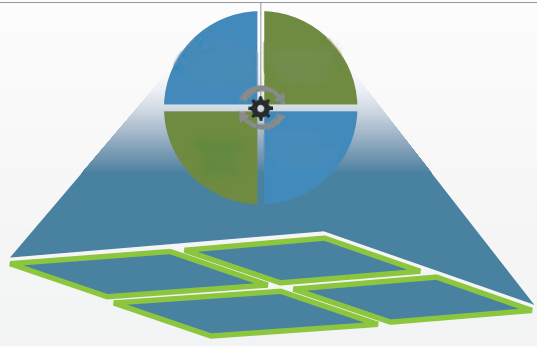




Durham County Government: Managing For Results White Paper

February 2015





Live. Grow. *Thrive.*



Durham County Manager: Wendell M. Davis

In 2012, Durham County Government approved its first comprehensive Strategic Plan. The plan was developed at the urging of elected officials who felt that a road map was needed in order to charter a course for a

new direction. Throughout the latter part of the 20th century and well into the 21st century, Durham was and is heralded as a progressive community steeped in culture with viable business, research, medical and industrial bases. However, like most communities across the nation, the 2008 economic downturn had profound implications for every sector – business & industry, education and government. Such being the case, setting a new course and looking at new and improved ways of doing business has been a central theme in this new climate. In fact, the increased demand for public services, the demands for a new and refined workforce, and sobering demographic projections each influence and inform how Durham County Government should think about the future of the community. This paper will lay out a vision and direction for charting a new course in Durham County Government to better serve the community.



**DURHAM
COUNTY**


Durham County's Strategic Planning Efforts

In early 2011 and 2012, the Durham County Strategic Plan was developed through work with consultants, County Staff and the Board of Commissioners. The plan was the result of considerable citizen engagement, as almost 3,000 Durham residents and employees participated in this process.

The Plan has five goals:

- **Community and Family Prosperity and Enrichment**
- **Health and Well-being for All**
- **Safe and Secure Community**
- **Environmental Stewardship**
- **Accountable, Efficient and Visionary Government**

The County has done an admirable job setting goal areas and defining a strategic direction. However, the approach has not been systematic and little effort has gone into the necessary organizational alignment and mechanics in order to realize the broader outcomes as expressed in the plan. This is not a criticism of past efforts, as this is common practice in countless organizations. Organizations tend to be long on vision, long on mission and short on strategy. In addition, decisions surrounding the allocation of budget resources in County government are often made based on the squeaky wheel model; conversely, the organization does not holistically evaluate, benchmark, and offer feedback in order to realize better outcomes. Lastly, there is minimal ownership of the Strategic Plan by the organizational leadership, as most view the plan as being the responsibility of a handful of mid-level staff.



Managing For Results Model

How Does It Work?

As this organization peers into the future, one thing is evident: Durham County Government cannot have a business-as-usual mindset if it wants to create a new paradigm for addressing modern-day social and economic challenges. Poverty, crime, disconnected youth, unemployment, workforce development, educational achievement, good health, and a sustainable environment are all challenges and opportunities that will require deliberate strategies that are carefully managed, planned, measured, and evaluated. Such efforts are consistent with the creation of a Managing for Results (MFR) model.

According to the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), “the ideas behind managing for results are basic: to identify the needs a government is trying to address; to develop an overall plan (mission, goals, objectives, and strategies) for addressing those needs; to come up with policies, programs and services to meet those needs; to organize and implement budgeting, accounting and management systems that support the strategies, goals and objectives laid out in the overall plan; and finally to develop and track cost and performance data that allow the government to gauge its progress in reaching its goals and objectives and tweaking (or changing) strategies, programs, policies, management systems or budgets when necessary. Approaching government operations in such terms can have powerful impacts on government decision making and results.”

