



# Culture Strategy: Municipality of Lakeshore

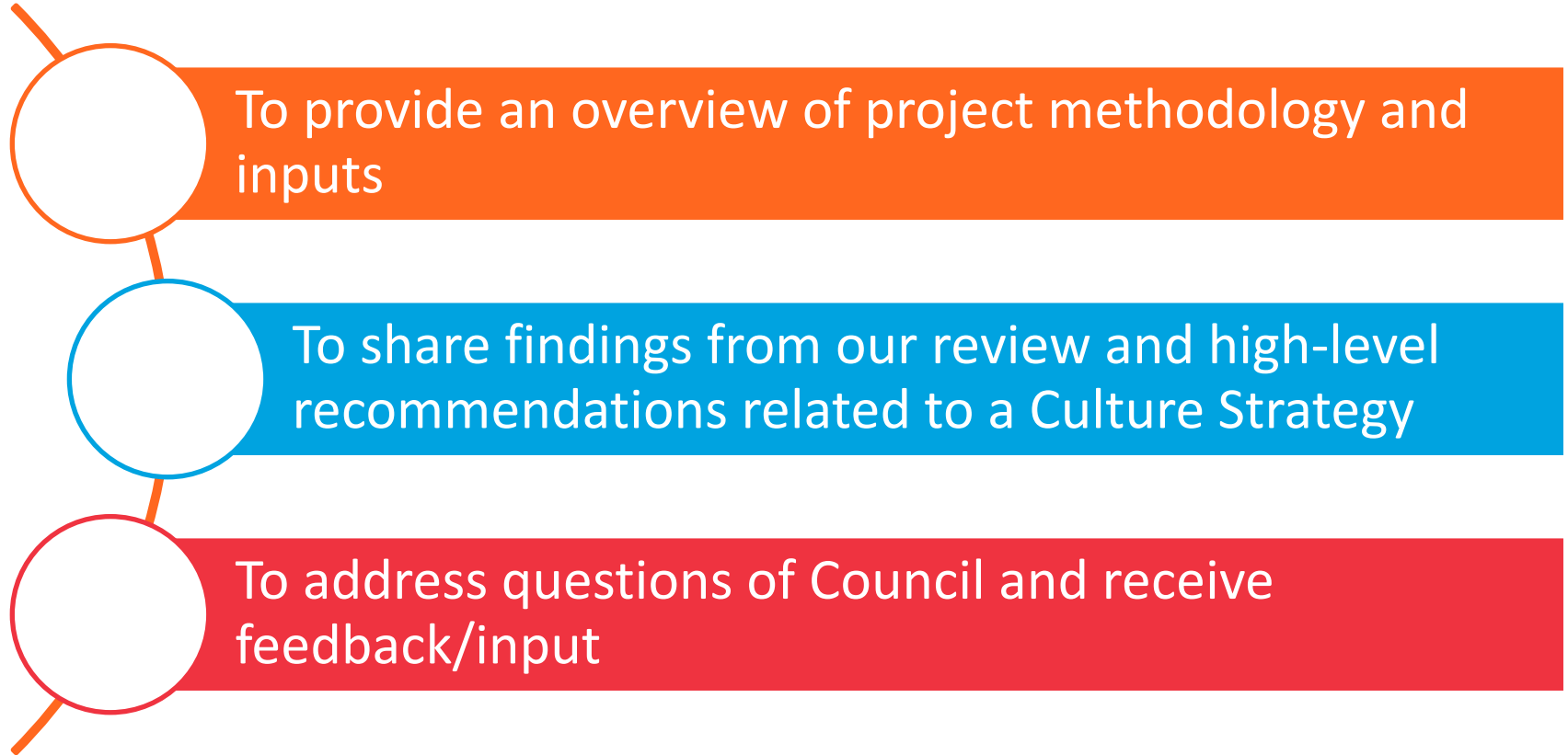
Council Summary Report for  
feedback and input

