STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Strategic Planning is a process to effectively direct government and business activities through critical problem solving. Strategic Planning is an effective means of dealing with policy and planning issues which face communities, and for creating an overall plan and structure for a program or office based upon critical needs and issues.

There are three critical components of strategic planning:

1) problem solving, which this workbook emphasizes through Issue Analysis;
2) management, which will be presented around Mission by Objectives for Results (MBOR) techniques; and
3) team building, which will be stressed through group projects during the workshop.

The first and perhaps central component of this workshop is Issue Analysis, however, a process used in strategic planning.

We will pursue all three components of Strategic Planning over the next few days. This workbook covers materials from the first day’s activities and is a work guide for you to document your sessions.

Strategic Planning often begins with a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. We will conduct a group SWOT analysis of transportation within your tribe. The purpose is to share and gain common insights through the group exercises, and to establish the basis for strategic planning for transportation to come later.

The next activity is Issue Analysis, a technique for studying and resolving complicated problems. It is very effective for government, and has been used by the Navajo Nation and other government organizations as a management tool.

Issue Analysis can do many things. It can be used to help make simple and complex decisions, or to organize an entire office or division. We will use it on the first afternoon to identify what the most important tourist development project should be examined first.

Issue Analysis is a very practical management tool which is simple to learn and use, yet very powerful. It is effective for presentations and organizing complex issues into action solutions. It relates directly to the needs of every government employee, board member, or concerned citizen to make the best decisions and create the best programs and services for your community. It should allow you to determine a direction or several clear options for transportation development.

Incorporated in this process will be to establish the basic data in transportation assessment. What is the current level of transportation activity? What are the visitor travel patterns and characteristics in the area? What are the current impacts of transportation on the tribe? What current tribal transportation activities are being carried out. These are defined as part of the Policy Making Environment and underlying and related issues.
The Issue Analysis Exercise will identify transportation alternatives and recommend one or more alternatives for action as part of Product Development and follow-up sessions. As programs are developed, Management techniques, the third phase of Strategic Planning, will be used to develop the program mission, goals and objectives, work program, and budget.

The Strategic Plan for Transportation will be the documentation of the process starting with the SWOT Analysis, the Inventory of Existing Conditions and Issue Analysis focused upon “What is the most effective transportation development?” and finally the management framework for the program and how to carry it out. This is very much a “working session,” and your participation will lead to successful ideas and actions as part of the Strategic Plan for Transportation.
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BACKGROUND

Strategic Planning means different things to different people. It involves the borrowing of techniques from management and business, and applying them to governments and non-profit organizations. For some, strategic planning is synonymous with long-range planning (Pfeiffer, Goodstein and Nolan 1986, p.1). For others (Sorkin, Ferris and Hudak 1986, p.1) it is a process or specific methodology which exhibits the following characteristics:

1) It is a focused process that concentrates on selected issues.
2) It explicitly considers resource availability.
3) It assesses strengths and weaknesses.
4) It considers major events and changes occurring outside the organization or jurisdiction.
5) It is action oriented.

Bryson and Roering (1986) have described the range of approaches to public sector strategic planning.

My own experience with strategic planning came as a long range or comprehensive planner, my exploration of budgeting, public finance, policy analysis, and the broader application of planning techniques to government. In 1979 I began work with Arizona State University's Center for Public Affairs as director of their Native American Public Administration (NAPAP) Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. At that time, working with consultants from the New School for Social Research in New York City, public administrators, and tribal employees of the Navajo Nation, I learned and participated in the application of a process of strategic planning called Issue Analysis. The Issue Analysis portion of this workbook comes from that effort.

The Navajo Nation is the size of West Virginia, with 150,000 residents and an annual combined tribal and federal government programs' budget of over $600,000,000. The application of strategic planning, begun in 1977, and still ongoing at key levels, was an important experiment in public administration. Using a “state of the art” strategic planning process created by public administrators at the New School for Social Research, New York City, and in conjunction with a similar experiment in management being implemented by New York City, Issue Analysis was instituted as the major policy analysis technique in a total restructuring of government organization, services, budgeting and finance.

Since 1979 I have conducted workshops on Issue Analysis and Strategic Planning for the Navajo Nation, and for a broad range of government organizations, non-profit organizations, and citizens' groups. Issue
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Analysis offers a very positive approach to government organization and operation. It is a simple process which is action oriented. It can be used or begun by staff, advisory boards, or program directors simply by applying the process to selected issues. It has direct application to any type of issue including land use planning and personal time management. Its continued application to critical issues and to the overall organization and management of an office will create a strategic planning program.

I hope you will enjoy the workshop/seminar, and am sure you will find it a tremendously valuable tool in your profession.

