

Operationalizing Asset Management – the City of Prince George Experience

When you think of operationalizing, what comes to mind? This was the first question posed to the group during our AMBC Operationalizing Asset Management Cohort program. Words like; action, planning, and implementation made their way to the top of the word cloud as most popular. The City of Prince George's Asset Management Team knew we were in the right place in beginning our journey to operationalize our artifact for this workshop; our newly developed *Transportation Levels of Service (LoS) framework*.

Change is hard and there are always risks to consider when asking someone to make changes to the way they do their work. As we went through our first exercise, a Change Risk Assessment, it was apparent that the artifact we chose to operationalize is going to be moderately risky from a change management point of view. Technology is one of the key tools identified within our requirements in order to collect the data we need to report on our service levels. Some of our Transportation staff are already familiar with using our Computer Maintenance Management System on mobile devices (cell phones and tablets), while others are not. There are also automated ways in which we currently capture the data needed to report on services like snow clearing, which uses a system integration between our CMMS and our fleet-tracking tool. The best way to move through change is to make sure we are always trying to answer a few of these fundamental questions for our staff:

1. Why is change happening now?
2. What is the risk of not changing?
3. What's in it for me?

4. What will the change mean to me?

The next exercise the Cohort went through was the PESTLE-SWOT analysis. By identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for each political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal, and environmental parameter, it gave us insight into which areas we needed to focus on the most. For example, the City of Prince George has an asset management policy and strategy in place and is well supported by our Council; however, some of our greatest weaknesses are related to a lack of documented processes. The PESTLE-SWOT analysis has helped us focus on what we should work on first in our journey to operationalize Transportation LoS.

I found our third exercise to be the most valuable; the Pairwise Sandbox. Throughout my time in asset management, there has always been debate on how best to weight the importance of different criteria against each other to prioritize tasks. What's more important; cost, reliability, quality, safety? It can't be only one person determining which factors are critical when making decisions. It needs to be a cross-functional group of people having input into the importance or weighting of the various criteria. The Pairwise Sandbox tool used during our Cohort program provided a way for us to compare a bundle of different criteria in pairs and calculate a weight percentage for each. For example, we compared the importance of data quality to documented procedures and after some discussion, determined it was more important to have documented procedures first in order to gain good data quality.

All three Cohort exercises fed into a final Business Case. The Business Case tool provided a way to compare three different scenarios in order to calculate which scenario would result in

the most successful implementation of our Transportation LoS. Scenario 1 focused on Staff & Procedures, Scenario 2 focused on Data & Technology, and Scenario 3 focused on Council & Public Engagement. Scenario 1 and 3 scored about the same. The business case has provided us with a roadmap for the tasks that need to be done to operationalize Transportation LoS. First task being the updating and formal documentation of our procedures.

This Cohort program gave us the opportunity to learn from other municipalities and really hone in on the first steps we need to take to operationalize our Transportation LoS framework. Having skilled facilitators guide us through the exercises allowed us to stay focused on our target and not get distracted by preconceived notions, bias or having to develop this tool. It's already been developed and we, like many municipalities, prefer to use proven techniques like the Operationalizing Asset Management Cohort to guide us in our continuous improvement objective.

Thank you to AMBC and FCM for sponsoring this learning and knowledge sharing initiative.