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June 6th, 2022

# Today's Objectives





Employer of Choice:  
Municipality of Lakeshore



# Project Background



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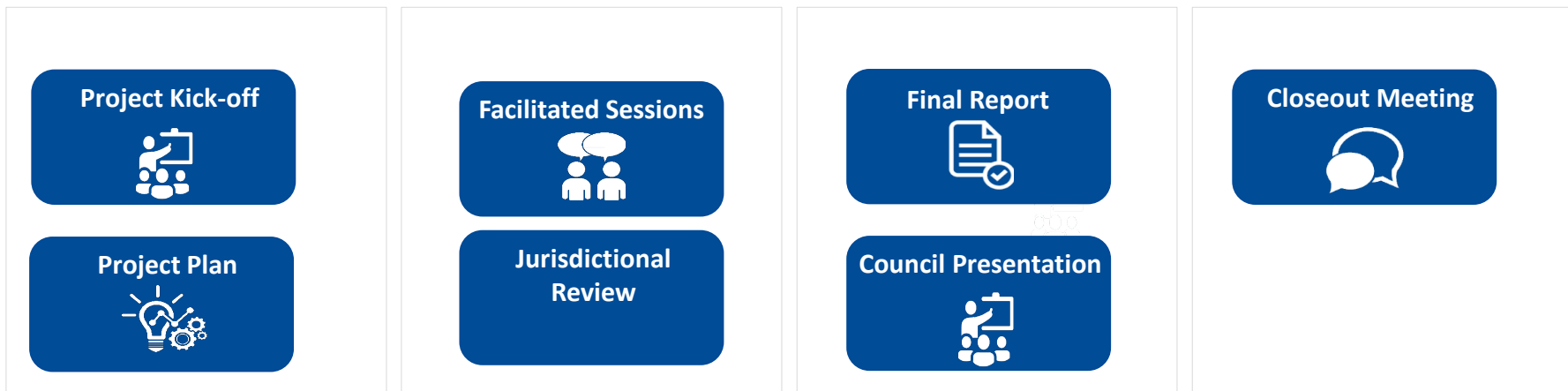
- Lakeshore Council and Senior Administration established its **strategic direction and priorities for the 2019-2022 period**, which are:
  1. Sustainable Development
  2. Roads and Infrastructure
  3. Shoreline Protection and Community Resiliency
  4. Financial Sustainability
  5. **Organizational Excellence – Becoming an Employer of Choice that encourages continuous improvement, innovation, and accountability from employees**
- One of the **core recommendations that came out of Lakeshore's organizational review was to undergo a culture shift and become an employer of choice**
- To become an **Employer of Choice**, the Municipality of Lakeshore engaged Optimus SBR to develop:
  - A **culture strategy** for an Employer of Choice Master Plan that will shift workplace culture and ensure high employee satisfaction. A review of market competitiveness and total rewards was also undertaken.
- Lakeshore has shown dedication to enhancing its current culture and work environment for all its staff. COVID-19 has created tremendous shifts and barriers to the workplace environment and organizational culture for all municipalities.
- During this engagement, Lakeshore has been working behind the scenes to lay the foundation for several key initiatives that will improve its culture. The culture strategy will help to build upon these foundations.

# Project Activities

**Mission:** To support the Municipality of Lakeshore in their journey to become an “Employer of Choice” through the development of a Culture Strategy that would form the Municipality’s Employer of Choice Master Plan and set a course for the path forward.



## Key Milestones



# Information Inputs

Optimus SBR conducted interviews, reviewed data and documents, and conducted a jurisdictional scan to collect inputs that informed the culture review. Optimus SBR also created Conversation Toolkits and worked with the WIT to facilitate conversations amongst their staff.



