Project MOST
Mobilizing One Sound Transit

Community Oversight Panel

5/14/25

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Agenda

- Project MOST Overview
- Team Mobilization
- Mission in Motion
- Executive Leadership Acceleration Program (ELAP)

Case for Change

Our challenges necessitate urgent organizational transformation to fulfill our mission to the region, empower our employees to continue to do amazing work, and stabilize project and operations costs.

Project MOST Overview

Outcome

Project MOST will create a stronger organizational structure and culture that empowers every Sound Transit team member to contribute effectively, hold one another and our partners accountable, and make good decisions quickly at the lowest possible.

Our Guiding Principals:

- ✓ Organize to facilitate a One ST Mindset
- ✓ Streamline the organization
- ✓ Elevate critical functions

- ✓ Solve growing pains of agency maturity
- ✓ Inspire, entrust, and empower staff

How will we measure success of the new structure?

- By **assessing our performance against our agency priorities** (i.e., delivering our projects on time, sustaining and improving our ridership, and building system capacity)

- By monitoring and assessing **key performance indicators** and conducting future **Culture Readiness Surveys** to measure and report progress on improving our culture.
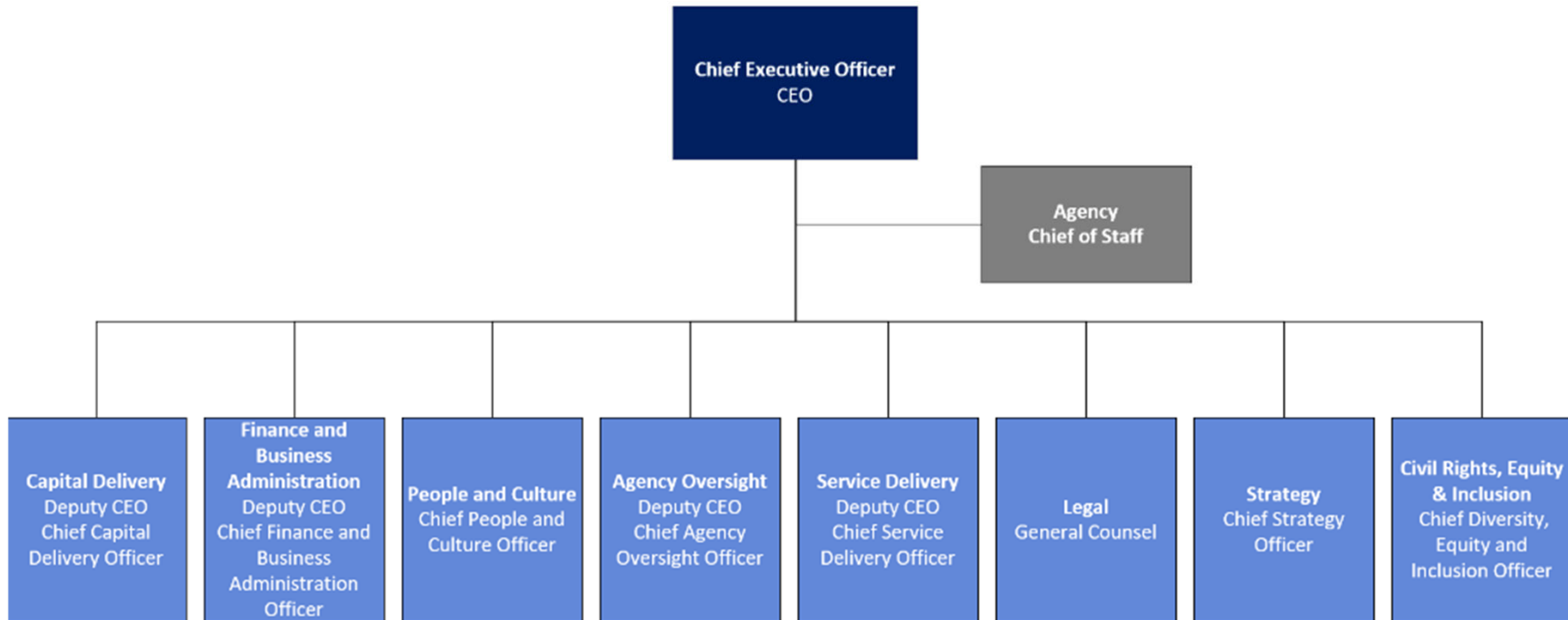
Process

