Using logic models to help deliver strategic outcomes in Bellevue, Washington

By Corey Orlosky

The creation of a strategic direction is a big step towards identifying a long-range vision for your community. Bellevue's strategic planning takes place at the department level and during Bellevue's "budgeting for outcomes" process. Bellevue's city council creates the longer-term vision and identifies key outcomes for the organization as it enters each two-year budget cycle. The next step is to make it a reality. For Bellevue, part of that vision was to become a "budgeting for outcomes" city. To make that happen, Bellevue spent a considerable amount of time with supervisors, leadership team members, and program managers to look at how they were operating and giving staff tools to help them view their program areas in a logical way.

Background

Starting in 2010 for the appropriation of the 2011-2012 biennial budget, Bellevue began using a "budgeting for outcomes" methodology and logic model approach to connect the budgeting process to the strategic outcome areas determined by the city council. By taking this approach, Bellevue hoped to establish and explain a chain of logic between resources, activities, and results in each outcome area. This would help the city show a link between the outcomes identified by the council and the money the community can afford to support the city's municipal services and capital programs.

Bellevue emphasized logic modeling as a way to both improve proposal writing and to help identify key departmental performance indicators and targets. Logic models help with defining the right metrics, and connecting the proposals to the broader strategic outcomes.

An interesting way to explain logic modeling was from the perspective of a "so that" model to facilitate more efficient thought and proposal processes. The idea behind this is fairly simple: you do one thing *so that* something can happen *so that* another thing can happen, and so on. To put this into practice, the police department needs police officers (resources) so that the city can patrol the streets (activities) so that the city remains a safe place to live, work, and play (outcomes).

Logic model specifics

Introducing the logic model approach during the budgeting process allowed departments across the organization to show that their proposals will make a positive difference for the community. They provide a tool for program managers and cross-departmental teams to more clearly show the link between what a program may deliver and the line of sight to the broader outcome areas. This begins with the budget proposal writer understanding the desired citywide outcomes and the strategies relating to them. Logic modeling helps users to understand inputs, outputs, and intermediate and final outcomes of the program. Program efficiency and effectiveness is then reviewed in relation to the council's selected outcomes to help rank the programs within each outcome area and

to recommend whether to keep, revise, or develop new programs within the amount of money people can afford. The conversation on the budget shifts from what a department thinks it needs to what is best for the community.

More emphasis was recently placed on using performance metrics in the 2013 -2014 budgeting process. ICMA collects performance data on a wide range of inputs, outputs, and outcomes that can be used to provide evidence of program effectiveness. The intent of the logic model is to get staff to think critically about how their work helps the organization achieve the desired outcomes, and in order to successfully do that, the evidence provided by performance measures must be used as one of the many tools at their fingertips.

ICMA has long stated that performance measures should be used to inform and support the work done in local government, rather than in a punitive fashion. Bellevue has emphasized the use of performance measures in this process to give budget proposal writers better tools. This is important because another aspect of the logic model is that it creates stronger proposals citywide, and improves the competitive playing field. With more proposals using logic, decisions can be informed by data, with the end impact of a better budget and a better understanding of how projects relate across the government. Rich Siegel, performance coordinator for Bellevue, explained that "We're not funding a proposal in a department just because we've always done it, but because the proposal shows clearly how it will positively impact our city."

Characteristics for success

Coming up with a plan to execute this process isn't the only necessary component. Another vitally crucial component is having the appropriate organizational culture. Bellevue has found that having the right organizational culture is very important to making it work. For Bellevue, this has been accomplished with a very strong leadership culture adopting the principles of high performing organizations (HPO) as advanced by the Commonwealth Centers for High Performing Organizations. As an evidence-based organization, the vision of the city manager is crucial to the establishment of the culture. An emphasis has been placed on being evidence-based and is tasked to the city's leadership team, which is made up of department directors. "The city manager asks leadership team members to come into the door, take off their 'department' hats, and really be thinking from a leadership standpoint to consider the organization as a whole," Siegel said. It can take time for the culture to take hold, but having strong management at the top and persistence will pay off.

Logic model in action

To demonstrate what this looks like, Bellevue has provided an example (see diagram on last page). This particular example deals with neighborhood traffic safety. Among other things, this particular program uses educational and engineering efforts to address traffic concerns. They have outlined that this project relates specifically to the citywide outcome of improved mobility. Further, they detail that the inputs they're going to use for this include staff time, capital funding, materials, and equipment. Those inputs relate directly to both the tasks they do and the results that are provided, such as developing and producing traffic action plans, conducting neighborhood-wide surveys, and producing educational materials. Those actions produce expectations of increased knowledge of traffic laws and best practices among residents of Bellevue, a more engaged Bellevue community on traffic issues, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle safety, and an enhanced neighborhood identity.

