

ELECTRONIC RECORDS IMAGING AND RETENTION POLICY

(City Council Adopted Policy)

I. Purpose.

The City of Concord utilizes modern electronic technology to further efficient and effective delivery of services to the public. To increase the reliability and accuracy of records stored in information technology systems and to ensure these records remain accessible over time, established guidelines are necessary. Thus, this policy shall serve to protect those records digitized by the City's in-house and/or contracted imaging system, which will reduce required storage space for original documents and provide instant and simultaneous access to documents as needed. Further, this policy shall serve as basic documentation of the procedures to be followed by the City in imaging, indexing, auditing, backing up, and purging electronic records in accordance with the disposition schedule, and in handling the original paper record, if applicable. This policy shall reflect guidelines set forth by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources and will be re-evaluated at least every five years and updated as required.

II. Additional References.

- A. City of Concord Computer Network, Email, and Internet Access Policy
- B. Records Retention and Disposition Schedule
- C. North Carolina G.S. § 132

III. Definitions. For purposes of this policy, the following terms shall be understood as follows:

- A. Electronic Records include e-mail messages, word-processing documents, electronic spreadsheets, digital images, databases and any other records kept in electronic format. Electronic records are kept in computer networks, Geographic Information System (GIS) databases, digital image storage systems, and similar mediums.
- B. Public Record means all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, magnetic or tapes, electronic data-processing records, artifacts or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of public business by any agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions.
- C. NCDR shall be understood to mean the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

IV. Responsible Parties.

- A. City Manager/Department Directors shall
 - 1. Determine access rights to the electronic records and document imaging systems;

2. Approve applicable information systems as configured by the City's Information Technology Division; and
3. Perform quality assurance checks of documents imaged under this policy by sampling applicable imaged documents for audit before the original documents are destroyed pursuant to this policy and applicable law.

B. Information Technology Division shall

1. Install and maintain all information technology systems and their equipment and software, particularly the electronic records and document imaging systems;
2. Create and update detailed procedural manuals describing the document imaging process and document imaging system equipment;
3. Configure electronic records and document imaging systems according to City needs, to include creating and testing applications and indexes;
4. Control access rights to the electronic records and document imaging systems, in accordance with the determinations and direction of City management;
5. Maintain documentation of the electronic records and document imaging systems' hardware and software;
6. Establish audit trails that document actions taken on records stored by the electronic records and document imaging systems;
7. Provide backups for electronic records and recovering deleted electronic records when necessary, as provided herein;
8. Complete disaster recovery backup of electronic records and document imaging systems at least once every two years;
9. Establish and provide training on electronic records and document imaging processes and systems equipment and software; document such training; and provide remedial training as needed; and
10. Ensure that applicable databases are indexed in compliance with N.C.G.S. §132-6.1.

C. City Employees tasked with utilizing the City's document imaging systems shall

1. Attend and complete training by the IT staff or by the NCDCCR;
2. Create passwords for computers that are sufficiently complex and frequently changed;
3. Designate records to be entered in the imaging system;
4. Note confidential information or otherwise protected records and fields;
5. Complete indexing guide form for each record being scanned;

6. Review images and indexing for quality assurance;
 7. Name and store scanned images in designated folders;
 8. Once approved, destroy and otherwise dispose of original records in accordance with the guidance issued by the NCDCCR and section VI of this policy.
- D. City employees who have been authorized by the City Manager or his designee to telecommute or use mobile computing devices must:
1. Comply with all information technology security policies as well as all statutes and policies governing public records;
 2. Back up information stored on the mobile device daily to ensure proper recovery and restoration of data files; and
 3. Keep the backup medium separate from the mobile computer when a mobile computer is outside a secure area.

V. Digital Document Imaging Program Documentation and Procedures.

- A. The IT Division is responsible for preparing and updating detailed procedures that describe the process followed to create and re-create electronic records. This documentation will include a description of the document imaging system hardware and software;
- B. A current procedural manual will be maintained to assure the most current steps are followed and to assure reliable system documentation will be available for judicial review or similar proceedings; and
- C. All responsible parties as defined above will follow the procedures.

VI. Security of Electronic Records.

- A. Safeguards to further the security of the electronic records and document imaging systems, and access to the records they hold, shall include:
 1. IT Division in conjunction with the City Manager or his designee shall manage access rights to prevent unauthorized viewing of documents;
 2. The electronic records and document imaging systems shall have the capability to separate confidential from non-confidential information; or record creators shall otherwise organize and name file to reflect confidentiality of documents stored within; and
 3. Confidential material shall be redacted from documents, including metadata and tags, before it is shared or otherwise made available to public records requestors.

VII. Retention of Records.

- A. Retention. Electronic records shall be retained based upon their content and for the time period specified by the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.
- B. Approval Required for Disposal.
 - 1. **The City shall seek the approval of the NCDCCR for the destruction of any paper records that have been scanned to create an electronic record in accordance with this policy.**
 - 2. **Approval will be requested and recorded on the “Request for Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means” form maintained by the NCDCCR. The City will submit a new form each time it begins to scan a new record series.**
- C. Permanent Records.
 - 1. Any document that is considered to be a permanent record pursuant to the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule must be kept either as paper media or microfilm in compliance with the NCDCCR’s Human Readable Preservation Duplicates policy.
 - 2. **Permanent records may be scanned and become a part of the document imaging and electronic records systems to provide for greater efficiency; however, these records will still be maintained in either a paper media or microfilm form.**
 - 3. Destruction of the original paper record will be conducted only after imaging and quality control assurance procedures have been completed, all necessary corrections have been made, all auditing procedures have been conducted and approved by the Department Director.

VIII. Availability of System for Outside Inspection: The City recognizes that the judicial system may request pretrial discovery of computer programs and related materials. After review by the City Attorney, where appropriate, the City shall honor requests for outside inspection of the system and testing of data by opposing parties and the court. Also, the City shall honor public records requests pursuant to Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Concord’s Municipal Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.

IX. Commencement Date of Policy. This policy will become effective upon adoption, but because it will require changes to current practices that will necessitate extensive training of employees, the requirements of this policy will be deferred until such implementation determined by the City Manager to be feasible, provided that such date will not be earlier than approval of this policy by the NC Department of Cultural Resources nor later than July 1, 2017.

Policy presented to City Council April 13, 2017

