The top three priorities identified by elected officials and government staff for the county's strategic plan are:

1. **Economic Development and Job Creation (81.40%):**
   Strong consensus on prioritizing economic development and job creation, indicating a recognition of the importance of fostering local economic growth.
2. **Infrastructure Improvements (65.12%):**
   Significant support for addressing infrastructure improvements, highlighting the recognition of the essential role that well-maintained infrastructure plays in the county's development.
3. **Environmental Sustainability (32.56%):**
   While not as dominant as economic development and infrastructure, a notable percentage sees environmental sustainability as a priority, signaling a concern for balancing growth with environmental considerations.

Additional Priorities Identified:

1. **Access to Healthcare (34.88%):**
   A substantial percentage emphasizes the need to address access to healthcare, underlining the importance of healthcare services in the strategic plan.
2. **Access to Affordable Housing (34.88%):**
   Similar to healthcare, respondents highlight the significance of ensuring access to affordable housing, recognizing housing affordability as a key aspect of community well-being.
3. Population education, emphasizing the importance of educational initiatives related to population dynamics.
4. Adequate compensation for county employees, pointing towards workforce considerations.
5. Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement, underscoring the priority of public safety.
6. Affordable public transportation for rural areas, highlighting the need for transportation solutions beyond urban centers.

Recommendation to the County Government:

1. Elevate Economic Development Efforts: Allocate resources and create policies that actively promote economic development and job creation in the county.
2. Prioritize Infrastructure Projects: Invest in and prioritize infrastructure projects that enhance the overall connectivity, accessibility, and quality of life for residents.
3. Balance Growth with Environmental Concerns: Incorporate environmental sustainability practices into development plans, ensuring that growth is balanced with preserving the county's natural resources.
4. Address Healthcare and Housing Needs: Develop strategies to improve access to healthcare services and facilitate affordable housing options to enhance residents' well-being.
5. Consider Additional Priorities: Evaluate and consider the additional priorities identified, such as population education, employee compensation, public safety, and rural transportation, in the strategic planning process.

Elected officials and government staff have identified key areas for improvement in county operations to better support residents and businesses:

1. **More Collaborative and Cross-Departmental Approaches (67.44%):**
   A strong consensus exists on the need for more collaborative and cross-departmental approaches to problem-solving, emphasizing the importance of breaking down silos within the government structure.
2. **More Training and Professional Development (55.81%):**
   A significant percentage expresses the need for more training and professional development opportunities for staff, indicating a recognition of the importance of continuous learning and skill enhancement.
3. **More Effective Communication and Public Outreach (53.49%):**
   Effective communication and public outreach are identified as crucial areas for improvement, underlining the importance of transparent and accessible communication with residents and businesses.

Additional Insights:
1. **More Efficient and Streamlined Processes (39.53%):**
   While a substantial portion recognizes the importance of streamlined processes, it is not as dominant as collaborative approaches and professional development.
2. **More Effective Use of Technology and Data Analysis (27.91%):**
   A smaller percentage highlights the need for more effective use of technology and data analysis, indicating potential opportunities for leveraging technology to enhance operations.

Recommendation to the County Government:
1. Foster Collaboration and Cross-Departmental Cooperation:
   Implement strategies that encourage collaboration and communication among different departments. Foster a culture of cooperation to enhance problem-solving and overall efficiency.
2. Invest in Training and Professional Development:
   Prioritize training programs and professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their skills, knowledge, and efficiency. This investment can contribute to a more skilled and adaptable workforce.
3. Enhance Communication and Public Outreach:
   Develop and implement comprehensive communication strategies that ensure transparency, accessibility, and engagement with residents and businesses. Utilize various channels to disseminate information effectively.
4. Evaluate and Streamline Processes:
   Assess existing processes and procedures to identify areas for streamlining and efficiency improvements. Implement changes that enhance operational effectiveness without compromising quality.
5. Leverage Technology for Data-Driven Decision-Making:
   Explore and adopt technology solutions that enable better data analysis and decision-making. Embrace technological advancements to streamline operations and improve service delivery.

