



Current State Analysis

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

Efficiency and Business Transformation Study



Contents

1.0	Executive Summary	1
2.0	Background and Purpose	3
3.0	Methodology	4
4.0	Key Findings and Themes	6
4.1.	Key Findings	6
4.1.1.	<i>Awareness</i>	6
4.1.2.	<i>Control & Coordination</i>	6
4.1.3.	<i>IT and AI Platform</i>	7
4.1.4.	<i>Culture</i>	8
4.1.5.	<i>Talent</i>	8
4.1.6.	<i>Ongoing Operations</i>	8
4.2.	Survey	8
4.2.1.	<i>Largest Areas of Concern</i>	8
4.2.2.	<i>Tenure</i>	9
4.2.3.	<i>Survey Details</i>	11
4.2.4.	<i>Open-Ended Questions</i>	14
4.3.	Structured Interviews	18
4.3.1.	<i>Organizational Structure and Staffing</i>	18
4.3.2.	<i>Processes and Workflows</i>	20
4.3.3.	<i>Efficiency and Performance</i>	21
4.3.4.	<i>Questions on Cost Management and Resource Allocation</i>	22
4.3.5.	<i>Questions on Technology Utilization</i>	23
4.3.6.	<i>Employee Perceptions and Culture</i>	25
4.3.7.	<i>Resident/Customer Interaction and Service Delivery</i>	27
4.3.8.	<i>Forward Looking Questions</i>	28
5.0	Concluding Remarks and Next Steps	30
5.1.	Next Steps	30
	Appendix	32

1.0 Executive Summary

Blackberg Group conducted a Current State Analysis for the City of St. Helena (City) to evaluate its operational structure, processes, and alignment with resident-focused goals. The primary objective is to assess business processes, identify inefficiencies, and recommend transformation strategies, with the goal of realigning services, technology, and structure to enhance resident access and efficiency. This analysis, the first step in the Efficiency and Business Transformation Study, utilized Blackberg's City Fitness Framework (CFF) (See Figure 2), focusing on Structure while considering Talent, Culture, and Ongoing Operations as interrelated elements. For clarity, our study focuses on identifying weaknesses and threats to the City's efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, you will find a significant focus on various issues; however, this should not be misconstrued as the City lacks strengths and opportunities. The City has **many strengths and opportunities** that you will find discussed in section 4.3 of this deliverable.

The methodology comprised four steps: Document Review, Survey, Structured Interviews, and Analysis. In Step 1, Blackberg reviewed key documents, including the 5-year Capital Improvement Program, Draft Budget 26-27 (232 pages), Fiscal Operating Budgets for 2023-24 and 2024-25, Employee and Resident Surveys, and organizational charts, revealing structural deficits and budget complexity for a town of ~5,800 residents. Step 2 involved a 23-question anonymous survey via Microsoft Forms, open for 3.5 weeks, with 53 responses (~59% of ~90 employees). It assessed resident satisfaction, process challenges, resource access, and bottlenecks, with Police and Public Works noting equipment and delay issues.

Step 3 included 36 structured interviews (45-75 minutes each) via Microsoft Teams, covering the City Departments and various Divisions within those Departments. The structured interviews explored organizational structure, processes, efficiency, technology, culture, resident interactions, and forward-looking perspectives. Step 4 synthesized findings, identifying themes under "Awareness" (immature processes, CMMI Level 1, excessive budgeting), Control & Coordination (low maturity, 57% process challenges), Talent (30% staffing shortages), and Culture (39% "Sometimes supported" leadership). We highlight the key findings of both the survey and structured interviews below.

Key Findings

The City is moving in a positive direction. We saw evidence of this in various Departments and levels of employment (Executive, Mid-level, and staff). City employees generally have a positive culture in which they are focused on improving the City and are actively seeking innovations to improve efficiency and effectiveness. However, the current state also includes many weaknesses and threats:

- 1) There have been significant efforts made in the past two years to improve the overall management of the City. Most City employees recognize this and find it a source of encouragement to continue improvements. However, even though there have been improvements, it is clear that there is room for many more.
- 2) An overall lack of situational awareness within the City exists. This is driven by a lack of quantitative information flowing upward through management and executive leadership. This is primarily driven by immature processes.
- 3) A low level of organizational maturity evidenced by ad hoc and undocumented processes. Based on the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI), we rate the City's processes as a 1 out of 5 (lowest level of maturity). In many parts of the City, there exists detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs); however, there is a severe lack of documentation of high-level process flows and quantitative data about performance.
- 4) No governance model for policies, processes, and standard operating procedures. This includes the lack of a central repository for these documents and a lack of methodology for indexing.
- 5) No evidence of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) crafted to track overall processes.
- 6) Inadequate asset management systems (this is potentially severe but needs further investigation). We see the inadequacy primarily at an executive level. There are tools to track assets at Department levels (some robust, some excel spreadsheets); however, centralized asset management appears to be lacking. This is an example of our aforementioned concern about "situational awareness".
- 7) The City has been exploring AI for at least a year. While the City has not implemented AI, it has considered its use in several areas. However, we find no evidence of purposeful objectives to use AI or prepare for future AI use. The low maturity level of processes will make it much more challenging to adopt AI in the future.
- 8) Many positive responses and evidence of the implementation of IT Services. The purchase of these IT Services pair with purposeful efforts to automate tasks, improve tracking, digitize storage, and improve transparency. Our primary concerns in this area are potential integration issues and potentially pushing bottlenecks further down the process

flow, reducing the benefits of IT Services on total throughput time. At this time, we do not know if any integration issues or bottlenecks exist from IT implementation; however, we plan to investigate this concern in the near future.

- 9) Employees report feeling comfortable providing recommendations for improvement to their supervisors and identified weekly meetings as venues where they can share their ideas. However, this is not consistent across all Departments.
- 10) Low pay and high work volume are generating negativity in the culture with uncertainty about position stability and future advancement.
- 11) Employees would like more opportunities for training that help them to advance in their career or general management knowledge.
- 12) Employees say that there is understaffing. This appears to be particularly acute within Administrative Services.
- 13) City employees define success as: “there are no complaints or problems”. This demonstrates that ongoing operations are highly reactionary about concepts of quality.

2.0 Background and Purpose

Blackberg conducted this study to develop an initial “Current State Analysis” of the City of St. Helena (City). Blackberg’s engagement with the City has a primary objective and primary goal:

- **Objective** - assess current business processes, identify inefficiencies, and recommend strategies for improvement and transformation.
- **Goal** - align City services, technology, and organizational structure in a way that makes it easier and more efficient for residents to access services and conduct business with the City.

The Current State Analysis is the primary deliverable for “Step 1” that is shown in Figure 1. The purpose is to provide a clear, data-informed picture of the current state of the City’s operations. This includes Assessing business functions through interviews, workflow review, observations, operating budgets and expenditures, review the City’s administrative process and procedures, and evaluate the organization/employees’ perception and attitude toward performance and workplace culture.

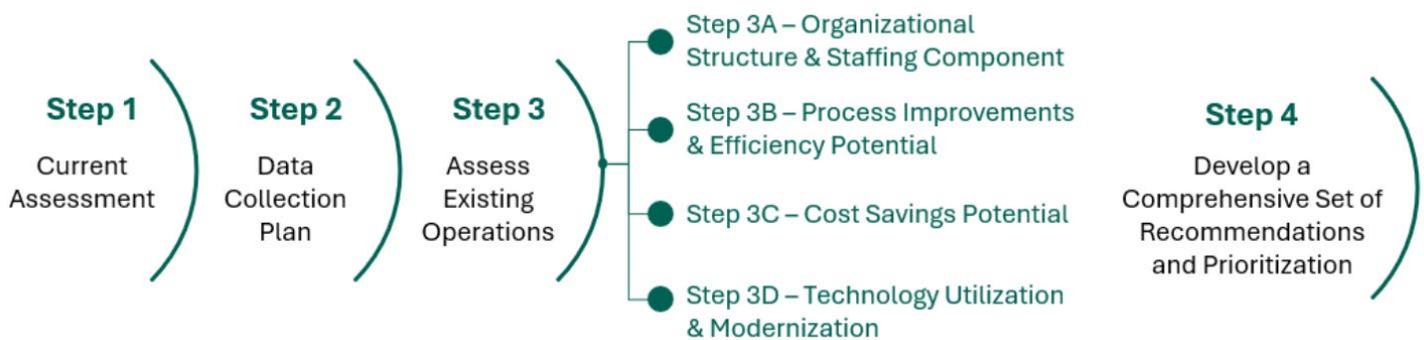


Figure 1 - Study Steps: Blackberg moves through four major steps in conducting the efficiency and business transformation study.

3.0 Methodology

Blackberg used the City Fitness Framework (CFF) (See Figure 2) to provide structure and context for the study. The primary focus of the overall study is the “Structure” element within the CFF; however, it is important to understand how other elements interact and effect the Structure (i.e. Talent, Culture, and Ongoing Operations). Specifically, one can study each element within the CFF in relative isolation, but the reality of any organization is that each element is interacting with all other elements as a complex adaptive system. Therefore, it is important to understand the major interactions.

In developing the Current State Analysis, Blackberg focused on the Structure element within the CFF, but we also assessed the City organization broadly with some focus on Talent, Culture, and Ongoing Operations (See Figure 2 red boxes). Our methodology covered 4 steps: Document Review, Survey, Structured Interviews, and Analysis.

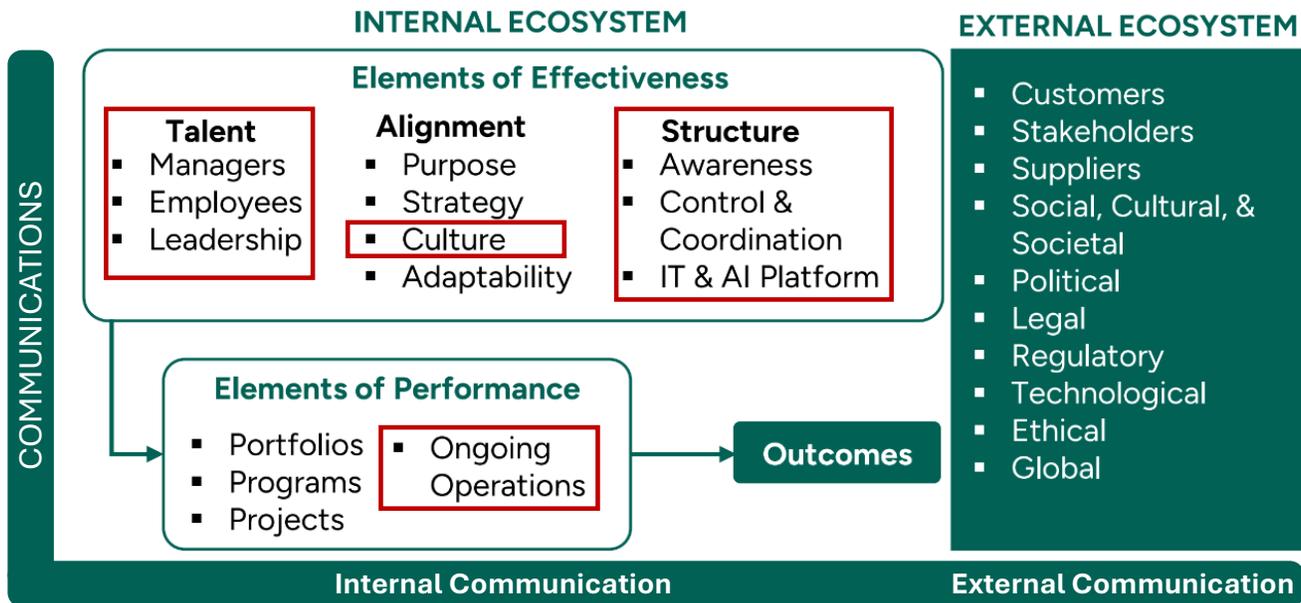


Figure 2 – Blackberg City Fitness Framework: In conducting efficiency and business transformation studies, Team Blackberg examines all elements that impact a City’s effectiveness and performance.

