



**WCMA**  
Washington City/County  
Management Association  
A State Affiliate of ICMA

# Strategic Planning

## Implementation Session Agenda

### Focus: Tactical Take Off

9:00 am–12:00 pm Wednesday January 7th, 2025: Online

**Building on our current momentum, how will we work together over the next 3-5 years to strengthen WCMA, deepen member value and connection, and ensure our long term sustainability and impact?**

#### Session Goals:

- Align all board members on the strategic plan and implementation roles
- Develop implementation recommendations for each strategic direction, with success indicators and deliverables
- Establish a realistic first-year draft timeline
- Build board commitment and confidence in the plan's feasibility and value

	Segment Focus	Aims
9:00-9:15	<b>Check In Review Agenda</b>	Facilitator guides brief check-in, then reviews today's agenda, introducing the steps and process ahead.
9:15-9:30	<b>Review the Strategic Plan:</b> Ensure all board members understand the strategic plan and their role(s) in implementation	Review the planning journey to this point. Connect the work to the overall focus question. Create work teams.
9:30-9:50	<b>Strategic Direction 1:</b> What will be our specific, measurable accomplishments for the first year?	The group will do a quick Current Reality for each Strategic Direction, identify Success Metrics for 2-3 years, and then identify benchmark deliverables to bridge between the current situation and the success metrics.
9:50-10:10	<b>Strategic Direction 2</b>	
10:10-10:30	<b>SD 3</b>	
10:30-10:50	<b>SD 4</b>	
10:50-11:00	<b>BREAK</b>	
11:00-11:30	<b>Developing a potential timeline</b> What is our timeline for completion of the first-year accomplishments?	A detailed implementation timeline for the first year, including accomplishments by quarter with project leads and implementation teams named, deadlines articulated, and next steps clarified.
11:30-11:45	<b>Coordination Discussion:</b> Will these implementation steps achieve what we want to accomplish?	Review the compiled timeline and identify how plan will be monitored, coordinated, and evaluated.
11:45 -12:00	<b>Closing &amp; Reflection</b>	Group reflects on their work and looks ahead to launching the plan.



In advance of the session, please use pages 2-5 to gather your initial thinking in each of the Strategic Direction Areas. Please print and bring any advance notes you make.

# Board Implementation Worksheets

**WCMA Board Meeting  
Wednesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

Strategic Direction 1: Enhancing Value to Drive Membership

In advance of the retreat, use this to gather your initial thinking around each strategic direction. Note 1-3 key items for discussion as a group.

<p>Good News</p> <p>What’s already in place here? What’s going for us?</p> <p>What are notable areas of strength, achievement?</p>	<p>Areas of Concern</p> <p>What’s missing? Where are there gaps?</p> <p>What weaknesses or deficits come to mind?</p>
<p>Relevant Opportunities</p> <p>What opportunities are emerging that could be relevant here?</p> <p>What intersections do you see with other initiatives?</p>	<p>Relevant Threats</p> <p>What threats or challenges are you aware of here?</p> <p>What could become a problem if not addressed?</p>
<p>Success Indicators</p> <p>In 2-3 years, what shifts or changes do you want to see?</p> <p>What evidence would demonstrate that this was a WCMA priority?</p>	

Strategic Direction 2: Engaging with Members to Build Community + Connection

In advance of the retreat, use this to gather your initial thinking around each strategic direction. Note 1-3 key items for discussion as a group.

<p>Good News</p> <p>What’s already in place here? What’s going for us?</p> <p>What are notable areas of strength, achievement?</p>	<p>Areas of Concern</p> <p>What’s missing? Where are there gaps?</p> <p>What weaknesses or deficits come to mind?</p>
<p>Relevant Opportunities</p> <p>What opportunities are emerging that could be relevant here?</p> <p>What intersections do you see with other initiatives?</p>	<p>Relevant Threats</p> <p>What threats or challenges are you aware of here?</p> <p>What could become a problem if not addressed?</p>
<p>Success Indicators</p> <p>In 2-3 years, what shifts or changes do you want to see?</p> <p>What evidence would demonstrate that this was a WCMA priority?</p>	

Strategic Direction 3: Strengthening + Supporting the CM/CA Career Cycle

In advance of the retreat, use this to gather your initial thinking around each strategic direction. Note 1-3 key items for discussion as a group.

<p><b>Good News</b></p> <p><i>What’s already in place here? What’s going for us?</i></p> <p><i>What are notable areas of strength, achievement?</i></p>	<p><b>Areas of Concern</b></p> <p><i>What’s missing? Where are there gaps?</i></p> <p><i>What weaknesses or deficits come to mind?</i></p>
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<p><b>Success Indicators</b></p> <p><i>In 2-3 years, what shifts or changes do you want to see?</i></p> <p><i>What evidence would demonstrate that this was a WCMA priority?</i></p>	

Strategic Direction 4: Building + Maintaining a Highly Effective Board

In advance of the retreat, use this to gather your initial thinking around each strategic direction. Note 1-3 key items for discussion as a group.

