A vision without a strategy remains an illusion.

STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2028
GILES COUNTY, TN

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Executive Summary: Strategic Plan for Giles County, Tennessee

The Giles County Strategic Plan sets forth a comprehensive roadmap to promote countywide quality of life, safety, and prosperity. The plan emphasizes six pillars of success, including community engagement, public safety, finance and administration, citizen services, infrastructure, and economic development. By focusing on these priorities, Giles County can position itself as a thriving and dynamic community – a wonderful place to call "home" that pursues progress without compromising our rural and agricultural heritage.

In developing a wide-ranging strategic plan there are a number of values that should be defined vice assumed. This strategic plan considers:

- Safe communities and the health of county residents
- County economic vitality and resilience
- Sensitivity to the impacts of taxes on county residents
- Stewardship of natural resources and cultural traditions
- A definition of "progress" and the need to balance with the conservation of rural community
- Partnerships with community, state, and civic organizations

There are also a number of guiding principles inherent to good governance. If we hope to achieve the objectives of this strategic plan then county government must:

- Stand as a bulwark for constitutional *liberty* which coexists with individual *responsibility*
- Demonstrate sound stewardship of taxpayer dollars
- Commit to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct
- Pursue excellence in providing government services without usurping the natural roles of civic organizations, churches, and non-profits.
- Demonstrate flexible, proactive approaches to changing situations
- Foster open and effective communication with our communities, residents, taxpayers
- Be committed to fact-based decision-making
- Encourage education and workforce development to meet tomorrow's needs
- Encourage innovation and recognize the contributions of employees, volunteers, and residents

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Strategic Plan "Six Pillars"

1. Community Engagement

Our commitment to community engagement serves as the cornerstone of this strategic plan. Through transparent communication channels, inclusive decision-making processes, and active participation initiatives, we aim to empower _all_ residents to shape the future of Giles County.

- Encourage active citizen participation and engagement in decision-making processes and community initiatives.
- Foster collaboration among local government, businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions, and community organizations to address common goals and challenges.
- Implement regular communication channels to keep residents informed about county developments, events, opportunities, and challenges.

2. Public Safety

Ensuring the safety and security of Giles County citizens is paramount. Leveraging data-driven approaches, proactive law enforcement and emergency services strategies, and joint training and inter-agency partnerships. Reduce recidivism, enhance emergency responsiveness, and promote a culture of resilience.

- Utilize data-driven approaches to identify crime trends and deploy resources effectively.
- Enhance community efforts to build trust and collaboration between law enforcement and residents.
- Invest in training and technology to improve emergency response times and effectiveness.
- Promote community resilience through public education and preparedness programs.
- Reduce recidivism via training and treatment programs.

3. Finance & Administration

Sound fiscal management and efficient administration are imperative for accountable governance. By prioritizing prudent financial stewardship, embracing technological innovation, and streamlining administrative processes, we strive to optimize resource allocation and maximize operational effectiveness.

- Implement measures to ensure responsible fiscal management and budget transparency.
- Utilize technology solutions to streamline administrative processes and enhance accountability.
- Foster a culture of efficiency and performance measurement across all departments.
- Invest in professional development and training to enhance staff skills and leadership succession.

4. Citizen Services

We are committed to delivering superior, responsive citizen services that meet the needs of our community. Through modernization efforts, enhanced accessibility, and personalized support, we aim to foster trust, satisfaction, and a positive experience across all service touchpoints.

- Enhance accessibility and convenience of government services through digital platforms and online portals.
- Implement training for staff to ensure a positive citizen experience.
- Conduct regular assessments to gather feedback and improve service delivery.
- Develop personalized support mechanisms for vulnerable populations and special needs groups.

5. Infrastructure

Maintaining and improving our infrastructure is fundamental to facilitating economic growth and improving quality of life. Through strategic infrastructure planning, innovative development projects, and targeted maintenance initiatives, we endeavor to enhance connectivity, resilience, and sustainability throughout Giles County.

- Develop a capital infrastructure plan to proactively address critical needs and prioritize projects.
- Invest in sustainable and resilient infrastructure solutions that don't irresponsibly "kick the can" to future generations.
- Partner with utility providers to upgrade infrastructure, ensuring reliable and sustainable services for residents, businesses, and industries.
- Foster public-private partnerships to leverage additional funding and expertise for infrastructure projects.
- Expand access to high-speed internet and other digital technologies to enhance connectivity and support economic development, education, and telehealth services.

6. Economic Development

Driving economic vitality and prosperity is central to our vision for the future. By fostering a conducive business environment, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, and cultivating strategic partnerships, we aim to attract investment and promote "smart" growth across all sectors of our economy.

