

September 2005

REPORT ON OUTCOME AND RESULTS
COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND
2001 STRATEGIC PLAN

Commissioner Esther Clenott, Chairman, District 1
Commissioner Richard Feeney, District 2
Commissioner Al Austin, District 3

Report prepared by:

Peter J. Crichton, County Manager
Bill Whitten, Deputy County Manager

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2001 STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Don Gerrish, Chairman	Town Manager, Brunswick
Tom Bartell	Chairman, CC Budget Advisory Committee
Paul Bird	Town Manager, Harpswell
Nancy Bouchard	Maine Department of Corrections
Kathleen Brown	CEO, Lakes Region Development Council
Donnie Carroll	Director, Southern Maine Emergency Medical Services
Bruce Clary	USM Muskie School Professor
Peter Crichton	County Manager, County of Cumberland
Mark Dion	Sheriff, County of Cumberland
George Flaherty	County Emergency Management Director
Edward Googins	Police Chief, South Portland
Jeff Henthorn	Regional Court Administrator
Jeff Jordan	City Manager, South Portland
Ned Kitchell	Councilor, Town of Falmouth
Rosemary Kulow	Town Manager, Sebago
Grant Lee	Executive Director, PROP
Betty McInness	Director, Soil & Water Conservation District
Ron Miller	General Manager, Portland Water District
Carla Nixon	Assistant Town Manager, Town of Cumberland
Jack O'Brien	Register of Deeds, County of Cumberland
Senator William O'Gara	City of Westbrook
Richard Ranaghan	Peoples Heritage Bank
John Thompson	Former Chairman, Civic Center Board of Trustees
Nancy Thurber	President, Thurber & Associates

Godfrey Wood	CEO, Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce
Rep. Terrance McKenney	Town of Cumberland
Kate Borduas	President, Greater Portland Council of Governments
Rep. Michael Quint	City of Portland
Gerry Cayer	Director of Health & Human Services, City of Portland
Rep. Harold Clough	Town of Scarborough

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Technology Subcommittee

(Chairman) Ned Kitchell, Councilor, Town of Falmouth

Nancy Thurber, President, Thurber & Associates
 Mary Najarian, Deputy Register of Deeds, County of Cumberland
 Herb Adams, Register of Probate, County of Cumberland
 Tony George, Standish Telephone Company
 Mike McGovern, Town Manager, Cape Elizabeth
 Kevin O'Sullivan, Vice President, Envisionet
 Randy Perry, Virtual Town Hall
 Ted Luebbert
 Tamara Getchell, District Attorney's Office, County of Cumberland
 Donald Foss, Sheriff's Office, County of Cumberland
 (Staff) John Joy, IT Director, County of Cumberland
 (Staff) Carrie Leighton, Maine Development Foundation

Corrections Subcommittee

(Chairman) Jeff Jordan, City Manager, South Portland

Arlene Ridlon, Education Coordinator, Cumberland County Jail
 Stephanie Anderson, District Attorney, County of Cumberland
 Godfrey Wood, Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce
 Mark Dion, Sheriff, County of Cumberland
 Nancy Bouchard, Maine Department of Corrections
 Rep. Michael Quint, City of Portland
 Hon. Thomas Humphrey, Maine State Courts
 John Ridge, Cape Elizabeth
 Steve Roberts, Police Chief, City of Westbrook
 James Van Kuren, Cumberland County Jail
 Richard McCallum, Cumberland County Jail
 Hon. Paul Eggert, Maine State Courts
 (Staff) Jeff Newton, Jail Administrator, County of Cumberland
 (Staff) Sheila Seekins, Muskie School

Space Needs Subcommittee

(Chairman) Carla Nixon, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Cumberland

