



STRATEGIC PLANNING *at the*
NATIONAL ARCHIVES



**NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan
Comments Summary and Analysis
July 2013**



NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan Executive Summary



1

- Received endorsements, concerns, and suggestions within the submissions
 - Most frequent positives/endorsements:
 - Appreciation of the focus on access and the concept of “value”
 - NARA “appears to be moving in right direction”
 - Appreciation of the document’s shortness in length
 - Most frequent concerns:
 - Digitization of all analog archival records is perceived as unattainable
 - Impression that core functions of an archives were not mentioned
 - Plan is perceived as unclear, including a lack of execution details and the terms used
 - Most frequent suggestions:
 - The plan should provide more detail with an expanded glossary for unique terminology
 - The plan should include initiatives for:
 - more digitization activities
 - more in-depth record descriptions to increase online record discovery and use



NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan Executive Summary (2)



2

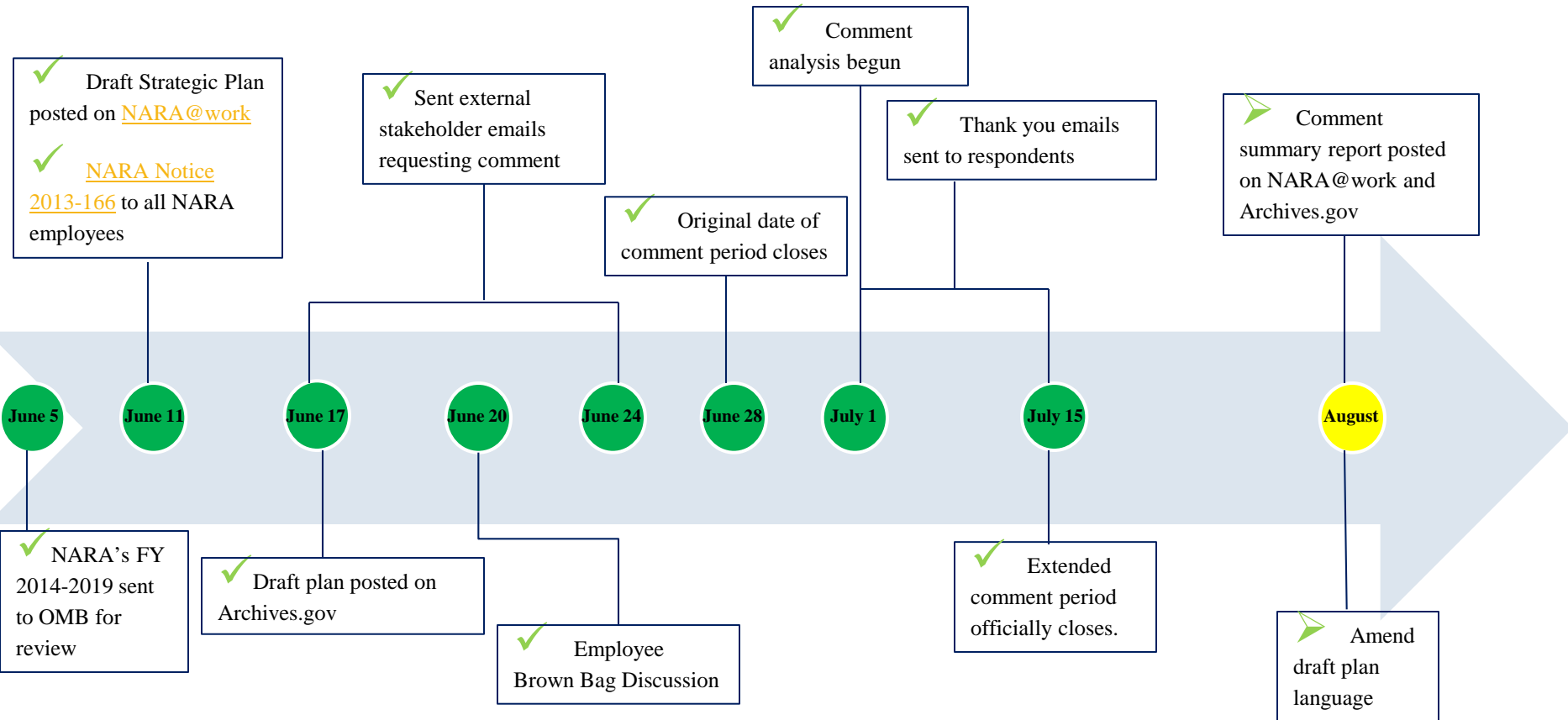
- ❑ Suggestions for updates to the draft plan:
 - ❑ Word-smithing to address the clarity comments and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders
 - De-conflict any “opposing” language
 - Inject a “greater good” factor in the mission explanation – “why should I go to work?”
 - Expand the “Make Access Happen” explanatory statement to include the records management life cycle construct
 - Include OMB adjustments when comments received
 - ❑ Add an appendix communicating that the plan is a high-level document but will include some execution and oversight details
 - Expand the glossary to include “new” or re-defined terms
 - Include a statement that resources will be re-aligned as needed to address priorities
 - Explain that the plan will become operational through the initiatives and action plans
 - Describe how the strategic plan integrates with the performance budget and performance plan
 - ❑ Ensure the objectives are SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, time-bound)
 - Eliminate any redundancies
 - ❑ Ensure the initiatives are holistic and meet the criteria of an agency-level or office-level initiative
 - Update the plan with the most recent “key” initiatives listing



NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan Comment Period Timeline



3





NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan Methodology and Inputs



4

- NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan was made available for comments
 - 8 pages (body of the draft plan) was posted on internal and external websites; info presented in several forums (internal staff meetings, e-mailed to partners and stakeholders)
 - Draft plan consisted of major trends affecting NARA, mission and vision statements, values, four strategic goals, 12 objectives, and 27 example initiatives
- NARA employees and external stakeholders were invited to provide their comments on NARA's strategic direction via email, inter-office mail, and/or fax
- Submissions
 - Internal: 151 comments
 - External: 130 comments; received comments from professional organizations, government organizations, and individuals
 - Brown Bag Discussion: 33 participants
- OMB feedback remains pending



NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan Endorsements



5

Comment Positives/Endorsements:

- About half of the comments were either positive or neutral; there was a perception that the draft Plan “is moving NARA in the right direction”
- Support for the draft plan from both external sources and NARA staff was received ; one external contributor characterized the Plan as “Close to Perfect”
- Professional organizations agree with the challenges and approaches stated in the plan
- Many submissions applauded the brevity
- Several comments were very supportive of Goal 4, Build our Future through our People
- Several comments were intrigued by Goal 3, Maximize NARA's Value to the Nation
- Numerous accolades received for requesting external feedback



NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan Concerns



6

Comment Concerns:

- Digitization of all analog archival records is perceived as unattainable
- Impression that core functions of an archives were not mentioned
- Use of unfamiliar or undefined terms led to numerous questions and statements of being confused
- Perception that intent of objectives and initiatives are not fully articulated nor is “how” objectives or initiatives will be accomplished
- Draft plan does not advocate NARA’s leadership role in the archival profession enough
- Draft plan does not appear to value archival professional expertise enough within the agency



NARA's FY 2014-2019 Draft Strategic Plan Suggestions



7

Comment Suggestions:

- Draft plan needs better articulation of how to bridge the gap between the mission and vision statements
- Better to set lower targets for digitization of analog records or explore other options such as 'scan on demand' or place more record description online
- Plan needs to provide more clarity:
 - Make objectives and initiatives concrete and measurable for example, "Digitize all analog archival records' are easily measured, while initiatives like 'Build effective partnerships' are more vague and therefore invite questions about how you will achieve this goal and what an acceptable outcome would look like."
 - Eliminate contradictory and/or repetitive initiatives for example, "similarities between 2.1 and 3.1 under "Make Access Happen," 1.2 and 2.1 under "Connect with Customers," and 2.2. under "Connect with Customers" and 3.2 under "Maximize NARA's Value."
 - Define more of the terms for example, "data-at-rest," "high-value," and "on-demand channel"
 - Increase the use of plain language... "This plan appears to have pieces of a puzzle but I was unable to put them together and see a whole picture."
 - Reference to outside documents isn't helpful for example, "...in general, it would be better if readers could understand your intentions without having to refer to (additional) external documents."