



Information and Insight Analysis

OCTOBER 21, 2025

Efficiency and Business Transformation Study



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1.0 Executive Summary

In our first deliverable, Blackberg focused on examining the current state of the City of St. Helena (City) primarily through surveying all staff and conducting structured interviews of 36 staff members. For the Information and Insight Analysis (second deliverable), Blackberg again examines the City's current state. However, with this examination, we conducted document reviews; data requests; quantitative analyses of data; interviews with Executive leadership, Finance Committee members, City Council members, and residents (small number); review of legacy analyses and surveys; one meeting with the outside IT service consultant (Apex); examination of publicly published materials on the website and social media; and examination of national benchmark data for Libraries.

Overall, our findings are consistent with the first deliverable. However, the second deliverable has given us greater insights into many of the issues facing the City, and we were able to explore new areas of the organization. We used the City Fitness Framework (CFF) as a structure for the study and the deliverable (See Figure 2, page 4).

Key Findings

The following are the key findings for the Information and Insight Analysis. We stress that the focus of this analysis is on the weaknesses and issues within the City government, not the strengths.

- 1) The various reports on budget deficiencies create confusion among staff and residents about what the actual annual shortfall is and what comprises it. There is also confusion about how the shortfall spreads over years (i.e. is it 3 years of deficits or is it in perpetuity). This is one element creating a sense of serious distrust towards City executives and the City government broadly. In section 1.1.2, we highlight some of the different realities that the City communicated about the budget in the past few years. There are obviously dramatic differences, and we see a lack of communication in explaining what reality truly is and why these differences exist (not in the Baker Tilly report, but in how the City communicated with residents and City staff about the issue). Undoubtedly, the near total lack of centralized asset management is closely tied to the budget issue, see section 1.1.6, and a near total lack of talent management is also tied to it, see section 1.1.1. We also noted that the use of Popular Annual Financial Reports ended in 2020, thereby reducing residents' ability to understand what is happening with City finances. The revisions to the budget derive from a Baker Tilly report that also included a series of budget strategies. Ideally, the City would tie these budget strategies to its Strategic Plan through a major update. However, the City does not maintain a Strategic Plan, see section 1.1.7. Finally, the combination of budget tracking issues, severe lack of management systems, governance inadequacy, and leadership and management styles creates a ripe environment for financial and/or procurement impropriety.
- 2) The Library maintains a good collection of quantitative data related to key aspects of its performance (See Figure 8). However, we did not find that it had taken the next step of computing Performance Ratios that could be used as KPIs. Therefore, Blackberg developed the Performance Ratios (see Figure 9) for comparison to national benchmarks for libraries associated with towns of similar population size. The Library demonstrates excellent levels of performance. It is arguably a top 20 or possibly top 10 performing library in the national survey. However, this does come with a much higher than average staffing cost. We spoke with the City Manager about the Library, and he began referencing the Performance Ratios with our assistance in explaining them. This immediately began helping him in making decisions about what to consider. This was an excellent example of how the City could use Performance Ratios/KPIs in making good management decisions.
- 3) There is an inadequate (almost nonexistent) talent management system within the City. There are some aspects of talent management (recruiting, training, talent review); however, there is no framework or model used. There is very little structure or planning. There is no alignment with strategy because a strategy does not exist. The lack of talent management has created a City staff in which some individuals, including executive managers, do not have the education, professional certifications, and/or experience to meet a minimal level of capability (not average) expected for their role.
- 4) Governance is severely lacking in many different aspects. The City does not have a central repository of policies, processes, and performance metrics co-located with an Integrated Policy-Performance (IPP) Grid. An IPP Grid maps policies to process and performance metrics. Undoubtedly, this is creating gaps between existing policies and actual implementation of those policies. This has also led to misunderstandings about who is responsible, accountable, supportive, consulted, or informed for work. One example that we highlight is a report from Regional

Government Services (RGS) that notes: “Notably, the City Clerk’s statutory role as FPPC Filing Officer under the Political Reform Act is not being fully met.” (RGS, “Draft Strategic Assessment Report”).

- 5) Quality Management is severely lacking. The basic definition of a Quality Management System (QMS) is a structured framework for policies, processes, and performance metrics that is designed to ensure consistent quality in an organization’s products or services. Arguably, this is nonexistent.
- 6) There is positive progress with Customer Relationship Management (CRM). The addition of the Grapevine tool is a great step in the right direction. Grapevine does have limited functionality that the City could upgrade at a later date. A central and severe problem of CRM is the lack of engagement on the core City issues (e.g. water, streets, sidewalks, affordable, housing, budget challenges). The City needs to formulate a comprehensive strategic plan to address these issues and communicate it with residents. This should be directly linked to the budget reports.
- 7) Change management is severely lacking within the City. This is highly problematic because the City is experiencing many changes as it addresses issues and challenges. An ADKAR model of change management is particularly useful for the City’s situation because it outlines five individual change stages: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement (ADKAR). A Kotter “8 Steps for Leading Change” approach may also be helpful. We did not find any evidence that executive managers are familiar with change management. To the contrary, we found evidence that some were embracing well-known missteps: failing to establish a roadmap beforehand; poor or absent communication; dismissing opposition outright-often in hostile ways; neglecting proper upskilling...etc.
- 8) Asset management is severely lacking, particularly centralized asset management that tracks maintenance completed, work completed, inventories, etc. This is a major issue within Public Works and connects directly with the issues of long-term financial planning. This also undermines the City’s ability to formulate robust strategic plans because it stifles situational awareness. Further, the lack of asset management can lead to inventory shrinkage (that includes theft) or embezzlement.
- 9) The City does not have a strategic plan. This is a critical gap as it is the key document for planning and organizing how the City will meet its vision and mission. The absence of this document is creating numerous direct issues and spill-over problems across the City.
- 10) The budget crisis (or perception of it) is creating negative effects on culture within the City Departments and Divisions. It’s leading to both rumors and legitimate concerns about job security. It is also leading employees to “wonder why they are working hard if the entire Division might be shut down.” These concerns link directly to the first key issue that we highlight in this section.
- 11) Apex is making progress in improving the City’s IT position, particularly with cybersecurity; however, there is still room for significant improvement in general management. There appears to be no enterprise architecture for IT. The City needs enterprise architecture to map how its IT systems are supporting people and processes. Within AI, the City is lagging its peers (See Figure 21). The City is currently in the bottom 10% of the benchmark data.
- 12) Our in-depth review of processes within Public Works, Administrative Services, and Community Development revealed a CMMI maturity level ranging from 1-2. The City’s business process environment reflects early-stage maturity with limited standardization and no formal continuous improvement framework. Please see Figure 3 (page 7) for reference on maturity levels. A major concern is that none of the managers with whom we spoke were familiar with the concept of business process maturity levels, and they tended to score City process maturity at much higher levels than what is justified by definition.

2.0 Background and Purpose

Blackberg conducted this study to develop “Information and Insight 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 Information and Insight Analysis is the primary deliverable for “Step 2” that is shown in Figure 1. Step 1 focused on surveys and structured interviews of City staff with limited documentation reviews. Step 2 is a broader review of the elements within the City Fitness Framework (CFF) (See Figure 2, next page) that includes more quantitative and document reviews with a heavy focus on management systems and models (or a lack thereof). In this examination, Blackberg explores to what degree professional management is present in the City.

Basic Definition: Professional management includes a clear structure, clear goals, and people-focused execution. It means strategies, strong leadership, and efficient processes. From an organization’s view, hallmarks include clear goal-setting SMART objectives, plus solid communication to keep everyone aligned. There is effective delegation, where managers empower teams without micromanaging. Data-driven decisions are key, using metrics to track progress. Accountability is present through regular reviews, and adaptability handles changes smoothly. Finally, fostering culture with training and feedback builds high-performing groups.

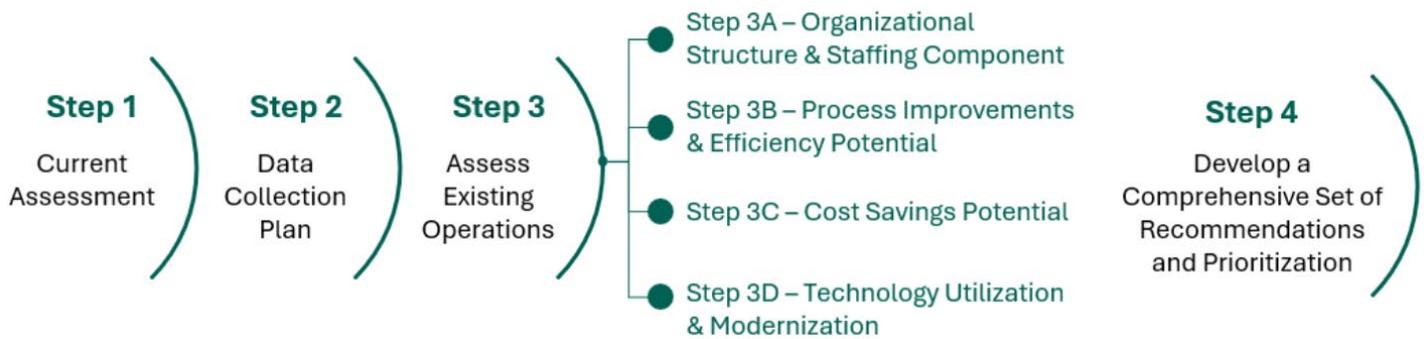
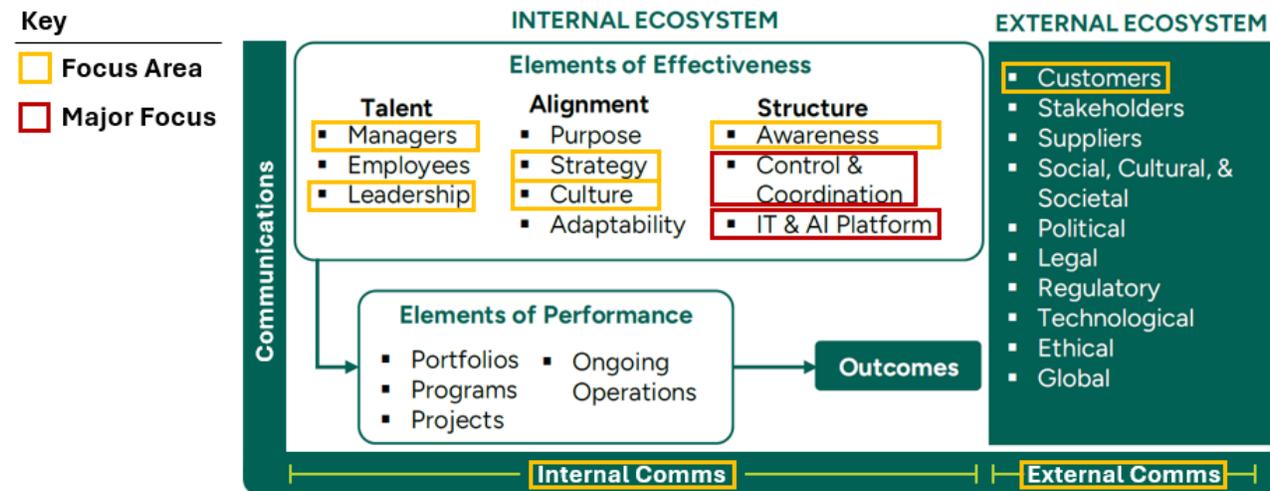


Figure 1 - Study Steps: Blackberg moves through four major steps in conducting the efficiency and business transformation study.

3.0 Methodology

Blackberg used the City Fitness Framework (CFF) (See Figure 2) to provide structure and context for the study. For the Information and Insight Analysis, we shifted to examining organizational elements outside of “Structure” (See Figure 2), but we also continued our analysis of Structure. 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. For the Information and Insight Analysis, we began examining those interactions. We also conducted more detailed analyses of Process and Performance metrics in Public Works, Administrative Services, and Community Development. Our methods included document reviews; data requests; quantitative analyses of data; interviews with Executive leadership, finance committee members, City Council members, and residents (small number); review of legacy analyses and surveys; one meeting with the outside IT service consultant (Apex); examination of publicly published materials on the website and social media; and examination of national benchmark data for Libraries.



Control and Coordination

Cross-functional activity elements

- Asset management
- Internal audit and compliance
 - Internal audit
 - Accounting & Budgeting
 - Legal
 - Operational departments
- Customer relationship management
- Change management
- Risk Management
- Quality Management
- Strategic planning
- Training and development
- Supply chain management
- New product development

Structural elements

- Hierarchy and chain of command
- Span of control
- Work specialization

Governance

- Policies
- Processes
- Performance metrics
- Decision making frameworks
- Oversight mechanisms
- Risk management protocols
- Compliance rules
- Resource allocation systems

Processes

- Core Business Processes
- Decision-Making Processes
- Governance and Oversight Processes
- Technology-Enabled Processes
- Collaboration and Coordination Processes
- Continuous Improvement Processes
- Standard Operating Procedures

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.

4.0 Key Findings and Themes

Based on document reviews; data requests; quantitative analyses of data; interviews with Executive leadership, finance committee members, City Council members, and residents (small number); review of legacy analyses and surveys; one meeting with the outside IT service consultant (Apex); examination of publicly published materials on the website and social media; and examination of national benchmark data for Libraries, Blackberg identified the key findings. We emphasize that most of the key findings are not simple, one-dimensional problems; rather, they are complex, multidimensional problems. In the following key findings, we attempt to be as succinct as possible, but we must expand the findings to address some of the multidimensional nature of these issues.

- 1) The various reports on budget deficiencies create confusion among staff and residents about what the actual annual shortfall is and what comprises it. There is also confusion about how the shortfall spreads over years (i.e. is it 3 years of deficits or is it in perpetuity). This is one element creating a sense of serious distrust towards City executives and the City government broadly. In section 1.1.2, we highlight some of the different realities that the City communicated about the budget in the past few years. There are obviously dramatic differences, and we see a lack of communication in explaining what reality truly is and why these differences exist (not in the Baker Tilly report, but in how the City communicated with residents and City staff about the issue). Undoubtedly, the near total lack of centralized asset management is closely tied to this issue, see section 1.1.6, and a near total lack of talent management is also tied to it, see section 1.1.1. We also noted that the use of Popular Annual Financial Reports ended in 2020, thereby reducing residents' ability to understand what is happening with City finances. The revisions to the budget derive from a Baker Tilly report that also included a series of budget strategies. Ideally, the City would tie these budget strategies to its Strategic Plan through a major update. However, the City does not maintain a Strategic Plan, see section 1.1.7. Finally, the combination of budget tracking issues, severe lack of management systems, governance inadequacy, and leadership and management styles creates a ripe environment for financial and/or procurement impropriety.
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Figure 3 – 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.”

5.0 Detailed Analysis

5.1 Quantitative Data

In this section, we share the quantitative data that we were able to obtain, and we include some discussion of it. We used the data to further inform the “Insights” section that is in section 5.2. Within the Insights section, we provide a deeper discussion of findings. We will also reference this data in our future deliverables that focus on recommendations on transformational changes needed.

5.1.1 Staffing

Blackberg received staffing data on September 23, 2025. This data included a breakdown of staffing by Department, Division, full-time positions, and part-time positions. Some of the full-time positions listed were vacant, but there was active recruitment occurring. We noted additional positions with a status of “unfunded” or “frozen”. We did not count these positions in the staffing summary.

Staffing Summary

Department	Division	Full-Time Positions	Part-Time Positions
City Manager's Office	Executive	1	
City Manager's Office	City Clerk	2	
Total:		3	
Administrative Services	Administrative Services	6	
Administrative Services	Human Resources	1	
Total:		7	
Community Development	Community Development	6	
Total:		6	
Community Services	Executive	2	
Community Services	Recreation	2	23
Community Services	Library	3	7
Community Services	Fire	8	15
Community Services	Police	15	
Total:		30	45
Public Works	Executive	9	
Public Works	Buildings & Streets	4	
Public Works	Parks & Trees	5	
Public Works	Underground Utilities	4	
Public Works	Water Treatment	3	
Public Works	Wastewater Treatment	4	
Total:		29	
Grand Total:		75	45

Figure 4 – Staffing Summary

5.1.2. Budget

The City’s budget suffered from a lack of long-range planning being tied to assets. In the Figure below, The City had a long-range budget forecast that showed minimal deficits and an overall healthy surplus.

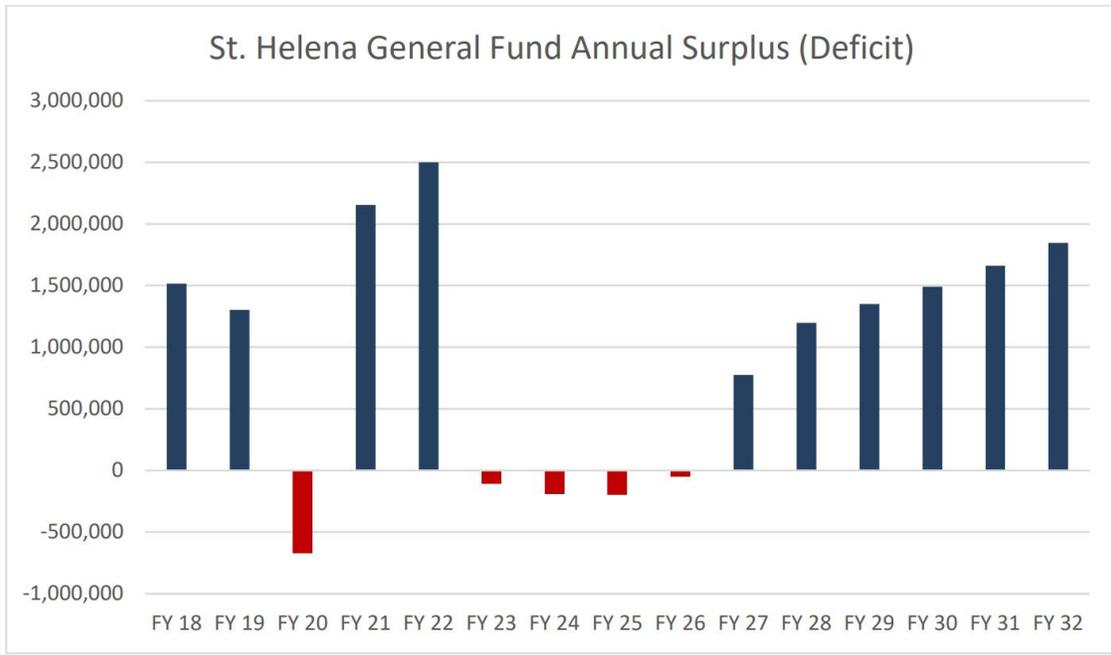


Figure 5 – Original Long-Range General Fund Forecast - dated August 29, 2022: This is a snapshot from the Baker Tilly “Report to the City Council on 28 Feb 2023.”

