Minute No. 629
Report – Executive Policy Committee – July 13, 2022

Item No. 2 Human Resources Strategic Alignment of the Flexible Workplace Program

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee and adopted the following:

1. That this report be received as information.

Report – Executive Policy Committee – July 13, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Bowman,

That the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee be adopted.

Carried

Councillor Lukes asked to be recorded as having voted against the above motion, in accordance with Rule 47(7) of The Procedure By-law No. 50/2007.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 13, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Human Resources Strategic Alignment of the Flexible Workplace Program

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
J. Hanson	A. Cusson	N/A	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2021, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) requested the development of a framework for remote and hybrid work arrangements. The Director of Human Resource Services and the Director of Innovation & Technology were tasked to lead the review and recommend a flexible work program for consideration. On February 23, 2022, the CAO announced that employees would have the option to start returning to the workplace beginning March 1, 2022, and that a Flexible Workplace Program (FWP Program) was forthcoming. On May 9, 2022, Council and subsequently all City employees were introduced to the FWP Program and the Application Process was opened.

The FWP Program has built-in tools to help foster continued communication and promote performance evaluation. This helps both leaders and employees with understanding their obligations while engaged in FWP Program arrangements and ensure client or customer needs are being met.

The FWP Program also provides parameters on how employees can be managed to ensure productivity and operational needs are being met. The FWP Program allows for a three-month trial period, after approval, for each employee, that will provide an opportunity for the Supervisor to review the effectiveness of the FWP arrangement early on to ensure this is working for the employee, the workplace and the residents of Winnipeg where it may apply.

Human Resource Services goals and objectives for the FWP Program are directly informed by the City of Winnipeg Corporate Strategic Plan, OurWinnipeg 2045, and departmental goals. The FWP Program allows eligible City of Winnipeg Employees to participate in flexible work arrangements with Department Head approval while ensuring they are meeting the needs of the residents by providing the same levels of customer service and increasing employee satisfaction rates.

At the forefront of this program is our need to be a responsive employer, ensuring we can compete to recruit and retain specialized professionals in a highly competitive labour market

and that the City can offer incentives that attract high demand knowledge workers. It is a priority for HR Services to set department teams up for success through education, resources, and tools to support our workforce, manage employee performance, and ensure we maintain quality staff for the sustainability of City services and programs.

As part of the FWP Program, the City will be measuring turnover rates, and reporting when an employee leaves due to remote work-related reasons. Departments will be asked to specifically monitor front line positions with direct contact with the public. We anticipate that offering flexible work will reduce turn over in jobs. Reduced turn over leads to higher levels of customer service as consistent staffing and retaining employees allows the City to offer more efficient service. Additionally, less turn over reduces costs and time for training, orientation and education.

With the implementation of the FWP Program, we have not seen any negative impact on customer service levels. Anyone interacting with employees who are working remote will continue to receive the same levels of service as they would have if they were interacting with an employee working in the office. Employees working remotely will continue to have the same level of availability to deliver services as they would have working in the office setting. The City will track complaints that are received that are directly related to remote work, and will act upon those complaints accordingly. This will also be evaluated as part of the three-month review on the program.

The City also performs a Citizen Satisfaction Survey, which is a statistically-relevant survey conducted annually in May. The City will continue to monitor customer service satisfaction levels, as well as levels of satisfaction related to all other services. The Public Service will look at and report on any comments that are provided by residents to determine if there is any direct correlation between the FWP Program and satisfaction levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That this report be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On May 18, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee directed the Public Service to report back to Council within 60 days on how the Flexible Workplace Program aligns with City of Winnipeg's Human Resource goals, objectives and meets service delivery standards.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications to receive this report as information.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Timeline of Remote Work at the City of Winnipeg

Remote work has been a discussion point at the City of Winnipeg for a number of years, but had been primarily only used as part of a trial for the Innovation & Technology (IT) Department in 2018. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 300 employees had remote access and were working remotely on an infrequent basis.

