WHAT WE DO IS WHO WE ARE

A Blueprint for Building Organizational Culture at The City of Edmonton

May 2018

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A | ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN AN EDMONTON MUNICIPAL CONTEXT

Culture is a way of being, not a set of strategic principles, and we can see this in Edmonton's unique energy and character. Our city is dynamic and ever-changing, though it also needs the right conditions in order to thrive, which is why we all devote so much time to making Edmonton a great place to live where Edmontonians can express their individual and communal selves. The City of Edmonton Administration also has a unique culture rooted in service to Edmontonians and stakeholders. This culture reflects a feeling of commitment, dedication and belonging that nearly 14,000 people bring with them to work every day.

THE CULTURE OF AN ORGANIZATION IS MOST POTENT WHEN ALIGNED WITH (BUT NOT MISTAKEN FOR) STRATEGIC OUTCOMES. IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN CULTURE SUPPORTS AND REINFORCES WHERE AN ORGANIZATION WANTS TO GO.

The culture of an organization is most potent when aligned with (but not mistaken for) strategic outcomes. In other words, when culture supports and reinforces where an organization wants to go. Strategy can be difficult to translate for all staff. While our leaders help to inspire staff to understand how their individual work contributes to our shared goals, not everyone has a clear sense of how almost 14,000 individual puzzle pieces come together to achieve a big picture vision for our city. Culture, on the other hand – when it is genuine, organic and inclusive – can help the strategic direction of an organization become something that employees feel they are participating in. While they might not understand the complex connections between the goals, outcomes and initiatives that we consider most important, they have an emotional connection to our strategy because we work in a way that reinforces our shared role in achieving a vision for our city. In this case,

that common goal is making and keeping Edmonton a great place to live and work. Strategy, goal-setting, operational plans, environmental scans, business cases, implementation plans—all are necessary and best enacted as part of system that includes a strong organizational culture. Such activities do not create culture by themselves, but they both support and benefit from it.

It's also true that the culture of an organization is most powerful and effective when guided with perceptive and consistent leadership. Council and City Administration will help create and sustain an organizational culture that builds on the strengths of our existing culture while adapting to accommodate the future. But to focus too much on the "strategy" will be to miss the point of creating something that's as much about feeling as policy: a strong and enriching organizational culture.

WHY CULTURE MATTERS

Culture matters because the progress of our city matters. Culture is rooted in things that have deep meaning—behaviours, values, habits, aspirations, social and familial patterns. These are not things easily altered simply because someone in our workplace says we should alter them. It takes buy-in, commitment, team work, belief in one's self and in those around us. We have individual values, family cultures, social cultures, civic cultures, workplace cultures, provincial and national cultures. There are many ingredients that go into an authentic organizational culture.

Culture is what happens when leadership direction and workplace action galvanize each other and create a higher, more intrinsic purpose for work. What we do becomes automatic, unconscious, reflexive. And we will say "What we do is who we are." It is a pride with many levels—the individual pride of doing a good job, the collective pride of contributing to your community as an organization, and the satisfaction of knowing Edmontonians feel pride in their hometown.

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How will we know when we are operating in this state? We'll know because Edmontonians will be satisfied when we ask them for feedback. We will know through the respect and support that employees show one another and every customer we serve. We'll know because we will be attracting high calibre applicants to jobs.

As the Organization Development Consultant David Long recently wrote in his article "Don't Let 'Meaning' Be Missing From Your Engagement Strategy," published on the TLNT Recruitment and HR website, meaning is found when the "work has purpose beyond the work itself." What organizations can do, he writes, is to highlight the values and beliefs of their organization and help employees relate them to their own values. Living in a great city is something every Edmontonian places a value on. There is, therefore, a direct connection between an employee doing a great job and Edmonton being a great city.

But because culture has no "finish line", progress may be challenging to see. It will include making sure that employees feel the satisfaction of a job well done, the support of their peers, and the knowledge that we play a role in making our city a better place to live and work. Our path towards continuously forging an authentic organizational culture must always include understanding the connection between the culture of our hometown and the culture of our workplace.

CONNECTING EDMONTON TO THE CITY OF EDMONTON

What is the culture of our city? How do we define it? Can we characterize it accurately enough to usefully refer to it and weave it into our organizational culture? The answer is yes, but bearing in mind that our city is always changing, evolving, growing, as it should.

Edmonton is a diverse metropolis with a livability most people dream about finding in a bigger city. Our river valley is the world's biggest urban park. We have great schools, excellent health care, a wealth of restaurants and other cultural options, and a strong and diverse economy. But what makes Edmonton such a great place are the people who live here. We know it as a welcoming and supportive community that accepts people for who they are and who they want to be. Overall, we have a mix of sound governance and freedom that creates an enviable culture.

Edmonton's challenges are also part of its culture. The ten-year Capital Investment Outlook 2019–2028 was recently presented to Council and it was noted in that document how difficult it is to maintain infrastructure in Edmonton due to our harsh winters and cyclical economy. We also know that in Edmonton homelessness and poverty require diligent attention. Urban sprawl is another reality we are currently grappling with.

And so, when we consider the culture of Edmonton, we would do well to highlight our strengths, acknowledge our challenges, and weave them into an honest and insightful assessment of who we are and who we aspire to be. In this way, we can match the spirit and intent of our city with the creation of our organizational culture. Our city, then, is a place where diligence and application are rewarded. People who toil honestly thrive here. New ideas are welcome, no matter where they come from. We are generally kind to one another. It is a place of common sense and orderliness. It is a city of government and education. It has a strong blue-collar culture. We aren't afraid to acknowledge mistakes and to look for ways to right them. We are a winter city, a river city, a prairie city, a new city in many ways but with thousands of years of history to enrich us.