Step 1 – Document Review: Blackberg conducted an initial review of the following documents:

- 5-year capital improvement program
- Draft Budget 26-27
- 23/24 & 24/25 Fiscal Operating Budget
- 2025 Employee Survey Results
- COSH Contact List
- City-Wide Org Chart
- Employee Survey 2025
- Position Control
- St. Helena 2025 Resident Satisfaction Survey Staff Report- Provide an Updated Analysis of the City’s Revenues and Expenditures to Determine the Extent of the Structural Deficit.
- Town Survey and City Bond (2023)

Step 2 – Survey: Blackberg developed a survey that included a combination of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. The survey included 4 sections which we show in the table below:

Section 1: Resident Focused Questions	These questions assess employee perceptions of resident satisfaction, issues, and challenges.
Section 2: Performance (Process Efficiency, Resources, Service Delivery)	These questions assess perceptions of operational effectiveness, resource availability, and alignment with resident-focused outcomes.
Section 3: Workplace Culture	These questions evaluate efficiency enablers in the culture, like innovation and leadership support for processes.

**Section 4: Open-Ended
Feedback (Broader Insights)**

These questions capture qualitative insights to inform gap analysis and recommendations, aligning with resident-focused goals and budget constraints.

The survey included a total of 23 questions and an introduction where respondents could identify the Department in which they work, years employed, and full-time versus part-time. Blackberg published the survey with Microsoft Forms in the Blackberg Microsoft 365 account. We published the survey as an anonymous response. City employees had approximately 3.5 weeks to respond to the survey. A total of 53 City employees responded to the survey.

Step 3 – Structured Interviews: Blackberg conducted “structured interviews” with City employees. The structured interview is a standardized set of 32 questions. All questions were open-ended question types. The structured interview included 8 major sections as shown in the table below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Organizational Structure and Staffing | 5) Technology Utilization |
| 2) Processes and Workflows: | 6) Employee Perceptions and Culture |
| 3) Efficiency and Performance: | 7) Resident/Customer Interaction and Service Delivery |
| 4) Cost Management and Resource Allocation: | 8) Forward-Looking Questions |

A member of the Blackberg team met with the interviewee on Microsoft Team. Each interview was a private, individual interview. The length of the interview varied by individual and typically ranged from 45-75 minutes. After the interviewee responded to the initial standard interview question, the interviewer had the option to move to the next question; ask clarifying questions; or probe responses for additional information. The Blackberg team interviewed a total of 36 City employees.

Step 4 – Analysis: Blackberg reviewed the results of the Survey and Structured Interviews to identify themes, patterns, and insights. This included the identification of patterns based on the Department in which the interviewee is assigned. We also considered information obtained from the Step 1-Document Review.

4.0 Key Findings and Themes

For the current state analysis, Blackberg examined elements of talent, culture, structure, and ongoing operations (outlined in red in Figure 2). The focus of this study is structure; however, it is critical that we understand how other aspects of the organization are affecting structure. Further, in the future, we will examine public interactions with the City’s structure. We limited the current state analysis to the “internal ecosystem”, but we did ask City employees about their experience with residents. This section includes Key Findings, Survey, and Structured Interview findings and themes.

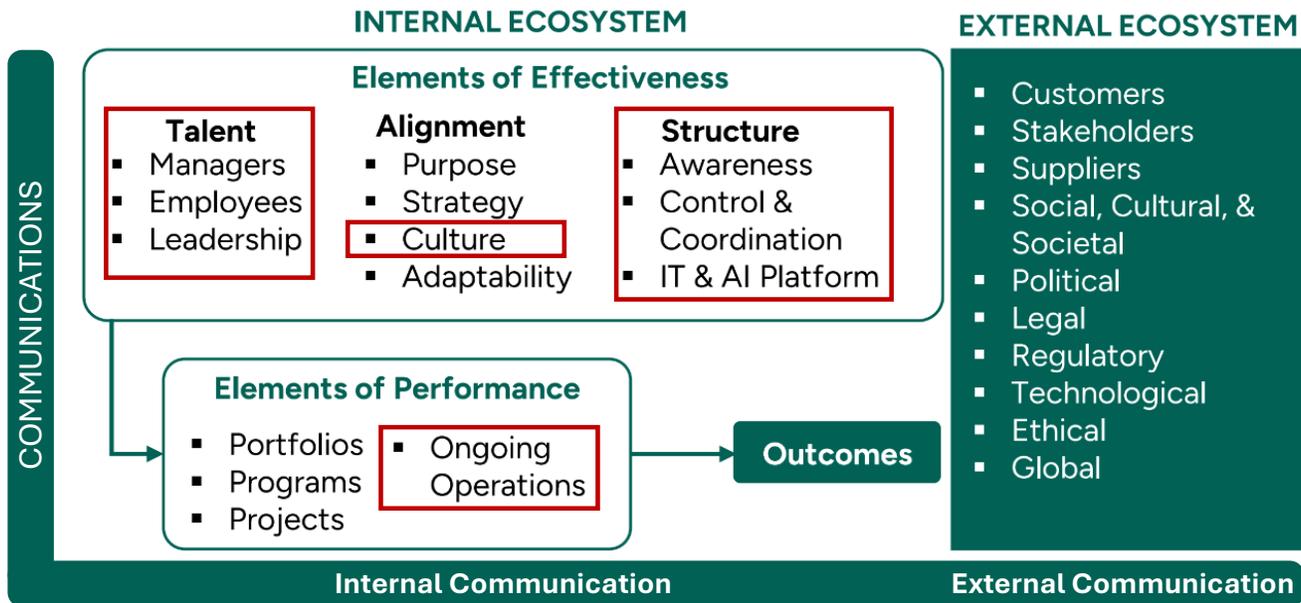


Figure 3 – Internal Ecosystem: Our findings centered on the Internal Ecosystem with a focus on Structure; however, in the future, we will examine elements of communication and the external ecosystem in further depth.

4.1. Key Findings

4.1.1. Awareness

Key Finding A – Situational Awareness: Based on the lack of business process maturity and management control systems (e.g. asset management), there is an overall lack of situational awareness within the City. It appears that the City attempted to fill these gaps with extensive budgeting documentation; however, this needs to be further evaluated for accuracy. We also saw situational awareness issues secondary to the lack of a strategic plan as a communication tool. Although outside the scope of internal structure, a strategic plan could also be used for external communication with residents.

4.1.2. Control & Coordination

Key Finding B – Organizational Maturity: We use the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) to define the process levels within the City. This model will also help the City in planning for future process improvements. Based on our structured interviews and surveys, the City primarily has a process maturity level of 1 out of 5. There are some indications of level 2 maturity; however, they seem mostly anchored to the adoption of IT systems that have prebuilt processes. They are not planned or documented. Our survey data shows: 26 respondents (57%) note "Moderately" challenging processes, and 20 (43%) encounter bottlenecks "Often," highest in Public Works (6/10) and Administrative Services (4/6). Only 7 (15%) report "Rarely." They also noted a significant impact of non-value added activities: "Sometimes" (18, 39%), "Often" (14, 30%), "Rarely" (10, 22%), "Minimal/No impact" (4, 9%). It is significant in Administrative Services (manual tasks) and minimal in Community Development. Blackberg will investigate processes in further depth in future months of the study.



Figure 4 – Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI): We use CMMI to assign a process maturity score to the City. CMMI has 5 levels of maturity with 5 being “most mature”.

Key Finding C – Policy and Process Governance: We found no indication that there is a governance model for policies, processes, and standard operating procedures. This includes the lack of a central repository for these documents and a lack of methodology for indexing. There are indications that this exists to a small degree within some City Divisions. Nevertheless, a significant portion of organizational knowledge remains undocumented, residing solely within the tacit expertise of individual City employees, posing risks to continuity and scalability. This is particularly troubling when coupled with the issue of high employee turnover within the City.

Key Finding D – Key Performance Indicators (KPI): There is some indication of use of KPIs from the survey data; however, this seems mostly linked to ad hoc KPIs created at weekly or monthly meetings for limited tasks or projects. We do not find evidence of KPIs crafted to track overall processes. This matches the organizational process maturity findings. We received input from 9 individuals that described KPI success as “completing lists of work, responding to all emails before the end of the day, or there are no complaints”. These may be loosely defined as KPIs that one would expect with immature processes (e.g. an employee has created a process that is undocumented and creates a KPI to support it—“no emails unanswered in my inbox”).

Key Finding E – Asset Management: Asset management appears inadequate. This is a preliminary finding that we plan to investigate in more detail. However, we are seeing substantial indications of asset management problems based on employee concerns of outdated equipment. This ties to the City’s issues related to water infrastructure updates and replacements. Secondly, the lack of asset management will have detrimental effects on budgeting. Secondary to this issue, we did not find evidence of the use of “sinking funds”.

4.1.3. IT and AI Platform

Key Finding F – Artificial Intelligence (AI): Although we heard from many individuals that they want AI solutions, we did not find evidence of purposeful goals or objectives to use AI or prepare for future AI use. The low maturity level of processes will make it much more challenging to adopt AI in the future.

Key Finding G – IT Services: We heard many positive responses and evidence of the implementation of IT Services. The purchase of these IT Services pair with purposeful efforts to automate tasks, improve tracking, digitize storage, and improve transparency. Our primary concerns in this area are potential integration issues and simply pushing bottlenecks further down the process chain—reducing the benefits of IT Services on total throughput time.

4.1.4. Culture

Key Finding H – Employee Perceptions: Many employees report an overall positive internal culture in terms of people. They see the culture as collaborative and supportive. There appears to be a positive view of leadership overall, but there is also a desire to see more communications and interactions with leadership. However, many also site low pay and high work volume as generating negativity in the culture with uncertainty about position stability and future advancement. This is exacerbated by negative external commentary (e.g. Nextdoor application) that leaves City employees feeling underappreciated and attacked.

