



CAPITAL AREA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

2024 Strategic Plan

Adopted November 14, 2024

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Executive Summary

This document is a guide for the Commission and the Agency as we design and carry out our activities each year. The Work Plan and the Budget are the most important mechanisms through which these strategic planning ideas will be implemented.

A core principle woven throughout this document is that the agency prioritizes intergovernmental collaboration and the relationships and services necessary for communities to invite CARPC in as collaborators.

CARPC's Strategic Plan Identifies three categories of strategic direction for the next few years:

Relationships

We recognize that our efficacy as an agency is based not on regulations or authority, but on technical expertise, relationships, and trust.

We have two objectives regarding our relationships across the region – we want to be valued by our community partners, and we want to collaborate and avoid duplication of services with our regional agency partners. To accomplish these objectives, we can engage with communities, share data, offer strategic pricing for certain work, educate and communicate RDF objectives, maintain focus on water quality outcomes in Water Quality Plan amendments, and coordinate effectively with regional partners.

Key Actions

- Focus on earlier engagement with communities during their planning processes.
- Promote cooperative and intergovernmental dialogs.
- Leverage technical expertise and regional relationships to support local planning.
- Consider changes to the Urban Service Area Amendment process that encourage municipalities to initiate applications prior to specific development proposals.
- Assign staff and/or ask commissioners for assistance building relationships between CARPC and entities that represent our cultural diversity; as we get to know those organizations, identify opportunities to reinforce their relationships with local governments across our region.

- Continue working with partner agencies, including routine, scheduled check-ins to discuss shared and complementary work.

Services

There is a virtuous circle in which we build relationships and skill through our services across the region and those relationships and skills lead to more work.

We will leverage technical expertise, relationships and trust to provide services consistent with the policy goals of the RDF and Water Quality Plan. Our services will be built around our strengths as convenors, communicators, and data specialists (including geospatial data). We will use the Services Guidelines flowchart to help decide where to focus our efforts.

Key Actions

- CARPC staff and Commission will use the Services Guidelines (Appendix A) to select and prioritize proposed services.
- CARPC staff will consider equity issues in all our internal and external activities, seeking engagement with residents and recruitment/retention of agency staff from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Revenues

Our efficacy as an agency depends on diversified and sustainable funding streams through which we can retain a high-quality staff.

CARPC's ability to provide services valued by the region requires stable and diversified funding and the ability to utilize grant and/or levy funding for activities that benefit the region and lack local funding support. We will use our Levy Funding Guidelines and Grant Funding Guidelines to help decide how to pursue and apply those funding sources.

Key Actions

- CARPC will use the Levy Funding Guidelines (Appendix B) to determine how levy funds will be applied to projects and services.
- CARPC will use the Grant Funding Guidelines (Appendix C) to determine CARPC's involvement in the pursuit of grant funding.

Glossary

Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) – A form of regional government created under Wis. Stats. 66.0309 and operating primarily in Dane County, Wisconsin. CARPC is comprised of a 13-member Commission appointed by four appointing authorities and staff (the “Agency”) that supports and implements the decisions of the Commission. Unless otherwise indicated, “CARPC” refers to the combined entity and effort of both the Commission and the Agency.

Commission – the 13-member body appointed by the Dane County Executive, the Mayor of Madison, the President of the Dane County Towns Association and the President of the Dane County Cities and Villages Association.

Agency – the staff who support the functions and decisions of the Commission.

Partner Agencies – other regional entities with which we coordinate and collaborate, primarily including Dane County and its various departments, the Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP), the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), and the Greater Madison MPO. This may sometimes extend to include county governments and other regional entities that operate in the five unaffiliated counties.

Local Communities – all towns, cities and villages in our region, which may sometimes extend to include communities in the five unaffiliated counties.

Unaffiliated Counties – the five adjoining counties not associated with a regional planning commission: Sauk, Columbia, Dodge, Jefferson and Rock.

Ecosystem Services – the various benefits that humans derive from healthy ecosystems, such as provision of food, natural pollination of crops, clean air and water, decomposition of wastes, or flood control.