In 2018, a small pilot of remote work began in the IT Department. In March 2020, the pilot was quickly expanded to approximately 1,800 employees across multiple departments as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All 1,800 employees were connected to work on MS Teams and the City acquired additional VPN capacity on an emergent basis. Both Labour Relations and cybersecurity barriers were able to be deferred at the time. In short, the need to respond to the COVID-19 crisis removed many long-standing constraints and hesitation to move on remote work within the City. Within a 10-day period approximately 1,800 employees who could perform their job duties remotely were successfully sent home to work.

Approximately 200 people started to return in summer 2020 due to the needs of their job, leaving approximately 1,600 employees still working in remote and hybrid work arrangements to meet the needs of the City.

Recognizing the intensified need to offer remote work, and manage the long-term implications of COVID 19, in October 2021, the CAO requested the Director of Human Resource Services and Director of Innovation & Technology to lead the review and recommendation of a flexible work program and administrative standard for the City. After the public health orders lifted in early 2022, more employees returned with many currently working between both the office and at home.

On February 23, 2022, the CAO announced that employees were welcome to start returning to the workplace beginning March 1, 2022, and that a FWP Program was forthcoming for those who may want to continue working remotely. The program was formally introduced to the City's Senior Management Team and Human Resources Leadership Group in April 2022, and to all employees and City Council in May 2022. The application process was opened in June 2022.

Remote Work Employee Survey and Program Creation

At the forefront of this program is the City's need to be a responsive employer and ensure we can compete to recruit and retain specialized individuals in a highly competitive labour market. It also allows the City to compensate and offer this incentive that attracts high-demand knowledge workers.

The introduction of the FWP Program provides an additional avenue to increase employee engagement, satisfaction, and increase commitment to the City of Winnipeg which allows service continuity, and maintains the City's ability to plan and deliver programs and services as an organization. As part of the FWP Program, the City will be measuring turnover rates and reporting when an employee leaves due to remote work-related reasons. Departments will be asked to specifically monitor front line positions that have direct contact with the public.

Human Resource Services anticipates that offering flexible work will reduce turnover in jobs such as the 311 Contact Centre. Reduced turn over leads to higher levels of customer service as consistent staffing and retaining current employees allows the City to offer more efficient

service. Additionally, less turn over reduces costs and time for training, orientation and education. Information on employee turnover and attrition will be included in the next FWP Program report to Council.

In June 2020, IT sent the first of two survey's to the1,800 employees mandated to work remotely due to the pandemic. On November 25, 2021, a second employee survey was sent out to those same 1,800 employees. An overall summary of the results concluded that:

- 93% responded to the survey,
- 95% wanted for remote work to continue, and
- 93% said a permanent remote work program would increase their commitment to staying at the City of Winnipeg.

Additional survey highlights will be included in the first-year update report.

The FWP Program Steering Committee was established in November 2021 to create the FWP Program. The Team worked to complete five key review points:

(1) Review of what the local Manitoba employer competition was doing;
(2) Review of Flexible Work programs in other Canadian Cities;
(3) Complete a focused survey with City of Winnipeg Human Resources Leadership Group;
(4) In person interviews with the City of Winnipeg Senior Management Team; and
(5) Review of Employee Survey information (June 2020 & November 2021).

All of this information was used to inform and create the City of Winnipeg FWP Program.

Human Resource Services Goals, Priorities, and Strategic Implications are driven by the needs of the organization.

Human Resource Services (HR Services) Teams support the priorities of the City of Winnipeg by working with Departments to meet City and Department specific strategic plan goals. HR Services does this by leading human resource services in City departments and implementing corporate human resource programs in eight specialty areas of HR: they include; Recruitment, Compensation & Classification, Employee Development, Labour Relations, Employee Health, Workplace Safety, Human Resource Information Services (HRIS), and the Equity Office to meet the needs of our large workforce.

In addition, the goals of those corporate human resource programs must align to ensure that HR Services is meeting the goals, policies, and objectives identified by City Council, the City of Winnipeg Corporate Strategic Plan, and OurWinnipeg 2045.

Alignment of Human Resource Programs is directly connected to the City of Winnipeg Vision, Mission and Values outlined in the City of Winnipeg Corporate Strategic Plan.