- Create a conducive business environment by keeping regulatory barriers to a minimum and improving access to business partnerships.
- Support local entrepreneurship and small businesses through mentorship programs and access to capital.
- Develop strategic partnerships with regional organizations to promote investment and job creation in Giles County.
- Capitalize on Giles County's historical and natural attractions to promote tourism and increase visitor engagement.
- Attract new investment and industries through targeted marketing and business development efforts.
- Promote workforce development initiatives to ensure a skilled and competitive labor force.
- Preserve our rural charm and safeguard farmland and existing agricultural industry.

In pursuit of these strategic objectives we will be governed by our core values and guiding principles.

Integrity, Stewardship, and Excellence
are foundational to achieving strategic objectives.

Collaboration, **Accountability**, and **Flexibility**
will guide us throughout implementation and unanticipated adjustments.

Vision Statement: Giles County Government

"Our Vision is to be a thriving, united county that cherishes its cultural inheritance, fosters sustainable growth, and sustains wholesome community for all residents."

The vision statement captures the following aspirations:

1. **Thriving Community**: Giles County seeks to create an environment where businesses flourish, employment opportunities abound, and residents are free to achieve superior quality of life.
2. **United and Welcoming**: Giles County aims to be an ideal homeplace to live and raise a family, where _everyone_ is valued, welcomed, and empowered to contribute to the community's progress and well-being.
3. **Culture**: Recognizing its historical and cultural significance, Giles County aims to celebrate and preserve its legacy while embracing present and future opportunities.
4. **Sustainable Growth**: Giles County aims to balance economic opportunity with environmental stewardship and agricultural heritage, ensuring that future generations can enjoy a healthy and resilient community.
5. **Wholesome Community**: Giles County defines genuine progress in terms of lifestyle quality, seeking to sustain its rural charm while improving access to education, healthcare, recreational opportunities, and essential services.
6. **Collaborative Spirit**: Giles County seeks to encourage collaboration among community members, government entities, businesses, and organizations. Together we must foster partnerships to identify and address our shared challenges while cultivating a shared vision for wholesome community life.

By embracing this vision, Giles County aims to build a prosperous and sustainable community that preserves its historic legacy, supports its residents, and attracts new opportunities for growth and success.

Mission Statement: Giles County Government

"Giles County government exists to provide effective and responsive governance, deliver essential services, and foster a strong sense of community through our commitment to integrity, stewardship, and excellence."

Core Values: Integrity, Stewardship, Excellence

In this mission statement, Giles County Government articulates its commitment to its Core Values with the following principles:

1. **Effective Governance**: Giles County government aims to provide efficient and accountable administration through well-informed decisions, policy implementation, and operational integrity. It strives to serve the best interests of its residents by upholding traditional principles of moral governance.
2. **Essential Services**: Giles County Government is dedicated to delivering essential services that meet the needs of its residents. These services include public safety, emergency services, infrastructure maintenance, and education support. County government seeks to provide these services in a reliable and responsive manner.
3. **Resident Well-being**: The mission underscores the government's commitment to promoting the well-being and quality of life for all residents. It prioritizes initiatives that support community development, health and wellness, and environmental sustainability.
4. **Fiscal Responsibility**: Giles County Government recognizes the importance of fiscal responsibility and prudent financial management. It aims to steward resources effectively, seek sustainable revenue streams, and ensure financial accountability.
5. **Strong Sense of Community**: The mission emphasizes the government's role in fostering a strong sense of community. It encourages community engagement, collaboration with local organizations, and the promotion of civic pride. The government seeks to build partnerships that enhance the overall social fabric and collective well-being of Giles County.

By adhering to this Mission Statement and its Core Values, Giles County Government strives to serve as an effective and responsive governing body that addresses resident needs, promotes their well-being, and fosters a wholesome and connected community.

SWOT Analysis for Giles County, Tennessee

Strengths:

