



AGENDA NO. 6 CITY OF OCEANSIDE

Development Services Department

Memorandum

DATE: March 11, 2009

TO: Planning Commission

CC: Jerry Hittleman, Secretary to the Planning Commission

FROM: George Buell, Development Services Director 

SUBJECT: **Transmittal of Draft Productivity Study of the Development Services Department, Volume 1 (Matrix Consulting Group)**

On May 7, 2008, the City Council approved a Professional Services Agreement with Matrix Consulting Group to perform two studies of the Development Services Department (DSD):

1. A productivity study to evaluate staffing levels, staff roles and responsibilities, and internal processes related to discretionary applications and ministerial plan review; and
2. A fee study to determine the actual cost of discretionary project application processing and ministerial plan review, and to recommend modifications to the existing fee schedule.

At staff's direction, Matrix created two separate volumes for the productivity study. A draft of the first volume is attached, and it addresses internal processes and procedures, and the second volume addresses staffing levels, roles and responsibilities.

The following analysis applies only to the first volume. A final draft of the second volume, which will address staffing levels, should be complete within two weeks, and the fee study is scheduled for completion in early April. All three documents will be taken into consideration during budget discussions.

As described the Executive Summary of the attached report, the DSD has many strengths, and as with any organization or business unit, there are also many opportunities for improvement. Toward that improvement, Matrix has developed 181 recommendations to modify internal processes and procedures. Zoning Ordinance amendments that can result in a more streamlined review of less significant discretionary permit applications are also advised. These adjustments to DSD practice and City policy are suggested as a result of Matrix's breadth of experience with other, similar governmental agencies and interviews with DSD customers and staff. Of primary focus throughout the study was to provide easier understanding of and greater predictability to the development review process (for both our customers and staff). Also recommended are investments in technological systems that would improve ease of access to development-related public documents, all DSD permit applications, and more efficiently track permit status and data related to staff productivity. Collectively, these investments would enhance internal and external communication, allow for better utilization staff and project management, and improve customer service.

I look forward to hearing your comments on this draft document at your meeting on March 23, 2009.

**Productivity Study of the Development
Services Department – Technology and
Processes – Volume 1**

CITY OF OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

DRAFT

matrix 
consulting group
721 Colorado Avenue, Suite 101
Palo Alto, California 94303
v.650.858.0507 f.650.858.0509

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report, which follows, presents the results of the productivity study of the Development Services Department conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group. The report is presented in two volumes. This first volume addresses technology and processes. The second volume addresses organization and staffing.

This first chapter of this first volume introduces the analysis – outlining principal objectives and how the analysis was conducted – and presents an Executive Summary.

1. STUDY SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES.

The project team conducted a productivity study of the Development Services Department's existing operations, service levels, staffing levels, and opportunities to streamline the development review process. The analysis was to be fact based and include all aspects of service provision by the Department. The purpose of the study was to identify opportunities to improve productivity, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of the operations in the Planning, Building, Engineering, and Fire Prevention divisions and to identify cost factors that impact the processing of development-related products.

The scope focused on the six “building blocks” for an effective and efficient development review process including organizational structure, technology, physical space, core business processes, staff, and the regulatory framework.

The approach of the project team in meeting this scope is portrayed below.

- Develop an in-depth understanding of the key issues impacting the Department. The Matrix Consulting Group conducted interviews with Department staff at all levels of the Department. Interviews focused on goals and objectives, management systems, the use of technology, the levels of service provided by the Department, the resources available to provide those services, etc.

- Develop a profile of the Department. The Matrix Consulting Group conducted interviews with Departmental staff and other key staff in the City to document the current organization of services, the structure and functions of the Department, budgets, workload data, management systems, inventory of the infrastructure, etc.
- Conduct a comparison of the Department program and practices to 'best management practices.'
- Conduct focus groups to elicit feedback from customers of the Department regarding the adequacy of the levels of service provided by the Department.
- Evaluate the staffing, organization structure, and service levels in the Department. This included interviews with key staff to develop an understanding of the current service delivery model, evaluation of the adequacy of current service levels, work practices, work planning and scheduling systems, productivity and staffing levels, the plan of organization, and asset management.

The objective of this assessment was to identify opportunities for improvement in the operational and economic efficiency of the Department, and practicable opportunities for enhancing the quality of its product and services.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT EMPLOYS A NUMBER OF BEST PRACTICES.

An organizational and management analysis by its nature focuses on opportunities for improvement. However, there are a number of strengths in the Department. Examples of these strengths are portrayed below.

- Inspection requests are generally responded to by a Building Inspector within one workday of the request.
- Building inspection staff each have certifications in more than one trade – Building, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, etc. Three building inspection staff obtained Combination Inspector certification in the last year.
- Combination inspectors are utilized to respond to inspection requests.
- Over the counter building permit plan check service is generally available for permits that have a master/standard plan, do not require structural or complex review, or for single trade (M.E.P.) permits. The Building Division is issuing

approximately 58% of their building permits over-the-counter, including many simple residential projects that do not require plans, and all M.E.P. permits.

- Some simple residential M.E.P. permits for common replacements of water heaters, furnaces, electrical service, and re-pipes can be issued via a “fax-in” program.
- The Building Division has published “target dates” for building permit plan checking.
- The Planning Commission holds four workshops per year; one is used to create the work plan for the coming year. The last work plan was adopted by the Commission in September of 2007, and approved by the City Council in November of that year.
- There is a “Development Processing Guide” that is available at the counter and on line. It includes an overview of the development process and an explanation of the planning, engineering, building, fire department and water utilities development processes.
- There is a separate system under Planning/Project Search on the City’s web site that provides access to basic information about applications on file with the Planning Division (filed application form, the applicant’s description of their proposal, a vicinity map and brief description of the status of the application).
- The City’s General Plan contains all the mandatory elements (land use, circulation, housing, conservation and open space located in the Environment and Resource Management Element, noise and public safety. It also contains elements of interest to Oceanside (community facilities, hazardous waste and military reservation/Camp Pendleton).
- The City is undertaking 3 specific area plans; The Oceanside Boulevard Corridor Master Plan, the Coast Highway Master Plan and the Alternative Use Study for the Center City Golf Course site.
- Combination Fire Inspectors are utilized to respond to all fire life safety inspection requests.
- The Fire Prevention Division has adopted the most recent uniform fire code and updated the code to reflect local conditions and requirements. Code interpretations are discussed in the division’s weekly meetings to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- For the most part, the Engineering Division is now using combination Public Works Inspectors for capital improvement and private development with

inspectors assigned specific areas. The inspectors also are assigned specific projects and attend a pre-construction meeting with the builder.

- The Engineering Division has recently updated their web site and is providing a variety of permit and plan check information at that site.
- Zoning regulations in the City's industrial zoning districts have been streamlined in some aspects. For example, a wholesale distribution and storage in the general industrial (IG) zoning district is a permitted use, and is permitted in the limited industrial (IL) district if the building is 50,000 square feet or less.

These strengths provide a sound basis for further enhancements.

3. AGENDA FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

In developing recommendations for the improvement of the Development Services Department, the project team was guided by a publication of the American Planning Association entitled *The Development Review Process: A Means To A Nobler and Greater End*.¹ The publication indicated that applicants want:

- **Predictability** including clear expectations, no surprises, and a clear decision process with decision points;
- **Fair treatment** with rules that are the same for everyone with the offering of trust to applicants by the City and the demonstration of trustworthy behavior by the City;
- **Accurate and accessible information** that is easy to find and understand, with clear applicant requirements and standards;
- **Timely processing** that establishes early tentative dates for hearings, guaranteed review turnaround times, and published Planning Commission and City Council meeting dates;
- **Reasonable and fair costs** for application fees, impact fees, and development commitments;
- **Competent staff** with a team that possesses a balance of "hard" technical skills and "soft" people skills;

¹ American Planning Association, Zoning Practice, *The Development Review Process: A Means To A Nobler and Greater End*, January 2005.

- **Elegant regulations** that fit the circumstances of Oceanside, are easy to navigate, are rational, and that contain desired outcomes not requiring “herculean” efforts to attain.

The report itself contains more than 200 recommendations in both volumes. It is important for the City, as it begins to implement these recommendations, to not get lost in the volume and number of recommendations, but to focus on these themes.

(1) Streamline the Land Entitlement, Building, and Engineering Permit Processes

PricewaterhouseCoopers developed a model, with the cooperation of the American Institute of Architects, to document the increase in local development activity and government tax revenues through more efficient permit processes.² The specific findings of the application of this model are summarized as follows:

- Quicker permitting times will encourage economic development;
- Permitting delays raise tenant costs both in new buildings and existing buildings;
- With the competition between jurisdictions for new development dollars, more efficient permit processes can attract investment from other areas;
- Accelerating permit processes can permanently increase local government revenues;
- Increased construction spending provides broader economic benefits; and
- Because of the economic importance of investment in structures, even modest efficiency gains in permitting processes can have large impacts.

The project team identified a number of opportunities to streamline and simplify the development review process. These opportunities are summarized below.

- The Building Division should utilize a concurrent plan check process, not a sequential process, and assume responsibility of the initial intake, processing, routing, receiving, and tracking of plan submittals for all reviewing departments and divisions.

² PricewaterhouseCoopers, the Economic Development of Accelerating Permit Processes on Local Development and Government Revenues, December 2005

- The Building Division should reduce the number of divisions and departments that are routed building permit plans for plan checking. The Building Division, for example, should provide zoning clearance for simple building permits.
- The Building Division should increase the proportion of building permits issued over-the-counter and should begin, with the acquisition of an automated permit information system, to issue building permits over the Internet.
- The Planning Division should simplify and streamline selected aspects of land entitlement permits by developing proposals for consideration of the City Council to delegate authority for approval or disapproval of selected land entitlement permits to the City Planner. These include such permits as variances, lot line adjustments, and tentative parcel maps.
- The Planning Division should develop recommendations for consideration by the City Council to increase the number and types of minor uses that can be approved as an Administrative Conditional Use Permit.
- The Planning Division should review those uses in the zoning ordinance that require a site development permit, and develop recommendations to increase the number and types of uses that can be approved as an Administrative Site Development Permit.
- The Planning Division should reduce the extent of the routing of land entitlement permits to other divisions and departments in consultation with Engineering, Building and Safety, Fire, and Water Utilities. This would apply to less complex and routine permits such as Administrative Conditional Use Permits.

Improvements in permit processes can help a community promote economic development, lower business costs, and create jobs both within the construction sector and throughout the local economy. Increased tax collections can provide a revenue source that can help finance the costs of the systems and procedural improvements needed to accelerate permit approval.

(2) Establish Management Accountability for Managing the Building, Land Entitlement, and Engineering Permit Processes.

One of the most critical components of effective land entitlement processes and building permit processes is to clearly define the manager in the City's organization

accountable for managing that process. These managers should “own” that process. These process owners are responsible for that process, responsible for decision-making as it relates to that process, managing a process team, maintaining process metrics at the desired levels, and improving the process. A number of recommendations within the report propose that the City clarify accountability in the City’s organization for managing the land entitlement permit, building permit, and engineering permit processes. These recommendations are summarized below.

- The Building Division should revise and shorten cycle time objectives for building permit plan checking. The cycle time objectives should be applied on a citywide basis for all of the divisions and departments that are involved in the plan check process.
- The Planning Division should establish formal, written cycle time objectives for plan checking of land entitlement permits.
- The Subdivision Section should establish formal, written cycle time objectives for plan checking of engineering permits.
- The City should hold the Building Official responsible for management of the number of workdays required for building permit plan checking by all of the divisions and departments involved, not just the Building Division and for monitoring performance against the cycle time objectives on a regular basis.
- The City should hold the City Planner responsible for management of the number of workdays required for land entitlement permit plan checking by all of the divisions and departments involved, not just the Planning Division, and for monitoring performance against the cycle time objectives on a regular basis.
- The City should hold the City Engineer responsible for management of the number of workdays required for engineering permit plan checking by all of the divisions and departments involved, not just the Engineering Division, and for monitoring performance against the cycle time objectives on a regular basis.
- Track and monitor the success or failure of staff in meeting cycle time objectives through regular management information reports generated on a monthly basis by an automated permit information system. This should include all of the divisions / departments involved in the building permit, land entitlement permit, and engineering permit plan check process.

- A number of steps should be taken to reduce the extent of incomplete submittals for land entitlement permit applications. A significant proportion of applications are being deemed incomplete, in some cases numerous times for the same application, and the number of calendar days required to deem a land entitlement permit application complete is lengthy, much longer than the number of calendar days required to process an application to a decision once the application is deemed complete. The efficiency of the permit application process begins at intake, and the Planning Division needs to reduce the extent of incomplete submittals that are accepted for intake. The measures the Division should take to accomplish this objective include, for example:
 - The planner on duty at the public counter should check land entitlement permit applications at submittal to assure these applications meet basic submittal requirements using prescriptive checklists, and reject applications that do not meet essential submittal requirements (judgment should be used in this decision guided by written policies and procedures to assure consistency);
 - Application guides should be developed for each type of land entitlement application to include all of the City’s requirements for an applicant to achieve a complete permit application submittal;
 - The Planning Division should provide workshops for consulting planners, architects, engineers, developers and others involved the land development process explaining the land entitlement permit submittal requirements;
 - The Planning Division should publish to its web site examples of complete submittals, and a listing of the most frequent causes for applications being deemed incomplete (with this list being updated quarterly);
 - The applicant, after the land entitlement permit application is initially deemed incomplete, should be required to submit, as part of the second submittal, a memorandum listing each of the items that was cause for the application being deemed incomplete, and what measures the applicant has taken to address each item on the list;
 - The fee structure for land entitlement permit applications should provide the option for the City to require additional payments by the applicant should the application be deemed incomplete more than twice; and
 - The City should require applicants of certain projects to use the pre-application developer’s conference.

The ability of the City to provide responsive customer service in the land

entitlement and the building permit processes depends on clearly defining accountability for managing these processes. The manager responsible for managing these processes should be accountable for creating, sustaining and improving that process and responsible for the successful outcomes of the process.

(3) Use of Technology to Better Manage the Building, Land Entitlement, and Engineering Permit Processes

The National Conference on States and Building Codes and Standards (NCSBCS) issued a report in 2005, entitled *Final Report on the "NCSBCS/Alliance Survey on Savings from the Application of Information Technology to Building Codes Administration and Enforcement Processes*.³ The report concluded that building and safety divisions have increasingly turned to information technology as a tool to make their services more efficient and effective. The application of information technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their services includes online permit processing, electronic plan submittal, plan tracking and review, licensing and the scheduling of field inspections. The report concluded that, in some cases, information technology has enabled the building and safety divisions to cut in half the number of time it takes for government and the private sector to complete a regulatory process.

The City lacks the technology to provide permit applicants with responsive service, and to enable the City to effectively manage the land entitlement permit, building permit, and engineering permit processes. The City should address these challenges in the short-term. Recommendations to address these challenges are summarized below.

³ National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards, NCSBCS/Alliance Survey on Savings from the Application of Information Technology to Building Codes Administration and Enforcement Processes, May 2005

- The City should acquire an automated permit information system in calendar year 2009.
- All of the departments and divisions involved in the development review process should be required to utilize the automated permit information system for all aspects of the land entitlement, engineering, and building permit process.
- The City should acquire an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System in fiscal year 2010-11.
- The Information Technologies Division should integrate the desktop GIS application with the automated permit information system. The application should be based on ESRI technology to facilitate integration with the City's existing platform, the automated permit information system, and to enable streamlined access to the City's geo-spatial data.
- The Information Technologies Division should integrate the automated permit information system capacity for online land entitlement permit and zoning search with a GIS interface to provide the public with the ability to search for permits through input fields or via a mapping interface.
- The Development Services Department should enhance its own expertise and begin to develop and utilize GIS in its daily routine including support for GIS activities, system and application support.
- The Building Division should require submittal of electronic plans prior to issuance of the building permit.

The use and application of technology is an essential tool that can, if properly implemented and utilized, enable staff to better serve their customers and increase the efficiency of their service delivery.

4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the recommendations contained within the report is presented in the table below.

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4.5.2	The Building Division should utilize a concurrent plan review and assume responsibility of the initial intake, processing, routing, receiving, and tracking of plan submittals for all reviewing departments and divisions.	60
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2. FOCUS GROUPS

As part of the management study of the development review process for the City of Oceanside, the project team conducted three focus group meetings over two days. Participants included small and large commercial and residential land developers, small business owners, architects, land use planners, engineers, residents who are impacted by the development process, and representatives of business and special interest groups with the objective to obtain their perceptions and assess customer satisfaction. These participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience with the City's development review process.

All meetings were conducted on a confidential basis to obtain as much candid feedback as possible, with no City staff in attendance. The focus groups were intended to elicit views and opinions on positive and negative aspects of relevant development service activities and to seek constructive feedback and ideas for change that will improve and enhance the process. In considering the results, it is important for the reader to bear in mind that unlike documents and statistics, the views expressed by individuals are subjective and may reflect personal biases. Nonetheless, they are as important as the objective material because it is these people, with their feelings and prejudices, who work with or are often affected by the City's activities. A second important consideration is that in analyzing the material, it may not be as important to determine whether a particular response is "correct" as it is to simply accept a response. In other words, perception is reality to the person holding the perception.

1. THE FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS MADE SOME POSITIVE COMMENTS REGARDING THE CITY OF OCEANSIDE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

Although one of the main goals of the focus groups was to identify challenges and opportunities and suggestions for improvement, participants made some positive remarks. These remarks originated primarily from participants in the development community. These comments are presented below.

- The Fire Department plan review and check process has improved over the past year.
- Some participants have noted some improvement in the Building Division plan check process over the past year.
- There is improved decision making authority and leadership in Engineering and recently landscape plan review has improved with the addition of a landscape architect in the Subdivision section of Engineering.
- Recently the Subdivision section of Engineering has added useful information to the Web site.
- Developers and their representatives like the process whereby they get to chose their EIR consultant.

2. PARTICIPANTS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY CONSIDERED THE REVIEW PROCESS IN OCEANSIDE “BELOW AVERAGE” AND MORE DIFFICULT THAN MOST OTHER CITIES.

Most participants from the development community had experience working with development services in other communities (in the San Diego area, California and across the country). Based on this experience, the participants were asked how Oceanside’s development review process compares to other jurisdictions. The participants indicated that the City’s process is more difficult than most other cities that they have worked with. Specific comments are presented below.

- The zoning and wireless ordinances and development standards are not current.

- The review process is not well defined and there is a lack of written policies and guidelines. The process is “subjective” and not predictable. Historically, statutory time requirements have not been met; Planning is now endeavoring to meet them but often comments have not been received from other divisions involved in the process e.g. Engineering.
- The application of rules, standards, and policies is inconsistent from staff member to staff member, especially in the Planning Division, and from project to project. An applicant can get two different answers to the same question depending on who is asked. “Staff doesn’t know existing rules and some are non-existent and they make them up as they go.”
- There are no written summaries of the pre-application conference discussion and the applicant is warned not to rely on what was discussed in the conference. Conceptual plans are submitted at the conference versus one week in advance as in other communities.
- Plans get lost and documents from files and entire files are often missing.
- Projects in the Redevelopment area do not go through the normal plan review process and the process is not well documented and understood.
- Long-term relationships with staff make the process easier to get through than in other jurisdictions. If one does not have long-term relationships, it is far more difficult. If applicant is a first time “customer” of the development review process in Oceanside, “you are in trouble”. It was stated that, “it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.”
- There is a lack of coordination and communication between the departments/divisions involved in the development review process in Oceanside. If there are conflicts, it is up to the applicant to initiate and coordinate with staff for resolution.
- There is no centralized counter; applicants must go from one division/department counter the next counter even in the same building area and department (Development Services: Planning, Engineering, and Building).
- The Planning staff is viewed as inexperienced and there is a lack of training for staff at all levels.
- Participants perceive that there is no organizational vision of land development in the community, but that individual planners have individual visions that they apply to individual projects.
- There is a lack of leadership/management and no “ownership” of the process by staff.

- The planning administrative approval process is the same as other approval processes and can take longer because only one staff member is empowered to grant such approvals.
- In general, the development community finds the pre-entitlement process more costly, and unpredictable post-entitlement process.
- There is a need for improved technology; expanded and accessible GIS, permit tracking, and current and easily accessible permit information on the internet were specifically noted.
- Comments were made that it is not always easy to get clarity, especially early in the process, on required fees and bonds. It was also noted that developers are being charged in lieu fee for reclaimed water lines, yet the ordinance requires the installation of lines and those present were not aware of city council approval of the in lieu fee. Some also questioned where the revenue from the fees collected for undergrounding utilities is going, as they perceive there is not undergrounding being done by the city.

Overall, the comments suggested that the development review process in Oceanside could be vastly improved. Some participants voiced the opinion that the process in Oceanside is “below average” compared to other jurisdictions in the San Diego/Oceanside area. Without improvements to the process, some developers and developer representatives noted that they will seek more projects in neighboring jurisdictions where processes are more definable and coordinated.

3. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS SHARED A NUMBER OF CONCERNS REGARDING THE PLANNING APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS.

Participants volunteered information and were asked specific questions pertaining to the Planning Division’s application and review processes, and indicated a number of challenges inherent in current policy and procedure.

(1) Planning Staff's Attitude, Availability, Responsiveness and Communication.

In general, participants perceived that the Planning Division was understaffed and inexperienced. Specific comments are presented below.

- Focus group participants noted that there has been significant turnover in the Planning staff. They believed turnover is the result of a combination of internal management issues, and opportunities being available in neighboring jurisdictions.
- Participants noted that it is not unusual for the case/project planner to change during the process and then the applicant "starts over".
- Representatives of the development community noted that responsiveness from case planners could be improved, citing examples of up to 3 to 4 days for a return phone call or email.
- Most developers and developer representatives noted that they find it is more efficient and effective to personally visit city hall and talk to the appropriate staff member about concerns or issues. It was noted that it is very unusual for staff to initiate communication on the status of an application or issues and problems.
- Most participants commented that the application process, in general, is not customer oriented. Some participants perceive there are "us versus them" or "city versus applicant" attitudes and a "you can't do that" approach versus "this is what you need to do to make or complete an application" among some staff; it varies from staff member to staff member. Some participants noted that it is rare to get helpful suggestions; the applicant needs to keep asking questions and hope they are asking the right questions and that they are asking the right person.

Participants noted that responsiveness and customer service continues to decline especially as there are more inexperienced planners. Some participants noted that they circumvent the case/project planner by directly approaching key individuals in the Planning Division and other development divisions/departments who are most responsive and helpful. One developer representative gave an example where, in a nearby community, staff discovered a "problem" with an application and associated conditions. The case / project planner got the key staff and consultants together and

resolved the issue and then called the developer representative. The representative indicated that has not happened in Oceanside; it is up to the developer or representative to coordinate the appropriate parties and resolve conflicts and issues.

(2) Effectiveness of Pre-application Meetings, Identification of Issues, Length of Processing Time, and Neighborhood Outreach:

Responses regarding questions related to the submittal and review process came primarily from developers and from developer consultants and representatives, but representatives of neighborhoods and community interest groups also had comments. These responses are presented below.

- It was consistently noted that City staff appears reluctant to make decisions and provide specific direction during pre-application meetings. Comments were made that staff does not provide written summaries of the meetings and that staff cautions applicants not to rely on responses and comments made in the meetings.
- Plan submittals and re-submittals are by appointment and it can take two weeks to get an appointment resulting in delays.
- Some developers and consultants noted that the original plan justification statement does not always get distributed to everyone in the development review process, nor do responses to staff comments which results in multiple reviews and time delays. In one case that was cited, the responses were "lost". Examples were also given where applicant responses to traffic comments did not get distributed to the transportation staff, and responses to geo-technical comments were not distributed to the geo-technical consultant.
- Developers noted that the application requirements and timelines could be better communicated during the pre-application meeting. Examples were provided of submitting several sets of plans with no defined period of review or processing.
- Comments were received that Engineering representatives are now attending the developer submittal meeting where they receive sets of plans for their use. It was noted that this was because they could not rely on receiving the plans in a timely manner from Planning; this was seen as an inappropriate fix for the problem. In addition, some comments were received that the applicant can still not be confident that the plans have been delivered to appropriate staff in the various divisions/departments in a timely manner and must follow up personally.

- Developers or their representatives did not consistently receive documented corrections or checklists throughout the review process.
- It was noted that an applicant can rely on “closure” in one division e.g. one division such as Fire finalizes conditions of approval and then when a re-submittal is made to address issues and concerns of other divisions, they are re-circulated to all divisions and departments with a risk of further change.
- It was noted that it is not uncommon for additional issues to surface in subsequent re-submittal reviews that should have been caught in the initial review.
- Developers, their representatives and residents agreed that different levels of service are provided for different projects without justification or explanation.
- Developers and their representatives as well as representatives of special interest groups and neighborhoods commented that the informal neighborhood outreach process is not well defined and documented. Applicants received inconsistent information as to what was expected, assistance in identifying neighborhood associations and special interest groups. Neighborhood and special interest representatives often do not find out about a project until the formal public hearing process, resulting in an inability to work with the applicant/developer to resolve concerns and issues.

(3) Application and Interpretation of the City’s Zoning Codes and Conditions of Approval and Ease of Accessibility of Zoning Information.

Participants noted inconsistencies in interpretation and application of the City’s Zoning Codes by type of project and staff members. The specific concerns are noted below.

- Conditions of approval are not project specific and often boilerplate conditions are not amended/changed from project to project, even if they don’t apply.
- Participants noted that perspectives and interpretation of the Code differ by project planner from flexible to rigid. The perception is that Planners are for the most part inexperienced and lack knowledge of code specifics and City history.
- Participants noted that there is a lack of written interpretations, policies and guidelines which leads to inconsistent application and a lack of predictability. Some perceive that a comment from a planning commissioner or city councilmember can become “policy” or “rule”.

- Developers and their representatives noted that they often do not see conditions of approval until the day of the public hearing. It is not uncommon for an applicant to discover conditions of approval that have never been reviewed or discussed with the applicant.
- Both developers and residents perceive that the staff does not have leeway to base decisions on intent rather than by strict code interpretations. Decisions often do not account for non-conforming conditions or consider the non-conforming conditions of neighboring lots.

Residents and developers maintained that the City does not appear to have a clear master plan for future development in the City. The current ordinance is applied on a reactive basis depending on project type and project location, rather than by a consistent vision for the future.

Participants noted that the zoning ordinance is overdue for review and update. Residents, developers and their consultants and representatives all experienced difficulty in securing a current copy of the zoning ordinance; they perceive that the ones at the counter and on the Web are not current and do not reflect all amendments.

4. THE FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLANNING APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS.

Although the participants shared a number of their challenges with the planning application process in Oceanside, they also were asked to provide specific improvement opportunities that would improve the process.

(1) Planning Staff's Attitude, Availability, Responsiveness and Communication.

The focus group participants made a number of suggestions regarding the Division's staff. These suggestions are presented below.

- Recruit and retain experienced planners. Provide on-going training opportunities and encourage attendance at professional conferences such as APA, and encourage professional certifications.

- Assign and maintain a case/project planner to a project from pre-application through certificate of occupancy.
- Provide customer service training for all employees.
- Develop performance measures and evaluate staff against these measures. Simple examples include requiring that staff return telephone calls and e-mails same day or within 24 hours and requiring case/project managers to contact applicants weekly to update them on the status of their application.

In general, the City's stakeholders are not adverse to adding additional experienced and trained staff to help with workload, and desire increased and regular staff initiated communication.

(2) Effectiveness of Pre-application Meetings, Identification of Issues, Length of Processing Time, and Neighborhood Outreach.

Representatives of the development community and community interest and neighborhood residents made a number of suggestions regarding the Division's staff.

These suggestions are presented below.

- Require conceptual plans to be submitted one week to 10 days in advance of pre-application meetings and require staff to review them and come to the conference with comments and constructive suggestions.
- Provide checklists by type of project in pre-application meetings. Use the checklists as an agenda of talking points, and provide options and planning services within this framework. Provide written minutes of the discussion.
- Communicate time frames by type of project during pre-application meetings, including information about hearings, suggestions for preparation and how not to miss deadlines.
- Create a periodic project management meeting process to inform applicants of project status and next steps.
- Ensure that the original plan justification statement gets distributed to all parties to the plan review process and that all responses to comments are distributed to the appropriate parties the day received.

- Assign the same case/project planner that attended the pre-application meeting to the application itself and maintain the same case/project planner through the pre-entitlement process at a minimum and ideally through certificate of occupancy. Participants noted that the case/project planner can change during the entitlement process.
- Supply current and up to date interactive forms and guideline information on the internet and make it intuitive as to their location.
- Adhere to the Permit Streamlining Act, including ensuring that all divisions and departments have finalized and submitted their comments, and implement a communication procedure to document whether an application is deemed complete or incomplete.
- Post staff reports to the Planning Commission and City Council within a specified number of days before scheduled meetings so applicants have more time to prepare.
- Formalize an “informal” community outreach process, which should include the requirement for applicants to file and receive approval of the process (number and location of meetings etc.). Provide written comments made at the meetings with a list of attendees, of upcoming development projects farther in advance than routine public noticing requirements. The city should also provide applicants with a list of neighborhood associations, stakeholders and community interest groups.

As noted above, multiple suggestions were provided regarding communication about submittal requirements, processing timelines, and information availability over the City’s website.

(3) Application and Interpretation of the City’s Zoning Codes and Conditions of Approval and Ease of Accessibility of Zoning Information.

Overall, developers and their consultants and representatives would like to see planning staff more empowered to make decisions based on management’s unified policy direction regarding the interpretation and application of Codes. They also agreed that the City’s Zoning Ordinance is in need of comprehensive review and update. In addition, participants made a number of other suggestions. These suggestions are presented below.

- Provide project specific conditions and ensure that boiler plate conditions are appropriately amended to meet project specifics.
- Develop a written document detailing common code interpretations and situations to help developers and planners understand what City policy is.
- Reinstate on a consistent basis the process of holding a conference with applicants to review all proposed conditions three (3) weeks in advance of scheduled hearings.
- Provide the community with project history and zoning information by address via the Internet.
- Make project information and status available for residents by development area on the Internet.
- Provide accurate zoning information and project history available by address on the internet.
- Streamline the administrative approval process and delegate more approval authority to staff.

5. THE FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS SHARED A NUMBER OF ISSUES REGARDING THE BUILDING PLAN REVIEW PROCESS.

The participants volunteered information and were asked specific questions pertaining to the construction plan submittal and approval processes. The development community and small business and residential property owners provided information in this section. In general, improvements have been noted in the plan review process over the past year. Participants gave very high marks to the outside professional firm that provides plan check services.

(1) Plan Review Staff's Attitude, Availability, and Responsiveness.

Representatives noted that there have been improvements over the past year in plan review, and, in general, the staff is available and responsive.

However, small business and individual residential property owners have found it difficult to get useful information as to requirements for minor improvements. Examples were given of an attitude of staff communicating, "you (the applicant) tell me what you are going to do and I will tell you if it is ok" versus an attitude of "here's what you need to get your permit" and the applicant needing to know to ask the right questions.

(2) Communication During the Review Process, Completeness and Accuracy Of Review, and Consistency of Code Interpretation.

Representatives of the development community and community interest and neighborhood residents made a number of suggestions regarding the Division's staff.

These suggestions are presented below.

- As noted above, participants gave very high marks to the outside professional consulting plan checkers used by the city. They found them to be timely in their review, consistent in the application of the building codes, and complete and accurate in their plan checking.
- Comments were received that the staff plan checkers are not as knowledgeable, experienced and competent as the consultants.
- Again, those who are not professional land developers or technical professionals (engineers, architects, etc.) found the process confusing and communication lacking.
- In general, the development community and consultant participants believe the technical nature of the plan check process lends itself to more timely and accurate plan review by both staff and consultants.

6. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BUILDING PLAN REVIEW PROCESS.

The development community provided the following suggestions for improvement to the construction plan submittal and review process:

- Provide checklists and information about expectations, submittal requirements and timelines for the City's construction plan review process by type of project. This is particularly important for small business and individual homeowners who have improvement needs.
- Some participants suggested that applicants be allowed to make re-submittals directly to the outside plan check consultants to save processing time.
- Clarity as to the relationship and roles of the staff plan check reviewers and the private consultant would be helpful. Some comments were made that the city should use outside consultants.

7. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS SHARED A NUMBER OF ISSUES REGARDING THE BUILDING INSPECTION PROCESS.

The participants volunteered information and were asked specific questions pertaining to the construction inspection and final approval processes, and indicated a number of challenges. The development community, including architects and engineers, was the only participant group providing information in this section. In general, participants found the quality and consistency of inspections to vary among inspectors and by the complexity of the project.

- For the most part inspectors show up on time for inspections and the inspection request system works well. However, examples were provided where the inspectors did not show up for scheduled pre-construction meetings.
- Participants reported that some building inspectors are not as experienced and knowledgeable regarding the building codes as others. An example was given where a field inspector was not sure that something was constructed to code, could not find the correct section in the code book and took three (3) days to get back to the contractor/engineer with an answer.
- Participants noted that some inspectors will initiate field changes that are not consistent with the approved plans.

- It was noted that field changes that are requested by the developer/contractor must be re-submitted and go through the plan check process while inspector field changes do not.

8. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BUILDING INSPECTION PROCESS.

The following suggestions for improvement to the inspection and final approval process were suggested by representatives of the development community.

- Develop written procedures to guide the field change order and re-submittal process.
- Require inspectors to attend pre-construction meetings.
- Provide training to ensure all inspectors are knowledgeable of the most recently adopted building codes. Recruit and retain experienced and knowledgeable inspectors.
- Provide clear lines of authority in decision making regarding field changes and challenges to code interpretations.

9. THE FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS PROVIDED FEEDBACK REGARDING THE ENGINEERING PLAN REVIEW PROCESS.

The participants volunteered information and responded to specific questions pertaining to the Engineering plan review process and indicated a number of challenges. Only representatives of the land development community provided information in this section.

Similar to the comments received regarding the Planning process, participants indicated a number of challenges inherent in the current process and noted that in general, there is a lack of consistency in the application of conditions and that there appears to be a lack of communication and coordination between Engineering and the other divisions/departments involved in the process. Specific comments are presented below.