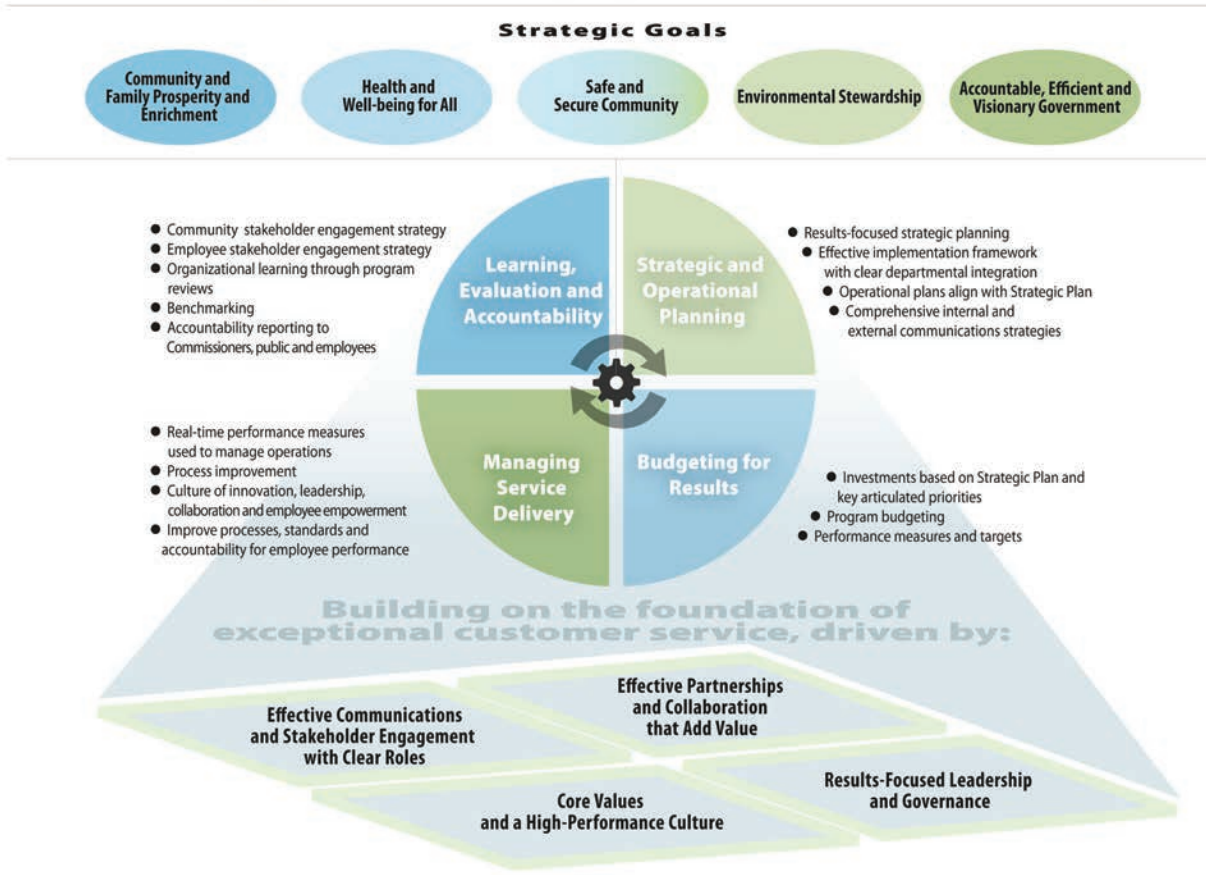
While Managing for Results is a systematic business approach for governing, it represents a long-term commitment and demands the simultaneous execution of multiple strategies. As such, there are multiple challenges in executing the MFR model as well. Doing so requires changing the organizational culture, embracing a new management philosophy, developing performance metrics, building reporting systems, and creating evaluation and feedback loops. MFR also demands a high level of intra/inter-agency collaboration with all stakeholders.

Thinking Change, Creating Change

On July 1, 2014, the County Manager hosted an all-day kick-off with about 100 employees (consisting of managers and staff) from all levels of the organization to begin discussing a transformational strategy. The event was facilitated by Martha Marshall, an international consultant and subject matter expert in Managing for Results and Performance Management. At the conclusion of the event, several themes came out of the staff’s work:

- If the County is going to be successful in building a Managing for Results model, intentional engagement of employees at all levels of the organization is a must.
- Considerable effort will have to focus on collaboration across all departments and agencies in order to improve Strategic Plan alignment.
- There must be a culture of support from management in order to implement the Managing for Results model.

During the late summer and early fall of 2014, Working Groups convened around the four components of Managing for Results – budgeting, management, planning, and evaluation and learning



Durham County Government Managing For Success Model

– to develop Durham County’s model. At the end of October, the draft model was shared with the staff group of about 100 County employees to receive feedback. In early November, the Board of County Commissioners attended a half-day retreat on Managing for Results and at the end of the session provided its concurrence on the model and a four-year implementation timeline

In light of current business practices in local government and being ever-mindful of limited resources, future demands for social and physical infrastructure and demographic changes, there is a strong need for Durham County’s Managing for Results business model. Put into motion, the model will allow the County to plan for the services that it delivers, measure the performance of services and use the performance data to inform its budget decisions as well as manage its programs and activities.