Introduction and Purpose

The Capital Area Regional Planning Commission manages two critical planning functions in our region. One is the Dane County Water Quality Plan, which we administer under contract with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to help protect surface water and groundwater in Dane County. The other is the Regional Development Framework, a plan for the physical development of the region that CARPC is statutorily required to prepare and maintain ([Wis Stats. 66.0309](#), sections 9-10). The Commission has very limited legal authority in either setting, but we have relationships and technical knowledge that can inform decisions by local municipalities and state agencies regarding land use and natural resource protection.

This process was intended to help us align our skills and behavior with both the 2050 Regional Development Framework and the Dane County Water Quality Plan so that our efforts consistently support both plans.

A core principle woven throughout this document is that the agency prioritizes intergovernmental collaboration and the relationships and services necessary for communities to invite CARPC in as collaborators. We can't contribute to preferred outcomes identified in our regional plans unless communities see value in our assistance and trust us to be at their tables with them.

This document is a guide for the Commission and the Agency as we design and carry out our activities each year. The Work Plan and the Budget are the most important mechanisms through which these strategic planning ideas will be implemented.

Process and Participants

SUMMARY

Participants included facilitator Alison Lebwohl, all commissioners and staff, and, at one of the meetings, a cross section of community and agency staff and officials.

There were six face-to-face meetings in 2024 to discuss CARPC's past planning and future opportunities, with a focus on Relationships, Services, Revenues and Roles. Retiring Agency Director Steve Steinhoff and new Executive Director Jason Valerius had key roles throughout the process to bring forward proposals and strive to build consensus around strategy.

The Participants

This strategic planning process was designed and carried out by CARPC staff and commissioners, with support from Alison Lebwohl Consulting, a strategic planning specialist. A Steering Committee worked with Alison to design and implement the process, and all members of the Agency and the Commission participated in the process.

The Steering Committee

- David Pfeiffer, CARPC Chairperson (and Executive Chair through June 2024)
- Steve Steinhoff, Planning Division Lead and Agency Director (retired February 2024)
- Jason Valerius, Executive Director (started January 2024)
- Caitlin Shanahan, Senior Community Planner & Outreach Coordinator
- Nick Bower, Senior Environmental Engineer
- Melissa Michaud, Environmental Resources Planner

Other CARPC Staff

- Sean Higgins, Senior Community Planner
- Matt Noone, Senior Environmental Specialist
- Prachi Mehendale, Environmental Engineer
- Allison Madison, WI Salt Wise Manager
- Liz Levy, Environmental Resources Planner

- Matt Krempely, Community Planner
- Kayla Haas, Marketing and Communications Specialist

The Commission

- Maureen Crombie
- Steve Greb
- Kris Hampton
- Barbara Harrington-McKinney
- Peter McKeever
- Heidi Murphy
- David Pfeiffer
- Cynthia Richson
- Jim Schuler
- Caryl Terrell
- Bill Tishler
- Nicholas Zavos
- Alison Volk

The Process

The process featured six in-person events in 2024 attended by commissioners and staff, each preceding a regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.

January 2024 – Launch

This was a 1-hour session hosted at UW-Madison Union South to kick off the planning process. It featured a presentation and affirmation of the charter for the strategic planning process and then an overview presentation by Steve Steinhoff describing CARPC’s mission and vision, authority and influence, the Regional Development Framework, and the Proactive Planning Process.

February 2024 – RDF Workshop

This was a 3-hour workshop hosted at the Waunakee Library to build familiarity with the Regional Development Framework. It featured a presentation about the RDF by Jason Valerius, including a review of responses to a survey about RDF challenges and opportunities completed by participants. This workshop included use of the urban-to-rural transect to support discussion about the varied places we value in our region. Participants engaged in discussions about barriers preventing communities from implementing the RDF and strategies CARPC can use to support local communities in overcoming those barriers.

