Why Measure Our Performance?

Measuring performance provides a quantifiable way in which to see successes and areas in need of improvement. The City's progress is measured against data from previous years, targets set in master plans and benchmarks with other communities. By measuring our programs using a variety of data, we can see how Kirkland's present state relates to its past indicators and future plans.

Ultimately, the measures provide direction for resource allocation and help determine which policies and programs most effectively serve the community's needs.

Performance measures offer transparency and allow the public to hold the City accountable. The report highlights important City programs and services to inform the community what the City is doing for you. The report provides insight into costs, successes, areas of improvement, and citizen satisfaction as determined by the biennial community survey.

Format of Report

Performance measures provide a logical connection between City resources and desirable community outcomes through a "so that" format. If the City devotes resources to a service area, then it should be able to achieve desired outcomes in line with the Council goal.

Each service area includes a performance measures chart of City inputs, outputs, results and outcomes, and an analysis of the measures based on benchmarks and targets. Each section provides a description of why the specific measures were chosen, how the City is performing, and how the City is working towards achieving the goals.

Data comes from budgeted funding in final budget and Capital Improvement Program documents, department program tracking, master plans, and community and business surveys in even years. Because of the expanded scope of this report, some measures have been developed this year or are being developed for future reports, and have not had data collected. Goals and performance measures will be reviewed annually.

The Future of the Report

In recent years the City has been working to develop its performance management framework to create greater consistency across all strategic documents, while measuring performance in a clear and concise manner that allows citizens to track how their city is doing.

This system will lead to changes in format, and potentially content, in next year's performance report. These changes will include an at a glance graphical representation of how the City is working to be affordable, sustainable and responsive to community needs. These graphics can currently be found in the 2013-2014 Budget Message and their inclusion in future performance reports represents the increased consistency across different City reports.

The fundamental basis on which this report is built will not change. The 10 goal areas will remain the same and many of the same performance measures will continue to be used. Tracking the same performance measures over time is essential as it allows departments and citizens to see how performance has changed against a prior standard.

Key Findings

The 2012 Performance Measures Report serves as a report card on the City's progress toward the ten goal areas adopted by the City Council in 2009. The report shows the relative resources devoted to each area, the volume of outputs for each area and the outcomes or actual results. Measuring program outcomes can be the most challenging exercise but is the most meaningful as it expresses whether our efforts are accomplishing the intended results.

During the most recent reporting period from 2009 to 2011, the City experienced a series of financial challenges that required the City Council to make budget cuts in several priority areas. However, the City has worked hard to find ways to maintain levels of service despite reduced resources. The resulting cuts are evidenced in the changes in resource allocations in some areas.

The annexation of the North Juanita, Finn Hill and Kingsgate (now known as Evergreen Hill) neighborhoods in June 2011 increased the population of the City from 48,000 to 81,000. This large population growth means the City now provides services to a larger area and population, while bringing additional revenue.

Neighborhoods continue to evidence a high degree of satisfaction and participation in neighborhood programs. Communication channels such as listserv subscriptions and interactive websites have seen an increase in the number of subscribers. There was a decline in attendance and questions at City Council meetings in 2012. This followed a large increase in 2011 as citizens were engaged in the annexation process.

Public Safety services consistently rate as a high priority service and citizen surveys indicate that residents feel safe walking in their neighborhoods during the day and at night. Fire and EMS response times fall below the targets, although improved 911 dispatch and turn out protocols are improving response times.

Human Services has worked to maintain its level of spending per capita, which is largely provided through contracts with non-profit agencies and coordinated through a series of regional efforts. Funded agencies have continued to meet the goals set out for them in City contracts.

Balanced Transportation efforts continued in 2012 with the purchase of 5.75 miles of the BNSF railroad right of way, creating the Cross Kirkland Corridor from the South Kirkland Park and Ride to the City's northern boundary in the Totem Lake Business District.

Parks and Recreation funding increased in 2012 following three years of budget declines. This was made possible after voters passed Proposition 2 in the November election.

Housing diversity and affordability are a function of local zoning regulations and regional investments made through A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH). The City has been able to maintain its annual contributions to ARCH at a level commensurate with other local jurisdictions. Local affordable housing options continue to be added at a slow but steady pace.

Financial Stability is measured by the City's bond rating and reserve balances. The City Council used reserves to balance the 2009 and 2010 Budget in order to maintain services. Beginning in 2011, the City was able to begin replenishing reserves. General purpose reserve balances remain strong and the City's underlying financial policies and practices were strongly endorsed by Standard and Poor's AAA rating of the City's credit.

Environment is a consideration in many of the City's policies and operational practices. The City has established ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing waste to the landfill and improving natural habitat. Kirkland continues to have the highest solid waste diversion rate in King County due to its innovative and readily-accessible recycling programs.

Economic Development is most important during economically challenging times but also most difficult. The high rate of office vacancies and decreased employment directly reflect the recession's impact on Kirkland. Citizens and businesses are satisfied with Kirkland as a place to do business and a place where residents have access to many of the goods and services they need.

Dependable Infrastructure is basic to a city's purpose. In 2012 the citizens of Kirkland voted to pass Proposition 1, which provides funds for the City to improve the condition of streets. The City will proactively complete projects that will achieve the goals of the Levy as soon as possible.

The City Council will review the City's performance on a regular basis to ensure they continue to express the community's needs and measure the community's progress towards the adopted goals and vision.