

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jennifer Schembri
Rob Lloyd

**SUBJECT: POWERED BY PEOPLE
EFFORTS**

DATE: January 26, 2022

Approved



Date

01/27/22

INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

At the November 16, 2021, City Council meeting, the Mayor requested staff follow up with information regarding the specific list of Business Process Automations that have been deployed to date, as well as the backlog of workflows¹ related to the City's Powered by People efforts. This memorandum describes how Business Process Automation (BPA) and the City's Human-Centered Design Learning Lab transform the way City staff works remotely and how teams engage in the new hybrid work environment.

The Powered by People Enterprise Priority on the City Roadmap has three objectives (Figure 1): (1) Build processes that work for people; (2) Nurture employee growth, safety, and wellness; (3) Bust down silos to build trust and transparency.



Figure 1: Powered by People Objectives

¹ <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5202113&GUID=311A1F9A-612F-4E40-8420-4990A2FDFFF6&Options=&Search=#.YesnJ1UFPXU.link>

Transforming business processes to a virtual environment has been instrumental in advancing the City's ability to "Build Processes that Work for People" – to equip and empower teams with the tools and skills necessary to reimagine and then redesign processes and experiences across the employee lifecycle.

People, processes, and technology must come together for any solution to be effective. Through most of the pandemic, about 40% of the City's full-time workforce worked virtually and needed alternate online work processes. This required investment in developing and growing staff skills to create automation solutions designed for "customers". The City contracted with a leading organization in collaborative and inclusive design, CivicMakers, to work with the Human Resources Department and deliver a Human Centered Design Learning Lab to grow skill sets related to designing processes with a focus on customer experience. As an extension of the Learning Lab, Human Resources also partnered with Change Innovation Agents (Brian Elms, formerly with the Peak Academy) to begin to develop skills and capacity for creating effective and impactful business processes.

The **Background** section of this memorandum covers Business Process Automation, followed by detail on the Human-Centered Design Learning Lab. The **Analysis** section describes how the two programs work in concert to support the design, testing, and implementation of improved processes. The **Results** section describes the impacts of both programs.

BACKGROUND

Before the pandemic, the City had identified and funded an initiative to digitize paper and email-based processes. With the onset of COVID-19, a significant portion of City staff began working remotely. The City did not have the option to collect information on paper, and with so much more coming through electronically, staff accelerated the Business Process Automation initiative with a dedicated team and additional funding to rapidly shift to more efficient workflows.

One of the first workflows built was the Emergency Operations Center Resource Request Form (213RR form in the Incident Command System) for things like personal-protective equipment (PPE), thermometers, personnel, and other pandemic response supplies and services. As a result of the pandemic indoor occupancy restrictions, businesses shifted to using outdoor spaces. Staff created a series of "Al Fresco" forms to create a pipeline for reviewing and approving requests from San Jose businesses to use sidewalks, parklets, parks and plazas. To meet the demand for more employees working remotely and securely, the BPA Team digitized the City's Remote Access Request (formerly "VPN") Form. These early examples provided the BPA Team experience and insights into what became the City's Business Process Automation program.

Business Process Automation

The idea for Business Process Automation originated with the 2017-2021 IT Strategic Plan and an original 2017 Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire a workflow automation software. The RFP was awarded in 2020, weeks before the pandemic declarations were made, and physical

offices closed. As a result of COVID-19, the need for Business Process Automation and digital, automated processes became much more acute.

In June 2020, the Information Technology Department stood up the Business Process Automation team with three objectives serving as the Team's North Star (see Figure 2):

- (1) Build workflows that are simple to use, digital and take advantage of automation to drive efficiency.
- (2) Build a team that is empowered to improve processes and build workflows to drive transformation (not just put technology on existing, inefficient processes).
- (3) Build workflows on technology that is reliable and scalable.

