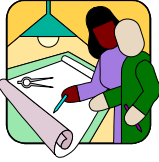


SARASOTA COUNTY TRANSFORMATION PLAN

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, STRATEGY AND INITIATIVES

May, 2000



THE ROAD TO REINVENTING SARASOTA COUNTY

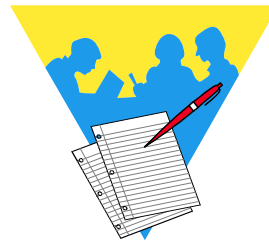
When authors Gaebler and Osborne published their now famous book “Re-inventing Government”, they connected with a public sentiment of general dissatisfaction with government services through the creation of a simple phrase. While sounding a clarion call that rang true with the public, Reinventing Government provided little substance from the practitioner’s perspective. It did however create over a half dozen philosophies drawn from case studies that sounded a challenge to practitioners and elected officials.

In his follow-up book “Banishing Bureaucracy”, Osborne took Reinventing Government one step further toward application. By once again using the mechanism of case studies, Osborne began to turn the theoretical into the practical by drawing together six strategies that practitioners could use as a framework for the various tools of quality, customer service, performance measurement and employee engagement.

While many books have been written around the same basic themes and the need for entrepreneurial customer focus and employee empowerment, there are no guides that provide a simple to follow “how to” plan. At best it was inferred that a motivated leadership that was willing to learn could build a plan to re-invent government by building an understanding of his/her organization and the unique demands of his/her customer community.

Transforming the way government does its business is a complex task that can often be very frustrating if

someone is looking for broad based rapid change. There are many things to achieve, many things that get in the way and many ways to get around them. ***Ted Gaebler would suggest that while there are about two dozen possible outcomes to reinventing government (better use of the public’s dollars, streamlined staff, etc.), there are in excess of 310 barriers to getting there, and about 200 strategies that comprise the tool box for reinventing government.*** Administration’s goal has been to craft a transformation plan that is meaningful to Sarasota County and the unique demands of its citizens. This happens by creating a continuous commitment to identifying the barriers, knocking them down with actions, and creating a staff that welcomes the challenge to be entrepreneurial in not only involving their customers but in a willingness to try.



SARASOTA COUNTY TRANSFORMATION PLAN

There has been a lot of activity on the Transformation front in Sarasota County. So much so that it is often easy to get lost in each of the various initiatives under way. The goal of the Transformation effort has been to create a high capacity organization. At the same

time, we trying to maintain existing levels of service and resist the temptation of the all too often failed strategy of creating a "parallel organization" to manage the transition

Let's put this into perspective, analyzing how we got to where we are, with some idea as to where we still need to go.



THE VISION AND GOALS

County Administration has articulated an administrative vision that contains four core values and which drives four organizational goals as follows:

Vision and Values

*A customer focused,
continuously improving,
accountable,
team.*

Goals

- 1) To ***build credibility with the public*** by creating a customer focused, simple and accountable organization offering opportunities for public involvement were beneficial to good governance.
- 2) To ***create a simpler organization*** that is smaller and more accountable, easier for the public to understand, which encourages internal communications and therefore creates opportunities to improve work flow.
- 3) To ***create a motivated staff that is responsible and accountable***, having been provided with the tools (training, analytical methods, work space, technology and professional development) to leverage the opportunities for improved workflow provided in a simpler organization.

- 4) To ***build a foundation of technology*** upon which to place the framework of an empowered staff, providing the technical tools to leverage even more performance from improved work flow, using automation to assist in managing records for better public accountability.



ADDING VALUE TO OUR CITIZENS' LIVES

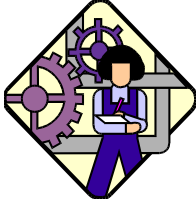
What do we do that adds value to our community?

This is the bottom line of government service, the primary question that should guide our daily workings. So, what do our citizen's value? While it may change from person to person, or can be very specific from service to service (ex; I like my streets clean, high property standards) you can generally categorize any response into several broader value categories. Citizens value:

- Responsiveness
- Promptness
- Dependability
- The Wisest Use of Their Dollars
- Equality of Treatment
- Courtesy
- Creativity
- Consistency
- Least Cost to Get the Job Done

Once we fully appreciate the dimensions of what our citizen's value, we can then begin to examine the way we do business, evaluate how competently we do it and organize ourselves around ONE key operating model that defines our basic business strategy.





