STAFF REPORT

To:	Chief Administrative Officer	**Date:** May 2, 2022
From:	Barclay Pitkethly, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer	
Subject:	**Continuous Improvement Program Update – May 2022**	

Recommendation(s)

This report is provided for information only. No staff recommendation accompanies this report and Council action is not required.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the continuous improvement program initiated as part of Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

Background

Council adopted the Strategic Plan with a stated focus area of Organizational Excellence; goals include the following:

- To provide effective and efficient services;
- To be a high performing professional organization;
- To attract highly qualified, high performing staff;
- Ensure administrative fairness and transparency in District processes; and
- To strive for continuous improvement

The continuous improvement program was initiated in late 2019.

On September 20, 2021, Council was provided an update on the continuous improvement program along with a Vision Map and Work Plan. The Vision Map, as shown in the diagram below, outlines a multi-faceted approach to a continuous improvement program that is scalable, transferable, and applicable, across all departments within the organization and is presented in stages – Stage I Process; Stage II Paper; Stage III People; Stage IV Permanence – The 4P's.
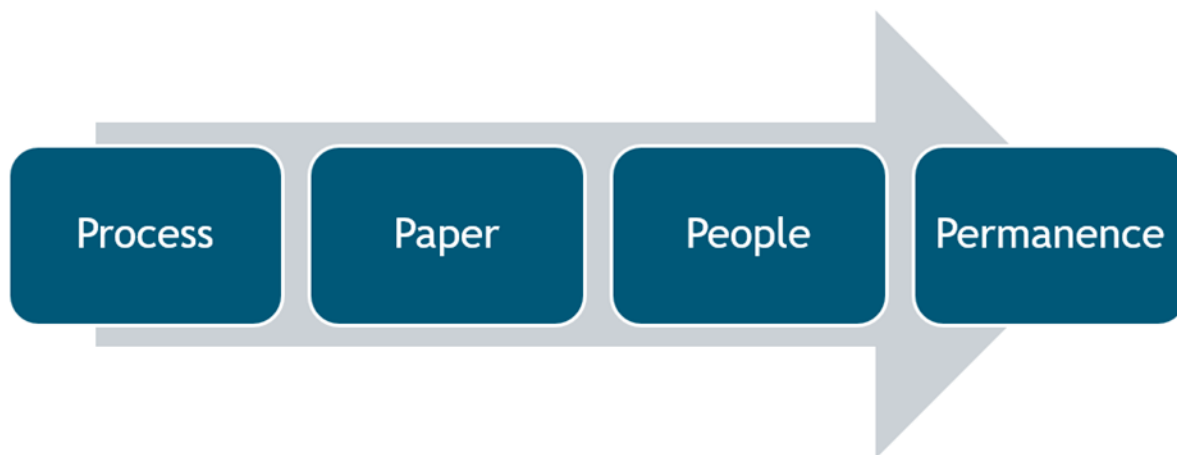
Stage I represents the **Process** stage and is the exercise of looking to improve specific organizational practices within a department. This is the stage which questions cultural norms of an organization and delves into the organization's policies, procedures, bylaws and Provincial legislation, to shake up the foundation of what has become the cultural norms of the organization. Fundamentally, this is the stage which asks: "Why we do what we do?"

The Process stage also starts to develop the process mapping that is vitally important to future improvements regarding forms, enterprise systems, on boarding, etc.

Stage II represents the **Paper** stage where it is important to review the Paper side of the equation. Paper, in this methodology, refers to the forms, tracking systems, training regimes, and importantly, the public interface with intake systems, payment systems, web interface, etc. Stage II Paper asks the question, "Do our forms and support systems work effectively and efficiently to get the job done?"

Stage III, the People stage, examines the personnel side of the organization where the question is asked: "Do we have the right people in the right place to ensure success?" During Stage III the program delves into capacity – does the organization have enough capacity to fulfil desired levels of service; competency – are onboarding and training programs in place to ensure personnel achieve success; organizational structures – does the existing organizational structure place the right people in the right place for effective and efficient decision making processes; and finally change fatigue – is the organization undertaking change at a pace that can be absorbed by existing personnel capacities?

Stage IV or Permanence is where process changes are engrained into the culture of an organization where the changes become part of the new cultural norms. Included within the Permanence stage is where personnel are encouraged to bring new ideas forward, take ownership of change, and to engrain continuous improvement into the psyche of the organization.

Stage IV Permanence also introduces accountability and measures into the program. This is where political decisions such as levels of service are implemented, and where departmental key performance indicators and measures are recorded.

Discussion and Analysis

The goal of the following report is to provide a brief update to Council on the continuous improvement program and identify successes made to date. This report is divided by division within the organization, starting with the Building Division, which has received the greatest focus over the past two quarters.

Building Division

Process – The process for intake of Building Permits continues to be refined as the division has embraced other new initiatives being created within the division including formalizing the professional reliance model to streamline building permit applications.