March 2024 – Communities and Agencies Workshop

This all-day workshop at the Waunakee Public Library was the highlight of the planning process for many participants, which included partners and stakeholders from across our region. It featured presentations by and panel discussions with municipal planning staff

March 2024 Communities and Agencies Workshop



about their efforts to implement strategies identified in the RDF. It also included a panel of regional agency partners who described how our organizations work together and identified opportunities for enhanced collaboration. Small group discussions after each panel identified opportunities for CARPC.

April 2024 – Services Deliberation

This working session, hosted at UW–Madison Union South, was focused on the criteria and process for deciding what services the agency offers. Jason Valerius presented a proposed set of criteria and then a series of test cases to apply those criteria. Participants discussed both the criteria and the test case services and recommended creation of a flowchart to apply the criteria.

May 2024 – Revenues Deliberation

The May working session, hosted by the Village of Cottage Grove, focused on revenues. Jason Valerius presented information about CARPC’s financial history and a proposal with funding goals and guidelines for the use of levy funds and the pursuit of grant funding. Participants discussed and offered feedback on the proposal.

July 2024 – Roles Deliberation

In July the staff/commission working group met for the final time, at the Verona Town Hall. Jason Valerius presented for discussion a proposal describing staff roles and commissioner roles, including both core and optional tasks. This session also included review and discussion of the final report outline.

Draft Plan Development and Review

Executive Director Valerius synthesized the findings from the surveys and working sessions into a Draft Strategic Planning Report, which he presented to the Commission for review.

October 2024 – Draft Plan Review

At the October Commission meeting commissioners discussed the draft plan, offering a variety of content edits, from word choice to overall approach. The most substantial change was to eliminate the Roles section, concluding that the remainder of this document and the CARCP bylaws contain adequate guidance for Commissioners and Staff. Regarding the conclusion of the planning process, the consensus of the Commission at this meeting was to prepare this document as a Strategic Plan, to be adopted by the Commission.

November 2024 – Plan Adoption

The Commission adopted this plan by resolution at the November 14, 2024 meeting.

Prior Planning

SUMMARY

CARPC has completed planning efforts over the prior 8 years that we reviewed in the current process and affirmed as relevant to our direction. These included the last Strategic Planning effort (2016–2017), A Greater Madison Vision (2017–2019), the Regional Development Framework (2020–2022), and the Proactive Planning Process (2022–2023). Also relevant to the current effort is the Dane County Water Quality Plan, a living document first adopted in 1979 and updated continually to manage urban development and support water quality.

The charter for the current process included a synthesis of relevant direction from those plans, organized here in 6 categories: mission and vision, stakeholders, opportunities, strategies, authority, and roles.

CARPC Strategic Plan, 2016–2017 [\[Link\]](#)

CARPC staff and commissioners met 5 times in 2016 to identify the organization’s mission, vision, values, key stakeholders, and implementation strategies. Some of those items were later updated or replaced during the Regional Development Framework process, but the description of Key Stakeholders and Strategies remain relevant:

Key Stakeholders

- CARPC’s primary stakeholders are local officials, their constituents, and local staff.
- CARPC’s success depends upon the agency’s relevance to local officials and their constituents.
- Regional planning is about offering resources and options and inspiration to locals to support them in making informed choices – early in the process, when they are gathering information.

Strategies

- Tell the story of what CARPC and regional planning bring to the party for municipalities – communicate the value and “what is” of regional planning – highlight successful communities.
- Strengthen CARPC’s relevance for local officials and their constituents by focusing on regional planning and building bridges to locals.
- Leverage CARPC’s region-wide activities, including supporting A Greater Madison Vision, the land use plan and the water quality plan.

A Greater Madison Vision (AGMV), 2017–2019 [\[Link\]](#)

A diverse steering committee helped develop a regionwide survey that used four alternative growth scenarios to elicit opinions about how we should choose to grow as a region. More than 9,000 people responded to the survey. Environmental issues were prominent in this process, receiving the second-largest number of total comments.

