

# TAKING COMMAND OF CHANGE

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**A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR APPLYING  
THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS  
IN STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES**



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Cultural Resources**  

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PROCESS IN STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES

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# Foreword

Historic preservation is alive and in sound health in these United States, despite the daunting challenges that we historic preservationists face. Those of us engaged in preserving this nation's historic and archeological places since the National Historic Preservation Act was passed in 1966 can reflect on the past three decades with pride, but certainly not nostalgia. We surely have no golden age in our past to recall fondly and yearn for, no time when a deluge of dollars and enthusiastic public attention threatened to overwhelm us. On the contrary, the times have always been fiscally and politically lean, and only the most cockeyed optimist would see a dramatic turnaround in the historic preservation environment in the foreseeable future.

Our accomplishments are all the more impressive, therefore, and our pride justifiable. The nearly thirty years that have passed since the National Historic Preservation Act took effect have seen significant progress in protecting and preserving America's heritage, and historic preservation is today a vital, growing force in American life. Without question, hearts and minds are being reached, as evidenced by the millions of Americans searching for their past in historic districts, house museums, battlefield sites, and archaeological exhibits of all kinds. And our growing constituency includes thousands of volunteers who annually expand public access to historic places and ease straitened budgets through their generous gifts of time and energy.

That the cause of historic preservation has been so well served since 1966 owes much to the commitment, creativity, ingenuity, and perseverance of the men and women in our nation's State Historic Preservation Offices. In the challenging times that lie ahead, however, the SHPO Offices will need to take aggressive steps to expand their leadership and management capability if they are to expand their vital leadership in the preservation movement. They must diversify programs to meet changing customer needs and demands, build alliances with new partners, and aggressively pursue new funding opportunities. Yesterday's tried and true approaches may be tomorrow's failed strategies, and ignoring these challenges will be the riskiest of approaches in the turbulent future before us.

The **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS** that is described in this *Guidebook* provides SHPO Office staff with a powerful tool for taking command of their own change and development in response to the changing world around them. And to judge from the experience of the six SHPO Offices that participated in the "Managing for the Year 2000" Initiative in 1993 and 1994, SHPO Offices are blessed both with a healthy appetite for more powerful leadership and management tools and with the resolve and capability to use them. What is sorely needed is what this *Guidebook* is intended to supply: the practical how-tos for translating theory into practice.

In the summer of 1992, the National Park Service joined forces with the American Planning Association to present two two-day planning workshops for State Historic Preservation

Office managers and staff in Reno, Nevada and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Over 70 participants in the two workshops explored a variety of approaches to preservation planning and strategic management with the assistance of several leaders in the field, including the author of this *Guidebook*.

It became clear from questions and comments raised by workshop participants, that what SHPO Offices wanted was practical tools to strengthen their capabilities to cope with the challenges facing them. Virtually everyone participating in the workshops recognized that in a dynamic—indeed, volatile—environment, SHPO Offices must strengthen their planning and management techniques in order to grow and flourish. The “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative in 1993 and 1994 was the joint response of the National Park Service and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers to the obvious SHPO Office need for nuts-and-bolts assistance in putting contemporary strategic planning techniques into practice. This *Guidebook* is a natural outgrowth of the Initiative.

Simple in design, the “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative provided three to four days of consulting assistance to six selected SHPO Offices. This assistance involved the facilitation of a SHPO Office strategic management retreat and the provision of follow-up assistance. Participating offices received training in strategic and change management techniques, fashioned values, vision, and mission statements, and identified critical issues facing them. All six have successfully developed and implemented strategies to address several of the key issues that they had identified, and all are engaged in ongoing strategic development processes. We at the NPS and NCSHPO commend these six SHPO Offices for being willing to open their offices and take on the risks and benefits involved in strategic management.

It became clear, unfortunately, that the “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative services could not be extended to all offices in the near future. We nevertheless wanted all SHPO Offices to benefit from the guidance provided to their six colleagues. The National Park Service and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, therefore, commissioned the Initiative’s consultant, Douglas Eadie, who heads a firm that specializes in nonprofit/public strategic management, to prepare this *Guidebook*. We gave Doug two explicit commands: to provide SHPO Offices with clear, detailed, down-to-earth guidance in applying strategic development techniques; and to draw to the extent feasible on the experiences of the six SHPO Offices participating in the “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative. We are pleased that Doug has taken both directions to heart in preparing the guidance that follows.

We wish you well as you embark on your strategic development journeys, and we trust that this *Guidebook* will make the way clearer and smoother.

*de Teel Patterson Tiller, Chief  
Preservation Planning Branch  
Interagency Resources Division  
National Park Service*

*Eric Hertfelder  
Executive Director  
National Conference of State Historic  
Preservation Officers*

# Author's Preface

## PLEASANT SURPRISE

When Pat Tiller, Eric Hertfelder, and their colleagues at the National Park Service and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers approached me about serving as consultant to the “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative, I was, frankly, skeptical. My involvement in the Reno and Sioux Falls SHPO workshops had taught me — a true outsider and newcomer to the historic preservation arena — a lot in a short time about the many problems facing SHPO Offices, most notably their modest funding and staffing in light of the jobs being done and their frequent absence from the political hit parade. Applying strategic development techniques is much more fun in organizations not in crisis, and it struck me then that life in many, if not most, SHPO Offices could be summed up as unending crisis. My initial reluctance was also based on my gut feel that people in highly technical, research-based and inward-focused professions such as archaeology, history, anthropology, and architectural history would not be very receptive to messages coming from an outside management consultant.

So I could not have been more surprised, pleased — and relieved — by the cordial reception and enthusiastic participation of the staff team in Illinois, the first of the six states that I visited as part of the Initiative. And my subsequent visits to New Hampshire, Texas, Oregon, Alaska, and Kansas were just as enjoyable and productive. Contrary to my expectations, the six SHPO Office teams were as willing and able to put contemporary strategic development techniques to use in their work as any groups with which I have consulted, and more than many.

## PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Without the “Managing for the Year 2000” experience, I would not have had much confidence in the utility of this *Guidebook*, but knowing what I now know, I am certain that most SHPO Offices will find it useful in tackling their unique change challenges. This does not aspire to be an academic treatise that traces the development of strategic planning techniques or that classifies and describes different approaches. Rather, my aim is to arm SHPO Office staff with practical, nuts-and-bolts guidance based on extensive real-life experience. My intent is for SHPO Office staff to be able to use the *Guidebook* in applying contemporary strategic management techniques successfully in the near-term and in generating immediate, concrete benefits.

## TIE TO STATEWIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNING

In keeping with the mandate in the National Historic Preservation Act that each SHPO Office take the lead in its state in preparing a “comprehensive statewide historic preservation plan,”

the National Park Service has issued planning guidelines for SHPO Offices to follow in complying with the letter and spirit of the Act. These guidelines provide SHPO Offices with considerable flexibility in designing and carrying out statewide historic preservation planning processes that are tailored to their unique needs, circumstances, and capabilities, and they promote the role of SHPO Offices as **FACILITATORS** of statewide preservation planning, rather than as merely the writers of plans.

In my professional opinion, the SHPO Offices that proactively and enthusiastically embrace designing and facilitating their statewide preservation planning process as a **STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY** will realize a significant return on their investment of time and energy. The Strategic Development Process that is described in this *Guidebook*, which is basically an internal tool for SHPO Office change management, can be a valuable resource in this regard. A SHPO Office can treat the design and implementation of its statewide preservation planning process as one of its “strategic initiatives,” within the framework of its Strategic Development Process, along with other initiatives that it selects for intensive, systematic, front-burner attention.

#### SOMETHING FOR ALL SHPO OFFICES

The Strategic Development Process can be applied by any SHPO Office that firmly resolves to take command of its own development and growth. No fancy technology is required, and implementation can be tailored to each SHPO Office’s resources, capabilities, and circumstances. So, every SHPO Office can afford to implement the techniques described in this *Guidebook*, in some form and fashion, but no SHPO Office can afford the lost opportunities that are the inevitable cost of failing to tackle change head-on.

*Douglas C. Eadie*  
*Cleveland, Ohio*  
*September, 1994*

# Author's Acknowledgements

This *Guidebook* draws on my experience as a consultant to over 200 public and nonprofit agencies and on the rapidly expanding literature on strategic and change management. But I owe the deepest gratitude to the six SHPO Offices that participated in the first two rounds of the “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative. I was as much student as teacher during my visits, and I deeply appreciate the cooperation and support I received. My very special thanks go to several executives without whose leadership “Managing for the Year 2000” could not have been nearly so successful: Judy Bittner in Alaska, James Hamrick in Oregon, Van McLeod and Nancy Muller in New Hampshire, Ramon Powers and Dick Pankratz in Kansas, Curtis Tunnel in Texas, and Bill Wheeler in Illinois.

Neither the “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative nor this *Guidebook* could have been conceived and translated into reality without the clear vision, steadfast support, and friendly criticism of Pat Tiller and Sue Henry at the Park Service and Eric Hertfelder and Nancy Miller at the National Conference. They deserve — and certainly have — my respect, affection, and appreciation, and their advice and counsel have made this *Guidebook* a more powerful resource for SHPO Offices.

And finally, I must acknowledge my debt to Barbara Krai — colleague, friend, and wife. Without her wise counsel, constant encouragement, and always strong emotional support, balancing the competing demands of a thriving consulting practice and the preparation of this *Guidebook* would have been much more difficult, if not impossible.

