

Public Stewardship

Leading Change for Public Value



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Public Administration in 2025

- Unprecedented complexity
- Tightening budgets
- Increasing service demands
- Waning public trust
- Burnt out public employees

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Government Should Not Be Run Like a Business

Government should be run like a government.



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Today's Roadmap

- The Stewardship Shift
- Case 1 - Golden Valley, Minnesota
- Case 2 - Lincoln, Nebraska Parks and Recreation Department
- Case 3 - Kansas City, Missouri
- Executing Change
- Your 30 / 60 / 90-day Action Plan



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About Micah

- 20+ years of public service experience
- In Government
 - Finance, HR, Central Administration
 - Federal, State, Local
- Outside of Government
 - Advocacy
 - GovTech
 - Consulting
- 2 Kids, No Pets, True Government Believer



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The Stewardship Shift

Framing and Mindset



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Public Stewardship

Service without Servitude

Service Delivery

Servant Model

- Prioritizes reaction to immediate individual demands
- Gives all voices equal weight
- Emphasizes compliance over professional judgment
- Delivers short-term focus

Steward Model

- Encourages responsiveness to community well-being
- Balances urgency with durability
- Values staff as strategic professionals with expertise
- Maintains multi-generational perspective

Change is always
happening.

Whether, and how, we
manage it is up to us.



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Where Are We Now?

Case 1 - Golden Valley, MN (pop. 21,200)



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Golden Valley, MN (Pop. 21,200)



Golden Valley, MN (Pop. 21,200)

- Situation:
- New City Manager, Ambitious City Council
 - Capacity constraints - Time, Money

- Solution:
- Respond, don't react
 - Ask smart questions - **what do we do?** And, how well are we resourced to do it?
 - Build from where we are, not where we'd like to be

The Key Takeaway: shared pain points offer ideas

- Friction points exposed: internal service departments felt ignored by external-facing departments; external-facing departments felt unsupported by internal service providers
- Rather than blaming individuals, we could accept that there was a systemic failure of misaligned expectations
- By focusing on how we can work better together, we eliminate friction and drag, and increase organizational velocity towards getting important work done for the community



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Where Do We Want to Be?

Case 2 - Lincoln, NE (pop. 300,600)



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Lincoln, NE Parks and Recreation (Pop. 300,600)



Lincoln, NE Parks and Recreation (Pop. 300,600)

- Situation:
- Long-tenured staff; relatively new leader
 - High expectations, limited capacity - demands on parks, trails, pools, trees and programs growing; staff and resources stretched thin
- Solution:
- Leverage staff expertise, **empower voices**
 - Build medium- and long-term vision carrying equal (or greater) importance than short-term response

The Key Takeaway: we have agency, too

- Community insights are helpful – community demands can be a challenge; particularly when they’re conflicting with each other, best practice, or staff’s strategic direction
- Over-indexing on community voice led to burnout and low morale despite surface level positivity
- Asking staff what they were responsible for, and how well they were resourced to get it done, gave a boost of energy



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How Will We Get There?

Case 3 - Kansas City, MO (pop. 516,000)



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Kansas City, MO (Pop. 516,000)



Kansas City, MO (Pop. 516,000)

- Situation:
- Large institution working in multiple directions
 - Continual structural budget imbalance obscured by large, periodic one-time cash infusions

- Solution:
- Develop multi-generational perspective
 - **Solve for future** budget shortfall by acting strategically now to change
 - Leverage experience and expertise of others and avoid re-creating the wheel

The Key Takeaway: build on others' experiences

- Knowing where you want to go is important, but it only gets you so far
- Determining how you'll get there while you're also tending to the day-to-day can be a challenge
- Starting from what's worked well in other places not only gives a window into what is possible, but it also provides an avenue to think creatively about what you're doing now and spur new ideas that match your operating paradigm completely.



