

Staff Report

Report To: Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee
Report From: Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Meeting Date: July 9, 2025
Report Code: CM-25-022
Subject: Update on Service Review Project 1A3 and the Engineering and Public Works Department Structure Review

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-022 respecting an Update on Service Review Project 1A3 and the Engineering and Public Works Department Structure Review, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to:

1. Include the new staffing positions in the Ideal Option in the Mayor's 2026 budget for the Mayor's consideration; and
2. Include the realignment of five seasonal positions in the Mayor's 2026 budget for consideration by the Mayor.

Highlights:

- The alignment of work between the Public Works and Parks and Open Spaces Divisions continues and further alignment will be implemented in 2025/2026.
- The Public Works and Engineering Department is recommending a restructuring of the department based on current work assessment and service level requirements to support the work of the Department, with options.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Service Excellence.

Staff Report CM-25-022: Update on Service Review Project 1A3 and the Engineering and Public Works Department Structure Review

This report supports the review and identification of work and staff that can reduce duplication, improve productivity and customer satisfaction.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

On July 17, 2023, the Special Meeting of Council adopted the results of the Service Review Study, along with the Strategic Leadership Team's responses and recommendations. Service Review [CM-23-012 S-230717-006](#).

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report respecting Service Review Implementation and Next Steps, City Council approves the Service Review Priority Opportunity Action Plan, as attached to the report, subject to the changes made by Council throughout the July 17, 2023 Special Council meeting."

Further on June 12, 2024, the Service Review Ad Hoc Committee received the report [1.A.3 Review Parks and Public Works Operations for Synergies](#) which outlined the initial review and improvements taken to date.

Background:

The purpose of the Service Review Action Project 1.A.3 was to "find efficiencies, streamline processes, reduce duplication of effort between functional groups and maximize opportunities to coordinate and support work". The Directors of Public Works and Engineering and Community Services have continued to meet to review the opportunities to better align work, reduce duplication, enhance productivity and ultimately provide enhanced customer service since the improvements outlined in the report in June 2024.

Prior to 2008 the operational units were a single division, and a decision was made to break the unit into two divisions – a division that reported to Public Works and a division that reported to Parks and Open Spaces. Since that division in work, opportunities have arisen to provide greater alignment which has become clear as staff have continued to review the workload and servicing across both departments.

In addition, in May 2025, the Superintendent of Public Works retired, and since then, the Manager of Engineering Services has announced that he would be retiring at the end of August 2025. This is a timely opportunity for leadership to take a closer look at how the Engineering and Public Works Department is organized. With thoughtful planning, there is flexibility to explore improvements that can strengthen the department's structure and performance. At the same time, it is important to ensure that any changes are made with care and respect for long-serving staff, recognizing their experience and contributions. By involving the right people and allowing space for open discussion, leadership can support meaningful change without disrupting what is already working well.

The review of the Engineering and Public Works structure and the Service Review Project both benefit from these analyses.

Analysis:

Public Works/Parks Alignment

The Directors of Public Works and Engineering, Community Services and Corporate Services together with the Manager of Parks & Open Spaces and City Manager have been discussing the options for alignment and amalgamation. Staff have determined that amalgamation of the two departments is not recommended due to the impact operationally given the size and implications of having one large Department as were seen previously. In addition, a review of Report-A-Concern has identified an inconsistency in addressing similar concerns across divisions. Staff have continued building on the review to focus on forward facing services that have overlapping work, sharing of resources, establishing standard operating procedures and executing shared activities and clarifying which tasks/activities should be fully housed (moved) under one of the Departments.

The work that can be aligned within the departments potentially includes Grass Cutting, Tree and Stump Removal, Events, Catwalks, Garbage Collection and River District upkeep.

