ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

AGILE STRATEGIC PLAN

2024

La Plata Economic Development Alliance
Agile Strategic Plan   Q1 2024

The Alliance has traditionally approached strategic planning, creating a three-year horizon that supports a reviewed and revised vision and mission statement. The current staff and leadership of the Alliance initiated the development of this type of plan in the fall of 2020 and published a final version in January 2021.

The last three years have been unpredictable and have changed many traditional approaches to economic development. The Alliance has dramatically adapted the organization to focus on our community's most fundamental and significant challenges and economic vitality. In doing so, the business model has been progressive around partnerships and programming that best strategically serve our membership and business community.

To best plan the execution of the next phase of the Alliance, shorter and more focused efforts around goals, objectives, and outcomes would be more applicable than longer-term planning, which is extremely difficult to predict. The Agile strategic planning framework was considered the most advantageous approach and is being adopted by organizations in similar transitional phases in fluid and dynamic environments.

Agile Principles for Economic Development

Why Agile: Economic development in a post-pandemic economy is a rapidly changing environment with emerging challenges. Agile planning will enable the Alliance to quickly adjust our strategies in response to new opportunities or unexpected obstacles.

Iterative Improvement: Agile planning breaks the planning process into smaller, manageable cycles. This allows the Alliance to set short-term goals, achieve them, and then reassess and adjust our strategies based on the outcomes. It promotes a culture of continuous improvement, where the Alliance is always learning and evolving.

Resource Efficiency: With the growth of programming and supporting personnel at the Alliance, we still need more time and funding. Agile planning will assist us in prioritizing our activities and allocating resources more effectively, focusing on initiatives that provide the most value to members and the community. Agile strategic planning will promote the Alliance to stay adaptable, member-focused, and resource-efficient in a rapidly changing environment.

Embracing Agile principles and values

> **1. Community and Member Centricity**: Focus on what our community and business/Alliance membership need and align with.
> **2. Iterative Progress**: Look at the plan as a 12 to 18-month timeline of a bigger picture. Create learnings from each step and adjust our strategies as needed.
> **3. Collaboration**: Involve our staff, Board Members, Membership, and strategic partners to provide input on our initiatives.
> **4. Adaptability**: We will be ready to change our initiatives as we evolve, and the initiatives mature or change. The business community is constantly evolving, so your strategies should be flexible and able to respond to new opportunities or challenges.
> **5. Transparency**: Keep our Board, membership, and stakeholders informed about our progress. Tell our story to get buy-in.
> **6. Focus on Value**: Prioritize activities and initiatives that add value to our business community. Do not get too diluted.
> **7. Continuous Improvement**: Regularly assess our plans and processes. Look for ways to make them better and more efficient over time.

Overview of Alliance Performance of 2021 Three-Year Strategic Plan

The Alliance identified three core pillars to focus on in the last three-year strategic plan published in January 2021. To get there, we asked ourselves one simple question:

> *What would success in economic development and community resilience look like for our community over the next 2 - 3 years?*

The Alliance gathered a small group of stakeholders representing our membership, Board, municipal partners, and economic organizations and workshopped to create high-level themes to categorize the answer to this question. As we started to consider planning for the next 3 to 5 years, the unpredictable future and the need to accept the journey of a longer-term recovery overshadowed a more traditional approach to planning and economic development. We needed to be optimistic but realistic about how long we may be experiencing recovery and the reasonable and necessary objectives to survive and continue to build for a brighter future. In hindsight, we were right about a dramatic change in a post-pandemic economy. We were fortunate to have identified what became the community's largest challenge due to the socio-economic shifts.

The sentiment of the plan was captured in the following statement:
We must address and create opportunities for attainable housing, ensure an available and skilled workforce with excellence in diverse sectors, and commit to education and workforce development. We must be able to keep and grow the businesses here and

encourage entrepreneurship. With this in mind, we are committing to the following three major themes:

- **Business Capacity and Growth**
- **Housing Solutions**
- **Expand & Recruit Workforce**

The Alliance has made significant progress in all three areas and exceeded expectations in our role in housing. We could not have imagined the part we have ended up playing in the formal public-private partnerships created to address workforce housing solutions. As an organization, we have created depth in workforce development programming, enabling us to be a significant facilitator and catalyst in this area. We have advanced initiatives in business capacity and ongoing growth that will be a considerable accomplishment if we can solidify light industrial development.

