

City of Northfield, MN

Administrative Services Organization Assessment

Final Report: May 14, 2024



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Executive Summary

Project Introduction

The City of Northfield, Minnesota (City) engaged Baker Tilly in the October 2023 to conduct an organizational assessment of its Administrative Services Division (Division) including: a review of the Division's organizational structure, staffing levels, and efficiency of staff roles and responsibilities. The Division includes the following major functions: Communications, Finance, Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT) and the City Clerk. Through this project, the Division is identifying process improvement areas, areas at risk of significant institutional knowledge loss and level of preparedness as Division responsibilities continue to grow. This report summarizes the observations and recommendations of the organizational assessment of the Administrative Services Division.

Summary of Recommendations

A summary of the recommendations, attached priority, and implementation time is provided below. We do not recommend the Division attempt to implement all recommendations at once. Therefore, each recommendation contains an implementation timeframe of either within six (6) months, six (6) months to eighteen (18) months, or twelve (12) months to eighteen (18) months. We recommend the Division focus attention and resources implementing recommendations that are listed as high priority and have an implementation timeframe of within six (6) months.

#	Corresponding Initial Observation	Organization Assessment Recommendations	Priority	Timeline
1	2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8	Increase Capacity and Restructure the Administrative Services Division	High	0 – 6 months
2	1	Formalize Workforce Planning Strategy to Preserve Institutional Knowledge and Continuity	High	0 – 6 months
3	3	Prioritize Process Documentation and Comprehensive BS&A Training to Enhance Efficiency	High	0 – 6 months
4	6	Address Lean Administrative Support by Leveraging Language Line	Medium	0 – 6 months
5	9	Implement Solutions to Minimize Manual Processes	Medium	6 – 12 months
6	10	Consider the Frequency of Board and Commission Meetings	Low	0 – 6 months
7	11	Promote Effective Communication and Training for Equitable Telework Policy	Low	0 – 6 months
8	12	Enhance Finance Efficiency through Task Redistribution and Cross-training	Low	6 – 12 months
9	13	Streamline Onboarding and Offboarding for Organizational Effectiveness	Low	0 – 6 months
10	14	Leverage Communications Staff to Increase DEI Initiatives	Low	6 – 12 months

Scope and Methodology

As part of this study, Baker Tilly reviewed a considerable amount of data provided by the City including review of 56 documents, interviews with 22 employees through individual interviews and focus groups, and benchmarking of six comparable organizations.

This data was used to facilitate interviews and identify comparable organizations for peer benchmarking. The following serves as a summary of the data reviewed:

- Organizational charts
- Number of full-time equivalents (FTE)
- Policies and procedures
- Job descriptions
- Process narratives
- HR onboarding documents
- Key technology systems
- Strategic Plan

Summary of Focus Areas

We focused the review into two components, including:

Staffing: Our team conducted interviews with employees representing all functions of the Division, which included Finance, Liquor Operations, Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Specialists, HR, Communications, Northfield Public Broadcasting (NPB) Station, and Information Technology (IT). Interviews provided our team with a clear understanding of current staffing levels. Our analysis identified existing bottlenecks and areas where additional staffing could significantly enhance the efficiency and productivity of the Division. Additionally, our staff performed a staffing analysis for the Division, found in Appendix G.

Roles and Responsibilities: Our review provided valuable insights into the communication patterns, workload distribution, and role allocation within the Division. We identified areas where workloads were heavy and conversely, areas where capacity was available. This highlighted opportunities to redistribute work to balance workloads more effectively. Our findings will inform future decisions on role realignment and responsibility distribution, enhancing the Division's operational efficiency and staff satisfaction.

Resources and Benchmarks

We relied on our public sector experience, industry associations, and research institutions for best practice information for this report. At the direction of the project sponsors, comparable organizations were selected based on Flaherty & Hood, P.A.'s Cluster Analysis¹. Cities were then identified on a combination of geographic region, organization size, and population. Cities used for benchmarking during the organization assessment included:

City	Northfield	Faribault	Elk River	New Brighton	Hastings	Crystal	Forest Lake	Average of Comparables
Population ²	20,790	24,453	25,835	23,454	22,154	22,954	20,613	23,243.83

¹ Flaherty & Hood, P.A.'s Cluster Analysis is a statistical data analysis tool for solving classification problems. This analysis tool can be used to combine cities into various subgroups based on various factors until the subgroups form one of the several clusters.

² Population: Based on 2020 Census numbers pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau

City	Northfield	Faribault	Elk River	New Brighton	Hastings	Crystal	Forest Lake	Average of Comparables
Number of Boards and Commissions	15	19	10	6	7	6	4	8.67
Total Number of Employees ³	114	207	150	134	124	-	69	136.8
Finance FTE	4	5	2.5	6	6.1	-	4	4.72
Human Resources FTE	2	2	2.5	3	2	-	-	2.37
Information Technology FTE	3	2	3	3	3	-	-	2.75
Total FTE	9	9	8	12	11.1	-	-	10.02

Industry data used for the organizational assessment and recommendations include:

- United States Census Bureau
- Harvard Business Review
- McKinsey & Company
- The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)
- Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO)

The engagement team is confident that all Division staff connected to the assessment had an opportunity to offer insight with significant participation in the project.

Strengths & Alignment with Best Practices

During our review, the Baker Tilly team noted several areas of strength within the Division. These are listed below in no specific order:

- Throughout the fieldwork process, our team heard resounding support and appreciation for the City Administrator. We observed significant trust, appreciation, and buy-in.
- Our review highlighted an impressive level of internal coordination within each section of the Division, facilitated by the effective use of various schedules and communication modes. This adaptive approach to information sharing has fostered unity, and efficiency.
- Interviews revealed a strong sense of camaraderie within the staff, characterized by their readiness to take on challenges and assist colleagues in need. This proactive approach, coupled with their collaborative problem-solving efforts, will significantly enhance the efficiency of the Division.

³ Total Number of Employee and FTEs: Based on the most recent/available Annual Budget or Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Baker Tilly Project Team

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to serve as a strategic partner to the City on this project. The Baker Tilly project team would like to thank the City project sponsors and staff for their participation in this organizational assessment and all the effort dedicated to producing this report. We look forward to continuing to serve as your valued business advisor.

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Elliot Hallett, MPAL | Consultant

Observations and Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Increase Capacity and Restructure the Administrative Services Division

Recommendation: The Administrative Services Division should consider hiring additional staff to alleviate the current workload and create redundancies for critical functions. This would ensure smooth operations during absences and allow for more focus on major projects, thereby improving overall productivity, and restructure the Division to align with future anticipations.

Detailed Observation:

Additional Staffing:

Staff interviews revealed a sentiment that the Administrative Services Division is understaffed. Despite the ability of the Divisions providing administrative services to fulfill their duties, the lack of additional support has resulted in an environment where many staff are constantly playing catch-up. Understaffing has led to a lack of redundancies over critical functions. For example, there is no designated internal backup who possesses the authority or knowledge to fulfill certain functions⁴ performed by the Accounting Supervisor, Human Resources (HR) Specialist, or Northfield Public Broadcasting (NPB) Station Manager. This lack of internal backup creates challenges and bottlenecks within operations, particularly when these individuals are out of the office. Furthermore, IT personnel are facing challenges in maintaining the ticketing system due to capacity constraints.

The staffing situation within the Administrative Services Department and its inability to promptly address potential issues and responsibilities, coupled with the constant state of catch-up, is slowing Department productivity. Frequent diversion from major projects to address immediate issues further exacerbates the situation.

Human Resources:

The City of Northfield has an HR staff of 2 full-time equivalent (FTE); a Communications and HR Director and an HR Specialist. This Department supports 114 FTEs (2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report).

The HR Specialist's duties include:

Bi-weekly payroll	Wellness program reimbursements
Reporting (EEOC, health insurance, OSHA)	Seasonal/part-time hires
Employment interview coordination	Onboarding
Benefit administration	FMLA
Drug and alcohol programming	Personnel files
Open enrollment	Recruiting
Workers' compensation	

The Communications and HR Director's duties include:

Compensation and league studies	Labor negotiations
Administrative Services Director performance reviews	Department budgeting
Union discussions	Disciplinary actions

⁴ The City has established contingency strategies to manage extended absences of key personnel, including the Human Resources Specialist and Accounting Supervisor. In instances of prolonged absences, they leveraged the expertise of consultants to ensure seamless continuity in these roles.

Strategic messaging, coordination and communication support	Event planning and campaigns
Citywide survey development	Budget, accounts payable, and time entry approval for HR, IT and Communications

Information Technology:

IT staff are unofficially on-call 24/7 for technology emergencies related to any department, including for the Police, Fire, and Facilities Departments. Assignment of the emergency call varies, and City staff call the IT staff member they are familiar with to assist. Additionally, IT is expected to be available for issues outside of their typical working hours like council meetings and shifts for City departments that are outside of their typical working hours.

The IT Division is facing a backlog of help tickets, which is preventing them from focusing resources on larger projects. The last time IT staff were comfortable with ticket levels was in 2018-19, which is prior to the number of tickets increasing as a result of work from home requirements during COVID. Prior to the pandemic, staff were able to properly manage ticket workload; there were approximately 200 unresolved tickets as of January 2024.

