
Strategic Plan for the Recreation Department



March 2017

Introduction

The Department of Recreation Strategic Plan for 2017-2022 is the product of an inclusive planning process involving staff and the Dover Recreation Advisory Board, Arena Commission, McConnell Center Advisory Board and Pool Advisory Committee.

As part of the City of Dover's Framework for Performance Excellence, the Recreation Department developed its own strategic plan which works in conjunction with the City's Master Plan to guide the community. This Strategic Plan builds on the City of Dover's mission, vision, core values and objectives developed in collaboration with staff and management. The Recreation Department developed complimentary mission and vision statements that are included in this plan. The plan includes a performance-based management framework that will ensure the continued success and effectiveness of work.

The Recreation Department went through an exercise to determine its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Obstacles (SWOO). It took those and integrated them into the document as we determined our Issues and Challenges that will be explained in Section 2 and Action Plans under the Goals in Section 3.

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.

Vision Statement

The 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:

“To provide and expand recreation activities and facilities for participants of all ages to help foster a healthy, vibrant community.”

Mission Statement

The Department's mission statement reflects its purpose, and is aligned with the City's mission. It is effectuated by the ongoing efforts of our municipal operations and is as follows:

“To provide affordable, high quality recreation facilities and programs in collaboration with other City departments and local organizations, ensuring participants have access to a variety of recreational opportunities, thereby enhancing their quality of life.”

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.

Community Development – We implement programs and activities related to the Block Grant Program, and staff support of multiple Boards and Commissions, Furthermore, we represent the City on regional Boards and Commissions.

Emerging Issues and Challenges

The strategic planning process identified the following issues and challenges:

1) Promotions and marketing

The Dover Recreation Department prides itself in being one of the most comprehensive program and facility providers in the area of Municipal Recreation operations in New England. With that being said, we have come to realize that we need to do better in educating the public so that they may become more aware of, and familiar with, our current programs and facilities. The marketing methods we currently use have been in place for many years, and in some cases, do serve a good purpose. What is lacking are the means to make use of more current communication systems and opportunities. Achievement of Goal A will address this issue.

2) Staff Needs

The Dover Recreation Department is very fortunate to have a myriad of programs and facilities that have been developed over many years through a variety of means. One of the most important elements that has been the backbone in the development of these facilities and the ability to offer these programs is to recruit, train and maintain a high quality staff team. All areas of the department require specialized skills and training including various levels of education and certifications. If we are to maintain our current offerings and grow them over time for future generations we need to constantly be aware of how to develop the staff we need.

We have been fortunate over the years to attract many qualified and motivated staff both full and part time mostly due to the population in the area that provided a strong pool of candidates for most positions. This applicant pool has been developed in part due to our proximity to the University of New Hampshire and its student population with many skills and a desire to work while in college. The University also offers a degree in Recreation Management and Policy, which affords us the opportunity to meet potential applicants while they are pursuing a degree in the field. However, that alone is not a guarantee that we can and will continue to attract the best candidates that will be able to fill our current and future needs. We will address this issue by implementing the Actions identified in Goal B.

3) Customer Relations and Feedback

The Recreation Department has the opportunity and the ability to connect with area residents in many ways. These contacts create the environment for those people to become our "customers" at some point in building a new dimension as to what the future of that relationship will be. That dimension is the ability to regularly connect with that individual or family personally or by other means. This ability to stay in contact is vital in building long term relationships for business transactions and ongoing support of the Departments mission.

The cultivation of our customer base is not something that is typically discussed by municipal governmental agencies and may be unique to recreation. However, we cannot fully accomplish our vision "To provide and expand recreational activities and facilities for all ages

to help foster a healthy, vibrant community” if we do not reach out to those who we may serve. However, we also need to communicate well to those we currently serve so we can learn from their input as to what we can do to better the recreational opportunities, and facilities, we now offer.

The Strategic Plan Goal C focuses on this issue in order to make this a significant part of our future efforts.

4) Infrastructure Maintenance and Development

The City uses the VueWorks system to track service calls and work orders. Implementing VueWorks within the Department has not been completed and is disconnected from the filing system in place for much of the Code Enforcement activities. Embracing this technology can provide efficiencies and accountability for Code review and Enforcement across departments. Code Enforcement should be better coordinated with Inspections Services and the Engineering Department.

Dover is unique and very fortunate to have a great number and variety of recreation related assets that gives the City an image of having so much to offer residents and visitors. This scenario took many years to achieve and establish a vision as to what makes a place attractive and to be a “home” to many families.

The ongoing effort to not only keep what has been hard fought to accomplish in good condition, as well as looking to what it will take to build and maintain future development, is something that needs to be addressed across City departments. The challenge is to not only build a great community but to assure that future efforts strive to continually improve the community.

The citizens of Dover have come to expect the highest quality of services from every area of City government. The level of work to meet that expectation is enormous and the resources are limited from standard budgetary means. The Recreation Department has the ability to seek outside funding and other resources to help with the efforts to build and maintain the highest quality of recreation assets possible. We also need to work closely with elected officials, appointed board members and the other City Departments to facilitate the best use of all of the means available to accomplish this task.

Under the Strategic Plan Goal D we have developed Action Items to help keep our current infrastructure up to high standards and to work closely with others to see what we can do to make our future development even better.

