

Transforming from Within



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Introduction

A Season of Change

North Richland Hills is experiencing a dynamic period of transformation. In FY2024, there was a significant shift in our local government leadership. Retirements in senior leadership include the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Director of Public Safety, Finance Director, both Assistant Fire Chiefs, Assistant Director of Finance, Purchasing Manager, Utility Billing Manager, and the Chief Building Official. In addition to retirements, an Assistant Police Chief passed away suddenly in May. The annual election further accelerated this momentum when a new Mayor and three new City Council members were elected. This level of change has injected a surge of new energy and ideas into our community.

To solidify the direction of the organization, the City Council held a strategic planning session with city executive staff. This collaborative effort resulted in a renewed mission, vision, and goals for the City of North Richland Hills. The promise to work together to become "The Standard for transparent, resident-focused, fiscally responsible, business-welcoming municipal government in Texas" emphasizes a collective aspiration for a brighter future. The goals outlined by the City Council clearly demonstrate a call for the city to engage in stronger collaboration, efficiency, and service orientation.

Embracing Change

This season of change is a catalyst for progress. It presents the city with a unique and exciting opportunity to reimagine the community, strengthen partnerships, and create a more vibrant and prosperous city for generations to come.

The city faces growth opportunities in building organizational capacity to explore, analyze and learn from available data through existing and new municipal systems and components. The challenge lies in harnessing the full potential of the data available due to disparate systems, limited staff expertise, and a lack of centralized data management.

As a result, the city stands at a pivotal juncture, navigating a complex landscape of change. As we confront challenges such as turnover, impending build-out, shifts in financial strategies, legislative pressures, and evolving property tax dynamics, it is imperative that a proactive and strategic approach to ensure continued success is adopted.

Change can be driven by internal or external factors. Internal drivers of change originate within the organization. Some common examples of internal change that have impacted NRH are as follows:

- Changes in Leadership: Leadership changes can bring about different priorities and perspectives which can lead to changes in strategy or operations.
- Changes in Expectations: Newly established mission, vision, and goals statements by the council provide a shift from previous direction.
- Changes in Departmental Structure: Reorganizing departments or teams to improve efficiency, effectiveness or align with new goals can create changes to how individuals work and who they work with.
- Changes in Technology: Adopting new technology can require changes in infrastructure, processes and skills required to manage those assets.
- Changes in talent and systems: Internal challenges such as outdated systems and processes can impact the overall performance of an organization and necessitate change.

External factors, which are outside of the organization and are beyond its direct control can influence change as well. Examples of external drivers of change that NRH is experiencing include:

- Ever changing service demands and engagement levels by citizens.
- Market fluctuations such as booms and recessions can impact supply and demand and availability of resources.
- Changing interest rates can affect borrowing costs and investments.
- Advancements in technology such as digital transformation and the increasing reliance on digital tools and platforms can cause organizations to change their processes and daily operations to have a presence online.
- Government regulations such as changing laws and mandates can impact costs, operations and how organizations do business.
- Shifting funding philosophy moving away from debt-financed projects towards utilizing existing reserves. This, combined with the potential for property tax caps imposed by both lawmakers and community demands for tax relief, pose significant financial constraints for the city.

While it can be challenging, it is possible to overcome these challenges with the right approach. Key factors to consider include:

- **Effective communication** – Open and honest communication about change and why it is necessary is critical to its success.

- **Planning and Preparation** – A carefully crafted plan is necessary to ensure a smooth transition. It is important to set clear goals, realistic expectations, and a clear organizational vision to provide a roadmap for success.
- **Data Driven Decision Making** – The allocation of time, resources, and personnel must clearly align with the intended outcomes of the organization. Proactively analyzing data as part of the decision-making process will support resiliency in decision-making.
- **Service Mindset** – There must be a focus on the perspective of our residents and customers to accommodate changing needs, seek feedback, and to continually improve our services.
- **Prioritization of Needs** – Prioritizing decisions based on needs can lead to more efficient allocation of limited resources.
- **Comprehensive Solution Orientation** – The complexity of problems facing our community will often require the organization to address concerns that extend past a single department’s authority. The City has to be managed in a way that can be responsive to this nuance.
- **Accountability** – Empowering employees to make decisions and then to be accountable for their actions to ensure organizational performance.



