



SUBJECT: Facility operations update
TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture

Report Number: RCC-03-24

Wards Affected: all

Date to Committee: March 4, 2024

Date to Council: March 19, 2024

Recommendation:

Receive and file recreation, community and culture department report RCC-03-24 providing a facility operations update.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Background and Discussion:

Introduction

The Facility Operations (FO) section is a critical service operating within the Recreation, Community and Culture department (RCC) and a key contributor to enhancing the quality of life for everyone, every day. FO plays a crucial role in ensuring the safe operation and maintenance of all recreation facilities, as well as key corporate spaces including City Hall and the Halton Courthouse.

The section's mission and vision revolve around delivering exceptional services to provide clean, safe, and available facilities. The goal is to be innovative, collaborative, and act as valued partners committed to providing inclusive facilities that foster physical,

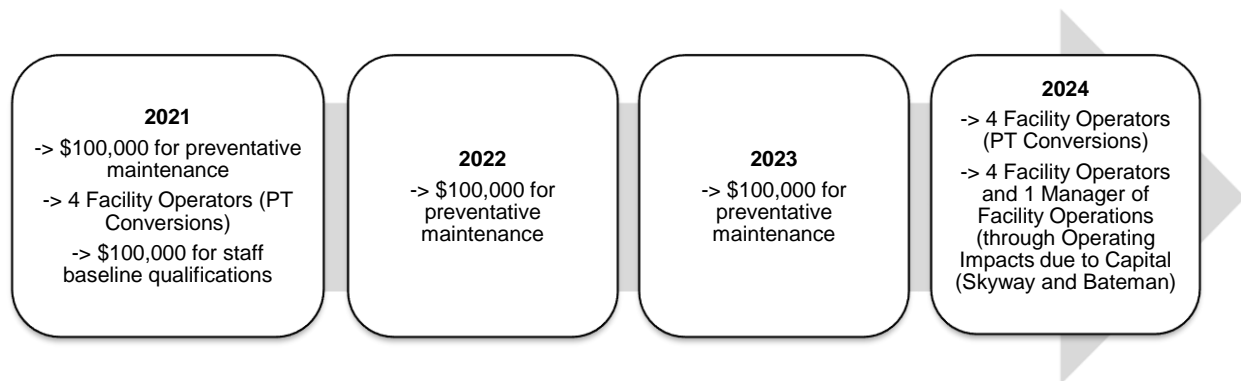
social, and emotional wellness for all individuals. These endeavors align perfectly with the values adopted in the [Framework for Recreation](#) which are:

- Everyone Has The Right To Play
- Individual Well-Being
- Sense Of Belonging

The FO section is comprised of a mix of 140 full-time and part-time staff, that provide comprehensive operations and maintenance services to keep facilities clean, safe, and available for use. FO interacts with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, members of Council, customers, residents, vendors, regulatory authorities, tenants, user groups, and contractors. As a result, we understand the significant risks associated with our work and have implemented robust risk management practices, policies, and procedures to mitigate those risks. These risks include operational risk, code and regulatory risk, financial risk, labor relations risk, and reputational risk given our direct contact with the public.

In 2019, the section underwent an external audit, and with the support of Council, FO has made significant service improvements. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress achieved during this period as well as outlining remaining gaps. In addition, the FO section has completed extensive benchmarking with respects to service standards and have some recommendations in the area of resources, training, and operating model.

The 2019 audit made a number of recommendations which were leveraged by the team and formulated the basis of the FO's workplan for subsequent years. In 2020, staff brought forward a report to Committee highlighting various risks and outlined three budgetary priorities: conversions of part-time to full-time staff, a phased-approach to address the \$700,000 gap in operating expenses, and a one-time investment to develop baseline qualifications for staff. As a result, the following investments were made:

