

FUNDAMENTAL SERVICE REVIEW AND YOUR CITY YOUR WAY
AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO DEFINING THE FUTURE FOR
THE CITY OF LAS VEGAS

A Case Study Application for the 2010 TLG Conference

City of Las Vegas

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Project Synopsis

To respond to a deepening recession, increasing citizen demands, and obligations to employee unions, the City Manager initiated the Fundamental Service Review and Your City Your Way Initiatives. The goal of the initiatives is to utilize input from City Employees, identify needs and expectations of the community, and make recommendations to the City Council that will allow the Management Team to redefine how the City of Las Vegas will operate to ensure the integrity of the organization for future generations.

Project Intent

Fundamental Service Review (FSR)

The FSR was initiated by the Las Vegas City Council in March 2008 when the Management Team recognized that the City would be facing significant economic challenges in forthcoming years. The Mayor and City Council directed staff to conduct a review of all city programs and services to determine if they were still consistent with the Council's Priorities. The Review was also intended to identify inefficiencies and redundancies and make recommendations for improvement. When the recession deepened and the forecast for the City worsened, the intent of the FSR for the 2010 Fiscal Year (FY) was to reduce the FY11 operating budget by \$25 Million.

Your City Your Way

The Your City Your Way initiative was created by the City Manager and approved for implementation by the City Council. The initiative was designed to gather data from the community via a community survey, test the data along with preliminary recommendations for service reductions with citizen focus panels, engage the online community with social media sites, and present the results of the initiative along with recommendations for the FY11 budget in town hall meetings.

An Integrated Approach

The Fundamental Service Review and Your City Your Way Initiatives at the City of Las Vegas will provide for an integrated approach to proactively and aggressively responding to the recession in a manner that allows the City to 1) Preserve City Jobs, 2) Maintain Critical Services, and 3) Ensure Fiscal Integrity, utilizing citizen input and recommendations from City staff as a guide.

Actual and Anticipated Outcomes

The City of Las Vegas has already realized a significant savings and success associated with the implementation of the Fundamental Service Review (2009). By time of the conference for 2010, we fully expect to have results of the FSR (2010) and Your City Your Way Initiatives and will be able to share the successes and challenges to the organization with the conference attendees.

Actual Outcomes

Fundamental Service Review 2009

As part of the FSR, the City Manager provided 106 options for consideration to the City Council. The City Manager recommended all of the options that did not involve reductions in force. All



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of the City Manager recommendations were accepted in October 2009. Since the implementation of FSR recommendations, the City has realized a savings of nearly \$6 Million Dollars through actions such as:

- Consolidation of Special Events into the Office of Cultural Affairs
- Consolidation of the Offices of Administrative Services and Government Affairs
- Consolidation of Graphic Artist Functions in the Office of Communications
- Consolidation of Public Information Functions in the Office of Communication
- Consolidation of Graffiti Abatement Functions in the Department Neighborhood Services
- Implementation of 48 Efficiency Recommendations that do not eliminate employees
 - Examples include, converting grass to desert landscaping, online paychecks, mobile field operations for staff, centrally managed computer printing, elimination of downtown bus routes through a strategic partnership with the Regional Transportation Commission, and other reductions in budgets

Anticipated Outcomes

Fundamental Service Review 2010

Currently, the City Manager has requested Department Directors identify 12% in budget cuts from their proposed FY11 budget. Twelve percent in budget cuts, in addition to the reduction in staff of over ten percent (through mostly vacant positions) and already imposed budget reductions of more than ten percent will mean a significant impact to the services the City provides. From the list of options for reduction, the City Manager will vet the options with a Fundamental Service Review Team consisting of the City Manager, Deputy City Managers, Chief Urban and Redevelopment Officer, Chief Information Officer, and Director of Human Resources, to identify the recommendations that are best for the community.

It is anticipated that the City Manager will provide a series of options to the City Council in March 2010 that will equate to a \$25 Million Dollar reduction in the FY11 budget. Those options for review by the City Council will take into consideration the feelings and attitudes of the citizenry, the negotiated obligations to the employee unions, and the bottom-line budgetary impact to the City's General Fund Budget.

Your City Your Way

Currently the City has hired the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Cannon Survey Center to conduct a multi-dimensional, statistically significant and valid survey of City of Las Vegas constituents. There are several purposes of the survey, including:

- Gauge satisfaction levels with City services
- Identify expectations of government during this recession
- Identify indicators to support the City's Performance Management System
- Identify attitudes towards budget cutting measures

Following the presentation to the City Council on the results of the Survey, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Department of Sociology will be conducting five focus panels to drill down



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the survey data and further define the expectations of the community with regards to proposed service delivery reductions.

Throughout the months of October through February, the City will be utilizing social media sites to further engage the public and solicit input from them through an online, informal survey. To conclude the Initiative, the City Manager will conduct a series of twelve Town Hall Meetings to go over her recommendations to the City Council and explain how the City interpreted the Citizen input. The recommendations will be made in conjunction with a presentation from the Department of Sociology on the results of the Focus Panels, Town Hall Meetings, and online survey.

