CITY OF Burlington

SUBJECT: Corporate Continuous Improvement Strategy and Plan – it's not a mandate, it's a movement

TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

FROM: Corporate Strategy

Report Number: CS-02-23

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-01

Date to Committee: January 9, 2023

Date to Council: January 24, 2023

Recommendation:

Endorse the Corporate Continuous Improvement Strategy as outlined in Appendix A in corporate strategy report CS-02-23; and

Direct the Executive Director of Strategy, Risk and Accountability to hold a workshop in January 2023 to provide Lean Six Sigma White Belt training for all of Council.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Background and Discussion:

In the past 10 years the organization has adopted and implemented various tools and approaches to support continuous improvement (CI). In May 2013, Council was introduced to the Service Management Framework and Business Process Management and approved the report to Committee of the Whole introducing service management - CM-07-13. Over these years, many city service areas and projects have engaged in process reviews using the business process management approach. Fundamentally, this approach of service management and process improvements shifted the organization in the right direction towards understanding: who are our service customers, the cost by

service, how to map processes, identify pain points and improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. A few examples of these past process improvement reviews include;

- specialized transit client application and approval process
- animal service on-line dog licensing and payment process
- special events road closure process
- traffic calming request process
- construction prompt payment process
- insurance claims process
- road patrol process.

In general, these types of process reviews resulted in reducing duplicate efforts, redirecting staff time to more value-add process activities, better clarification of roles and responsibilities and/or adjusting a process to better meet the needs of the customer.

Strategy/process

The CI Strategy and Plan (refer to details in Appendix A) will use a disciplined approach of deconstructing challenges, using evidence analysis, and solving problems at the root. It is important to note that CI is more than just process improvement and the strategy will bring together several best practices to achieve improved business outcomes. The disciplined approach will leverage the methodologies and tools of Lean Six Sigma, Customer Experience, Project Management, Human-Centered Design Thinking (HCD), Prosci Change Management, Risk Management and Data Analysis. Collaboration across areas with the abovementioned expertise will be important in ensuring a balanced and holistic approach to CI is achieved.

As the organization evolves, it is time to reconfirm, revise and re-educate the organization from top to bottom on what it means be a continuous improvement (CI) organization and how to take a holistic approach that enables practical application of CI methodologies. This includes the fundamental definition of what CI is and what it is not. Connections and participation in CI methods will include all levels of staff and will adopt the approach of not making more work to review process for the sake of reviewing process but to make strategic improvements over time to achieve results. This will include prioritizing solutions to see progress and not perfection, while bringing a focus on the value-add for the customer. In this continuous improvement strategy and plan, foundational values of being customer-centric, using a disciplined methodology, solving problems at the root and having cross-functional and inclusive teams are key.

The most important aspect to the strategy and plan moving forward is building strong psychological safety, not only in the teams doing the work but across the entire

organization from Council to front-line staff. Psychological safety is the shared belief that others on the team will not embarrass, reject, humiliate, or punish them for speaking up. This approach aligns with the current values of the organization and supports an inclusive and diverse workplace. Psychological safety begins with the feeling of belonging. Within our own organizational value "We take care of each other", the expected behavior is to genuinely have interest for the wellbeing of our colleagues and work as a team and have each other's backs. Employees must feel accepted before they are able to contribute fully in ways that improve their organization (Centre for Creative Leadership www.ccl.org). Improvement will be about the process and not about the person.

In addition to creating psychological safety, it is important to note that CI is more than just the bottom line. Goals of an improvement project may focus on quality, time, people, risk, and cost. This can mean identifying where investments are required (spend now to save later), creating cost avoidance and/or redirecting workloads and staff time to value-add work. At the center of all improvements will be service delivery that meets and/or exceeds the expectations and needs of the community, the customer.

The mantra of the CI strategy is that it is "a movement, not a mandate" and that the effectiveness of these methodologies will yield desired results, attracting staff who want to participate, without having to be required to. The program is structured to offer much needed supports to business units and provide meaningful outcomes for business objectives.

To further ensure that a cross-functional approach is supported and adopted, a Corporate Improvement Network has been formed. This network is a collection of staff from across the entire organization with either a passion, interest or skill set in CI who have chosen to join in, participation is voluntary. The group is not exclusive, titles are "checked at the door" and participants are expected to act as trusted peers where ideas are created, challenges shared and support to work through failure is key. The core of the group is made up of staff experts in the areas of process and service improvement, change management, project management, customer experience, and risk management. Some of the early benefits realized have included, stakeholder impact consolidation, communication and engagement collision awareness and the sharing of common goals and objectives. The group is still in the beginning phase of development; however, it has become evident by participation, it is a much welcomed and needed way of engagement to support CI activities and build a culture of psychological safety.

