

CULTURAL REPORT DISCUSSION FORUMS

In February and March of 2024, the city of Aspen hosted seven cultural report discussion forums, including one session conducted in Spanish. These forums gave employees the opportunity to talk about the feedback in the draft report, released in January 2024, and identify and prioritize solutions to the staff initiated cultural priorities highlighted in the draft report. The roadmap included below is a direct result of this exercise. These sessions were hosted by many of the same colleagues who facilitated the original listening sessions, representing different departments and holding varied roles throughout the organization.

The cultural report discussion forums focused on building solutions together, based off areas of importance identified by more than 280 city staff during the organizational culture listening sessions held in the summer of 2023. The results of the initial listening sessions led to the selection of discussion topics to serve as the focus for the development of the roadmap and the cultural report discussion forums. These topics were:



In addition to these six categories, a focus area for this roadmap of total compensation and internal employee housing was identified as a cultural priority. However, as these endeavors are primarily the responsibility of the City Council and the Agency Director Team, this category was not included in the discussion forums. An update on action items focused on this area is included on pages 6-7.

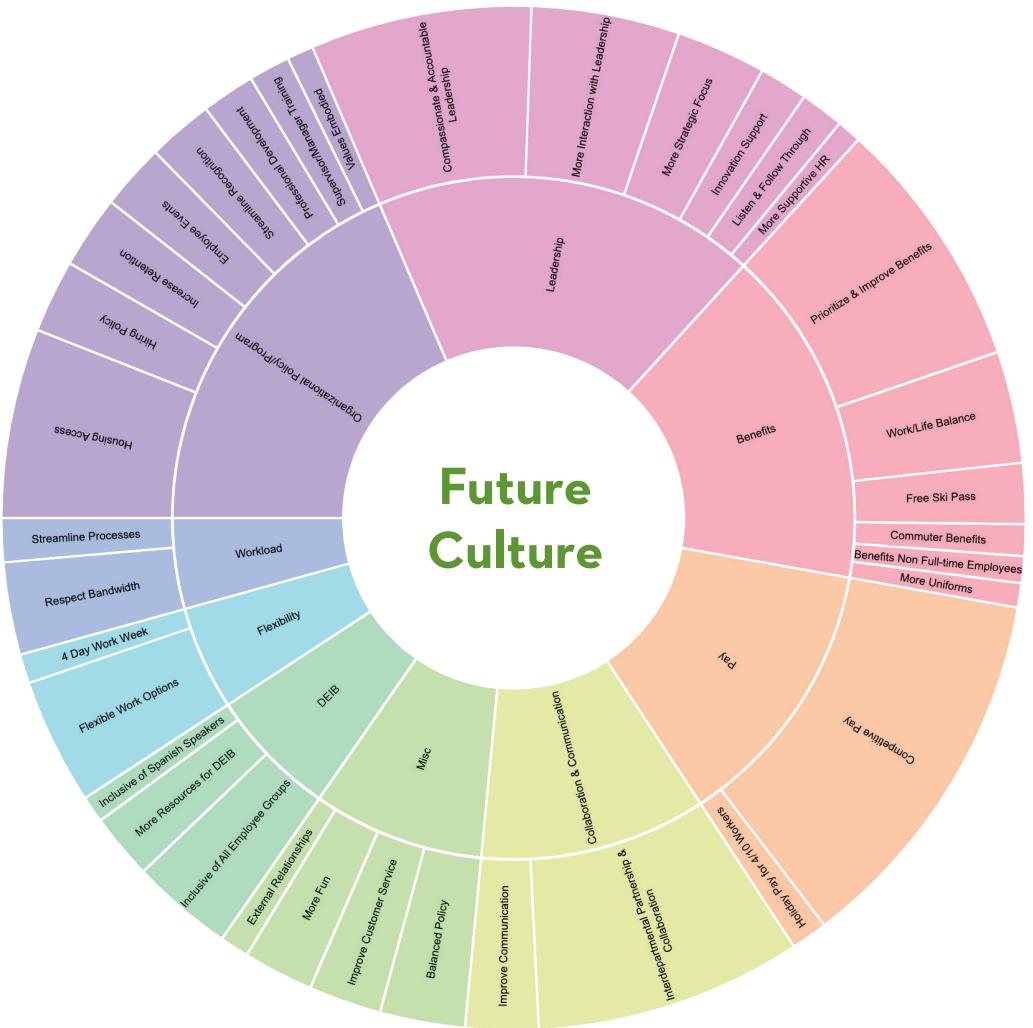
**(The wildcard category served as an open opportunity for participants in the discussions to make sure solutions they wanted to propose had an appropriate development space.)*

A key learning from the results of the discussion forums is that themes span more than a single discussion topic category and the suggested actions identified by staff align within sections of the future cultural priorities wheel (see right).

