

@wcma.org

WCMC STRATEGIC PLAN

2026–2031

Advancing with Intention



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Washington City/County
Management Association
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MEMBER POLLS

Pull out your phones
Get your voting on!



In ONE word, what do you hope WCMA becomes in the next 5 years?



MEMBER POLL



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How long have you been a WCMA Member?



New to the flock!

Under 2 Years



**Still finding my
footing!**

2-5 Years



Well Established!

5-10 Years



**Institutional
Memory!**

10 + Years



How long have you been a WCMA Member?



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



- Una McAlinden, Creative Strategy Solutions
- WCMA Board
- MRSC Staff





THE MOMENT

+ × + ×



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Why now?

WCMA is at an inflection point.

Stronger engagement. Increased impact. Clarified purpose.



⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮
⋮ ⋮ ⋮ ⋮



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SESSION ROADMAP

- How the plan was built
- What's in the newly adopted strategic plan
- Your reflections
- Implementation - Subcommittees





How WCMA Built Its New Strategic Plan

A structured, flexible and iterative process





How many strategic planning processes have you personally participated in?



Looking back, most of those experiences felt like...



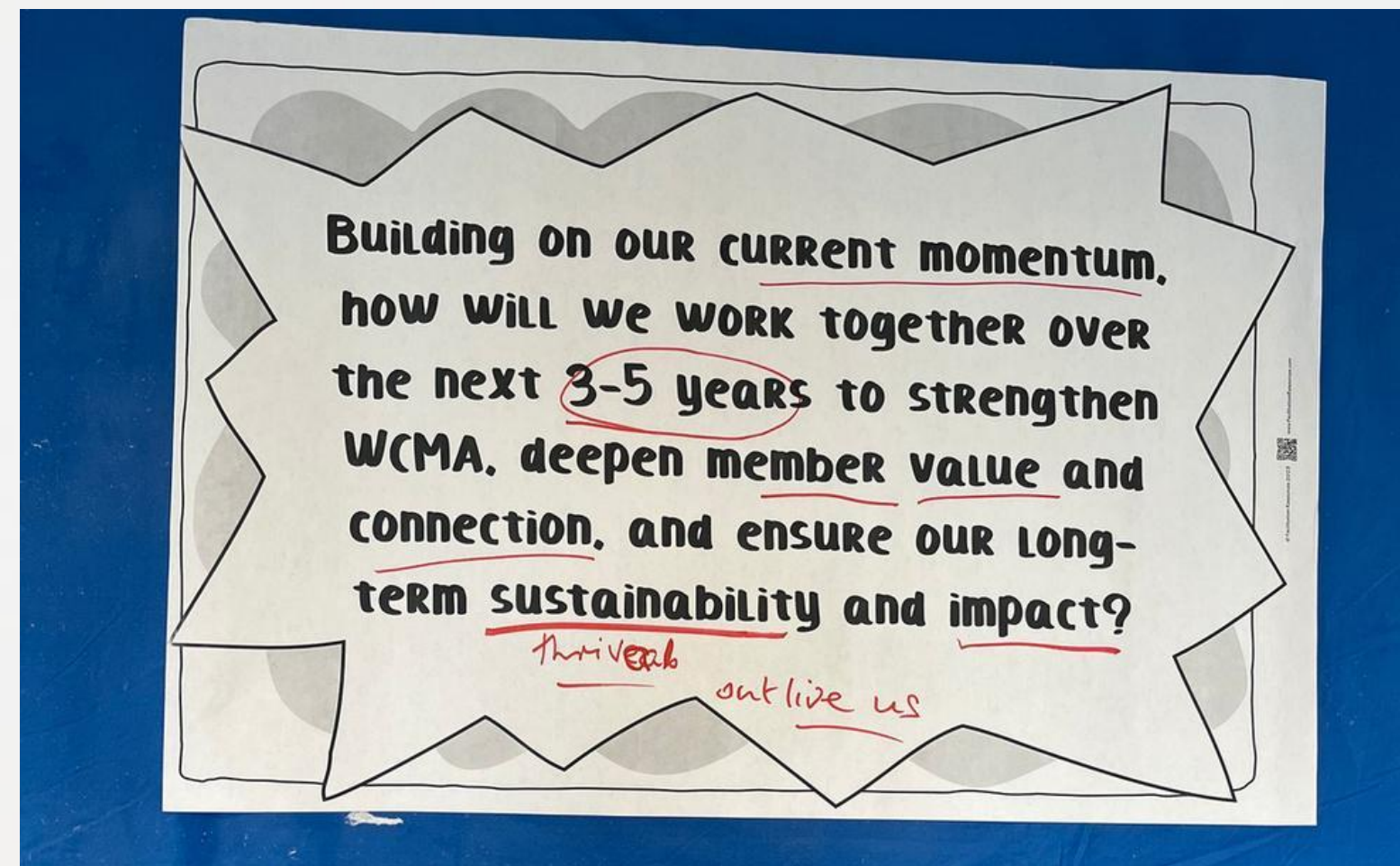


Does your organization currently have a strategic plan?

Step 1: Pre-planning and Design

Why is now the time for strategic planning?

How do we define this moment in time for the organization?



If we skip this: We are guessing at needs, instead of getting straight to the real work.

Step 2: Current Reality

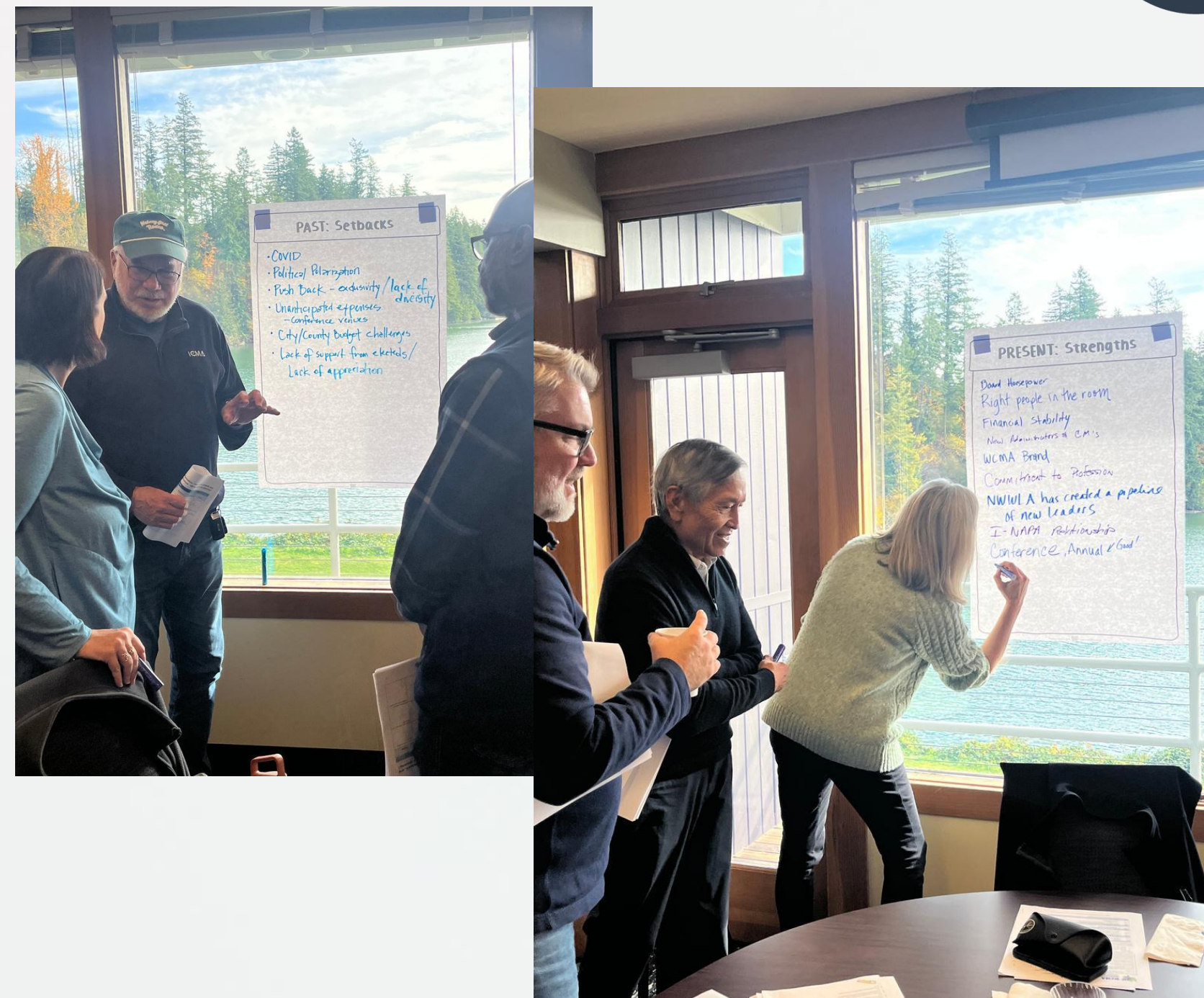
What from our past, present & anticipated future can help inform our planning?