Key Finding I – Innovation: Many employees report feeling comfortable providing recommendations for improvement to their supervisors and identified weekly meetings as venues where they can share their ideas. The survey found a moderate degree of “Culture Encouragement for Innovation”. Stronger in Community Development; weaker in Police. The value of innovation in the culture could be enhanced with additional training and improvements in overall awareness.

4.1.5. Talent

Key Finding J – Employee Training: City employees responded that they often receive effective training for IT systems from outside vendors or consultants. However, they also stressed that they would like more opportunities for training that help them to advance in their career or general management knowledge. We found that most City employees did not understand basic concepts of process development, process management, process improvement, quantitative measures (KPIs) of processes, and continuous quality improvement. This training will be necessary to advance the City’s organizational maturity.

Key Finding K – Employee Work Volume: We heard from many employees that there is understaffing. This appears to be particularly acute within Administrative Services. Likewise, we heard from multiple Departments that they experienced significant issues due to errors or delays in the Finance Division. However, there were also many indications that IT automation and AI could alleviate work volume that is creating the perception of understaffing. A major obstacle to realizing the benefits of IT automation and AI will be the initial cost and time commitment necessary purchase and properly implement the IT automation. We saw evidence in the Finance Division that already purchased IT tools are underutilized or not used at all because there is not enough time available to learn about them and implement them.

4.1.6. Ongoing Operations

Key Finding L – Measurement of Success: We discovered that many City employees define success as: “there are no complaints or problems”. This demonstrates that ongoing operations are highly reactionary. Further, employees struggled to think of other methods that they could use to measure success. They did identify benchmarks as something they wanted to explore and learn more about. Overall, there appears to be few, if any, measurements to establish the difference between unacceptable, acceptable, exceptional, and outstanding work output.

4.2. Survey

Blackberg developed a survey that included a combination of Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. The survey included a total of 23 questions and an introduction where respondents could identify the Department in which they work, years employed, and full-time versus part-time. Blackberg published the survey with Microsoft Forms in the Blackberg Microsoft 365 account. We published the survey as an anonymous response. City employees had approximately 3.5 weeks to respond to the survey. A total of 53 City employees responded to the survey. **Table 1 (page 12)** provides an overview of survey results for all Likert scale questions. It includes a “Total City” score that includes all responses. It also includes a breakdown of scores by Department. At the bottom of the table is an “Average Scores” that is the average of each column.

4.2.1. Largest Areas of Concern

Departments – Administrative Services, Public Works, and Police have the lowest average scores. Administrative Services is particularly concerning with an average score of 2.6. Administrative Services also has many responses that score below

2.5. Public Works has an average score of 3.3 with a 2.7 score in encountering bottlenecks and redundancies. Police Department has an average score of 3.3 and has two scores below 3.0 (i.e. bottlenecks and non-value-added activities).

Topic Area – “Bottlenecks and redundancies” is the lowest scoring area by topic (2.7 out of 5.0). This is followed by “maturity of processes” and “non-value-added” activities, both of which scored 3.1.

4.2.2. Tenure

This section examines responses to the survey based on employee tenure with the City.

The survey includes employees with the following ranges of tenure:

- 0 - 1 year: 9 respondents
- 1 - 3 years: 18 respondents
- 4 - 8 years: 11 respondents
- 9 - 12 years: 7 respondents
- Over 12 years: 8 respondents

Total: 53, all full-time except 4 part-time (in Community Services/Police).

Resident Satisfaction – (3.89 - 4.00): Peaks at 1-3 years (4.00), dips slightly over 12 (3.75). Discussion: Newer staff (0-3 years) may feel more resident-facing pressure or optimism, while veterans might see systemic issues (e.g., Admin’s “Very poor” from a 0-1 year respondent). This aligns with budget engagement goals (2025-27 agenda screenshot), suggesting training could sustain high satisfaction.

Tool Access – (3.22 - 4.00): Increases with tenure (0-1: 3.22, Over 12: 4.00). Discussion: Newer staff rate lower, possibly due to onboarding gaps—e.g., 0-1 year has 3 “Somewhat” vs. 4 “Fully” over 12. This correlates with challenges ($r \approx 0.40$), indicating resource scarcity impacts frustration.

Process Maturity – (2.89 - 3.14): Slightly higher for 9-12 years (3.14), lowest 0-1 (2.89). Discussion: Veterans may adapt to ad-hoc systems, while newer staff notice inefficiencies—e.g., Admin’s “Initial” (2.0) from a 1-3 year respondent.

Challenges/Bottlenecks – (2.29 - 3.00): Lowest at 9-12 (2.29), highest 0-1 (2.89/3.00). Discussion: Newer staff face more frustration (e.g., 4 “Moderately” in 0-1), possibly from unclear processes. Veterans (9-12) adapt better, but Public Works’ 3.17 avg across tenure suggests field-specific hurdles—water security delays (agenda goal) could be a factor.

Effectiveness/Workflows – (3.50 - 3.71): Stable (3.50-3.67), with 1-3 years highest (3.67). Discussion: Consistent delivery despite tools gaps, but lower in Admin (2.57) across all tenures. Correlates with satisfaction ($r \approx 0.55$), showing resident focus holds.

Culture Metrics – (3.63 - 3.91): Collaboration peaks at 4-8 (3.91), innovation at 1-3 (3.72). Discussion: Mid-tenure staff drive teamwork, but leadership support dips for 0-1 (3.44). Newer staff’s lower scores (e.g., 2 “Not supported” in Admin) suggest onboarding/culture gaps

Consistency – (3.72 - 3.91): Highest 4-8 (3.91), lowest 0-1 (3.78). Discussion: Experience stabilizes processes, but variability in Public Works (3.43 avg) across tenures hints at operational complexity—ties to 2023-25 staffing summary (TOC screenshot) needing better coordination.

Table 1: Overview of Responses to Likert Scale Questions within the Survey.

Survey Questions		Total City	Police	Fire*	Community Services	Community Development	City Clerk	Admin Services	Public Works
		Number of Respondents							
		53	8	1	7	5	2	7	23
1	How would you rate residents' overall satisfaction with your department's services, based on the feedback or interactions you've observed (e.g., complaints, surveys, or direct encounters)?	3.9	4.4	5.0	4.6	4.2	3.5	2.7	3.8
2	To what extent do current processes in your department (e.g., response times to service requests, permitting timelines, billing accuracy, public safety procedures) create challenges or frustration...	3.5	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.5	2.3	3.5
3	How would you rate the maturity of the processes in your Division?	3.0	3.0	4.0	2.9	4.0	1.5	2.1	3.1
4	How effective are the current processes in your department for delivering services to residents (e.g., permitting, utility billing, park maintenance, etc.)?	3.5	3.6	5.0	3.9	3.8	3.5	2.3	3.5
5	To what extent do you have access to the tools and resources (e.g., technology, staffing, training) needed to perform your job efficiently?	3.2	3.4	5.0	3.0	4.2	4.0	2.1	3.2
6	How would you rate the speed of completing key tasks in your department (e.g., processing requests, responding to resident inquiries, responding to other departments, etc.)?	3.4	3.6	5.0	3.7	3.8	4.0	2.3	3.3
7	How well do current workflows in your department support timely and high-quality service delivery to residents?	3.4	3.6	5.0	3.7	3.8	4.0	2.3	3.3
8	How often do you encounter bottlenecks or redundancies in your daily work processes (e.g., delays, repetitive tasks)?	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.4	3.2	2.5	2.4	2.7
9	To what extent do non-value-added activities (e.g., unnecessary steps, waiting times, or overproduction) impact your department's processes?	2.8	2.4	2.0	2.6	2.4	3.0	3.1	3.1
10	How consistent are your department's processes in terms of error rates or variation (e.g., inconsistent outcomes in service requests or task completion times)?	3.5	3.3	5.0	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.3
11	To what extent does the workplace culture encourage innovation and process improvements in your department?	3.5	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.6	3.3
12	How supported do you feel by leadership in addressing challenges like staffing shortages or workload peaks?	3.4	3.3	5.0	3.6	4.0	3.5	2.7	3.3
13	How would you rate the level of collaboration and knowledge-sharing across teams to enhance efficiency?	3.4	3.3	4.0	3.9	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.6
Average Scores:		3.3	3.3	4.3	3.6	3.7	3.4	2.6	3.3

*Fire-The response is not statistically valid since there was only 1 respondent.

4.2.3. Survey Details

This section includes tables that contain detailed responses to each Likert question. There is a total of 13 Likert style questions.

1. How would you rate residents' overall satisfaction with your department's services, based on the feedback or interactions you've observed (e.g., complaints, surveys, or direct encounters)?

Very poor	1	2%
Poor	0	0%
Average	18	34%
Good	18	34%
Excellent	16	30%
	53	100%

2. To what extent do current processes in your department (e.g., response times to service requests, permitting timelines, billing accuracy, public safety procedures) create challenges or frustration?

Not at all	5	9%
Slightly	22	42%
Moderately	20	38%
Very	4	8%
Extremely	2	4%
	53	100%

3. How would you rate the maturity of the processes in your Division?

Initial (ad-hoc and unpredictable)	4	8%
Managed (basic processes exist but are not documented)	15	28%
Defined (well-defined and documented)	18	34%
Quantitatively Managed (Key Performance Indicators exist and are tracked)	11	21%
Optimizing (Continuous Process Improvement of all processes)	5	9%
	53	100%

4. How effective are the current processes in your department for delivering services to residents (e.g., permitting, utility billing, park maintenance, etc.)?

Not effective	3	6%
Somewhat effective	5	9%
Moderately effective	13	25%
Very effective	28	53%
Extremely effective	4	8%
	53	100%

5. To what extent do you have access to the tools and resources (e.g., technology, staffing, training) needed to perform your job efficiently?

Not at all	4	8%
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Somewhat	15	28%
Moderately	9	17%
Mostly	16	30%
Fully	9	17%
	53	100%

6. How would you rate the speed of completing key tasks in your department (e.g., processing requests, responding to resident inquiries, responding to other departments, etc.)?

Very slow	2	4%
Somewhat slow	9	17%
Acceptable	16	30%
Fast	20	38%
Very fast	6	11%
	53	100%

7. How well do current workflows in your department support timely and high-quality service delivery to residents?

Not well	2	4%
Somewhat well	9	17%
Moderately well	16	30%
Very well	20	38%
Extremely well	6	11%
	53	100%

8. How often do you encounter bottlenecks or redundancies in your daily work processes (e.g., delays, repetitive tasks)?

Never	0	0%
Rarely	12	23%
Sometimes	21	40%
Often	19	36%
Always	1	2%
	53	100%

9. To what extent do non-value-added activities (e.g., unnecessary steps, waiting times, or overproduction) impact your department's processes?

