

Corporate Planning & Financial Services Report to
Executive Committee
2024 April 16

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
EC2024-0342

Continuous improvement: Delivering faster, better, more effective services for Calgarians

PURPOSE

This report provides insights on the continuous improvement ecosystem at The City that enhances service value for Calgarians. The organization regularly undertakes activities that maximize effectiveness, modernize services, and optimize efficiency to remain responsive to the needs of a growing and evolving community.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

On 2023 January 24 ([EC2022-1304](#)), Council approved Administration's recommendation to close out the Zero-Based Review program. The report also outlined a new continuous improvement program supporting the corporation with foundational systems, expert advice, and internal consulting services to help ensure the success of the service improvement initiatives outlined in the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets and beyond. Attachment 1 provides additional background and history.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Executive Committee recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for the Corporate Record.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Chief Financial Officer and General Manager, Corporate Planning & Financial Services, Carla Male concurs with this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Administration found efficiencies and achieved approximately \$226 million in operating budget savings and reductions since 2019 through directed budget cuts and programs intended to enhance service value ([C2021-1436](#)).
- Council made Modernizing Government a focus area for 2023-2026. This includes continually improving operations and delivering services more efficiently and effectively to increase service value for Calgarians.
- Post organizational realignment, the corporation's evolving needs and experience with past continuous improvement programs prompted Administration to launch a new program to help modernize City services. The program was named Elevate Calgary to signal a new course of action to energize, empower and amplify continuous improvement efforts during this business cycle and beyond.
- The City's continuous improvement ecosystem is characterized by individuals, services, divisions, business units, departments and a corporate program all working to enhance service value for Calgarians. This new unified and collaborative approach combines service-led and corporate-wide initiatives. Attachment 2 showcases initiatives from across the corporation.

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- From a corporate perspective, Elevate Calgary provides continuous improvement support, offering in-house management consulting services, an education program, and a unified approach to telling stories of The City's shared successes. In 2023, Elevate Calgary helped the organization avoid \$3.9 million in external consulting costs by undertaking work in-house that would have otherwise been outsourced. Completing those 13 continuous improvement projects ensured further progress toward delivering the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets.

DISCUSSION

The City's continuous improvement efforts optimize processes, maximize effectiveness, and reduce inefficiencies, leading to higher value service delivery for Calgarians.

Two historical foundational programs have shaped continuous improvement in the organization, setting the stage for collaborative achievements that enhance service value.

Zero-Based Review program

Starting in 2011, the Zero-Based Review (ZBR) program reviewed 76 per cent of The City's operating budget through 12 ZBRs across the organization, with predicted financial benefits ranging between \$64 million and \$80 million per year.

Solutions for Achieving Value and Excellence (SAVE) program

In 2019, Council directed Administration to identify \$74 million in operational savings to meet fiscal challenges. The SAVE program was developed to meet this need and help modernize City services by delivering \$78.6 million in operational savings.

Other savings initiatives

Outside of the ZBR and SAVE programs, additional reductions have been delivered by individual services through the budgeting process. For example, in 2019 The City reduced the previously approved operating budget by \$60 million through an in-year adjustment resulting in service reductions. Some of these service reductions, like the closure of the Inglewood Pool, the reduction of Transit service hours and the elimination of Emergency Medical Response Units operated by the Calgary Fire Department were later mitigated with renewed investment because it became apparent that Calgarians valued these services.

A new era of continuous improvement

Continuous improvement of City services remains a priority for Administration. This is demonstrated by approximately 300 strategies identified as service improvement during development of the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets ([C2022-1051](#)).

With the organizational realignment, continuous improvement is an opportunity to build value, resilience and modernize City services. Envisioned as a cohesive continuous improvement ecosystem, this network articulates initiatives from the individual-level daily work to service-led enhancements and corporate-wide targeted improvement efforts.

The Service Improvement division of the Corporate Planning & Performance business unit leads the Elevate Calgary program. As an internal consulting group, the Elevate Calgary team

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provides resources, frameworks, training, and tools to ensure a common approach to improve service delivery.

Attachment 2 highlights Elevate Calgary's work in 2023 and a selection of initiatives across departments that align with the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets. To frame the continuous improvement focus, selected projects and programs are outlined in six themes: Serving Calgarians, Operational Optimization, Systems & Technology, Infrastructure Optimization, Cross-corporate Collaboration and Climate & Environment. Attachment 3 provides a list of the approximately 300 strategies aligned to the six key continuous improvement themes.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

IMPLICATIONS

Social

This report presents an overview of continuous improvements made in support of social resilience, including social equity and customer service enhancements focused on equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

Environmental

Environmental protection and climate resilience is a fundamental part of continuous improvement and is represented in this report.

Economic

This report presents an overview of continuous improvements focused on modernizing municipal government in support of Calgary's economic resilience.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

RISK

Risk management and continuous improvement are intrinsically linked, helping advance good governance by providing the practices and toolsets for the organization to embrace the opportunities of upside risks and respond appropriately to downside risks. Efforts to enhance service value through continuous improvement initiatives benefit the delivery of Council's approved Service Plans and Budgets and are an integral part of The City's planning, performance and reporting relationship under The City Risk Officer.

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ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Continuous improvement: Delivering faster, better, more effective services for Calgarians
3. 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets continuous improvement initiatives
4. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department / Business Unit	Approve/Consult/Inform
Carla Male	Corporate Planning & Financial Services	Approve
Chris Stewart	Corporate Planning & Performance	Approve
David Duchworth	Chief Administrative Office	Inform
Stuart Dalgleish	Chief Operating Office	Inform
Chris Arthurs	People, Innovation & Collaboration Services	Inform
Katie Black	Community Services	Inform
Jill Floen	Law, Legislative Services & Security	Inform
Debra Hamilton	Planning & Development Services	Inform
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Inform
Michael Thompson	Infrastructure Services	Inform

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