- Some participants noted that Engineering comments are not always available by the statutory 30 day review deadline.
- It was noted that conditions are often not project specific and boiler plate conditions are not amended to reflect specific projects. They also noted a lack of consistency from project to project.
- Engineering is perceived as bureaucratic and staff members have specific and distinct roles and assignments. While this can result in a high level of expertise in some areas, it also can result in delays if someone is absent from the office and an applicant is seeking clarification of conditions or answers to questions.
- Participants noted that there are often conflicts in comments and conditions between landscaping, stormwater and water utilities, and that it is up to the applicant to resolve such conflicts.
- Some participants noted that an appointment must be made with Planning to make a re-submittal and if the appropriate Engineering staff representative(s) are not available, there can be significant delays (up to two weeks).
- Participants noted that for the most part written engineering standards are out of date and can not be relied upon.
- It was noted that depending on the individual and/or the complexity of a project, issues or problems that should have been caught in the initial review will surface during later reviews.
- Some participants noted an inconsistency between what used to be needed to meet stormwater requirements and the present. Some attributed this to changing state and national regulations and the change in using a staff person versus a consultant.

10. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ENGINEERING PLAN REVIEW PROCESS.

The development community provided suggestions for improvement to improve the engineering plan review process as noted below.

- It was recommended that technical standards be brought up to date and published.
- Provide checklists by type of project as to what is required for submittal.
- Recruit and retain engineers experienced in the land development and plan check processes. Provide ongoing training opportunities.

- Streamline the internal engineering plan check process to ensure the timely submittal of comments.
- Ensure that conditions are project specific.

11. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS PROVIDED SOME INPUT ON THE FIRE PREVENTION PLAN REVIEW PROCESS.

In general, the participants have noted a marked improvement in the quality of service from the Fire Prevention Division over the past year. They report consistent and fair application of the Uniform Fire Code and knowledgeable and accessible staff. One participant did note that it was clear at the beginning of the process that based on the location of the project; there would be two different plan reviews and comments, one for the building code and one related to the wildland-urban interface. This was noted as an area for improvement in communication.

12. PARTICIPANTS PROVIDED SOME INPUT ON THE WATER UTILITIES PLAN REVIEW PROCESS AND INSPECTION SERVICES.

In general, participants from the land development community noted that the Water Utilities Department is independent and there is a lack of coordination and communication between that department and the other divisions / departments involved in the development review process. Some participants noted that plan checkers need more experience and training. The biggest issue that was noted is that often water utility inspector initiated field changes are not consistent with approved construction plans. These issues were noted as areas needing improvement.

3. EMPLOYEE SURVEY

As part of the review of the management study of the Development Services Department, the Matrix Consulting Group conducted a confidential survey. This chapter of the report summarizes the results of the employee survey.

1. A SURVEY WAS DISTRIBUTED TO EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PROCESS

The survey was distributed to 70 employees and 52 surveys were returned for a response rate of 74%. While the employee survey was confidential, employees were asked to identify their current assignment. The table below presents the results.

Current Assignment	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Planning	12	23.1%
Building and Safety	16	30.8%
Engineering	12	23.1%
Fire Prevention	6	11.5%
Water Utilities	1	1.9%
Unidentified	5	9.6%

The survey was prepared by the Matrix Consulting Group and contained one section. The section was a “multiple choice” section designed to cover a wide range of topics about the management, organization, and operation of the development process while minimizing the employee’s time and effort in completing this survey. Employees were asked to respond to 35 statements by selecting “no response,” “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neutral,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree.”

The following sections provide a discussion of the results.

2. MANY RESPONDING EMPLOYEES EXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

A total of ten questions were included in the employee survey regarding the development review process. These ten questions, and the responses are presented in the table below.

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Development permit processes in the City are neither unnecessarily complex nor burdensome on the applicant.	4	4	15	15	12	2
	8%	7%	29%	29%	23%	4%
2. I am able to consistently meet the Department's goals for permit turnaround times or timelines for the processing of land entitlement and / or building permits.	16	1	8	10	14	3
	31%	2%	15%	19%	27%	6%
9. Permit review, and the interpretation of codes and ordinances associated with permit review, is undertaken in a consistent manner by staff.	3	6	17	9	14	3
	6%	12%	33%	17%	27%	6%
12. Oceanside makes it easy for applicants or the general public to obtain complete, accurate information about all aspects of the development permitting process.	3	3	14	12	18	2
	6%	6%	27%	23%	35%	3%
14. Oceanside's development permitting procedures ensure that applicants are advised of <u>all</u> application requirements and standards early in the process.	4	3	13	20	11	1
	8%	6%	25%	38%	21%	2%
23. Most of the time, the permit application submitted by applicants is complete and adequate to allow prompt and complete action.	4	7	25	10	6	0
	8%	13%	48%	19%	12%	0%

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24. Oceanside's zoning codes, building regulations and development standards do not present unreasonable or unnecessary obstacles to development	7	2	11	14	15	3
	13%	4%	21%	27%	29%	6%
30. Overall, decisions regarding interpretations of the zoning ordinance, building codes, fire code, and engineering regulations are made consistently, with little variation from applicant to applicant.	6	6	9	16	13	2
	12%	12%	17%	31%	25%	4%
33. The development review process in this City is an efficient, well-run process.	1	5	18	18	9	1
	2%	10%	35%	35%	17%	2%
34. There is good coordination between my division and other divisions that are involved in the development review process	3	5	19	16	7	2
	6%	10%	37%	31%	13%	4%

Clearly, many responding employees expressed concern regarding the City making it difficult for applicants or the general public to obtain complete, accurate information about all aspects of the development permitting process, that development permitting procedures do not ensure that applicants are advised of all application requirements and standards early in the process, that Oceanside's zoning codes, building regulations and development standards present unreasonable or unnecessary obstacles to development, and that decisions regarding interpretations of the zoning ordinance, building codes, fire code, and engineering regulations are not made consistently, and vary from applicant to applicant

4. MOST RESPONDING EMPLOYEES BELIEVED THE TECHNOLOGY IN USE IN THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT WAS ADEQUATE.

There were three questions in the employee survey regarding the use and application of technology in the development review process. These three questions,

and the responses are presented in the table below.

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. My division has an efficient records management and document management system	1	8	13	14	12	4
	2%	15%	25%	27%	23%	8%
10. I am able to effectively utilize information systems and technology to track turnaround time for permits, record comments, corrections for permits and conditions of approval, and track other aspects of development permitting.	6	7	16	8	13	2
	12%	13%	31%	15%	25%	4%
13. The City has a robust geographical information system that I am able to utilize on a day-to-day basis in the accomplishment of my work.	6	10	19	9	7	1
	12%	19%	37%	17%	13%	2%

Overall, most respondents were not concerned regarding their ability to effectively utilize information systems and technology to track turnaround time for permits, record comments, corrections for permits and conditions of approval, and track other aspects of development permitting, and the robustness of the geographical information system

5. MOST EMPLOYEE RESPONDENTS BELIEVED THAT WORKLOAD WAS A PROBLEM

There were two questions in the employee survey regarding workload. These two questions, and the responses are presented in the table below.

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. My workload is manageable	0	2	10	6	26	8
	0%	4%	19%	12%	50%	15%
29. Overall, workload is equally divided and balanced among my co-workers in my work unit.	6	4	10	12	18	2
	12%	8%	19%	23%	35%	4%

Overall, the existing levels of workload appeared to be of concern to most responding employees, but that existing workload is well balanced within their unit.

6. MOST EMPLOYEE RESPONDENTS BELIEVED THAT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WERE WELL DOCUMENTED.

There were two questions in the employee survey regarding policies and procedures. These two questions, and the responses are presented in the table below.

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. My division has clear, well-documented policies and procedures to guide my involvement in the development permitting process	4	7	12	14	12	3
	8%	13%	23%	27%	23%	6%
35. There are clear, well-written policies and procedures to guide me in my day-to-day responsibilities for the development review process	1	8	14	16	12	1
	2%	15%	27%	31%	23%	2%

Most employees were not concerned regarding the adequacy of well-written policies and procedures.

7. MOST RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THAT THE CITY DID NOT PROVIDE GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE.

There were two questions in the employee survey regarding customer service. These two questions, and the responses are presented in the table below.

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19. Applicants have easy access to staff from various divisions involved in the development review process to obtain information about development permit application and approval requirements	1	3	7	6	30	5
	2%	6%	13%	12%	58%	10%
28. Customer service is a clear and driving force in the development review process	2	2	6	7	25	10
	4%	4%	12%	13%	48%	19%

There was a clear perspective that applicants do not have easy access to staff, and that customer service is a not clear and driving force in the development review process.

8. THERE WERE MIXED CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY MOST RESPONDENTS REGARDING TEAMWORK.

There were three questions in the employee survey regarding teamwork. These three questions, and the responses are presented in the table below.

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. There is good teamwork and communication between the different divisions and / or departments that are processing development plans and permits in the City.	2	6	22	10	11	1
	4%	12%	42%	19%	21%	2%
20. Everyone is encouraged to solve problems together regarding the development review process.	1	4	15	11	20	1
	2%	8%	29%	21%	38%	2%
27. There is free and open communication between all levels of employees involved in the development review process about the work they are performing.	0	4	14	13	18	3
	0%	8%	27%	25%	35%	6%

There were clear concerns regarding employees being encouraged to solve problems together regarding the development review process, and free and open communication between all levels of employees involved in the development review process about the work they are performing.

9. MOST RESPONDENTS WERE CONCERNED REGARDING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

There were twelve questions in the employee survey regarding the leadership of the development review process. These twelve questions, and the responses are presented in the table below.

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Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. My immediate supervisor does a good job of coaching and guiding me	1	8	6	9	13	15
	2%	15%	12%	17%	25%	29%
5. My division is effectively managed as it regards the development permitting process	3	4	15	8	20	2
	6%	8%	29%	15%	38%	4%
8. I feel valued by immediate supervisor for my unique talents and skills	0	6	10	3	20	13
	0%	12%	19%	6%	38%	25%
15. When mistakes are made, managers and supervisors focus on the learning and correcting the mistake rather than on placing blame.	2	7	10	15	12	8
	4%	13%	19%	29%	23%	12%
16. I am empowered to act within the scope of my expertise, training, and experience.	1	5	8	8	21	9
	2%	10%	15%	15%	40%	17%
17. Managers in my division are receptive to new ideas and employee suggestions for improvements in the development permitting process.	1	4	12	5	22	8
	2%	8%	23%	10%	42%	15%
18. To continuously improve our development review process, I am encouraged to question the way we do things in this City and to offer constructive suggestions.	2	7	12	9	20	2
	4%	13%	23%	17%	38%	4%
22. This City encourages practical risk-taking and supports positive effort in the development permitting process	7	4	10	23	8	0
	13%	8%	19%	44%	15%	0%
25. Managers actively involve the staff in working together to solve problems the Department encounters in the development review process.	2	5	11	12	17	5
	4%	10%	21%	23%	33%	10%
26. I receive enough recognition and appreciation for the quality of my work.	1	6	10	13	18	4
	2%	12%	19%	25%	35%	8%
29. I am encouraged to explore creative ways to resolve development review service delivery issues in this City	6	4	10	12	18	2
	12%	8%	19%	23%	35%	4%

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Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32. Overall, my division is efficient and well-run in terms of the services it delivers.	0	3	12	14	19	4
	0%	6%	23%	27%	37%	8%

Overall, most respondents were concerned regarding the leadership of the development review process.

10. RESPONDING EMPLOYEES HAD MIXED PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE ADEQUACY OF TRAINING.

There was one question in the employee survey regarding training. This one question, and the responses are presented in the table below.

Question	No Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. I receive sufficient formal ongoing training in the technical skills required to fulfill my role in the development permitting process. We have a strong emphasis on training.	2	8	10	16	9	7
	4%	15%	19%	31%	17%	13%

Clearly there are mixed opinions regarding the adequacy of training.

4. BUILDING DIVISION

This chapter presents an analysis of the Building Division. This includes an analysis of the building permit process including the permit issuance, plan review, and inspection services provided by the Division. This analysis focuses on issues related to such factors as:

- Policies, procedures, and overall management of the Division;
- Levels of service provided in response to requests for plan review and construction inspection services;
- Ability to enhance skill levels within the Division;
- Steps that should be taken to enhance the consistency of communication and application of code interpretations; and,
- Ability to provide increased services provided to the public.

The Building Official is the manager of the Division, and supervises the building inspection, permit processing, plan review, and clerical services provided by the Division. The Building Inspection Section is authorized ten (10) full-time staff; the Processing Section is authorized eight (8) full-time staff, which includes plan checking, permit counter, and clerical personnel. The table on the following page presents a brief synopsis of the major duties of each Section.

Section	Major Duties
Permit Processing	<p>Permit Counter: Verifying workers compensation and contractors licenses, issuing of building permits, responding to customer phone calls, calculating permit fee numbers, performing over-the-counter reviews.</p> <p>Plan Review: Residential and commercial project plan checks for life-safety, structural, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, Tilte-24 energy and disabled access, and pertinent municipal code and state regulations governing the design and construction of buildings and other structures.</p> <p>Clerical: General phone support, filing and filing system maintenance, fax-in permit processing, processing of inspection requests/results and new permit application submittals, utility releases, assisting Division management with other clerical and research duties as assigned.</p>
Building Inspection	Building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical inspection of all construction projects on private and City-owned properties.

The following sections present the analysis of the Building Division, including both strengths and opportunities for improvement.

1. STRENGTHS OF THE BUILDING ADMINISTRATION, PLAN CHECK, PERMITTING, AND INSPECTION PROCESSES.

While this chapter focuses primarily on opportunities for improvement, there are a number of strengths in the existing administration, plan check, permitting and inspection processes of the Building Division. Examples of these strengths are displayed in the exhibit following this page.

Exhibit 1

**Illustrative Strengths of the
 Building Division**

Function	Strength
Building Department Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responsibility for delivery of building inspection, building permit plan checking and over-the-counter services for building permit plan check and issuance has been centralized under the Chief Building Official. • The Building Division's section of the City website is easy to locate and contains useful permitting information. • The Division has an existing policies and procedures manual. • Training goals are developed for each staff member on an annual basis. • Inspection and plan review staff hold appropriate certifications.
Building Permit Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Division's existing permit information is utilized to assure the status of each plan submittal is visible during the plan check process. Dates of submittal, return, re-submittal, and approval are entered into the system. Planning and Engineering staff can also view the data. • The Public Counter is open during lunch hours. • A number of simple permits can be processed and issued via faxed application. • Some simple residential MPE permits for common replacements of water heaters, furnaces, electrical service, and re-pipes can be issued via a "fax-in" program. • Building permit applications and plans are checked at the counter upon submittal for initial completeness and rejected if missing basic items.
Building Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Senior Building Inspector positions are designated to the plan review function and are certified Plans Examiners. • Over the Counter plan check service is generally available for permits that have a master/standard plan, do not require structural or complex review, or for single trade (M.E.P.) permits. • A number of Standard Plan designs are posted on the Division's website. • The Division has published "target dates" for plan review submittals. The Division is, on average, meeting their established target timelines for review.
Building Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection requests are responded to by Building Inspector within one workday of request. • Fax-in inspection requests are accepted until approximately 7:00 AM of the day inspections are to be completed. • Re-inspection fees are applied upon third attempt to inspect without applicant preparedness. • A building inspector attends pre-construction meetings for all commercial and residential tract development projects to present and discuss Oceanside's policies, procedures and processes to the applicant. • All inspectors each have certifications in more than one trade. Combination inspectors are utilized to respond to inspection requests. • Information regarding general types of inspections required by project stage are posted on the City's web-site. • Instructions on how to schedule an inspection or request a Special Inspection are also posted.

These are illustrative examples of the strengths of the administration, permitting, plan review, and inspection processes of the Building Division.

2. THE BUILDING OFFICIAL SHOULD BE ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING THE BUILDING PERMIT PLAN CHECK PROCESS ON A CITYWIDE BASIS.

The Building Division does not fully employ a case management system for the building permit process. The opportunities for improvement are presented below.

- There is not a case management system to manage the length of calendar time required for building permit plan checks utilizing an automated permit information system.
- The Division has cycle time targets for plan checking. These cycle time targets are too lengthy.
- Actual processing time is not reported on an ongoing basis or compared to cycle time targets.
- The Building Official has not been allocated authority regarding the other departments/divisions to resolve delays in completion of plan checks.

The Building Division should be empowered to manage the plan check of building permits to assure the review by all disciplines – Fire, Planning, Engineering, and Water – is timely, predictable, and coordinated, and that plans are checked in accordance with cycle time goals. The project manager in the Building Division - one of the plan checking staff within the Division - should be empowered as the team leader of a multi-discipline team comprised of staff from Planning, Building, Engineering, Fire Prevention, Water, and other participants.

This feature is a critical to the effective management of the City's building permit process. The project manager should make the City's building permit process seamless to the customer. The project manager should manage the building permit plan check by the various disciplines, set processing deadlines for the review of the application by this

multi-disciplinary team (based upon guidelines formally adopted by the City), and hold the multi-disciplinary team accountable for meeting those processing deadlines. Using the automated permit information system, the designee of the Building Official would develop these processing deadlines and share tentative schedules with the applicant.

The project manager – one of the plan checking staff of the Division - would **not** be an advocate for a building permit application, but someone the applicant can always contact in the City to determine their application's progress, to ensure that disputes regarding codes and regulations are settled, and to keep their project on a predictable review schedule.

Early in the building permit plan check, the project manager should give the applicant a road map of all the reviews the application will need.

More specifics regarding the role of the designee of the Building Official are presented in the paragraphs below.

- (1) The Project Manager in the Building Division Is There to Ensure Reviews of Building Permit Plans Are Timely, That the Plan Check Process Is Predictable and That the Application Gets to a Decision Point in Accordance with Formally Adopted Cycle Time Guidelines.**

The project manager in the Building Division for the application - should accomplish this by developing – and monitoring – a schedule for both staff reviews and the applicant.

(2) The Building Official Should Designate a Project Manager to Serve as the Applicant's Single Point of Contact.

The applicant should be able to call the project manager at any time. The applicant should still be able to call the project manager directly – to obtain answers to questions concerning plan review on specific items such as Uniform Building Code, environmental or public improvement requirements – and that project manager should be responsible for managing the reviews and always be there to handle complex issues and to pull these comments from the team together.

(3) The Project Manager in the Building Division Is Not an Advocate for a Building Permit Application, But He or She Will Make Sure That the Applicant Gets to a Clear Decision Point on a Timely Basis.

The project manager designated by the Building Official is not an advocate for an application, and cannot design a project for the applicant. The project manager, however, will make sure the applicant fully understands the City's requirements.

The project manager should ensure that issues are identified early in the process, so the City can suggest ways to modify the applicant's project to achieve a complete application.

If a disagreement arises with the review of the building permit application, the project manager is the applicant's contact to get the issue resolved. The project manager should take the applicant's concerns up to the appropriate staff level, up to and including the Building Official.

The project manager is there to ensure the building permit plan check process proceeds in a timely and predictable fashion. The project manager should not be expected to always give the applicant the answer the applicant wants – the City's codes

and regulations don't allow everything. So, the answer may be "no, you can't build that, but, we will give you an option as to what you can build."

(4) The Applicant Should Be Informed Regarding the Name of their Project Manager within Five Working Days of Submittal of the Application.

The applicant should be informed of the name of the project manager in the Building Division no later than five working days after the submittal of their application.

(5) The Project Manager in the Building Division Should Be Responsible for Complete and Timely Communication With the Multi-Disciplinary Team.

Each member of the multi-disciplinary team, from Planning to Engineering to Fire, will still be there. The project manager in the Building Division makes sure communication occurs on the multi-disciplinary team, a schedule is set and complex issues are resolved, such as when code issues conflict.

The project manager should lead any discussions that focus on resolving conflicting conditions of approval or competing code requirements. His or her job is to keep the plan check of the building permit application coordinated and predictable.

(6) The Role of the Project Manager Should Be Clarified in a Written Policy.

The responsibility and the authority of the project manager in the Building Division should be clearly spelled out in a written policy by the City Manager's Office.

The responsibility and authority, in addition to that previously identified, should include:

- Coordinate the pre-application meetings and review as appropriate;
- For complex applications, intake of the permit application and materials;
- Coordinate the determination of application completeness for all of the City's requirements;
- Coordinate the collection and integration of comments from other divisions and departments;

- Resolving inter-division or inter-departmental problems such as conflicting conditions;
- Assuring that the conditions of approval suggested by other divisions or departments are reasonable;
- Coordinating applicant input and comments;
- Working with the applicant to resolve problems and revise the project as appropriate;
- Changing from a regulator and collector of other's opinions to a problem solver who is focused on how to get the plan check done according to cycle time guidelines with conditions of approval that are fair and practical;
- Functioning as an advocate for the process (maintaining timelines and seeing that they are met);
- Promptly reviewing and issuing notifications of omissions or problems with the project;
- Making presentations at public meetings;
- Coordinating with key decision makers; and
- Approving the staff reports; and following up on enforcement of conditions.

In summary, the project manager in the Building Division should be a team leader for a multi-disciplinary team responsible for keeping the review of a building permit plan on track, making sure issues involving conflicting code or regulatory issues are resolved, charting a clear course for the applicant through the review process, and making sure issues regarding the plan are identified early in the review process.

Recommendation: The Building Division should develop and install a case management system for the building permit plan check process.

3. ANALYSIS OF BUILDING DIVISION ADMINISTRATION.

This section includes recommendations for the improvement of policies, procedures, and overall management of the Building Division.

(1) The Information Available on the Building Division Website Should Be Expanded.

The Building Division's web page is easy to locate on the City's website. The project team noted the following information available on the Division's website:

- Mission Statement for the Division
- List of adopted Building Codes and Regulations, including amendments. And Oceanside Design Standards
- Links to Code-related websites
- Hours of operation, contact names and phone numbers
- Calendar of City Hall open days and closed days
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Fee Schedule and Construction Valuation Certification form
- Information and handouts, including Technical Information, Submittal Requirements, Policies and Forms, Standard Plans, Special Inspection program information
- General types of required inspections and information on scheduling an inspection
- Information on how to apply for a building permit including a downloadable hand out detailing Plan Submittal Requirements, and also an informational bulletin on Permit Issuance and Submittal Requirements
- A list of projects exempted from the Building permit process
- Owner/builder policy
- Expired permit policy
- Guide to telephone and fax-in permit service for residential MPE
- Minimum submittal requirements for various types of residential and commercial permits
- Target first submittal review timelines

- Revisions to existing submittals policies and contact information for plan review status.

The Division should continue their efforts to publish information about the building permit process on the Division's website. Additional information that should be available includes:

- A utility whereby applicants can log in to see the status of their building permit submittal, download plan check correction comments, schedule, confirm and cancel inspections, get inspection notices, and access field inspection reports;
- More extensive and attractive introductions and descriptions about the permitting process with separate instructions should be available for homeowner projects versus larger projects.);
- Expected timelines for first and second plan review submittals;
- Utility for issuing fax-back and simple trade permits with the option to process payment online;
- Utility for records research, including permit history by address;
- Utility for estimating building permit fees; and
- Information on recent code changes

The Division should prepare and document a clear communication plan for customer information on the website and organize it effectively. Doing so will cut down on the number of general information related phone calls, and redirect customers to the Division's information available online.

Recommendation: Continue to develop the Building Division's website.

(2) The Division Should Update and Maintain Their Policies and Procedures Manual

The Building Division has an existing policies and procedures manual, which includes approximately 150 separate written policies and procedures in the following sections: Building, Plan Review, Public Counter, Energy, Interdepartmental Review,

Solar, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, Mobil Home, Administrative Duties. A book of memos from the previous Building Official regarding common code interpretation questions also exists.

However, the project team noticed the following:

- The manual has not been comprehensively updated in a number of years. Approximately 30 out of the 150 policies contained in the original manual have been updated and reviewed in the last two years.
- The code interpretations book has not been updated after the recent adoption of the International Codes in January 2008.

According to the employee survey conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group, the majority of respondents noted that their Division was lacking clear, well-documented policies and procedures.

Desk manuals are an excellent resource for employees, especially if an organization has several employees performing similar tasks, a high rate of turnover for a particular type of position, or certain tasks that must be performed according to a specific protocol. Given the often highly administrative and technical nature of their daily operations, the permit processing and plan review functions can benefit from maintaining a central repository of procedure documentation.

The Division staff should develop a central desk manual for employees that lists office management duties and who is responsible. The manual should include instructions on how to use the manual, detailed definitions of procedures or processes, direction about when and where to get help, and any other necessary resources and references (software manuals, important phone numbers, etc.). Examples of items to be included in the manual are shown below.

Function	Policies and Procedure Information
Permit Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of processes required from start to finish on application submittals • Application submittal checklists and requirements • Protocol for answering the phones, scheduling appointments • Policies for rejecting incomplete submittals • Process for fee calculations and collecting money • Procedures for packaging and routing plan submittals • Plan routing matrix by type of project and department requiring review
Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Review Checklists • Case management duties for plan review staff • Cycle review times by type of project • Customer service goals such as response times for email and phone inquiries • Frequently Asked Questions • Common Code interpretations • Policies regarding communication with customers about vacation and 9/80 schedules

An employee desk manual will provide a quick reference for employees to get questions answered, back each other up in the case of absence, and gain a comprehensive understanding of the Building Division's operations. In addition, it provides the Building Official a method for standardizing operating procedures and developing measures of accountability for those procedures for staff. The Building Official should also work closely with lead workers, supervisors and managers in the Division to update the manuals on at least an annual basis.

Recommendation: The Building Division policies and procedures manual should be updated.

4. THE DIVISION SHOULD COMMUNICATE WITH THE BUILDING INDUSTRY VIA AN EMAIL NEWSLETTER.

The Division should communicate regularly with the Building Industry via an Email based Newsletter regarding changes to the building code, Division policy and procedure, staffing changes, etc. When plan checking staff in the Division and Building Inspectors bring new information into their practices acquired at outside training, or

realize that something that they have not been requiring is, in fact, required by the codes, an immediate call for corrections or changes in procedure can cause hardship for owners and contractors, especially when changes impact their costs and job completion deadlines. Owners and contractors are entitled to notice time in order to prepare for requirements not previously imposed. The Building Division should provide 60-days notice regarding any changed requirements not previously invoked, and should not impact jobs under construction.

Recommendation: The Building Division should communicate regularly with Oceanside developers, contractors, architects, engineers, and the construction community through issuance of information bulletins and a newsletter. Distribute information bulletins describing any new requirements, and show effective dates of implementation.

5. ANALYSIS OF BUILDING PERMIT PLAN REVIEW AND PERMITTING.

This section presents an analysis of the plan review and permitting services provided by the Building Division. Similar to other sections in this chapter, this section focuses on issues related to:

- Levels of service provided by the plan review and permitting programs;
- Levels of staffing allocated for plan review and permitting functions;
- Ability to enhance skill levels within the Division;
- Ability to increase services to the public; and,
- Ability to increase customer service to the public.

The following are summaries of improvement opportunities in the plan review and permitting programs of the Building Division.

(1) Develop a Monthly Reporting System to Report on Actual Performance in Processing Plans Against Cycle Time Objectives

The plan review targets discussed in the previous section are meant as a benchmark for concurrent review by all departments involved in the building permit plan review process, not just the Building Division. The supervisor of the plan checking staff in the Division should be held accountable for management of the number of workdays required for plan checking by all of the divisions / departments involved. The supervisor of the plan checking staff in the Division should utilize the automated permit information system to:

- Evaluate employee productivity in the Plan Review Section;
- Balance workload among different plan reviewers in the Plan Review Section;
- Determine the number of staff time that could be reasonably expected to be consumed on various types of projects or activities in the Plan Review Section; and
- Quantify the number of plan review backlog and the anticipated completion date of various plans given all work in progress.

This system should be utilized to manage the workload, including reviewing actual progress versus scheduled deadlines and facilitate the shifting of work assignment and schedules in the face of changing priorities or workload. One of the products of this system should be a monthly report to identify workload for each staff both in number of plan reviews, estimated hours to handle these reviews, and identification of actual processing time versus scheduled both on a permit-by-permit basis and year-to-date.

Recommendation: The City should hold the Building Official responsible for management of the number of workdays required for plan checking by all of the divisions involved, not just the Building Division and for monitoring performance against the cycle time objectives on a regular basis.

Building Division. This "master" set would be stamped as approved after each organizational unit approves the building permit plans.

- Incomplete applications for building permits should not be accepted by the Building Inspection and Regulation Division.
- A cover form letter should be developed to act as a face sheet for the comment sheets. This face sheet would merely indicate which comments were attached, the appropriate person to contact in each unit if the architect or engineer has any questions, and any critical issues which need to be resolved. The Permit Technician in the Building Division would prepare this face sheet.

This process will require change in the methods utilized to check plans both by the City and by developers, but it represents a more logical and timely approach to the review of building permit plans.

Recommendation: The Building Division should utilize a concurrent plan review and assume responsibility of the initial intake, processing, routing, receiving, and tracking of plan submittals for all reviewing departments and divisions.

- (3) The Division Should Develop Plan Check Checklists And Standardized Comment and Corrections Sheets, and Publish These Documents to the Division's Website.**

The Division has not developed standardized checklists to be utilized internally by plan review staff to assure consistency in application of various building code requirements. In addition, standardized comment and corrections forms have not been developed. Currently, each plan review staff member has their own method for scope of technical review, and comment and correction notification to applicants.

The plan checking staff in the Building Division should work with the Building Official to develop checklists for internal plan review as well as uniform comment and correction sheets for applicants. Both documents should be published to the Division's website to act as a guide for the nuances of interpretations of these codes by the City of Oceanside.

(2) The Building Division Should Utilize a Concurrent Plan Check Process.

Construction plan review is not accomplished in parallel by all departments and divisions involved in the process. Currently, the responsibility of obtaining sign off and approval of construction plans by functions other than the Building Division is placed on the applicant. In brief:

- Customer writes description of their scope of work to be performed on a carbon-copy “plan route sheet”, or “blue sheet”;
- Customer walks with “blue sheet” to each reviewing department, typically Planning, Engineering, and Fire, but could also include Water Utility, Housing, San Diego County Dept. of Health; and
- Each reviewing department must approve the project as “OK for Plan Check” in order for the applicant to qualify to submit construction plans at the Building counter. This approval may take place immediately upon approaching the counter, or require a separate submittal of a copy of the construction plans to the reviewing department.

The present process utilized by the City for checking development plans is a sequential approach. In other words, the plans are checked first by one organizational unit, then another, then another, etc. This process will take longer than a concurrent approach, in which several units check the plans at the same time.

The City should utilize a concurrent process. The use of a concurrent approach will require a number of changes in the way the City processes the building permit plans. These changes are portrayed below.

- A greater number of plans will have to be submitted by the applicant. Six sets of plans could be required for commercial and industrial building permit applications, for example.
- Rather than recording corrections directly on each plan, corrections would be noted on a plan check corrections sheet, which would be returned to the Building Division along with the plan.
- An office and job copy of plans would need to be maintained and reviewed by the

Recommendation: Plan check checklists and uniform comment and correction lists for construction plan submittal and review should be developed and posted to the Division's website.

(4) The Division Should Publish a Plan Check Correction Comment Library and Frequently Asked Questions Page on its Website.

The Building Division should compile corrections to building plan checks made by the various reviewing departments and agencies in the City. These corrections should be analyzed, with the most common comments for each construction type posted on the City's website. These corrections could, for example, include the following:

Fire protection	Mechanical, electrical, plumbing
Room sizes, lighting, ventilation	Noise insulation
Exists, stairways, railings	Energy conservation
Roofing	Foundation requirements
Masonry	Framing
Garages	Plot plans
Elevations	Floor plans

The posting of the correction library will provide guidance to architects and engineers in understanding the requirements for construction in Oceanside, and should include the requirements of all divisions and agencies involved in the review process in the City.

Recommendation: The Building Division should post common plan check corrections to its website.

(5) Applicants Should Be Provided with the Ability To Obtain Simple Building Permits Online.

Building permits that do not require a plan check, such as single trade permits, often known as over-the-counter permits, are well suited to online permit processing. Similar to e-commerce transactions, such as buying products from a website, this activity involves credit card processing and the printing of a permit. Online processing of permit applications can be as basic as automating only the front-end information

collection process, or as complete as full automation of the entire over-the-counter permit transaction.

At their own personal computers, applicants can apply for a building permit, schedule an inspection, and print the permit and receipt. Credit card payments are secured through the use of encryption technology. Applicants can set up their access so that basic information will not need to be re-entered for multiple transactions.

The City's automated permit information system should provide the capacity for applicants to complete a permit application via the Internet. Ideally, applicants complete online forms and hit a "send" button to transmit the application to the City's permit database. The permit system then processes, reviews, approves, and stores completed permits. The permit system generates a permit for the applicant. Applicants can pay for permits using a credit card.

There are a number of public agencies throughout the United States that are using this capacity. These cities range from Albany, Oregon to Miami-Dade County, Florida. The Division should implement a similar feature for their simple building permits, including the full automation of the entire over-the-counter permit transaction. Initially, this would include only single trades permits such as plumbing, mechanical, electrical permits, and re-roof permits. Longer-term, this should be expanded to other types of permits such as kitchen remodels.

Recommendation: The Building Division should use an automated permit information system to enable applicants to complete and pay for a permit application via the Internet, eventually involving all over-the-counter transactions.

(6) Develop and Adopt Building Permit Plan Check Cycle Time Agreements With Applicants for High Priority Projects.

Effective building permit services are able to provide plan check services in a

way that is quick, consistent and predictable. This recommendation to change the way the City provides its building permit plan check services will help the City enhance its services. This is particularly important as the City competes against its peers such as Vista and Carlsbad for commercial development.

An additional tool that can be very effective in competing against its peers for commercial development is the use of cycle time agreements with applicants for high priority projects. These agreements, which should be used selectively to further the City's economic development objectives, are simple and highly effective. The agreements are non-binding and typically are limited to 2-pages in length. The City could choose, for example, to offer cycle time agreements for:

- Commercial projects in the City's commercial centers;
- Industrial projects that generate or retain over 50 employment opportunities;
- Commercial projects that generate significant new sales tax revenue; and
- Affordable housing projects of 10 units or more.

The City should discuss and decide the types of projects that should be afforded cycle time agreements and the exact content of the agreements. Cycle time agreements should include basic project information and a schedule for processing of the building permit plan that includes a schedule for the City and for the applicant. The schedule would include agreed upon dates for the pre-application conference, submittal of a complete application, conditions of approval, project refinements, staff report, etc.

