



Date: June 3, 2009

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Development Services Department

SUBJECT: **CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT PRODUCTIVITY STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT, VOLUME 1 (MATRIX CONSULTING GROUP)**

### **SYNOPSIS**

The item under consideration is a Productivity Study of the Development Services Department, which was prepared by Matrix Consulting Group. This study presents 181 recommendations for improvements and/or changes to internal and external customer service delivery, including the department's review processes and technological capabilities. Also included among Matrix's recommendations are modifications to policy-driven procedures and codified processes that, if implemented, would result in streamlining the City's development review process.

Staff recommends that the City Council direct staff to coordinate with Economic Development Commission and Planning Commission to initiate changes to appropriate documents to:

1. Increase the number of building permits issued over the counter;
2. Continue to develop the automated permit system so that building permits can be issued online;
3. Simplify and streamline land entitlement permitting processes by delegating authority for approval or disapproval to the City Planner;
4. Increase the number and types of minor uses that can be approved as an Administrative Conditional Use Permit; and
5. Increase the number and types of uses that can be approved as Administrative Development Plan.

### **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 of the efficiency study addresses roles and responsibilities, staffing levels and organizational structure, which is currently being utilized by staff as a guide in budget/staff reduction planning. Work on the fee study is in progress.

## **ANALYSIS**

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. A summary of these recommendations is provided under Attachment 1.

In developing recommendations for the improvement of the Development Services Department, Matrix's 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*. That publication indicates 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; and

- **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.

With the above points serving as objectives and guides, the DSD has already begun implementing many of Matrix’s recommendations. The overall goal is to streamline the land entitlement, building and engineering permit process.

1. Quicker permitting times will encourage economic development.
2. With competition between jurisdictions for new development dollars, more efficient permit process can attract investment from other areas.
3. Accelerating permit processes can increase local revenues.

Perhaps the key Matrix finding and recommendation pertains to that of the need for the DSD to streamline its operation and reduce complexities, with particular emphasis on the development review process. Specifically, Matrix recommends that the Zoning Ordinance be amended to achieve a more streamlined review of less significant discretionary permit applications. 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. Therefore, the goal of this effort is to identify and eliminate non-value-added activities involved in service delivery to the community and development customers.

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 staff utilization, and improve project management and customer service abilities.

As stated above, the DSD has already begun implementing many of Matrix’s recommendations. As a result of the interviews, surveys and subsequent release of the draft documents, staff clearly understands and is diligently working toward improvements to service delivery, customer service, processes and technologies. In doing so, we are striving to understand our customers’ perspective, and seek to optimize value delivered to the environment, the public and the regulated community.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

No fiscal impact.

## **PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMISSION REPORT**

### **Comment from the General Public**

The productivity study has been available on the DSD Web site for about ten weeks, and a number of written and verbal comments have been received. Copies of written comments are provided as Attachment 2. Verbal comments have been generally supportive of Matrix's recommendations and echo the need for greater efficiency in the Department's permit processing. These calls for efficiency are relative to both how staff manages permit applications and how the Zoning Ordinance prescribes different levels of review for various permit types.

Not all comments from the public were positive, as concern was expressed with recommendations to streamline the development review process to the extent described in the report. Other comments echoed a comment from among a focus group indicating possible more favorable staff treatment of experienced developers, and one commenter suggested that the City Planner should be authorized to refer potentially controversial projects to the Planning Commission without completing the currently-prescribed administrative review process.

### **Comments from the Planning Commission and Economic Development Commission**

Both the Planning Commission and Economic Development Commission reviewed the productivity study, and both commissions are generally supportive of Matrix's recommendations and are pleased that changes are forthcoming. Comments received are summarized as follows:

- Staff should realize that, in addition to serving as a regulatory agency, we are in the "people business," and we serve the public.
- Additional customer service training for staff should be a priority, especially among Planning staff.
- Special consideration should be extended to our customers who are new to the development/construction process ("moms and pops"). Additional time is needed to explain the discretionary review and permitting process and ensuring they understand all fees and City-related expenses.
- While it is good that an automated permit system is being deployed, it should not be viewed as a cure-all.
- Department managers need to be better attuned to both customer service and staff development needs.