By implementing these strategies, organizations and individuals can overcome the challenges brought on by change. Both can emerge stronger and more resilient.

Because organizational change can be so dynamic, significant and highly complex, it is important to ensure its success through effective change management. Change management is a process-oriented approach to helping individuals, teams, and organizations adopt new ways of working. It involves planning, implementing, and monitoring changes to ensure a smooth transition.

To manage change, drive organizational excellence and future-proof NRH, we propose creating a strategic initiative team that will serve as a catalyst for organizational change and technological advancement, empowering the city to leverage data, technology, and human capital to position the city at the forefront of progress. By conducting comprehensive system analysis, implementing robust training programs, and integrating diverse data sources, the team will enable the organization to make data driven decisions, improve efficiency, and enhance service delivery for the community. The team will serve as a catalyst for organizational excellence, providing the leadership, vision, and coordination necessary to navigate seasons of change. By fostering innovation, collaboration, and data-driven decision-making, the team will equip the city to thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Meet the Strategic Team

Who are we?

The strategic team serves to ensure that strategic goals are achieved efficiently and effectively to plan for the future. It is an extension of the City Manager's Office aimed at collaborating with all departments and is responsible for planning and preparing for change through data harnessing and analysis organization. The office serves as a bridge between the City Manager's Office and Departments to foresee and outline strategic shifts and assist with implementation of service delivery.

Purpose

The Office of Strategic Initiatives will serve as a centralized hub for organizational excellence, effectiveness and service delivery within our local government. By bridging the gap between management and operational departments, the strategic team will ensure that strategic initiatives are translated into day-to-day operations. This will drive operational excellence across all areas, facilitate easier interactions for businesses and residents, optimize the use of public funds, foster a positive work environment, revitalize communities, strengthen resident engagement, and enhance public safety, security, and infrastructure. Through comprehensive data analysis, integration, the team will empower

city leaders to make data-driven decisions, improve efficiency, and deliver measurable outcomes in support of the City Council goals and service delivery.

Mission

Our mission is to facilitate trend analysis, then successful implementation of strategic initiatives to improve service delivery. Acting as a catalyst for service delivery, ensuring that innovation initiatives are implemented to achieve city goals to become the standard.

To empower the City of North Richland Hills to achieve its strategic objectives through effective, resilient, and efficient processes by:

- **Facilitating Operational Excellence:** Overseeing the coordination and execution of innovation initiatives, ensuring their successful completion. This includes being aware of existing trends thru data analysis, communicate and proactively drive initiatives to foster operational excellence into every area.
- **Leading Operational Excellence:** Providing strategic guidance by enabling data-driven decision making, process optimization, continuous improvement and technology adoption.
- **Optimizing Operational Excellence:** Identifying and implementing process improvements to enhance efficiency and effectiveness thereby stewarding the public's money well.
- **Innovating Operational Excellence:** Fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning by providing employees with the tools necessary to thrive and continue to be a great place to work.

Vision

To be a leading city renowned for organizational and service delivery excellence, leveraging data and technology to build community resilience, make informed decisions and position the City of North Richland Hills to thrive through change for a more efficient, effective, and innovative future.

Goals and Objectives

- Establish an innovation center to foster a culture of experimentation and innovation.
- Conduct a thorough system analysis to identify data gaps, redundancies, and opportunities for improvement.
- Develop a comprehensive training program to enhance staff proficiency in existing software and data utilization.
- Implement a data integration platform to consolidate data from various sources.
- Create a robust dashboarding and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) framework to measure performance and communicate results.

- Form a cross-functional team to oversee strategic initiatives and drive continuous improvement.

Key Functions

- **Strategic Planning:** Aligning data and trend analysis to meet community needs and achieve strategic goals.
- **Project Management:** Overseeing the planning, execution, and monitoring of strategic innovation.
- **Change Management:** Developing and implementing strategies to facilitate sustained organizational excellence and resilience.
- **Performance Measurement:** Tracking progress, using data to measuring outcomes, and reporting on the effectiveness of innovation.
- **Knowledge Management:** Capturing, sharing, and preserving knowledge and data essential for innovation and continuous learning.
- **Innovation and Continuous Improvement:** Fostering a culture of innovation and identifying opportunities for process improvement.

