

Continuous Improvement Supporting New Housing and Economic Development

Pipeline to Permit Committee

July 10, 2025

P2P, July 10, 2025
Staff presentation (PP-09-25)



Continuous Improvement Supporting New Housing and Economic Development



Ongoing Improvements to Support Housing Approvals and Economic Development

- Building, Renovating & Licensing Counter
- [New Zoning By-law Project](#)
- Archistar - Artificial Intelligence Assistance
- Community Planning Permit System for Major Transit Station Areas
- Pre Building Permit Approvals and Pool Permit Process streamlining
- Committee of Adjustment Process Enhancements



Ongoing Improvements to Support Housing Approvals and Economic Development

- Accessory Residential Unit Team
- Redlining of Plans and Staff Discretion
- Increased Use of Delegated Authority
- Zoning Experiments
- Data Integrity Initiatives
- Pre-Consultation Process Improvements

Streamlined Development Application Project



Streamlined Development Application Project

Goal Statement

- **Enhance the entire application process** to ensure more efficient and customer-centric service delivery.
- **Streamline interactions and approvals** across the entire planning and building processes.
- **Increase the speed of application review** while reducing failure demand, making the experience smoother and easier for the customer.



Quality has surfaced as a goal, in the form of collaboration between staff and the applicant to find the "Path to Success"

Key Project Activities

Details

- **Data Collection:** Before and after data to demonstrate the impact of change/improvement.
- **Voice of the Customer Interviews:** Conduct interviews with internal staff and customers to gather direct feedback on their experiences, expectations, and pain points.
- **Process Mapping Workshops:** Value Stream and Customer Journey maps.
- **Identification of Strategic Areas for Improvement:** Getting the most out of the solutions we implement.
- Cause & Effect analysis
- **Solution Generation and Experimentation:** Design and test solutions. Make iterative improvement until full implementation of the future state.
 - Test solutions and future state process design with customers to ensure “we got it right” (example: Pre-consultation feedback sessions).
 - Iterative improvement over time adds value faster and controls the rate of change.



Voice of Customer & Staff Approach

We conducted research into the OPA/ZBA and Building Permit processes:

21 Business Customers

Mix of Consultants, Development Associates & Managers, Project Managers, Owners

18 CoB Staff

Representation from Building, Planning, Engineering, RPF, Transportation, CX



Although staff and customers share a mission of community building, the values and motivations of staff and customers differ and can be at odds.

Staff are using the insights below to design processes that serve the needs of both Customers and the business.