While I cannot claim sole credit for its strengths, whatever weaknesses this *Guidebook* possesses are my responsibility alone.

*Douglas C. Eadie*

# Executive Summary

This *Guidebook* is intended to provide SHPO Offices with detailed practical guidance in making use of the **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS** in managing their growth and development. The *Guidebook* draws not only on the rapidly expanding body of knowledge about managing change, but also on the experiences of six SHPO Offices that participated in the Managing for the Year 2000 Initiative of the National Park Service and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. Each of the six offices found the Strategic Development Process a powerful tool for identifying and dealing with major opportunities and challenges (“strategic issues”), and each of the six has maintained an ongoing Strategic Development Process that fits its circumstances, culture, and capabilities.

The Strategic Development Process basically involves a SHPO Office’s taking steps — on a continuous basis — to narrow the gap between its **VISION** of what it aspires to be and do over the long run and its current situation (its programs, services, resources, reputation, relationships). The key elements of the process are:

- **CLARIFYING OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK** — Updating our vision for the future, and our mission.
- **SCANNING OUR EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT** — Identifying pertinent conditions and trends in the world around us and assessing their implications.
- **ASSESSING OUR INTERNAL RESOURCES** — Understanding where we are strong and where we are weak in terms of our financial, human, and other resources and our program performance.
- **IDENTIFYING OUR STRATEGIC ISSUES** — Putting our finger on the critical “change challenges” in the form of opportunities to be grasped and barriers and problems to be overcome.
- **SELECTING OUR STRATEGIC ISSUES** — Deciding which issues must be addressed **THIS YEAR** and which can be left for later attention.
- **FASHIONING CHANGE INITIATIVES** — Developing detailed action plans to deal with the selected issues.
- **MANAGING CHANGE** — Putting in place the structure and process to ensure implementation of the strategies.

To ensure that change actually takes place, rather than being overwhelmed by day-to-day pressures, a SHPO Office should establish a formal Strategic Development Program that:

- Is kept separate from routine SHPO Office operations;
- Is guided by the SHPO Office management team serving as the “program steering committee;” and
- Is supported by a management team member serving as the “program coordinator.”



# I. Overview

## NOT WHETHER — BUT HOW — TO CHANGE

Our common lot, whatever our station and role in life — professor, legal counsel, or historic preservationist — is to **CHANGE**, sometimes at a glacier’s pace, sometimes breathtakingly fast. Change is inevitable, and attempts to maintain the status quo inevitably fail — often leading to disillusionment and even bitterness. The pertinent question is not whether we will change; rather, it is what role we will play in the change process. Will we play a positive and proactive role, creatively shaping, guiding, and managing the change process, or will we circle the wagons, defending the past to the last man (or woman)?

Put simply, do we choose to be leader or inevitable victim? This is not to say that any person or organization can be in full control of her or its destiny; there are always forces beyond our ken and influence. But, still, we do have a clear choice as we relate to the world around us. We can choose to understand what is going on in the wider world and its implications for us, attempt to influence those events, and, when warranted, take the lead in adjusting to that changing world. Personal and organizational growth and development are signs that we have made the proactive, rather than defensive, choice.

The psychologist Rollo May has defined the creative process as facing the changing world squarely, and mustering the courage to grow, rather than retreating into nostalgia. In my opinion, courageous, active creation is the essence of being **STRATEGIC**. But have no doubt: being strategic requires considerable courage and is not for the faint-hearted. This is the reason, as Scott Peck has observed, that the path of creative growth is truly “the road less travelled.” In choosing to travel the strategic path of creative, directed growth and development, you will choose to travel with few companions, to encounter a number of obstacles, and to find your way with few guideposts.

## MAKING THE TRENCH A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE

From the perspective of the proverbial trench, talk of courageous, creative growth likely sounds a trifle academic, if not downright Pollyannish. We have met day-to-day life, thank you, and it is not very romantic or inspiring. For a starter, please understand that the steady expansion of our workload appears inversely related to the resources we are granted. The paper inexorably flows in to be processed — pound after pound; mountains of documentation must be created and stored away or posted to a bureaucratic carnivore hungrily awaiting its arrival; phones never stop ringing; every deadline is immediate; one crisis after another leaves no breathing room. And to add insult to injury, our stalwart efforts are often taken for granted. Forget pie-in-the-sky; we just want to survive another day without burning out!

**The pertinent question is not whether we will change; rather, it is what role we will play in the change process.**

There are those who believe that periodically fleeing the trench is the only antidote to sagging spirits and fatigue; they seek the consolation of group therapy, where shared misery brings momentary comfort, or the intense bonding that comes with scaling cliffs or shooting rapids together. The trouble with escape is that Monday always comes. The trench is always there waiting for our return — unchanged and threatening to chew up our new found gusto by Friday. So the real challenge is to stand our ground and to make enduring changes in the trench itself. Is this Pollyanna speaking? No way!

Fortunately, the rapidly developing field of public/nonprofit leadership and management offers practical tools that we can use to guide change and development in our SHPO Office while also managing the store. And by far the most powerful is a contemporary variation on the broad strategic planning theme that I call the **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**. I will explore the process generally in this Overview and then look at each of its key components in detail in subsequent sections.

## BEYOND TRADITIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

The only problem with traditional strategic long-range planning is that it never worked! What basically happened in the process is that an organization's current divisions or operating programs fashioned three, five, or ten-year goal statements in the context of a succinct, usually inspiring, mission statement, and then each division or program projected detailed plans into the future.

So, everything already going on in the organization was projected into the future for some arbitrary period, usually three, five or ten years. All of these not-so-petite strategic plans from the various programs or divisions were then compiled into one big (bloated!) **STRATEGIC PLAN**, all four to six pounds of which were eventually handsomely bound and put on the shelf. Where, by the way, it typically stayed, little if ever consulted as organizational life moved forward.

Never in the history of mankind has so much energy and paper produced so few practical results as in the realm of traditional strategic long-range planning, while deforesting much of America, to boot! There is a simple explanation. In a complex, rapidly changing world, we have only the vaguest — and often erroneous — idea of what our future holds beyond a year or two, and even then we do a lot of guessing. And so if we are asked to produce detailed projections of our current programs into an unknown future, we naturally take a mechanistic approach (as in 5 percent per year growth); at least our mechanistic projections look orderly and not capricious. Naturally, these compiled projections of the unprojectable are quickly forgotten once shelved; at best, the process was the product.

The Strategic Development Process evolved in reaction to the deficiencies of the traditional approach. Its hallmarks, by contrast, are:

- **SELECTIVITY**—Not tackling everything at once.
- **FLEXIBILITY**—Adapting to continuous change.
- **CHANGE**—Not merely repeating the present.
- **ACTION**—Getting things done, not just writing about them.

## TWO AGENDAS

Successfully traveling the strategic development road requires that you make a distinction between two broad streams of organizational activity—two large agendas—which must be kept apart, and which your SHPO Office must plan and manage separately. If the two are mixed up, creative, significant change is highly unlikely to survive the press of day-to-day events.

### □ **THE OPERATIONAL AGENDA—RUNNING THE SHOP**

Running the shop is the bread-and-butter agenda of every organization, and immediate rewards and punishments are doled out in this arena. Controlling your budget, taking calls, getting ready for the upcoming state review board meeting, processing National Register nominations, reviewing Section 106 reports—these are typical operational activities.

### □ **THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDA—CHANGING, GROWING**

This agenda has to do with selecting major change and development targets—above and beyond our current activities, and implementing strategies intended to achieve the targets. Building a new partnership with your state tourism department to increase heritage tourism would be such a target.

Making sure that organizational matters are handled on the appropriate agenda is an art involving high stakes. You will know you are in trouble if a strategic question appears as the seventh item on the Monday morning staff meeting agenda. And you should expect that it will be a real challenge to find the time for, and to devote significant attention to, the strategic development agenda, in the face of day-to-day pressures. Let us now look briefly at the key elements of the process.

## THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In a nutshell, the strategic development process is all about:

**SELECTIVELY INVESTING IN STRATEGIC CHANGE INITIATIVES THAT ARE INTENDED TO NARROW THE EVER-PRESENT GAP BETWEEN AN ORGANIZATION'S OPERATIONAL AGENDA (ITS CURRENT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES), ON THE ONE HAND, AND ITS VISION FOR THE FUTURE, ON THE OTHER.**

# Strategic Management

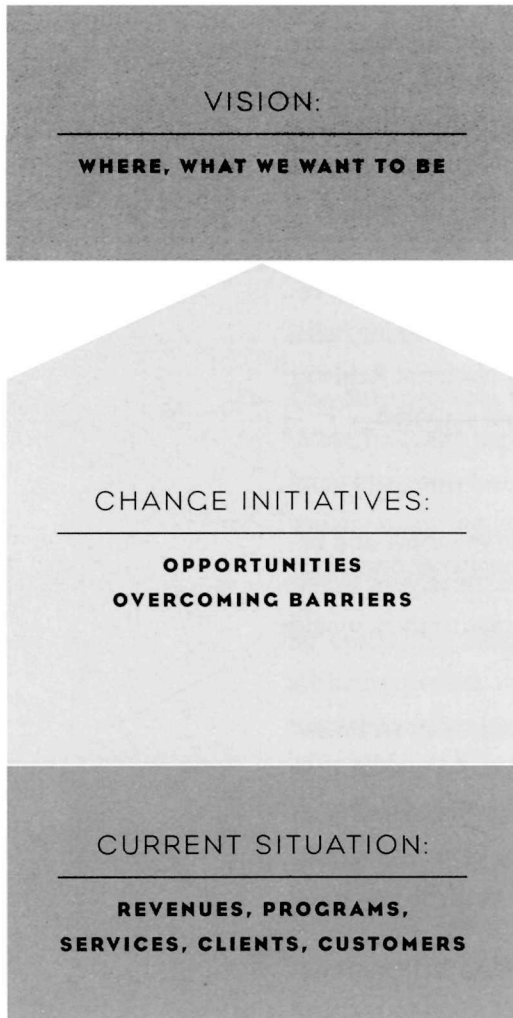


FIGURE 1

The key concepts in the Strategic Development Process are: **VISION, GAP, SELECTIVITY, INVESTMENT, AND CHANGE** (FIGURE 1). What basically happens is that a SHPO Office decides, year-to-year, what new things it will do, above and beyond its current operations, in order to move closer to its vision. The SHPO Office's current operations should be described in detail in its operational plan/budget, and the annual budget process is a tried and true tool for updating and refining current operations.