Minimal/No Impact	4	8%
Rarely	15	28%
Sometimes	23	43%
Often	8	15%
Major Impact	3	6%
	53	100%

10. How consistent are your department's processes in terms of error rates or variation (e.g., inconsistent outcomes in service requests or task completion times)?

Very inconsistent	2	4%
Often inconsistent	9	17%

Somewhat consistent	14	26%
Often consistent	19	36%
Very consistent	9	17%
	53	100%

11. To what extent does the workplace culture encourage innovation and process improvements in your department?

Not at all	2	4%
To a small degree	9	17%
Some encouragement	8	15%
Lots of encouragement	29	55%
Extensive encouragement	5	9%
	53	100%

12. How supported do you feel by leadership in addressing challenges like staffing shortages or workload peaks?

Not supported	5	9%
Rarely Supported	5	9%
Sometimes Supported	17	32%
Often Supported	18	34%
Fully Supported	8	15%
	53	100%

13. How would you rate the level of collaboration and knowledge-sharing across teams to enhance efficiency?

Poor	5	9%
Little	6	11%
Sometimes	12	23%
Often	24	45%
Extensive	6	11%
	53	100%

4.2.4. Open-Ended Questions

- 1) **From your interactions, what are the most common needs or expectations residents express when engaging with your department's services (e.g., faster response times, clearer communication)?**

Faster Response/Processing Times (Most common, ~38 responses, 72%): Residents demand quicker handling of requests, bills, permits, investigations, and services. Examples: "Faster response times" (multiple in Admin Services, Public Works, Community Development); "Quicker turn around with investigations" (Police ID 3).

Clearer/More Communication (~15 responses, 28%): Calls for better transparency, updates, and accessible info. Examples: "Clearer communication" (Admin ID 48, Community Services ID 25); "More communication (not necessarily clearer, just found in several places)" (Public Works ID 11).

More Resources/Staffing (~12 responses, 23%): Perceptions of understaffing leading to delays. Examples: "More staff needed" (Police ID 28, 45); "We do not have the personnel to add more" (Community Services ID 27); "Limited staff and the volume of projects" (Community Development ID 14).

- 2) **What one change to your department's processes or tools could most improve the resident experience (e.g., easier online access, reduced wait times)?**

Digital/Online Access Improvements (Most common, ~25 responses, 47%): Easier online tools for billing, permits, records, and info. Examples: "Easier online access" (multiple in Admin Services IDs 13, 42, 49, 52); "More transparency with applications posted on the website" (Community Development ID 1); "Making the online experience easier" (PW ID 26).

Increased Staffing/Hiring (~15 responses, 28%): Adding personnel to reduce waits and burnout. Examples: "More staff" (Community Services IDs 10, 4; Police IDs 28, 45); "Hiring. Hiring. Hiring." (Police ID 16); "More personnel" (PW ID 46).

Process Streamlining/Reduced Waits (~12 responses, 23%): Simplifying workflows like permits or enforcement. Examples: "Streamlined permit application process" (PW ID 9); "Reducing the grace period between each phase of weed abatement" (Fire ID 51); "Reduced wait time" (Community Services ID 6).

Technology/Tools Upgrades (~10 responses, 19%): Better software, devices, or equipment. Examples: "Better ERP" (Admin ID 53); "Tablets to complete task" (PW ID 41); "Online reporting" (Police ID 3); "Newer vehicles" (Police ID 44).

Communication/Engagement Enhancements (~8 responses, 15%): Better info sharing via texts, tours, or directories. Examples: "Explore texting things like our newsletter" (City Clerk ID 22); "Tours... to school kids" (PW ID 21); "Better way of getting to our staff directory" (PW ID 26).

- 3) **How well do you feel your daily work aligns with delivering high-quality, resident-centered services? Provide an example of a positive resident interaction and/or a barrier you've noticed.**

Positive Interactions/Feedback (Most common, ~35 responses, 66%): Compliments, gratitude, or successful resolutions. Examples: "Positive response to new Eye On Water application" (Admin ID 42); "Residents often comment on how at home they feel at the library" (Community Services ID 10); "They love us" (PW ID 33).

Barriers/Challenges (~20 responses, 38%): Obstacles like workload, delays, misdirection, or external perceptions. Examples: "Barrier is workload causes longer wait times" (Admin ID 42); "Hindered a lot by other departments" (Community Services ID 4); "Citizens get frustrated when their neighbors are not complying" (Fire ID 51).

High Alignment with Services (~25 responses, 47%): Strong sense of contributing to quality/resident focus. Examples: "Extremely well" (Community Services ID 10); "My daily work aligns well" (PW ID 40); "Very Well in public safety" (Police ID 18).

4) What could be done to improve resident satisfaction?

Increased Staffing/Hiring/Training (Most common, ~20 responses, 38%): Adding personnel or training to reduce delays/burnout. Examples: "Increase staff" (Community Development ID 14); "Hiring. Hiring" (Police ID 16); "More personnel" (PW ID 46); "Continue to have trained staff" (Community Services ID 10).

Improved Communication/Transparency (~15 responses, 28%): Better updates, collaboration, listening. Examples: "Increase communication to residents" (Admin ID 52); "Communication, transparency" (City Clerk ID 8); "Better communication on when tasks need to be done" (PW ID 37); "Transparency" (PW ID 36).

Process Efficiency/Faster Responses (~12 responses, 23%): Streamlining billing, permits, enforcement. Examples: "Make billing process more efficient" (Admin ID 17); "Faster response times from all departments" (Community Development ID 7); "Give people a shorter grace period" (Fire ID 51); "Finding a way to respond to matters faster" (PW ID 11).

Digital/Website Improvements (~8 responses, 15%): Better online tools, updates. Examples: "Better web site" (PW ID 33); "A more quickly updated website" (Community Services ID 25); "Having a easier website platform" (Community Development ID 20).

Resource Allocation/Equipment (~10 responses, 19%): Better tools, funding, facilities. Examples: "Providing our department with more tools/items" (Police ID 44); "Having better equipment and vehicles" (Police ID 45); "Better use of funds" (Admin ID 53).

5) What specific barriers, if any, prevent you from performing your job efficiently? (e.g., inadequate tools or equipment, outdated technology, unclear processes)?

Outdated Technology/Software (Most common, ~20 responses, 38%): Old systems, lack of integration, or inadequate tools. Examples: "Outdated technology, no maps for underground utilities on a computer base GIS system" (PW ID 40); "Outdated tech" (Police ID 3); "Limited software (tools)" (Admin ID 52).

Unclear/Outdated Processes/Documentation (~15 responses, 28%): Ambiguous workflows, lack of SOPs, or manual methods. Examples: "Unclear processes" (Admin IDs 13, 49); "Unclear processes, including outdated documentation" (Admin ID 48); "We do not have written SOPs" (PW ID 11).

Staffing Shortages/Workload (~12 responses, 23%): Understaffing leading to backlogs or delays. Examples: "Staffing shortages created a backlog" (Admin ID 42); "Not having enough staff" (Community Services ID 10); "Limited staffing during high-demand periods" (PW ID 32).

Training/Access to Knowledge (~8 responses, 15%): Lack of training or quick direction. Examples: "Lack of access to training" (Admin ID 48); "Training, I believe more in house training would be beneficial" (PW ID 26); "Inadequate/dated tools... and need for training" (Police ID 44).

Equipment/Facilities Issues (~10 responses, 19%): Inadequate gear, buildings, or resources. Examples: "Cars are old and need to be replaced... building is not a pd" (Police ID 2); "Breakdowns of critical equipment" (PW ID 32); "Cluttered work area" (Community Services ID 47).

6) What barriers, if any, exist in the culture that hinder operational efficiency or resident service?

Lack of Communication/Collaboration (Most common, ~20 responses, 38%): Interdepartmental silos, poor info sharing. Examples: "Interdepartmental communication" (Admin ID 13); "Staff lacks internal communication" (Community Development ID 14); "Communication within and with other departments" (Community Development ID 19); "Informal communication is the best way... but not all staff are on Teams" (PW ID 11).

Staffing/Workload/Shortages (~12 responses, 23%): Overload, thin staffing affecting support. Examples: "Workload sometimes restricts availability" (Admin ID 42); "Being short staffed really hurts us" (Community Services ID 27); "Lack of personnel" (Police ID 28); "Not enough staff, constant change in plans" (PW ID 46).

Resistance to Change/Innovation (~8 responses, 15%): Pushback on new ideas, perceived as extra work. Examples: "Opportunities and reception seem lacking... overwhelmed with 'their job'" (Admin ID 48); "Non willingness to adopt more efficient ways" (Admin ID 53); "Residents seem resistant to change" (City Clerk ID 8); "Slow or no change to redundant steps" (Police ID 44).

7) What is one process or tool in your department that works well and should be maintained or expanded?

Software/Tools/Technology (Most common, ~20 responses, 38%): Specific apps or systems like Excel, Grapevine, eTrakit. Examples: "Excel" (Admin ID 13); "Grapevine" (PW IDs 11, 29, 30); "e Trakit software" (Community Development ID 20); "Flock Camera system" (Police ID 18).

Communication/Meetings/Collaboration (~12 responses, 23%): Open dialogue, huddles, outreach. Examples: "Open collaboration" (Admin ID 17); "Weekly department meetings" (Community Development ID 1); "Communication" (PW ID 26); "Community outreach" (Police IDs 44, 45).

Maintenance/Preventive Processes (~10 responses, 19%): Rounds, inspections, equipment upkeep. Examples: "Monthly preventive maintenance program" (PW ID 32); "Sewer rounds" (PW ID 40); "Regular site inspections and daily maintenance rounds" (PW ID 38); "Staying on top of vehicle replacement" (PW ID 43).

Training/Cross-Training (~5 responses, 9%): Skill-building and knowledge sharing. Examples: "Cross-training" (Admin ID 48); "Officer Trainee Position" (Police ID 16); "Communicating with each other... listening to each other goals" (Community Services ID 27).

Staffing/Teamwork/Attitude (~8 responses, 15%): Positive team dynamics, can-do spirit. Examples: "Teamwork" (PW ID 36); "Appropriate attitude within workers" (PW ID 46); "Internal communication and can-do attitude" (PW ID 5); "It's people" (Police ID 28).

Department	Top Themes (Frequency)	Patterns/Insights
Administrative Services (7)	Software/Tools (4), Training (1), Collaboration (1)	Digital tools like Excel, Stampli, MS 365 (e.g., "Online self-serve for employees" ID 52); cross-training (ID 48). All full-time, mixed tenure.
City Clerk (2)	Software/Tools (1), Communication (1)	Document management (Laserfiche ID 8) and newsletters (ID 22). Both 1-3 years full-time.
Community Development (5)	Communication (2), Software/Tools (1), Maintenance (1)	Meetings and counter services (e.g., "Front counter open" ID 19); routing/eTrakit (IDs 14, 20). All full-time, varied tenure.
Community Services (7)	Software/Tools (3), Communication (2), Training (1)	Registration systems (CivicRec ID 25), meetings (ID 6), open comms (ID 4). Mix full/part-time.
Fire (1)	Software/Tools (1)	ImageTrend (ID 51). 9-12 years full-time.