Building capability within departments will be an important area of focus early in the deployment of the strategy. Staff will learn how to engage in and lead CI initiatives through both training, and practical application of various CI tools. Engaging all leadership (including Council) in basic training of a Lean Six Sigma, namely White Belt training, will be an important first area of focus for the strategy, followed by Lean Six
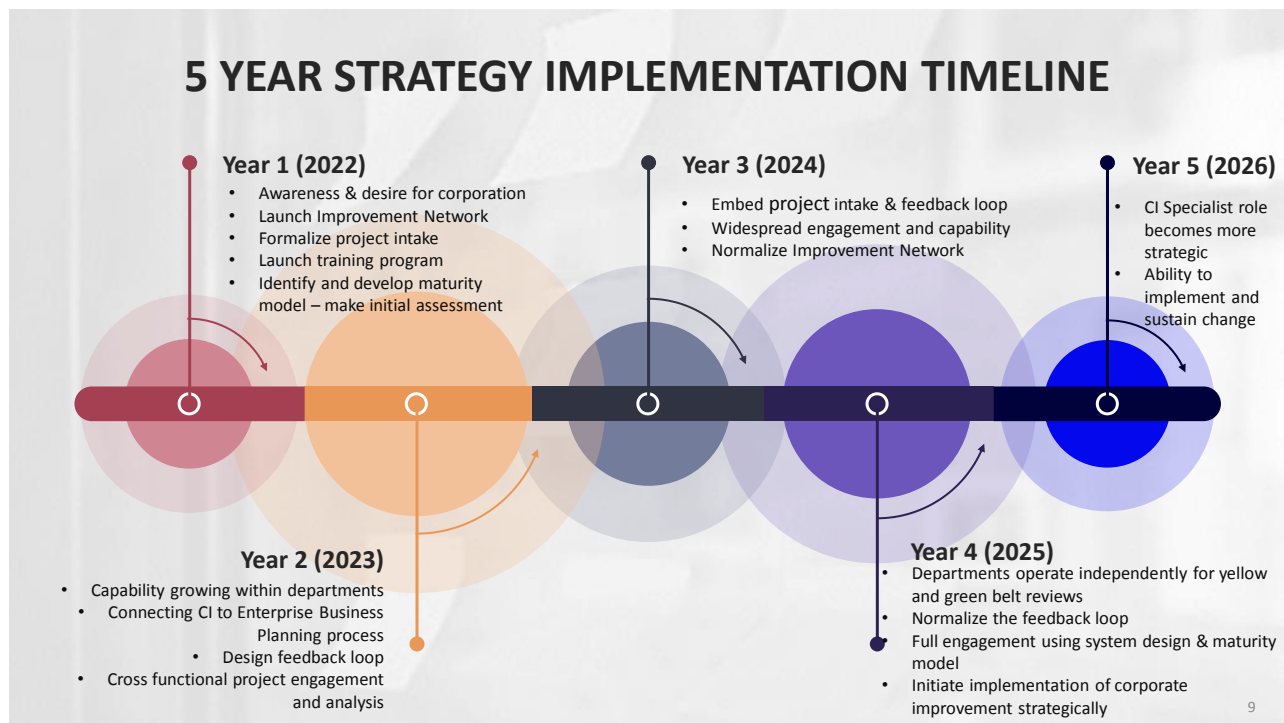
Sigma Yellow Belt training for all management and people leaders (inclusive of supervisors and coordinators) by year end 2023. Additional training in areas such as change management and Human-Centered Design Thinking are under consideration.

Over time, projects will independently report out on realized gains and benefits and the Corporate Strategy Team will measure and report year over year organizational improvements in the areas of culture, capacity and standards. A sample of these measures will include;

- Increase year over year in the number of leaders and staff trained
- Total number of improved KPIs after a CI project
- Increase number of cross-functional city wide projects
- Ratio of engagement lead by Corporate Strategy team member to independent staff lead
- Effectiveness of meeting the service goals and organizations strategic objectives.

In addition, a maturity model is being researched and developed to assess the organization's current condition or baseline of CI maturity. Measuring CI maturity will help staff understand how sophisticated the knowledge and application of CI is at the city, and help staff set goals for advancement. Goals for increased maturity over time will be established at a regular cadence and will be measured and monitored by staff to ensure progress is made.

The following is the strategic timeline outline over the next 5 years, remembering the intention of the CI strategy and plan is to become a regular way of working across the entire organization.

5 YEAR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Year 1 (2022)
- Awareness & desire for corporation
- Launch Improvement Network
- Formalize project intake
- Launch training program
- Identify and develop maturity model – make initial assessment

Year 3 (2024)
- Embed project intake & feedback loop
- Widespread engagement and capability
- Normalize Improvement Network

Year 5 (2026)
- CI Specialist role becomes more strategic
- Ability to implement and sustain change

Year 2 (2023)
- Capability growing within departments
- Connecting CI to Enterprise Business Planning process
- Design feedback loop
- Cross functional project engagement and analysis

Year 4 (2025)
- Departments operate independently for yellow and green belt reviews
- Normalize the feedback loop
- Full engagement using system design & maturity model
- Initiate implementation of corporate improvement strategically

5 Year Strategy taken from Appendix A page 9

Financial Matters:

Financial considerations include staff time for participation in training and projects. This corporate approach to CI is intended to reduce the time spent on duplicating efforts on multiple improvement projects and take a more strategic and enterprise approach by coordinating and collaborating to solve the right problems to have the most impact.

Climate Implications

Climate impacts will be considered in two ways through the CI strategy and plan. Attention to climate and environmental impacts will be included throughout all phases of CI projects and additionally included in the delivery of the CI program (including training delivery and use of equipment and supplies).

Engagement Matters:

Engagement in the program and strategy details began with a presentation to the Strategy and Risk Team and continued from there, making connections throughout the organization by way of the Improvement Network, White and Yellow Belt training and

project engagements. The Streamline Development Application Project was the most significant engagement in 2022 offering opportunity to provide training and guidance on the use of many Lean Six Sigma tools. This project has served as model and example of the impact that can be realized by implementing the components of the CI approach outlined in the strategy.

Conclusion:

In summary, by endorsing and participating in the Corporate Continuous Improvement Strategy and training our behaviors, mindsets and leadership will demonstrate the fundamentals of continuous improvement; cultivating and supporting a culture of collaboration, trust, evidence-based analysis and root cause problem solving. Creating a movement.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Venimore	Jeanette Bax
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Appendices:

    A. CS- 02-23 Appendix A Corporate Continuous Improvement Strategy

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.