Public Interest

Policy Interpretation & Compliance

Timely approvals & Resource
management

Stakeholder Management &
Coordination

Staff

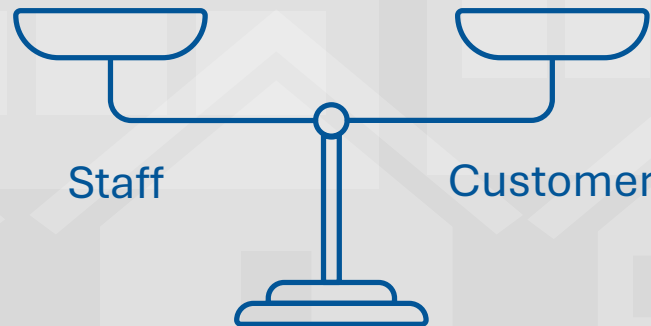
Project Viability & Profitability

Compliance to Achieve Project
Goals

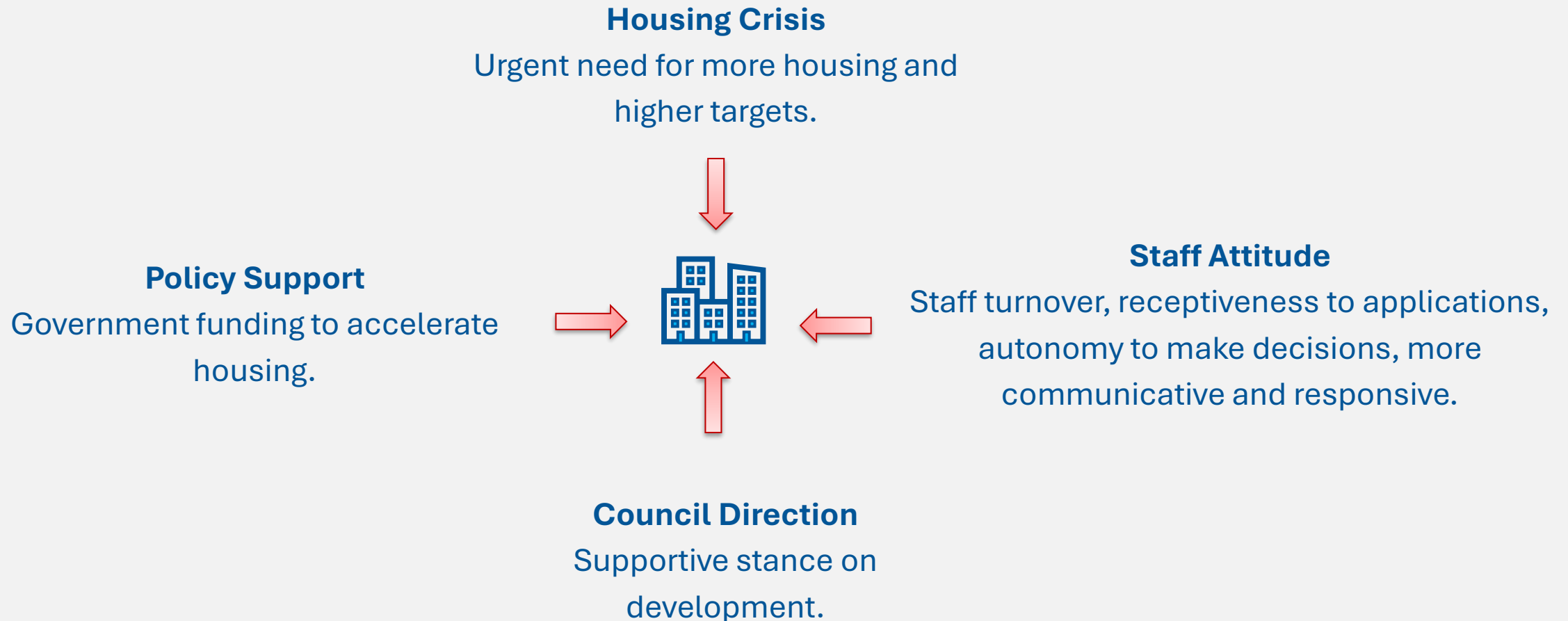
Speed to Market & Cost Management

Customer Service & Relationship
Building

Customer



When asked about recent experiences in the last year, customers said they've observed a noticeable *positive* shift.



PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPING IN BURLINGTON (Planning and Building)

“

After meeting and working with staff, things have been much, much better than what people were telling me about working with the city.

– Customer

“

It has been getting better, and staff have been a lot more responsive. And staff have been sort of championing that.

– Customer

“

Staff have also been very open to meet with me, my client, my consultant team, to work through issues, knowing that there is a tight timeline on these applications going to council.

– Customer

“

Staff helped me exponentially when she didn't have to do that. And it was so appreciated because I wouldn't have been able to get to the end if she wasn't there working with me and helping to pull those other pieces together. I was so grateful for her.

– Customer

“

I was thinking to myself, Burlington was one of the worst municipalities to work in, but now they've completely done a 180. So, they've, gotten much better.

– Customer

“

My involvement with staff in the city has been really, really great.

– Customer

KEY THEMES FOR IMPROVEMENT



Approach for More Seamless Communication

Tools that can facilitate simple communications (like file updates) to a broader stakeholder group, open capacity for staff to manage more complex issues that require collaboration, focusing their efforts on adding value to the customer. Self serve tools give the customer the opportunity to get file updates without having to make the effort to call in.



