
Continuous Improvement Strategy – Internal Process Review Update

Recommendation

That the report of the General Manager, Corporate Performance Department dated October 13, 2015, be forwarded to City Council for information.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Internal Process Reviews (IPR) undertaken across the organization to date.

Report Highlights

1. Internal Process Reviews focus on identifying and removing redundancies and waste within existing processes to increase efficiencies in civic operations.
2. They also build capacity in the corporation through innovation coaches and empowering employees.
3. IPRs are bringing teams together and increase efficiencies.
4. IPRs focus on:
 - streamlining the process for citizens;
 - ensuring consistency in the service provided to citizens;
 - reduction of manual processes and increase in digital first approach; and
 - review of tax-supported and user-pay models to cover the cost to deliver the service.
5. Employees find solutions for better service based on their experience and knowledge of the operational realities and finding savings as a result.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the long-term strategy to focus on continuous improvement and use innovative and creative means to provide the best possible services under the Strategic Goal of A Culture of Continuous Improvement.

Background

The Continuous Improvement (CI) Strategy was launched in 2013 as a corporate-wide approach to ensuring effectiveness and improving efficiencies in municipal services and operations. An ongoing approach including regular service level reviews encourages the Administration to go beyond conventional needs to provide high-quality service to the citizens of Saskatoon using innovative and creative means.

Internal Process Reviews (IPRs) are a component of the CI Strategy and are designed to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the operations through identification of waste and redundancy in internal processes. The approach to an IPR will depend on the size and scope of the project.

- Innovation Teams will be encouraged for projects with a larger scope or multi-departmental impact.

- Smaller review teams will be encouraged to establish quick wins in a section, division or department.

In the 2015 Corporate Business Plan and Budget, each business line identified continuous improvement initiatives for 2015, many of which will be addressed through an IPR. Additionally, on an ongoing basis each division is identifying opportunities to increase efficiency and improve on effectiveness. These initiatives are tracked and reported out annually in the *Report on Service, Savings and Sustainability: How the City of Saskatoon is Improving Productivity*.

Report

Focus on Identifying and Removing Redundancies and Waste within Existing Processes

In an organization the size of the City of Saskatoon, it is not uncommon that there is duplication of some processes and functions. For example, one division may be responsible for graffiti removal on a park bench and yet another is responsible for removal if the graffiti is found on a power pole; creating opportunity for inconsistency in service provided to citizens as well as potential for duplication of time spent investigating the issue.

The IPRs formalize the opportunity for teams from multiple divisions to come together and understand services delivered by each divisions and/or section, how each division addresses issues and concerns as they arise and identify areas of duplication. The reviews examine all aspects of a process, identifying steps that are redundant or no longer necessary and seeks opportunities to automate processes, reducing manual entry, paper use and staff time required to locate missing information and/or correct errors.

Building Capacity for Innovation in the Organization

An Innovation Practitioner Training (boot camp) in 2014 brought 30 employees from a variety of divisions together with a purpose of fostering innovation and creativity within all levels of the organization. Through the use of tools the process is designed to take an opportunity from idea to implementation, teams are building capacity within each department to assist in driving change.

The Innovation League, as the group is called, meets once per month to share information on how they have used the tools with their team in meetings and discussions. The tools that the Innovation League members have been trained on through the Innovation Boot Camp are an excellent resource that teams will utilize to complete many of the CI initiatives outlined in the 2015 Corporate Business Plan and Budget.

IPRs are Bringing Divisions Together and Increasing Efficiencies

Collaboration across divisions is a key component to ensuring we are providing quality service to citizens and good value for tax payer's dollars. IPRs bring a team together, formally or informally, to address a challenge or opportunity. Attachment 1 provides highlights for some of the IPRs underway in 2015: Customer Service at Public Works, Streamlining of Graffiti Reduction, and a review of the Special Events process.

Employees have found solutions for better service and savings of approximately \$200,000 to date.

The focus of the IPRs is on:

- streamlining the process for citizens;
- ensuring consistency in the service provided to citizens;
- reduction of manual processes and increase in digital first approach;
- review of tax –supported and user pay models to cover the cost to deliver the service; and
- creating a repeatable process allowing teams the opportunity to jump into the next issue or challenge.

Employees Finding Solutions for Better Service and Savings

Feedback from the teams participating in the IPRs has been excellent. Meetings have been described as productive, informative, and fun. The interactive process helps a team set a common goal and achieve clarity on objectives and outcomes, creating an environment where everyone can have a voice and is able to contribute to the conversation.

Front-line employees have commented that they are happy to be involved in the process as a member of the team and to be part of the change within their workgroup. They are often the closest to our citizens and bring great insight regarding feedback from citizens as well as the challenges and opportunities they face daily with work they are doing. They also bring some of the most innovative ideas to the table and are instrumental in helping achieve change within their work groups.

Improved collaboration fosters team building and employee engagement; employees can more easily understand the downstream impact of their work, which enables them to provide a better experience for citizens.