These three pillars have been and continue to be our north star, and there is strong alignment from our Board, membership, and community stakeholders that we are on the correct course to have the largest impact on the foundational needs of economic development for our area.

Vision and Mission

Our vision and mission have been validated through time. The statements may need slight modifications to justify our business model, which is committed to public-private partnerships that execute programming through professional service contracts and grants.

A. Vision Statement:
The Alliance will enable La Plata County to be one of the country's most vital, vibrant communities to live, work, learn, and play.

B. Mission Statement (revised for subcontract purposes):
To create a vibrant and resilient economy through the recruitment, retainment, and growth of business to preserve our quality of life. This mission is achieved by workforce development, enabling business capacity, supporting affordable housing for the community workforce essential for long-term economic sustainability, and fostering public and private partnerships.

Initiative and Objectives – Prioritizing 2024 into 2025
Prioritizing goals based on impact and feasibility.

1. **Educate our team, Board Members, and Membership on Agile concepts and processes.**

Measurable Goals

> 1. Workshop with the team to review the plan and get feedback and input. Modify the plan as needed. Ask for objectives and goals to be individualized by different team members so they identify their ownership in the initiatives.

> 2. Use the Board meeting in early 2024 to review the agile process and distribute the plan. Meet with Chair Steve Elias and Co-Chair Mitch Dye to review the plan in detail at the Board meeting.

2. Re-invigorate membership and continue high engagement with the membership base. Grow high-end membership by 5% (Investors or Chairman Circle Members)

Measurable Goals

> 1. Membership Levels – Focus on creating value and alignment to the community's most significant challenges and opportunities -- move from individual member service that does not scale.
> > a. Document improved process for management strategy, including membership recruitment, onboarding, retainment, and billing.
> > b. Develop a Sales Force application to meet all membership management objectives and reporting.
> > c. Report baseline of membership and have specific membership level goals for 2024.
> > d. Categorize at-risk members and create outreach initiatives.
> > e. Create a prospect list for the Board Membership Committee.

> 2. Board-led engagement of prospects and non-engaged members. (membership committee)

> 3. Membership Communication – Get certified in Mail Chimp and document a communication plan and standards. Create a social media plan that plays a role in a communication plan. Include web content in the strategy. (increase).

> 4. Summit – Sponsorship, attendance, Net Promoter Score (maintain)

5. Membership Meeting Engagement: Measure monthly numbers and capture all attendance in SalesForce. Create individual reach out to members to keep them engaged. Leverage social media for announcements. (slight increase)

6. Chairman's Circle Engagement – 2 events per year. (slight increase)

7. Trailing Spouse – Relaunch the program. (increase)

8. Public Partner Debriefs – Proactively meet with each public partner biannually for updates. (increase)

3. Continue to connect and facilitate Workforce Housing public-private partnership opportunities in La Plata County. Make Alliance the pivotal entity that congregates stakeholders and creates a high-level strategy for Workforce Housing.

Measurable Goals

1. Update the Workforce Housing Investment Strategy and identify where Alliance initiatives map to plan.
   a. Create a narrative of Alliance initiatives with objectives and communicate them formally to stakeholders – Board, RHA Board, Membership, and Community.
   b. This narrative becomes a marketing and communication strategy for Alliance in Housing.

2. RHA Formal Partnership
   a. SOW for 2024 Professional Services
   b. Sustainable Funding Source Strategy
   c. IGA for 2025
   d. Finalize and Execution of Strategic Plan (Measurement)
   e. Secure new grant monies and incorporate them into strategic plan
   f. Communication Strategy – Develop community communication strategy (social, web, earned, and paid media)

3. Administrative Contract Performance (RHA Board Measurement)

4. Catalyst Fund
   a. Funding
   b. Distribution of Projects
   c. Units Built – Measurement and Dashboard

5. Rental Assistance Program
   a. Review the process and create the next phase of the program with new funding.

        b. Create a marketing strategy for improved outcomes.
        c. Infuse monies already allocated.

