

# Financial Stewardship

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## Strategic Plan for the Finance Department

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March 2017

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## Introduction

The Finance Department Strategic Plan for 2017-2022 is the product of an inclusive planning process. The plan is developed with input from Finance department division supervisors, public members of the Board of Trustees of Trust Funds, input from Director of Recreation, a representative of our public customers and a vendor partnership representative.

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 Strategic Plan reviews identified issues and challenges for the Department 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.

The Department is separated into four main divisions. The Finance, Accounting and Purchasing Division which administers all the cash management, accounting/financial reporting and purchasing functions of the City. This division provides administrative support to the Board of Trustees of Trust Funds. The Tax Assessment Division ensures equity and fairness in the annual assessment of properties and administers tax exemptions, credits and abatement request. The City Clerk/Tax Collection Division coordinates the collection and deposit of all City funds along with processing motor vehicle registrations and preserving the vital records of the City. The Utility Billing Division, interfacing with the Community Services Department, produces usage and service billings for Water and Sewer Utilities.

## Vision Statement

The Finance Department's vision statement is derived from the staff's review of the needs of the Department, and the City, and how the department can support the City's overall vision:

***“We value high quality service to our stakeholders and sound financial management to maintain the public trust through transparency and accountability of the City's valued resources.”***

## Mission Statement

The Finance Department's mission statement reflects the purpose to be served by the existing and ongoing efforts of our municipal operations as follows:

***“To be a trusted safeguard of the City's financial resources and public records in an equitable, accurate, efficient and professional manner to meet all regulatory and fiduciary responsibilities while timely reporting the financial position and performance to stakeholders.”***

## 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 following issues and challenges:

### **Issues and Challenges**

The Department employed a SWOO (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Obstacles) analysis to identify external and internal issues promoting success and challenges that are obstacles preventing success that must be addressed.

### **From the SWOO Analysis:**

#### **Work that is moving in a positive direction that need to keep going:**

1. Inter-department collaboration and information sharing
2. Financial Policies management and achievement of benchmarks
3. Securing State and Federal Grant funding
4. Utilization of Online technology for acceptance of payments, billing, and data sharing
5. Installation of new water meters and read technology

#### **Emerging Issues / Challenges that are Preventing Success:**

- 1) **Different and Continually changing priorities, often work reactively and disconnect between department goals and other departments' goals.**
- 2) **Ever Increasing regulatory requirements for Financial reporting and Grants**
- 3) **Training for Finance department staff, finding time, and succession planning**
- 4) **Limited resources to address challenges of growing community**
- 5) **Ongoing utilization and CAMA system and Govern (AR System)**

## Action Plan: Goals, Objectives, Actions & Outcome Measures

This strategic plan will be used as the Department's blueprint for successful implementation. It will serve as a living document that evolves and adapts over time as conditions warrant. Finally, this document will assist staff by providing a vision for budgetary and operational decisions. 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 also:

The Matrix also:

- Identifies the 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
- Identifies the responsible person or people tasked with performing the Action
- Indicates which Issue or Challenge is being addressed by the proposed Action

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures |   | Timeline | Responsibility             | Issue |
|--|---|----------|----------------------------|-------|
| Goal A   | <b>Public Information, Outreach, and Engagement</b>   |          |                            |       |
| Objective A.1                                      | <b>The Department will provide timely and useful financial information for decision-making.</b>   |          |                            |       |
| Action A.1.1                                       | Undertake a comprehensive review of existing Financial Audit timeline and completion of City's CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report)                               | Short    | Department                 | 2 & 4 |
| Action A.1.2                                       | Update City Investment Policy, Trustees Investment Policy and implement industry investment benchmarks  | Short    | Treasurer/Finance Director | 2     |
| Action A.1.3                                       | Provide monthly Financial Reports to City Council, Boards and Commissions   | Ongoing  | Accounting                 | 2     |
| Action A.1.4                                       | Annually review and appropriately revise City Financial Policies to meet current financial industry best practices and report annually on compliance with these policies. | Ongoing  | Department                 | 2     |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Develop and implement a new audit schedule</b>   |          |                            |       |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Updated Policies implemented</b>   |          |                            |       |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Timely Budget to Actual reports posted in Treneo and reports provided to DBIDA, DUC, and Trustees of Trust Funds</b>   |          |                            |       |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Provide an annual Financial Policies Scorecard</b>   |          |                            |       |
|  |   |          |                            |       |
|  |   |          |                            |       |

