Culture Analyst™ Report
The City of Austin Government

July 2017
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Executive summary

Culture strength: The City of Austin (COA) does not have a particularly strong culture. Scores are lower than what we typically see across the macro factors:

Performance and discipline: COA desires a stronger culture across all of the macro factors in the future. Respondents indicated a particular desire for an increased emphasis on performance and discipline.

Talent management and pay: The survey and open-ended responses highlight grievances in talent management processes. Many cite the new MCS rules that inhibit pay for performance and also prevent employees from being fired. The lack of pay for performance is viewed to be a serious hindrance for attracting and retaining top talent, particularly as Austin's cost of living continues to rise. This is also captured in the desire for more of an orientation towards training and development.

Integrity: There are also some concerns around discipline and the notion of integrity. Participants desire a culture that holds people accountable for upholding the values and rules set forth by the COA. The lack of structure around firing under-performing or unethical employees is seen as the chief cause of this problem.

Openness: COA's desired culture is one that is more open and inclusive. Participants would like city leaders, such as City Council members and other key stakeholders, to be more transparent in decision making and strategy. There is also a call to have a stronger focus on multiculturalism and diversity.

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Our methodology

The Culture Analyst™ survey was completed throughout June, 2017 by 286* respondents

- Participation rate: 34%

Individuals were asked to consider the organizational culture in the COA Government and provide their responses in relation to the current and desired organizational culture

Responses were reported on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where:

1 Very Inaccurate	2 Moderately Inaccurate	3 Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate	4 Moderately Accurate	5 Very Accurate

Averages were calculated for each of the micro factors and macro factors, as well as an overall culture strength measure

This report presents the current and desired culture as described by participants

Additional responses included to reflect partially-answered surveys

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Culture Analyst™ Factors

Culture Analyst™ provides a model, a method and a language for objectively evaluating culture in the context of executive search, succession planning or organizational change.
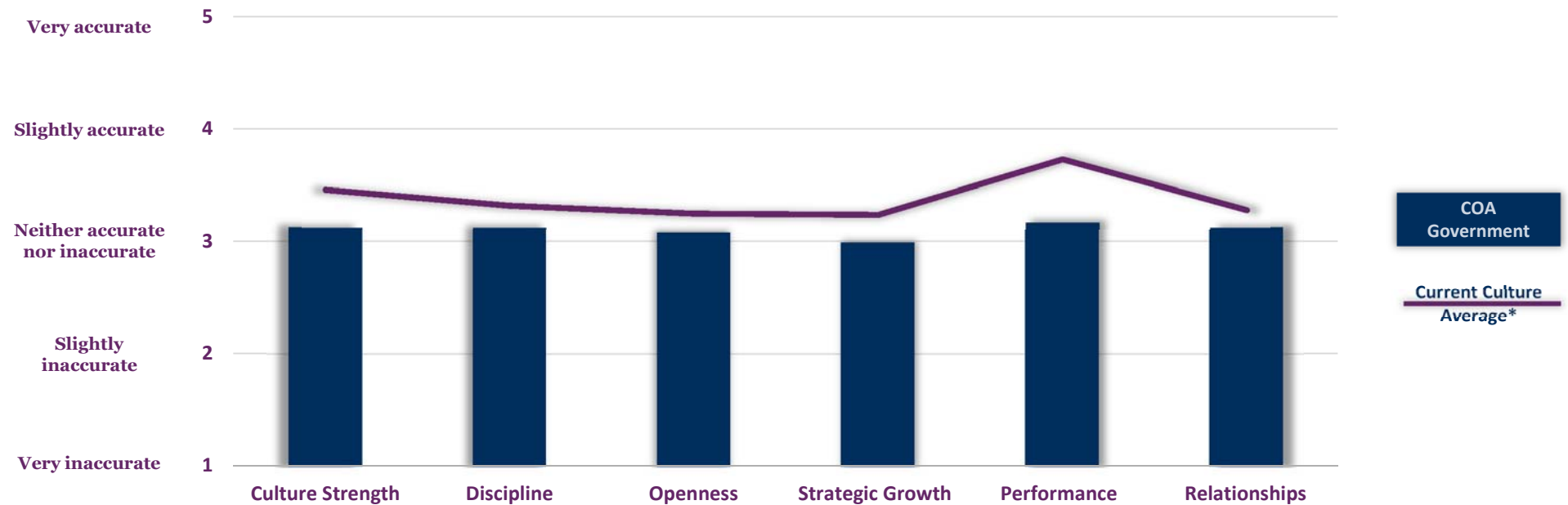
Discipline	**Openness**	**Strategic Growth Orientation**	**Performance Orientation**	**Relationships**
The rigor involved in day-to-day functioning:	*Openness to people, thoughts, ideas and alternative methods:*	*Orientation toward strategic growth:*	*The emphasis placed on results, quality and high performance:*	*Interpersonal issues:*
▪ Rules orientation ▪ Timeliness/ promptness ▪ Emphasis on integrity ▪ Detail/thoroughness ▪ Awareness of limitations ▪ Development/training orientation	▪ Flexibility re: personalities and thinking ▪ Alternative work schedules and format ▪ Interest in true debate ▪ Diversity/multicultural orientation ▪ Transparency ▪ Non-elitist environment ▪ Involvement/matrix orientation	▪ Innovation ▪ Emphasis on top-line growth ▪ Emphasis on long-term planning ▪ Constituent orientation ▪ Emphasis on intellect	▪ Emphasis on results ▪ Urgency/speed ▪ Emphasis on expertise ▪ Working hard/long hours	▪ Teamwork/ collaboration ▪ Level of personal nature in communication ▪ Enthusiasm/ motivating others ▪ Outside of work employee friendship ▪ Interpersonal respect

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1. Current Culture Analysis

Current Culture Analysis
"How do we define our culture now?"

