

Boston About Results – Performance Goals

INTRODUCTION

The City remains committed to excellence in service delivery and responsiveness to its residents. To ensure these goals are met, the City employs a multi-faceted approach to performance management, comprised of three critical components. Boston About Results, the City's performance measurement system, is informed by the Mayor's 24 Hour Constituent Service Hotline, a 24-hour hotline that logs and tracks constituent calls, and Neighborhood Response Teams, a cross-departmental effort organized around neighborhood-specific issues. Through its coordinated approach to service delivery, the City is proving its success not only in protecting essential services and producing steady results in times of constrained resources, but also in continuing its work towards improving service delivery and maximizing efficiencies across departments. Cross-departmental and inter-agency collaboration and coordination are a key part of moving the City forward and achieving the results that make Boston city government absolutely the best it can be.

The City's strong program budgeting and performance monitoring system continues to provide a solid base of service level information for understanding the goals and objectives that support the Mayor's core priorities, including providing every child with a quality education, creating affordable housing, lowering the crime rate, revitalizing Boston's neighborhoods and promoting a healthy lifestyle for all City residents. Detailed spending information integrated with promised levels of service strengthens the tie to accountability for allocated resources.

The City Charter contains legal deadlines and actions that must be followed in adopting the budget. The deadlines and formal actions, as well as the planned dates for the fiscal 2006 budget development process are shown in the table below.

CONTINUOUS PLANNING CYCLE

Budget Development and Approval

Boston integrates goal setting, program budgeting, monthly performance reporting and financial tracking into a continuous planning and review

Action Required	City Charter	Date
Departments proposed budgets to Budget Office	No requirement	02/15/05
School Superintendent proposed budget to School Committee on or before 1 st Wednesday in February	Chapter 613 Acts of 1987	02/02/05
Mayoral meetings with departments	No requirement	March
School Committee action taken on budget on or before the 4 th Wednesday in March	Chapter 613 Acts of 1987	03/23/05
Mayor's recommended annual budget submitted to the City Council on or before 2 nd Wednesday in April	Ch.190, Acts of 1982 as amended by Ch.701, Acts of 1986	04/13/05
Public hearings held prior to budget adoption	No requirement	April – June
City Council definite action on recommended budget on or before 2 nd Wednesday in June	Ch.190, Acts of 1982 as amended by Ch.701, Acts of 1986	06/08/05
Mayor's approval of budget adopted by City Council on or before July 1, 2005 (Fiscal Year 2006)	No requirement	06/30/05

cycle.

The cycle begins with departments preparing budgets within the financial parameters established. During the annual budget planning process, departments are required to develop and report performance measures indicating the planned and actual results supported by available resources.

The mid-year evaluation of current fiscal year projected results at this juncture may lead to the refinement of departmental objectives and outcomes intended to further the department's mission in the ensuing year. By redesigning business processes to increase operational efficiency or realigning programs to enhance service delivery, the City adapts itself to the diverse needs of its citizenry.

Funding requests and projected service delivery outcomes are informed by prior year results and help frame a series of policy discussions held with the Mayor. Tradeoffs under alternative service delivery options may be analyzed, with the end result a recommended budget submitted to the City Council for public deliberation.

The final approved budget marks the Mayor's commitment to provide the citizens of Boston with a comprehensive plan to deliver the highest level of quality services.

Budget Accountability

Budget implementation follows City Council approval. Throughout the year, budget expenditure monitoring is informed by performance data. Financial and operational performance is monitored against the established budget plan and expected service levels, utilizing monthly revenue and expenditure variance reports and the Boston About Results program (described below) to ensure accountability for performance. Mayoral policy meetings are held mid-year to take a comprehensive look at front-line agency performance to ensure that departmental strategy is proving effective in the context of actual results.

Department Performance Measures

Performance management is an essential component in demonstrating to residents the value they receive for their taxes. The goals for local government, on behalf of its constituents, are

always to provide the best services at the most efficient cost, with clear accountability. The City ensures these goals are met through its use of performance measurement.

First, measurement helps improve performance. Government programs exist to provide services that improve the quality of life for its citizens. Performance measurement identifies ways for the City to provide quality, efficient, and effective services. For example, monitoring costs and reviewing performance trends over time, and comparing results to other municipalities provides information from which better decision making and program management can lead to better performing public services.

Second, performance measurement strengthens accountability. With each year's budget, the City informs taxpayers what will be achieved, what it is actually accomplishing, and at what cost. Measuring performance and setting targets effectively establishes an understanding of the expected results or standards for each service area. The result is a framework of accountability for the level and type of service delivery committed. Performance measurement demonstrates to the public how they are being served and the value they are receiving for their tax dollars.

