

“Dover Community Connections”

A Framework for Citizen Engagement

We actively seek to engage citizens and encourage their involvement in the Dover community’s local governance. The overarching effort we have employed to accomplish this task is generally referred to as “Dover Community Connections”. This program is a coordinated effort using a variety of means intended to expand outreach to Dover residents and business owners and encourage greater citizen participation in their local governance.

Some of the various means regularly employed to open channels of communication, improve information flow and allow for constructive deliberations concerning the issues of concern to the community and the activities of our local government include:

Surveys, Citizen Panels, and Focus Groups:

Surveys, citizen panels and focus groups, singly or together, are used for a variety of purposes ranging from measuring preferences and soliciting opinions, to engaging citizens in ongoing dialogue. The results derived from our participation in the biannual National Citizen’s Survey, the work of our various boards and commissions, and occasional ad-hoc committees are examples of this kind of approach.

Sharing Information: Discussing, Educating, and Envisioning:

There are a host of traditional and newer methods for informing the public and inviting their input. These include using topical community meetings with small group discussions that focus on fostering exploration of shared concerns and hopes. The ongoing "Speak Out Dover" sessions held as part of the recurring Master Plan update process, the periodic "Coffee with Councilors" and occasional "Dover Discussions" held with the City Manager and other staff members are all part of this approach.

Utilizing Local Cable Television, the Internet and Social Media:

Information and communication technology has changed the way people relate to each other, the way that our government communicates with citizens, and the way that our staff does their work individually and organizationally. Our use of Channel 22, the City web site, email, and social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter support this approach.

Performance Measurement:

Customer feedback regarding service delivery and reporting on performance is an important arena for citizen engagement on an ongoing basis. Customer service and the related reporting of service delivery metrics helps to inform not only staff but also citizens regarding the demand placed upon municipal services. Ongoing public review of service efforts and results allows for an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of services in meeting our citizen’s needs and expectations.