Environmental Scan from Leadership Council – Major Challenges and Opportunities for the Next Two – Three Years

Challenges:
Changing Citizen Expectations
- Customer service expected 24/7, including online access to government information and services (e.g., paying taxes)
- Access to government via social media; expectation of immediate response from gov't
- Government services located/delivered geographically nearby (e.g., geo-policing)
- Increased demand for transparency in government and inclusion in decision-making
- Unclear whether citizens want/expect the government's role to be expanded or more limited

Changing Demographics
- Population is aging (retirees)
- Increasing cultural diversity, more non-English-speaking residents—> more/different/enhanced gov't services
- There is a migration of a lower socio-economic population into the County
- Increase in childhood poverty
- There is poverty in both rural and development areas with different causes and impacts. Need to understand and be aware of the needs of the entire County.
- Changing demographics may contribute to declining urban property values, and increased diversity of community opinions (making community decision-making more difficult)
- Growth of school population contributing to school capacity/infrastructure challenges.
- Families have a hard time finding child care

Changing Service Needs/Funding
- There is an (unrealistic) expectation of economic recovery that may be creating demand for additional/enhanced levels of service. There is uncertainty around economic growth and wages.
- Unfunded state/federal mandates (devolution) continue to have a significant impact on the County's budget.

Urbanization
- We have an urbanizing population with a shifting urban balance (i.e. our population has become more urban than rural); there is a strain of urban growth without corresponding revenues
- Rural citizens don't necessarily identify with urban community issues
- We do not have a defined, established vibrant urban center like a city. How do we deal with being a "first ring suburb"?
- Should we/how do start providing more "city" services as we become more urban?
- Urban ring has significant redevelopment needs, including aging transportation infrastructure

Organizational Issues
- Retirement of significant numbers of staff creates potential for to significant loss of institutional knowledge/ experience
- Lack of staff capacity (with no additional capacity programmed into the Five-Year Plan) to meet citizen expectations and to focus on leadership work of "transforming" the organization
- Pay compression is a significant morale issue, and makes it very challenging to attract and retain talented staff
- Younger generations have a different mindset and motivation; for example, most millennials probably don't plan to become County "lifers" (in part due to VRS changes that make it less attractive to do so)

Opportunities:
- Possibilities as senior positions open up – people, structure, reorganization opportunities
- New people, programs, and structure can make us stronger and more diversified
- Partnerships with schools, other local governments, private industry, etc. can improve our capacity
- Use of technology; finding other ways to deliver our services
- Strategic economic development initiatives to grow the tax base and create jobs
- Ability to be part of proactively redefining the future role of government