Monitoring performance entails an emphasis on identifying appropriate methods for measuring the success or failure of programs to realize Mayoral priorities. In an era of constrained growth, the sustainability of programs may be jeopardized if resources allocated are not yielding positive returns. It also means tracking and monitoring performance over time and using this information to reassess operations, ensuring the continuation of quality service.

Performance measures are developed as part of the planning process and are derived from the mission, goals and objectives identified by each department, with the emphasis always on serving the department's customers. Performance measurement becomes the language that gives clarity to program objectives, drives decision-making and focuses the appropriation process on outcomes. Analyzing cause and effect throughout the year provides valuable information used in improving everyday program management.

Boston About Results (BAR)

In 2002, the City of Boston enhanced its approach to performance measurement – increasing accountability citywide and focusing on results – with Boston About Results. Boston About Results represents a citywide commitment to report, review, and analyze performance data that is relevant, timely, and reliable. Boston About Results is allowing the City to sustain the level and quality of core services, despite cuts in resources.

Each and every City department uses this management tool to measure their core activities, by program, on a monthly basis. Performance data is available immediately for management and analyst review. The capability of this technology to capture data that is both timely and relevant greatly enhances the City's ability to track results and analyze emerging trends in service provision.

The availability of performance data also improves budget monitoring throughout the year by measuring whether the established budget plan and expected service levels are being met. Ongoing budget and performance management ensures the City remains responsive to opportunities to realign resources as necessary and continue to achieve desired results.

Mayor's 24 Hour Constituent Service Hotline

The Mayor's 24 Hour Constituent Service Hotline is an integral piece of the City's management of service delivery. Hotline data serves as a check on what is important to constituents in each neighborhood, and ultimately, helps the City focus on achieving results in these activities.

The Mayor's Hotline staff forward constituent calls directly to department managers, who then share service requests with the appropriate department staff for follow-through. Boston About Results includes performance measures for the most frequent constituent calls, including, abandoned cars, traffic signals, streetlights, potholes, graffiti, code enforcement, building inspection, and tree maintenance.

Service requests and constituent comments focuses managers' attention on measuring the right things, ensuring that department performance measures reported in Boston About Results are relevant. With an emphasis on customer service, the Mayor's 24 Hour Constituent Service Hotline is a direct point of entry for

residents and also helps guide departments towards achieving the City's goal to remain accountable and responsive to constituent needs.

Neighborhood Response Teams (NRT)

As Boston About Results and performance measurement in general are more tightly integrated in the financial, management, and policy planning of departments, the Mayor is harnessing the momentum these tools have afforded the City by establishing Neighborhood Response Teams. Neighborhood Response Teams add a new dimension to the City's commitment to accountability and responsiveness to its citizens.

Neighborhood Response Teams represent a cross-departmental, coordinated effort to improve the provision of basic city services by utilizing new communication forums to address neighborhood-specific issues. Information flow is streamlined as Neighborhood Response Teams coordinate dialogue across all departments.

Teams are comprised of a core representation from City agencies, including, the Mayor's Office, Office of Neighborhood Services, Public Works, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Inspectional Services, Code Enforcement, Property Management, Budget Management, and Police departments – each team member is an effective decision maker in their respective department. Teams also consist of citizen participation and representation from local interests, including Main Streets districts, media and community groups such as City Year. Representatives from other City, state, and local agencies, for example, Boston Fire and Licensing departments, Boston City Council, Massport, and local chambers of commerce, are asked to attend meetings whenever applicable.

Weekly discussions focus on the request, prioritization, and delivery of services, and are informed by data from the Mayor's 24 Hour Constituent Service Hotline. Follow-up on the results from these activities is relayed back into the Hotline and the Boston About Results system to track, analyze, and continue to improve the City's response to citizen concerns.

Neighborhood Response Teams are set up in each neighborhood according to police district lines to establish the neighborhood's priorities and needs. As a targeted response to basic city services

affecting quality of life in Boston’s neighborhoods, issues addressed in the Neighborhood Response Team forum may include graffiti removal, illegal trash disposal, crime or other public safety issues, tree-trimming, park, open space, and vacant lot clean-ups, building, housing, and environmental health issues, street lighting, and street signage.