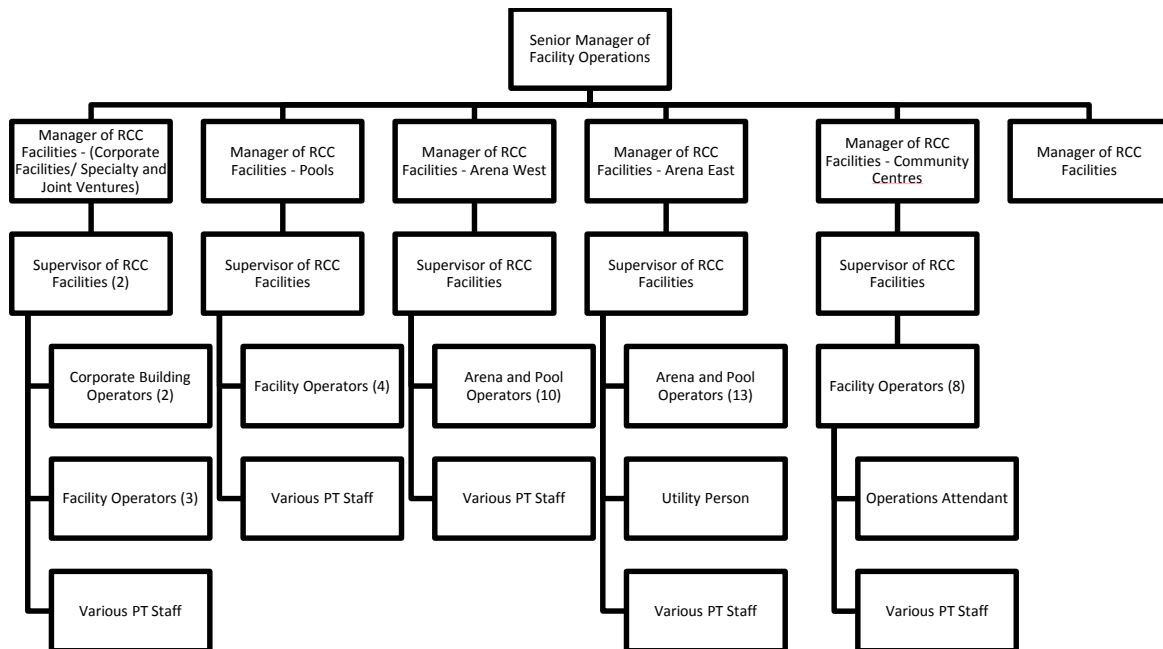


Facility Operations Staff Complement and Oversight

The FO section oversees a diverse range of facilities whose collective worth supersedes \$700 million dollars. The Operations Leadership Team (OLT) is responsible for the leadership, culture, and decision making of the section. OLT is comprised of 140 Full-Time and Part-Time staff including 6 Managers of Operations, 6 Supervisors of Operations, and a Senior Manager of Facility Operations. The 13 members of OLT are currently split between 5 different portfolios, which include: Corporate Buildings, Specialty Facilities, Arenas, Pools, and Community Centers. OLT strives to achieve operational excellence through mitigating risk, human resources management, business continuity, as well as setting the strategic direction for FO while ensuring alignment with departmental and corporate priorities. Moreover, the team is responsible for administrating both theoretical and practical training for the FO section as well as other sections within RCC.

In addition, to OLT, Facility Operators play a pivotal role within the FO section and corporation, serving as essential staff entrusted with ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals who enter our facilities. As subject matter experts, they possess a wealth of knowledge and expertise in maintaining a secure environment, delivering high quality products, and ensuring adherence to regulatory requirements. Moreover, they serve as first aid providers, provide task direction to part-time staff, are equipped to handle emergencies, and act as the frontline ambassadors of our organization, delivering an exceptional customer experience to millions of individuals each year.

Below is the current organizational chart for FO which provides a visual overview of the section and highlights the various staff required to safely maintain recreational facilities:



Strategy/process/risk

Approach

Following the 2019 audit, our Facility Operations team developed a framework to align with departmental and corporate goals while simultaneously improving operations and reducing risk. The four pillars of the framework are:

1. Customer Experience,
2. Health, Safety, and Risk,
3. Continuous Improvement and Business Processes, and
4. Workplace Culture.

Each pillar is essential and interconnected, and the framework relies on all of them for success. Our team has made significant progress in each area, and we continue to be a valued partner in the corporation and the community. Below is a high-level overview of the framework:

The below chart outlines specific strategic objectives under each pillar:

Continuous Improvement & Business Processes	Workplace Culture	Health, Safety & Risk	Customer Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance preventative maintenance program. • Leverage technology to enhance and streamline operations. • Leverage industry best practices. • Apply an environmental and energy efficiency lens to all operational decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a clear mission and vision. • Empower, motivate, and inspire staff. • Encourage staff recognition. • Ensure staff are valued and see their role in the corporate vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change operating model. • Develop standard operating and safe job procedures. • Conduct internal audits and address any findings. • Develop staff baseline qualifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the customers' wants and needs. • Focus on collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. • Create a more inviting and welcoming experience. • Encourage feedback to influence decisions.

Current State

Since RCC-03-20, the FO section has made significant strides in enhancing operations, reducing risk, and serving our community. We are proud to note that the team played an integral role in supporting both internal staff and the wider community during the pandemic. Despite numerous challenges, the section remained on-site throughout the pandemic and had to pivot regularly to adapt to changing circumstances and regulations. In addition to serving as a vital outlet for the community during this challenging period, we had the privilege of supporting the Halton Region with several of their pandemic related initiatives.

The items below illustrate some of the initiatives undertaken during this period:

- Developed a clear mission and vision.
- Developed and implemented over 100 safe job and standard operating procedures.
- Streamlined various processes.
- Installed cutting-edge safety technologies connected to staff smartphones.
- Implemented baseline qualifications and certifications for frontline staff (see Appendix A).
- Prioritized creating and fostering a positive, safe environment for both staff and the public.

Next Steps

Although FO has made significant strides, it is important to acknowledge the remaining constraints that require attention.