Communication Plan

Saskatoon's Performance Improvement Plan, "Making Strides", a communication strategy focusing on continuous improvement and performance targets was launched at the end of April. The goal of this strategy is to increase internal and external awareness for the City's success in achieving savings through efficiency, improving service and progress towards strategic goals.

Results from the Internal Process Reviews will be communicated on the City's website in the 'Latest Strides' and/or 'City Spotlight' sections of the *Our Performance* page at www.saskatoon.ca/strides.

Financial Implications

The financial implications related to efficiency gains continue to be quantified with the focus of reallocating to other strategic and operational priorities and/or may contribute to a reduction in the base budget. The annual budget will be prepared to reflect the approved service levels.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no policy, environmental, Privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Reports related to key findings of the Internal Process Reviews will be brought forward to the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services as they reach completion. Action plans and recommendations will be incorporated into the annual business planning and budgeting process for the respective divisions.

A report on the Continuous Improvement initiatives identified within each business line in the 2015 Corporate Business Plan and Budget will be brought forward as part of the 2016 Corporate Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Attachments

1. Highlights from the Internal Process Reviews

Report Approval

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Reviewed and

Approved by: Catherine Gryba, General Manager, Corporate Performance Department

Highlights from the Internal Process Reviews

Customer Service at Public Works

Description of the Process Under Review

- The review group brings together front line staff and management from Public Works (PW), Information Technology (IT), and Strategic and Business Planning (SBP) to begin the process of transitioning Public Works Customer Service to Service Saskatoon's Customer Relationship Management System/311. Public Works has over 200 services that result in inquiries and complaints from citizens, councillors and other civic divisions. As a starting point, the team began the review by documenting six current state water and sewer trouble processes.
- The team also discussed the opportunity to improve service to citizens by creating one point of contact for citizens which ensures they receive consistent, accurate, and relevant information, tracking and follow up. This was further defined as:
 - Informed customer service representatives able to answer a variety of questions quickly and completely in one call
 - Fast and effective service responses to emergency situations
 - Understand the levels of service provided by the City so they know what to expect
 - Options for inquiries (email, phone, web, social media, etc.)
- To date all six processes have been mapped and are undergoing revisions where 'quick wins' are possible to improve customer service.
- Moving forward, recommendation and action plan investigations focus on:
 - Developing a 311-like experience for the six processes with the support of IT, enabling gains in the digital first approach and consistent service for citizens.
 - Developing scripts for customer service representatives that outline consistent customer levels of service for these six processes. Information here highlights standards already in place at PW.
 - Review of tax costing – outlining customer levels of service supported by PW (emergency service) and user pay models (non-emergent service, for example – a curb box location request from a resident looking to pave a driveway).
 - Digital consolidation options for database/email information often searched by customer service representatives – enabling more efficient service (quicker calls and calls that answer questions without a call back to the citizen).

Anticipated Efficiencies and Service Enhancements Resulting From the Review

While the team is still working through the current processes and identifying opportunities for improvement it is expected that the revised process will result in the following opportunities that will be quantified in future reports to Committee:

- Streamlining of IT systems for the Public Works Call Centre will reduce the amount of time staff spend searching for information, improving the response time to citizens and allowing staff to address a greater number of inquiries or complaints within the same timeframe.
 - The length of time Call Centre staff currently spends on a call varies with the nature and complexity of the call. Calls can take anywhere from 1.5 minutes

- for a simple inquiry to several minutes (or longer if the information isn't available) on a complex inquiry or complaint.
- On average staff spend 2.5 minutes per call searching for information. Each staff member takes approximately 83 calls per day which translates into 3.47 hours searching for information.
 - The staff time has a value of approximately \$164,000 per year.
 - Moving from manual to online management of work orders in the field will improve the accuracy in reporting delays and/or work completion and eliminate the need for staff to manually enter work order information in the system. The future state will also allow citizens to be able to track their inquiry or complaint in real-time with an online tracking system, reducing the number of calls the customer service staff receive.
 - Improved communication between the Public Works Call Centre and field crews will improve response time and accuracy of issue and location.

Streamlining Graffiti Reduction

Description of the Process Under Review:

- Traditionally, the City of Saskatoon department responsible for removal was determined by the location of the graffiti. For example, if the graffiti was on a park bench, the Parks division would coordinate its removal. As a result, citizens were always left to guess who to report the graffiti to, and would have to call multiple people before getting to the appropriate division.
- The longer graffiti remains, the more likely other people will add to it (also known as "tagging"). Therefore, it was identified that a much more efficient process for dealing with graffiti was needed.
- The review brought staff together from, among others, Community Development, Parks, Fire Department, Police Services, and Recreation and Sport. The team has been integrating innovation tools into their meetings, providing a more structured focus and encouraging them to look at the problem in a more comprehensive way; working together toward a citizen-centric solution.
- The team examined what success would look like from the citizen's perspective. This was defined as a seamless, coordinated approach which provides a single point of contact for reporting graffiti, as well as prompt, consistent response and time to remedy.
- The team is now also beginning to think not just about removal, but how to proactively prevent graffiti from happening. For example, group members have begun to look at the issue from a construction perspective, considering building materials that could be cleaned instead of having to be repainted; and identifying building locations less likely to be spray-painted throughout the city.