The following pages identify the top impactful projects to co-create and implement.

The actions identified in these pages represent the major ideas from the employee discussion forums.

In an effort to respond to identified priorities as quickly as possible, individual staff members throughout the city have begun work on many actionable solutions already. Many of these items are identified on the roadmap as “Actions Underway” and include descriptions of what is already being worked on. For example, HR recently re-launched the Après Awards, which allow employees to recognize their peers for actions that makes a difference in everyday work, positive impact or great work, and contributions that further the mission and organizational values.



Roadmap Themes

Priorities awaiting further development or implementation are included in the “On the Roadmap” section and will serve as the basis for work supported by new teams that will be established. For these, there is little information included because the work to build out these ideas will happen in the future. Moving forward, this project will be led by department, champions or cross-functional teams with support from the Department Leadership Team and the Agency Director Team. New cross-functional teams will provide thought partnership on a particular topic or build out of an action that supports the continued building of the culture that we want. This does not mean that the teams are taking the full responsibility of the particular theme or individual project delivery.

The Themes and Priority Actions are further developed on pages 4-11:



Balancing Workloads and Streamlining Processes - 4



Continuing to Build Solutions Together - 5



Cultivating Trusting Relationships with Our Leaders - 6-7



Developing Talent & Providing a Welcoming Environment for New Staff - 8



Fostering an Appreciative and Positive Culture - 9

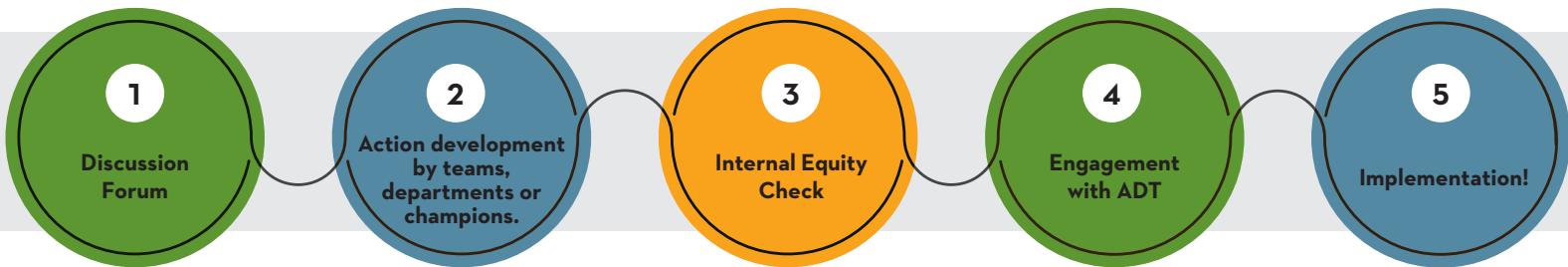


Focusing On Competitive Pay, Benefits And Staff Housing - 10



Keeping Each Other Informed - 11

Roadmap Action Development Steps

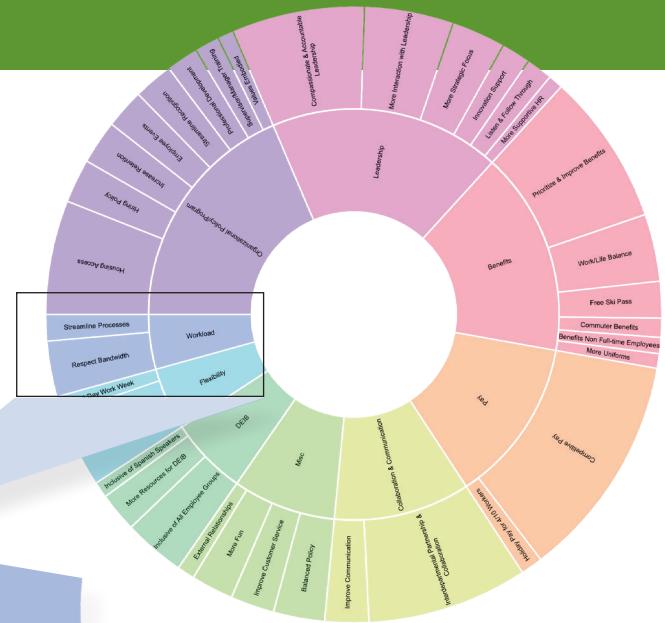
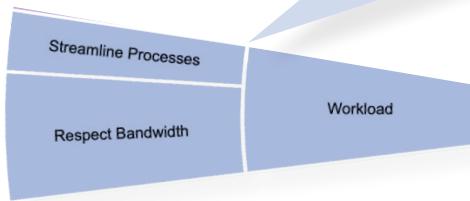