The COA Government culture today

Macro-level analysis of the current reported culture at COA Government

- Participants believe that the COA does not have a particularly strong culture. The organization scored lower than the RRA Culture Analyst database average across all macro factors: culture strength, discipline, openness, strategic growth, performance, and relationships

- Despite being noticeably lower than the RRA Culture Analyst database average, the COA places slightly more emphasis on performance than other cultural factors.

"Current Culture Average" represents an average of macro-level results taken from roughly 180 organizations, spanning several industries

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The COA Government culture today

The dimensions below most accurately describe COA Government's culture as it exists today

	Discipline	Openness	Strategic Growth Orientation	Performance	Relationships
Distinctive*	• *Emphasis on Integrity (3.31)* • *Detail / Thoroughness (3.45)*	• *Diversity / Multicultural Orientation (3.81)*	• *Constituent Orientation (3.62)*	• *Emphasis on Expertise (3.57)* • *Urgency / Speed (3.35)* • *Working Long / Hard Hours (3.54)*	• *Interpersonal Respect (3.43)*
Some Disagreement**	• *Awareness of Limitations (3.00)* • *Development / Training Orientation (2.78)*	• *Non-Elitist Environment (3.22)* • *Alternative Work Schedules & Format (3.07)* • *Interest in True Debate (2.93)* • *Transparency (2.72)* • *Involvement / Matrix Orientation (2.66)*	• *Emphasis on Long-Term Planning (2.88)* • *Emphasis on Top-Line Growth (2.86)* • *Constituent Orientation (3.62)*		

- Strong cultural factors include a commitment to diversity and inclusion, constituents, expertise, and working long/hard hours

- Areas producing some disagreement amongst participants include the extent to which there is an awareness of limitations, a non-elitist environment, opportunities for alternative work schedules, and commitment to constituents.

The current score of these culture factors exceed one half-standard-deviation above the mean of all current scores
***The standard deviation of these culture factors exceed one-half standard deviation above the standard deviations of all current scores*

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Current Top-Rated Items

Discipline	Openness	Strategic Growth	Performance	Relationships

Micro Factor	Item	COA
Emphasis on Integrity	Individuals have a high level of integrity.	3.66
Emphasis on Integrity	Individuals would be fired if unethical behavior was discovered.	3.11
Detail / Thoroughness	Being thorough is valued.	3.51
Detail / Thoroughness	Identifying different contingencies is important before making a decision.	3.46
Diversity / Multicultural Orientation	Individuals are respectful of co-workers from different ethnic backgrounds.	3.96
Diversity / Multicultural Orientation	This organization is respectful of all religious holidays (i.e., appropriate allowances are made).	3.85
Constituent Orientation	This organization considers customer/client needs extensively when developing new products/services.	3.62
Emphasis on Expertise	Demonstrating in-depth knowledge of one's field is necessary.	3.69
Emphasis on Expertise	Individuals strive to stay up-to-date in their functional areas.	3.59
Urgency / Speed	Individuals are expected to respond quickly via mobile phones, PDAs, and other technology.	3.75
Urgency / Speed	Immediate responses to requests are expected.	3.49
Working Hard / Long Hours	Individuals frequently start working early in the morning.	3.66
Working Hard / Long Hours	Many individuals have a strong work ethic.	3.49
Interpersonal Respect	It is not okay for individuals to show anger.	3.54
Interpersonal Respect	Offending others is not tolerated.	3.79

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2. Desired Culture Analysis

Desired Culture Analysis
"How do we want to define ourselves eventually?"

The COA Government desired culture

Macro-level analysis of the reported desired culture for COA Government
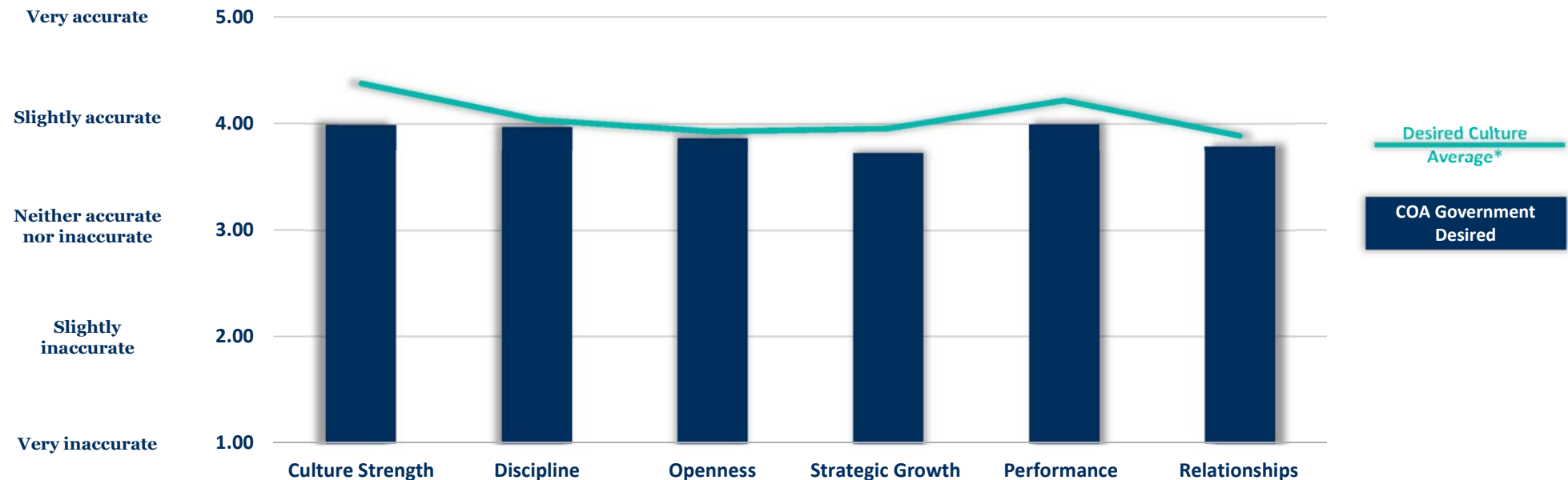
- Participants desire a stronger culture across all of the macro factors, with a particular emphasis on performance and discipline.