## **CITY ATTORNEY'S ANALYSIS**

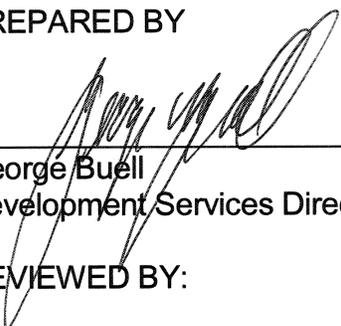
Does not apply.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the City Council direct staff to coordinate with Economic Development Commission and Planning Commission to initiate changes to appropriate documents to:

1. Increase the number of building permits issued over the counter;
2. Continue to develop the automated permit system so that building permits can be issued online;
3. Simplify and streamline land entitlement permitting processes by delegating authority for approval or disapproval to the City Planner;
4. Increase the number and types of minor uses that can be approved as an Administrative Conditional Use Permit; and
5. Increase the number and types of uses that can be approved as Administrative Development Plan.

PREPARED BY

  
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SUBMITTED BY

  
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Peter A. Weiss  
City Manager

REVIEWED BY:

Michelle Skaggs-Lawrence, Deputy City Manager 

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Summary of Matrix Consulting Group's recommendations
2. Written public comment
3. Productivity Study of the Development Services Department provided under separate cover (distributed separately)

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**Productivity Study of the Development Services Department**

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4.5.7	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 the automated permit information system. This should include all of the divisions / departments involved in the building permit plan check process.	65
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4.5.9	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 the plan checking staff.	67
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5.3.4	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.	90
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5.4.4	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.	102
5.4.5	Develop and adopt written Division policy and procedure standards for the maintenance of case status information in the automated permit information system by the case planners assigned to processing land entitlement applications.	104
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5.4.7	The manager of the Current Planning Section should formally plan and schedule the permits processed by their staff using the automated permit information system.	106
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5.5.2	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.	121
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5.7	The City should develop a program to rotate staff between the Advanced Planning Section and the Current Planning Section. This should exclude supervisory and management staff of the Division	122
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5.9	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.	130
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	<b>Chapter 6 – Analysis of Advance Planning</b>	
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6.1	The Advance Planning Section should thoroughly review its general plan once every five years and revise the general plan as necessary so	140

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6.1	The City should continue to develop specific plans to address community-planning issues.	140
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6.2	A quarterly status report and presentation should be made to the Planning Commission on each advanced planning initiative.	142
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<b>Chapter 7 – Analysis of the Engineering Division</b>		
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7.3.2	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.	153
7.3.2	The ability of the Associate Engineers to consistently meet the cycle time objectives should be integrated into their performance evaluation.	153
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7.3.4	The Program Specialist should develop and generate these reports on a monthly basis.	156
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7.4	Once these checklists are developed, the checklists should be published to the Division's web site.	159
7.5	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 to the Engineering Division.	160
7.6	The Subdivision Section should develop written policies and procedures for the application of exactions guidelines with the cooperation of the City Attorney	163
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	<b>Chapter 8 – Analysis of the Fire Prevention Division</b>	
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8.3	The Fire Prevention Division should develop application guides for the unique permits processed by the Division.	169
8.4	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.	171
8.5	The Fire Prevention Division should develop a policies and procedures manual.	172
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	<b>Chapter 9 – Analysis of Technology</b>	
9.1	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.	174
9.1	The City should acquire an automated permit information system.	174
9.2	All of the departments and divisions should utilize the automated permit information system for all aspects of the land entitlement, engineering,	181