What's most important to keep front of mind?

“

"We came in with a mix of tenures and perspectives. Getting that shared context — really seeing where we were — was more valuable than I expected."

”



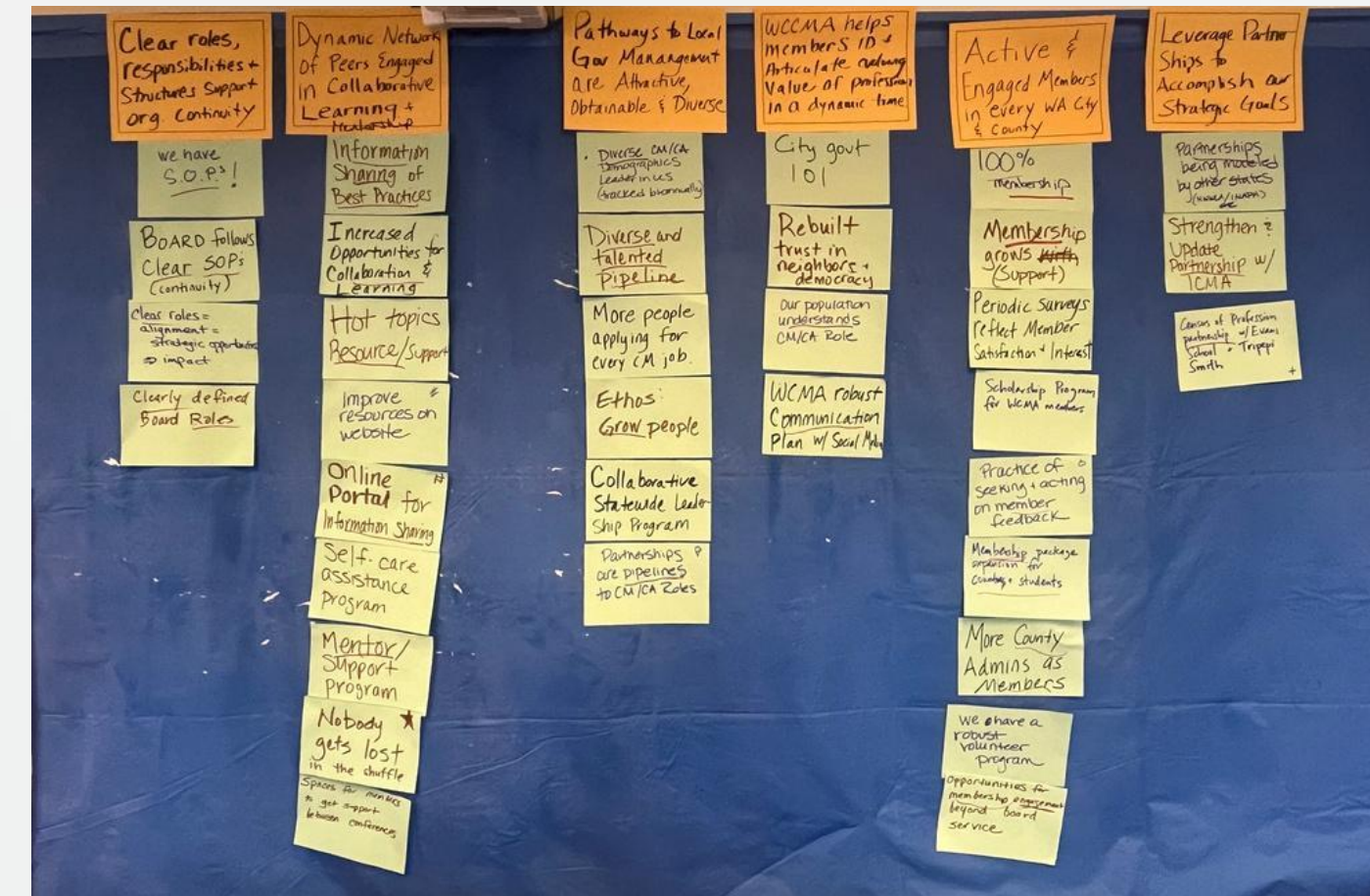
If we skip this: We are working from different assumptions and hidden disagreements.