ALIGNING THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS TO MEET CUSTOMER VALUES

We should all share the goal to be the leader in what we do. To do this we must focus on a core set of competencies that reflect the values that our citizen's desire and which in their aggregation define an **operating model** for how we do business. So what are the choices for our operating model?

There are only three operating model choices for any business;

-Operational Excellence,

-Product Leadership, or

-Customer Intimacy.

Each operating model requires that we be competent in significantly different ways. Also be aware that the focus on one model does not relieve us of the burden to be able to operate within the confines of the other two from time to time. It is seductive to try to be competent at all three, but experience in the private and public sector shows us many times over that such attempts are doomed to failure. Unfortunately, and all too often, government tries to be all things to all people. Many times this can be attributed to a lack of understanding of what its citizens really value and/or a knee jerk reaction to jump from one model to the other because there is no focus. ***If we are to be successful at being the leader in local government service, we must develop a focus on one operational model and be truly committed to its success.*** We must also be able to demonstrate some capability in the other models, but only as sub strategies when policy direction dictates, while maintaining our focus on our primary way of doing business.

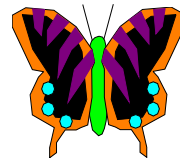
However, no matter what our operating model is, we should always focus on those things which our citizens value. We can be the most operationally efficient organization in the world, but we don't have to be mindless, unfeeling robots, hidden behind voice mail or huddled behind our computer terminals. A

smile, personal attention, the ability to talk to a human being as opposed to a machine are all elements of customer service that are meaningful to any operating strategy. We must never lose sight of the fact that we serve our friends and neighbors, and our community when we do our jobs. ***The Golden Rule is the best rule of customer service -- Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.***

Government exists to ensure the unbiased fair allocation of limited resources in the name of community, whether it is the application of justice as practiced through our court system or the budgeting of tax dollars by the County Commission. This basic purpose of government, taken in conjunction with an understanding of what our citizens value, dictates that our primary operating model is:

Operational Excellence; we deliver a combination of quality, price, and ease of customer interaction that no one else in the market can match. Our proposition is to guarantee low price and/or hassle free service within the plan of business for each of our many services.

While we should always keep our minds and hearts open to our citizens, much like a customer intimate company, and also be capable of flexibility and creativity, much like a product innovative company; this should all occur within the context of ***continuous improvement*** to the systems that make up how we operate an Operationally Excellent organization.



THE TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The County Administrator has suggested that Sarasota County can achieve its transformation goals by focusing on the following seven strategic initiatives and associated action items:

1. Evaluating Organizational Assets

Management Assets -- *Birkman profiles* (personality and proclivity assessments) were completed for each of the members of the Senior Management team and for the collective department heads. Fits were analyzed and used to create a communications plan. Assessment and alignment of the Business Center Executive Directors with the organization's core values and the operational model is underway as part of a "cultural alignment" sub-strategy.

Lovelace and Roby Management Audit -- The *Lovelace and Roby Management Audit* completed in 1996, was reviewed to ascertain whether its findings were still significant. Priority areas suggested for strategic focus were: lack of effective leadership, inappropriate organizational structure, lack of responsiveness and ineffective incentives. A review of the strategic initiatives and the Administrator's now direct involvement as the strategic leader seem to suggest an alignment with the recommendation of the Audit.



Communications -- A *White Paper* was developed and distributed to every employee. The White Paper discusses the various issues driving the need for transformation and many of the underlying principles. Several *videos* were developed for use in communicating with employees. The purpose was to provide a consistent message and the ability to hear it from the top. *Trust Training* has been provided to well over 1,800 employees in support of creating the best possible communications environment in a team culture. Employee *Speakeasies* provide an opportunity for the Administrator to communicate with randomly selected employees on a regular basis. Through *site visits*, the Administrator visited with all

Sarasota County employees over a six-month period in FY1 998 and again in FY 2000, discussing employee issues and transformation goals. The *employee newsletter* was reformatted to provide regular written information. Through an evolving *Intranet* site, a variety of generally available internal information, as well as targeted communications, will be available to all employees. In the Fall of 1999 we completed the first ever *employee attitude survey*, which provided a bottom-up perspective on employee awareness. The survey was also used to assess the performance of Business Center Executives as cultural reformers in conjunction with a *cultural alignment sub-strategy*.

