

# Document Services Section Records Management Activities for 2017

## Records Schedules and Scheduling

In 2017, The Document Services Section reviewed **495 retention schedules from 23 city departments and divisions**. Of these, 41 schedules were held by departments or withdrawn; the remainder were submitted to the City Information Management Committee for review and approval. 221 of these schedules were submitted for the December 2017 CIMC meeting alone, primarily as a result of a comprehensive review of schedules from the office of the Comptroller and a large-scale initiative to close schedules from that department.

With regards to State Records Board activity, **117 records schedules** were submitted to the Wisconsin Public Records Board for approval. This disparity is a result of the PRB's preference to only review schedules for authoritative copies of active records. Schedule close requests, e.g., are delivered to the State Records Center for recordkeeping purposes only and do not need to be approved by the full board. Likewise, the PRB indicated in March that they are only interested in reviewing the schedule for the scanned copy of records in cases where the CIMC has traditionally reviewed 2 schedules (1 for the paper copy and one for the scanned copy). This discrepancy suggests some changes that could be made to the CIMC's own reviewing processes, some of which (mass closures of records schedules; one schedule for all formats of records) have already started to be implemented.

As new City Records Officer, one of my first major initiatives has been to reach out to every City Department and introduce myself and the concept of records management, with the hopes of building relationships to facilitate proper records management and the maintenance of retention schedules and policies. Thus far, this has been a relatively successful initiative—I have held introductory meetings with staff members from all of the major departments (including Police and Fire departments) and many of the key divisions, including Infrastructure, Milwaukee Health Laboratories and Mother-Child Health Divisions, and the License Division within CCCC. In many of these cases, these introductory meetings have led to fruitful discussion and training on records management, including the creation or renewal of numerous schedules within these departments. In many cases, the long-time records coordinator for the department had recently retired, which did harm the institutional memory of the department's practices but allowed me to start fresh with the new coordinator re: records expectations.

One major change made in the way records management is handled from the department side is the appointment of records sub-coordinators for some larger departments. The sub-coordinators were appointed at my request by the department heads of the Department of Public Works and the Health Department, and have helped the City Records Center build more direct relationships with divisions and sections in those departments. Unfortunately, the request to appoint sub-coordinators from the Milwaukee Police Department and Department of City Development met with some resistance; this is especially problematic for MPD, which has over 1000 schedules listed in the RMS, most of which need to be superseded or obsoleted. MPD remains a major scheduling target and I will continue to work with records creators in the Department in 2018 to ensure proper management of the Department's records.