Now that we have given due consideration to what culture is, why it matters, and how the character of Edmonton should figure into it all, we can turn to the question of what it is we want culture to mean and to do within our organization.

B | THE FUNCTION OF CULTURE AT THE CITY OF EDMONTON

HOW TO THINK ABOUT CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE

Culture is another word for character, personality, nature, ethos. Culture is the spirit of a thing, a place, a body, a group, an organization. Edmontonians live in a city they want to be proud of. We want to be able to travel across the province or around the world and say, Edmonton is a fantastic place to live. Similarly, when we say we work for the City of Edmonton, we want to be able to say, The City is a fantastic place to work. That is achieved through something complex in execution, but simple in principle: The cultivation of a shared and authentic organizational culture.

But can you arbitrarily create culture? Organizational "culture" is sometimes artificially generated at the corporate level, after which management expects it to filter throughout. This process rarely succeeds, however, no matter how inclusive the language, because any top down cultural filtration exercise will typically be viewed by most employees as a task.

A STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE INCLUDES MOTIVATED EMPLOYEES AND GOOD LEADERSHIP.

There are perhaps more effective ways to think about it. An apt metaphor would be that of an Italian stovetop coffee maker, in which you take ground coffee (a written culture strategy), add water (motivated employees), give it some heat (a supportive workplace and encouraging leadership) and then let nature take its course. What boils up and filters through for everyone to enjoy is coffee, or, in this case, an organizational culture. Writing something and calling it a culture strategy isn't going to result in a strong organizational culture unless you add motivated employees and good leadership, in the same way that putting beans in a pot without heat or water isn't going to give you coffee.

WHAT GIVES MEANING TO ONE'S JOB?

There are as many "meanings" to a job as there are employees. But there are overarching features of a strong organizational culture. These fall into two broad categories—the tangible and the intangible. Tangible features include good working conditions, strong employee programs and benefits, supportive structures. Intangibles features include trust, autonomy and respect.

WE WILL ALWAYS BE ENGAGED IN A PROCESS OF ADAPTING CULTURE.

The City of Edmonton has created strong cultural features in the workplace, but an ongoing yardstick is always going to be producing, and reproducing, intangible things like trust and respect. This is partly due to the size of the organization and partly due to the fact that there is a pre-existing culture with its own set of strengths and weaknesses. We are not starting from scratch, nor should we—The City of Edmonton will always be engaged in a process of adapting culture from previous iterations. The trick is to build on the best of what came before as we prepare for what the future will bring.

And part of that is recognizing that employees crave meaning in the workplace. It is the duty of The City to provide as much of the raw material as possible to make this happen. It can't all rest on the shoulders of management, of course. But knowing the depth of talent and commitment in place at the City, there is every reason to expect that we can successfully and continuously adapt our existing workplace culture to add meaning to the lives of employees.

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WHAT IS THE GOAL AND THE SYMBOLISM OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE?

Culture is not a hood ornament, it's an engine. An organization with a dedicated and motivated employee base will possess a culture that drives workplace performance in ways that become habit. The goal of such a culture is to have it merge organically with employee performance, so that employees live it automatically.

EDMONTONIANS VIEW THE WAY THEIR CITY IS RUN AS PART OF WHAT MAKES EDMONTON A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE.

The goal of an integrated culture is to make it the calling card for the organization in the broader community. This is particularly important for an organization such as the City of Edmonton, because Edmontonians view the way their city is run as part of what makes Edmonton a great place to live. These elements feed one another. City staff will feel pride knowing they are part of what makes Edmonton great, and Edmontonians will know their quality of life is increased by an efficient and effective Administration. The happiness of Edmontonians and the efficiency and effectiveness of City operations are interdependent. Culture is the symbiotic link between the two.

It's vital, therefore, to devote considerable resources to culture and its symbolism. It is connected to a stable and motivated work force, and a satisfied citizenry (in the same way that most Canadians feel a general sense of pride travelling abroad, due to our reputation for peace, order and good government, all of which are a function of a strong culture built over time).

WHY NOW?

Edmonton and the surrounding region are in the middle of significant change, for reasons that are both positive and challenging. We are growing rapidly, our economy is stable, and there is a sense of enterprise to our city. However, our dominant oil and gas economy will undergo changes in the decades to come and regional governance issues will become more complex. Also, demographic realities of immigration and indigenous growth will in the end have a significantly positive impact on Edmonton but will require empathy and transparency as we evolve.

EDMONTONIANS HAVE NEW EXPECTATIONS FOR HOW THEY LIVE, DO BUSINESS, ENJOY THEIR CITY AND HOW THEY WANT THEIR CITY BUILT FOR THE FUTURE.

Not that long ago, the city was essentially a utilities provider. But today, the City manages over 80 programs and services, many of which have human relationships at their core. The way Edmontonians communicate with each other and with municipal government has also changed. Societal understanding of diversity has become more sophisticated. Edmontonians have new expectations for how they live, do business, enjoy their city, and how they want their city built for the future. The City of Edmonton has a more profound social and economic impact on Edmontonians and stakeholders than ever before. Of course, this is not just about Edmonton. There has been considerable literature written in recent years about the "city-state" emerging as the dominant form of global human socio-economic activity. The planet's population is becoming increasingly urbanized, and as regional disparities increase in large countries, it seems inevitable that cities in and of themselves are becoming bigger, more complex and more important. Which also means they are getting harder to run every day.

