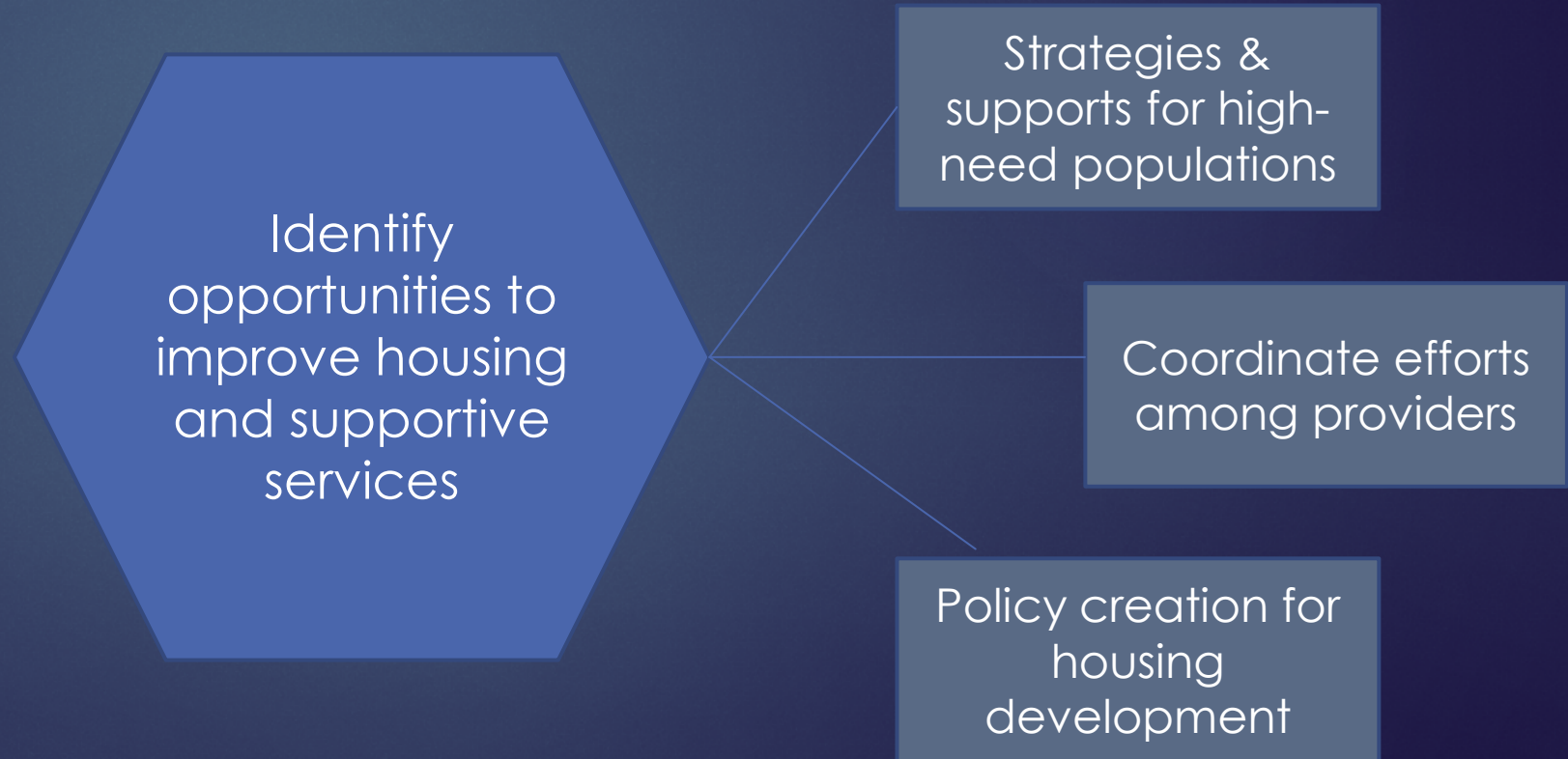- Homelessness is a top priority that needs to be addressed within the county

PILLAR: HOUSING
(AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOUSING ASSISTANCE)

Goal #3: Improve availability and access to safe, quality, affordable and supportive housing throughout the County

Priority

Identify opportunities to improve housing and supportive services

Strategies & supports for high-need populations

Coordinate efforts among providers

Policy creation for housing development

PILLAR: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
(JOB TRAINING & GROWING A SKILLED WORKFORCE)

Stakeholder Feedback

- Developing and retaining a strong local workforce is crucial for the success of the county

- There is a need to align job training with current and future employment opportunities within the county

- There is an opportunity to remove the barriers that encourage Fairfield County residents to work in other counties

PILLAR: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
(JOB TRAINING & GROWING A SKILLED WORKFORCE)

Goal #4: Grow and support a skilled workforce to meet the needs of current and future local employers

Priorities

Align job training with employment opportunities

Promote awareness and education of employment opportunities

Remove barriers to employment

PILLAR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(DRIVING & MANAGING EQUITABLE GROWTH)

Stakeholder Feedback

- There is an opportunity to take advantage of the strong financial position and projected growth within the county

- Better connectivity and alignment throughout the county is key in harnessing thoughtful growth

PILLAR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(DRIVING & MANAGING EQUITABLE GROWTH)

Goal #5: Facilitate and drive economic growth through effective planning, promotion, and development

Priorities

Assess opportunities for commercial development

Develop goals for industry growth within the county

Stakeholder Feedback

- The strong leadership team at the County is a great asset to the community, it is crucial to maintain a work environment that continues to attract and retain quality staff

- There is an opportunity to better understand and meet the evolving needs of residents

- Investments in technology and best practices must be continued to be made to ensure the County is able to effectively serve residents

PILLAR: COUNTY OPERATIONS
(INTERNAL OPERATIONS & POLICIES)

Goal #6: Optimize County operations to meet the emerging needs of Fairfield County employees and residents.
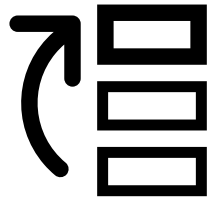
Priorities

Remain responsive to citizen needs

Leverage technology to improve operations

Ensure a favorable working environment

Next Steps

- Prioritizing activities

- Identifying quick wins/ low hanging fruit

- Identifying leaders and collaboration opportunities

Questions