<p><b>Good News</b></p> <p><i>What’s already in place here? What’s going for us?</i></p> <p><i>What are notable areas of strength, achievement?</i></p>	<p><b>Areas of Concern</b></p> <p><i>What’s missing? Where are there gaps?</i></p> <p><i>What weaknesses or deficits come to mind?</i></p>
<p><b>Relevant Opportunities</b></p> <p><i>What opportunities are emerging that could be relevant here?</i></p> <p><i>What intersections do you see with other initiatives?</i></p>	<p><b>Relevant Threats</b></p> <p><i>What threats or challenges are you aware of here?</i></p> <p><i>What could become a problem if not addressed?</i></p>
<p><b>Success Indicators</b></p> <p><i>In 2-3 years, what shifts or changes do you want to see?</i></p> <p><i>What evidence would demonstrate that this was a WCMA priority?</i></p>	



# WCMA Board Retreat & Strategic Planning Launch    November 4, 2025



## Focus: Launching Strategic Planning

**Building on our current momentum, how will we work together over the next 3-5 years to strengthen WCMA, deepen member value and connection, and ensure our long term sustainability and impact?**



### Retreat Work Products

- Contextual Scan
- Practical Vision
- Contradictions & Blocks

Designed & facilitated by  
certified Technology of  
Participation Facilitator:



Una McAlinden, CTF





Practical Vision	Obstacles	Strategic Directions
3-5 years from now, as a result of our efforts, we will see in place:	We recognize that we are blocked from our vision by:	We will address our contradictions and advance our vision by:
<p><b>Clear Roles, Responsibilities, and Structures</b> <b>Support Organization Continuity</b></p> <p><b>Support/resources for members to advance good governance, trust, and value of profession.</b></p> <p><b>Dynamic Network of Peers, Engaged in Collaborative Learning + Mentorship</b></p> <p><b>Active &amp; Engaged Members in every WA City &amp; County</b></p> <p><b>Pathways to Local Government Management are Attractive, Obtainable &amp; Diverse</b></p> <p><b>Strong Partnerships that help Accomplish our Strategic Goals</b></p>	<p><b>Unclear path - chasing squirrels without systems &amp; structure</b></p> <p><b>Few do most, many show up</b></p> <p><b>Unbalanced focus on negative</b></p> <p><b>Outdated view of the role &amp; Outdated recruiting strategies</b></p> <p><b>Failure to define and / or communicate value</b></p> <p><b>Poor articulation of value means we don't compete well for money</b></p>	<p><b>Enhancing Value to Drive Membership</b></p> <p><b>Engaging with Members to Build Community + Connection</b></p> <p><b>Strengthening + Supporting the CM/CA Career Cycle</b></p> <p><b>Building + Maintaining a Highly Effective Board</b></p>
	2026-2031 Strategic Plan developed in Fall 2025 by WCMA Board of Directors	Facilitated by Una McAlinden, Creative Strategy Solutions



# In 3-5 years, as a result of our work, we see in place:

## Clear Roles, Responsibilities, and Structures Support Organization Continuity

We have S.O.P.s!

Board follows clear SOPs for continuity

clear roles = alignment  
= strategic opportunities  
=> Impact

Clearly defined board roles

## WCCMA Helps Members ID & Articulate the value of the Profession in a Dynamic Time

City Government 101

Rebuilt trust in neighbors and democracy

Our population understands City Manager / City Administrator Role

WCMA Robust communication plan with social media

## Dynamic Network of Peers, Engaged in Collaborative Learning + Mentorship

Information sharing of best practices

Increased opportunities for collaboration & learning

Hot topics resource / support

Improve resources on website

Online portal for information sharing

Self-care assistance program

Mentor / support program

Nobody gets lost in the shuffle

Spaces for members to get support between conferences

## Active & Engaged Members in every WA City & County

100% Membership

Memberships grows (support)

Periodic surveys reflect member satisfaction and interest

Scholarship program from WCMA members

Practice of seeking + acting on member feedback

Membership package expansion for counties & students

More County Admins as Members

We have a robust volunteer program

Opportunities for membership engagement beyond board service

## Pathways to Local Government Management are Attractive, Obtainable & Diverse

Diverse City Manager / City Administrators demographics leader in US (tracked biannually)

