

# Resolution to Improve the Transparency of City of Ann Arbor Performance

Drafted by John Mirsky; Chair, Ann Arbor Energy Commission

Whereas, the Preamble of the [Charter of the City of Ann Arbor](#) states the defined municipal structure exists to “*secure the benefits of efficient self-government and otherwise to promote our common welfare*” and Section 18.2 specifies “*All records of the City shall be public*”;

Whereas, efficient government performance is typically judged by the achievement of important policy objectives;

Whereas, policy objectives are best expressed in terms of SMART – or **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound – goals, also known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);

Whereas, in the case of municipal government, SMART policy goals are established by City Council and deployed to City departments and staff by administrative leadership, where those SMART goals are best comprised of a “balanced scorecard” of leading and lagging metrics or KPIs<sup>1</sup>;

Whereas, “keystone habits” are the development and public distribution of trend charts showing actual and projected KPI performance vs. targets and peer city performance together with regular rigorous reviews of those KPIs to drive continuous improvement, problem solving, prioritization, and efficient and effective resource allocation;

Whereas, the City of Ann Arbor’s Sustainability Framework, comprised of four Theme Areas and 16 Goals defining the City’s main “common welfare” sustainability objectives, was added as an official element of the City’s Master Plan in January 2013;

Whereas, a public-facing Sustainability Framework Dashboard with 38 Indicators, all accessible through a single City webpage, was introduced and used to track KPI performance against the City’s 16 Sustainability Framework Goals.

Whereas, the City replaced the Sustainability Dashboard with its current [Performance Measures webpage](#) in 2019 (verify);

Whereas, the [Performance Measures webpage](#) is generally both poorly executed and maintained, where formats differ, almost all KPIs do not show up-to-date performance<sup>2</sup>, many do not include historical performance trends or very limited ones, numerous lack targets, none include peer city performance benchmarks that should be used to help set City of Ann Arbor targets, and none indicate projected performance based on committed action plans;

Whereas, multiple City departments do not have any information on their KPIs linked to this webpage nor a harmonized way of finding them on their own webpages making it difficult for difficult to track down performance status;

Whereas, there is no simple means for stakeholders to determine if the City is indeed doing an adequate job to “secure the benefits of efficient self-government and otherwise to promote our common welfare” and City resources are providing a good return on taxpayer investment; and

Whereas, complete, transparent, easily accessible information about government operations and performance is essential to city council policy makers, administrative leadership, staff, boards and commissions, citizen oversight and democratic processes more generally;

Whereas, a number of municipalities have exemplary public service dashboards, including Kent County, MI, the City of Seattle, WA, the City of Boulder, CO, the City of Durham, NC, the City of Irving, TX, and the City of Scottsdale, AZ<sup>3</sup>;

Be it therefore Resolved, the City Administrator shall ensure that all current City SMART goals and KPIs are linked to the City's [Performance Measures webpage](#) by (due date, e.g., YE 2022);

Resolved, the City Administrator and City Council will review, based on the advice of City boards and commissions, the completeness, adequacy and format of all the City' strategic goals as defined in the Master Plan and approved resolutions to ensure that they are indeed SMART, correlate well with stated City policy and the City Charter goal of being good indicators of "the benefits of efficient self-government" and promoting "our common welfare", and are posted in their updated form to the [Performance Measures webpage](#) by (due date, e.g., YE2023);

Resolved, the City Administrator will provide a workplan, including a timeline with intermediate due dates for the above actions, and the completion of the workplan will be incorporated into the Administrator's objectives; and

Resolved, the City Administrator and City Council will conduct on an ongoing basis at least an annual public review of the City's performance against its key SMART goals and targets.

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<sup>1</sup> Leading KPIs give early indications of performance; they "lead" to results by showing the progress being made towards goals; typically, leading KPIs help keep an entity on track so that it hits its strategic objectives. Lagging KPIs are metrics that takes a longer time to impact or measure. Because of the time frame involved, lagging KPIs are not a good option for providing feedback to teams as to whether their current action plans and projects are effective; however, lagging indicators are often the metrics that most accurately reflect if an entity is meeting it strategic goals.

<sup>2</sup> All but one City Department's KPIs linked to this webpage are either two or three years old or not dated.

<sup>3</sup> Most of these municipal entities' performance information can easily be found by searching for "City of (name) performance dashboard".