Status Report Introduction

Objectives:

- Compare your group's past and current work with the Strategies Checklist.
- Narrow your list of potential strategies for the future.

Role and Supplies Needed:

- *Strategies Checklist* (all four sections)
- A note-taker to record the group's discussion in the "STATUS REPORT" and "NOTES" sections of the Strategies Checklist (columns to the right of the Checklist)

Suggested Duration: 60 minutes

Instructions:

- Work through each section of the Checklist one strategy at a time.
- For each strategy, check the appropriate "status" in the columns to the right.
- Include notes on each line to make the Checklist more useful as a reference tool later on.

NOTE: Please give a status report on both "major strategies" (listed in **bold text**) AND "sub-steps" (rows are faded in color). Though you'll be focused on major strategies in other sections of the Toolkit, breaking out sub-steps at this stage will help you better assess where you're at.

Status Report Categories *(Colors correspond shaded columns on the Strategies Checklist)*

"Don't Know"	No one in the room knows whether your town is already working on this. Ask someone to find out and report back.
"Done"	Check! You've done enough already and don't need to touch this strategy in the next few years. Be sure to include notes (e.g. completed when, results documented, lessons learned).
"Ongoing"	You're already doing this and will continue on, no need to discuss further (e.g. attend conferences, report at town mtg).
"Not Now"	No interest in or capacity for this in the next few years.
"More To Do"	You're working on this, it aligns with your vision, but you know there's more to be done.
"Challenge"	This aligns with your interests and vision but you've made little or no headway, or maybe you haven't tried because you wouldn't know where to start.
"Wish List"	Forget about everything else, there are probably a few strategies on this list that are *just really interesting/exciting* for your group.

Only strategies in these three categories should be considered as potential priorities

Tips:

- Don't linger on the easy strategies, move right along. There are over 20 strategies on the checklist, some of which have lists of sub-steps. Some checklist strategies will be simple to categorize, some will require more conversation.

- If you get stuck on a strategy for more than 5 minutes leave it blank and move on. You can circle back once you get to the end of the list.

- If you need more information, mark "Don't Know" and assign someone to find out before next meeting.

- If you're having trouble wrapping your head around a strategy on the Checklist, try imagining an actual project (past or future) in your town that fits with the strategy. Then mark down a status report related to that project.

- Remember to pay attention to how various strategies align with the vision, assets, opportunities, challenges, and lessons learned your group identified in the "Looking Back" section of the Toolkit. This will help you decide which strategies should be in the "Not Now" category, and which should stay on the list to be considered among your other potential priorities.

- Once you've completed this activity and have a narrowed list of potential strategies, plan on taking the next step and selecting top priorities from the list. To do this, you can either use the Scorecard tool described in the next section of this Toolkit, or come up with a more informal method for deciding which one to three strategies you'd like to actually work on right now.

Suggestions for adapting the Status Report exercise:

- Bring a laptop and have the note-taker type notes directly into the Checklist spreadsheet file.

- Split up into groups and each take one of the four impact categories, then meet up after 25 minutes to compare notes.

- If you don't have the time to complete the Status Report exercise or go on with the rest of the toolkit, you can simply use the Strategies Checklist as inspiration for potential projects. Is there a section of the Checklist your group hasn't managed to tackle yet? Do the strategies on this list make you think of projects you've never considered before?