



## **Twenty Governance Questions for Mayors and Council**

---

The Twenty Governance Questions were developed as a handy tool to help councils assess their approach to the strategic planning process and risk management without having to wade through volumes of material. The questions cover a range of key issues, from understanding strategy to implementation and monitoring.

### **UNDERSTANDING STRATEGY**

1. How is strategy defined in our municipality?
2. What are we ultimately trying to accomplish and where do we eventually want to get to? (The Vision Goal)
3. What is our purpose – or, why do we exist? (The Mission Goals)
  - a. Who are the ‘key stakeholders’ that have a significant impact on our municipality and its long-term viability (i.e. residents, property owners, employees, regulators, adjacent municipality, etc.)?
  - b. What specific needs do we attempt to satisfy for these ‘key stakeholders’ in order to secure their long-term loyalty, commitment and support?
4. What are the ethical and cultural priorities of our municipality that attract stakeholders to us? (The Values Goals)
5. What are the specific measures and targets that we will use to judge our progress in achieving our macro-level vision, mission and values goals? The Objectives
6. In what specific service or business arenas have we chosen to operate for the purposes of achieving our objectives? Service area selections
7. Is the definition of strategy (Question 1) shared by all members of council and the management team of the municipality?
8. What are the major departmental strategies making up the overall corporate strategy?
9. Do circumstances warrant Council’s involvement in (i.e. review, assessment and approval of) the organization’s operating plan?

### **ASSESSING AND EVALUATING STRATEGY**

10. Does our municipality have the right strategy and, if not, what should it be?
11. What was the process followed in our municipality to formulate the strategy contained in the strategic plan and does the plan’s vision
12. Does the strategy have the right vision?
13. Does the strategy have the right mission?
14. Does the strategy have a proper statement of values?
15. Does the strategy contain objectives which are well formulated and well stated?
16. Are the service or business areas specified in the municipality’s strategy the right ones?

## **STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

17. Have the proper organizational arrangements been selected, designed and ‘aligned’ to reflect, reinforce and support the strategy?
18. Have all the significant internal and external strategic risks been identified, quantified and addressed in the plan?

## **MONITORING PROGRESS**

19. Are appropriate mechanisms in place to provide Council with timely feedback on the municipality’s progress in achieving its strategy, the underlying causes of any performance variance and any changes in the internal/external environments or risk factors which would cause the Board to consider altering the municipality’s strategy?

## **CONSTRUCTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

20. Are the Council and managers constructively involved in the municipality’s strategy?

***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: AUMA acknowledges the work undertaken by the Risk Management and Governance Board Directors Advisory Group, Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, on which this paper is based.***