A *dial in audio/video system* is being considered as part of the *Intranet* site, providing a means for Administration and others to orally and visually communicate and conference.

2. Quality and Customer Focus

Customer Service Campaign -- The Sarasota County Customer Service Committee developed a customer service campaign to spread the message. A Customer Service Day was used to highlight the new Sarasota County theme -- *Dedicated to Quality Service*. This theme was integrated into all stationary and communications messages as a "touch point." Over 650 employees have participated in the resultant *customer service training*. A five tier, advanced customer service excellence course has now graduated two classes. Completion of the Level IV course requires engagement in at least one enterprise enhancing project. Completion of this project and graduation from Level V is accompanied by a cash bonus.

Surveys -- Sarasota County has led the way in southwest Florida by annually conducting a *random, scientifically valid survey* of its citizens. Many of the questions contained in the survey provide insight into higher-level customer expectations. Some Business Centers do regularly seek feedback from their customers through satisfaction cards or forms. This practice and other measurements should be continued and expanded.



3. Transformation Through Core Process Realignment/Business Centers

Structural Realignment -- The County has been reorganized from twenty-three departments to eight **Business Centers**. Through a series of department head team managed initiatives, the Administrator's leadership vision was discussed and detailed in high-level **business plans** for each Business Center. The County Commission approved this transformation in November of 1998. Business Plans have been integrated into an evolving performance budget process.

Business plans for each Business Center are now being re-evaluated in conjunction with a **delineation of service objectives**, which will provide the framework upon which to hang **performance/outcome indicators** that will provide further detail for the planned migration to a performance budget by FY 2003.

Cultural Alignment -- A **cultural alignment sub-strategy** has been developed to assess the leadership skills of the Executive Directors. The purpose of this effort is to assess their alignment, and that of their Business Center, with the designated operational model, values and culture of the organization; to provide for leadership development plans and personal improvement plans; and to further refine communications and strategic training needs. More work needs to be done to align administrative policies and procedures with organizational goals, so that they better support the desired culture. This includes a review of administrative directives, personnel policies and other administrative regulations.



4. A Focus on Technology

Aligning the Mission and Organization of the Information Technology Function -- An **information technology operations plan** was developed to focus the mission and subsequent application of organizational assets to meet the goal of using technology as the foundation of our future service delivery system. A more customer-focused and strategic systems-based organization has been put in place. The management structure is focused on systems teams that support various cross-functional work groups called communities of interest. A policy committee including the County Administrator, County Attorney and Constitutional Officers assists the administration in setting system development priorities and will be key in the development of an information technology strategic plan. The operations plan resulted in the issuance of an RFP in April of 2000 to **outsource telephony and network management** for the purpose of maintaining a high-level dependable service platform for the new millennium.

An **IT management audit** will be completed in the Spring of 2000. A framework now exists to develop an **information technology strategic plan** that supports the goal of creating a strong technological foundation.

WEB Strategy -- In the spring of 1998, a **WEB strategy** was developed for Sarasota County. The strategy not only implies focus on the use of the WEB as a communications tool, but also identifies the potential for the WEB to be an interactive service platform for the transaction of internal (Intranet) and external (Internet) County business. In January of 1999, Sarasota County launched its WEB page. By January of 2000 the Sarasota WEB presence had undergone four additional transformations and is now positioned to become a business tool, a support platform for e-commerce if needs be, and not just an information source.

The Sarasota WEB presence is currently one way only, focused on the dissemination of information. Within the context of technology becoming our future operating platform, the Business Centers are now focused on the strategic aspects of the WEB plan and now have a template with which they can pursue

their individual strategic business applications. Several Business Centers have already conceptualized operational models that are moving to reality as they re-engineer service through organizational and process changes. Development Services and the re-engineering of its 42 permitting processes is a poster child for this effort.