The City’s forecast faced a series of updates that completely changed the outlook. The first update showed a concerning, but still manageable, series of deficits between 2023 and 2028. The City could cover these deficits from the Fund Reserves.

Updated Baseline General Fund Forecast

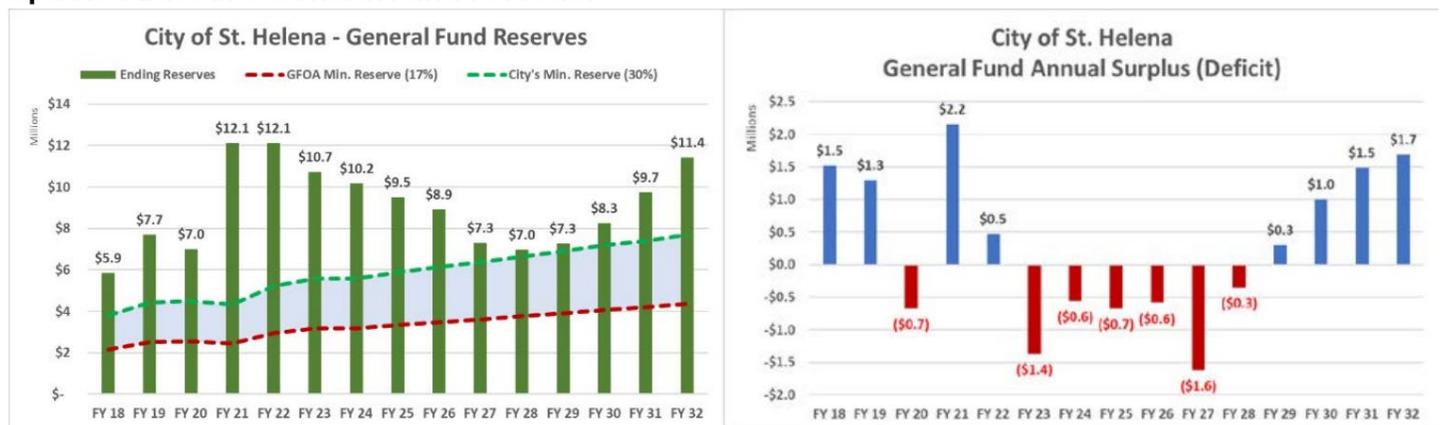


Figure 6 – St. Helena Updated Baseline General Fund Forecast: This is a snapshot from the Baker Tilly “Report to the City Council on 28 Feb 2023.”

The City then conducted “a series of studies, working committees, and reports to categorize assets, provide cost estimates for replacement/repair, and develop funding strategies for the replacement/repair of assets/infrastructure.” (Presentation on Long Range Financial Plan Options and Council Discussion and Direction, 28 Feb 2023). This resulted in an “estimated

\$155 million in Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects identified over the next 30-years in the following categories: Streets, Storm-drain, Water, Wastewater, and Civic facilities.”

The following is a direct quote from the “Long Range Financial Forecast Budget Strategies” provided by Baker Tilly:

“With the baseline forecast updated, Baker Tilly reviewed the City’s identified unfunded or underfunded needs and capacity to meet the service delivery expectations of the community. These needs are summarized in the three areas discussed below.

1. **Compensation adjustments.** The City is challenged with recruiting and retaining talent to fill necessary positions for basic service delivery. Initial estimates indicate that current compensation and benefits are well below market. Addressing this would require additional General Fund resources totaling \$1.7 million per year if implemented in FY 2024, which would bring City positions to within 75% of the variance between existing compensation levels and the median based on the compensation survey.

2. **Ideal staffing levels.** City staff assessed necessary positions to meet the community’s desired service levels and the City Council’s established priorities. These positions include a grants coordinator, code compliance staff, administrative assistants/analysts, one additional police officer, and maintenance workers. The cost of the eight new positions and the unfreezing of one position to address these staffing needs would be approximately \$1 million per year to the General Fund.

3. **Capital funding needs.** The City has assessed its unmet capital funding needs in five areas: streets, stormwater, civic facilities, water, and wastewater. Water and wastewater capital projects are funded by utility charges with the City Council having the authority to establish rates that cover both operational and capital costs. The other three capital areas could require General Fund sources. Based on the needs to address these three infrastructure areas, the City staff anticipates unfunded obligations totaling over \$2.5 million per year through FY 2028, tapering down to over \$2 million per year starting in FY 2029 and beyond. The unfunded capital and staffing needs are presented in Table 3 below.”

Category	Estimated Annual Shortfall Year 1
Streets CIP	\$1,787,000
Stormwater CIP	\$324,000
Civic CIP	\$413,000
Staffing	\$2,776,000
Total Shortfall –General Fund	\$5,300,000
Water CIP	\$25,000
Wastewater CIP	\$11,000
Staffing – Other Funds	\$1,154,000
Total Shortfall – All Funds	\$6,490,000

Figure 7 – Summary of Underfunded Capital and Staffing Needs – Year 1 (Table 3): This is a snapshot from the Baker Tilly “Report to the City Council on 28 Feb 2023.”



Figure 8 – Revised General Fund Forecast Including Additional Capacity and Addressing Unfunded/ Underfunded Needs: The final revision shows budget deficits that are highly alarming for City.

Baker Tilly provided a variety of strategies and scenarios to address the budget shortfall. This included detailed descriptions and expected outcomes of various strategies on Pages 11-26 of the *“Report to the City Council on 28 Feb 2023.”*

Critical Concerns: For any municipal government, the Baker Tilly findings and long-term financial forecasts should serve as an enormous “call to action.” However, the City did not respond by conducting a root-cause analysis nor did it create a strategic plan to explain how it would address these issues. This was a major missed opportunity to begin driving needed change. In our interviews, we found residents joining the City Finance Committee to investigate the situation (root cause analysis), and they informed us that they thought the City “needed some type of overarching plan for addressing the budget and other issues in the City.” A strategic plan would satisfy what they described to us.

We also noted distrust on both the side of the Committee and the City. Residents and City Staff have reported this issue of distrust to us on many occasions. If the City develops a strategic plan, and we highly recommend it does, a major strategic objective should be to address this issue of distrust.

5.1.3. Library

The data (See Figure 8) shows a very popular and well-run St. Helena Public Library (Library). It also shows a strong recovery from the COVID-19 shutdowns. This recovery is strong even though it is hampered by an FTE Staff reduction that reduced the number of programs dramatically. The data aligns with the Godbe Research that showed “Library Programs and Services” as the second highest rated (behind Fire Protection Services) in terms of “Satisfaction with City Services, Programs and Facilities.”

Measures	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Open Hours	2,257	1,787	728	2,227	2,193	2,428
People with Library Card	6,905	6,635	6,521	4,651	5,012	6,436
Physical visits	98,848	67,336	9,983	45,142	59,765	64,144
Website visits	41,200	43,659	45,072	48,136	49,584	54,635
Print materials	50,412	49,297	45,335	44,870	43,988	34,136
Collection items	184,189	217,537	160,596	243,684	136,034	47,291
Electronic materials	45,760	50,210	50,667	944,644	326,637	37,576
Checkouts	181,903	129,087	139,264	1,057,383	432,086	156,592
Lent to outside libraries	32,331	22,738	24,856	21,206	21,244	8,418
Brought from outside libraries	17,432	13,440	19,797	13,799	12,245	14,548
FTE staff	8.05	7.92	6.40	6.40	6.02	6.00
Reference questions	8,892	6,669	11,388	8,164	7,436	5,556
Programs	640	427	34	185	167	110
Program attendance	11,011	6,489	786	3,270	4,158	3,322

Figure 8 – Library Quantitative Data

We did not find evidence that the Library maintains **Performance Ratios**. However, the Library does have a considerable amount of high-quality, quantitative data that tracks its performance. Further, it participates in the Public Libraries Survey (PLS). To better understand, the Library’s performance, we used data from the PLS to compare it to 330 other libraries across the country, to which we collectively refer as “comparables.” The comparables were limited to towns with a population of 4,801 to 5,598 residents. The results of our analysis produced the Performance Ratios found in Figure 9 (next page).

Based on the Performance Ratios, the Library’s performance is exceptionally good. It is arguably in the **top 10** libraries in the data set. To the extent that there are negatives in the Performance Ratios, 3 of the 4 negative results are simply products of the Library’s success. They are driven by much higher usage and more intensive usage than average. The Library receives about 200% more physical visits than an average library of its size. Further, of those who visit the library, they request librarian reference support about 250% more and borrow about 80% more. This leads to the need for higher amounts of Staffing per 1,000 service hours; usage of a higher amount of operating income per capita; and higher collection expenditure per capita. The one negative that the Library should examine is the Collection Turnover Rate. It is in the negative because of the very large number of electronic resources available. The Library could consider lowering this. This would also improve the Collection Expenditure per Capita. We also note, that once you adjust for work volume, the Library is running a slightly leaner than average staffing (See Performance Ration “Staffing per Visits per Open Hour”).

Figure 9 – Library Performance Ratios

Performance Ratios	St. Helena	Average		Definition	Formula	Typical Benchmark for Small Libraries (Pop. ~5,000)
Total Circulation per Capita:	28.33	6.00	Higher is better	Measures borrowing activity relative to the served population; indicates collection relevance and user engagement.	Total circulation (physical + electronic) ÷ Population of legal service area	5–10 items per person annually (e.g., 25,000–50,000 total for a 5,000-person town). Higher rates suggest strong demand.
Visits per Capita	11.16	3.98	Higher is better	Gauges foot traffic and in-person engagement	Total physical visits (TOTPHYS/VISITS) ÷ Population of legal service area	4–6 visits per person annually (e.g., 20,000–30,000 total).
Reference Transactions per Capita	1.39	.57	Higher is better	Tracks informational assistance provided; reflects staff expertise and patron needs met.	Total reference transactions ÷ Population of legal service area	.4–3 per person annually (e.g., 5,000–15,000 total).
Collection Turnover Rate	.35	0.70	Higher is better	Shows how often materials are checked out; higher rates indicate a fresh, in-demand collection.	Total circulation ÷ Total collection size (at year-end)	2–4 turnovers per year for adult/children's materials combined.
Staffing per 1,000 Service Hours	2.75	1.64	Lower is better	Evaluates staffing efficiency during open hours; balances service quality with costs.	Total FTE staff (professional + other) ÷ Annual public service hours in 1,000's	1.5 FTE per 1,000 service hours (e.g., for a library open ~2,500 hours/year, 1.25–2.5 FTE).
Staffing per visits per open hour	0.23	0.27	Lower is better	Evaluates staffing efficiency during open hours adjusted for physical visits per hour.	Total FTE staff (professional + other) ÷ Visits per Open Hour	Middle range: .23-.3
Operating Income per Capita	216.41	53.17	Lower is better	Assesses funding adequacy relative to community size; key for financial health.	Total operating revenue ÷ Population of legal service area	\$50–\$80 per person annually (e.g., \$250,000–\$400,000 total).
Staffing Expense Ratio	0.74	0.80	Lower is better	Proportion of budget spent on personnel; indicates investment in human resources vs. other costs.	Total staff salaries & wages ÷ Total operating expenses	50–65% of budget.
Program Attendance per Capita	0.78	0.64	Higher is better	Measures community engagement with library programs (e.g., storytimes, workshops). High attendance indicates strong outreach.	Total program attendance (PLS #503) ÷ Population of legal service area (PLS #100)	0.5–1.5 visits per person annually (e.g., 2,500–7,500 total). Higher for active libraries.
Circulation per Visit	2.54	1.51	Higher is better	Gauges how often visits lead to borrowing; indicates collection relevance per interaction.	Total circulation (PLS #601) ÷ Total physical visits (PLS #501)	1–2 items per visit. Your 64,000 visits might yield 64,000–128,000 circulation for this range.
Visits per Open Hour	26.58	12.99	Higher is busier	Measures how busy the library is during operating hours; useful for scheduling/staffing.	Total physical visits (PLS #501) ÷ Total annual public service hours (PLS #500)	10–20 visits per hour. For 64,000 visits over ~2,500 hours/year, your library is ~25.6 visits/hour—above average.
Collection Expenditure per Capita	22.32	5.06	Lower is better	This is the total dollar amount spent on all library materials, including print (books, periodicals) and non-print items (audio, video, and digital resources) relative to community size.	Total collection expenditure (PLS #350) ÷ Population	\$5–\$10 per person annually (e.g., \$25,000–\$50,000 total).

5.1.4. Planning Division

The Planning Division provided the following 2024 metrics:

Planning Permits	#
PC Applications Approved	14
Administrative Applications Approved	42
Number Denied	0
% of Issue letters completed within 30 days	100
# planning applications On hold-Let's discuss	9

The Building Department provided the following 2024 metrics:

Building Permits	Residential	Non-Residential
Number Issued	370	120
Average Number of Days for City Response-first submittal	28	28
Number Denied	0	0
2024 Application Fees (plan check and inspection)	\$350,300.11	\$51,619.65

5.1.5. Grapevine Report

We received the following data from Grapevine reporting for the period 01/01/2025-9/30/2025:

ALL CATEGORIES		PW CATEGORIES		NON PW CATEGORIES	
Tickets Submitted	584	Tickets Submitted	532	Tickets Submitted	52
Avg Days to Acknowledge	2	Avg Days to Acknowledge	2	Avg Days to Acknowledge	3
Avg Days to Close	14	Avg Days to Close	13	Avg Days to Close	16
Median Days to Acknowledge	1	Median Days to Acknowledge	1	Median Days to Acknowledge	1
Median Days to Close	8	Medians Days to Close	8	Median Days to Close	10

5.1.6. Parks and Recreation

Below are the activities, participants, and total fees collected by Parks and Recreation. At this time, we do not have the total costs for the City’s recreation programs, but ideally, the fees should cover 50-70% of the cost, to align with benchmarks.

Summer Camps			Fall Programs		
Activity	Participants	Total	Activity	Participants	Total
Adventure Day Camp 2025	222	\$ 41,340.00	Fall Bocce League	14	\$ 3,150.00
After Care: Adventure Day Camp	57	\$ 2,565.00	Kickboxing & Muay Thai- Fall Session 2025	9	\$ 3,510.00
Challenger Soccer Camps	10	\$ 2,126.00	Youth Soccer	191	\$23,780.00
Crane Park Tennis Academy: Ages 4-16	84	\$ 28,560.00	Matias Martial Arts Taekwondo- Fall 2025	26	\$ 9,630.00
Junior Pickleballers Camp	6	\$ 2,040.00		240	\$40,070.00
Kids Cooking Camp with Chef On	7	\$ 2,625.00			
National Academy of Athletics Summer Camps	70	\$ 13,500.00			
Play-Well STEM Summer Camps	23	\$ 1,610.00			
	479	\$ 94,366.00			

Summer Programs			Fall Programs		
Activity	Participants	Total	Activity	Participants	Total
Kickboxing & Muay Thai- Summer Session 2025	5	\$ 1,950.00	Spring Bocce	92	\$42,850.00
Matias Martial Arts Taekwondo- Summer 2025	26	\$ 10,062.00	Youth Basketball	0	\$ -
Water Aerobics	27	\$ 2,070.00	Matias Martial Arts Taekwondo- Summer 2025	26	\$10,062.00
Adult Slow Pitch Softball	12	\$ 5,775.00	Adult Basketball League	11	\$ 6,050.00
Community Soccer Night Adult Tournament	13	\$ 325.00	Co-Ed Youth Volleyball	49	\$ 3,675.00
	83	\$ 20,182.00	Kickboxing & Muay Thai- Spring Session	11	\$ 4,290.00
			Little Sluggers Tee Ball	46	\$ 2,990.00
				129	\$58,962.00

Figure 10 – Annual Activities Report for Parks and Recreation

5.1.7. City Clerk

The City hired Regional Government Services (RGS) to assess the City Clerk’s Office. The assessment focused on current practices, processes, and organizational structure. RGS estimated a weekly workload for the Clerk’s Office of 42-60 hours, and a breakdown of that weekly workload is shown in Figure 11. The requirements of the City Clerk are currently being met by two individuals working in coordination with each other. One estimates his time commitment of 50%, while the other estimates her time commitment of approximately 70%. This is in line with RGS’s estimate of a 42-60 hour workweek. Please note that these two individuals are also fulfilling other roles currently.