Elected officials and government staff have provided insights into the best methods for engaging them in the strategic planning process and decision-making:

1. Opportunities for Cross-Departmental Collaboration (38.10%)
2. Regular Meetings and Workshops (33.33%)
3. Employee Surveys and Feedback Forms (16.67%)
4. Departmental Feedback Sessions (7.14%)

Additional Insights:

1. Approachability of Department Heads and Elected Officials:
   A specific response underscores the importance of creating an approachable environment where employees feel comfortable interacting with department heads and elected officials.

Recommendation to the County Government:

1. Facilitate Cross-Departmental Collaboration:
   Create structured opportunities for cross-departmental collaboration, such as workshops, joint projects, or task forces. Foster an environment that encourages different departments to work together on shared goals and challenges.
2. Hold Regular Meetings and Workshops:
   Establish a schedule of regular meetings and workshops to discuss strategic planning and decision-making processes. Ensure these sessions are inclusive and provide a platform for open communication and idea exchange.
3. Implement Employee Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms:
   Conduct employee surveys and utilize feedback forms to gather insights from staff members. Encourage honest and constructive feedback to inform decision-making and strategic planning efforts.
4. Organize Departmental Feedback Sessions:
   Implement targeted feedback sessions within specific departments to address department-specific concerns and ideas. This ensures that the unique perspectives of each department are considered in decision-making.
5. Promote Approachability of Leadership:
   Emphasize the importance of approachability among department heads and elected officials. Create channels for employees to interact with leadership, fostering a positive and collaborative work environment.
6. Consider a Combination of Engagement Methods:
   Explore the possibility of combining various engagement methods to cater to different preferences and needs. A mix of approaches can provide a comprehensive and inclusive engagement strategy.

Elected officials and government staff have provided insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the county:

Strengths:
1. Community Focus: Several respondents highlight a strong sense of community as a key strength. The community is described as caring, hard-working, and dedicated.
2. Geographic Location: The county's excellent location is mentioned as a strength, providing proximity to higher education, medical facilities, fine dining opportunities, and shopping.
3. Natural Resources: Natural resources, scenic beauty, and tourism potential are identified as strengths.
4. Dedicated County Employees: The dedication of county employees is recognized as a strength, emphasizing the importance of the people who care about the community.
5. Lifestyle: The overall lifestyle in the county is noted as a strength.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of Businesses/Manufacturing: Some respondents express concern about the lack of businesses and manufacturing, indicating a weakness in economic diversity.
2. Limited Access to High-Speed Internet: Limited access to high-speed internet is identified as a weakness, impacting the county's connectivity and technological infrastructure.
3. Educational Disparities: Weaknesses include educational disparities, a lack of skills trade education opportunities, and an attitude of the populace toward education.
4. Environmental Nuisances/Litter: Environmental nuisances, including litter, are mentioned as weaknesses.
5. Communication: Communication is identified as a weakness, both within the county and, more broadly, as an area that needs improvement.
6. Job Opportunities with Living Wages: The county faces weaknesses related to job opportunities that offer living wages, indicating a need for improved economic conditions.
7. Infrastructure Plans: Future infrastructure plans are considered a priority, suggesting a need for strategic development.
8. Access to Skilled Workforce: Access to a skilled workforce is noted as both a strength and a weakness. While it is a strength, there are also challenges related to employee retention and competitive pay.
9. Safety of Citizens: The safety of citizens is mentioned as both a strength and a weakness, emphasizing the importance of addressing safety concerns.

Recommendations to County Government:

1. Economic Diversification: Develop strategies to attract businesses and manufacturing to enhance economic diversity.
2. Infrastructure Development: Prioritize future infrastructure plans, ensuring they align with the county's growth and development needs.
3. Connectivity Improvement: Address the limited access to high-speed internet to enhance connectivity and technological infrastructure.

4. Educational Initiatives: Implement initiatives to address educational disparities and provide more skills trade education opportunities.
5. Community Engagement: Strengthen communication within the county, fostering a positive and collaborative environment. Implement outreach programs to involve the community in decision-making.
6. Employee Welfare: Address concerns related to employee retention, competitive pay, and benefits to ensure the county can attract and retain a skilled workforce.
7. Safety Measures: Invest in measures to enhance the safety of citizens, addressing concerns related to safety and security.
8. Strategic Planning: Engage in strategic planning to capitalize on the county's strengths, such as its geographic location and strong sense of community. Use these strengths to attract businesses and promote tourism.