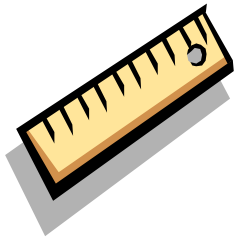
In the year 2000 Sarasota County will investigate opportunities to privatize much of our WEB presence based upon models that have been in operation in States such as Kansas and/or local governments such as Marion County/Indianapolis, Indiana. In this way we hope to maintain an “edge” on evolving WEB based technology and e-business demands. Such a transition also offers the opportunity to extend the life of current legacy systems and data bases using WEB technology to map the information into a more useable form and avoiding the cost of replacing the systems in place.

5. Competitiveness/Excellence -- Developing Capacity

Controlling Costs -- Public service functions are no longer subject to the protection of a monopoly mind set. It seems that everyone now competes for public dollars (or the tax assets that create public dollars) by demonstrating a more competitive way of doing business. This puts a competitive lid on the price (tax dollars, convenience, public safety and health) that we can charge for a service. **Cost containment** is a key element of any transformation effort. Sarasota County has always demonstrated a fairly solid set of management practices and systems that support a good foundation of cost containment. However, the current set of practices is generally limited to dollar cost considerations, and fails to recognize the potential to manage other costs which play a role in a retail service model, such as the cost of customer convenience. The Administrator is currently designing a **cost containment strategy** that will create a continuous focus on management systems, funds management, asset management (vehicle use for example), safety, risk, customer convenience (time lost, simplicity), and employee benefits.

Compensation and Recognition -- **reward and recognition systems** need to be evaluated as a part of the overall change strategy. A recently completed **compensation study** provides one leg of a three legged stool that will comprise a **transformed human resource system**. During the first half of 2000, a **new compensation philosophy**, a resultant **new pay plan**, a **value focused recruitment system** and a **work group employee evaluation system** that removes the focus from the individual and toward work group output as measured by performance measures tied to level of service and desired budget outcomes will be developed. This effort represents a radical departure from traditional public pay and recognition plans, but one that is intends to be fully integrated with a performance based program budget.

Other recognition techniques need to be developed through a better performance appraisal system. Some 360-degree evaluation tools are being examined for management level employees, but no one is yet looking at an organizational strategy. Employee recognition is still focused upon individuals. The 1999 **employee recognition celebration** was restructured to focus on teams. A solid foundation exists, but the application and alignment of the program to the organizational values requires some further work. A redesigned **employee recognition program** will be implemented in the coming year. **SOAR (Successful Opportunities for Achievement and Results)** provides an opportunity for employees who desire to excel and advance but who do not have the requisite minimum skills, to participate in higher level jobs to obtain an education through the “school of hard knocks.” Training costs are reduced, hard work is recognized as a valued commodity, and advancement is supported as part of a larger focus on succession planning for the work force. **Gain sharing**, which is also discussed as part of a realigned budget strategy, offers other opportunities to match incentives with challenges.



Performance Measurement -- Sarasota County joined the *ICMA Performance Measurement Consortium* in 1998. A plan to strengthen the business and budget plans of each Business Center is currently being evaluated by Senior Management. By the first quarter of 1999 each Business Center began to develop an enhanced *performance measurement system* for Sarasota County. In FY 2000 the service objectives of each Business Center will be identified and scrutinized for the purpose of *ranking service objectives*. Through a thoughtful review we will analyze each service objective on the basis of a simple principle: "Knowing what we know now, would we still be doing things the way we are doing them." In this way we hope to pursue a process of "*organized abandonment*", freeing up resources for the future needs of the County. Through the use of an external advisor skilled in the performance measurement arena, a *performance measurement manual* has been developed to provide a uniform means of applying performance measures to service objectives, supporting the long-term goal of accountability and the more detailed application of *activity based management* techniques in the future, all integrated within the context of an outcome oriented *performance based budget*.



Cost Accounting -- Through an as yet undeveloped *activity based management* program, more precise levels of service and cost accounting systems will be put into place within the context of each service objective. While providing one form of a focus on cost containment, statistics gathered in this effort will be used as a means to demonstrate accountability and to measure performance against benchmarks that would trigger outsourcing or other competitiveness considerations.

