



## CITY OF OCEANSIDE Development Services Department

### Memorandum

**DATE:** April 20, 2009

**TO:** Planning Commission

**CC:** Jerry Hittleman, Secretary to the Planning Commission and City Planner *JH*

**FROM:** George Buell, Development Services Director

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

#### Focus of Commission Review

Staff is not seeking detailed comment on the entirety of this document. Instead, the primary focus of the Commission's review should be on the recommended Zoning Ordinance amendments that would streamline the discretionary permit application process presented on pages 117-139. If found acceptable and directed by the City Council, a formal Zoning Ordinance amendment process would commence to formally adopt these Code revisions.

#### Recommendations

Following general review, staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that the City Council:

1. Accept and finalize the Draft Productivity Study of the Development Services Department, Volume 1 prepared by Matrix Consulting Group;
2. Support, in concept, recommendations for streamlining the development review process, as shown on pages 133-139 of the draft productivity study;
3. Initiate an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to codify streamlining of the development review process;
4. Direct the Development Services Director to prepare a strategic plan within six months that outlines how implementation of the productivity study can be achieved;
5. Direct the Development Services Director to provide a memorandum at least every six months, over the course of the next two years, to the City Council, Economic Development Commission Ad-hoc Committee and Planning Commission on the status of the strategic plan creation and implementation.

#### Background

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. The final draft of the first volume has been provided under separate cover. This volume addresses internal processes, procedures and technology. The second volume (which addresses roles and responsibilities, staffing levels and organizational structure) and the fee study will not be forwarded for Commission review, but will be presented to the City Council this spring.

### **Discussion**

As described in the Executive Summary of Volume 1, the DSD has many strengths, and 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 is the need 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 will improve communication and ease of access to development-related public documents, and more efficiently track application/permit status and data related to staff productivity. Collectively, these investments will enhance internal and external communication, allow for better utilization staff and project management, and improve customer service.

### **Conclusion**

In addition to consideration of the recommendations listed at the beginning of this memorandum, staff seeks general comment on Matrix Consulting Group's proposals to streamline the development review process. If the City Council initiates a Zoning Ordinance amendment process to streamline the permit review process, a thorough vetting of all proposed Code amendments will take place in the future.