City of Dover, NH

Communicating to Connect

Strategic Plan for Media Service

March 2017

Introduction

The Strategic Plan for Media Services for 2017-2022 is the product of an inclusive planning process involving City staff, public officials and civic leaders, residents, communications professionals, local businesses and other members of the community.

As part of the City of Dover's Framework for Performance Excellence, each department develops its own strategic plan which works in conjunction with the City's Master Plan to guide the community. This Strategic Plan builds on the accomplishments from earlier strategic planning efforts. It presents a vision, mission, core values, goals and objectives developed in collaboration with staff and management. This plan includes a performance-based management framework that will ensure the continued success and effectiveness of work.

The plan reviews identified issues and challenges for strategic communications organized around four major goals:

Goals

A. **Public Information, Outreach, and Engagement** - Increased public awareness and understanding of issues and ensure public participation is vital to the continued success of all public organizations.

B. **Workforce Development and Management** - Attracting, developing, and retaining a high-quality, diverse, professional staff with the ability to create innovative, implementable plans and the expertise to facilitate service delivery.

C. **Organizational Excellence and Customer Service** – By maintaining effective internal systems and processes we enhance overall organizational performance and responsiveness to customer needs and expectations.

D. **Infrastructure and Technological Assets** – Through the application of efficient and modern use of technology and infrastructure staff is able to accomplish high quality services delivery.

Each of these four Goals has a set of specific objectives, actions and performance measures to assess progress. These have been listed in an Action Plan that serves as a road map for action.

Vision Statement

The City of Dover's Media Service vision statement as derived from the collective input of citizens, business owners and other key stakeholders interested in the long-term future of the community is as follows:

> ***"The City of Dover will provide clear and consistent communication that informs the community, maintains open and transparent government, and exemplifies City's commitment to high-quality services and responsive governance."***

Mission Statement

The City of Dover's Media Services mission statement reflecting the purpose to be served by the existence and ongoing efforts is as follows:

> ***"To provide and enhance the City of Dover's communications tools and resources, improve stakeholder relationships and public engagement, and deliver effective communications programs that help achieve these goals within the organization and the community. City communications will provide timely and helpful information about government programs and services. The City of Dover will continue to produce and expand its communications resources, including a comprehensive website, electronic newsletters, video content on the City's two access channels, public forums, social media, and news releases."***

Core Values

The core values representing the beliefs and behaviors by which all members of the City of Dover organization shall conduct ourselves and providing a common basis for making and evaluating all decisions and actions are as follows:

Customer-Focused Service – We engage our customers, with a focus on listening to and supporting their needs, anticipating and delivering high quality services and ensuring their satisfaction.

Integrity – We conduct ourselves at all times in a manner that is ethical, legal and professional, with the highest degree of honesty, respect and fairness.

Innovation – We develop creative solutions and share leading practices that enhance the value of services provided for our customers.

Accountability – We promote openness and transparency in our operations ensuring that we are accountable for our actions at all times.

Stewardship – We serve as trusted stewards of the public's financial, environmental, social and physical resources always seeking to responsibly utilize, conserve and sustain for current and future generations.

Emerging Issues and Challenges

The strategic planning process identified the issues and challenges listed below. More information about the strengths identified during this process can be found in the SWOO (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Obstacles) assessment, attached as an appendix to this plan.

Issues and Challenges

1) Website Navigation and Interface

Among the strengths identified in this process include the City's long-standing practice of making public information accessible as a matter of course. The City's website is often cited as one of the most comprehensive in the state. The City's varied online and electronic communications are cited as informative and frequent. While the City's website is among the most comprehensive in the state, the depth and amount of information can make navigation and access difficult. Furthermore, the website is difficult to search, which is complicated by two independent search engines (the website search engine and Treeno) that are not linked.