Recommendation: Develop and adopt building permit plan check cycle time agreements with applicants for high priority projects.

(7) Track and Monitor the Success Or Failure of Plan Checking Staff of the Building Division In Meeting Cycle Time Objectives.

Once the Building Division has modified cycle time objectives for building permit plan checking, the Division should monitor and report its success and that of all of the divisions / departments involved in the building permit plan check process in meeting these modified cycle time objectives.

Currently, the Building Division has no means to measure and monitor staff performance in meeting these objectives.

It is important for management to have quantifiable tools to: regulate performance, identify training needs, staffing needs, and detect organizational deficiencies. The cycle time objectives can serve as fair and accurate means to gauge staff performance for the following reasons:

- Staff will know and be familiar with the standards;
- Standards are easily understandable;
- Standards are flexible;
- Standards have been created through their input.

The management reports defined and discussed in a later section of this chapter, if generated on a regular basis, would track both individual and overall staff performance.

Recommendation: Track and monitor the success or failure of the staff in meeting cycle time objectives through regular management information reports generated on a monthly basis by the automated permit information system. This should include all of the divisions / departments involved in the building permit plan check process.

Recommendation: The ability of the Plan Checking Staff of the Building Division to consistently meet the cycle time objectives should be integrated into the performance evaluation system.

(8) The Supervisor of the Plan Checking Staff Should Be Held Accountable For Formally Planning And Scheduling the Building Permit Plans Processed Using the Automated Permit Information System.

The supervisor of the plan checking staff of the Building Division should prepare and maintain a schedule for processing of building permit plans. The purpose of the schedule is to make visible the number of calendar days required to analyze and complete plan checking of building permit plans. The specific objectives related to the design and development of this system should be as follows:

- To establish a process whereby specific calendar day targets are set for each application based upon cycle time objectives established by the Division;
- To utilize the proposed automated permitting systems to ease the tracking of the timeliness of the processing of building permit plans and enable the Building Official to hold the supervisor of the plan checking staff and the staff themselves accountable; and
- To generate data sufficient to assist in the assessment of the performance of the Division's staff assigned to the processing of building permit plans in comparison to the cycle time objectives;

Major elements of the system are presented below.

- The supervisor of the plan checking staff would review incoming building permit plans and analyze the characteristics of the plans, focusing in particular on potential processing difficulties. Once difficulties are identified, the supervisor of the plan checking staff would set targets for the plan checking staff as follows: (1) overall staff hours allocated to process the application; and (2) calendar targets for completing the analyses of the application. Based on the target data, the supervisor of the plan checking staff would review the most recent open case inventory report and note the workload of the plan checking staff. Cases would then be assigned as appropriate. The supervisor of the plan checking staff would then enter the cycle time date and the name of the plan checking staff on the automated permit information system.
- When projects are first assigned, the plan checker in the Division to whom the application is assigned would review the targets (calendar targets and staff hour allocations) established for the case. If the plan checker feels that the targets are unreasonable after a review of the application, the case planner should discuss the targets with the supervisor of the plan checking staff and negotiate appropriate changes.

The supervisor of the plan checking staff should be held accountable for the ongoing maintenance of this open case inventory and the completion of the processing of permits in accordance with the cycle time objectives. The planning and scheduling system should be utilized to:

- Evaluate employee performance;
- Balance workload among different staff assigned to the processing of building permit plans; and
- Quantify the anticipated completion date of various applications given all work in progress.

The planning and scheduling system should be designed to manage the workload including reviewing actual progress versus scheduled deadlines, and facilitate the shifting of work assignment and schedules in the face of changing priorities or workload.

Recommendation: The supervisor of the plan checking staff in the Building Division should formally plan and schedule building permit plan checking using the automated permit information system.

Recommendation: The supervisor of the plan checking staff of the Building Division should be held accountable for the ongoing maintenance of this open case inventory.

(9) Generate Ongoing Monthly Management Information Reports Using the Automated Permit Information System to Track Performance Against Cycle Time Objectives and Monitor the Case Workload and Performance for Plan Checking Staff in the Building Division.

Our study revealed that management information reports are not currently being generated for several reasons, including: (1) the lack of an automated permit information system with the capability to generate reports easily; and (2) the accuracy of the plan check data is questionable. The management of the Building Division is not

receiving reliable information on plan check workload for the Division, and individual plan checker workload to use in scheduling. In addition, overall information on staff efficiency and productivity is not maintained or used for staff evaluation.

Management information reports capture the detailed information about staff productivity and Division performance to monitor workload, balance assignments and evaluate internal operations. After several discussions with management and staff, we recommend the automated permit information system be utilized to track and report the following information:

- Division Workload;
- Case Tracking;
- Elapsed Processing Times;
- Work in Backlog;
- Personnel Productivity; and
- Project Management Measures.

The exhibit on the following page represents the corresponding management reports the Division should generate on a regular basis

The management of the Building Division is currently not provided with the type of reliable information necessary to manage the processing of land entitlement permits. The project team feels it is imperative that management be able to utilize reliable building permit plan check information to manage, direct and enhance the Division.

Exhibit 2 (1)

**Recommended Management
Reports For the Building Division**

Report Name	Frequency / Distribution	Report Data
Workload distribution by Plan Checker	Monthly to Building Division management	Monthly frequency counts of incoming building permit plans by type and by Plan Checker
Workload Report – New Building Permit Plans	Monthly to Building Division management	Information by Plan Checker including date submitted, date assigned, and last milestone
Workload Report – Open Cases	Monthly to Building Division management	Information by Plan Checker including date submitted, date assigned, and last milestone
Workload Report – Inactive Building Permit Plans	Monthly to Building Division management	Information by Plan Checker including date submitted, date information requested from the applicant, and the nature of the outstanding information requested
Workload Report – Closed / Approved Building Permit Plans	Monthly to Building Division management	Information by Plan Checker including date submitted and date the permit was approved / closed
Building Permit Plan Check Status Report	Monthly to Building Division management	Building permit plan check status information by case number, due date, Plan Checker assigned, and last milestone
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Open Building Permit Plans	Monthly to Building and Safety management	Information by Plan Checker including date submitted, cycle time objective, days in process and last milestone
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Closed Building Permit Plans	Monthly to Building Division management	Information by Plan Checker including date submitted, cycle time objective, completion date, total days, and date of approval or denial
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Building Permit Plans Overdue	Monthly to Building Division management	Information by Plan Checker including date submitted, cycle time objective, days into process and last milestone

Exhibit 2 (2)

Report Name	Frequency / Distribution	Report Data
Building Permit Plan Check Assignment and Distribution Report	Monthly to Building Division management	All caseload information, and Plan Checker assigned by Plan Checker name and permit type
Plan Checker Performance Report	Monthly to Building Division management	Elapsed processing time by Plan Checker, including new plans, open plans, inactive plans, closed plans, overdue plans, and % processed within cycle time objectives.

The management reports that the project team has outlined in this study are a beginning to better understanding the productivity and workload volume in the Division. The Division may wish to generate additional reports or receive more detail once these initial management information reports are implemented and used routinely.

Recommendation: Generate ongoing monthly management information reports using the automated permit information system to track performance against cycle time objectives and monitor the case workload and performance of plan checking staff in the Division.

(10) Reduce the Number of Organizational Units That Plan Check Some Types of Building Permit Plans.

In many instances, the divisions / departments that plan check building permit plans in Oceanside is different than patterns used in other cities. For example:

- Custom single family dwellings are routed to between four to five departments, including Housing and sometimes Fire;
- The following types of building permit plans are routed to Engineering:
 - Residential Additions
 - Enclosed Patios
 - Detached Accessory – Residential
 - Pools
 - Demolitions
- The Building Division does not provide zoning clearance for simple building permit plan checks. These plans are routed to the Planning Division for zoning clearance.

Other cities have reallocated responsibility for zoning clearance to their Building Division. This eliminates the need for building permit plan checking of simpler building permit plans by the Planning Division such as patios and decks, single-family additions, or tenant improvements

Other cities only route single-family additions and remodels, and new single family residences, to the Fire Department for plan checking if located in a special overlay district such as a hillside.

The City should take steps to reduce the number of divisions / departments that plan check building permit plans. The project team recommends the City review the routing of building permit plans to assess if all organizational units need to review these plans. For example, the City could consider the following:

- The City should eliminate the routing for single-family remodels/additions to the Planning Division, Water Utility Department, Fire Prevention, and to the Engineering Division. This change will require the Building Division to check for zoning clearances, and easements.
- Tenant improvements that do not involve a change in use should not be routed to the Planning Division or to the Engineering Division. This change will require the Building Division to check for zoning clearances.
- Minor permits, such as awnings, retaining walls, and pools, should be plan checked solely by the Building and Safety Division.

It should be recognized that the transition to a streamlined process is dependent upon the training of the staff of the Building Division to exercise these skills and knowledge.

The project team believes the routing of building permit plans can be reduced. The Building Official should develop a proposal for review of the City Manager's Office and the affected departments.

With the acquisition and installation of the automated permit information system, the responsibility for zoning clearance should be reassigned to the Building Division. The automated permit information system should enable the plan checking staff of the Building Division to determine the zoning of the property. This would enable the staff of the Division to determine the development standards (e.g., setbacks) for the

applications. This transition should not occur until the Building Division staff has been trained in the use of the system, and Building Division staff has been trained in applying the development standards.

Recommendation: Reduce the number of divisions and departments that are routed building permit plans.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE BUILDING INSPECTION PROCESS.

This chapter presents an analysis of the Inspection program within the Building Division, focusing on such issues as the following:

- Staffing levels allocated for building inspections;
- Use of tools and technologies for scheduling and performing inspections; and,
- Steps that should be taken to enhance the productivity and utilization of staff.

(1) An IVR (Automated Voice-Activated) System Should Be Obtained in the Next Several Years to Automate The Scheduling Of Inspection Requests.

An automated voice-activated inspection request system is needed in the Building Division to receive and schedule inspection requests. Currently, the receipt and recordation of these requests is performed three times per day by various clerical staff. This staff alternates roles in checking the City's voicemail system, manually logging inspection requests, and filling out individual inspection request forms for inspectors. The Division's current policy accepts inspection requests via fax up to 7:00 a.m. the day inspections are to be completed, and up to 3:30 p.m. the day before.

IVR systems are used widely throughout the customer service industry. When calling a bank, credit card company or utility company, most customers interact with an automated voice system before reaching a live person. An IVR system is available 24 hours a day and can simultaneously handle multiple callers. When connected to an

automated permit system, IVR enables permit applicants and other interested parties to receive information such as permit status and the expected date of completion, schedule an inspection, or obtain the results of an inspection.

An IVR system can be programmed to adapt to an organization's specific needs. For example, announcements can be incorporated into the IVR system notifying external customers of changes in the permit process, important dates, and events of concern to permit applicants.

Building Division employees are responsible for maintaining the system and providing back-up customer service when callers indicate the need to speak directly with Permit Center/counter staff or other Division staff. Both internal and external customers can use the IVR at any time, night or day.

The cost impact of this proposed recommendation is presented in the table below.

Recommendation	One-Time Capital Outlay Cost	Recommendation	Annual Cost Decrease
Acquire an automated voice-activated inspection request system	\$56,000	N / A	\$0

Recommendation: The Division should acquire and install an IVR system in the next several years for scheduling of inspection requests. The IVR system should interface with the automated permit information system.

(2) The City Should Acquire Wireless Technology and Automated Input Devices for Building Inspectors.

Building inspectors currently utilize a paper-based system to record inspection results and issue correction notices. A more efficient and consistent method is needed for handling inspections. The inspection process should be paperless, and permit history should be available to inspectors, if needed. The Building Division should

acquire wireless technology for the use of building inspectors to capture all necessary information regarding permits on a mobile computer. In the morning, building inspectors would download inspection information for scheduled inspections from the IVR, and during the day building inspectors would enter results and corrections using simple standardized drop-down menus. Correction history would be stored in the automated permitting software database and would be available for future reference. Building inspectors would print professional and legible Correction Notices on-site, using a portable printer.

This system would enable building inspectors to enter real-time results of inspections into the City's database of information, and within seconds of the inspector completing computer entries, permit holders could review inspection status on the City's website or be able to access the City's automated software records for immediate results. The City should not delay the approval and acquisition of this resource, and should provide wireless input devices for building inspectors.

The cost impact of this proposed recommendation is presented in the table below.

Recommendation	One-Time Capital Outlay Cost	Recommendation	Annual Cost Decrease
Acquire wireless technology and automated input devices for Building Inspectors	\$16,000	N / A	\$0

Recommendation: The City should acquire wireless technology and automated input devices for Building Inspectors.

(3) The Number of Time Spent in the Office by Inspection Staff Should Be Reduced.

Building inspection staff spend an average of 2.5 hours per day in the office, which allows for only 75 percent of available work hours for conducting building inspections in the field. Between approximately 7:00 am and 8:30 am each workday, inspectors receive assignment of inspection requests, assemble their Daily Activity Reports and route sheets, respond to emails, phone calls, pull permit files, and perform project related research. Between 3:30 and 4:30 pm each workday, inspectors return to the office from the field to coordinate utility releases, drop completed paperwork, prepare for the next workday, and perform any needed plan review or project research.

The Building Official and Senior Inspector will need to take an active role in increasing the number of time spent in the field by building inspectors, including adopting a benchmark of at least 12 inspection stops per inspector, per day, and utilizing the automated permit information system to print weekly and monthly reports in meeting this target.

Once automated input devices and wireless capabilities are installed for inspectors, the Building Official and Senior Inspector should closely track and monitor time spent by Building Inspectors in the office to uncover and correct hidden demands on the inspectors' time. The Division should be focused on reducing the average number of time spent in the office from the current level of 2.5 hours per day to a level closer to 1 hour per day.

Recommendation: The amount of time spent in the office by the Building Inspection staff should be reduced to no more than one hour.

(4) The Division Should Develop a Code Interpretation Manual to Improve Consistency Among Individual Building Inspectors and to Educate Customers Regarding Expectations.

While the City is utilizing a set of national building codes and local ordinances to govern the construction activities within the community, there are at times areas within these codes and guidelines that require further explanation and/or clarification. These are commonly referred to as code interpretations. At the present time, the Division has no comprehensive listing of code interpretations or clarifications that they have made. There are individual policies that have been developed to address specific issues and these were historically given to building inspection staff to provide direction and guidance. However, these individual policies have not been pulled together into one document.

The Division should memorialize all local code interpretations and clarifications of local policies and ordinances into a comprehensive manual that contains the text of the code, the staff's interpretation of this code, and the manner in which it will be enforced. This provides clear detail to customers regarding the actions that need to be taken in order to comply with the existing building codes.

The manual should be maintained as an up-to-date document, utilized as part of the periodic training sessions for building inspectors and posted on the City's website for the development community. Providing this information, in advance, to the construction community, provides an additional opportunity for them to self-educate regarding the City's expectations and to voluntarily comply with the regulations. It also demonstrates the City's service commitment to its customers.

Recommendation: The Division should develop a comprehensive manual of code interpretations. The manual should be utilized for internal staff training and be posted to the website for use by the development/construction communities.

(5) Implement an Inspection Quality Control Program.

One of the issues identified in the focus groups was the lack of consistency in inspections. A quality control program would ensure that consistency is being achieved, and assure expected employee performance.

The Senior Building Inspector should ride for at least one half day each month with each Inspector to observe their inspection procedures. The Senior Building Inspector should independently visit major jobs periodically to review the results of the inspections and visit with contractors to assess the customer service demeanor of building inspectors. The Senior Building Inspector should document their activity and findings and submit reviews and findings monthly to the Building Official.

Recommendation: Establish a quality control program for Building Inspection.

(6) Enhance the Extent of Training for Building Inspectors.

Ongoing training is essential to maintain staff proficiency, consistency and uniform interpretation and application of codes enforced.

Sending individual Building Inspectors to classes presented outside of the City is encouraged. It is equally important that the staff share the information received from seminars and classes, and that all agree on the use of each subject. Individual Building Inspectors that receive information learned from outside the organization need to verify how it is going to be utilized in the City through team learning and sharing. Placing priority on training, sharing of information, and agreement on interpretations should contribute to the issue of consistency.

Coordination and consistency can be enhanced by periodic meetings between fire inspectors, plan checking staff, Building Inspectors, Permit Technicians, and all personnel who participate in the development process, to review operations and contribute to efficient delivery of services. Involving everyone who serves in the development process will assure that all good ideas are heard and will allow everyone to participate and take advantage of resolution of all matters. If consensus cannot be achieved, supervision and management may have to make decisions and publish their findings. This kind of effort will give all personnel the opportunity to be involved, provide input and take ownership for the process.

Recommendation: The Building Official should establish and publish quarterly training agendas. Assign all employees as presenters, and have them prepare outlines for their presentation. Bring in outside industry training where appropriate.

Recommendation: The Building Official should implement quarterly sessions with fire, building, plan checking staff, Permit Technicians and all employees involved in the development process (Planning, Engineering, Fire Prevention, etc.) to review operations, eliminate overlap or duplication, and improve coordination for efficient delivery of services. Allow each discipline to present matters of concern for decision and resolution.

Recommendation: The Building Official should involve the fire inspectors, at least monthly, in the building code training to achieve consistency.

Recommendation: The Building Official should assure that all training received at seminars or courses outside the City are reviewed in-house before use to see that any change applies to local use and meets policies set forth by the Building Official.

(7) Building Inspectors Should Not Take Issue with Approved Building Permit Plans.

One of the frustrations voiced by contractors is inconsistencies and new surprises on the job, which occur after initial inspections. While it is recognized that sometimes this problem occurs as result of work changed by corrections to comply with

codes, surprises are occurring because each Building Inspector takes differing approaches and interpretations. Training will assist in the standardization of interpretations. Beyond training, policies and procedures should be developed and implemented to avoid surprises.

Recommendation: Initiate a policy that Building Inspectors do not re-open a construction element previously approved by another of the City's Building Inspectors unless life-safety is at issue. This policy should discourage surprises or changes to previous field job approvals by the City's Building Inspectors.

Recommendation: Initiate a policy whereby Building Inspectors do not take issue in public with a building permit plan that has been approved unless life-safety is at issue. If a Building Inspector questions a plan check approval or is concerned about an omission or discrepancy, the Building Inspector should review it with the plan checking staff in the Building Division and if a problem is identified, have the plan checking staff in the Building Division contact the architect or engineer for a change.

7. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BUILDING BOARD OF APPEALS SHOULD BE MODIFIED.

At the present time, the Building Board of Appeals is the City Council. This is an unusual practice in comparison to other cities. Then typical practice is for the City Council to appoint construction trade experts to serve as the Board of Appeals so that the Board can more effectively function as an independent hearing body.

Recommendation: The structure of the Building Board of Appeals should be modified so that the membership consists of construction trade experts, and not the City Council.

Recommendation: The City Council should appoint members to the Building Board of Appeals.

5. PLANNING DIVISION

This chapter presents an analysis of the Planning Division. The chapter includes an analysis of the following aspects of the Division:

- The Planning Commission;
- Opportunities to improve the management of the land entitlement process; and
- Opportunities to streamline the land entitlement process.

The Planning Division is a division of the Development Services Department. The City Planner, who reports to the Development Services Director, is the manager of the Division. The Division is authorized (9) nine full-time staff, and is responsible for the processing of land entitlement permit applications including ensuring the applications meet the requirements of the General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, CEQA requirements, the California Coastal Act and the Subdivision Map Act, providing staff support to the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, developing reports and recommendations for presentation to these commissions, and reviewing building permit applications for conformance with the Zoning Ordinance and land entitlement permit conditions of approval. The staff serve as case planners or managers responsible for processing all aspects of each land entitlement permit application.

The following sections present the analysis of the Planning Division, including strengths and opportunities for improvement.

1. THE PLANNING DIVISION HAS A NUMBER OF STRENGTHS.

While this chapter focuses primarily on opportunities for improvement, there are a number of strengths in the Division. Examples of these strengths are presented in the table below.

Program	Strength
Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Commission holds four workshops per year; one is used to create the work plan for the coming year. The last work plan was adopted by the Commission in September of 2007 and approved by the City Council in November of that year. • The Commission has adopted a code of ethics that guides individual and group actions.
Current Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-stop shop exists for submittal of land entitlement permit applications; applicants do not have to “walk” their submittal from division-to-division. • A “Development Processing Guide” that is available at the counter and on line. It includes an overview of the development process and an explanation of the planning, engineering, building, fire and utilities development processes. • The general plan and zoning ordinance are available on line. • The City uses a case management system with one planner assigned the case from application acceptance through land entitlement. • Design review guidelines have been developed for specific areas of the City, such as the Harbor, Down City and the San Luis Rey.

These are illustrative examples of the strengths of the Planning Division.

2. OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires all public agencies to review and consider the environmental consequences of projects that they carry out or approve. This section of the chapter presents recommendations regarding how the Planning Division can improve the CEQA process within the City.

(1) The Responsibility for Managing the Preparation of Environmental Impact Reports By Environmental Consultants Should Be Insourced.

At the present time, the applicant is responsible for hiring, payment of, and management of environmental consultants that prepare environmental impact reports.

This is a highly unusual practice. In the experience of the project team, most planning divisions manage the environmental consultants that prepare these environmental impact reports to control the quality, and to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

The Planning Division should change its approach for the preparation of the environmental impact reports. This revised approach should include the following elements:

- The Division should issue a request for qualifications at the beginning of the fiscal year for environmental consultants for the preparation of environmental impact reports.
- From the list, the Division should select consultants for specific projects based on capability and qualifications.
- Upon filing to prepare an environmental document, the applicant should be charged a deposit. The deposit should be equal to the estimated fee for the environmental impact report.
- The Division should also include in the fee the number of time required for administration of the contract by the Planning Division. The project team would not expect that this would be less than 200 hours for each Environmental Impact Report.
- Upon selection, the environmental consultant should prepare a written work program to complete the analysis.
- The environmental consultant should be paid by the Division, based upon deliverables of acceptable quality.

As part of this change in approach, the Planning Division should develop a policy and procedure for the management of the environmental consultants that prepare the environmental impact reports.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should insource the responsibility for management of the preparation of environmental impact reports by environmental consultants.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop a policy and procedure for the management of the environmental consultants that prepare the environmental impact reports.

(2) The Planning Division Should Update the City's CEQA Guidelines To Include Local Thresholds of Significance, Appeal Timelines, and Procedures.

The basis for any consistent, efficient and comprehensive environmental review process is compliance with state law and administrative procedures.

The California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") requires all public agencies to review and consider the environmental consequences of projects that they carry out or approve. CEQA requires the state to adopt a comprehensive set of guidelines ("the State Guidelines") to assist in implementation of the law, and that public agencies adopt local procedures for implementation as well. These local procedures include provisions on how the agency will process environmental documents and provide for adequate comment, time periods for review, and lists of permits that are ministerial actions and projects that are considered categorically exempt. Agency procedures should be updated within 120 days after the State CEQA Guidelines are revised.

The Department Resource Agency is charged with certifying, adopting or amending the Guidelines at least once every two years, but it is usually on an annual basis. The Department has not adopted local procedures for CEQA implementation since January 2001.

The City merely adopted the State guidelines.

These guidelines should be updated and expanded to reflect local policies for traffic generation and levels of service, water consumption and global warming.

Enacting local thresholds helps ensure that, during the initial phase of

environmental review, determinations will be made on a consistent and objective basis. The establishments of thresholds of significance are not required by the CEQA Guidelines, but local agencies are encouraged to adopt them as a best management practice. These locally specified impact thresholds improve the efficiency, fairness and consistency of the entire land entitlement process.

The Planning Division should develop local standardized thresholds to identify environmental impacts that trigger more intensive environmental review. These locally specified impact thresholds improve the efficiency, fairness and consistency of the entire land entitlement process.

Recommendation: The City should adopt local levels of significance for traffic, water, noise and other appropriate environmental impacts.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should publish the local CEQA Implementing Procedures and local levels of significance to its web site.

(3) The Planning Division Should Develop Standard Mitigation Measures.

Many cities have adopted a standard set of mitigation measures that are developed based upon the General Plan. Oceanside has not.

The adoption of standard mitigation measures memorialize the mitigations in a single document. On the positive side, these standard mitigation measures speed the initial study process and provide a good deal of review consistency over time and across different types of projects. They also make it possible for project sponsors to include appropriate mitigation steps in their original proposals. On the downside, standards and thresholds when strictly adhered to tend to lessen the importance of local discretion and limit the potential for negotiation. Strict adherence to standards also tends to foster a project-by-project rather than plan-based view of development

regulation.

Mitigations should include operational noise during construction, dust control during construction, drought tolerant landscaping, vehicle and truck pollution during construction and other operational aspects of any development project.

The Planning Division should develop its own mitigation measures for use with mitigated negative declarations and environmental impact reports.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop standard environmental mitigations measures for all projects based upon the General Plan environmental impact report.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should publish these standard mitigation measures to its web site.

3. THE PLANNING DIVISION SHOULD DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A POLICY AND PROCEDURE REGARDING THE COMPLETENESS OF LAND ENTITLEMENT PERMIT APPLICATION SUBMITTALS AND TAKE A NUMBER OF MEASURES TO REDUCE INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS

A significant number of the land entitlement permit applications, based upon the analysis of land entitlement permit cycle time conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group, are being deemed incomplete thirty days after submittal, more so than experienced in the analysis of other cities. The number and extent of incomplete letters result in significant delays in the processing of these applications, and frustration on the part of the applicant and City staff. Examples of the number and extent of incomplete letters are presented below.

- For forty-six (46) conditional use permit applications submitted between January 2003 and February 2008, the median number of incomplete letters numbered was two (2) per application. The maximum number of incomplete letters was six (6) for one (1) application, while four (4) applications had four (4) per application, and seven (7) applications has three (3) per application.
- For twenty-three (23) parcel map applications submitted between October 2004 and September 2007, the median number of incomplete letters was one (1) per

application. The maximum number of incomplete letters was five (5) each for two (2) applications, while two (2) applications had four (4) per application, and one (1) application has three (3) incomplete letters.

- For thirteen (13) variance applications submitted between November 2004 and March 2008, the median number of incomplete letters was one (1) per application. The maximum number of incomplete letters was four (4) each for two (2) applications, while four (4) applications had four (4) per application.
- For twenty-three (23) applications that involved multiple types of applications (e.g., a tentative map and a conditional use permit) submitted between April 2003 and July 2007, the median number of incomplete letters was one (1) per application. The maximum number of incomplete letters was four (4) for one (1) application, while five (5) applications had three (3) per application.

This is an incredible waste of time and money for the applicant and the City. More specifically, it takes a median of 259 calendar days to deem a conditional use permit application complete. This is an excessive number of days. The same problem exists with parcel map applications; it requires 273 calendar days at the median to deem a parcel map application complete.

The City needs to take steps to reduce the proportion of applications deemed incomplete after the thirty-day review.

(1) The Planning Division Should Develop and Implement a Written Policy on Land Entitlement Application Completeness.

Staff of the Planning Division interviewed by the project team estimated that a significant proportion of the land entitlement applications are deemed incomplete as part of the 30-day review. Some of this problem resulted from Planning Division not thoroughly checking applications at submittal for completeness in comparison to application submittal guidelines.

The result of not thoroughly checking land entitlement applications at submittal is that many applications are deemed incomplete thirty days after submittal.

Assuring that these basic application submittal requirements are met when the applicant is at the counter submitting their application saves everyone valuable time. The applicant doesn't waste thirty days only to find out the application is incomplete for basic submittal requirements. Staff doesn't waste valuable time reviewing an obviously incomplete application. It reduces the extent of frustration for the applicant and staff since applications can process more quickly to a decision by the Planning Commission.

The staff of the Planning Division has identified the extent of incomplete applications as a challenge to their efficiency.

A policy and procedure should be developed by the Division that includes the essential submittal requirements for each type of application to be deemed complete and consistent with applicable city codes and policies. It should also include the basis for rejecting incomplete applications.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop and implement a written policy and procedure on land development application completeness.

Recommendation: Training on the policy should be provided to staff of the Planning Division.

(2) The Planner On Duty At the Public Counter Should Check Land Entitlement Permit Applications at Submittal to Assure These Applications Meet Essential Submittal Requirements and Reject Incomplete Applications That Do Not Meet These Essential Requirements.

Land entitlement permit application should be checked at submittal to assure the application meets submittal requirements. The Planner on duty at the public counter should fill this role. This will require the support of the City Council, carefully crafted policies and procedures, and training of the staff of the Division.

The City is often taking thirty days to inform an applicant their application is incomplete for failure to meet submittal requirements. Many of the items that resulted in

incomplete applications should be part of the submittal requirements. In this way, the application would have been rejected at the time of submittal or the applicant would have been informed at submittal that these items were required and given a deadline for submittal.

The role of the Planner on duty at the public counter should be modified to assume responsibility for quality control of the land entitlement permit applications assuring these applications meet essential submittal requirements. The Planner on duty at the public counter needs to serve a stronger role for quality control of applications. The Planner on duty should be responsible for assuring land entitlement permit applications are complete at submittal, rejecting those that do not meet essential submittal requirements. This will require judgment; if the applicant makes a commitment to resolve the incomplete submittal within the next several workdays, the Division could begin processing the application. However, the burden must lie with the applicant.

To ease the role of the Planner on duty at the public counter in quality controlling re-submittals, the applicant, after the land entitlement permit has initially been deemed incomplete, should be required to submit as part of their second submittal a memorandum that lists each of the items that was cause for the application being deemed incomplete, and what measures the applicant has taken to address each item on the list.

Recommendation: The Planner on duty at the public counter should check land entitlement permit applications at submittal to assure these applications meet essential application submittal criteria and reject applications that do not meet these essential requirements.

Recommendation: The applicant, after the land entitlement permit has initially been deemed incomplete, should be required to submit as part of their second submittal a memorandum that lists each of the items that was cause for the

application being deemed incomplete and what measures the applicant has taken to address each item on the list.

(3) Application Guides Should Be Developed for Each Type of Land Entitlement Permits to Include All Of The City's Requirements for an Applicant to Achieve a Complete Submittal.

The Planning Division has not developed application guides for each different type of land entitlement permit application. These guides need to be expanded to identify the minimum requirements for an application to be deemed complete. This would include the requirements of planning, building, fire, utilities, engineering and traffic engineering.

The Senior Planner in the Planning Division should assemble a team of staff for those divisions / departments involved in the land entitlement process to develop an application guide for each different type of land entitlement permit. These guides should include the whole gamut of application requirements, but the Senior Planner should exercise authority to assure these requirements are realistic.

These application guides should include a checklist of submittal requirements that an applicant has to check off and that requires the applicant's signature. This is designed to have the applicant self-certify the application includes all of the information required to achieve a complete submittal.

Recommendation: Application guides should be developed for each type of land entitlement application to include all of the City's requirements for an applicant to achieve a complete submittal.

(4) Land Entitlement Permit Application Guides Should Be Placed on the Planning Division's Web Site.

There are a number of cities that have placed their application guides and submittal requirements on their web site. The Planning Division should similarly place

their land entitlement permit application guides, forms, and submittal requirements on their web site after the City has completed the steps mentioned previously.

In addition, the Division should publish examples of complete submittals so that applicants know the leading causes for incomplete submittals.

Recommendation: Land entitlement permit application guides, forms, and submittal requirements should be placed on the Planning Division's web site.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should publish to its web site examples of complete submittals, and a listing of the most frequent causes for applications being deemed incomplete.

(5) The Planning Division Should Conduct Workshops for Consulting Planners, Architects, Engineers, Developers and Others Involved in the Land Development Process on the Land Entitlement Permit Submittal Requirements.

Based on feedback received by the consulting team during the focus group meetings, the City should periodically meet with consulting planners, architects, engineers, etc. that are involved in the application for discretionary land development permits to review permit submittal requirements. The workshops should include a review of submittal requirements and checklists, the most common reasons applications are deemed incomplete, and recent policy and code interpretations. The workshops should also include a forum for participants to ask question, and make recommendations to improve and streamline the process.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should provide workshops for consulting planners, architects, engineers, developers and others involved the land development process on the land entitlement permit submittal requirements.

(6) The City Should Require Applicants of Some Types of Projects to Use the Pre-Application Developer's Conference to Obtain Preliminary Input and Direction.

The City currently encourages developers to meet with Planning Division staff to receive preliminary direction and input prior to submitting a formal land entitlement application.

The City should require developers of certain types of projects, for example development agreements, use permits, rezoning requests, projects within the coastal and redevelopment areas and otherwise large and/or complex projects, to participate in a pre-application developer's conference.

The Planning Division, in cooperation with the other disciplines involved in the development process, should develop a project pre-application questionnaire. It should identify the general requirements (conceptual drawings, site/context photographs, application type, property details, a detailed descriptive narrative, etc.).

The meeting should be held within seven working days of receipt of the pre-application questionnaire. At the meeting the case planner should review with the applicant the items required for a formal project application, concerns about the information contained in the pre-application, and timing for project review. Representatives from the various disciplines who will be involved in the formal review process should be in attendance. Minutes should be kept of the discussion and distributed by the case planner/manager to developer and represented staff within three working days.

Recommendation: The City should require applicants of certain projects to use the pre-application developer's conference.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop a project pre-application questionnaire listing general project requirements.

(7) The Case Planner Should Meet With the Applicant to Discuss Issues That Have Been Found During the Initial Review of the Application.

Applicants for land entitlement permit applications, or their representatives, should be invited to meet with the case planner and other necessary staff to discuss their application if it will be deemed incomplete at 30-days. The case planner would inform the applicant face-to-face about basic problems, if any, with the application being deemed complete, preliminary environmental findings, basic conditions that might be imposed, and timing for processing of the application. The meeting would allow the applicant to meet staff members that are working on the application, and staff could hear what goals the applicant might have, and what problems the conditions might cause.

Recommendation: The case planner in the Planning Division should meet with the applicant to discuss issues that have been found during the initial review of the application.

(8) The Planning Division Should Develop a System to Monitor the Extent of Complete Submittals to Identify Where Improvements Can Be Made to Reduce the Number of Incomplete Submittals.

Many of the recommendations in this chapter are designed to reduce the number of incomplete applications as a means of improving efficiency of the process of land development entitlement review. Critical to the success of this endeavor is the establishment of a system to monitor the extent of improvement in the submittal of complete applications. Only with such systems can management evaluate how well the process is working and how well employees are performing as well as determine where to make future changes and adjustments.