Incorporating these practices into the organization’s business model will better position the County to recognize an accountable, efficient, and visionary government.

As shown in the model, Durham County also will construct a foundation that stresses exceptional customer service. This is one of the County’s core values, as stated in its Strategic Plan, and staff will develop tangible strategies to build this service-focused foundation, through:

- Effective Communications and Stakeholder Engagement with Clear Roles
- Effective Partnerships and Collaboration that Add Value
- Results-Focused Leadership and Governance, and;
- Core Values and a High-Performance Culture

As Durham County embarks upon the next generation of strategic planning, it must update Strategic Plan objectives with active BOCC, staff and community engagement and also must analyze citizen satisfaction survey data. Furthermore, the County’s leadership must deliberately ensure that culture change and knowledge transfer occur within every facet of the organization. While all of these are critical components, they may not necessarily occur in this order.



The Way Forward

Implementation of Managing for Results will occur gradually over the next four years, with an approach committed to piloting practices in an initial seven departments in order to seek feedback, make adjustments, and build a scalable model that can be used by the entire organization.

Though lofty, the organization must aim to create a culture that is characterized by traits and actions exhibited in some of the nation's best-run organizations. These include, but are not limited to:

- Embrace and drive change
- Consistently pursue growth and learning
- Build open and honest relationships
- Deliberately recognize social responsibility
- Innately understand that to give trust is to get trust
- Be innovative
- Value people above all else
- Deliver "wow" through service
- Never accept being comfortable
- Ensure that employees understand the significance of their work
- Provide a high return to stakeholders and produce quality products
- Be financially sound
- Be well-managed
- Have high ethics

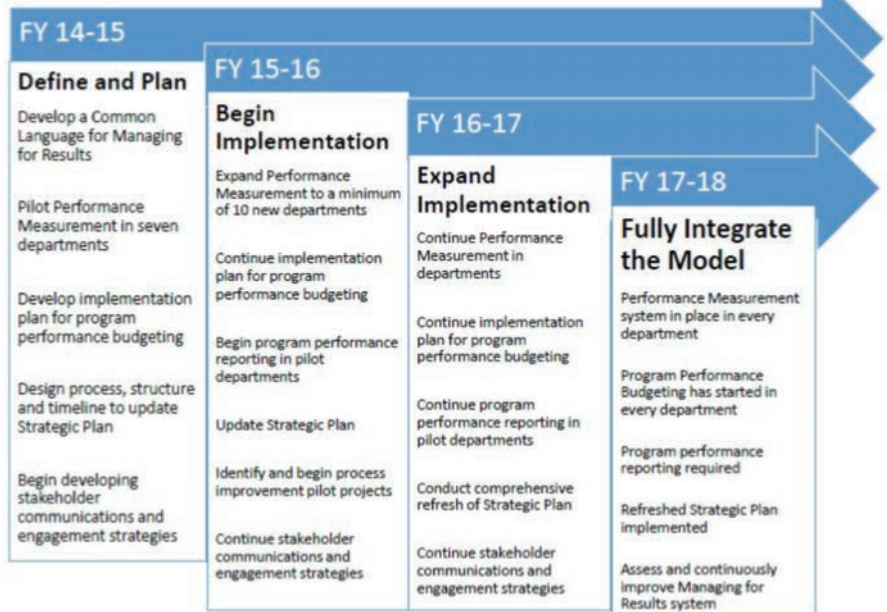
- Value teamwork
- Empower staff
- Collaborate effectively with internal and external partners
- Be humble
- Be passionate
- Be determined, and;
- Create fun

A Change in County Culture

Attempting to change the organization culture by implementing a Managing for Results model is no small feat. This undertaking will require extensive staff training, a different attitude about service delivery, a commitment to relinquish services that do not contribute to the bottom line, and – most of all – leadership within all ranks of government. Author Jim Collins (Good to Great) has demonstrated that making the leap from Good to Great will require "Disciplined People who engage in Disciplined Thoughts and who take Disciplined Actions."

Durham County Government is capable of taking the leap and already has laid out a model and pathways to get to its desired destination.

Managing for Results Implementation Timeline



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