

LEAN @ WORK

Resource Management + Coordination Strategies

As a small office with nearly 50 years of experience building in Alberta, RPK Architects' longevity is tied to its ability to stay nimble and adapt to the times. As with all companies of a similar vintage, we have seen the transition from vellum to CAD to BIM. But these changes have been technological; and while the new tools may make us faster at individual tasks, we noticed that we can still do better on the whole.

Having experienced lean methods on the client side of our healthcare projects, we have been keen to systematically adopt similar principles within our office. We have always prided ourselves on our approach to technical solutions, document production, design, and resource management. Lean gives us a new lens through which to improve these processes.

Centered around an ethos of constant improvement, our staff use set processes to learn from our past endeavours, ensure holistic employee education, and allow for timely rendition of deliverables. Our passion for lean is contagious and we eagerly encourage our consultants to adopt our techniques and lean with us towards project success.

“ I have to change to stay the same.

William de Kooning



PULL PLAN

A pull plan first identifies the timing for needed resources based on the agreed to schedule. This is then developed into a resource allocation plan, allowing the team to verify that the needed resources are available at the time they are needed.

LEAN PROCESS GROUP

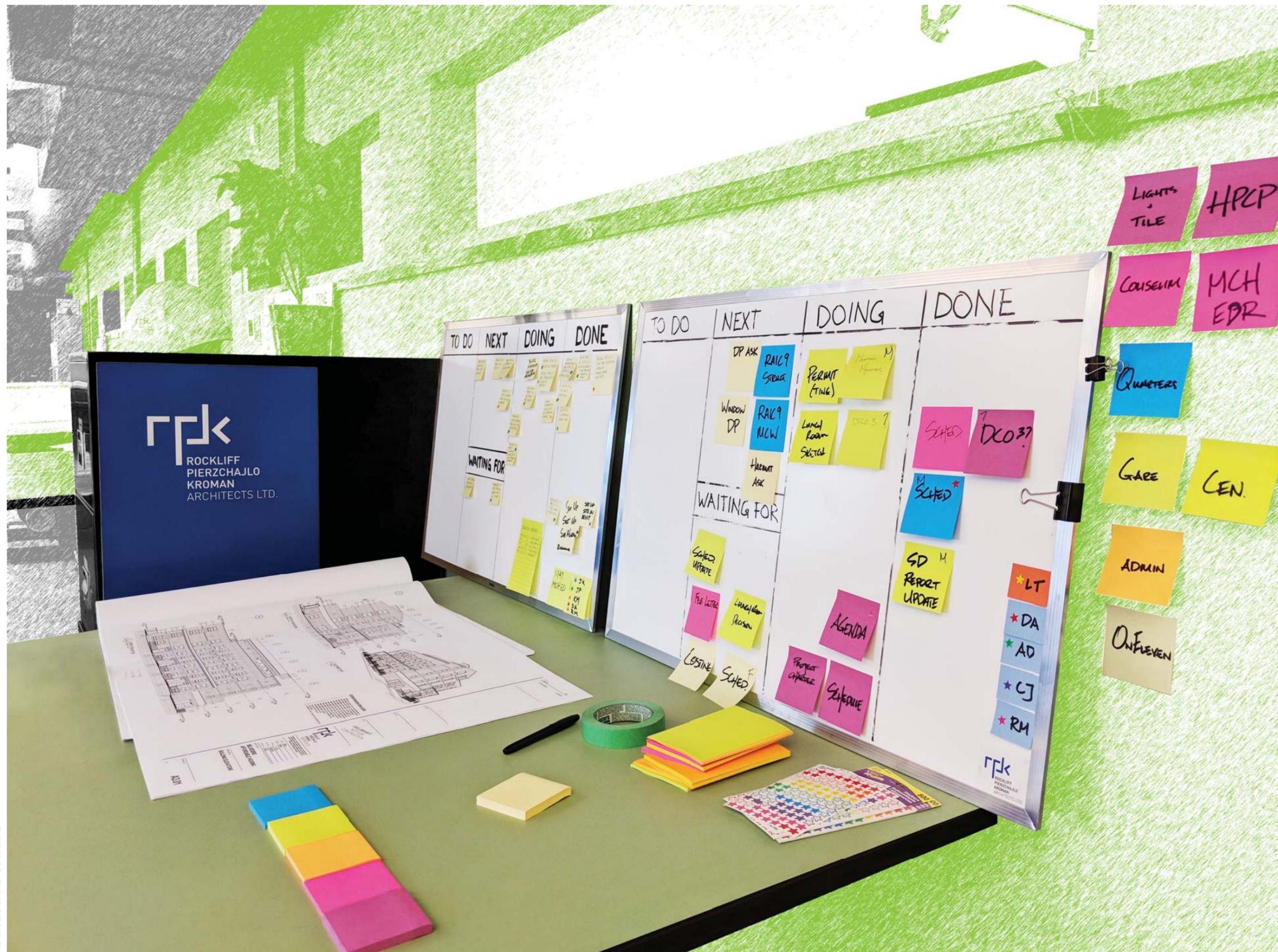
Once a month, our Lean Process Group, comprised of four staff, meet to discuss ways to make our office workflows more effective and efficient. Ideas generated from this group are then vetted by senior management prior to implementing. The Lean Process Group looks at all aspects of our office, including administration, design, technical drawing production, and construction administration.