The backlog of help tickets is leading to delays in the ticketing system. This could potentially affect the efficiency of all departments that rely on IT support.

Historically, IT was under the direction of the HR Director/Risk Safety and Information Technology Manager before transitioning to the Library Services Director in 2013. It then briefly transitioned reporting directly to the City Administrator before being placed under the Communications and HR Director.

The Communications and HR Director primarily serves in a project management role, assisting the IT Manager in prioritizing and tracking tasks. The IT Division is a standalone division with technical IT expertise, however, due to its current limited capacity, it cannot function as an independent division. The IT Division requires additional staffing to enable the IT Manager to operate more independently, focusing on strategic needs and the bigger picture.

Moving the IT Division to another location may have a significant impact on the City's operations. The proposed reorganization could lead to more efficient collaboration and communication with the IT staff while empowering the IT Manager to function more autonomously and strategically.

Detailed Recommendation: Conversations with employees made it clear the Division is operating beyond the capacity of current staffing levels. Given the City's offered services, a Division restructure involving staff increases, detailed in Appendices B-D, is recommended. We anticipate this being a five-year, three-step approach. The new positions, recommended title changes, and structure changes are described below.

New Positions:

1. **Assistant City Administrator:** To enable the City Administrator to focus on strategic priorities, we recommend adding an Assistant City Administrator position⁵. This addition will reduce the City

⁵ The job description for Eagan's Director of Communications and Engagement outlines the operations, management, and administrative tasks for functions of communications. This will serve as an excellent template when crafting the communication portion of the Assistant City Administrator's job description.

Administrator's span of control, dividing oversight of major City functions, and allowing more time for innovative thinking, planning for City growth, and completion of projects and initiatives.

2. **HR Manager:** The addition of an HR Manager will ensure continuity in HR responsibilities as the Communications and HR Director retires in 2026. The HR Manager will supervise office staff while handling both day-to-day tasks as well as high-level functions. This will improve the efficiency of the HR Division and ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities should an employee leave or take time off.
3. **Additional IT Specialist:** An additional IT Specialist will be instrumental in the future water treatment plant project. They will assist with IT tickets, freeing up other IT staff to focus on improving implementation plans and enhancing the City's cybersecurity safeguards. This will significantly improve the City's technological infrastructure.

The additional staff will provide the IT Manager with the time needed to operate in a strategic manner. This will facilitate enhanced collaboration with City leadership, thereby amplifying their presense within the organization. It may also allow the IT Division to better cater to the needs of the City's various departments. Which, in turn, can lead to improved service delivery and heightened operational efficiency.

4. **Sustainability Coordinator⁶:** A Sustainability Coordinator is crucial for advancing the City's environmental, community, and viability goals, acting as a liaison between policy and implementation. They will address community needs by monitoring sustainable practices and climate resilience, ensuring the City's environmental responsibility. Strategic planning involves collaborating on policies and identifying conservation and waste reduction opportunities, enhancing community health and vibrancy. They will lead outreach, engage stakeholders, coordinate interdepartmental efforts, and be the primary liaison to the Environmental Quality Commission. Furthermore, the individual in this role will contribute to the execution of the Climate Action Plan, with the objective of enabling the City to attain a 100% carbon-neutral electricity supply by 2030, and to establish a fully carbon-free community by 2040.
5. **Part-time Administrative Assistant:** A part-time bilingual Administrative Assistant would cover the front desk, assist with data entry, and support constituent services. This role would alleviate distractions, allowing staff to focus on primary duties while enhancing Division productivity. Additionally, the Administrative Assistant would aid in translating for walk-ins, processing the backlog of paperwork and Laserfiche forms, and necessary responsibilities beyond the position's essential duties.
6. **Budget Analyst⁷:** A Budget Analyst would delve into financial analysis, serve as the BS&A ambassador, oversee grant compliance and management, ensure effective resource allocation and cross-train with the Accounting Supervisors responsibilities. This role would streamline financial operations, allowing the Finance Director to concentrate on significant projects while boosting the

⁶ Given the administrative focus of the Sustainability Coordinator role and the need for knowledge transfer, we anticipate the position being housed within Administrative Services. Initially, this individual will collaborate closely with the Assistant to the City Administrator, who currently oversees the Environmental Quality Commission. Subsequently, organizational structures are always evolving with the skillsets and needs of a community. There is a possibility in future years that the position transitions to the Public Works Department if skillsets and management oversight align.

⁷ Based on peer review, Northfield's Finance Division has been operating with one fewer FTE.

productivity of the finance team. Additionally, the Budget Analyst would aid in forecasting future budget needs and offering strategic financial advice and undertake necessary responsibilities beyond the position's essential duties.

We acknowledge that resource constraints may limit the City's ability to implement all the changes recommended. However, based on our discussions with staff and understanding of the Division, we believe that prioritizing the HR Manager and additional IT Specialist roles would be the most beneficial and feasible steps. The HR Manager will take on the daily responsibilities necessary for the effective operation of the City's Human Resources functions. Concurrently, the IT Specialist is a necessary addition in light of the City's proposed new Water Treatment Plant and current IT staff workload.

Title Changes:

7. **Spanish Translator to Community Relations Specialist:** Transitioning the title of Spanish Translator to a Community Relations Specialist will provide valuable support for larger City projects in departments such as Public Works and Community Development. They will continue to establish relationships between the City and outside vendors and work with the Human Rights Commission. The title change and shift in responsibility focus would require wider City adoption of the Language Line platform. If that is accomplished, this transition would not only make better use of the Spanish Translator's skills but also foster stronger community relations with activities like philanthropy, sponsorship, and general goodwill efforts to maintain a positive image and rapport with the public.

The Spanish Translator regularly works with the Communications Specialist on tasks such as social media, survey development, and participation in communication meetings. By integrating additional duties related to community engagement, this position will provide significant public interaction opportunities. These interactions will serve as a platform to solicit and collect community feedback on disseminated information, ensuring that the public's voice is heard and considered.

8. **Accounting Supervisor to Accountant I:** This transition anticipates a future need for additional financial expertise within the office. The Accountant I will continue to establish relationships between the City and outside vendors and work with the Finance Director. The Accountant I would still retain supervisory responsibilities, overseeing the Finance Associate IIs. This role would require a traditional accounting education and professional background to ensure a comprehensive understanding of financial principles.

Structural Reporting Changes:

Evaluating the City Administrators large span of control was a topic of discussion and is considered important. It could lead to more effective management and supervision of employees, dedicate more time to individual guidance, and provide greater job satisfaction by reducing potential burnout. We considered best practices for span of control from the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM⁸) and considered factors such as: organizational size, workforce skill level, organizational culture, and managers' responsibilities. A proposed organization chart detailing split controls can be found in Appendix E.

- **By year five of the organizational redesign, an Assistant City Administrator position would oversee the following direct reports:** HR Manager, IT Manager, City Clerk and Sustainability Coordinator.

⁸ SHRM: [What Factors Should Determine How Many Direct Reports a Manager Has?](#)

- **The City Administrator position will oversee the following direct reports:** Community Development Director, Library Services, Finance Director, Police Chief and Public Works Director/City Engineer.

These staffing and structural changes will bring significant improvements to the Division and have a positive impact by enhancing efficiency, productivity, and employee satisfaction.

Best Practice:

The SHRM Human Capital Report for medium sized organizations (100-499 employees) found the average HR-to-employee ratio to be 1.30 per 100 employees. The current FTE count shows the Department is 1.75 HR staff members per 100 employees. It should also be noted that the Communications and HR Director has responsibilities outside of HR which could drive the current FTE ratio lower if an analysis of time spent on HR related duties was incorporated.

The proposed restructuring and staff augmentation will bring numerous benefits to the Division. According to best practices found by Harvard Business Review⁹ and McKinsey & Company¹⁰, span of control reductions can foster increased employee collaboration, enhance problem-solving capabilities, streamline the decision-making process, and unlock value. Moreover, it can lead to better-motivated employees, greater decisiveness, and a stronger bottom line. These improvements will ultimately support the City's growth and enhance the delivery of services to our community.

Restructuring will enable the City Administrator to provide leadership, vision, and focus on results by:

- Monitoring long-term plans and human capital.
- Planning strategically for organizational development and branding.
- Using performance metrics to drive continuous improvement.
- Committing to the highest level of ethical standards.

We reviewed the reporting structure of comparable Minnesota cities and found that two use an additional leadership position to organize key reporting lines as an appropriate way to divide functions of their government. The following cities shared a similar structure with an Assistant City Administrator position overseeing functions matching Northfield's Administrative Services Division:

- **City of Crystal:** City Clerk, Communications, HR, and Finance functions
- **City of Hastings:** City Clerk, Communications, and HR

Timeline for Implementation: 0 – 60 months

Priority: **HIGH**

Recommendation 2: Formalize Workforce Planning Strategy to Preserve Institutional Knowledge and Continuity

Recommendation: The City should develop a formalized workforce planning strategy to ensure the continuity of institutional knowledge and smooth transition of roles. This strategy should include a comprehensive plan for documenting processes, identifying essential skills required for internal successors, and determining areas where external recruitment is necessary.

