

Continuous Improvement Projects Progress Update

The following section provides a progress update as of October 2016 for the four corporate level continuous improvement projects:

1. Procurement to Purchasing Process Review

Project Objectives

To review various streams used for the purchase of goods and services to identify opportunities for improvement. The review is to encompass the entire process from need identification to vendor payment and financial costing.

To review and analyze current and possible corporate structures as it related to purchasing.

Completion Date

The project was scheduled to be completed over 3 years from 2016-2018.

Project Approach and Update

The objectives for this project were very large in scope and it has become apparent that, without an adequate project budget, the objectives are likely not achievable in the three-year time frame. Discussions with the Interim City Manager have led to a decision to refine/reduce the scope of this project to two or three smaller components to provide clearer direction. These components will be identified in late 2016.

Key Next Steps

The project team will be meeting in late October to discuss the refinement/reduction of scope and to develop updated timelines and deliverables.

2. Public Engagement – Phase 3

Project Objective

To obtain community input to validate the draft Community Engagement Policy, recommend changes to Council and provide input to Administration for the Management Plan.

Completion Date

December 31, 2016

Project Approach and Update

A Council Advisory Committee was established in late March 2016 consisting of two Councilors and five members of the public and is facilitated by City staff. The Committee has met every two weeks since April.

A consultant, Urban Systems, was hired through a competitive process to work with City staff and the Committee to plan public engagement activities, deliver those activities and provide summary of input received from the community. They also prepared background documents on the current state of public engagement at the City and undertook best/leading practice research on how other municipalities are addressing public engagement.

To date, the Committee, with support from City staff and the consultant, has:

1. Completed orientation on City government structure, the Governance and Policy Framework and the role of Council Advisory Committees;
2. Reviewed and discussed the current state of public engagement in St. Albert;
3. Reviewed and discussed the best/leading practices for public engagement;
4. Worked with the consultant to provide input into the Communications and Engagement Plan including activities, timing and target audiences;
5. Provided input on the online public engagement survey that was used to gather resident's input;
6. Participated in in-person public engagement activities to gather input from residents on their public engagement preferences; and,
7. Received and reviewed a summary of findings from the public engagement activities (online survey and in-person community dialogue)
8. Started drafting Advice to Council document.

Next Steps

Next steps include:

Committee

1. Development of Advice to Council on the draft Public Engagement Policy
2. Presentation of Advice to Council on December 12, 2016

Administration is also working in parallel to draft the Public Engagement Management Plan that will outline steps necessary for effective implementation of, and support for, the Public Engagement Policy. The Committee will also provide input, based on the completed current state and best management practices reports as well as the public engagement results, into the Management Plan.

3. Service Levels Benchmarking

Project Objective

To catalogue the City's key services and associated service levels currently in place across the organization and identify gaps where service levels have not been established.

Completion Date

The project was scheduled to be completed over three years from 2014-2017.

Project Approach and Update

The focus in 2016 has been on developing the Service and Service Levels Inventory. The Inventory will help to better articulate the key services provided to residents, enhance decision making and more effectively link the City's business planning and budgeting to the delivery of programs and services in alignment with residents' expectations. In addition, the Services and Service Levels Inventory provides details regarding service levels currently referred to in Council Policy C-FS-05 Budget and Taxation Guiding Principles, explained in more detail later in the report.

Services and Service Levels Inventory

To compile inventory of services and service levels, department heads worked with their teams to look at their functional responsibilities and clearly identify services delivered to community. While many activities are involved in delivering services to community, the focus of this Inventory is to capture the program/services provided to the community from a customer perspective. , Departments will continue to update and refine the inventory as new service levels are established and/or updated.

The Services and Service Levels Inventory is organized according to the Community Vision and Pillars of Sustainability and grouped under a number of major program delivery areas. Each program area is delivered through a collection of services, outputs that satisfy customers' needs, contribute to the program goals and comply with program strategy. As a result, services and associated service levels, that are statements to tell clients what level of service they can expect, have been organized under each of the program areas listed.

This approach takes a step forward in demonstrating how results related to programs and services delivered contribute to achieving Community Vision. It should be noted that a service may contribute to more than one Pillar; however, for the purpose of this inventory, a service is listed under the Pillar where it contributes the most.

Further work is required to refine and strengthen the link between the Community Vision and City programs as well as create better alignment across the organization in order to categorize services delivered under appropriate program areas and to formalize objectives for each program area.

This work will also lead to the identification of performance measures for programs and services. To achieve this, it will be essential to introduce performance measures into the regular business of the City and operational practices, in particular those related to business planning and budgeting.

It is important to note that the Services and Service Levels Inventory will continue to evolve as new service levels are established and existing ones enhanced and/or changed, in order to meet changing community needs. To support this future direction, on August 29, 2016, Council approved establishment of a new policy that will be focused on regular program and service reviews as well as an update to the existing budget and taxation guiding principles policy to include reference to the Service Inventory and to ensure it integrates with the annual business planning and budget process. For both policies, guiding principles have been approved by Council and will be used as basis to develop a new policy and update existing policy. These policies will be brought back to Council for consideration on November 28.

Key Next Steps

The next steps include:

1. Presentation to Council on November 28, 2016, for their consideration and approval of the:
 - a. A new Programs and Service Review Policy (replacing the Continuous Improvement Program Review policy)
 - b. Updated Budget and Taxation Guiding Principles policy

2. Operational Integration of the new Service Inventory

In support of the new Programs and Service Review Policy, Administration will confirm the process for the review and update of services and service levels and align this with the business plan and budget process, as well as related public engagement plans.

3. Performance Measurement

A Performance Measurement Coordinator has been contracted and a work plan for 2016-2017 will be developed to work with departments to further enhance service levels and increase knowledge on performance measurement so that the work in this area can continue.

4. Customer Service Delivery – Phase 1

Project Objective

To develop consistent standards and practices for customer service delivery, explore the option of having one access point for City Services and expand online services.

Completion Date

The project was originally scheduled to be completed over 3 years from 2015-2018; however, due to other priorities and resource availability, the expected timeframe has changed with an expected completion date of 2019.

Project Approach and Update

This project was split into three phases:



Phase One

This phase took place in late 2015 and early 2016. City departments were interviewed in order to gain a better understanding of their existing customer service practices, including:

- standards and guidelines
- training provided
- customer interaction and complaint tracking practice/customer relationship management
- use of analytics for decision making and reporting
- customer feedback mechanisms

In addition, a review of the current service delivery methods was completed in order to gain better understanding of the different methods currently used by different departments.

An internal report was prepared to summarize key findings and to provide a number of recommendations that will be incorporated into project plan for Phase Two. In addition, a number of quick wins were identified and included in the report for short term implementation where possible. This report was presented to Senior Leadership Team and approved for acting on the recommendations.

Due to other priorities and resourcing, a few of the recommendations will be implemented in 2016 but the majority will be implemented in 2017. A number of improvements were made to the online services as that is one of the priority areas identified.

Key Next Steps

1. Development of the Phase Two Project Plan that will focus on researching customer service delivery models.
2. Development of an implementation plan for recommendations from Phase One.
3. Creating an internal Service Excellence Committee to work collaboratively on making continuous improvements to customer service delivery at the City.