



Strategic Planning Memo

For Submission to Housing Leadership Council of Palm Beach County

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Secoya Strategies

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Executive Summary

Secoya Strategies (Secoya) is pleased to submit this strategic planning memorandum to the **Housing Leadership Council of Palm Beach County** (HLCPBC). This memorandum presents a synopsis of how Secoya assisted and engaged with the executive and board leadership of Housing Leadership Council of Palm Beach County to outline and refine an initial strategic planning process.

Below we offer a brief organizational description, a summary of the approach for designing and implementing the initial strategic planning process for HLCPB, an overview of the strategic analysis data collected, and the subsequent goals and recommendations that emerged over the course of the engagement.

Secoya completed several feedback interviews with internal stakeholders, including staff and board members, as well as facilitated an initial strategic planning session to begin the process of identifying a strategy road map for the organization. The following memo covers five main categories based on the outcomes of these interviews and workshops and a review of available documentation from HLCPBC:

- » **Board and Committee Development**
- » **Executive Support & Succession Planning**
- » **Communications, Marketing and Messaging**
- » **Fund Development**
- » **Relationships with External Stakeholders**

Each of these five topics includes a suggested goal statement, possible action steps, and a suggested timeline for accomplishing the tasks.

Organizational Description

History

In 2005, the Economic Council of Palm Beach County formed a work group to begin studying the issue to determine the future impact the lack of affordable housing would have on the economy and the long-term viability of our community.

A technical advisory committee was formed and over the course of the next year, a study was commissioned by the Metropolitan Center at Florida International University. By this point in time the affordable housing issue was reaching crisis proportions but when The Workforce Housing Needs Assessment was released in July of 2006, the depth and severity of the problem came as a shock to even those who had been tracking the issue for a number of years.

As a result of this study and extensive strategic planning efforts, the Economic Council's Affordable Housing Taskforce developed goals and objectives to begin addressing this issue, which included the formation of committees including:

- **Education, Communications and Institution Building**
- **Public Policy/Land Acquisition**
- **Employer Assisted Housing**

The transition from a volunteer initiative to an organization dedicated to workforce/affordable housing was completed in the first quarter of 2007 with the hiring of the President & CEO, the selection of a full board made up of community and business leaders and the granting of the 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. Since 2007 The Housing Leadership Council has been working on important collaborative efforts that will make sure we address the current issues of stabilizing neighborhoods and a future goal of making sure we have an adequate supply of workforce housing in our community once the housing market has

recovered.

Mission, Vision and Values

- **Vision:** Housing for all of Palm Beach County's residents that is financially feasible and sustainable.
- **Mission:** The Housing Leadership Council of Palm Beach County is a coalition of Community Leaders working to sustain the economic viability of the County by supporting housing opportunities for all residents through education, advocacy, and facilitating partnerships.

Description of Strategic Planning Process Used

The initial kick-off session was developed to ensure there is consensus about the HLC’s identity, begin to develop the components of a strategy screen, and identify what opportunities or challenges in the environment that you would like to address and prioritize, that is, your current set of ‘Big Questions’. The selection of this opportunity or challenge is achieved through an interactive process leading to a group decision. How HLCPCB decides to address this opportunity or challenge should be the focus of the strategy that the board will form. The **initial facilitated session** is meant to kick off an on-going, iterative process that engages the board and acclimates them to be in the habit of thinking strategically as a group. This is a critical muscle to build, especially in the current social and political climate that continues to evolve and shift quickly. Doing so will also ensure that the organization is clear on how to prioritize its focus and resources, and to be strategic and intentional as it responds to challenges and opportunities that arise in the short, mid, and long-term.

