

## Executive Summary

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The City of Evanston is moving forward with its ambitious vision to become the most livable city in America. By adopting a strategic plan in March 2006, the city has established plans for its future, built around thirteen goals in the areas of economic viability, strengthening community, and environmental sustainability. Each of these goals has a set of objectives intended to guide the city's priorities and activities. However, the question that remains is: *How do City administrators and citizens know whether or not Evanston is the most livable city when objectives set to achieve that vision are not measured?* Knowing how well the city is doing in becoming the most livable city in America hinges on the city's ability to measure its performance.

The city has recently witnessed a significant change in executive leadership, contributing to openness to new directions. The city recognizes that a well-developed performance management system is critical to fulfilling its vision, driving productivity, addressing the structural deficit, and improving citizen satisfaction of service delivery. One of the first steps in developing such a system is to identify performance measures that departments can use to evaluate their progress.

To assist in this effort, the City of Evanston collaborated with a team of students in the Graduate Program in Public Administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The UIC team facilitated the development of metrics that demonstrate the impact of departmental activities and link to the department's overall mission and the citywide strategic plan. The majority of the metrics developed for the upcoming year support the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, as referenced in the body of this document. Of course, even the metrics that are not expressly linked to the strategic plan are still an indication of a livable city.

The value and usefulness of these metrics depend on the sustainability of the performance measurement process, future enhancements to the budget structure, and continued administrative support. The UIC team recommends the following:

- **Ensure that each performance measure is a specific, measurable, short-term objective which ties back to a longer-term program goal.** Measures should be output or outcome-based to show the impact of departmental activities. Each performance measure should be compared to a pre-determined target as well as performance for the last two years.
- **Ensure a reliable means for collecting quality and accurate data.** Data for 20 out of the 33 performance measures come from a survey, while the remaining 13 come from department record keeping. Standards for these means must be developed to ensure consistent data from year to year.
- **Develop an integrative procedure for developing, collecting, and analyzing performance measures.** An integrative and formal process for performance measures should be developed to establish consistency across departments. A formal process must identify how data for performance measures will be collected, who will collect the data, and where the data will be stored and managed.
- **Make the performance measurement process a priority and allocate sufficient resources.** Making the performance measurement initiative sustainable from year to year necessitates that it become a priority. Sufficient resources must be dedicated to the process, specifically annual funding and staff time.
- **Create a separate section, located near the beginning of the budget document, which provides a progress report on each of the thirteen goals outlined in the strategic plan.**
- **Establish strong linkages between the strategic plan, departmental mission, departmental initiatives, program goals, and performance measures.**