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9.2	Modules, applications and reports should be developed within the automated permit information system to support the work of these departments and divisions.	181
9.2	Modules, applications and reports should be developed within the automated permit information system to support the work of these departments and divisions.	181
9.2	Training should be provided to staff as appropriate in the use of the automated permit information system.	181
9.3	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.	182
9.4	All documents created by staff regarding permits, plan checks, and inspections should be archived in the automated permit information system.	182
9.4	Architectural plans should be archived in the automated permit information system once the permit is finalized.	182
9.5.1	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.	184
9.5.2	The automated permit information system should include the capacity to interface with an Interactive Voice Response system.	185
9.5.2	The City should acquire an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System.	185
9.5.3	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.	186
9.5.3	The City should adopt an objective of issuing 10% of their building permits online.	186
9.5.4	The automated permit information system should have wireless capabilities.	188
9.5.4	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.	188
9.5.5	The automated permit information system should have an automated workflow capacity.	189
9.5.6	The automated permit information system should have the capacity for online project management and collaboration tools.	189
9.5.7	The automated permit information system should have the capacity to interface with GIS.	190
9.6.1	The automated permit information system should have the capacity to interface with GIS.	194
9.6.1	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.	194
9.6.1	The Information Technologies Division should deploy an Intranet GIS data browser for the Building Division staff to utilize 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).	194
9.6.1	The Information Technologies Division should integrate the automated permit information system online building permit search with a GIS	194

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	interface to provide the public with the ability to search for permits through input fields or via a mapping interface.	
9.6.1	The Building Division should work with the Engineering Division to develop GIS layers such as building permits, buildings with site plans.	194
9.6.1	The Building Division should be responsible for the maintenance of its assigned GIS layers once these layers are developed.	194
9.6.1	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.	194
9.6.1	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 who are expected to use these tools routinely as part of the tasks performed on behalf of the Division, residents, and applicants.	194
9.6.2	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.	197
9.6.2	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.	197
9.6.2	The Information Technologies Division should deploy Python software with the automated mapping application.	197
9.6.2	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).	197
9.6.2	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.	197
9.6.2	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 identify temporary scenario data, and facilitate the reconciliation of approved data changes to master data sources.	197
9.6.2	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.	197
9.6.2	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.	197

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9.6.3	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.	206
9.6.3	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.	206
9.6.3	The Engineering Division should utilize the Autodesk suite of software, and Autodesk Map 3D in conjunction with ArcView for mapping and spatial analysis.	206
9.6.3	The Engineering Division should use Haestad Methods' GISConnect as an add-on tool for the AutoCAD environment.	206
9.7.1	The Development Services Department should charge a document imaging fee.	213
9.7.2	The Building Division should require submittal of electronic plans prior to issuance of the building permit.	214
<b>Chapter 10 – Analysis of Administration</b>		
10.1	The Development Services Department should develop a clearly written, five-year strategic plan.	215
10.1	The Development Services Director should be responsible for facilitating the development and implementation of the Department's strategic plan.	215
10.2	The Development Services Department should clearly document its policies and procedures.	217
10.2	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.	217
10.2	The Development Services Director in the Department should be assigned responsibility for development of the policies and procedures manual working with the committee.	217
10.3	The Department should develop a training plan for its employees based upon a training needs assessment developed for each employee.	218
10.4	The Development Services Department should take the lead in the development of this cost recovery policy, assisted by the Finance Department.	220
10.4	This cost recovery policy should be developed for consideration of the City Council prior to the conclusion of the user fee study.	220

**Karen F. Brown**

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**From:** George Buell  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2009 9:25 PM  
**To:** Karen F. Brown  
**Subject:** Fw: Comments on Matrix Draft Report

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**From:** diane nygaard  
**To:** George Buell  
**Sent:** Sun Mar 22 17:28:13 2009  
**Subject:** Comments on Matrix Draft Report  
 Mr. Buell

Can you please pass these comments to the Planning Commission for their consideration as part of the review of the draft Matrix report on the Development Process?

Thank you

Diane Nygaard

Comments on Draft Matrix Report on Oceanside Development Process

- Building Board of Appeals - p 80

This sounds like an important step to assure some consistency in action- but my concern is that representatives of the "building industry" alone may not provide sufficient breadth of experience. A broader make-up with architects, engineers, landscape architects and planners would provide better overview of the process. All need to have some technical expertise- but there is more than one professional area that should be represented.