The automated permit system, which is recommended elsewhere in this report, should be used to monitor the extent of incomplete submittals. Periodically, the Senior Planner should review this information to identify if there are common reasons or patterns for incomplete submittals. This information should be shared with staff and the development community. Where appropriate, staff should receive additional training, procedures should be changed and additional guidelines issued.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop a system to monitor the extent of complete submittals.

Recommendation: This information regarding the extent of complete submittals should be shared with staff and the development community and appropriate changes made to reduce the number of incomplete applications.

(9) The Fee Structure for Land Entitlement Permits Should Be Modified to Discourage Incomplete Submittals.

There are some applicants that do not listen to the comments and feedback from the City regarding causes for applications being deemed incomplete. The applicants re-submit the application, and do not fully address the underlying problems with the application. These applicants are infrequent, but add to the City's expense for plan checking land entitlement permits. The City should have the option to change an additional plan check fee for submittals deemed incomplete more than twice.

Recommendation: The fee structure for land entitlement permit applications should provide the option to require additional payments by the applicant should the application be deemed incomplete more than twice.

4. OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF THE LAND ENTITLEMENT PERMIT PROCESS.

To quantify the benefits of streamlining local permit processes, PricewaterhouseCoopers developed a model to calculate the cash flows associated with the construction of a new building. Participating members of the American Institute

of Architects provided substantial assistance in this effort by describing their experiences with permitting processes and costs, and construction times and costs. The model documented opportunities to increase local development activity and government tax revenues through the implementation of more efficient permit processes. The specific findings of the application of this model are presented below.

- **Permitting times will encourage economic development.** Permitting delays increase costs, reduce returns on investment, and cause investors to seek other opportunities. The study found that shortening permitting processes by 3 months on a 22-month project cycle could make the difference in the decision whether or not to undertake a project.
- **Permitting delays raise tenant costs both in new buildings and existing buildings.** When permitting delays are the norm, the increased costs and delayed returns on investment are built into rents paid by all tenants. Permitting delays discourage investment, leading to less construction, fewer buildings, and a tighter real estate market. As a result, rents are higher for all tenants.
- **With competition between jurisdictions for new development dollars, more efficient permit processes can attract investment from other areas.** Local governments frequently compete to attract new developments. Improved permit processes can be a cost effective tool in addition to or in lieu of other inducements such as preferential tax rates or regulatory relief.
- **Accelerating permit processes can permanently increase local government revenues.** For a single project, accelerating permit processes provides a temporary acceleration of property tax collections. For a series of new projects, these temporary property tax increases accumulate and result in a permanent increase in government tax revenues. For a representative series of projects, the study shows that these increases could be 16.5 percent over a 5 year period.
- **Increased construction spending provides broader economic benefits.** The economic benefits of increased construction activity extend beyond employing more construction workers. Construction-related materials and services will be purchased from local suppliers, local jobs will be created, and these workers will spend the income they earn at local establishments. Based on information from the Department of Commerce, for every 10 jobs directly related to a construction project, another 8 jobs are created locally. These impacts yield not only additional income for the community but also additional tax revenues and investment.
- **Because of the economic importance of investment in structures, even**

modest efficiency gains in permitting processes can have large impacts. While changes must be considered at the local level, the potential benefit for the nation is substantial. The Bureau of Economic Analysis in the Department of Commerce reports that in 2004, new investment in privately owned structures totaled \$960 billion, or 8 percent of GDP. Of this number, \$295 billion was for nonresidential structures and \$665 billion was for residential structures. Seemingly small improvements in permitting processes could lead to more investment and more rapid economic growth.

Improvements in permit processes can help a community promote economic development, lower business costs, and create jobs both within the construction sector and throughout the local economy. Increased tax collections can provide a revenue source that can help finance the costs of the systems and procedural improvements needed to accelerate permit approval.

In evaluating the land entitlement permit processes, there are a number of opportunities for improvement to streamline the process without reducing the quality of the review to assure compliance with the general plan, zoning ordinance, and design guidelines. These opportunities are portrayed below.

(1) Establish and Utilize An Interdepartmental Development Review Committee To Provide Initial Feedback To Applicants Regarding Land Entitlement Permit Applications.

Generally, a Development Review Committee should meet every two weeks to discuss permits, develop recommended conditions of approval and mitigation measures, and refine the review process. The Development Review Committee should include those divisions and departments involved in the permit and plan check process for land entitlement permit process, and also include applicants (if the applicants and their representatives care to attend). The Development Review Committee should be focused on expediting the permit and plan check process by ensuring the applicant is aware of all the things they will need to do to enable their permit applications to receive

serious consideration by the Planning Commission.

The Development Review Committee should consist of multi-disciplined and multi-departmental personnel, including staff from Planning, Building, Engineering, Redevelopment and Fire Prevention. Applicants should be invited to attend the meetings. The bi-weekly Development Review Committee meetings should be utilized to review all of the land entitlement permit applications filed during the previous weeks. After the meetings, the case planner from the Planning Division should send the applicant a letter containing Development Review Committee comments, and specifying what will be required to process the project.

The utilization of the Development Review Committee needs to be carefully managed by the Planning Division, however, to be an aid in the land entitlement permit and plan check process, and not a hindrance. The careful management should include the following aspects.

- The permit application should be routed to Development Review Committee before the meeting every two weeks.
- The permit application should be routed to the Development Review Committee after the application has been determined to meet submittal requirements – the day after.
- Comments, conditions of approval, and mitigation measures should be discussed at the Development Review Committee meeting, and formal written comments, conditions of approval, and mitigation measures should be due back to the case planner within 5 calendar days.
- Members of Development Review Committee should only have one opportunity to comment or condition an application.
- Thresholds should be set for referral of applications to Development Review Committee. Not all applications should be referred to all members of Development Review Committee.

The involvement of Development Review Committee in the permit and plan check process needs to be managed by the Planning Division.

Applicants should be invited to the Development Review Committee to receive direct feedback regarding their application and comments or conditions or of approval, and to inform the applicant face-to-face about basic problems, if any, with the application being deemed complete, preliminary environmental findings, basic conditions that might be imposed, and timing for processing of the application. The meeting would allow the applicant to meet the staff members that are working on the application, and staff could hear what goals the applicant might have, and what problems the conditions might cause.

The benefits of having the Committee meet to discuss current applications are that there is continuous feedback to the applicant, timelines and expectations of each department are memorialized, and there is a forum to resolve conflicts, if any exists, between each department.

Recommendation: The City Planner should establish an inter-departmental Development Review Committee.

Recommendation: The City Planner should provide the leadership of the meetings of the Development Review Committee.

Recommendation: The Development Review Committee should meet bi-weekly and review land entitlement permits that have been submitted in the previous weeks. After the meeting, case planners from the Planning Division should consolidate and prioritize Development Review Committee comments, and send a written communication to the applicant outlining what steps will be required to get the project processed and completed.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should use the Development Review Committee meetings to ensure the applications are handled consistently and correctly, and that decisions are consistent with past precedents and decisions.

(2) The Same Case Planner Should Be Assigned to a Land Entitlement Permit Application from Pre-Application Conference Through the Land Entitlement Permit Application to the Building Permit Plan Check.

Currently, the City Planner and the Senior Planner review all applications and assign them usually based on workload.

This process should be formalized with assignments made by the Senior Planner. Assignment should be based on complexity of the proposed project, skills and experience of the planning staff members as well as workload. The assignments should be made prior to the pre-application conference. The same case planner should be responsible for the review and plan check of the application from pre-application conference through the plan check of the land entitlement permit application and building permit plan checking.

During the focus group meetings, some participants indicated that they had experienced a change of case planner during this process.

The case planner should not be changed during the process; the same case planner should continue throughout the process.

Recommendation: The Senior Planner should assign a case planner in advance of the pre-application conference.

Recommendation: The case planner should be assigned the land entitlement permit application from pre-application conference through the plan check of the land entitlement permit application and building permit plan checking.

(3) Develop and Adopt a Policy and Procedure Regarding When Land Entitlement Permit Cases Should Be Closed as a Result of Inactivity By the Applicant.

A review of a sample of land entitlement permit applications indicates that, in many instances, there is a significant delay in processing the application as a result of the lack of activity by the applicant. This delay occurs in re-submitting an application

after it has been deemed incomplete. For example:

- An addition to a single-family dwelling, was submitted as an administrative coastal permit (ACP-11-05) and was deemed incomplete on November 11, 2005. The application has never been re-submitted.
- An unmanned wireless communications facility application (C-1-05) was submitted as a conditional use permit on January 1, 2005. It was deemed incomplete on January 21, 2005. It was never re-submitted.
- A wireless telecommunications facility (C-11-07) application was submitted as a conditional use permit on April 3, 2007, and deemed incomplete on May 3, 2007. It was never re-submitted.
- An application to remove existing structures and build three-unit condominiums (P-9-06, D-17-06, C-45-06) was submitted as an application on September 1, 2006. After being deemed incomplete on September 29, 2006, it was never re-submitted.
- An application for construction of a 20-unit condominium complex and 2 single-family homes (T-1-05, D-1-05, C-48-05, V-13-05) was submitted January 3, 2005, and deemed incomplete on February 2, 2005. It was not re-submitted until September 27, 2005, almost eight months later.
- An application for 8 single-family lots and a hillside development plan (T-2-06, C-15-06, C-16-06) was submitted on April 26, 2006. It was deemed incomplete on May 25, 2006. It was re-submitted on October 30, 2006, five months later.

A review of the 79 land entitlement permits that were “awaiting submittal” on June 6, 2008 found that 10 permits that were still incomplete not less than five years after being deemed incomplete by the Planning Division, and another 18 were still incomplete four years after being deemed incomplete. Another 25 permit applications were “inactive;” 11 of these applications were inactive not less than four years after being deemed incomplete by the Planning Division.

The current practice of carrying “inactive” applications creates the following operational delays:

- Planners are unable to predict and plan workload;

- Cases which have been inactive for a lengthy period of time may suddenly become active;
- Planners must relearn case specifics after this interim inactive period; and
- Planners' workload can fluctuate suddenly without warning.

The Department should develop and adopt a written policy and procedure regarding when "inactive" cases should be closed. This policy should be integrated into the Department's 30-day incompleteness letter. The Planning Division, by the terms of the Permit Streamlining Act, has 30 calendar days to notify the applicant, in writing, of whether or not a land entitlement permit application is complete enough for processing. When rejected as incomplete, the Division must identify where deficiencies exist and how they can be remedied – the additional information required.

This is an opportune time to inform the applicant that if the applicant does not correct the deficiencies within a specified time period, the application will be closed. The information provided to the applicant should include the following:

- At the time of the request for additional information, staff should specify the timeframe in which information must be submitted, i.e. 30, 45, or 60 days;
- Maintain a "tickler system" using the automated permit information system to remind staff of upcoming applicant deadlines;
- Send a form letter reminder to applicants;
- Inform applicants that if additional information or a time extension request is not submitted by the deadline, the application will become inactive or the project will be closed; and
- Charge applicants a fee to reactivate files after deadline submission dates. This may require an amendment to the fee schedule.

These methods should encourage applicants to submit information within defined time frames and create a system for staff to regularly review the status of cases. By

developing and implementing internal and external standards, overall processing should flow more efficiently.

Recommendation: Develop and adopt a policy and procedure regarding the timing for closure of land entitlement permit cases as a result of inactivity by the applicant.

Recommendation: The 30-day incomplete letter should inform the applicant that, if the applicant does not correct the deficiencies within a specified time period, the application would be closed. The 30-day incompleteness letter should also inform the applicant that the permit fee will not be refunded if the case is closed due to failure to respond to the 30-day incompleteness letter within the specified time period, and a new re-submittal fee will be required as well.

Recommendation: Amend the City's zoning ordinance to permit closure of land entitlement permit cases as a result of six months inactivity by the applicant.

(4) Cycle Time Objectives Should be Established For the Processing of Land Entitlement Permit Application By the City.

The Matrix Consulting Group evaluated the number of calendar days required by the City to process land entitlement permits by type of permit application, and compared the results to benchmarks utilized by the Matrix Consulting Group. The results are presented in the paragraphs below.

- **Conditional use permits were approved within 90 calendar days of being deemed complete (at the median);** 67 calendar days at the 25th percentile and 130 calendar days at the 75th percentile. The number of calendar days required for approval of a conditional use permit from original submittal was 349 calendar days (at the median). The results compare to the benchmark utilized by the Matrix Consulting Group is 60 calendar days of being deemed complete.
- **Parcel maps are approved within 76 calendar days of being deemed complete (at the median);** 52 calendar days at the 25th percentile and 180 days at the 75th percentile. The number of calendar days required for approval of a parcel map from original submittal was 349 calendar days (at the median).

The Planning Division operates in a complex work environment that is procedure and labor intensive. Given this environment, it is imperative that management be able to monitor the performance of Division staff including elapsed processing times. Historical

average data has shown that elapsed processing times often exceeded statutory limitations defined in the Permit Streamlining Act, and that management does not currently have the tools to manage or monitor processing timelines.

Cycle time objectives should be developed by the Division and should be adopted and implemented. The cycle time objectives are beneficial to the Planning Division, as they should:

- Validate timelines and quickly identify projects which are experiencing processing delays;
- Identify complex cases early in the process to allow for processing adjustments, such as staffing;
- Present staff with a direction and goal for productivity;
- Create an effective management tool to measure and monitor staff performance; and
- Provide a justifiable and accurate source for fee schedules, staffing and budgetary decisions.

Benchmarks should be established for the length of time -- in calendar days -- required to process applications from the date an application is deemed complete to the date of the applicant's initial public hearing. Possible calendar date benchmarks for processing different types of applications are presented in the table below:

Type of Permit	Categorically Exempt	Negative Declaration
General Plan Amendment	Not Applicable	270
Re Zoning	Not Applicable	270
Conditional Use Permit	60	N/A
Parcel Map (TPM)	50	120
Subdivision Map (TTM)	50	120
Variance	60	90
Development Plan Review	50	120
Administrative Development Plan	45	N/A
Administrative CUP	45	N/A
Administrative Coastal Permit	45	N/A

Recommendation: Establish cycle time objectives for all of the major types of land entitlement permits.

Recommendation: These cycle time objectives should be posted on the Division website and identified in the Division's application materials.

Recommendation: The City should hold the City Planner responsible for management of the number of workdays required for plan checking by all of the divisions involved, not just the Planning Division and for monitoring performance against the cycle time objectives on a regular basis.

(5) Monitor and Maintain Case Assignment and Case Status Information In The Automated Permit Information System.

The current approach to monitoring and maintenance of land entitlement cases could be improved by effective case management, supervision, and monitoring including:

- Improving the Senior Planners' ability to track project staffs' progress;
- Improving the case planner's ability to track concurrent project developments; and
- Improving the Senior Planners' ability to manage workload.

Accurate data on workload, by permit type, cyclical variances in activity, and workload activity by team and by planner are all essential management tools. With this information, management can make informed, logical decisions regarding staffing, budgeting, procedures, and organizational structure.

On a monthly basis, the Senior Planner should be required to audit the caseload assigned to each of the case planners to determine whether the case is active, is inactive as a result of applicant inaction and should be terminated, or has been closed and the case should be updated in the automated permit information system.

Recommendation: Develop and adopt a written Division policy and procedure standards for the maintenance of case status information in the automated permit

information system by the case planner's assigned to processing land entitlement applications.

Recommendation: Develop and adopt a Division written policy and procedure that assigns responsibility to the case planners for ongoing maintenance of case status information in the automated permit information system and that requires the Senior Planner to audit the caseload assigned to each of the case planners to determine whether the case is active, is inactive as a result of applicant inaction and should be terminated, or has been closed and the case should be updated in the automated permit information system.

(6) Track And Monitor the Success Or Failure of Case Planners In Meeting Cycle Time Objectives.

The Planning Division, once it establishes cycle time objectives for land entitlement permits, should measure and monitor staff performance in meeting these objectives. It is important for management to have quantifiable tools to: regulate performance, identify training and staffing needs, and detect organizational deficiencies. The cycle time objectives can serve as a fair and accurate means to gauge staff performance for the following reasons:

- The staff will know and be familiar with the standards;
- Standards are easily understandable;
- Standards are flexible;
- Standards have been created through staff input.

The management reports defined and discussed in a later section of this chapter, if generated on a regular basis, would track both individual and overall staff performance.

Recommendation: Track and monitor the success or failure of case planners in meeting cycle time objectives through regular management information reports generated on a monthly basis by the automated permit information system.

Recommendation: The ability of the case planners to consistently meet the cycle time objectives should be integrated into their performance evaluations.

(7) The Manager of the Current Planning Section Should Be Held Accountable for Formally Planning and Scheduling The Land Entitlement Permits Processed By His / Her Staff Using the Automated Permit Information System.

The manager of the Current Planning Section should prepare and maintain a schedule for processing of permit applications by his / her team of case planners. The purpose of the schedule is to make visible the number of calendar days required to analyze and reach a decision on the permit application. The specific objectives related to the design and development of this system should be as follows:

- To establish a process whereby specific calendar day targets are set for each application based upon cycle time objectives established by the Division;
- To utilize the proposed automated permitting systems to ease the tracking of the timeliness of the processing of land entitlement permit applications and enable the Senior Planner to hold case planners accountable; and
- To generate data sufficient to assist in the assessment of the performance of the Division's staff assigned to the processing of land entitlement permits in comparison to cycle time objectives;

Major elements of the system are presented below.

- The manager of the Current Planning Section would review incoming applications and analyze application characteristics, focusing in particular on potential processing difficulties. Once difficulties are identified, the manager of the Current Planning Section would set targets for case planners as follows: (1) overall staff hours allocated to process the application; and (2) calendar targets for completing the analysis of the application. Based on the target data, the Senior Planner would review the most recent open case inventory report and note the workload of staff members. Cases would then be assigned as appropriate. The manager of the Current Planning Section would then enter the cycle time date and the name of the case planner in the automated permit information system.
- When projects are first assigned, the "case planner" to whom the application is assigned would review the targets (calendar targets and staff hour allocations) established for the case. If the "case planner" feels that the targets are unreasonable after a review of the application, the case planner should discuss them with the Senior Planner and negotiate appropriate changes.

The manager of the Current Planning Section should be held accountable for the ongoing maintenance of this open case inventory and the completion of the processing of permits in accordance with the cycle time objectives. The planning and scheduling system should be utilized to:

- Evaluate employee performance;
- Balance workload among different staff assigned to the processing of land entitlement permits; and
- Quantify the anticipated completion date of various applications given all work in progress.

The planning and scheduling system should be designed to manage the workload including reviewing actual progress versus scheduled deadlines and facilitate the shifting of work assignment and schedules in the face of changing priorities or workload.

Recommendation: The manager of the Current Planning Section should formally plan and schedule the permits processed by their staff using the automated permit information system.

Recommendation: The manager of the Current Planning Section should be held accountable for the ongoing maintenance of this open case inventory and the completion of the processing of permits by staff in accordance with the cycle time objectives.

(8) Planners in the Planning Division Should Be Assigned Applications In a Timely Manner.

The process of assigning land entitlement permit applications to the Planners in the Planning Division is not timely. New applications are not being assigned to case planner within five (5) calendar days in a consistent fashion.

The case assignments should be completed on a weekly basis, usually at a weekly staff meeting. The applications should be received at the counter, entered into

the tracking system by the Planner, files created by support staff for the Planning Division, and files routed to the Senior Planner for assignment. At the weekly staff meeting, the Senior Planner should review and discuss the applications that have been received in the past week, make the assignments to the Planners, and the applicant should be notified of the name of the case manager.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should utilize weekly staff meetings for distribution and assignment of new land entitlement permit applications.

Recommendation: New land entitlement permit applications should be assigned to the case planner in five (5) calendar days.

(9) Generate Ongoing Monthly Management Information Reports Using The Automated Permit Information System To Track Performance Against Cycle Time Objectives and Monitor the Case Workload and Performance for Case Planners.

In the course of our study, the Matrix Consulting Group requested existing management information reports and discussed with management the types of information it needs for better operation of the Division. Our study revealed that management information reports are not currently being generated for several reasons, including: (1) the existing automated permit information system (an Access database) does not have the capability to generate reports easily; (2) the accuracy of the data is questionable in some cases; and, (3) prior to this study, management had not requested this information. The management of the Planning Division is not receiving reliable information on workload for the Division, and individual case planner workload to use in scheduling. In addition, overall information on staff efficiency and productivity is not maintained or used for staff evaluation.

Management information reports capture the detailed information about staff productivity and Division performance to monitor workload, balance assignments and

evaluate internal operations. After several discussions with management and staff, we recommend the automated permit information system be utilized to track and report the following information:

- Division Workload;
- Case Tracking;
- Elapsed Processing Times;
- Work in Backlog;
- Personnel Productivity; and
- Project Management Measures.

The exhibit on the following page represents the corresponding management reports the Division needs to generate on a regular basis. The management of the Planning Division is currently not provided with the type of reliable information necessary to manage the processing of land entitlement permits. The project team feels it is imperative that management utilizes reliable case information to manage, direct and enhance Division operations. The management reports that the project team has outlined in this report are a beginning to better understanding the productivity and workload volume in the Division. The Department may wish to generate additional reports or receive more detail once these initial management information reports are implemented and used routinely.

Recommendation: Generate ongoing monthly management information reports using the automated permit information system to track performance against cycle time objectives and monitor the case workload and performance for case planners.

Exhibit 3 (1)

**Recommended Management Reports
For the Planning Division**

Report Name	Frequency / Distribution	Report Data
Workload distribution by section	Monthly to Planning Division management	Monthly frequency counts of incoming permit applications by type and by section
Section Workload Report – New Cases	Monthly to Planning Division management	Information by Case Planner including date submitted, date assigned, and last milestone
Section Workload Report – Open Cases	Monthly to Planning Division management	Information by Case Planner including date submitted, date assigned, date deemed complete, and last milestone
Workload Report – Inactive Cases	Monthly to Planning Division management	Information by Case Planner including date submitted, date information requested from the applicant, and the nature of the outstanding information requested
Workload Report – Closed Cases	Monthly to Planning Division management	Information by Case Planner including date submitted and date the permit was approved / denied
Case Status Report	Monthly to Planning Division management	Case information by case number, due date, Planner assigned, required action, and last milestone
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Open Cases	Monthly to Planning Division management	Information by Case Planner and section including date submitted, cycle time objective, days in process and last milestone
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Closed Cases	Monthly to Planning Division management	Information by Case Planner and section including date submitted, cycle time objective, completion date, total days, and date of approval or denial
Elapsed Processing Time Report –Cases Overdue	Monthly to Planning Division management	Information by Case Planner and section including date submitted, cycle time objective, days into process and last milestone

Exhibit 3 (2)

Report Name	Frequency / Distribution	Report Data
Caseload Assignment and Distribution Report	Monthly to Planning Division management	All caseload information and Case Planners assigned by Planner name and permit type
Case Planner Performance Report	Monthly to Planning Division management	Elapsed processing time by Case Planner, including new cases, open cases, inactive cases, closed cases, overdue cases, and % processed within cycle time objectives.

(10) Clarify the Role of Case Planners in the Planning Division In a Written Policy and Procedure.

The Planners within the Planning Division should be empowered to manage the review of land entitlement permits to assure the review by all disciplines (Building, Engineering, Fire, Water, etc.) is timely, predictable, coordinated, and that the application gets to a public hearing or permit action. The case planner, empowered as a team leader of a multi-discipline review team, should be a critical feature of the Planning Division's land entitlement permit process. Case planners should make the land entitlement permit review process seamless to the applicant.

The case planner would **not** be an advocate for the land entitlement permit application, but someone the applicant can always contact in the Division to find out their application's progress, to ensure disputes between codes and regulations are settled, and to keep their project on a predictable review schedule.

More specifics regarding the role of the case manager are presented in the paragraphs below.

- The case planner is there to make sure reviews of land use permit applications are timely, that the review process is predictable, and that the application gets to a decision point in a timely manner. The case planner should accomplish this by monitoring a schedule for both staff reviews and the applicant.
- The case planner would serve as the applicant's single point of contact. The applicant should be able to call a case manager at any time. The applicant should still be able to call any member of the planning permit review team directly -- they'll still have to answer questions concerning plan review on specific items such as Uniform Building Code, environmental or public improvement requirements -- but the case manager should be responsible for managing the reviews and always be there to handle complex issues and pulling these comments from the team together.
- The case planner is not an advocate for a land use permit application, but he or she will make sure the applicant gets to a clear decision point in a timely basis. The case manager is not an advocate for an application, and cannot design it for

the applicant. The case manager, however, will make sure the applicant fully understands the Department's requirements. For example, the applicant's property may not be able to handle a child care center project proposed by the applicant due to zoning restrictions limiting the size of a child care center in a residential neighborhood, environmental, hillside slope, fire regulations, height limits or other regulations. The case manager should make sure the applicant understands this in a timely fashion. The case planner should also ensure that issues are identified early in the process, so the City can suggest ways to modify the applicant's project to achieve a complete application.

- If an issue arises with the review of the planning permit application with which the applicant doesn't agree, the case planner is the applicant's contact to get the issue resolved. The case planner should take the applicant's concerns to the appropriate staff level, up to and including the Senior Manager.
- The case planner is there to ensure the planning permit application review proceeds in a timely and predictable fashion. The case planner should not be expected to always give the applicant the answer the applicant wants -- the City's codes and regulations don't allow everything. So, the answer may be "no, you can't build that, but, we will give you an option as to what you can build."
- The case planner should be responsible for complete and timely communication among the multi-disciplinary team. Each member of the inter-departmental review team, from Fire to Water Utilities will still be there. The case planner makes sure communications occurs within the multi-disciplinary team, the schedule set by the quadrant's Planner IV is met and complex issues are resolved, such as when conditions of approval conflict. The case planner should lead any discussions that focus on resolving conflicting conditions of approval or competing code requirements. His or her job is to keep the review of the planning permit application coordinated and predictable.
- The role of the case planner should be clarified in a written policy. The responsibility and the authority of the case planner should be clearly spelled out in a written policy by the Department. The responsibility and authority, in addition to that previously identified, should include:
 - Determining application completeness for all of the City's requirements;
 - Collecting and integrating comments from other divisions;
 - interdivision problems such as conflicting conditions;
 - Assuring that the conditions of approval suggested by other divisions are reasonable;
 - Analyzing the application;

- Coordinating citizen input and comments;
- Working with the applicant to resolve problems and revise the project as appropriate;
- Changing from a regulator and collector of other's opinions to a problem solver who is focused on how to get the job done and build a better community;
- Functioning as an advocate for the process (maintaining timelines and seeing that the schedule set by the Senior Planner is met);
- Promptly reviewing and issuing notifications of omissions or problems with the project;
- Making presentations at public meetings;
- Coordinating with key decision makers; and
- Signing the staff reports; and following up on enforcement of conditions.

In summary, the case planner is a team leader for a multi-disciplinary team and is responsible for keeping the review of a land entitlement permit application on track, making sure issues involving conflicting code or regulatory issues are resolved, charting a clear course for the applicant through the review process, and making sure issues regarding the application are identified early in the review process. The case planner is not an advocate for a planning permit application, nor is he / she responsible for the design or redesign of an application

Recommendation: The roles and responsibilities of the case planner in the Planning Division should be clearly identified in a Departmental policy and procedure.

(11) Develop and Adopt Land Entitlement Permit Plan Check Cycle Time Agreements with Applicants for High Priority Projects.

Effective land entitlement permit services are able to provide services in a way that is quick, consistent and predictable. The recommendations to change the way the

City provides its land entitlement permit plan check services will help the City enhance its services. This is particularly important as the City competes against its peers such as Vista and Carlsbad for commercial development.

An additional tool that can be very effective in competing against its peers for commercial development is the use of cycle time agreements with applicants for high priority projects. These agreements, which should be used selectively to further the City's economic development objectives, are simple and highly effective. The agreements are non-binding and typically are limited to 2-pages in length. The City could choose, for example, to offer cycle time agreements for:

- Commercial projects in the City's commercial centers;
- Industrial projects that generate or retain over 50 employment opportunities;
- Commercial projects that generate significant new sales tax revenue; and
- Affordable housing projects of 10 units or more.

The City should discuss and decide the types of projects that should be afforded cycle time agreements and the exact content of the agreement. Cycle time agreements should include basic project information and a schedule for processing of the land entitlement permit plan that includes a schedule for the City and for the applicant.

Recommendation: Develop and adopt land entitlement permit plan check cycle time agreements with applicants for high priority projects.

(12) The Planning Division Should Formally Notify The Applicant of the Name of Their Case Planner in Writing or by E-Mail.

The Planning Division utilizes a case planner for its land entitlement permit applications. That case planner acts as a single point of contact for the applicant.

The applicant should be informed in writing or by e-mail regarding the name of the case planner assigned to their land entitlement permit within five working days of submittal of the application. This should include the name, e-mail address, and phone number of the case planner.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should notify the applicant of the name of their case planner no later than five working days after the submittal of their application.

(13) The Planning Division Should Develop and Utilize Standard Checklists for Use by All Case Planners for the Review and Processing of the Different Types of Land Entitlement Applications.

The development of checklists will ensure that staff focuses their attention on the relevant aspects of the proposed project of each type of development application. The design and content of these checklists should be developed to ensure consistency among staff in the review of permit applications.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop and utilize standard checklists for use by all case planners/managers.

(14) The Conditions of Approval Utilized by All of the Divisions and Departments in the Review of Land Entitlement Permits Should be Formally Documented.

In the experience of the Matrix Consulting Group, one of the primary methods for assuring consistency in the completion of land entitlement permitting activities is to formally document the conditions of approval utilized by all of the divisions / departments involved in the land entitlement permit process, post these conditions of approval to the City's web site so that the general public and the development community know what will be expected from them when applying for land entitlement permit permits, and creating a library of these conditions of approval within the

automated permit information system to aide staff in processing of land entitlement permits.

The Planning Division should take lead responsibility in facilitating the development of these conditions of approval by all of the divisions and departments that are involved in the land entitlement permit process.

Recommendation: The conditions of approval utilized by all of the divisions and departments in the review of land entitlement permits should be formally documented.

Recommendation: These conditions of approval should be posted to the Planning Division's web site.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should take lead responsibility in facilitating the development of these written conditions of approval by all of the divisions and departments.

5. THE CITY SHOULD STREAMLINE THE LAND ENTITLEMENT PERMIT PROCESS.

To quantify the benefits of streamlining local permit processes, PricewaterhouseCoopers developed a model to calculate the cash flows associated with the construction of a new building. Participating members of the American Institute of Architects provided substantial assistance in this effort by describing their experiences with permitting processes and costs, and construction times and costs. The model documented opportunities to increase local development activity and government tax revenues through the implementation of more efficient permit processes. The specific findings of the application of this model are presented below.

- **Permitting times will encourage economic development.** Permitting delays increase costs, reduce returns on investment, and cause investors to seek other opportunities. The study found that shortening permitting processes by 3 months on a 22-month project cycle could make the difference in the decision whether or not to undertake a project.

- **Permitting delays raise tenant costs both in new buildings and existing buildings.** When permitting delays are the norm, the increased costs and delayed returns on investment are built into rents paid by all tenants. Permitting delays discourage investment, leading to less construction, fewer buildings, and a tighter real estate market. As a result, rents are higher for all tenants.
- **With competition between jurisdictions for new development dollars, more efficient permit processes can attract investment from other areas.** Local governments frequently compete to attract new developments. Improved permit processes can be a cost effective tool in addition to or in lieu of other inducements such as preferential tax rates or regulatory relief.
- **Accelerating permit processes can permanently increase local government revenues.** For a single project, accelerating permit processes provides a temporary acceleration of property tax collections. For a series of new projects, these temporary property tax increases accumulate and result in a permanent increase in government tax revenues. For a representative series of projects, the study shows that these increases could be 16.5 percent over a 5 year period.
- **Increased construction spending provides broader economic benefits.** The economic benefits of increased construction activity extend beyond employing more construction workers. Construction-related materials and services will be purchased from local suppliers, local jobs will be created, and these workers will spend the income they earn at local establishments. Based on information from the Department of Commerce, for every 10 jobs directly related to a construction project, another 8 jobs are created locally. These impacts yield not only additional income for the community but also additional tax revenues and investment.
- **Because of the economic importance of investment in structures, even modest efficiency gains in permitting processes can have large impacts.** While changes must be considered at the local level, the potential benefit for the nation is substantial. The Bureau of Economic Analysis in the Department of Commerce reports that in 2004, new investment in privately owned structures totaled \$960 billion, or 8 percent of GDP. Of this number, \$295 billion was for nonresidential structures and \$665 billion was for residential structures. Seemingly small improvements in permitting processes could lead to more investment and more rapid economic growth.

Improvements in permit processes can help a community promote economic development, lower business costs, and create jobs both within the construction sector and throughout the local economy. Increased tax collections can provide a revenue source that can help finance the costs of the systems and procedural improvements

needed to accelerate permit approval.

In evaluating the land entitlement permit processes, there are a number of opportunities for improvement to streamline the process without reducing the quality of the review to assure compliance with the general plan, zoning ordinance, and design guidelines. These opportunities are portrayed below.

(1) Authority For Approval / Disapproval Of Minor Land Entitlement Permits and Design Review Permits Should Be Delegated To the City Planner.

The City's current process for land entitlement permits is complex and not uniform. In the focus groups conducted by the project team, participants noted an excessive number of project types require Planning Commission review and approval.

Other cities have streamlined the land entitlement permit process for those types of permits that are low risk and achieve a high level of compliance with conditions of approval, and have delegated authority to staff or to the City Planner or his /her designee. This is clearly the case with two of the four cities included in the comparative survey conducted by the project team. There are 188 cities and counties in California that use a hearing officer ranging from Adelanto to Yuba County. This includes Encinitas, Solana Beach, Huntington Beach, Laguna Beach, Santa Monica, and other Southern California beach communities.

For example, the type of land entitlement permits approved by a hearing officer in San Diego County cities is presented in the table below.