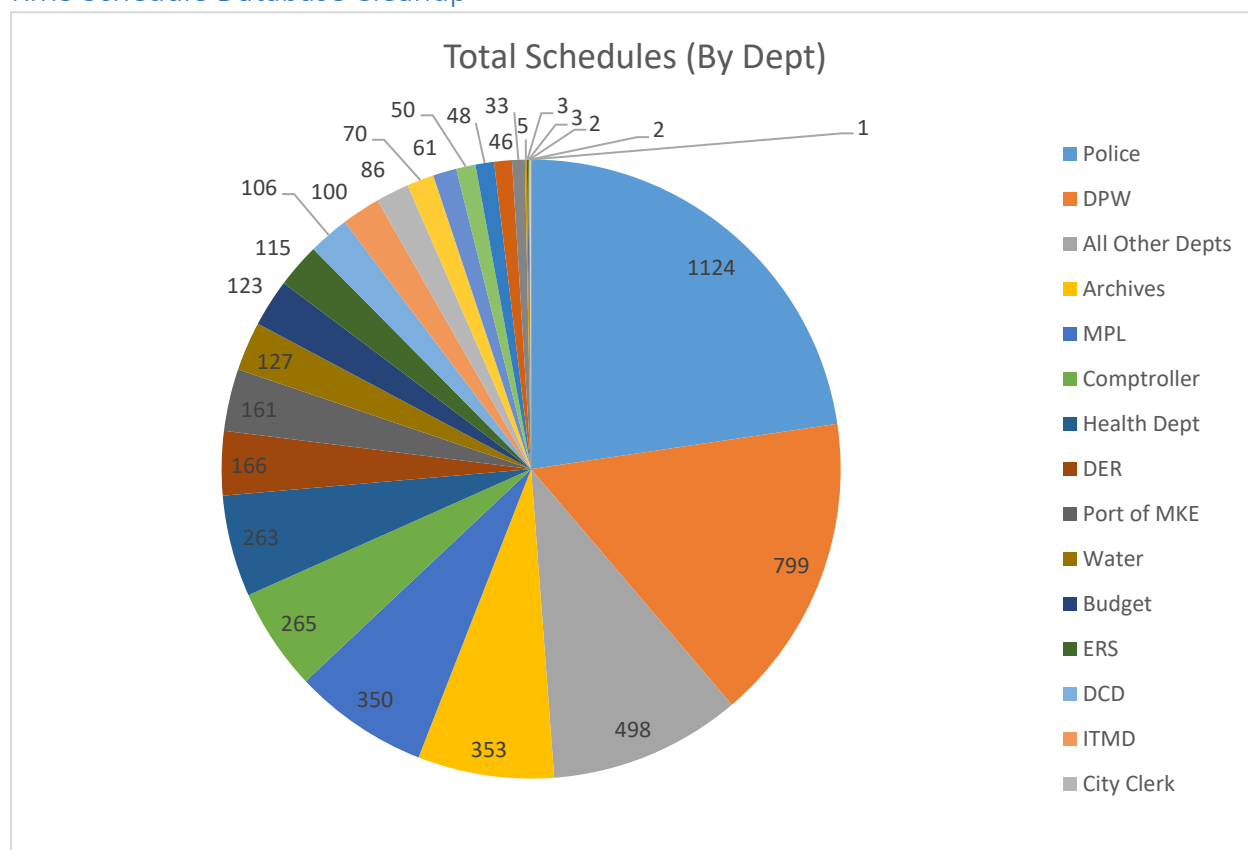
## Special Initiatives and Projects

In addition to working on planning for the Municipal Research Center, which is outside the scope of this report, CRC staff has been involved in planning and implementation of a number of key records initiatives:

### RMS Replacement

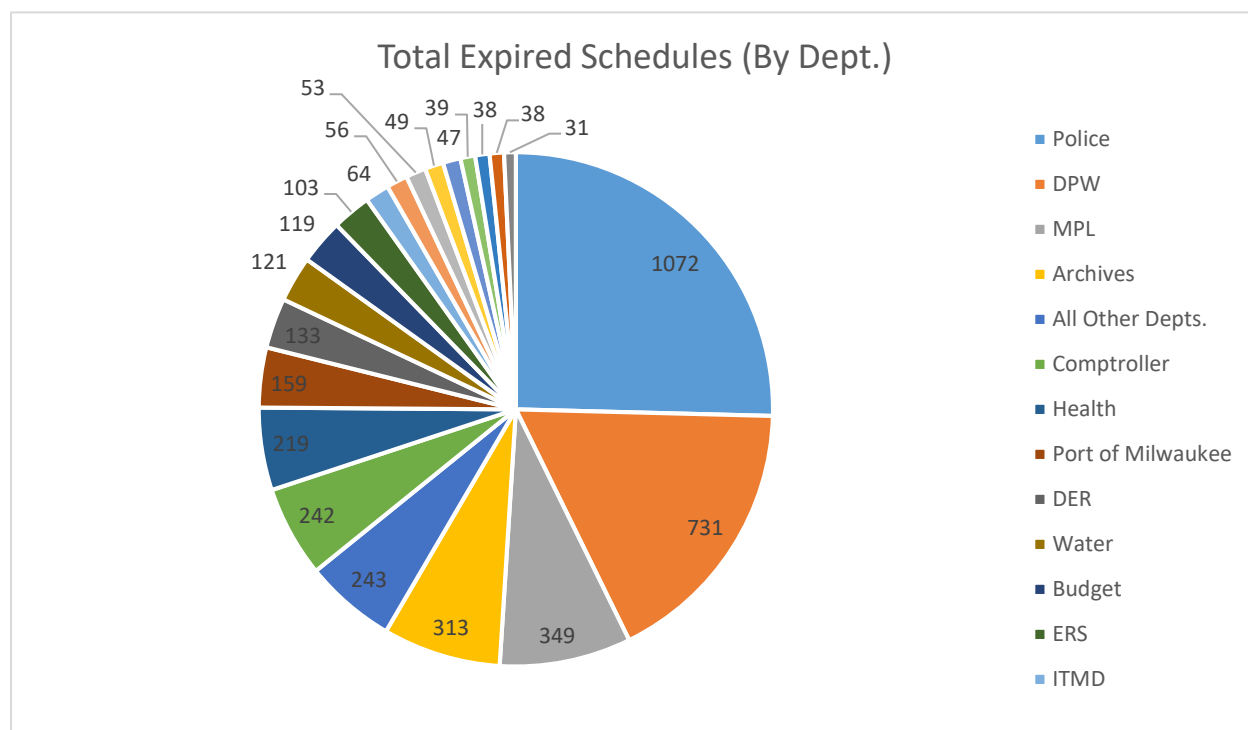
This project, which has been in development since 2014, is finally nearing a state which will allow the City Records Center to move its box and schedule information from the outdated DOS-based RMS system to a more modern web-based client. Unfortunately, evaluation of the capabilities of this system, combined with a clarification of the support and development that ITMD is willing and able to provide, indicated that the solution being developed by ITMD will at best serve as a stop-gap solution while we search for a commercial-made system specifically designed for records center management. The RFP process for that replacement system is underway as we speak. In the meantime, a new developer and conversations with ITMD staff have produced a system which should be at least functional, if not ideal; we hope to be able to phase out the legacy RMS by no later than March of this year.