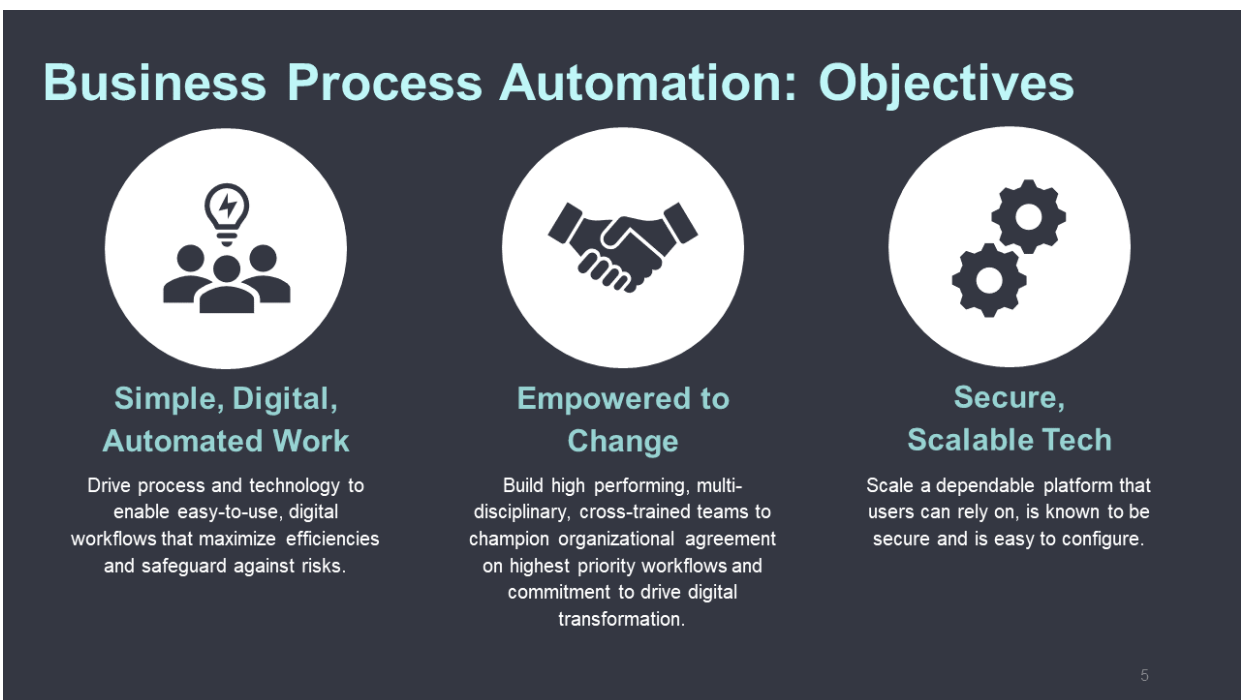


Figure 2: Business Process Automation Team Objectives

The BPA Core Team consists of staff from Information Technology, Human Resources, the City Manager's Office, the Office of Employee Relations, and Finance (see Figure 3). The team also relies on departmental process owners to provide expertise and help guide process redesign. The BPA Core Team meets monthly with the BPA Steering Committee to set prioritization, drive transformation, and champion automation. Quarterly, the BPA Team meets with its Executive Team to ensure accountability on commitments and to set forward direction for BPA.

Who is the Business Process Automation Team?