All this is happening at the same time that Edmontonians are demanding greater accountability and transparency from, and greater participation in, their governments. These are highly positive trends, but they add complexity to the job.

THE FUNCTION OF CULTURE AT THE CITY OF EDMONTON

In short, running a city has always been complicated, but it's even more so today. This was partly why, in late 2015, City Council expressed the feeling that perhaps many of Administration's approaches needed re-thinking and/or refreshing. Council felt better information was required from Administration, that simpler language would be useful, that technical expertise was sometimes a barrier between City employees and Council. Essentially, Council felt Administration needed to become a more engaged partner in the work of building a great city. Council challenged Administration to make changes to increase its productivity and utility. It was not identified as such, but this was in many ways the beginning of our process to take the Administration's existing organizational culture and adapt it with those future complexities in mind.

Council identified four primary areas they wanted the City Manager to focus her efforts on in this work. These were:

1 | To have fully engaged, high performing teams throughout the corporation.

2 | To enable a fully informed Council, armed with current, valid, practical data and information about the performance of the City of Edmonton and strategic advice and guidance on future opportunities.

3 | To be part of developing well-informed Edmontonians
who understand the links between their needs, the vision and goals of the City of Edmonton and its performance.

4 | To help create strong, effective and mutually beneficial relationships with other orders of government, the business community, educational institutions, and arts, culture and recreation organizations.

These focus areas acted as both the foundation and starting point for building an organizational culture for the future through using the sound base of our pre-existing culture. We are always seeking to improve how we deliver services and to be alert to the types of services Edmontonians need. But we also realized that the future is coming and that we had to learn how to manage change better. It was also understood that every employee needs to feel part of this cultural evolution—an organizational culture without staff enthusiasm is like a grilled cheese sandwich without the cheese. What's the point?

Since 2015, Administration has spent numerous hours speaking with elected officials, talking to staff, consulting with experts, and doing a lot of listening to Edmontonians. In trying to re-think what a strong organizational culture looks like, we have arrived at what we believe is a sound blueprint, designed to meet the expectations of Edmontonians and the employees who choose to share their talents with the City of Edmonton. These are employees to be proud of, because they do their jobs well and have embraced the flux of change and the challenges of the future.

The sections that follow lay out further elements of the blueprint.

C | GATHERING OUR MATERIALS AND TOOLS

THE MODERN MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

In 2015, the City Manager transformed senior management from a collection of General Managers into an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) comprised of Deputy City Managers (DCM). Each DCM was made equally accountable for running the City under the leadership of the City Manager. This new ELT recognized that changing the processes and culture of the City was not going to be simple. There was the need for deep change in some areas while protecting the culture and competencies of many others. ELT arrived at the conclusion that the City of Edmonton needed to modernize and transform from being a utilities provider into an organization ready and able to respond to the needs of modern Edmontonians. In other words, the City needed to become a modern municipal corporation (MMC) that was open, responsive and able to anticipate challenges and opportunities.

A vision statement for this process was crafted: "Working together, aligned with Council's vision, we enable a better life for all Edmontonians." Some of the key characteristics of an MMC include:

A contingent, flexible organization
The modern municipal corporation adjusts its approach in response to shifting political, economic, social and technological influences in the external environment and changing priorities.

Servant leadership
The modern municipal corporation operates in service to Council and Edmontonians, at the direction of the City Manager and is seperate from government. Council is government and has contracted with the corporation to service its constituents.

Accountability
Within the corporation, Executive Leadership Team sets expectations and accountabilities for the organization. Individual Deputy City Managers are integration managers who are accountable for carrying out corporate strategy through the work of the department they lead.

Integration
Integration is a holistic approach to managing, which requires shared and mutual accountability for leaders and staff. Integration is based on the understanding that multiple perspectives should be applied to complex issues.

In some governance models and practices of the past, the notion of change was seen as a disruptor, or at least something not conducive to stability. But we now better understand that change is an opportunity not a problem. Times of significant change are not moments to be wasted. In this frame of mind, the MMC is a platform to make use of change within our organizational culture.

IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE LIMBS AND BRANCHES OF A TREE MOVE WITH THE WIND, OUR ADMINISTRATION, STRENGTHENED BY THE ROOTS OF ITS CULTURE, CAN ADAPT TO CHANGE. THE WINDS OF CHANGE WILL ALWAYS BLOW, WE CAN BE SURE OF THAT. BUT STRONG TREES STAND UP.

THE FIVE CULTURAL COMMITMENTS

What exactly are the cultural elements that comprise this root system? ELT spent many months considering this, listening, reaching out, debating. They arrived at a set of five Cultural Commitments that embody the culture we are building from, that we aspire to, and that can be demonstrated in everything we do. Words have power, but we are what we do, especially in the minds and hearts of the people we serve.

The five Cultural Commitments are a kind of shorthand. They function as clear and simple manifestations of the behaviours and values embedded in the MMC model, and in the culture and values of Edmonton itself. They

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represent shared principles to embrace in order to be successful in our future work. As mentioned earlier, we are not starting from scratch; the City is already an organization full of strong and positive values. The cultural commitments are a vision for the future. The goal is to build on past strengths and combine them with new ways of thinking and doing. A goal defined by building a strong organizational culture shared with pride across the corporation and woven in to everything we do.

