

# **Beyond the Basics Sustaining Success Through Performance Management**

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Subcommittee on Oversight of Government, Restructuring  
and the District of Columbia  
Committee on Governmental Affairs  
U.S. Senate

May 9, 2000

## **Introduction**

Chairman Voinovich, Senator Durbin, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on performance management in the District of Columbia. In the first fifteen months of my administration, the District government has made great strides in instituting a performance management system that introduces accountability for each and every agency and employee in order to transform the government into one that is responsive to citizens. This approach has already shown promising results in my first year in office and will continue to drive change in years to come.

When I took office, the management challenges my administration inherited were daunting:

1. Accountability for the District workforce was rare, if not non-existent.
2. A deeply entrenched culture resistant to change.
3. An infra-structure decimated by deferred maintenance and disinvestment
4. Technology needs that were grossly inadequate.

Attacking these underlying issues is a long-term effort, but we needed immediate successes.

## **1999 Short-term Action Agenda**

My first priority was to restore faith in government by demonstrating rapid, visible improvements in basic services. I challenged my cabinet to set an aggressive Short-term Action agenda. We set concrete objectives with measurable deadlines, ranging from a month to no more than a year and I am proud to report that we completed 90 percent of them during 1999.

However, short-term initiatives are only a down payment. They built trust and confidence, and they gave us a little momentum, but ultimately the challenges facing the District are significantly greater.

I would like to simply submit for the record the full list of the initiatives, but I want to highlight a few and describe how we are building on these short-term successes:

- \* We restructured electrical and building permit processes, eliminating a several months-long backlog of electrical permits by February and completing 80 percent of complex building reviews within 30 days throughout 1999.
- \* Today, eighty percent of electrical permits are issued within 48 hours and 95 percent of complex building plans are reviewed within 30 days.
- \* We established a single phone number for residents to call for information and service requests with the launch of the Citywide Call Center (727-1000) in April 1999.
- \* Today we average more than 2,000 phone calls per day and we can track performance data on frequently requested services and how long it takes to resolve them.
- \* We targeted open-air drug markets in six communities and arrests increased through stepped-up enforcement. Now, the Police Department is closely tracking drug activity statistics to document how this short-term action will show reductions in drug activity over time. Shutting down a drug market is only the first step in reclaiming a neighborhood for its residents.
- \* This initiative has evolved into the Capital Communities program, a comprehensive strategy to focus a broad spectrum of resources on distressed communities. The name Capital Community signifies the focus on and involvement of community, the investment of capital resources, the location of the community in the nation's capital, and the goal of turning the community into a first-rate neighborhood.

### A Citywide Strategic Plan

In formulating my priorities I decided to do something a little untraditional, I decided to empower citizens to set priorities for our

government. Our citizens have 20 years of pent up civic pride. They love the city and they're itching to make a difference in their neighborhood. For far too long, local government has not been a reliable partner. So I held a citizen summit in November. More than 3,000 residents answered the call and came to help me set priorities for the city and their neighborhood.

This wasn't just a feel good exercise. We compiled those comments and used citizen priorities to put together the budget for next year. I also used them to develop a citywide strategic plan-with a set of very specific, measurable goals for every agency of our government. The plan is organized around five priority areas:

- \* Building and Sustaining Healthy Neighborhoods
- \* Strengthening Families, Children, Youth
- \* Promoting Economic Development
- \* Making Government Work
- \* Enhancing Unity of Purpose

Using the citywide plan as a template, throughout 2000-2001 residents will be engaged in a Neighborhood Action planning process that provides communities an opportunity to establish their own unique neighborhood priorities.

### **2000 Mayor's Scorecard**

A detailed plan is a great way to keep our government focused and to hold agency directors accountable. But by itself, it's not going to engage the public. I want our citizens to be able to see the progress we are making on achieving their priorities. Until they have some evidence that government will be a reliable partner, they'll have less of an incentive to invest themselves in their community.

So I've developed a set of "Scorecards" for myself and my agency directors-based on citizens' goals from our strategic plan. The scorecards are available on our website, [www.washingtondc.gov](http://www.washingtondc.gov). We are building a virtual e-government and I hope citizens will keep track of our progress. If every citizen can see the score every day, then this government will become more accountable to the public. It's a management tool to maintain a sense of urgency in our government.

Issuing a Scorecard is similar to the strategy of last year's Short-term

Action Agenda. The District:

- \* Defined the goals and informed the public what they are;
- \* Gave agency leadership the resources and support needed to meet the goals; and
- \* Established a system to hold them accountable at the end of the day.

I recognize that many of the goals we set for ourselves are a stretch, but I would rather have ambitious targets and come close than meet or exceed timid goals. This year's goals include:

- \* 2,000 new and rehabilitated housing units under construction by December 2000 is well in excess of last year's production.
- \* Reduction of 911 response times to 8:00 minutes for 90 percent of critical medical calls for service. Right now, only 42 percent of calls meet that standard.
- \* Reduced wait-times at Department of Motor Vehicles to 30 minutes or less for 80 percent of drivers license and inspection transactions. With average transaction times of just under an hour, DMV's recent operational changes have yet to impact overall performance.