Employee Engagement -- Employee empowerment as a term has become cliché and fails to fit neatly into a government environment. In the public sector accountability goes beyond the bottom line suggesting the need for a unique form of management accountability that reaches back to the Board and the electorate. A term is required that accommodates this truism, while at the same time demonstrates the core value of "team" and the recognition of the value that employees at all levels in an organization add to our ability to do business. The term *employee engagement* is offered. This strategy needs to be fleshed out as we develop management practices, and provide the tools of quality through the *continuous quality improvement initiative*; creating incentives such as *gain sharing* and redirecting employee evaluation to a focus on work groups and whether or not they meet the performance expectations for a service objective.

Continuous Quality Improvement Tools -- Through the *Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)* initiative, employees are given customer focused, goal oriented tools to analyze and evaluate processes. This process both identifies improvements and sets standards for performance measurement. In addition, the County develops a cadre of trained facilitators whose mission will be to spread the skills of quality through the organization, with the goal of affixing this attitude to the organization in combination with self motivating reward programs like gain sharing.

Trust training, a very popular program that has now reached a majority of County employees, teaches the skills of developing and maintaining the effective interpersonal skills that helps teams to operate. *The Sarasota County Leadership Forum* offers an opportunity for those desiring to expand their horizons to learn more about the County, offering an opportunity to build skills and values that serve the leadership succession needs of the County. Through other programs such as *internal managed competition*, the value of competition is brought to bear on the analysis of those services that are subject to privatization or some other form of competitive accountability.

Systems analysis provides a means to integrate the tools of CQI, performance measurement, and activity based management to identify costs and efficiencies. The Development Services Business Center (DSBC)

represents one of the more complex systems operated by Sarasota County. By February 2000 the Development Services Business Center had analyzed all of its 42 major permitting processes, and is now applying process improvement techniques to not only evaluate the efficiency of services but to also develop a true cost of service for recapturing user fees through permits.



Decentralizing Management Systems --A large part of administration is set up to control the rest of the organization. If not properly managed within the context of the desired operational model, control can become a large cost center often becoming more important than the mission of service. Maintaining some form of control is required in an organization that practices operational excellence. The key is to maintain that control in a decentralized fashion that supports the overall mission. Technology makes much of this possible. A variety of decentralizing initiatives are underway as part of the Administrative Services Business Center Business Plan. The ***Integrated Fund Accounting System (IFAS) Users Group***, a community of interest within the new information technology management plan, represents a partnership between the Clerk of the Court and Administration in a way that maintains accountability for the use of tax dollars, while making the power of a large technology system more available to users. Through the work of one of the first CQI initiatives, Human Resources is ***decentralizing recruitment assets***, restructuring its mission and assigning human resource coordinators to the offices of the various Business Centers in a way that better serves its customers.

Another major CQI initiative evaluated the entire recruitment process, suggesting initiatives that will refocus Human Resource's mission to recruiting people with the values we desire, and to achieve this in partnership with the Business Centers by realigning staff resources to create Human Resource service agents for each Business Center.

Another CQI team analyzed our purchasing requisition system. Through this team effort, the county has established a pilot program to make ***purchasing cards*** available to field employees, replacing Direct Expenditure Vouchers (DEVs), a bureaucratic paperwork system that has proven to cost way more than it achieves. The anticipated result is increased employee productivity (they no longer have to return to the office, fill out paperwork and wait for a signature), better customer service (timely repairs and response), and reduced material costs (the ability to buy from a local discount store instead of through a retail supplier dictated by a bid process). All of this is achieved while maintaining accountability through controls and accounting now available through electronic means. By January of 2000, in excess of \$800,000 in supplies and materials had been purchased with no reported or identified abuses. The paperwork costs associated with the elimination of DEVs for these transactions has not yet been calculated. However, as an example of areas where overhead has been reduced, the Clerk (Comptroller) writes 600 less checks per month (a 15-20% decrease) than before the purchase cards were issued.