Strategic Analysis Data

- **Interviews with Members of the Board:** In preparation for the facilitated session with board, Secoya conducted a series of interviews with several members of the board. The table below captures feedback shared:

Themes	Reflections
<i>Lack of Clarity on Board Members Roles and Expectations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » While there was consistent sentiment in that the board is overall a group very committed to the work of HLPBC, there was some frustration shared that not all members seem to be equally engaged. » While many acknowledged the breadth and depth of expertise of the board and felt they are well- positioned to be able to amplify the mission of the organization, there was varied understanding of exactly how to be a value-add to the board. » There was some tension identified between longstanding members and those who are newer to the board —there is a desire for more facilitated discussion at meetings that engages across the more dominant voices and accounts for more consideration for the varied understanding some have on the issues that HLCPCB focuses on.
<i>Increase understanding of the organization’s work and impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Between the feedback from interviews with the board and the facilitated discussion with the board, there is a consensus that more needs to be done to amplify the organization’s work and the understanding of its impact in the local community. There is an opportunity to better leverage the board’s interest and capacity to act as community ambassadors and champions for HLCPCB.
<i>Operationalizing a Racial Equity Lens</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is interest to revisit the mission, vision, and targeted service delivery to adopt a racial equity lens. »
<i>Branding</i>	

<p><i>Need for Increased Support for Executive Director and a Succession Plan</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is a strong consensus that the current ED does a phenomenal job and is the “true backbone, brains, and shoulders” of the organization. However, there is concern that if the ED suddenly was unable to serve, or retires, it isn’t clear that the board would be prepared to identify the right candidates for the job. » There is particular concern that the ED has the financial knowledge, contacts and necessary experience to take charge of the organization and that there is no plan for hiring another executive who understands how to lead your organization and continue to provide uninterrupted service to your clients and funders. There is concern that funders might not trust that the organization can succeed without the current executive, and that the organization will lose irreplaceable institutional knowledge and contacts if the ED were to suddenly leave. » Another vulnerability that was repeatedly shared is concern that the organization would not be able to sustain a decline in income or fundraising activities without the ED because they are the primary fundraiser. Several board members expressed more opportunities to work with the ED to create relationships with funders and contacts. » There is also concern that the executive’s current level of responsibility is not sustainable realistic, and that the executive, in good faith, has taken on too much responsibility.
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» **SWOT Analysis**

After the leadership of HLCPCB drafted an initial SWOT analysis, this was used to drive a reflective conversation with the board to highlight where there is agreement, differences, and gaps in how they collectively perform a SWOT analysis; SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis should help nonprofit boards understand where they are today and how others see the organization. A SWOT matrix should highlight internal factors, external factors, and any inherent or potential risk factors. Brainstorming among board members will help them recognize new opportunities they may not have thought of and find ways to turn weaknesses into strengths.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p><i>Relationship with business community, inclusion in Business Forum</i></p> <p><i>Public Policy Committee</i></p> <p><i>Track record of success in policy issues (impact fee fund, Inclusionary zoning)</i></p> <p><i>Stakeholder list (almost 2,000)</i></p> <p><i>Completed Housing Needs Assessment</i></p> <p><i>Good community/statewide visibility (numerous board positions, CEO being statewide chair)</i></p> <p><i>Good relationships with funders</i></p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p><i>Small staff</i></p> <p><i>Funding is not diversified</i></p> <p><i>Limited unrestricted funding</i></p> <p><i>Challenging metrics (we don’t produce units or provide services to end users)</i></p> <p><i>Do not communicate successes well</i></p> <p><i>Confusion over stakeholders</i></p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p><i>New focus on housing crisis</i></p> <p><i>Covid-19 related funding</i></p> <p><i>New focus on racial equity</i></p> <p><i>Sadowski not swept and is in Trust Fund</i></p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p><i>Pandemic</i></p> <p><i>High Unemployment</i></p> <p><i>Lack of housing stock for low/mod buyers</i></p> <p><i>Lack of subsidy for homebuyers</i></p>

<p>PBC Housing Committee CRA-- be more strategic</p>	<p>No funding after CARES expires Sadowski not allocated – zero funding this year with no allocation Apathy</p>
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SERVICE MODEL ANALYSIS: Where, Who, What