Better Integration Among Review Teams

Customers see their application as a single journey, while staff must navigate hand offs between subject matter areas. Improving process and using new tools to better enable seamless team collaboration and communication



Opportunities for Automation

Staff currently juggle multiple systems (e.g. AMANDA, shared drives, email), making reviewing applications time-consuming. Repetitive manual tasks take time away from staff's technical expertise.



Addressing Root Cause Pain Points to Reduce the Need for File Escalations

Escalations can disrupt workflows and require the customer's time. Resolving service issues at their root will prevent the need for issues escalations improving the customer experience and saving staff time.



Simplify Standards

Customers may not fully understand requirements or disagree with policy (over-regulation) leading to multiple rounds of resubmissions and additional communication.

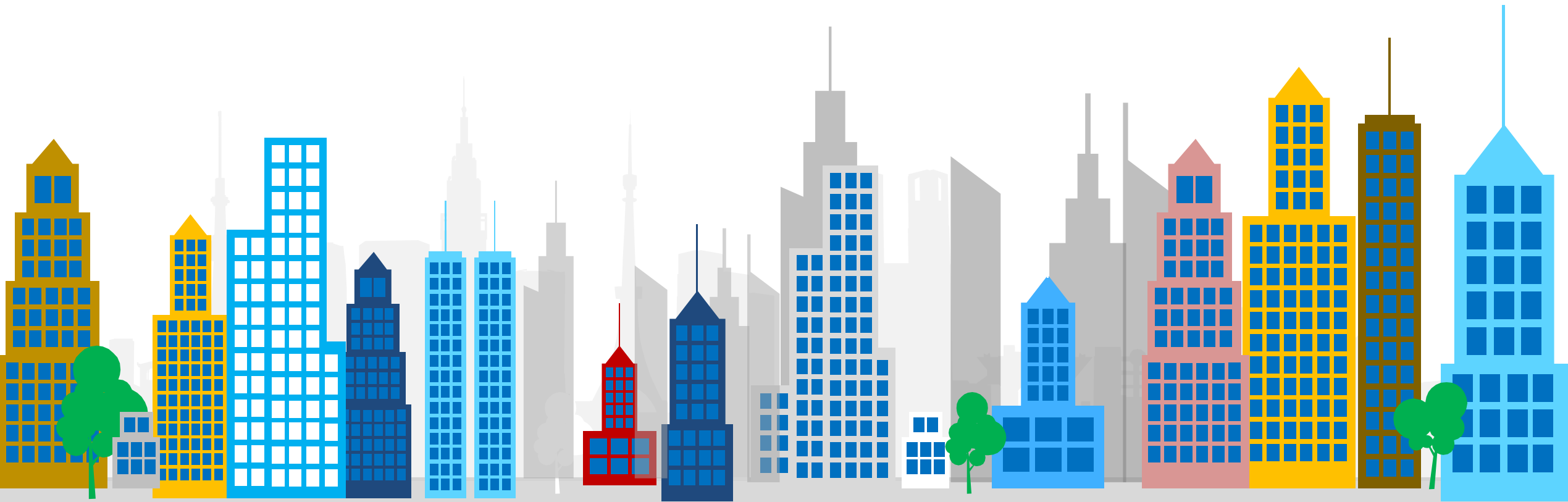
It is important to streamline & right-size requirements and communicate standards clearly & concisely to customers.



Internal Capacity & Resource Management

Departments face challenges related to internal capacity, turnover, and competing projects and priorities make it difficult to meet deadlines.





Process Improvement Approach

Using Lean Six Sigma Methodology



Taking a Lean Six Sigma Approach to Improvement

What is Lean Six Sigma?



Project Lifecycle



PDCA

Plan – what are you doing?
Do – Do what you said you would
Check – Did you do it right?
Act – Act on anything that went wrong

Define

Problem formation, project scoping

Measure

Baseline data collection, current state,
identify pain points or challenges and
their origin.

