

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA**

**2016-2018 Strategic Plan**



**Left to right: James Cavanaugh, Mike Boyle, Chris Rodgers (Vice Chair), Mary Ann Borgeson (Chair), P.J. Morgan, Marc Kraft, Clare Duda**

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIR**



Dear Douglas County Citizens:

After years of debating the efficacy of creating a County-wide strategic plan, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners decided in 2015 to develop a 3-year strategic plan to clearly identify the Board's operational priorities. While the County Board continually strives to provide quality services at the lowest possible cost, a clearly-defined strategic plan is a necessary element in ensuring that the County Board's priorities are achieved and that there is ongoing accountability to the public.

Strategic Planning is not a one-time or even an annual event; it is an ongoing and often fluid process that requires the involvement of County leaders, staff and the public. The Plan document itself is a "living document" in that the strategic priorities contained therein can be modified and/or added to on a periodic basis.

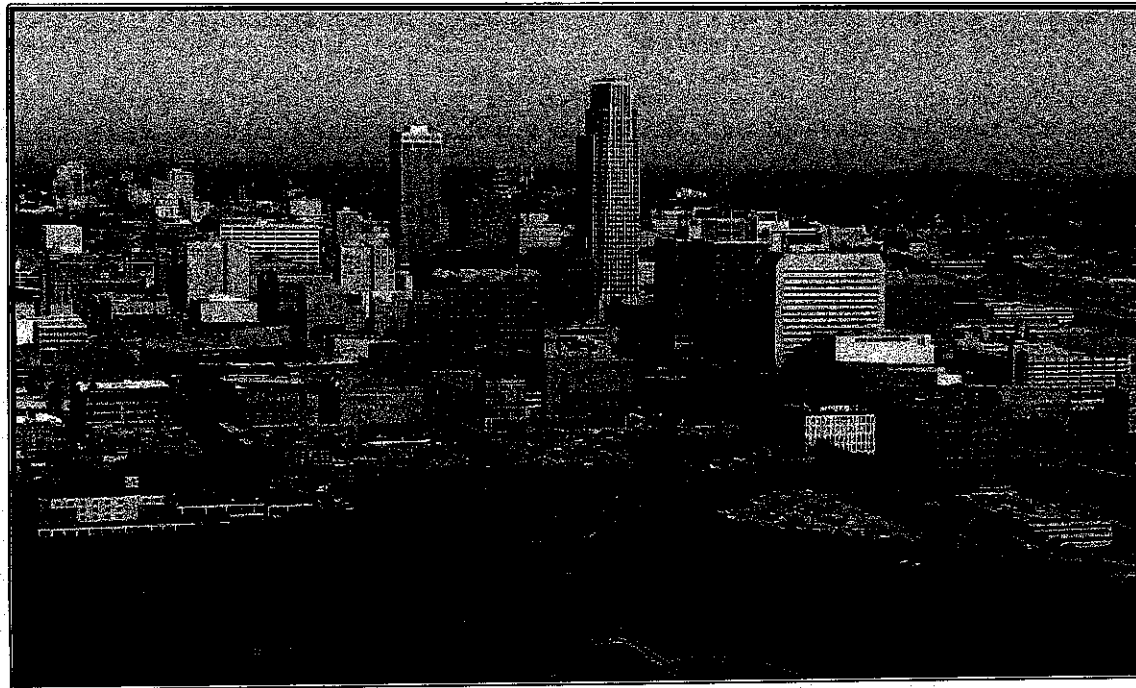
On September 24, 2015, the County Board met in a strategic planning session, which was open to the public. The session was facilitated by professional facilitator Deb Burnight of Burnight Facilitation Resources. The day-long session included much discussion and healthy debate on what the County Board's immediate and 3-year strategic priorities should be. The process was both interesting and productive, as shown by the priorities contained in this Plan.

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners looks forward to the process of implementing this plan so that it can continue to improve the quality and efficiency of the County's operations.

Mary Ann Borgeson

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**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA**

**Vision**

Our vision is to be one of the elite Counties in the United States.

**Mission**

To respect and respond to Douglas County citizens and provide quality services in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

**Value Statements**

We value Responsive Government

We value Public Engagement

We value Collaborative and Creative problem solving

We value Public/Private Partnerships

**County Government Organizational Structure**

Douglas County operates under the board of commissioners-administrator form of government. Policymaking and legislative authority is vested in the Board of Commissioners, which consists of seven members. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for, among other things, passing resolutions, adopting the budget, appointing committees, and hiring the county's chief administrative officer. The Commissioners are elected within their respective districts. Commissioners are elected to four-year staggered terms, with three or four members elected every two years.

The County's Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for carrying out the policies and resolutions of the Board, for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the County, and for appointing the various departments directors.