### RMS Schedule Database Cleanup



The RMS schedule table currently lists 5,784 records schedules, of which an estimated 5,023 either have officially expired under the State's 10-year sunset rule, or have no expiration date associated with them and therefore can be assumed to be expired as well. Many of these schedules refer to records series that are no longer produced, or have since been superseded by more recent approved schedules; others

contain hundreds of boxes of inventory and cannot be disposed of until a schedule is approved by the State Records Board. To eliminate inefficiencies and confusion on records management best practices, DSS staff has been working to clean up the database of expired schedules. The two main methods by which this will happen are creation of Global Schedules that supersede existing departmental schedules, and a schedule-by-schedule appraisal with records creators and coordinators. Both tactics are ongoing (see below for the former); the individual appraisal of departmental schedules has met with mixed results, most successfully with the schedules from the Office of the Comptroller and with some degree of resistance from some of the other major departmental culprits (namely the Milwaukee police department). This project is very dependent on the availability of other Departments' staff to review what are sometimes hundreds of potentially obsolete schedules, and so will likely be on a multi-year completion horizon.



One tool that has already helped facilitate the schedule cleanup process is the mass schedule close form, introduced following approval by CIMC at the August 2017 meeting. By requiring signatures on one form containing multiple schedules, instead of signatures on each individual schedule to be closed, the process of closing schedules is much less onerous both on the part of the departments and the part of DSS staff, thus lowering the barrier to entry of closing a large number of schedules at once. Notably, the Office of the Comptroller, License Division, and Sanitation Departments have used the form to close dozens of schedules each, in the case of the Comptroller over 150 in December 2017 alone! DSS staff will continue to look for efficiencies in this process in 2018 (see below for one example).

### [Fiscal/Accounting Global Schedule Development](#)

This will hopefully be the first in a series of Global schedules developed to simplify and standardize City departments' records retention requirements for common records series. Working with staff from the Comptroller's Office and Treasurer's Office, DSS staff identified potential global schedule candidates and determined appropriate descriptions and retention periods in October and November, then circulated

the proposed schedule to department records coordinators for comment in December. As of this writing, I am incorporating suggestions for submitting the global schedules to CIMC for approval at its March meeting.

As part of the above plan to simplify the City's retention schedule, I am hoping to use the approval of these Global schedules as impetus to close obsolete or redundant schedules for specific departments. As the Global schedule process works right now, adoption of a Global is opt-in; DSS staff could simplify this process by identifying schedules to be superseded for the department and giving them the option to close all such schedules using the mass close form. The next obvious step, but one which would probably involve CIMC approval, would be to make schedules **opt-out** instead, under which plan obsolete or redundant schedules would automatically close after some period unless a department registered an objection. I am hoping to discuss this change along with discussion of the global schedule at the next CIMC meeting.

### City Records Management Policy

Although the City has a records management \*mandate\* in Ordinance Ch. 320-31, that chapter only gives the CIMC authority to create and oversee a records management program; the nature and operation of such a program is left undefined. The proposed records management policy would apply city-wide, indicating the authority of the records management program, the responsibilities of city records management and records creators, and the processes by which records schedules are approved and disseminated. For the most part, the policy codifies existing policies and procedures, with three major exceptions:

- The change from opt-in to opt-out for Global schedules, as mentioned above
- Assignment of intellectual control of archival records to the CRC. This provision is to help prepare us to provide access to records of the City as we move towards a more public-service oriented mission.
- Granting of (limited) authority for CRC staff to review and redact confidential or sensitive records. This will be done in close collaboration and consultation with staff in relevant areas.

## Goal/Opportunity Summary for 2018

### Records Center/Records Management

- Improve time-to-process of incoming and outgoing records
- Continue renewing or closing obsolete retention schedules, focusing on departments with large amounts of inventory and/or records schedules in the backlog (City Attorney, MPD, DPW)
- Complete migration to new version of RMS and develop RFP for a commercial solution
- Develop and Implement records management training programs city-wide
- Create and approve city-wide records management policy
- Review and revise the City Vital Records program, including discussion of recovery and long-term preservation of digitized and born-digital records
- Develop processes/procedures for appropriate ingest of electronic records