Roadmap

Balancing Workloads and Streamlining Processes

Future Culture Categories This Theme Is Responsive To:

1. Respect Bandwidth
2. Streamline Processes



PRIORITY ACTION

Ensure new systems & technologies are an improvement organization-wide



Current Action Underway

- A project, led by the Strategy & Innovation Office, is underway to inventory all systems that are used by city staff and to better understand the functionality of each. When completed, this project will help ensure that we don't have multiple systems serving similar purposes across the city, reducing unnecessary complexity and saving money.

PRIORITY ACTION

Provide workload clarity through regular conversations about priority between staff and supervisors



PRIORITY ACTION

Develop ways to get new and interesting work to people with the passion and capacity to handle it between staff and supervisors



PRIORITY ACTION

Thoughtfully pace city-wide initiatives to protect core job functions



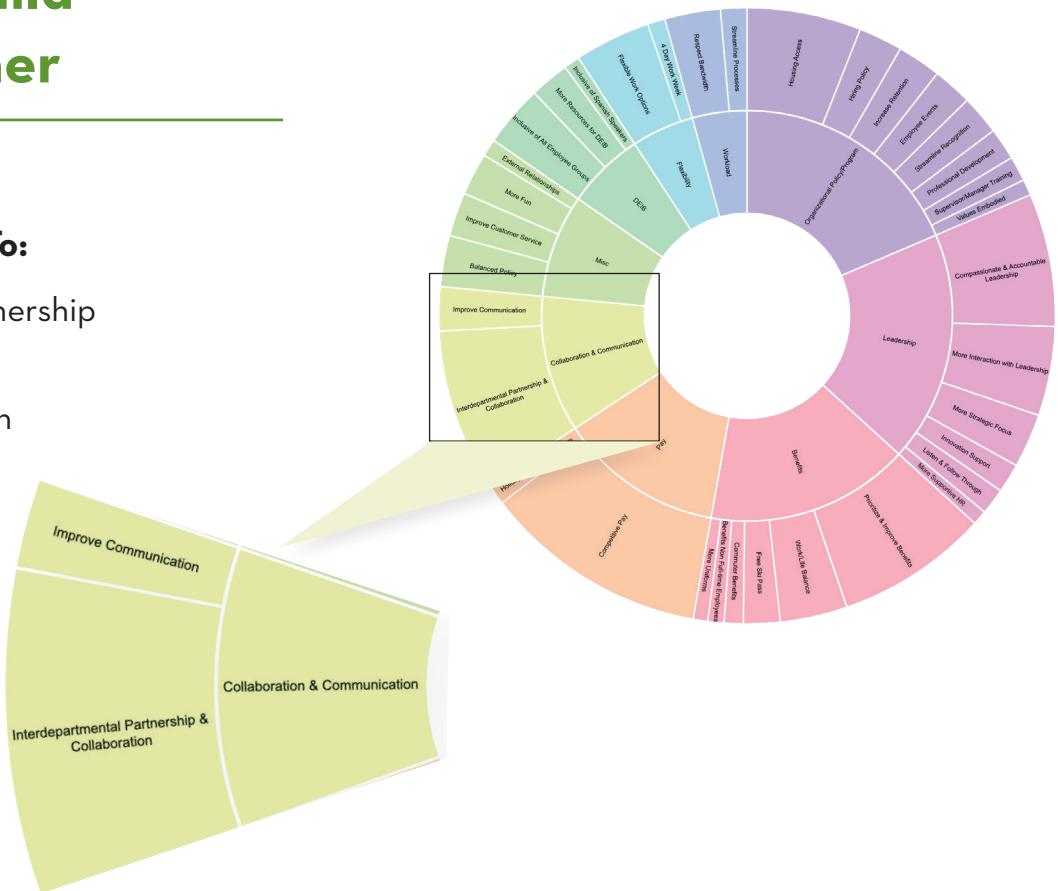
Current Action Underway

- ADT is working to maintain, and publish to all staff, a calendar of city-wide initiatives to allow for greater notice and reduced overlap of administrative requirements such as trainings, compass sessions, budget schedules, surveys, etc. for staff and supervisors.

Continuing to Build Solutions Together

Future Culture Categories This Theme Is Responsive To:

1. Interdepartmental Partnership & Collaboration
2. Improve Communication
3. Employee Events



PRIORITY ACTION

Staff Exchange Day



PRIORITY ACTION

Small Interdepartmental Gatherings



PRIORITY ACTION

All Staff Engagement Events



Current Action Underway

- New events are being developed such as the Parks Clean Up Green Up Day to ensure that all staff events promote collaborating with colleagues from across the organization. Special Events planners are working to bring people together over food, games and for folks to get out their offices. Continue to explore opportunities to make city events culturally relevant for all staff.

PRIORITY ACTION

Increase Opportunities for Staff to Participate in Organizational Decision-Making (Cross-Functional Teams)



Cultivating Trusting Relationships with Our Leaders

Future Culture Categories This Theme Is Responsive To:

1. More interaction with Leadership
2. Listen and Follow Through



PRIORITY ACTION