<p>Where</p> <p>AREAS THAT WE SERVE: Palm Beach County Unincorporated Areas Employment Centers People live in other counties and commute into PBC-- regional approach</p>	<p>WHERE ARE WE HAVING THE GREATEST IMPACT? HOW DO WE KNOW? Central Part of the County Boynton Area-- CLT work North County-- conversations (awareness prong) Jupiter Lake Worth Beach-- Central Part of the County-- rental assistance YIMBY-- Chelsea Commons Banyan Court (financing, worked with the developer throughout the process, zoning meetings, advocacy, connected the resources</p>
<p>AREAS WHERE WE DO NOT SERVE BUT WOULD LIKE TO: North County (want to do more) Glades-- Western Communities (underserved but highly desired) CRA-- more effectively use them</p>	<p>AREAS WHERE WE STRATEGICALLY DO NOT TO SERVE: Wealthy Coastal Communities Town of Palm Beach</p>

<p>Who</p> <p>Who are your current customers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homebuyers/Renters-- Ultimate Beneficiaries ▪ Businesses/Employers-- Want a workforce available ▪ Lenders-- funders ▪ Residential Developers ▪ Local Government/Municipalities-- ▪ Foundations-- Funders--racial equity lens for housing, covid housing ▪ Community Foundation--their audience ▪ Realtors-- beneficiaries (potential funders and storytellers) ▪ Freddie Mac ▪ School Board ▪ Teachers 	<p>WITH WHOM ARE WE HAVING THE GREATEST IMPACT? HOW DO WE KNOW?</p>
<p>Customers We Do Not Serve but Would Like To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizations that have employees that are looking for housing ▪ Municipal Employees ▪ Orgs that want to create a housing benefit or strategy ▪ Healthcare workers/RNs 	<p>Customers We Strategically Do Not Serve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Public (individual housing requests) ▪ NIMBYs ▪ National Rental Companies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Service Workers/Retail</i> ▪ <i>Intersection of health and housing--blue cross, others that are investing</i> ▪ <i>Relocation-- business that are recruiting people to come to the region</i> ▪ <i>Community Organizers</i> ▪ <i>Small-rental owners-- property owners that need to renovate but don't have resources</i> ▪ <i>Neighborhood associations-- those looking for reinvestment in housing</i> ▪ <i>Make them aware of the resources that are available</i> ▪ <i>Landlords, small contractors, lenders (capacity building, technical assistance) North County (want to do more)</i> ▪ <i>Glades-- Western Communities (underserved but highly desired)</i> ▪ <i>CRA-- more effectively use them</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Absentee Landlords</i>
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<i>What</i>	
WHAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DO WE CURRENTLY OFFER? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financing - Develop financing options for front & back end subsidy ▪ Advocacy - Advocate for more housing options, combat NIMBYism ▪ Public policy committee ▪ Research - Document the housing crisis through studies ▪ Education - Educate on best practices ▪ Planning - Develop communitywide housing plan with P3 partnerships ▪ "211" ▪ Relationship-Building/Networking 	WHAT PROGRAMS ARE HAVING THE GREATEST IMPACT? HOW DO WE KNOW?
WHAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DO WE NOT OFFER BUT WOULD LIKE TO:	WHAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WE'VE STRATEGICALLY DECIDED TO NOT OFFER: Service Calls

As an organization, some of our most important questions are:

How are we going to position ourselves to have a greater leadership role in housing for the region?

How are we going to secure funding to increase staff capacity to give the executive director more bandwidth to focus on communicating the work of HLCPB?

How are we going to educate our diverse stakeholders on the impact our advocacy and policy efforts have, what that process looks like in action, and secure more funding?