These expectations in turn fulfill the council outcome of improved mobility by providing multi-modal infrastructure and improved safety of transportation infrastructure. The logic model diagram concludes with an assessment of assumptions and the external environment. For instance, they assume that preserving neighborhood livability is important to residents. That assumption would give confidence to staff producing a more engaged community.

Conclusion

Using a logic model approach can be useful for organizations that have established a strategic direction for the local government and want to work towards tying the work completed to the goals set forth by council. It can help show a dividend on the resources provided with evidence of performance, and showing value, price, and customer satisfaction. Creating a logic process for linking activities to overall goals is one way to show your worth to citizens. For more information on the city of Bellevue, Washington, please visit their website at www.ci.bellevue.wa.us.

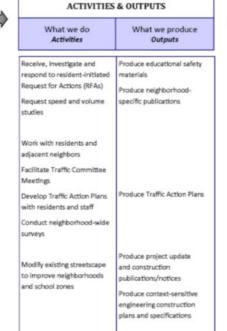| Proposal:	**M-7 Neighborhood Traffic Safety** *(Capital Budget)*

Citywide Outcome:	**Improved Mobility**

Neighborhood Transportation Services (NTS) provides exceptional customer service to Bellevue residents, City staff, and the general public through education and engineering efforts - implementing traffic safety programs, developing plans with stakeholders, and designing quality transportation infrastructure. NTS educates and informs neighborhoods, school districts, City staff, and other agencies to responsibly address neighborhood traffic concerns.

INPUTS
What we use

- Staff Time
- Capital Funding
- Participation of residents, businesses, and schools
- Materials
- Equipment
- Technology

ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS

What we do *Activities*	What we produce *Outputs*
Receive, investigate and respond to resident-initiated Request for Actions (RFAs)	Produce educational safety materials
Request speed and volume studies	Produce neighborhood-specific publications
Work with residents and adjacent neighbors	
Facilitate Traffic Committee Meetings	
Develop Traffic Action Plans with residents and staff	Produce Traffic Action Plans
Conduct neighborhood-wide surveys	
Modify existing streetscape to improve neighborhoods and school zones	Produce project update and construction publications/notices
	Produce context-sensitive engineering construction plans and specifications

OUTCOMES

SHORT TERM
What we EXPECT to see

- Residents concerns have been acknowledged and responded to
- Increased knowledge of traffic laws and best practices for walking, riding, and driving in a neighborhood
- Residents are engaged with the process of developing and implementing traffic action plans
- Residents are more aware that they may have differing viewpoints from their neighbors

MEDIUM & LONG TERM
What we WANT/HOPE to see

- Safer driving behavior in School zones and neighborhoods
- Managed traffic volume on neighborhood streets
- Reduced excessive vehicle speeds on residential streets
- Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Enhanced Neighborhood Identity
- Educated community and/or neighborhood

CITYWIDE
Purchasing Strategies

Improved Mobility:
- Improves safety of transportation infrastructure
- Provides multi-modal infrastructure
- Helps prevent accidents that impact vehicles, pedestrians, and/or cyclists
- Designs and builds projects that fit neighborhood character ("context-sensitive")
- Response to perceived conflict between neighborhoods and traffic impacts

Quality Neighborhoods:
- Preserves and enhances neighborhood character
- Increase neighborhood involvement and cohesion.
- Increase public awareness among motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians to obey traffic laws and show respect to other road users.

Safe Community:
- Partners with schools, grants, & other capital funding programs that increase the capacity and effectiveness of services to residents
- Builds trust and accountability within a neighborhood

ASSUMPTIONS - Conditions necessary for success

Preserving Neighborhood Livability is important to Bellevue Residents. Neighborhood Identity is preserved by managing residential traffic.

Most residential traffic are those that live within that neighborhood. The 85% speed is at or above minimum speed requirement.

Drivers will drive safer if they realize/notice they are within a residential neighborhood or school zone.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

City Council / Commissioners/Residents wanting improvements even if 85% speed is below minimum speed requirement.

People that walk, ride, and/or drive the way they want, regardless of speed limit and traffic laws

Neighborhood residents having the ability to come to consensus