To develop the new structure, the Sound Transit Cabinet followed an inclusive, four-phased process to engage leaders and staff across ST.
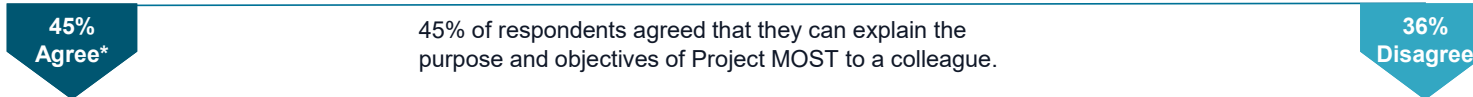
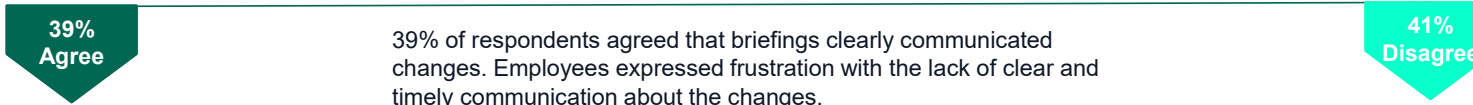| Phase		Key Activities
Functional Alignment		• Conducted an initial functional assessment and determined the areas of work that each department will be responsible for delivering under the new organizational structure • Selected 17 key functions for further exploration by working teams • Refined the functional structure (based on working team and staff feedback) and shared a final version with the agency in early October
Working Teams		• Established 17 working teams to analyze identified functions • Identified employees from a range of career levels across the agency to participate in the Working Teams. • Empowered each working team to develop mission statements, workflow maps, and proposed structures for their assigned function
Organizational Structure		• Held a three-day intensive session for Cabinet members, Chiefs of Staff, and HR Business Partners to review working team recommendations to finalize the new structure. • Engaged HR, CREI and Legal to conduct an equity review and approve the new structure and employee placement • Avoided layoffs by offering a small number of staff (around 1%) a choice between accepting a new role at a lower level or a severance benefit
Change Management & Communications		• Focused on change management and transparent communications with staff throughout Project MOST • Conducted an agency-wide Town Hall on August 21 to discuss Project MOST's goals and case for change • Published articles on the HUB regularly to keep staff informed of progress • Developed a sequenced change management plan to inform staff of changes and prepare them to enter the new structure

Final Structure

Change Readiness –December 2024

UNDERSTANDING PROJECT MOST

45% Agree*

45% of respondents agreed that they can explain the purpose and objectives of Project MOST to a colleague.

36% Disagree

COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

39% Agree

39% of respondents agreed that briefings clearly communicated changes. Employees expressed frustration with the lack of clear and timely communication about the changes.

41% Disagree

IMPACT ON DAY-TO-DAY WORK

48% Agree

48% of respondents understand the impact to their day-to-day. Employees expressed uncertainty about the impact on their day-to-day operations due to the early stages of the organizational structures.

28% Disagree

SUPPORT FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

50% Agree

50% of respondents support the organizational changes. Some employees are optimistic and see potential benefits, while others remain largely neutral. Additionally, there is a strong desire for more efficient processes and improved collaboration across departments.

38% Disagree

EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT

Hopeful   **Interested**

Top Positive Sentiments

Employees expressed a wide range of emotions. While some are optimistic and foresee potential benefits, others are adopting a wait-and-see approach, remaining neutral until they observe the impact on their daily routines.

Confused   **Frustrated**   **Skeptical**

Top Negative Sentiments

"Agree" includes "Strongly agree", "Disagree" includes "Strongly disagree"

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Culture Indicators – December 2024

SILOING

| May 3.0 → Dec 3.2 |

The average rating improved from **3.0** to **3.2** from siloed towards One ST.

CLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY

| May 3.0 → Dec 3.1 |

The average rating improved from **3.0** to **3.1** from diffused towards clear accountability.

EXPERTISE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

| May 3.0 → Dec 3.0 |

Although the average ratings between May to Dec remains stable at 3.0, the ratings distribution chart shows a slight shift from hierarchical decision-making towards expertise-based decision-making.
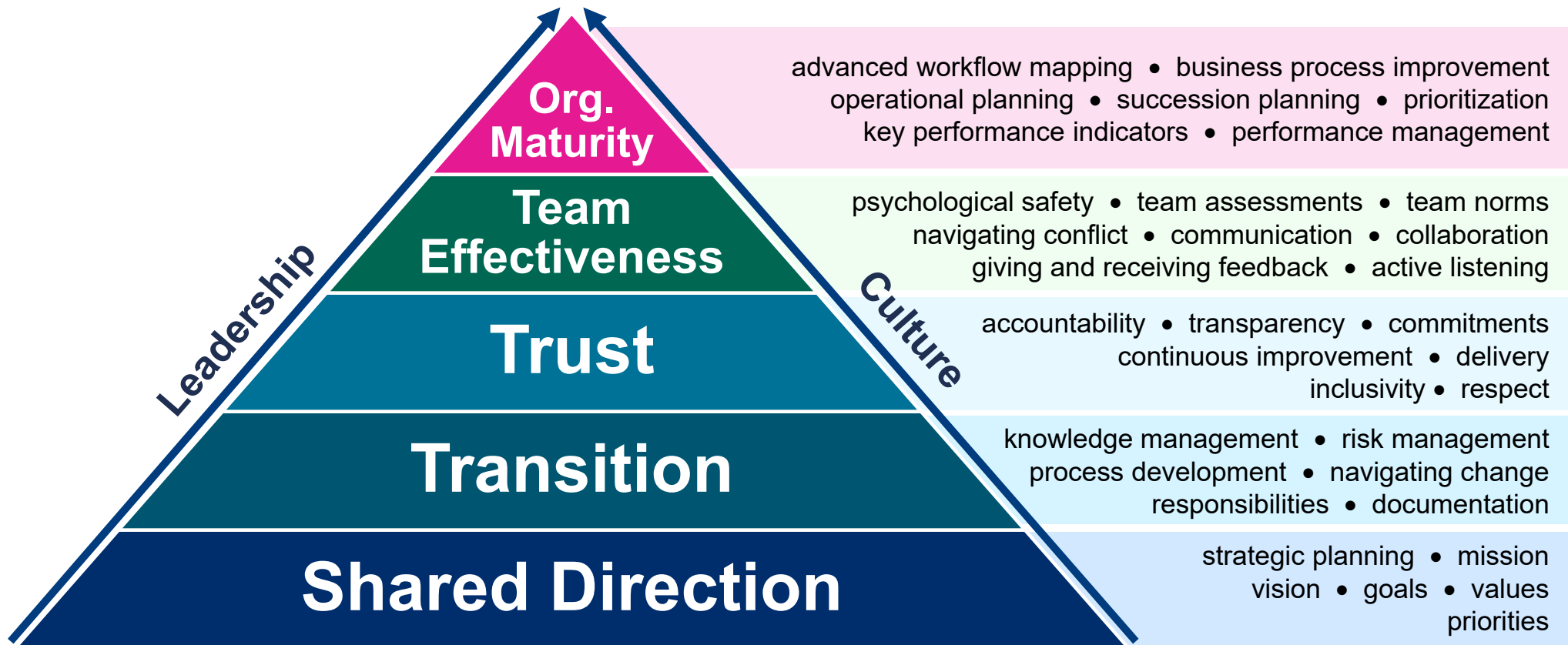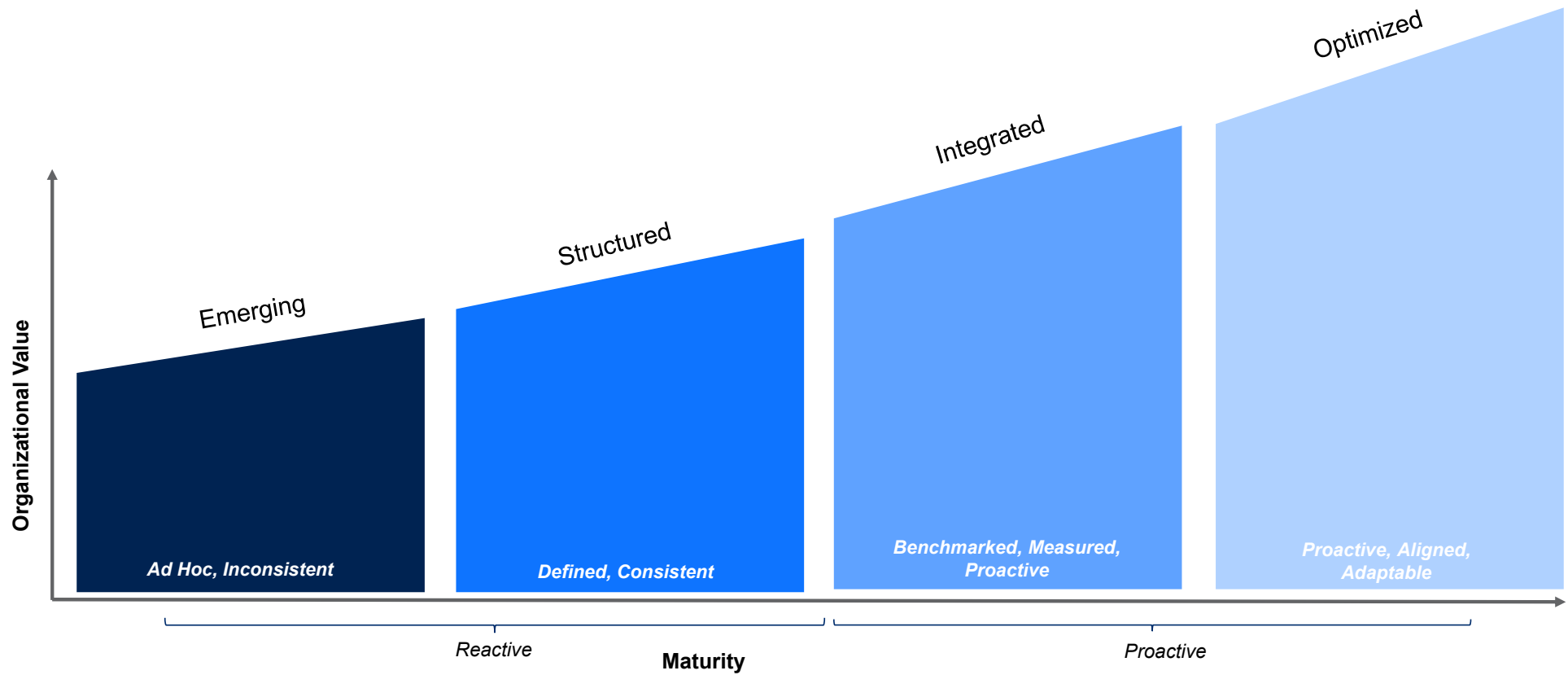
BUSINESS PROCESSES