Staff have determined that with the alignment of work, there will also be an alignment of staff that do that work in the two departments. It is anticipated that the Trees and Stump Removal could move (staff and equipment) in its entirety to the Parks and Open Spaces Division, more specifically to the

Forestry Team. This means that stump removal will be scheduled knowing when the tree removal is scheduled, reducing the work orders and requests for locates and providing better, more proactive customer service such that the homeowners will be advised when the stump removal will be completed as it will be scheduled within the same division, rather than across departments. With the work completed across two departments there is a duplication of work and effort. For example, there are work orders being originated in both Public Works and Parks. There is GIS mapping that must be completed by both departments and locates must be requested by each department prior to doing the work. Locates once requested can take up to two weeks to be received and can only be acted upon within sixty (60) days of receipt. Currently, stump removal occurs once per year, typically in the fall, while trees are removed throughout the year based on need and resources. This leads to a decrease in customer satisfaction. Once Parks completes the removal of the tree, then the work order is completed in the system and a new work order is generated by the Public Works Administrative Assistant for the stump removal. If the work was aligned into one of the Divisions, the duplicate work would be reduced, and it is expected that customer satisfaction would be enhanced.

In addition, it is anticipated that grass cutting around guide rails can also be transferred and completed by the Parks and Open Spaces Division. It is expected that with the alignment of this work, two (2) staff could be transferred from the Public Works Division to the Parks and Open Spaces Division. With regard to events and catwalks, further discussion is required to ensure that fulsome information is available to support the transition of the work.

It was also determined that the Public Works Department could share up to two (2) staff with the Parks Division throughout the busiest spring and summer months reducing the number of Seasonal staff to be hired.

Finally, staff are also evaluating the business case to make a number of seasonal staff permanent. Over the previous few years, staff have found that the ability to attract and retain qualified seasonal staff has become increasingly difficult. For instance, in the past three years, we have seen increasing numbers of candidates turn down our offers, such that in 2025 to date, 7 offers have been declined. Currently, the City hires eleven (11) seasonals for winter control and sixteen (16) for spring and summer. Those

who have accepted offers have had high attrition rates as permanent full-time roles have become available elsewhere.

Over the past four years staff have seen an increase in the number of applicants per role as well as an increase in the number of applicants who decline offers of seasonal employment. In 2022 staff spent 48 hours in hiring seasonals for both Public Works and Parks. In 2023 and 2024, this was 94 and 77 hours, respectively. In 2025 to date, hiring only Parks Seasonals, staff have spent 60 hours in the recruitment process. Once seasonal staff start, they each have an additional sixteen (16) hours of training and testing to complete before they are assigned to work on equipment. Over the past two years, staff have had to repost for seasonal roles, in order to generate sufficient qualified applicants. In fact, for 2025 Parks and Open Spaces Seasonals, three postings were required until sixteen Seasonal staff accepted roles and in 2023-2024 staff were never able to attain the target number of winter seasonals.

The introduction of Picsume, while reducing the time for screening and scoring, does not reduce the time for interviewing, training and testing which is where the bulk of the time is spent.

Adjusting some seasonal staff to permanent and assigning them to Parks will decrease time in recruiting and onboarding and result in greater productivity and engagement of staff. Staff are recommending that five Seasonal roles move to permanent as there are currently several excellent seasonal staff who wish only to work either in Parks or in Public Works seasonally as they have other responsibilities in the respective off season.

During Collective Bargaining, the parties agreed to a Letter of Understanding to discuss shift times. Changing any seasonal positions to permanent would only be able to occur if the Union agrees to adjust shifts to meet the needs that seasonal staff currently fulfill.

The City currently has five staff that work in Parks as a seasonal, take a break in service and then return as a Winter Control seasonal either in Parks or Public Works. They would not require onboarding and training for each year when they return as seasonals. In addition, it is expected that there would be a higher level of engagement and productivity with this change. It would also provide further opportunities for advancement which based on the 2024 Engagement Survey, only 40% of staff believe currently exists within the organization.