Dick G. Winchell, Chair
NW & AK Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP)
Department of Urban Planning, Public & Health Administration
Eastern Washington University
668 N. Riverpoint Blvd., Suite A
Spokane, WA 99202

509-358-2230
CHAPTER 1. SWOT ANALYSIS OF TRIBAL ISSUES.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Many strategic planning efforts start with a team building exercise to identify and build on the knowledge of community residents and staff. The SWOT exercise will follow the introduction of participants and guests. Those present will be divided into groups of 4-6 people, and each group will conduct a team SWOT assignment.

Before the team effort, however, each individual will outline the SWOT analysis from their perspective.

SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats. Some strategic planning exercise use “prouds” and “sorry’s” as an alternative to SWOT to describe the community. We will use the more detailed SWOT analysis.

The SWOT analysis will focus on transportation activities, defined very broadly. Please think about your reservation and community. Then identify the five strengths you see in the community in general and for transportation specifically, and rank them in order of importance. Use the sheet on the next page as a guide.

Next, identify the things you identify as weaknesses or problems within the community, especially for transportation. What has been tried that has not worked? What detracts from the community or causes problems.

Third, identify the opportunities you see for transportation development. What could possibly be developed, what educational or training programs established, or other activities or efforts undertaken.

Finally, what threats can you identify for tourist development efforts. These may come from outside the reservation or inside.
SWOT ANALYSIS INDIVIDUAL WORKSHEET

STRENGTHS (LIST 5)

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WEAKNESSES

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OPPORTUNITIES (LIST 5)

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THREATS (LIST 5)

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The individual SWOT analysis worksheets will form the basis of a group exercise. Each group should have 4-6 participants randomly selected (number off or use seating). Each group should first identify each participant by giving your name and interest in transportation. Then each person should read their SWOT analysis, starting with strengths. Each participant reads their list of strengths while everyone else listens and takes notes. A discussion follows in which each group develops a group list of 5 to 7 Strengths. Everyone in the group should participate, and everyone in the group must agree on the Strengths listed on the group worksheet. One person from each group should be identified as the recorder, and write the group list on large paper. The recorder or another member of the group will later make a report to everyone at the workshop on these Strengths.

The same process is used to identify Group Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Lists of 5 to 7 of each are produced by each group, and written on large paper. This team building exercise should include discussion of SWOT items to select the ones most important to all members of the group.

After this group exercise is completed (use worksheet on the following page to record your group results), a presentation is made from each group’s list. These are presented to everyone at the workshop, Strengths first. Once each group has presented its strengths, the conference facilitators will compile a list of key strengths. This process is repeated for Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The facilitators will compile the final SWOT Analysis as the starting point for tourist development (Worksheet is attached).
SWOT ANALYSIS SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET

STRENGTHS (LIST 5)

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WEAKNESSES

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OPPORTUNITIES (LIST 5)

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THREATS (LIST 5)

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GROUP MEMBERS (LIST NAMES)

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SWOT ANALYSIS FULL WORKSHOP WORKSHEET

STRENGTHS (LIST 5)

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WEAKNESSES (LIST 5)

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OPPORTUNITIES (LIST 5)

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THREATS (LIST 5)

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KEY PARTICIPANTS (LIST NAMES)

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INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Once the SWOT analysis has been complete, a more detailed inventory and analysis of existing conditions will take place. This will include:

1) an overview of the current transportation activity including visitor travel patterns and characteristics for your Tribe;
2) An overview of current impacts of transportation on the tribe;
3) Review of current tribal attractions and transportation operations.

This should conclude the morning session. After the break, the focus will be on the Issue Analysis decision-making process in Chapters 2 and 3.
CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION TO ISSUE ANALYSIS

The most important responsibility of government is to solve problems. The resolution of problems or issues is not a simple task, however, and often requires extensive research and collection of data. Especially for governments and non-profit organizations, issues are often complex, interrelated with other problems, and involve many groups of people.

The recent introduction of management science brought a number of misconceptions about our ability to solve problems. One of those is “the more information, the better.” This is simply not the case unless that information is well organized. As managers and board members have discovered on their own, the more information that is gathered on a topic, the more difficult it becomes to make decisions unless organization of that data is stressed.

After seeing this problem with many governmental and business agencies, a number of social scientists tried to develop a new way of solving problems. This new way would still generate new information, but it would use that information directly in making decisions, instead of leaving it in the form of large reports that few people would read. This new system of decision-making was called Issue Analysis. It is the technique which will be presented in this workshop.