Who Leads the Strategic Team?

The strategic team is led by the Manager of Strategic Initiatives who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of organizational change initiatives and ensuring alignment with the City's overall strategic goals and community needs. The position reports directly to the City Manager and will lead a team of professionals selected from various departments in driving strategic initiative projects and measuring progress.

Some of the key responsibilities of this role include:

- **Strategic Initiatives Implementation and Project Management:**
 - Oversee the planning, execution, and monitoring of strategic initiative projects, ensuring they are delivered on time, within budget, and to the desired quality standards.
 - Develop and implement project management methodologies and tools.
- **Performance Measurement:**
 - Develop and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress and measure the impact of transformation initiatives.
 - Prepare dashboards and regular reports for the City Manager's Office.
- **Team Leadership:**
 - Lead and manage an ad hoc team of transformation professionals whose primary roles exist in other departments, but that serve as needed to provide input for strategic initiatives.

- Foster a collaborative team culture.
- **Data Analytics:**
 - Use data to allocate resources (staff, budget, equipment) more effectively based on community needs and service demands.
 - Make data on government operations, budgets, and performance more publicly accessible to promote transparency and accountability.
 - Improve the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of services provided to residents while fostering greater community engagement and trust.
- **Knowledge Management:**
 - Develop and maintain a repository of transformation knowledge and best practices.
 - Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning within the organization.

Key Resources for the Manager of Strategic Initiatives

The strategic initiative's function will serve as a critical hub for driving organizational innovation, excellence and effectiveness. To effectively manage and execute strategic development initiatives, the Manager of Strategic Initiatives will require access to several key resources.

Departments and Cross-Functional Collaboration

- **City Manager's Office sponsorship:** Support and commitment from top-level executives.
- **Information Technology Department:** To provide technical support and infrastructure.
- **Budget and Finance Departments:** To manage budgets and resources.
- **Human Resources Department:** To handle talent management and organizational development.
- **City Operational Departments:** To provide insight into operational impact of decisions to ultimately provide smooth functioning of day-to-day operations.
- **Data Access Across all Platforms and Systems:** To establish a unified and secure data system that enhances data accessibility, sharing, and utilization across all city platforms and systems, leading to improved

operational efficiency and informed decision-making to improve delivery of services.

Training and Continuous Learning

Training is a crucial component of the Manager's success. It ensures that team members have the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively manage and execute transformation initiatives. Continuous learning and development are essential for members or those participating in organizational development initiatives. This can be achieved through:

- Internal training conducted by subject matter experts.
- External workshops and conferences.
- Online courses.
- Mentorship programs and networking to learn from experienced professionals.

Technical Skills

- **Project management methodologies:** Methodologies and programs to support tracking and management of strategic initiative projects.
- **Data analysis and visualization tools:** Proficiency in spreadsheet software, data visualization tools or analytics platforms to identify trends and patterns in the organization's data.
- **Change management techniques:** Frameworks or programs to support change management.
- **Communication and stakeholder management:** Effective communication strategies and conflict resolution skills.
- **Research skills** – Proficiency in data analysis and interpretation, ability to extract meaningful insights from large datasets that can be used to support City Council goals.

Soft Skills

- **Leadership and influence:** Building relationships, motivating teams, and facilitating change.
- **Problem-solving and decision-making:** Identifying and addressing challenges and making informed choices.
- **Strategic thinking:** Understanding the broader organizational and community context to align initiatives with goals.
- **Emotional intelligence:** Demonstrating active listening, and a sincere curiosity to understand others. This includes the ability to read social cues, anticipate needs, and adapt communication styles to effectively interact with diverse perspectives. By connecting information and leveraging past

experiences, individuals can build trust and foster a collaborative environment.

Software and Tools

- **Project management software:** Tools like to track project timelines, tasks, and resources.
- **Change management software:** Tools to assess change readiness, communicate effectively, and monitor progress.
- **Collaboration tools:** Platforms for facilitating communication and teamwork.
- **Document management systems:** Tools to store, organize, and share documents and information.

