

Information Item

Date: December 10, 2018

To: The City Manager

From: Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager

Subject:

Update on What Works Cities Initiatives

Strategic Focus Area: Service Excellence

Strategic Objective: Ensure Service Delivery Efficiency and Effectiveness

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: Yes



In the fall of 2017, the City of Winston-Salem was selected as one of 100 cities for the What Works Cities initiative, which is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies. Winston-Salem's participation focused on two areas of data-driven governance—open data and performance management. Through the initiative, the City received assistance from the Sunlight Foundation to develop an open data policy and governance structure and from Johns Hopkins University's Center for Government Excellence to develop a performance management framework. City staff completed the engagements with these What Works Cities partners in the spring of 2018. Early accomplishments included the Council's adoption of an open data policy (<http://www.cityofws.org/Departments/Information-Systems/Open-Data-Policy>) and establishment of an internal Open Data Committee. In addition, the Office of Performance and Accountability facilitated the development of strategic goals, key performance indicators, and performance measures for the Livable Neighborhoods Strategic Focus Area. The Office of Performance and Accountability also developed the framework for performance management or “stat-style” meetings to increase the use of data to manage City operations. This information item provides an update on the City's open data and performance management initiatives.

Open Data

As part of the City's Open Data Program, the Information Systems Department already has launched the Online Information Center that can be further developed as an open data portal (<http://wsoic.cityofws.org/>). The department continues to work with the departments under the Livable Neighborhoods Strategic Focus Area on identifying datasets that could be published through an open data portal. In addition, the department currently is working with vendors on the development of a new City website that will provide a platform for an open data portal. The department also is developing a new bond project tracker website to enable citizens to monitor the progress of the 2018 bonds, which were approved by voters on November 6th. Finally, the department recently contracted for the development of a new Customer Request Management system that will enhance the feedback loop with citizens.

Performance Management

The Office of Performance and Accountability has spearheaded a number of items in this area. This past spring, the office presented the results of a new resident survey to determine the importance and satisfaction of various City programs and services (<http://www.cityofws.org/residentsurvey>). The office has redesigned the quarterly performance indicator report, increasing the number of performance measures reported, providing trend data, and presenting more visualizations to make the report more reader friendly (<http://www.cityofws.org/Departments/City-Manager/Performance-Indicators-Report>).

Currently, the office has compiled approximately 180 possible key performance indicators (KPI's), based on the staff's research of KPI's developed by other cities in North Carolina and across the country. These proposed KPI's will track the City's progress in meeting its strategic objectives, will report on the efficiency and effectiveness of City operations, or will provide data for community measures such as the unemployment rate and job creation. Finally, the Office of Performance and Accountability has begun to review all of the service level standards for the service request types used by City Link. Their review is taking place in conjunction with the Information Systems Department's development of a new Customer Request Management system.

The City's participation in the What Works Cities initiative is a first and important step in Winston-Salem's development into a data-driven organization. The work of the Information Systems Department and the Office of Performance and Accountability, since the end of the What Works Cities' engagements, is laying the foundation for a change in the City's organizational culture that will be lasting. Winston-Salem's efforts in the area of data-driven management and reporting already have been recognized with a Certificate of Achievement in Performance Management by the International City/County Management Association. The City was one of 57 jurisdictions across the United States receiving awards for data strategies related to identifying, collecting, analyzing, and reporting on indicators that show how well an organization performs internally and delivers services to the public. The City was specifically recognized for its performance measurement database, benchmarking efforts, quarterly performance indicators report, bond tracking website, and self-service development data portal. Future initiatives to further this work will include an update to the Council's Strategic Plan, initiation of revamped performance management meetings, and the launch of a data academy to train City staff on data collection, performance measurement, and analytics.