- When compared to the RRA Culture Analyst database, participants indicate a more moderate desire for overall culture strength, strategic growth, and performance orientation.

* "Desired Culture Average" represents an average of macro-level results taken from roughly 180 organizations, spanning several industries

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The COA Government desired culture

The dimensions below most accurately describe COA Government's desired culture

	Discipline	Openness	Strategic Growth Orientation	Performance	Relationships
Distinctive*	▪ *Emphasis on Integrity (4.17)* ▪ *Detail/Thoroughness (4.17)* ▪ *Development/Training Orientation (4.11)*	▪ *Diversity/Multicultural Orientation (4.29)* ▪ *Transparency (4.22)*	▪ *Innovation (4.20)* ▪ *Constituent/Donor Orientation (4.24)*	▪ *Emphasis on Results (4.14)* ▪ *Emphasis on Expertise (4.19)*	▪ *Teamwork/Collaboration (4.12)*
Some Disagreement**	▪ *Rules Orientation (3.44)*	▪ *Alternative Work Schedules and Format (3.89)* ▪ *Interest in True Debate (3.75)* ▪ *Involvement/Matrix Orientation (3.05)*	▪ *Emphasis on Top-Line Growth (2.82)*	▪ *Urgency/Speed (3.72)* ▪ *Working Hard/Long Hours (3.86)*	▪ *Interpersonal Respect (0.83)* ▪ *Level of Personal Nature in Communication (0.88)*

- Government employees of the COA desire a stronger culture across all macro factors
- There is a particular desire for an increased sense of discipline, such as through more of an emphasis on integrity and detail, and to have more training and development opportunities
- Other aspirational features include a greater orientation towards diversity, transparency, innovation, constituents, and a sustained focus on teamwork and collaboration.
- There are a number of areas that produced disagreement amongst participants' aspirational culture. These include an interest in more alternative work schedules, having true debate, sense of urgency, and working long hours.

- **The desired score of these culture factors exceed one half-standard-deviation above the mean of all desired scores*
- ***The standard deviation of these culture factors exceed one-half standard deviation above the standard deviations of all current scores*

Desired Top-Rated Items (1/2)

Discipline	Openness	Strategic Growth	Performance	Relationships

Micro Factor	Item	COA
Emphasis on Integrity	Individuals have a high level of integrity.	**4.52**
Emphasis on Integrity	Individuals would be fired if unethical behavior was discovered.	**4.24**
Detail / Thoroughness	There is a strong emphasis placed on proofreading documents and presentations.	**4.25**
Detail / Thoroughness	Being thorough is valued.	**4.23**
Development / Training Orientation	Individuals are guided on career steps and development opportunities.	**4.35**
Development / Training Orientation	Annual formal performance reviews are completed consistently.	**4.17**
Diversity / Multicultural Orientation	Individuals are respectful of co-workers from different ethnic backgrounds.	**4.42**
Diversity / Multicultural Orientation	Minority groups are represented reasonably in the demographics.	**4.24**
Transparency	Most decisions are explained by management.	**4.38**
Transparency	Reasons for actions taken by management are openly communicated to individuals at all levels.	**4.21**
Innovation	Individuals are encouraged to generate new ideas.	**4.37**
Innovation	Innovation is rewarded.	**4.31**
Constituent / Donor Orientation	This organization considers constituent needs extensively when developing new services	**4.24**

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Desired Top-Rated Items (2/2)

Discipline	Openness	Strategic Growth	Performance	Relationships

Micro Factor	Item	COA
Emphasis on Results	Promotions are based on performance	**4.29**
Emphasis on Results	The pay system rewards good performance.	**4.26**
Emphasis on Expertise	Demonstrating in-depth knowledge of one's field is necessary.	**4.34**
Emphasis on Expertise	Having deep expertise in your area of responsibility is important.	**4.29**
Teamwork / Collaboration	There is a lot of trust among individuals.	**4.40**
Teamwork / Collaboration	Being collaborative is highly valued.	**4.39**

3. Gaps / Implications Analysis

**Gaps / Implications
Analysis**
"How should we
prioritize change to
close our gaps?"

Factor and dimension detail – Definitions

Factor Summary

- This section provides a brief summary of the culture dimensions for each of the five factors
- Areas for change are interpreted
- Trends related to most- and least-defining factors are also discussed

Culture dimensions mapped closer to this gray line are similar in their current and desired scores. These dimensions require little to no change.

CULTURE MATRIX

More Defining

More Desired

Culture dimensions mapped to this area are rated **lower currently** than **desired**. This suggests that there should be *stronger emphasis* on these features going forward. The further dimensions depart from the gray line, the more *change* is desired.