City	Hearing Officer	Applications
Escondido	No	N/A
Chula Vista	Yes	Minor conditional use permits, variances, design review applications
Vista	Yes	Tentative parcel maps, minor conditional use permits, temporary use permits, site development plans for smaller scale development, and plot plan reviews
El Cajon	No	N/A

These same cities have also delegated authority to staff for the approval of land entitlement permits. Escondido, for example, while not using a hearing officer, has delegated extensive authority to staff including adjustment plats (boundary adjustments), administrative adjustments (administrative variances), certificates of appropriateness (historic structures), certificates of compliance, lot-tie agreements, tentative parcel maps, plot plans, second dwelling units, sign permits, and vegetation removal permits. Oceanside has delegated authority to the City Planner for the approval of administrative conditional use permits and administrative development plans, but these other cities have delegated to staff a greater proportion of permits.

This is clearly a policy decision that must ultimately be made by the City Council. However, the project team recommends that the City Council simplify and streamline selected land entitlement permits by delegating the approval, conditional approval, or denial of selected land entitlement permits to the City Planner. These recommendations are presented below.

- Tentative parcel maps should be approved, conditionally approved or denied, by the City Planner.
- Lot line adjustments should be approved, conditionally approved or denied, by the City Planner.
- Variances should be approved, conditionally approved, or denied, by the City Planner.

This authority granted to the City Planner should include the ability to refer these kinds of applications to the Planning Commission if it is evident the application has high exposure or impact. In addition, any applications considered by the City Planner should be publicly noticed.

Recommendation: Selected aspects of the land entitlement permits should be simplified and streamlined by delegation of authority for approval, conditional approval, or disapproval of these permits to the City Planner.

(2) The Types of Uses That Require a Conditional Use Permit Should Be Reduced.

A review of the City's zoning ordinance indicates that there are a number of uses requiring conditional use permits that would be considered "minor" in other cities based upon the experience of the Matrix Consulting Group. The Planning Division has reviewed those uses in the zoning ordinance that require a conditional use permit, and developed recommendations to increase the number and types of uses that can be approved as an Administrative Conditional Use Permit. These uses are presented in the exhibit at the end of this chapter (see exhibit 4).

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop a proposed zoning ordinance amendment to increase the number and types of uses that can be approved as an Administrative Conditional Use Permit.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should review those uses in the zoning ordinance that require a site development permit, and develop recommendations to increase the number and types of uses that can be approved as an Administrative Site Development Permit.

(3) The Planning Division Should Reduce the Extent of Routing of Land Entitlement Permits.

Not all land entitlement permits should be routed to each division or department involved in the land entitlement permit plan review process. For example, administrative conditional use permits are routed to Engineering, Building and Safety, Fire and Water Utilities. This type of permit should not be routed to any of these divisions or departments; the Planning Division should use standard conditions of approval developed by each of these divisions or departments. In most instances, the Planning

Division is merely receiving these “boilerplate” conditions of approval from these divisions or departments for administrative conditional use permits anyways.

These divisions or departments will be able to plan check the propose development during the building permit plan check process.

The routing of land entitlement permits should be simplified.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should simplify the routing of land entitlement permits to other divisions and departments in consultation with Engineering, Building and Safety, Fire and Water Utilities.

6. THE PLANNING DIVISION SHOULD MEMORIALIZE ZONING POLICY AND ORDINANCE INTERPRETATIONS.

In the focus groups conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group, some representatives of the development community voiced the opinion that, over the years, a number of interpretations have been made of sections of the Zoning Ordinance and that staff had interpreted Council and Commission comments and opinions as policy.

Any interpretations of ordinances or development of policy should be approved by the governing body and memorialized in a document that is publicly available.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should develop a list of zoning ordinance and policy interpretations for review and adoption by the City Council.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should then publish the list of zoning ordinance and policy interpretations to the City’s Web site.

Recommendation: A practice of incorporating interpretations of the Zoning Ordinance into the Code as soon as practical after issuance should be instituted.

7. THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE CURRENT PLANNING SECTION AND THE ADVANCE PLANNING SECTION SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY ROTATED.

At present, the staff of the Advance Planning Section and the Current Planning Section are not rotated.

The rotation of staff between these sections would have significant benefits for the staff assigned to these two sections. (This should exclude supervisory and management staff of the Division.) Rotation widens the experience and knowledge base of a Planner to the mutual benefit of the Planner and the City. There are benefits for both individuals and City, and the two are intertwined.

Rotations are an opportunity for the staff in these two sections to develop new skills and experience, gain exposure to new tasks and, more specifically, develop new skills. Staff assigned to organizations with formal rotation programs have supported this view. They have commented on the skills they acquired, and on the new ways of working that they learned. In turn, such development builds both personal and institutional knowledge, and is beneficial in keeping the staff motivated and thus in retaining skills within the City.

Rotation of staff also contributes to network and relationship building within the City. Staff assigned to organizations with formal rotation programs described them as "a good networking opportunity" for individuals.

The risks of this rotation program relate primarily to training costs and managing the rotation process adequately.

However, the rotation of staff between current planning and long range planning is essential to "ground" staff assigned to advance planning in the "real world" of processing planning and land entitlement permits and of increasing the depth of knowledge of staff assigned to current planning of the general plan, the elements of the general plan, the specific plans, and the zoning ordinance.

Recommendation: The City should develop a program to rotate staff between the Advance Planning Section and the Current Planning Section. This should exclude

supervisory and management staff of the Division.

8. ANALYSIS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION.

This section addresses approaches that could enhance the effectiveness of the Planning Commission.

(1) The Planning Commission Should Conduct an Annual Retreat.

The Planning Commission should conduct an annual retreat separate from a regular meeting or workshop.

The purpose of the retreats is to enable the Commissions to get away from the ordinary routine and discuss strategic issues such as the annual work program, for example. One city's annual retreat agenda for its Planning Commission consisted of the following:

- The Commission's role in implementing City Council policy;
- Variances and planned unit development zoning regulations; and
- The code enforcement process, and its coordination with Planning.

Other cities utilize these annual retreats to discuss zoning regulations, the grounds upon which applications can be denied, transportation issues, etc.

Managerial and supervisory staff of the Planning Division and the Development Services Director should participate in this annual retreat with the Planning Commission.

An important part of the annual retreat is to define the relationships between the Commissioners and the staff of the Planning Division. This includes the expectations the Commissions have of staff and, similarly, what expectations staff has of the Commissions.

To develop a better working relationships, the Department should conduct joint retreat sessions with the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission annually. The purpose of these joint work sessions is to discuss matters involving planning, land use, and community change management issues. A working dinner is a common approach. To avoid being haphazard and disjointed, an agenda should be developed by the Department.

The Department should utilize an outside facilitator to keep this annual retreat on track, develop the agenda, coordinate the meeting, and conclude the retreat by developing an agreed-upon list of actions or next steps.

In Oceanside, the City Council annually reviews and approves the Commission's work plan. Therefore, it is appropriate who they meet subsequent to the retreat and discuss development of the work plan to discuss it and any changes the Council desires.

Recommendation: The Planning Commission Should Conduct an Annual Retreat.

Recommendation: At the first annual retreat, the Planning Commission and the staff of the Planning Division should define the expectations the Commission has of staff and develop the Commission's annual work program and the Commission should review and update their Bylaws.

Recommendation: The City should use an outside facilitator to facilitate the annual retreats.

Recommendation: The Planning Commission and the City Council should hold a joint meeting subsequent to the Planning Commission retreat to discuss the annual work program.

(2) New Commission Members Should Be Provided With Orientation, and All Members Should Be Provided With Ongoing Annual Training and Educational Resources.

Upon appointment, new members of the Planning Commission are provided an

orientation. The chairperson of the Planning Commission, the Development Services Director, the City Planner, the Senior Planner and a representative of the City Attorney's Office should participate in the orientation.

The orientation should include the following:

- The legal basis for the Commission and the Board;
- The duties, roles and responsibilities of the Commission including the kinds of decisions that the Commission makes and the required legal basis for making those decisions;
- The structure and staffing of the Development Services Department and the duties, roles and responsibilities of staff;
- Recent significant applications and advance planning program initiatives that the Commission has considered;
- A review of the general plan, the zoning ordinance, and subdivision ordinance and the overall land use process;
- The bylaws of the Commission and meeting management and procedures;
- Public participation requirements;
- CEQA and environmental regulations and issues; and
- The most recent advance planning work program.

In addition, the members of the Commission should be provided with a minimum of twenty-four hours of ongoing, annual training. Training should include attendance at SANDAG workshops, the annual Planner's Institute sponsored by the League of California Cities as well as training developed by staff of the Development Services Department and the City attorney's Office to cover relevant topics including changes in Federal and State laws.

In addition, each member of the Planning Commission should be provided with membership in the American Planning Association. The American Planning Association

provides information specifically for Planning Commissioners including a Commissioner newsletter, a CD-ROM and video training package series for planning commissioners, audio training packages, a planning commissioner training resource center, a planners book service and a series of retreats at the annual American Planning Association annual conference, the monthly Planning magazine, and other relevant material. This membership is available at a discounted rate for “planning board” members.

Recommendation: Representatives of the Development Services Department and the City Attorney’s Office should provide New Planning Commission members with an orientation.

Recommendation: Planning Commission should be provided with ongoing training of not less than four hours a year.

Recommendation: The members of the Planning Commission should be provided with membership in the American Planning Association.

(3) The Planning Commission Should Expand the Annual Report Submitted to the City Council.

The Planning Commission should develop an expanded annual report, prepared by staff of the Planning Division, for the City Council. The purpose of the annual report is to communicate the activities, results and actions of the Planning Commission for the fiscal year to the City Council.

The annual report should be expanded. In addition to the status of the annual work plan of the Commission, the annual report should include the following elements:

- The mission, goals and objectives of the Commission;
- The status of advance planning initiatives, such as the Coast Highway and Oceanside Blvd, Corridor Master Plans, in which work occurred in the previous year;
- The number and types of applications that were considered by the Commission including any notable cases; and

- The work plan for the coming fiscal year.

Recommendation: The City Planner should prepare an expanded annual report on behalf of the Planning Commission and submit that report to the City Council.

(4) The Staff of the Planning Division Should Provide Alternatives and Recommendations Within the Staff Reports.

Staff reports should contain specific recommendations for approval or denial of an application. The staff should provide the Commission with alternatives to approval or denial and reasons why or why not to consider the alternatives. This provides the Commission with a thorough analysis of alternatives and consequences of alternatives to the recommendation.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should provide the Planning Commission with alternatives to the recommended action as part of the staff report for significant land entitlement applications.

(5) The Planning Commission Should Use the Consent or Expedited Calendar for the Approval of Routine Matters.

The Planning Commission agenda lists the heading of Consent Calendar, but representatives of both staff and the Commission indicate that it is not used. Consent agendas enable the Commission to group routine matters that do not need any discussion before a vote. The entire package is voted on at once without any additional comments or explanations. Any item that does not require a public hearing and is non-controversial should be considered for placement on the consent calendar. This procedure therefore streamlines the meeting and saves time that can be used on other items.

Recommendation: The Planning Commission should use the consent calendar for the approval of routine matters.

(6) The Planning Commission Should Meet Annually with the Historic Preservation Commission, the Economic Development Commission and the Redevelopment Advisory Committee to Discuss Issues and Projects of Mutual Interest.

The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission “considers and makes recommendations on issues relating to the identification, protection, retention, and preservation of historical areas and sites within the City” and is charged with “safeguarding the heritage of the City.” The actions of the Planning Commission directly impact the ability of the Commission to carry out its purpose, and which it should therefore be cognizant of the impact of its decisions on safeguarding the City’s heritage.

The Economic Development Commission’s goal is to “create an atmosphere conducive to the retention, growth and creation of quality business.” The land development of the community is directly tied to this goal. It is important for the Planning Commission to understand how its decisions impact the economic development and health of the community.

The Redevelopment Advisory Committee is charged with facilitating the “economic, residential, commercial, tourist and cultural development of the project area.” This includes the evaluation of proposed projects, development standards, housing issues and business development. Again, the responsibilities of the two bodies are mutual and intertwined.

Joint meetings, including the possibility of a three Commission/Committee meeting of the Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission and the Redevelopment Advisory Committee, provides for the opportunity to discuss and understand their mutual interests and goals and understand how their decisions impact the ability for the other bodies to attain their goals.

Recommendation: The Planning Commission should meet annually with the Historic Preservation and Economic Development Commissions and the Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

9. THE CITY SHOULD STREAMLINE THE NOTICING REQUIREMENTS FOR LAND ENTITLEMENT PERMITS.

The City of Oceanside has expansive noticing requirements. In addition to on-site signage, neighborhood planning area notification, notification of residents within a neighborhood planning area, interested party notification, the City requires that property owners and tenants within 1,500 feet of a proposed project site for all development proposals other than single family projects be sent notices via mail informing them of a pending land entitlement permit submittal within 15 days of the submittal date.

This is an unusual practice. Other surrounding cities only require a notice to 300 feet of the proposed project site. These other cities are increasingly using technological means to keep residents and businesses informed regarding pending development proposals. Carlsbad, for example, provides a free subscription to receive e-mail notifications of future Pending Planning Applications updates. This is the approach that the City of Oceanside should utilize. The mailing of notices should only be provided to 300 feet of the proposed project site for all development proposals including single-family projects.

Recommendation: The mailing of notices should only be provided to 300 feet of the proposed project site for all development proposals including single-family projects.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should utilize the automated permit information system to provide a free subscription service for residents and businesses regarding receive e-mail notifications of future Pending Planning Applications updates.

10. THE CITY SHOULD EVALUATE OPPORTUNITIES TO STREAMLINE THE NUMBER OF ADVISORY GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

The City of Oceanside has a number of advisory groups that participate in the development review process. This includes the advisory groups noted below.

- **Design Review Committee.** The Design Review Committee provides design review, consultation, and advice to the Community Development Commission and its staff on proposed development projects in the Redevelopment Project Area. The purpose of the Committee is to ensure that a qualified design perspective, with a Citywide as well as a Project Area viewpoint, is given in the review and approval process for proposed development projects. This is a five-member committee made up of three Planning Commission members and two members of the Redevelopment Advisory Committee.
- **Economic Development Commission.** The Economic Development Commission considers and makes recommendations to the City Council on the attraction and enhancement of opportunities for economic development within the City.
- **Harbor and Beaches Advisory Committee.** The Harbor and Beaches Advisory Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council and Harbor Board of Directors to make recommendations regarding those items brought before the Committee including, but not limited to, items referred to the Committee by the City Council/Harbor Board of Directors, items brought before the Committee by members of the general public and items brought before the Committee by Harbor and Beaches Department staff.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Commission.** The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission considers and makes recommendations on issues relating to the identification, protection, retention, and preservation of historical areas and sites within the City. The Commission is charged to safeguard the heritage of the City by providing for the protection of historical sites and areas representing significant elements of its history.
- **Planning Commission.** The Planning Commission considers matters related to planning and development. The commission is charged with the development of the General Plan, formulation and administration of the zoning ordinance and map, and review of development applications.
- **Redevelopment Advisory Committee.** The Redevelopment Advisory Committee provides policy and technical consultation and advice to the Community Development Commission and staff on issues affecting the project area

This is a significant number of advisory groups. The City should consider the reduction of the number of these advisory groups or the limiting of the roles of these advisory groups in the development review process. A review of the advisory groups in Carlsbad indicates that the City has a Historic Preservation Commission, a Planning Commission, and a Design Review Board, but not a Redevelopment Advisory Committee, an Economic Development Commission, or a Redevelopment Advisory Committee. The City of Vista has a Planning Commission and a Redevelopment Project Area Commission, but not a Design Review Committee, an Economic Development Commission, and a Historic Preservation Advisory Commission.

The City of Oceanside should reduce the number of the commissions and committees by expanding the role of commissions and committees particularly as it pertains to the development review process. The City has already taken one step in this direction with the Planning Commission: three of its members function as part of the Design Review Committee.

Recommendation: The City should reduce the number of the commissions and committees by expanding the role of commissions and committees particularly as it pertains to the development review process.

Exhibit 4 (1)

**Proposed Zoning Ordinance
Conditional Use Permit Amendments**

PS District	Existing Use Permit	Proposed Use Permit
Residential Uses		
Group Residential	U	A
Public and Semi-Public		
Clubs and Lodges	U	A
Convalescent Facilities	U	A
Cultural Institutions	U	A
Day Care, General	U	A
Detention Facilities	U	A
Emergency Shelter	U	A
Government Offices	U	A
Hospitals	U	A
Maintenance and Service Facilities	U	A
Park and Recreation Facilities	U	A
Public Safety Facilities	U	A
Religious Assembly	U	A
Residential Care, General	U	A
Resource Centers	U	A
Schools, Public or Private	U	A
Transitional Housing	U	A
Commercial Uses		
Commercial Filming	U	A
Commercial Recreation and Entertainment	U	A

Legend

U = Use Permit Required
A= Administrative Use Permit Required

Exhibit 4 (2)

RE, RS, RM, RH, and RT Districts	RE		RS		RM		RH		RT	
	Existing	Proposed								
Residential Uses										
Live / Work Quarters	-	-	-	-	-	-	U	A	U	A
Commercial Uses										
Artists' Studios	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	U	A
Public and Semi-Public										
Daycare, General	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A
Public Safety Facilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	U	A	U	A

Legend

- U = Use Permit Required
- A= Administrative Use Permit Required

Exhibit 4 (3)

IL, IG, and IP Districts	IL		IG		IP	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
Public and SemiPublic						
Clubs and Lodges	U	A	-	-	U	A
Emergency Health Care	U	A	U	A	U	A
Public Safety Facilities	L18	-	L18	-	L18	-
Resource Centers	L17	A	L17	A	L17	A
Commercial Uses						
Commercial Recreation and Entertainment	L15	A	L15	A	L15	A
Personal Improvement Services	L18	A	L18	A	L18	A
Automobile Washing	U	A	U	A	-	-
Vehicle Storage	U	A	U	A	-	-
Industrial						
Wholesaling, Distribution and Storage	L12	A	P	P	L7	L7

Legend

- U = Use Permit Required
- A = Administrative Use Permit Required
- P = Permitted Use

Exhibit 4 (4)

	CN		CC		CG		CL		CR	
	Existing	Proposed								
CN, CC, CG, CL, CR, CV, CS, and CP										
Districts										
Public and SemiPublic										
Clubs and Lodges	L29	A								
Cultural Institutions	L29	A								
Day Care, General	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A
Government Offices	L29	P	L29	P	L29	P	L29	P	-	-
Public Safety Facilities	U	-	U	-	U	-	U	-	U	A
Commercial										
Ambulance Services	L15	L15	L15	L15	L15	L15				
Animal Grooming	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	-	-
Animal Retail Sales	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	-	-
Artists Studios'	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	L28	P
Bank and Savings and Loans	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	-	-
Building Materials and Services	P	P	P	P	P	P	U	P	-	-
Eating or Drinking Establishment with Full Alcoholic	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A
Beverage Service										
Eating or Drinking Establishment - Drive-thru / Drive-up	L23	A	U	A	U	A	-	-	U	A
Food and Beverage Sales	L5	A								
Funeral and Interment Services	L6	A	L6	A	L6	A	-	-	-	-
Personal Improvement Services	L25	A								
Personal Services	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	L29	P
Retail Sales	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	L8	P

Exhibit 4 (5)

CN, CC, CG, CL, CR, CV, CS, and CP Districts	CN		CC		CG		CL		CR	
	Existing	Proposed								
Automobile Washing	U	A	U	A	U	A	L31	A	-	-
Service Stations	U	U	U	U	U	U	L31	U	L7	L7
Vehicle Equipment Repair	L32	A	L32	A	L32	A	L31	A	-	-
Vehicle / Equipment Sales and Rentals	U	A	U	A	U	A	L31	A	L14	A
Hotels, Motels, and Time-Shares	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	-

Legend

- U = Use Permit Required
- A= Administrative Use Permit Required
- P = Permitted Use

Exhibit 4 (6)

	CV		CS-HO		CS-L		CP	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
CN, CC, CG, CL, CR, CV, CS, and CP Districts Public and SemiPublic								
Clubs and Lodges	-	-	L29	A	U	U	L29	A
Cultural Institutions	L29	A	L29	A	L29	A	L29	A
Day Care, General	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A
Government Offices	-	-	L29	P	-	-	P	P
Public Safety Facilities	U	A	U	A	U	A	-	A
Commercial								
Ambulance Services			L15	L15	P	L15		
Animal Grooming	-	-	-	-	L16	P		
Animal Retail Sales	-	-	P	P	L16	P		
Artists Studios'	L28	P	-	P	L28	P	-	P
Bank and Savings and Loans	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Building Materials and Services	-	-	P	P	-	-	-	-
Eating or Drinking Establishment with Full Alcoholic Beverage Service	U	A	U	A	U	A	U	A
Eating or Drinking Establishment - Drive-thru / Drive-up	-	-	U	A	-	-	-	-
Food and Beverage Sales	L5	A	P	A	L5	A	-	-
Funeral and Intermment Services	-	-	L6	A	L6	A	-	-
Personal Improvement Services	-	-	L25	A	L25	A	L25	A
Personal Services	L29	P	P	P	L29	-	L29	-
Retail Sales	L8	P	P	P	P	P	-	-
Automobile Washing	-	U	A	-	-	-	-	-
Service Stations	-	-	U	U	U	U	-	-
Vehicle Equipment Repair	-	-	L32	A	L20	A	-	-

Exhibit 4 (6)

CN, CC, CG, CL, CR, CV, CS, and CP Districts Vehicle / Equipment Sales and Rentals Hotels, Motels, and Time- Shares	CV		CS-HO		CS-L		CP	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
L14	-	-	U	-	-	-	-	-
U	-	-	U	-	L12	A	-	-

Legend

- U = Use Permit Required
- A= Administrative Use Permit Required
- P = Permitted Use

6. ADVANCE PLANNING SECTION

This chapter presents an analysis of the Advance Planning Section of the City.

1. THE ADVANCE PLANNING SECTION SHOULD INITIATE A MULTI-YEAR PROGRAM TO UPDATE SOME OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN AND CONTINUE TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC PLANS.

The City's General Plan has not been comprehensively updated since it was originally developed in the 1970's. The land use and the housing elements were updated in 2007, and the circulation element is currently being updated. Other optional elements have been updated recently including the Fire element (2008), and the Bicycle element (1999). The open space element was updated in 1997, the conservation and safety elements in 1975, and the noise element in 1974.

Amendments have taken place on a case-by-case basis. The General Plan document shows a 2002 date, but it was only reformatted at that time to improve readability.

Many of the elements are incomplete by today's standards. The planning area within the elements is not consistent; the elements include the land within the City limits at the time the elements were prepared. It should not contain optional elements that are important to a built-out community such as community design and historic preservation.

While the State does not provide legal requirements regarding when these elements should be updated (excluding the housing element that must be updated every five years), the State does provide suggestions. For example, the State Office of Planning and Research is required to notify a city or county when its general plan has not been revised within eight years. If a city or county has not revised its general plan within ten years, the Office of Planning and Research must also notify the Attorney

General. This notification does not necessarily mean the plan is out of date, but may serve as a reminder to comprehensively review the general plan if the city or county has not already done so. The Office of Planning and Research does recommend that at least once every five years, each local planning agency should thoroughly review its entire general plan and revise the document as necessary, so that it remains a true reflection of a community's values and goals.

Three of the seven general plan elements for the City are more than twenty years old. The City has continued to grow and evolve since these elements and area plans were prepared, much of the data, analyses, and the policies in these elements do not reflect the current conditions and priorities in the City.

Thus, a comprehensive update of these elements – Conservation, Safety, and Noise - is necessary to reflect current conditions as well as the community's vision for development within Oceanside over the next 20 years. The staff of the Advance Planning Section should undertake the update of these elements, with minor, technical consulting assistance.

In addition, the City should continue to develop specific plans to address community-planning issues. The City is using specific plans to develop visions for Oceanside Boulevard, the Coast Highway, and the Center City Golf Course. Depending on the scope of a project, the consulting costs of such a study can range from \$250,000 (Coast Highway study has a not to exceed budget of \$260,000) to \$500,000. The Oceanside Boulevard study had a budget of \$320,000 and the City is seeking private contributions to supplement the budget.

Recommendation: The Advance Planning Section should initiate a program to update the elements of the general plan and the Downtown and the Civic Center

area plan over the next five years.

Recommendation: The Advance Planning Section should thoroughly review its general plan once every five years and revise the general plan as necessary so that it remains a true reflection of a community's values and goals.

Recommendation: The City should continue to develop specific plans to address community-planning issues.

2. THE ADVANCE PLANNING SECTION SHOULD DEVELOP AN ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM.

A work program for advance planning work projects is critical to ensuring that these projects are completed on schedule and within budget.

An annual work program should be developed. The program should include such information as the following:

- A description of the project;
- The priority of the project;
- A summary of previous work performed on the project;
- The tasks to be performed for the project in the next fiscal year;
- The milestone dates for each project;
- The name of the project manager;
- The allocation of staff hours per Planner per month to the various projects;
- The month-by-month allocation of staff hours by Planner;
- The proposed budget for the project in the next fiscal year including the source of funding, appropriation status, and proposed expenditures by major component;
- A summary month-by-month Gantt chart for the year that provides an overall summary of the tasks to be performed for each project.

This annual work program will likely require one to two pages per project.

The process for development of this annual work program should fundamentally change the focus of the managers of the Planning Division from their current roles of day-to-day supervision to that of management of resources in order to ensure conformance with the annual work program.

Recommendation: The Advance Planning Section should develop an annual work program and publish quarterly status reports on the City's web site.

Recommendation: A quarterly status report and presentation should be made to the Planning Commission on each advance planning initiative.

3. THE ADVANCE PLANNING SECTION SHOULD UPDATE AND DEVELOP EXPANDED DESIGN GUIDELINES TO COMPLEMENT THOSE ALREADY DEVELOPED.

Design review guidelines are available such as the design guidelines for the Harbor, Downtown and the San Luis Rey district. Design guidelines are an important tool for land entitlement permit applicants in terms of establishing clear rules, enhancing the predictability of the approval of the design approach proposed by the applicant, and encourage architectural and urban design creativity.

The City should expand the extent of design guidelines and also develop a cohesive design guidelines document that covers all aspects of development in the City including:

- Neighborhood design, streets and public ways, streetscapes including views and height limits;
- The downtown core area including the downtown area, public streets, plazas and open space, and height limits;
- Residential and commercial design; and
- Special design considerations including landscaping, off-street parking, creeks, riparian corridors, and storm drainage, hillside considerations, City entries, and signs.

While some of this document may include existing design guidelines, principles, and diagrams, the document will require the development of new design guidelines in areas such as neighborhood design, single family residential, and special design considerations for specific areas or unique neighborhoods of the City.

Recommendation: The Advance Planning Section should update and expand the City's design guidelines.

4. THE ADVANCE PLANNING SECTION SHOULD PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN.

After the general plan has been adopted, Government Code section §65400(b) (1) requires the planning agency to provide an annual report to their legislative body, on the status of the plan and progress in its implementation.

The purpose of the report is to provide enough information to allow local legislative bodies to:

- Assess how the general plan is being implemented in accordance with adopted goals, policies, and implementation measures;
- Provide enough information to identify necessary course adjustments or modifications to the general plan as a means to improve local implementation;
- Provide a clear correlation between land use decisions that have been made during the 12- month reporting period and the goals, policies, and implementation measures contained in the general plan; and
- Provide information regarding local agency progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the development of housing.

The suggested format of the annual progress report is presented below.

- **Focus on individual policies and implementation measures.** Provide a comprehensive listing of all general plan policies, categorized by element, with a commentary on how each policy was implemented during the reporting period (i.e., a description of the activities underway or completed for implementation of each policy). This listing can most easily be accomplished by using a table

format.

- **Focus on development activities and projects approved.** Provide a comprehensive listing of all development applications that the planning agency received and processed with commentary on how the agency's actions on these development applications further the goals, policies, and/ or implementation measures of the general plan. Link the major projects, including public projects, to the general plan using policy numbers or by element.
- **Focus on general plan elements.** Provide a general summary of each of the mandatory and optional elements of the general plan with a brief description of various actions taken by the agency (e.g., development application approvals, adoption of ordinances or plans, agency-initiated planning studies, etc.) that advance specific goals and policies of each element.
- **Broad annual report format.** Incorporate the annual progress report into a broadly focused annual report on all of the activities and programs of the jurisdiction, drawing upon data and sources such as an annual performance report on budgeting, processing of land use entitlements, redevelopment activities, housing construction, or other programs or "state of the city" reports.

Reporting the progress of implementing the general plan and its elements requires that the Advance Planning Section think through and evaluate the progress in implementation of this key policy document. It brings to life the policies and procedures developed in this key policy document.

The project team estimates the staff hours required annually to develop this report at approximately one staff month. These reports are generally about ten to fifteen pages long.

Recommendation: The Advance Planning Section should prepare and submit to the Planning Commission an annual progress report that reports the progress of implementing the general plan and its elements.

7. ENGINEERING DIVISION

This chapter presents an analysis of the Engineering Division. This analysis includes:

- An analysis of the methodology for conducting traffic impact studies;
- An analysis of the allocation of responsibility for plan checking for all of the City's infrastructure including streets, traffic signals and control devices, sidewalks, curb and gutter, and stormwater;
- The availability of application guides for the types of permits issued by the Engineering Division; and
- The timeliness of plan checking of permits by the Engineering Division.

1. THE ENGINEERING DIVISION HAS A NUMBER OF STRENGTHS.

While this chapter focuses primarily on opportunities for improvement, there are a number of strengths in the Division. Examples of these strengths are presented in the table below.

Program	Strength
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responsibility for the delivery of engineering construction, construction inspection, engineering plan review, engineering permit plan checking and over the counter services for engineering permit plan check and issuance is centralized under the City Engineer with the exception of Water Utilities.
Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the most part, the city is now using combination Public Works Inspectors for capital improvement and private development with inspectors assigned specific areas. The inspectors also are assigned specific projects and attend a pre-construction meeting with the builder. The exception is landscaping where one inspector is assigned to inspect all landscaping requirements and irrigation.
Plan Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering permit plan checking is accomplished in parallel by all of the engineering staff, departments/divisions involved in the process. Plans are distributed simultaneously to all of the staff in Engineering and the departments/divisions for plan checking.

These strengths provide the foundation for improvements in the permit, plan check, and inspection processes utilized by the Engineering Division.

2. THE PLAN CHECK PROCESS UTILIZED BY THE SUBDIVISION SECTION SHOULD BE SIMPLIFIED THROUGH THE REDUCTION OF “SILOS.”

The plan check process utilized by the Subdivision Section is more complicated than necessary, particularly with the acquisition of an automated permit information system. This process is presented in the exhibit at the end of this chapter. Important points to note concerning this process are presented below.

- Three (3) paraprofessional and clerical staff are allocated to the coordination of the plan check process within the Subdivision Section. This includes a Principal Engineering Assistant, an Engineering Assistant II, and an Office Specialist II. The role the staff fulfills in the coordination of this process is depicted in the table below.

Position	No. of Authorized Positions	Role of Positions
Principal Engineering Staff Assistant	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to the City Development Engineer • Supervises an Engineering Assistant II, an Office Specialist II and an Office Specialist I. • Manages the front counter and the intake and distribution of development plans (pre-entitlement), compiling Engineering Division comments and conditions of approval, and transmitting these comments and conditions of approval to the Planning Division after review by City Development Engineer. • Develop an operating manual describing the building permit plan check process for the Engineering Division.
Engineering Assistant II	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to the Principal Engineering Staff Assistant • Coordinates the land entitlement permit process between the Planning Division and the Subdivision Engineering Section • Participates in pre-entitlement developer conferences. • Tracks plan check review and sends out weekly reminders to plan checkers for submittal of comments and conditions. • Compiles comments from plan checkers and submits them to the Principle Engineering Staff Assistant. • Inputs project information into the Access tracking system.
Office Specialist II	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to the Principal Engineering Staff Assistant • Assists the Engineering Assistant II and prepares manual files for development plans and distributes copies to appropriate staff members for plan check.

- An Associate Engineer and Principal Engineering Assistant review each submittal with the case planner and the applicant.
- City Development Engineer receives all of the project plans. The City Development Engineer determines who will review the project submittal.
- The Office Specialist II creates a transmittal and project file folder. Plans are distributed to the Subdivision Section staff assigned as plan checkers. The Office Specialist II receives signature for delivery and forwards the folder and distribution list to Engineering Assistant II for data entry.
- The Engineering Assistant II enters basic data of project in the Subdivision Section project tracking database and action sheet, creates 'G' drive project folder and adds to the weekly reminder. The Engineering Assistant II and the Office Specialist II make additional copies of plans or documents if necessary.
- The project plans are then distributed to six different staff as noted below.
 - Traffic Engineering (Transportation Planner) receives tentative maps, site plan, the building/elevation, civil plans, slope, landscape plans, traffic related reports/studies, site photos and response letter.
 - Landscape receives (Associate Engineer) tentative maps, site plan, building/elevation, civil plans, copy of SWMP plan, landscape plans, site photos and response letter.
 - An Associate Engineer receives tentative maps, site plan, the building/elevation, civil plans, slope, site photos and response letter. However, another Assistant Engineer in capital Projects also reviews these documents for private water and sewer (from meter to the building) plans routed from Subdivision Engineering; this Assistant Engineer averages 3 plan checks per month; each plan check takes approximately 2 hours.
 - Geotechnical receives tentative maps, site plan, civil, building/elevation, geological, hydrology, soils, drainage report, slope & related documents, photos & response letter.
 - Stormwater (Engineering Assistant II) receives tentative maps, site plan, building / elevation, civil plans, SWMP plans documents, site photos and response letter
 - CIP / Parks receives the 1st submittal and subsequent plan submittals if he has comments.

- All comments and conditions provided by the plan checkers are sent electronically to the Principal Engineering Assistant and the Engineering Assistant II for processing and data entry in the 'G' drive, *Engineering Conditions*. Copies of the data in the 'G' drive, *Engineering Conditions* are printed and filed in the folders of each project.
- The information is "cut and pasted" into a form document, (Engineering Division comments) in the 'G' drive.
- The information is sent from the Engineering Assistant II to the Principal Engineering Assistant, from the Principal Engineering Assistant to the City Development Engineer and then from the City Development Engineer to the case planner in the Planning Division.
- The Principal Engineering Assistant or Engineering Assistant II update the weekly reminder, and distribute it on Monday of every week.
- The Engineering Division plan checkers periodically deliver the redlined plans or reports to Principal Engineering Assistant, or Engineering Assistant II for processing.

This is an extremely cumbersome process.