   6. Prop 123 Funding
        a. Track opportunities and apply to available grants when available
        b. Host educational webinars/seminars for developers, government
        officials, and housing industry leaders
        c. Provide technical assistance to workforce housing projects for state
        resources and funds

   7. Grant Tracking and Application process
        a. Track and maintain a list of all grants that are applied for by each of the
        four entities (Durango, La Plata County, Ignacio, Bayfield) and any grants
        used for by the RHA
        b. Apply for available grants ($500K and up) in collaboration with public
        partners

4. Create collaborative Workforce Development programs that create high value for our business community by assisting in the recruitment and retention of critical workforce.

<u>Measurable Goals</u>

   1. Project RUN
        a. Make this the premier model for Opportunity NOW seed projects by
        leveraging the FLC partnership and Alliance Business Community reach.
        b. Perform on 2 Micro Certifications and hit grant targets and budget.
        c. High Membership Engagement in Committees and Cohorts
            i. Actively recruit organizations to participate in the program
               (executive buy-in)
            ii. Leverage the Board for outreach and participation in the
               program.
     d. Promote and Place Jobs from Certification
            i. Create success stories

   2. Internship Program
   a. Find funding source for continued Internship Program
        b. Review previous programs with a type framework and create a new
        program strategy with measurable outcomes.

5. Identify and Drive Business Capacity and Growth Initiatives

<u>Measurable Goals</u>

     1. Advance La Posta Infrastructure
         a. Complete Water and Sewer Design
         b. Assist in the Annexation process and have it completed.
         c. Collaborate on Grant Opportunities for Road and Sewer build-out

     2. Summit 2024 – Theme appropriately for capacity growth
         a. Engage businesses that can leverage programming and content.

6. Create Operational Excellence and the right size operations process for programming.

<u>Measurable Goals</u>

     1. Implement Investment Strategy and leverage investments.

     2. Have vital Grant Management and reporting process that is recognized by grant provider (RUN, Catalyst, others)

     3. Create efficient and solid membership billing and AR process.

     4. Continue to have Accounting best practices and complete audits as required.

     5. Manage the organization to budget in 2024.
         a. Have monthly and quarterly performance reviews to budget
         b. Involve the Board Chair and Co-Chair in quarterly budget reviews.

Agile Framework

We will customize the framework to fit the Alliance's needs and working environment. Weekly huddles, monthly Board and Membership meetings, and set operational reviews.

1. Sprint (SPARK) Planning
     1. Creating a backlog of initiatives.
     2. Prioritizing backlog items for the sprint
     3. Setting sprint goals and duration

2. Sprint (SPARK) Execution
     1. Weekly SPARK meetings for progress updates

2. Create priorities and ownership with deadlines in initiatives in the sprint.
3. Adapting to changes and challenges as they arise
4. Review Outcomes
5. Identify areas for improvement.
6. Celebrate wins and accomplishments.

3. Ongoing Monitoring and Adaptation
1. Make the Agile process iterative by establishing a learning culture.
2. Periodically evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Agile strategic plan.
3. Adjust the strategic plan as needed.
4. Ensure alignment with membership, public partners, and stakeholders' needs and environmental changes.

4. Resource Allocation
1. Allocating resources (budget, personnel) based on the priorities identified in the Agile process
2. Ensure efficient resource utilization by evaluating employee performance. Review performance and employee engagement and work plan quarterly. Conduct bi-annual employee reviews.

Conclusion

Traditional strategic planning processes often involve creating detailed, long-term plans executed over an extended period. In our fast-paced and dynamic business environment, planning three to five years out with any level of detail is more complicated. Agile Strategic Planning emphasizes flexibility, adaptability, and iterative progress. The Agile process is more conducive to strategic planning for the Alliance as it looks to execute further programming aligned to our mission's three central pillars that we consider still foundational.

The Alliance has performed exceptionally well in the last three years, progressing in all areas and improving our status as an organization with our membership and key stakeholders. Our public-private-focused model has been instrumental in making progress and creating alignment within our community on critical issues. We have earned the status of a trusted partner, facilitator, and convener, enabling programming to be built. Our brand has matured and allowed us to leverage our platform for thought leadership, engagement, and execution of initiatives in workforce development and housing. The Alliance has grown the organization by over 100% in both resources and budget in the last three years and is fiscally in the best position since the founding of the organization 15 years ago.

The next three years need multiple agile strategic plans that collectively identify how we execute our mission and strive to achieve our vision. This plan is the first of a series of modified plans that will use an iterative process of learning and evolution.

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