Vision - A vibrant, healthy, and inclusive city for all Winnipeg residents and visitors.

Mission - Achieve effective and efficient services delivery through a collaborative, engaged and value-driven culture.

Values:
Accountability – as stewards of public assets and the work we do
Diversity – in who we are
Respect – for each individual person
Trust – with elected officials and the residents we serve
Transparency – in all we do

Alignment of Human Resource Programs to City of Winnipeg Corporate Strategic Plan:

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1: CULTURE –
Foster a collaborative, engaged, and value-driven organizational culture embodying reconciliation, diversity, and inclusion.

Goal	Key Performance Indicators
GOAL 1.1 – Measure & Increase Employee Engagement	✓Engagement survey response rate – minimum of 75% ✓Percentage of employees actively engaged – annual increase toward 80% ✓Employee turnover rate – not to exceed 10% annually
GOAL 1.7 – Enhance employee development through regular performance reviews	✓Employee development and performance review completion rate – annual increase toward 100%

The FWP Program has built-in tools to help foster continued communication and performance evaluation. This helps both leaders and employees understand their obligations while engaged in FWP Program arrangements. In addition, fewer people in the workplace reduces the risk of transmission of illness. It is expected that remote work may positively impact employee sick leave usage, which will be tracked along with any related Workers Compensation Board (WCB) costs.

Available Education and Training support for City employees & leaders:

- Courses are available to Leaders and Employees through the Employee Development Division on preparing to return to the workplace, supporting employees as they return to the workplace, managing employee performance, communication when working remote, and maintaining a healthy physical work environment.

The Public Service will report back on this goal through:

- Employee course and training completion rates;
- Employee sick time usage rates; and
- Employee satisfaction rates identified through Employee Engagement Survey.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION –
Drive continuous improvement and performance measurement in key processes and procedures across the organization.

Goal	Key Performance Indicators
GOAL 2.2 – Strengthen linkages between service level goals and their measurements to help communicate and drive performance	✓Service level satisfaction – maintain or increase customer satisfaction

Available Education and Training support for City employees & leaders:

- Courses are available to Leaders and Employees through the Employee Development Division on managing employee performance and outlining service expectations.
- Additional materials and tools have been created, and continue to be created, to further support managing productivity and employees.

The Public Service will report back on this goal through:

- Employee course and training completion rates;
- Employee performance review completion rates;
- Service satisfaction rates reported in the Annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey; and
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints received by departments related to service provided by an approved flexible workplace program employee.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3: COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT – Collaborate to improve internal and external communication and engagement with elected officials, residents, employees, and businesses.

Goal	Key Performance Indicators
GOAL 3.4 – Improve communication with employees across departments	✓Engagement survey response rate – minimum of 75% ✓Percentage of employees actively engaged – annual increase toward 80%

Available Education and Training support for City employees & leaders:

- Courses are available to Leaders and Employees through the Employee Development Division.
- Additional Courses are being created to further support orientation, employee expectations, and supporting employees working in remote work arrangements.

The Public Service will report back on this goal through:

- Employee training completion rates;
- The City of Winnipeg 2022/2023 Employee Engagement Survey completion rates;

- Microsoft Teams and technology usage analytics for employees working remotely; and
- Employee turnover rates for the City, with specific mention of remote work positions by department.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4: CUSTOMER SERVICE –
Improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of city services.

Goal	Key Performance Indicators
GOAL 4.3 – Customer service satisfaction	✓ Maintain an overall customer service satisfaction rate of 80% ✓Number of customer service complaints received regarding poor customer experience from a FWP staff member.

City of Winnipeg employees have been working remotely in a number of different departments, providing a variety of services for more than two years. Maintaining customer service is paramount to meeting the needs of the public, and for the ongoing support of a FWP program.

Available Education and Training support for City employees & leaders:

- Courses are available to Leaders and Employees through the Employee Development Division on customer service and engaging with the public.
- Additional Courses are being created to further support orientation, employee expectations, and supporting employees working remotely.

The Public Service will report back on this goal through:

- Employee training completion rates;
- Monitoring and reporting on customer complaints received by departments related to remote work service; and
- Service level satisfaction reported in the Annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey.