Create service roles for ADT members at every employee event

PLANNING → EXECUTING → IMPLEMENTING → SUCCESS

On the Roadmap



- Identify opportunities for every ADT member to have a service role at every employee event. This will create casual conversations with many more staff members than would normally happen at an employee event. One great example of this is the Pancake Breakfast (Sunrise Social).

PRIORITY ACTION

CMO/ADT Quarterly Video Updates

PLANNING → EXECUTING → IMPLEMENTING → SUCCESS

On the Roadmap



- In conjunction with the Communications team, produce a quarterly video message from the City Manager. Concurrently, a separate message from a different ADT member each quarter will be produced. While not a personal interaction, it is a good method of increasing information sharing throughout the organization.

PRIORITY ACTION

Increase ADT accessibility and approachability within the organization

PLANNING → EXECUTING → IMPLEMENTING → SUCCESS

On the Roadmap



- ADT will take two actions with the intended outcomes of
 - Connection before Content: ADT members get to know more staff members as people and vice versa;
 - ADT members listen more; and
 - Staff from different departments getting to know each other better through this process.
- To achieve this, ADT will need to:
 - Develop a toolkit of facilitation tools so that each ADT member can facilitate a semi-structured meeting that best matches their own personal style;
 - Determine a process for how ADT members can meet with people with groups of whom they normally do not work and perhaps meet with groups of people who come from different departments; and
 - Devise a system to ensure this program is sustainable over time.

Cultivating Trusting Relationships with Our Leaders (cont.)



PRIORITY ACTION

Communicate the “why” behind important decisions



Within the brainstorming topic, employees identified several strategies to:

- Initiate in-person communications, not just open door
- Close communications loop

Objective for communications:



- Develop a methodology for ensuring that efforts with organization-wide impact are reviewed holistically with the impact of the whole organization in mind. (Interdisciplinary review, iterative processes, and clarifying that a polished product for consideration is not a finished product until it has been reviewed through the organizational lens.)