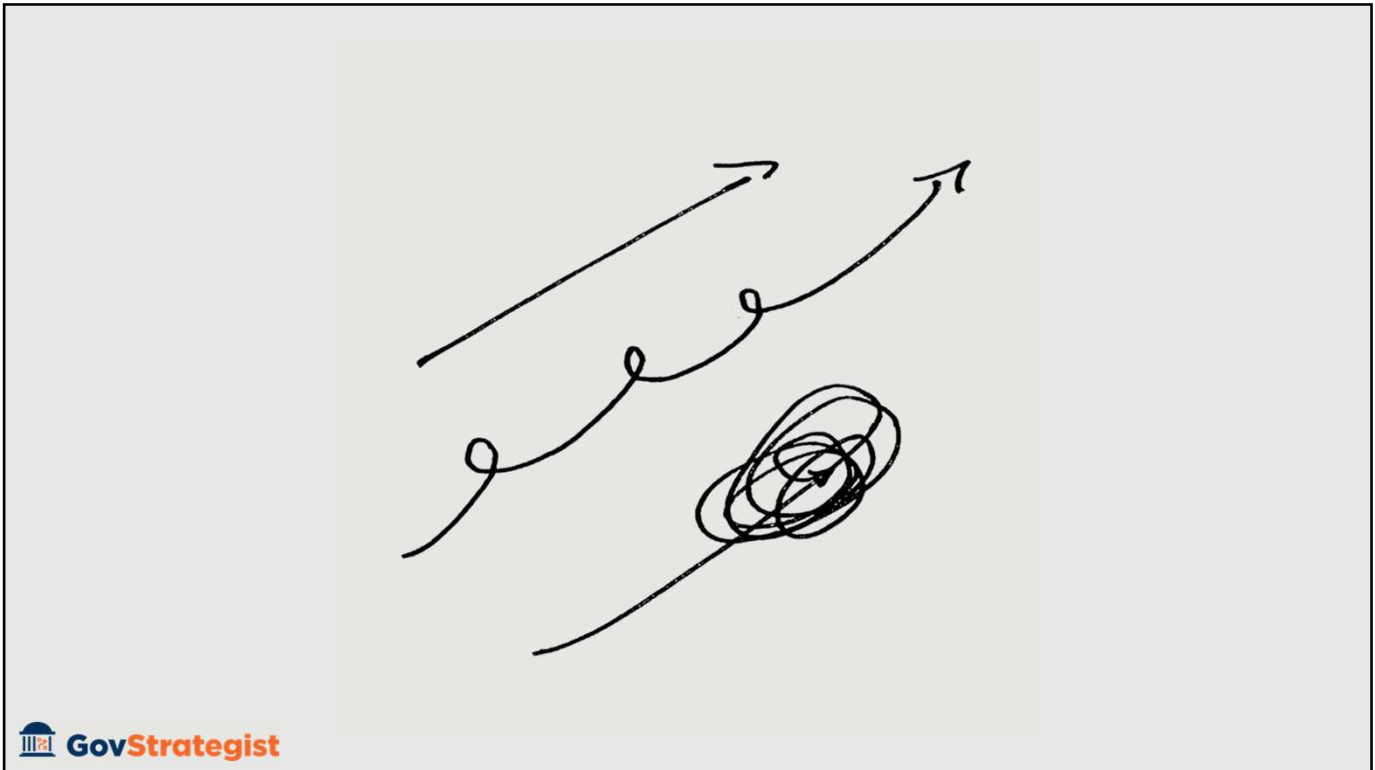
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Executing Change

(so it sticks)



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Public Value Impact Model

Robust Planning

- Build a project plan, with a project charter
- Clearly scope the project and stick to it
- Onboard everyone early
- Repeat the plan often

Standardized Tools

- Project Management Professional is an official certification for a reason!
- Leverage timelines, milestones, communication hubs, etc., to maintain transparency and build trust

Risk Mitigation

- Identify risks early
- Build plans to mitigate those risks
- Execute the plans as conditions require

Robust Planning: Project Charter Key Components

Objectives & Purpose

Describes the change we seek to achieve, and why

Scope

Clear articulation of work we intend to perform, and what we don't

Deliverables

Specific artifacts or resources that will be delivered at the end of the project

Roles & Responsibilities

Who the individuals involved in the project are, and what they are doing

Timelines & Milestones

Key project dates and time frames during which specific aspects will be completed