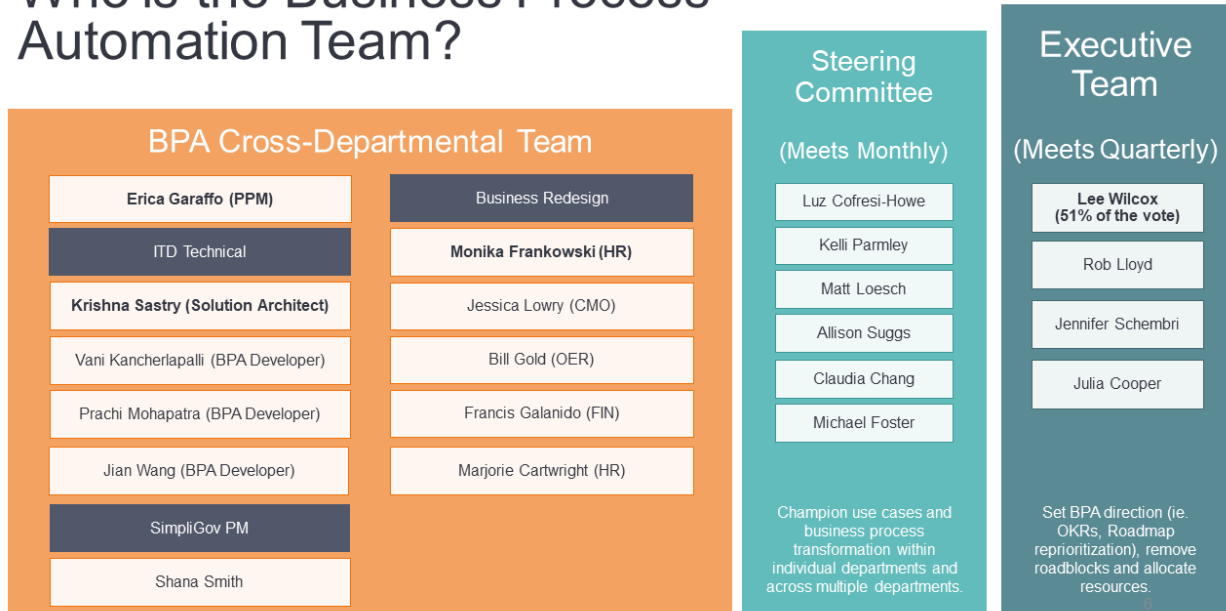


Figure 3: Business Process Automation Team and Governance Structure

The cross-departmental and cross-functional makeup of the BPA Team has been key to its success. The inclusion of non-technical business leads helps connect with the service recipients, so that workflows are easy to use and valuable to the people that use them. BPA technical staff understand how to build workflows creatively and efficiently to best accomplish service delivery needs.

When the City’s Contract Insurance and Risk Manager departed, we were lucky to have transferred his knowledge of the process and created two Contract workflows before the role was vacated. Previously, these two forms were Word documents sent to a generic email inbox. Now, the new digital forms automatically collect all the required information and route it to the right person. For whoever comes into this position next, these automations will save countless hours trying to learn our system.

The benefits of Business Process Automation include:

- **Centralized and Searchable Records:** All information is in one location, online, available 24/7 (not locked up in a filing cabinet!).
- **Built in Approvals and Routing:** Staff can easily track whose “desk” the request is on and the pending action.
- **Fewer Errors and Missing Information:** Forms are error-proofed by requiring key information and validating data before submittal –i.e., a form might check that a phone number is 10 digits, before allowing submission.

- **Saved Time Onboarding New Staff:** A standardized process reduces the time to train new staff so they can be productive on day one of their City careers.
- **Knowledge Retention:** Minimizes productivity loss when people leave. The BPA system carries the processes and retains past approvals.

When the City needed to collect religious and medical exemption requests after mandating all employees receive the vaccine, we knew email would be a massive headache. But, with BPA, we were able to create two online forms that easily allowed staff to submit requests with the appropriate documentation and makes it much simpler for the Office of Employee Relations to review, track and report out on the requests.

Which BPA Product is best for my use case?





 SimpliGov	 PeopleSoft	 MS Forms	 Power Automate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Replacing paper or PDF forms✓ Collecting e-signatures (Authorized by State of California)✓ Can integrate with other City systems✓ Single repository for all automations and records✓ Internal and external facing forms✗ Not great for document collaboration (ie. Editing Word/Excel files)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Employee records, timekeeping, benefits, personnel data✗ Needs to be developed by PeopleSoft Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Simple, one-time polls, quizzes or surveys✓ Internal and external facing forms✗ No workflow, approvals, routing, signatures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Regular, routine processes and tasks that repeat✓ Geared more for individual or team-based tasks✓ Especially good for document collaboration and approval✗ Only works with Sharepoint and Office365✗ No central repository of saved automations✗ Internal City-use only

Figure 4: BPA Product Offerings and the pros/cons of each tool

The BPA Team employs four products to digitize forms and automate workflow: SimpliGov, PeopleSoft, Microsoft Forms, and Power Automate (Figure 4). Most BPA forms are built in SimpliGov, but each product has its advantages and limitations for automation.