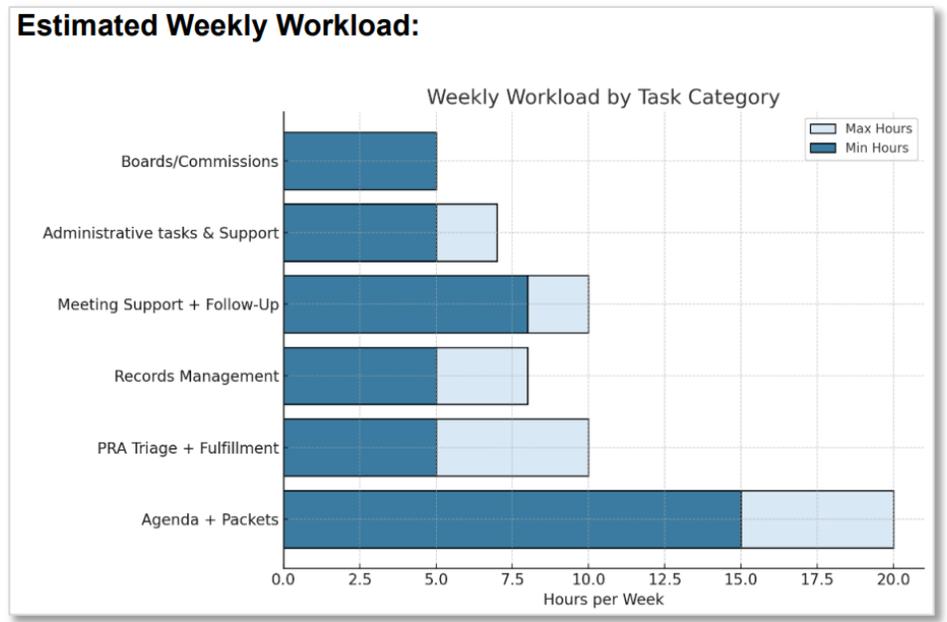


Figure 11 – City Clerk’s Office work Breakdown Estimate

RGS also identified the following comparatives for the Clerk’s Office. A significant finding is that St. Helena processes a very high number of public record requests (PRA) each year. St. Helena’s volume is approximately 3x what Calistoga processes.

The City Clerk’s office has two major issues: 1) there is a significant backup of records digitization with boxes of physical records held in several City locations that the Clerk’s Office needs to digitize; and 2) the current IT solutions do not enable further automation that would better serve residents and relieve pressure on the City Clerk’s office (i.e. PRA requests).

City/Year	PRA	Resolutions	Claims	Ordinances	Population
St. Helena 2025 (YTD - June 18, 2025)	97	60	3	2	5257
St. Helena 2024	177	165	4	7	5257
St. Helena 2023	161	169	21	5	5257
Napa 2025 (YTD - May 30, 2025)	202	56	57	6	76921
Napa 2024	451	137	110	5	76921
Calistoga 2025 (YTD - June 18, 2025)	25	55	2	3	5022
Calistoga 2024	30	98	3	13	5022
Yountville 2025 (YTD - June 16, 2025)	15	32	0	1	3356
Yountville 2024	55	88	2	3	3356
Carmel by the Sea (YTD – July 9, 2025)	135	69	N/A	1	3200

Figure 12 – City Clerk Comparables

5.2. Insights

The insights section contains details on the City’s status in various elements of effectiveness and performance. We also examine the external ecosystem for customers and City communications. The yellow-boxed items represent areas of focus for our analysis, and the red-boxed items represent areas of major focus for our analysis.

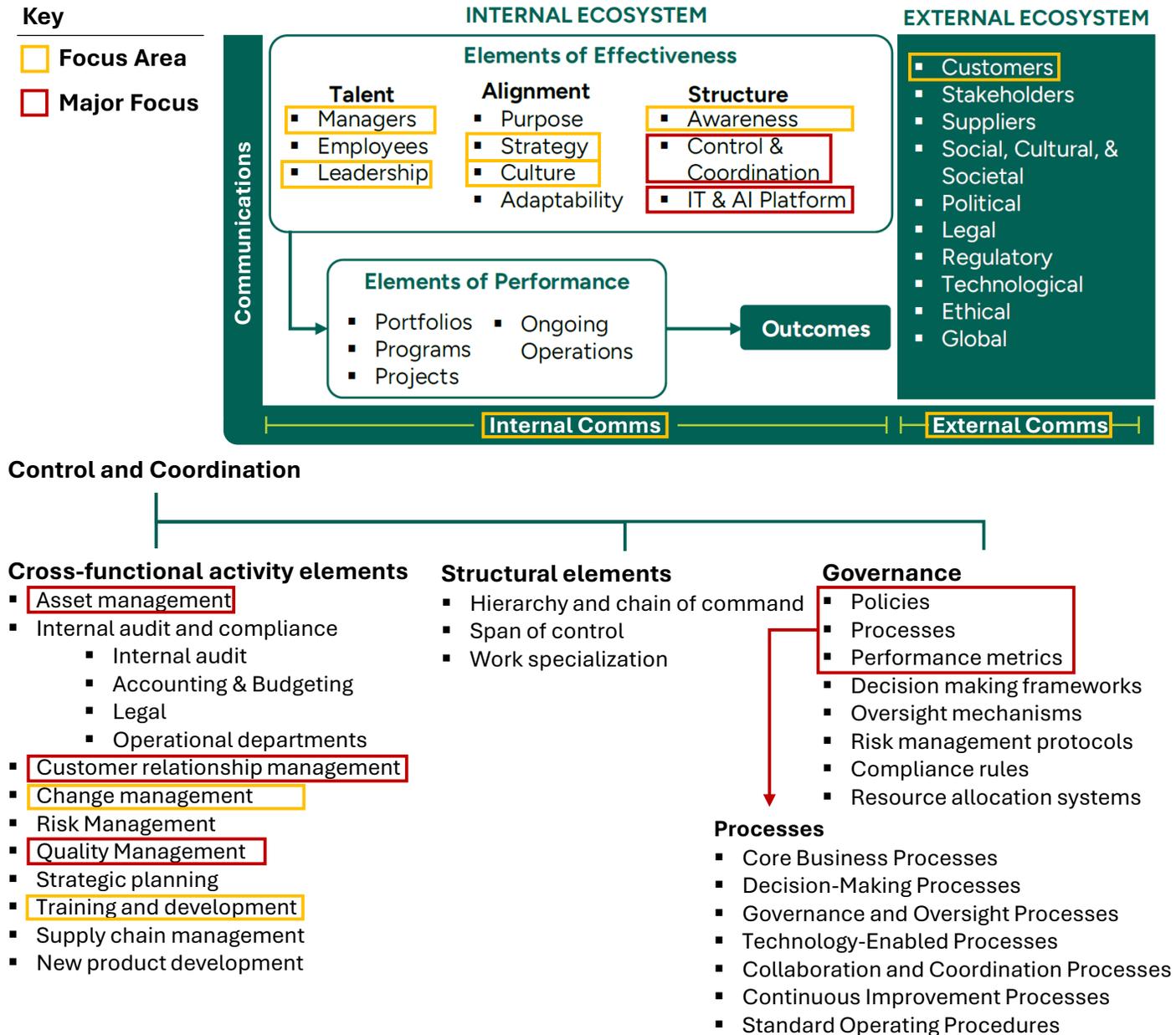


Figure 13 – City Fitness Framework: In conducting efficiency and business transformation studies, Team Blackberg examines all elements that impact a City’s effectiveness and performance.

5.2.1. Talent

Within the element of talent, we examine two primary aspects of the organization: 1) the talent management system and 2) the capabilities of individuals broadly.

Talent management system. We found the City’s talent management system to be severely lacking or non-existent in certain components. There are many different talent management systems, but most of them contain the same components or highly similar components (See Figure 14). To the degree that we found some components present, they tend to be reactionary. For example, training does occur, but it tends to occur as a reaction to a new system being implemented or an employee pushing for a type of training. However, we do not see evidence of stated competencies with planned future dates for related training. This seems particularly acute for general management knowledge competencies. In other areas, like performance management, we saw even less evidence of a systematic approach. If an employee(s) is having performance issues, is there a stated process that is followed for documenting the issues and providing corrective action in a robust manner? Except for extreme circumstances, the answer is mostly “no.” When you look at the principles of talent management, such as “Alignment with Strategy,” this does not exist because the City has no Strategic Plan. These are just some select examples of the overall lack of a talent management system.

Capabilities of Individuals Broadly. We did not assess the “employees level” (See Figure 13); however, we did assess at the management and leadership levels (including executive leadership) levels. Our findings are mixed. In the Police and Fire Departments, we found evidence that management and leadership levels have an expected set of capabilities, degrees/certifications, and experience. In the Library, we found evidence that management and leadership have an exceptionally strong set of capabilities, degrees/certifications, and experience.

Critical Considerations: We have major concerns about other Departments and Divisions within the City. We found multiple positions lacking in what we consider to be minimal qualifications. Minimal qualifications are not attributes that can easily be rectified with mentoring, coaching, or professional training courses. These are attributes such as an appropriate type of bachelor’s or master’s degree, total years of relevant experience, or major professional certifications. This issue is likely secondary to the City not maintaining minimum qualifications for positions in a talent management system and facing challenging recruiting environments.



Figure 14 – Example Talent Management System

5.2.2. Governance

The governance of policies, processes, and performance metrics is severely lacking. Currently, the City does not have a central repository of policies, processes, and performance metrics co-located with an Integrated Policy-Performance (IPP) Grid. An IPP Grid is a taxonomy of all policies, processes, and performance metrics used across the city. It shows how specific performance metrics align to specific processes and how specific processes align to specific policies.

In practice, the structure creates a two-way flow between executive leadership and daily operations. The downward flow includes: City Council defines the policies; City Manager and Executives establish high-level processes; and Mid-level management establishes detailed processes and performance metrics in consultation with executive leadership. The upward flow includes: daily performance drives performance metrics data that flows up to Mid-level management, City Manager and Executives, and City Council.

Governance of the IPP Grid should include a routine review and development cycle (that is codified) to ensure consistent development and currency of policies, processes, and performance metrics. The City’s policies, processes, and performance metrics should also be catalogued and saved in the same central repository (e.g. SharePoint) for reference. To provide clarity on roles and responsibilities, a variation of the classic RACI chart is often helpful to use. The variation is a “RASCI” chart. The RASCI chart adds the “S” to include the role of “Support.” This enables the City to identify the roles as they relate to specific policies, processes, and performance metrics.

Critical Considerations: The City’s charter establishes a “Council-Manager” form of government. In this form of government, the Council appoints a City Manager, and the City Manager delivers professional management of the City. However, there is a breakdown in this model that appears to have been present for many years. The breakdown is a lack of use of fundamental professional management approaches, frameworks, and models. A key example is the lack of a strategic plan. Our research revealed that the City has not had a strategic plan in the past 10 years, and likely, it has never had one. The City Council may need to codify the expectation that the City Manager create and maintain a strategic plan and other fundamental professional management approaches, frameworks, and models.



Figure 15 – RASCI Chart Concepts

5.2.3. Quality Management

Quality Management is critical for resident satisfaction, and it is intrinsically linked to processes. For example, to the extent there is a quality issue, one should implement process modification to eliminate the issue or improve the quality. The basic definition of a Quality Management System (QMS) is a structured framework for policies, processes, and performance metrics that is designed to ensure consistent quality in an organization’s products or services. This directly ties to the City’s need to establish Governance for policies, processes, and performance metrics. Further, a city government QMS revolves around key components such as risk management, process control, continuous improvement, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Currently, the City has been improving by establishing elements of a QMS; however, we do not find evidence of a full QMS framework that is documented with a structured plan for incremental development and operation. Obvious QMS guidance that the City may consider is ISO 9001:2015 (general quality management) and ISO 18091:2019 (tailored for local governments), the system would focus on resident satisfaction, operational efficiency, and compliance with California regulations (e.g., for water security and environmental sustainability, aligning with City Council goals). Lean Six-Sigma is another QMS for consideration in the future. To provide some conceptual guidance of a QMS, we include Figure 16. This is not our recommended QMS for the City; rather, it is a generic QMS to highlight the general structure. In the future, we will provide a specific QMS recommendation for the City.

Conceptually, Quality Management includes Quality Assurance and Quality Control (See Figure 16). The City is currently focused on Quality Control with some Proactive Management and a lot of Reactive Management. Although this represents the early stages of Quality Management implementation, it is an improvement from the historical situation within the City that often-ignored complaints and issues. However, the City still needs to improve Quality Management through the implementation of Quality Assurance concepts and a more universal Proactive Quality Control.



Figure 16 – Example Quality Management System

5.2.4. Customer Relationship Management

The City has a broadly available Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system (we are applying a loose definition here of CRM) that is called “Grapevine.” Grapevine is available via the City’s website or on mobile app. The City describes Grapevine as, “a free, easy-to-use app and web-based platform that allows City of St. Helena community members to provide pictures, videos, specific descriptions, and more to request fixes to issues throughout the City including potholes, missing signs, and water leaks. This tool will allow various City departments, including Public Works, to manage requests more efficiently with a centralized and integrated reporting and task management system. City staff can assign tasks to specific individuals or teams, track its status, and engage with residents further as needed, including letting them know when an issue has been fixed or resolved.”

Grapevine is a type of municipal service request platform. While Grapevine excels at basic 311-style service requests (aligning with the city's goals for community information and engagement), it functions more as a narrow 311/constituent service tool than a full-fledged Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. True CRMs (e.g., Granicus or Salesforce for Governments) handle broader constituent interactions, including emails, surveys, event registrations, and analytics. There are many strengths with Grapevine; however, the City should also be aware of some of the likely key weaknesses, which we highlight in the table below.

Weakness	Description	Relevance to St. Helena
Limited Scope Beyond Service Requests	Primarily designed for one-way issue reporting (e.g., submit photo/GPS of a pothole, track resolution), lacking robust two-way communication, personalized outreach, or integration with other channels like email/SMS campaigns. No native support for proactive engagement,	Hinders broader resident relationship-building, as noted in the study’s emphasis on "Resident/Customer Interaction and Service Delivery." For a small city, this silos interactions, missing opportunities to tie requests to educational content (e.g., sustainability tips).

	such as newsletters or targeted surveys on council goals (e.g., water management feedback).	
Basic Analytics and Reporting	Offers simple status updates and community voting, but lacks advanced dashboards, predictive analytics, or segmentation (e.g., by neighborhood or issue type). No AI-driven insights for trends like recurring water leaks or infrastructure hotspots.	Conflicts with the study's call for better "Efficiency and Performance" metrics; could limit data use in budget processes (e.g., FY 2025-26 priorities for infrastructure). Small cities need scalable analytics without high costs.
Integration Challenges with Existing Systems	Minimal native APIs for linking to city tools (e.g., budget software, GIS for water resources, or HR systems). Custom integrations (e.g., with the city's financial policies) may require vendor support or IT workarounds.	Amplifies "IT and AI Platform" gaps from the study; poor coordination could frustrate departments like Public Works (e.g., syncing service requests with garage cost allocation in budgets).
Scalability and Customization Limitations	Optimized for basic, high-volume requests in small towns but struggles with custom workflows (e.g., multi-step approvals for environmental sustainability projects) or scaling to include non-issue features like event RSVPs.	As a city pursuing "Forward Looking Questions" in the study, it may not evolve with needs like AI-enhanced engagement; limited customization could strain the small staffing of Departments.
User Adoption and Accessibility Barriers	Relies on app/web access, which may exclude non-tech-savvy residents (e.g., seniors in a wine-country town). Community voting feature risks "popularity bias" over equitable input, and there's no offline mode for field reports.	Undermines "Culture" and "Talent" themes by not fully engaging diverse residents; could widen gaps in community information, per council goals.
Security and Compliance Risks	Handles public data (e.g., photos of issues) but may lack advanced features like GDPR/CCPA-level privacy controls or audit trails for sensitive reports (e.g., environmental hazards). As a free tool, vendor support might be basic.	Poses risks for a city with strict financial policies; could expose data in transformation efforts without robust governance.

Beyond Grapevine, the City has started making other strides in CRM. A basic example is pushing cultural change that emphasizes responding quickly to customer requests that arrive via phone calls. The City has also been making strides with customer communications that support CRM. However, we did not find evidence of a formal CRM system.

5.2.5. Change Management

Change is hard, and it often fails within organizations: "70% failure rate: A classic statistic from McKinsey (1995) and echoed in Harvard Business Review (2000), where initiatives like restructuring or cultural shifts often falter due to execution gaps. This is reaffirmed in 2022-2025 reports, with only about 30% fully succeeding." This is why change management is critical for organizations. It will not guarantee success, but it will greatly improve the probability of success (and make it easier for everyone involved).

There appears to be little or no change management used by the City in a systematic way. We found no evidence that common change management models/frameworks (e.g. Prosci ADKAR, Kotter's 8-step, etc.) are understood and being used. However, we know the City is attempting to make significant changes. Information Technology (IT) changes are an example. An ADKAR model (See Figure 17) would be an excellent fit for IT-centered changes. This situation is unnecessarily lowering the probability of success as the City moves forward with changes.

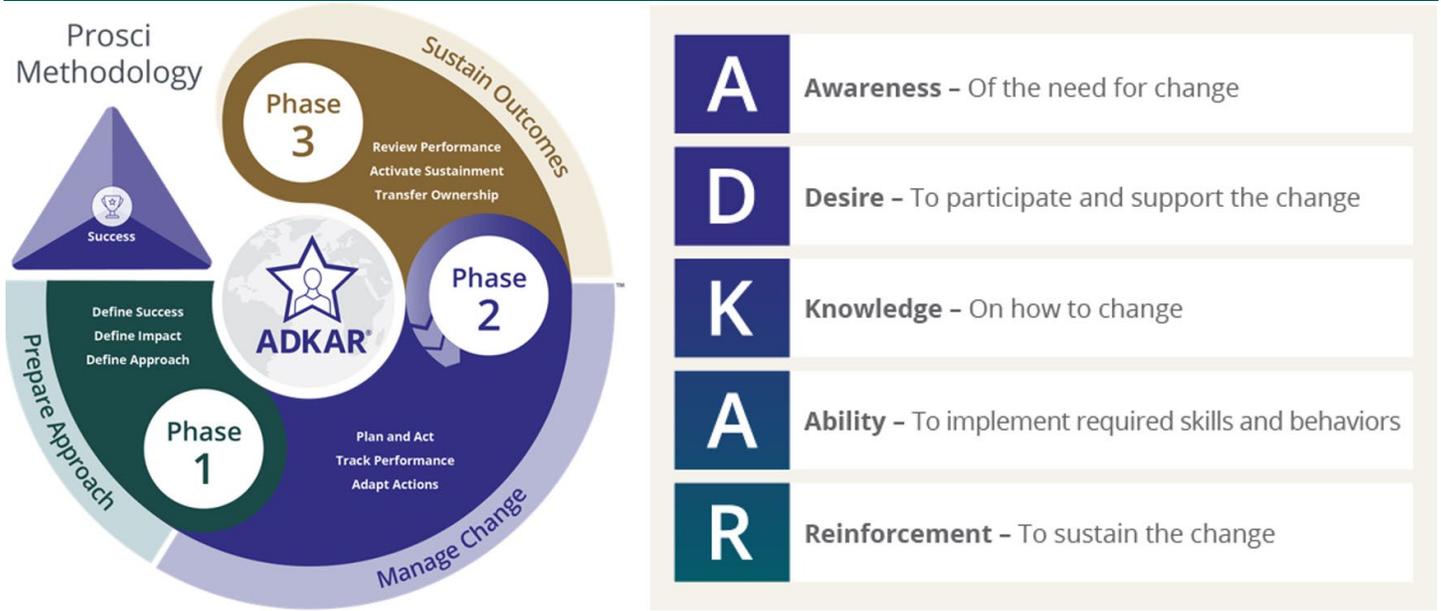


Figure 17 – ADKAR Model of Change Management

5.2.6. Asset Management

City assets encompass a broad range of items: Land and parkland, buildings, vehicles, infrastructure (sidewalks, roads, bridges, etc.), equipment, utilities (water/sewer systems, streetlights, etc.), furniture, cash, and investments. We can subdivide assets in various ways; however, for this section, we simply address two broad categories: 1) savings accounts, checking accounts, and investments and 2) tangible assets. The management of cash and investments fits within the category of finance and accounting, which the City has examined separately. Therefore, we focus on tangible assets outside of that. Overall, the City is severely lacking in asset management systems and frameworks.