Paper – Much of the work regarding application forms has now been completed; new forms for some of the minor permits and tenant improvements are currently being worked on.

People – The Division continues to evaluate its personnel needs and with continued increases in permit revenues, there is opportunity to add to the department to address the increasing workload and greater complexity in permits.

Permanence – The Division, under the leadership of the Manager of Building and Director of Development Services continues to embrace the continuous improvement identity the

organization is trying to instill. Ideas from the newly hired staff are being embraced and brought forward in an open forum

Planning Division

Process – A Council workshop outlining process changes has been completed (October 25, 2021) with support to develop a de-coupled approach to processing planning applications. Included in this approach is the development of a Neighbourhood Approach to evaluating major development applications that may have a significant impact on existing neighbourhoods.

Paper – The Planning Division is currently developing new application forms to replace Council Policy LAN .51 Guide to Development Applications thereby allowing the development community greater flexibility in how they approach the development application process. The goal is to implement the new forms and process in the second quarter of 2022.

People – Evaluation of the current staffing complement is ongoing as the division starts to project its future needs as major new planning initiatives come to fruition.

Permanence – As with the building division, buy-in from the staff level is crucial for the success oof implementing change. In this regard, the staff in the planning division under the leadership of the Manager of Planning and Director of Development Services are embracing change and taking a significant leadership role in its implementation.

Communications

Process – As outlined within the City's Corporate Communications Strategy, the Communications team has taken a proactive approach to the City's communications strategy. This means there is a concerted effort to get out in front of issues before they become major.

Paper – There has been a fundamental shift in the way communications is being disseminated within the city to stakeholders, and the public. The approach is based on a subscription methodology versus email lists, advertising, and web presence. This has manifested into new newsletters targeting the public with the monthly City Updates Newsletter, the Builder and Developer Newsletters and internally with the staff newsletters. This proactive approach is also manifested in over 1400 user subscription to the Engage Mission website.

People – Additional pro-active initiatives such as Council's Café Series, and Community Conversations are an example of the People centric pro-active approach Council is currently engaged in.

Permanence – As each of the initiatives become better known, they each will form an integral part of the communications strategy moving forward and will be the known place for City information.

Enterprise Application

Process – Critical to the successful launch of the City's Enterprise Application system is the process mapping. This stage has been complete, a workplan laid out and vendors selected for both the financial solutions – Unit4, and the development services plus other solution – CityWorks.

Key process improvements expected with the launch of CityWorks specific to building permitting include:

- Online Application Process
- Online Payment Systems
- GIS Centric for data control by geo-reference
- Instant Reporting

- Workflow monitoring

Paper – Clearly, the intent of the enterprise applications systems project is to reduce redundancies and provide efficiencies across the organization which are currently utilizing outdated system specific software or ad-hoc software solutions.

People – The Project Team is assembled and the kickoff meeting for Unit4 occurred during the week of April 25th, 2022. Expected timelines for the launch of the Unit4 is expected in the 2nd quarter of 2023. Similarly, the launch of CityWorks is expected to be shortly after the launch of the financial piece.

Permanence – The change management aspect of project management is key to the successful launch of the City's new enterprise application systems and with that, the Project Team is currently developing the champions for the implementation of Unit4. A similar approach will occur with the launch of the CityWorks solution.

Key Performance Indicators

Another key aspect of the continuous improvement project is the development of key performance indicators to measure successes and provide accountability to the organization.

The organization has developed key performance indicators for the measuring and tracking of the Council's Strategic Plan. The KPI's for the Strategic Plan are scheduled to 'go live' on the City's website in the 2nd quarter of 2022.

Additional KPI's are being developed on a department by department basis. As an example, further refinement of KPI's for the Building Division are being developed to provide deeper understanding of the work and efforts currently being experienced. The KPI currently being measured for Building are Single Family building permit wait times; additional information that paint a much fuller picture include building permit revenues, housing unit counts, permits issued, etc.

Council Goals/Objectives

Strategic Focus Area 6. Organizational Excellence:

Council is committed to investing in staff and the organization to provide superior service to the community.

Goals:

To provide effective and efficient services

To be a high performing professional organization

To attract highly qualified, high performing staff

Ensure administrative fairness and transparency in District processes

To strive for continuous improvement

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications with this report. The report is provided for information only.

Summary

When the continuous improvement project was started in late 2019, the main goal was to change the culture within the organization; to develop a culture of continuous improvement.

Cultural change management is often an arduous task as long standing beliefs become engrained into an organizational culture. These long standing beliefs can result in stagnation, resistance to change or new ideas, and possibly resentment amongst staff, stakeholders and public. The incremental changes realized by the organization has allowed the long standing belief systems – thus culture of the organization - to trust change, to see success and to develop the permanence the organization has been seeking.

While the organization is not, nor should it ever, complete in its transformation, it has come a long way. This is in no small part to the champions and dedicated staff who have embraced this new culture and continue to strive for excellence.

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