One of the first things the BPA Team does when starting a new workflow is to identify which product is best suited for the service or job to be automated. In considering which tool to use, we also hope to promote a consistent user experience for similar types of work. For example, staff are accustomed to using PeopleSoft for employee benefits and payroll processes, therefore, future workflow automations of this type would likely be best suited for PeopleSoft.

Human-Centered Design Learning Lab

The Human-Centered Design Learning Lab (HCD Learning Lab) launched in 2020, led by a partnership between Human Resources, the Office of Civic Innovation, and Information Technology. The Learning Lab program was created as a hands-on learning and engagement experience created to foster a culture empowering its people to empathize, define, ideate, and prototype creative solutions to City challenges. This is the crux of human-centered design. Table 1 lists all past Learning Lab projects and descriptions.

Facilitated by training consultants CivicMakers, each Human-Centered Design Learning Lab consists of an eight-week learning experience. In cohorts, coaches provide cross-departmental teams training in human-centered designed mindsets, tools, and techniques. At its core, the Learning Lab seeks to build capacity for applying innovative methodologies and collaborative problem solving into how the City does its work. A design-led approach to problem solving is rooted in empathy, questions, experiments, and optimism, ultimately to reframe problems to get to new solutions. Participants leave the Learning Lab with knowledge and experience using design methods such as: creating a research plan, conducting stakeholder interviews, journey mapping, creating “How might we...?” questions, brainstorming, rapid prototyping, and testing ideas.

During the duration of the program, each team is tasked with addressing a current City challenge. Participants are then asked to apply their human-centered designed learning to first understand the root cause of their challenge by empathizing with people who directly experience the challenges and then design and test possible solutions by collecting feedback. Since the fall of 2020, the team has offered four Learning Labs with 80 City staff to design solutions to 12 City Challenges.

Following the conclusion of the Learning Lab, projects addressed during the training have the opportunity to be transferred and improved upon in the Innovation Academy. Facilitated by training partner Change and Innovation Agency, the Innovation Academy is an immersive learning experience that combines innovation, lean and process improvement, and change management practices with hands-on exercises and real-world simulation.

During the Innovation Academy participants are provided with the tools and mindset to be innovative thinkers who are trained in reducing wasted efforts, improving efficiency, and being problem solvers. By taking an innovative and problem-solving approach to their work, employees are taught how to make improvements using existing staff and financial resources.

The two programs complement each other and the relationship between the two begins when the ideas, outputs, and questions surfaced from the challenges in Human-Centered Designed Learning Lab are moved into the Innovation Academy where they are redesigned, improved, and made more efficient. It should also be noted that the success of these trainings, which require a significant amount of commitment and time, would not be possible without the support and

encouragement of department leadership. Leadership is dedicated to promoting a culture that values learning by making available the resources that enable staff to thrive in these training opportunities.

Table 1: Learning Lab Projects and Descriptions

Learning Lab	Project	“How might we…” statements
1	One City Workplace	How might we (1) create an engaged and informed workforce, (2) optimize virtual productivity, (3) improve collaboration in a distributed workspace?
2	New Employee Welcome (NEW) re-imagine	How might we create the most positive orientation experience for new employees?
	Performance Reviews	How might we make the performance appraisal process inclusive, compassionate, and supportive of career growth for non-management staff and seamless, predictable, and efficient for management and administrative staff
	Employee Directory	How might we help employees to find another employee
	Council Memos	How might we improve the process of coordinating, collaborating, and drafting City Council memos within & between department?
	Flexible Schedules	How might we provide employees with options to work remotely or with a flexible hourly schedule?
3	Notice of Separation/Offboarding	How might we help the City close a relationship with an employee?
	Performance Appraisals	How might we improve the process of conducting, collecting & recording non-management performance reviews?
	Hiring Process	How might we provide new employees with a positive & consistent onboarding experience?
4	Promotional Process	How might we increase awareness in regard to promotional process and streamline the process for all City employees
	Employee Assistant Program	How might we increase utilization of the City’s Employee Assistance Program

	eContracts	How might we build a culture accepting of change while incorporating all user needs into a streamlined contract process
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ANALYSIS