Department	Top Themes (Frequency)	Patterns/Insights
Police (8)	Software/Tools (3), Training (1), Communication (2), Teamwork (1)	Systems like RIMS, Flock (IDs 3, 18); outreach/trainee programs (IDs 16, 44). Mostly over 4 years, mix full/part-time.
Public Works (23)	Maintenance (8), Communication (4), Software/Tools (3), Teamwork (2)	Grapevine, rounds, huddles (e.g., "Daily huddles" ID 31); street sweeping/mowers (IDs 39, 34). Mostly 1-3 years full-time.

8) What is one change (e.g., to processes, technology, equipment, tools, etc.) that would most improve your ability to serve residents effectively?

Technology/Software Upgrades (Most common, ~20 responses, 38%): New systems, apps, or digital tools. Examples: "New ERP" (Admin ID 53); "Business Licenses - online system" (Admin ID 52); "On-line permitting" (Community Development ID 7); "GIS for all mains and electrical" (PW ID 40).

Equipment/Tools Improvements (~12 responses, 23%): Better vehicles, gear, or hardware. Examples: "New vehicles" (Police ID 2); "Better equipped and more capable vac truck" (PW ID 35); "Utility bed on service trucks and tablets" (PW ID 41); "Desktop public access computers" (Community Services ID 6).

Increased Staffing/Personnel (~8 responses, 15%): Adding staff to handle workload. Examples: "More staff" (PW ID 34); "More Employment in the department" (PW ID 50); "Equipment and staffing" (Police ID 28).

Process Automation/Streamlining (~10 responses, 19%): Reducing manual work, faster payments. Examples: "Need for more automation" (Admin ID 42); "Full water plant automation" (PW ID 12); "An online CIP tool that live-updates" (PW ID 9); "Pay bills on time and process purchase orders faster" (PW ID 29).

Training/Support (~5 responses, 9%): More training or resources. Examples: "I don't know if it would be more time or training; maybe support?" (Admin ID 48); "More inhouse Training" (PW ID 26); "Better tools and training" (Police ID 44).

Communication/Integration (~5 responses, 9%): Better comms or system integration. Examples: "Use of teams" (Community Development ID 1); "More integration between CivicRec and CivicPlus" (Community Services ID 25); "Better communication on when tasks need to be completed" (PW ID 37).

9) How do you perceive the City's alignment with its mission to provide high-quality, resident-focused services? What could be improved?

Positive/Mixed Alignment (Most common, ~30 responses, 57%): Good intent/effort, but challenges noted. Examples: "It is a great mission" (Admin ID 42); "The City is committed... but sometimes siloed" (PW ID 9); "I think the city's alignment is on point" (Fire ID 51); "Well, there is an evident push to improve" (PW ID 5).

Improvements in Communication/Transparency (~15 responses, 28%): Better updates, trust, resident engagement. Examples: "Communication, ability to address customer concerns faster" (Admin ID 13); "More communication would help" (PW ID 39); "Clearer communication with residents" (PW ID 38); "Regain trust back with them" (City Clerk ID 8).

Staffing/Resources/Funding Needs (~12 responses, 23%): More staff, better allocation to meet demands. Examples: "Staffing levels do not support the demand" (Admin ID 42); "More staff" (PW ID 23); "Additional public facing staff" (Community Services ID 25); "More funding to the pd" (Police ID 2).

Technology/Website Enhancements (~8 responses, 15%): Digital improvements for access. Examples: "More online services offered" (Admin ID 17); "Improvements could be made to the website" (Admin ID 52); "The website could be easier to navigate" (Admin ID 49).

Trust/Perception/Expectation Management (~10 responses, 19%): Building trust, addressing "us vs. them," realistic timelines. Examples: "Find a way to regain trust" (City Clerk ID 8); "Many people... don't trust the city leaders" (Police ID 24); "Do not over promise" (PW ID 43); "Unrealistic expectations" (implied in City Clerk ID 22).

10) Any additional comments on performance, efficiency, or improving resident interactions?

Staffing/Workload Concerns (~8 responses, 15%): Shortages/backlogs affecting efficiency. Examples: "Staffing shortages... impacts performance and efficiency" (Admin ID 42); "More staff is needed" (Admin ID 53); "We need more staff/onsite" (PW ID 23); "Our department gets pulled away often" (PW ID 46).

Communication/Resident Engagement (~5 responses, 9%): Better updates, involvement, trust. Examples: "Better communication with residents and following up" (PW ID 39); "Stronger direct communication with residents" (PW ID 38); "The City should have open houses" (PW ID 26); "Keeping residents involved with processes" (City Clerk ID 8).

Positive/Improving Trends (~5 responses, 9%): Noting progress or positives. Examples: "Things are going a lot smoother than before" (PW ID 34); "We have begun making improvements" (Admin ID 52); "Continue to allow displays... receive positive feedback" (Community Services ID 10).

Technology/Process Suggestions (~3 responses, 6%): Specific fixes for efficiency. Examples: "If we created some sort of simple contact directory" (Community Services ID 27); "Pushing for less face-to-face... will help improve efficiency" (PW ID 11); "Full plant automation" (PW ID 12).

Cultural/Attitude Issues (~3 responses, 6%): Vesting, burnout, disparagement. Examples: "My co-workers are more vested... burn-out is possible" (Admin ID 48); "Openly speaking disparagingly about residents should not be acceptable" (PW ID 5); "Not from here" (Fire ID 51, possibly implying outsider perspective).

4.3. Structured Interviews

4.3.1. Organizational Structure and Staffing

Strengths	Description
Collaborative Teams & Empowerment	Many departments report strong internal collaboration and empowerment for decision-making. For example, in Fire, full-time officers collaborate on changes effectively. Public Works emphasizes cross-training and flexibility, allowing staff to shift roles during surges. Library highlights bi-monthly meetings where all staff contribute to decisions, fostering a supportive culture. Overall, 70% of respondents rate internal decision-making as efficient when kept within the department.
Dedicated & Skilled Staff	Respondents frequently note committed, multi-skilled employees who "make it work" despite constraints. In HR, staff handle diverse tasks like onboarding and grants. Community Development praises knowledgeable permit techs and planners who manage high workloads. Public Works field staff value hands-on expertise in maintenance, with low error rates in daily operations. This resilience aligns with city goals for service delivery.
Clear Reporting Lines in Small Teams	In smaller divisions like Library and Building, simple structures support quick decisions—e.g., direct reporting to directors enables efficient issue resolution. Fire and Police also benefit from shift-based hierarchies that promote accountability.

Weaknesses	Description
Understaffing & Frozen Positions	A dominant theme (mentioned in 80% of interviews): staffing is inadequate, with frozen positions causing overload. Administrative Services cites perpetual training mode and HR gaps. Library notes two frozen FT roles limiting hours and programs. Public Works reports understaffing in wastewater and parks, leading to deferred maintenance. Ratings average 3-6/10, with gaps in administrative support and specialized skills (e.g., engineering, code enforcement).
High Turnover & Skill Gaps	Turnover is common due to better opportunities elsewhere (e.g., Fire's part-timers leave for FT jobs; Finance's new techs need training). Gaps include lack of expertise in unique areas like LOA or historic resources. Community Development notes overwhelmed staff pushing code enforcement aside. This leads to overtime and burnout, impacting morale.
Inconsistent Cross-Departmental Support	While internal collaboration is strong, cross-dept efforts are often ineffective due to delays (e.g., Finance bottlenecks in AP for Public Works. The Library and Parks cite geographic separation reducing effectiveness. 60% report collaborations as "OK" or "willing but limited," with redundancies in approvals.

Opportunities	Description
Unfreezing Positions & Cross-Training	Multiple respondents suggest unfreezing roles to reduce overload (e.g., Library's FT positions for extended hours; Public Works' admin support). Enhanced cross-training could fill skill gaps, as seen in successful examples in Parks. Partnerships with neighboring cities (e.g., Napa for HR) could share resources without compromising quality.
Empowerment & SOP Development	Strengthen decision-making by formalizing delegation and SOPs. This could align with city goals for efficiency, reducing bottlenecks in escalations (e.g., from departments to Council). Training programs (e.g., certifications for advancement) would boost retention and skills.
Technology & Process Automation	Integrate tools like eTRAKIT to automate permitting and reduce manual work. Regional collaborations for software could cut costs. Address turnover by offering incentive pay for skills.

Threats	Description
Continued Turnover & Burnout	High turnover risks institutional knowledge loss (e.g., Fire's part-time staff; Administrative Services' new hires). Long commutes and low pay compared to other cities exacerbate this, potentially leading to service disruptions.
Regulatory & Demand Pressures	State regulations (e.g., housing laws; water neutrality) slow processes and increase demands. Aging population (Fire, Public Works) boosts medical calls and maintenance needs, straining lean teams without budget increases.
External Dependencies & Delays	Reliance on consultants (Community Development, Public Works) raises costs and oversight needs. Cross-dept delays (e.g., Finance AP issues) threaten project timelines. Economic factors like tight labor markets limit hiring quality.

4.3.2. Processes and Workflows

Strengths	Description
Adaptive & Collaborative Workflows	Many departments demonstrate flexibility in workflows, with staff cross-training to handle surges effectively. For example, Public Works uses daily rounds and look-ahead lists to manage maintenance, while Fire employs ICS for prioritizing calls. Library efficiently processes shipments via LEAP, with part-time staff sharing duties. Overall, 60% note strong internal collaboration, aligning with city goals for service delivery.
Recent Digital Improvements	Several areas have adopted tools that enhance efficiency, such as Stampli for AP routing, Who-Fi for tracking, and electronic scheduling in Fire. Community Development is transitioning to eTRAKiT for permitting, reducing paper reliance. These support timely completion, with low error rates in routine tasks.
Customer-Focused Initiation	Workflows often start with resident or stakeholder input, ensuring relevance. E.g., permits in Community Development and grants in Finance are initiated by public needs, fostering positive outcomes.

Weaknesses	Description
Manual Processes & Redundancies	Dominant theme (75% of interviews): heavy reliance on manual entry, spreadsheets, and paper, leading to errors and inefficiencies. HR cites Excel-Springbrook duplication; Finance notes multiple AP approvals/queues; Public Works highlights procurement delays. Library has overlaps in tasks due to understaffing.
Bottlenecks from Delays & Dependencies	Cross-dept dependencies cause lags (70% mention), e.g., Finance bottlenecks for Public Works and Fire; vendor delays in Library; regulatory reviews in Community Development. Seasonal peaks (e.g., storms in Public Works, summer in Library) exacerbate overload without adequate support.
Lack of Efficiency Metrics	Few formal measurements (80% report none or informal); deadline-oriented without tracking time/errors. E.g., no KPIs in Library, experience-based in Fire/Public Works; Community Development uses dates but lacks comprehensive tools. This hinders alignment with city goals.