The Strategic Development Process consists of the following major elements (see FIGURE 2):

- **CLARIFYING OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**—Updating our vision for the future, and our mission.
- **SCANNING OUR EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**—Identifying pertinent conditions and trends in the world around us and assessing their implications.
- **ASSESSING OUR INTERNAL RESOURCES**—Understanding where we are strong and where we are weak in terms of our financial, human, and other resources and our program performance.
- **IDENTIFYING OUR STRATEGIC ISSUES**—Putting our finger on the critical “change challenges” in the form of opportunities to be grasped and barriers and problems to be overcome.
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- **FASHIONING CHANGE INITIATIVES**—Developing detailed action plans to deal with the selected issues.
- **MANAGING CHANGE**—Putting in place the structure and process to ensure implementation of the strategies.

## TO FACILITATE YOUR STRATEGIC JOURNEY

Be forewarned: the serious strategic development journey is meant for the stout-hearted. Pain-free panaceas promising bright futures at no cost are the stuff of dreams and the business of hucksters. In your—the real—world, you will add the Strategic Development Process to an already filled agenda; you will be hard put to find the time and the energy for a major new initiative. And while there will be long-term benefits, the short-term costs will be all-too-obvious and hard to bear.

As you start on your way, keep the following travel tips in mind:

□ **BE A SHPO OFFICE GENERAL MANAGER.**

We all naturally wear our functional “hats” when we are on SHPO Office business; we are involved in historic resource surveys, responding to public inquiries, processing National Register nominations, and the other activities that comprise the bulk of our day. But if our office is to travel the strategic development road successfully, and over the long run to guide and manage change effectively, then we must learn to behave as **SHPO OFFICE GENERAL MANAGERS** when we are engaged in the Strategic Development Process. This means that we must come to the table ready and able to make the welfare of the SHPO Office as a whole our preeminent mission. We must come to the table as an advocate of the SHPO Office, not of our particular program area or professional interest.

□ **PROTECT STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FROM DAILY DEMANDS.**

Make sure that you have put in place a strong-enough carapace and accompanying process to protect your change efforts from the incursions of day-to-day operations. Experience has taught all of us that anything out-of-the-ordinary, especially if it entails some pain and suffering, will be an easy victim of organizational routines, which are familiar and are the basis for all immediate rewards.

□ **EMPLOY TEAMWORK.**

The Strategic Development Process will not work in traditional bottom-up fashion, with SHPO Office units or divisions sending documents upward for review and action. Virtually every step in the process, from clarifying values and vision to overseeing implementation of change initiatives, benefits from intensive team participation. Team members bring diverse perspectives, experiences, skills, knowledge, and ideas to the strategic development process. It would make no sense to entrust truly strategic matters, involving high stakes, to one or two staff members, no matter how capable they are. And through intensive team participation, we not only generate new ideas that would not have come from any one individual, we also build the *esprit de corps* and feelings of ownership that will fuel the implementation of change.

□ **EMBRACE THE WIDER WORLD AS IT IS.**

Effective strategic development efforts are based on a detailed and realistic understanding of the world around us. Preconceived notions

## Strategic Management Flow



FIGURE 2

are a cardinal sin in the strategic realm! Avoiding the extremes of cockeyed optimism and grim pessimism, the effective strategist spends a lot of time openly listening, looking, and trying to understand. Pet notions of the way we want the world to be give way to the facts when we are being strategic.

□ **BE ENTREPRENEURIAL.**

Although “entrepreneurialism” has become somewhat of a buzz-word of late, its essential characteristics are critical to effective strategic development. When we are behaving in an entrepreneurial fashion, we are:

- Not only open to new opportunities for diversification and growth in services, products, and revenues, we actively pursue them.
- We are always on the lookout for new customers and for ways to better satisfy the customers we have. Take note: SHPO Offices have customers, and the better we define our relationships to these customers, the more secure our future is likely to be.

□ **BE WILLING TO SHARE AND EXPAND SHPO OFFICE OWNERSHIP.**

The weakest possible approach to the wider world is to see the SHPO Office as our turf because we spend our workaday lives here and we are the professionals in our fields. In today’s world, the public and nonprofit organization that learns to share and expand ownership stands a far better chance of enhancing its political influence and diversifying and growing its resources than does its more exclusionary brethren. Expanding ownership means essentially two things: convincing outside individuals and organizations that they have an important stake in our SHPO Office; and ensuring that, as owners, they will play a meaningful role in setting SHPO Office directions. Every SHPO Office is surrounded by potential owners, if we only look. An excellent example would be a board or commission that can be turned into a more active participant in our strategic direction setting.



## 2. Creating a Strategic Framework

A SHPO Office's strategic framework provides both a starting point and a context for the Strategic Development Process. You will recall that the framework consists of two key elements: a clear, detailed vision for the future, describing what the SHPO Office aspires to be over the long run, and a mission that describes the SHPO Office now, in terms of its programs/services, customers/clients, and how it delivers its services.

### VISION — A POWERFUL BUT UNDERRATED TOOL

Vision is without doubt both the **INTELLIGENCE** and the **DRIVER** of the Strategic Development Process. Without a clear, detailed vision as a starting point, a SHPO's Strategic Development Process is just as apt to produce useless, as useful, results. Indeed, strategy without vision is likely to become motion without direction, and experience has taught all of us that being busy does not necessarily mean being very productive.

Unfortunately, for many nonprofit and public leaders and managers, vision has been a vague concept with little obvious utility in developing their organizations' strategies. Its tremendous power for good has, therefore, seldom been fully realized in practice. Popularly and somewhat vaguely seen as having to do with fundamental purposes, inspiration, and motivation, vision is often used interchangeably with its close, but very different, ally — mission.

### OVERVIEW OF VISION

Vision is basically a picture of the future, and the more detailed the vision, the more useful it can be in identifying and selecting strategic issues. Of course, without a clear vision, a SHPO Office will have no reliable way to identify strategic issues (opportunities to narrow the gap between vision and current reality).

In doing visioning, it is important that SHPO Offices distinguish between serious planning, on the one hand, and public relations/information, on the other. While a pithy paragraph that attractively captures the essence of a SHPO Office's vision will very likely make sense for public relations purposes, a far more detailed version is essential for internal SHPO Office planning and development purposes.

A SHPO Office can envision its future in a number of ways: in terms of **VALUES**, **IMPACT**, or **IMAGE**.

Vision is basically a picture of the future, and the more detailed the vision, the more useful it can be in identifying and selecting strategic issues.

□ The **VALUES VISION** describes the SHPO Office’s most cherished beliefs and principles, relative both to its work in the wider environment and to its internal culture.

## SHPO Values Visions

ILLINOIS	NEW HAMPSHIRE	TEXAS
<b>A rewarding job experience</b>	<b>Preservation as a public responsibility and public trust</b>	<b>Respecting the diversity of the state's population</b>
<b>Equitable treatment</b>	<b>Spiritual values of historic preservation</b>	<b>Serving the public</b>
<b>Staff participation in decision-making</b>	<b>Sense of place and identity</b>	<b>Importance of heritage education</b>
<b>Opportunities for professional development</b>	<b>Public education</b>	<b>Improving the quality of life for present and future generations through historic preservation</b>
<b>A collegial atmosphere</b>	<b>Collegiality of staff</b>	<b>Respecting and responding to our constituents' needs</b>
<b>Informal</b>	<b>Hard work</b>	
<b>Accountability in decision-making</b>	<b>Advocacy</b>	
	<b>Prudent management of public resources</b>	
	<b>Volunteerism</b>	

□ The **IMPACT VISION** describes the concrete impacts that the SHPO Office’s efforts are intended to have on its environment (e.g., the review board; federal, state, and local government agencies; the general public)—how the world around it will be changed by its programs and activities.