Anticipated Efficiencies and Service Enhancements Resulting From the Review:

While the team is still working through the current processes and identifying opportunities for improvement, it is expected that the revised process will result in the following opportunities that will be quantified in future reports:

- Streamlining of the graffiti reporting process through an app will improve the quality of information received, and reduce staff time currently spent figuring out the issue and location of the graffiti.
 - The length of time spent investigating a graffiti inquiry or complaint varies with the nature and complexity of the issue. On average staff spend 2-4 hours per inquiry searching for information and determining responsibility for remediation based on location, type of property, etc.
 - There are approximately 250 external inquiries/complaints per year with approximately 20% (50 inquiries/complaints per year) requiring detailed investigation and follow up.
 - At an average of 3 hours per investigation by a manager, the value of staff time is potentially between \$6,000 - \$10,000 per year.
 - Staff addressing these inquiries/complaints would be able to reallocate this time to other duties.
- The focus on preventing graffiti from happening will result in savings associated with equipment, materials and time required to remove the graffiti as well as time spent addressing reports of graffiti.
- Currently, several divisions incur costs related to removal of graffiti depending on where it is located and costs are tracked individually within divisions and/or sections. In order to provide potential efficiency gains in this area, information is being gathered from each of these divisions as part of the review to gain an understanding of the current cost of graffiti removal. The estimated annual cost for removal of graffiti across all divisions is approximately \$250,000 per year. Reducing the amount of graffiti through prevention efforts by 10% would result in an annual savings of equipment, materials and time of approximately \$25,000.

Special Events

Description of the Process Under Review:

- The review group brings together 9 of the 14 divisions currently involved in the special events process.
- Meetings to date have focused on understanding the current state of the special events process through process mapping, brainstorming activities including defining success from the stakeholders perspective and the collection of costing and stakeholder feedback data.
- There are many stakeholders involved in the special events process, each with their own definition of success. That being said, some of the common opportunities include:
 - An application process that is streamlined and reflective of the proposed event (simple application for small, low risk events versus detailed application for larger, higher risk events and/or those requiring civic services)
 - A single point of contact at the City regardless of the number of divisions or departments their event needs may touch
 - Responsive service in processing of applications and answering questions
 - Special events to occur in Saskatoon with minimal disruption to the daily lives of citizens

- Moving forward, recommendation and action plan investigations focus on:
 - Streamlining the process for citizens in two ways
 1. Customizing the application process, ensuring small low risk events have a concise application free from questions that are not applicable. This action stems from the recent customer feedback survey and supports a recommendation in the 2014 Special Events Report by Recreation & Sport that events be categorized by attendance and risk.
 2. The single point of contact model, ensuring citizens get efficient and consistent service regardless of how many divisions/departments are involved.
 - Streamlining the process for internal stakeholders involved with the creation of a SharePoint site to host all information relevant to the process. (complete)
 - Ensuring consistency in decisions made about event approvals and support through research and discussion around special events policy and procedure creation and documentation.
 - Creating online application processes to support the digital first strategy and the reduction of manual processes.
 - Reviewing the current payment model and discussing options that move toward a combination of supported events and user-pay events.

Anticipated Efficiencies and Service Enhancements Resulting From the Review:

The team is still working through the current processes and identifying opportunities for improvement. They are also currently quantifying costs associated with special events as there are many divisions that incur costs that are not currently recovered. A future report will outline these costs, options for application and event fees, cost recovery, and will provide a recommendation to the Committee.

It is expected that the revised process will result in the following opportunities that will be quantified in future reports:

- Streamlining the application process will eliminate the requirement of each division to receive an application from the event organizer. A significant amount of time is currently spent following up on incorrect or missing information by each division. Reduction in time spent following up on information has a value of approximately \$5,000 which would help reduce budgetary over-expenditures.
- Providing a single point of contact before, during and following an event, is expected to reduce complaints as presumably they will be addressed in a more timely fashion and reduce the number of phone calls and emails to City Councillors and the Administration regarding an event. Reduced complaints and inquiries would result in an increase in staff time of approximately 25 hours per event season that would be reallocated to other priorities.
- The team is also investigating options related to application and event fees, staff time and cost recovery for labour and equipment required for events as well as damage resulting from an event; particularly in civic parks.

Next Steps

It is expected that each of the reviews highlighted in this attachment will result in efficiencies such as staff time through automation of processes and reduction in duplication of effort across multiple divisions. Service enhancements are also expected that will reduce the time required to respond to citizen and Councillor inquiries and complaints as well as improving the ability for the information to be located online and/or through an app on a smart phone. Recommendations and action plans will be brought forward to Committee as the opportunities are investigated and savings quantified.