Strategic Planning Outline

Based on the strategic analysis data capture through the initial process, the strategic planning outline is organized to cover the main topics elaborated on as a group :

- » ***Clarify Board Member Roles and Responsibilities***
- » ***Executive Support & Succession Planning***
- » ***Communications, Marketing and Messaging***

Each of these topics includes a brief goal statement, possible action steps, and a suggested timeline for accomplishing the tasks.

» **Strategic Goal: Clarify Board Member Roles and Responsibilities and Better Leverage Them**

The Housing Leadership Council of Palm Beach County will provide clarity and focus to its expectations of its board members and ensure there is alignment between their roles and the strategic priorities of the organization. This includes standing and ad hoc committees and their mission and goals, purpose, authority, standing, representation, and performance expectations. All standing and established committees will be expected to define their action plans, based on the mission and vision statements and strategic goals of the organization and their committee's specific mission and goals.

Two major themes that came out of the interviews with board members included 1) a desire for improved communications and 2) clarity of expectations of board members, including their responsibilities in comparison to the executive director's responsibilities and those on committees. While there was a consistent sentiment that the board is overall very committed to HLPBC and has the breadth and depth of expertise to amplify the mission of the organization, there was varied understanding of what was expected of each board member.

Clear authority and communication fosters trust and accountability between board members, makes board transitions easier, and improves how well HLPBC can optimize and leverage the breadth and depth of their board's expertise and connections. Below are recommended actions for clarifying board member roles and responsibilities:

Conduct a professional board development workshop: Perhaps with the assistance of an outside consultant, directors should conduct a board assessment to identify gaps in expertise, clarify board responsibilities, and draft a contract of board responsibilities that is renewed and more aligned with the current priorities of the organizations. This would assist members with greater clarity on how their responsibilities are separate from the organization's by-laws and specify requirements that each board member agrees to do as a part of commitment to the strategic priorities of HLPBC. It would also foster a space for greater understanding of the how newer board members might contribute, as well as even identify potential mentorship opportunities for board members with similar interests in roles.

Revisit the Board Member Orientation: It was noted that new board members appreciate the welcoming and educational introduction to HLPBC and that they found the document outlining what each member needs to know about HLPBC and serving on the board useful, but that it often felt less impactful after the initial orientation . They

will need a copy of the board book and a review of financial information. Several members expressed interest in being paired with other board members to foster better relationships across levels of experience, areas of expertise, and create potential mentorship opportunities.

Draft Institutional Knowledge of HLCPBC Committees and formalize a process to appoint or establish new committees: HLCPBC expressed that it already can create committees in its by-laws. If not already established, the board should decide on the rules to appoint or elect people, both internally and externally, to these committees. Keep in mind that there are often legal requirements for Committees of the Board, so qualifications for election should vary based on the type of committee. This process should also include how to streamline the recommendation, approval, and establishment of committees as needed given the need to leverage the board and compensate for any gaps in staff capacity.

Identify and form committees to fill gaps in staffing needs: There is a clear pathway of opportunity for HLCPBC to maximize in this current moment in addition to this organization’s vantage point in the local ecosystem. Committees can engage board members to assist in filling gaps in staffing needs but also leverage the breadth and depth of expertise and network connections of the board. Without permanent, full-time staff in addition to the executive director however, many of these ideas will be difficult to implement without greater support from volunteers. Committees of volunteers including board members, external advisors, and clients are excellent ways to make up for staffing shortages and fulfill HLCPBC’s needs.

» **Strategic Goal: Executive Support & Succession Planning**

Board Leadership will work with staff leadership of HLCPBC to develop and execute a hiring plan that allows the executive director to fund and hire staff that can serve in roles that allow the ED to have greater support across the domains of their role and ensure their time is spent on the organization’s highest priorities. This should also be with implemented with the greater intention of bolstering the organization to sustain a leadership transition.