OUR WINNIPEG 2045 ALIGNMENT:

The City of Winnipeg's FWP Program is also aligned with the goals, objectives, and policies outlined in Our Winnipeg 2045. The current state of the labour market and the impact of the global pandemic has had profound impacts on employee expectations and employment opportunities available to high demand knowledge workers. These workers now have more options than ever to access jobs across the country, and the globe, without having to relocate. Meeting the needs of top talent will be key to attracting and retaining good staff and ensuring a sustainable Public Service.

The FWP Program aligns with Our Winnipeg 2045 as follows:

1. Leadership and Good Governance (LG)

The general goals and objectives of LG are directly applicable to the FWP program, speaking to achieving responsive service delivery through an aligned, integrated, collaborative and results-orientated organizational culture.

In addition, LG policies **1.18 – Responsive, Representative and Resilient Workforce, 1.19 – Equitable Service Access, 1.20 – Succession Planning** also apply. This includes using information from two employee surveys to create and implement the FWP Program.
The FWP Committee worked with City leaders and teams to ensure initial program planning included a focus on long term sustainable of a FWP program. The FWP Program is further aligned with this objective as the City now uses MS Teams and is currently implementing Office 365 to eligible employees. Both will increase collaboration and assist with managing performance and demonstrating work productivity while allowing employees to have flexible work options.

Providing employees with the flexibility to continue remote work will be key to offering sustainable City services using a qualified and engaged workforce. Having a FWP Program is expected to reduce employee turnover and increase the attractiveness of the City of Winnipeg as an employer. When reduced turnover occurs, it allows for consistent service planning, improved workforce planning, better succession planning, and reduced costs for training, orientation and recruitment.

The following measures will be reviewed to ensure employees are engaged in the FWP Program and that employees working remotely continue to deliver consistent levels of customer service:

- Turnover rates for employees;
- Employee engagement levels annually increase toward 80% through the 2022/2023 employee engagement survey; and
- Identification of any complaints to 311 or departments directly related to the quality of interactions with employees working remotely.

2. Environmental Resilience (ER)

ER policies **2.3 & 2.8 – Climate Action Leadership** are directly applicable to the FWP Program which allows the City to demonstrate environmental leadership by reducing the use of roads, reducing traffic congestion, reducing emissions, pollution, and dependence on fossil fuels.

The FWP Program provides a unique opportunity to reduce transportation impacts. City employees approved for both full time and hybrid work arrangements will attend the workplace less. This will lead to a direct impact on road and personal vehicle usage. Some employees that are attending the workplace less are also looking to use alternative options for transportation, such using the bus or carpooling.

The following measures will be reviewed:

- Number of kilometers saved by employees not driving to the workplace; and
- Estimated commuter drive time savings in traffic.

3. Economic Prosperity (EP)

EP policies **3.3 – Economic Research & Development, 3.4 – Community Economic Development, 3.16 – Optimize Facility Access;** these are directly applicable to the FWP Program which allows the City to support the best use of city resources to complete work, potentially make available some building space for alternative business use, and to support our employees as a large Manitoba employer with remote work options.

The FWP Program provides a unique opportunity for the City to offer employees and the public reduced personal cost savings for travel and vehicle usage by offering remote work. This additionally benefits the City as employees have less lost productivity time traveling to and from the workplace and to meetings.

The following measures will be reviewed:

- The number of employee trips saved by not going into the office.

4. Good Health and Well-Being (HW)

General goals and objectives of HW are directly applicable to the FWP Program which will impact City employees. In addition, HW policy **4.7 Community Safety** applies.

Employees repeatedly speak to the increased personal balance, wellness, and increased time for self and family when able to engage in remote work arrangements.

In addition, as it relates to HW policy 4.7, in the event of inclement weather, disasters, or emergencies there is limited lost time, and employees working remotely are able to continue to do their work with limited service interruption to the public or internal customers.

The following measures will be reviewed:

- Employee satisfaction levels for employees approved to work in FWP Program; and
- Employee sick time usage.