1. Strategic Location: Giles County benefits from its strategic location in southern Tennessee, providing access to major transportation routes, including highways and rail lines. This advantageous location facilitates commerce, trade, and economic opportunities.
2. Natural Resources: The County is blessed with abundant natural resources, including fertile agricultural land, forests, springs and creeks. These resources support agriculture, timber, and outdoor recreational activities, contributing to the local economy and quality of life.
3. History and Culture: Giles County has rich cultural traditions, with historical landmarks and a strong sense of community identity. The county's history and cultural assets can be leveraged to attract tourism and further enhance community pride.
4. Workforce Development: With both TCAT and UTS situated in Pulaski, a thriving dual-enrollment program for HS students, and a resultant flow of highly skilled young people entering the trades and professions, Giles County has tremendous workforce potential.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited Agricultural Diversity: Giles County's agriculture industry of is reliant on large-farm agriculture (i.e. agribusiness) with concentrations in cattle production and row crops. This lack of economic diversity poses a vulnerability to market fluctuations and limited opportunities for future generations.
2. Limited Access to Higher Education: While the county has TCAT and UTS, access to advanced STEM education options are limited. This can hinder workforce development and the attraction of knowledge-based industries.
3. Aging Infrastructure: Some areas of Giles County suffers from aging infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and public facilities. This can adversely impact the county's ability to attract and support business growth and potentially undermine quality of life.

Opportunities:

1. Economic Development: Giles County has opportunities to diversify its economy by attracting new industries, promoting entrepreneurship, and supporting small businesses. By leveraging its strategic location, interstate corridor, natural resources, and available incentives, the county can attract investment and foster job creation.
2. Tourism and Recreation: Giles County's historical sites, natural beauty, and outdoor recreational opportunities present significant potential for tourism development. By promoting these assets and

investing in related infrastructure, the county can attract visitors, generate revenue, and create employment opportunities.

3.   Education and Workforce Development: Expanding access to higher education, vocational training, and skill development programs can enhance the county's workforce and attract knowledge-based industries. Strengthening partnerships between educational institutions, local businesses, and regional partners can ensure a well-prepared workforce.

4.   Broadband expansion is rapidly expanding across the county, advancing opportunities for home-based entrepreneurs, telecommuting, and distance-learning.

Threats:

1.   Economic Factors: Giles County may be susceptible to economic downturns, changes in market demand, or fluctuations in commodity prices. These external economic factors can have a disproportionate impact on the agricultural sector and undermine economic stability. Further, much of our existing industry revolves around auto manufacturing; the county has limited industrial diversity to weather automotive related downturns.

2.   Demographic Challenges: Like many rural areas, Giles County may face challenges related to an aging population, limited population growth, and outmigration of young talent. This can impact the labor force, economic vitality, and the sustainability of community services.

3.   Limited Resources for Infrastructure Investment: Limited funding and resources can pose challenges for maintaining and improving infrastructure in Giles County. This can hinder economic development efforts, limit connectivity, and impact the quality of life for residents.

By understanding and addressing these factors, Giles County can capitalize on its strengths, address weaknesses, seize opportunities, and mitigate threats to create a more prosperous and sustainable future for its residents and businesses.

Strategic Process: the following graphic helps define the ongoing practice of strategic planning:
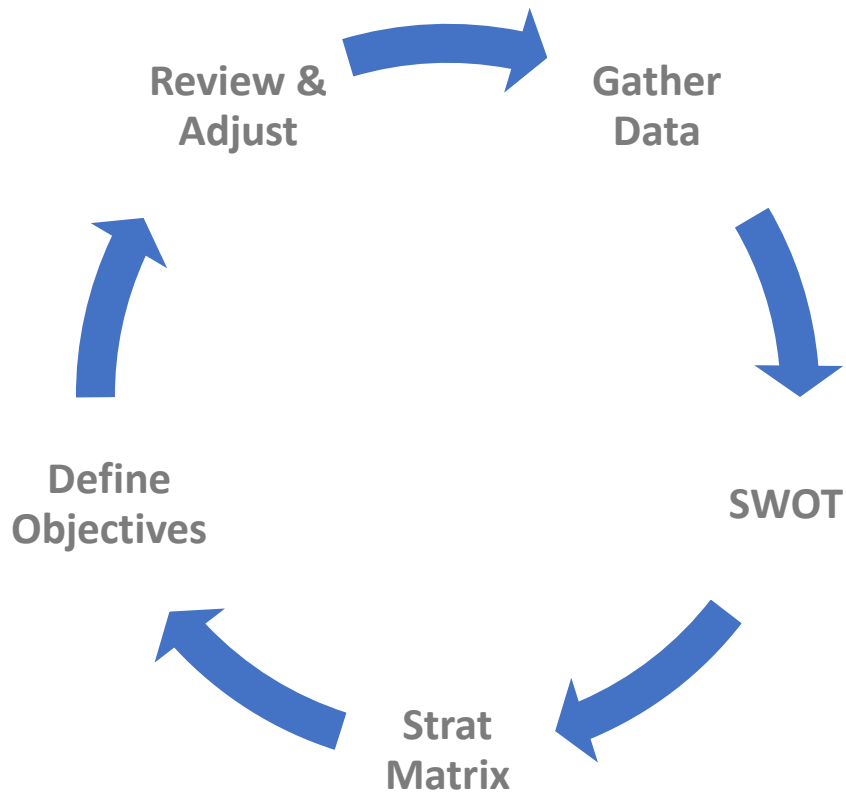
- **Gather Data** – Survey Commission, RPC, EDC, Department Heads
- **SWOT** – External opportunities & threats; Internal strengths & weaknesses; drives the strategic issues
- **Strategic Matrix** – Fleshes out the strategic issues; assesses opportunities v. strengths/weaknesses, and threats v. strengths/weaknesses
- **Define Objectives** – Develop broad objectives, then break out into short/long goals; develop operational and financial plans for implementation
- **Review & Adjust** – Continually review strategies, goals, plans, outcomes and performance measures