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures |  | Timeline | Responsibility                            | Issue |
|--|--|----------|---|-------|
| <b>Goal B</b>                                      | <b>Workforce Development and Management</b>  |          |   |       |
| <b>Objective B.1</b>                               | <b>Develop and empower employees to continue to improve the effectiveness in serving City stakeholders.</b>  |          |   |       |
| <b>Action B.1.1</b>                                | Perform annual performance evaluations and identify at least three tangible work goals for the upcoming year to increase employee knowledge, skills and abilities.             | Ongoing  | Finance Director and Division Supervisors | 3     |
| <b>Action B.1.2</b>                                | Increase employees' engagement by including in departmental decision making meetings and regular communication.  | Ongoing  | Finance Director and Division Supervisors | 3     |
| <b>Action B.1.3</b>                                | Promote regular supervisory and department head communication within organizational levels regarding work performance expectations, work assignments, and succession planning. | Ongoing  | Finance Director/Division Supervisors     | 3 & 4 |
| <b>Action B.1.4</b>                                | Prepare staff for career advancement by providing mentoring and opportunities for strengthening leadership skills.   | Ongoing  | Finance Director and Division Supervisors | 3 & 4 |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>For each position update annual performance benchmarks.</b>   |          |   |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Development and utilization of feedback process</b>   |          |   |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Continued use of Office Hours and consistent use of Monthly staff meetings.</b>   |          |   |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Establishment of hierarchy and succession plan for key positions.</b>   |          |   |       |

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures |  | Timeline | Responsibility   | Issue |
|--|--|----------|------------------|-------|
| <b>Goal B</b>                                      | <b>Workforce Development and Management</b>  |          |                  |       |
| <b>Objective B.2</b>                               | <b>Develop budget strategies that are long term in nature and focus on sustainability.</b>   |          |                  |       |
| <b>Action B.2.1</b>                                | Conduct annual budgeting with a realistic approach to assigning resources to programs and budgeting revenues conservatively.                         | Ongoing  | Finance Director | 4     |
| <b>Action B.2.2</b>                                | Identify opportunities to generate more revenue and/or new stable funding streams that will help supplement or leverage traditional revenue streams. | Ongoing  | Finance Director | 4     |
| <b>Action B.2.3</b>                                | Identify opportunities to reduce spending.   | Ongoing  | Department       | 4     |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>On an annual basis in January review the department's proposed budget and fee schedule.</b>   |          |                  |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Document exploration of all opportunities to generate more revenue</b>  |          |                  |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>On a monthly basis monitor budget expenditures and status.</b>  |          |                  |       |

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures | Timeline   | Responsibility | Issue                                     |     |
|--|--|----------------|---|-----|
| <b>Goal B</b>                                      | <b>Workforce Development and Management</b>  |                |   |     |
| <b>Objective B.3</b>                               | <b>Provide and fund training opportunities for employees to sharpen existing skills and/or develop knowledge to provide professional growth and improve service to stakeholders.</b> |                |   |     |
| <b>Action B.3.1</b>                                | Develop a department training team to promote volunteer cross-training opportunities outside the scope of regular job duties to support professional development.                    | Short          | Department                                | All |
| <b>Action B.3.2</b>                                | Expand understanding and knowledge in all areas of the department to effectively serve constituencies.   | Short          | Finance Director and Division Supervisors | All |
| <b>Action B.3.3</b>                                | Tap into in-house expertise to share knowledge of practice areas.  | Ongoing        | Finance Director                          | 3   |
| <b>Action B.3.4</b>                                | Use mentoring programs to strengthen leadership skills.  | Short          | Finance Director and Division Supervisors | 3   |
| <b>Action B.3.5</b>                                | Develop a master training calendar to advertise and coordinate trainings.  | Short          | Department, IT                            | 3   |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Annually review each staff member and establish opportunities to perform work they normally don't conduct.</b>  |                |   |     |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Conduct quarterly topical sessions to allow staff to understand Ordinances, Code or Statutes they have not been exposed to previously for department functions</b>                |                |   |     |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>One staff meeting a month has a training element</b>  |                |   |     |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>One team bonding exercise every 6 months</b>  |                |   |     |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Training calendar is created in Outlook shared calendar</b>   |                |   |     |

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures |   | Timeline | Responsibility   | Issue |
|--|---|----------|------------------|-------|
| Goal C   | <b>Organizational Excellence and Customer Service</b>   |          |                  |       |
| Objective C.1                                      | <b>Encourage employee discussion to evaluate processes and procedures to improve customer service.</b>  |          |                  |       |
| Action C.1.1                                       | Evaluate Finance Departments in similar municipalities and identify processes and functions in our department that can be improved for customer service | Ongoing  | Finance Director | 2 & 3 |
| Action C.1.2                                       | Survey staff to identify tasks, processes or workflows that are inhibited by a lack of collaboration.   | Short    | Finance Director | 3 & 4 |
| Action C.1.3                                       | Provide assistance and input for completion of Customer Service Center on ground floor of City Hall and relocation of relevant divisions.               | Short    | Department       | 1     |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Feedback obtained from municipalities and appropriately integrated into Department workflows</b>   |          |                  |       |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Survey of staff completed and tasks, processes or workflows reviewed and revised.</b>  |          |                  |       |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Completion of Customer Service Center and relocation of City Clerk/Tax Collection and Utility Billing offices.</b>                                   |          |                  |       |
|  |   |          |                  |       |
|  |   |          |                  |       |
|  |   |          |                  |       |
|  |   |          |                  |       |