Provide Access to Executive Coaching: Executive directors who receive coaching report significantly higher impact and productivity in specific management areas, stronger leadership skills, accountability and confidence that they could create a more sustainable job for themselves. By bringing forth epiphanies that already exist within, coaching supports leaders to identify pathways to the types of supports they need, as well as how to develop their roles to foster a leadership bench that can ensure that in the event of an executive transition the organization isn’t as vulnerable.

Prioritize an Executive Director Task Audit: While there is clear consensus that the organization understands the urgency and importance of hiring additional staff to ensure the ED has the support so that they spend their time on activities most beneficial and aligned to the mission of the organization, it is imperative that this be done with thoughtful consideration of the how the hiring plan should be structured. A low stakes way to inform this process is by asking the ED to perform a self-task audit, and intentionally evaluate their ‘to-do’ lists, review each task, and organize them according to the following four options:

Do: Complete the Task Now	Defer: Complete It Later, But Do It Myself
Delegate: Assign It to Someone Else	Delete: Remove It from My List of Responsibilities

Upon intentional reflection of what tasks are most beneficial and aligned with the level of the ED role, this kind of informative data can help drive the development of a hiring plan for support staff that are able to provide support in a way that ensures the ED can have extended runway to spend their time on the most urgent and important priorities to the organization. Additionally, the ED should reflect and be prepared to share with the board answers to the following:

- Are you spending enough time on the vital A items on your agenda, or are you frustrated by time spent on B and C items? What B and C items could be delegated to positions in consideration for your hiring plan?
- Do you have enough “blank space” in your calendar to consider future opportunities, or is most of your time spent reacting to what has already happened? What type of staff support could augment the “runway” you have to be more proactive versus reactive to issues that impact the organization?

Formulate a Process for Succession Planning: Succession planning can take on different forms and be completed for various situations. Given the incredible role that the executive director plays across the major programmatic and fund development focuses of the organization, HLCPCB should ensure they consider planning for the following three scenarios that are recommended for all organizations, and are defined broadly in the field as follows:

- *Emergency Succession Planning* – A process that is in place in the event the executive suddenly departs – either permanently or for an extended period of time (i.e., longer than three months).
- *Departure-Defined Succession Planning* – A process that is in place for a future planned retirement or permanent departure of the executive.
- *Strategic Leader Development* – A process that promotes ongoing leadership development for talent within the organization.

Formally adopt a strategy screen: Before implementing a new strategy, HLCPCB needs to better evaluate the impact of the strategy using specific decision-making criteria, with a “Strategy Screen.” The Executive Committee should develop the Strategy Screen so that as the board determines the current the trend, factor, or event in your marketplace that the group has decided to address—the formation of the strategy is aligned with the organization’s mission, competitive advantage(s), and situation. The criteria are different for each organization and most likely need to change over time as your nonprofit adapt to changes in the environment. The strategy generally must support:

- » Your organization’s mission (assuming that your mission does not need to change)
- » Your organization’s competitive advantages (specific to the situation, facing your nonprofit)
- » Include additional criteria as you see fit, such as requiring that the strategy:
 - Meet specified financial criteria (e.g., a new program must pay for itself)
 - Meet quality criteria (e.g., new services must be of high quality)
 - Meet criteria related to your organization’s geographic and customer scope
 - Position your organization as a leader

» **Strategic Goal: Communications, Marketing and Messaging**

Between the feedback from interviews with the board and the facilitated discussion with the board, there is a consensus that more needs to be done to amplifying the organization’s work and the understanding of its impact in the local community. There is an opportunity to better leverage the board’s interest and capacity to act as community ambassadors and champions for HLCPCB. Along with identifying and recruiting new board members, current directors should work to identify partner organizations, new donor organizations or individuals, and future clients.

Conduct a workshop on marketing to key stakeholders: All board members should feel comfortable speaking on behalf of HLCPCB in cultivating new funders and building relationships with members of the greater Palm Beach County community. Being able to speak passionately and professionally about the work HLCPCB does and why it should be supported in time and money is important to raising the visibility of the work, attracting new donors, and sustaining the organization’s growth. However, other partners and external stakeholders can also be champions of the work HLCPCB does and should be considered for inclusion in marketing workshops or public awareness campaigns.