⁹ [Harvard Business Review: Getting Reorgs Right](#)

¹⁰ [McKinsey & Company: Reorganization Without Tears](#)

Detailed Observation: Part of this project is a proactive workforce planning exercise initiated by and for the Administrative Services Division. There are staff members in key areas that will be eligible for retirement in the coming years. Given the limited time available to document processes, it is commendable that leaders of Administrative Services and Human Resources (HR) staff are proactively taking steps towards documenting processes, identifying staff in the organization for position eligibility pools, and identifying where external recruitment may be needed.

While steps taken are component elements of workforce planning, the City does not have a formalized strategy for workforce planning in these positions and key areas. Further retirements and attrition may increase a potential loss of institutional knowledge.

Detailed Recommendation: Create a workforce planning strategy that identifies critical position needs within Administrative Services and prioritizes resources to internally develop the required skills and qualifications or competitively externally recruit for positions.

Preserving institutional knowledge is a critical aspect of this workforce planning strategy. By implementing tailored development plans and facilitating cross-training, Administrative Services can ensure that institutional knowledge is retained and passed on to future employees. This approach, coupled with transparent communication of Division tasks and issues, will help mitigate knowledge gaps that could arise from employee departures.

The following steps are the building blocks of a framework that Administrative Services can use to execute a workforce planning strategy. Linked in the Best Practices section below is an article series providing more detail on each of these steps:

- Step 1: Conduct a retirement eligibility analysis.
- Step 2: Validate potential critical positions and add any additional critical positions through conversations with Division leaders to determine a final list to begin the identification of succession candidates.
- Step 3: Select an appropriate competency model relevant to Administrative Services to assess and select competencies for success for each position. Validate and potentially update education and experience requirements.
- Step 4 and 5: Use a 9-box rubric (see Appendix F) to plot potential internal candidates for succession of critical positions and identify any growth or development needs. Identify during this step if external recruitment is needed.
- Step 6 and 7: Incorporate skills and leadership training and align the compensation and benefit strategy with workforce needs.

By implementing tailored development plans, facilitating cross-training, nurturing employee advancement, and ensuring transparent communication of Division tasks and issues, Administrative Services will broaden its internal talent pool. This proactive approach aims to mitigate knowledge gaps in the event of employee departures. Furthermore, succession and workforce planning can serve as a mechanism to flag any shortage of internal candidates, prompting the formulation of a targeted recruitment strategy to swiftly address potential vacancies.

Best Practice

Establishing robust workforce development and workforce planning strategies is pivotal in cultivating a sustainable and resilient organization. This entails three crucial processes: firstly, identifying high-priority

positions affected by retirements and areas of heightened turnover; secondly, discerning core competencies and identifying top-tier talent; and thirdly, tailoring training programs to ensure market competitiveness.

Further comprehensive material on workforce development and planning strategies are outlined below:

- [Workforce and succession planning – Part 1: getting started – Baker Tilly](#)
- [Workforce and succession planning – Part 2: core competencies and top talent – Baker Tilly](#)
- [Workforce and succession planning – Part 3: training and competitiveness – Baker Tilly](#)

The active involvement from leadership and dedication of staff members are crucial in ensuring that identified potential candidates are in harmony with the City's values and culture. Equally vital is the understanding of employees' aspirations and long-term plans, enabling focused succession development for those eager and capable of assuming greater responsibilities. Once identified, the organization should have structured processes in place to facilitate skill acquisition, technological proficiency, and effective management of leadership roles and responsibilities.

To help with workforce planning efforts, we have included documentation in Appendix I highlighting the top ten myths and realities of succession planning. This may aid in discussing this topic with leaders in the organization.

Timeline for Implementation: 0 – 6 months

Priority: **HIGH**

Recommendation 3: Prioritize Process Documentation and Comprehensive BS&A Training to Enhance Efficiency

Recommendation: The Administrative Services Division should prioritize the formalization and documentation of IT and Finance processes and invest in comprehensive training for the BS&A system. This will ensure knowledge continuity, optimize operations, and enable effective cross-training, thereby addressing the current inefficiencies and potential disruptions.

Detailed Observation: Administrative Services faces process inefficiency issues across several areas leading to inconsistencies and potential disruptions.

Information Technology:

The Information Technology (IT) Division lacks formalized documented procedures and knowledge sharing which could greatly affect City operations if key staff members were to leave.

The IT Division has suggested creating standardized procedures and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for City staff to refer to before submitting a ticket, but due to their current workload, they lack the necessary time to devote to this task. Addressing these needs could greatly enhance the efficiency and productivity of the IT's operations.

Finance:

With the switch to BS&A's Cloud-Based ERP system from Incode several finance processes remain in the process of being fully documented. Despite this, the Finance Division is operating efficiently, but duties have become more segregated than desired. Staff using BS&A expressed a desire for further detailed training on certain aspects of the system, which will improve system optimization, increase operating efficiencies and the ability to properly cross-train other employees. This segregation and the lack of cross-training are growing pains common for software implementations.

Some specific challenges and/or cross-training areas are listed below:

- Payroll
- Utility Billing
- Journal Entries
- Accounts Payable
- W-2's
- 1099's

Addressing these processes could greatly enhance the efficiency and productivity of the Divisions operations. Staff are aware of these issues and are taking proactive approaches to filling knowledge gaps as staff capacity permits.

Detailed Recommendation: To address the process efficiency issues within the Administrative Services Division we recommend prioritizing the documentation of IT and Finance processes and implementing comprehensive training on the BS&A system.

IT Division:

- Create a FAQ document for City staff to refer to before submitting a ticket. This will not only enhance the efficiency and productivity of the Division's operations but also ensure continuity in the event of staff turnover.

Finance Division:

- Continue engaging with BS&A and schedule regular meetings with your contact to receive training and assistance in documenting procedures. This will ensure that the Division is making the most of the system's capabilities and that staff are well-equipped to use it.
- Prioritize regularly updating documentation and implementing quarterly exercises to ensure staff are educated on the roles of their peers to help cover responsibilities in the event an employee is out of office. Doing this will help cross-train employees in areas of payroll, utility billing, journal entries, accounts payable, W-2's and 1099s.

Both Divisions:

- Develop a centralized, digital knowledge management system capable of storing and organizing all documented procedures accessible to all Division staff, ensuring employees have access to the same information.
- Regularly review and update documentation ensuring information remains current and relevant.
- Create process maps¹¹ visually representing procedures to help staff understand the workflow and their role within it.
 - Define the scope of what is being documented, understand the audience, identify all players involved in the process, gather information, organize, and develop the outlines.
- Continue Implementation of strategy to cross-training staff, recognizing staff capacity has been the issue in moving this along faster.

Best Practice

¹¹ [Atlassian: The ultimate guide to process documentation](#)

SHRM¹² describes cross-training as the process that uses training and development opportunities to ensure employees have the skills necessary to perform various job functions within an organization. A well-developed and well-implemented cross-training program benefits the employer by providing coverage during leaves of absences, vacations or periods of high production. Cross-training benefits employees by enabling them to broaden their skills. It is likely that workers with a broad base of skills will become increasingly important as the pool of skilled workers shrinks, the workforce ages and competition for skilled workers increases.

All cross-training should begin with two basic steps¹³: identifying the knowledge and skills needed for each position, and then cross-referencing that list with an inventory of current employees' proficiencies to reveal gaps.

The Government Finance Officers Association¹⁴ (GFOA) supporting local government finance officers, recommends adopting the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO)¹⁵ framework for internal controls. This is comprised of five components:

1. Control Environment
2. Risk Assessment
3. Control Activities
4. Information and Communication
5. Monitoring Activities

Following the COSO internal control framework can provide your finance office with a comprehensive structure for designing, implementing, operating, and evaluating internal controls, thereby ensuring operational effectiveness, efficient reporting, and compliance with regulations.

Timeline for Implementation: 0 – 6 months

Priority: **HIGH**

Recommendation 4: Address Lean Administrative Support and Leverage Language Line

Recommendation: The Division should perform a thorough analysis of administrative procedures and identify areas where time and resources can be better utilized. Additional administrative staffing should be considered if updates to procedures do not improve processing times.

Detailed Observation: Administrative support is lean throughout the Administrative Services Division. Staff under the Communications and HR Director shared a common theme of needing front desk and administrative assistance to prevent regular distractions and being pulled from their primary duties.

In addition to these needs, there is a requirement for additional assistance with translating for walk-ins. This would ensure that all visitors, regardless of their primary language proficiency, receive the help they need promptly and efficiently. Additionally, aiding with printing communications has been identified as a crucial task. This would ensure that all necessary documents are readily available and distributed in a timely manner, further enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's operations.

¹² [SHRM: What is job swapping? Is it the same as cross-training?](#)

¹³ [SHRM: Kicking up cross-training](#)

¹⁴ [GFOA: Internal Control Framework](#)

¹⁵ [Building Trust and Confidence through the COSO Internal Control - Integrated Framework](#)

The City contracts with Language Line free of charge to residents. Language Line can interpret in more than 240 languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and staff training was conducted in late 2022. However, it appears that staff members have developed a habit of pulling the Spanish Translator away from their work to assist with interpretation. Interpreter assistance provided by the Spanish Translator can be done at any desk at City Hall, the Library, Police Department, and other City buildings. This suggests a need for staff to become more proficient in using the Language Line as a tool for in-person interpretation, rather than relying on the Spanish Translator.