The purpose of BPA and HCD Learning Labs is to build processes that work for people: to equip and empower teams with the tools and skills necessary to reimagine and redesign processes and experiences across the employee lifecycle. The team accomplishes this objective by creating a pipeline that funnels work through BPA, HCD Learning Lab, and Innovation Academy processes to produce work that is ready for reimagining, reengineering and/or automation.

Projects enter the pipeline either from the BPA Backlog (starting point A in Figure 5 below) or the Learning Lab Backlog (starting point B in Figure 5). The BPA Backlog includes a long list of potential automations (Appendix A shows the full list of deployed, in process and backlogged workflows). The BPA Team refreshes the backlog twice a year through a reprioritization process using the Weighted-Shortest-Job-First technique². New automations are added to the backlog for prioritization by BPA Steering Committee and Executive Team members.

How do projects flow between BPA and Learning Lab?

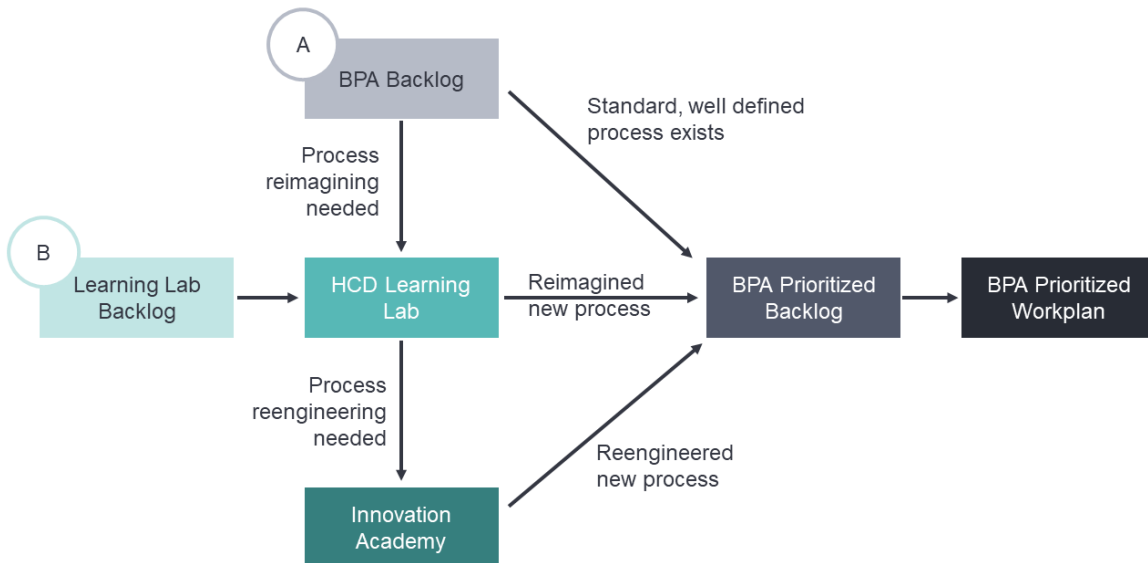


Figure 5: BPA and Learning Lab Project Pipeline Diagram

² W of initiatives. A team calculates each initiative’s score as the cost of delay divided by the job’s size or duration. The team then prioritizes those items that receive the highest ratings. (see <https://www.scaledagileframework.com/wsjf/> for more details)

Many of the workflows on the BPA Backlog have standard, well-defined processes, some do not. The category of workflows with less-well defined (or non-existent) processes are one source of projects for the HCD Learning Lab. The other source of HCD Learning Lab projects come from the Learning Lab backlog.