Step 3: Creating a shared Vision

What do we see in place, 3-5 years from now, as a result of our work?

What will be distinctly different from today?

“A lot of the people who'd been involved in WCMA for a while got to see it with fresh eyes. There were real light bulb moments — oh, this is what we could be.”



If we skip this: We end up with a list of projects but no shared picture of success.

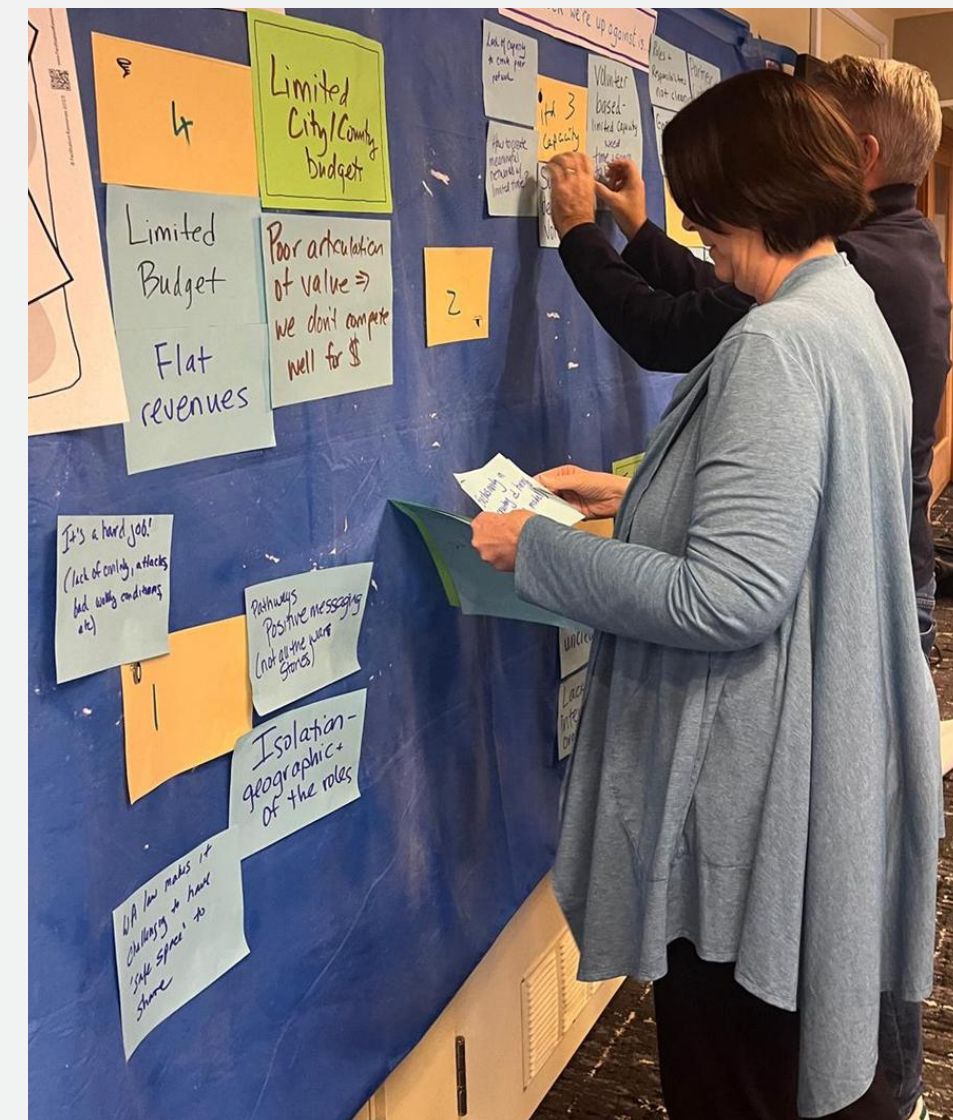
Step 4: Barriers & Contradictions

What is blocking us from making progress towards our vision?

How are we getting in our own way?

“There was some healthy conflict — real differences in how people saw things. But the space felt safe enough that people were willing to engage with that rather than just move past it. And that's what made it valuable.”

”



If we skip this: The plan sounds good on paper but runs straight into the same obstacles.

Step 5: Strategic Directions

What innovative robust actions can we take, in light of our blocks/vision?

Where will we focus our energy and investment over the next few years?

“