OUR CULTURAL COMMITMENTS

Safe
We value respect, and protect the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of each other and those we serve. Safety is everyone's responsibility. We create trusted spaces to challenge the status quo and do our best work. Mutual respect, courtesy and care for each other are fundamental no matter what position we hold.

Helpful
We care about people's experiences. We work with them and for them to seize opportunities, address challenges and deliver outstanding service. We view public service as an honour. We are driven by, and respond to, the interests of those we serve. We seek to understand the experience of those we serve to better meet their priorities and expectations.

Accountable
We are trusted and empowered to embrace our responsibility for our actions, decisions and behaviours. We commit to our responsibilities to Council, each other and those we serve. We understand the corporation's goals and our work aligns and supports them. We are responsible for meeting performance expectations and results. We live our cultural commitments with respect, integrity, and transparency.

Integrated
We get the best results when we align our diverse ideas, knowledge and efforts in shared purpose. We believe the whole is stronger when its parts are aligned. We work in common cause and not as an assembly of standalone functions. We are all connected in working to achieve the success of our city, both across the corporation and with our external stakeholders. We respect and value diversity within our workplace and across the communities we serve.

Excellent
We perform to the highest standard. We passionately pursue innovation and continuously improve ourselves, our teams and our city. We create an environment that encourages, values and recognizes continuous improvement and innovation. We commit to quality, ingenuity, and high performance in all that we do. We seek continuous improvement and innovation. We seek continuous improvement through curiosity, and being well informed about new ideas and opportunities.

Our cultural commitments are about the promises we make to do our best and be our best in our daily work life, but the real power of using these commitments to guide our work is that they are already a reflection of our best selves. We want to be safe on the job and we want Edmontonians to feel safe. We have high standards. We want to work together. We take pride in a job well done. And we are ready to offer a hand where we can. There you have it—the cultural commitments.

Not that that means we can say we've read this blueprint and so our job is done. These are just raw materials, after all. Ways of thinking. They need to be arranged and deployed properly, otherwise they are just a collection of parts. You can't sit in a chair from IKEA just because you've emptied all the pieces onto the floor.

D USING OUR MATERIALS TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN A MEANINGFUL CULTURE

We are looking to create a robust organizational culture based on pre-existing strengths and on the principles of the MMC, using the cultural commitments to guide the ways in which we perform our jobs every day. The question is how best to turn this raw material into an ongoing pattern of implementation and expression.

WE HAVE TO TAKE THIS KNOWLEDGE AND THESE VALUES, AND TURN IT INTO ACTION, BECAUSE WHAT WE DO IS WHO WE ARE.

There are numerous elements to our blueprint that involve building a meaningful culture and sustaining it. These elements are clear and logically connected. The foundation they rest on is made from the central characteristics of the **MMC** and the five **cultural commitments.** What flows from that are the **Principles** of the blueprint, the desired **Outcomes,** the **Goals** detailed within each Outcome, and the **Key Actions** that we'll need to take to achieve each Goal. Each step in the process of building this blueprint follows organically from the knowledge that preceded it.

This document is designed to act as a simple and transparent blueprint that inspires while functioning as a practical guidance tool, which is why we have also included benchmarks of quality and time to measure whether or not our actions are working. This includes building in mechanisms to make sure feedback is heard and represented in meaningful ways.

In all aspects of this blueprint, leadership from Council, the City Manager, the Deputy City Managers, the Branch Managers and the Supervisors is vital. At every level of the organization, there must be a balance of leadership from above with percolation from below. People crave leadership that recognizes individual value. There is a difference between leading with

wisdom and patience and leading by telling people what to do. As Michael Fenn and David Siegel recently wrote in their paper "The Evolving Role of City Managers and Chief Administrative Officers" published by the Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance at the Munk School of Global Affairs, "the tone is set from the top. Organizational culture affects the kind of staff that a municipality attracts. Starting with good people is one part of team development; the next task is to make them team players who put the interests of the municipality as a whole above those of their own department." In other words,

A STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE HAS LEADERSHIP THAT UNDERSTANDS AND PROMOTES THE VALUE OF TEAMWORK.

As we go about the process of building a new organizational culture aligned with our vision, and which weaves the best of the past with the advances of the current, it's worth remembering that cultivating culture is a bonus not a burden. If culture isn't adding value to the daily working life of the nearly 14,000 people who work for the City, then our organizational culture is not doing its job (and odds are the staff won't be excelling at their jobs, either, in that they will be fighting against the current of a poor internal culture). Culture isn't something to "implement," it's something that nourishes and inspires. Culture shouldn't add to the workload.

CULTURE ENABLES, IT DOESN'T HINDER.

The root of the word culture is cultivate, after all.

USING OUR MATERIALS TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN A MEANINGFUL CULTURE

Essentially, our people remain the core focus of this blueprint. A culture plan speaks to how we lead, how we establish priorities, how we define our competencies, and how we manage our structures and processes. Those nearly 14,000 people can benefit enormously from having a coherent workplace culture guide what they do as individuals. That's the goal, simple as it is— to have employees feel that they are both appreciated for what they do while also gaining the satisfaction of knowing that their work contributes meaningfully to the larger vision and the wider community.

Bearing all this in mind, the detailed elements of the cultural blueprint are as follows:

CULTURAL BLUEPRINT PRINCIPLES

The following principles have been developed to help guide the implementation of the cultural blueprint. A strong organizational culture is:

Dynamic
Culture evolution is dynamic and we are open and responsive to change.

Unifying
The five cultural commitments together guide our beliefs, attitudes and actions.

A Driver
Culture drives everything. At the core of culture is people.