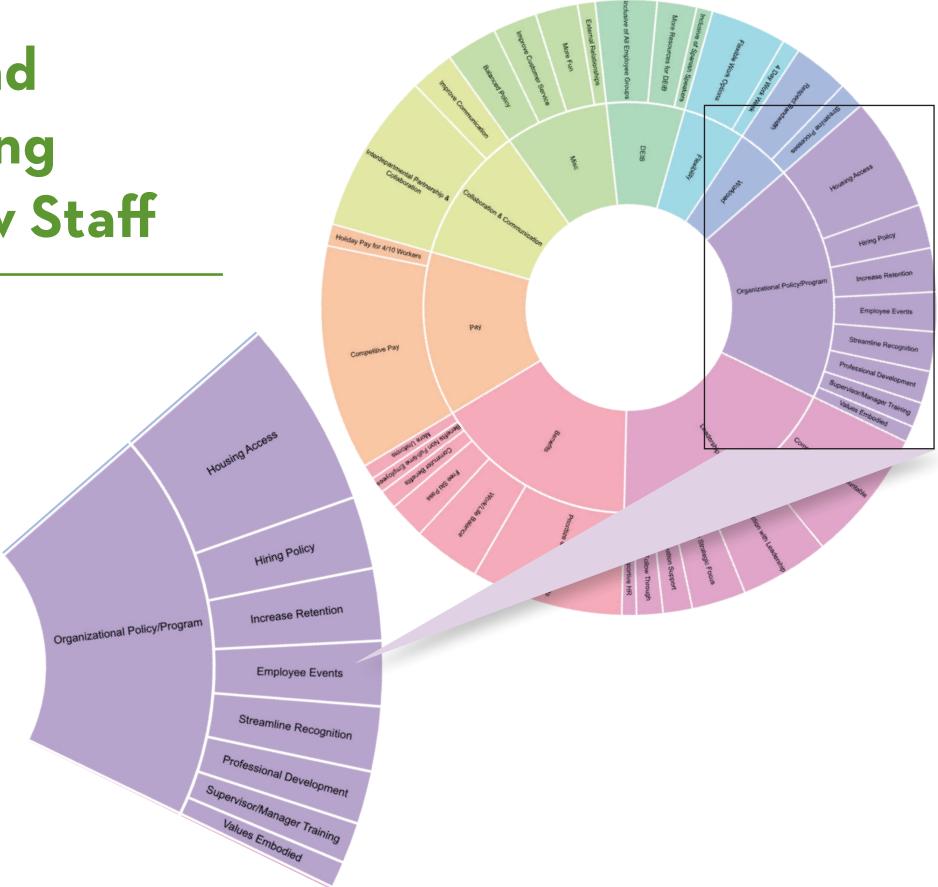
Current Action Underway

- Launch Internal Communications Plan, which aims to achieve the following objectives:
 - Build a culture of transparency, trust, and inclusion.
 - Increase connection and collaboration across all departments in the organization. Remove silos and build connection.
 - Increase transparency from Agency Director Team and city leadership to build trust in the decision-making process and build relationships with all staff members.
 - Offer more opportunities for engagement and relationship building with staff members from all departments.
 - Communicate with all employees in a clear, engaging, and inclusive manner.
 - Increase internal communication to connect employees and departments, increase collaboration and engagement.
 - Increase internal communication from ADT and City Leadership to increase transparency and build relationships with staff across all departments.
 - Development of a graphic visualization is underway to show how various strategic efforts are aligned and to increase understanding of the organization's overall priorities.
- Administrative Directives
 - Work is ongoing to ensure that directives are developed collaboratively before they are approved. Additionally, communication plans with each of these directives will describe the “why” for the policy.

Developing Talent and Providing a Welcoming Environment for New Staff

Future Culture Categories This Theme Is Responsive To:

1. Supervisor/Manager Training
2. Professional Development



PRIORITY ACTION

Restructured Orientation



Current Action Underway

- The Human Resources Department restructured the employee orientation to make it more welcoming and to create a cohort for new employees to attend a “coffee talk” check in three months following the now-daylong orientation. The orientation led by employees with different roles throughout the organization provides information on:
 - Values; A311 Connect; cybersecurity; HR policies; benefits; employee surveys; Environmental Health; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging; risk and safety
- The cross-departmental team will further identify potential changes related to the onboarding experience for new employees to make them feel welcome.

PRIORITY ACTION

Trainings targeted for career growth



Current Action Underway

- HR is working on a syllabus and plans to implement a revised new-supervisor track in mid-2024 to respond to feedback that additional training in this area would help support new supervisors and create a pathway for workforce/succession planning.