While the need for central financial and legal



accountability is important, it must be balanced in light of our basic mission to provide quality government services. In support of shifting control and accountability from the top to the center, more work needs to be done in the area of decentralization of internal administrative support systems. ***Team based budgeting***, the Executive Council acting as a team rather than separate centers, has been used to realign the budget process; moving the budget itself from a traditional roll up budget, to a resource limited budget (target budgets) to the ultimate desired goal of an outcome oriented ***performance based budget***.



Realigning the Budget – Moving from a roll up budget, through the interim measure of a resource limiting budget to the ultimate outcome oriented ***performance based budget*** derived from a ***multi year budget plan*** is our goal.

Sarasota County has utilized a fairly typical zero based and cost center organized; roll up budget. In FY 2000 the County Administration budget was realigned around the concept of a resource limited budget. Each Business Centers was given a ***target budget*** that represented the resource limit. Using ***team based target budgeting*** techniques, the budget development process was revised to give each Business Center more autonomy at the beginning of the budget cycle, to encourage team budgeting through the Executive Council, and to permit Administration to maintain its focus on strategic goals such as the maintenance of a healthy financial reserve, assessment or utility rate stabilization, etc. A fixed ***target budget***, formulated on the basis of Board budget policy (no new property taxes, building of the reserve, etc.) was given to each Business Center at the beginning of the budget process -- a 180 degree shift from previous zero based roll up budget practice which encouraged typical budget game playing. In FY 2001 this concept is being extended to all cost centers in the County, including Constitutional Officers. By FY 2003 it is our goal to move to an outcome oriented ***performance based budget***. This fiscal year all Business Centers are redefining their business plans, ***identifying core businesses and service objectives***. For the last year we have been training staff in the art of ***performance measurement***. Over the next year we will link these two concepts to form the basis of the realigned budget.

Gain Sharing -- In FY 2000, a ***gain sharing policy*** will be proposed as a companion to the realignment of the budget process and a top to bottom restructuring of the human resource system. Matching the realigned budget with a work group focused employee evaluation process, where evaluation takes place on the basis of the expected output contained in the budget and associating the evaluation process with an incentive/reward program



based upon ***gain sharing*** is intended to produce a creative environment that will motivate employees to seek out efficiencies.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage entrepreneurial thinking and employee engagement by rewarding the application of continuous improvement principles and a competitiveness mind set, all in a way that will redefine how we create and measure the budget bottom line for each cost center in future years. The gist of the policy will be to permit cost centers or programs to identify efficiency and effectiveness opportunities and to then negotiate measurable outcomes with administration. Savings that meet the stated goals would be partially shared among the team members with the rest going to the county taxpayer in the form of a more efficient and less costly service. Guidelines that protect levels of service and provide the ability to audit demonstrated performance will be part of the overall policy. Future goals are to strengthen the relationship of performance measures to levels of service, to move toward ***activity based management*** and to analyze every service program objective as to necessity. By creating self interest through ***gain sharing*** it is desired that employees, in particular work groups, by applying continuous quality improvement tools and other skills, will be self motivated to identify improvements without the need to wait for management direction or approval.



Communications -- In FY 1998 and again in FY 2000, the Administrator spoke to all 2,000 Sarasota County employees in small groups. In addition the administration holds *Speakeasies* to share a dialogue with several dozen randomly selected employees. The *employee newsletter* was restructured within the last year to be monthly and to be more topical as it relates to organizational matters. In the fall of 1999 the first *employee attitude* survey was administered. Other means are also being developed so that employees may hear about and respond to what is going on in the County family, as well as to ask questions and provide feedback. The *Intranet* provides one method for doing this and a *dial in audio/video system* is being considered whereby administration can place a message that any employee can dial into and listen and where employees can also ask questions randomly.