Shared
Culture is everyone's responsibility and everyone's gift.

Knowing that outcomes need clear identification in light of the fluidity and volatility of reality, this plan has focussed goals that remain open to continuous reassessment. Each goal has key actions associated with it. (Outcomes, Goals and Key Actions are contained in Appendix 1, though we have summarized the outcomes and goals in the main body of this document.) These outcomes, goals and actions are

transparent, and employees will know their role in each case. There are also timelines tied to the outcomes, which will be discussed further in the next section related to tracking the success of the blueprint.

CULTURAL BLUEPRINT KEY OUTCOMES

An adaptive and supportive culture can only be realized if five elements are integrated. These elements are the focus areas of this cultural blueprint and reflect Administration's comprehensive approach to evolving our culture. Individual outcomes have been crafted to capture key priorities in each of the five areas.

Employee Engagement
All employees demonstrate a clear understanding of the cultural commitments through their behaviour, attitudes and actions.

Leadership
Leaders understand, embrace, and model the cultural commitments at all times.

Artifacts and Symbols
Concrete visual representations of our desired culture are readily evident to all employees and Edmontonians.

Employee Lifecycle
Desired culture is reinforced throughout all stages of the employment journey.

Organizational Design
Align structure, systems and processes to support desired culture.

CULTURAL BLUEPRINT GOALS

Goals and key actions designed to advance our cultural evolution are outlined below in the short summary tied to each outcome.

Engagement Goals
» Multiple pathways exist to learn, share, emulate and deepen employee understanding of the cultural commitments.

USING OUR MATERIALS TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN A MEANINGFUL CULTURE

» Adopt a comprehensive approach for evaluation of culture.

» Align resources dedicated to supporting teams as they work to embed the cultural commitments in all parts of the organization.

Leadership Goals

» Highlight and reward leaders whose personal style and values align with the culture commitments.

» Ensure employees in leadership roles understand performance expectations and employee accountability.

» Enable leaders to articulate the cultural commitments and the journey to get there.

Artifacts and Symbols Goals

» Create and implement a corporate–wide internal communications strategy to ensure consistent employee access to information.

» Ensure corporate recognition and awards programs align and reinforce the desired corporate culture.

» Review and update existing corporate culture artifacts to align with vision for corporate culture.

» Adopt a strategy for external awards recognition and programs that emphasizes the City's commitment to excellence in its service to Edmontonians.

Employee Lifecycle Goals

» Revamp existing human resource models to ensure attraction and retention of employees with values that align to our corporate culture.

» Align employee onboarding to introduce the clearly and consistently cultural commitments to all new employees.

» Offer comprehensive training and development opportunities about exhibiting attitudes and behaviors that align with the cultural commitments.

» Leverage offboarding process to improve employee experience for current and future employees.

Organizational Design Goals

» Enable and empower employees to offer excellent service to Edmontonians and Council.

» Develop and implement a new service delivery model to ensure enhanced communication partner services are offered internally.

» Implement a Corporate Governance Framework to drive integration across the corporation.

» Implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure employees work in a safe environment and follow safe practices.

» Increase the quality and timeliness of Council Reports.

» Develop a performance management policy that includes measurement, analysis, reporting, application and evaluation.

Elevate the importance of corporate culture, organizational effectiveness, safety, talent management and respectful and inclusive workplaces through changes to corporate organizational structure and strategy.

Ensure that the City has a respectful, positive and productive work environment.

CULTURAL BLUEPRINT KEY ACTIONS

These can be found in Appendix 1.

E | TRACKING THE SUCCESS OF THE CULTURAL BLUEPRINT

In much the same spirit as, "what we do is who we are," the success of this plan rests in measuring quantifiable outcomes, not just the positivity of its aims. There will, of course, be qualitative outcomes—Edmonton will thrive; Edmontonians will be content; the economy will be stable; social harmony will increase. Essentially, the city will continue to function smoothly, though we do not, of course, control these conditions.

But to fully gauge the health of our organizational culture, we will need measurable data to be sure that employees feel they work in a place that has their backs. Employees need to feel they work in an environment where they are valued and supported. Everything else flows from that.

Building on the principle that cultural evolution is dynamic and that we are open and responsive to change, it will be critical to check in on our progress frequently and through different mediums. In this way, we will be held accountable to the ideas put forward in this blueprint.

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS

For over a decade, the City's touchpoint for understanding employee satisfaction of workplace culture, engagement, diversity and inclusion, and harassment and discrimination has been data generated from the biennial Employee Diversity and Engagement Survey. Currently, the City is considering additional and more frequent assessment of employee behaviors and activities, including these options:

Adding indicators to the proposed Enterprise Performance Management scorecard

As City employees go about their jobs, a mix of hard cultural commitment outcomes (some already measured by the City) will be generated. These outcomes will need to be prioritized and reported through the organization. In addition, hard indicators that describe employee experiences related to engagement, culture, diversity, inclusion, harassment, and discrimination will need to be measured and reported.

Employee Surveys

To supplement hard measures, which tend to be lagging indicators subject to external forces, the City will need to begin collecting "near real–time" data. Current best practices are to collect this data through third–party companies that provide pulse surveys. Pulse surveys are short (~5 questions) and sent to a rotating random sample of city employees. In situations where e–surveys do not work, such as with transit and maintenance employees, button–based unit polling podiums can be set up in common areas, with revolving questions on screens. Pulse surveys can complement our biennial survey and allow us to evolve our current benchmarks.