Priorities

- Mitigating Climate change and flooding risks
- Better access to opportunities and resources such as jobs, education and services
- Expanded housing and transit options to address both climate risks and opportunity
- Preserving farming areas

2050 Regional Development Framework (RDF), 2020–2022 [\[Link\]](#)











Developed around the priorities of A Greater Madison Vision and guided by a steering committee of staff from partner municipalities and agencies, the Regional Development Framework (RDF) is a guide to address where and how to grow as a region. The process included a survey of municipal officials and staff seeking feedback on the draft goals, objectives and strategies.

The RDF identifies three overarching goals, promoting regional development that:

- 1. Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and fosters resilience to climate change**
- 2. Increases access to jobs, housing, and services for all people**
- 3. Conserves farmland, water resources, natural areas, and fiscal resources**

A series of objectives support those three goals:

2050 Regional Development Framework Goals and Objectives

Objectives	Goals		
	Climate	Opportunity	Conservation
Increase percent of development that is compact, mixed, walkable, and where feasible, transit supportive			
Increase the tree canopy			
Increase infiltration of precipitation and reduce stormwater runoff			
Decrease urban heat island effect			
Decrease racial disparities			
Generate housing supply to meet demand			
Grow business and jobs in targeted sectors			
Increase physical access of residents to jobs and services			
Enhance stewardship and natural resource areas			
Designate and protect regional farmland preservation areas			
Increase density and ensure good connectivity among developments			

To achieve those goals and objectives the RDF identifies six strategies to guide regional development patterns.

Four describe where to grow:

- Focus growth in centers and along corridors
- Prioritize growth in already developed areas
- Plan areas for quality business growth
- Plan complete neighborhoods

Two of the strategies describe where NOT to grow:

- Preserve stewardship areas
- Preserve farming areas

Proactive Planning Process (PPP), 2022–2023 [\[Link\]](#)

CARPC established the Proactive Planning Committee (PPC) to help implement the Regional Development Framework. Comprised of four commissioners, four other local government officials, and the CARPC Executive Chairperson as a non-voting member, the Committee was charged with developing recommendations to the Commission for an ideal, proactive planning process for implementing the Framework.

The Committee met five times to review and discuss information gathered by staff including summaries of dozens of meetings with local government officials, an assessment of CARPC’s Future Urban Development Area (FUDA) planning, and consistencies between the Framework and community comprehensive plans. The PPC unanimously approved their recommendations to CARPC at the May 2023 meeting, which were then approved by the Commission in June 2023 (edited for brevity):

1. Implement the RDF through a focus on earlier engagement with communities, during their own planning processes.
2. Promote cooperative and intergovernmental dialogs, especially for development consistent with the RDF.
3. Leverage technical expertise and regional relationships to support local planning efforts.
4. Consider changes to the Urban Service Area Amendment Process to encourage applications founded on future land use plans.
5. Make changes to operations and governance as needed to implement the above.

Dane County Water Quality Plan (DCWQP), 1979–current [\[Link\]](#)

We did not say much about the Water Quality Plan until late in this strategic planning process, when we realized that our understanding of CARPC’s planning context was incomplete without it.

Through this plan, CARPC develops an environmental protection strategy for both pollution control and resource protection. This strategy encompasses waste treatment, stormwater management, erosion control, vegetation management, and land use planning. It is something we manage on behalf of the DNR and with the consent of our appointing authorities, primarily to protect surface water and groundwater in the County. This is a living

plan, established decades ago, continually updated through urban service area amendments, and occasionally updated to revise background data and environmental protection policies.

Synthesis of Prior Planning: Shared Understandings About CARPC

Our Strategic Planning Charter offered a synthesis of the prior 8 years of CARPC planning efforts, presenting the following foundation for our 2024 work. Conversations during the planning process further reinforced this foundation as relevant to our future efforts.

1) Agency Mission and Vision

- **Mission:** *Strengthen the region by engaging communities through planning, collaboration, and assistance.*
- **Vision:** *A region where communities create exceptional quality of life for all by working together to solve regional challenges.*

2) Stakeholders

- CARPC’s primary stakeholders are local government officials and staff.
- CARPC’s success depends upon the agency’s relevance to local officials and their constituents.