This presents an opportunity to optimize the role of the Spanish Translator. By providing additional translation support through Language Line, this could enable the Spanish Translator to engage more with the public, collaborate with the Human Rights Commission, and handle document translation requests from various City departments.

Detailed Recommendation: To address the issue of lean administrative support, it is recommended that the City undertake the steps below:

Evaluation of Procedures:

- Conduct a thorough evaluation of current office responsibilities and procedures to identify how administrative support can be better utilized. This will help understand where time and resources are being spent and how administrative support could further assist teams.

Train Employees and Utilize Language Line:

- It is recommended that the City create a comprehensive guide on how to best use Language Line to aid City employees. This guide should serve as a valuable resource, outlining the optimal use of Language Line and providing examples of when it is most advantageous to use the Spanish Translator's assistance versus relying on Language Line.

The City should provide training on Language Line to staff to assist with language barriers. The City pays for this service and should utilize it to their advantage to help alleviate the stressed capacity of Administrative Services staff. This approach would not only enhance communication but improve the overall efficiency of Administrative Services.

Encouraging staff to become more proficient in using Language Line for in-person interpretation would reduce the reliance on the Spanish Translator. This ensures that all visitors, regardless of their language proficiency, receive the help they need promptly and efficiently.

This strategy is designed to allow the Division to take the necessary steps to evaluate and enhance administrative support. It ensures all staff can concentrate on their primary roles, leading to improved efficiency and productivity of HR, Communications and Finance responsibilities.

This will result in a more efficient workflow, improved use of resources, and enhanced community engagement. It would also align the role of the Spanish Translator with common practices in most cities, further enhancing the City's reputation for inclusivity and accessibility.

Best Practice

The Institute for Local Government¹⁶ lists the following tips for providing language access services:

¹⁶ [Language Access Laws and Legal Issues: A Local Official's Guide](#)

- Ensure that local agency departments are aware of existing language access services and resources.
- Appoint a coordinator or, a working group of individuals from different levels of the City to monitor/update the agency's response to needs of limited English-proficient service-users.
- Consider developing policies that clarify the agencies' responsibilities for providing language access services
- Monitor compliance to ensure staff cooperation and accountability.
- Conduct regular trainings about language access to ensure that all staff, especially those who frequently encounter the public, are aware of the agency's policies.

Timeline for Implementation: 0 – 6 months

Priority: **MEDIUM**

Recommendation 5: Implement Solutions to Minimizing Manual Processes

Recommendation: Boost productivity and efficiency by implementing a document management system, transitioning to digital invoicing and journal entries, automating onboarding processes, and utilizing an automated utility billing system.

Detailed Observation: Administrative Services staff are burdened with manual processes. While the conversion to BS&A automated many processes, such as automated workflow, approval of timesheets and accounts payable invoices, many manual tasks remain such as journal entries, employment documentation, financial documents, and utility billing have a manual component to them. Additionally, the onboarding process, as suggested by the HR Specialist, involves a significant amount of paperwork, reducing its efficiency.

These manual processes lead to potential disruptions and reduced productivity. Staff members spend a considerable amount of time receiving, scanning, saving, and storing documents based on the City's document retention policy. Invoices and journal entries are printed as hard copies, scanned into the computer, and then physically stored.

Streamlining these processes is crucial for improving overall productivity. By reducing manual processes and transitioning to automated systems, staff members can be alleviated of these time-consuming tasks, allowing them to focus on more tactical and strategic initiatives.

Detailed Recommendation: To enhance productivity and efficiency, it is recommended to create a document management system, transition to digital invoicing and journal entries, and automate the onboarding process. These technological solutions will alleviate the Administrative Services staff from time-consuming tasks, enabling them to focus on more strategic initiatives.

Best Practice

Optimization will increase internal operations, data-driven decision making, provide more visibility into your employees work progress, can also reduce human error.

Timeline for Implementation: 6 – 12 months

Priority: **MEDIUM**

Other Observations – Low Priority

During this review, our team noted additional observations which were considered to possess medium or low priority and were unlikely to have significant immediate impact on the Division.

#	Priority	Summary of Observation	Recommendation
6	LOW	<p>The City Administrator, City Clerk, and Deputy City Clerk have underscored the significant role of the City's 15 Boards and Commissions, which require diligent monitoring and active participation. This responsibility contributes substantially to the workload of the Administrative Service Division's staff. A benchmark comparison with Flaherty & Hood, P.A.'s "Cluster Analysis" reveals that the City has more Boards and Commissions than five out of six comparable cities.</p> <p>While this is not necessarily a problem, it is a crucial factor to consider when assessing workload and staffing levels. Streamlining the number of boards and commissions or enhancing the efficiency of their oversight could potentially alleviate the Administrative Services staff's workload, thereby boosting productivity.</p>	To alleviate the workload, consider evaluating the use of bi-monthly or quarterly meetings for smaller boards and commissions, freeing up staff and enhancing efficiency while maintaining effective oversight.
7	LOW	<p>There is a perceived lack of a comprehensive, equitable, and shared telework policy among the Administrative Services staff. Work schedules vary across roles, with some employees having the option to work remotely, while others are required to be in the office.</p> <p>The absence of a clear telework policy has led to communication and coordination challenges, potentially causing project delays. The establishment of a comprehensive telework policy is crucial for smooth operations, employee satisfaction, and increased productivity.</p> <p>The existing employee handbook does mention remote work for non-exempt staff upon Division head approval, indicating a basis for a remote work policy. However, this needs to be expanded and clarified to address staff concerns.</p>	The City has established an equitable telework policy that clearly outlines the eligibility and guidelines for remote work. This policy should be communicated effectively to all staff members, ensuring transparency and addressing any concerns. Regular training and reiteration of these rules can help in mitigating communication and coordination challenges, thereby enhancing productivity and employee satisfaction.

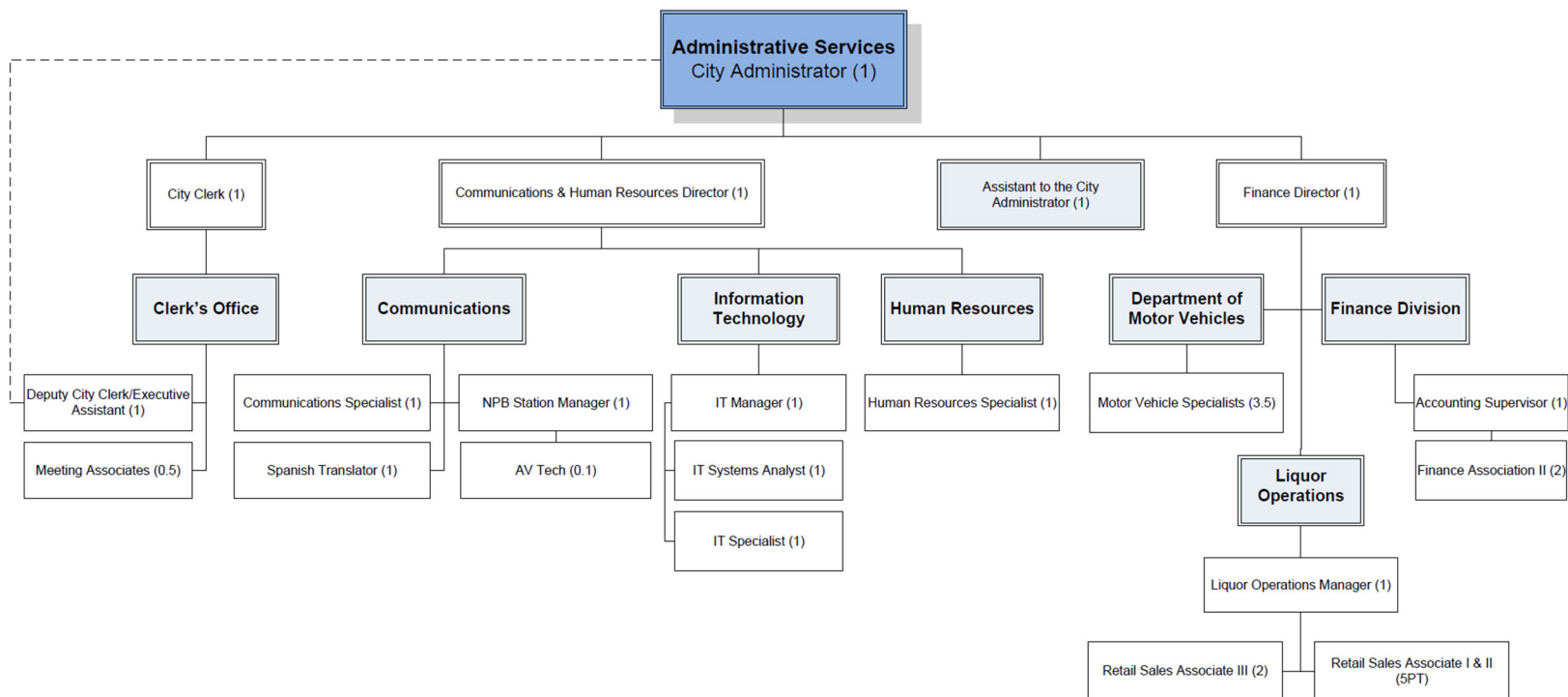
#	Priority	Summary of Observation	Recommendation
8	LOW	<p>The Finance Division is experiencing workload imbalances. Some staff are overwhelmed with their duties, struggling to balance tasks with limited resources.</p> <p>Certain functions of the Finance Division are time sensitive, such as payroll, audits and budgeting. Staff has not been completely cross-trained to provide true cross-utilization during these peak times. This indicates a potential underutilization of internal resources and highlights the necessity of cross-training.</p> <p>This imbalance could lead to delays or errors in financial processes, create bottlenecks in accounting and reporting, and affect the City's financial operations. Addressing this issue could improve efficiency and productivity.</p>	<p>To address workload imbalances and enhance efficiency, the City should evaluate staff responsibilities and capacity and identify tasks that can be shifted with additional training. This approach will help mitigate delays, reduce potential errors, and create a more efficient financial operation.</p>
9	LOW	<p>The City's onboarding and offboarding processes, involving multiple departments, have shown inconsistencies. There have been instances of delayed setup of identification profiles for new employees and untimely restriction of file access post-termination.</p> <p>These issues could negatively impact new employee experiences and pose potential risks to the City. Therefore, efficient and consistent onboarding and offboarding processes are essential for both employee and organizational success.</p>	<p>The City should establish a streamlined and standardized onboarding and offboarding procedures across departments. This will ensure timely setup of employee profiles and prevent access-related delays, improving both employee experiences and organizational effectiveness.</p>
10	LOW	<p>Our team has received feedback that the Assistant to the City Administrator has made valuable contributions to advancing racial equity and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. However, there is potential for further growth in this area. Staff dedicated to these initiatives have highlighted the need for more time and resources, which are currently limited by other responsibilities.</p>	<p>The Division should consider engaging HR staff to support the Assistant to the City Administrator in further advancing DEI initiatives. By engaging HR staff, the Assistant to the City Administrator can receive stronger support in advancing DEI efforts. This collaborative approach will not only enhance the effectiveness of DEI initiatives but also foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment.</p>