Diverse and talented pipeline

More people applying for every City Manager job

Ethos: Grow People

Collaborative statewide leadership program

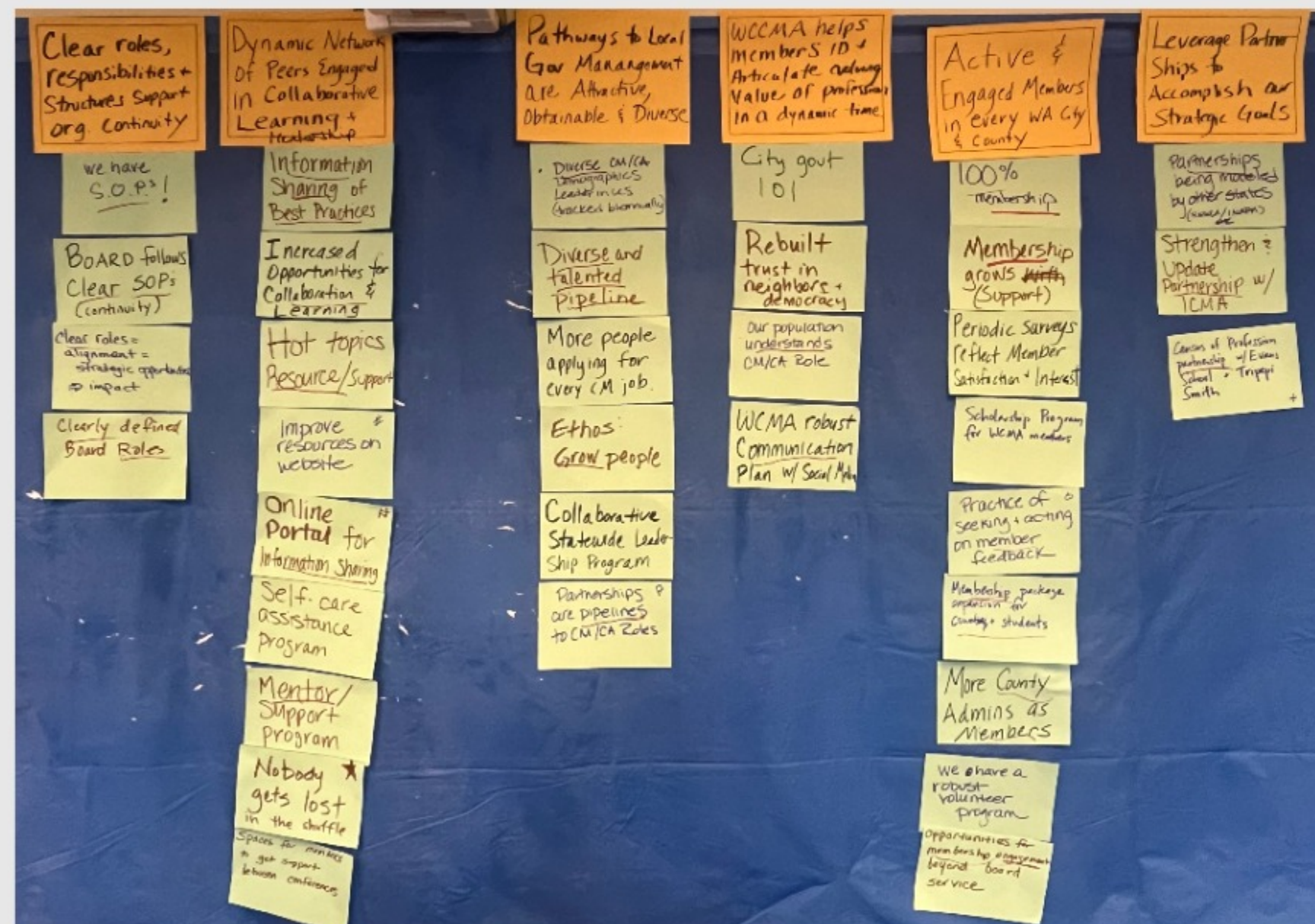
partnerships are pipelines to City Manager / City Administrator roles

## Strong Partnerships that help Accomplish our Strategic Goals

Partnerships being modeled by other states (NWWLA/INAPA)

Strengthen & Update Partnership with ICMA

Census of Profession partnerships with Evans School + Tripepi Smith





In examining our obstacles, we recognize...

We are blocked from  
our Desired Future by

....

Unclear path - chasing  
squirrels without  
systems & structure

Few do most  
many show up

Unbalanced  
focus on  
negative

Outdated view of the  
role & Outdated  
recruiting strategies

Failure to define  
and / or  
communicate value

Poor articulation of  
value means we don't  
compete well for  
money

Roles +  
responsibilities  
not clear

How to create  
meaningful networks  
with limited time?