2) Public Engagement Process

Communications and transparency are essential functions of government. Maintaining and improving communication with the community remains a priority for the City, as well as the public and elected officials. The City Council consistently identifies improved communications as a common goal for City administration. Although the most recent National Citizen Survey for which Dover participated, in 2015, demonstrates satisfaction with public information services (73 percent positive), public engagement remains low. For example, only 19 percent of survey respondents attended a public meeting, and only 36 percent of respondents watched a public meeting on television or online. This is in part due to the lack of a City wide public engagement plan. Furthermore, the City of Dover boasts many public bodies, including numerous boards and commissions. These groups often discuss complex and singular issues that can be difficult to communicate consistently. This can lead to inconsistent and independent communications originating from board, commission or committee members.

3) Communication Tool Opportunities

As the fastest-growing city in the State of New Hampshire, Dover's demographics represent a wide spectrum of age groups, interests and needs. Many of the communications tools and resources that worked effectively in the past do not consistently reach or engage some members of the community. For example, younger residents rely on sources of information that include mobile applications and social media, while other citizens say they depend on traditional forms of communication, such as printed material and television. The City's website is a tool that most citizens consult for a wide variety of information, but in different ways, which can lead to frustration, as detailed in this plan. A consistent communications protocol across departments is lacking which leads to some community populations, such as younger people, not being engaged in civic affairs. This is especially true in the development of mobile applications for e-government, which would improve this connection.

4) Coordination of Public Information Distribution

The diversity in the acquisition of public information was evident throughout the planning of a strategic plan. It remains one of the top challenges in effective and comprehensive communication. In addition, despite the City's administrative commitment to improved communications, there is not consistent, organizational leverage of communications resources already available, or initiatives under way, including Media Services, or adhere to a consistent communications strategy. This can lead to inefficient and mixed messages from departments. This could be unified through a designated Public Information Officer (PIO).

Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Actions & Outcome Measures

The responses to the Issues and Challenges listed in Section 2 are provided in the following Matrix. The Matrix lists the four Goals and their corresponding Objectives, Actions and Outcome Measures.

The four Goal areas are:

A. Public Information, Outreach, and Engagement
B. Workforce Development and Management
C. Organizational Excellence and Customer Service
D. Infrastructure and Technological Assets

The Matrix identifies:

- A timeline for implementing each Action
  - Ongoing: Actions which are continuous or are already being carried out
  - Short: Actions which should be undertaken in 1-2 years
  - Medium: Actions which should be undertaken within 3-5 years
  - Long: Actions which will take more than 5 years to be initiated or completed
- The responsible person or people tasked with performing the Action
- Which Issue or Challenge is being addressed by the proposed Action

The City of Dover utilizes a wide variety of communications tools and platforms. While these tools represent administrative-driven improvements to years-old practices, the City has identified specific goals to improve all communications. The matrixes that conclude this section identify the most significant goals and expected actions to achieve results.

As the matrixes make clear, improved functionality of the City's website and online tools are a significant component of this strategy. It was identified as a common source of information for citizens across all demographics.

In addition, several other goals were identified as part of an ongoing strategy to improve communications in various fields. These include:

- Meet with department heads to review important dates and events in the coming month;
- Work to promote organizational and public body strategic goals through communications, including increased use of visual communications;
- Better use of social media to encourage participation in City programs and to foster public engagement, including stronger communication of other outreach tools, such as Budget Revealed and electronic newsletters;
- More visible placement and distribution of the City's video content, including public service announcements, informational videos, and coverage of city and school events;
- Consider submission of the City of Dover to the Star Community Rating System, which rates the most livable communities, but also provides resources and tools intended to boost public engagement

Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Actions and Objective Outcome Measures

Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures		Timeline	Responsibility	Issue
Goal A	**Public Information, Outreach, and Engagement**			
Objective A.1	**Create a public engagement plan**			
Action A.1.1	Assess how citizens access public information	Ongoing	Media Services	2
Action A.1.2	Draft public engagement and community outreach plan	Short	Media Services	2,3 & 4
Action A.1.3	Seek approval of engagement plan and distribute	Short	Media Services	2,3 & 4
Objective Outcome Measure	**Increased public engagement and participation**			

Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures		Timeline	Responsibility	Issue
Goal A	**Public Information, Outreach, and Engagement**			
Objective A.2	**Gather comprehensive feedback about how people use the City's website**			
Action A.2.1	Create online and printed surveys about website use	Short	Media Services	1
Action A.2.2	Query web users about frequency and type of web actions	Short	Media Services	1
Action A.2.3	Draft recommendations for web redesign and arrangement	Short	Media Services	1
Objective Outcome Measure	**Improved engagement and website accessibility**			

Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Actions and Objective Outcome Measures

Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures		Timeline	Responsibility	Issue
Goal B	**Workforce Development and Management**			
Objective B.1	**Create new tools for access to common public information and data**			
Action B.1.1	Compile current data about common access of information requests and retrievals, online and by other means	Ongoing	Media Services	1 & 4
Action B.1.2	Develop new tools or resources tailored to most requested information	Short	Media Services	1 & 3
Objective Outcome Measure	**Diminished difficulty accessing common public information**			

Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures		Timeline	Responsibility	Issue
Goal B	**Workforce Development and Management**			
Objective B.2	**Fund a Public Information position**			
Action B.2.1	Define the role and responsibilities of a PIO, review needs across the current roles of staff	Medium	Media Services	2 & 4
Action B.2.2	Fund either a new position, or increase hours of existing staff to take responsibilities from media manager, to allow that position to become the PIO.	Long	Media Services	4
Objective Outcome Measure	**Establishment of a PIO**			

Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Actions and Objective Outcome Measures

Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures		Timeline	Responsibility	Issue
Goal C	**Organizational Excellence and Customer Service**			
Objective C.1	**Create a consistent, citywide communications policy**			
Action C.1.1	Provide training to staff to better utilize the City's communications resources.	Short	Media Services	3 & 4
Action C.1.2	Consolidate the disparate communications efforts across all City departments.	Short	Media Services	2, 3 & 4
Action C.1.3	Provide support and resources for consistent use of branding that emphasizes the City's role and value to the community.	Short	Media Services	3 &4
Action C.1.4	Develop internal communication guidelines and tools to better educate staff about current issues and efforts.	Short	Media Services	3 & 4
ActionC.1.5	Improve shared distribution of public information and resources.	Short	Media Services	All
Objective Outcome Measure	**Clear and consistent distribution of internal and external communications**			
Objective Outcome Measure	**Better staff comprehension of policies and shared issues**			
Objective Outcome Measure	**Reach segments of the population underserved by traditional communications**			

Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Actions and Objective Outcome Measures

Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures		Timeline	Responsibility	Issue
Goal D	**Infrastructure and Technological Assets**			
Objective D.1	**Develop and upgrade technology for the City's website, email and broadcast communications**			
Action D.1.2	Improve and integrate website search functionality	Short	Media Services and IT	1
Action D.1.3	Comprehensive review of website presentation and access, with planning strategy for adaptive redesign and restructuring, if necessary.	Short	Media Services	1
Action D.1.4	Develop mobile applications for public information	Medium	Media Services and IT	3
Action D.1.5	Integrate varied technology assets and platforms into consistent, accessible and user-friendly information.	Medium	Media Services and IT	1 & 3
Action D.1.6	Complete redesign of City's public-facing website	Long	Media Services	1
Action D.1.7	Increase effective use of social media	Ongoing	Media Services	2 & 3
Action D.1.8	Develop new access programming for the City's governmental and education channels, and improve shared use and communication of new programming across all media platforms.	Ongoing	Media Services	All
Objective Outcome Measure	**Increased public access and engagement**			
Objective Outcome Measure	**User-friendly public information tools**			
Objective Outcome Measure	**Consistent and accessible public information**			