Appendix A – Current State Organization Structure

The chart below shows the current state structure of the Administrative Services Division. A well-documented organizational chart is crucial for clarity, transparency, and effective decision-making, ensuring that roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines are clearly delineated. It provides an insightful overview of the Division's hierarchy and the interrelationships between different roles and offices, thereby facilitating efficient communication and coordination within the organization.



Color Key:
Green Box = New Position
Red Text = Title Change
***** = Reports to the City Administrator

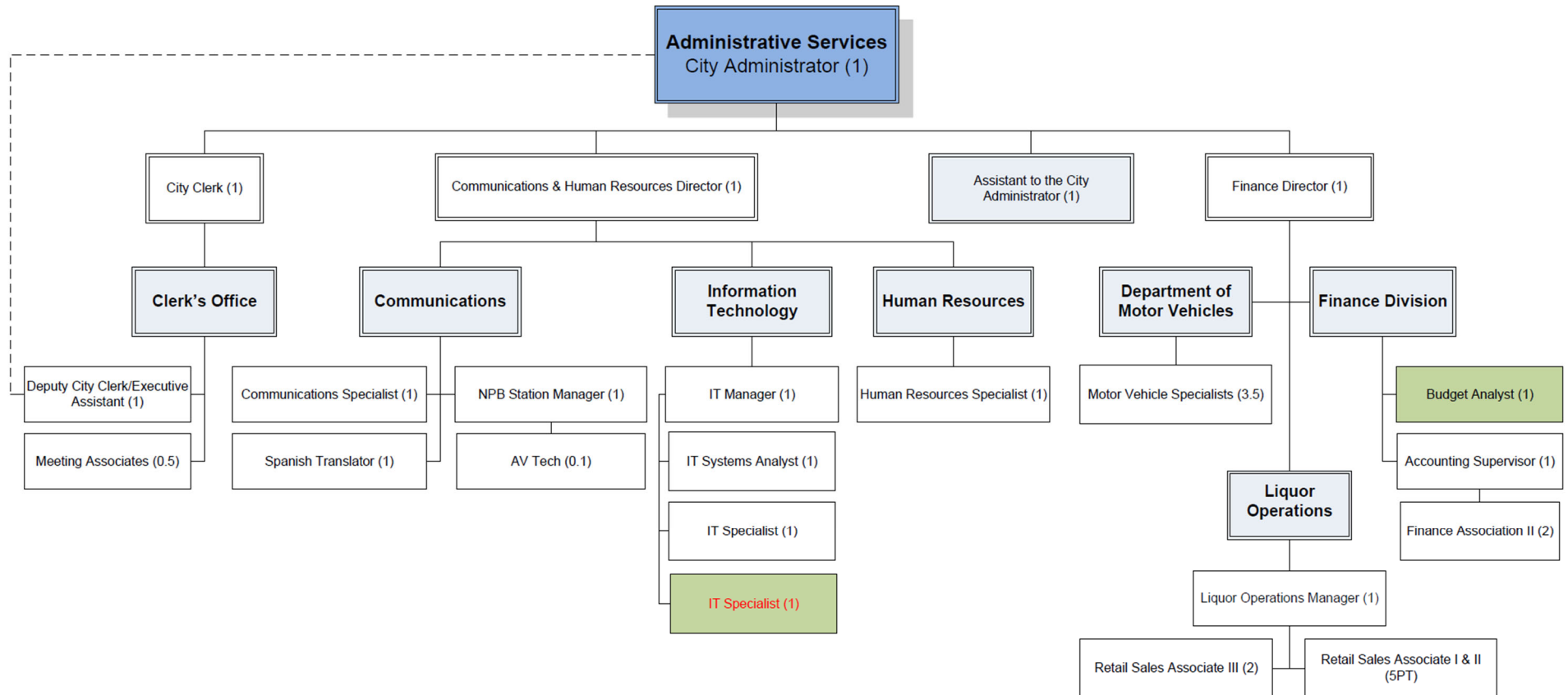


Appendix B – Future State Organization Structure: Years 0 – 1



Timeline: 0 – 1 Years

Color Key:
Green Box = New Position
Red Text = Title Change
* = Reports to the City Administrator

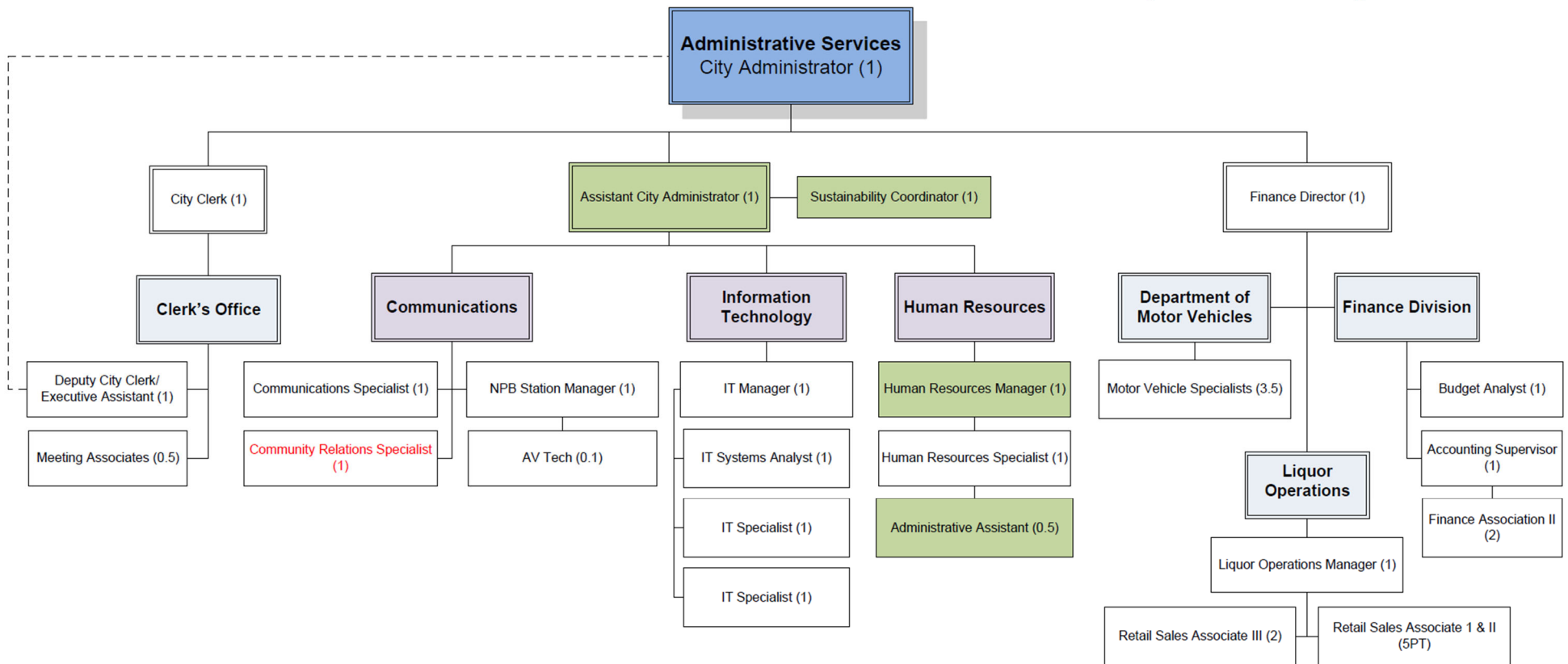


Appendix C – Future State Organization Structure: Years 1 – 3



Timeline: 1 – 3 Years

Color Key:
Green Box = New Position
Purple Box = Reporting Change
Red Text = Title Change
* = Reports to the City Administrator