Opportunities	Description
Automation & Integration	Widespread suggestions (85%) for automating manual tasks: payroll/reconciliations, permitting, meter reading, agenda prep. Integrate systems like Springbrook/Neogov or regional software. AI for policy/short-term rentals.
SOP Development & Training	Formalize SOPs to reduce redundancies; enhance training/cross-training. Unfreeze positions to alleviate overload, improving morale and capacity.
Partnerships & Outsourcing	Share resources regionally (e.g., HR with Napa; code enforcement; outsource non-core like large tree work or consultants for peaks. Align with city goals for cost savings without quality loss.

Threats	Description
Staffing Shortages & Turnover	Understaffing (mentioned in 75%) risks burnout/overtime; turnover from low pay/commutes could lose institutional knowledge, disrupting workflows.

Threats	Description
Regulatory & External Demands	State regulations (e.g., housing laws; water neutrality) and resident demands (e.g., high service expectations in Library/Public Works) slow processes, increasing errors/delays. Aging population boosts calls (Fire).
Technology & Resource Constraints	Outdated tools (e.g., wifi outages; fragmented systems) and budget limits threaten efficiency. Vendor delays (Library) and procurement issues amplify risks.

4.3.3. Efficiency and Performance

Strengths	Description
Recent Technological Improvements	Many departments have implemented tools to boost efficiency, such as Stampli for AP, Who-Fi for tracking, RFID for checkouts, and electronic timesheets. These align with city goals for service delivery, reducing manual work and errors in 60% of responses.
Effective Peak Management Strategies	Staff use prioritization, cross-training, and calendars to handle surges. Fire's ICS and Library's scheduling knowledge maintain productivity, with 80% reporting successful adaptation despite constraints.
Resident-Focused Metrics	Success often measured by feedback and outcomes like attendance or compliance, supporting city goals for customer service and safety.

Weaknesses	Description
Lack of Formal KPIs and Alignment	Dominant theme (70% of interviews): no structured KPIs or guidance; deadline-driven without tracking. Alignment with city goals is vague or absent, hindering strategic focus.
Over-reliance on Overtime and Reactive Approaches	Peaks lead to burnout and overtime; 75% cite understaffing exacerbating this. Error rates or efficiency not measured formally.
Limited Resources for Training/Innovation	Gaps in skills/training reduce efficiency; external factors like regulations overload lean teams.

Opportunities	Description
Expand KPI Development and Alignment	Formalize KPIs tied to city goals, e.g., using dashboards for tracking. Leverage tools like eTRAKiT or Grapevine for metrics, improving in 70% of areas lacking them.
Automation and Process Streamlining	Automate manual tasks like reconciliations, permitting, and meter reading; adopt AI for policy/short-term rentals. Partnerships for training/certifications to boost retention.
Regional Partnerships and Outsourcing	Share resources with neighboring cities; outsource non-core like code enforcement or large tree work, reducing costs while maintaining quality.

Threats	Description
Regulatory and Resident Pressures	State laws (housing, water neutrality) and demands slow processes; aging population increases calls, risking overload in 50% of responses.

Threats	Description
Staffing Shortages and Turnover	Understaffing/burnout from peaks; low pay/commutes drive turnover, threatening knowledge loss and service disruptions (75% mention).
Technology and Resource Constraints	Outdated systems/delays; budget limits hinder training/automation, amplifying inefficiencies. Vendor/publisher delays add risks.

4.3.4. Questions on Cost Management and Resource Allocation

Strengths	Description
Lean Budget Management & In-House Efficiency	Departments operate efficiently within tight budgets by shifting to in-house work, reducing external costs. For example, Public Works saved by handling services internally instead of contracting. Fire keeps OT low with part-timers, aligning with city financial stability goals. Administrative Services maintain separate dept budgets with pre-approvals, minimizing overruns.
Effective Partnerships & Resource Sharing	Existing collaborations reduce costs, such as Community Development using Interwest for fire plans and eTRAKiT integration. The Library leverages volunteers and foundations for materials/events, saving city funds. HR explores regional training with similar software users.
Basic but Functional Tracking	Expenditures are tracked via spreadsheets, POs, and monthly reports with finance, supporting accountability. E.g., Public Works uses automated spreadsheets; City Clerk forwards coded invoices to Stampli.

Weaknesses	Description
Limited Budget Visibility & Involvement	Many respondents (60%) have no direct role in budgeting, leading to gaps in awareness and optimization. E.g., Permit Tech and Utility Billing defer to directors; Library staff note city doesn't cover much due to foundation reliance.
Underutilized Resources & Training Gaps	Training and tools are frequently underused due to time/budget constraints (70% mention). E.g., Springbrook not fully leveraged; Laserfiche for records; training stipends/certifications limited. Overutilized staff leads to burnout.
Costly Maintenance & Manual Processes	Building/maintenance drains resources (Library's A/C/roof); advertising/newspaper notices seen as wasteful. Manual tracking creates workarounds.

Opportunities	Description
Outsourcing & Partnerships for Non-Core Tasks	Widespread suggestions (50%) for outsourcing to cut costs: payroll, weed abatement with goats/County, low-income discounts via partnerships. Regional collaborations (with Napa for HR; with volunteers). Aligns with city goals for efficiency without quality loss.
Enhanced Resource Utilization & Training	Maximize underused tools like Springbrook/Laserfiche and increase training budgets. Group trainings with similar cities; in-house expansion (fences/trees) to reduce contracting.

Opportunities	Description
Technology & Process Automation	Integrate systems for better tracking; bulk orders/digital shifts (for notices) to save on ads/maintenance. Foundations/consortia (Library) for more funding/sharing.

Threats	Description
High Workloads & Staff Overload	Overutilized personnel risks burnout/turnover, amplified by peaks and no backups. Low pay compared to other cities threatens retention.
Regulatory & External Demands	State regulations/resident expectations increase costs; unpermitted activity or complaints strain lean teams. Aging infrastructure (Library, Public Works) leads to unexpected expenses.
Budget Constraints & Limited Visibility	Tight budgets limit training/tech investments; lack of real-time tracking software risks errors/delays. Economic factors like revenue dependency add uncertainty.

4.3.5. Questions on Technology Utilization

Strengths	Description
Effective Core Tools in Specific Departments	Several systems received high praise for reliability and utility. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEAP/Polaris (library ILS): Described as effective, user-friendly, and efficient for cataloging and circulation (mentioned positively in 3 library interviews). Image Trend (fire department): Highly effective for medical reporting and building inspections. WhoFi (library): "Very happy" with it for tracking and reservations. Beacon (utility billing): "Great" for meter reading dashboards. eTRAKiT/Community Development (building/planning): "Working really well" with good integration and support, especially after recent implementation.
Vendor Support and Quick Fixes	In cases like eTRAKiT (Client First "fantastic" with weekly meetings), Image Trend, and Starlink, respondents noted sufficient vendor-provided training and support, enabling quick adoption.
Positive Impact on Efficiency in Niche Areas	Tools like RFID (library), Starlink (fire connectivity), and hotspots (backup during outages) were highlighted as improving daily operations without major issues.
Basic Tools Widely Used Successfully	Microsoft Suite, Excel, Word, and Adobe were consistently mentioned as reliable for everyday tasks across departments (e.g., reports, newsletters), with no major complaints.

Tool/System	Departments Praising It	Key Strength
LEAP/Polaris	Library (multiple)	User-friendly, effective for cloud-based cataloging
Image Trend	Fire	Supports reporting and inspections efficiently
eTRAKiT	Building/Planning	Good integration, fantastic vendor support
Starlink	Fire	Reliable backup for poor connectivity

Weaknesses	Description
Low Satisfaction with Key Enterprise Systems	Springbrook (finance/payroll) rated low (e.g., 5/10 or 7/10) due to manual entry, error risks, and lack of templates/integration (mentioned in 6 interviews). NEOgov (HR) rated 4/10 for being not

	user-friendly and constantly changing. iCompass (agendas/reports) called "not user friendly" multiple times.
Integration and Manual Process Issues	Frequent mentions of gaps like no integration between Springbrook and NEOgov/Stampli, leading to redundancies (e.g., manual AP routing, Excel spreadsheets duplicating work). Public computers/printers/scanners outdated, not supporting modern needs (e.g., phone barcodes).
Connectivity and Hardware Problems	Poor Comcast (outages 2x/week in fire), slow computers, Duo login causing lockouts, and complicated tools like "neat bar" (unused due to complexity).
Insufficient Training and Support	Lack of ongoing training (e.g., none for updates, outdated manuals, time constraints), with respondents often self-teaching or using ChatGPT. This was a pattern in 8 interviews, leading to underutilization (e.g., Springbrook not used to full capacity).
Fragmentation and Over-Reliance on Cloud	20+ cloud services creating inefficiencies, mentioned in public works and admin.

Opportunities	Description
External or potential positive developments, drawn from recommendations for new tools, modernization, and partnerships (suggested in ~12 interviews).	
Adopt Emerging Tools and Automation	Widespread calls for AI/ChatGPT (for efficiency in admin/public works), EyeOnWater (utility billing "life changing" for customer self-service), iPads/tablets for field work (building/fire), and digital signatures/mobile apps to reduce manual processes.
Improve Integration and Regional Solutions	Opportunities to integrate systems (e.g., Springbrook with NEOgov) or adopt regional/shared software (e.g., with Napa/Callistoga for HR/finance) to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Partnerships with vendors for better prioritization of small cities.
Enhance Training Programs	Invest in structured, ongoing training (e.g., vendor-led, group sessions with other jurisdictions) and updated procedures to maximize existing tools like SharePoint or PowerBI.
Modernize Hardware and Connectivity	Upgrade outdated printers/computers/scanners, add hotspots/Starlink backups, and implement fail-fast approaches for tools like conference tech.
Leverage Consortia and Partnerships	Library consortia (e.g., LinkPlus) already help; expand to shared resources for training or outsourcing non-core tasks without quality loss.

Recommended Tool/Improvement	Departments Suggesting	Potential Benefit
AI/ChatGPT	Public Works, Admin	Automate admin tasks, research
EyeOnWater	Utility Billing, Finance	Customer self-service, reduce inquiries
iPad/Field Devices	Building, Fire	On-site inspections/reports
Regional Integration	HR, Finance	Shared support, cost savings

Threats	Description
	External risks that could worsen technology issues, based on mentions of vulnerabilities, dependencies, and changing environments.

