

# CITYGATE ASSOCIATES, LLC

■ FOLSOM (SACRAMENTO)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS ■

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**FUNCTIONAL AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING AND LAND USE  
FOR THE**

**COUNTY OF  
SAN DIEGO, CA**

***Final Report***

***VOLUME 1 OF 2 – MAIN REPORT***

September 5, 2008

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## SECTION I—EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *INTRODUCTION*

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This report presents the results of Citygate Associates, LLC's *Functional and Organizational Analysis of the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU)*. Citygate conducted the study between January 2008 and August 2008. The scope of the study included all major program areas of DPLU, which include:

- ◆ Advanced Planning
- ◆ General Plan Update
- ◆ Fire Prevention Program
- ◆ Watershed/MSCP
- ◆ Regulatory Planning
- ◆ Building Services
- ◆ Code Enforcement
- ◆ Support Services
- ◆ Director's Office
- ◆ Information Technology.

Where appropriate, Citygate examined non-DPLU departments, programs and activities that impact the customer experience throughout the development review permitting process.

The objective of the study was to analyze the policies, procedures, management and operations of DPLU. Where necessary, we also analyzed the overall development review permitting process as it functions outside DPLU in order to make recommendations for improving the service provided by the departments to the citizens of San Diego County. To accomplish this objective, Citygate first analyzed the mission of the DPLU and assessed the congruence of these critical guidelines with the framework of the General Management System as well as the needs of the community. We then evaluated the organizational structure and management systems, organizational relationships, allocation of employees and other resources, data management, personnel management and training, records management, communications, information systems, facilities and equipment, fiscal management, relationships with citizens, employee morale, and related aspects to determine if these are in alignment with the missions and policies of the DPLU and the known service objectives of the County.

This Executive Summary presents an overview of our major findings and recommendations. It is suggested that in order to obtain a complete understanding of Citygate's analysis, this report should be read in its entirety.

In a separate bound volume (Volume 2) Citygate presents the detailed results and analysis for the employee and customer surveys.

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## ***FINDINGS/ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

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During the course of this study, major thematic findings, issues, and recommendations emerged. The facts surrounding these themes presented themselves over and over again as we spoke with appointed County leadership, department staff, customers, and community stakeholders. The points of view and specifics varied depending on where in the organization or community the individual stood, but the major themes remained the same. These themes, as viewed through the prism of Citygate’s professional judgment and experience, were corroborated and supported by our review of internal documents, the employee survey, the customer survey, and customer focus groups. These themes include the following findings/issues and recommendations:

### ***1. CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN ALL DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS***

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**Major Recommendation: Customer service must be the top priority in the new organization.**

County departments and programs associated with the land development process struggle to consistently provide highly effective customer service. The outcome of this struggle was evidenced and documented throughout our interviews, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and in the customer survey conducted with this study. Sometimes the customer experience was negative simply because of a staff attitude or tone in a conversation. Sometimes it was simply because staff did not understand the customer’s perspective. At other times, the relationship between staff and the customer devolved into a “Them vs. Us” situation. Customers with whom we had contact in many instances would complain about a regulatory policy. This is not unusual in Citygate’s experience. But more often than not, customers simply wanted to get accurate, consistent, and well coordinated information in a timely fashion. More than anything else, they want to be contacted proactively by staff about a project issue, rather than having to worry about chasing down information within a non-transparent organizational interdepartmental maze.

### ***2. PROCESSING TIMES FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TAKE TOO LONG***

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**Major Recommendation: Processing times need to be monitored closely to ensure leadership is available to support responsive high-quality decisions close to the point of contact with the customer.**

A common customer complaint with planning agencies is “everything takes too long.” San Diego County is no exception. DPLU has historically had problems meeting process time targets. In the last couple of years DPLU has taken a number of actions to reduce the backlog and improve productivity. However, there are still problems meeting schedules and with overall timeframes for many projects. One significant issue is the level of scrutiny done in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process. The DPLU staff and County Counsel spend an extensive amount of time on review of CEQA issues and documentation, well beyond what might be expected in other jurisdictions. The lack of effective communication between DPLU and Department of Public Works (DPW) staff regarding development applications also results in increased process times. There is also a problem with availability of senior managers to meet

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with line staff regarding potential problems with an application. The lack of training, mentoring and access to managers results in staff not being sure what needs to be done, resulting in delays.

### ***3. INTERDEPARTMENTAL AND INTERDIVISIONAL COORDINATION IS INCONSISTENT AND OFTEN WEAK***

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**Major Recommendation: The silos and walls between the departments and divisions involved in the development review permitting system need to be eliminated.**

A common theme throughout Citygate’s data-gathering phase, both from staff within DPLU and other departments involved in the development process, as well as from external customers, was issues with communication and coordination between departments involved in the process. Reluctance to ask another department staff relevant questions, and unproductive pre-application meetings were cited and are indicators of coordination issues. Staff interviews revealed a common concern with silos and walls between divisions and departments. Communication and coordination issues are common throughout organizations—any agency having more than a handful of employees encounters this. As a result, customer and stakeholder inquiries are often inappropriately shuffled back and forth between departments, delaying the ability and effectiveness for the County to respond to such inquiries. These problems must be confronted on a regular and ongoing basis or they will result, as they have here, in serious and significant customer service problems and internal dysfunction.