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures |   | Timeline | Responsibility                        | Issue  |
|--|---|----------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Goal C   | <b>Organizational Excellence and Customer Service</b>   |          |                                       |        |
| Objective C.2                                      | <b>Continually assess customer feedback to ensure that the department is run efficiently, and comprehensive and accurate information is provided.</b>   |          |                                       |        |
| Action C.2.1                                       | Maintain front-counter and phone coverage Monday through Friday during open hours by maintaining appropriate staff levels   | Ongoing  | Finance Director                      | 4      |
| Action C.2.2                                       | Return all phone calls and emails within 1 business day   | Ongoing  | Department                            | 4      |
| Action C.2.3                                       | Create a customer service training manual and provide annual training on customer service functions.  | Short    | Department                            | 1      |
| Action C.2.4                                       | Ensure customers have an understanding of department processes (motor vehicle registrations, marriage licenses, and State vital records) and know what to expect when they submit an application. | Short    | City Clerk/Tax Collector              | 1, & 4 |
| Action C.2.5                                       | Track customer complaints and bring resolution to problematic areas.  | Ongoing  | Finance Director/Division Supervisors | 4      |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Document customer feedback and implementation of corrective actions</b>  |          |                                       |        |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Create good handouts describing processes and applications.</b>  |          |                                       |        |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Create customer service manual and track employee training</b>   |          |                                       |        |

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures | Timeline   | Responsibility | Issue            |       |
|--|--|----------------|------------------|-------|
| Goal C   | <b>Organizational Excellence and Customer Service</b>  |                |                  |       |
| Objective C.3                                      | <b>Work with Departments to better understand their processes and evaluate ways to strengthen their compliance with internal controls and administrative policies.</b> |                |                  |       |
| Action C.3.1                                       | Invite department representatives to staff meetings to discuss specific functions that demonstrate the need for process improvement                                    | Ongoing        | Finance Director | 3 & 4 |
| Action C.3.2                                       | Establish periodic meetings with each City department to proactively review upcoming projects and/or existing challenges complying with internal control policies.     | Ongoing        | Finance Director | 3 & 4 |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | <b>Implementation of process improvements and compliance</b>   |                |                  |       |
|  |  |                |                  |       |

## 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                                      | Enhance the effectiveness of GIS to support tax assessment mapping needs and providing customers with better access and use of tax assessment data  |                |                |       |
| Action D.1.1                                       | Continue to educate community on the availability of the Map Geo application  | Short          | Department, IT | 2 & 5 |
| Action D.1.2                                       | Support development of Current Use map layer  | Medium         | Department, IT | 2 & 5 |
| Action D.1.3                                       | Support creation of digital tax maps  | Ongoing        | Department, IT | 2 & 5 |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | Development of outreach materials and demonstration video promoted via Media Services. Updated map of projects the day after an Agenda is completed |                |                |       |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | Development of Current Use map layer  |                |                |       |
| Objective Outcome Measure                          | Development of digital tax maps and connecting with MapGeo for public use.  |                |                |       |

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

| Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures |  | Timeline | Responsibility       | Issue |
|--|--|----------|----------------------|-------|
| <b>Goal D</b>                                      | <b>Infrastructure and Technological Assets</b>   |          |                      |       |
| <b>Objective D.2</b>                               | <b>Continue to maintain and keep data current on the Department website.</b>   |          |                      |       |
| <b>Action D.2.1</b>                                | Evaluate the department's website to establish consistency in presentation of information and improve functionality.               | Short    | Finance Director     | 2     |
| <b>Action D.2.2</b>                                | Continue to provide relevant information and effectively address routine customer questions for department services and processes. | Ongoing  | Division Supervisors | 2     |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Problem areas are identified and improvements made to website</b>   |          |                      |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b>                   | <b>Establish list of FAQs and recurring phone inquiries and incorporate relevant information on website</b>                        |          |                      |       |

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

| Long:                            | Goal/Objectives/Actions/Objective Outcome Measures   | Timeline | Responsibility       | Issue |
|----------------------------------|--|----------|----------------------|-------|
| <b>Goal D</b>                    | <b>Infrastructure and Technological Assets</b>   |          |                      |       |
| <b>Objective D.3</b>             | <b>Continue to expand the use of information technologies and services to provide operational efficiencies</b>                           |          |                      |       |
| <b>Action D.3.1</b>              | Implement online Property Tax and Utility billing and payment functions.   | Short    | Finance Director, IT | 4     |
| <b>Action D.3.2</b>              | Identify technology types to improve acceptance of credit cards as an available payment method for over the counter and online payments. | Short    | Treasurer, IT        | 4     |
| <b>Action D.3.3</b>              | Create interactive application form for tax exemption filings  | Medium   | Tax Assessment, IT   | 4     |
| <b>Action D.3.4</b>              | Through budget process fund the replacement and implementation of a new CAMA system.   | Medium   | Tax Assessment, IT   | 5     |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b> | <b>Functional use of eCommerce module of Govern software by department and members of the public</b>                                     |          |                      |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b> | <b>Adoption and Implementation of relevant technology</b>  |          |                      |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b> | <b>Functional form available for public use</b>  |          |                      |       |
| <b>Objective Outcome Measure</b> | <b>New CAMA software has been purchased and implemented</b>  |          |                      |       |