3) Opportunities

- **We Can Use the RDF**
The Regional Development Framework is based on robust public input and is a strong platform for collaboration around shared values across the entire region.
- **We Can Engage in Local Planning Processes**
The Commission embraced the recommendations of the Proactive Planning Committee in June 2023, agreeing that “CARPC should focus its engagement with local communities during early stages of their planning processes, such as comprehensive planning” and “CARPC should promote cooperative and intergovernmental dialogs and planning processes that seek to establish shared

goals and agreements including for future urban development consistent with the Regional Development Framework”.

- **We Can Help Communities Deal with Growth**

The region is growing quickly (+29% since 2003) yet resources to manage and guide growth across our many jurisdictions and boundaries are constrained by levy limits and hampered by local staff turnover. CARPC provides support for common planning issues, technical challenges, planning processes and intergovernmental relationships.

4) Strategies

- Regional planning is about offering resources and technical support to local government.
- Strengthen CARPC’s relevance for local officials and their constituents by focusing on regional planning and relationships with and among local governments.
- Tell the story of what CARPC and regional planning bring to support the challenges we all face. Highlight successful collaborations and solutions that emerged from those collaborations.
- Leverage our unique contributions to planning efforts in Dane County: the Regional Development Framework and the Dane County Water Quality Plan.

5) Authority

- CARPC has influence, but not control, in local planning and development processes.
- Our strategies will focus on working within the current statutes that guide our structure, authority, and procedures.

6) Roles

- The role of the commission is oversight and strategy, including governance, policy, and championing the agency
- The role of management and staff is execution, including planning and delivering programs, operations and communications; building relationships with communities, partners, and other stakeholders

RDF Implementation Opportunities and Challenges

SUMMARY

Though CARPC has no authority to implement the RDF, our plan for the physical development of the region is based on broad public input and it offers policy ideas across the full diversity of the County's places and people. CARPC has the challenge and opportunity to help communities understand and benefit from the Regional Development Framework.

This strategic planning effort was focused largely on implementation of the Regional Development Framework. The second meeting of the process focused on the challenges and opportunities around the RDF; this is a summary of our most salient conclusions from that event.

CARPC's authority is limited.

As defined by Executive Order #197 (CARPC's creation) and Wis. Stat. 66.0309 (RPC law), our role is to advise and support local government. The Regional Development Framework satisfies a statutory requirement to plan for the physical development of the region, but it comes with no authority to require implementation or consistency with the plan. Similarly, our role in water quality protection is only advisory to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The Regional Development Framework is robust.

Though not enforceable, the RDF is based on broad public input (the Greater Madison Vision process) and offers policy solutions based in that input that appeal to a full cross-section of the county's diverse population. Through the RDF, CARPC supports:

- Varied land uses
- Varied development styles and choices
- Infill development and redevelopment

- Complete neighborhoods
- Preservation of environmental corridors, natural spaces, voluntary environmental corridors and invaluable farmland
- Green infrastructure and understanding of the value of ecosystem services

CARPC can help communities realize the benefits of the RDF.

- By communicating the long-term economic advantages of complete neighborhoods, compact development and strategic land protection through data and case studies, we can support local staff and leaders in their review of development, especially proposals initially inconsistent with the RDF.
- By offering clear information about development best practices, we can help communities craft acceptable solutions for specific challenges like stormwater management, traffic, parking, open space access and viewshed protection.
- By sharing data describing local conditions and relevant research we can help local officials make thoughtful, fact-based decisions.
- Local staff sometimes lack the resources to advocate for the benefits of development consistent with the RDF.
- It is difficult to account for all public benefits and costs related to new development while considering things like the density/intensity of development, pedestrian-friendly design, and voluntary natural resource protections.

Strategic Direction: RELATIONSHIPS

SUMMARY

We recognize that our efficacy as an agency is based not on regulations or authority, but on technical expertise, relationships, and trust.