"Nobody gave anything up. You could see your own handwriting on the wall. Your ideas were there. And somehow we'd named what connected all of them."

”



If we skip this: We have a vision & a grab-bag of tactics, but no filter to guide choices.

Who will do what, by when for the plan to move to action?

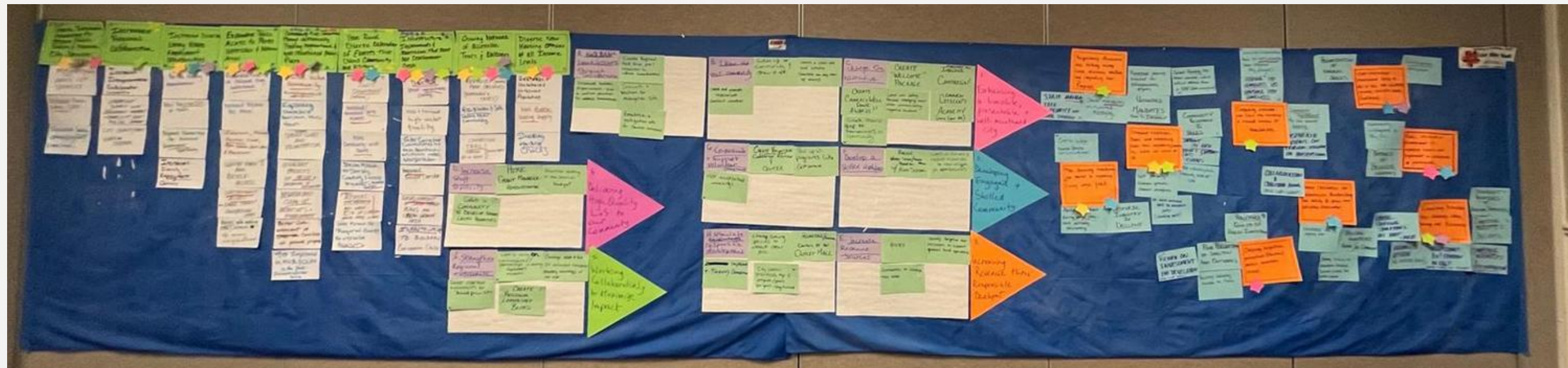
“



If we skip this: The plan struggles, because staff didn't shaped the projects and timelines.

Why it works

The intangible impacts beyond the plan



“We sat down and we worked through it together.
I think people left feeling like we did something good.”



Which stage of this process do you feel most at home in?





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THE ADOPTED PLAN

Presenting the Strategic Plan 2026–2031

Let's walk through the full strategic plan, including WCMA's purpose, vision framework, and the five strategic directions shaping 2026–2031.



Strategic direction & vision

WCMA's refreshed purpose and the overarching vision framework that guides the plan's strategic directions.



Priorities & accountability

5 strategic directions to guide us through 2031.