## SHPO Impact Visions

ALASKA	KANSAS	OREGON
<b>Alaskans' greater appreciation of heritage</b>	<b>Respect for the image of Kansas</b>	<b>Widespread acceptance of historic preservation in Oregon</b>
<b>The SHPO Office as an integral part of state policy-making</b>	<b>Respect for cultural diversity</b>	<b>Better understanding of preservation goals and ethic</b>
<b>More state historic parks</b>	<b>Communities valuing historic preservation</b>	<b>Preservation institutionalized in land use processes</b>
<b>More effective integration of the SHPO Office into its parent department</b>	<b>Sense of community, continuity</b>	<b>Preservation of entire neighborhoods, historic districts</b>
	<b>Powerful, focused preservation education curriculum</b>	<b>Preservation of tangible links to cultural heritage</b>
	<b>Increased opportunities to do historic preservation</b>	<b>The SHPO Office viewed as one of the top Offices in the nation</b>
	<b>Enhanced collaboration</b>	<b>Expansion, strengthening of local government preservation programs</b>
	<b>Focused, coordinated use of resources</b>	<b>Enhanced respect for ethnic and cultural heritage</b>
	<b>Increased public participation</b>	

□ The **IMAGE VISION** describes how the SHPO Office wants to be seen in the years ahead by its principal stakeholders and by the wider public in its state.

## SHPO Image Visions

<p><b>ALASKA</b></p> <p><b>The place to come if interested in historic preservation</b></p> <p><b>Protector and advocate for the essence of what Alaska is and was</b></p> <p><b>Repository of expertise and knowledge on historic preservation</b></p> <p><b>Reliable and predictable</b></p> <p><b>Friendly and cooperative</b></p> <p><b>Creative</b></p> <p><b>Having "pizazz"</b></p> <p><b>Essential to the state's economic well-being</b></p> <p><b>Can-do agency that gets the job done</b></p> <p><b>Easy to understand</b></p>	<p><b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b></p> <p><b>Protectors of heritage, beauty, values, and natural resources</b></p> <p><b>Resource for information, education, guidance, criteria, and standards for heritage protection</b></p> <p><b>Consistent</b></p> <p><b>Honest</b></p> <p><b>Knowledgeable</b></p> <p><b>Catalysts for change</b></p> <p><b>Respectful, open to ideas of others</b></p> <p><b>Accessible and responsive</b></p> <p><b>Friendly</b></p> <p><b>Businesslike, but not fixated on being a business</b></p>	<p><b>TEXAS</b></p> <p><b>The state's preservation leader</b></p> <p><b>Advocates of preservation issues</b></p> <p><b>Significant player in state government in terms of influence and clout</b></p> <p><b>Responsive and accessible to the various publics we serve</b></p> <p><b>Flexible yet firm in our beliefs</b></p> <p><b>Focused on the issues that make a difference in people's lives</b></p> <p><b>Innovative, talented, professional public servants that are doing vital work</b></p>
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### THE VISION-MISSION CONNECTION

How are vision and mission different, and how do they work together in the strategic development process? If vision is a multi-faceted picture of a SHPO Office's desired future, its mission is a detailed description of the SHPO Office **NOW**, in terms of its customers and clients, its products and services, and the roles it plays and technologies it employs (FIGURE 3). Vision and mission are not only different in content, they also serve completely different purposes. Vision is intended to inspire and motivate a SHPO Office and to guide it in selecting strategic issues. Mission is more a disciplinary tool, establishing clear boundaries and fighting the "headless chicken" syndrome (FIGURE 4). Vision moves a SHPO Office in new directions, and mission keeps it from losing its head in willy nilly diversification.

Over time, if a SHPO Office seriously employs the strategic development process, vision will cause mission to change. Strategic issues in the form of barriers and opportunities will inevitably be identified to close the gap between long-range aspirations (the SHPO Office vision) and what the SHPO Office is right now (the SHPO mission). Vision will force possibilities to be raised, while mission will force second thoughts and resist undue haste. Without a clear, detailed mission, a

### Mission Describes an Organization in Terms of ...

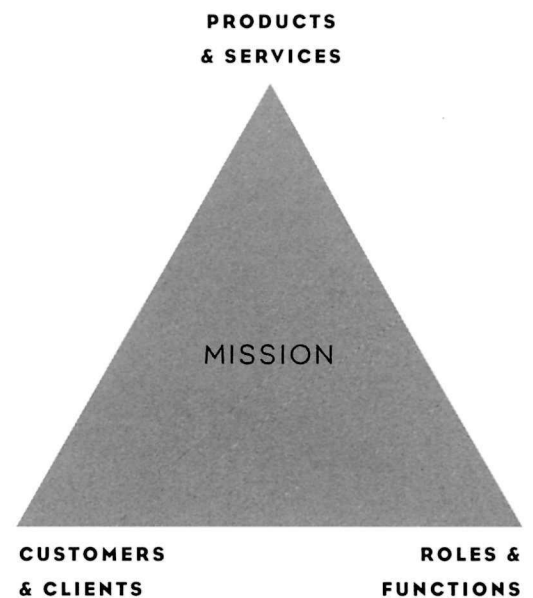


FIGURE 3

**Mission**  
 ■  
**SETS**  
**BOUNDARIES**  
**AND LIMITS**  
**FOR ORGANI-**  
**ZATIONAL**  
**ACTIVITY**  
 ■  
**GUARDS**  
**AGAINST OVER-**  
**EXTENSION**  
 ■  
**IS PRESSURED**  
**AND CHANGED**  
**BY VISION**

SHPO Office will be in much greater danger of falling victim to the “everything to everybody” syndrome. However, a clear mission that is not pressured by a strong, expansive vision can lead to a hardening of the SHPO Office’s arteries and its eventual obsolescence.

The Kansas planning team saw three categories of “primary” customers as a component of its mission:

- “General public” customers include property owners, owners with future involvement (National Register listing and preservation grants), adjoining property owners, consulting professionals, and developers. These customers receive as products and services: technical assistance, academic information, National Register nomination guidance, education, review and compliance advice, grant assistance, tax credits, and access to resources and information.
- “Government” customers include the National Park Service, other federal agencies, state government departments, and county and city governments. The products and services provided to this group include reports, review and compliance advice, grant assistance, planning assistance, contract archaeology, education, and program agreements.
- “Nonprofit organizations” included a diverse group, such as local and county historical societies, the Kansas Anthropological Association, regional planning commissions, neighborhood associations, the Unmarked Burial Board, the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review, and the Antiquities Commission, among others. These organizations generally receive the products and services already noted.

**FIGURE 4**

As part of its mission exercise the Alaska planning team identified a number of essential functional capabilities, including: “networking” and “coordinating,” “interpreting regulations,” building and maintaining data bases, “mediation” and “conflict resolution,” professional expertise, communication, planning, contracting, and facilities management.

**SHPOs MANAGING FOR THE YEAR 2000**

The six SHPO Offices that participated in the “Managing for the Year 2000” Initiative fashioned detailed vision and mission statements over the course of intensive, one-and-one-half-day strategic work sessions in a retreat setting. All six SHPO Offices subsequently identified strategic issues and fashioned action strategies to address them. Although the original rough visions and missions were eventually refined and condensed for public consumption, they had already served a powerful internal development purpose for all of the six offices.

The detailed visions were fashioned by brainstorming groups early in the first day of the SHPO Office retreats. The groups took a free-flowing approach to their job, inviting active participation and avoiding formal consensus techniques. In the process of fashioning vision statements, participants not only enriched their understanding of each other’s programs, they also gained new appreciation for each other’s perspectives and viewpoints and built a stronger foundation for future teamwork.

# 3. External and Internal Environments

## SCANNING THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Scanning the external environment basically involves the identification and analysis of conditions, trends, and stakeholders that are pertinent to a SHPO Office's vision, mission, and current strategies (FIGURE 5). A SHPO Office's external environment is the source of many of its strategic issues, including threats, barriers to achieving its vision fully, and opportunities in the form of new customers and resources.

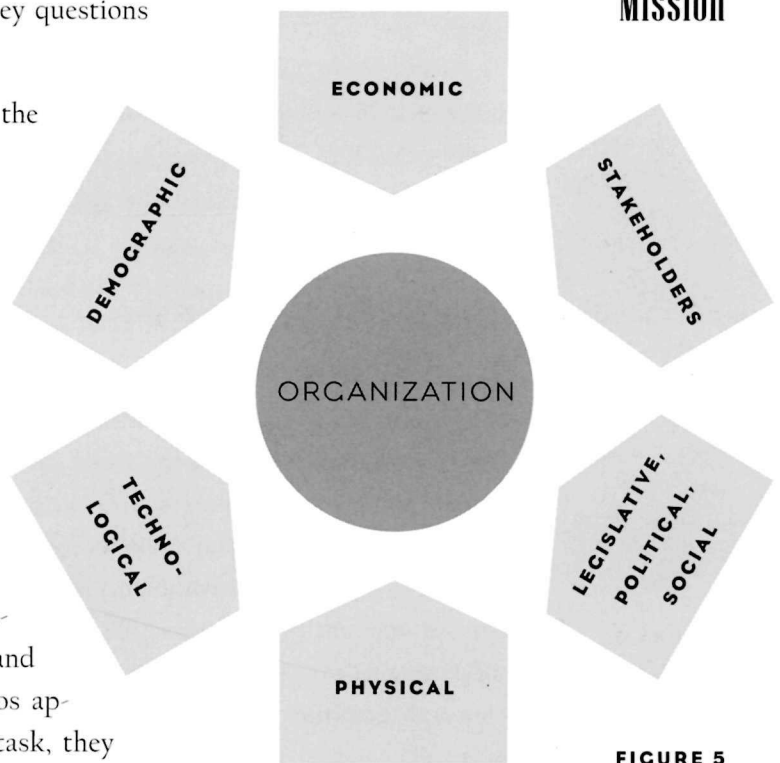
Although a retreat is an effective vehicle for taking an intensive, point-in-time look at the external environment, the extent and pace of change these days demands that external environmental scanning become a regular, on-going feature of a SHPO Office's management process. In this regard, certain key questions must be answered:

- What information will we regularly collect in the external scan?
- Who will collect it, how will it be collected, who will analyze it, and how will the analysis be factored into our strategic and operational planning process?