KANBAN BOARDS

As a workflow visualization tool, Kanban boards enable RPK to optimize project tasks. We use sticky notes on a whiteboard to communicate status, progress, and issues within the production of the design and technical drawings. Typically, this is performed daily to keep everyone informed with regards to what needs to be done and by when, and to ensure no one is left spinning their wheels.

In the thick of a project, some of our project teams will meet twice a day in 15 minute stand-up meetings, once in the morning and again at noon, ensuring no one feels roadblocked in undertaking their tasks.

Kanban boards are featured in the photograph on the right.



KANBAN BOARDS

PLUS/ DELTAS

Once a week, our entire office participates in a Plus/ Delta exercise where we discuss the positives (wins) and the learning moments in the past week. This can include things such as winning a new contract; a challenge with a detail during construction; or something more personal. This allows staff, be it senior or junior, to learn about some of the demanding situations that people have faced, and hear about what solutions or methods may have worked. It is also a chance to celebrate all our victories as a group.

Lately, we have interjected Drafting Moments to provide a 2 minute insight into a particular drafting convention and understand why it is important. This is an inspired and effective way to make sure we are on the same page and more interactive and memorable than reading a drafting manual.

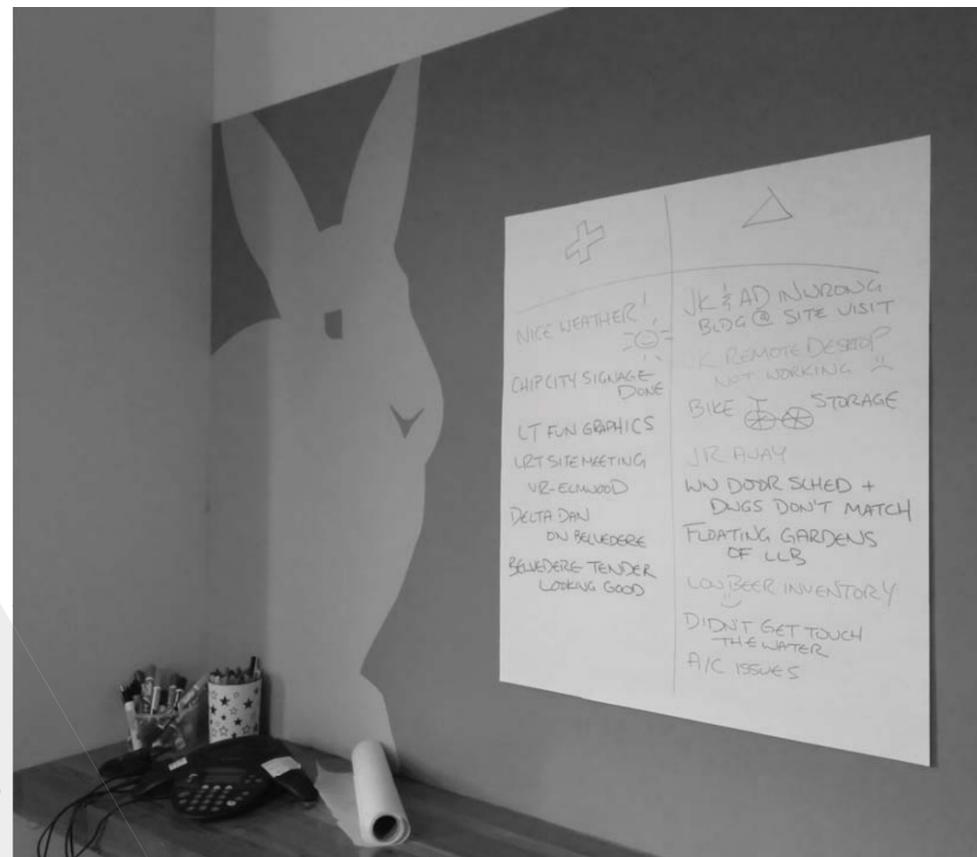


YAMMER + SHAREPOINT

To ensure effective project communication and include all subconsultants and the contractor, we have been using two online platforms.

Yammer is a highly collaborative application that allows everyone involved to follow and record much of the communication related to a project. Conversations are broken down into individual streams, making it much easier to follow. This platform is a perfect way to prevent the silo-ization of problems and combats limitation on participation around issues (and therefore, solutions). Additionally, Yammer allows for a fantastic means for everyone involved in the project to cross-train and learn from specialists in other disciplines or parts of the construction process.

SharePoint is a centralized cloud based file storage system that allows all team members to access or to save information related to the project. Finding or storing information is made much easier and faster with this community-based archive. This platform limits bottlenecks created by a singular point of contact in organizations while allowing for proper document control.



YAMMER SCREENSHOT

PLUS/ DELTA