Data and Analytics

- **Data repositories:** Centralized storage for various types of data, including operational, financial, customer, and employee data.
- **Data visualization tools:** Software to analyze and present data in a clear and understandable manner.
- **Business intelligence tools:** Software for analyzing data to identify trends, patterns, and insights.
- **Predictive analytics tools:** Software to forecast future trends and outcomes based on historical data.

By having access to these resources, it is possible to more effectively plan, execute, and monitor transformation initiatives, ensuring that the organization achieves its desired outcomes.

NRH LiNKS Unit

The NRH Linking Innovation Knowledge and Strategy Unit (LiNKS U) is a cross-functional team established to collaborate with the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and ensure the successful implementation of strategic initiatives to drive excellence and effectiveness throughout the City of North Richland Hills.

NRH LiNKS U serves as a strategic advisory team, providing subject matter expertise, guidance, and recommendations to ensure the successful implementation of innovation throughout the city. NRH LiNKS U fosters connection, expertise and innovation.



Key Functions and Roles

Organizational change can face many challenges including resistance to change, communication breakdown and lack of support. Below are some of the key functions and roles of NRH LiNKS U in mitigating these challenges:

- **Subject Matter Expertise:** NRH LiNKS U includes representatives from various departments across the city, bringing a diverse range of knowledge and experience to the table. This expertise is invaluable in assessing the feasibility, impact, and potential challenges of innovation initiatives.
- **Strategic Advisory:** NRH LiNKS U acts as a strategic advisor to the Office of Strategic Initiatives, providing insights and recommendations on the direction and priorities of innovation efforts. By aligning change initiatives with the city's overall goals and objectives, the team helps ensure that they are relevant and impactful.
- **Idea Generation and Review:** NRH LiNKS U is responsible for identifying, reviewing, and recommending potential change initiatives. By leveraging their understanding of departmental needs and challenges, members can propose innovative solutions that drive efficiency and improve service delivery.
- **Resource Identification and Recommendation:** The team plays a crucial role in identifying and recommending resources, including training, technology, and best practices, that can support innovation throughout the city. By staying informed about industry trends and advancements, the team helps the Manager of Strategic Initiatives make informed decisions and implement effective innovation strategies.
- **Collaboration and Coordination:** The committee fosters collaboration and coordination among different departments, ensuring that innovation and excellence initiatives are aligned and executed effectively. By breaking down silos and promoting teamwork, the group helps to overcome obstacles and achieve desired outcomes.
- **Communication and Stakeholder Engagement:** NRH LiNKS U serves as a communication channel between the Office of Strategic Initiatives and the broader organization. By keeping stakeholders (i.e. employees, managers, directors and others impacted by innovation) informed about progress and addressing their concerns, the team helps to build support and maintain momentum for future innovation.

In summary, NRH LiNKS U plays a vital role in supporting the Manager of Strategic Initiatives' efforts to see strategic initiatives to fruition in daily operations. By providing subject matter expertise, strategic guidance, and resource allocation, the team ensures innovation initiatives are implemented effectively, helping the city navigate change and meet city council goals.

Implementing Data-Driven Decision Making

A strategic approach to enhance decision-making in the City of NRH should be considered to leverage data-driven methodologies and harness the power of data. This can assist the city in making more informed, efficient and effective decisions that align with city council goals.

Historically, the city has relied on people oriented decision-making processes that often involve subjective judgement, personal experiences, and anecdotal evidence. While these methods have served us in the past, they do not fully equip us to address the increasingly complex challenges of today's world. By leveraging data-driven decision-making, the city can gain deeper insights into the community's needs and trends. Decision-making in the city is currently reliant on traditional methods that may not fully capture the complexity of modern-day challenges. A data-driven approach can provide valuable insights and evidence to support informed policy development and resource allocation.

