

Supervisors conduct Strategic Plan Workshop

March 17, 2024

Why do Strategic Planning?



Board will discuss Vision, Mission and Goals at March 12 meeting

What is a Strategic Plan? Assistant County Administrative Officer Randy Hooper is the point person working with consultant Don Ashton of Municipal Resource Group to help develop a Strategic Plan. The Board is working with this duo, employees, department heads, stakeholders and the public to establish the vision for Del Norte's future. The Strategic Plan is the tool to give Del Norte the direction to follow.

The Del Norte Board of Supervisors heard from the public at a Special Meeting to conduct a workshop for developing a Strategic Plan. All supervisors were in attendance.

Board Chair Dean Wilson opened the meeting, welcoming the public and advised all time limits would be waived for the workshop meeting. Wilson stated government is designed and departments focus is internal. Because of this dynamic, Wilson stated Del Norte County lacks an overall vision. "In this design, the county for too long has been a rudderless ship. This planning workshop is the beginning of a process to put a rudder on (Del Norte County) our ship." With that pronouncement, Wilson welcomed Don Ashton, Lead Consultant for Municipal Resource Group (MRG). Ashton has a formidable resume, serving as Chief Administrative Officer for El Dorado County for seven years, Director of El Dorado Health and Human Services for three

years. His public sector experience includes various executive-level leadership positions as well as leadership positions in public safety finance, general government and health and Human Services in El Dorado and Los Angeles counties. Ashton is credited with implementing the first Strategic Plan for Health and Human Services in El Dorado County.

Ashton prioritized Del Norte's needs. He related those needs in order of importance are:

- Staffing. “without staffing, nothing can happen,” said Ashton.
- Housing. If housing is not available, employees cannot be hired.
- Jobs. Many opportunities go unfilled.
- Governance. How are staff and the public treated in the workforce?
- Maintenance of Infrastructure rounded up the list of priorities.

The public weighed on on priorities for Del Norte. As one might expect, public opinions of priorities varied across a broad spectrum.

Supervisor Valerie Starkey shared a public comment from a real estate developer for what she termed ... “a Gold Standard” of customer service, a level of consistency of accurate information for customer protocol, packets or planners for public benefit, improve cooperation with the City with regard to utilities and sewer connection.

- Public Speaker Branden Bieber shared his views on the negative impact of vacation rentals, more youth activities and the rumor mill surrounding the future of Pelican Bay State Prison. Bieber saw great potential afforded to Del Norte county.
- Public Speaker Robert Derego welcomed and praised the plan for the Strategic Plan. Derego saw the need to improve public disclosure.
- Elias Mavris underscored the importance of Pt. St. George and how this site has been virtually ignored by Del Norte County.
- Smith River resident Carrie shared the housing shortage crisis and the Blight issue especially drug crack houses in her community.
- Public Speaker Amanda from Ft. Dick and works for the Yurok Tribe in Klamath touted the need for a Boys and Girls club, shortage of housing, homelessness and the proper care and support for animals and pets.
- Norma Williams, SEIU representing spoke about the shortage of well-paying jobs, payments in lieu of lost property taxes (PILT), mediocre downtown Crescent City appearance, Blight issues and abuse.

Some public speakers address supervisors more than once.

The timetable for Del Norte's Strategic Plan will be conducted and vetted before the County budget hearings by the end of April.