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PURPOSE & VISION



Why WCMA Exists

The Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA) exists to support, connect, and strengthen local government professionals across Washington State. Building on recent momentum, stronger member engagement, and increased programmatic impact, this Strategic Plan establishes a clear, disciplined framework to guide WCMA’s work over the next three to five years.





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PURPOSE & VISION

Our Purpose



WCMA's purpose is the foundation of our 2026–2031 Strategic Plan. Everything we do flows from a clear commitment to serving the public interest through our members.



Vision Framework/ Goals

- Clear roles, responsibilities, and structures
- Strong resources and support systems
- A dynamic, engaged peer network
- Active and engaged members in every Washington city and county
- A strengthened pipeline into local government management
- Durable partnerships





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STRATEGIC DIRECTION

1. Strengthen Governance, Roles, and Organizational Infrastructure
2. Deepen Member Value, Engagement, and Connection
3. Build and Sustain a Strong Leadership Pipeline
4. Elevate the Profession and Strengthen Recruitment
5. Align Capacity, Priorities, and Partnerships for Long-Term Sustainability





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STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1



Strengthen Governance, Roles, and Organizational Infrastructure

WCMA will establish clear, sustainable systems that support continuity, accountability, and effective decision-making.



Key outcomes

- Clearly defined board and committee roles aligned with strategic priorities.
- Consistent onboarding and leadership development for board and committee members.
- Improved transparency and follow-through in governance and decision-making.



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STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Deepen Member Value, Engagement, and Connection

WCMA will strengthen its role as a trusted professional home by increasing meaningful engagement opportunities and clearly communicating value.



Key outcomes

- Increased membership participation across regions, disciplines, and career stages.
- Expanded opportunities for peer learning, mentorship, and connection between conferences.
- Improved understanding among members of WCMA programs, resources, and benefits.



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STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Build and Sustain a Strong Leadership Pipeline

WCMA will intentionally support the next generation of local government leaders by expanding pathways into the profession and strengthening professional development.

Key outcomes



- Increased membership participation across regions, disciplines, and career stages.
- Expanded opportunities for peer learning, mentorship, and connection between conferences.
- Improved understanding among members of WCMA programs, resources, and benefits.





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STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4

Elevate the Profession and Strengthen Recruitment

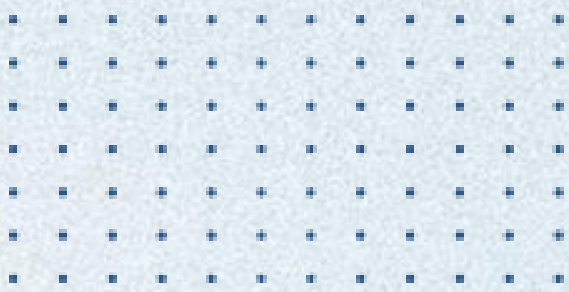
WCMA will proactively shape the narrative around local government management, highlighting its impact, relevance, and public value.



Key outcomes

- Clear, compelling messaging that articulates the value of the profession.
- Practical tools and resources to support recruitment and retention.
- Increased visibility of positive stories, innovations, and leadership successes across Washington.





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STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5

Align Capacity, Priorities, and Partnerships for Long-Term

Sustainability

WCMA will align its workload, partnerships, and financial resources with its strategic priorities to ensure long-term organizational health.



Key outcomes



- Focused annual work plans aligned with strategic directions.
- Strong partnerships that enhance program delivery and reduce duplication.
- Financial sustainability that supports innovation while maintaining fiscal responsibility.



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BREAKOUT SESSION



Setup & Group Assignments

Work with your table...

Each group will have a facilitator to guide the conversation and a note-taker to capture key ideas.

Groups will have 10 minutes to discuss before we reconvene to share out.



Discussion Topics

Reflect on the five strategic directions. Which resonates most with your work?

Beyond these five directions, what else would make WCMA indispensable to you?

Be ready to share one key insight or action idea from your group when we reconvene. All voices and perspectives are welcome and valued.