Environmental conditions and trends can be sweeping — such as national and state legislative, political, social, economic, demographic, and technological information. And they can be particular, such as military base closures, local natural disasters, archeological discoveries, responses to citizen opinion surveys, and detailed historic resource inventories. As SHPOs approach the external environmental scanning task, they must beware of two common pitfalls:

- It is all too easy to see the trees while missing the forest — to focus so heavily on detailed assessments of needs and resources in the immediate environment that major negative or positive developments in the wider environment are missed.
- And there is always the clear and present danger of paralysis by analysis — spending so much time and energy in reviewing voluminous documentation that is generated by the scanning process that a SHPO Office fails to take timely action to avert threats or capitalize on opportunities.

**External Scan:  
Collection  
and Analysis  
of Information  
Pertinent  
to Vision and  
Mission**



**FIGURE 5**

## Stakeholder Analysis

■  
IDENTIFYING  
STAKEHOLDERS  
—ENTITIES  
WITH  
SIGNIFICANT  
INFLUENCE ON  
MISSION AND  
STRATEGIES  
■  
UNDERSTAND-  
ING THE STAKES  
INVOLVED  
■  
UNDERSTAND-  
ING THE  
STAKEHOLDERS

FIGURE 6

The Texas Historical Commission planning team's external scan saw at the national level: "stable" federal funding, increased federal support and demand for "public outreach, public education, and multi-cultural programs," the introduction of "more stringent" federal guidelines, a stronger federal emphasis on planning, and increasing demand for technical assistance, growing Native American advocacy in Congress, "growing diversity of political ideologies, sometimes resulting in political polarization," an aging population, a decaying infrastructure, and "strengthening of the private property rights lobby, which will greatly challenge the preservation movement's gains in the past decade," among other factors.

Pertinent conditions and trends noted by the Alaska planning team included: multi-culturalism, oil revenue decline, a "strong and growing interest in tourism," a continuing interest in development and resulting conflict with environmentalists, Alaska's small and transient population, a growing interest in and demand for fossil and prehistoric artifacts, a renewal of the Smithsonian Institution presence in Alaska, increasing volunteerism, "fluctuating" interest in historic preservation, a "polarized" political environment, and little money to enforce existing preservation legislation.

The Alaska team identified as major implications of its external scan the need to pay more attention to: diversifying revenue sources, building new constituencies, keeping "up-to-date" with technology, image, integrated staff work, volunteer management, marketing historic preservation, and external partnerships, among other concerns.

### STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

It would be all too easy for a SHPO Office planning team to take an overly statistical approach to scanning, viewing the job as basically the collection of all kinds of interesting and useful facts and figures describing the world around them. The fact is that the stakeholder organizations and institutions in a SHPO Office's environment are just as—if not more—important than conditions and trends, and in these challenging times building and maintaining successful relationships with key stakeholders is critical to SHPO Office survival. A stakeholder is any organizational entity in a SHPO Office's environment that is capable of exerting significant influence on the SHPO (FIGURE 6). In order to select the stakeholders that merit closest attention and to fashion strategies to manage relationships with these stakeholders effectively, a SHPO Office must:

- Understand the stakes involved in each relationship—resources? partnership? political support? authority? legitimacy?
- Understand the stakeholder in terms of its values, vision, mission, plans, strategies, capability, and its expectations of, and opinions about, the SHPO Office.

Some SHPO Office stakeholders are associated with such high stakes that the SHPO Office will have no choice but to pay continuous, careful attention to building and maintaining a close, positive relationship, or at least fashioning counter strategies to deal with a hostile stakeholder.



Other SHPO Office stakeholders will receive close attention on an ad hoc basis, as particular issues come and go.

A good starting point in stakeholder analysis—best accomplished in a retreat setting—is to identify all of the stakeholders that come to mind, in free-flowing fashion, then select the ones obviously involving the highest stakes. For each of these selected stakeholders, the planning team can then identify what is at stake in the relationship and assess the status of the relationship. A stakeholder analysis done by one of the six “Managing for the Year 2000” SHPO Offices in its strategic development retreat is provided in FIGURE 7.

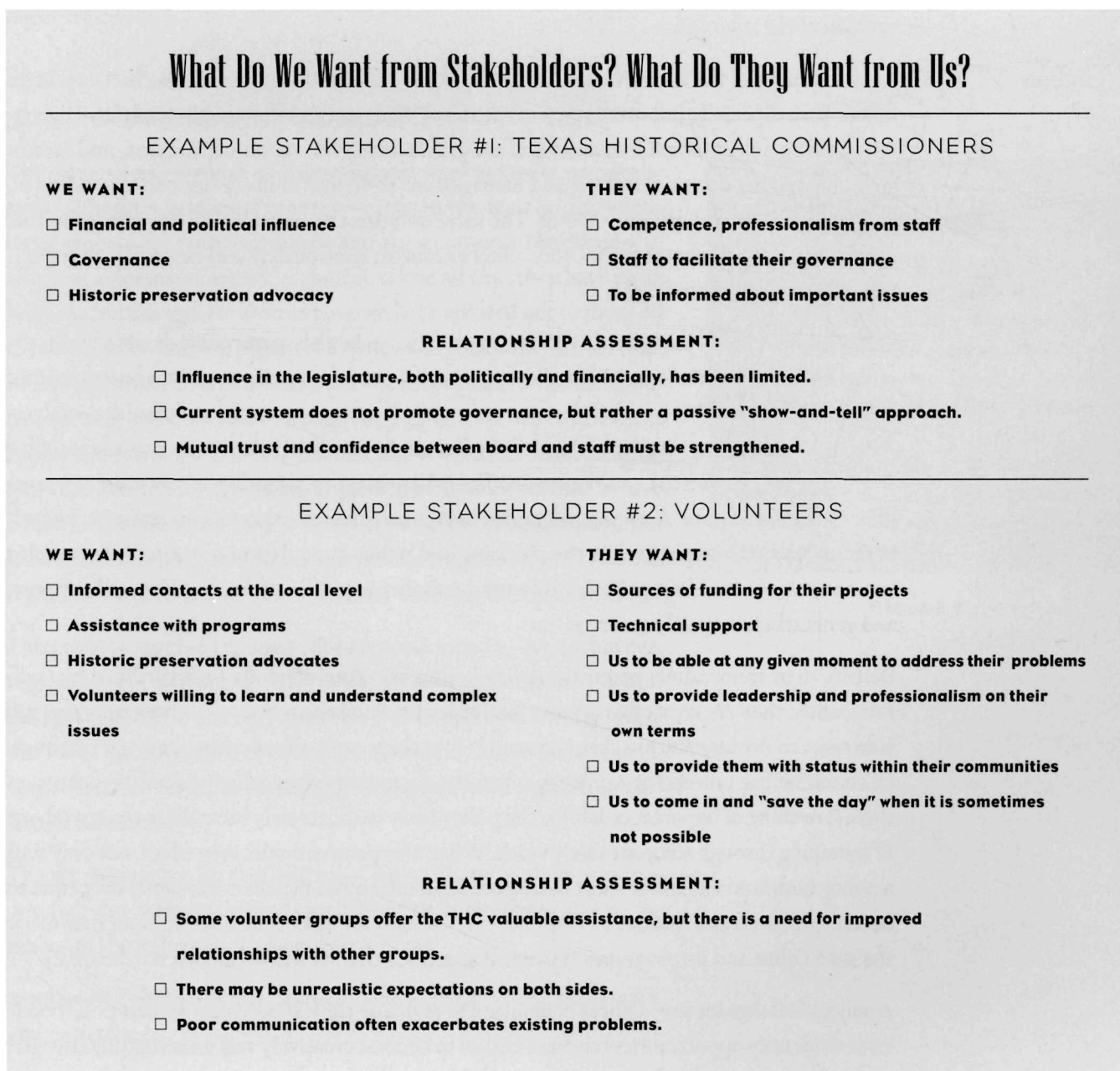


FIGURE 7

## VERY SPECIAL STAKEHOLDERS — PARENTS AND POLICY BODIES

Many SHPO Offices are part of a wider department, commission, or division, rather than stand-alone organizations. In these instances, it is important that the chief executive officer and executive management team (typically, the department or division heads, often including the State Historic Preservation Officer) of the SHPO Office's parent organization receive very special attention in the stakeholder assessment process, because the stakes are exceedingly high. It is critical that the SHPO Office have a clear understanding of the parent's vision, mission, and strategic directions and how the SHPO Office fits into these directions. The SHPO Office also needs to know how well the parent understands its directions and programs and the parent's opinion of the SHPO Office.

An assessment of the SHPO Office relationship with the parent organization's chief executive officer is an especially important part of the SHPO Office-parent relationship analysis. This entails gaining a detailed understanding of the chief executive's vision, aspirations, and strategies, of his or her decision-making and management style, and of his or her understanding of, and attitudes toward, the SHPO Office. The more detailed the SHPO Office's knowledge in this regard, the more likely the SHPO Office-chief executive relationship will be productive, positive, and mutually beneficial.