Key Considerations & Constraints

Limitations on resources, policy choices, or other facets of the project

Risk Mitigation Plans

Anticipation of where the project might stall, and how we'll account for it



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Standardized Tools: RACI Matrix

Responsible

Individual who will perform the work

Accountable

Individual answerable for the task's completion and outcome

Consulted

Individual whose input is required before work is completed

Informed

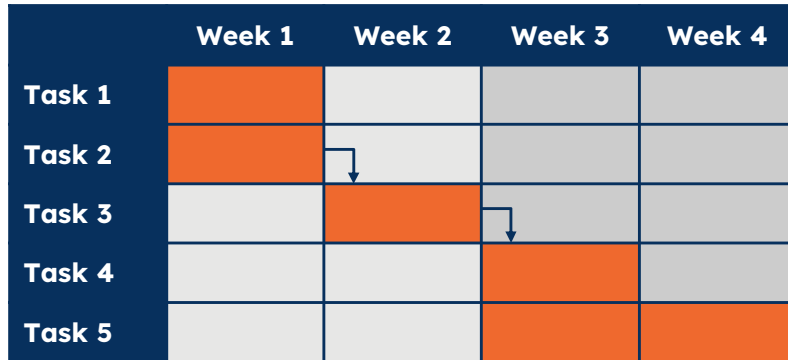
Individual who needs updates about progress or completion

	Project Manager	Team Lead	SME	Stakeholder
Task 1	R	A	C	C
Task 2	A	C	R	I
Task 3	A	I	R	I



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Standardized Tools: Gantt Chart



Timelines

What's going on, when?

Dependencies

Which tasks are reliant on others?

Milestones

What are the major phases of work?

Progress

How far have we come? How far do we have to go?



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Standardized Tools: Regular Communication

The collage shows three documents:

- Financial Review:** Key Date: March 31 - Review what we're looking for. Meeting with Sandra today to kickoff.
- Business Operations Inventory:** Key Date: March 12 - Kickoff with Admin Team.
- Discussion Items:** Outstanding issues or items to discuss related to the project.
 - Meeting with Sandra
 - Monthly Budget vs Actuals (2019 to date)
 - Historic fee study info?
 - Business Operations Inventory
 - City of Golden Valley Example
 - Parks and Recreation Draft
 - Key Items
 - Division vs Work Unit vs ???
 - Programs vs Services
 - Special emphasis?
 - Golden Valley emphasized Equity, Facilities
 - Alignment & Strategic Insights
 - Comp Plan?
 - XIX Phase?
 - April Trip
 - Try to fit around Parks Foundation meeting?
- Agenda:** February 24, 2025. Project Name: Parks and Recreation Strategic Planning - Phase I. Client: City of Lincoln. Summary: Review prep materials and Draft Project Charter ahead of Project Kickoff. Attendees: City of Lincoln, Denise K. Pearce, Micah Intermit, JJ Hill, James L. Grenquist.
- Upcoming Key Dates / Deliverables:** Important timeline items for project success. Includes a Gantt chart showing tasks from 1/20 to 4/20.

- Meeting Agendas
 - Bring focus to conversations
 - Serve as basis for taking minutes and notes
 - Drive projects to completion
- Every meeting deserves an Agenda



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Standardized Tools: Regular Communication

- Project Status Reports
 - Provide quick at a glance updates
 - Support a historical record of work performed and decisions made
 - Align organizations
- Use the Cadence (e.g. Weekly, Monthly) that fits

Individual meetings to discuss Key Challenge Programs/Services

- Drafted a Memo for Mayor re. LPSD revenues - what we propose moving forward
- Re-worked plans for Phase II and Phase III, to be Haggie on 8/14

4. Work Planned for Next Week:
Planned tasks and activities for the upcoming week.

- On-site Meetings Monday/Tuesday
- Continued analysis of Comp Plan alignment resp
- Finalize plans re Phase II and Phase III

5. Issues and Concerns
None at this time

6. Decisions Needed
None at this time

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Weekly Project Status Report
August 1, 2025

Project Name: Parks and Recreation Strategic Planning - Phase I
Client: City of Lincoln, Nebraska

1. Summary
Spent the week getting ready for on-site meetings next Monday and Tuesday, and planning for the wind-down of Phase I and the ramp-up of Phase II.