Competitive Assessment -- Through its *Public/Private Competition Advisory Committee*, the County Commission has established a program and a set of procedures whereby various County services may be analyzed in a systematic manner. In addition to placing various services under the microscope for privatization or competitive bidding between the private sector and public staff, the Committee process offers the opportunity to benchmark against similar services and to make recommendations for improving services even if they are not privatized. The most recent efforts resulted in the privatization of the landfill operation and identified various opportunities to improve fleet operations. *Internal Managed Competition* has also been used by the utilities operations of Environmental Services. By having several staff teams bid against each other for the operation of the new Venice Gardens Sewage Treatment Plant, almost \$200,000 in cost savings was identified. In FY 2001 a *Competitiveness Strategy* will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners; linking performance measures as a trigger that will activate internal managed competition and/or outsourcing efforts through the

guidelines developed by the Public/Private Competition Advisory Committee



6. Community Building/Partnerships & Civic Response

To be a citizen today seems to be more involved with protecting self-interest, than understanding the responsibilities that we as citizens carry for governance. Part of our transformation includes steps to build among citizens a sense of obligation to community interests and to convince them that their private and economic well being is not the only measure of what is good. In order for our community to prosper, its citizens must understand that some individual desires will have to be subjected to majority rule and that some interests will have to be weighed collectively against an array of interests. Many of the community building programs that we have outlined are geared toward achieving that understanding. But most importantly we need programs that encourage citizens to act like citizens in charge, rather than act simply like subjects of government. Citizens need to be encouraged to support the representative nature of our government. They need to be educated in organizational techniques, to anticipate and foster public participation, and to build structures of participation that will legitimize their rightful role and in ways that will demand their personal responsibility and involvement.

Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence (SCOPE) -- A government is only as good as the involvement of its community. Sarasota County has demonstrated a high degree of polarization in trying to resolve substantial public issues. This polarization is at once similar to reported national trends but also unique in regards to settlement patterns and economic and demographic nature of our community. Experience in other communities has shown that one good approach to defining issues and developing solutions in a way that breaks down polarization, is the establishment of a civic decision making process. The County Commission has encouraged community leaders to develop a community collaborative, known as *Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence*

(SCOPE). *SCOPE's* primary objective is to search out, determine the issues facing the County, and set goals to solve those problems through citizen involvement, providing a means to measure community progress. Through large community meetings, numerous individual interviews and task forces organized around issues, *SCOPE* proposes to create a dialogue on the future and to pursue partnerships to resolve issues by aligning public and private resources. The challenge to organizing this effort has been taken up by several community leaders and the larger philanthropic foundations in the County and is being supported by the staff of the County Administrator.



Taking Government to the Neighborhood -- Throughout the remainder of FY 99 and through FY 2000 administration will pursue the theme of taking government to the neighborhood. A variety of initiatives are being evaluated. In March 2000 Sarasota County operated its first *Citizens Academy*. Citizen Academies provide a means to teach citizens how government works and how they can become leaders in their communities. Creation of an *Action Center* supported by a *311 call system*, or similar one stop number, is being investigated as to feasibility and cost, providing a simplified “one stop” entry point into the county for anyone seeking any service. The Administrator will also be seeking to hold *neighborhood forums, opening a* dialogue that not only seek to improve connections between citizens and their county but one which it is opened will lead to the involvement of the community in defining strategic service priorities. Such an investigation may suggest some major philosophical changes in the way that we provide services and may challenge our basic business strategy.

A Community Involved Management -- Through a focus on *executive leadership*, Business Center directors and senior level executives are required to take an active role in the community by belonging to service clubs and/or to be highly visible in the

community through general, non issue oriented, speaking engagements and programs which help them meet and understand the various players in the community. In this way they can not only tell the County's story but more importantly they can listen; identifying opportunities to enhance service and become more valuable to the Board of County Commissioners as policy advisors.



Communications -- In 1998 a *Public Information Strategic Plan* was developed. The plan was structured around a multi media theme dubbed *Access Sarasota*. The goal of the plan was to create a framework upon which to hang various public information tools. The plan focuses on the basics of good news media relations, sound consistent information in written and verbal form and the use of electronic media. A training program has been developed to support these principles. *Access Sarasota* also focuses on bringing technology to bear as a means of creating dialogue directly with the community. The *WEB strategic plan* and the *Access Sarasota government cable channel* provide both interactive and video means to not only communicate but to improve service delivery.