Analyze

Root cause analysis.
Further data collection

Control

To remain constant to a purpose.
Maintain your change.

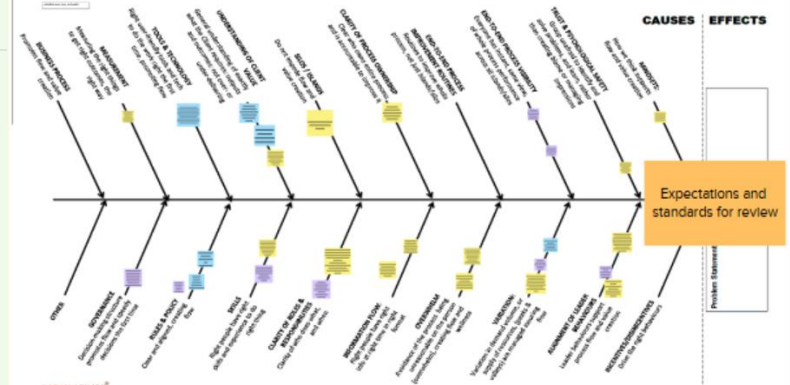
Improve

Generate solutions. Future state process map.
Implementation plan. Change management

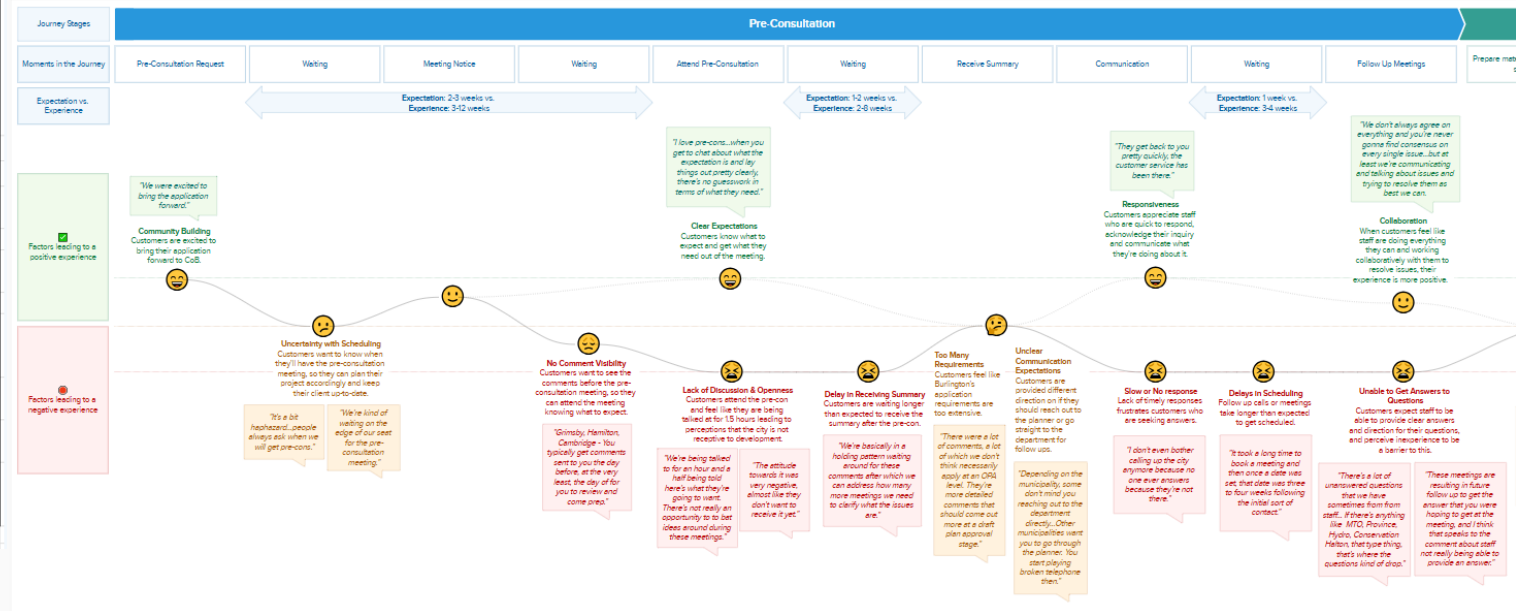


Strategic Improvement – Improving for Impact

Step no. from VSM	Phase	Role	Process Step, title of person performing the step	Processing Time (PT) hours	Elapsed Time (ET) hours	Complete & Accurate %	Failure Demand
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Process Output	Errors in re-submission	Manual data entry	How to make a payment	Tracking Payments	Process Workflow/ Visibility - for both staff and customers	Expectations/ Standards for Review	Development charges process	No centralized document management	To add a column, select the last 'Process Output' column, right-click and select insert. To add a row, copy and paste from any Process Step / Input row.
Importance to Customer	9	3	9	3	9	9	3	9	
Process Step / Input	Correlation Scores								Total
Errors in re-submission		9			9	9			189
Manual data entry	3		9	9	9	9	3		306
How to make a payment		9		9	9		3		144
Tracking Payments		3			9	3	3		126
Process Workflow/ Visibility - for both staff and customers	3	9	9	9		9			243
Expectations/ Standards for Review	9								162
Development charges process		9	9	9	9	3			243
No centralized document management	9	9			9	9	9		297