Cybersecurity and Outages	Past cyber attacks (e.g., on-prem server hack) and frequent outages (Comcast, tech failures) threaten operations, especially in critical areas like fire or utilities. Loss of data (e.g., building department's paper loss) highlights vulnerability.
Vendor and System Dependencies	Small city status leads to deprioritization by vendors/publishers (library delays), and reliance on changing portals (NEOgov) creates learning curves and inefficiencies.
Staff Overload and Turnover	High workload prevents training/adoption of new tools, exacerbated by staffing gaps; morale issues from outdated tech could lead to turnover.
Regulatory and External Changes	Evolving regulations (e.g., water/wastewater) require tech updates; resident demands (e.g., via Nextdoor) strain resources if tech doesn't support quick responses.
Budget Constraints	Limited funds for upgrades/training, with threats like frozen positions or over-reliance on outsourcing (e.g., IT to new vendor) potentially increasing costs or reducing control.

4.3.6. Employee Perceptions and Culture

Strengths	Description
These are internal positive aspects, such as effective collaboration and intrinsic motivations, highlighted in ~18 interviews (e.g., fire, library, public works, building).	
Strong Departmental Collaboration and Teamwork	Described as excellent with open idea-sharing; staff help each other, and weekly meetings foster consistency (e.g., "We all get along really well").
Motivation from Community Service and Positive Feedback	Driven by providing value to residents, literacy support, and visible accomplishments; positive interactions boost morale (e.g., "We like to make people happy").
Supportive Current Leadership	Features open-door policies, quick decisions, and encouragement of innovation; improved from past top-down styles (e.g., "Leadership is very supportive").
Inclusive and Flexible Culture	Allows flexibility for personal needs and inclusive task delegation; promotes a "it's OK to make mistakes" environment (e.g., "Everyone has a say").

Theme	Departments Praising It	Key Strength
Collaboration and Teamwork	Fire, Library, Public Works	Open idea-sharing and mutual support
Community Service Motivation	Library, Public Works, Fire	Positive resident interactions
Leadership Support	Fire, Admin, Public Works	Open-door policies and encouragement
Inclusive Flexibility	Public Works, Library, Building	Flexibility and mistake tolerance

Weaknesses	Description
Internal negative aspects, with overload and communication issues dominant in ~20 interviews (cross-departmental, especially admin, finance, HR).	
Overwhelm from High Workload and Staffing Shortages	Constant overload leads to burnout; staff feel "spread thin" (e.g., "They are just overwhelmed").
Poor Cross-Departmental	Weak inter-department links result in judging or escalated issues (e.g., "Communication with other departments...not so much").

Communication and Collaboration	
Feeling Undervalued or Lack of Recognition	Staff feel undervalued relative to other departments; lack of positive reinforcement (e.g., "Feels like obtaining information from leadership is hard").
Past Leadership Issues and Inconsistent Support	Previous aggressive styles caused turnover; inconsistent follow-through persists (e.g., "Past leadership was more aggressive").

Opportunities	Description
External or potential positive developments, drawn from suggestions for training, engagement, and building on strengths (suggested in ~15 interviews).	
Enhance Training and Professional Development	Invest in department-specific training, certifications, and group sessions with other cities (e.g., "Opportunities to get together are helpful").
Improve Employee Engagement Through Events and Recognition	Organize picnics, thank-yous, and citywide committees to foster fun and collaboration (e.g., "Allowing them the opportunity to be heard").
Strengthen Communication and Cross-Training	Implement regular inter-department meetings and leverage positive feedback for morale (e.g., "Monthly meetings...communication outside").
Leverage Partnerships for Shared Resources	Expand regional collaborations for training/support, such as consortia like LinkPlus (e.g., "Partnerships with other city clerks").

Recommended Improvement	Departments Suggesting	Potential Benefit
Training and Development	Library, Public Works, Admin	Certifications and group sessions
Engagement Events	Admin, Library, Public Works	Picnics and recognition programs
Communication Enhancements	Public Works, Finance, Library	Regular meetings and cross-training
Regional Partnerships	Admin, Fire, Library	Shared resources and support

Threats	Description
External risks that could worsen culture issues, based on mentions of vulnerabilities, dependencies, and changing environments (noted in ~13 interviews).	
Turnover Due to Pay, Commutes, and Limited Growth	Low pay compared to other cities and long commutes drive staff to seek better opportunities (e.g., "Pay and sometimes the long commute can impact morale").
External Resident Complaints and Demands	Negativity on platforms like Nextdoor and high expectations strain morale (e.g., "Nextdoor is a challenge to morale").
Budget Constraints Limiting Improvements	Tight budgets restrict training and staffing, particularly in undervalued departments (e.g., "We don't have any money").
Regulatory/External Changes and Crisis Mentality	Repeated crises without lessons learned and regulations add strain (e.g., "The city is in a crisis mentality").

4.3.7. Resident/Customer Interaction and Service Delivery

Strengths	Description
Resident feedback	Positive resident feedback is common across departments, with appreciation for personal touch, face-to-face interactions, and helpful staff (e.g., Library, Fire, Public Works, Building).
Tools	Effective use of tools like SeeClickFix/Grapevine for reporting and resolving issues, leading to quick responses and positive outcomes (e.g., Public Works receiving praise for timely fixes).
Support	Strong internal collaboration and cross-training in some teams to ensure backup support and timely service (e.g., Library and Administrative Services emphasizing no silos).
Empowerment	Empowerment from leadership in decision-making and problem-solving, fostering a supportive culture in areas like Public Works and Community Development.
Face-to-face engagement	Visible presence and direct engagement (e.g., Fire entering homes daily, building trust).

Weaknesses	Description
Outdated tools	Outdated phone systems and misdirected calls cause delays and frustration (e.g., HR, Administrative Services, Community Development noting navigation issues and unanswered phones).
Staffing Shortages	Staffing shortages and overload lead to burnout, reduced capacity, and inability to meet demands (e.g., Library, Wastewater, Parks feeling stretched thin).
Manual processes	Reliance on manual processes, lack of automation, and inconsistent training (e.g., billing errors in Finance, manual onboarding in Library).
Metrics	Limited metrics for measuring success, with many departments relying on informal feedback rather than data (e.g., no dashboards, only "no negative comments" as indicator).
Inaccuracies and delays	Inaccurate or delayed services, such as billing issues or copier problems, eroding trust (e.g., Finance's brown water complaints, Library's lapsed copier contract).

Opportunities	Description
New Technology	Adopt new technologies like eTRAKiT, AI, tablets/iPads for field staff, and online self-service to streamline processes and reduce in-person load (e.g., permitting in Community Development, remote monitoring in Wastewater).
Positions	Unfreeze positions and invest in training to increase headcount and skills, enhancing capacity (e.g., Library and Public Works suggesting more staff for extended hours and maintenance).
Shared resources	Form partnerships with other cities or organizations for shared resources, like code enforcement or training (e.g., Community Development exploring shared roles, Library benchmarking with other libraries).
Communication Channels	Improve communication channels, such as better online reservations and dashboards, to boost satisfaction and efficiency (e.g., Public Works expanding Grapevine use, City Manager suggesting interactive platforms).

Events & outreach	Leverage positive feedback to build on strengths, like expanding events or outreach (e.g., Library's program attendance tracking, Fire's community presence).
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Threats	Description
Regulations & changes	Stringent state regulations and changes (e.g., housing laws, water neutrality) override local control and slow operations (e.g., Community Development's public hearing limits, Building's enforcement challenges).
Expectations	High resident expectations and demands exceeding capacity, especially from seniors or vocal communities (e.g., Public Works' oversight from engaged residents, Library's material requests).
Social Media	Negative social media (e.g., Nextdoor) and misconceptions impacting morale and perception (e.g., Public Works' crisis mentality from repeated complaints).
Labor market	Labor market tightness and long commutes making recruitment and retention difficult (e.g., turnover in Public Works, understaffing in Wastewater).
External crises	External crises like storms or fires creating peaks that strain limited resources (e.g., Public Works' seasonal demands, Fire's call volume).

4.3.8. Forward Looking Questions

What changes do you anticipate in your business functions over the next 1-3 years, and how prepared is your team?

Technology dominates (appearing in ~60% of substantive responses), followed by staffing (~35%). Administrative departments (e.g., Finance, City Clerk) lean toward process/tech changes, while operational ones (e.g., Public Works, Building) emphasize external factors and efficiency. Library interviews repeatedly highlight outreach and hours.

Teams often rate themselves as somewhat prepared if changes involve familiar tools, but unprepared for resource-intensive shifts (e.g., needing training or hires). About 25% express explicit concerns like costs or adaptation.

Responses are mostly proactive and hopeful, focusing on improvements rather than declines. Many tie changes to broader city needs, like revenue generation or trust-building, but note unclear alignment with strategic goals.

If you could implement one major improvement to your operations, what would it be and why?

Rank #1: The most common suggestion involved hiring additional personnel, unfreezing frozen positions, improving salaries, or requiring more onsite presence to handle workloads. Rationales often center on reducing burnout, enabling service expansions (e.g., longer library hours for community access during evenings or weekends), and boosting morale through better compensation and presence (e.g., less remote work to foster team collaboration). The sentiment is urgent and practical, with interviewees noting that current shortages lead to overwhelmed teams and inconsistent service; improvements would directly support daily functions and employee retention.

Rank #2: Implementing or enhancing software, tools, or automated systems, such as new platforms for error reduction, digital tracking, or field equipment. Mentioned in roughly 30% of responses, spanning administrative and operational roles like HR/Finance (adopting Springbrook to minimize payroll errors), Water (automating quality controls for consistent supply), Public Works (tablets/iPads for field staff efficiency), and Building (eTRAKiT to eliminate paper-based processes). Rationales emphasize error reduction, time savings, and modernization (e.g., moving from manual Excel tasks to automated systems to free up staff for higher-value work, or using tech to handle seasonal demands like water discoloration). Sentiment

is Forward-thinking and optimistic, viewed as a high-impact fix for outdated methods, though tied to costs; often linked to broader digital transformations already underway.

Rank #3: Streamlining workflows, developing SOPs, or reorganizing tasks like scheduling, batch processing, or record management. Found in about 25% of responses, especially in Finance (batch closings to save time on billing cycles), City Clerk (organizing public records for quicker access), Wastewater (improved scheduling to avoid overload), and Planning (accelerating permit processes). Rationales focus on efficiency gains, error prevention, and consistency (e.g., written SOPs to ensure knowledge transfer amid turnover, or better documentation from leadership to track issues and build community trust). The sentiment is pragmatic, with a focus on low-hanging fruit that could yield quick wins; often connected to reducing redundancies and aligning with city-wide goals like faster service delivery.

What best practices from other organizations or departments could be adapted here?

Benchmarking dominates (especially in Library, where staff repeatedly express interest in peer learning), followed by technology (common in admin/operations). Process improvements are widespread but department-specific, while collaboration appears in hands-on roles. About 15% of responses were neutral or "I don't know," indicating limited exposure or focus on internal issues.