#### The Redesigned Scorecard

This Scorecard is very different than the DRAFT Scorecard I shared with you last spring. At that point in time, we were developing a set of indicators with an independent community organization, but as we continued our development efforts the District and the organization recognized several flaws in our approach:

- \* The DRAFT Scorecard was preceding the development of the Citywide Strategic Plan;
- \* Many of the indicators were not within the power of the District to impact through government action;
- \* For instance, the home ownership rate is an excellent indicator of the economic health of a community, but so many factors external to the government determine home buying decisions that the District could not set a realistic target based on government resources or programs.
- \* The DRAFT Scorecard was dependent on data that was possibly unreliable;

Simply put, we decided to suspend the Scorecard under discussion last spring and develop Scorecards that clearly state the District's commitments in response to the citizens' priorities that emerged through the Neighborhood Action Citizen Summits.

#### The Scorecard's Place in the Performance Management System

The Scorecard is only one element of the broader performance management system we have in place to evaluate our Deputy Mayors and our Agency Directors. It is a public statement of a few commitments we are making, but it is not an exhaustive list of everything in our Citywide Strategic Plan.

To capitalize on short-term successes and to institute long-term systemic changes, last spring I instructed agency directors to develop strategic plans evaluating existing practices and proposing comprehensive improvements. Directors were to make tough assessments of their organizations' strengths and competencies; question what businesses their agencies were in and what businesses they should get out of; and identify strategies for innovation.

I've set up performance contracts based on these agency plans with my Deputy Mayors and Agency Directors so that they know exactly what they are responsible for delivering and their job security depends on their effectiveness. I'm going to be evaluating their progress twice a year and after the formal year-end evaluation, directors will be rated as meeting, exceeding or below expectations. (Attachment II: DMV Performance Contract)

However, we are not waiting for mid-year and year-end evaluations to judge agency success. We are tracking the performance contract commitments on an ongoing basis. Let me give you a flavor of the type of commitments and results we are seeing this year:

\* Department of Motor Vehicles: DMV is one of our highest profile "customer service" operations. Almost every resident has to register their car, have it inspected and get a driver's license. Sherryl Hobbs Newman set an ambitious year 2000 target of 80 percent of license and registration transactions within 30 minutes as new data systems were revealing the extent of the problem with average process times of an hour or more. The District just announced aggressive strategies to move us towards that target by December 2000: 1) additional personnel and additional counter-bays at the C Street main facility, 2) customer service training developed and provided by

US Air, 3) temporary trailers as we explore sites for additional facilities; and 4) site designs that address parking needs of residents visiting DMV.

\* Office of Contracting and Procurement: Elliott Branch's initial analysis of his agency's workload indicated that nearly half of agency transactions were for less than \$2,500, but less than one percent of the District's contract dollars were spent on those small transactions. He proposed an innovative strategy to establish purchase cards for those small transactions. Piloted at the DC Public Library in November, nine additional agencies will come on-line by July 2000. In addition, OCP is working with the DC Public Schools to deploy purchase cards as part of the broader initiative to empower DCPS with its own procurement authority. As the Purchase Card program is expanded, contracting personnel can focus their time and energy on large dollar contracts.

\* Department of Parks and Recreation: Bob Newman recognized the need to improve program quality and consistency at the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). He committed to achieve national safety standards at all DPR playgrounds by December 1999, accredit 50 percent of DPR childcare programs during FY 2000 and ensure that more than 40 percent of DPR coaches hold professional certification. All DPR playgrounds met National Consumer Product Safety standards by December. DPR has completed its daycare center program changes and is awaiting inspections by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), but is ahead of its internal target. And as of March 2000, more than 50 percent of DPR coaches hold professional certifications.

Creating a Culture of Accountability within the Government

With performance contracts in place for the directors at mission critical agencies, the D.C. Office of Personnel is rolling out a comprehensive Performance Management Program throughout the Summer of 2000. Our agencies are developing performance agreements for every District employee aligned to the Citywide Strategic Plan and their agency's goals and objectives. These agreements will be in place by October 2000.

This is part of my goal to create a Unity of Purpose. I want all employees to

- \* Understand the City-wide Strategic Plan
- \* Accept and adopt own role in supporting and executing the plan
- \* Incorporate those goals and objectives into their day to day work

## Independent Verification and Validation

How can we be sure we're meeting our goals? We are not just taking agency reports on faith. Agencies are required to provide a clear definition of each Scorecard measure, how the data is collected, calculated and reported. This approach is based on the Office of Management and Budget's guidelines to Federal agencies for ensuring verifiable and valid performance data in their Performance Accountability Plans and Reports. We will start with the Scorecard commitments and will require similar documentation for each measure in directors' FY 2001 performance contracts.

Ultimately, I want this system to stand up to outside verification. I'd like our Inspector General to provide an audit some of our scorecard items at year-end. Agencies will have provided documentation of how they present performance data, and the Inspector General can determine whether they followed their methodology and whether it was a valid approach.

## Remaining Work in Performance Management

My administration has made significant progress in performance management in its first year, linking strategic planning, budget formulation, performance expectations and evaluation. But I recognize the need to do more. Sustaining progress, ensuring valid and reliable data, and benchmarking progress against other jurisdictions are among the District's objectives in 2000.

Performance management isn't just a catch phrase. It's our way to make sure that students get the books they need. That senior citizens get the meals they need. That teachers are paid on time. That foster families get the services they need. In short, we're talking about restoring faith in government, and being a partner to our citizens, our children, and our families. Thank you. I will now be glad to answer any questions you might have.