We found evidence that City Departments and Divisions track some tangible assets through spreadsheets and other documents. However, in other cases, it appears that there is no tracking. This problem becomes particularly acute when we expand the concept from a simple list of tangible assets to maintenance and condition management. The problem grows further when we begin searching for information that addresses what work has been completed on assets (e.g. what maintenance has been performed this year; what new installations have been completed this year; etc.).

We have seen evidence that there is some monthly and weekly planning for work to be completed, but there is a lack of benchmarking and quantitative measurement of it. There is also some basic planning for seasonal tasks that occur annually, but it is limited to major, well-known items, such as brush clearing for fire prevention. The individual that provided us this information also stressed that these monthly and weekly planning sessions had only started in the past year, and prior to that, there was none. A separate individual reported to us that they were having a conversation with multiple Public Works employees at lunch. When that individual asked the Public Works employees what they would be doing the rest of the afternoon, they said, “we don’t know, we don’t have anything scheduled.”

There is a complete lack of centralized management. There is no centralized system that tracks all the asset maintenance and condition. The City does use ArcGIS, but it is not being used effectively. This is a key point. We have heard the usage of misleading responses or information. For example, “does the City have a centralized asset management system?...Yes, we have ArcGIS”. However, there are many different ArcGIS solutions and simply having the system does not mean it is being used effectively or correctly. We heard many reports of residents requesting a service for items ranging from potholes to road signs, yet the time period to have them addressed spanned years in some cases. Further, there was no follow-up with the resident to explain when it will be fixed or why it will not be fixed.

This is an area we need to investigate further; however, it has been difficult to get information from Public Works. For example, we made the following request to Public Works on September 29, 2025:

Joe,

Good afternoon, I'm a Blackberg consultant and am trying to get some volume of work data for public works. Do you have any data similar to the following:

Buildings and Streets: Annual counts like number of street repairs, pothole fixes, sidewalk installations, building inspections, maintenance tickets, etc. Do you have square footage maintained for buildings, miles of streets paved or repaved, and maybe emergency response logs for urgent calls.

Parks & Trees: Annual tree planting, pruning, or removal counts; park maintenance hours or visits logged; playground inspections; trail upkeep miles; or irrigation system repairs. Also, any season workload data (e.g. brush and debris removal for fire prevention).

Underground Utilities: Annual water, sewer, gas repairs, sewer line cleanings or CCTV inspections, hydrant flushes, new service connections-both residential and commercial-and average response time to emergencies like breaks or backups; and footage flushed or jetted each year.

Water Treatment: Gallons processed daily or annually, annual number of filter changes, chemical usage volumes-like chlorine or fluoride-backwash cycles run, compliance test results, and any maintenance downtimes.

Waste Water Treatment: Gallons treated yearly, sludge volume hauled off, pump station calls-outs, overflow incidents, biosolids processed-like tons per month-and permit violation counts, meter readings for flow rates and energy use. Also, is public works tracking any benchmarking data or performance data for these divisions? I know this is a lot to ask for, but it is important for our analysis.

After multiple follow-up emails to Public Works and City Executives, we received the following response on October 8, 2025: “Here's some data from a community academy presentation in 2024. The other data requests are not readily available and will take more time...”

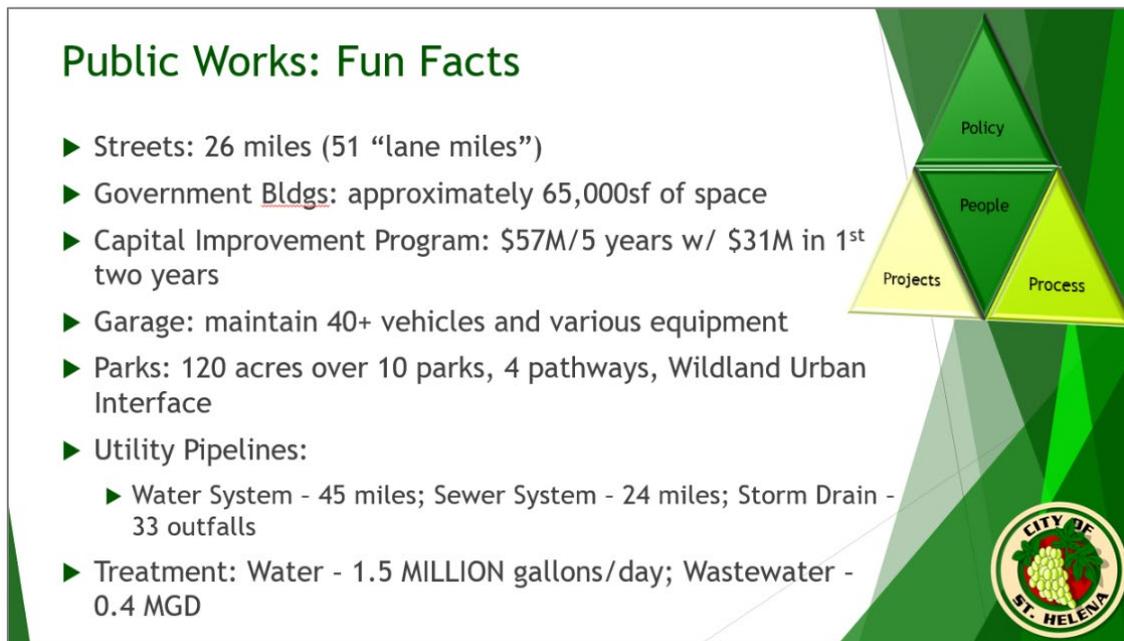


Figure 18 – Public Works Fun Facts Data

As of October 20, 2025, Blackberg has not received any further information from Public Works.

Even with the limited data provided by Public Works, we find areas of concern. First, this data implies that Public Works is managing 65,000sf of building space; however, we received reports that the Library has a roofing issue and there is no planning or budgeting for this issue. The reports also stated that there was confusion over who is responsible for requesting money in the budget for the roof repair. Second, Public Works stating “120 acres over 10 parks, 4 pathways, Wildland Urban Interface” is misleading. Most Cities differentiate between “natural areas or undeveloped parkland” and “developed parks or active recreation spaces”. A resident could see such a report and think: “the City is mowing, weeding, fertilizing, irrigating, and gardening 120 acres of land every week”. However, is the City actually doing this, or does the 120 acres include a substantial amount of undeveloped parkland? We received input from one resident who said: “We had been trying to get the City to make some repairs at the skate park for a very long time. When they finally came out, it was four or more managers all talking about what to do. The repair request was pretty simple. Why would it take all these different managers to visit the park?”

We did find that asset management at the Water Treatment facility was more robust; however, the data remains at the plant and not in a centralized system.

5.2.7. Strategy

Originally, we were told that St. Helena had a Strategic Plan; however, it is no longer in use. We then discovered that the City might not have ever had a strategic plan, but it does have a mission and vision statement. The City has a “General Plan,” but its purpose differs significantly from a Strategic Plan. The General Plan “...sets forth the City’s policies to guide future land use decisions and provides the needed framework to preserve the character and quality of development that the community desires. The General Plan also helps to establish the processes by which the City’s evolution and changes to existing land uses will take place.”

A strategic plan is vital for St. Helena to provide a clear roadmap for achieving long-term goals, ensuring fiscal resilience, and enhancing infrastructure. It aligns resources with City Council objectives, such as water security and community engagement, fostering efficient governance. This structured approach enables proactive decision-making, adaptability to challenges, and sustained community development, as outlined in the FY 2025-26 and 2026-27 budget documents. It also supports communication with managers, employees, and residents. Currently, communications are ranked relatively low by residents based upon the Godbe Research report of a 0.60 rating for “Communicating with Residents.”

Critical Considerations: The City’s website contains a copious amount of information. The routine communications are good, and they meet or exceed what Blackberg typically sees in a town of this size. However, the communications do not address the key issues facing the City (Water, Roads, Budget, etc.). Further, communications lack a unifying document that provides a summary of the City’s efforts in a relatively easy to understand format. We emphasize the “easy to understand” because many publications are dense legal or accounting focused documents (e.g. 300+ page budgets). When we visit the website, we see key issues being addressed, albeit sparsely (See Figure 19). However, when one clicks on the “Water Enterprise Spending...” link, you arrive at a letter from a law firm (See Figure 19). This is excellent for transparency, but it is challenging for 90% or more of Residents to understand. Further, it does not overtly show how this links to any larger strategy to address Residents’ concerns or interests. A City Strategic Plan would provide the missing “unifying document” that the website lacks and would significantly improve communications with Residents (i.e. what is the City doing about water quality, affordable housing, road repairs, and the budget issues).

City's Website Communications

Letter from Law Firm

 <p>Water Enterprise Spending: Community Questions Answered</p>	 <p>2025 Pavement Projects Have Started</p> <p>Major roadway improvements are coming to St. Helena with work starting</p>	 <p>Mayor's Budget Message: Emphasizing Belt Tightening and Shared Sacrifice</p>	 <p>BBK BEST BEST & KRIEGER LLP ATTORNEYS AT LAW</p> <p>Ethan Walsh (916) 551-2822 ethan.walsh@bbkllaw.com</p> <p>Memorandum</p> <p>To: City Council City of St. Helena</p> <p>From: Best Best & Krieger LLP</p> <p>Date: June 21, 2025</p> <p>Re: Proposition 218: Response to Assertions Raised by Tom Belt</p> <p>File No.: 83578.00116</p>
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Figure 19 – Example City Communications

5.2.8. Culture – Library and Parks and Recreation

In both the Library and Parks and Recreation, the culture demonstrates commitment to quality and desire to serve the St. Helena community. We found evidence of a culture committed to collaboration, transparency, and improvement. However, there are also clearly negative elements in both Divisions. These negative elements are job insecurity and mission insecurity. Both negative elements stem from the budget challenges faced by the City. Employees are concerned, given the non-critical nature of their Divisions, that they may face significant budget cuts or be dissolved entirely. This results in feelings of, “why am I working hard to build and improve this Division if it’s going to be dissolved.” There are also direct concerns about future employment.

In addition to these negative elements, there is also a sense that they are an “after thought” of executive leadership within the City. They also discuss receiving little in terms of communications from executive leadership.

Critical Considerations: To the extent possible, communications to these Divisions about future plans would be helpful. Undoubtedly, there are legitimate degrees of uncertainty; however, the City should focus on preventing untrue rumors from spreading by directly addressing these types of concerns with employees.



Mayor's Budget Message: Emphasizing Belt Tightening and Shared Sacrifice

We find ourselves facing a challenging fiscal environment. Like families and businesses throughout our City, we must confront hard choices as we work to close a significant budget gap.

[Read on...](#)

5.2.9. IT & AI Platform

The City is currently using Apex Technology Management, LLC (Apex) to support IT. Prior to Apex’s engagement, the City experienced a major cybersecurity event in May of 2024 that involved a ransomware attack. This attack and prior attacks targeted the City’s on-premise servers.

This incident highlights ongoing risks to municipal systems, that was similar to attacks on other California cities. California municipalities, counties, and local government entities (including school districts and utilities) have been frequent targets of cyberattacks in recent years, with a notable uptick in 2024 and 2025. Based on official reports and security analyses, the most common types include:

- **Ransomware Attacks:** Malicious software encrypts systems or data, demanding payment for restoration. These often disrupt city services like payments, libraries, and administrative functions.
- **Unauthorized Access and Data Breaches:** Hackers gain entry to networks, stealing sensitive information such as Social Security numbers, medical records, financial details, or personal identifiers. This is the most reported type, leading to identity theft risks.
- **General Cyber Attacks:** Broad category including phishing, malware, or denial-of-service (DoS) attacks that compromise systems without specific ransom demands.
- **State-Sponsored or Sophisticated Campaigns:** Increasingly tied to geopolitical tensions, involving espionage or advanced persistent threats (APTs).

These attacks exploit vulnerabilities in outdated infrastructure, limited cybersecurity budgets, and human error. California leads nationally in at-risk cities, with metros like Fresno, Bakersfield, Riverside, Stockton, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and San Francisco topping vulnerability indexes due to high population density and critical infrastructure. Ransomware incidents surged 126% globally in 2025, with U.S. local governments heavily impacted.

As last reported in fiscal year 2024, the City maintains the following IT subscriptions:

Department	IT Subscriptions	Term*	FY24 Annual Cost
City-wide	Microsoft 365	12 months - Auto Renew	23,715
City-wide	Microsoft Project	12 months - Auto Renew	2,892
City-wide	Adobe	12 Months	9,585
City Clerk	ECS Imaging - Laserfische	12 months - Auto Renew	13,850
City Clerk	I-compass	12 months - Auto Renew	6,880
City Clerk	Granicus	12 months - Auto Renew	1,504
Finance	Springbrook	12 months - Auto Renew	55,362
Finance	Stampli	12 months - Auto Renew	14,400
Finance	Breeze Smartware	12 months - Auto Renew	1,980
Finance	GovInvest	12 months - Auto Renew	12,381
Finance	OpenGov	12 months - Auto Renew	2,800
Human Resources	NeoGov	3-Year Term	23,596
Human Resources	Target Solutions	12 months - Auto Renew	9,116
Library	Useful	12 months - Auto Renew	3,383
Library	SPLASH	12 months - Auto Renew	50,138
Library	OCLC	12 months - Auto Renew	2,829
Planning	TrakIT	12 months	24,625
Public Works	ArcGIS	12 months - Auto Renew	1,043
Police	RIMS	12 months - Auto Renew	17,248
Police	LEFTA	12 months - Auto Renew	1,639
Police	Critical Reach	12 months - Auto Renew	250
Fire	Zoll	12 Months	2,453
Fire	Image Trend	12 months - Auto Renew	10,381
Fire	Active 911	12 months - Auto Renew	300
Recreation	ActiveNet	12 months - Auto Renew	1,288
Community Development	eTRAKit		
Total Annual Cost:			293,637

Figure 20 – City IT Subscriptions

Our primary concern is not cost; rather, we are concerned with integration issues between the large number of different products (Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)) being used. We confirmed that integration issues already exist in Finance. The City would likely gain significant operational efficiencies by using an enterprise solution that has full integration. The cost of an enterprise solution would not lower cost directly; however, the efficiency gains would reduce the total labor hours needed while delivering a higher-quality solution.

Cybersecurity is another important concern for the City. Municipal governments can significantly reduce risks by adopting a multi-layered approach to cybersecurity. These strategies are drawn from guidelines by organizations like CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) and industry reports tailored to local governments. The strategies include (See next page table):

Cybersecurity Mitigation Strategies	City Use
Implement Robust Backup and Recovery Practices: Create regular, immutable (unchangeable) off-site or cloud-based backups that are tested frequently. This allows quick restoration without paying ransoms and can reduce recovery costs by up to 50% in ransomware incidents. Aim for the 3-2-1 rule: three copies of data on two different media types, with one off-site.	Apex is supporting this. The City has cloud backup. We offered them an appliance as a backup and temporary server.
Enforce Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA): Require MFA for all accounts, especially remote access like VPNs, which are common entry points for attackers. This simple step can block up to 99% of account compromise attempts.	“I believe they are just using Microsoft authenticator. They are MFA enabled.” -Apex
Conduct Employee Training and Awareness Programs: Train staff on recognizing phishing, social engineering, and safe internet practices. Regular simulations and updates are key, as human error causes over 70% of breaches.	“Yes, we include security awareness training. They are enrolled and receiving it. 32 phishing tests completed. Most people have not finished the training. 7-12 have actually completed the course. Annual training is up to 20 minutes. The rest is just a couple minutes.” -Apex
Adopt Zero Trust Architecture: Assume no user or device is inherently trustworthy. Use network segmentation to limit lateral movement by attackers, and implement continuous verification.	“They have it implemented. We do dark web monitoring. We use threat locker.” - Apex
Maintain Patch Management and Software Updates: Regularly update all systems, software, and firmware to close vulnerabilities. Automate where possible to address known exploits quickly.	“Yes, Apex is doing patch management and software updates via ‘Automate’.” -Apex
Develop and Exercise Incident Response Plans (IRP): Create a detailed IRP with communication protocols, roles, and regular drills. Include coordination with federal agencies like CISA or the FBI for rapid response.	“IRP is part of our process. It has not been built yet. We do have best practices templates. This is a “to do” item.” - Apex
Secure Endpoints and Use Advanced Tools: Deploy endpoint detection and response (EDR) tools, antivirus software, and firewalls. Monitor for anomalies using AI-driven threat intelligence.	“Yes, that is handled.” -Apex
Obtain Cyber Liability Insurance: This provides financial protection and often includes access to expert response teams, though it requires meeting certain security standards to qualify.	“Yes, the City has this insurance.” -Mandy Kellogg
Collaborate and Share Resources: Leverage state or federal resources, such as those from MRSC (Municipal Research and Services Center) or NIST, for training, audits, and shared threat intelligence.	“No, this is not in use.” -Apex

Migrating from on-premise servers to cloud-based infrastructure is widely recommended as a key mitigation strategy for enhancing cybersecurity in municipal IT systems. Cloud providers (e.g., AWS, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud) offer managed security features that often surpass what small governments can maintain in-house. However, it's not a complete solution—proper configuration and ongoing management are essential to avoid new risks like misconfigurations.

