

Outstanding Recommendations

Assessment of Implementation Report

Alberta Infrastructure

Fort McMurray Residential Facility-Based Care Centre (Willow Square) Project Management

(February 2020)

Summary of Recommendations

IMPLEMENTED Recommendation:
Improve certain project management processes for capital projects

IMPLEMENTED Recommendation:
Improve performance measures for capital projects

Introduction

In 2020, we audited the Department of Infrastructure's project management systems to manage the planning and design of the Fort McMurray Residential Facility-Based Care Centre (Willow Square).¹²

We focused our work on assessing if the enhanced project management and performance measurement systems for capital projects were designed adequately and implemented. Although our audit in 2020 focused on the department's project management systems for Willow Square, our recommendations and our assessment of implementation focused on the department's project management systems for schools, health facilities and government-owned facilities. The scope of our assessment of implementation excluded processes and controls related to public-private partnerships and capital projects in the department's properties division.

In our assessment of implementation, we found the department implemented our recommendations to improve certain project management processes and performance measures for capital projects.

The department implemented a project management policy and manual. To ensure the policy and manual are complied with, the department also implemented additional oversight controls, including project gate meetings¹³ and enhanced tracking, monitoring and review of project management deliverables and milestones.

¹² *Report of the Auditor General of Alberta—February 2020*, Alberta Infrastructure Fort McMurray Residential Facility-Based Care Centre (Willow Square) Project Management, page 13 and 14.

¹³ Project gate meetings—meetings with project teams and management to discuss the project and obtain approval from management to proceed to the next phase of the project.

The department also implemented improved performance measures for capital projects.

Recommendation: **Improve certain project management processes for capital projects**

IMPLEMENTED

Context

In our 2020 audit of the Fort McMurray Residential Facility-Based Care Centre (Willow Square) project,¹⁴ we found the department needed to:

- improve the robustness and timeliness of its project management plan
- ensure stakeholders approve critical project deliverables for managing scope
- improve the monitoring of project risks

Our current findings

The department implemented our recommendation to:

- develop standards for its project management plan
- complete a project management plan in accordance with the standards and ensure the project management plan and project charter are approved early in the life of a project
- ensure the project team follows the project management processes and controls identified in the project management plan and the project charter

The department implemented a project management policy and manual. The policy and manual define project management expectations and standardizes the departments project management processes and controls.

The department also implemented project gate meetings,¹⁵ which are an additional oversight control. Each capital project must go through several gate meetings throughout the course of the project life. Some project management deliverables are also a pre-requisite to the gate meetings. The gate meetings provide an opportunity for project teams to:

- discuss risks and mitigation strategies
- obtain support and solicit experience from the gate meeting attendees
- obtain key decisions, including approval of whether the project can proceed

The department also enhanced its tracking and monitoring of project deliverable milestones. And prior to each gate meeting, department staff review the project management deliverables to ensure that project teams have populated and updated them.

¹⁴ *Report of the Auditor General of Alberta—February 2020*, Alberta Infrastructure Fort McMurray Residential Facility-Based Care Centre (Willow Square) Project Management, page 13.

¹⁵ Project gate meetings—meetings with project teams and management to discuss the project and obtain approval from management to proceed to the next phase of the project.

Recommendation:
Improve performance measures for capital projects
IMPLEMENTED

Context

In our 2020 audit,¹⁶ we found the department did not have adequate measures to assess the performance of the Fort McMurray Residential Facility-Based Care Centre (Willow Square) project.

Our current findings

The department implemented our recommendation to develop better measures to assess the performance of its capital projects.

The department implemented enhanced measures for assessing the performance of its capital projects and its project management processes. For certain performance measures, the department also implemented a process to escalate results that do not align with its performance expectations.

¹⁶ *Report of the Auditor General of Alberta—February 2020, Alberta Infrastructure Fort McMurray Residential Facility-Based Care Centre (Willow Square) Project Management, page 14*