The annual County budget operates on a fiscal year of July 1 – June 30. The current 2015-2016 budget is \$368.3 million. No tax levy increase was required to establish this budget.

The County Board has responsibility for the operation of 16 departments, for which department directors are appointed to conduct the direct supervision. Those departments are:

- Administration
- 911 Emergency Communications
- Community Mental Health Center
- Corrections
- Emergency Management
- Environmental Services
- General Assistance
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- Health Center (LTC/Short Term Rehab)
- Internal Audit
- Juvenile Assessment Center
- Records Imaging
- Public Properties
- Purchasing
- Veterans Services
- Youth Center



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Additionally, there are eight offices that are independently operated by elected officials. The County Board approves the annual budgets and wage scales for those offices, but otherwise has no supervisory responsibility.

- Assessor/Register of Deeds
- Clerk of the District Court
- County Clerk/Comptroller
- County Attorney
- Engineer
- Sheriff
- Public Defender

There are additional County offices that are not under the County Board's direct supervision:

- District Court
- Election Commission
- Extension
- Health Department
- Human Resources/Civil Service
- Separate Juvenile Court

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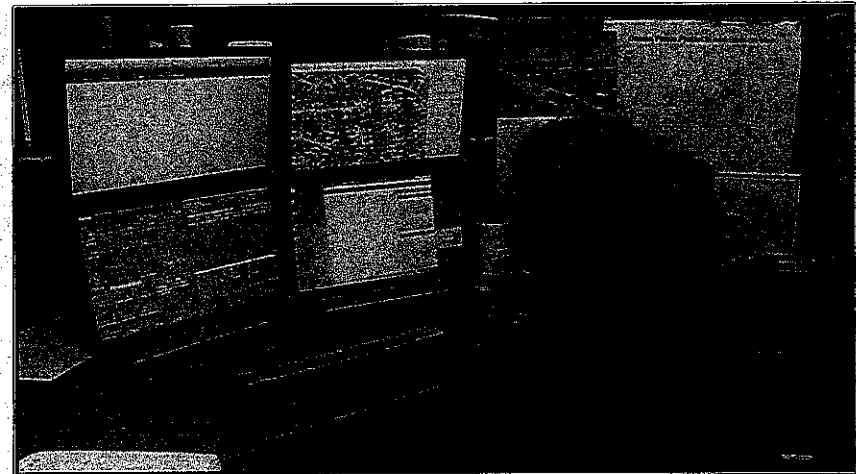
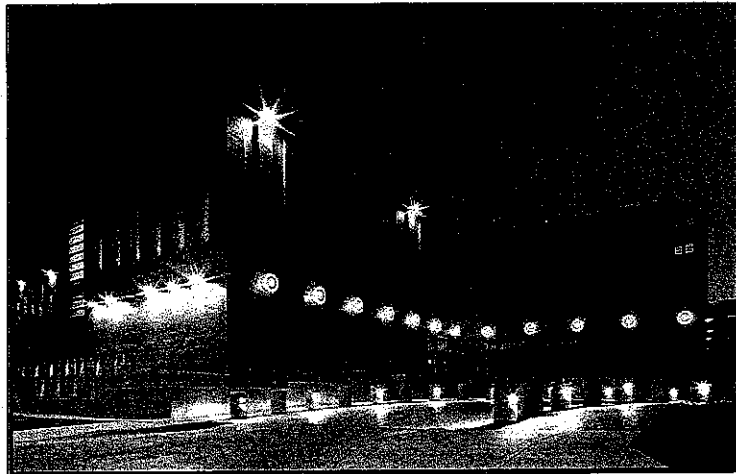
### **Strategic Process Summary**

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners met in facilitated session at the UNL Extension Office on September 24, 2015, to craft a 3-year strategic plan. The overarching question guiding discussion was:

*“How will we, over the next 3-5 years, creatively and efficiently invest our resources in order to provide the most effective services for the citizens of Douglas County?”*

Over the course of the day-long retreat, the participants explored three primary areas of strategic focus:

- Foundational thinking
- Strategic thinking
- Tactical solutions



### **Foundational thinking**

- Environmental Scan – The first step of the group process was to assess the current planning landscape. The participants took a “30,000 foot view” of recent accomplishments and setbacks, as well as trends that are (or will be) impacting the work and mission of Douglas County. Presentations were also given to educate participants on current budgetary and other fiscal information. Opportunity was provided for public and partner input and recommendations for the planning process.
- “Practical” Vision – The exercise answered the focus question “What do we want to see in place in 3-5 years as a result of our collective action?” Nine vision elements (priority outcomes) emerged as a result of the process (see page 5 for detail). They were:
  - A robust capital improvement program
  - Improved inter-local collaboration
  - Fair and affordable total employee compensation
  - Effective and fair tax policy
  - County government awareness
  - Juvenile justice reform
  - Alternatives to incarceration
  - Health service coordination
  - Strengthened public health infrastructure

### **Strategic thinking**

Using the environmental scan as a screen through which to view the desired future vision elements, the participants developed four broad themes to guide strategic action over the next two to three years. Those strategies included (in no order of priority):

- Identify and effectively utilize human and financial resources
- Build County government awareness
- Accelerate criminal justice reform
- Enhance the health services system



**Tactical Solutions**

The final step of the process resulted in the listing of 12-month tactical expectations for each strategy.