Challenges for each HCD Learning Lab are sourced primarily from the BPA Backlog with a few originating from other City challenges that are non-BPA related. In selecting BPA Projects for the HCD Learning Lab, priority is given to those projects that are generally early in development with less defined processes in places. This allows the Learning Lab the opportunity to engage newer projects that require further work and development.

After a project has gone through the HCD Learning Lab, it can either go into the BPA Prioritized Backlog or, if further process reengineering is needed, it flows into the Innovation Academy. In some cases, even if a project has gone through the Learning Lab or Innovation Academy, it does not continue on to the BPA Backlog. For example, the OneCity Workplace Learning Lab project resulted in an RFP for a new digital workspace. In this example, there is not a workflow to be automated through the BPA pipeline.

An early success coming from the HCD Learning Lab involved the program's first project, the City's OneCity Workplace intranet initiative which resulted in a Request for Proposal. The project asked participants to apply human-centered design tools and techniques to reimagine the City's intranet. In the process of the training, participants offered recommendations on the redesign of the City's digital tools and technologies with a priority on accessibility, collaboration, and efficiency. The project was divided into three teams, each assigned a unique challenge to address how the City (1) informs and engages the City workforce; (2) optimizes virtual productivity for City employees; and (3) unifies the City's digital workplace. As a result of this work, a Request for Proposal was approved for up to \$400,000 for contractor costs and licensing to replace the City's Intranet with a new digital workspace.

RESULTS

Since June 2020, the BPA Team and contributors from City departments have deployed 59 workflows. Appendix A shows the full list of deployed, in process and backlogged workflows. Some of BPA workflows had preexisting paper, manual processes. Others were either developed as new processes or were an upgraded digital process. Of the workflows that existed pre-automation, requests now complete 77% faster than pre-automation. Collectively, these requests take 14,000 fewer hours each month to route, process, and approve.

The primary contributor to these gains in efficiency are from imbedding the workflow in a standardized, transparent, searchable platform. In other words, paper is not lost in transit, emails are not buried in inboxes, and requests are not routinely submitted with missing or erroneous information.

The HCD Learning Lab has helped to further foster a culture that values learning and places an emphasis on incorporating human elements into decision-making. It has also served to enhance the City's Powered by People initiative by developing the creative capacity and problem-solving skills of individuals, teams, and departments to collaboratively address key City priorities across departments.

Participant Quotes on the impact of the Human Centered Design Learning Lab

"I was doubting myself before participating in the Learning Lab. I was thinking of leaving the city because I felt pressure to be a stern manager, which is not compatible with my more human-centered management style. But through the Learning Lab, I got myself back. I got validation that a human-centered management style is okay. I don't need to be a tough manager. I found my voice again."

"My team worked on several projects so far that you can actually see Learning Lab at work. One that comes to mind is the Emergency Services Project: we are using Learning Lab tools and Learning Lab put faces to names. Reaching out to people who can push projects forward happened immediately and continues until today. We've all gained more skills by talking to each other."

"I feel for the first time that my voice is heard."

"I came out with skills to be a better manager, adding a more human approach to each day, adding emotion and not just the business. We are testing a project with stakeholders right now, and that project started during LL!"

NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, CivicMakers has been secured to facilitate two additional HCD Learning Labs in 2022. The first is set to launch in late January and the other in late spring. Each Learning Lab will address three City Challenges and projects for both will be sourced from the BPA backlog.

For BPA, staff estimates deploying roughly 10 additional workflows each quarter through Fiscal Year 2021-2022 if we maintain current resource levels (two BPA team members were pulled from other ITD application teams and may need to be reassigned back). In addition to pushing out new automations, the BPA Team is pivoting in 2022 to focus equal effort on improving the usability and adoption of workflows already in use.

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Transforming business processes and reimagining “how we work” has been instrumental in advancing the City’s Enterprise Priority of “Powered by People”. We see these efforts as being instrumental in retaining staff by providing fulfilling opportunities to engage in deeply meaningful work that makes a valuable impact to the City.