Methodology

The methodology of this effort involved several surveys tailored to areas of responsibility and representation, which included: The Giles County Commission, elected Department Heads, Public Safety professionals, Finance personnel, employees who deliver citizen services, those responsible for infrastructure maintenance, the Economic Development Commission, and the Regional Planning Commission. Further, older county documents that had previously outlined vision, values, and SWOT analyses were reviewed and updated. The goal was to stand on the shoulders of previous county leaders while charting a course for today's leadership team, to include more specificity with strategic themes, goals and objectives.

Surveys were collected from the Commission, Department Heads, the Economic Development Commission and the Regional Planning Commission. Data from the surveys were collated, from which six strategic dimensions were determined:

1. Community Engagement
2. Public Safety
3. Finance & Administration
4. Citizen Services
5. Infrastructure
6. Economic Development

    Education: Please see separate Board of Education Strategic Plan

It's important to highlight that the Strategic Process is a circular system of continual planning and adjustment. The Strategic Plan, then, is a "living document" that will be revisited and adjusted quarterly. Action steps and performance measures will be added and updated as they are addressed by the responsible individuals/departments.

Strategic Evaluations

The array of critical planning tasks drawn from surveys and interviews were evaluated using an "Eisenhower Matrix" to assign responsibility and prioritization. Tasks were then assigned to a Goals & Objectives spreadsheet that specify the Focus Area, Defined Strategies and Action Steps, Budget Needs, and Desired Outcomes.   These matrices will be revisited and updated quarterly.