Focus Groups

When performance results from hard measures or pulse surveys reveal the need for further investigation, best practices include detailed surveys and/or focus groups that can be separate or part of an existing meeting.

Indicators for the Culture Elements

The City's Culture Elements describe the ways in which our cultural commitments are actively shown and shared. The Elements are: Employee Engagement, Leadership, Artifacts and Symbols, Employee Lifecycle, and Organizational Design. The City is developing indicators for each of them.

A less–formal but still valuable tool for measuring (and disseminating) the strength of our internal culture will be to observe what emerges naturally in the workplace and to support it. A body in the City (Culture Unit) can be set up to be a pipeline/repository for any and all stories/events/trends that celebrate and relate culture at the City. Stories are not just a core aspect of a strong organizational culture, they are central to who we are as human beings. We understand and interpret so much of our world through stories that creating this pipeline for employees will anchor our culture and celebrate the ways in which this culture is experienced as individuals and collectively. To encourage transparency, this body should also be a place for staff to challenge and seek

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interpretation on matters of organizational culture. Also of great importance will be recognizing employees for their great work. There are proposals currently awaiting endorsement that would allow for creating a much stronger Recognition element to our organizational culture, in both day-to-day operations and for corporate-wide recognition.

A three-phase implementation plan will be developed to advance our cultural blueprint. Each phase will go through the process improvement cycle, in which each action item will be assessed and adjusted if necessary in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

The development of the plan will be informed by the following actions:

» Engagement with staff, through ELT Committees, Department Leadership Teams, Branch management teams, union leadership sessions, and broader employee engagement

» Seek to fully understand the impact of the organization's cultural transformation––both the intended and unintended effects

» Identify subcultures and how these support or hinder organizational outcomes

» Align leaders' performance contribution plans and identify how these contributions support the cultural commitments

» Develop tools that support people on the change curve and evaluate the effectiveness of these tools

» Use a plan—do—check—adjust/act cycle to diagnose gaps, manage resistance, implement supportive actions and celebrate success

ACTION PHASES

Phase I (3–6 months)
The first phase is designed to achieve two main goals: setting a baseline that can be used as a benchmark for the evaluation of the progress of the culture transformation as well as the creation of short term wins that can be felt and lived throughout the organization. This will enhance the staff's sense of engagement, and awareness as well as demonstrate leaderships' genuine efforts and commitment to change.

Phase II (6–18 months)
The purpose of phase II is to emphasize change, provide guidance and continue to build knowledge and staff's ability to demonstrate the desired behaviours. The scale of improvement is considered a powerful retention tool for the culturally aligned staff as well as the attraction of new talent. The second phase will ensure the implementation of medium term tactics as well as the evaluation of completed short term actions, and any related course adjustment, if necessary.

Phase III (18 months – ongoing)
The third phase is an ever evolving one; where new long term initiatives are implemented while continuously checking the pulse on the previous tactics and their overall alignment. This is the phase during which our cultural evolution will ''stick'' with all levels of staff. All new initiatives are targeted towards continuous improvement, staff engagement and evaluating the advancement of the modern municipal corporation which is the ultimate desired state.

F | FULL CIRCLE

Culture is a shared celebration, a group effort also felt individually. Our organizational culture now and in the future should symbolize one central fact—great people work here. We want to always be improving and be challenged, which is why this plan also creates the space for us to grow, to take risks, to do better. That is our goal. The truth is that there is no end point in the process of building a strong organizational culture because we live in a city that is forever growing and forever changing. The only "finish line" will be in making sure that employees feel the satisfaction of a job well done and the support of their peers and Administration. When that happens, it will translate into continuing to serve our fellow Edmontonians ably and to make our city a better place to live and work. We are all part of a complex $3 billion corporation running over 300 programs and services, and every one of us has a specific part to play to make sure that collectively we do one thing right: make life better for Edmontonians. Edmontonians trust us, they need us and they value us. Our pride in that role shines through in every action we take.

The work of refreshing and evolving our culture is vital. It is not a process that can be completed via a five-page report and an annual check in. It's a considerable undertaking that must be taken seriously from top to bottom and side to side, because every single action each one of us takes every minute of every day will be influenced by the culture of our workplace. There is nothing as important as creating the right culture because it guides and mirrors the tens of millions of decisions made every day by our nearly 14,000-strong collective. If our decisions and actions are guided by a strong and coherent and consistent organizational culture, then an exponential pride and care will evolve and gather momentum. That is something to aim for. And something to be proud of. Culture is as culture does. What we do is who we are.

APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

ENGAGEMENT		
OUTCOME: All employees demonstrate a clear understanding of the cultural commitments through their behaviour, attitudes and actions.		

GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	STATUS
Multiple pathways exist to learn, share, emulate and deepen employee understanding of all cultural commitments.	1. Develop an engagement strategy and cultural implementation plan that cascades the cultural commitments.	🟢
	2. Provide employees at all levels with access to tools and resources to learn about, foster and create norms around desired corporate culture.	🟠
	3. Immediately pursue quick wins: a. Share stories of how City employees emulate the cultural commitments.	🟢
	b. ¨Celebrate our Culture in Action¨ which is an opportunity to recognize any level of staff at any time for personal or professional contributions/ development that supports our cultural commitments.	🟠
	c. Use visual collateral for positive validation of cultural norms and behaviours.	🟠
	d. Host outreach events that profile the commitments and provide opportunities for feedback and sharing.	🟠
	e. Develop audience-specific tools for cultural commitments roll out.	🟢
	f. Facilitate structured and unstructured group discussions in person and through electronic media platforms to explore the cultural commitments and how they drive success.	🟠