/s/

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/s/

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Appendix A: Backlog, In-Process, and Deployed BPA workflows

Backlog	In Process	Deployed
City Council Cost Estimate	Budget Information Submittals	213RR
Benefits Billing/Arrears	Employee Reimbursement - Education	Al Fresco Private Property
Salary Requests for Hire/Promotions	Employee Reimbursement - Professional Development Request & Reimbursement (PDP)	Al Fresco Sidewalk/Parklet
MPP: Recommendations for Increase	HR Dependent Verification Form	Al Fresco Parks and Plazas
Add/Deletes (Positions for PCN)	IT Onboarding (including system access, licenses, equipment, etc.)	VPN (Remote Access)
Employee Parking Card Application (Parking Pass)	Muni Water's Register Low Income and Vulnerable Customers	Benefits Enrollment Change Form
Voluntary Furlough	Notice of Separations	Contract eSignatures
IT Offboarding (for separations, transfers, and leaves)	P-Card Program Forms (New/Change P-Card Coordinator)	Overtime Authorizations
Higher Class Pay (Management)	P-Card Program Forms (US Bank Admin Access request)	Time Off Requests
MPP: Performance Appraisal Form	P-Card Program Forms (Violation memo)	Request to Review Employee File
NMPP: Performance Appraisal Form	Revenue Management Adjustment/Cancel Form	ITD Change Management
Alternative Work Schedules	Muni Water Leak Notification Form	SimpliSign (Word & PDF Docs)
PeopleSoft User Access Request Form	Muni Water Service Order	Security Access & Badges
Premium Pays - 10 forms	Department Head Financial Documents Signature Authorization Form	Budget Hiring Exemption Form
Timesheet Adjustment Form	HR Onboarding Forms for New FT Hires (v2)	Director Award Contract (PW Capital Program)
Employee Reimbursement - General Reimbursement	Retire-Rehire Interest Pool Form	Capital Project Plans (PW Capital Program)
Employee Reimbursement - Uniform and Equipment	DE-4 (State Tax Form)	Capital Project Specifications (PW Capital Program)
Sexual Harassment Training Tracker	Purchasing PO Renewal Process	Finance FMS/RevQ Access Request
Benefit Forms - (Wellness, Commuter, HSA and LTD (year round enrollments))	Leave of Absence Request Form	OER Parking Accommodations
Bilingual Form	Administrative Leave	CED GreenValue PreEnrollment
City Council Memo Departmental Process		Temporary Employee Request
EOC Staff Acknowledgement Form		HR Onboarding Forms for New PT Hires (12 forms included)
Ergo Request Form		ITD Invoice Approval
Exception Time Reporting		Capital Construction Change Orders - PW
HR Confidentiality Statement		Contract eSignature Phase 2 (Service Orders, Change Orders, Signed Contracts, Retroactive Memos, Confidential Agreements)
OSHA Log (HR)		Mobile Device Authorization Form
Outside Work Permit		Property Surplus and Disposal Form
PRNS - City Sports Form		Medical Exemption Request Form
Probation Ext/Term		Religious Exception Request Form

PW Acceptance and Dedication Recordation
PW Site License Agreements
Qualified Promotional
Reduced Work Week Request
Reports To/Position Section Change Updates
Retiree Change Of Address
Server Instance Request
Signature Authority Form
Student and in lieu Attestations & SSN Verifications
Verification of Employment
VTA SmartPass (Eco Pass)

Mileage reimbursement
Eviction Help Center Survey
Finance Vendor Set Up/Maintenance Form
Finance Vendor Maintenance with Batch Script
Solar Energy Access
Technology New Project Intake
Insurance Compliance Review Request (Finance Form 149-7)
P-Card Program Forms (Agreement form)
P-Card Program Forms (Higher Spend form (now Spend Limit Change form))
P-Card Program Forms (P-Card Application)
Request for Contract Insurance Specifications – RFP, RFP, Negotiated Contracts (Finance Form 148-22)
ESD Change Management Form
Higher Class Pay (Non-Management)
Flexible Workplace Form
P-Card Program Forms (Change of Information)
Council Referrals Tracking