Bruce Leddy, Esq., Portland

Robyn Dahms, District Attorney's Office, County of Cumberland

Royce Bartlett, Emergency Communications, County of Cumberland

Sylvia Plumley, Steep Falls

Jack O'Brien, Register of Deeds, County of Cumberland

Bill Faucher, Allied Engineering, Inc., Westbrook

William Whited, Portland

George DiMatteo, South Portland

Jeff Henthorn, Regional Court Administrator

Rep. Harold Clough, Scarborough

(Staff) Bruce Tarbox, Facilities Manager, County of Cumberland

(Staff) Sheila Seekins, Muskie School

Financial Management Subcommittee

(Chairman) Richard Ranaghan, People's Heritage Bank

Paul Bird, Town Manager, Town of Harpswell

Ron Miller, General Manager, Portland Water District

Tom Bartell, Chairman, Cumberland County Budget Advisory Committee

John Thompson, Former Chairman, CC Civic Center Board of Trustees

Diane Gurney, Treasurer, County of Cumberland

Rep. Terrance McKenney, Cumberland

Ron Smith, Hulsey & Smith, CPA, Hollis Center

Nat Tupper, Town Manager, Town of Yarmouth

Jane Duncan, Hulsey & Smith

Gerry Cayer, Director, City of Portland Health & Human Services Department

Steve Kenney, Freeport

(Staff) Vic Labrecque, Finance Director, County of Cumberland

(Staff) Najim Animashaun, Muskie School

Regional Cooperation Subcommittee

(Chairman) Kathleen Brown, CEO, Lakes Region Development Council

Donnie Carroll, Southern Maine Emergency Medical Services

Bruce Clary, Professor, Muskie School

Richard Gagliano, Sheriff's Office, County of Cumberland

Edward Googins, Police Chief, City of South Portland

Charles Hammond, Fire Chief, Town of Windham

Rosemary Kulow, Town Manager, Sebago

Grant Lee, Executive Director, People's Regional Opportunity Program

Betty McInnes, Executive Director, CC Soil & Water Conservation District

William O'Gara, State Senator, Westbrook

Tim O'Neil, Monks-O'Neil Development

Ed Suslovic, Realtor

(Staff) George Flaherty, EMA Director, County of Cumberland

(Staff) Darcy Rollins, Program Officer, Maine Development Foundation

(Staff) Carol MacKenzie, Greater Portland Council of Governments

A SUMMARY OF THE 2001 STRATEGIC PLAN

A Strategic Planning Committee was appointed by the Cumberland County Commissioners in January of 2001 to work with county officials and staff to develop a five year strategic plan for the County of Cumberland.

Don Gerrish, Town Manager of Brunswick, was appointed as chairman of the committee and did an outstanding job together with the subcommittee chairmen and other participants. All together people met for a period of six months to complete the task during a highly intense and productive series of meetings involving the various subcommittees as well as the community of Cumberland County. The final plan received acceptance and adoption by the Commissioners in June of 2001.

There were approximately 60 individuals from throughout the county who participated in a very dynamic, exciting process helping county officials to focus on five key areas: finance, technology, space needs, corrections, and regional cooperation. Participants included citizens, municipal elected officials, town/city managers, business leaders, human service agency representatives, and legislators, as well as county officials.

The Maine Development Foundation under the leadership of Henry Bourgeois acted as the primary consultant for the project. Mr. Bourgeois and his staff added enormous value to the project through their high level of energy and his ability to help the County efficiently allocate the personnel and financial resources needed so that the final goal could be achieved. In addition to Mr. Bourgeois' leadership, Bruce Clary of the Muskie School provided a terrific resource of graduate students to assist the subcommittees in their research on various issues and other work as necessary. In a desire to be collaborative the County also involved the Greater Portland Council of Governments in the project. Lastly, but certainly not least, a number of the county's senior management team acted as support staff to the subcommittees to help the subcommittees complete their work successfully.

A review of the 26 recommendations of the 2001 Strategic Plan and their outcomes and results, shows that 70% of the recommendations have either been achieved or are in the process of being achieved, such as with the building of a new Cumberland County Regional Communications Center; which is expected to be completed by the fall of 2006. At the same time, some of the recommendations were not so specific or measurable, such as the recommendation to "Investigate increased state funding for the Cumberland County Jail." In these instances, it is more difficult to evaluate the results. Generally, it is felt that the 2001 Strategic Plan has been a great success and that the recommendations have been a great catalyst for getting things done.