Volunteerism Plan -- Engaging the wealth of personal resources in a community strengthens any government. A *volunteer coordinator* has been tasked to provide the necessary focus, administrative consistency, and coaching required to guide the Business Centers in achieving the goal of a more involved community. The *G.I.V.E (Government Involving Volunteer Energy) Program* provides a coordinated focus on the goal of volunteer involvement based upon the premise that our citizens offer a wide range of valuable assets that can be used to fulfill their lives and improve the community as a whole. By providing the avenue for channeling their energy, we improve and diversify services in a more efficient manner and possibly even more importantly we create ambassadors who can spread the “good word” about County government.

In March of 2000, Sarasota County convened its first *Citizen's Academy*, engaging a class of 20-40 citizens in developing a broad understanding of how their community works. In this way we hope to empower our citizens to become a larger part of a great community.



Community Feedback -- Each year Sarasota County undertakes a statistically valid *community attitude survey*. We need to recognize that we live in a society addicted to information, information that is constantly molding peoples attitudes. Increased use of sophisticated research techniques such as *focus groups* and *surveys* needs to be investigated as a way of getting more customer feedback. When developing a plan to provide new source of funding to overcome a large transportation funding deficit, we used working groups, focus groups and a statistically valid community survey to engage the community and to thereby assist decision makers in developing a course of action.



Action Center -- As part of the move to a neighborhood focus, we are looking into the pros and cons of a *311 call system* and associated "*Action Center*". Customer service would be organized around a one call, triage, routing and records management system; the goal of which is to make access to government and the resolution of problems seamless and accountable.

Involving Customers -- From planning efforts to program development to the design of regulatory systems, there are numerous examples where Sarasota County has reached out to its customer base to inform, educate and involve them in their government. Through successful examples, models

of successful behavior are developed as a means of encouraging like behavior throughout the County.

7. Governance

Policy Leadership -- The Board has agreed to investigate an optional approach to policy development, known as *Policy Leadership*. Viewed only as a goal at present, Policy Leadership is a governance model gaining acceptance in the non-profit sector which it is felt may assist the Board in focusing on its desired outcomes, strengthen working relationships and define expectations between administration and the Board. This will be an evolving discussion.

Strategic Planning -- A missing element of the overall transformation effort is the adaptation of a formalized strategic planning process at both the administrative and policy level. In FY 2000 it is our goal to identify a forward thinking planning process that overcomes some of the limitations of the tired process of traditional strategic planning. *Real Options Planning* and *Scenario Planning*, used heavily in corporate America, are two of the options being researched. Integrating strategic community



input through the neighborhood forums program is also being discussed.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This is a job that is never done. Because the world, the business climate and therefore our customers expectations are changing constantly, we must always look for additional opportunities to grow and improve the business of Sarasota County. Resting on our laurels is a formula for failure. There are still many other activities that must take place. Many have been talked about herein but are repeated for focus. These include:

Some form of **Strategic Planning** at both the County Commission and staff level.

A **multi year budget plan** would help keep us focused upon the future as well as to provide one means by which to measure cause and effect when

services or capital facilities are being examined.

An **information technology strategic plan**.

A continued focus on the application of the techniques of **continuous quality improvement**.

Broader based **customer feedback** and the use of more sophisticated research tools like **focus groups and surveys**.



Focus on a broad ranging **competitiveness strategy**. **Realignment of management systems and policies and procedures** with the desired operational model and culture in mind.

A **recruitment, compensation and recognition systems** for employees that reflects the desired culture.

Cultural alignment of middle management with the overall transformation effort.

A continued focus on the **WEB as a business tool** to increase productivity to reduce paper flow and enhance work flow management.

Criteria for funding services and **ranking service priorities** would help to achieve consensus on what is



important and what is not.

Continue the focus on the development of **performance measures and service accomplishments, levels of service and activity based management**.

The County needs to develop a broader based **infrastructure management program**, in particular for streets and drainage facilities.

WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN:

Sarasota County citizens believe that County services are delivered in an efficient and effective manner by a responsive organization.

County Government values are aligned with community values.

Sarasota County fills the collective expectations of its citizens and is viewed as contributing to their quality of life.

Employees feel the necessity to solicit customer input and act upon what they have learned.

The entire organization of County Government pulls as one when challenged.