Issue Analysis was developed at the Department of Urban Affairs and Policy Analysis, Center for New York City Affairs, the New School for Social Research. The basis of this workbook comes from the document “A General Schema for Issue Analysis” (1974) which was produced by the New School for Social Research, from the application of this Schema to the Navajo Nation government made by the old OMB office of the Tribe in the 70's, and by workshops sponsored by the Navajo Tribal Training Center taught by Mr. Stan Boynton, Management Consultant, and Mr. Serra Murray, Office of the Budget, New York City.

WHAT ARE ISSUES?

An issue is a conflict where two or more opinions are raised. Since we are concerned with governmental or public issues, these relate to governmental policy--the decisions made by governments or organizations and the structures they utilize to carry out those decisions. Issues for the governments are problems or conflicts about policy which ask the question “What is the government to do?” These policy issues, since they are part of government systems, are public because the government represents the people. These issues are tied to public interests, with the government or non-profit organizations working to resolve the issue. Programs and policies which resolve issues are linked to management and administrative decisions. All government programs, services and activities are formed in a response to issues faced by the community, and therefore analysis of issues leads to the Strategic Planning of organizations.

One of the problems of government is that there are many problems which it faces at any given time. Because all governments are limited, they must choose which ones to study or resolve. Management
science cannot simply generate more information for decision-makers, making their decisions more complicated. Instead it must organize information in such a way that the information helps lead to specific decisions. Issue Analysis is one way of organizing information so that it leads to better decisions. Issue Analysis lets us organize all the information available on a critical issue in a framework which helps us resolve the problem (called the Pre-solve). It also lets us determine what additional research is needed to better understand the problem and analyze the alternative actions which can be taken. It generates new information on critical issues and organizes that information in a manner which directly assists in making decisions.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

Because issues are being made by governments, and are therefore public, we can examine the issue not only as it affects government agencies or divisions but how it affects the public. Good decisions always relate to the community, by resolving a need within the community or improving programs and services. An important part of this process is how the community understands and is involved in issues.

In general, the more information available to the public, and the better the general public knowledge of programs and service is, the more likely they will support government programs. With community education or concern comes a need for community participation in decision-making. If citizens feel their opinions are being listened to they are more likely to support the final decision, even if they themselves do not agree with that decision. Information and participation in decisions can reduce polarization and conflict within the community.

Citizen and staff participation in decision-making is an important aspect for applying issue analysis to your own office situation. If you inform the people you are working with exactly what you are doing, and ask them to participate and give advice on decisions, they will feel much more a part of government. They will understand the purpose of your organization or office, as well as the specific tasks being undertaken. One of the most unique features of Issue Analysis is that by using this approach you can create more information for decisions, and increase the number of people participating in the Decision-making while still making timely decisions. The decisions become easier to make because the new information and opinions are all organized in a manner which directly helps you or the elected officials you serve make better decisions.
UNDERSTANDING ISSUE ANALYSIS

In order to understand issue analysis, we must recognize that every issue or conflict involves three stages:

1) formulation
2) appraisal
3) resolution.

In the initial identification of the issue by the community, the formulation stage, the public is greatly influenced by the amount, type and sources of information which they receive. Over a very short period, sometimes almost instantaneously, members of the public make their own appraisal of the issue based on their own values and information, and make a decision which become their position. Once made, this position is difficult the change or to have people reconsider.

At this point, the community is polarized, meaning they have made a tentative decision either for or against a certain action on the issue. Resolution of the polarized issues means that some people within the local community feel they have "won", while others feel they have "lost". Both sides often become resentful of the other, and in many cases look for new issues in which they can continue their fight.

Issue Analysis offers an alternative to this process, in that it proposes a more neutral role for government staff in community conflict resolution. It seeks out information which will provide a context and support for decisions throughout the community. More importantly, it identifies all possible actions which can be taken, and instead of saying this one is better than that one, it collects information and shows the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. It provides a number of alternative actions instead of one or two and helps organize this information in a way that each alternative can be evaluated based upon an analysis of the information available. Issue Analysis presents this information in a clear, systematic fashion so that decision-makers (elected leaders) can see the alternatives and the expected outcomes of each alternative. Their decisions can be based upon this assessment rather than how they stand within a polarized community.

POLICY MAKING AND THE POLICY ANALYST

Policy making is the process of: 1) identifying an issue or conflict; 2) determining what alternatives exist; 3) analyzing what the results of each action might be; and 4) taking some action based upon that analysis. Such a process occurs in any decision. The manner in which this process occurs, however, can vary greatly depending upon the relationship of all parties to adequate information, an adequate understanding of the issues, and a clear idea of all possible alternative actions. IT IS THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTAL STAFF MEMBERS TO PROVIDE SUCH CLARITY WHICH LEADS TO
EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING. Such a function is called policy analysis, and almost every Tribal official and employee needs to understand that part of his or her responsibilities in working for the Tribe include that of Policy Analyst.