Culture dimensions mapped to this area are rated **higher currently** than **desired**. This suggests that there should be *less emphasis* on these features going forward. The further dimensions depart from the gray line, the more *change* is desired.

Less Desired

Desired

Less Defining

Current

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Factor and dimension detail – Discipline

Discipline Summary

- Participants express a strong desire for more of a focus on **employee development and training** in the organization

- While they are defining features of COA's current culture, employees envision an environment that places even more emphasis on **integrity** and **attention to detail**

- To a lesser extent, participants indicate an aspirational culture that includes a greater emphasis on **timeliness** and **awareness of limitations.**

- There is little desire for change regarding the COA's **rules orientation**, and this has been identified as a less-defining feature of the culture.

CULTURE MATRIX

More Defining

More Desired

Development / Training Orientation

Emphasis on Integrity

Detail / Thoroughness

Awareness of Limitations

Timeliness / Promptness

Rules Orientation

Desired

Less Defining

Current

Less Desired

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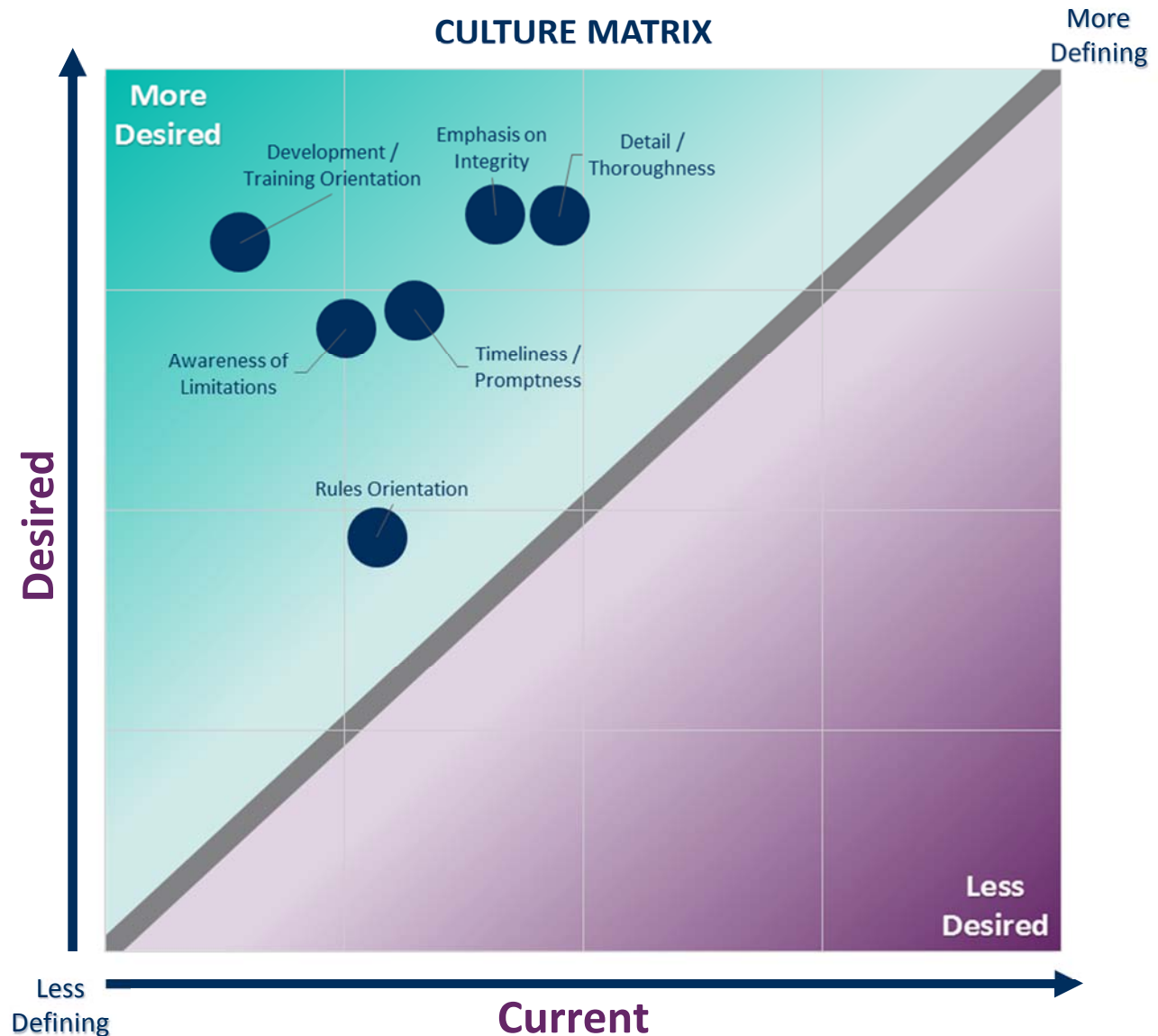
Items and implications – Discipline

{ *"The organization is made up of many hard-working, ethical and competent public servants. There are many that go well above and beyond expectations and have a true passion for what they do. In the past 8 years, the individual performers within the organization have not been recognized, engaged or encouraged in a consistent and formalized way. This has resulted in a sagging morale in the departments, and a disconnection between City Hall and the departments."* }

Development / Training Orientation	Gap
Formal mentors are assigned to individuals for career development.	2.17
Individuals are guided on career steps and development opportunities.	1.61

Awareness of Limitations	Gap
This organization is appropriately critical of itself as it evaluates its condition/status.	1.21
Sometimes this organization is so optimistic that competitive threats are ignored.	0.61

Implications

- Among the dimensions suggesting the greatest desire for change, new developmental opportunities and mentoring are the key issues.