We have two objectives regarding our relationships across the region – we want to be valued by our community partners and we want to collaborate and avoid duplication of services with our regional agency partners. To accomplish these objectives we can engage with communities, share data, offer strategic pricing for certain work, educate and communicate RDF objectives, maintain focus on water quality outcomes in Water Quality Plan amendments, and coordinate effectively with regional partners.

Objective 1

We want CARPC to be known to local communities as a valued partner.

We know from conversations with local staff and officials, including those that participated in the Communities and Agencies Workshop in March 2024, that we *can* be that valued partner.

Strategies

We can **strengthen relationships with local communities through:**

- Engaging with communities during their own planning processes
- Supporting common needs and challenges that benefit from sharing data, policies and experiences, while also taking care to see how each community is unique and will adapt solutions to fit its particular conditions and culture
- Maintaining clear lines between advocacy for RDF outcomes and enforcement of regulatory requirements in Water Quality Plan amendments
- Offering services that communities need and want

- Strategically pricing fee-for-service projects to incentivize work that strengthens relationships and reinforces the RDF
- Building our connections with entities in the region that represent our cultural diversity, such as the Dane County Office of Equity and Inclusion, Centro Hispano, the Urban League of Greater Madison, the Hmong Institute, the Ho-Chunk Nation and others, and then helping to strengthen connections between these organizations and local government officials (communities seek diverse involvement in planning processes but find it challenging to get people involved – this could help address that challenge).

ACTIONS

Implement recommendations of the Proactive Planning Process:

1. Focus on earlier engagement with communities, during their planning processes
2. Promote cooperative and intergovernmental dialogs.
3. Leverage technical expertise and regional relationships to support local planning efforts.
4. Consider changes to the Urban Service Area Amendment process that encourage municipalities to initiate applications prior to specific development proposals, to increase their ability to implement their own future land use plans.
5. Make changes to operations and governance as needed to implement the above.

In addition:

6. Assign staff and/or ask commissioners for assistance building relationships between CARPC and entities that represent our cultural diversity; as we get to know those organizations, identify opportunities to reinforce their relationships with local governments across our region.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Annual number of municipalities we worked with and local planning processes in which we were actively involved.
- Annual number of intergovernmental agreement efforts in which CARPC staff were actively involved.

- Number of urban service area amendment applications initiated by a community without a development proposal motivating the application.
- Number of active relationships with institutions representing our region’s cultural diversity.

Objective 2

We want to provide more services to more local governments without conflict or duplication of effort with partner agencies or other local governments.

We know from conversations with our partner agencies that our relationships are generally strong and that there are more opportunities for collaboration with each of them.

Strategies

We can strengthen relationships with **partner agencies** through:

- Continual efforts to clarify roles and provide a more seamless and coordinated experience for our community partners.
- Coordinated outreach to communities, including those outside Dane County that otherwise lack access to a regional planning commission.

ACTIONS

1. Continue working with partner agencies, including routine, scheduled check-ins with each to discuss shared and complementary work.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Number of check-in collaboration meetings and unique collaborative projects with other regional entities, especially MadREP, Dane County Planning & Development, Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change

Strategic Direction: SERVICES

SUMMARY

There is a virtuous circle in which we build relationships and skill through our services across the region and those relationships and skills lead to more work.

We will leverage technical expertise, relationships and trust to provide services consistent with the policy goals of the RDF and Water Quality Plan. Our services will be built around our strengths as convenors, communicators, and data specialists (including geospatial data). We will use the Services Guidelines flowchart to help decide where to focus our efforts.

Objective

Our services will support communities and the region and will be consistent with the principles of the RDF and the Water Quality Plan.

Strategies

The agency will act as convenors, and we will model inclusivity and objective, fact-based decisions in creating and administering our own plans. We will listen to everyone and value what all stakeholders bring to planning and development processes – including local officials, residents, landowners, developers and other agencies and nongovernmental organizations that support the needs of residents.

The agency will provide resources that support projects and discussions at the local level, including case studies, best practice illustrations, templates for common planning tasks, cost-benefit analyses, estimates of ecosystem services, and information about development best practices.

The agency will support projects in individual communities through fee-for-service agreements, applying our skills with community engagement, data collection and analyses, mapping, policy development, and document formatting.