Responsible Entities include:
   a.   County Department Heads
   b.   County Commission
   c.   Regional Planning Commission
   d.   Economic Development Commission
   e.   Various other boards and committees
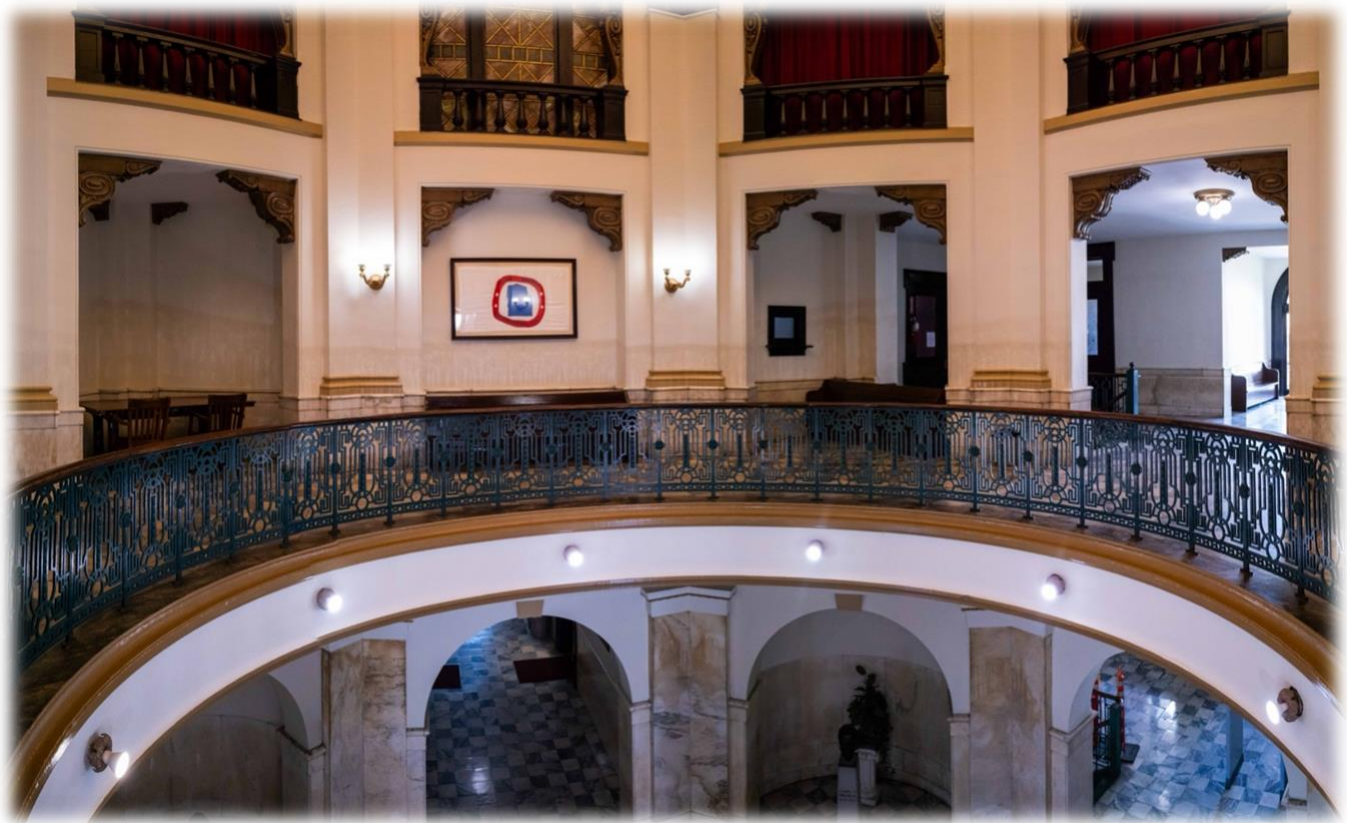
Strat Plan Ike Matrix
County Exec DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	Strategic Plan	1	Capital Asset Plan
	2	Website Overhaul	2	Public Comms Plan
	3	Time Shift Software	3	
	4	Personnel Manual	4	
Less Important	1	Qrtly Ldrship Training	1	IT & Tech Support
	2		2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix
Commission DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	Ambulance Building	1	Housing Development
	2	Interstate Development	2	Sports Park
	3	Prioritize our Needs	3	Plan for growth
	4	Courthouse/Justice Center	4	
Less Important	1	Airport Opportunities	1	
	2	Resolve state/county differences in liquor/beer sales	2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix
Dept Head DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	Retention of employees	1	Leadership training
	2	Mental health/YSO issues	2	Employee raises
	3	Recapitalize equipment	3	
	4		4	
Less Important	1	Assess unfunded mandates	1	Training and culture
	2		2	Assess DH space needs
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix
Public Safety DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	Improve retention	1	Consolidation under one roof
	2	Leadership training	2	Manpower increase
	3	Cross-function training	3	Improved radio comms
	4	Courthouse/Annex security	4	
Less Important	1		1	Succession plan for leadership
	2		2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix

Finance & Admin DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	ID revenue streams	1	Salary schedule
	2	Assess employee benefits	2	
	3		3	
	4		4	
Less Important	1		1	Assess space needs
	2		2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix

Citizen Services DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	Go online with titles/records	1	Fraud alert program
	2	Drop-box or walk-up window	2	
	3	Public access to old documents	3	
	4		4	
Less Important	1		1	Sports Park
	2		2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix
Infrastructure DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	Courthouse renovation	1	BOE Main Office
	2	School renovations	2	Bus Depot
	3	Ambulance/Emerg Svcs	3	Hwy - Recapitalize equipment
	4	E911	4	Plan for new HS
Less Important	1		1	
	2		2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix
Econ Development DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	County Marketing Plan	1	Interstate Corridor
	2	Creative Residential Solutions	2	Spec Building
	3	Relationships w/ Industry, TVA, etc	3	Preservation of Quality of Life
	4	Enhanced workforce initiatives	4	
Less Important	1		1	Buy-in from Entrepreneurs
	2		2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Strat Plan Ike Matrix

Planning Commission DASHBOARD

	SI	Most Urgent	SI	Less Urgent
Most Important	1	A clear mission	1	A "general" map for growth
	2	Relationships w/ citizens/agencies	2	A plan for growth (EDC, county, etc)
	3	Redo subdivision standards	3	Keep govt regs low
	4		4	
Less Important	1		1	
	2		2	
	3		3	
	4		4	

Goals and Objectives Matrices

Each Strategic Dimension rated "Most Important" in the foregoing matrices, along with a variety of critical planning issues from surveys and interviews, were assigned to a Goals & Objectives spreadsheet that specify the Focus Area, Defined Strategies and Action Steps, Budget Needs, and Desired Outcomes. These matrices will be revisited and updated quarterly.

Goals & Objectives Matrices