Proposed Solution

To address the challenges that the city is currently facing such as lack of data-driven insights, inconsistent data collection or reliance on traditional methods than rather than scientific or statistical data the city should undertake the following steps:

1. Data Governance and Management:
 - While the city's Information Technology department provides the essential infrastructure, storage, and security for the city's data, there should be a focus on leveraging and retrieving data to support informed decision-making. By effectively utilizing the tools and resources provided by IT, it will be easier to extract valuable insights from the city's data and contribute to the development of data-driven strategies and policies.
 - Implement data management tools and platforms to facilitate data collection, storage, and analysis.
2. Data Analysis and Visualization:
 - Leverage in data analytics tools and software to enable advanced data analysis capabilities.
 - Develop interactive dashboards and visualizations to communicate data-driven findings effectively.
3. Data-Driven Decision-Making Training:
 - Provide training and workshops to city staff on data-driven decision-making principles and techniques.
 - Encourage a culture of data-driven decision-making throughout the organization.

4. Continuous Improvement:

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of data-driven decision-making and identify areas for improvement.
- Foster a culture of innovation and experimentation to explore new data-driven approaches.
- Remain curious about resident experiences, organizational effectiveness, and performance management.

Expected Outcomes

By implementing this data-driven decision-making framework, NRH can realize our mission to be the standard for transparent, resident-focused, fiscally responsible, business-welcoming municipal government in Texas. The city can expect the following outcomes:

- Improve the quality and efficiency of decision-making.
- Enhance resource allocation and optimize service delivery.
- Identify new opportunities for growth and innovation.
- Foster a data-driven culture within the organization.
- Enhance public trust and transparency.

Investing in data-driven decision-making is essential for NRH to remain competitive, responsive, and effective. By implementing the proposed framework, the city can leverage the power of data to drive positive change and achieve its long-term goals below:

- Drive operational excellence into every area.
- Become easier to do business with.
- Steward the public's money well.
- Be a great place to work.
- Revitalize neighborhoods and commercial corridors.
- Engage residents to enhance connection with the city and their neighbors.
- Improve safety, security, and infrastructure every day.

Leveraging Existing Resources

The city can also effectively leverage its current assets without making significant financial contributions. The following areas offer promising opportunities for implementing much needed change.

1. **Implement a Comprehensive Training Program:** To fully leverage the capabilities of the city's existing platforms.
 - **Tyler Pace Program** – Offer formal training for the city's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system through the Tyler Pace

Program that the city already pays for. This will allow training to be carried out by professional who work for Tyler and can provide specialized, detailed training to departments depending on the specific programs they use.

- **Leadership Development** – Establish training programs that provide all newly promoted members of senior leadership with standardized knowledge of management best practices such as personnel management, purchasing requirements, city council agenda submission requirements and other areas of management.
 - **Enhance Productivity Skills in Core Applications:** Many users are familiar with the basic functionalities of Microsoft Office Suite programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) in their daily tasks. However, advanced features can significantly improve their efficiency.
2. **Foster Use of Collaboration Tools:** The organization has made a significant investment in collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams and Cisco Jabber. However, these tools are underutilized. Foster an environment that can fully harness the capabilities of these tools such as:
- **Real-time chat:** Instant messaging provides for quick and efficient communication. Both can be used to significantly streamline communication by minimizing unnecessary emails, phone calls and informal in-person meet ups. By encouraging their use for quick questions and answers, we can improve efficiency and reduce communication overhead.
 - **Screen sharing:** Both platforms enable quick collaboration by means of screen sharing making problem solving easier and knowledge sharing more simplified.
 - **Virtual meetings:** Teams provides high-quality video and audio making it ideal for virtual meetings. Encourage scheduling of more virtual meetings especially for topics that do not require in-person communication such as One on One's, Status Updates, Scrums, etc. This can save time and effort for everyone including users who may occasionally need to work remotely.
3. **Foster Creative Environments:** Encouraging environments where employees can share ideas for improving work processes and increasing efficiency can lead to many benefits.

- **Increased Innovation:** Fresh perspectives and diverse ideas can help can lead to innovative solutions.
- **Improved Efficiency:** Employee suggestions can identify inefficient areas and lead to streamlining processes.
- **Boost Morale:** Allowing employees to contribute ideas can help make them feel empowered and valued. This may lead to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover.
- **Stronger Organizational Culture:** Fostering idea sharing can promote teamwork and collaboration. Employees who feel comfortable sharing ideas are more likely to trust their organization.