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 with corresponding Issues and Challenges are:

- A. Public Information, Outreach, and Engagement
 - o **Promotion and Marketing**
 - o **Objective A1** To ensure that the public is aware of the variety of facilities and programs offered through the department
- B. Workforce Development and Management
 - o **Staffing Needs**
 - o **Objective B1** With Full Time staff; to ensure maximum efficiency, productivity and professional development
 - o **Objective B2** With Seasonal/Part Time staff; to recruit and train a dedicated, qualified Part Time staff to support the departments mission
- C. Organizational Excellence and Customer Service
 - o **Customer Relations and Feedback**
 - o **Objective C1** To provide superior recreational opportunities to the public
- D. Infrastructure and Technological Assets
 - o **Infrastructure Maintenance and Development**
 - o **Objective D1** To maintain, improve and develop necessary infrastructure for high quality recreational facilities and programs

The Matrix also:

- Identifies the timeline for implementing each Action
 - o Ongoing: Actions which are continuous or are already being carried out
 - o Short: Actions which should be undertaken in 1-2 years
 - o Medium: Actions which should be undertaken within 3-5 years
 - o 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

Responsibility Key for Action Plan

DIR	Recreation Director
ARD	Assistant Recreation Director
OM	Office Manger

SCC	Senior Center Coordinator
AM	Arena Manager
AFM	Aquatics Facility Manager
APM	Arena Program Manager
MC	Media Coordinator
FM	Facility Managers

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	To ensure that the public is aware of the variety of facilities and programs offered throughout the department			
Action A.1.1	Develop a coordinated social media presence	Short	SCC	1,3
Action A.1.2	Develop the Recreation web page that is more attractive for recreation related marketing	Short	ARD	1,3
Action A.1.3	Seek and improve a consistent print media presence locally and develop print marketing material	Ongoing	FM/MC	1
Action A.1.4	Increase use of Dover Download and City website front page announcements	Ongoing	FM/MC	1,3
Action A.1.5	Reactivate e-newsletter	Short	ARD	1,3
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of press releases per month			
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of Website hits			
Objective Outcome Measure	Facebook followers and e-newsletter subscribers			

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	Full Time Staff- Ensure maximum efficiency, productivity and professional development			
Action B.1.1	Staff development and training targets and topic development	Short	OM/FM	1,2,3,4
Action B.1.2	Evaluate current Full time and Regular Part Time Position Descriptions and conduct job analysis	Short	OM/FM	2,3
Action B.1.3	Evaluate current professional staff development resources and opportunities as compared to training needs. Develop alternate resources lists and seek funding as needed	Short	DIR/ARD	2
Action B.1.4	Documentation of institutional knowledge in forms that can be shared with others and stored for extended time frames	Medium	ALL	1,2,3,4
Action B.1.5	Develop training opportunities to have staff go outside of the community to learn from regional and national sources and expand knowledge of current trends	Medium	DIR	1,2,3,4
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of Staff Training Needs and Opportunities identified			
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of staff that attend trainings			
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of hours of training undertaken/year/person			

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.2	Seasonal-Part Time Staff – Recruit and train a dedicated, qualified Part Time staff to support the departments mission			
Action B.2.1	Staff development and training targets and topic development	Short	OM/FM	2
Action B.2.2	Evaluate current Part Time-Seasonal Position Descriptions and conduct job analysis	Short	OM/FM	2
Action B.2.3	Conduct salary survey to determine if the current rates are comparable to other communities and are competitive with like skilled positions	Short	FM	2
Action B.2.4	Develop and formalize orientation and ongoing training schedules	Ongoing	ALL	2
Action B.2.5	Seek additional feedback from Part Time staff while employed and as they transition out to other positions	Ongoing	ALL	2
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of Staff Training Needs and Opportunities Identified			
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of staff and hours of training attended			
Objective Outcome Measure	Development of a Staff Training and Orientation Manual			

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	To provide superior recreational opportunities for the public			
Action C.1.1	Develop new and improve current staff training for providing outstanding customer service	Ongoing	ALL	2,3
Action C.1.2	Develop a formalized method of receiving feedback from program participants and the general public and develop strategies to address the needs that are outlined	Ongoing	APM/AFM/SCC /ARD	3
Action C.1.3	Analysis and evaluation of current programs, facility schedules and pricing	Ongoing	ALL	3
Action C.1.4	Maintain awareness of program and facility trends in the marketplace	Ongoing	ALL	3
Action C.1.5	Maintain and improve safety training for all staff including CPR/AED/FA training and facility condition assessment	Ongoing	ALL	2,3
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of staff certifications and range of skills documented			
Objective Outcome Measure	Results of feedback options and determination of best methods			
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of updated and new programs			

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	To maintain, improve and develop necessary infrastructure for high quality recreational facilities and programs			
Action D.1.1	Develop a maintenance and replacement schedule for existing assets and future development	Ongoing	ALL	4
Action D.1.2	Seek additional funding resources and partnerships for facilitating future projects.	Medium	DIR	4
Action D.1.3	Explore remote management applications that could improve efficiency and expediency of facility oversight and operations	Medium	DIR/AM/AFM	4
Action D.1.4	Connect with the current shared asset filing system to better keep track of inventory and history of changes and improvements	Short	DIR/ARD/AFM /AM	4
Action D.1.5	Develop a method to gain resident feedback on the status of the recreation assets to be used in conjunction with an upcoming Recreation Master Plan	Medium	ALL	3,4
Objective Outcome Measure	Amount of outside support/grants/sponsorships			
Objective Outcome Measure	Number of facility improvements planned and accomplished			
Objective Outcome Measure	Amount of facilities included in shared files for assets			