Those groups and individuals who may question government's ability to be able to act as a business, need only see the results of our 2001 Strategic Plan to know that the County of Cumberland is following these practices in much of what we do.

RECOMMENDATIONS ACHIEVED

The recommendations that have been either fully or partially achieved are highlighted in gray. The remaining recommendations have not been acted upon or have produced few if any results as yet.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS: OUTCOMES & RESULTS

Finance Subcommittee

Chairman: Richard Ranaghan, People's Heritage Bank

VISION: To provide county services in the most cost-effective manner through a diverse funding base in an equitable manner.

This has been a primary focus of the county for the past four years, and has been successful to a certain degree.

A SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES:

- **Investigate tax diversification:** This is an on-going process by continually looking for appropriate ways to generate non-tax revenue that will help offset the property tax burden. The primary sources of non-tax revenue are through the housing of inmates from other counties, the U.S. Marshall's Office, and the Immigration Naturalization Services, as well as with real estate transactions through the Registry of Deeds Office. The County continues to investigate new opportunities for increasing fees or generating additional non-tax revenue, such as with the Registry of Probate Office.
- **Investigate increased state funding for the jail:** Again, similar to the previous recommendation, this work has been on-going. Over the past several years numerous meetings have been held with individual legislators as well as legislative leaders. We have also organized meetings with the entire legislative delegation from Cumberland County involving the Greater Portland Council of Governments whenever it was appropriate. In addition, county officials and staff have testified before various legislative committees, namely the State & Local Government Committee and the Criminal Justice Committee. An often repeated request has been the need for increased state funding for the Cumberland County Jail. Currently, the state contributes between 5%-6% of the annual funding for the Jail. Candidly, to date we have been wholly unsuccessful in our attempts to either increase state funding for county jails or to increase the County's proportion of the real estate transfer tax which is a minimal 10% with the State pocketing 90% of the non-tax revenues.
- **Review the concept of a regional jail:** The Cumberland County Jail functions in many ways as a regional jail. Simply by the fact that we have at various times housed inmates from almost every region in the state is an example of our value as a regional jail. We have also been

exploring opportunities such as GPS Electronic Monitoring to monitor the activities of minimum security non-violent inmates over a large geographic area.

- **Increase in non-property tax revenue:** This has been an unqualified success with the non-tax revenues that have been generated by the Registry of Deeds Office and the Cumberland County Jail. The past several years the County has also been actively pursuing state and federal grants, with over \$2 million dollars in federal grant money awarded for our Cumberland County Domestic Violence Project, as well as nearly \$1 million dollars in federal grant funds for our Jail Diversion Program.
- **Centralize local tax functions:** This recommendation has been reviewed periodically but remains in the discussion stages. A study needs to be undertaken to examine the costs and benefits of sending out a tax bill directly to the citizens of Cumberland County and whether any municipalities would be interested in participating. It is interesting that in most areas of the nation outside of the New England region, it is common for county governments to send out the tax bill with interested municipalities and schools participating on the bill in order to take advantage of the economies of scale and effectiveness of that type of consolidated service; particularly with the advent of new technology and the opportunity for taxpayers to pay their taxes over the internet.

Space Needs Subcommittee:

Chairman: Carla Nixon, Town of Cumberland

VISION: To determine the space needs of various Cumberland County governmental departments through the year 2005 by carefully considering relevant factors such as demographic projections, technology, departmental changes, the needs of the public, and possible legislative changes, and to develop a cost-effective and efficient facilities plan to meet those needs.

A SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES:

- **Construct an addition to the Courthouse:** A recommendation was made to build an addition to the Courthouse at the cost of several million dollars in order to provide space relief for the District Attorney's Office, the Registry of Deeds Office, as well as other space needs. Since that time the County has used this recommendation as its motivation to provide additional space through the creative use and management of the existing building space to avoid the high cost of an addition.

For example, considerable renovations were made to the attic to create badly needed additional document space for maintaining and preserving the records from the Registry of Deeds and the Registry of Probate Offices.