Executive committee to appoint members to the communications committee: The executive committee should ascertain interest across the board and invite a select group of initially only board members to join the communications committee. While the communications committee will need to articulate its purpose and goals, the executive committee should be responsible for charging the group with strategic priorities that align with the organization’s mission and also establish an accountability framework to maintain the momentum of the newly established group.

The newly established communications committee should articulate its purpose and goals: There is a clear consensus that the committee needs to re-frame HLC history, draft impact stories, and implement strategies to greater disseminate the message of the organization, amplify advocacy efforts, and create increased visibility of the role HLCPBC plays in the local housing ecosystem. This group should also be charged with deciding/prioritizing what communications medium needs to be targeted (webinars, internet, social media, youtube. They should also work with the ED to draft a list of stakeholders to engage.

Final Recommendations for Organizational Leadership

As discussed in the collective session, formation of effective strategy is not just a once-every-several-years activity and in these times, it is more critical than ever for nonprofit leaders (both board and staff) to incorporate strategic thinking and action into the daily life of the organization.

» *Structure Meeting Agendas to Create Space for Strategic Discussions*

Given the size of the HLC Board and the transition to virtual meetings—it is critically important that time spent in meetings is used in the most effective way possible. To ensure the strategic planning process is on-going and interactive, HLC should consider how they craft meeting agendas: are you designating enough time for truly strategic discussions? Engaging the right people in the right discussions is critical. Consider designating a portion of time each month (or at each board meeting) for strategic discussion or even adopting a strategic planning committee, You can “plan ahead” by calendaring a rotating selection of topics, though you should always be open to changing plans to address emerging issues or opportunities.

» *Establish a Strategic Thinkers Group*

Strategic discussions at the board and management level are important and useful, but strategic discussions that involve individuals from a variety of levels in the organization can also be useful. Such a group—the membership of which might change over time—could meet monthly to focus specifically on questions like numbers 1-4 above, or even more broadly, “Are we having the impact that we want?” or “What might we do differently if we could start over again?” As HLCPBC considers adding committees, it might be worth either adding a strategic thinkers group meeting that builds off of the existing executive committee or perhaps establishes a new group altogether. This could also be a way to share institutional knowledge across board members with varied years on the board.

Following are some topics to consider:

- How can we more effectively engage our board members and leverage their resources, capacities, etc.?
- What governance structures do we need to establish to clearly define the roles of the committees and how their work aligns with our goals and mission?
- How do we market our accountability work to solicit funding that it is sustained?
- What are three to six priorities and goals for the organization over the next 6 months? 18 months? What are the respective roles of the ED, the board, and board committees in achieving those priorities?
- Are there changes in the environment we should consider? How might these impact our work?
- What is the next big innovation in [choose a topic] likely to be? (e.g., private education, technology use in schools, etc.) How might this impact our work, or how we do our work? How should it?

- **“Vision Brainstorm.”** Select one element of the organization’s vision statement and conduct a brainstorming discussion. How could we be more effective in this area? Be creative. Consider changes to program as well as to infrastructure / internal processes. (As an alternative, if the organization has articulated a Logic Model or Theory of Change to guide its work, focus the brainstorm on one of the outcomes described in that model.)
- **“Silo Check.”** Is there an area where we could be working more collaboratively? How? What steps can we take in the next 30 days to improve?
- Review specific programmatic strategies and outcome indicators – are our goals still realistic? Are we on track? Why or why not? Where do we need to adjust?
- Have decisions already been made, and if so, was the strategy screen used? How did that process go? Would we make the same decision again? If not, what decisions need to be made? How can we do this strategically?
- How else can we incorporate ongoing strategic thinking and discussions into our work? What is working well, and what could be improved?