STATUS LEGEND: 🟢 well underway and on track   🟠 started or planned   🔴 not started

APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

ENGAGEMENT		
OUTCOME: All employees demonstrate a clear understanding of the cultural commitments through their behaviour, attitudes and actions.		
GOALS	**KEY ACTIONS**	**STATUS**
Adopt a comprehensive approach for evaluation of culture.	1. Create a comprehensive evaluation framework that has multiple mediums to measure culture, engagement, and safe and inclusive workplace levels.	🟠
	2. Quick Wins: a. Ensure Branch Action Plans address employee survey results and align with the cultural commitments roll out, are implemented and reported on.	🟠
	b. Evaluate the use of the biennial employees engagement survey.	🟢
	c. Complete a baseline assessment of the current state of culture.	🟠
	d. Develop key performance indicators for the five cultural commitments.	🟠
	e. Develop an evaluation framework.	🟠
Align resources dedicated to supporting teams as they work to embed all cultural commitments in all parts of the organization.	1. Appoint a Corporate Transformation Program Manager.	🟢
	2. Develop the corporate mandate of the Corporate Culture Office.	🟢
	3. Relaunch the Cultural Ambassador program with the primary focus of creating change agents in all business units to ensure the cascade of the cultural commitments. Create a measuring tool to ensure effectiveness of the cascade through the Culture Ambassadors.	🟢
	4. Mobilize networks to create pockets of people emulating and sharing the cultural commitments with others.	🟠

STATUS LEGEND: 🟢 well underway and on track   🟠 started or planned   🔴 not started

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APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

ARTIFACTS AND SYMBOLS

OUTCOME: Concrete representations of our desired culture are readily evident to all employees, stakeholders and residents.

GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	STATUS
Create a corporate-wide internal communications strategy to ensure consistent employee access to information.	1. Develop strategy and an implementation plan to ensure consistent messaging throughout all levels of the organization.	🟡
	2. Integration of Make Something Edmonton brand platforms into existing collaterals and align with internal corporate branding.	🟡
	3. Centralize resources and developing supporting structures to enhance work on Image, Brand and Reputation.	🟡
Ensure Corporate recognition and awards programs align and reinforce the desired corporate culture.	1. Review existing recognition activities and assess fit with culture vision.	🟢
	2. Develop new awards programs that reinforce the cultural commitments.	🟢
	3. Launch new and aligned awards programs, and transform existing programs.	🟡
	4. Phase out programs and awards that are no longer relevant.	🟡
Review and update existing corporate culture artifacts to align with vision for corporate culture.	1. Update the Working Relationship Agreement between Employee Unions and Associations and Management.	🟡
	2. Phase out the 'Leadership Principles' through a comprehensive change management plan.	🟢
	3. Create new physical reminders and prompts for the cultural commitments.	🟡
	4. Activitate the inventory of stories in multiple mediums that capture how employees embody the cultural commitments.	🟡
	5. Share testimonials from Edmontonians and partners that illustrate the cultural commitments in action.	🔴
Adopt a strategy for external awards recognition and programs that emphasizes the City's commitment to excellence in its service to Edmontonians.	1. Review existing processes for external rewards.	🔴
	2. Pursue external reward and recognition opportunities that reinforce desired aspects of our culture, brand and reputation.	🔴
	3. Ensure resource allocation to support external recognition opportunities.	🔴

STATUS LEGEND: 🟢 well underway and on track   🟡 started or planned   🔴 not started

APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE

OUTCOME: Desired culture is reinforced throughout the all stages of the employment journey.

GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	STATUS
Revamp existing human resource models to ensure attraction and retention of employees with values that align to our corporate culture.	1. Update job evaluation and compensation systems.	🟡
	2. Review recruitment processes through an audience–based lens.	🟡
	3. Update the Management Performance Contribution Plans to improve the employee's understanding of performance expectations, increase the number of formal performance conversations with supervisor and create a consistent streamlined process throughout the corporation.	🟢
	4. Review and update most relevant Administrative Directives and Procedures to reflect employee performance expectations relative to Council priorities, the City Manager's focus areas and the City's cultural commitments.	🟢
	5. Use data to inform leading practices and targeted approaches to recruitment and retention.	🟡
	6. Explore flexible work arrangements to support employee retention.	🔴
Align employee onboarding to clearly and consistently introduce the cultural commitments to all employees.	1. All employees receive a comprehensive orientation about cultural commitments and expectations.	🟡
	2. Reinforce cultural commitments through in person and online mediums.	🟡
	3. Develop onboarding of contractors to ensure they model cultural values in their interactions with the public.	🔴

STATUS LEGEND: 🟢 well underway and on track   🟡 started or planned   🔴 not started

APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE

OUTCOME: Desired culture is reinforced throughout the all stages of the employment journey.

GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	STATUS
Offer comprehensive training and development opportunities about exhibiting attitudes and behaviors that align with the cultural commitments.	1. Develop specific curriculum that relates to individual cultural commitments. Including: a. Helpful: Create courses that provide training in customer service.	🔴
	b. Safety: Develop training that inspires and enables an environment free of harassment and discrimination.	🟡
	c. Excellent: Incorporate tools that support a culture of innovation and excellence in current course offerings.	🟡
	d. Accountability: Review and incorporate common corporate expectations related to performance management in course offerings.	🟢
	e. Integrated: Incorporate tools and mental models that enable integrative thinking and facilitates integration of perspectives.	🔴
	2. Incorporate cultural commitments into new Aspiring Director Program.	🟢
	3. Incorporate the cultural commitments in all School of Business course offerings.	🟢

Leverage off-boarding process to improve employee experience for current and future employees.	1. Define consistent processes for exit interviews with four core employee audiences:
	   a. Permanent employees who resign
	   b. Permanent employees who retire or depart involuntarily
	   c. Temporary employees
		🟢

	2. Develop a system for analysis and reporting of exit interview findings to ensure they inform future practice.	🟢

STATUS LEGEND: 🟢 well underway and on track   🟡 started or planned   🔴 not started

APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

OUTCOME: The City of Edmonton's culture is pervasive through our systems, structures, and processes.

GOALS	KEY ACTIONS	STATUS
Enable and empower employees to offer excellent service to Edmontonians and Council.	1. Develop a manual of excellence that helps staff identify clear standards of customer service for Edmontonians.	🔴
	2. Communicate these standards through multiple mediums that ensure a comprehensive roll out.	🔴
	3. Develop an evaluation tool to measure the impact of the implementation of the manual.	🔴
Develop and implement a new service delivery model to ensure enhanced communication partner services are offered internally.	1. Evolve service delivery model based on pilots and implement service delivery model changes that ensure that communication, engagement, marketing and external relations services throughout the corporation are integrated, consistent and brand-aligned.	🔴
	2. Evaluation of existing workflow, processes, and tools.	🟡
	3. Pilots of refined service delivery model focused on three key pillars: core values, people practices and project rigour.	🔴
Implement a Corporate Governance Framework to drive integration across the corporation.	1. Establish four Executive Leadership Team committees as an integrative mechanism through which ideas, advice and recommendations are developed, refined and advanced to ELT.	🟢
	2. Include a culture moment in all meetings of the Executive Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team Committees.	🟡
Implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure employees work in a safe environment and follow safe practices.	1. Develop comprehensive strategy for employee safety and health that includes mental/emotional health to create an organization that has a mature safety culture characterized by increased safety ownership, leadership accountability and frontline employee engagement.	🟢
	2. Align organizational resources to create the Corporate Safety and Employee Health Branch.	🟢
	3. Establish a new Executive Leadership Team governance framework for employee safety.	🟢

STATUS LEGEND: 🟢 well underway and on track   🟡 started or planned   🔴 not started

APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN		
OUTCOME: The City of Edmonton's culture is pervasive through our systems, structures, and processes.		
GOALS	**KEY ACTIONS**	**STATUS**
Implement a comprehensive strategy to ensure employees work in a safe environment and follow safe practices.	4. Immediately pursue quick wins: a. Complete an internal safety audit to establish baseline.	🟢
	b. Introduce a corporate safety program for all employees.	🟢
	c. Increase safety maturity in all operational areas.	🟠
	d. Complete assessments on all ETS drivers.	🟢
	e. Facility safety (ongoing review of safety practices in City Facilities and adjustments to protocols as required).	🟠
	f. Implement a strong corporate safety and employee health management system.	🟠
	g. Clarify safety and wellness and accountabilities at all levels.	🟠
	5. Update the Emergency Management Plan.	🟠
Increase the quality and timeliness of Council Reports.	1. Develop new processes, supports and tools to enable shared accountability and high quality reports that are timely and meet the needs of Edmontonians and Council.	🟢
	2. Realign the Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management section to create a clear line of sight to corporate outcomes.	🟠
Develop an enterprise performance management policy that includes measurement, analysis, reporting, application and evaluation.	1. Performance management policy, framework and reporting standards.	🟠
	2. Align to other work streams: Corporate Business Planning Process, the Program and Service Review, and the Way Ahead.	🟠

STATUS LEGEND:	🟢 well underway and on track	🟠 started or planned	🔴 not started

APPENDIX 1: CULTURE STRATEGY OUTCOMES, GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN		
OUTCOME: The City of Edmonton's culture is pervasive through our systems, structures, and processes.		
GOALS	**KEY ACTIONS**	**STATUS**
Elevate the importance of corporate culture, organizational effectiveness, safety, talent management and respectful and inclusive workplaces through changes to corporate organizational structure and strategy.	1. Bring together the Human Resources Branch, the Corporate Safety and Employee Health Branch, and the Corporate Culture Office into one integrated Department team.	🟢
	2. Second a Diversity and Inclusion specialist from a organization of comparable size and scope.	🟢
	3. Establish policy and procedures to support transparency through open city and data.	🟠
	4. Align Corporate Culture principles, values, norms and assumptions that form collective behaviors within the Corporate Strategy. Develop corporate culture strategy that highlights the importance of service leadership and integration.	🟠
Ensure that the City has a respectful, positive and productive work environment.	1. Implement a system to address employee concerns in a safe, confidential, timely and fair manner: a. Introduce an interim, external, independent process for employee complaints regarding harassment and discrimination	🟢
	b. Develop an internal communications strategy to raise awareness of options for reporting workplace concerns.	🟢
	c. Development of a long term process for complaints management after a thorough review and design.	🟢
	d. Establish a citizen code of conduct to facilitate safe and respectful interactions between citizens and staff.	🟠
	e. Update the Diversity and Inclusion Framework, including connections to relevant corporate strategies and priorities (i.e. anti-racism framework).	🟠
	f. Review existing and Inclusion resource capacity to ensure services and programs meet the needs of all employees.	🟠

STATUS LEGEND: 🟢 well underway and on track   🟠 started or planned   🔴 not started