- There are some disagreements when it comes to the organization's awareness of limitations. There is a strong desire for the COA to be more aware and self-critical and less of a desire to be hyper-attuned to competitive threats.

- Beyond training and development and awareness of limitations, there were substantial gaps in the current and desired culture on the factors of integrity and timeliness.

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Factor and dimension detail – Openness

Openness Summary

- Compared to COA's current culture, participants indicate they would like the organization to be more **transparent**

- Several openness factors reflect a moderate desire for change, including aspirations for increased **interest in debate** and **flexibility regarding different personalities and thinking,** expanded **alternative work options**, and for the organization to be **less elitist**

- Participants desire an even greater emphasis be placed on **diversity and multiculturalism**, despite it being a defining feature of the current culture

- There is less change desired around the COA's **matrix orientation**, a factor that is less defining of the current culture

CULTURE MATRIX

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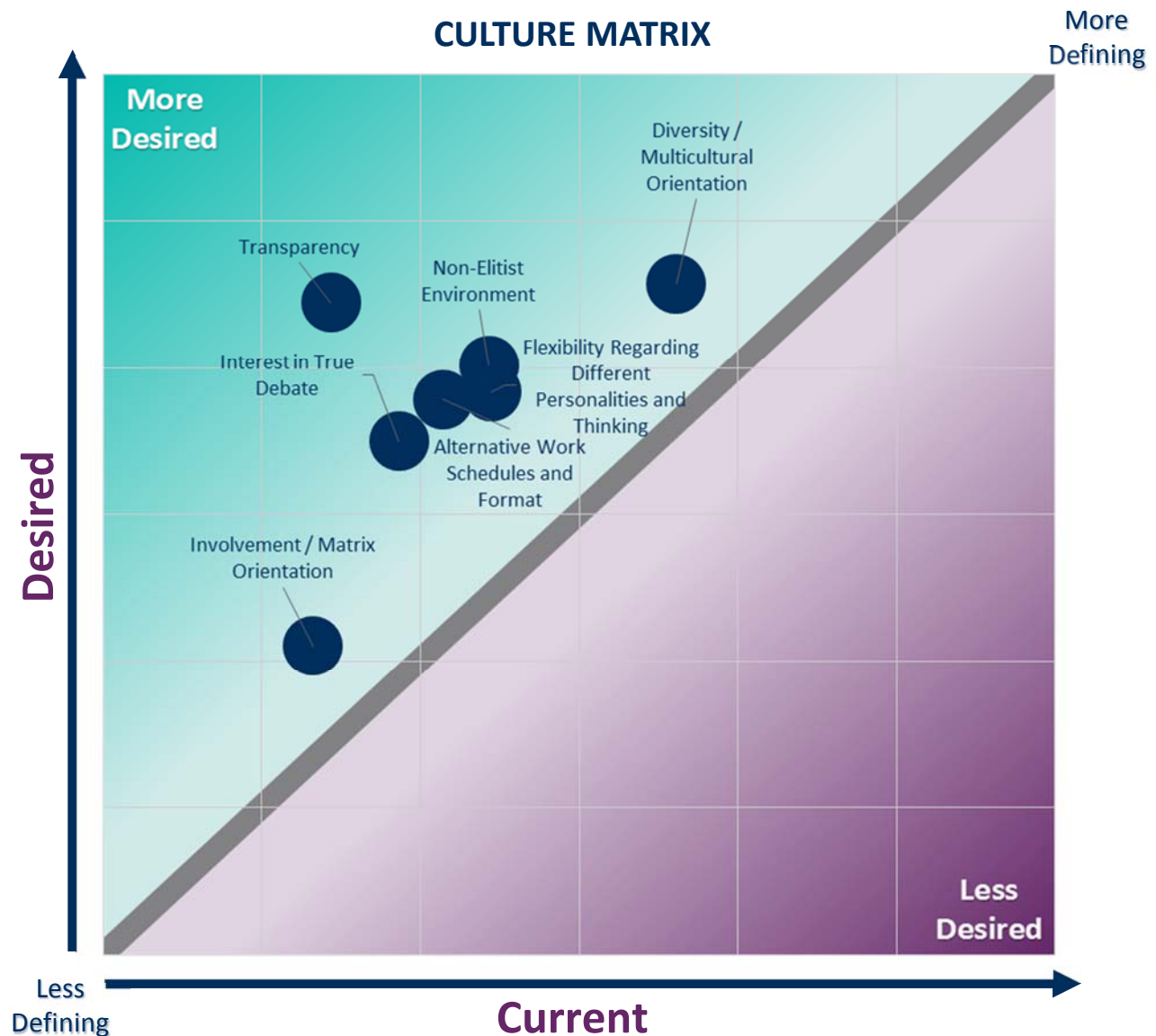
Items and implications – Openness

{ *"There is a huge disconnect between management and employees. The transparency of what is happening and why is lacking."*

"Business culture is changing and if COA wants to be competitive it will have to change its culture too. We must learn how to integrate alternative work schedules, working from home and other new ways of conducting business or talent will not come to work here." }

Transparency	Gap
Management is perceived as operating with secrecy.	1.71
Strategy is communicated to individuals at all levels.	1.70

Alternative Work Schedules and Format	Gap
Working from home is accepted.	0.98
Alternative work schedules are widely accepted.	0.89

Implications

- There is a considerable gap in the current and desired culture when it comes to transparency. Participants indicate they would like a culture that is more open and for management to be more forthright regarding strategy and decision-making.