Based on the shifting of work, the sharing of resources, and the adjustment from seasonal to permanent, staff expect to see a reduction in budget dependent on the number of staff overall that are shifted between the departments and the number of seasonals that are made permanent.

As staff and work are aligned, staff need to ensure that there is appropriate equipment available to complete the work. Since 2021, there has been no additional equipment purchased to support the work and multiple pieces of equipment have become obsolete and irreparable. Pursuant to the Fleet Strategy, when plotting out the most efficient way to operate, the optimum types and numbers of equipment must be considered as well. Requirements for new equipment shall be requested within the budgetary process.

Finally, consistent standards need to be developed to support the shared services. Staff may be transferred between Parks and Public Works (work is wholly kept in either Parks or Public Works), or the work could be shared between Parks and Public Works while the staff remain in one Division. This requires additional review to determine the most efficient and effective means of completing the work and maintaining employee engagement.

This proposed alignment will require a three (3) year implementation period prior to determining its success. The first year is a transitional year and will require adjustments as new information becomes available. The second year is to make further adjustments to support the transition, and it is expected that the third year will be the first cohesive year of the transition.

Public Works and Engineering Department Restructuring

Over the past two years, the Director of Public Works and Engineering has been reviewing the structure of the Public Works and Engineering Department to determine the ideal structure needed to address the operational and strategic needs of the organization's current service levels. With the recent vacancies in the Superintendent of Public Works and Manager of Engineering positions, an opportunity arose to adjust the current structure without significantly disrupting long-serving staff in the existing positions.

In developing concepts for consideration, input was sought from the staff of various divisions within the Department and from Union representatives to discuss what, in their opinion, worked well with the divisional relationships and team structures, as well as what could be improved from a frontline perspective.

The review aimed to ensure that any concept was “future-proofed” in that the proposed structure did not paint the Corporation into a corner when population growth or new legislation necessitated the addition of services, or the expansion of existing scope and/or complexity. In particular, several pieces of provincial legislation were referenced and considered when developing the portfolios for each proposed position, such as the Continuous Linear Infrastructure Certificate of Approval (CLI-ECA), the Drinking Water Quality Standard (DWQMS) and the newly specified provincial Wastewater Quality Standard (WWQMS).

The volume of work to be completed was also taken into account when determining the number and type of positions that would be ideally suited to undertake the work. For example, the City has been fortunate to have been awarded several grants in recent years to offset some of the infrastructure deficit; however, now the work must be completed. Where financial resources were previously the most limiting factor, recently, human resources have become the limiting factor. In order to ensure the prudent management of these projects from conception to construction completion, both financial and human resources are necessary. There have been capital projects that have been deferred due to lack of human resources to manage the project; while significant effort has been made to propose an achievable capital plan, unforeseen circumstances, additional/unplanned projects and staff vacancies all impact the ultimate ability of the Department’s lean workforce to achieve all objectives as planned at the beginning of the year. The lack of redundancy and backup coverage is common across the corporation; however, in the Public Works and Engineering Department, this has led, for example, to multimillion-dollar capital projects being run off the corner of a Superintendent’s desk simply because they are the subject matter experts for their facility. While they may be experts at running the processes in their assigned plant, they are neither project managers nor engineers, and this can lead to unmet needs for both the consultant and the City.

Three (3) options (see Appendix A) were developed based on the review and input. The three proposed options are:

3. **Ideal option**, which would be resourced to meet the requirements demanded of the Department’s work units, such as but not limited to Council’s priorities, level of service expectations and legislated standards. The Ideal option adds resources to process and manage

additional information, a primary weakness in the current departmental structure. For example, additional capacity to process Temporary Encroachment and Driveway permits with a more rapid turnaround time, dedicated staff to manage the documentation required for ministry reporting and improve internal document control, reducing the chance of cost overruns and delays due to contract administration issues. Adding an engineering technologist position could also result in more project design being done “in-house” as currently almost all design work is outsourced. Lastly, it is not anticipated that the structure will need to expand in the foreseeable future, as this staff allotment has built-in capacity to absorb pressures due to future population growth, simply by adjusting certain expectations, i.e. re-extending turnaround times or limiting the number of active projects. Should higher service levels be desired at that time, there is room in the structure for further expansion.