| May 2.7 → Dec 3.2 |

The average rating improved from **2.7** to **3.2** from stuck to streamlined processes.

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Mobilization Framework

Leadership

Culture

Org. Maturity
- advanced workflow mapping • business process improvement
- operational planning • succession planning • prioritization
- key performance indicators • performance management

Team Effectiveness
- psychological safety • team assessments • team norms
- navigating conflict • communication • collaboration
- giving and receiving feedback • active listening

Trust
- accountability • transparency • commitments
- continuous improvement • delivery
- inclusivity • respect

Transition
- knowledge management • risk management
- process development • navigating change
- responsibilities • documentation

Shared Direction
- strategic planning • mission
- vision • goals • values
- priorities

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Team Mobilization Maturity Model

Team Mobilization Maturity Model chart showing Organizational Value (y-axis) vs Maturity (x-axis):

- **Emerging** — Ad Hoc, Inconsistent
- **Structured** — Defined, Consistent
- **Integrated** — Benchmarked, Measured, Proactive
- **Optimized** — Proactive, Aligned, Adaptable

Reactive spans Emerging and Structured. Proactive spans Integrated and Optimized.

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Team Mobilization Maturity Model

Mobilization Category	Emerging	Structured	Integrated	Optimal
Org Maturity	Strategy, culture, process, people and KPIs are reactive and matured on a case-by-case basis.	Maturity of strategy, culture, processes, people and KPIs is a priority, with intentional structures put in place to support maturity (e.g., succession planning, business process improvement, performance management).	Strategy, culture, processes, people, and KPIs are integrated across Sound Transit and are designed to optimize performance.	Strategy, culture, processes, people, and KPIs are continually assessed in the context of changing business needs and external factors and goals are prioritized to achieve intended outcomes.
Team Effectiveness	The team is getting to know each other, there is uncertainty and lack of clarity, little feedback, and increased opportunity for conflict.	Individuals understand their role in the team and communication is clear from the top.	Team norms and values are demonstrated, individuals understand how they all fit together to achieve the strategy, and feedback and information flow freely.	Staff feel psychologically safe and can adapt to changing business needs and external factors.
Trust	Individuals are cautious and guarded, and information sharing is inconsistent with a focus on self-protection.	Individuals and leaders demonstrate competence and caring, however, there is room to improve consistency and commitment.	Trust exists everywhere and individuals readily collaborate with increased collaboration, information sharing, and respect.	A culture of accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement exists that is embraced and championed.
Transition	Inconsistent understanding of the post-reorganization structure, with limited to no documentation of processes and roles and responsibilities.	Transition plans, risks and mitigations strategies are defined.	New processes and roles and responsibilities are documented.	Operations post-reorganization are successfully implemented.
Shared Direction	Strategy is created on a case-by-case basis and is not consistently documented or referenced.	Strategy is documented, continuously referenced, and updated promptly.	Strategy is integrated and benchmarked across Sound Transit, bench and has clear measures of success.	Strategy is continually assessed in the context of changing business needs and external factors and goals are prioritized to achieve intended outcomes.

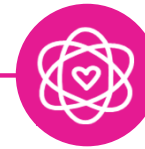# Culture Transformation - Mission in Motion