Benefits of Cloud Providers		
Benefit	Description	Relevance to Municipal Governments
Enhanced Security Features	Cloud platforms provide built-in tools like encryption, automated threat detection, firewalls, and compliance certifications (e.g., FedRAMP for government use).	Reduces exposure to physical threats (e.g., on-site hardware failures) and leverages provider expertise to patch vulnerabilities faster.
Improved Backup and Disaster Recovery	Automatic, off-site backups with high availability and redundancy.	Critical for ransomware recovery; enables quick restoration without data loss, aligning with the 3-2-1 backup rule.
Scalability and Automatic Updates	Resources scale on demand, with providers handling OS and application updates.	Eliminates delays in patching that plague on-prem systems, reducing exploit windows.
Cost Savings and Efficiency	Shift from capital expenses (hardware) to operational ones, with potential 20-30% reductions in IT costs over time.	Frees up budgets for other security investments; easier for resource-strapped cities.
Better Compliance and Monitoring	Built-in logging, auditing, and AI-driven threat intelligence.	Helps meet standards like NIST or HIPAA, with centralized visibility into threats.

Apex Technology Management, LLC

Apex Technology Management, LLC (Apex) serves as the City’s “IT Department.” Apex provides comprehensive managed services including but not limited to network and system administration, security monitoring, on-site and remote help desk, procurement, backup and recovery operations, database administration, hardware lifecycle management, and project management. Apex supports the City’s operations at seven facilities, which include: City Hall/Police Department, Corporation Yard, Fire Department, Library, Parks & Recreation Building, Water Treatment Plant, and Wastewater Treatment Plant. Apex support started in July 2025. Support includes 2 full days of an onsite technician and the rest is remote work support. Since its start date, Apex self describes: “we have been plugging a lot of security holes...we are working on infrastructure.”

The use of an outsider service provider to serve as an “IT Department” for small municipalities is common due to cost constraints and overall small scale of IT needs. However, caution is needed to ensure that pricing and service scope is reasonable. Without an IT professional on-staff for the City, there is an information asymmetry that can lead to the City being misled. We have seen no indications of this with Apex, but it is a general and significant concern with this type of management structure.

Server Locations and RIMS

The City currently has on-premise servers that are approaching end of life. Further, the City is renting a data center from a previous provider at a cost of \$2,700 per month. The City is planning to move entirely to a cloud solution (e.g. Azure); however, the issue is RIMS by Sun Ridge Systems. RIMS is used by the Police Department (i.e. RIMS Mapping, PropRoom, Reports, Mobile RIMS), and it does not support cloud solutions. Apex could deploy RIMS to a cloud server, but Sun Ridge Systems has stated that it will not provide support for cloud-based solutions. Sun Ridge Systems only supports on-premise servers. This creates an obvious issue for the City’s plan to move to a 100% cloud-based environment.

RIMS Overview: RIMS is specialized software tailored for law enforcement agencies, handling records management, evidence tracking, chain-of-custody logs, and integration with other public safety tools like CAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch). It's built for police departments to organize and access high volumes of sensitive data efficiently. Sun Ridge's documentation explicitly describes installation on agency servers (e.g., a quick one-day server setup, followed by client installs on PCs and mobiles). Their technical specs recommend dedicated on-site hardware, such as a separate database and application server for larger agencies. Support is 24/7 for emergencies but tied to on-prem environments—no mentions of AWS, Azure, or any cloud migration paths.

We recommend that the City continue with its plan to be 100% cloud-based. There are alternatives to Sun Ridge that are 100% cloud-based. The City should explore replacing Sun Ridge with an alternative that matches the City’s strategy. We provide some initial considerations in Table 1 as a starting point. When evaluating, consider factors like CJIS compliance, integration with existing tools (e.g., Sun Ridge's supported integrations like Accurint or ARIES), and migration support. Many offer demos or trials. For St. Helena's scale, start with eFORCE or NicheRMS, as they're praised for ease of use in small departments.

Table 1: Sun Ridge Alternatives				
CJIS Compliance: All listed solutions meet FBI CJIS standards, critical for law enforcement data security.				
Solution	Provider	Deployment	Key Features	Why a Good Alternative to RIMS
NicheRMS	Niche Technology	Fully cloud-engineered, mobile-first	Investigation/crime management, incident reporting, custody management, intelligence tracking, property/evidence, NIBRS/UCR compliance, AI analytics, unlimited users	Matches RIMS' case, warrant, citation, and inmate tracking; adds real-time syncing and mobile access for field officers
eFORCE RMS	eFORCE Software	Cloud and web-based, browser/device-agnostic	Records management, CAD integration, jail management, e-citations, civil process, mobile apps, customizable reporting, evidence logging	Mirrors RIMS' citations, civil services, and inmate management; user-friendly for small departments like St. Helena

Table 1: Sun Ridge Alternatives

CJIS Compliance: All listed solutions meet FBI CJIS standards, critical for law enforcement data security.

Solution	Provider	Deployment	Key Features	Why a Good Alternative to RIMS
CentralSquare Records	CentralSquare Technologies	Cloud-based, part of Public Safety Suite	Unified incident reporting, digital evidence, CAD integration, automated workflows, finance/community integration, NIBRS reporting	Covers RIMS' data organization needs with enhanced interoperability and AI-driven data retrieval
Mark43 RMS	Mark43	Fully cloud-native	Case/incident management, evidence tracking, warrant/citation handling, analytics dashboards, mobile access, CAD/JMS integration	Replicates RIMS' records and vehicle/person tracking; modern design with zero-downtime updates
ASPEN-RMS	DataWorks Plus	Web-based (cloud-deployable)	Customizable UI, CAD/JMS integration, state/federal interfaces, crime analysis, civil processing, enhanced reporting	Matches RIMS' civil services and case management; cloud access enables remote operations
Phoenix Law RMS	ProPhoenix	100% browser-based (cloud)	Duplicate detection, error checking, records/inventory/personnel management, report generation, crime analysis, mug shots	Aligns with RIMS' comprehensive records management; cloud reduces data duplication and scales easily
BEAGLE	WATI	Hybrid (cloud and on-premise options)	Crime data analysis, investigation management, reporting, visualization tools	Complements RIMS' investigation and case features; cloud option supports transition from on-prem

AI Platforms

The City has a large opportunity to improve efficiencies and effectiveness with AI tools and AI agents. The City Manager reported that the City has been exploring these tools, but they have not yet made any purchases or strategic plans for their usage. AI tools (e.g., software for data analysis, automation, and chatbots) and AI agents (autonomous systems that perform tasks independently, like "agentic AI") could significantly enhance city management by boosting efficiency, reducing costs, and improving resident engagement. Based on 2025 trends, AI adoption in local governments has surged, with 56% of cities piloting or using it to upgrade operations and services. Below, we provide a couple of examples of how St. Helena could use AI, drawing from recent studies and case studies relevant to small municipalities.

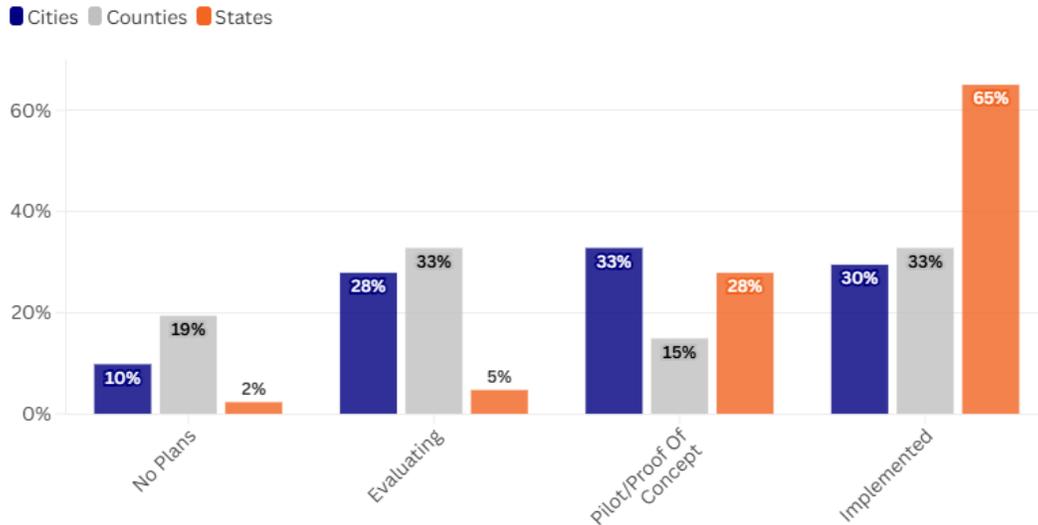
1. Enhancing Administrative Efficiency and Workflow Automation

AI tools can automate routine tasks, freeing staff for higher-value work. For St. Helena, this could mean streamlining permit processing, document management, or public records handling—areas highlighted in its efficiency studies (from uploaded documents like "City of Helena Efficiency and Business Transformation Study.pdf").

- **Impact:** Agentic AI (e.g., autonomous agents) could handle 24/7 citizen inquiries via chatbots, reducing backlogs and response times by up to 50% in similar small cities. Generative AI might draft reports or suggest clearer structures for budget documents, accelerating processes like those in the "Draft Budget 26-27 cut.pdf."
- **Case Study:** In a small Kentucky city (similar size to St. Helena), officials implemented low-cost large language models (LLMs) for under \$200 to automate resident queries and internal workflows, proving AI is accessible even on tight budgets. Small towns are also using AI to automate routine tasks, saving millions while transforming public services. (<https://www.govtech.com/biz/data/llm-on-a-budget-how-small-cities-are-leveraging-ai>)

Conversational Agents in the Public Sector Implementation Status

According to the results of 2024 Center for Digital Government surveys, states are at the forefront of conversational agent implementation, while cities are showing strong interest and counties are gradually catching up.



Source: Center for Digital Government 2024 Surveys • Created Nov. 11, 2024. Visualization by Nikki Davidson.

Figure 21 – Conversational Agents Benchmarks

2. Improving Budgeting and Financial Management

AI excels at data-driven forecasting, which could help St. Helena optimize its fiscal planning amid constraints seen in budget documents.

- **Impact:** AI tools analyze large datasets for better decision-making, predicting budget shortfalls or optimizing resource allocation. AI agents could detect fraud in claims processing or procurement, potentially cutting costs by 20-30% through efficiency gains.
- **Case Study:** AI has optimized workflows in state and local governments, similar to how St. Helena could use it for multi-year budgeting. (<https://www.munitemps.com/2025/09/03/how-small-cities-are-winning-with-local-government-innovation-like-a-i/>)

AI for Public Works

AI can transform public works by automating routine tasks, optimizing resources, and enabling predictive decision-making. For St. Helena, this could mean more efficient utilities management and reduced costs in areas like water treatment or road maintenance. Potential impacts include:

- **Predictive Maintenance and Infrastructure Optimization:** AI analyzes sensor data to forecast failures in roads, pipes, or equipment, preventing costly breakdowns. Impact: Reduces downtime by 20-30% and extends asset life, saving on repairs—critical for St. Helena's wastewater and water systems. (<https://www.apwa.org/resource/ai-case-studies-in-sewer-inspection-and-pavement-assessment/>)
- **Efficient Resource Allocation and Service Requests:** AI-powered chatbots and systems handle citizen reports (e.g., potholes, leaks) 24/7, routing them automatically. Impact: Speeds response times by 40-50%, cuts administrative workload, and improves resident satisfaction in small towns with limited staff. (<https://www.govtech.com/artificial-intelligence/california-cities-turn-to-ai-to-help-manage-public-works>)
- **Environmental and Sustainability Enhancements:** AI models water usage or stormwater patterns to minimize waste and pollution. Impact: Lowers energy costs by 15-25% and supports compliance with CA regulations, aligning with St. Helena's floodplain and tree protection efforts. (<https://clerkminutes.com/blog/challenges-opportunities-of-ai>)

[implementing-ai-in-local-government-operations](#)) and (<https://cpex.org/news/from-algorithms-to-action-ais-role-in-shaping-tomorrows-communities/>)

Overall, AI could cut operational costs by 10-20% while boosting efficiency, per APWA studies, ideal for St. Helena's budget-constrained environment. (<https://www.apwa.org/resource/the-future-of-public-works-best-practices-for-ai-utilization/>) and (<https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/4-ways-local-governments-harnessing-ai-transform-operations/739931/>)

5.2.10. Awareness

When we discuss “awareness,” we do not mean strategic communications or external communications. We mean awareness in the sense that mid-level and executive level management know what is happening across the City, Departments, and Divisions. A common tool for achieving and maintaining a high level of awareness is a dashboard, specifically, an executive and/or enterprise dashboard. Other sources of awareness come from program management reports, weekly and monthly activities reports (i.e. KPIs), accounting and financial reports, performance audits, surveys, and quantitative and qualitative information generated from SaaS subscriptions. Most of these items can be included in the dashboards as well.

The City has made some progress with implementing SaaS solutions in multiple Departments. Also, the Grapevine tool has helped with residents reporting requests and tracking those requests. Further, there are surveys and weekly/monthly reporting. However, there are still severe weaknesses. Most Departments have no KPIs or a very minimal amount that arguably are not actual KPIs. There is minimal tracking of projects and programs. Further, the City is far from using the full potential of tracking, reporting, and dashboarding tools that are available with the SaaS solutions. Finally, there are no financial ratios that we could find, and the accounting and budgeting reports are overly complex with flows between accounts that are extremely difficult to track.

Critical Concerns: While there is some information available to support awareness, we have found a severe lack of making connections between data generated by different Departments. For example, Public Works reports 45 miles of “water system”; however, there is no corresponding “sinking fund” to replace the pipes. Further, we could find no evidence of any information available that identifies pipe replacement life, inspections conducted, or locations of pipe with corresponding age. Likewise, there appears to be no procurement efforts (e.g. Requests for Information (RFI)) to try to identify market rates to replace the pipe to support future planning.

Second, although we note that the City is spending \$2,829 per year on Microsoft Project, there appears to be a lack of awareness about what is happening with projects across the City. For context, Microsoft Project costs \$360/user/year. This means that the City should have approximately 8 licenses in use, but we found no evidence of the software being used effectively. For example, the City could use Microsoft Power BI to connect to its Microsoft Project to generate portfolio level dashboards, but we found no evidence of this (See Figure 22 example dashboard).

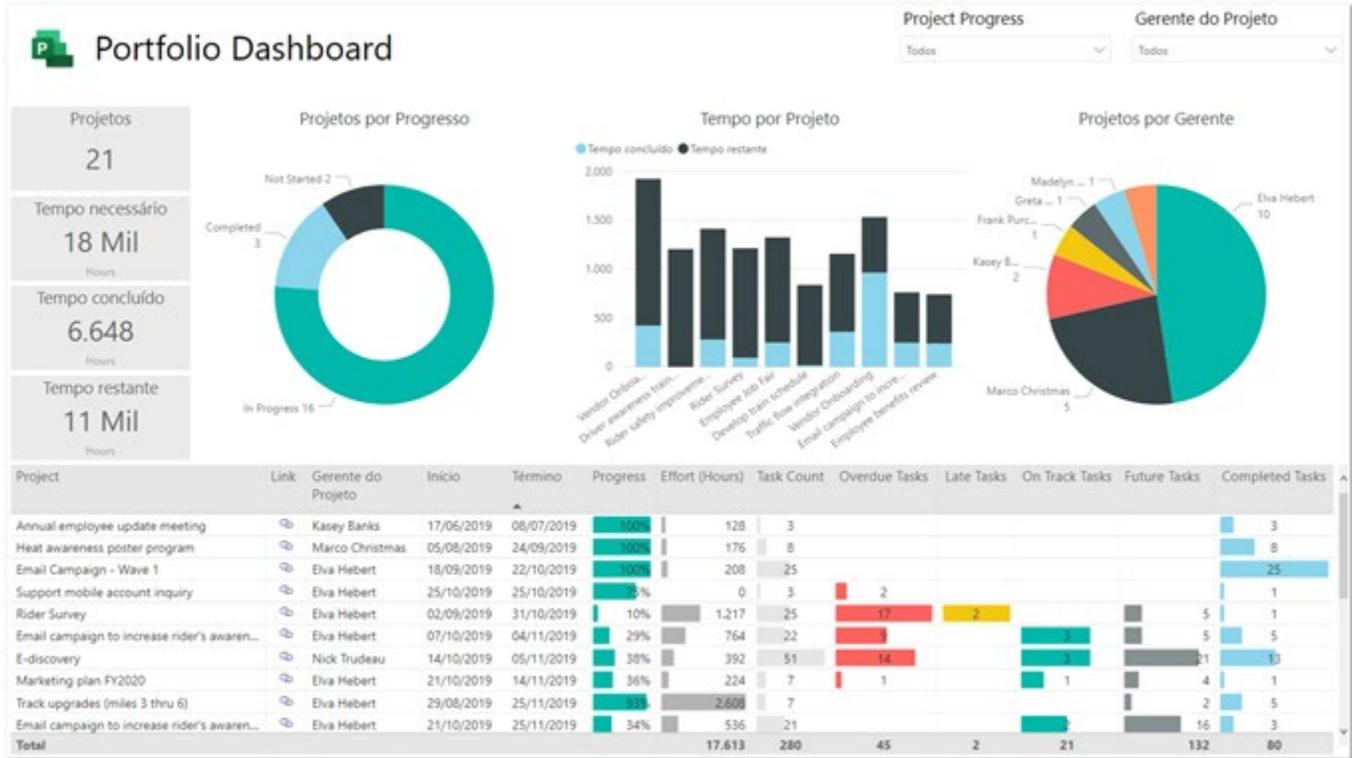


Figure 22 – Example Portfolio Dashboard

5.2.11. Customers

Blackberg spoke to St. Helena residents by phone; reviewed Godbe Research (Godbe) survey results; and spoke with City employees about conversations that they have had with residents. First, we briefly revisit the Godbe findings that were presented to the City Council on March 25, 2025.