Policy bodies closely associated with the SHPO Office—be they governance boards and commissions (linked to the SHPO Office directly or to its parent organization) or advisory bodies of one kind or another—also deserve very special attention in the stakeholder analysis process. Volunteers serving on such policy bodies can be a tremendous resource to a SHPO Office if they are well supported and the SHPO Office-policy body relationship is meticulously managed by the SHPO Office. For example, policy bodies can provide experience, expertise, knowledge, and varied perspectives in the planning and policy formulation process. They can also be important in building political networks, enhancing public understanding and support, and generating financial resources.

Despite their tremendous potential, policy bodies are often woefully underutilized by staff. Frequently, they are treated as passive audiences for finished staff work, whose only real job is to react to documentation that is placed before them or to absorb show-and-tell briefings. Of course, at the tail-end of a process, when the document is basically finished, by definition there is nothing of importance left for the policy body to do; its only function is the trivial one of thumbing through someone else's work. When this passive model is in effect, not only will a policy body's work fall far short of its potential, the body's members are likely over time to become so bored and frustrated that they on occasion act as enemies, rather than friends, of the SHPO Office and its programs. (FIGURE 8 identifies characteristics of effective boards.)

A major challenge for SHPO Offices committed to realizing the full potential of their policy bodies is to identify opportunities for these bodies to become creatively and meaningfully engaged in shaping strategic directions and establishing policies **PROACTIVELY**—early in the planning and program development process, rather than at its conclusion. Another challenge is to help

their policy bodies to understand clearly their leadership roles and responsibilities and to assist them in designing processes and structures that will facilitate their playing these roles effectively. For example, if a policy body is truly to play a creative and productive role in strategic direction setting for a SHPO Office, then it must: (1) have a well defined job to do within a well defined strategic planning process; and, (2) have a committee that focuses on planning so that in-depth participation is possible. Very seldom is it possible for a policy body as a whole to become involved in-depth in planning or any other governance function.

## INTERNAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The internal assessment of strengths and weaknesses is one of the most difficult—and most critical—steps in the strategic development process, for both individuals and organizations. The barriers to effective assessment are not technical; above all else, they have to do with the human ego. How often have we been advised not to focus on the down side? There is plenty of bad news to go around, we are told, so let's just concentrate on our vision and accentuate the positive! But this up-beat advice is dead-wrong. The fact is, if we are to select the appropriate strategic issues to address, and if we are to fashion strategies that are realistic (meaning implementable at a cost that we can afford), then we must have a detailed understanding of where our SHPO Office is strong, and where it is less so. Rigorous honesty in this regard is the preeminent virtue, wishful thinking the cardinal sin!

This is not to say that any SHPO Office is condemned to live within current resource constraints, or to suffer without recourse from debilitating weaknesses. The only objective is to understand exactly where the SHPO Office stands *vis à vis* specific resources; a SHPO Office can always decide to invest in correcting weaknesses and expanding particular resources.

The six “Managing for the Year 2000” SHPO Offices, in their one-and-one-half-day retreats, looked carefully at their strengths and weaknesses in the following major resource areas:

- **HUMAN:** Policy body effectiveness; staff skills, training, experience, and expertise.
- **FINANCIAL:** Stability and diversity of revenue sources; potential for revenue growth.



FIGURE 8

- **POLITICAL:** The size of the shadow the SHPO Office casts on the political landscape; the extent of the SHPO Office's clout with highest-priority stakeholders; the size and vitality of the SHPO Office's network of friends and allies.
- **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE:** SHPO Office performance against stated performance targets over the past year; evidence of customer satisfaction.
- **INTERNAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT:** The SHPO Office's use of contemporary planning and management techniques, such as team participation in the strategic planning and budget preparation processes and in SHPO performance monitoring; the employment of modern technology, such as computer-generated financial reports.
- **INTERNAL CULTURE:** The effectiveness of internal communication; the level of collegiality and cooperation; the staff's morale.

## 4. Issue Identification and Selection

### WHAT IS A STRATEGIC ISSUE?

The crux of the strategic development process is the identification and selection of the **STRATEGIC ISSUES** that the SHPO Office will tackle—above and beyond its normal, day-to-day business (what we called the “operational agenda” in Section 1). These strategic issues, and the strategic change initiatives that are fashioned to address them, comprise a SHPO Office’s **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**, which must be managed separately from a SHPO’s day-to-day affairs.

Strategic issues, which come in diverse shapes and sizes (FIGURE 9), are basically **CHANGE CHALLENGES** in the form of opportunities to move toward our SHPO vision and of barriers or problems impeding our progress to our vision. They might relate to:

- **CUSTOMERS, PROGRAMS, AND REVENUES**—for example, the opportunity to provide a new service to a new customer, such as a federal agency or an Indian tribe, or the decline of a traditional revenue source that forces the SHPO Office to search for new revenues. The New Hampshire planning team decided to address heritage tourism as one of its strategic issues.
- **IMAGE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS**—for example, the need to build a stronger image in the state or to repair a dangerously frayed relationship with a key stakeholder, such as the state legislature or a nonprofit board. The Texas planning team decided that stakeholder management generally merited immediate attention as one of a small number of high-priority issues.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP, PLANNING, AND MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY**—for example, the need to strengthen a SHPO board’s governance capability, or to upgrade a particular planning or management process. The Illinois planning team chose to tackle three internal issues—budget preparation, personnel management, and internal communication. The Kansas planning team decided to focus intensive attention on designing the process for preparing a statewide preservation plan that would be highly participatory and issue-focused.

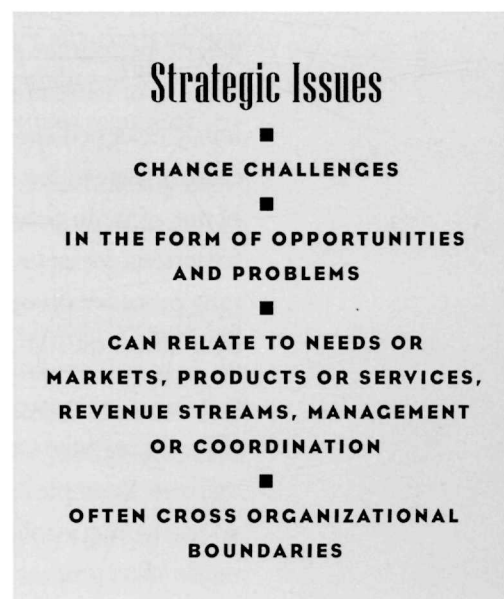


FIGURE 9

Certain characteristics tell us we are dealing with a strategic issue, rather than a matter that should be handled through the normal operational planning and management process: it involves high stakes; it demands intensive attention; and it cuts across SHPO Office programs and operating units.

□ **HIGH STAKES**—A strategic issue demands attention because the likely cost of **NOT** dealing with it will be high, in terms of direct penalties or lost benefits. For example, because of a failure to repair its working relationship with a politically influential nonprofit preservation association, a SHPO Office might lose legislative support in the state budget process. Or, a poorly designed budget process that fails to involve all of a SHPO Office's management team actively will exact a high price in terms of staff morale and program innovation and refinement.

□ **INTENSIVE ATTENTION**—The issue is so complex, and the need for action in the near-term so pressing, that the issue cannot be left to the SHPO Office's routine planning and management process or merely be delegated to a staff person to spearhead. For example, developing a heritage tourism program may involve complex dealings with several other state agencies and one or more nonprofits and the orchestration of planning sessions that must be meticulously designed and facilitated. And the outcomes that might be produced through the SHPO Office's statewide preservation planning process are so diverse (including upgrading the roles of one or more policy bodies and building alliances with state legislators and nonprofit associations, for example) and the process so complex that designing and carrying out the planning process cannot sensibly be delegated to one person, even if she or he is the normal planning officer on staff.

□ **CROSS-CUTTING, ORGANIZATION-WIDE**—Very often, strategic issues just do not fit into any existing SHPO Office operating unit or program area and are, therefore, organization-wide matters. Examples are stakeholder management, going after grants to fund new programs, strengthening a policy body's leadership capability, and building a more effective internal communication process.

## SELECTING STRATEGIC ISSUES

The overriding objective of a SHPO Office's Strategic Development Process is to generate **ACTION**—and **CHANGE**—in the **NEAR TERM**. Old-time supermarket planning, with its shopping lists of tantalizing possibilities, does not cut ice in this regard. The cruel fact is that a SHPO Office can handle only a very few, truly strategic issues well over the course of a year, while also managing day-to-day affairs.

**SELECTIVITY IS THE NAME OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GAME, AND IF A SHPO OFFICE IS SERIOUS ABOUT STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT, THEN THE PROCESS MUST BY ITS VERY NATURE FOCUS ITS ATTENTION ON A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF HIGHEST STAKES ISSUES.**



And keep in mind that we are not talking about General Motors here. The challenge for the average SHPO Office is to find some time, and perhaps a little money, to deal with two, three, or four serious issues at any given time, while continuing to spend 98 percent of the time on running the shop. It stands to reason, then, that the average SHPO Office must choose issues it can realistically handle. Far from being earth-shaking or grandiose, to be manageable the strategic issues must be **CHEWABLE BITES** that will not overwhelm the SHPO Office.