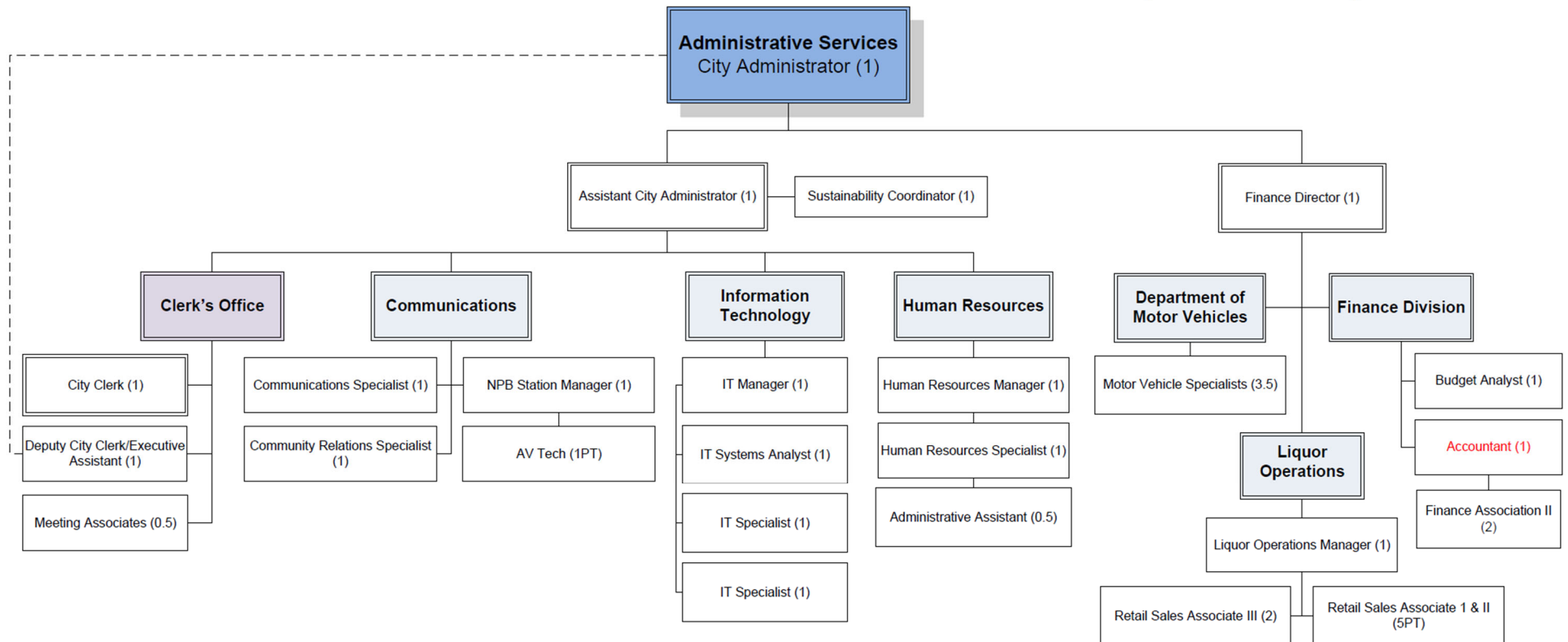


Appendix D – Future State Organization Structure: Years 3 – 5



Timeline: 3 – 5 Years

Color Key:
Green Box = New Position
Purple Box = Reporting Change
Red Text = Title Change
 * = Reports to the City Administrator

