

Office of Neighborhood Involvement

Analysis by Yung Ouyang

Staffing and leadership changes at the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) have impacted the bureau’s work, including its ability to measure the bureau’s performance. On the finance side, program revenues were robust, reflecting an expanding economy (noise and liquor) but most likely also the need to reduce some fees (Marijuana license). Spending on personnel, not only for salaries and benefits but also leave payouts and severance costs, resulted in almost no underspending in that category despite the transfer and allocation of new resources during the Spring Supplemental.

Bureau Performance

Neighborhood Involvement	Number of activities - events, meetings, and community projects by community groups	4,602
	Number of partnerships among events, activities, and projects with underrepresented..	3,359
	Number of people trained on leadership and organizational development skills	7,499
	Percentage of calls answered in less than 25 seconds	93%
	Percentage of clients satisfied with mediation services	92%
	Percentage of liquor licenses with complaints addressed through the Time, Place, and ..	65%



<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/article/655039>

Three of ONI’s performance measures involve its Noise Control subprogram, measuring the numbers of noise inspections, noise variances, and noise code violation cases. At 148 at year-end, the number of violation inspections were significantly lower than the FY 2016-17 Adopted Budget target of 500 and the FY 2015-16 actuals of 262. Similarly, at 386, the number of code violation cases ended the year significantly below the target of 750 and prior year actuals of 526. The bureau notes that its targets were somewhat aspirational, and the program was more focused on variances than violations

last year, since noise construction variances have grown significantly. The Number of noise variances processed increased from 641 in FY 2015-16 to 657 last year. In addition, the program has also been more proactive to prevent violations from occurring in the first place.

Concerning ONI's Crime Prevention program, the number of crime prevention groups supported by the bureau dropped significantly from 439 in FY 2015-16 to 324 in FY 2016-17 and also did not meet the Adopted Budget target of 530. ONI notes that this was due to staff formerly working in the Enhanced Safety Properties (ESP) subprogram being reassigned to community organizing, and that the bureau should have removed 150 ESP locations from the target. Another Crime Prevention measure, the number of site security assessments performed (93), also ended the year significantly below prior year actuals of 192 and the target of 275. In this case, the bureau attributes the reduction and failure to reach the target to staffing vacancies and turnover. These staffing issues also affected the number of crime prevention trainings for the public, which ended the year at 480, below the target of 550. As these are workload measures, CBO recommends that ONI explore whether the types of crime involved actually increased as a result of these decreases; such an indication may reveal whether the program's interventions are effective or not.

One positive achievement has been ONI's ability to establish partnerships among events, activities, and projects with underrepresented groups, which ended FY 2016-17 at 3,359, well above the Adopted Budget target of 2,800.

Performance Measures

As in prior years, ONI continues to struggle with the quality and consistency of its performance data, a problem that the bureau is aware of. For example, concerning the number of people trained on leadership and organization development skills and the number of direct communications distributed, the actuals for FY 2016-17 were significantly higher than both the prior year's values and the Adopted Budget targets. ONI notes that it has 13 grantees and multiple staff members collecting the data, and that it has not had the capacity to enforce a consistent methodology amongst the various groups and staff who collect the data or investigate anomalies, making it a challenge to compare the measures' performances from year to year.

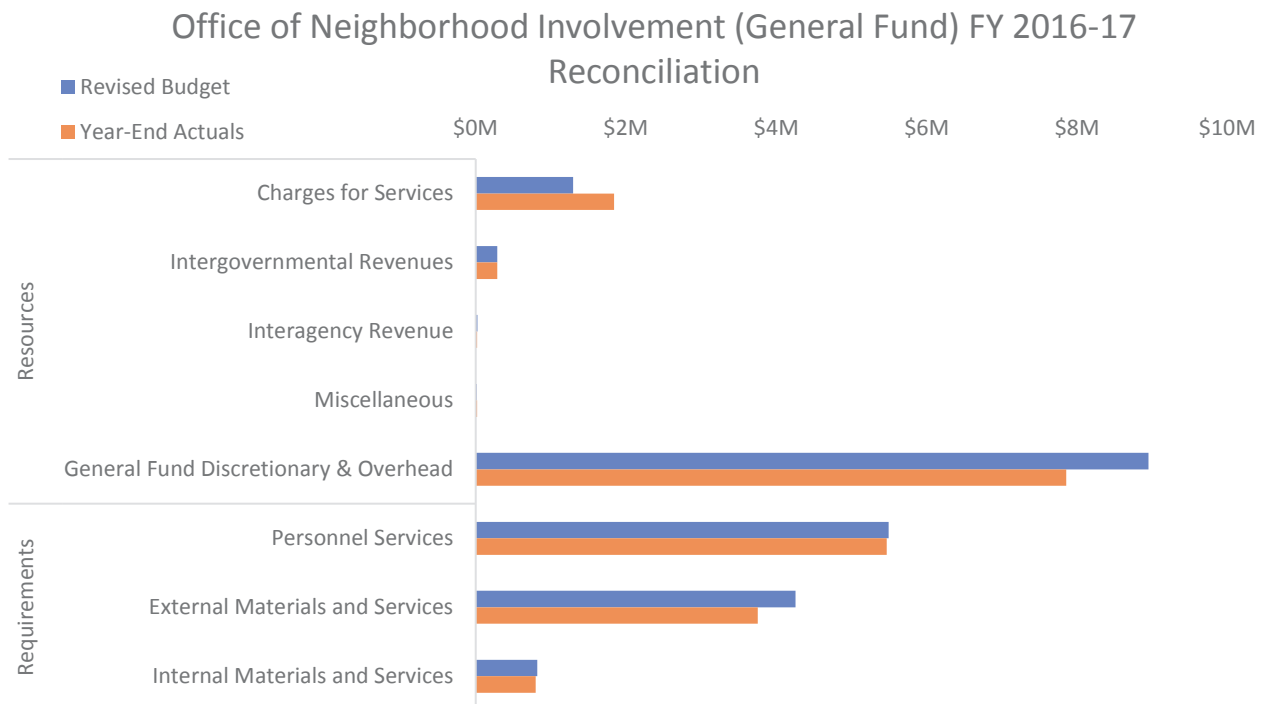
This problem also affects at least one of the bureau's KPMs, the number of participants in civic engagement activities. Another measure, the number of problem location cases processed, increased by 50% from FY 2015-16, and when asked about the large increase, the bureau discovered that it was counting resolved cases, which it did not do in prior years. For another KPM, that of the number of problem solving cases, the bureau began to include graffiti warrants and cannabis violations/warnings, when in the past it had not, accounting for the 21% increase between FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17. In the absence of having enough resources to apply a consistent and methodological approach to many of its workload measures, CBO recommends that the bureau consider significantly pairing down the number of such measures and apply quality control to a much smaller number of such workload measures.