Leadership & Accountability

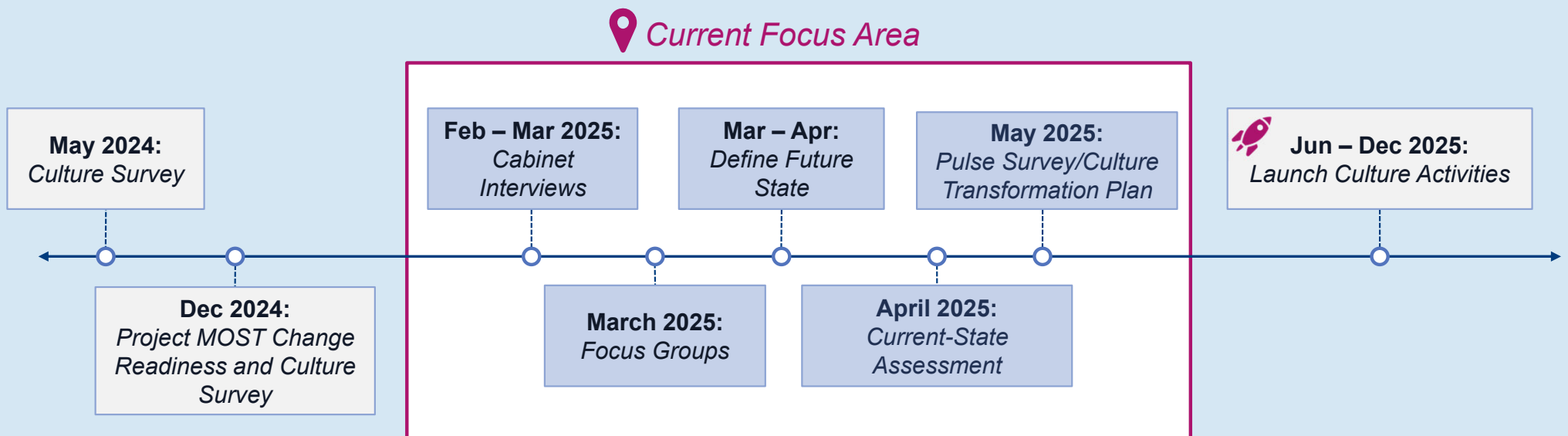**Decision-Making & Transparency**

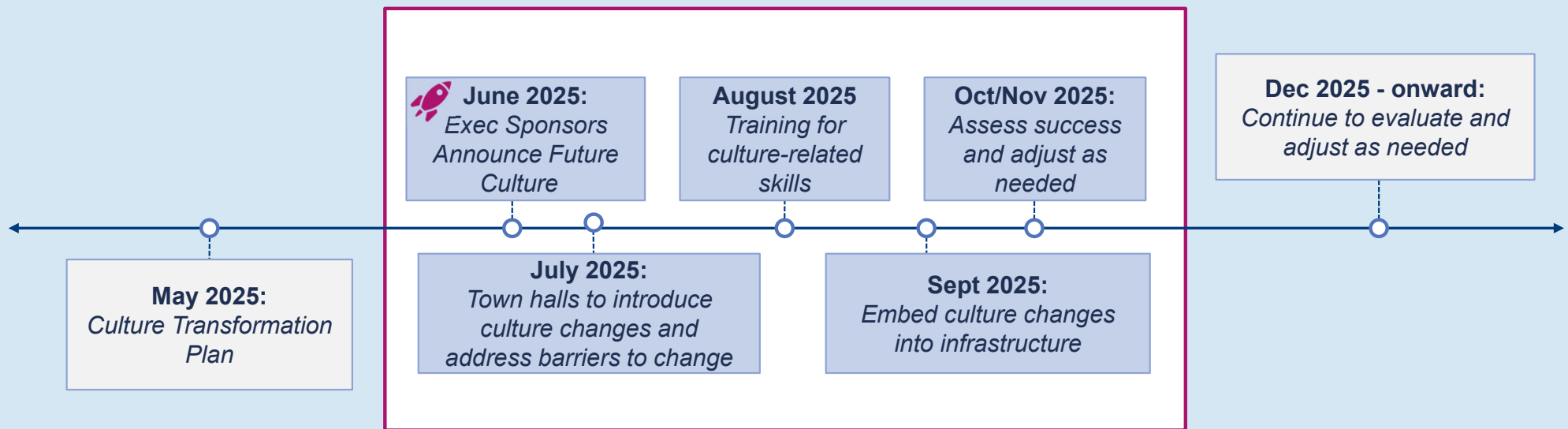**Roles & Performance**

Mission & Motivation

Psychological Safety

Mission in Motion Timeline

Current Focus Area

May 2024:
Culture Survey

Dec 2024:
Project MOST Change Readiness and Culture Survey

Feb – Mar 2025:
Cabinet Interviews

March 2025:
Focus Groups

Mar – Apr:
Define Future State

April 2025:
Current-State Assessment

May 2025:
Pulse Survey/Culture Transformation Plan

Jun – Dec 2025:
Launch Culture Activities

Mission in Motion

May 2025:
Culture Transformation Plan

June 2025:
Exec Sponsors Announce Future Culture

July 2025:
Town halls to introduce culture changes and address barriers to change

August 2025
Training for culture-related skills

Sept 2025:
Embed culture changes into infrastructure

Oct/Nov 2025:
Assess success and adjust as needed

Dec 2025 - onward:
Continue to evaluate and adjust as needed

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Executive Leadership Accelerator Program