- Employees also desire more alternative work options, both through working from home and operating on flexible schedules.

- Other items with significant gaps include the need for true debate and a more inclusive atmosphere for individuals with different backgrounds.

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Factor and dimension detail – Strategic Growth

Strategic Growth Summary

- Employees desire a greater focus on **intellect**, **long-term planning**, and **innovation**.

- There is little net change desired in terms of **top-line growth**

- While it is more of a defining feature of COA's current culture, participants desire a more substantial **orientation towards constituents**.

CULTURE MATRIX

More Defined

More Desired

Constituent / Donor Orientation

Innovation

Emphasis on Long-Term Planning

Emphasis on Intellect

Emphasis on Top-Line Growth

Desired

Current

Less Defining

Less Desired
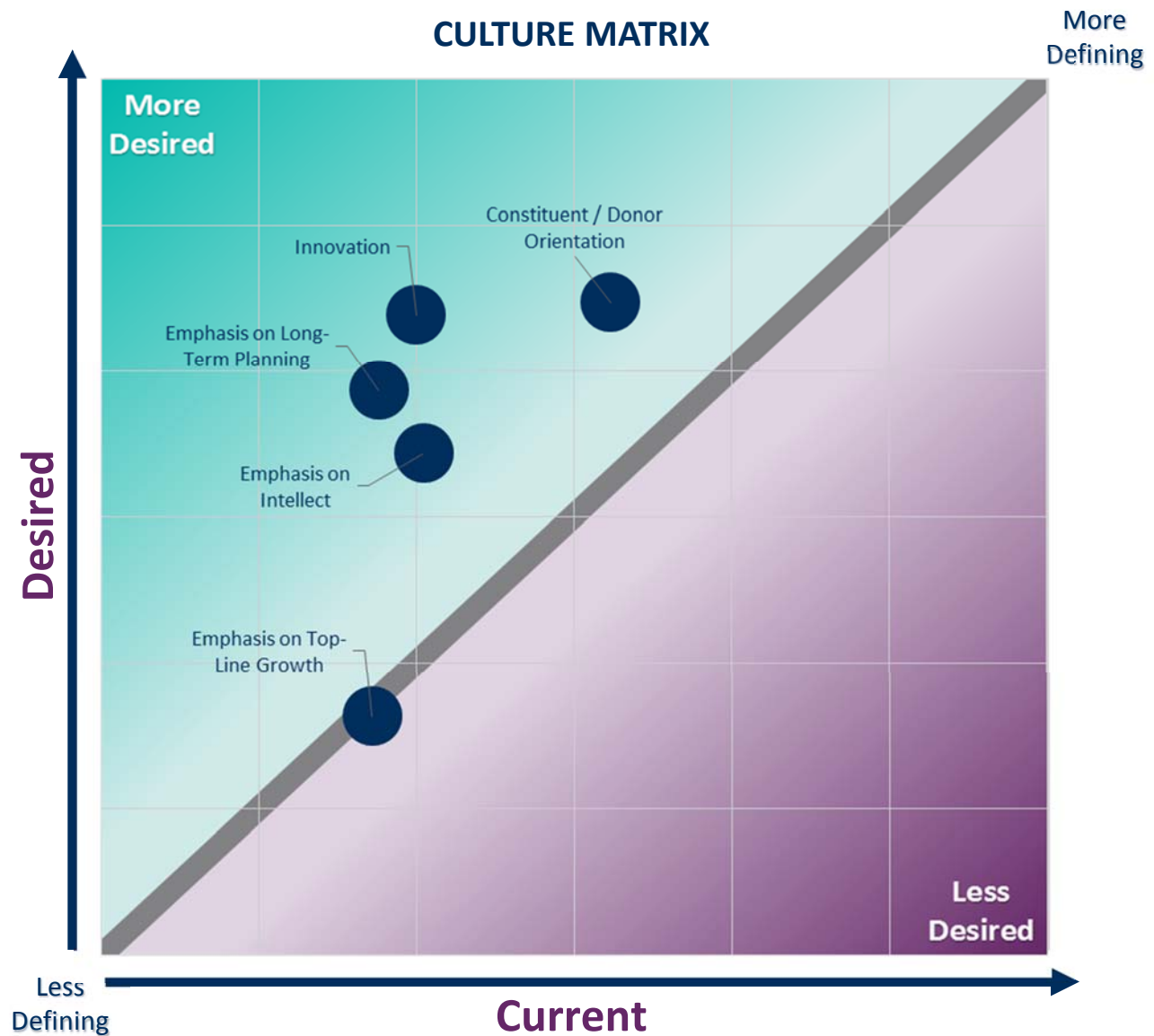
Items and implications – Strategic Growth

{ *"Many behaviors are dictated by the Municipal Civil Service rules - succession planning and targeted hiring is not able to happen under the MCS rules. Too often it seems like we are told to be innovative and come back with a new solution, just to have the new way of doing things put to the side to do things like we always do."* }

Innovation	Gap
In general, new ways of doing things are often met with resistance or not appreciated	1.32
Innovation is rewarded	1.31

Emphasis on Long-Term Planning	
There is a succession plan in place ensuring key roles will be filled in the future	1.82
This organization has a planning process that focuses on the long term	1.08

Implications

- Employees envision a more innovative culture, such as for there to be more appreciation of new ideas and approaches.

- Respondents cited concerns around the lack of long-term talent and succession planning.

- There is a more moderate desire for more emphasis to be placed on intellect.