PRIORITY ACTION

Per employee allocation for training/professional development



PRIORITY ACTION

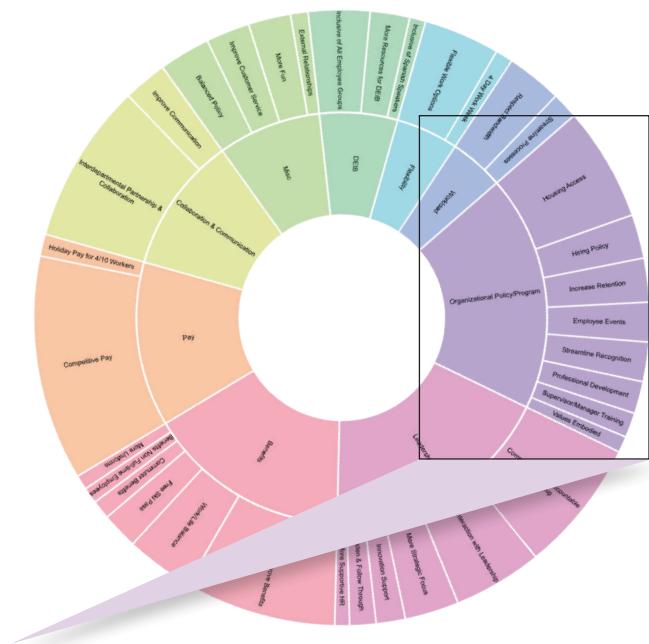
Promote Employee Growth Through Individualized Coaching & Mentorship



Fostering an Appreciative and Positive Culture

Future Culture Categories This Theme Is Responsive To:

1. Streamline Recognition
2. Values Embodied



PRIORITY ACTION

Bring Back Après Awards



Current Action Underway

- HR has re-launched the Après (peer-to-peer) Awards program.
- Notes: Within the brainstorming topic, employees identified several strategies to improve the awards and recognition for employees with the following tenets:
 - Quick, Meaningful Recognition
 - Employee Buy-in - How do people want to be recognized?
 - Utilize recognition programs that are already in place
 - Encourage more departmental recognition initiatives, not just for performance
 - Bring Back Après Awards

PRIORITY ACTION

Review Values with a DEIB lens



PRIORITY ACTION

Celebrate Our Wins



PRIORITY ACTION

Encourage Thoughtful Risk-Taking

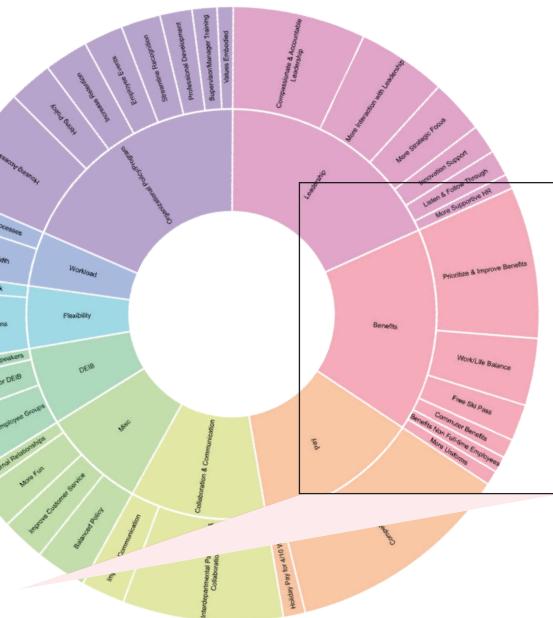
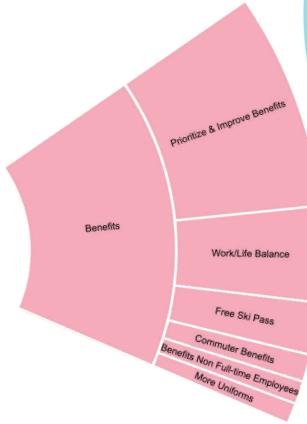


*Create a Cross Departmental Team to evaluate other suggestions to foster an appreciative and positive culture and to develop timelines for other initiatives.

Focusing on Competitive Pay, Benefits and Staff Housing

Future Culture Categories This Theme Is Responsive To:

1. Prioritize and Improve Benefits
2. Housing Access
3. Competitive Pay



PRIORITY ACTION

Convey the city's internal strategic housing plan.



On The Roadmap:

- The city's internal strategic housing plan provides a roadmap and action plan for moving forward.

The primary focus areas of city's plan include:

- Improve understanding of the program.
- Expand creative housing options to meet the diverse needs of the city's workforce.
- Revise and expand the housing administrative orders (policies).
- Increase communication and transparency.
- Assess resources while also leveraging opportunities within the current housing program.