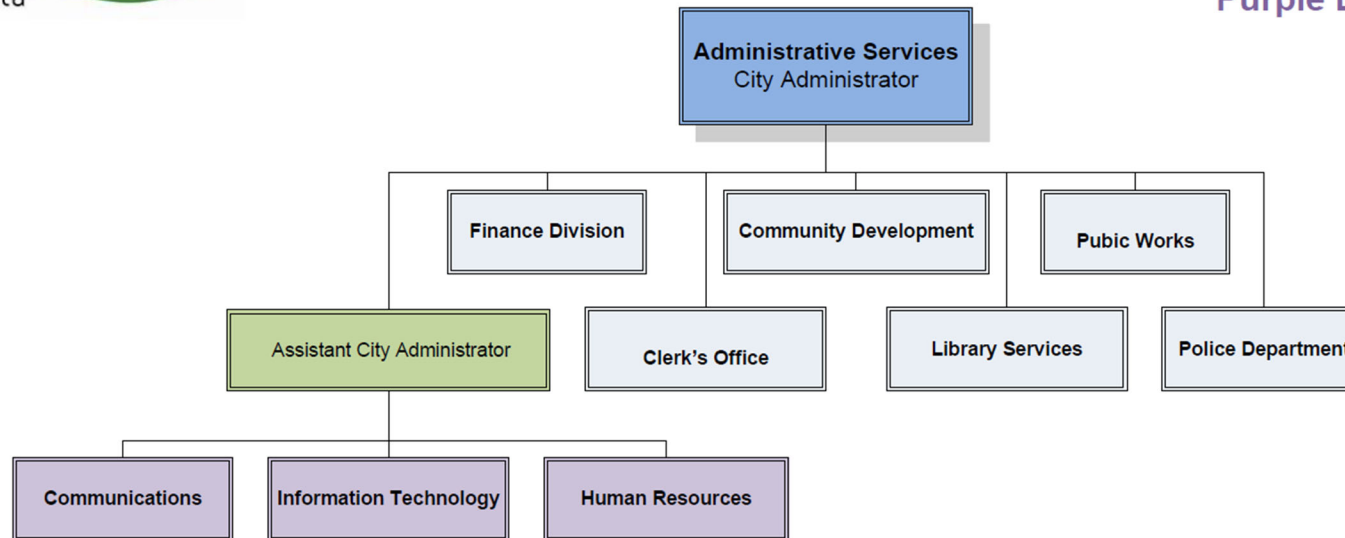


Appendix E – Future State Direct Reports: City Administrator



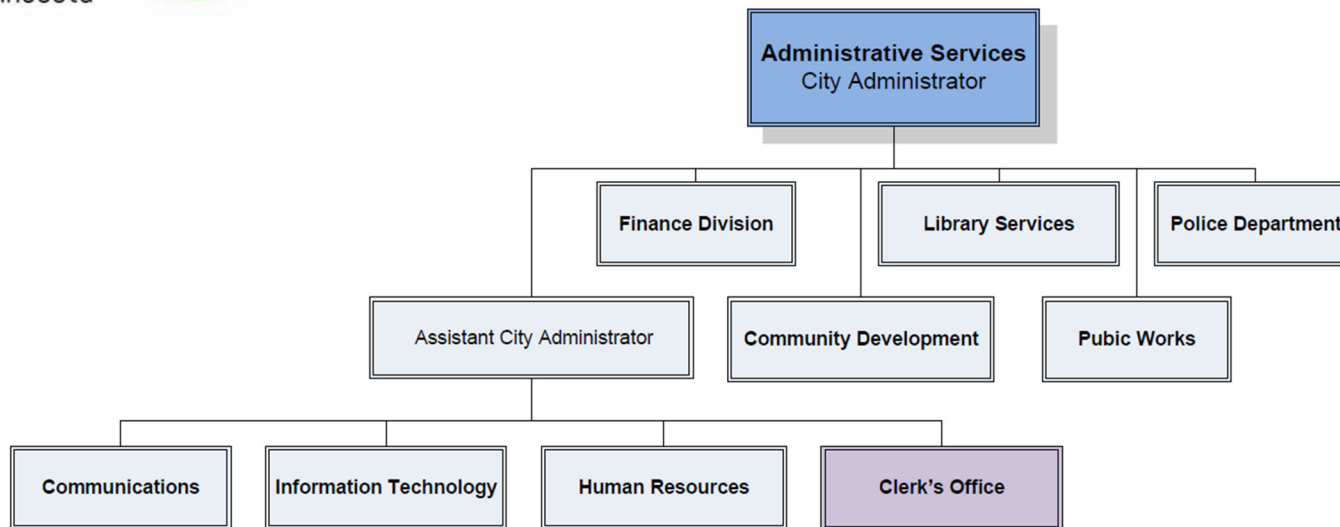
Timeline: 1 – 3 Years

Color Key:
Green Box = New Position
Purple Box = Reporting Change



Timeline: 3 – 5 Years

Color Key:
Purple Box = Reporting Change



Appendix F – 9-Box Grid¹⁷

		Potential		
		Low	Medium	High
Performance	High	Enigma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent performer and well placed. Could be difficult to replace Not considered promotable due to skill, knowledge, ability, aspiration or engagement at work 	Emerging Talent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent performer but needs training/coaching to take on the position Promotable in 6 – 12 months Potential lateral movement to accelerate development Develop plan to grow/challenge to next level 	Promotable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent performer. High potential employee Has taken on more responsibility Ready NOW for the next level position Continue to develop for the next level
	Medium	Dilemma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent performer and well placed Continue to grow and challenge in plan Not considered promotable at this time. Lateral move to support organization needs may be appropriate 	Core Employee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An employee who performs well and needs training/development/coaching to take on the position Could be difficult to replace Continue to grow and challenge in place Lateral move to support the organization may be appropriate 	Emerging Talent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong performer with high amount of potential Promotable in 6 – 12 months Potential lateral movement to accelerate development Develop plan to grow/challenge to next level
	Low	Under Performer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capability insufficient for current title. Typically, 1 or 2 performance rating Need organization intervention (outplace or redeploy) Timeline for action/outcome is required 	Effective Performer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent performer – typically trending toward 2 performance rating May lack knowledge, skill and abilities Not promotable – performance improvement plan in place 	Solid Performer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High potential with good prior performance Typically trending to 2 performance rating May be new in position or in a turnaround position Determine support required for success and if placement is appropriate

¹⁷ The boxes of Emerging Talent and Promotable should be the focus of evaluation. Those employees who would be placed in any of the low potential columns or low growth would not be identified for workforce planning.

Appendix G – Staffing Analysis

As depicted in the chart, the number of employees within the Administrative Services Divisions has seen a slight increase over the last ten fiscal years due to the addition of IT staff in 2021. This trend reflects the City's growth and the consequent rise in demand for services.

As Northfield continues to expand, the City has had to scale up its workforce to effectively manage the day-to-day responsibilities and meet the service expectations of its residents. This growth in staff is a testament to the City's commitment to providing high-quality services and maintaining a responsive and efficient government operation. It is crucial that as the City grows and services are expanded, so does its capacity to serve its residents effectively.

FTE Count ¹⁸	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Management Services ¹⁹	3.3	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.1	5.3	4.0
Finance	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Human Resources	2.1	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Communications	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.5	1.5	2.1	3.1	3.1
Information Technology ²⁰	2.2	2.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Motor Vehicle	2.1	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0
Liquor Operations	7.3	7.3	7.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.4	6.4	6.4
Total Administrative Services FTE ²¹	18.8	19.9	20.1	19.6	19.2	19.8	20.7	20.7	24.6	26.8	25.5
Total City FTE	89.0	93.6	95.8	97.4	98.5	104.9	104.9	111.8	114.7	114.0	114.0

¹⁸ Staffing numbers were provided by the City's administrative personnel and the total City FTE numbers are from the document title *FTE County 09-22*. Source: City Budget Office.

¹⁹ Management Services includes the City Administrator, City Clerk, Assistant to the City Administrator, Deputy City Clerk, and Meeting Associates.

²⁰ Information Technology was added to Administrative Services Division in 2021, where it originally sat as a direct report to the City Administrator before transitioning to their current location under the Communications and Human Resources Director.

²¹ Information Technology staffing numbers are not included in the total Administrative Services FTE count from 2013 – 2020.

Appendix H – Proposed Job Functions: New Positions

The table below consists of the new positions Baker Tilly is proposing for the Administrative Services Division. Each position is aligned with job duties of similar positions based on resources provided by SHRM. As the City experiences growth, these job duties may change over time. The duties will help leadership visualize how current resources can be reallocated to better serve the needs of the City.

Proposed Job Titles			
Job Title	Type of Position	Timeline	Job duties
Human Resources Manager	New	0 – 1 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partners with the leadership team to understand and execute the organization's human resource and talent strategy particularly as it relates to current and future talent needs, recruiting, retention, and succession planning. - Manages the talent acquisition process, which may include recruitment, interviewing, and hiring of qualified job applicants, particularly for managerial, exempt, and professional roles; collaborates with departmental managers to understand skills and competencies required for openings. - Analyzes trends in compensation and benefits; researches and proposes competitive base and incentive pay programs to ensure the organization attracts and retains top talent. - Provides support, guidance and training to City staff as needed.
IT Specialist	New	0 – 1 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determines the nature of staff business to better facilitate requests and/or to transfer specialized needs to the appropriate department or person. - Provides general information to staff; supplies appropriate forms and explains procedures.
Budget Analyst	New	0 – 1 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assists with projecting future financial needs and collaborates with the Finance Director and other management personnel to prepare long-term financial plans, and other budget and financial reports. - Assists in the development of the City's overall budget, and at the departmental level, providing advice and analysis to increase the efficiency of the City's spending.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serve as the City's BS&A financial system expert, training specialist and vendor point of contact.
Administrative Assistant	New	0 – 1 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Processes required paperwork for employee transfers, changes in job classification, salary increases, and other related employment matters - May assist with preparation of human resource reports such as attendance, new hire, and turnover reports. - Welcomes and directs visitors, answers and directs departmental phone calls, receives and directs phone calls, and performs other duties as assigned.
Assistant City Administrator ²²	New	1 – 3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assists the City Administrator with planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and evaluating city operations. - Oversees the day-to-day management of assigned operational and administrative Divisions, and functions. - Oversees and manages the communications division at a granular level while assisting with communication planning oversight. - Leads and oversees the strategic planning process, including the development of strategies, coordination of service contracts, and assignment of staff roles. - Conducts special projects, studies, and analyses as directed by the City Administrator.
Sustainability Coordinator	New	1 – 3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serves as the primary staff liaison to the Environmental Quality Commission. - Collaborates in the strategic planning of the sustainability policy and program development. - Oversees sustainability outreach, planning and coordination. - Oversees the collection and organization of sustainability information for annual reports and ancillary plans and projects.
Community Relations Specialist	Reclass	1 – 3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds and maintains relationships with members of the community. - Organizes community outreach programs and coordinates special events that will influence public opinion or promote services and ideas of the City.

²² Essential job functions pulled from resources provided by ICMA.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Responds to inquiries from community members and other interested parties; when needed, recruits a knowledgeable spokesperson or information source to assist.- Plans, coordinates, and executes special events and speaking opportunities.
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Appendix I – Workforce Succession Planning Myths

Myth #1

The perfect candidate is the direct report to the vacant position.

Reality

Moving the person who sits directly below the vacant position into the open role does not guarantee that they are the most qualified person for the job. To ensure that a position is filled with the most qualified candidate, it is important to have a career path for employees. This will ensure that the organization matches the requirements of the position with the right candidate who has the requisite competencies, technical skills, and understanding of the role. Additionally, succession candidates do not have to come from the same unit where the vacancy is. Succession candidates can come from other units within the organization.

Myth #2

Workforce and succession planning is about cherry picking and selecting management's favorite employees for development.

Reality

Workforce and succession planning involves preparing employees for possible future roles; it is not about pre-selection. The process is intended to match the organization's needs with the employee's interests and prepare employees for future roles.

Myth #3

The workforce and succession planning process should be led and facilitated by the Human Resources Division.

Reality

Managers/supervisors may feel that HR should handle the entire workforce and succession planning process. However, it is a team effort. Senior leaders must be a champion of the program and communicate on how the program will be implemented to all staff. HR staff are responsible for guiding the process to keep the program moving, understanding position requirements, and ensuring staff have access to training and development opportunities. Managers/supervisors are responsible for being engaged in the program and continuously mentoring, coaching, and developing staff through providing new learning opportunities and stretch assignments.

Myth #4

If there are no imminent retirements, then this process should not be a priority.

Reality

Attrition occurs in organizations for many other reasons than retirement. To ensure that the organization can continue to operate smoothly once these employees retire, succession candidates need to be developed to fill the critical roles. For succession planning to progress smoothly, the potential candidates must be prepared, developed, and adequately trained. That process takes time.

Myth #5

Good talent is easy to spot and the "cream will rise to the top."

Reality

Hiring talented individuals is critical to the organization's success. To retain the most talented individuals and prepare them for future roles, the organization must actively create a succession and workforce plan that provides training, development, mentoring, and career planning for staff. It is important that the organization maintain a pipeline of talented individuals who can immediately fill critical roles as vacancies arise.

Myth #6

Workforce and succession planning is too much effort and too expensive given our resources.

Reality

Organizations do not have to invest in expensive software tools to have a successful workforce and succession planning program. Workforce and succession planning can be completed on a limited budget with simple tools, such as a 9-Box Grid, Individual Talent Profile Form, an Action Plan, and a Training Plan. These tools help managers identify succession candidates for critical roles and provide a plan as to how succession candidates and all staff will be developed for future roles based on their work performance, strengths, skills gaps, and training needs.

Myth #7

Workforce and succession planning is only an issue for big organizations.