The Neighborhood Response Team format allows for information-sharing and work-coordination behind the scenes among those departments that are directly– or indirectly – impacted by neighborhood concerns. Graffiti, for example, is an issue addressed in the NRT forum by public safety, property management, and social service, education, or business districts representatives. Generally, all graffiti calls from constituents and staff are directed to the Mayor’s 24 Hour Hotline; the efficiency with which graffiti is addressed is reported by the department in the Boston About Results system monthly. In NRT meetings, a graffiti location that causes particular concern for the neighborhood – because the location is often-targeted, and highly visible, for example – may be identified as a possible mural site, a proven solution to graffiti in the City of Boston. Such a response requires support from the City’s Mural Crew, which involves another City agency, the Mayor’s Office of Arts, Tourism, and Special Events, to address the graffiti issue and as a result, strengthen quality of life in the neighborhood. Bringing representatives from multiple agencies to the table, Neighborhood Response Teams create an opportunity to assess and address neighborhood-specific issues quickly and effectively.

The following table illustrates some of the performance measures employed by departments to achieve the City’s goals. These and other performance measures are found within each department’s budget in Volumes II and III.

Continuous Service Delivery Improvement

The City continues to identify opportunities for efficiencies and to sustain the momentum that positive change can provide. Restructuring and refining government is an iterative process that overlaps budget cycles. The City has already taken measures to improve on the structure and responsiveness of government. Some of the

<p>TABLE: Select Performance Measures</p> <p>AFFORDABLE HOUSING</p> <p>Neighborhood Development, Leading The Way Measure: Units permitted of new affordable rental and homeownership opportunities PLOS06:* 450</p> <p>QUALITY EDUCATION</p> <p>Boston Public Schools Measure: Annual dropout rate % - High School ACTUAL04: 8.4%</p> <p>Office of New Bostonians Measure: ESOL program slots created by English for New Bostonians (ENB) project PLOS06: 500</p> <p>Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Youth & Family Services Measure: Total adult education program slots PLOS06: 900</p> <p>IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE</p> <p>Boston Youth Fund Measure: Summer hires PLOS06: 3,300</p> <p>Property & Construction Management, Building Maintenance Measure: Requests for graffiti removal PLOS06: 750</p> <p>Public Works, Street Lights & Signals Measure: Street light outages addressed PLOS06: 7,500</p> <p>Transportation, Enforcement Measure: Abandoned vehicle tows PLOS06: 3,000</p> <p>REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS</p> <p>Neighborhood Development, Business Services Measure: Storefronts improved through Restore Program PLOS06: 78</p> <p>Parks and Recreation, Maintenance Measure: Street trees planted PLOS06: 225</p> <p><i>* FY06 Promised Level of Service (PLOS06)</i></p>

measures under consideration or already taken are as follows:

- Improving the effectiveness of its Recreation Division, Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) is expanding programs and staff capacity– responding

to an increased demand for gainful youth activities. Existing models of successful recreation programming among the City's 46 community center sites are identified and replicated throughout the system as current Athletic Directors are cross-trained in program development and management by their peers – expanding the availability and accessibility of quality recreation programs. Notably, this effort advances the goals of the regionalization model introduced by BCYF in FY04 – namely, to effectively and efficiently utilize all existing resources to deliver a complement of programs and other services that is responsive to neighborhood needs, sustainable, and focused on results.

- Increasing the efficiency of existing affordable housing support services, the Mayor is merging the Rental Housing Resource Center (RHRC) with the Department of Neighborhood Development's Housing Development Program. Combining the technical resources and landlord tenant mediation expertise of RHRC with the Housing Development Program presents an opportunity for the City to improve coordination around those activities that preserve affordable housing.
- Introducing energy-efficient lighting to the City's traffic signal system, the Boston Transportation Department will manage the replacement of over 6,000 incandescent light bulbs in traffic signals with brighter, energy efficient Light Emitting Diodes (LED). The achieved energy savings will cover the cost of the project.
- Seizing an opportunity to decrease the City's trash disposal costs, the Public Works Department re-negotiated and extended its FY05 trash contracts for four areas of the City and re-bid all the remaining contracts to reduce the overall trash budget. This initiative is attributed to the department's knowledge and active tracking of the solid waste industry. The trash budget FY05 to FY06 was reduced by

almost \$2.2 million and saved approximately \$3.3 million that would have been required for Public Works to fund the existing contracts and terms.

- During FY05 the City of Boston for the first time purchased electricity in the deregulated electric supply market. This supply contract will carry through into mid-FY06. The City will continue to watch the energy market in FY06 with plans for additional procurements for both electricity and natural gas. Cost savings forecasts for the first electric procurement were assumed at approximately \$900 thousand.
- The newly created Office of Emergency Preparedness replaces the Office of Homeland Security, reflecting an enhanced approach to effectively prevent, respond to, and recover from all emergency conditions. The Mayor's Office of Emergency Preparedness formalizes the coordinated effort that comprises both the City's homeland security strategy and its response to natural disasters and other emergency conditions.