Narrowing down a list of 43 tantalizing prospects to the four “chewable bites” that a SHPO Office can afford to address is more an art than a science, but a SHPO Office’s planning team can bring rigorous logic and common sense to the selection task by asking certain key questions:

- What is our SHPO Office likely to pay because we do **NOT** deal with a particular issue this year? Penalties typically take the form of direct damage (eroding staff morale, alienating the governor, a cut in the budget) or less direct consequences (missing a major new grant opportunity).
- Are we realistically capable of tackling a particular issue, either alone or in alliance with one or more stakeholders? Our SHPO Office may need to build stronger staff capability or raise new funds to address an issue. What are the odds that we can muster the resources required?
- What risks are involved in tackling a particular issue? Is it politically or technically complex enough to make risk a serious issue? Is it so controversial that by merely tackling it we will tarnish our reputation?

Our SHPO Office planning team may have no choice but to address certain issues because the penalties of failing to act are so high. Usually, however, such easy and dramatic decisions do not come our way. Our task is to do a balancing job, choosing a small number of issues that promise the greatest benefits, that are assessed as affordable and manageable, and that involve the most favorable ratio of benefits to costs.

#### A TEAM AFFAIR

Teamwork is at the heart of strategic issue identification and selection, and the SHPO Office planning team will most likely require at least two intensive sessions for this purpose. A reliable approach is to accomplish the issue identification step as part of a one or one-and-one-half-day work session or retreat (see Section 6 below), and soon thereafter to select issues in a follow-up half-day session. The break-out groups that identified issues in the retreat might prepare for the follow-up issue selection session by performing a benefit/cost analysis of the issues they generated. This would ideally be made available to all members of the planning team in advance of the second session.

# 5. Strategy Formulation

## EMPLOYING TASK FORCES

Once a SHPO Office planning team has selected the issues that will be tackled **now**, it will make good sense to put together task forces to accomplish the detailed action strategy formulation that comes next. Task forces are an effective planning tool when:

**THEY DRAW STAFF FROM DIFFERENT PROGRAM/FUNCTIONAL AREAS IN THE SHPO OFFICE.**

Since strategic issues significantly impact the whole SHPO Office and since they tend to cut across programs and organizational divisions, task forces with diverse membership are essential. An added benefit of task forces is that they enhance internal communication and build a stronger internal culture.

**THEY INVOLVE KEY STAKEHOLDERS.**

Stakeholders can bring critical experience, expertise, and knowledge to the strategy formulation process, and their involvement can be a means to strengthen ties, as well as building stakeholder commitment to implementation of task force recommendations.

**THEY ARE WELL LED.**

Choosing the right task force leaders will help to ensure that their work is accomplished in a full and timely fashion. In making the appointments, look for the following characteristics:

- A strong understanding of, and commitment to, the strategy formulation process.
- Well developed planning and facilitation skills.
- The ability to relate well to peers.
- Openness to new ideas.
- An inclination to pay meticulous attention to detail.

**THEY RECEIVE A CLEAR, DETAILED CHARGE.**

Since strategic issues can be very different, the strategies to address them can also differ significantly, as can the methods to produce the strategies. For example, a task force whose charge is to design the statewide historic preservation planning process will be producing a very different product than a task force whose charge is to fashion strategy to improve a relationship with a particular stakeholder, or a strategy to obtain a new grant. These obvious differences mean that, if task forces are to hit the ground running, and to maintain their momentum, they must receive clear, detailed guidance about the job they are to perform: the

Since strategic issues can be very different, the strategies to address them can also differ significantly.

precise nature of their strategic product; the methods they are to employ; and the deadlines they are to meet.

□ **THE CONSTRAINTS ARE MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR.**

A critical supplement to a task force charge is the constraints that will govern their work. The SHPO Office planning team might, for example, decide that the only acceptable strategy involving new expenditures will clearly identify a new funding source and will include a detailed plan for tapping it. Or the team may decide that certain subjects are clearly off-limits, perhaps because of their political sensitivity. Whatever the constraints, by stating them at the onset, valuable time will be saved and needless emotion avoided.

□ **THEIR WORK IS OVERSEEN AND COORDINATED.**

To ensure that the task force process moves forward as planned, it is important that a staff person be assigned to oversee and coordinate the task force process (see Section 6 for more detail) and that the SHPO Office planning team regularly reviews progress.

□ **THEY DEVELOP A DETAILED TASK FORCE WORKPLAN.**

In addition to reviewing their charge at their first organizational meeting, it is important that each SHPO task force fashion a detailed workplan to meet the deadlines that have been assigned. The workplan should clearly identify and schedule the tasks to be accomplished, and should assign specific jobs to each task force member.

## STRATEGY FORMULATION METHOD

The precise method that a SHPO Office task force employs in carrying out its strategy formulation charge must be tailored to the particular issues being addressed. However, the great majority of task forces will produce one primary product — a set of what we might call “**CHANGE INITIATIVES**” to address the issue assigned to the task force. A Change Initiative can be thought of as a specific action strategy aimed at accomplishing specific targets and will consist of:

- A statement of the need (or sub-issue) being addressed.
- The specific targets to be achieved by the Initiative.
- The action plan to achieve the targets.
- The resources required.

For example, our task force, which is addressing the issue of improving our relationship with the head of the department in which the SHPO Office is located, has identified as a key sub-issue (a need), the department head’s lack of understanding about the SHPO Office’s basic mission and functions. Our specific **CHANGE INITIATIVE** to address this specific sub-issue (or need) will be to stage an in-depth briefing for the department head. Our action plan will include such steps

as preparing written and oral presentations, rehearsing as a team, making sure that time is set aside on the department head's calendar, and the like.

The task force process to produce the Change Initiatives will flow along the following lines in most cases:

- Early in the task force process, each task force must gain an in-depth familiarity with its particular issue, via a detailed second-stage environmental scan, the objective of which is to surface specific sub-issues (or needs/problems) that comprise the major issue. The more complex the major issue, the more sub-issues you can expect to find, and the more important this first scanning step will be.
- A variety of information techniques might be employed to create a more powerful scan of the issue. The task force might combine review of documentation with interviews and perhaps even surveys of opinion.
- The detailed issue scan and the analysis of sub-issues will inevitably surface a number of potential Change Initiatives, and the primary task force job is to select a limited number of such Initiatives and to fashion action plans to achieve them. There is no science to rely on in doing this job. Rather, a rough cost/benefit analysis can be employed to decide which Change Initiatives that **APPEAR TO BE FEASIBLE — TECHNICALLY, FINANCIALLY, AND POLITICALLY** — will provide the SHPO Office with the fullest return on its investment of precious time and other resources.
- One of the most important constraints in selecting Change Initiatives is the resources that are required to implement the Initiatives. How much can be done, and how quickly, obviously depends on the resources available — in time, in dollars, in technology, and sometimes even in political capital. Choice is the name of this game. When the strategic development process is taken seriously, it is about more than merely raising tantalizing possibilities or composing endless wish lists. Rather, it is about choice and investment — the choice to invest very scarce resources in achieving particular outcomes and carrying out specific courses of action.

#### SHPO OFFICE PLANNING TEAM OVERSIGHT

Since the stakes involved in the work of the various strategic development task forces are so high to the SHPO Office, it is imperative that the SHPO Office planning team keep close tabs on the task force process. The team can be used to provide technical guidance, reviewing interim task force reports and giving directions relative to needed revision, and to resolve operational issues that may arise as the task force effort proceeds.

# 6. Launching a Strategic Development Process

## CREATE A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Strategic development, if it is to yield powerful results to your SHPO Office over the long run, must be an on-going, well structured process that is not blended into the day-to-day operation of the SHPO Office's functions and programs. The following steps can be taken to ensure that the strategic development agenda is well managed and productive for your SHPO office:

### □ **ESTABLISH THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.**

Treat all activities involved in implementing the Strategic Development Process as a **STAND-ALONE SHPO OFFICE PROGRAM**. This Strategic Development Program is distinct from all other SHPO programs and is specifically charged with the strategic development of the SHPO Office over the long run.

### □ **CREATE A PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE.**

The SHPO Office Planning Team can serve as Strategic Development Program Steering Committee. Wearing this "hat," the Planning Team will meet solely for the purpose of providing policy direction to the Strategic Development Program, confirming its design and plans, overseeing its operation, and reviewing and adopting any task force recommendations emerging from the Program.

### □ **APPOINT A PROGRAM COORDINATOR.**

The SHPO Office's Strategic Development Program Coordinator will be a senior staff person who will devote between 10 and 20 percent of her or his time to serving as chief staff to the Program, in this capacity:

- Developing the Program Design for Steering Committee review.
- Providing staff support to the Steering Committee, ensuring that regular meetings are scheduled, that agendas are well developed, that documentation to be reviewed is received in advance, that presentations are well crafted, that Committee actions are followed up on, that the Committee is kept well briefed on Program progress and problems, and the like.
- Closely monitoring and guiding the work of any strategy formulation task forces that are established as part of the Strategic Development Program.

### □ **ADOPT A DETAILED STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DESIGN.**

Key to the success of a SHPO Office's Strategic Development Program will be the Steering Committee's adoption of a Program design that sets forth a schedule of major Program events (such as a kick-off retreat) and explains precisely how they relate to the annual operational planning

and budget preparation cycle. The Program Coordinator should take responsibility for preparing a Program Design Document for the Steering Committee's review as one of her or his first official duties.