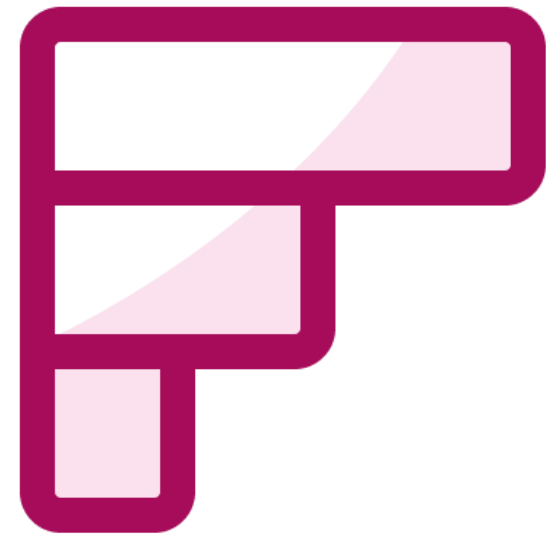


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Each group reports back their key insights

Spokespersons from each breakout group will share 2–3 key takeaways with the full room. The board will be listening for themes, tensions, and opportunities that emerge across groups.





Which Strategic Direction is most compelling for you?





IMPLEMENTATION

- Communications Committee
- Conference Committee
- Governance/Organizational Structure Committee
- Membership Committee



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE



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Purpose: Advance WCMA's visibility and impact through strategic communication and outreach.

- Develop and implement a multi-platform communications strategy
- Content that connects: Create best practices, member features, program highlights
- Collaborate with Board and committees to amplify initiatives
- Recognize member achievements and celebrate the profession

Structure: 4+ members · Meets monthly · Open to general membership

Tracking Progress Toward Our 2031 Goals





CONFERENCE COMMITTEE



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Purpose: Plan, deliver, and refine the WCMA Annual Conference to advance the profession and connect members.



- Develop a meaningful theme grounding the program in the WA municipal management moment
- Attract compelling keynote speakers and build an aligned session program
- Drive sponsorship through strategic approaches and collective participation
- Coordinate logistics with MRSC: registration, app, venue, materials
- Assess and refine: survey attendees, document systems for future continuity

Structure: 5+ members · Chaired by Board Vice President · Includes I-NAPA representative · Open to general membership





GOVERNANCE/ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



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COMMITTEE



Purpose: Formalize, maintain, and continuously improve WCMA's governance structure, board policies, and operational practices.

- Strengthen board structure — clarify roles, align governance with the Strategic Plan
- Organize governance documents — create a centralized catalog with version control
- Develop policies and tools — agenda templates, action trackers, reporting standards
- Onboard new board members — orientation materials, role expectations, transition support
- Ensure continuity — succession planning, annual governance reviews, lessons learned

Structure: 5+ members · Chaired by a Board member · Meets quarterly (or more as needed) · Open to general membership





MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



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Purpose: Advance member recruitment, engagement, retention, and connectivity across WCMA.

- Recruit new members and strengthen awareness of WCMA statewide
- Retain members through meaningful engagement, outreach, and communication
- Promote networking, mentorship, and peer connection opportunities
- Support pathways for emerging professionals, students, and first-time members
- Encourage diversity across geography, org size, career stage, and lived experience



Structure: 5+ members · Chaired by a Board member · Meets monthly · Open to members across regions and career stages

Tracking Progress Toward Our 2031 Goals





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BREAKOUT SESSION



Setup & Group Assignments

Move to the committee you're most interested in...

Each committee group will have a facilitator to guide the conversation and a note-taker to capture key ideas.

Groups will have 10 minutes to discuss before we reconvene to share out.



Discussion Questions

What drew you to this committee?
(rapid round)

What's in place? What's missing?
(just take notes, don't address (yet))

What does success look like?
(how will the members know?)

Be ready to share one key insight or action idea from your group when we reconvene. All voices and perspectives are welcome and valued.





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Each group reports back their key insights

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MEMBER POLL



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How confident are you that...?



How confident are you that the plan is headed in the right direction?



In ONE word, how you feel about the plan?



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Are you willing to join a committee
(if yes, which one?)



How likely are you to serve on a committee?





Which committee interests you most?



THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO BUILD IT TOGETHER.



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**Carry this forward — your commitment
shapes what comes next.**

Thank you for your energy, your voice, and your dedication to
WCMA's future.