The Policy Analyst is very powerful in any issue or conflict situation because Policy Analysts often control the amount of information and who has access to the information for any given issue. It is generally the Policy Analyst's job to organize this information into a set of actions or alternatives which is then presented to decision-makers and forms the basis of decisions. Most of you, as Policy Analysts, are responsible for making presentations to either your staff administrators or directly to elected officials. This is a serious problem because it is difficult to know how much to tell these officials, or how much they need to know to make good decisions. The result is that they are told only enough information to make whatever decisions seem best. THIS IS NOT ENOUGH FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT. IN AN IDEAL SITUATION, ADMINISTRATORS AND ELECTED DECISION-MAKERS NEED TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION, ALL POSSIBLE ACTIONS WHICH THEY MIGHT TAKE, AND WHAT THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES MAY BE FOR EACH OF THESE ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS. Only when they have this information can they become effective leaders, and only then have you fulfilled your obligation as Policy Analyst.

SUMMARY

The issue analysis process can be used to examine any issue or conflict. It provides a framework for governmental staff member to study community issues and problems as Policy Analysts. The role of the Policy Analyst is to organize information, structure alternatives and provide recommendations based on an initial analysis of alternatives. This takes the form of a report or presentation which can be made to tribal staff or elected leaders. These persons are responsible for the final decision. Such a process needs to involve the community in identifying problems, creating alternatives and placing values on the impacts of those actions. Issue Analysis can result in the resolution of issues in which staff, community members and decision-makers have all participated, and which is based on building community support rather than conflict.
CHAPTER 3. THE ISSUE ANALYSIS PROCESS

Issue analysis is the process of collecting information, identifying alternative action, comparing the expected outcomes which would result from each alternative and recommending the best alternative for action. There are seven steps in the process of Issue Analysis, and you will need to learn them in order to understand and use Issue Analysis. Each step is important for understanding any issue, and all steps must be taken in their proper order to gain maximum effectiveness in using the process. The seven steps are:

1) IDENTIFY THE CENTRAL POLICY ISSUE

2) IDENTIFY UNDERLYING AND RELATED ISSUES

3) DEFINE THE POLICY-MAKING ENVIRONMENT

4) GENERATE A SET OF ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

5) DEVELOP CRITERIA TO ANALYZE THE ALTERNATIVES

6) EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVES USING THE CRITERIA

7) DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of these steps will be describes in detail below, after some brief comments on another problem of Issue Analysis—time.

Many decision-makers simply do not have the time or the staff to conduct extensive research on a particular topic. They must make speedy actions to resolve immediate problems.

At the same time, once a decision has been made, it may or may not solve the problem. Many policy issues cannot be resolved by one decision, but keep recurring.

As a result Issue Analysis must not be looked upon as a one-time cure-all for problems. It is not a static process and it does not occur in isolation. Instead, all problems are inter-related, part of the continuous process of community change. Because the causes of problems and the problems themselves are always changing, Issue Analysis as a way to solve problems must be understood as a PROCESS, a way of solving problems over time. As new information becomes available and values of the community change, Past solutions to issues may no longer be the best for the community. Issue Analysis must not end with one solution, but continue so that at any given time the best solution to an issue can be gained.
As a result, a series of timing cycles have been developed by which to study issues. That allows the application of the Issue Analysis process not only at the beginning of a study, but at critical points during the study, including at the completion of the first research on the issue, the completion of additional research, the time of the decision and after an action has been taken to determine if the action was successful and to evaluate what new action might be needed.

The time frameworks for Issue Analysis are listed below:

PRE-SOLVE: The Pre-solve is a first run through of the Issue Analysis process. It provides "quick and dirty" assessment of the issue, the alternatives and an evaluation of alternatives. It can be used as the basis for recommendations, but more often is used to organize further research and data collection for a more comprehensive Issue Analysis. Where possible, the Pre-solve should include staff administrators or elected officials themselves to gain a better understanding of the issue and its implications.

RESEARCH DESIGN: The research design may be based upon the Pre-solve or may be a separate process which goes through all steps in the Issue Analysis process. It identifies where possible additional information or studies which can be completed to better understand the issue, the criterion by which it is being evaluated and the differences which will result from different outcomes. At the Research Design stage it is important to include all staff members who will be working on a project so they can understand how their part of the project will fit into the overall decision-making effort.