2. Milestones and Deliverables

Milestone / Deliverable	Status	Comments
Project Roadmap	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful kickoff on 2-19-25 • Completed hybrid session for folks who weren't in attendance
Data Collection Framework	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOI Finalized • Health Checks Complete
Comprehensive Operations & Financial Review	Substantially Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations Analysis complete and delivered • Financial Analysis complete, to be delivered by end of month
Optimized Budget Framework	Substantially Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations in hand, to be delivered with financial analysis by end of month

3. Work Completed This Week
Tasks and activities completed during the week.

- Continued analysis of Comp Plan alignment responses from the Health Checks
- Prepared presentation materials for 10 on-site meetings next Monday and Tuesday
 - Group meeting to review the BOA themes and boulders



Risk Mitigation

- Identify what could get in the way of project completion
- Determine where resistance to change might occur
- Develop plans to overcome resistance and hurdles
- Build in checkpoints and feedback loops to ensure hidden risks may not be taking root

Risk Mitigation Register

Risk

Factors that could impede project success

Mitigation Strategy

How we'll work to reduce the chance the risk will materialize

Contingency Plan

What we'll do if the risks turn out to impact the project

Risk	Mitigation Strategy	Contingency Plan
Delays in Receiving Data and Documentation	Identify data needs early and ask well in advance; set firm deadlines for submission.	Shift focus to other tasks while awaiting data, rescheduling dependent activities to minimize delays.
Limited Availability of Key City Staff	Coordinate scheduling well in advance and offer flexible timing for interviews or workshops.	Record sessions if stakeholders are unavailable or arrange follow-up sessions as needed.
Compliance and Data Security Protocols	Review and adhere to City policies on data handling and security before accessing sensitive information.	Adjust project activities as needed to comply with City policies, including removing access to certain data types if necessary.

Metrics that Matter

Measure to focus decisions, verify value, and course-correct — not to admire dashboards.

Do

- Tie each metric to a decision you'll make
- Show trend + target; highlight exceptions

Don't

- Track what you won't use
- Confuse activity (emails sent) with value (days saved)

Metrics that Matter

- **Pick 3-5 core measures for a given project**

Outcome	<i>community result the change should influence</i>
Service Level	<i>speed, access, reliability</i>
Quality/Compliance	<i>error rate, rework, exceptions, audit findings</i>
Cost/Efficiency	<i>cost per unit, staff hours per case, avoidable spend</i>
Experience/Equity	<i>satisfaction, first-contact resolution, gaps</i>

- **Leading vs Lagging**

Leading	<i>driver you can act on now (e.g. % apps submitted complete)</i>
Lagging	<i>outcome that moves later (e.g. median days to permit)</i>

Metrics that Matter

- **Minimum viable metric**

Definition & Formula	<i>plain language!</i>
Data Source & Frequency	<i>system vs survey, weekly vs monthly</i>
Owner	<i>name one person</i>
Baseline & Target	<i>where we're starting, what "good" means</i>

- **Cadence & Use**

Weekly team	<i>Are we on track? What's the blocker?</i>
Monthly sponsor	<i>Do we adjust scope or resources?</i>
Quarterly public	<i>What changed, what's next?</i>

Your Action Plan

30 / 60 / 90-day path to **get started**



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Days 0 - 30

What is the change,
who is affected,
and what is the
current state?

- **Define the intent**
What's changing and why
- **Identify stakeholders and constraints**
Who is affected, what are our limits
- **Baseline & early improvement**
Identify current performance, show the art of the possible



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Days 31 - 60

What did we learn from testing, and what will it take to proceed?

- **Validate assumptions**
Limited pilot test
- **Estimate effort**
Rough cost, timeline, staffing, dependencies
- **Confirm alignment**
Ensure leadership support and fit with policy requirements

Days 61 - 90

What is the decision, what happens next, and how will we track results?

- **Decision**
Select preferred path
- **Initial implementation plan**
6-12 weeks with owners, milestones, approvals
- **Measurement & Review**
Identify three measures to track and set review cadence

Solve for tomorrow's
future.