4. **Mid option (with Short-term and Medium-term variants)** modifies some existing roles and implements fewer new positions than the Ideal option. This option eliminates the additional engineering technologist position; therefore, it is unlikely that additional design would be undertaken in-house. The variation between the short-term and mid-term versions are primarily the creation of a Wastewater Collection team, which would oversee all linear collection infrastructure (storm sewer and sanitary sewers), to allow the Wastewater Superintendent to focus on the treatment plant and more importantly, to ensure that the storm sewers are receiving adequate consideration (maintenance and operational) investment, as required by the City’s CLI-ECA.
5. **Base option**, which changes two roles and adds no additional positions.

All three options have two common organizational changes: the Manager of Engineering position becoming a Manager of Public Works and Engineering, and the Engineering Administrator becoming a Project Coordinator.

The above changes (Manager of Public Works and Engineering and Project Coordinator) ensure that the Engineering Services Division remains adequately supported while adding to the support of the Public Works Division. It is envisioned that the Manager position will interact

collaboratively with the Manager of Water and Wastewater position, bringing additional technical and political expertise to the day-to-day work of the Division under their purview. This position will take a data-driven approach to decision-making and provide strong leadership, combining both operational focus and longer-term strategic planning for the Division.

The Project Coordinator position will assist in executing capital projects during the conceptual and design stages and will support the documentation necessary during the construction and contract administration phase. This is of critical importance to keep projects on schedule, on budget, and organized so that decision-making can be made in a timely and informed manner. Currently, the Engineering Technologists are each carrying out projects in an ad-hoc way; as they are often pulled into miscellaneous engineering-related matters, they are unable to devote the necessary attention to execute timely procurement, turnaround on feedback requests and document incurred costs to compare against invoices.

Ideal Option

The Ideal Option includes four (4) additional roles including a Compliance Coordinator, a Supervisor of Engineering, an additional Engineering Technologist and an additional Superintendent for Wastewater Collections.

The City's CLI-ECA requires a variety of standard record-keeping, reporting and documentation of compliance with the regulations and conditions of the ECA. To date, this has been performed from the corner of the Director and Manager of Water and Wastewater's desks. Recent training has uncovered that much more attention is required, particularly in the realm of stormwater, as there is currently no clear owner of that line of business. The Compliance Coordinator would oversee the reporting and conformance with not only the City's CLI-ECA, but also the DWQMS and WWQMS. There is also the opportunity for this position to be responsible for reporting and monitoring relating to the City's shuttered landfills and salt management plan.

The Supervisor of Engineering is proposed primarily to support the Engineering Services Division, based on the need to provide ongoing guidance on technical matters as well as assistance with potentially contentious issues or those with impact beyond the Department. It may be challenging to find a candidate with the combination of Public Works and Engineering skills required to effectively support both Divisions. It is

suspected that this is the reason why the Manager positions were set up the way they were (Manager of PW, including Water and Wastewater, and Manager of Engineering Services). However, there is a clear justification for the proposed Manager position, both due to hierarchy and for a position that can focus on operational issues. The Manager would have an eye on the strategies that the Director is implementing within the Department as well as support the enhancement of inter-departmental relationships.

The Supervisor of Engineering Services position is proposed to provide support to the Manager of Public Works and Engineering, with the main focus on being the “technical expert” and people leader of the Engineering Services team. Whereas, on the Public Works side of the Division, the role is operational and project oriented; while it is expected that there will be some overlap of skillsets, it is unlikely that the successful applicant for this role will have a strong Engineering skillset as well as a strong, data focused, operational skillset. Even with the full skill set, the workload and expectations of the Manager role cannot be completed by one person.