While some of the actions in this plan already in the implementation stage, such as creating a housing page on the new Intranet, others, such as evaluating a housing stipend program or purchasing additional housing units, require further exploration and analysis.

PRIORITY ACTION

Begin the annual, city-wide compensation process and ensure the process is transparent.



Current Action Underway

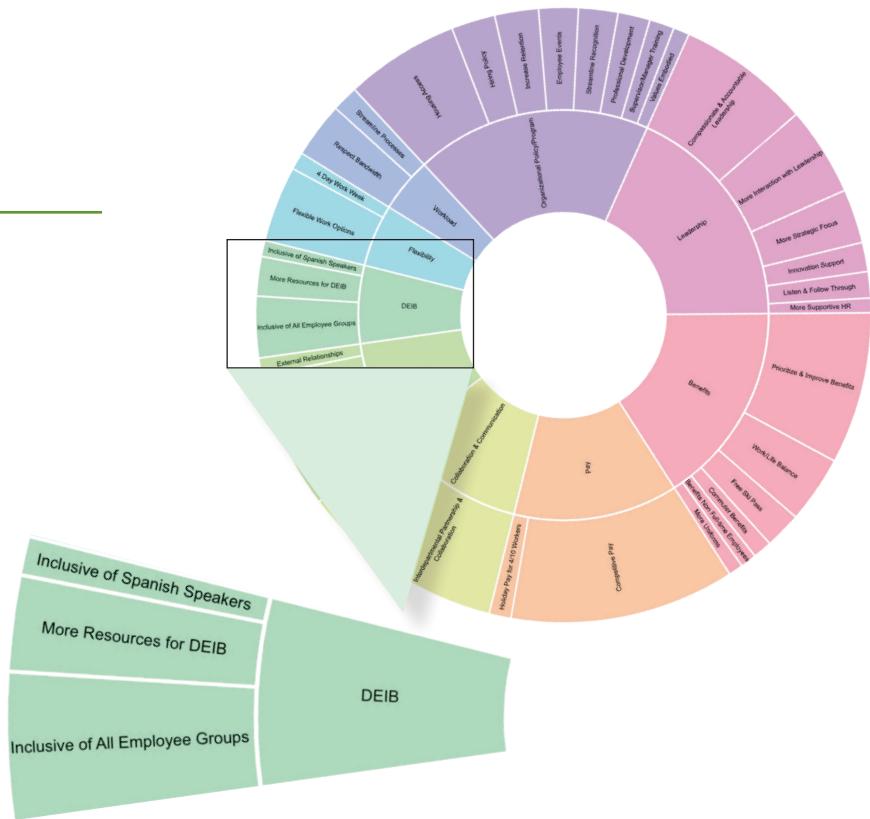
- HR has hired Employers Council (EC) to review the annual city-wide compensation process. Outcomes include:
 - Develop recommendations for the 2025 pay plan.
 - Review all positions and their placement on the 2025 pay plan.
 - Ensure alignment with total compensation philosophy for actual pay.
 - Ensure transparency and communication throughout.

Keeping Each Other Informed

Future Culture Categories This Theme Is Responsive To:

1. Improve Communication
2. Inclusive of Spanish Speakers
3. Inclusive of All Employee Groups

There is overlap in this section with other portions of the roadmap. Please see page 6-7 for Cultivating Trusting Relationships with Our Leaders for additional information.



PRIORITY ACTION

Build better awareness about departmental goals and individual staff roles

PLANNING → EXECUTING → IMPLEMENTING → SUCCESS

Within the brainstorming topic, employees identified several strategies to improve transparency for who does what in the organization:

- Employee search/better contact information
- Communication tools accessible to all staff describing all department roles
- Revised City Source
- Have people from departments go to other departments and learn what other employees in different departments do.

Current Action Underway

- The City's new intranet City Connect went live on April 17. Many pages have been updated to provide additional information about who does what and to provide pictures showing people's faces.

PRIORITY ACTION

Provide additional resources in Spanish internally and externally

PLANNING → EXECUTING → IMPLEMENTING → SUCCESS

Current Action Underway

- Important citywide messages are translated into Spanish, however, not everything sent citywide and not all resources are provided in Spanish. The new Internal Communications Plan anticipates additional information to be distributed in Spanish to employees. (Ideas could include LEAD Spanish trainings, Spanish subtitles for videos, Spanish interpreter for ADT coffee chats with some departments, etc.).