Godbe conducted the survey between January 6 and 19, 2025. They captured input from 285 individuals and reported a margin of error of +/- 5.62%. In their presentation, they also reference the survey that they conducted for the City in 2022. The 2022 survey covered the same questions, which gives us some time series data to explore. Across years, water quality remains the top issue. Affordable housing and road repairs/potholes/infrastructure remain in the top 3 issues. Concern about the City budget has grown considerably from 2022 and is now rated 4th in 2025. Other top concerns in 2025 include tourism/revenue, cost of living, water costs, and jobs/wages.

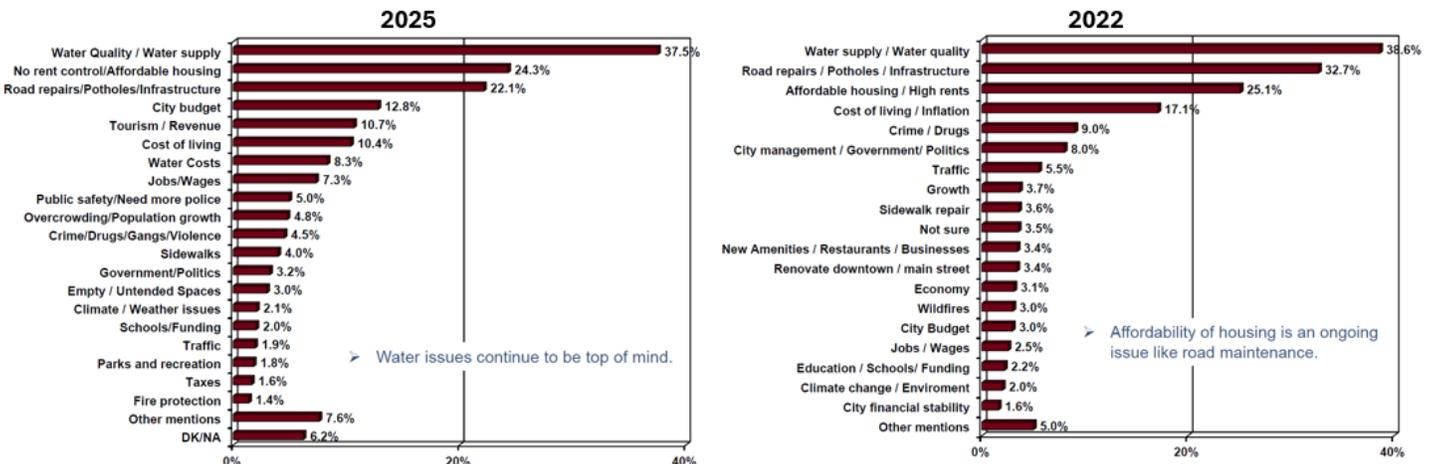


Figure 23 – Godbe Survey Results for Top Issues Facing the City

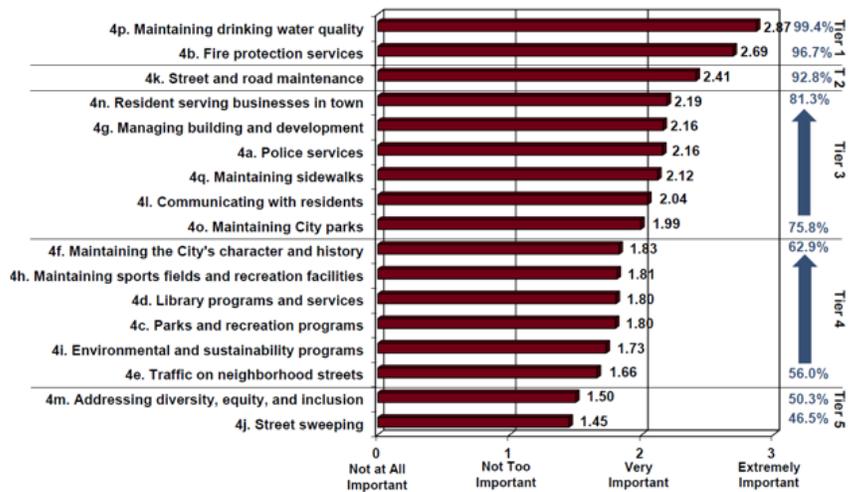
The Godbe survey also identified “Importance of City Services, Programs and Facilities.” The results are shown in Figure 24. Water quality is the highest rated followed by fire protection and street and road maintenance. The lowest rated items are street sweeping; addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion; and traffic on neighborhood streets.

Godbe also surveyed “Satisfaction with City Services, Programs, and Facilities” (See Figure 24). The highest rated areas are fire protection, library, police, and parks and recreation programs. The lowest rated areas are water quality, street and road maintenance, managing building and development, and maintaining sidewalks.

Blackberg’s interviews with residents and City employees told a similar story. However, we did hear individuals stress some other areas related to the survey results. Individuals cited problems with drinking water, roads, sidewalks, and affordable housing. They also identified that the City is not successfully engaging with the tourist industry and capturing revenues from the millions of tourists that move through the City each year.

In our conversations, individuals expanded upon these concerns and expressed that they have no trust in the City government nor in its executive managers. Notable exceptions were the Fire Department, Police Department, and Library. They mentioned significant concerns with City executive managers and provided examples of direct communications (verbal) with executive managers in which they described responses from the executive manager as being “unprofessional, rude, and insulting.” Individuals expanded upon their lack of trust and dissatisfaction with City executive managers by providing other specific examples. These examples include: “1) It took six years to replace a road sign that I notified the City about multiple times per year; 2) The City is in crisis with budget, water, roads and infrastructure and a lot of other things, but I have never seen a plan to fix any of it; 3) I’ve had multiple times when residents asked me to contact the City because the City was not responding to them. Even when I contacted the appropriate Department, I didn’t hear back and had to keep calling different individuals; and 4) I spoke to City workers that didn’t seem to be doing anything. I asked them what they were doing that day, and they said that they didn’t have any assignments...”. These are just some of the responses that we received during conversations with City residents and City employees.

2025 Importance of City Services, Programs and Facilities



2025 Satisfaction with City Services, Programs, and Facilities

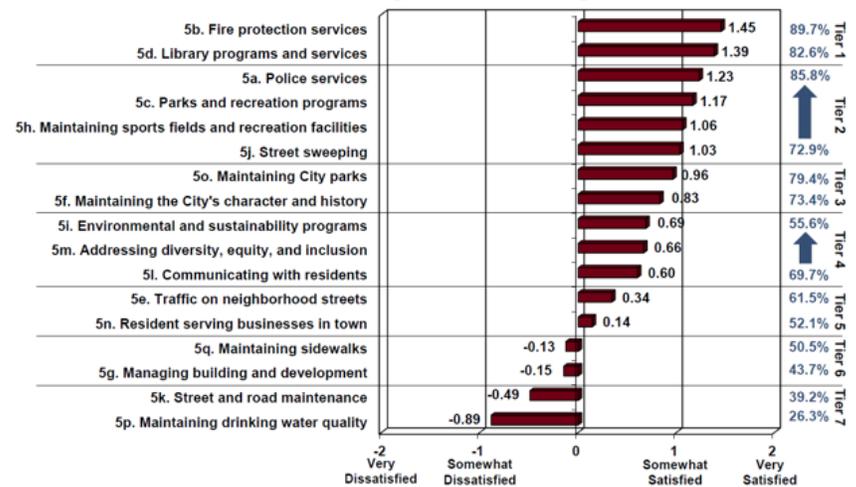


Figure 24 – Godbe Survey on Importance & Satisfaction

As we examine these responses, it is very difficult to separate subjective perspectives from objective realities. We do not doubt that there is a great deal of resident dissatisfaction that centers on water, roads, sidewalks, and development. However, it is impossible to quantitatively identify how severe those concerns are because the City has no quantitative data available (e.g. number of days of brown water; square footage of sidewalk needing repair or replacement; lane-miles of road needing repair or replacement; etc.). Because there is no quantification of the problem, there can be no satisfactory communication of the problem to residents. There is no strategic plan, so the ability to communicate solutions and timelines for addressing

the problems (even if we did know how significant they are) is impossible. Therefore, residents are left seeing the problems, have no information from the City about their magnitude, begin to speculate, and then have no strategic plan to affirm the City is doing something about the problems that “makes sense.” We emphasize the phrase “makes sense” because we heard this phrase many times within the context of the City’s lack of any comprehensive plan: “what they are doing doesn’t make sense; I wish we had something that just made sense; the City needs a plan that makes sense of how they are going to fix all these problems; I don’t think what they are doing makes sense because it is so piecemeal...etc.” Clearly, the residents’ lack of trust in the City government is rooted in these issues.

5.2.12. Communications

We bifurcate communications into “external communications” and “internal communications.” External communications include any communications outside of the City government staff. Internal communications are all communications between government staff.

External Communications. There are two broad categories of external communications relevant for St. Helena: 1) external communication targeting residents and nearby stakeholders, and 2) external communications targeting tourists and other visitors (e.g. investors). For this study, we focus on external communications with St. Helena residents and nearby stakeholders.

The City maintains an extensive website that includes moderately sophisticated tools: Grapevine; resident portal with live streams, public record requests, subscriptions, archived video, schedule of meetings, etc.; utility billing; career pages; registrations for parks and recreation; and various reports.

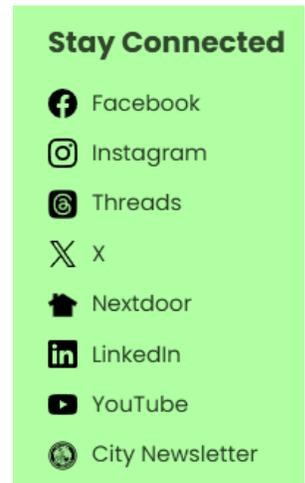
The City also communicates through newsletters and social media. The City publishes newsletters biweekly, and the newsletters contain an appropriate amount of information, including: general community news, latest updates, events and notifications, and city council meeting items. The City also publishes social media with clear customization to the platform to align messaging with user type engagement. For example, LinkedIn publications are clearly targeting residents; whereas, X publications have a government account for residents and a separate account targeting tourists. We did note that the City’s website is advertising multiple jobs for recruiting, yet its LinkedIn account shows “There are no jobs right now.”

Our main concern with external communications centers on the lack of communication content that addresses the residents’ biggest issues: water quality, streets and roads, sidewalks, infrastructure, affordable housing, and City budget. The problems are relatively undefined and not communicated in terms of magnitude and what the City is doing to fix them.

Internal Communications. Internal communications appear strongest at the Department or Division level. Given the small size of Departments, it is relatively easy to manage internal communications through simple weekly/monthly status meetings and other informal discussions. However, there is a clear lack of “big picture” type communications from the City Manager’s Office and interdepartmental communications.

Critical Concern. The most concerning aspect of internal communications is the lack of “change management” oriented communications. In change management, key communications include clear announcements about the change's purpose, timeline, and impact-like emails or all-hands meetings with leadership to set expectations. Regular updates via email, newsletters, or dashboards help maintain awareness of status. Leadership should place emphasis on transparency, listening to feedback, and repeating the rationale for change to develop buy-in. Leadership demonstrating consistency and empathy are also important elements. Blackberg has heard from multiple individuals that City executive managers are demonstrating the opposite of these practices.

Communications Model. Our main concern is the City’s lack of a communications model for both internal and external communications. Clearly, the City spends much time and effort developing strong “content assets” (e.g. newsletters, social media posts, website announcements, etc.). However, there is a lack of sophistication to the overall management of communications. The absence of a communications model is one indication, but importantly, it is the lack of many elements



that you would find in such a model that is most problematic. These missing elements include purposeful thinking, planning, and actions for: strategy and insights, customer experience & personalization, measurement of impact or engagement, and using optimal data and technology. Given the size of St. Helena, a communications model does not need to be extremely sophisticated; however, there may be benefits to leaning toward higher levels of sophistication in the areas of targeting tourism. If the City elected to increase tourism communications, it should be coupled with a larger strategic effort by the City to engage tourists and develop clear paths to increasing revenues from tourist visits.

5.2.13. Processes

The review of the City of St. Helena's business processes, supporting documentation, and departmental management practices indicates that the organization is still in the early stages of developing a formalized Business Process Management System (BPMS). While the City's workforce demonstrates a strong commitment to public service and a clear understanding of their functional responsibilities, most core and support processes remain largely informal, person-dependent, and reactive to operational needs rather than structured or measured through standard management systems.

5.2.13.1. Business Process Management System (BPMS) Maturity

The assessment used a maturity framework based on Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) principles and included six key dimensions: Process Ownership, Documentation and Standardization, Process Controls, Measurement and Performance Management, Cross-Department Integration, and Continuous Improvement and Innovation.

Across these dimensions, most departments were observed to be functioning at Level 1 (Initial / Ad Hoc) or Level 2 (Repeatable / Defined) maturity. In practical terms, this means that many processes depend on the institutional knowledge of long-tenured staff rather than documented systems, and that procedures are often recreated as needs arise rather than guided by written standard operating procedures or shared process maps.

Some divisions, particularly Finance and Community Development, show elements of greater maturity - including defined workflows, use of digital forms or permitting systems, and limited data tracking - but even these remain isolated rather than integrated across the enterprise. The lack of consistent documentation and standardized controls limit transparency, cross-training, and the ability to measure performance or allocate resources objectively.

Documentation review also found that while departmental staff can clearly describe their responsibilities, there is limited evidence of structured process design at the Level 3–5 tiers of maturity (detailed process mapping, Swimlanes, and SOPs). Existing materials are often task lists or procedural notes rather than process-level representations that define inputs, outputs, and interdependencies. As a result, opportunities to identify redundancies, clarify hand-offs, or assess efficiency are difficult to visualize.

5.2.13.2. Continuous Improvement (CI) Capability

At present, the city does not have a formalized Continuous Improvement (CI) structure or program. Improvement efforts are generally reactive — focused on resolving immediate issues rather than systematically analyzing root causes or measuring process performance over time. There is no dedicated framework such as Lean, Six Sigma, or similar methodologies currently in use, nor are staff trained or supported in using structured process improvement tools.

While several supervisors and managers informally encourage problem-solving and incremental improvement, these efforts occur independently within departments and are not connected through a coordinated management system. Likewise, there is no evidence of a Daily Management System (DMS) using readiness boards such as MESS (Methods, Equipment, Supply, Staffing) or of consistent tiered huddles where performance, safety, and resource issues are reviewed and escalated.

This absence of formal CI infrastructure limits the City's ability to identify systemic trends, manage performance visually, or reinforce learning across departments. It also constrains the development of a performance culture that relies on data and shared accountability rather than individual initiatives.

5.2.13.3. Organizational Context and Direction

The City's small size and resource constraints are important context for interpreting these observations. The organization has many of the attributes of a Level 1–2 maturity municipality: strong individual dedication, informal collaboration, and a practical understanding of service needs, but lacking the formal systems, data infrastructure, and governance mechanisms that characterize higher levels of process maturity.

The absence of structured process ownership, measurement, and continuous improvement systems should not be viewed as a deficiency but rather as a developmental stage. Many smaller jurisdictions begin in a similar state before adopting scaled, lightweight forms of operational excellence suited to their staffing and workload.

The direction suggested by this assessment — though not yet formally adopted — is toward a pragmatic Operational Excellence model: building foundational process documentation and ownership, introducing routine measurement and MESS-board-based daily management practices, and gradually cultivating a culture of data-driven problem-solving and shared accountability.

5.2.13.4. Overall Insight

In summary, the City of St. Helena's business process environment reflects early-stage maturity with limited standardization and no formal continuous improvement framework. However, it possesses the essential ingredients for growth: engaged leadership, experienced personnel, and a clear desire to improve service delivery. Establishing a basic Business Process Management and Continuous Improvement structure will enable the City to evolve from reactive management toward proactive, transparent, and performance-based operations over time.

5.2.13.5. Business Process Management and Continuous Improvement

A. Introduction

Business Process Management (BPM) is a systematic approach to improving how a city delivers services to its residents, businesses, and internal customers. By connecting the city's service portfolio to daily operations, BPM helps leaders identify where time, cost, and risk accumulate. This approach translates technical process analysis into meaningful outcomes, such as faster permit processing, reliable street repairs, clean water, efficient fee collection, and compliance with statutory timelines.

BPM involves light-touch scoping, evidence-based measurement, and targeted improvements, with governance playing a vital role. The expected benefits include reduced rework, lower costs, improved customer satisfaction, and a clear, auditable trail for policy and budget decisions.

For municipalities like the City of St. Helena, a Business Process Management System (BPMS) provides the structure, tools, and practices needed to enhance service delivery. A BPMS offers visibility into processes across departments, clarifies accountability, and supports continuous improvement. This ensures effective resource use, efficient staff operations, and timely, transparent, and responsive services for residents. Adopting a BPMS aligns processes with strategic goals, improves interdepartmental coordination, and helps the city adapt to regulatory changes, financial constraints, and evolving community expectations.

Purpose of the BPMS

- Establish a centralized approach to documenting, analyzing, and improving city processes.
- Provide a repository of process information accessible across departments.
- Enable data-driven decision making through measurement of process performance.
- Support staff training and onboarding by standardizing work methods.
- Improve service delivery outcomes for residents and stakeholders.