CYCLE 1-ANALYSIS: Cycle 1-Analysis takes place when some or all of the research identified in the Research Design stage has been completed. At this time the new information and findings of the research effort are added into the previous Issue Analysis, sometimes creating new alternatives, adding more data to the analysis and evaluation and increasing the base of information upon which recommendations can be made. Again, it is good to involve participating staff members, letting each person present the information they gained in the research effort at this point. In some cases, a recommendation can be made, but often the Cycle 1-Analysis will suggest even more research which when completed will allow for better decisions.

CYCLE 2, 3, 4-ANALYSIS: As you can imagine, there are always ways to collect more information which will help make better recommendations and better decisions. At the completion of the efforts, the entire Issue Analysis process should be followed. At some point, however, a decision must be made, and recommendations based on Issue Analysis
process can be presented to decision-makers. These recommendations can best be explained by using the Issue Analysis Matrix which will be developed later, so that even though the decision may not have participated in all stages of Issue Analysis, they can understand the steps and why the recommendations were made.

**EVALUATION:** Finally, after a decision has been made and implemented, it is important to be able to determine if it has been effective. Often after one year or more, it is good to review issues in the community, and past decisions to implement services and programs to make sure those are the best actions which can be taken at this time. The Issue Analysis is applied to the needs of the community which led to certain decisions or actions.

Issue Analysis is a process which can be used when an issue is first identified, when it is being studied as a way to organize the research effort, when a decision is made, and after the decision and action is taken as a means of evaluation of programs and services. Now that we understand this time framework, let us study these seven stages of Issue Analysis in more detail.

1) **IDENTIFY THE CENTRAL POLICY ISSUE**

Perhaps the most important step in Issue Analysis is to identify the central policy issue. Many government programs and services are developed which do not address the real causes of problems, or do not address the correct issues. In addition to identifying the correct issue it is important to state each issue as simply and clearly as possible. It is very useful to put each issue into a short, simple statement such as:

"The critical issue is ........................."

Quite often when trying to limit the issue it becomes clear that there are other related issues. It is important to sort through these related issues making sure that you are examining the one most critical to the conflict. It is important to identify the real source of conflict rather than related issues.

2) **IDENTIFY UNDERLYING AND RELATED ISSUES**

As noted above, most issues are not isolated, but are directly related to a number of other issues or conflicts. It is not only important to clearly state the central issue, but also to state the related issues in simple statements. This will make sure you are examining the central issue and will aid you in understanding how these other related or underlying issues influence the central issue.
Pre-solve it is important to spend some time defining related issues to assure proper understanding of the central issue.

3) DEFINE THE POLICY-MAKING ENVIRONMENT

Step three is to define the policy-making environment within which decisions are to be made. This should be a two-phased process. The first phase is simply to identify the history of the issue, answering the following questions:

1) What is the immediate history of the issue?
2) How did the issue arise?
3) Is this a new or a recurring issue?

The second phase is to identify and discuss the position of key actors regarding the issues, including the organizations they represent and how these individuals and groups would be affected by the outcome of the issue. This is important in providing a context for understanding the issue as it relates to the community and key decision-makers or policy influencers.

4) GENERATE A SET OF ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

The step in Issue Analysis which is most often overlooked or not fully developed by decision-makers is the creation of a comprehensive set of alternative actions. In most cases at least two alternatives are often overlooked simply because people do not think of them, or because they may seem unlikely at first glance. The contribution of Issue Analysis is to fully explore ALL POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES.

It is very important to list all possible alternatives. For any given problem, with a little practice, it should be easy to identify ten or twenty or more alternatives. IT IS THE ROLE OF THE POLICY ANALYST TO INVENT NEW ALTERNATIVES AND BE SURE THAT ALL POSSIBLE OPTIONS ARE CONSIDERED. Policy analysts should invent new options through:

1) Discussion or brainstorming sessions;
2) The use of reference documents;
3) The creation of a decision tree which identifies all sub-parts of the decision, and the considers all combinations of those.
Brainstorming can often be done during the Pre-solve, asking persons in the group participating in the Pre-solve to come up with all possible ideas. Often new and creative solutions to problems will arise which were not previously considered. In addition, many times an option is seen to be improved with combinations of one or more parts of other alternatives. The result is better, more creative actions which relate to the issue.

In some technical issues, alternatives are not apparent unless the participants are well versed in the issue. One part of the Research Design stage may be to study the literature and writings, or to call other Tribes or governments which have faced similar issues to see what they have done. Sometimes this can take the form of a short survey or request for reports from other agencies.

Finally decision trees are extremely valuable in creating alternatives. Decision trees can be formed by identifying all sub-parts of the decision. An example of a Navajo tribal government construction project demonstrates this process. If you are working on a construction project for housing, there are a number of sub-parts of the decision to build houses. One is the building materials to be used. The first sub-part question is:

What building material should be used for the construction of houses in our project?