Other examples include constructing an office under the main stairwell of the County Courthouse, as well as constructing a new conference Room, the 'Peter J. Feeney Conference Room' through an innovative, collaborative partnership between the Courts and the County. All three of these alternatives have cost the County a total of \$250,000 instead of spending multimillions of dollars in architect fees and construction costs for a new addition to the Courthouse.

- **Construct a new structure for the PSAP building:** We have come far since this was first discussed in 2001. The Windham Planning Board has given their final approval for the construction of a new Cumberland County Regional Communications Center and plans are to have the center completed by the fall of 2006.

An essential step in having the new Center become a reality was the establishment of the 2001 Strategic Plan. In June of 2001 the strategic planning recommendation for the PSAP building was decided based upon the fact that there were a number of serious space and air quality needs. Then with increased interest in 2002 on the benefits to taxpayers from consolidating emergency and non-emergency communications services, and the added value from this type of county service, the idea of building a larger center became of paramount importance. As a result a decision was made to conduct an independent study on emergency communications countywide.

The moment the decision was made to conduct a study a very collaborative process began with municipal and county folks involved in the process, up to and including the selection of Kimball & Associates of Pennsylvania. This study resulted in a recommendation that the County construct a 6,600 square foot building on top of the bunker where the County's Emergency Communications Center and Emergency Management Office are co-located. It was felt by Kimball that this close proximity to the EMA was a natural partnership and a tremendous homeland security asset for the citizens of Cumberland County. Perhaps the study's most compelling finding was that there could be savings to Cumberland county citizens of \$2.7 million dollars annually in personnel costs alone.

Following the completion of the 2001 Strategic Plan recommendation, a capital reserve account for space needs was specifically earmarked to build a new PSAP structure with \$350,000 in funds. With the additional information gained from the Kimball & Associates Study, in 2005 the County Commissioners approved a total of \$800,000 for completion of this project, including the previous amount that had been approved earlier.

- **Plan for an expansion to the county jail:** the exact form this will eventually take is uncertain, but planning for various options continues. The two issues that the County Manager and the Sheriff have

discussed is the possibility of needing to expand the Jail's inmate medical facility, due to the type of inmate medical problems that we are confronting, as well as the construction of a Day Reporting Center to encourage greater utilization of alternatives to incarceration.

The Sheriff believes that we will need to expand the inmate medical facility when we reach a daily inmate population that exceeds 500 inmates on a continuous basis. The estimated cost for this expansion is approximately \$1 million dollars. In addition, the Sheriff is interested in the advantages that a Day Reporting Center would provide as we seek to develop more alternatives to incarceration. The estimate for this type of center is \$250,000 plus. Certainly, any expansion of the Cumberland County Jail needs to be examined more thoroughly during the next strategic planning process.

Technology Subcommittee

Chairman: Ned Kitchel, Falmouth Town Council

VISION: Cumberland County government will use appropriate technology to provide efficient, accurate, affordable and accessible service to all customers of Cumberland County.

SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES:

- **Establish an employee computer user-training program:** This has been established and continues today in the Law Enforcement Center's conference room located at the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. In addition, the new Peter J. Feeney Conference Room has been equipped with audio-visual equipment, including public access cameras, which can be used for employee training of municipal as well as county employees.
- **Make Registry of Deeds computer accessible:** This was accomplished and the entire system is now web accessible. This is one of the most significant accomplishments of the plan by scanning 40 years of deeds records and making this information available online. As a result of the 2001 Strategic Plan, a total of \$450,000 was put into a capital reserve space needs account for this specific project. Without the plan this may not have taken place. Since April of 2004 the deeds records have been online with subscribers who utilize the information regularly making it easier for customers to access the records without having to travel to the Registry Office, thereby helping to alleviate the space needs problem facing the County and avoid having to construct a multi-million dollar addition to the Courthouse.
- **Make Registry of Probate computer accessible:** This has not been accomplished due to personnel changes. The current thinking is to

have this project funded in the 2006 CIP, with completion as soon as possible.