	24	48	27	36	63	42	18	0	





Areas for Improvement



EXAMPLES OF IMPROVEMENT



Pre-consultation

**Process Visibility & Improved
Process Responsiveness**



Standardization

Reducing Failure Demand



Clear & Simple

**Automation of Process &
Administrative Tasks**



Reduction in Variability

Elimination of Silos



1. Key Accomplishments:

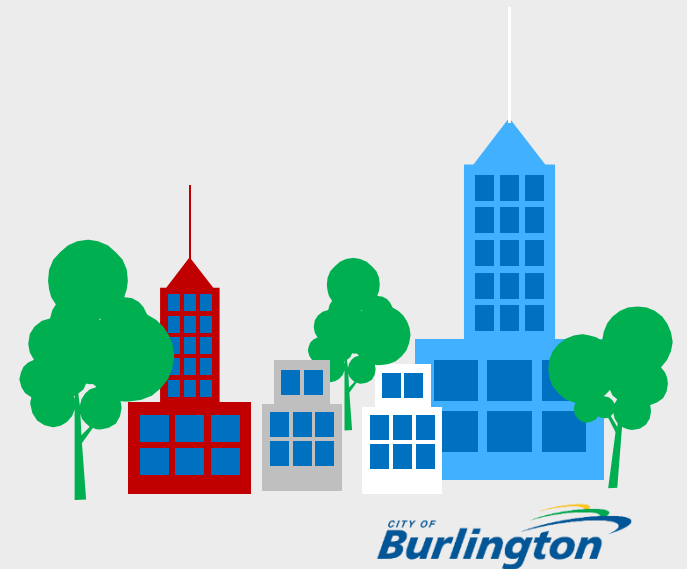
- a) Fulsome and detailed assessment of the customer experience with insight for improvement
- b) Fulsome and detailed analysis of the current state & it's performance
- c) Future state process design (incorporating improvement) completed for OPA/ZBA & Building Permit
- d) Ongoing iterative improvements with more to come

2. Upcoming Work:

- a) Site Plan Application process analysis and improvement
- b) Future state technology design and implementation

What Does it Mean to Achieve the Future State Design?

An improved customer experience will better enable the planning, design and construction of housing units on an accelerated timeline with more reliable outcomes



A stylized graphic of a city skyline on the left side of the slide. It features several white buildings of varying heights and widths, each with a grid of blue squares representing windows. The buildings are set against a solid blue background. Some buildings have thin white vertical lines on top, resembling antennas or spires. The overall style is minimalist and modern.

Questions?