Alternative materials can then be listed:
- wood
- brick
- concrete
- adobe
- rock

A second sub-part question can also be examined. That is:

Who can complete major portions of the construction project?

Alternatives include:
- independent local laborers
- local laborers working for a Navajo contractor
- local laborers working for a non-Navajo contractor
- A Navajo contractor/construction firm
- a non-Navajo contractor/construction firm
If the selection of materials in the first sub-part is brick or concrete, the job could probably not be done by independent local laborers, and would require a contractor. It might also exclude some Navajo contractors, and minimize local labor.

On the other hand, if the first selection were for adobe, rock or wood housing, it may be possible that independent local laborers may be able to complete major segments of the project. By identifying all sub-parts of the decision, and making all possible combinations new or creative alternatives can be identified which are much more supportive of the overall community and respond much more positively to the issue.

One final note about generating alternatives. Probably the most common alternative, one which is often overlooked, is the DO NOTHING alternative. Such an alternative should always be listed. What happens is that no decision is made, or the decision is delayed. It is very important to list this DO NOTHING alternative to demonstrate possible outcomes. In many cases DO NOTHING is the alternative selected, or the one which is implemented in practice. It is important for decision-makers to realize what the impacts of this alternative are.

Step 4 is really the first part of the construction of our decision-making matrix. A matrix is simply a chart which has a list of items across the top. The matrix is a picture of rows and columns of information. Each cell of the matrix represents the comparison of information for the column with information in the row. In Issue Analysis, the alternatives which are generated in Step 4 are placed in the left-hand column, with each alternative forming one row across the matrix. This leads us to the identification of Step 5  DEVELOP CRITERIA TO ANALYZE THE ALTERNATIVES, since each criterion identified will be placed in the columns across the top of the matrix.

5) DEVELOP CRITERIA TO ANALYZE THE ALTERNATIVES

Once we have identified all possible alternative actions, we need to identify which of those alternative actions is best to resolve our issue. To accomplish this we need to establish what we will call CRITERIA, which are critical factors to be considered when we compare alternatives. What makes Issue Analysis a powerful management tool is that it is always organizing information in a way to help make decisions. We do not do research for the sake of research, but to increase our ability to say one alternative is better than another.

There are generally four categories of CRITERIA which are used by managers to evaluate alternatives. These are:

1) How much will the alternative cost?
2) How effective will it be at solving the conflict?
3) How long will it take to implement or to gain results?
4) How likely is it that the alternative can be implemented (feasibility)?
1) Costing the alternative

Identifying the cost of each alternative action, and then comparing those costs is perhaps the most common and easily understood CRITERIA. This is relatively simple when a dollar value can be assigned to each alternative. For social service programs or other types of issue, it is difficult if not impossible to determine specific dollar costs or benefits of the project. Even when costing is in dollars, there are several rules to follow in establishing cost criteria.

First, always separate capital expenditures from operating expenditures. Capital expenditures are those which are used for purchase of equipment, facilities, buildings, etc. They can include the cost of land, cost of construction of a facility, etc. Operating expenditures are those which go for salaries for staff, maintenance of facilities and services, rent, travel, etc. Both must be calculated to determine the total cost and/or the total benefits (profits) from the project. In addition, there should be an effort to identify direct costs for the project, as well as any indirect or hidden costs which may occur at a future time. Many offices which have purchased their own computers for example found they needed software to make their computers worthwhile. In addition, after the initial purchase, they learned they often needed an on-going maintenance contract to keep the computer operating effectively. These costs are often not figured into the acquisition cost of a computer, but are real costs which will have to be paid if the computer is to be used effectively.

"Another concern in examining issues is what is called "sunk costs". These are costs which have already been expended to implement one alternative. The best way to handle these "sunk costs" is to ignore them. If an office has already purchased a thousand dollar computer, for example, but needs to buy two thousand dollars worth of software to make it work, it is best to start over in analysis, asking the question:

"What is the best alternative at this time?"

By taking such an approach, we may identify a new type of computer which already has the software we need for only one thousand dollars. This would mean we would save one thousand dollars, even though we already had spent one thousand on a computer we could not use. The critical aspect of Issue Analysis is that it is concerned with:

"WHAT IS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE I CAN TAKE AT THIS TIME?"

This must consider actions which can be taken now, rather than an over-emphasis of past actions or decision.
2) Effectiveness

Effectiveness is a much more difficult measure of criteria by which to evaluate alternatives. It is difficult to determine exactly how effective an action can be. What can be determined is what is termed a "relative measure". Although we cannot say this alternative is exactly this much better than another, we can say that given the expected outcomes for each alternative, one alternative seems to be better than another.