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Factor and dimension detail – Performance

Performance Summary

- There is a strong desire for the COA to be more **results oriented**.

- Although a more defining feature currently, respondents hope to continue to focus on individual **expertise** moving forward.

- Respondents felt less strongly about changing the organization's attitude towards **speed** and the **need to work long hours**.

CULTURE MATRIX

More Desired

More Defining

Emphasis on Expertise

Emphasis on Results

Working Hard / Long Hours

Urgency / Speed

Desired

Less Defining

Less Desired

Current

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Items and implications – Performance

{ *"Good performance is not rewarded. Annual review results do not affect one's pay or job security, so there is much lesser incentive to perform well."* }

Emphasis on Results	Gap
The pay system rewards good performance	2.41
Individuals are fired for poor performance	2.24

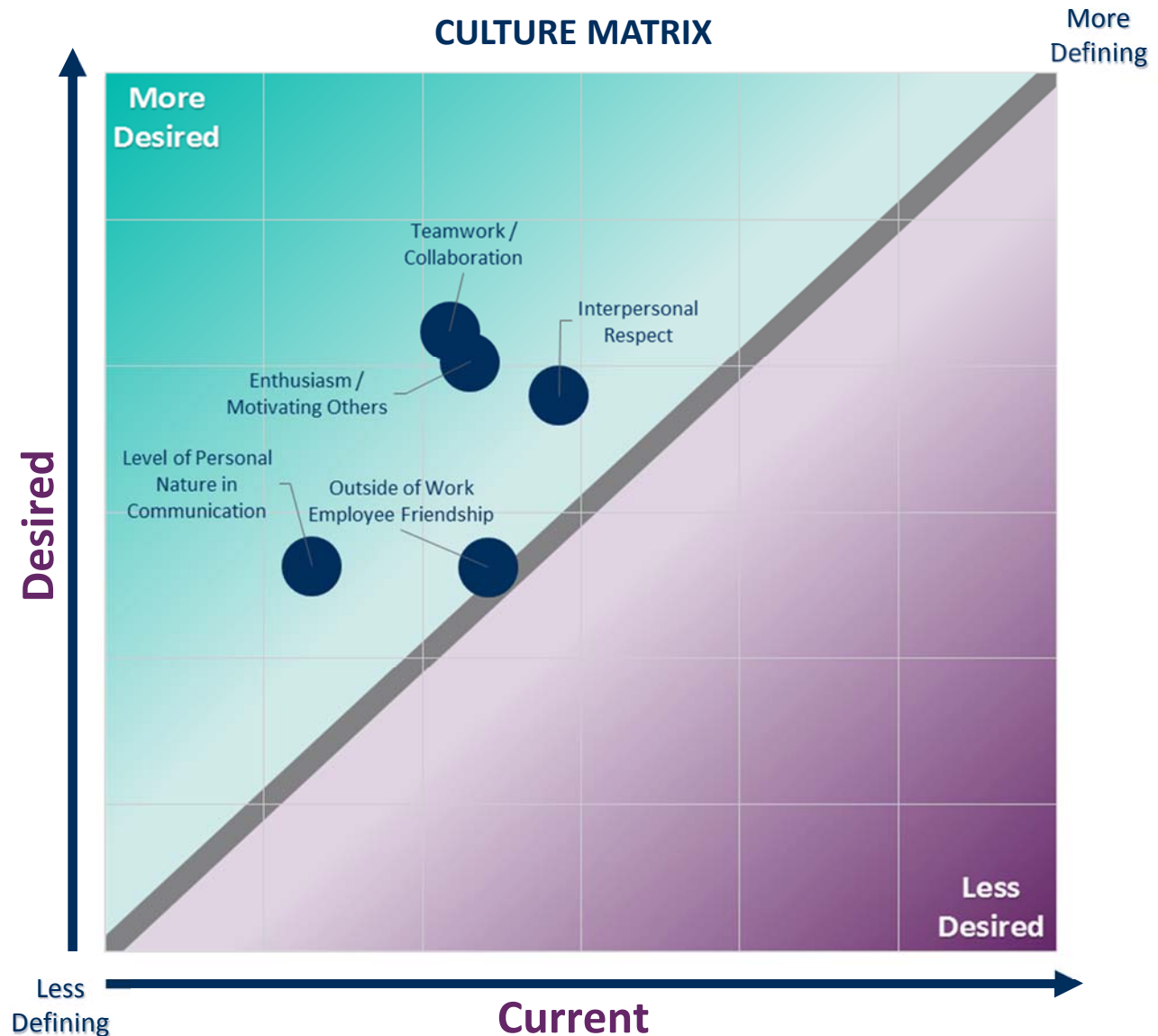| Working Hard/Long Hours	
Many individuals have a strong work ethic	0.90
Individuals do not work hard	0.65

Implications

- There is a clear desire for the COA to place a greater emphasis on results. This is made evident when asked about talent management processes and compensation.

- The other aspects of performance had smaller gaps between the current and desired culture, though employees did cite a greater desire for speed and urgency.

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Factor and dimension detail – Relationships

Relationships Summary

- COA's aspirational culture includes a greater emphasis on **collaboration** and **enthusiasm**.

- There is moderate desire for more **interpersonal respect** and **personal communications**.

- Respondents are relatively satisfied with the degree to which employees **maintain friendships outside of work**.