This process should be streamlined and a new service delivery model implemented. This new process utilizes "generalist" Associate Engineers with responsibility for plan checking land entitlement permit applications for all civil engineering aspects including stormwater and landscaping. The elements of this model are presented below.

- An Associate Engineer should review each land entitlement permit application for all civil engineering aspects including tentative maps, site plan, building/elevation, civil plans, copy of SWMP plan, landscape plans, site photos and response letter. This would include landscaping, stormwater, and parks. The Associate Engineer should function as a "generalist" civil engineer.
- This Associate Engineer would be responsible as a case engineer for reviewing all aspects of the same application from "cradle to grave" – in other words, from the land entitlement permit to the final map and improvement plan to the building permit.

- The Transportation Planner would continue to receive tentative maps, site plan, the building/elevation, civil plans, slope, landscape plans, traffic related reports/studies, site photos and response letter.
- The Planning Division would route the land entitlement permits to the City Development Engineer. The City Development Engineer would assign the land entitlement permit applications to an Associate Engineer.
- The Associate Engineer would be responsible for entry of conditions in the automated permit information system, and routing those comments to the case planner in the Planning Division.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should route the land entitlement permits to the City Development Engineer. The City Development Engineer should assign the land entitlement permit applications to an Associate Engineer.

Recommendation: The Associate Engineers in the Subdivision Section should function as a “generalist” with responsibility for plan checking land entitlement permit applications for all civil engineering aspects including stormwater and landscaping.

Recommendation: The “generalist” Associate Engineer in the Subdivision Section should be responsible for reviewing all aspects of an application from “cradle to grave” – in other words, from the land entitlement permit to the final map and to the building permit.

Recommendation: The Associate Engineers in the Subdivision Section should be responsible for entry of conditions in the automated permit information system, and routing those comments to the case planner in the Planning Division.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CASE MANAGEMENT BY THE SUBDIVISION SECTION SHOULD BE IMPROVED.

There are a number of important objectives for the Subdivision Section in the management of the permit and plan check process. These objectives include the following:

- Consistent interpretation of regulations;
- Clear communication of the process and the requirements;
- The predictability of the process;
- Staff responsiveness;

- Consistency; and
- Accountability for decisions and the management of the process.

In evaluating the existing process versus these objectives, the Matrix Consulting Group first evaluated the number of calendar days required for reaching a decision regarding permit applications by the Subdivision Section. The results of this analysis are presented below.

- Parcel maps required 23 calendar days to complete the first plan check at the median; 18.5 calendar days are required at the 25th percentile and 34 calendar days at the 75th percentile. The benchmark utilized by the Matrix Consulting Group for parcel maps is 21 calendar days to complete for the first plan check, and 10 calendar days for rechecks.
- Improvement plans require 29 calendar days to complete the first plan check at the median; 22.25 calendar days are required at the 25th percentile; 41.75 calendar days are required at the 75th percentile. The benchmark utilized by the Matrix Consulting Group for major improvement plans is 21 calendar days to complete for the first plan check, and 10 calendar days for rechecks. Minor improvement plans require 14 calendar days to complete for the first plan check, and 7 calendar days for rechecks.
- Precise grading plans require 21 calendar days at the median to complete the first plan check; at the 25th percentile, 13 calendar days are required; at the 75th percentile, 33 calendar days are required. The benchmark utilized by the Matrix Consulting Group for grading plans is 14 calendar days to complete the first check, and 7 calendar days for rechecks.
- Landscaping plans require 42 calendar days to complete the first plan check at the median; 23 calendar days are required at the 25th percentile; 51 calendar days are required at the 75th percentile. The benchmark utilized by the Matrix Consulting Group for landscape plans is 14 calendar days to complete the first check, and 7 calendar days for rechecks.

Overall, the Subdivision Section is taking a longer number of time, in terms of calendar days, than the benchmarks utilized by the Matrix Consulting Group would suggest are appropriate.

The Subdivision Section should take a number of steps to address this challenge. These steps are presented below.

(1) The Subdivision Section Should Adopt Cycle Time Goals.

The Subdivision Section should develop cycle time objectives for all permit applications for the length of time -- in calendar days -- required to process applications from the date of submittal to the date of the applicant's initial public hearing or the approval / disapproval of the application by staff. Possible calendar date benchmarks for processing different types of permit applications are presented in the table below.

Type of Permit	Proposed Cycle Time Objective (Calendar Days) At The Median
Final Parcel maps	21 calendar days to complete for the first plan check, and 10 calendar days for rechecks
Final Subdivision Map Improvement Plans	21 calendar days to complete for the first plan check, and 10 calendar days for rechecks
Parcel Map Improvement Plans	14 calendar days to complete for the first plan check, and 7 calendar days for rechecks
Grading Plans	14 calendar days to complete the first check, and 7 calendar days for rechecks.
Landscape Plans	14 calendar days to complete the first check, and 7 calendar days for rechecks.

For the Subdivision Section to set cycle time objectives from the date of submittal of the application, as opposed to the date the application is deemed complete, the Subdivision Section staff assigned to the Permit Application Center will need to be rigorous in checking applications at submittal to assure the applications contain all of the essential information required to achieve a complete submittal, and rejecting applications that do not contain this essential information. It will also require that the application guides developed by the Subdivision Section clearly identify the elements of a complete application.

Recommendation: The Subdivision Section should establish formal, written cycle time objectives for engineering permits and plan checking of those permits.

Recommendation: The development of these cycle time objectives should be a collaborative effort by staff assigned by the Subdivision Section.

Recommendation: These cycle time objectives should be published to the Section website and identified in the Section's application materials.

Recommendation: The City should hold the City Development Engineer responsible for management of the number of workdays required for plan checking by all of the divisions involved, not just the Subdivision Section and for monitoring performance against the cycle time objectives on a regular basis.

(2) Track and Monitor the Success Or Failure of Associate Engineers Assigned to Processing Permit Applications in Meeting Cycle Time Objectives.

The Subdivision Section, once it has established cycle time objectives for land entitlement applications, should utilize an automated permit information system to measure and monitor staff performance in meeting these objectives. It is important for the City Development Engineer to have quantifiable tools to: regulate performance, identify training needs, staffing needs, and detect organizational deficiencies. The cycle time objectives can serve as fair and accurate means to gauge staff performance for the following reasons:

- Staff will know and be familiar with the standards;
- Standards are easily understandable;
- Standards are flexible;
- Standards have been created through their input.

The management reports defined and discussed in a later section of this chapter, if generated on a regular basis, would track both individual and overall staff performance.

Recommendation: Track and monitor the success or failure of Associate Engineers in meeting cycle time objectives through regular management information reports generated on a monthly basis by the automated permit information system.

Recommendation: The ability of the Associate Engineers to consistently meet the cycle time objectives should be integrated into performance evaluations.

(3) The City Development Engineer Should Be Held Accountable For Formally Planning and Scheduling the Permit Applications.

The City Development Engineer should prepare and maintain a schedule for processing of permit applications by the Associate Engineers using the automated permit information system. The purpose of the schedule is to make visible the number of calendar days required to analyze and reach a decision on the permit application. The specific objectives related to the design and development of this system should be as follows:

- To establish a process whereby specific calendar day targets are set for each application based upon cycle time objectives established by the Section;
- To utilize the automated permit information system to ease the tracking of the timeliness of the processing of permit applications and enable the City Development Engineer to hold the Associate Engineers accountable; and
- To generate data sufficient to assist in the assessment of the performance of Associate Engineers in comparison to those cycle time objectives;

Major elements of the system are presented below.

- The City Development Engineer would review incoming applications and analyze application characteristics, focusing in particular on potential processing difficulties. Once difficulties are identified, the City Development Engineer would (1) set calendar day targets for completing the analysis of the application, and (2) set overall staff hours allocated to the Associate Engineer for processing the application. The City Development Engineer would review the most recent open case inventory report and note the workload of the Associate Engineer. Cases would then be assigned as appropriate. The City Development Engineer would then enter the target dates and the name of the Associate Engineer in the automated permit information system.
- When projects are first assigned, the Associate Engineer to whom the application is assigned would review the calendar day and staff hour target established for the case. If the Associate Engineer feels that the targets are unreasonable after a review of the application, the case manager should discuss them with the City Development Engineer and negotiate appropriate changes.

- The automated permit information system should be utilized to track the extent to which the specific cycle time objectives are met, and to 'red flag' permits that exceed these guidelines.

The City Development Engineer should be held accountable for the ongoing maintenance of this open case inventory and the completion of the processing of permits in accordance with the cycle time objectives. The planning and scheduling system should be utilized to:

- Evaluate employee performance;
- Balance workload among different Associate Engineers; and
- Quantify the anticipated completion date of various applications given all work in progress.

The planning and scheduling system should be designed to manage the workload including reviewing actual progress versus scheduled deadlines and facilitate the shifting of work assignment and schedules in the face of changing priorities or workload.

Recommendation: The City Development Engineer in the Subdivision Section should formally plan and schedule the engineering permit applications processed by their staff using the automated permit information system.

Recommendation: The City Development Engineer should be held accountable for the ongoing maintenance of this open case inventory and the completion of the processing of permits by their staff in accordance with the cycle time objectives.

- (4) Generate Ongoing Monthly Management Information Reports Using the Automated Permit Information System To Track Performance Against Cycle Time Objectives and Monitor the Case Workload and Performance for Associate Engineers Assigned to Processing Permit Applications.**

The City Development Engineer in the Subdivision Section should receive ongoing information regarding Section workload and individual Associate Engineer

workload to use in scheduling. In addition, overall information on staff efficiency and productivity is not available for staff evaluation.

Management information reports capture the detailed information about staff productivity and Section performance to monitor workload, balance assignments and evaluate internal operations. After several discussions with management and staff, the Matrix Consulting Group recommends the automated permit information system be utilized to track and report the following information:

- Section Workload;
- Case Tracking;
- Elapsed Processing Times;
- Work in Backlog;
- Personnel Productivity; and
- Project Management Measures.

The management reports the Subdivision Section needs to generate on a regular basis are presented in the exhibit on the following page.

Exhibit 5 (1)

**Recommended Management Reports
For the Subdivision Section**

Report Name	Frequency / Distribution	Report Data
Workload Report – New Cases	Monthly to City Development Engineer	Information By Associate Engineer including date submitted, date assigned, and last milestone
Workload Report – Open Cases	Monthly to City Development Engineer	Information By Associate Engineer including date submitted, date assigned, date deemed complete, and last milestone
Workload Report – Inactive Cases	Monthly to City Development Engineer	Information By Associate Engineer including date submitted, date information requested from the applicant, and the nature of the outstanding information requested
Workload Report – Closed Cases	Monthly to City Development Engineer	Information by Associate Engineer including date submitted and date the permit was approved / denied
Case Status Report	Weekly to City Development Engineer and City Engineer	Case information by case number, due date, Associate Engineer assigned, required action, and last milestone
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Open Cases	Monthly to City Development Engineer, City Engineer, Development Services Director	Information by Associate Engineer and total including date submitted, cycle time objective, days in process and last milestone
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Closed Cases	Monthly to City Development Engineer, City Engineer, Development Services Director	Information by Associate Engineer including date submitted, cycle time objective, completion date, total days, and date of approval or denial

Exhibit 5 (2)

Report Name	Frequency / Distribution	Report Data
Elapsed Processing Time Report – Cases Overdue	Monthly to City Development Engineer, City Engineer, Development Services Director	Information by Associate Engineer including date submitted, cycle time objective, days into process and last milestone
Caseload Assignment and Distribution Report	Monthly to City Development Engineer	All caseload information and Associate Engineer assigned by Engineer name and permit type
Associate Engineer Performance Report	Monthly to City Development Engineer, City Engineer, Development Services Director	Elapsed processing time by Associate Engineer, including new cases, open cases, inactive cases, closed cases, overdue cases, and % processed within cycle time objectives.

The matrix includes the report name / source, frequency / distribution, and report data. The Subdivision Section should be provided with the reliable and ongoing information necessary to manage the processing of permits. The Matrix Consulting Group believes it is imperative that management utilizes reliable case information to manage, direct and enhance Section operations. The management reports that the Matrix Consulting Group has outlined in the preceding exhibit are a beginning to better understanding the productivity and workload volume in the Section. The Section may wish to generate additional reports or receive more detail once these initial management information reports are implemented and used routinely. These management reports focus primarily on staff performance and workload monitoring necessary for management to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Section.

Recommendation: The Subdivision Section should generate ongoing monthly management information reports using the automated permit information system to track performance against cycle time objectives and monitor the case workload and performance for Associate Engineers in the Section.

Recommendation: The Program Specialist should develop and generate these reports in a monthly basis.

4. ENHANCE AND EXPAND THE EXISTING CHECKLISTS TO ASSURE CONSISTENCY IN PLAN CHECKING APPLICATIONS BY STAFF OF THE SUBDIVISION SECTION.

The Subdivision Section has developed two checklists for the use of its staff: a grading plan checklist and a checklist for plan checking of land entitlement permits by the staff of the Section.

The grading checklist should be expanded to provide greater detail regarding the requirements in completing the plan check. That list contains statements that the plan check engineer is to consider in plan checking such as cut (cubic yards), drainage

direction of flow, slope ratios, fill (cubic yards), lot numbers, etc. These statements should be expanded to provide greater guidance to the plan check engineers. For example, rather than state lot number, it should state "lots shall be numbered and dimensioned per final map or parcel map." Rather than state drainage direction of flow, it should state "drainage of lots is shown; 1% minimum slope required; concentrating flow on adjacent property is prohibited." In addition, other checklists should be developed including checklists for improvement plans, final maps, tentative maps, etc.

The purpose of the checklist is to focus the effort and attention of the plan checking staff of the Subdivision Section Division on the application to assure it meets all the requirements of local ordinances and State laws.

The City Development Engineer should assemble a team of staff to develop these checklists. Once developed, these checklists should be published on the Division's web site.

Recommendation: The Subdivision Section should enhance and expand the use of plan check checklists by staff in plan checking of tentative maps, final maps, improvement plans, grading plans, etc.

Recommendation: Once these checklists are developed, the checklists should be published to the Division's web site.

5. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSURING CONFORMANCE OF DEVELOPER-CONSTRUCTED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS TO STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR ALL CITY ASSETS SHOULD BE ASSIGNED TO THE ENGINEERING DIVISION.

Traditionally, it was believed that the effectiveness of development engineering was correlated to its proximity to the asset that it was responsible for plan checking to assure conformance with standard specifications. The most result was the decentralization of development engineering to the divisions / departments responsible

for each of the assets. The City of Milwaukee, for example, organizes its engineering services around each asset including separate capital project engineering / development engineering units for streets, bridges, facilities, and water. Each of these units has separate managers responsible for capital project engineering and development engineering.

Increasingly, however, it has been recognized that capital project engineering / development engineering can be more effectively met through a consolidated approach. The move towards consolidation can be traced, in large measure, to the increasing complexity and cost of engineering and asset management over the past twenty years. During this period, developments in such areas as automation, personnel management and professional development, regulation of environmental protection, construction, and the evolution of technology have changed the definition of “effective” engineering, making it prohibitively expensive for specialized, but usually small and poor, engineering organizations to keep up.

A significant advantage of centralizing engineering is that investment in automation, employee training, staff, and the like are more likely to be adequately funded for one large organization than for several smaller ones. Another significant advantage is the ability it affords to standardize policies and procedures so as to promote consistent – and consistently sound – operating and service delivery practices and avoid inequities in the distribution of resources that create uneven service levels and impair employee morale. A final advantage of consolidation is that it can improve the utilization of engineering resources and capabilities – such as staff and staff expertise – by permitting the application of these resources across assets that might

otherwise create barriers to such shared use. In other words, the Public Works Inspector is already inspecting stormwater mains; there is no technical or workload reason that the same Public Works Inspector could not inspect water mains, sewer mains and sewer mains within the public right-of-way rather than two inspectors – one from Engineering and the other from Water Utilities.

The price of consolidation is the distancing – organizationally if not physically – of engineering from their customers. Sacrifices in this area should be acceptable, however, if they are offset by gains in others.

Thus, the key question to be addressed in examining the organization of engineering functions in Oceanside is whether different organizational structures will yield improvements in service effectiveness and/or cost control.

The organizational approach to engineering in Oceanside is largely centralized, with the exception of the Water Utilities.

The responsibility for plan checking of the improvement plans and final maps, and construction inspection to assure all assets – streets, sidewalks, curb and gutter, stormwater, water, and wastewater – adhere to standard specifications, should be assigned to the Engineering Division. Briefly, the vision for the fundamental shift in how engineering in Oceanside would be managed would include centralizing within a single division the responsibility and accountability for the delivery of engineering services. The shift of responsibility for engineering from the Water Utilities Department eliminates the fragmentation of responsibility for engineering processes and technologies that results in inconsistencies, areas of inefficiency, and duplication.

Other cities have made this shift to centralized engineering with clear and

positive results.

Recommendation: Consolidate responsibility for plan checking and inspection of all assets – streets, sidewalks, curb and gutter, stormwater, water, and wastewater – to assure adherence to standard specifications should be assigned with the Engineering Division.

6. THE SUBDIVISION SHOULD DEVELOP FORMAL WRITTEN PROCEDURES REGARDING HOW EXACTIONS ARE APPLIED.

Ordinances adopted by the City define the nature and requirements for exactions. The Subdivision Section has not defined the process for determining the nature and type of exactions in formal written policies and procedures.

There appears to be some concern and confusion regarding how exactions are applied for such infrastructure as the undergrounding of utilities. Recent state and national court decisions have addressed the need for a “nexus” in any exaction. There is concern that some of the exactions requested by the Section may exceed the nexus requirement. Additional clarity as to how to handle the nexus issues is necessary for staff of the Section to operate efficiently and effectively.

Recommendation: The Subdivision Section should develop written policies and procedures for the application of exactions guidelines with the cooperation of the City Attorney.

7. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING TRAFFIC IMPACT STUDIES SHOULD BE INSOURCED.

At the present time, the applicant is responsible for hiring, payment of, and management of traffic engineering consultants that prepare traffic impact reports.

This is a highly unusual practice. In the experience of the project team, most engineering divisions manage the consultants that prepare these reports to control the quality, and to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

The Engineering Division should change its approach for the preparation of the

traffic impact reports. This revised approach should include the following elements:

- The Division should issue a request for qualifications at the beginning of the fiscal year for environmental consultants for the preparation of traffic impact reports.
- From the list, the Division should select consultants for specific projects based on capability and qualifications.
- Upon notification of the requirement to prepare a traffic impact report, the applicant should be charged a deposit. The deposit should be equal to the estimated fee to prepare the traffic impact report.
- The Division should also include in the fee the number of time required for administration of the contract by the Engineering Division.
- Upon selection, the traffic engineering consultant should prepare a written work program to complete the analysis.
- The traffic engineering consultant should be paid by the Division, based upon deliverables of acceptable quality.

Recommendation: The Engineering Division should insource the responsibility for management of the preparation of traffic impact reports by traffic engineering consultants.

Exhibit 6 (1)

Process For Distribution of Land Entitlement
Permits in the Engineering Division

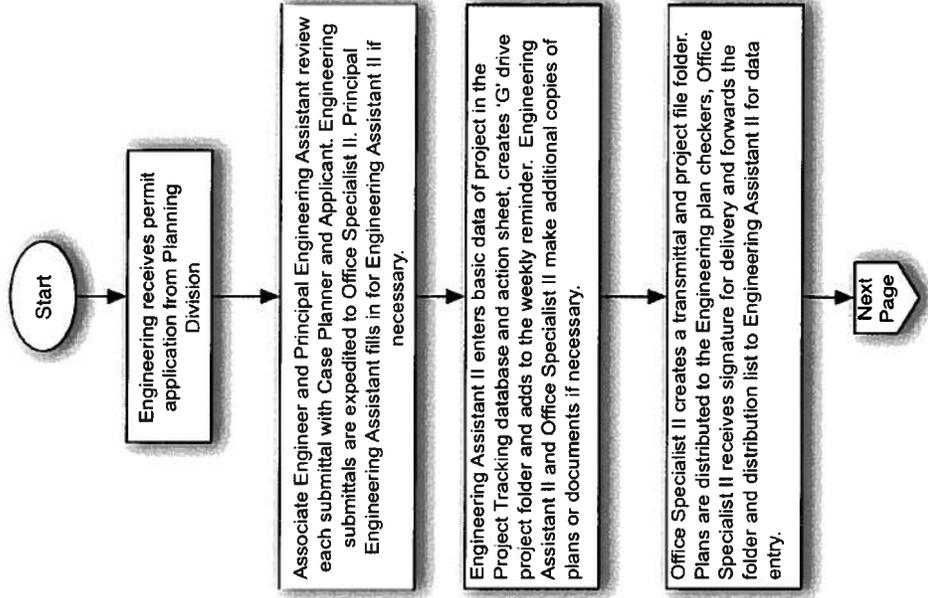


Exhibit 6 (2)

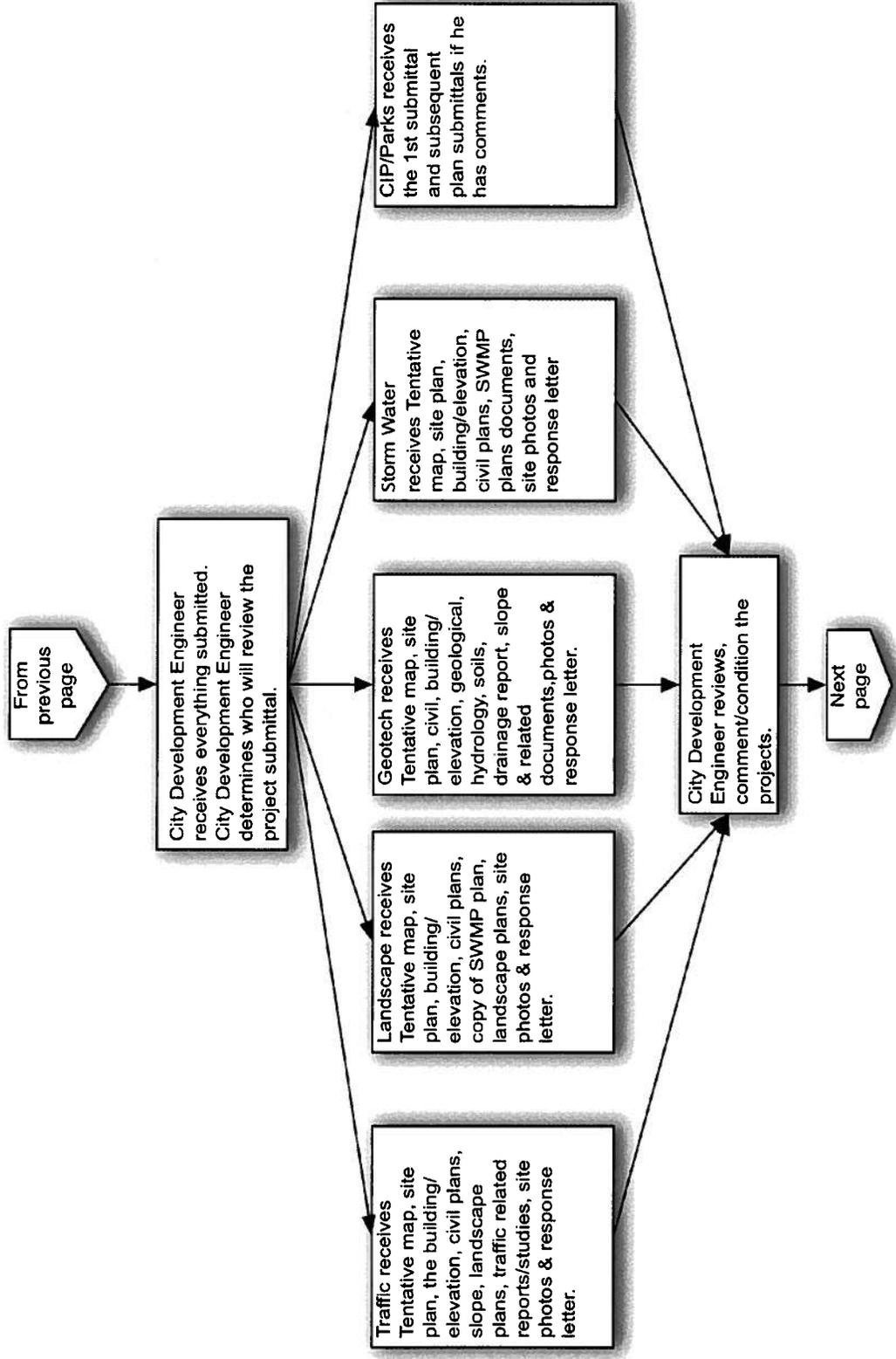
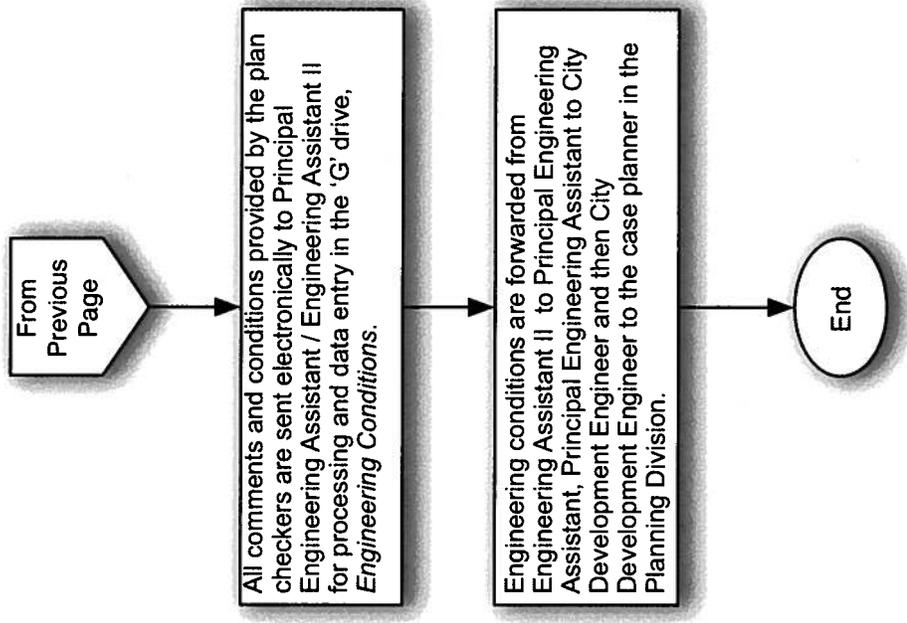


Exhibit 6 (3)



8. FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION

This chapter presents an analysis of the Fire Prevention Division. This analysis includes:

- The development of a classification of Fire Marshal to develop a career path and consistency in the position;
- The development of application guides for the unique development review aspects of the Fire Department such as fire sprinkler plans, and publishing them to the division's web site;
- The development of a checklist of the most common mistakes in the submittal of land entitlement permit and building permit applications and publishing them to the division's web site; and
- The development of a policies and procedures manual for Fire Prevention.

1. THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION HAS A NUMBER OF STRENGTHS.

While this chapter focuses primarily on opportunities for improvement, there are a number of strengths in the Division. Examples of these strengths are presented in the table below.

Program	Strength
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responsibility for fire prevention, including fire prevention construction inspection and permit is centralized under the Fire Prevention Division Chief (Fire Marshal).
Plan Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan checking by Fire Prevention is provided by a part-time non-sworn position who holds a State Fire Marshall's plan review certification. • The City has adopted the 2007 California Fire Code, modifying the Code for local conditions and requirements. • The plan check cycle time for Fire Prevention is excellent.
Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fire Prevention Division initiated the use of laptop computers for input of inspection results, inspection history and access to fire codes.

These are illustrative examples of the strengths of the Fire Prevention Division.

2. THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION SHOULD CUSTOMIZE THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR LAND ENTITLEMENT PERMIT APPLICATIONS

An analysis of land entitlement permit applications by the City found that the Fire Prevention Division utilized much the same conditions of approval or “boilerplate” conditions regardless of the type, scale, and complexity of the application.

The Fire Prevention Division should (1) develop more comprehensive standard conditions of approval for land entitlement permit applications, and (2) customize their conditions of approval to the type, scale, and complexity of the land entitlement permit application.

Recommendation: The Fire Prevention Division should develop more comprehensive standard conditions of approval for land entitlement permit applications.

Recommendation: The Fire Prevention Division should customize their conditions of approval to the type, scale, and complexity of the land entitlement permit application.

3. THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION SHOULD DEVELOP APPLICATION GUIDES FOR THOSE UNIQUE PERMITS PROCESSED BY THE DIVISION.

The purpose of the application guide is to focus the effort and attention of the staff of the Fire Prevention Division on the application to assure it meets all the requirements of local ordinances and State laws while the applicant is still at the counter. These checklists should specify what the applicant must submit in order for the Division to accept the plan. The applicant should complete a checklist for each application self-certifying that all of the required information has been submitted. This information should include the information required by all the divisions or departments involved in the building permit plan check process, not just the Building Division.

For example, the checklist for fire sprinkler systems might specify such factors as:

- Make, type, model, and nominal-K factor of sprinklers;.
- Temperature rating and locations for high-temperature sprinklers;
- Total number of sprinklers on each dry pipe system, pre-action, combined, or deluge system;
- Approximate capacity in gallons of each dry pipe system; or
- Pipe type and schedule of wall thickness.

The intent is to specify the criteria against which projects will be evaluated. When these checklists have been developed, orientation sessions with developers, builders, architects, consulting engineers and City staff should be held to explain and discuss the criteria so that the intent, meaning, and interpretation is clearly understood by all parties. The use of checklists may well result in some plans being rejected as incomplete.

The Fire Marshal should assemble a team of staff to develop application guides for the unique permits processed by the Fire Prevention Division. These guides should include the whole gamut of application requirements, but the Fire Marshal should exercise authority to assure these requirements are realistic.

The application guides should include a checklist of submittal requirements that an applicant must check off, and require the applicant's signature. This is designed to have the applicant self-certify the application includes all of the information required to achieve a complete submittal.

Recommendation: The Fire Prevention Division should develop application guides for the unique permits processed by the Division.

4. THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION SHOULD PUBLISH A PLAN CHECK CORRECTION COMMENT LIBRARY TO THE DIVISION'S WEB SITE.

The Fire Prevention Division should develop a library of correction comments for plan checking. These comments should include the most common corrections noted on building permit plans by the Division.

The correction comments, for example, could include the following:

- Fire protection;
- Fire sprinkler systems;
- Exits, stairways, and railings;
- Openings on exterior walls;
- Pressurized enclosures for exits in buildings having floors used for human occupancy located more than 75 ft. above the lowest level of Fire Department vehicle access;
- Fire resistive construction for members supporting concrete or masonry walls;
- Smoke alarms; or
- Ducts penetrating fire-resistive elements of fire-rated corridor walls.

The publishing of the correction library to the web site should provide a framework for architects to understand the requirements for the unique fire code requirements for the design of buildings in the City, and the most commonly found errors by the Division. The plan checking correction comment library also should include the requirements of other divisions and departments.

Recommendation: The Fire Prevention Division should develop a library of correction comments for plan checking. These comments should include the most common corrections noted on building permit plans by the Division. The library of corrections should be published to the Division's web site.

5. THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION SHOULD DEVELOP WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO GUIDE ITS STAFF.

The Fire Prevention Division should develop a policies and procedures manual to guide its staff and assure uniformity in the critical processes of the division.

In developing policies and procedures for the Division, the following approach should be utilized.

- **Minimize.** The policies and procedures should be kept to a minimum.
- **Best Methods.** Make certain the procedure represents the “best method”. This means the procedure has undergone detailed analysis and is continually challenged.
- **Review and Revise.** All policies and procedures should be reviewed annually.
- **Keep Current.** The problem with many policies and procedures is that they have long ago outlived their usefulness. No one remembers why the policies and procedures were created in the first place. Sometimes they contradict each other and create even more confusion. Responsibility for updating these policies and procedures should be clear.
- **Be ready to change.** The key to organizational effectiveness and efficiency is finding a better way. The department must always be ready to challenge current policy - throw it out – change it.
- **The policies should be available on the Division’s intranet site.** This should facilitate easy updating.

Recommendation: The Fire Prevention Division should develop a policies and procedures manual.

6. THE FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION STAFF ASSIGNED TO BUILDING PERMIT PLAN CHECKING FOR FIRE CODE COMPLIANCE SHOULD BE PHYSICALLY BASED WITHIN THE OFFICE AREA ASSIGNED TO THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

A best practice for the delivery of development services is the co-location of staff assigned to the delivery of these services. The City has accomplished much of this best practice in the City Hall.

The one notable exception is the part-time employee assigned to plan checking by the Fire Prevention Division. The employee works three hours per day five days a week, and conducts all of the building permit plan checking for compliance with the Uniform Fire Code. This employee should deliver these services in the same physical location as the Development Services Department.

Recommendation: The Fire Prevention Division employee that works three hours per day five days a week, and conducts all of the building permit plan checking for compliance with the Uniform Fire Code should be physically based in the same physical location as the Development Services Department.

9. TECHNOLOGY

This chapter presents an analysis of the permit information systems required to support all aspects of land entitlement permit, engineering permit, and building permit services. This includes a number of technology needs facing the Development Services Department including the following:

- An automated permit information system;
- An effectively deployed geographic information system;
- A document imaging system.

The state of information technology in the Development Services Department could only be described as rudimentary at the present time.

1. THE CITY SHOULD ACQUIRE AN AUTOMATED PERMIT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

The City should acquire an automated permit information system to serve all of the City's staff and outside agencies involved in the City's permitting process. This includes:

- Planning;
- Engineering;
- Building;
- Fire Prevention; and
- Water Utilities.

The specific goals for the acquisition of this automated permit information system should include the following:

- Increase customer service and satisfaction level by providing a faster, more

- accurate and readily available (i.e. access via the Internet) information retrieval process;
- Improve staff productivity by reducing the time required to process applications or permits;
 - Enhance cost recovery through improved fee assessment and permit monitoring;
 - Increase management control and accountability by providing more accurate and up-to-date data to departments, management and the public;
 - Track the location and status of work at any point within the development or code violation process;
 - Provide an environment for the total automation of all aspects of the land entitlement and building permit process, from rezoning through issuing a Certificate of Occupancy and release of performance bonds;
 - Optimize the use of automated systems to include plan check tracking, permit issuance, inspection requests, inspection results, and all records in a multi-departmental, multi-team environment;
 - Improve productivity and coordination between teams;
 - Provide for the development of common processes and a shared database that improves the efficiency and delivery of services within the City;
 - Provide a system that can be integrated with other current and future automated applications in the City, including but not limited to a Geographic Information System (GIS), Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Internet, Image storage and retrieval (Imaging), , and Financial System;
 - Provide the ability to account for bonds such as performance bonds;
 - Allow Internet capabilities for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access to permit records, checking status of submittals, obtaining permits and scheduling inspections;
 - Allow updates and data migration from the County's Assessor Rolls; and
 - Allow field personnel to access and update the database directly from the field.