**Discovery Interviews** – interviewed leaders from Lakeshore to collect inputs that informed the culture review.



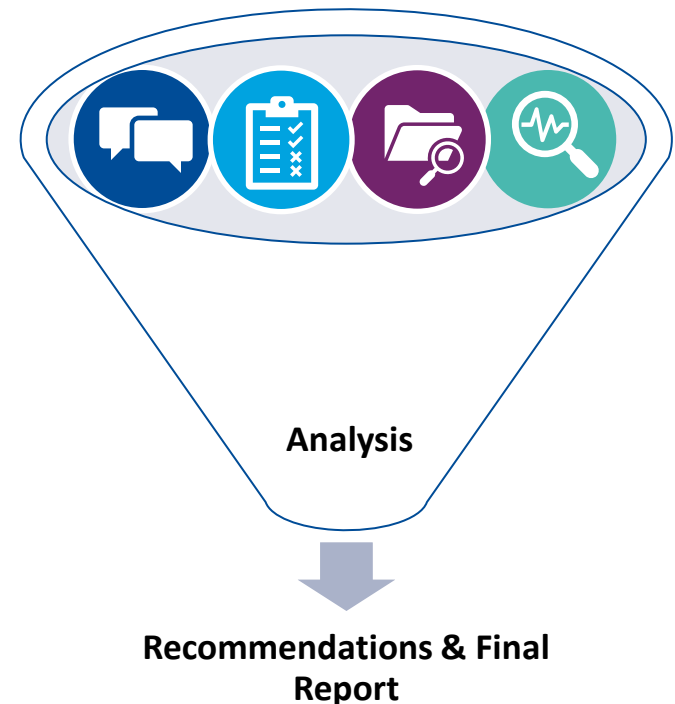
**Data and Document Review** – reviewed existing data and documents to provide additional data, insights and key background information.



**Conversation Toolkits** – developed a conversation toolkit to support WIT members to facilitate their own conversations with their respective divisions to gather inputs on what is working well, what should be stopped, and what can be done differently.



**Jurisdictional Scan** – scanned other municipalities to understand how they became employers of choice and to identify leading practices in this area.



# Workplace Improvement Team

To build on the work already completed by the organization, a Workplace Improvement Team (WIT) was created to allow Lakeshore staff to define the organization's future culture and the activities required to get there.

**WIT Role:** Workplace Improvement Team members were tasked with supporting a vision for a new culture, creating a plan to achieve it, and driving the implementation of the new culture.

## **WIT Responsibilities:**

- Take a leadership role in developing culture change and workplace improvement initiatives (with support beyond the team from other staff)
- Work with senior management to provide recommendations on actions that could improve Lakeshore's workplace and culture
- Be a champion for changing the culture and improving the workplace



## **WIT Key Project Actions:**

- Facilitated conversations amongst their respective teams to understand what should be continued or changed with respect to culture at Lakeshore
- Provided input to shape Lakeshore's culture strategy including vision, values and pillars
- Supported the development and prioritization of strategic initiatives that would drive Lakeshore's culture strategy forward

# Review Framework

The WIT and Optimus teams explored four key focus areas. Each focus area looked at different aspects of the workplace:

<b>Leadership and Culture:</b>  Behaviours, Values, Leadership, Work Life Balance	<b>Development:</b>  Career Opportunities, Learning & Development
<b>Work Environment:</b>  Physical Work Environment, Key Processes, Tools and Technology	<b>Market Competitiveness/Recruitment:</b>  Non-Financial Incentives, Health & Wellness, Retirement/Savings, Paid Time off and Employee Rewards and Recognition, Salary, Financial Incentives





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## Current State Culture Assessment



# Overview of Current State Culture Findings

Context for the Current State findings can be found below:

- Today you will see a **high-level summary**; more detail exists behind each finding
- The current state findings are based on a **point in time review**. It is understood and should be considered that Lakeshore is ever-evolving given environmental changes in the municipal sector, the evolving work environment more broadly, as well as the implementation of multiple ongoing initiatives
- Optimus was asked to provide an unbiased view on areas of opportunity to help improve culture at Lakeshore; **our review is focused on opportunities**
- Lakeshore does have areas of opportunity, however there are **many strengths to build from**

## → Current State Culture Assessment

# Staff Perceptions: SWOT

Below are the perceived key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified by Lakeshore staff in the Conversation Toolkits:



### Strengths

- Comparable market salaries and vacation/benefit packages for union positions
- Employee appreciation days
- Mental health and wellness workshops
- Tools and supplies (e.g., double monitors)
- Social events (pre-COVID)
- Culture improvement opportunities



### Weaknesses

- Consistency of non-financial incentives or recognition across departments
- Limited opportunities to provide feedback evaluation of leadership and staff
- Compensation for non-union positions are not competitive in the market (e.g., 55<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Professional development courses are not open to all staff, in some divisions
- Pay discrepancy between full-time and part-time employees who perform the same job



### Opportunities:

- Improve communication throughout the organization
- Celebrate and recognize people based on accomplishments not just long-time service
- Create a leadership development program
- Provide more opportunities to learn about other divisions' projects and the organization as a whole



### Threats:

- Perception of division between management and staff (e.g., "in the know")
- Not updating staff on key issues and problems
- Limited acknowledgement of COVID's impact on staff
- No formal internal communication standards
- Placing blame and judgement during problem solving

**Please note** that the findings in this section are reflective of the perceptions of staff who contributed to the Conversation Toolkits; there may be discrepancies between how things are experienced and how they have been established, which in itself presents opportunity. 10

## Key Takeaways of Other Municipalities

Optimus SBR conducted a review of three comparator organizations that were identified as employer of choice organizations to better understand their approaches to culture transformation and total reward packages. Below is a summary of the key common themes across all three jurisdictions:

- 1 Corporate culture is extremely important and top of mind for all leaders but there is a strong understanding that it is a shared responsibility and driven by everyone in the organization and led by the Council and CAO.
- 2 Focus has been placed on fostering an open-door policy where staff feel safe taking risks and asking questions.
- 3 Strong emphasis is placed on employee-created and -driven initiatives to enhance engagement.
- 4 Significant focus is placed on developing and growing talent through several different opportunities.
- 5 Staff are recognized and rewarded based on behaviors and actions that align with culture values.



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## Strategic Framework for Culture



# Strategic Framework for Culture

Below is the drafted culture strategic framework developed by WIT and CLT, to complement Council's corporate strategy:



# Vision and Values

- **Vision:** Our people and community come first in everything we do.
- Lakeshore's culture is grounded by five core **values**:

<b>Respect</b>	We are committed to being honest, transparent, fair and to approach all situations with integrity.
<b>Accountability</b>	We are committed to taking initiatives and exceeding expectations, and to act in a trustworthy manner that adheres to our words.
<b>Teamwork</b>	We are committed to working together to be more effective, efficient, and to enable our colleagues with different strengths, interests and backgrounds to grow, succeed and be themselves in the workplace.
<b>Positivity</b>	We are committed to working together in positive spirits to achieve high quality outcomes.
<b>Creativity</b>	We are committed to thinking differently and strive to apply innovative thinking to solve problems and identify opportunities.

# Cultural Pillars

There are four cultural pillars that align with Lakeshore's vision of ensuring their people and community come first in everything they do. The pillars prioritize the areas of focus and action for the upcoming years:





# Strategic Initiatives

To achieve our cultural pillars, we will focus on the following strategic initiatives, jointly with the WIT (as appropriate):



## Recruitment & Competitiveness

1. Continue to transform recruitment to ensure that the best person is hired for the position
2. Develop policies and processes that promote diversity and equity in hiring practices and workplace culture
3. Develop a peer-led recognition program that recognizes staff that go above and beyond
4. Implement a total rewards plan



## Connection & Communication

1. Increase employee engagement opportunities with all staff
2. Create opportunities to share learnings and ask questions across the organization and teams
3. Develop internal communication standards/guidelines



## Growth & Development

1. Create a leadership development program that is accessible to all staff
2. Create a training and education hub for employees to access
3. Implement management evaluations and feedback



## Accountability

1. Create frameworks for problem solving
2. Implement standards for physical workspaces
3. Identify opportunities to leverage tools and technology to support collaboration