5. Social Equity (SE)

General goals and objectives of SE are directly applicable to the FWP Program which speaks to building social cohesion, through responsible City service delivery. In addition, **SE 5.1 – Equitable Service Access,** applies and speaks to awareness of social equity, providing opportunities to address barriers and provide access to services, and/or making improvements to better serve the systemically disadvantaged, underrepresented, and/or underserved groups of customers.

There are noted benefits to providing remote work options for employees. Remote and flexible work supports employees by reducing personal costs that assists the family unit by having more personal money available due to savings from transportation costs, travel time, and more time for personal family commitments due to reduced commute times. The City may be viewed as a more attractive employer to some and particularly for positions with high turnover like we see in the 311 Contact Centre. By offering remote work on a regular basis, this allows employees more flexibility, reduced travel time, and the ability to lessen personal transportation costs. This is a highly desired benefit in today’s competitive labour market.

The following measures will be reviewed:

- Employee satisfaction results directly connected to the 2022/2023 Employee Engagement Survey for employees approved for flexible work arrangements.

6. City Building (CB)

General goals and objectives of the City Building section allow for the potential for redevelopment opportunities by reusing existing buildings, recognition that the downtown is a hub for attracting new business, and that maintaining heritage buildings is a priority. In addition, **6.18 – Downtown Economic Development, 6.30 – Reinvestment Areas, 6.40 – Commercial Areas, 6.43 - Heritage Conservation** applies. In the future, it is possible some City owned or leased buildings may become underutilized due to remote work. There is an opportunity to make that space available for other City use, for redevelopment, or make available for potential rental by external sources.

Before the pandemic and flexible work options were implemented, there was a need for more space within some City of Winnipeg departments, such as Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Property Planning & Development, and Legal Services. The FWP Program has already allowed for flexible scheduling of shared office space and it has been confirmed that, by allowing remote work, the City will have some immediate office space available. Currently, some departments have reported that using flexible scheduling is allowing them to meet their current office space needs. If the FWP Program was to be removed, some departments would have an immediate need for additional space. Surplus and reduced office space use will be tracked by departments and provided in the next report to Council.

The following measures will be reviewed:

- Each City Department participating in the FWP Program will track surplus office space directly related to remote work arrangements.

The decision to permit an employee to work remotely will be made by the Department Head or Chief Administrative Officer (or their designate) after a Department and individual assessment. Ultimately, it will be the City of Winnipeg Senior Leadership Teams and the CAO that will be accountable to report back on the success of this program, to determine where individual arrangements remain viable, management of the workplace and employee productivity as needed, and adjust the program to meet the needs of the City, citizens, and employees.

The success and sustainability of the FWP Program relies on a shared commitment of both employees and leaders at the City of Winnipeg.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: June 10, 2022

Project Name:
Human Resources Strategic Alignment of the Flexible Workplace Program

COMMENTS:

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation of this report.

Jocelyn Peters - June 10, 2022
Jocelyn Peters CPA, CGA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Innovation & Technology Department
- Customer Service & Communications Department

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

1. **Leadership and Good Governance –** 1.18 – Responsive, Representative and Resilient Workforce, 1.19 – Equitable Service Access, 1.20 – Succession Planning

2. **Environmental Resilience -** 2.3 & 2.8 – Climate Action Leadership

3. **Economic Prosperity -** 3.3 – Economic Research & Development, 3.4 – Community Economic Development, 3.16 – Optimize Facility Access

4. **Good Health and Well Being -** 4.7 Community Safety

5. **Social Equity -** 5.1 – Equitable Service Access

6. **City Building -** 6.18 – Downtown Economic Development, 6.30 – Reinvestment Areas, 6.40 – Commercial Areas, 6.43 - Heritage Conservation

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Strategic opportunity 1: Corporate Leadership
1.1 Cultivate a corporate culture that values climate action
1.2 Understand and integrate business and economic implications of climate action into decision-making processes
1.5 Reduce employee travel

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

N/A

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Human Resource Services and Innovation & Technology
Division: Corporate Human Resources
Prepared by: Jessica Hanson and Angie Cusson
Date: June 29, 2022
File No: N/A