- standard mitigation measures p 85/86

In concept this sounds like a good idea- but to base this on our greatly outdated existing General Plan is problematic. Our Circulation Element has already been in the process of being updated for 7 years and we have yet to develop any reasonable guidelines for alternative transportation and things like providing for bicycle and pedestrian access. We also have essentially nothing that deals with mixed use development, and have no established guidelines in the GP that would help carry out the SANDAG provisions for Smart Growth. We need standard/consistent mitigation measures but may need to use a combination of sources for developing them until such time as we have a General Plan that makes sense as the sole source for such.

- watershed protection p 86

This concept is very important and needs to be fleshed out further. The Regional Water Quality Control Board has guidelines for low impact development (LID) and the recently completed Agua Hedionda Watershed Management Plan (the most recent and best one in the region) includes very specific LID and enhanced LID measures with quantified benefits to the watershed if these are implemented. This also relates to the idea of establishing thresholds for significance for CEQA evaluation. We need to be able to say if a project meets LID standards or not.

- reducing single family residential notice to 300' p 130

There is really no justification provided for this- and no evidence that this would improve the process. There are very few of the recommendations that would make it easier for the general public to know what is going on-

(really only improvements to the on-line data base to be able to look things up which one only does if one is aware that a project is being considered). Until the public really has better access to information and the process is working in a more consistent way there is no reason to reduce public notice.

- consolidation of committees p 135

This is another recommendation that sounds good in concept- but needs more work. It would be helpful if the recommendation was more specific- identifying which committees would be consolidated and eliminated and assuring that the functions of the old committees are being addressed with the new ones- or providing some explanation for why some may no longer be needed.

- cost recovery policy p 220-226

I thought that given our current economic conditions this is probably the most important recommendation in the report. We need a rationale for our fee structures and these need to be updated on a routine basis to reflect changing costs. We are short staffed and underfunded partly because we are not having new development pay its fair share. The city needs to operate more like a business and this is certainly a step in the right direction. However a key issue is that we cannot be expecting all of these improvements in processing time and quality without expecting that it will cost more.

Diane Nygaard

## George Buell

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**Subject:** FW: Matrix Study - Volume II - Oceanside Productivity Study 2-9-2009

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**From:** Ben Sullivan  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2009 3:57 PM  
**To:** George Buell  
**Cc:** Jerry Kern  
**Subject:** Matrix Study - Volume II - Oceanside Productivity Study 2-9-2009

George -

I have included an email our office received from Mr. Gary Gover (see below) regarding the Matrix Study - Volume II - Oceanside Productivity Study, 2-9-2009 with his comments specifically concerning Section 7. Technology. I'm not sure if you have any observations regarding this matter, however I thought I'd pass it along for your review and comment.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Hi Ben,  
I've reviewed Section 7. "Technology" of this document and since I operate in the enterprise implementation space each day I would offer the following observations.

In general, I would say the findings by Matrix in this area are pretty good. They do suggest a software product from ESRI called ArcGIS 9 but many municipalities have implemented SAP including the City of San Diego with good success.

My experience is that many clients, like the city of Oceanside, don't have an effective way to accurately determine the cost of installing an enterprise package as well as the cost of on-going maintenance and support.

When making a judgment about whether a system should be centralized, decentralized or a Hybrid (as suggested by Matrix) the general rule of Matrix Study -Volume II - Oceanside Productivity Study 2-9-2009f thumb is this: An IT model that pushes function and ownership down to the user community may be less expensive to support by a central IT group but requires a greater amount of on-going investment in user training to become self sustaining.

The long term payoff of investing in users is that the cost of maintenance and support can be focused on system performance improvements and enhancements to the individual applications. By putting power in the user's hands, the size of the IT organization's footprint can be reduced perhaps below the levels suggested by Matrix (21-32).

Generally, I would support the conclusions by Matrix but a vision of what the city's IT organizations should become ought to be a critical component of the city strategy. The end objective should be to create a world class organization that can deliver great tools to its users (and ultimately taxpayers) while containing the cost of its growth. Any operating model that doesn't have this item at its core can prove to be a money pit very quickly.

In the end, investing in the right technology can provide a significant competitive advantage whether a fortune 500 hundred corporation or a city government.

Thanks for the opportunity to review the document.

Regards,  
Gary Gover  
Cambria Consulting  
[ggover@cambria Holdings.com](mailto:ggover@cambria Holdings.com)