The FO section has undertaken a comprehensive review of industry trends, best practices, and benchmarking, aiming to gain deeper insights and focus on enhancing operations. Through this, several key trends and takeaways have emerged:

- There are industry best practices for number of full-time operators per square foot,
- There are limits to size and span of control per number of supervisory staff to ensure operational success,
- Municipalities with an even split of frontline full-time staff to part-time staff can do more and have less service disruptions and staff turnover. It is interesting to note that one neighboring municipality with the same amount of square footage have twice the number of full-time staff when compared to RCC's FO staffing model, and

- Private and public organizations are understaffed and are advocating for additional full-time, qualified, and certified management and frontline staff to mitigate risk, meet their customers' needs, provide quality services, and ensure assets are well maintained.

Based on the research above (comparing municipalities of similar size and facility inventory); it would suggest a complement of 50 full-time operators (vs. current complement of 40). Further review and analysis are required to understand how this might be achieved through a mixture of part-time to full-time conversions and new staff complement. The department intends to work through the Strategy and Risk Team (SRT) as part of the budget process to clearly outline resource gaps.

The current model has resulted in operational inefficiencies, staff burnout, and service disruptions (which have reduced significantly – see Appendix B). In addition, the OLT spends more than 75% of their time on staff schedules, training new hires, and assuming frontline responsibilities to ensure tasks are completed; this is valuable time taken away from strategic tasks. Lastly, the current model relies heavily on part-time staff which leads to high turnover rates, and increased risk due to lack of experienced staff.

Additional resources would help reduce risk but also ensure the presence of experienced and highly qualified staff that take ownership of the facilities. The approach offers several benefits, including but not limited to, the ability to:

- Improve cleaning protocols and standards,
- Prioritize customer experience,
- Increase services standards,
- Reduce service interruptions,
- Handle maintenance tasks internally instead of relying on external contractor,
- Enhance staff retention and mitigate resources loss resulting from high turnover rates, and
- Allow management to focus on strategic initiatives rather than getting involved in shift scheduling and backfilling responsibilities.

Additionally, it is essential to prioritize adequate operating expense budgets to maintain a basic level of operation without compromise. It is worth highlighting that our section is currently in year 4 of a 7-year phased plan to address the funding gap in facility maintenance. The approved funding for 2024 was redirected to staff conversions, as this was treated as a higher priority to stabilize operations. The additional 3-years have been accounted for in the multi-year budget simulation previously shared with Council (see Appendix C).

Considering recent advancements in optimizing the management of our Recreation Facilities, it has come to our attention that certain corporate facilities are presently understaffed, warranting a comprehensive evaluation from both a risk and maintenance standpoint. While commendable strides have been made within the recreational sector, it is imperative that we extend our focus to other crucial areas within our organization.

Specifically, facilities such as fire stations and our Transit Headquarters have been identified as requiring immediate attention. The ongoing discussions among our staff are centered on formulating and implementing the most effective strategies to bridge the existing gaps in these essential facilities. It is paramount that we approach this matter with a proactive mindset, acknowledging the significance of maintaining optimal operational standards across all corporate entities.

The support that has been received thus far has been much appreciated and the FO is looking forward to continuing to bridge these gaps in the next few years. These improvements will enhance operations and position the section and department well to intake Burlington's projected growth.

Financial Matters:

In addition to the financial investments made thus far to enhance the service, various no/low-cost continuous improvement initiatives have been implemented. Specially, with respects to the 2019 audit recommendations; all the recommendations have been implemented. There continues to be areas of development for the FO section and the team is committed to work more efficiently to re-align resources to meet operational needs and focus on the key priorities which will generate the highest ROI.

There are several financial investments mentioned in this report including additional investments to address preventative maintenance and staff resources. The staff resources will be reviewed carefully by the team and presented to SRT for consideration in upcoming budget submissions.

The 2023 operating expense budget for Facility Operations is close to \$16 million and the section directly contributes to the collective \$10 million revenue achieved by the department mostly through program and rental revenues.

Climate Implications:

Operation of facilities is a significant contributor to our corporate GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions. While not the focus of this report, recommendations in the report in

increasing preventative maintenance budgets and staffing policies aimed at attracting and retaining a stable and well-trained group of facility operators will help reduce both GHG emissions as well as risks outlined in this report. Well maintained and operated facilities are more efficient, require less energy to operate and produce lower GHG emissions. They also provide a better experience to our customers. City facilities are also an important component of preparing climate resiliency where they can provide necessary refuge during severe weather events.

Engagement Matters:

Several departments contributed to the development of this report, including but not limited to Finance, Legal, and Facilities and Buildings. Furthermore, Facility Operations consulted with various Facilities Departments in neighboring municipalities, as well as engaged with industry stakeholders to collaborate on the creation of this report.

Conclusion:

The Facility Operations section in the Recreation, Community and Culture department is a proud and dedicated group of employees ensuring facility needs are well-managed and safe for staff and the public to use and enjoy. The current team in place (both management and frontline) have been functioning very well and have a clear and established path to ensure ongoing success. With continued investment in this area while prioritizing the customer's experience, safety, and sustainability, the Facility Operations section will be well-equipped to support the community and contribute to Council's vision.

Respectfully submitted,

Victor Ljuljdjuraj

Senior Manager of Facility Operations

Appendices:

- A. Staff Certifications
- B. Service Disruptions
- C. Maintenance Costs

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.