Often times we must develop a relative scale by which we can measure alternatives. An example of a relative scale is to determine if we think the outcome will be positive, negative, or neutral (no effect). We can then assign symbols or numbers to each alternative. How this relative scale operates will be described in detail in the next section.

It is often the case that the effectiveness of a project will be different for different groups of the community. It is important to sub-divide the population into appropriate sub-groups and assess the impact of the actions on each group. An example might be required training for teachers. Such training might increase the teacher's skill in a certain area, but may have only limited impact on the student's skills or abilities. The effectiveness of the action on each group must be assessed to determine which alternative is best.

Some ways of measuring teacher effectiveness can be the result of selected actions. Hiring more teachers may result in fewer students per teacher, or better grade scores among students, which can be used for determining effectiveness of school systems. Other actions may not result in any specific changes, and must simply be estimated in terms of relative impact.

Three guidelines can be used to measure effectiveness. These are:

1) Direct measures such as reduced pupil per teacher ratios or student test scores.

2) Indirect measures or indicators of change. Reduced juvenile crime rate or reduction in the number of students skipping school may indicate better overall educational services.

3) Use a proxy measure, where survey results or other related factors are examined to indicate effectiveness.

Many times these two forms of criteria, cost and effectiveness, are used in combination. The result is a cost/effectiveness or cost/benefit study. Although one alternative may cost more than another, if it produces much better results, its cost/effectiveness value may be high, representing the best alternative action. There are generally two outcomes sought form such measures:

1) What are the maximum results for a given cost?

2) What are the minimum costs to attain a given result?
3) Time

The time criterion is important to consider. Essentially it can be broken down into three component parts. First is what time frameworks will be required to implement each alternative. "How long will it take to produce results?" Some good alternatives are not practical simply because they will take too long to carry out. Setting up an emergency relief program during a storm is of no value if it takes months to create. The need will have come and gone before the program gets underway.

Second, what we call "short term" impacts of each alternative must be assessed. What are the immediate results we can expect from each alternative action in the first year. Short term results range from one to three years, and identify immediate costs, benefits and issues.

Third, we must examine the long term impact of each alternative action. Long term evaluation seeks to identify what the outcome of each alternative will be ten, twenty or thirty years from now. What changes will result with one alternative compare with another. Many times this long-term impact is ignored, and short term solutions which do not resolve the real issues result. It is critical to assess both the short term and the long term impact of alternative actions.

4) Feasibility

Feasibility is related to time, but also to the decision-making process and the reality of the community --its leaders, sentiment, values. One alternative may clearly be the best in terms of cost/effectiveness, but if there is no support from local leaders or the local community, it may not be feasible to carry out. Feasibility can best be explored in terms of "appropriate" solutions. It should address questions such as:

"Is this action appropriate for the values of the people in this community?"
"Can this action gain support and be implemented by decision-makers?"
"Are there actions which can be taken to increase support or feasibility for certain actions?"

6) EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVES USING THE CRITERIA

Steps 4 and 5, when placed in the matrix, provide a listing of alternative actions in the rows, and a listing of criteria by which each alternative will be evaluated in the columns, as shown in Figure 1. This forms what we will term the Decision Matrix. By establishing values or information for each cell of the Decision Matrix, we can evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, and use this information to evaluate which alternative is best. The actual process of evaluation consists of two steps:
1) To project the probable outcome or performance of each alternative according to each criterion, placing some value in each cell; and,

2) To compare each alternative on the basis of total advantages and disadvantages based on a summation of the information in each cell for each alternative.

Especially in the Pre-solve stage, such an evaluation takes the form of a subjective measure, often the "best guess" for each cell. The summation of each cell's value does provide a good relative indicator of which alternatives are best, however.

One way to create such a relative measure was already mentioned, simply establishing if there is a positive, negative or neutral impact for each criterion (in each cell) for each alternative. Such a system would be as follows:

+ designates a positive impact
- designates a negative impact
o designates a neutral or no impact

In the Decision Matrix, either a +, -, or o would be placed in each cell, indicating the expected impact from each alternative using the specific criteria listed for that cell. Once the Decision Matrix is filled in with a value for each cell, these values can then be totaled, to give a "relative" indicator of each alternative. The + can be given a numerical value of 1, which the - the value of -1. o would be 0. By going across each alternative and adding the pluses, minuses and zeros, a sum representing the total can be gained.

In some cases, more detailed relative scales can be used, and different numerical values assigned. A scale of 1-5 or 1-10 may be used, where 1 equals negative or bad impacts and 5 or 10 represents the highest of best impacts, with the other impacts at some relative value in between. The totals for each alternative present a more accurate assessment of the impact of each alternative.