Explanations consistently link practices to efficiency (e.g., reducing delays, errors), capacity (e.g., handling growth with limited staff), and service quality (e.g., better resident interactions). Many highlight adapting from neighboring or similar-sized agencies, with conferences or lists as key sources. Responses are optimistic about potential gains but frustrated by barriers like frozen positions or budgets. Themes align with prior forward-looking questions, reinforcing needs for tech, staffing, and external input, but with less emphasis on city-wide goals.

How aligned are your current functions with the city's strategic goals, and where could alignment be strengthened?

Across the 36 interviews, 22 offered insights on alignment with the city's strategic goals, revealing varied awareness and alignment levels. A common theme is partial alignment, with departments like HR and Public Works noting their functions (e.g., hiring, safety) support goals like community trust and service delivery, yet lack clear guidance on specific objectives, as seen in mention of minimal KPI direction. About 40% express uncertainty, citing vague or inaccessible strategic goals, suggesting a need for better communication from leadership to bridge this gap.

Strengthening alignment emerges as a key pattern, with suggestions focusing on enhanced communication and metrics. Departments like Finance and Library propose regular updates or dashboards to link daily tasks to goals, such as revenue stability or community engagement. Around 30% highlight resource alignment—e.g., unfreezing positions or adopting tech like eTRAKiT—to better support strategic priorities. The sentiment is proactive, with a shared desire to align more closely, though gaps in awareness and resources, indicate ongoing challenges in integrating city-wide vision with operational roles.

5.0 Concluding Remarks and Next Steps

The Current State Analysis for the City of St. Helena's Efficiency and Business Transformation Study reveals a municipality poised for positive change but grappling with systemic challenges that hinder operational maturity and resident-focused service delivery. Key findings underscore an overall low organizational maturity (CMMI Level 1), characterized by ad hoc, undocumented processes, a lack of governance for policies and SOPs, and no formal KPIs to track performance. Situational awareness is limited, with excessive budgeting documentation attempting to compensate for gaps in asset management and strategic planning. Survey data from 53 employees (59% response rate) highlights moderate resident satisfaction (39% "Good," 35% "Average") but frequent bottlenecks (43% "Often") and non-value-added activities (30% "Often"), particularly in Administrative Services, Public Works, and Police, where average scores lag at 2.6–3.3. Open-ended responses emphasize needs for faster responses, clearer communication, digital access, and more staffing, with technology upgrades like AI and online tools seen as high-impact improvements.

Structured interviews (36 participants) provide a SWOT lens across categories. Strengths include collaborative teams, dedicated staff, and recent IT adoptions like eTRAKiT and Image Trend, fostering adaptive workflows and positive resident interactions. However, weaknesses dominate: understaffing (30% shortages, frozen positions), manual redundancies, cross-departmental delays, and outdated or lower performing tools (e.g., Springbrook rated 4–7/10) lead to burnout, errors, and inefficiencies. Culture is supportive internally but strained by low pay, high workloads, and external negativity (e.g., Nextdoor complaints), with innovation encouraged unevenly (39% "Some," 33% "Lots"). Opportunities lie in business process engineering; better management and integration of IT services and AI; and regional partnerships. Threats include turnover from commutes/pay disparities, regulatory pressures (e.g., housing laws), and budget constraints limiting training/tech investments.

Forward-looking insights anticipate tech/staffing changes in 1–3 years, with moderate preparation; and best practices from peers (e.g., benchmarking) could enhance efficiency. Alignment with strategic goals is moderate (48%) and could be strengthened by better communication and resource allocation. Overall, while the City demonstrates resilience and community commitment, addressing staffing shortages, process immaturity, and tech integration is critical for transformation, potentially yielding cost savings, higher throughput, and elevated resident trust. With targeted interventions, St. Helena can evolve from reactionary operations to a proactive, high-performing organization.

5.1. Next Steps

In Step 1, we focused on surveys and structured interviews across the entire City (See Figure 6). We also conducted an initial review of some key documentation and artifacts. This provided us with a broad “Current Analysis” of the City. Blackberg’s next step is Step 2, “Data Collection Plan”. In Step 2, we focus further on data collection (documents, guides, reports, budgets, schematics, flow charts, etc.). We also seek detailed data in areas identified as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats. The increased depth of analysis, from this data collection, focuses on the elements in Figure 7 that have a red or orange box. Red boxed elements are of highest priority, and orange boxed elements are of moderate priority. We will examine those elements individually and how they interrelate.

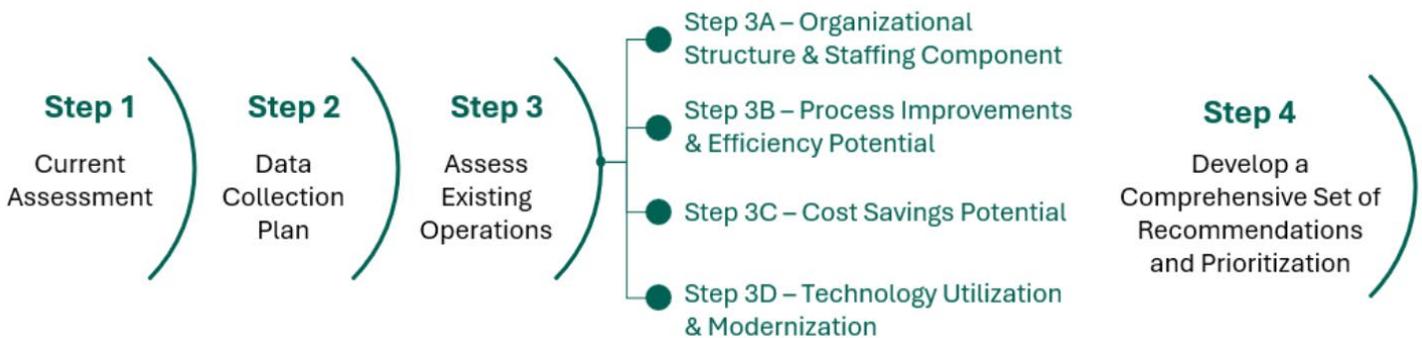
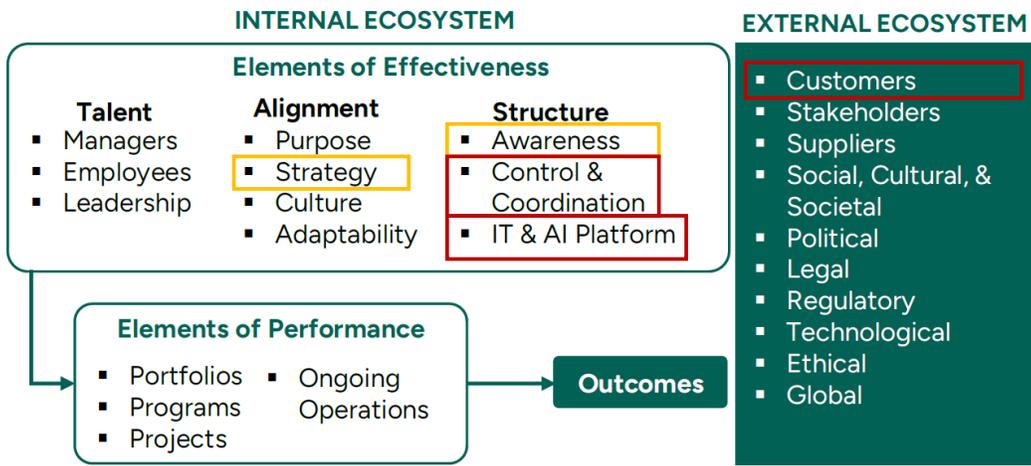


Figure 6 - Study Steps: Blackberg moves through four major steps in conducting the efficiency and business transformation study.



Control and Coordination

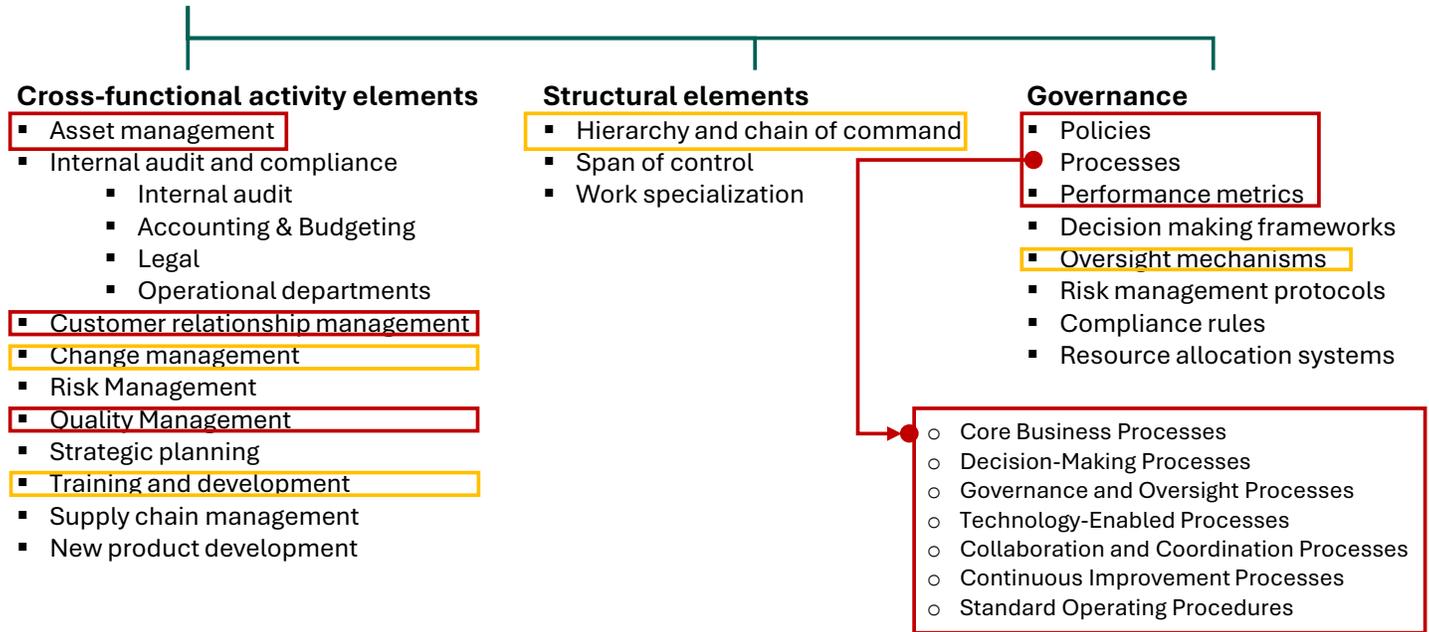


Figure 7 – City Fitness Framework: In Step 2, we begin to examine the elements in more depth with a high priority given to processes and other elements impacting customer service.