#### USE A RETREAT AS A PROGRAM JUMP-START MECHANISM

Once the Strategic Development Program is firmly established, a retreat can be used as a powerful vehicle for jump-starting the strategic development process. The six SHPO Offices involved in the "Managing for the Year 2000" Initiative found this to be the case. Their one-and-one-half-day retreats involved the following major activities:

- Orientation on the strategic development method.
- The development of vision and mission statements.
- The assessment of external environmental conditions, trends, and stakeholders and of internal strengths and weaknesses.
- The identification of a number of potential strategic issues.
- The discussion of possible strategic change initiatives.

In all six cases, task forces were established subsequent to the retreats, for the purpose of fashioning strategic change initiatives to address selected strategic issues. It is anticipated that an annual retreat will become a standard part of each SHPO Office's ongoing Strategic Development Program.

The following steps will help to ensure a successful retreat:

##### □ **DEVELOP A DETAILED RETREAT DESIGN.**

Involve all SHPO Steering Committee members in developing a detailed design for the kick-off retreat that clearly specifies what it is intended to produce, how it will be structured (for example, will break-out groups be used?), and the agenda that will be followed.

##### □ **SET ASIDE ENOUGH TIME TO DO THE JOB FULLY.**

A key element of the design will be to ensure that enough time is set aside to achieve the desired objectives fully. Nothing that involves serious consideration of complex issues and active participation can be done in less than a full day, and often more time is desirable.

##### □ **ENSURE THAT STAFF PLAY ACTIVE ROLES IN LEADING THE RETREAT.**

Nothing kills interest and enthusiasm faster than having to sit in a passive presentation/response meeting. Far more effective is a design that involves SHPO staff members in leading the retreat. One sure-fire mechanism is break-out groups that are designed to achieve specific outcomes—for example, to develop the elements of a SHPO vision, to scan the SHPO environment, to identify strategic issues in a given area, such as image and external relations. This

participatory approach works best when the break-out group process is meticulously designed in terms of expected products and the method to be used and when group leaders are carefully selected and oriented on their facilitative roles.

□ **MEET IN A COMFORTABLE, OFF-SITE LOCATION.**

An off-site location well away from the SHPO Office will help to create a positive climate for the retreat. Basically, it assists participants to “suspend the rules,” to set their sights higher than day-to-day operations and to be open to new viewpoints and approaches. And a comfortable setting makes it easier to sustain energy and attention.

□ **INVITE IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE.**

Key stakeholders will not only bring valuable information and perspectives to a SHPO Office retreat, they will also get to know the SHPO Office better and may very well become stronger allies and potential joint-venture partners. For example, among the “outside” participants in the Kansas SHPO Office retreat were two representatives of the Historic Sites Board of Review, a representative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Advisors, two Certified Local Government planners, and representatives of the Kansas Preservation Alliance and the Historic Resources Committee of the American Institute of Architects.

□ **RETAIN A PROFESSIONAL FACILITATOR, IF FEASIBLE.**

One way to ensure that your SHPO Office retreat is highly productive is to retain the services of a professional facilitator to assist in planning and facilitating the retreat. A skilled third-party facilitator can make sure that discussion does not bog down and can guide consideration of sensitive issues that would be difficult to address without outside assistance.

□ **PROVIDE FOR FOLLOW-UP.**

By designing follow-up into the retreat, a SHPO Office can avoid the puzzlement, frustration, and anger that often result from a retreat that fails to generate concrete progress subsequent to the event. One simple tactic is to make sure that the third-party facilitator’s contract requires the preparation of a detailed follow-up report that summarizes the major points made during the retreat and also recommends next steps. It is important that such a report be reviewed line-by-line by all retreat participants as soon after the retreat as feasible, and that explicit decisions are made relative to the follow-up steps.

**A key element of the design will be to ensure that enough time is set aside to achieve the desired objectives fully.**



## 7. You Can Do It!

SHPO Offices face a stark choice in today's world:

- A SHPO Office can choose to be **PROACTIVE** — creatively and systematically leading and managing change, taking command of its own development and growth.
- Or a SHPO Office can be **PASSIVE AND REACTIVE** — being changed by the forces around it and reacting to events as they occur.

THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND: EITHER DO, OR BE DONE UNTO!

The good news in today's challenging environment is that the Strategic Development Process described in this *Guidebook* is a powerful tool for proactive planning and management, and any SHPO Office that makes the proactive choice can put the Strategic Development Process into practice. No matter how threatening its environment, how straitened its resources, or how complex its politics, the SHPO Office that is committed to applying the Strategic Development Process can put it to good use.

We are not talking of tilting at windmills. By fashioning a detailed gameplan — or design — for applying the Strategic Development Process that is tailored to its unique situation, a SHPO Office can ensure that its investment of time and energy yields valuable results. The pace may be slower than ideal, the reach shorter than we would like, but the results, however modest, will always be preferable to the high price of passivity and inaction.

# 8. Sources of Information on Strategic Development

## IN GENERAL

SHPO executives and managers who want to keep in touch with broad currents in nonprofit and public management and in the fields of strategic planning/management, change management, and board leadership development will find that national journals are the most reliable resource. Books tend not only to tell us much more than we need to know, they are often somewhat dated by the time they hit the streets. Most helpful are: *Harvard Business Review* (Harvard Business School); *Sloan Management Review* (MIT Sloan School of Management); *Nonprofit World* (Society for Nonprofit Organizations); and the various publications of the National Center for Nonprofit Boards. *Fortune Magazine* is an excellent source on economic and management trends. Far less helpful because of their academic bent are *Nonprofit Leadership and Management* (Jossey-Bass Publishers) and *Public Administration Review* (American Society for Public Administration).

## STRATEGIC PLANNING/MANAGEMENT

Probably the best book on public and nonprofit strategic planning is Bryson, J. M. (1989), *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass). Also helpful is Olsen, J. B., and Eadie, D. C. (1982), *The Game Plan: Governance With Foresight* (Washington, D.C.: Council of State Planning and Policy Agencies). Articles of special interest because of their focus on public and nonprofit applications are: Bryson, J. M., and Roering, W. D. (1987), "Applying Private Sector Strategic Planning in the Public Sector," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 53, 9-22; Eadie, D. C. (1987), "Strategic Issue Management: Building an Organization's Strategic Capability," *Economic Development Commentary*, 11, 18-21; Eadie, D. C. (1989), "Building the Capacity for Strategic Management," in J. L. Perry (Ed.), *Handbook of Public Administration* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 162-175; Jones, R. L., and Eadie, D. C. (1994), "Fostering Innovation and Growth: The Center for Human Services Experience," *Nonprofit World*, 1, 23-28; Kemp, E. J., Funk, R. J., and Eadie, D. C. (1993), "Change in Chewable Bites: Applying Strategic Management at EEOC," *Public Administration Review*, 2, 129-134.

## CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Three superb books that deal with innovation and the management of change are: Kanter, R. M. (1989), *When Giants Learn to Dance* (New York, Simon and Schuster); Senge, P. M. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Doubleday); and Tichy, N. M. (1983), *Managing Strategic Change* (New York: John Wiley & Sons). Three additional works on managing change that provide useful information are: Dalziel, M. M., and Schoonover, S. C. (1988), *Changing Ways* (New York: AMACOM);

Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1985), *How to Manage Change Effectively* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers); and Lippitt, G. L., Langseth, P., and Mossop, J. (1985), *Implementing Organizational Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers).

#### BOARD LEADERSHIP

The National Center for Nonprofit Boards has published a book shelf of practical monographs addressing different facets of nonprofit board leadership, including this writer's 1993 piece, *Beyond Strategic Planning: How to Involve Nonprofit Boards in Growth and Change* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Nonprofit Boards). One of the few helpful books on developing the nonprofit board's role is Carver, J. (1990), *Boards that Make a Difference* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass). Carver's book is more useful in establishing boundaries between the governance and executive functions than in developing a board leadership role in strategic planning/management, which he largely ignores.

Three recent articles focusing on nonprofit board leadership development are: Conley, G. N., and Eadie, D.C. (1990), "Strengthening Board Strategic Leadership," *Economic Development Commentary*, 13, 4-11; Eadie, D.C. (1991), "Strengthening Board Leadership and the Board-Chief Executive Partnership," *Economic Development Review*, 9, 39-42; and Eadie, D.C., and Edwards, R. L. (1993), "Board Leadership by Design," *Nonprofit World*, 2, 12-15.

#### INDIVIDUAL HUMAN GROWTH

Organizational change is driven to a significant degree by individual growth, and in this regard SHPO team members will find inspiring and useful: Covey, S. R. (1989), *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster); May, R. (1994), *The Courage to Create* (New York: W. W. Norton); Peck, M. S. (1978), *The Road Less Traveled* (New York: Simon & Schuster); and Wheelis, A. (1973) *How People Change* (New York: Harper and Row).

# About the Author

Douglas C. Eadie is founder and president of Strategic Development Consulting, Inc., a Cleveland, Ohio firm that specializes in public and nonprofit strategic management, board leadership development, and executive team building. Doug has worked with over 200 public and nonprofit organizations and is the author of over 80 articles and book chapters on strategic management and board development. He is co-author of one of the first books on public strategic planning, *The Game Plan: Governance with Foresight*, and his new book on building nonprofit association board leadership capability will be published by the American Society of Association Executives in December, 1994.

Prior to establishing his firm, Doug taught ancient history and served in a number of public and nonprofit executive positions. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Illinois (Urbana) and received his Master of Science in Management degree from the Weatherhead School, Case Western Reserve University.