Project Costs

A considerable amount of staff time was utilized in the first iteration of the Fundamental Service Review in conjunction with the support of a paid consultant. The second round of the FSR included only staff time. The Your City Your Way Initiative consisted of an agreement between the Cannon Survey Center and the Department of Sociology.

FSR 2009

Consultant - \$36,800

FSR 2010

Cannon Survey Center - \$25,000

Department of Sociology - \$10,000

Project Savings

The Fundamental Service Review process directly impacted nearly \$6 Million Dollars in savings. Additional savings will be realized over time through consolidations of services and programs. Additional savings that can be attributed to the FSR include:

- Voluntary Separation Program - \$6M
- Revenue Stabilization Fund - \$55M
- Vacancy Management Plan - \$4.5M
- Elimination of non-labor costs - \$22.5M
- Reductions in cost of labor, via negotiations - \$2.2 Million

Innovative Characteristics

The process overall, which is continually evolving, requires the following characteristics:

- Staff involvement at all levels
- Dialogue with outside experts
- Input from the Council
- Input from Department Directors

The process overall required creativity, foresight, big-picture thinking, courage, transparency, trust, accountability, and a vision.

Obstacles

As is the case in most projects, clear, concise, and consistent communication was the biggest challenge. Communication to the City Council, Management Team, Labor Union Representatives, employees, and the Community continually presented challenges that required immediate and long-term solutions.

Results



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A streamlined organization able to adapt to reducing revenues and increasing demands based on the priorities of the City Council and the Community to whom we are all responsible.

Presentation Components

Innovation/Creativity

Q: How did the program improve the organization?

- A: Increased communication between the City Management Team and the Department Directors; and
- A: Enhanced the global perspectives of the City Managers in their understanding of the organization and the services provided; and
- A: Allowed for scrutiny of options for efficiencies and redundancies in operations to realize savings; and
- A: Allowed for communication with the Labor Union Representatives leading to a reduction in the cost of labor; and
- A: Will involve the input from the citizenry in defining how the organization will look for future generations.

Q: Where new technologies used?

- A: Web-Enabled Newsletters; and
- A: RSS Feeds; and
- A: Mobile Computers for field staff; and
- A: Reviewing the implementation of an electronic system for plans check functions.

Q: Was a private consultant used?

- A: A private consultant (Kirchhoff & Associates) was used to help define the process and interview Department Directors to identify key areas to target; and
- A: The University of Nevada Cannon Survey Center was used to conduct the survey; and
- A: The UNLV Department of Sociology was used to conduct Focus Panels, review input at Town Hall Meetings, and present results to the City Council.

Citizen Outcomes

Q: What customer/community needs and expectations were identified and fulfilled?

- A: We believe that through the Your City Your Way Model, we will be able to answer this question at the conference.

Q: Did the initiative improve access to your government?

- A: Like never before, citizens will be interacting with the City through the survey, focus panels, online mediums, and in town hall meetings. We believe this will significantly enhance the City's ability to engage the citizenry, which will in-turn improve the health of the community by identifying what is important to them.

Applicable Results and Real World Practicality

Q: What practical applications could you share if selected?

- A: The process of reviewing all City programs and services and vetting appropriate options for City Council; and



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A: The lessons learned from communication challenges with employees, managers, and City Council Members; and

A: Options that were explored in the process to reduce expenditures that may be options in other organizations.

Q: How applicable is the project to other local governments?

A: The project is very applicable and aspects of it should be duplicated as other government organizations continue to scrutinize their budgets in order to meet the bottom line.

Q: What results/outcomes will you be able to share?

A: The recommendations made to Council that result in a \$25 Million dollar cut to the FY11 Budget; and

A: The process, including all of the challenges and successes, for identifying a list of options and vetting those options with management, labor unions, and the citizenry prior to making recommendations to the City Council; and

A: The results of the Your City Your Way Initiative, including the process and the challenges and successes of utilizing citizen input in the decision making model; and

A: The impacts of implementation of program and service reductions to the workforce and to the community.

Q: Performance Measurements:

A: Performance of the FSR will be based upon the successful implementation of \$25 Million Dollars in cuts to the FY11 Budget; and

A: Performance of the Your City Your Way will be based upon the successful integration of citizen input into the decision making model and the successful turnout of citizens taking an online survey and showing up to Town Hall Meetings.

Case Study Presentation

The City of Las Vegas will utilize PowerPoint presentations, a video component with interviews from the Elected Officials and Department Directors, handout materials identifying lessons learned from successes and challenges to the FSR and Your City Your Way Initiative, and resource documents explaining the steps taken to integrate citizen input and Council Priorities into the decision making model.

The Presenters in this Case Study will utilize a team approach to explain the process of the FSR and Your City Your Way and will explain how results were realized and how to apply this model of Innovation to other local governments.