The challenge for the City is to assure the effective implementation of the system. Before the City acquires an automated permit information system, it should

develop an implementation plan (or project charter) for the automated permit information system. The project charter is a project planning tool, and a communication vehicle for the departments that will be involved in the project. It is a quick reference and overview of what the project is about, why it is being conducted, who is involved and in what capacity, and the general approach and timeline that exists for the project.

The elements of this implementation plan are presented below.

- **The City should convene a planning committee.** The planning committee would become responsible for the development of the technology plan for the automated permitting information system with the support of Information Technology. Team members should develop a vision for the system, determine the goals that must be met to reach it, and create steps to implement those goals. Effective technology implementation plans focus on applications, not technology. The planning committee should develop a plan based on what staff and residents should be able to do with technology and let those outcomes determine the types and number of technology plan requests.
- **The technology implementation plan should identify the business need or opportunity for acquisition of the automated permit information system.** The plan should describe the business need or opportunity that the automated permit information system will address. This project is large, complex and is critical. The discussion of the need/opportunity should be stated in business terms and should provide an understanding of:
 - What created the need, or how the opportunity was recognized;
 - The magnitude of the need/opportunity;
 - Contributing factors, such as the multiplicity of independent systems in each of the divisions, the lack of exchange of information among the divisions, and fiscal constraints;
 - An understanding of the extent to which the need/opportunity would be addressed if an appropriate alternative were implemented; and
 - The consequences for the City and its “customers” if the need or opportunity is not addressed.
- **The technology implementation plan should identify the objectives for the acquisition of the automated permit information system.** The technology plan should identify the business objectives for the acquisition of the automated

permit information system, which are used to establish organizational performance goals. These goals represent planned levels of what will be accomplished as a result of the project, and that can be compared to actual results. For the acquisition of the automated permit information system, the objectives that should be considered by the City include the following:

- Automate and track the various types of permits, licenses, land entitlement cases, building permit cases, and code compliance cases;
 - Parcel maintenance;
 - Address maintenance;
 - Contractor, Architect, Engineer, and Developer (CAED) maintenance;
 - Case, permit, and license maintenance; and
 - Increase on-line transactions by providing CAED and resident access to the system and allow the issuing of simpler building permits on-line.
- **Project scope.** The project scope should include the following:
 - The proposed solution, including high-level estimates of cost, schedule, and key resources;
 - A concise, measurable statement of what the project will accomplish, and, what it will not try to accomplish;
 - Which departments and divisions will utilize the system and for what purposes; and
 - The proposed solution and the business processes that will be used with the automated permit information system and a list of their characteristics.

The project description should identify the needs for each of the departments and/or divisions that will utilize the system. For example:

- The Planning Division should utilize the system to track land entitlement cases to enable effective case management, to input conditions of approval and corrections for land entitlement cases and building permit cases, zoning for each parcel, land use, setback requirements, and specials districts or overlays such as historical or redevelopment, to track parcel genealogy, and to track inspections;
- The Building Division should utilize the system to track building permits to enable effective case management, to input conditions of approval and

corrections for land entitlement cases and building permit cases, flood zones, and certificates of occupancy, and to track inspections;

- Other departments and divisions that are involved with the land entitlement and building permit processes such as the Fire Department, Engineering, Traffic Engineering, Water Utilities, etc. should utilize the system to input conditions of approval and corrections for land entitlement cases and building permit cases, and to track inspections.

A key issue that needs to be defined within the scope is the extent of access to the system that will be provided by residents, businesses, and CAED.

- **Outstanding Issues.** The implementation plan should identify any outstanding issues that need to be resolved within the scope of the project. These are issues that will have been identified during the project initiation process. For example:
 - Which division will be responsible for maintenance of address data including valid streets list, valid addresses, related assessor parcel numbers, etc.;
 - Which division will be responsible for authorizing the placement of locks, holds, notices, and comments;
 - Which division will be responsible for maintenance of land use and zoning data within the system;
 - Which division will be responsible for CAED maintenance;
 - Will data in the existing systems be converted to the new system;
 - Which division will be responsible for taking the lead to develop a standard set of conditions of approval for the City for land entitlement, building, and engineering permits and the maintenance of those sets of conditions.
- **Project Approach.** This section of the technology implementation plan should provide a brief description of the project approach including a high level overview of the project approach, project team structure, and project plan. This project approach should include:
 - Project deliverables and quality objectives. A list of deliverables that will be generated on completion of the installation of the automated permit information system should be developed with key milestones for those deliverables. Each deliverable should provide a description of its objectives in terms of output quality and approval requirements. For example, "interim status reports regarding installation of the automated permit information system will be provided weekly to the project sponsor

and project team leaders and will be approved by the project sponsor and project team leaders prior to being accepted within the project archives."

- Responsibilities. The project team should be defined, and roles and responsibilities assigned to named individuals. This includes the:
 - Implementation Committee for the automated permit information system;
 - Project Leader;
 - Project Manager (Information Services Project Manager);
 - Information Services Project Team Leaders;
 - Project Team Member(s) (including Information Services team members and departmental or division clients);
 - Test coordinator from Information Services;
 - Quality assurance coordinator from Information Services;
 - Configuration controller from Information Services; and
 - Change controller from Information Services.

The same person may have multiple roles on a project.

- Plans for implementation support activities. Plans for implementation support activities by Information Technology should be described. Examples of support activities are training, quality assurance, configuration management, and documentation support.
- Risk management. Any risks associated with the implementation of the automated permit information system and the actions that can be taken during implementation to minimize the risks need to be identified. For example, the risk of insufficient knowledge on the part of users when the system is installed would be mitigated by documentation of the system, hands-on testing of the system using actual City data before implementation, training geared to the different levels of users of the system, development of supplemental cheat sheets for users of the system, testing of users knowledge before these users are given access to the system, system security and access control, the use of computer based training, etc.
- Stages. A description of the project life cycle for the automated permit information system and the product installation staging should be included. This should include a definition of the stages to be used in the installation of the system, the objectives of each stage, and their entry and exit criteria.
- Project Control. This section of the project approach should identify the methods and processes that will be utilized to communicate project progress.

- Testing schedule and program. Testing activities relate to reviews and quality tests that will be carried out during the project, including responsibilities, approximate schedule and effort required. For example, review of the Project Plan, design reviews, unit testing, system testing, acceptance testing should be identified. A list of all joint customer reviews should be identified and planned for including acceptance test results and testing for conformance to agreed-upon requirements.
- Project schedule. The project schedule should consist of a Gantt chart of activities, resources and assigned responsibilities.
- Project cost estimate. This section outlines the project cost, for the full and complete implementation of the automated permit information system in those departments and divisions that will be utilizing the system.
- Project staffing requirements. This section identifies the staffing requirements for IS and the departments and divisions that will be participating in its installation, in person days or person months, with this information broken-down by project stage and project phase.

These measures are essential to the successful implementation of the automated permit information system. The Standish Group, a research organization that tracks corporate information technology purchases, has found that 66% of all information technology projects either fail outright, or take much longer to install than expected, because of their complexity. The development of this implementation plan is essential to the successful implementation of the automated permit information system.

The cost impact of the acquisition of the automated permit information system is presented in the table below.

Recommendation	One-Time Capital Outlay	Recommendation	Annual Cost Decrease
The City should acquire an automated permit information system	\$200,000	N / A	\$0

Recommendation: The Development Services Department should develop an implementation plan (or project charter) for the automated permit information system. The project charter is a project planning tool, and a communication

vehicle for the departments that will be involved in the project. It is a quick reference and overview of what the project is about, why it is being conducted, who is involved and in what capacity, and the general approach and timeline that exists for the project.

Recommendation: The City should acquire an automated permit information system.

2. ALL OF THE CITY'S DIVISIONS AND DEPARTMENTS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE ISSUANCE OF PERMITS SHOULD UTILIZE THE AUTOMATED PERMIT INFORMATION SYSTEM TO MEET ALL OF THEIR PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.

It is recommended that the City make a significant investment in an automated permit information system. The system will be capable of a broad range of tasks including the following:

- Plan review tracking;
- Permitting including the issuance and tracking of permits;
- Inspections scheduling and tracking;
- Workflow management;
- Fee calculation and collection;
- Customer communications through web-based customer services;
- Telephone-based voice response services; and
- Inter- and intra-departmental communication and management.

All of the departments and divisions involved in the issuance of permits need to utilize the automated permit information system for all aspects of the land entitlement, building, and engineering permit process.

Recommendation: All of the departments and divisions should utilize the automated permit information system for all aspects of the land entitlement, engineering, and building permit process.

Recommendation: Modules, applications and reports should be developed within

the automated permit information system to support the work of these departments and divisions.

Recommendation: Training should be provided to staff as appropriate in the use of the automated permit information system.

3. PLAN CHECK AND PERMIT ANNOTATIONS, CORRECTIONS AND COMMENTS SHOULD BE STORED IN THE AUTOMATED PERMIT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

Once land entitlement, building, and engineering permits are plan checked, annotations and comments can be added to the permitting database within the automated permit information system, shared among the review team, and forwarded to the applicant. This is an essential element of the automated permit information system: to facilitate collaboration, integration, and cooperation among staff, applicants, architects, and the neighborhoods. Use of the automated permit information system for these annotations and comments provides the potential for 24/7 access to staff, applicants, architects, and the neighborhoods.

The City should fully utilize the capacity of the automated permit information system storing comments and corrections. All of the divisions and departments that utilize the automated permit information system should enter and store their annotations, comments, and conditions in this system.

Recommendation: All of the divisions and departments that utilize the automated permit information system should enter and store their annotations, comments, and conditions in the system.

4. STAFF REPORTS AND ARCHITECTURAL PLANS SHOULD BE STORED IN THE AUTOMATED PERMIT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

Document management tools within the automated permit information system will offer the capacity to transform paper documents into digital documents and files, allowing staff to store, manage, and access documents, and applicants and the public to

access these documents using a standard interface – the automated permit information system. Using these document management tools, any information associated with the permit process is digital and indexed to the permit application. In addition to the electronic documents that can be stored in the automated permit information system, hard copy documents, photos and drawings can be scanned and converted to digital files in the automated permit information system. Organizations are beginning to integrate document management tools into their permit processes, because this technology improves the linkages between related information and provides a single point of access to multiple sources of permit information.

This goal should be accomplished by the City using a number of approaches.

These approaches are presented in the paragraphs below.

- **All documents created by staff regarding permits, plan checks, and inspections should be archived in the automated permit information system so that they can be stored and located more easily and efficiently.** The automated permit information system will have the capacity to store electronic documents (such as those created by Microsoft Word or Excel), legacy documents imaged or scanned from paper or microfiche, and documents and images from databases. In addition, city staff can scan non-electronic documents to add them to the document management database.
- **The City should scan architectural plans submitted to the City electronically or require the applicant to submit electronic copies of these architectural plans.** This is not an uncommon approach. Other cities and counties have already taken this step.
- **Architectural plans that are scanned should be archived in the automated permit information system.** All plans should be labeled and archived for future reference. There are a number of public agencies that are not only archiving these architectural plans, but also receiving these plans from applicants over the Internet.

Recommendation: All documents created by staff regarding permits, plan checks, and inspections should be archived in the automated permit information system.

Recommendation: Architectural plans should be archived in the automated

permit information system once the permit is finalized.

5. A NUMBER OF FEATURES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE AUTOMATED PERMIT INFORMATION SYSTEM ACQUIRED BY THE CITY.

The acquisition of the automated permit information system will not be inexpensive. If the City is to obtain an effective return on its investment, there are a number of features that should be included with the system. These features are presented below.

(1) The Public And Applicants Should Be Provided With Access To the Automated Permit Information System Over the Internet.

Automating the permit process opens the door for customer self-service. Simple e-permitting capabilities allow citizens and businesses to use both the Internet and the telephone to check the status of their permit application or comment on new development projects. The use of standard Web development technologies and relational databases make permit information available through the Internet.

Modern, progressive automated permit information systems provide the capacity for the public and for applicants to access the system through the Internet. This capacity would make information from the City's permit database accessible via the Internet by permit applicants, residents, and other interested parties. In this instance, the City's Web site would provide a search form where citizens enter a property address or permit number to receive current information on that permit, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from any computer with Internet access. The City can control the number of information that is accessible to the public and can limit the number of users by incorporating password protection, if it chooses to do so.

This feature of the automated permit information system should be utilized to

enable applicants to check the status of their permits. Giving applicants the ability to check the status online reduces telephone and walk-in traffic and allows applicants and city residents to review this information even when City Hall is closed.

It should also be utilized to enable citizens to review proposed projects online. By placing information about proposed developments on the Web, citizens have increased opportunity to participate in the extent and type of development occurring in their neighborhood.

Overland Park, Kansas, for example, enables citizens to access development activity in their neighborhood through a marriage of their permitting software and geographical information system. The City's Web site contains "What's Happening In My Neighborhood."

Recommendation: The City should utilize the automated permit information system to provide the capacity for the public and for applicants to access data through the Internet, or for the public and applicants to subscribe to information.

(2) The Automated Permit Information System Should Include the Capacity to Interface With an Interactive Voice Response or IVR

IVR systems are used widely throughout the customer service industry. When calling a bank, credit card company or utility company, most customers interact with an automated voice system before reaching a live person. An IVR system is available 24 hours a day and can simultaneously handle multiple callers. When connected to an automated permit system, IVR enables permit applicants and other interested parties to receive information such as permit status and the expected date of completion, schedule an inspection, or obtain the results of an inspection.

An IVR system can be programmed to adapt to an organization's specific needs. For example, announcements can be incorporated into the IVR system notifying

external customers of changes in the permit process, important dates, and events of concern to permit applicants.

City employees are responsible for maintaining the system and providing back-up customer service when callers indicate the need to speak directly with Permit Center/counter staff or other city staff. Both internal and external customers use the IVR at any time, night or day.

An IVR system is a “black box” (a self-contained computing system that can be plugged into other systems) that interfaces with a host computer(s) and telephone system through various communications protocols. Calls come into the system through the telephone switch or are routed by an Automated Call Distributor (ACD). The system prompts callers to select the information they want from a menu. The caller makes a selection either by using the touch-tone keypad or by speaking into the telephone receiver. The system then retrieves the requested information from the host system and “delivers” it to the caller.

Recommendation: The automated permit information system should include the capacity to interface with an Interactive Voice Response system.

Recommendation: The City should acquire an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System in fiscal year 2011-12.

(3) Applicants Should Be Provided With the Ability To Obtain Simple Building Permits On-Line.

The *e-Government Provider* estimated the costs per contact of the different types of citizen contacts with the staff of a city as follows:

- Face-to-face contact: \$400;
- FAX/e-mail: \$40;
- Telephone: \$12; and

- Internet: \$1.

While some information must be shared with citizens face-to-face, the data above suggests that the City should fully encourage and enable contacts over the Internet.

One area of Internet contact that should be encouraged and enabled is online permitting. Permits that do not require a plan check, such as single trade permits, often known as over-the-counter permits, are well suited to online permit processing. Similar to e-commerce transactions, such as buying products from a web site, this activity involves credit card processing and the printing of a permit. On-line processing of permit applications can be as basic as automating only the front-end information collection process, or as complete as full automation of the over-the-counter permit transactions.

At their own personal computer, applicants can apply for a building permit, schedule an inspection, and print the permit and receipt. Credit card payments are secured through the use of encryption technology. Applicants can set up their access so that basic information does not need to be re-entered for multiple transactions.

Automated permit information systems provide the capacity for applicants to complete a permit application via the Internet. Applicants complete online forms and hit a "send" button to transmit the application to the City's permit database. The automated permit information system processes, reviews, approves, and stores completed permits. The permit system then generates a permit for the applicant. Applicants can pay for permits using a credit card.

There are a number of public agencies throughout the United States that are using this capacity within the automated permit information system. These cities range from Albany, Oregon to Miami-Dade County, Florida.

The Development Services Department should implement this feature within the automated permit information system for simple building permits including the full automation of the entire over-the-counter permit transaction. Initially, this would include only single trades permits such as plumbing, mechanical, electrical permits, and re-roof permits. Longer-term, this should be expanded to other types of permits such as kitchen remodels.

Cities such as Concord, California are issuing as much as 9% of their building permits using the Internet interface with their automated building permit information system. This includes simple trade permits such as water heater changeouts, re-roofs, furnace replacements, but also is beginning to include kitchen remodels that involve only cabinet and appliance replacements.

Recommendation: The City should utilize the automated permit information system to enable applicants to apply for simple trade permits via the Internet involving all of what is now an over-the-counter transaction.

Recommendation: The City should adopt an objective of issuing 10% of their building permits online.

(4) The Automated Permit Information System Should Have Wireless Capabilities.

Using a handheld computer, inspectors in the field should be able to access the City's permit database. They should be able to download a list of scheduled inspections, enter inspection results, and even print a certificate using a small, wireless printer. Inspectors should also be able to collect information in the field and load this information into the permit database.

Recommendation: The automated permit information system should have wireless capabilities.

Recommendation: The City should provide formal training to Building Inspectors

in the use of the wireless data entry devices and other City staff that would utilize these devices.

(5) The Automated Permit Information System Should Have the Capability for Automated Workflow.

Complex land entitlement, building, and engineering permits often have to be routed to several employees at different departments and divisions within the City. Automating the permit process using the automated permit information system means that the land entitlement and building permit will not sit on a desk too long or get misplaced as it is being reviewed. The system itself operates according to business tasks and rules defined by the City. Automated workflow systems encompass role/relationship definition, security, auditing, and tracking capabilities. Users have the ability to know who has taken what actions on what date and where a particular task is in a sequence of steps. In addition, the system may have the ability to effectively archive required data and recreate representations of data.

Managers and permit staff use automated workflow to track a variety of documents, plans and attachments associated with a land entitlement and building permits permit application. External customers do not usually access the agency's workflow system.

Recommendation: The automated permit information system should have an automated workflow capacity.

(6) The Automated Permit Information System Should Have the Capacity for Online Project Management and Collaboration Tools.

The City should host project management and collaborative Web tools on their own Web site. Both city employees and external permit participants from the design and building community work together via electronic communication to share documents. A

password should be required to enter the Web site, but be accessed from any computer.

Architects, consultants, developers, and contractors should be able to use this tool to participate with City plan checking staff on complex projects involving a large number of plans and details.

Recommendation: The automated permit information system should have the capacity for online project management and collaboration tools.

(7) The Automated Permit Information System Should have the Capacity for Interfacing with Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

GIS links maps of an area with information from a database to generate maps and reports, allowing users to display, analyze, maintain, and model location-based information to support decision making. GIS systems have the capability to combine disparate sets of data (maps, aerial photographs, land coordinates) from various departments and agencies (such as water, electric, gas, land use) to graphically display data in any combination, for many purposes. For permitting, GIS can be used to search for addresses and features such as poles, utility mains or pipes below or above ground, water table and seismic information, and find its location in relation to any other location such as a freeway, or residential, commercial, or flood zone.

Recommendation: The automated permit information system should have the capacity to interface with GIS.

6. THE USE AND APPLICATION OF GIS IN THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE EXPANDED.

Defined broadly, geographic information systems are powerful computer-based tools for the capture, storage, management, retrieval, query, analysis and presentation of spatial data. Close to 85% of the information collected and used by local government

to support day-to-day operations, decision-making, and planning is geographically referenced.

GIS should be a core information technology for the Development Services Department to provide its staff with capabilities to effectively collect, organize, access, and analyze geographic information. This geographic information includes data and records associated with the land and its natural and man-made features (e.g., street segments, building locations, property parcels, etc.).

To identify gaps in the GIS capability of the Development Services Department, it was necessary to establish a target level and to characterize the current GIS technology status of the Department against this target. The project team defined five categories of GIS technology access and use to support the analysis of gaps:

- Level 1: Very Low Technology and GIS Access;
- Level 2: Moderate Technology and GIS Access;
- Level 3: Good Technology Infrastructure and In-house GIS;
- Level 4: Very Good Technology Infrastructure and Integrated GIS; and
- Level 5: Enterprise Technology and GIS Program.

These levels are a subjective message based on an overall evaluation of the availability and access to technology components:

- **Computer Hardware:** The level of use and user access to desktop computers and servers supporting basic computing and capable of supporting local GIS applications.
- **Network and Internet Access:** Integration of local area networks connecting users and computing resources within the organization and access to the Internet and Web resources at sufficient speed to support GIS applications and access to GIS Utility services.

- **GIS Software:** Use of and access to desktop or server-based GIS software for managing locally stored data and running local applications.
- **Organization-wide GIS Integration:** The degree to which the GIS program in an organization is coordinated on a multi-user, multi-organizational basis, including the possible formalization of technology standards, centralized system administration services, and other technology elements encouraging organization-wide operations.

The exhibit presented following this page characterizes each of the five levels in terms of these components.

While the Development Services Department has some GIS technology available, the Department faces a number of challenges regarding GIS. The challenges with the Department's deployment of GIS is not the computer hardware. The problem is not the network / Internet access. The problem is not the lack of framework databases; the City has already developed those databases.

The problem is the deployment of the GIS software / database to the desktop, the lack of integration of GIS with other Department information systems, such as an automated permit information system, that are utilized everyday by Department staff, the lack of databases for the unique services provided by the Department such as a historical landmark database, the lack of GIS professionals to support the deployment of the system in the Department, and the lack of knowledge regarding geographic information and GIS technology by staff within the Department.

GIS should be a core information technology for the Development Services Department, but GIS is not a core technology at present. The Department should address the challenges it faces to deploy GIS technology.

Exhibit 7

Alternative GIS Levels of Service

Level	Computer Hardware	Network/Internet Access	GIS/Database Software	Organization-wide Integration of GIS	Comments
1	Major deficiencies in user access to computers and considerable need for computer upgrades. No server. No support capability.	No or poorly integrated local area networks. No or low speed access to the Internet and Web resources.	No use of GIS software on a regular basis.	No organization-wide integration. No external connectivity. Minimal awareness of GIS.	No IT support structure. No use of GIS outside of occasional use.
2	Computers/Servers are functional but slow. In need of upgrade. Moderate internal support capability.	Low to moderate access to GIS, DSL or Internet, LAN. No external support capability. Low to moderate internal support capability.	Desktop GIS or CAD software used internally by one or two departments. No GIS server. No server database.	Minimal availability to other county agencies via hard media. No integration with internal business systems.	Low IT support. Dysfunctional network. No database admin. Very low technical skills.
3	Computers/Servers stable internally but little or no external capability. In-house capability. Medium external support capability.	Stable in-house infrastructure. Minimal external support capability. Sufficient access to Internet/intranet, LAN, WAN for file sharing.	Sufficient internal access to GIS software for GIS technical staff. Underlying DBMS not sufficient for serving GIS data outside of agency.	Functional but limited internal integration. One or two GIS professionals provide GIS products for the rest of the agency.	Medium IT support and staff skill set. No GIS positions. GIS functions a part of overall job.
4	Wide Area Network, LAN, Internet, intranet, distributed GIS use and some integration. High support capability.	Excellent internal network and high level of internal integration with some external access to GIS information via Web servers.	Excellent internal access to GIS software but limited external access via browser/query Web applications.	High level of GIS integration with internal business systems and limited integration externally via file sharing. GIS applications available to entire agency and, to a limited degree, the public.	High IT support and staff skill set. GIS coordinator or project manager. GIS services may or may not be a formalized entity.
5	Highly optimized computer hardware and GIS server capability.	Excellent internal and external server and database capabilities and very high level of integration with both internal and external agencies via WAN, intranet/Internet GIS services.	GIS software available to entire enterprise. Excellent underlying DBMS capable of supporting very large enterprise databases.	Centralized enterprise, multi-user, multi-organizational enterprise. GIS functions are embedded in numerous internal and external business processes. External agencies highly dependent on GIS system outputs.	Very high staff skill set. Coordinated IT support and administration. Full-time GIS coordinator with staff. GIS services are formalized entities.

(1) Deployment of GIS in the Building Division

The Building Division works closely with other divisions in the Department, collecting and maintaining important information about building permits. Several divisions / departments will utilize GIS data layers derived from data developed and maintained by the Division, thus maintaining an accurate and up-to-date database is vital. The management of the Building Division also indicated that the ability to map and analyze permit data is also a key need within the Division.

The Division should develop, in concert with the Information Technologies Division, an online application that allows the public to search for permits via the City's web site. This application has great potential to be integrated with an Internet GIS data browser providing citizens with the ability to view permit information via a mapping interface (see Public Access to Geo-Spatial Building data below). The Building Division has the GIS needs presented below based upon this needs assessment.

- **Mapping and Spatial Analysis of Building Division Data.** The Building Division will need to work closely with the Information Technologies Division to address short and long-term GIS goals and objectives. A key objective for Division staff is the mapping and analysis of building permits - this objective can be accomplished by linking permit information in the automated permit information system with a City address point layer (or to a parcel layer). Another key analysis that will allow the Division to enhance its operations is the mapping and analysis of easements and flood zones; mapping these features will yield benefits for other departments as well, such as the Fire Department and the Public Works Department, both of which need this information in case of emergencies.

The Building Division can utilize GIS to assist in several tasks, including:

- Building inspection location analysis;
- Occupancy data mapping and analysis;
- Permit fee analysis and mapping;
- Mapping easements in relation to inspection locations;
- Inspection and code violation mapping and analysis;
- Using maps to train personnel;

- Building code enforcement violations; and
- Statistical analysis for budgetary preparations.

For example, during the building permit plan check the location of the property, zoning, future land use, flood zones, overlay districts, and impact fees are all considered before the issuance of a building permit. The plan check process can be straightforward if applicants have done their research. On the other hand, if applicants have not done research on the property on which they would like to build, the process can be drawn out and frustrating to both the applicant and the Building Division. This would require:

- A linking of the ArcIMS map service to the building permitting database at the parcel level.
- Property appraiser information with the ability to query by parcel number, owner, secondary owner, business name, address, and secondary address. It was also important that queries would include condominiums and apartment complexes.
- Planning information with the ability to view parcel-level information on zoning, land use, future land use, overlay districts, and impact fee districts.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map information with the ability to view parcel-level information on flood zone designations.
- Environmental information with the ability to view parcel-level information on watersheds.
- Base map information including water features, streets, annotation, and aerial photography.
- Printable map with accompanying property data to attach to applications.

It is recommended that Division staff utilize an Intranet GIS data browser to conduct basic spatial analysis and produce maps. This Intranet browser will be based on the enterprise-wide Intranet GIS data browser (this is an ArcIMS implementation) developed by the Information Technologies Division. For more advanced analysis and other tasks such as data creation, the Division should work with the Information Technologies Division, to enable and train Division staff in the use of advanced GIS software such as ArcView or ArcInfo to conduct many of these tasks. The Information Technologies Division may also be called upon to create cartographic products for the Division. The Division should rely on its own staff for data creation and maintenance (see GIS Data Layers below for more information).

- **Public Access to Geo-Spatial Building and Safety Division Data.** A great opportunity exists for the integration of the automated permit information system online building permit search with a GIS interface to provide the public with the ability to search for permits through input fields or via a mapping interface. Subject to creation (geocoding) of permit layers based on the automated permit information system database, the Division should work with Information Technologies Division to create an application with similar search functionality that will allow users to click on a parcel (or address point) and view permit information. As part of the Division's objective to provide an Internet GIS data browser, the Division should coordinate with the Information Technologies Division to integrate relevant Building Division data as GIS data layers into the Internet-based application.
- **GIS Data Layers.** The Building Division will benefit from access to GIS data layers. It is expected that once all Development Services Department data is integrated, consolidated, and centrally stored, that staff will have access to all non-classified GIS data layers from other City departments. Division staff expressed that access to GIS data layers would be beneficial. These layers are presented later in this chapter. Additional layers may be required as the Department increases its GIS utilization and incorporates additional field data. Division staff also identified a need to link digital documents, such as Adobe PDF's for permitted applications, with parcels and address points.
- **GIS Applications for the Building Division.** An Internet GIS data browser that includes building permit search functionality has been recommended to provide citizens with access to the City's geo-spatial data, including parcel and building permit information. Leveraging the City's existing ArcIMS platform, the City will need to develop an enterprise-wide Internet GIS data browser to provide the public with access to geo-spatial planning data. An Intranet GIS data browser should be acquired and deployed to provide mapping and analysis capabilities for all Division staff. This application should serve as the primary GIS application for the Building Division.

At the present time, the Building Division does not have available GIS tools that are needed to provide effective and responsive service to the public. The Information Technologies Division should be assigned responsibility for bringing this set of tools to the desktop computer and developing the skills of the staff of the Division who should be expected to use these tools routinely as part of the tasks performed on behalf of the Division, residents, and applicants.

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should link permit information in the automated permit information system with a City address point GIS layer or to a parcel layer.

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should deploy an Intranet GIS data browser for the Building Division staff to conduct basic spatial analysis and produce maps. This Intranet browser will be based on the enterprise-wide Intranet GIS data browser (this is an ArcIMS implementation).

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should integrate the automated permit information system online building permit search with a GIS interface to provide the public with the ability to search for permits through input fields or via a mapping interface.

Recommendation: The Building Division should work with the Engineering Division to develop GIS layers such as building permits, and buildings with site plans.

Recommendation: The Building Division should be responsible for the maintenance of its assigned GIS layers once these layers are developed.

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should deploy an Intranet GIS data browser to provide mapping and analysis capabilities for all Division staff. This application should serve as the primary GIS application for the Building Division.

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should be responsible for providing ongoing GIS training to those staff in the Building Division developing the skills of the staff of the Division that should be expected to use these tools routinely as part of the tasks performed on behalf of the Division, residents, and applicants.

(2) Deployment of GIS in the Planning Division.

There is great potential for increasing the utilization of GIS in the Planning Division. The Planning Division manages and maintains a variety of data that has a spatial component. In addition, the Division's staff require comprehensive knowledge of various types of spatial data, including planimetrics, zoning, and environmental data.

Based on a needs assessment, the Planning Division has several GIS needs:

- Mapping and spatial analysis of land use and zoning data;

- Automated neighborhood and vicinity mapping;
- Planning support systems;
- Public access to geo-spatial planning data; and
- Formal GIS training for Planning Division staff.

The Planning Division's GIS needs are closely linked to the other divisions within the Development Services Department. A key opportunity for all divisions within the Department lies in centralization of CADD / GIS data and distribution of this data via several tiers of GIS applications. It is expected that Planning Division staff will gradually gain greater involvement in planning-specific GIS data production, maintenance, and management, as technical knowledge and resources within the Division increase.

The Planning Division identified that it could utilize GIS to assist in several tasks including the following:

- Proposed development location analysis;
- Land use and land development mapping and analysis;
- Zoning data mapping and analysis;
- Environmental inventories mapping and analysis;
- Project activity mapping;
- Traffic modeling;
- Building inspection and code enforcement mapping and analysis;
- Production of public meeting and exhibition maps;
- Statistical analysis for budgetary preparations;
- Spatial and quantitative analysis of long-range planning issues including demographics, housing, economic development, environmental protection, and infrastructure.

These GIS needs are presented below based upon a needs assessment of the Division.

- **Automated Neighborhood and Vicinity Mapping.** Automated neighborhood and vicinity mapping is a tool that the Information Technologies Division should develop on behalf of the Planning Division including the production of neighborhood and vicinity maps for public meetings and public distribution. The Planning Division will be able to better serve its public duties by utilizing an automated mapping application that enables staff members to quickly and efficiently create neighborhood and vicinity maps. At present, there is no automated means for generation of these maps.

It is recommended that a standalone desktop application be developed to address these mapping needs. The application should be based on ESRI technology to facilitate integration with the City's existing platform and to enable streamlined access to the City's geo-spatial data. The Information Technologies Division should develop an ArcGIS-based application for the Division's specific needs. In addition to providing custom automated mapping capabilities, the application should support versioning of data, especially for use in proposed development plans; by using versioning, any approved changes to specific boundaries or land use features can be easily and effectively reconciled with the original data (i.e., central geodatabase).

As part of the automated mapping application, and in order to ensure a high cartographic quality in publicly distributed maps, it is recommended that Python software be integrated with the automated mapping application. Python is sophisticated, high-end scripting software that can be utilized for creating quality labeling and annotation text for map generation. Utilizing an integrated approach that uses both ArcGIS and Python will yield cartographic quality products that can be created by both technical and non-technical staff.

An Intranet GIS data browser is an additional resource that can be used by Planning Division staff to view and map GIS data. It is recommended that the Division utilize an Intranet GIS data browser to provide mapping and spatial analysis capabilities for non-technical staff.

- **Planning Support Systems.** Another potential utilization of GIS within the Planning Division is the analysis of proposed development scenarios during plan reviews. It is recommended that the Planning Division procure a third party extension for ArcGIS that will enable departmental staff to leverage GIS infrastructure to perform these types of analysis. The solution should provide the ability to version temporary scenario data, as this will facilitate the reconciliation of approved data changes to master data sources.
- **Public Access to Geo-Spatial Planning Data.** Spatial information should be disseminated to the public by providing a mapping application that will enable citizens to view land use and zoning information.

The Division should coordinate with the Information Technologies Division

to integrate departmental GIS data into the Internet-based application.

Public access to geo-spatial planning data will increase productivity by reducing the need for staff to personally respond to questions from citizens. In addition to providing public access to mapping via an Internet GIS data browser, it is recommended that the Planning Division purchase and maintain a public access kiosk at the Division's front counter. The kiosk will allow citizens that come into the office to view and query zoning and land use information without disturbing or disrupting staff. The kiosk should provide an intuitive, user-friendly mapping interface that provides the ability to view and query land use information.