During the sessions, increased access to translated documents for the public was also identified as a need (sales tax remittance forms was one example).

The City in May launched a bonus program for Bilingual Pay for qualified employees that use Spanish and English in the workplace and where it has been determined that Spanish will substantially assist their department. HR anticipates that fluency testing for employees will be completed by mid-May, and the city will publish a list of participants on City Connect as a resource.

Where We Go From Here

City staff, through a full cycle of investigation beginning with the identification of current city culture, to identifying themes we want in a future culture, and finally developing solutions to create that culture, are now ready to turn these solutions into action.

Organizational change is hard work. It takes time. Most importantly, however, it takes the employees. For this initiative to succeed, it will take the earnest commitment of all of us. There are several elements to building the culture we want, starting with personal accountability and building to collaborative action.

Individual Responsibilities

1 - Live the City Values

In the discussion forums, participants were asked to tell a story about a time when they, or a colleague, put the city's values of Stewardship, Partnership, Innovation, and Service into action. Sharing these real-life examples of our values highlighted the thoughtful and dedicated work happening all throughout the city and provided an important way to align ourselves under a collective vision.

To create the future culture, each of us should consider using city values as the first reference point when making decisions, large and small. These individual actions - to embody the values - are a large determinate of the culture that we maintain and the future culture that is built together.

One way to live out this value is by nominating colleagues for a Green Circle, Blue Square, or Black Diamond award when they go above and beyond their job duties personifying a city value.



2 - Embody the Future Culture

Building our future culture will be the result of collective, individual action. During the discussion forums, each participating staff member was asked to “own” a change that they would make in their daily work life. While these changes were individual in nature, they shared some common themes. To create the future culture you want, consider the following in your routine:



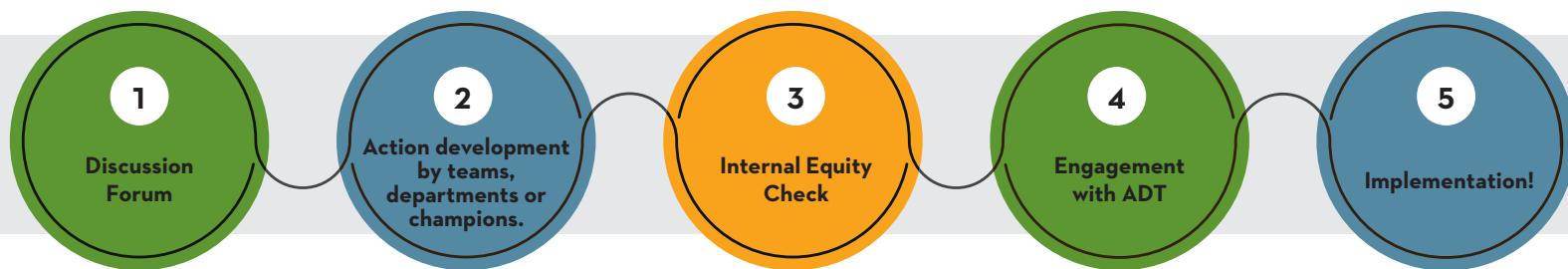
Collaborative Actions

3 - Support Organizational Changes

The action items identified in this report depend on the expertise and passion of staff throughout the city to be successful. In order to support this work, several cross functional teams will be created to support project sponsors and the Agency Director Team to:

- Prioritize action items identified in this report and gathered during the discussion forums
- Provide feedback on action and implementation plans for priority action items to ensure they are aligned with report feedback
- Review additions to the roadmap as new solutions responsive to the discussion forums are identified.

Participation in these teams is open to interested staff, via an application process, and will be limited to 8-10 members for each team. Each theme and priority action is following the roadmap development steps. All themes and priority actions are at step 2. We are developing action groups so that we can start on step 2.



4 - Ongoing Commitment

As these priority actions are developed, and as other projects that align with these roadmap themes emerge, the project sponsors and Agency Director Team commit to communicating about how it fits with this culture effort. When a particular project, change in policy or new way of approaching work is responsive to the feedback from this effort, the organization will celebrate it.