ELAP Timeline

Key Activities

Launch
May 2025

- Program management kickoff and working sessions
- Program logistics, systems, resources/vendors, communications, materials
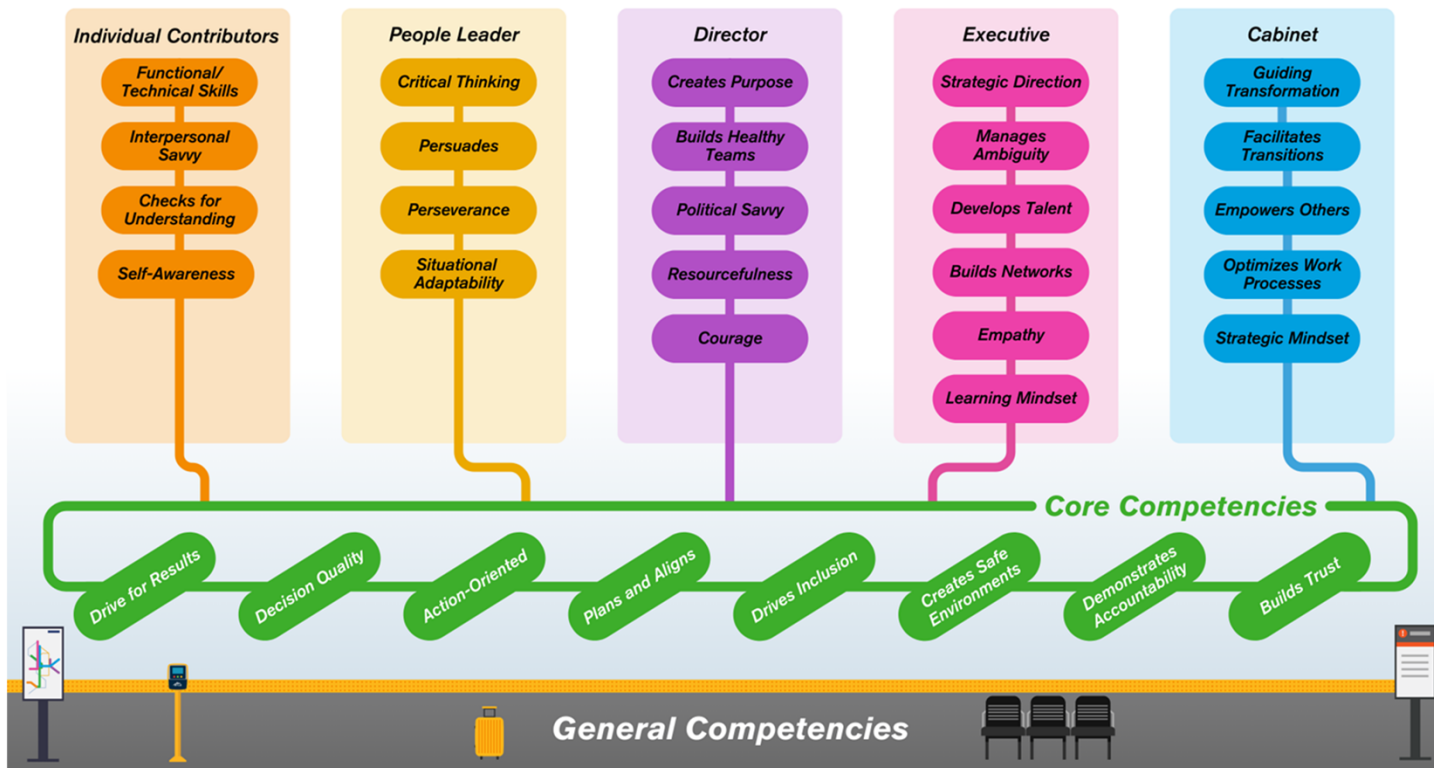
Selection & Orientation
June 2025

- Participant announcement and outreach
- Participant nomination, application
- Participant selection, commitment
- Participant orientation

Activities
June – February 2026

- Assessments (360, Hogan)
- Development Planning
- Leadership coaching
- Mentoring and networking
- Cohort-based agency-wide action learning project

Close
March 2026

- Program evaluation
- Program reporting
- Program close-out meeting
- Program alumni network

Thank you.

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