Reality

All organizations, regardless of size, are impacted by the loss of a key employee in an organization. Research shows that the cost of operating without a key player is \$7,000 a day, while the cost of losing a talented employee is \$250,000 to \$500,000. As the organization's business needs change and the technologies used to deliver services the organization will need to evaluate its short-term and long-term goals. A key factor in achieving these goals will be the organization's ability to have staff readily available to execute these initiatives. In preparation for these future changes, existing staff need to be developed now.

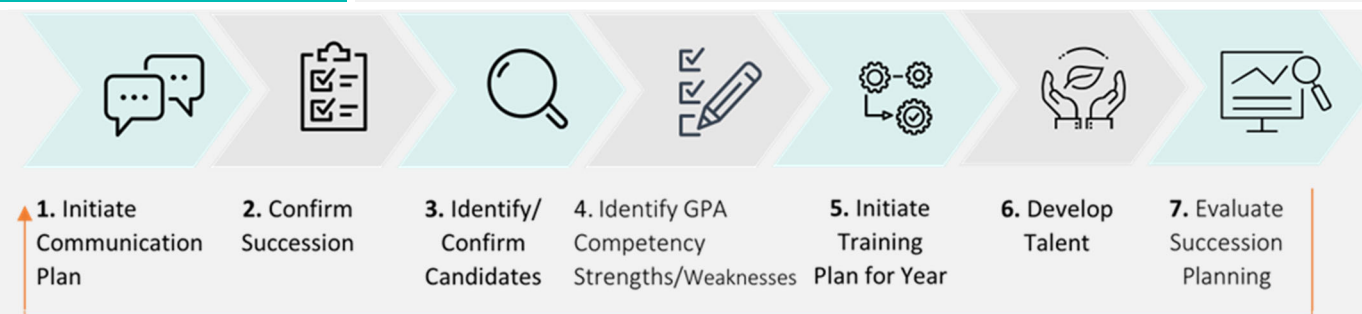
Myth #8

We only need a year or less to implement a succession plan.

Reality

Succession planning is an annual recurring process. It typically begins in January with the start of the performance evaluation cycle. The process Baker Tilly has developed runs on a calendar year and is updated yearly to incorporate new goals, initiatives, and growth opportunities for the organization.

The following diagram provides an overview of the process for succession planning.



Myth #9

Workforce and succession planning should only be used on a case-by-case basis and is only appropriate for senior positions.

Reality

Critical positions are defined as those roles that are vital for achieving an organization's strategic goals. These positions can be at any level within the organization. Roughly 10% to 15% of roles in an organization are strategic. The future success of an organization is compromised if these future roles are not filled with extremely capable people. An organizational-wide succession planning program streamlines the process and creates consistency within the organization.

Myth #10

The next generation is not ready to be groomed yet.

Reality

Senior leaders must assume a proactive role in preparing future leaders to take over the reins. Failing to train the next generation of leaders with the skills needed to move the organization into the future will impact the success of the organization to accomplish future initiatives.

Appendix J – Communications Benchmarking

The Administrative Services Department provided a list of peers for our review, focusing on the structure of their communications teams. These communities share a commitment to delivering above and beyond communication services to their residents. Notably, Northfield has a small communications staff in comparison. It is important to note that Northfield's population and organization wide FTE count are below the average for Eagan, St. Louis Park and Edina, with the latter having an average population of 56,618 and an average organization wide FTE count of 309.61.

Job Titles	Northfield	Eagan ²³	St. Louis Park	Edina
Population ²⁴	20,790	67,534	48,827	53,494
Total Number of Employees ²⁵	114.00 FTE	298.83 FTE	293.00 FTE	337.00 FTE
Communications & HR Director	1.0 FTE			
Director of Communications				1.0 FTE
Communications and Technology Director			1.0 FTE	
Communication & Engagement Director		1.0 FTE		
Digital Media & Marketing Manager		1.0 FTE		
Video Production Manager				1.0 FTE
Communications Manager			1.0 FTE	
Public Broadcast Manager	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE		
Senior Communications Coordinator				1.0 FTE
Communications Coordinator				0.625 FTE
Video Production Coordinator			1.0 FTE	
Digital Communications Coordinator				1.0 FTE
Digital Services Coordinator			1.0 FTE	
Community TV Administrator				1.0 FTE
Communications Specialist	1.0 FTE			
Social Media Specialist			1.0 FTE	
Multimedia Specialist			1.0 FTE	
Spanish Translator	1.0 FTE			
Senior Digital Production Lead		1.0 FTE		
Video Production Specialists				3 PT
Community & Live Producer		1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE	
Web Developer		1.0 FTE		
Customer Service Representative			1.0 FTE	1.8 FTE
Graphic Designer			1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE
Communication Support I				3 PT
Admin Support I/II				2 PT
Production Assistant		1 PT		

²³ Eagan has a team of ten part-time employees under the supervision of their Television Station Manager. Additionally, there is a Web Developer role that falls under the dual reporting structure of the Digital Media & Marketing Manager and the IT Manager from the Administration department.

²⁴ Population: Based on 2020 Census numbers pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau

²⁵ Total Number of Employee and FTEs: Based on the 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

Job Titles	Northfield	Eagan ²³	St. Louis Park	Edina
AV Technician	0.1 FTE	1.0 FTE		
Total FTE²⁶	4.1 FTE	8.0 FTE	9.0 FTE	8.425 FTE²⁷

The comparison table below serves as a strategic tool for Northfield, highlighting core communication functions across peers.

Core Functions	Northfield	Eagan ²⁸	St. Louis Park	Edina
Maintenance of City Website	X	X		X
Social Media	X	X	X	X
Cable Media Projects	X	X	X	X
Instruction and Learning Opportunities	X			
Produce and/or Coordinate Programming	X	X	X	X
Graphic Design	X	X	X	X
Photography/Videography	X	X	X	X
Electronic and Print Publications	X	X	X	X
Council Meeting Broadcasting	X	X	X	X
Special Event Planning and Promotion	X	X	X	X
City Branding	X	X	X	X
Track Web Analytics	X			X
Oversee Technology	X		X	
Language Translation	X			
Marketing Plan Development		X	X	X
Crisis Communication			X	X
Oversee Interns		X	X	X
Email Campaigns		X	X	X
Training Users on Webpage Modifications				

Based on the analysis above, it is evident that Northfield's Communications team is managing similar core functions to their peers in other cities, yet with a leaner staff. This limits their ability to keep up with the communication strategies of other cities, such as the frequency of communications, the use of multiple communication channels (including digital and print), and the production of additional video content.

If the strategic goal is to increase communication output to the level and frequency of its peers, Administrative Services leadership should analyze the need of adding additional staff to Communications in the future. If done, this move would boost Northfield's capacity for public engagement and information dissemination.

²⁶ The number of production staff shown represent the number of FTE within each city. However, this does not serve as an indicator of whether the city is incorporated into a consortium through franchise fees to facilitate broadcasting services.

²⁷ Hours/week were not provided for Video Production Specialist, Communication Support I's, or Admin Support I/II

²⁸ Eagan has a team of ten part-time employees under the supervision of their Television Station Manager. Additionally, there is a Web Developer role that falls under the dual reporting structure of the Digital Media & Marketing Manager and the IT Manager from the Administration department.

Best Practices

Granicus is a company specializing in providing communication solutions to enhance civic engagement and streamline government operations.

Granicus advocates for local governments to boost transparency and engage residents. It emphasizes building citizen trust through consistent, accessible communication, aligning with strategic goals and community responsiveness²⁹. Below are eight strategies from Granicus designed to enhance Northfield leadership's strategic communication goals:

1. **Overcoming Obstacles:** Addressing challenges in public engagement, service access, staff efficiency, and technology integration for civic engagement.
2. **Vision, Mission, and Values:** Developing clear statements to guide local government actions and operations.
 - a. **Leverage data for fine-tuning:** Use data to determine what is relevant to your audience; if you learn your target audience is a group that has made up of many Baby Boomers, Hispanic Americans, or households with young children, then adjust your voice, tone, and the messaging and content you're putting in front of them accordingly.
3. **Brand Presence and Awareness:** Utilizing branding and marketing to promote community and government initiatives.
4. **Identifying Stakeholders:** Recognizing citizen stakeholders and audiences to drive effective messaging and engagement.
 - a. San Antonio, Texas used an encoder and streaming service to broadcast live video feed for government meetings in two simultaneous streams for English and Spanish speaking residents as a way to promote equity through inclusive civic engagement. They found nearly 42% of residents speak Spanish at home; and of them, almost 30% were not fluent in English.
5. **Two-Way Communication:** Ensuring transparent, timely, and bidirectional communication with citizens.
6. **Program Execution:** Implementing communication programs effectively.
7. **Success Metrics:** Defining and measuring the success of communication efforts.
 - a. The Communications team tracks website click rate analytics, number of press releases, number of social media posts and should be reviewing on an annual basis.
 - b. Additionally, the City should track citizen satisfaction rates through surveys, request response time, and meeting attendance.
8. **Empowering Staff:** Training City staff to support and maintain communication strategies.

²⁹ [Granicus: 8 Strategies for Effective Local Government Communication Planning.](#)