Two of ONI’s KPMs relied on the annual Community Survey conducted with residents that was discontinued by the City Auditor’s Office - the percentage of residents who feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night and the percentage of residents that have been involved in a community project or attended a public meeting at least once. Absence of the survey data has left a data gap in many bureaus’ performance measures. With the discontinuation of the Auditor’s survey, CBO notes the need for an alternate approach to measure resident outcomes in important areas of investment, many of which reflect or are pertinent to ONI’s work. These include: perception of safety across different parts of the city; level of community engagement, particularly with traditionally underserved populations; and perception of service levels of parks, roads, and other infrastructure.

Over this past year, ONI participated in a “What Works Cities” initiative with CBO to examine the bureau’s performance measures for several of its subprograms in the Community and Neighborhood Involvement Center, including the Neighborhood, Diversity and Civic Leadership, Disability, and New Portlander subprograms. The effort resulted in suggestions of some new measures that may provide a better reflection of the effectiveness of some of the subprograms. At the time, ONI noted that it had to consult with various constituencies, as well as combine the effort with other goal and performance developing projects, before deciding which new performance measures should be adopted. Moreover, ONI has indicated that with a new director and a new leadership team, it will be seriously evaluating all of its measures and continue to work with CBO over the next year to ensure its measures are appropriate and align with the new vision of the bureau.

Bureau Finances: Budget-to-Actuals and Key Issues

General Fund



Most of ONI's budget is in the General Fund. There is a small amount in the Grants Fund for a grant from Multnomah County for the East Portland Action Plan.

Most (76%) of the variance between the budget and actual collections in Charges for Services are from Marijuana license fees, with ONI seriously underestimating the number of licensees when creating the budget. During the Fall Supplemental, the bureau is requesting to carry over the amount of revenues above expenditures - \$480,486, which CBO is recommending, with further recommendations that the program conduct a fee study as well as create its own fund.

The other two major revenue streams in Charges for Services – liquor revenues and noise revenues – also exceeded budgets, which could be due to a robust economy. For example, noise revenues are highly dependent on strong construction schedules. ONI states that its noise inspectors have been more focused on construction variances instead of violations. Since these two programs are subsidized by the General Fund, excess program revenues means that less General Fund discretionary resources are needed for the programs and more General Fund resources would thus fall to balance at year-end. That liquor program revenues are above budget is significant because the program has recently begun to need General Fund resources to help pay for operations. If the increase is due to the economic expansion, the excess revenues would only be a temporary phenomenon.

On the expense side, only External Materials & Services (EMS) shows any significant variance, ending the year at 88% of budget. The bureau states that this is typical due to the many contracts it has that cross fiscal years, mostly for small grants for various programs. After considering encumbered contracts, advances, and a grant that ONI wants to carry over, only 2.2% of the revised EMS budget would be unspent. Thus, while it would appear that the amount of General Fund discretionary needed by the bureau is excessive, this is actually not the case considering the encumbered contracts and advances.

Spending on Personnel Services was within budget by only \$26,447. During the Spring Supplemental last year, \$17,522 was redirected from funds formerly allocated for homelessness/housing outreach to the payout for the former bureau director. In addition, \$40,000 was allocated from Compensation Set-Aside. Since the under-expenditure is such a small percentage of the bureau's Personnel Services budget, these appropriations would seem to have been good decisions, at least from a financial perspective.