- **Equip the sheriff's office with computer sub stations:** completed, with computers in all sub-stations.
- **Equip law enforcement officers with portable computers:** This is in the process, with completion expected in 2006
- Establish computerized, jail video booking: Not completed- should be follow-up in the next strategic planning process involving the sheriff's office, the courts, the district attorney's office, and other stakeholders.
- **Establish a county wide personal I.D card system:** has been completed.
- Create a regional GIS web server for towns and cities: This has been completed to the extent we have GIS maps available to all municipalities through EMA. Available free of charge.
- **Establish a computerized emergency dispatch system:** This has been completed.
- Investigate using video arraignment: The investigation has been completed, with implementation to be reviewed for future consideration in the next strategic planning process.

Regional Cooperation Subcommittee

Chairman: Kathleen Brown, Executive Director, Lake Region Development Council

VISION: Cumberland County is a region, comprised of diverse communities, tied together by economics, history, geography, and values, working together to address common challenges and opportunities to all citizens.

SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES:

- **Establish a charter commission:** This was put before the voters in a referendum and defeated by a margin of less than 2%.
- Establish the Cumberland County Collaborative Leadership Forum: Numerous meetings have been held involving a number of potential partners, including the Greater Portland Council of Governments, the Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce, to no avail.
- **Develop an increased presence in state government:** This has been accomplished to some degree with increased visits to the State House by the Commissioners, the County Manager, the Sheriff, and county staff on a regular basis, plus discussion of concepts like increased

government efficiency through county services, property tax relief with increased jail funding, and other issues. Unfortunately there is little to show for these efforts.

- Develop county indicators, benchmarks and guidelines on quality of life and regional cooperation: Has not been done, but the County has explored this idea with the Greater Portland Chamber to establish standards for the Cumberland County region similar to the Maine Development Foundations 'Annual report on the State'. This would create measurable goals that public, private and non-profit sector leaders could use together with our citizens to establish meaningful performance measures on public health, taxes, the economy, government, education, etc.

Corrections Subcommittee

Chairman: Jeff Jordan, City Manager, City of South Portland

VISION: To provide a county corrections system that is safe, humane, responsive to concerns of public safety, and linking inmates connected to post sentencing services, while being responsible stewards to the public.

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES:

- Hire and retain quality corrections officers: This has been quite successful, with the number of open positions decreasing from approximately 40 at the time of this plan, to less than 20 today. Pay scales have been increased with other incentives making our corrections officers currently the highest paid in the state.
- Address financial concerns associated with the jail: This is a continuous challenge, due to the type of inmates who are being housed, with issues ranging from serious psychotropic problems to alcohol and drug abuse. Whenever possible, we are always seeking to lower costs to the property taxpayers through diverting the nonviolent mentally ill from the jail, to bidding out on purchases whenever possible, up to and including participation on state bids when it is advantageous to the County to do so.
- Expand existing corrections programs: this is an on-going project, which will never end. Since the inception of this plan we have increased the utilization of inmate services, including the development of an electronic GPS program, and launched a jail diversion program attempting to alleviate some of the mental illness issues confronting the jail.
- Plan now for jail expansion: As discussed under the Space Needs subcommittee results, this is an ongoing project.

CONCLUSION

Since acceptance of the strategic plan in 2001 by the County Commissioners a great deal has happened as a result of the plan. The Commissioners have authorized that the County move ahead on a number of different fronts ranging from the need to hire and retain qualified corrections officers, to fair compensation from the state for the costs of the Cumberland County Jail, to the approval of a new Cumberland County Regional Communications Center, to mention a few.

Don Gerrish wrote in 2001, "This report and its recommendations place a challenging agenda before the County Commissioners. Difficult decisions will have to be made about the future of the County, and with these decisions financial commitments will also have to be made." Like many things, the test of time is the true test on whether a project was successful. In this instance, it can safely be said that the 2001 Strategic Plan has been a tremendous success!

There is no reason to believe that the next strategic plan will not be equally successful and beneficial to the citizens of the County.