It's a hard job! (Lack of  
civility, attacks, bad  
working conditions,  
etc)

Exclusivity in  
recruiting & hiring  
(outdated model)

Value is  
unclear

Limited  
budget

Partner  
criteria

Volunteer based  
- limited  
capacity

Pathways positive  
messaging (not all  
the war stories)

Tradition &  
Stereotypes

Lack of interest  
in organization

Limited city / county  
budgets, they don't  
prioritise the  
membership cost

Partnerships:  
How to evaluate  
shared values

System depends  
on volunteers

Isolation -  
geographics + of  
the roles

Targeted recruitment  
of diverse associate  
members

Limits  
membership

Flat  
revenues

Too many opportunities  
for partnerships, lack of  
clarity on what strategic  
goals are

Gap in systems /  
delayed  
progress

Need time and space  
to build org structures  
and policies

WA law makes it  
challenging to have  
"safe space" to share

Not Forward  
focus

No  
accountability  
Feedback loop

Lack of capacity  
to create peer  
network

Too many  
priorities

Board unaware  
of exec  
decisions

Clarify of  
purpose and  
priorities

Clarity +  
focus

WHAT IS BLOCKING US  
FROM MOVING TOWARD  
OUR VISION?

&

Creative  
Strategy  
Solutions





## Strategic Directions

Over the next 3-5 years, and building on our current momentum, we work together to strengthen WCMA, deepen member value and connection, and ensure our long term sustainability and impact by focusing our energy on:

Designed and facilitated by  
**Una McAlinden**  
Certified Facilitator



### G. Drive Membership

Create 1-pager/business cards that can quickly be shared with other members

Call all CM's and CA's to garner membership

Launch monthly "subscription" for individuals to pay for membership

### I. Offer trainings + resources for members

Host conversation series on topics related to strategic goals

Host quarterly lunch and learns.

Provide more fee-based training or networking offerings

Create conference features specific to City/Co.s/Role type

Develop a Civics Academy Tool Kit

Host a conference session to promote ethos of speaking about problems into positive stories

**Enhancing Value to Drive Membership**

### E. Build community and connection

Create Opportunities for members to have fun together

Create WIN stories to counteraction WAR stories

Create opportunities for members to be involved outside conferences

Create more social opportunities for members to connect

### C. Ramp up our presence and communications to members

Advertise WCMA Listserv (or change model)

Communication committee with guidelines

Post two LinkedIn posts a month celebrating great work and sharing info/training.

Create a communication plan that highlights the value of WCMA

Profile practitioners who tangibly articulate the joys of the job and the 'why' in short videos to accompany each e-news

**Engaging with Members to Build Community + Connection**

### D. Elevate innovative recruiting practices/Provide CM perspective to improve recruiting

Work with our partner orgs & recruiters to think differently about recruitment

Launch webpage w/ Recruiting practices (borrow ICMA manual?)

Create a best practices CM/CA recruiting tool kit/templates for city councils

### H. Provide resources for effective career advancement

Develop a practical job seeking tool kit

Create a resource page with example CM/CA contracts

Utilize WCCMA website member portal for exclusive resources

**Strengthening + Supporting the CM/CA Career Cycle**

### A. Develop a pipeline for future board growth and expanded capacity

Assign tasks to WCMA general membership to ensure the Board is not doing all the work.

Establish student/Associate member role to post on social media about value of WCMA and profession - worth a free membership

Develop pathways for new members to become Board members

### B. Align our work with our priorities

Align committees to steward and drive delivery of strategic priorities

Create committees based on board priorities.

Limit the number of subcommittees for the board at any one time

### F. Stay focused on delivery

Commit to priorities - new idea added then something comes off the list

Write a Board responsibilities handbook

Create an annual work plan to identify tasks to focus on.

Create shared resource of written roles for board & officers

**Building + Maintaining a Highly Effective Board**



# Strategic Directions Crosswalk

Over the next 3-5 years, and building on our current momentum, we work together to strengthen WCMA, deepen member value and connection, and ensure our long term sustainability and impact by focusing our energy on:

Drag a strategic direction dot to the 1-2 Practical Framework element it supports & advances.



## Strategic Directions

Enhancing Value to Drive Membership

Engaging with Members to Build Community + Connection

Strengthening + Supporting the CM/CA Career Cycle

Building + Maintaining a Highly Effective Board

## Practical Vision

Clear Roles, Responsibilities, and Structures Support Organization Continuity

Support/resources for members to advance good governance, trust, and value of profession.

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Strong Partnerships that help Accomplish our Strategic Goals

## Contradictions

Unclear path - chasing squirrels without systems & structure

Few do most many show up

Unbalanced focus on negative

Outdated view of the role & Outdated recruiting strategies

Failure to define and / or communicate value

Poor articulation of value means we don't compete well for money