Benefits for the City of St. Helena

- **Transparency:** Residents and businesses better understand service timelines and requirements.
- **Efficiency:** Reduced rework and delays by clarifying roles and eliminating redundancies.
- **Adaptability:** Easier integration of innovative technologies, regulations, or staffing changes.
- **Employee Support:** Staff gain confidence through consistent methods and clear escalation paths.

- **Strategic Alignment:** Processes are tied directly to city goals and community priorities.

Suggested Next Steps

- Finalize the process inventory across selected city departments to level 3.
- Prioritize high-impact processes for mapping.
- Establish or Assign governance structures (steering committee, process owners, champions).
- Develop a repository solution (SharePoint).
- Implement BPM and a Daily Management System within a designated division or department on a pilot basis.

B. Business Process Maturity Assessment

This checklist is designed to help assess the maturity of City of St. Helena processes using the CMMI-based framework. Rate each process from Level 1 (Initial/Ad hoc) to Level 5 (Optimizing), based on observable criteria.

Process Ownership

- 1 – No clear owner; responsibility assumed but not explicit.
- 2 – Owner identified for major processes, but not all.
- 3 – All processes have assigned owners; responsibilities documented.
- 4 – Owners monitor performance data and initiate corrective actions.
- 5 – Owners lead proactive innovation and continuous improvement cycles.

Documentation & Standardization

- 1 – Informal or tribal knowledge; no formal documentation.
- 2 – Some processes documented, but incomplete.
- 3 – Standard documentation exists citywide. Documentation validation to “As-Is.”
- 4 – Documentation integrated with metrics and updated regularly.
- 5 – Automated workflows/digital tools enforce standardized steps.

Process Controls

- 1 – Controls applied inconsistently or reactively.
- 2 – Basic control points defined (signoffs, review steps).
- 3 – Standard control policies applied across departments.
- 4 – Control effectiveness measured (error rates, compliance tracking).
- 5 – Controls optimized/automated, continuous risk reduction.

Measurement & Performance Management

- 1 – No metrics; success based on individual effort.
- 2 – Basic measures tracked (timeliness, completion counts).
- 3 – Common KPIs defined and tracked.
- 4 – Statistical techniques applied to analyze trends.
- 5 – Predictive analytics and benchmarking used.

Cross Department Integration

- 1 – Processes siloed, unclear handoffs.
- 2 – Some processes mapped between departments.
- 3 – Cross-functional processes formally mapped.
- 4 – Data shared; bottlenecks monitored.
- 5 – Seamless integration; coordinated system.

Continuous Improvement & Innovation

- 1 – No formal improvement activities; reactive problem-solving only.
- 2 – Occasional improvement projects, but not systematic.
- 3 – Defined CI program; lessons learned shared.
- 4 – Data-driven improvements tested and scaled.

5 – CI embedded in culture, proactive innovation.

Business process maturity was assessed in the Public Works, Administrative Services, and Community Development divisions. After consultations with Division Leadership, examination of existing process documentation, and analysis from the current state assessment, the following ratings were assigned (See Figure 25).

Departments & Divisions	Process Ownership	Documentation & Standardization	Process Controls	Measurement and Performance Management	Cross Department integration	Continuous Improvement & Innovation
PW – Service Delivery	2	2	1	1	1	1
PW – Development Services	2	2	1	1	1	1
PW – Capital Projects Delivery	2	2	1	1	1	1
Community Development	2	2	2	2	2	2
Admin Services - Finance	2	2	2	1	2	2

Figure 25 – Business Process Maturity

Business Process Maturity Assessment Insights

The following insights summarize key themes emerging from the City’s initial maturity assessment across five divisions—Public Works (Service Delivery, Development Services, Capital Projects), Community Development, and Administrative Services – Finance. Each observation reflects the City’s current level of capability within six foundational dimensions of business process maturity, based on the CMMI framework.

1. Process Ownership

Process ownership across departments is largely informal and role-based rather than explicitly defined. While staff can describe who performs specific tasks, few processes have a clearly identified “owner” responsible for ensuring effectiveness, compliance, and improvement. This lack of explicit accountability is most visible in cross-functional workflows such as permitting and capital project approvals, where responsibilities blur across departments.

Implications:

Without defined ownership, improvement efforts depend heavily on institutional memory and individual initiative. This limits continuity, scalability, and accountability when roles change, or turnover occurs.

Recommendations:

Formalize process ownership within each department’s process inventory. Assign accountable individuals for each key process and document them in governance records. Integrate ownership into position descriptions, performance objectives, and departmental reporting.

2. Documentation and Standardization

Process documentation remains inconsistent, incomplete, and primarily informal. While some procedures exist, especially within Community Development and Finance, most Public Works activities rely on verbal communication, spreadsheets, and legacy templates. Documentation seldom reflects the actual “as-is” workflow practiced by frontline staff.

Implications:

Inconsistent documentation increases rework, hampers staff training, and undermines standardization efforts. It also constrains the City’s ability to evaluate performance objectively or adopt automation technologies.

Recommendations:

Prioritize documentation of high-volume, resident-facing processes using simple templates such as SIPOC or mini-maps.

Validate each documented process with subject-matter experts to ensure it represents the true “as-is” state. Develop a centralized, searchable repository accessible across departments.

3. Process Controls

Existing controls are primarily manual and reactive, focused on supervisory review after problems occur. Few processes include formal checkpoints, approval steps, or quality criteria. Exceptions exist in Finance and Community Development, where external audit or regulatory compliance requires structured oversight.

Implications:

The absence of preventive controls exposes the City to operational and compliance risks—ranging from service delays and cost overruns to inconsistent application of policies.

Recommendations:

Introduce defined control points such as approvals, verifications, and quality reviews within each major workflow. Establish standardized review templates or checklists for recurring activities. Over time, transition these controls into automated validations within future workflow systems.

4. Measurement and Performance Management

Performance measurement is at an early stage, focusing mainly on activity counts (permits issued, projects completed) rather than outcomes. Metrics are inconsistent across divisions and are not yet tied to service levels, timeliness, or resident satisfaction.

Implications:

Without reliable metrics, the city cannot evaluate efficiency or communicate improvements to stakeholders. Decision-making remains qualitative and dependent on anecdotal evidence.

Recommendations:

Define a concise set of key performance indicators (KPIs) for each department, such as turnaround time, accuracy, and backlog. Establish baseline measures to track progress over time. Integrate metrics into regular management meetings and dashboards as the BPMS evolves.

5. Cross Department Integration

Processes remain departmentally siloed, with limited formal coordination among Public Works, Community Development, and Finance. Interactions rely heavily on personal communication rather than standardized handoffs or shared data systems.

Implications:

Siloed operations create bottlenecks, duplicate data entry, and inconsistent resident experiences. They also slow project approvals and reduce overall service transparency.

Recommendations:

Map end-to-end value streams that cut across departments, such as Development-to-Occupancy or Capital Project Lifecycle. Identify and document interdepartmental dependencies, shared information needs, and approval pathways. Pilot integrated workflows that align on shared objectives and performance indicators.

6. Continuous Improvement and Innovation

Continuous improvement is largely reactive and episodic, driven by immediate operational issues rather than by a structured management framework. Staff demonstrate willingness to innovate but lack standardized methods, coaching, or governance mechanisms.

Implications:

Without a formal structure for continuous improvement, lessons learned are not captured or shared, and progress depends on individual champions rather than institutional commitment.

Recommendations:

Establish a lightweight Continuous Improvement (CI) framework, beginning with departmental CI champions. Introduce basic Lean and problem-solving tools and incorporate them into existing staff meetings. Create a citywide improvement log or forum to share outcomes, recognize contributions, and build a culture of learning.

Overall Observation

The assessment indicates that most City processes are operating at Level 1–2 (Initial to Managed) maturity. This means individual performance and institutional knowledge drive service delivery more than standardized systems or governance. The City of St. Helena is well positioned to advance maturity by formalizing ownership, documenting processes, introducing foundational controls, and linking performance measurement to strategic goals.

C. Business Process Framework (Levels 1-5)

The City of St. Helena’s Business Process Framework establishes a structured hierarchy for documenting, analyzing, and improving processes across all departments. The framework provides a common language for describing how the city creates, enables, and sustains value for its residents and stakeholders. It ensures that strategic goals at the citywide level can be translated into daily operational practices that are measurable, repeatable, and continuously improved.

The framework is organized into five levels of process definition. Each level represents a distinct perspective—from enterprise value creation at the highest level to individual task execution at the most granular. This tiered structure supports clarity, alignment, and scalability as the city matures its Business Process Management System.

The City’s Business Process Framework describes how operational maturity evolves from strategy to execution. Each level builds upon the previous one, creating a clear structure for process ownership, measurement, and improvement.

Level	Theme	Summary Description
Level 1 – Value Chain / Enterprise View	<i>Strategic Alignment</i>	Defines citywide value-creation and support functions that deliver services to residents and stakeholders.
Level 2 – Core Processes (SIPOCs)	<i>Process Definition</i>	Identifies end-to-end processes, clarifying suppliers, inputs, outputs, and customers.
Level 3 – Sub-Processes / Detailed SIPOCs	<i>Process Detail</i>	Decomposes each Level 2 process into measurable sub-processes and decision points.
Level 4 – Swimlane Process Maps	<i>Decisions & Controls</i>	Use cross-functional diagrams to show roles, responsibilities, and hand-offs across departments.
Level 5 – Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	<i>Standardization & Continuous Improvement</i>	Documents repeatable workflows, embeds best practices, and drives accountability and compliance.

Figure 26 – Levels of Process Maturity

Level 1 – Service Portfolio and Value Domains

At the highest level, the City’s Service Portfolio defines how value is created and delivered to residents through its major functional domains. These value domains include Public Works, Community Development, Public Safety, and Administrative and Support Services.

Each domain represents a collection of services that contribute directly to community outcomes such as safe streets, reliable water service, effective permitting, and fiscal stewardship. At this level, the framework focuses on value creation (resident-facing services) and value enabling (support and administrative functions).

Documenting Level 1 establishes the City’s enterprise view - how the organization is structured to meet public expectations and fulfill its mission.

City of St. Helena – Level 1 Service Portfolio (Value Chain Model)



Figure 27 – Level 1 Service Portfolio (Value Chain Model)

Level 2 – End-to-End Business Processes

Level 2 defines the City’s major end-to-end business processes, which typically span multiple departments and require coordination across value domains. These processes represent the horizontal flow of work that connects the City’s functional silos and delivers measurable results for residents.

These processes are documented using SIPOC models (Supplier, Inputs, Process, Outputs, Customer) to clarify who contributes, what resources are required, how work is performed, and what outcomes are produced. SIPOCs serve as the foundation for mapping dependencies, identifying bottlenecks, and defining ownership.

Transition from Level 2 SIPOCs to Levels 3–5 Process Documentation

As the City of St. Helena advances its Business Process Management System, the SIPOCs established at Level 2 provide the foundation for more detailed process documentation and operational standardization. The next step in this progression is Level 3, where each SIPOC expands into detailed sub-process maps that clarify handoffs, decision points, and roles. Level 3 SIPOCs define the “how” behind each core function identified in Level 2 and form the bridge between conceptual understanding and operational execution.

At Level 4, these detailed sub-processes are expressed as Swimlane Process Maps, illustrating the cross-functional flow of work across departments. Each swimlane shows responsibilities by role, timing, and dependencies—making inefficiencies, redundancies, and improvement opportunities visible. These diagrams serve as both diagnostic and training tools, reinforcing transparency and accountability in daily operations.

Finally, Level 5 represents the highest degree of process maturity: fully documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). SOPs provide repeatable, step-by-step guidance, linking each process back to its performance measures and compliance requirements. Together, Levels 3 through 5 complete the city’s end-to-end documentation hierarchy—transforming SIPOC frameworks into actionable workflows, visual management tools, and standardized practices that drive efficiency, consistency, and continuous improvement.

Level 3 – Subprocesses

At Level 3, end-to-end processes are decomposed into departmental subprocesses; the core activities performed within a specific division or unit. Each subprocess has defined inputs and outputs that connect to other subprocesses in the value stream.

For example, within Public Works, subprocesses may include Water Management, Streets and Facilities Maintenance, and Parks and Landscaping. In Finance, subprocesses might cover Accounts Payable, Payroll, and Budget Monitoring.

Level 3 documentation provides enough granularity to identify performance measures, assign process ownership, and establish consistency in service delivery. Each subprocess can be represented through detailed SIPOCs or mini maps that capture key decision points and timing.

Level 4 – Activity and Decision Level

Level 4 represents the activity and decision layer, where detailed process maps illustrate how work moves through functional areas. BPM swim lane diagrams show handoffs between departments, highlight decision points, and surface inefficiencies. No evidence was found of developed or used swim lane process maps, which are essential for identifying waste and enabling improvements.

These maps make dependencies visible and serve as the blueprint for future automation or system integration. As the City's BPM capability matures, Level 4 processes will also inform training, compliance reviews, and service redesign efforts.

Level 5 – Task and Standard Operating Procedure Level

The most detailed layer, Level 5, captures the specific work instructions and job aids needed to perform individual tasks within a process. Although the city has established a procedure for developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), these SOPs have not yet been fully implemented, nor are they consistently reviewed and approved on a regular basis.

SOPs standardize execution, promote safety and quality, and ensure continuity when staff change roles. Each SOP specifies the task purpose, inputs, step-by-step actions, responsible position, and expected outputs.

Establishing this level of detail allows the City to build a comprehensive knowledge base, reduce variation, and strengthen training and onboarding programs.

Summary

The City's five-level framework creates a structured approach for understanding and improving municipal operations. Levels 1–2 define the City's value architecture and end-to-end workflows. Levels 3–4 establish operational consistency and transparency. Level 5 anchors process discipline in daily work.

Together, these levels provide the foundation for a sustainable Business Process Management System - one that connects strategic goals to operational performance, enhances service quality, and supports a culture of continuous improvement throughout the City of St. Helena.

D. Process Inventory Overview

The Process Inventory serves as the City's master catalog of business processes, providing a clear, hierarchical view of how work is organized across departments and value streams. It establishes a consistent numbering and naming convention to connect the City's high-level service areas to their supporting subprocesses and standard operating procedures. This tool will form the backbone of the Business Process Management System (BPMS), enabling systematic tracking, prioritization, and improvement of processes over time. SharePoint serves as an effective platform for establishing and managing a comprehensive repository of organizational processes.

Process Level	Process ID	Process Name	Process Owner	Division	Cross Department Integration	Document Link
1	1.0	Public Works Service Delivery	Joe Leach	Public Works	Admin, B&S, Parks & Trees, UU, Water	Insert link to SIPOC, SwimLane Process Map, SOP
2	1.1	Building and Streets		Public Works		
2	1.2	Parks and Trees		Public Works		
2	1.3	Underground Utilities		Public Works		
2	1.4	Water Treatment		Public Works		
2	1.5	Wastewater Treatment		Public Works		
1	2.0	Library Services		Community Services		
1	3.0	Parks and Recreation		Community Services		
1	4.0	Fire		Community Services		
1	5.0	Police		Community Services		
1	6.0	Financial Management	Mandy Kellogg	Administrative Services		
2	6.1	Budget		Administrative Services		
2	6.2	Payroll		Administrative Services		
2	6.3	Utility Billing		Administrative Services		
2	6.4	Business Licenses		Administrative Services		
2	6.5	Accounts Payable		Administrative Services		
2	6.6	Accounts Receivable		Administrative Services		
2	6.7	Contracts / Purchase Orders		Administrative Services		
2	6.8	Accounting - audit, funding, bank reconciliation....		Administrative Services		
2	6.9	Cash Receipts		Administrative Services		
1	7.0	Human Resources	Mandy Kellogg	Administrative Services		
1	8.0	Information Technology		Administrative Services		
1	9.0	Community Development	Maya DeRosa	Community Development		
2	9.1	Building Permits		Community Development		
2	9.2	Planning Permits		Community Development		
2	9.3	Special Projects / Zoning Ordinance Administration		Community Development		
1	10.0	Capital Projects	Joe Leach	Public Works Administration		
2	10.1	Studies		Public Works Administration		
2	10.2	Capital Project from Study		Public Works Administration		
2	10.3	Capital Project from Operational Need		Public Works Administration		
1	11.0	Development Services	Joe Leach	Public Works Administration		
2	11.1	Planning Approval Process		Public Works Administration		
2	11.2	Public Improvement Plan Review and Approval		Public Works Administration		
2	11.3	Encroachment Permit Review		Public Works Administration		

Figure 28 – Example Process Inventory Overview

E. Continuous Improvement Assessment

A strong Continuous Improvement (CI) System integrates both top-down strategic improvement and bottom-up cultural improvement, ensuring that the City of St. Helena advances toward its long-term goals while simultaneously building a workforce that actively solves problems and improves performance every day.

At the strategic level, improvement projects and initiatives should directly align with the City’s strategic priorities and Council-adopted goals. These efforts are typically organized and displayed using a driver diagram, which visually links the City’s vision to its goals, strategies, and key improvement projects. A well-constructed driver diagram clarifies how project activities are both necessary and sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes, reinforcing accountability and strategic alignment. This top-down perspective ensures that limited resources are directed toward the initiatives that most meaningfully advance community outcomes. Presented below is a straightforward illustration of a strategic deployment framework.

Strategic Deployment Framework (Example)

True North: Deliver reliable, high-quality municipal services that enhance community well-being and long-term sustainability.

Vision & Mission: A responsive, transparent, and accountable city government focused on operational excellence and community partnerships.