Finally, the real value of Issue Analysis, especially in the Research Design and Cycle 1, 2, 3, 4-Analysis stages is that instead of these relative values, specific values are identified. For example, in a Pre-solve it might be guessed that one alternative will cost more than another. In the Research Design and Cycle 1-Analysis stage, a research project to be completed is to find out exactly what the costs will be for each alternative. The result is that instead of guessing one alternative will cost less than another, we can determine specifically that one alternative, for example, costs $10,000 while another alternative costs $4,582. In the Research Design and Cycle-Analysis stages we collect information to give us very specific outcomes or values for each cell. The result is that we are able to be more accurate in our evaluation of one alternative compared to another.
7) DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS

The final step in Issue Analysis is making recommendations to decision-makers. Again, the role most of you play as Tribal government staff needs to be that of Policy Analyst. As a Policy Analyst you do not make decisions, but study them and make recommendations to the administrators or elected official who do make the decisions. The role of the Policy Analyst is not to make decisions, but simply provide the information and analysis of a given issue to the decision-maker. This action can and should include a recommended action which you think is best, but should also include the listing of other alternatives. The decision-maker can then understand how you made your recommendation, and use his or her own values and knowledge to assess the alternatives and make the final decision. That final decision may or may not agree with your recommendation, but if you have presented the Issue Analysis system, showing the alternative actions possible and the analysis of each alternative, you have done your job. Often the decision-maker has information or knowledge you do not have access to. Such persons also have responsibilities to their constituents which you may not understand.

By presenting the issue in the Decision Matrix, however, the decision-maker is presented with all the information you have collected about the issue. He or she is more aware of the alternatives and the possible outcomes of each alternative action. The result will be a better decision based upon more accurate information.

The recommendations of Issue Analysis should be written in the form of a brief report or memorandum. This report should include a brief summary of each step, and a chart of the Decision Matrix. If you are presenting the information to a board or committee, you may which to use a blank Decision Matrix, which does not have the evaluation completed. Each participant can fill in the values for each cell according to his or her own understanding, totally the cells for a relative value for each alternative.

THE CONCLUSIONS OF THIS REPORT SHOULD INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO THE DECISION-MAKER AND A SUMMARY OF THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EACH ALTERNATIVE. The power of Issue Analysis is that it does not simply create information, but it organizes that information in a manner which leads to decisions. Those decision which result from Issue Analysis are based on a comprehensive assessment of all alternative actions, and an evaluation of each of those actions according to clearly established criterion. THE RESULT IS BETTER DECISIONS, AND BETTER GOVERNMENT.

CONCLUSIONS
Application of the Issue Analysis process can provide an effective means of governmental; problem solving and be used as the basis for effective Strategic Planning within government and non-profit organizations. The Issue Analysis process becomes a powerful tool for organized information on complex problems and issues into understandable alternative actions which one can be evaluated by decision-makers in setting policy and taking actions.
CHAPTER 4 ISSUE ANALYSIS EXERCISES.

EXERCISE 1: SCHOOL BOARD DILEMMA.

Now that you know the Issue Analysis process, it is important that you carry it out. The first exercise is a problem which will be described in class. You are assigned to work in a group and come up with recommendations. You should complete all seven steps of the Issue Analysis Process by filling out the following Worksheet and Matrix. Be sure your group lists at least 30 alternatives. Set your criterion and assess each one. Total the points, and make recommendations for action.
1. Central Policy Issue. The CPI is ..... 

2. Underlying and Related Issues. 

   Key Actors (list) 

   Immediate History. 

   How did the issue arise? 

   Is this a new or recurring issue? 

7. Recommendations
EXERCISE 2: WHAT ARE THE BEST TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS FOR YOUR TRIBE?

Use this question as your Central Policy Issue. Complete all steps of Issue Analysis. Be sure to list at least 30 alternative actions and efforts for transportation development. Set your criterion, score each alternative, and make a recommendation. After this Pre-Solve, identify areas for additional research to place “facts” instead of “+,-,0” in the matrix. Set a time frame and complete work of Phase I. Use the following sheets.

With the completion of this exercise you have identified one or more transportation developments which have the most impact. The next step is to move toward further action and implementation of one or more of these alternatives. That will be the subject of the next two days of Product Development for transportation.
1. Central Policy Issue. The CPI is ..... 

2. Underlying and Related Issues. 

   Key Actors (list) 

   Immediate History. 

   How did the issue arise? 

   Is this a new or recurring issue? 

7. Recommendations
### ISSUE ANALYSIS DECISION WORKSHEET (STEPS 4-7)

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