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SUBJECT: Results of Citizen Focus Groups Released

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Results of Citizen Focus Groups Released

Recently the City of Duluth held three focus group meetings in a continuing effort to improve the quality of services provided to citizens. The results have been compiled and are now available on the City's website here: http://www.duluthmn.gov/focus_group_research/

The focus group sessions have been an integral component of the City of Duluth's emphasis on performance management. Director of Public Administration Lisa Potswald stated, "The focus groups provided us with concrete feedback about how the services we provide are perceived by the public."

The City's plan to improve services to customers includes conducting the National Citizen Survey in 2009, 2010, and again in 2011; developing departmental business plans; ensuring every employee has received customer service training; implementing systematic employee performance reviews; and publishing the new City Quarterly newsletter.

Three 90-minute focus group sessions allowed participants, who represented a broad cross-section of citizenry, to engage in discussions regarding city services such as public safety, housing, education, parks, libraries, and sustainability. The effort was funded by a grant from the National Center for Civic Innovation, which stipulated the purpose, format, and parameters of the focus groups. The sessions were facilitated by Zenith Research Group of Duluth.

Chief Administrative Officer David Montgomery indicated that the results will be useful when making operational decisions. "These results have just added critical information as to how we are doing," noting that citizen input continues to drive reform within the organization.