The agency will collect, analyze, display and share data that describes our progress toward RDF goals, and we will enable communities to use that data for their own local assessments.

ACTIONS

1. CARPC staff and Commission will use the Services Guidelines (Appendix A) to select and prioritize proposed services.
2. The Guidelines will be periodically reviewed and revised to maintain their relevance to Agency operations.
3. CARPC staff will consider equity issues in all our internal and external activities, seeking engagement with residents and hiring/retention of agency staff from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.¹

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Documented use of the Services Guidelines
- Documented review and/or edit of the Guidelines with the Commission
- Documented stakeholder engagement efforts targeting the involvement of people not typically involved in planning processes.
- Number of fee-for-service projects initiated each year

¹ The [Dane County Planning and Development Dept. Racial and Gender Equity and Inclusion Plan \(RGEI\), February 2020](#) is a reference resource for the agency.

Strategic Direction: REVENUES

SUMMARY

Our efficacy as an agency depends on diversified and sustainable funding streams through which we can retain a high-quality staff.

CARPC's ability to provide services valued by the region requires stable and diversified funding and the ability to utilize grant and/or levy funding for activities that benefit the region and lack local funding support. We will use our Levy Funding Guidelines and Grant Funding Guidelines to help decide how to pursue and apply those funding sources.

Objective

We will have the capacity, skill and stability to provide services valued by the region.

Strategies

- Ground any funding requests in an understanding of community needs and CARPC's unique capacities to help meet those needs.
- Increase and diversify revenue by adding other sources such that revenue matches expenses by the 2026 budget year and levy funding is only 50% of the total budget by the 2027 budget year.
- Act in service of natural resource protection; seek grant funding and/or use levy funding as feasible, recognizing that environmental services sometimes lack direct funding by local governments commensurate with their long-term importance to the local and regional community.
- Act in service of intergovernmental cooperation; seek grant funding and/or use levy funding as feasible, recognizing that communities may not be able to cover the full cost of our assistance in cooperative planning efforts.
- Provide necessary funding stability to support the continued recruitment and retention of highly skilled and motivated staff.
- Use levy funding judiciously and in the public interest.

- Pursue grant funding for projects across the region.

ACTIONS

1. CARPC will use the Levy Funding Guidelines (Appendix B) to determine how levy funds will be applied to projects and services. These guidelines will be periodically edited based on Commission feedback about their use.
2. CARPC will use the Grant Funding Guidelines (Appendix C) to determine CARPC's involvement in the pursuit of grant funding. These guidelines will be periodically edited based on Commission feedback about their use.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Documented use of the Levy Funding Guidelines
- Documented use of the Grant Funding Guidelines
- Fiscal stability, growing revenue in balance with expenses, at least on pace with inflation and staffing costs
- Revenue diversity, increasing non-levy sources to 50% of total revenue
- A clean independent audit

Next Steps

This Report and the associated guidelines will be used by staff and commissioners to inform our operations week to week, and also our major annual processes, including the Annual Budget and the Annual Work Plan.

During the Work Plan development process each year, staff will consider and report to the Commission:

- Progress toward and consistency with the goals and guidelines of this Strategic Planning Report
- Implementation successes and challenges of the prior Work Plan

This document is intended to guide staff and commissioner activities for an estimated period of 5 years.

- The Commission should schedule the next strategic planning effort for 2029.
- Lessons learned from this process, to be considered in future processes:
 - An outside facilitator helped to keep the process on point and on schedule
 - The involvement of all staff and all commissioners in a series of face-to-face meetings was valuable, especially to staff
 - The involvement of partner agencies and communities was highly informative and also served to reinforce those relationships

Appendices [\[Link\]](#)

- A.** Services Guidelines
- B.** Levy Funding Guidelines
- C.** Grant Funding Guidelines
- D.** Event summaries (all events)
- E.** Presentations (all events)
- F.** Project charter
- G.** Project tracker
- H.** Survey and exercise results (all events)
- I.** Steering Committee Materials