Mid Option

The Mid options (Short-term and Mid-term) include three (3) additional roles, including an Engineering Supervisor to support the Manager of Public Works and Engineering, with the Short-term option excluding the Superintendent of Wastewater Collection for a couple of years until the legislation and accountabilities related to Storm Water are better articulated and understood. On June 20, 2025, the new Wastewater Quality Management guidelines were officially released. The Water QMS is legislated and required to maintain the City’s drinking water license; however, the requirement for Wastewater was a best practice and previously not legislated. Staff anticipate that as our Wastewater CLI-ECA is renewed, conformance with this Wastewater QMS guideline will likely be legislated.

While there is currently no requirement for staff working on the stormwater collection system to be Certified Wastewater Operators, based on the requirements of the CLI-ECA, Staff believe that is the direction that the legislation is moving towards in the province. As such, the proposed Mid Option, medium timeframe, calls for a Superintendent of Wastewater Collection. This Superintendent would become responsible for sanitary sewers and storm sewers. The sanitary sewers would be split from the current Wastewater Superintendent’s portfolio (the position would be renamed Wastewater Treatment Superintendent), allowing them to focus on

plant operations as the Water Treatment Superintendent does. Public Works is currently responsible for stormwater; however, none of the Public Works Staff have any wastewater collection certifications at this time. There was no immediate indication of interest when the potential opportunity to become trained as a wastewater operator was presented to the Public Works team.

Compliance and Project Coordination, although both required as full-time roles, could be combined in the Mid Options, recognizing that limited support will be provided for both compliance and project coordination. Refer to Appendix B for a detailed description of both roles.

Base Option

The Base option adjusts the Manager of Engineering to the Manager of Public Works and Engineering, and the Engineering Services Administrator is reallocated to Project Coordination and Compliance. These changes will be implemented later this summer. There is a limited budgetary impact which will be addressed within the current operational budget.

The Supervisor of Environmental Services will be assigned the Climate Action work as part of her portfolio and we will be looking to adjust her job description to allow her the time to focus on the Climate Action work.

Next Steps

Staff will be posting for the new Manager of Public Works and Engineering later this month and staff will finalize the job description for the Project Coordinator and posted this fall. The Superintendent of Public Works job will also be posted later this month.

The additional roles related to the Mid and Ideal options will be addressed through the budgetary process for the 2026 budget.

Financial Implications:

Wages for the Outside unionized employees are set within the Collective Agreement. In the past, there were significant differentials between the rates for Parks Seasonals and those in Public Works. Through the recent collective bargaining process, the disparity has been reduced. In addition, the parties have agreed to conduct a fulsome Joint Job Evaluation Process and develop a pay grid which may address additional previous compensation issues between Public Works and Parks Positions.

Savings related to the proposed alignment will be specific to the number of staff that are reallocated and how many are moved from seasonal to permanent. It is anticipated that annual savings of \$40,000 to \$110,000 could be realized through this realignment. It is recommended that any savings from the Service Review Project continue to be utilized by staff to further support operations in both Public Works and Parks and Open Spaces.

In the case of the restructuring of Public Works and Engineering Services Divisions, the proposed new positions and required funding will be submitted in accordance with the budgetary process.

Communication Strategy:

There were multiple opportunities for input from front line staff and people leaders including meetings where staff were asked what worked and what could be improved as well as to provide feedback on the report itself. In addition, the Union was apprised of the review and were asked to provide input and feedback regarding what was being considered.

After the Service Review meeting, feedback from the Committee will be shared with impacted front-line staff, the Union and people leaders, with a broad outline provided to all staff. Staff will work with the Union to develop processes to support any transition of staff.

Consultation:

City Manager, Directors of Public Works and Engineering, Community Services and Corporate Services.

Attachments:

1. Appendix A – Proposed Organizational Charts
2. Appendix B – Draft Job Summaries
3. Appendix C - Costing
4. Project 1a3 Update – Presentation

Recommended by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

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