Strategic Priorities: 1. Infrastructure & Resilience, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Customer Service Excellence, 4. Workforce Development, 5. Technology & Innovation

Primary Drivers

- Preventive maintenance and capital planning
- Budget discipline and forecasting

- Permit and customer-experience redesign
- Talent retention and succession planning
- IT modernization and system integration

Projects and Initiatives

- Pavement and water-system asset management
- New financial system implementation
- Streamlined permit and inspection workflow
- HR process modernization
- Citizen engagement and digital-service portal

Performance Measures (KPIs)

- Service-request response time
- Budget variance %
- Permit turnaround time
- Employee-engagement index
- % of services available online

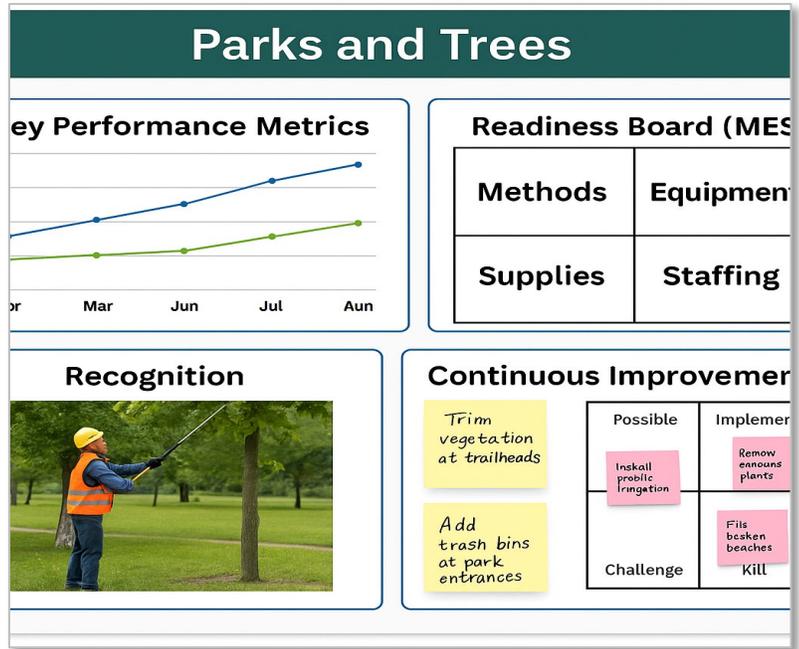


Figure 29 – DMS Example Board

At the operational level, the CI System must cultivate a culture of continuous improvement - a mindset in which every employee views themselves as both a contributor and a problem solver. Building this culture involves providing staff with training and tools in basic improvement methods and problem-solving techniques. Many organizations implement a Daily Management System (DMS) to sustain this approach. DMS structures -whether physical visual boards or digital equivalents -provide a standardized way for teams to review performance, identify barriers, and act on improvement ideas. These boards typically display:

- Key performance metrics and progress indicators
- Improvement slips or quick-win ideas ('Just-Do-Its')
- Sections for staff recognition or learning highlights
- A readiness board often uses the MESS framework—Methods, Equipment, Supplies, and Staffing—to ensure teams have what they need to perform today’s work effectively.

When used consistently, the DMS reinforces situational awareness, team communication, and proactive problem solving. It also creates a structured pathway for issues that cannot be resolved at the local level to be escalated through tiered huddles—short, focused meetings at successive organizational levels to coordinate action and remove barriers.

During the review of current practices within the City of St. Helena, there was no evidence of a formally adopted improvement methodology such as Lean or Six Sigma. Likewise, employees did not reference improvement training, structured problem-solving routines, or standardized tools in their interviews. This represents a significant opportunity for growth. Developing this capability would help staff not only perform their daily work more efficiently but also engage in the disciplined identification and elimination of waste, variation, and rework.

A Daily Management System was partially observed within Public Works, where a superintendent huddle serves as a coordination and communication mechanism. This provides a foundation upon which a broader, citywide continuous improvement system could be built—one that links daily operational management with long-term strategic improvement. Business Process Management (BPM) provides the structural backbone of such a system. Many City processes are currently in a state of pre-control, meaning they lack standardized definitions and consistent measurement. The first improvement step, therefore, is to establish a stable and repeatable standard process. Once a process is in control, predictable, and consistently executed, it can be evaluated against performance requirements to determine whether it can meet desired goals. If not, targeted improvement projects can be initiated to close those performance gaps.

Establishing this dual approach - strategic improvement from the top and cultural improvement from the bottom up - creates a sustainable system in which every employee contributes to better outcomes, every process is measurable and improvable, and the City continuously learns and evolves to meet the needs of its residents and stakeholders.

F. Performance Measures and Continuous Improvement

During the review, limited evidence was found that performance measures are being used consistently for decision-making, or that results are being trended over time. In a mature performance management environment, measures serve as a feedback mechanism—providing quantitative insight into service delivery, resource utilization, and community outcomes. Without this visibility, leaders must rely on anecdotal input rather than data to identify inefficiencies, assess progress, or justify investments. Effective performance measurement systems link strategic objectives to operational activities, ensuring that every process contributes to the organization’s mission and vision.

A comprehensive performance management framework typically integrates two complementary tools: Balanced Scorecards and Process Dashboards. Balanced scorecards track key outcome indicators across perspectives such as customer satisfaction, operational effectiveness, workforce capability, and financial stewardship - providing a balanced view of organizational health. Dashboards, by contrast, focus on real-time process measures, enabling supervisors to monitor service backlogs, work order completion rates, or compliance metrics. Together, these tools create a closed-loop system that reinforces accountability, enables data-driven decisions, and embeds continuous improvement into daily operations. As St. Helena advances its business process maturity, developing and using such scorecards and dashboards will be essential to building a culture where improvement is informed by evidence and sustained by learning.

Title: *Community Development Department | Performance Dashboard (Illustrative)*

Focus Area	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Current	Status
Permitting & Plan Review	Average days to issue residential building permit	≤ 10 days	14 days	Needs Improvement
Code Enforcement	% of complaints inspected within 5 days	90 %	82 %	At Risk
Planning	% of planning applications reviewed within statutory deadline	100 %	100 %	On Track
Customer Experience	% of applicants satisfied with process clarity (survey)	85 %	72 %	Needs Improvement
Staff Capacity	Average number of active cases per planner	≤ 40	56	Off Target

Title: *Public Works Department | Performance Dashboard (Illustrative)*

Focus Area	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Current	Status
Street Maintenance	% of potholes repaired within 72 hours of report	95 %	88 %	At Risk
Water Management	% of water samples meeting EPA standards	100 %	100 %	On Track
Wastewater Treatment	Average plant uptime (hours available / total)	≥ 99 %	97 %	Needs Improvement
Parks & Landscape	% of scheduled maintenance completed on time	90 %	85 %	Needs Improvement
Fleet & Equipment	% of fleet preventive maintenance on schedule	95 %	91 %	On Track

Figure 30 – Illustrative Dashboards

G. Level 2 SIPOC Examples
Public Works – Service Delivery

Suppliers	Inputs	Process Steps	Outputs	Customers	Outcome Measures
Residents and businesses submitting service requests	Work orders, maintenance schedules, equipment, materials, staffing resources	1. Buildings & Streets Maintenance: Inspect and repair roads, sidewalks, signage, and street lighting	Safe and well-maintained public infrastructure	Residents, businesses, visitors	% of service requests completed within target timeframe; number of safety incidents per year
Utilities vendors, materials suppliers	Tools, replacement parts, utility maps	2. Parks & Trees: Maintain parks, urban trees, landscaping, and public green spaces	Clean, accessible, and visually appealing public areas	Residents, community organizations, visitors	Park condition index; % of tree maintenance completed on schedule; citizen satisfaction survey results
Engineering team, public works staff	Work plans, maintenance logs	3. Underground Utilities: Maintain storm drains, sewer lines, and water distribution infrastructure	Reliable and compliant underground utility systems	Residents, businesses, regulatory agencies	% of line breaks per mile per year; regulatory compliance rate; mean time to repair
Water treatment plant operations	Water quality data, chemicals, monitoring equipment	4. Water Treatment Plant: Operate treatment facilities to ensure clean and safe drinking water	Potable water meeting state and federal standards	Residents, regulatory agencies	% of water quality samples in compliance; gallons treated per FTE; cost per million gallons
Wastewater plant operations	Influent data, process controls, operator logs	5. Wastewater Treatment Plant: Operate wastewater collection and treatment processes to protect public health and environment	Treated wastewater meeting regulatory discharge standards	Residents, environmental agencies, regional water board	% compliance with effluent standards; cost per gallon treated; % preventive maintenance completed

Public Works – Development Services

Suppliers	Inputs	Process Steps	Outputs	Customers	Outcome Measures
Contractors, architects, residents	Permit applications, plans, inspection requests	1. Receive and review permit applications	Completed application review	Contractors, developers, residents	% of applications reviewed within target days; % of complete submissions received
Planning and Building divisions	Zoning and code data, inspection schedules	2. Conduct plan checks and inspections	Approved plans and completed inspections	Residents, builders	% of plan checks completed on time; # of re-inspections per 100 permits

City staff, finance	Fee schedules, policy documents	3. Issue permits and collect fees	Authorized permits and receipts	Contractors, finance department	Average permit turnaround time; % of fees collected electronically
Engineering, GIS, public works	Infrastructure and site data	4. Coordinate utility and infrastructure reviews	Utility coordination approvals	Developers, utilities	% of permits delayed by utility conflicts; # of coordination meetings held
Quality assurance team	Inspection reports, compliance findings	5. Close out permits and archive records	Closed permit files	Residents, developers	% of final inspections passing first time; # of code violations identified per quarter

Public Works – Capital Projects Delivery

Suppliers	Inputs	Process Steps	Outputs	Customers	Outcome Measures
City Council, Finance	Approved capital budget, project list	1. Prioritize and plan capital projects	Annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	Council, residents	% of projects aligned with strategic plan; % of total funding obligated
Engineers, consultants	Design specifications, permits	2. Design and engineer projects	Final design packages	Contractors, internal departments	% of designs completed within schedule; # of change orders due to design errors
Procurement, legal	Bid documents, contracts	3. Procure and award contracts	Executed construction contracts	Vendors, contractors	% of projects awarded within 90 days of approval; # of bid protests
Project managers, contractors	Construction schedules, materials	4. Construct and manage projects	Completed infrastructure projects	Residents, businesses	% of projects on schedule and budget; cost variance per project
QA inspectors, finance	Punch lists, invoices	5. Close out and evaluate projects	Final acceptance and post-project evaluation	Council, residents, finance	% of projects completed within original scope; average closeout time

Community Development

Suppliers	Inputs	Process Steps	Outputs	Customers	Outcome Measures
Residents, developers, business owners	Development proposals, applications	1. Receive and review planning applications	Logged applications	Developers, residents	% of applications accepted as complete on first submission
Planning staff, regional agencies	Codes, ordinances, maps	2. Conduct zoning and environmental review	Compliance determinations	Developers, City Council	% of projects completing CEQA review within target; % of projects requiring resubmittal
Advisory boards, Council	Meeting agendas, reports	3. Present projects to planning bodies	Public hearing decisions	Residents, Council	% of recommendations accepted; public meeting participation rate

Permit center, engineering	Approved conditions	4. Issue entitlements and track compliance	Final approvals and records	Developers, residents	% of projects meeting permit conditions; # of code violations resolved
GIS, public information staff	Maps, status reports	5. Update planning data and communicate outcomes	Updated zoning and GIS maps	City staff, public	Frequency of data updates; # of web hits to planning portal

Administrative Services – Finance

Suppliers	Inputs	Process Steps	Outputs	Customers	Outcome Measures
Departments, vendors	Invoices, budgets, payroll data	1. Process accounts payable and receivable	Payments and receipts	Vendors, departments	Days payable outstanding; % of invoices processed within 30 days
City departments	Budget requests, revenue forecasts	2. Develop and manage city budget	Adopted annual budget	City Council, departments	% variance from budget; # of budget amendments per year
Payroll, HR	Timecards, salary schedules	3. Process payroll and benefits	Payroll runs, reports	Employees, HR	Payroll accuracy rate; % of payroll processed on schedule
Grantors, project managers	Grant agreements, reports	4. Manage grants and restricted funds	Grant reimbursement requests	State and federal agencies	% of eligible reimbursements received; grant compliance rate
City leadership, Council	Financial data, KPIs	5. Produce financial reports and audits	Monthly and annual reports	Council, residents	Timeliness of reports; audit findings per year

Administrative Services – Human Resources

Suppliers	Inputs	Process Steps	Outputs	Customers	Outcome Measures
Applicants, employees	Applications, resumes, policies	1. Recruit and hire qualified staff	Job postings and new hires	Departments, candidates	Time to fill vacancies; % of offers accepted
Department managers	Performance data, goals	2. Manage performance and evaluations	Completed performance reviews	Supervisors, employees	% of employees with annual review completed; employee satisfaction index
Training providers	Curriculum, materials	3. Deliver training and development programs	Trained staff and attendance records	Employees, management	Training hours per employee; % of staff meeting certification requirements
Payroll, benefits vendors	Enrollment forms, HRIS data	4. Administer benefits and compensation	Payroll and benefits updates	Employees, Finance	Benefits enrollment accuracy rate; % of payroll errors corrected within pay period
All staff	Engagement surveys, feedback	5. Maintain employee relations and compliance	Reports, investigations, resolutions	Employees, City leadership	# of grievances resolved within target; % compliance with labor regulations

5.3. Large Scale Considerations

As the City considers its efficiency and transformation, it's important to consider large scale changes. These changes could have significant impact on the City. We summarize some considerations below.

5.3.1. Revenue Improvement with Tourism

St. Helena has an amazing opportunity to improve tax revenues derived from the Napa Valley tourist industry. We provide 2023 statistics on Napa Valley tourism taken from Travel Research and Statistics (<https://www.visitnapavalley.com/about-us/research/>):

- Napa Valley welcomed a total of 3.7 million visitors.
- The tourism industry generated \$107.5 million in tax revenue for local resident services, an increase of 26 percent from 2018.
- Visitors to Napa Valley spent \$2.5 billion supporting local businesses.
- Almost 70 percent is generated from overnight hotel guests.
- The average visitor spent an average of \$281 in Napa County per guest, per day.
- Direct visitor spending within the county increased 13 percent since 2018.
- The tourism industry remains the second largest employer in Napa County (after the wine industry), supporting an estimated 16,000 jobs in the community.
- The average age of the Napa Valley visitor is 40, six years younger than the 2018 average visitor age of 46.
- Visitor spending per day in Napa Valley is \$7 million on average.

5.3.2. Increased Partnerships with Surrounding Towns and County

St. Helena has opportunities to further explore cost-sharing with Calistoga. Calistoga is a similar sized city within approximately 6 miles of St. Helena. St. Helena is already engaged with Calistoga partnerships with police dispatch. The City should continue to explore cost-sharing partnerships with Calistoga, particularly in areas of police, fire, and water. Further, the City should explore partnerships with Napa County in areas of water treatment and waste water.

5.3.3. Public Private Partnerships

A public-private partnership (PPP) refers to a contractual arrangement wherein a municipal government (a town of St. Helena's scale) collaborates with private sector entities to finance, develop, operate, or maintain infrastructure assets or services. Typically, the public body retains oversight, regulatory authority, and ultimate accountability, while the partner injects capital, specialized expertise, or accelerated timelines. Returns are risk-shared: taxpayers dodge full upfront burdens, firms earn through fees or concessions over decades. The City could use PPP arrangements for a broad range of needs. We provide some examples of PPP use by other towns/cities in the United States.

Alexandria, Virginia

Source: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/P3>

The City of Alexandria has long been a part of public-private partnerships and alternative delivery such as the Energy from Waste facility on Eisenhower Avenue, the construction of public parking garages with private development, the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, the City Courthouse, the Potomac Yard Fire Station, the Potomac Yard Metro Station, the first design-build of a municipal bus facility in Virginia, affordable and workforce housing, as well as used innovative financing tools such as synthetic tax incremental financing for Landmark Mall site redevelopment, the Virginia Tourism Development Financing Program for the redevelopment of 699 Prince Street Hotel, support agreements for retention of the Art League HQ and the activation of the The Art League Old Town North Arts District, franchise solicitation for EV Charging Infrastructure at City facilities, and tax abatement for the 5001 Eisenhower Avenue Office Building Conversion Project. The City also partners with many non-profit organizations in the delivery of services to the public. These innovative and progressive initiatives have involved joining the financial and knowledge-based strengths of the private sector with the public sector's in undertaking of complex affordable housing, cultural, transportation and other projects.

Rialto, California

Source: <https://bridgemastersinc.com/u-s-infrastructure-benefits-public-private-partnerships/#:~:text=Rialto%20Utility%20Authority%2C%20Rialto%2C%20California,safe%20water%20to%20the%20community.>

A public-private partnership was formed to upgrade the city's water system, which was facing decay and contamination. A 30-year PPP was established with a water processing company and an investment firm to make the necessary improvements and provide safe water to the community.

Sandy Springs, Georgia

Source: <https://www.sandyspringsga.gov/public-private-partnership> and [https://www.mackinac.org/20029#:~:text=Local%20P3s:%20Sandy%20Springs%2C%20Ga.&text=As%20you%20can%20imagine%2C%20Sandy,Office\)%20or%20some%20private%20entity.](https://www.mackinac.org/20029#:~:text=Local%20P3s:%20Sandy%20Springs%2C%20Ga.&text=As%20you%20can%20imagine%2C%20Sandy,Office)%20or%20some%20private%20entity.)

Incorporated in 2005 and designed its operations around a "contract city" model, outsourcing most municipal services like public safety and infrastructure to private firms. This model is often cited as a comprehensive example of a PPP. It also demonstrates issues with PPP when they are overly relied upon.

6.0 Next Steps

In Step 1, Blackberg began the current state analysis with a focus on collecting input from City staff in the form of structured interviews and surveys. In Step 2, Blackberg continued the current state analysis, but the methods changed to document reviews; data requests; quantitative analyses of data; interviews with Executive leadership, Finance Committee members, City Council members, and residents (small number); review of legacy analyses and surveys; one meeting with the outside IT service consultant (Apex); examination of publicly published materials on the website and social media; and examination of national benchmark data for Libraries. This enabled us to develop a comprehensive and accurate picture of the City's current state.

Next, we move into Step 3 where we begin developing recommendations for transformation. This includes an examination of organizational structure and staffing; process improvements and efficiency potential; cost savings potential; and technology utilization and modernization.