CULTURE MATRIX

More Desired

More Defining

Teamwork / Collaboration

Interpersonal Respect

Enthusiasm / Motivating Others

Level of Personal Nature in Communication

Outside of Work Employee Friendship

Desired

Current

Less Desired

Less Defining

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Items and implications – Relationships

{ *"Most of the time my department executes a coercive, aggressive leadership style, and rewards this behavior over other more effective forms of leadership."*

"Managers and Executives are not supported in the Civil Service environment and live in fear of the "gotcha" mentality constantly having to look over their shoulder in fear of the next "anonymous" complaint by a staff member who feels that their opinion was discounted by management." }

Teamwork/Collaboration	Gap
There is a lot of trust among individuals	1.77
Different groups or departments work well with one another	1.31

Enthusiasm/Motivating Others	
Individuals openly encourage each other to succeed	1.15
Overt enthusiasm is demonstrated by individuals	0.89

Implications

- The survey revealed a desire for increased teamwork and collaboration across the organization. This captures the notion of trust and collaboration across groups and departments.

- Respondents also desire a more enthusiastic culture.

- The data reflect some calls for increased interpersonal connections and respect.

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4. Appendix

Raw data overview

Micro Factors	COA Government Current	Current Benchmark	COA Government Desired	Desired Benchmark
Culture Strength Total	**3.12**	**3.46**	**3.99**	**4.66**
Rules Orientation	3.07	3.07	3.44	3.51
Emphasis on Integrity	3.31	3.75	4.17	4.17
Awareness of Limitations	3.00	3.27	3.91	3.88
Timeliness / Promptness	3.15	3.36	3.95	4.12
Detail / Thoroughness	3.45	3.62	4.17	4.23
Development / Training Orientation	2.78	2.93	4.11	4.22
Discipline Total	**3.12**	**3.32**	**3.97**	**4.36**
Flexibility Regarding Different Personalities and Thinking	3.22	3.34	3.92	3.89
Diversity / Multicultural Orientation	3.81	3.74	4.29	4.30
Non-Elitist Environment	3.22	3.49	4.01	4.08
Alternative Work Schedules and Format	3.07	2.93	3.89	3.71
Interest in True Debate	2.93	3.11	3.75	3.75
Transparency	2.72	3.22	4.22	4.36
Involvement / Matrix Orientation	2.66	2.91	3.05	3.40
Openness Total	**3.08**	**3.25**	**3.87**	**4.02**
Innovation	3.00	3.11	4.20	4.15
Emphasis on Long-Term Planning	2.88	3.06	3.93	4.14
Emphasis on Top-Line Growth	2.86	2.90	2.82	2.96
Constituent / Donor Orientation	3.62	3.53	4.24	4.41
Emphasis on Intellect	3.02	3.5	3.72	3.86
Strategic Growth Orientation Total	**2.99**	**3.24**	**3.73**	**4.03**
Emphasis on Results	2.54	3.58	4.14	4.22
Emphasis on Expertise	3.57	3.85	4.19	4.46
Urgency / Speed	3.35	3.72	3.72	4.28
Working Hard / Long Hours	3.54	3.84	3.86	4.05
Performance Orientation Total	**3.17**	**3.73**	**4.00**	**4.39**
Teamwork / Collaboration	3.09	3.48	4.12	3.89
Enthusiasm / Motivating Others	3.15	3.30	4.01	4.46
Interpersonal Respect	3.43	3.36	3.90	4.11
Level of Personal Nature in Communication	2.65	2.88	3.31	3.53
Outside of Work Employee Friendship	3.21	3.18	3.31	3.56
Relationships Total	**3.12**	**3.28**	**3.79**	**4.30**

Open-ended comments: Considerations for the search for a new City Manager

- "Please look to the leadership qualities demonstrated in the Interim City Manager to build the profile of the new City Manager for this organization. The Interim City Manager should be seen as a role model for the job."

- "I sincerely hope that the next City Manager will bring a true desire and proven track record for employee engagement, and organizational development that taps into the very talented and passionate workforce that we have in the COA. Breaking down silos and even potentially centralizing missions/functions/departments could be extremely beneficial to implementing the strategic vision coming out of current planning efforts with CMO and Council."

- "I'd like to see a City Manager who remembers the 12,000+ employees who bust their butts for him/her day in and day out, has a strong enough personality to stand up to the Council when necessary, and isn't afraid to do what's right, even if it's not popular. We (the employees and the citizens) are LONG overdue for someone with those skills."

- "Having someone with a true servant-leader approach to their role is critical, who is clearly committed not only to their own success and that of the organization, but to the individuals doing the work every day. The organization and the community appreciate humility, humor and openness/availability/transparency more than a singular focus on the work at-hand. Having someone interested (and engaged) in developing talent at all levels creates great confidence and pride amongst the workforce. "

- "In my opinion, a City Manager who has a comprehensive understanding of progressive HR structures that can drive performance of the organization will be the single best attribute in a new leader. The regressive practices impact almost every area of the City's operations. The results are seen daily-inability to attract and retain high quality employees, difficulty in removing/reassigning under-performing employees, inconsistent application of policy, pay practices/philosophy that incents mediocre performance, overly authoritative processes/decision-making, and removal of managerial tools afforded to all other organizations. This culture results in higher costs of service and poorer delivery of those services. Hopefully the search will yield a Manager who will understand this underlying reason for the cultural gaps and will take thoughtful and swift steps to change the HR structures in place."

- "We are hopeful that the selection of a new City Manager will increase the stability in our executive ranks and greatly reduce the focus on self-preservation and self-interest culture among our executives. Selfishness is not an ideal face of a public service organization and the culture it is creating permeates the organization. The City has a great workforce that is gradually adopting an 'every worker for themselves' culture because there is a lack of trust that the executive team is looking out for anyone but themselves."

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