- **GIS Data Layers** The Planning Division will benefit from access to several GIS data layers. It is expected that once all departmental data is integrated, consolidated, and centrally stored, that staff should have access to all non-classified GIS data layers from other City departments. Access to the GIS data layers presented in the exhibit on the following page would be beneficial for the Division. Additional layers may be required as the Division increases its GIS utilization and incorporates additional field data. Digital documents, such as Adobe PDF's for permitted applications, should be linked with parcels and address points.
- **GIS Applications.** There are a number of applications that are appropriate for the Planning Division. These GIS applications are presented below.
 - **Internet GIS Data Browser.** An Internet GIS data browser has been recommended to provide citizens with access to the City's geo-spatial data. Leveraging the City's existing ArcIMS platform, the City will need to develop an enterprise-wide Internet GIS data browser to provide the public with access to geo-spatial planning data.
 - **Intranet GIS Data Browser.** An Intranet GIS data browser is recommended for use by Planning Division staff. The Intranet GIS data browser should provide mapping and analysis capabilities for all personnel. This application will serve as the primary GIS application for the Planning Division.
 - **ArcGIS 9.** ArcView 9 is recommended for use by Planning Division staff. One (1) license of ArcView is recommended for use by each planner.

Exhibit 8 (1)

**Proposed GIS Layers For
the Development Services Department**

Data Layer	Creation Methodology	Division Responsible
Address Points	Extract, cleanse, geocode, and map from Pentamation; georeference based on aerial photography and GPS field work	Automated; Information Technologies Division
Aerial Photography	Fly-over with control points	GIS Data Services Vendor
Backflow Devices	Digitize on screen; GPS field work	Water Utilities Department
Bicycle / Pedestrian Facilities	Digitize from base map data; GPS field work	Engineering Division
Bridges	GPS data collection and integration with existing information	Engineering Division
Building Permits	Extract, cleanse, geocode, and map from the automated permit information system database	Automated
Buildings With Site Plans	Manually digitize polygons from plans and address sources	Building Division
Census Data	Download from Census Bureau !http://www.census.gov/geo/www/census2k.html	Information Technologies Division
Certificates of Compliance	Extract, cleanse, geocode and map from the automated permit information system database	Automated
City-Owned Property	Extract, cleanse, geocode, and map from County tax roll; other map sources as required	Automated
Commercial addresses	Extract, cleanse, geocode, and map from Pentamation	Automated
Crime Data	Extract, cleanse, and automatically map from Police database	Automated
Critical Facilities	Manually digitize points from aerial photography and address sources	Engineering Division
Day Care Facilities	GPS Field Work	Planning Division
Planning Division land entitlement applications	Extract, cleanse, geocode and map from the automated permit information system database	Automated
Easements	Digitize from base map data; aggregate layers as needed	Engineering Division
Encroachment Permits	Extract, cleanse, geocode and map from the automated permit information system database	Automated
Fire Hydrants	Digitize on screen; existing CADD data; GPS field work	Water Utilities Department
Flood Zones	Acquire from FEMA (free to government entities) http://www.fema.gov/fhm/	Engineering Division
General Plan	Digitize features from aerial photographs and data layer	Planning Division
GPS Monument Map	GPS Field Work	Engineering Division
Hazardous Materials	GPS data collection for location; extract from Fire Department database once data is entered	Automated; Information Technologies Division

Exhibit 8 (2)

Data Layer	Creation Methodology	Division Responsible
Impervious Surfaces	Digitize polygons from aerial photographs; derive polygons by raster analysis of remotely-sensed data	Engineering Division
Industrial Pre-Treatment	Digitize on screen; GPS field work	Water Utilities department
Land Use	Digitize polygons from aerial photographs and existing maps	Planning Division
Licensed Businesses	Extract, cleanse, geocode, and map from Pentamation; georeference based on aerial photography and GPS field work	Automated; Information Technologies Division
Intersections	Use street centerline layer as source	Engineering Division
Neighborhood watch areas	Digitize from base map data; GPS field work if needed	Police Department
Parcels	Acquire from County	Information Technologies Division
Park Facilities	Query from address point layer; attribute as needed; digitize from base map data; GPS field work	Engineering Division
Parks	Digitize from base map data; aggregate layers as needed	Engineering Division
Police Beats	Digitize from base map data;	Police Department
Real Estate Sales	Geocode and map from MLS database	Automated
Record of Survey Base Map	Digitize on screen; GPS field work	Engineering Division
Redevelopment Project areas	Digitize from base map data; aggregate layers as needed	Engineering Division
Schools	Digitize from base map data; GPS field work	Engineering Division
Sewer Base Map	Digitize on screen; GPS field work	Water Utilities Department
Sexual Offender Location	Extract, cleanse, and automatically map from Police Department software; Megan's Law database	Police Department
Signs	GPS field work; aggregate layers as needed	Engineering Division
Specific Plan Areas	Digitize from base map data; aggregate layers as needed	Planning Division
Sphere of Influence	Acquire, geocode, and map locations; rectify using base map data; derive spheres through buffers	Planning Division
Storm Drain Base Map	Digitize on screen; GPS field work	Engineering Division
Streets	Derived from aerial photography	Engineering Division
Striping and Pavement Markings	GPS field work; derive from aerial photography; aggregate layers as needed	Engineering Division
Tax Assessment Districts	Aggregate parcels and assessor data; other sources, such aerial photography, as needed	Information Technologies Division
Telecommunication Facilities	GPS field work; derive from aerial photography	Engineering Division
Traffic Accidents	Extract, cleanse, geocode, and map from Police Department database	Engineering Division
Traffic Base Map	Digitize on screen; GPS field work	Engineering Division
Traffic Calming Devices	GPS field work; derive from aerial photography	Engineering Division
Traffic Counts	Extract, cleanse, geocode and map from Traffic and Transportation Division database	Engineering Division

Exhibit 8 (3)

Data Layer	Creation Methodology	Division Responsible
Traffic Signals	GPS field work; aggregate layers as needed	Engineering Division
Transit Routes	Derive from street centerline layer; acquire from MTA	Engineering Division
Truck Routes	Derive from street centerline data	Engineering Division
Vacant Properties	Query from parcel layer	Engineering Division
Water Base Map	Digitize on screen; GPS field work	Water Utilities Department
Zoning	Based on existing maps: General Plan	Planning Division

- Planning Support Systems. The Planning Division should be provided with a planning support extension for ArcGIS. A planning support application will enable the department to analyze proposed development scenarios and improve decision-making. In addition, integrated GIS applications that provide access to a geodatabase will maximize efficiency through versioning and redundant data production. Included below are three options for ArcGISbased planning support systems that the department should consider and assess.
 - Scenario 360. Scenario 360 is GIS-based decision support software for planners and resource managers. Scenario 360 is an ArcGIS extension that adds interactive analysis tools and a decision-making framework to the ArcGIS platform. Scenario 360 is a valuable tool that enables viewing, analyzing, and understanding of land-use alternatives and impacts. More details are available at <http://www.communityviz.com>
 - What If? What if? is an interactive GIS-based system which supports all aspects of the land use planning process: conducting a land suitability analysis, projecting future land use demand, allocating this demand to suitable locations, and evaluating the likely impacts of alternative policy choices and assumptions. More details are available at <http://www.what-if-pss.com>
 - INDEX Software. INDEX is an integrated suite of tools designed to support the entire process of community planning and development. INDEX is used to design and visualize alternative planning scenarios, analyze and score their performance, and compare and rank alternatives. Once plans are adopted, INDEX supports implementation by evaluating development proposals against plan goals. More details are available at <http://www.crit.com>

- Public Access Kiosk Application. Many kiosk applications require the user to use a mouse and keyboard and have an understanding of how to use a Windows based application. These expectations eliminate 70% of potential users. The Internet has become one medium of disseminating data to the public. However, there is still a need to have public access to data physically at an organization's buildings. Many people come to a facility, such as the Division's public counter, with specific questions about the area and services provided. A well-written public access application will allow a user to find the answers for themselves. To be effective, a public access application must be easy to use. For many users, this means an application that does not require use of a mouse or keyboard. Touch screen monitors have enabled applications that do not require a mouse and keyboard to become a reality. A touch screen kiosk application should be implemented utilizing browser User software. Buttons and slider bars must be large so that they are easily selected by touching the screen.

This application should be flexible so that it can be used at other facilities/sites to provide public access with other data sets. Once the public access application is written it should allow for quick changes and customization. The public access application should target the following goals:

- Configurable for at least 10 preset queries;
- Extremely user friendly " no keyboard, no mouse;
- Designed with the latest GIS technology – ESRI MapObjects in conjunction with Visual Basic;
- Must have an administration package for complete control of layers, colors, and data;
- Network ready for automatic update of configuration and setup files;
- Easy to customize data setup and query configuration;
- Supports imagery and orthophotography; and
- Easy and quick setup

For keyboard entry, the touch screen application should replicate a keyboard on the screen. The kiosk application should be very streamlined, offering only the essential GIS functionality such as; printing, pan, zoom in, zoom out, identify, and turning layers on and off.

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should integrate the desktop GIS application with the automated permit information system. The application should be based on ESRI technology to facilitate integration with the City's existing platform, the automated permit information system, and to enable streamlined access to the City's geo-spatial data.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should work with the Information Technologies Division to develop an automated neighborhood and vicinity GIS mapping tool for the use of the Planning Division including the production of neighborhood and vicinity maps for public meetings and public distribution.

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should deploy Python software with the automated mapping application.

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should deploy an Intranet GIS data browser for the Planning Division that can be used by Planning Division staff and residents to view and map GIS data. This Intranet browser will be based on the enterprise-wide Intranet GIS data browser (this is an ArcIMS implementation).

Recommendation: The Information Technologies Division should integrate the automated permit information system online land entitlement permit and zoning search with a GIS interface to provide the public with the ability to search for permits through input fields or via a mapping interface.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should procure a third party extension for ArcGIS that will enable departmental staff to leverage GIS infrastructure to perform “what-if” analysis. The solution should provide the ability to version temporary scenario data, as this will facilitate the reconciliation of approved data changes to master data sources.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should purchase and maintain a public access kiosk at the Division’s public counter. The kiosk will allow citizens that come into the office to view and query zoning and land use information without disturbing or disrupting staff productivity. The kiosk should provide an intuitive, user-friendly mapping interface that provides users the ability to view, query, and print relevant land use information.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should work with the Information Technologies Division to prioritize and deploy GIS applications such as an Internet and Intranet GIS browser, ArcGIS9, and planning support extensions for ArcGIS such as Scenario 360, What If?, and INDEX.

(3) Deployment of GIS in the Engineering Division

The Division should utilize GIS for mapping and some spatial analysis. The Engineering Division has the potential to gain various efficiencies by utilizing GIS. The Division’s day-to-day tasks as well as long-term goals require holistic and integrated access to digital data in a variety of forms. The Engineering Division works closely with the Water Utilities Department - this department can be a major source for GIS data, given that it maintains the City’s utility infrastructure. The GIS needs of the Division would need to be addressed with an understanding of this relationship, and the nature of data flow between the Water Utilities Department and the Engineering Division.

The Division’s objectives require comprehensive knowledge of various types of spatial data, including planimetrics, utility and transportation infrastructure, and environmental data. The Engineering Division will need to integrate GIS as much as possible with its workflows. Based on this needs assessment, the Engineering Division has several GIS needs:

- Mapping and spatial analysis of transportation, utility, and facilities infrastructure
- GIS-based transportation infrastructure management
- Field access to geo-spatial data
- GIS-based transportation modeling and analysis
- Automated neighborhood and vicinity mapping
- Public access to Geo-Spatial infrastructure data
- Formal GIS training for Engineering Division staff

The Engineering Division's GIS needs are closely linked to the other divisions within the Development Services Department. A key opportunity for all divisions within the Department lies in centralization of CADD / GIS data and distribution of this data via several tiers of GIS applications. It is expected that Engineering staff will gradually achieve greater involvement in GIS data production, maintenance, and management, as technical knowledge and resources within the Division increase.

It is recommended that the Division be responsible for CADD / GIS data management and maintenance. For mapping and spatial analysis GIS support, the Engineering Division should use GIS software such as ArcEditor or ArcInfo to conduct additional mapping and analysis tasks; the Division may also need create other cartographic products for the Engineering Division.

It is also recommended that the Division implement an ArcIMS-based Intranet GIS data browser to provide staff with access to mapping and spatial analysis functionality. This GIS data browser should include the ability for staff to view updated Division-specific information as well as the City's base GIS data layers.

The GIS needs of the Division are presented below based upon an initial needs

assessment of the Division.

- **Mapping and Spatial Analysis of Infrastructure.** A key GIS need for Engineering Division personnel is increased and improved use of GIS to map and analyze transportation and infrastructure data. A variety of Engineering projects and tasks require the ability to produce maps and derive information from spatial analyses, including permitting, development projects, transportation infrastructure (roads, signs, signals, etc.), traffic accidents, and land use.

The Engineering Division could utilize GIS to assist in several tasks, including:

- Proposed construction and development location analysis
- Infrastructure mapping and analysis
- Automated land use mapping for traffic modeling
- Tracking tentative maps and automating calculation of development impact fees
- Accurately mapping and maintaining Underground Services Alert (U.S.A) utility markings
- Linking as-built drawings to GIS data
- Project activity mapping
- Lot line adjustment/merger mapping
- Impact fees and permits mapping
- Assessor/parcel mapping and analysis
- Production of maps for public meetings and exhibitions
- Statistical analysis for budgetary preparations

Many of these mapping and analysis tasks can be automated by spatially enabling databases (such as the automated permit information system) and producing regularly updated layers that can be used for mapping and spatial analysis via a GIS data browser; a key factor in this effort will be the coordination of database updates with other Development Services Department divisions as well as other City departments. For example, a GIS-based work order system used by Public Works personnel would allow the Engineering Division to access updated information with regard to maintenance / repairs for infrastructure.

- **GIS-Based Transportation Modeling and Analysis.** The Traffic Engineering Section could utilize traffic collision software for collision diagrams; collision, citation and DUI record management; queries by location, primary collision factor, collision type, reporting district, highest degree of injury, and other factors; reports for intersection historical and high incidence and other collisions; data analysis of highest degree of injury, collision type & involved with, weather & lighting conditions, and much more. The application requires ESRI's ArcView for use of its GIS functionality.

It is recommended that personnel in the Traffic Section utilize traffic collision software. The Section should work to procure and implement ArcView for use in conjunction with the database. GIS data layers created from the traffic collision software (through links to GIS data layers, such as streets, or as new geocoded point), and should be shared with other departments, primarily the Police and Public Works departments.

- **Automated Neighborhood and Vicinity Mapping.** The Engineering Division will be able to better serve its public duties by utilizing an automated mapping application that enables staff members to quickly and efficiently create neighborhood and vicinity maps. At present, there is no automated means for generation of these maps. It is recommended that a standalone application be developed to address these mapping needs. The application should be based on ESRI technology to facilitate integration with the City's information systems and to enable streamlined access to the City's geo-spatial data. Subject to centralization of geo-spatial data in a geodatabase, it is recommended that the Engineering Division work with an outside consultant to custom-develop an ArcGISbased application for the Division's specific needs. In addition to providing custom automated mapping capabilities, the application should support versioning of data, especially for use in proposed development plans; by using versioning, any approved changes to specific boundaries or land use features can be easily and effectively reconciled with the original data (i.e., central geodatabase). This application should be shared with the Planning Division, which has also received recommendation for an automated neighborhood and vicinity mapping application. In order to ensure a high cartographic quality in publicly distributed maps, it is recommended that ESRI's Maplex software be integrated with the aforementioned automated mapping application. Maplex is sophisticated, high-end cartographic design software for creating quality labeling and annotation text for map generation. Utilizing an integrated approach that uses both ArcGIS and Maplex will yield cartographic quality products that can be created by both technical and non-technical staff. An Intranet GIS data browser is an additional resource that can be used by Engineering Division staff to view and map GIS data. It is recommended that the Division utilize an Intranet GIS data browser to provide mapping and spatial analysis capabilities for nontechnical staff.
- **Public Access to Geo-Spatial Infrastructure Data.** The Engineering Division expressed the need to disseminate spatial information to the public by providing

a mapping application that will enable citizens to map various types of City maintained infrastructure and facilities, traffic and permit information, and impact fee zones via a mapping interface. As part of the City's objective to provide an Internet GIS data browser, the Division should coordinate with the GIS Specialist to integrate divisional GIS data into the Internet-based application.

The Engineering Division will benefit from access to several other departmental GIS data layers. It is expected that once all departmental data is integrated, consolidated, and centrally stored, that staff will have access to all non-classified GIS data layers from other City departments.

Division personnel would benefit from access to GIS data layers: previously presented in Exhibit 8.

- **GIS Applications.** There are a number of applications that are appropriate for the Planning Division. These GIS applications are presented below.
 - Internet GIS Data Browser. An Internet GIS data browser has been recommended to provide citizens with access to the City's geo-spatial data. The City will need to develop an enterprise-wide Internet GIS data browser to provide the public with access to geo-spatial engineering data.
 - Intranet GIS Data Browser. An Intranet GIS data browser is recommended for use by Engineering Division staff. The Intranet GIS data browser should provide mapping and analysis capabilities for all personnel. This application will serve as the primary GIS application for the Planning Division.
 - ArcGIS 9. ArcView 9 is recommended for use by Engineering Division staff. One (1) license of ArcView is recommended for shared use by each engineer.
 - Autodesk Suite. It is recommended that the Engineering Division utilize the Autodesk suite of software; Autodesk Map 3D should be used in conjunction with ArcView for mapping and spatial analysis.
 - GISConnect. Haestad Methods' GISConnect is an add-on tool for the AutoCAD environment that combines the power of ArcGIS's advanced database and geospatial capabilities with the extensive use of AutoCAD drawing tools. GISConnect adds a new toolbar and a dropdown menu within AutoCAD that allows users to add ArcGIS spatial data to a drawing in AutoCAD.

Recommendation: For mapping and spatial analysis GIS support, the Engineering Division should use GIS software such as ArcEditor or ArcInfo to conduct additional mapping and analysis tasks.

Recommendation: The Engineering Division should implement an ArcIMS-based Intranet GIS data browser to provide staff with access to mapping and spatial analysis functionality. This GIS data browser should include the ability for staff to view updated Division-specific information as well as the City's base GIS data layers.

Recommendation: The Engineering Division utilize the Autodesk suite of software; Autodesk Map 3D should be used in conjunction with ArcView for mapping and spatial analysis.

Recommendation: The Engineering Division should use Haestad Methods' GISConnect as an add-on tool for the AutoCAD environment.

7. THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHOULD IMPROVE ITS DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

Document management systems can include the following components:

- An optical scanner and optical character recognition (OCR) system to convert paper documents into a digital format;
- A database to organize and index stored documents, including electronic documents (e.g., Word files, etc.);
- A search mechanism to quickly find specific paper and electronic documents;
- Library services to manage security, privileges, version control, and track history;
- Automated archival and destruction according to mandated retention schedules;
- Support for workflow;
 - The ability to send a document from staff member to staff member for approval or review purposes, according to pre-defined business rules;
 - Appropriate for highly-structured and repetitive business processes; and
 - Potentially high cost, with substantial benefits.

There are a number of challenges with the existing document management systems in the Development Services Department. These challenges are portrayed below.

- Currently, none of the divisions in the Department are utilizing scanning and imaging.
- The Department has yet to determine what documents to include in a document management program (e.g., electronic files, email, working papers, drafts, etc.) and what documents not to include.
- The Department has lots of paper - in addition, the need to be responsive to Department customers and a lack of confidence in current systems has resulted in multiple copies of some documents (e.g., building permit plans) across the City.
- Attention, awareness, and demand for public access to Department documents is increasing – at the same time, the Department is experiencing heightened awareness of security / privacy issues.
- Workloads and document production will likely continue for the Department.
- Records and documents can't be shared effectively among staff – Department staff cannot access an electronic copy of a record simultaneously for collaboration.
- Staff is not easily able to index or access stored documents.
- Staff report that a lot of time is spent searching for documents that are misfiled – or lost.
- The Department lacks automated version control:
 - No automatic ability to ensure only a single copy of a document exists;
 - No guarantee that only the most current versions of contracts are being accessed; and
 - Editing of shared documents is not effectively managed electronically.

The installation of a document imaging system will resolve a number of problems in the Development Services Department as indicated in the table below.

CITY OF OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA
Productivity Study of the Development Services Department

Problem/Issue	Document Imaging Impact
Missing or lost files/documents	Electronic files, if indexed and backed-up properly, will not get lost.
Documents take a long time to get into the file (loose documents)	The documents will be linked to permits as soon as they are scanned and indexed. Available to users immediately.
File available to only one user at a time	Electronic files are available to multiple users at the same time.
Documents are copied to circulate	The need for extra copies will be eliminated
Pulling, transporting, and re-shelving permit files is labor intensive	Electronic files could eliminate the labor to the degree that staff are able to use electronic files as a substitute. Currently, Planning Department files are located throughout various building floors, some are microfiche and others are hardcopy, etc.
Records storage space is at a premium	To the extent that document imaging would eliminate the need for hard copy storage on site or at all, the number of records storage would be reduced
Retrieving off-site records can take from 1 to 3 days	Records stored on-line should be accessible in from 1 to 5 seconds
File shelving, and supplies are costly	Elimination or reduction of cost of equipment and supplies to the degree that electronic documents replace hard copy records
Using microfilm is cumbersome and time consuming	If user-friendly retrieval methods are built into the document imaging system, retrieval should be far easier and faster. Integration of document imaging and the automated permitting system is critical
The public must visit City hall to view records	Access over the Internet would alleviate many trips and phone calls

There are a number of steps that the Development Services Department should take to enhance the management of documents within the Department. These steps are portrayed below.

(1) The Department Should Charge A Document Management Fee.

To provide funding for the document imaging system within the Department, the Department should charge applicants a document imaging fee. The permit and plan check processes of any city generate a significant number of paper including the permits, plans, plan check comments, etc. Other cities have begun to charge a document imaging fee to provide consistent funding for scanning of these documents.

For example, Fullerton charges a document imaging fee that numbers to \$82 per item or \$35 per item if the planning fee is less than \$1,000.

The Development Services Department should develop a proposal for consideration of the City Council for a document imaging fee. This fee should be charged for all types of land entitlement and building permits. The revenue should be utilized to contract with a firm to scan and index these documents on behalf of the Department, and to pay the costs of overtime for Department staff to cull through the files, plans, and permits before scanning to assure that duplicates and other unessential documents are not scanned.

Recommendation: The Development Services Department should charge a document imaging fee.

(2) The Building Division Should Require Submittal of Electronic Plans Prior To Issuance of the Building Permit

After final corrections to the building permit plan have been made and prior to the issuance of the building permit, a CD containing a complete set of plans and all supporting documentation (i.e., engineering booklets, geotechnical reports, addendums, additional specs etc) should be required to be submitted by the applicant. In the event that the architect cannot provide an electronic copy of the plans with a visible stamp, the Building Division should also accept a letter from the architect bearing his stamp, signature and date certifying that the electronic copy is an identical and complete set of the drawings/plans (and supporting documentation) to the sets that were provided to the Division. The Division should standardize on the PDF file format for all electronic drawings/plans

Recommendation: The Building Division should require submittal of electronic plans prior to issuance of the building permit.

10. DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

This chapter presents an analysis of the Administration Division of the Development Services Department. This includes an analysis of the following aspects of the Division:

- The long-term strategic planning of the department; and
- The extent of training of staff based upon career development plans.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHOULD DEVELOP A CLEARLY WRITTEN FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN.

Public sector managers are often so preoccupied with immediate issues that they lose sight of their ultimate goals. That's why a strategic plan is a virtual necessity. It may not be a recipe for success, but without it the Department is less likely to achieve its goals. A sound plan should:

- Serve as a framework for decisions or for securing support / approval;
- Explain the goals and objectives of the Department to others in order to inform, motivate and involve;
- Assist benchmarking and performance measurement; and
- Stimulate change and become the building block for the next plan.

The best practices regarding development of a strategic plan that should be utilized by the Department are presented in the table below.

<p>The department has a multi-year strategic plan with annual goals and measurable objectives based on identified needs, projected workload, and expenditures and revenues.</p>
<p>The department maintains and publishes a clearly written, multi-year (five years at a minimum) strategic plan to provide vision and direction for the department. The plan links citywide and department goals.</p>
<p>In developing the strategic plan, the department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies and formally adopts a limited number (5 to 10) of departmental priorities to guide the department's strategies and major financial and program decisions;• Considers the impacts of the city's financial condition, current expenditures by the department, and opportunities to reallocate staff and other resources to enhance performance; and• Instructs departmental management on how these priorities should be considered in making program and budget decisions.
<p>The strategic plan clearly delineates the department goals, and objectives and strategies for achieving them. In developing these strategies, the department considers alternative service delivery systems such as outsourcing.</p>
<p>The plan also delineates the priorities the City Council and City Manager assign to its goals, objectives, and strategies.</p>
<p>The objectives in the strategic plan are measurable, and the department has set annual objectives for each goal for at least five years into the future.</p>
<p>The department's goals, objectives, and performance measures are based on past performance, identified needs, projected workload, and expenditures and revenues.</p>
<p>The plan delineates the managers responsible for implementing the strategies in the plan and the time frames for implementation.</p>
<p>The department head annually assesses the progress the department has made toward achieving the goals and objectives in the plan.</p>

In developing the strategic plan for the department, the Department should (1) identify its strengths, weaknesses, threats (e.g., slowdown in growth of City revenues), and opportunities (e.g., increased use of technology); (2) develop a vision and mission statement for the Department; (3) define the goals, objectives and strategies the Department will utilize to achieve those goals, objectives and strategies; and (4) define the managerial responsibilities for accomplishing those goals, objectives and strategies.

The Development Services Director should be responsible for facilitating the development and implementation of the Department's strategic plan.

Recommendation: The Development Services Department should develop a clearly written, five-year strategic plan.

Recommendation: The Development Services Director should be responsible for facilitating the development and implementation of the Department's strategic plan.

2. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE CLEARLY DOCUMENTED.

The divisions within the Development Services Department are developing their own policies and procedures to guide their managers and supervisors in areas such as disciplinary action. This is a problem in that the different divisions could develop different policies to address the same issue.

The Department should develop a policies and procedures manual to guide its managers and first line supervisors and assure uniformity in the critical processes of the Department.

In developing policies and procedures for the Department, the following approach should be utilized.

- **Minimize.** The policies and procedures should be kept to a minimum.
- **Best Methods.** Make certain the procedure represents the "best method". This means the procedure has undergone detailed analysis and is continually challenged.
- **Review and Revise.** All policies and procedures should be reviewed annually.
- **Keep Current.** The problem with many policies and procedures is that they have long ago outlived their usefulness. No one remembers why the policies and procedures were created in the first place. Sometimes they contradict each other and create even more confusion. Responsibility for updating these policies and procedures should be clear.
- **Short is better than long.** It is not the quantity, but the quality of information that is the essential problem of the information age.

- Be ready to change. The key to organizational effectiveness and efficiency is finding a better way. The Department must always be ready to challenge current policy – throw it out – change it.
- The policies should be available on the Department's intranet site. This should facilitate easy updating.

The Administrative Analyst should be assigned responsibility for providing training and technical support to the department's managers in the development of the policies and procedures manual.

Recommendation: The Development Services Department should clearly document its policies and procedures.

Recommendation: The Development Services Department should establish a policies and procedures committee, consisting of five to seven staff, that includes a representation of managers from all divisions.

Recommendation: The Administrative Analyst II in the Department should be assigned responsibility for development of the policies and procedures manual working with the committee.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT SHOULD DEVELOP A TRAINING PLAN FOR ITS EMPLOYEES INCLUDING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT.

The American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) has published a *State of the Industry Report* for ten consecutive years. The most recent report was published in 2006. This report is developed based upon a group of large Fortune 500 companies and public sector organizations that share data and best practices with one another. These organizations submit detailed data on their learning investments and practices each year. The report identified a number of ways to measure commitment to training including the number of hours of formal learning per employee. According to the 2006 *State of the Industry Report*, the average training hours increased to 41 hours per employee in 2005.

Staff interviews conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group indicate that employees do not have enough access to job-specific training. While total training hours may exceed ASTD standards in some cases, insufficient training hours have been devoted to activities and subject matter that is job specific.

The Department should develop a formal, written training plan to address the training and career development challenges faced by its employees. Development and execution of a well-conceived training plan is the cornerstone upon which a successful training program rests. A training plan exists on at least two levels:

- Department-wide - encompassing the entire department and covering a relatively elastic time period of several years (this is a reflection of a strategic plan or overall set of goals)
- Division-specific - describing divisions within the department and covering a discrete fiscal or calendar time frame (this is a reflection of concrete, measurable goals and objectives)

In developing a training plan, the Department is linking the skill development of its employees to its own strategic plan and an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. The Department should strive to achieve the best practices presented below and on the following page in developing this training plan.

The department provides a comprehensive staff development program to achieve and maintain high levels of productivity and employee performance.
The department: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducts orientation programs for all new employees, and includes information on departmental procedures, performance expectations and evaluations, training and career opportunities, and personnel policies regarding such issues as absences, leave approval and tardiness; and• Has a department-wide training program and maintains training records on each staff member.
The department has solicited and used input from supervisors and employees hired within the last three years to establish, revise, or affirm its new employee orientation programs, including content and approach.
The department has mentoring programs, as appropriate, for new employees.
The department plans training programs based on department-wide needs assessment that includes input from employees and their supervisors at least every other year.

The department establishes and implements formal staff development plans to provide on-going training for employees. The responsibility for training classes for employees may be delegated to a division within the department (i.e., Fleet Management employees may be trained by Fleet Management), but that unit provides the Departmental Advisor with copies of annual plans, training schedules, and attendance rosters.
The department has procedures to evaluate individual in-service training activities, including employee feedback, and to evaluate the extent to which annual training efforts have met identified long-term training objectives.
The department provides a comprehensive staff development program for managers and supervisors.
All managers and supervisors have completed (or anticipate completing within the current fiscal year) management and supervisory training programs.
The department has a process for identifying employees with the potential for employment in managerial and/or supervisory positions, and for providing training to them prior to appointment to a managerial and/or supervisory position.
The training program for new managers includes a mentoring component.

The Administrative Analyst should be assigned responsibility for providing training and technical support to the Department's managers and supervisors in the development of the training plan.

Recommendation: The Department should develop a training plan for its employees based upon a training needs assessment developed for each employee.

4. THE CITY SHOULD EVALUATE THE COST RECOVERY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

At any point in an economic cycle, management of the Development Services Department should be evaluating workload, revenues, and expenses. The evaluation of workload and expenses by the Matrix Consulting Group clearly indicates the opportunity to reduce staff and consulting expenses in Building and in Development Engineering.

However, even with the reduction of staffing and consulting expenses, there still remains a significant imbalance between revenues and these reduced expenses. Over the past several years, the general fund revenues have provided significant support to the delivery of services by the Development Services Department.

The user fees charged by the Development Services Department should be adjusted, over the next two to three years, to develop a balance between revenues and expenses.

As a first step, the Development Services Department and the Finance Department should develop a cost recovery policy for consideration of the City Council.

A possible cost recovery policy is presented below.

- **Ongoing Review.** User fees will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that they keep pace with changes in the cost-of-living as well as changes in methods or levels of service delivery. In implementing this goal, a comprehensive analysis of City costs and fees should be made at least every five years. In the interim, fees will be adjusted on an annual basis by annual changes in the Consumer Price Index. Fees may be adjusted during this interim period based on supplemental analysis whenever there have been significant changes in the method, level or cost of service delivery.
- **User Fee Cost Recovery Levels.** In setting user fees and cost recovery levels, the following factors will be considered:
 - **Community-Wide Versus Special Benefit.** The level of user fee cost recovery should consider the community-wide versus special service nature of the program or activity. The use of general-purpose revenues is appropriate for community-wide services, while user fees are appropriate for services that are of special benefit to easily identified individuals or groups.
 - **Service Recipient Versus Service Driver.** After considering community-wide versus special benefit of the service, the concept of service recipient versus service driver should also be considered. For example, it could be argued that the applicant is not the beneficiary of the City's development review efforts: the community is the primary beneficiary. However, the applicant is the driver of development review costs, and as such, cost recovery from the applicant is appropriate.
 - **Effect of Pricing on the Demand for Services.** The level of cost recovery and related pricing of services can significantly affect the demand and subsequent level of services provided. At full cost recovery, this has the specific advantage of ensuring that the City is providing services for which there is genuinely a market that is not overly-stimulated by artificially low prices. Conversely, high levels of cost recovery will negatively impact the delivery of services to lower income groups. This negative feature is

especially pronounced, and works against public policy, if the services are targeted to low-income groups.

- **General Concepts Regarding the Use of Service Charges** The following general concepts will be used in developing and implementing service charges:
 - Revenues should not exceed the reasonable cost of providing the service.
 - Cost recovery goals should be based on the total cost of delivering the service, including direct costs, departmental administration costs, and organization-wide support costs such as accounting, personnel, data processing, vehicle maintenance and insurance.
 - The method of assessing and collecting fees should be as simple as possible in order to reduce the administrative cost of collection.
 - Rate structures should be sensitive to the "market" for similar services as well as to smaller, infrequent users of the service.
 - A unified approach should be used in determining cost recovery levels for various programs based on the factors discussed above.
- The following cost recovery policies apply to the development review programs:
 - Services provided under this category include:
 - Planning (planned development permits, tentative tract and parcel maps, rezonings, general plan amendments, variances, use permits).
 - Building and safety (building permits, structural plan checks, inspections).
 - Engineering (public improvement plan checks, inspections, subdivision requirements, encroachments).
 - Fire plan check.
 - Cost recovery for these services should generally be high relative to the costs of these services. In most instances, the City's cost recovery goal should be 100%.
 - However, in charging high cost recovery levels, the City needs to clearly establish and articulate standards for its performance in reviewing developer applications to ensure that there is "value for cost."
- **Comparability With Other Communities.** In setting user fees, the City will consider fees charged by other agencies. Surveying the comparability of the

City's fees to other communities provides useful background information in setting fees for several reasons:

- They reflect the "market" for these fees and can assist in assessing the reasonableness of Oceanside's fees.
- If prudently analyzed, they can serve as a benchmark for how cost-effectively Oceanside provides its services.
- However, fee surveys should never be the sole or primary criteria in setting City fees as there are many factors that affect how and why other communities have set their fees at their levels.

The Development Services Department should take the lead in the development of this cost recovery policy, assisted by the Finance Department. This cost recovery policy should be developed for consideration of the City Council prior to the conclusion of the user fee study.

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