Vision Question: What do we see in place in three years as a result of our collective action?								
A robust capital improvement program.	Improved inter-local collaboration	Fair and affordable total employee compensation	Effective and fair tax policy	County government awareness	Juvenile justice reform	Alternatives to incarceration	Health service coordination	Strengthened public health infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology infrastructure upgrade allowing some personnel costs to decrease</li> <li>Capital improvement program</li> <li>Thomas Fitzgerald Home renovation</li> <li>Technology plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State aid increased</li> <li>Fiscal efficiency and improvements</li> <li>County board best practices re-orientation</li> <li>Partnerships with the City</li> <li>City/County consolidations</li> <li>Working strategic plan</li> <li>911 regionalization</li> <li>Collaboration with Lancaster County on legislation</li> <li>Strengthen Public Health infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Premier workforce - a place people want to work</li> <li>We are efficient, citizen-focused and friendly</li> <li>Competitive salary - attract and maintain</li> <li>Lifestyle and insurance changes</li> <li>Go back to one health insurance offering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long term taxation policy</li> <li>Fiscal efficiency and improvements</li> <li>Public education regarding taxes</li> <li>Fair tax policy changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data driven, research rich (Empirical analysis)</li> <li>We have an education program for citizens, schools and lawmakers</li> <li>An effective PR/marketing department</li> <li>The "Go-To" government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Juvenile court reform</li> <li>Up front investment (decreased GAL cost, decreased status offenders, decreased pressure on courts)</li> <li>Comprehensive juvenile justice reform</li> <li>Juvenile Justice Center / campus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solved mental health in jail</li> <li>Premier psychiatric program to decrease government psychiatric jail</li> <li>Forensic mental health unit</li> <li>Model mental health program</li> <li>End homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, addressed mental health in jails</li> <li>Veterans issues addressed</li> <li>Mental health court</li> <li>Strengthen public health infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate the Health Center's mission with the community</li> <li>DCHC strategic partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food security and justice</li> <li>Walkable communities</li> <li>Age friendly communities</li> <li>Public transportation improvements</li> <li>Community benefit dollars</li> </ul>
<i>Identify and effectively utilize human and financial resources</i>				<i>Build County government awareness</i>	<i>Accelerate criminal justice reform</i>		<i>Enhance the health services system</i>	

**Strategy Development and Tactical Priorities**

**2-3 Year Strategy - Identify and effectively utilize human and financial resources**

**12-month tactical priorities:**

- Campaign for bond issue
- Study and recommend a plan for an enhanced budgeting process (i.e. 0-based)
- Resolve G.A.L. provision issue
- Consider discontinuing retire coverage in 2017
- Facilitate at least one consolidation of duplicative services (including in-house)
- Seek increase in State aid
- Develop complete (1-year) technology plan
- Develop a (cooperative and/or internal) legislative agenda
- Study changing to PTO system
- Develop a comprehensive County employee compensation plan
- Enhance employee wellness policies and program
- Develop a succession plan
- Review, enhance and codify County board executive best practices
- Enhance use of social media to engage employees and public



**2-3 Year Strategy - Build County government awareness**

**12-month tactical priorities:**

- Establish a data research and empirical analysis process
- Hire a professional P.I.O
- Design a robust citizen engagement process
- Explore and adopt use of existing tools to educate on and build County government awareness

**2-3 Year Strategy - Accelerate criminal justice reform**

12-month tactical priorities:

- Reform the provision of G.A.L services (Guardian Ad Litem)
- Develop a plan to reduce pre-trial numbers faster
- Establish a mental health court
- Develop drawings for a juvenile justice campus

**2-3 Year Strategy - Enhance our health services system**

12-month tactical priorities:

- Pursue public health partnerships (V.A., UNMC and federally funded health centers)
- Raise public awareness of Douglas County Health Center
- Research financial resources for Douglas County Health Center (both public and private dollars)
- Explore and coordinate with Douglas County Health Department on: 1) Food security and justice, 2) Walk-able communities, 3) Age friendly communities, 4) Public transportation improvements, and 5) Community benefits.

