

This example can be used as a starting point to create a policy or other document for your own land trust, but should be altered as necessary to reflect your organization's unique circumstances using guidance found in the *Land Trust Standards and Practices Guidebook* text and corresponding Standards and Practices Curriculum.

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Basics of Action Planning (as part of strategic planning)

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The reader might best be served to first read the information in the topic [Strategic Planning](#).

(At this point in the strategic planning process, planners have usually already completed all or most of the strategic analysis, including the environmental scan, SWOT analysis, identifying strategic issues and goals. They've probably already developed/updated the mission statement (and a vision statement and values statement, if they choose to add these).

Action planning typically includes deciding who is going to do what and by when and in what order for the organization to reach its strategic goals. The design and implementation of the action planning depend on the nature and needs of the organization.

One of Biggest Problems in Strategic Planning: Plan Isn't Implemented

At this point in planning, planners are sometimes fatigued from completing the earlier phases of planning. Action planning may seem detailed and tedious compared to earlier phases of strategic planning which often seem creative in nature. Therefore, action planning is too often ignored, leaving the results of earlier stages of planning much as "castles in the air" -- useless philosophical statements with no grounding in the day-to-day realities of the organization. Meaningful stages of earlier planning become utterly useless.

The organization's commitment to strategic planning is commensurate to the extent that a) the organization completes action plans to reach each strategic goal and b) includes numerous methods for verifying and evaluating the actual extent of implementation of the action plan.

Developing Action Plans (or Work Plans)

1. Actions plans specify the actions needed to address each of the top organizational

issues and to reach each of the associated goals, who will complete each action and according to what timeline.

2. Develop an overall, top-level action plan that depicts how each strategic goal will be reached.
3. Develop an action plan for each major function in the organization, e.g., marketing, development, finance, personnel, and for each program/service, etc. These plans, in total, should depict how the overall action plan will be implemented. In each action plan, specify the relationship of the action plan to the organization's overall, top-level action plan.
4. Ensure each manager (and, ideally each employee) has an action plan that contributes to the overall. These plans, in total, should depict how the action plans of the major functions will be implemented. Again, specify the relationship of these action plan to the organization's overall, top-level action plan.
5. The format of the action plan depends on the nature and needs of the organization. The plan for the organization, each major function, each manager and each employee, might specify:
 - a) The goal(s) that are to be accomplished
 - b) How each goal contributes to the organization's overall strategic goals
 - c) What specific results (or objectives) must be accomplished that, in total, reach the goal of the organization
 - d) How those results will be achieved
 - e) When the results will be achieved (or timelines for each objective)

Developing Objectives and Timelines

1. Objectives are specific, measurable results produced while implementing strategies.
2. While identifying objectives, keep asking “Are you sure you can do this?”
3. Integrate the current year’s objectives as performance criteria in each “implementer’s” job description and performance review.
4. Remember that objectives and their timelines are only guidelines, not rules set in stone. They can be deviated from, but deviations should be understood and explained.
5. Consider the following example format for action your plan.

Strategic Goal	Strategy	Objective	Responsibility	Timeline
1. (Goal #1)	1.1 (first strategy to reach Goal #1)	1.1.1 (first objective to reach while implementing Strategy #1.1)	(who’s going to accomplish that objective)	(when the implementer is going to be accomplish that objective)

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