### ***4. PERFORMANCE AND ACCURACY INCONSISTENCIES IN THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAVE REVEALED A NEED FOR ONGOING REGULATORY, PROCEDURAL, AND COST ACCOUNTING IMPROVEMENTS***

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**Major Recommendation: Delivering a high quality, highly consistent and highly coordinated work product requires an ongoing, continual reassessment of regulations, procedures, and cost accounting.**

A key customer concern is accurate and complete information at each stage. A key County concern is that no policy or regulation get “missed” at any stage, allowing a project to develop in a manner inconsistent with policy and regulation. In an environment where the institutional memory is weak due to lack of experienced planners of long tenure, DPLU has evolved extensive procedures to attempt to bridge this gap. Even so, several areas of concern remain, notably including pre-application meetings, “second bites at the apple” or late identification of issues. It is common that as a project evolves and is modified, often in response to agency comments, new issues arise and must be addressed. However, when a customer receives comments from the agency, modifies the design or other features, and then receives additional input not arising from the modifications, they are justifiably upset and the “second bite” issue surfaces. Training and mentoring, and better access for junior staff to more experienced staff, as discussed elsewhere in these Findings, are all needed to assist with this issue.

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## ***5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS NOT ADEQUATELY CUSTOMER ORIENTED***

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**Major Recommendation: Emphasis must be placed upon delivering desirable outcomes for the County and its customers/stakeholders.**

Citygate would describe the current application review process as “activity management” and not “project management.” Project management is the discipline of planning, organizing, and managing resources to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals and objectives. This includes making sure the customer is an integral part of the process in terms of understanding and reaching the goals and objectives. Activity management is incremental and compartmentalizes work, shutting the customer out of the process. Project management would help the process become more transparent to the customer, and result in both quantitative and qualitative improvements in customer service delivery.

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## ***6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE LIMITED IN TERMS OF QUALITATIVE EFFECTIVENESS***

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**Major Recommendation: Performance measures need to address a broader set of more qualitative factors.**

The DPLU performance/productivity measurement system is a strong and robust system, yet it is focused on the measurement of tasks and does not measure outcomes sufficiently. The existing system is a powerful tool and provides much data, but its downside is that it reinforces an incremental, task-by-task approach as opposed to a comprehensive and more organic project management approach. As presently understood by staff, it does not sufficiently encourage customer contact. Further, it does not sufficiently encourage staff to take responsibility for completion of the larger project. Although it should be noted that this is not the intent of the system and the system does provide for contact. Qualitative indices would include measures of customer satisfaction as well as the achievement of desired project outcomes.

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## ***7. TECHNOLOGY WILL BE AN ONGOING CHALLENGE; THERE ARE CURRENT AND FUTURE ISSUES***

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**Major Recommendation: The County and the Department need to continually invest in and train for new technologies.**

Time tracking using the KIVA system is a key technology issue – it has systemic problems. First, the system is not designed to be a fully integrated platform that can utilize data from other sources. This means that separate systems need to be bridged by other means. Second, it measures discrete activities rather than process milestones. The County is working to implement the more advanced Accela system, but full implementation is still a few years out. Accela was designed from its inception to process development applications and integrate related software and systems, and it should result in significant improvements, both internally and with external customer service delivery.

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## **8. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT FULLY ALIGNED WITH CURRENT NEEDS; STAFFING AND TURNOVER NEED TO BE ADDRESSED**

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**Major Recommendation: The Department needs to make a serious commitment to ongoing training and professional development for its valued employees, particularly as it affects staffing and turnover.**

Training and professional development programs must address a variety of needs: knowledge and understanding of County and departmental policies and procedures, basic professional knowledge and skills updates relevant to specific job classes, preparation of junior staff to advance to upper levels, customer service, and organizational development issues such as team building, trust, and communication, to name just a few. Citygate reviewed training logs for supervisory staff. The current training program has a few notable gaps, for example training in Project Management is lacking, and a comprehensive program of professional development is not in place. Training and professional development are key to creating consistency in the application review process, as well as facilitating the organizational structure changes recommended in this report.

Also, DPLU has experienced above-average turnover, including what is often referred to by DPLU staff as “mass exodus one and mass exodus two,” and there is considerable concern among staff that this may occur again.

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## **9. THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY**

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**Major Recommendation: Leaders and managers need to continually talk to and be supportive of staff, and the Department needs to increase and improve communications with its external customers, stakeholders, and Planning Groups.**

Customers complain that they do not receive clear and ongoing communication from staff while their project is under review, and that the process is opaque to the customer. Staff complains that interdepartmental and interdivisional communication is poor, often unwelcome, and lines of communication are unclear. A significant factor underlying problems with external communication is that the current activity management process has been interpreted by staff to discourage them from talking or meeting with the applicant. Although this is not the intent of the system and the system does provide for such communication, this is because the contact is not counted as “productive” work in the KIVA system. The internal communication problems are primarily structural and organizational. The engineers are in a separate department from the planners, and neither DPLU staff nor DPW staff have an incentive from management to communicate better. Legal Counsel is located in a different office building; however, Counsel can co-locate to DPLU on an as-needed basis.

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## ***10. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DOES NOT MEET CURRENT OR FUTURE NEEDS***

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**Major Recommendation: The County needs to organize around the development review permitting process, rather than within its historical silos; the executive management structure needs to be re-thought.**

Not all staff participants view the development review permitting process across the lines of their individual professional disciplines. An *across-departmental-lines perspective* is important when the DPW and DPLU organizations are trying to align their day-to-day work with the policy goals of the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. No step in the process can be viewed in isolation, be it planning, engineering, financing, infrastructure construction, building inspection, or post-occupancy mitigation monitoring.

In addition, Citygate found that there are challenges with the current executive leadership structure. Upper management needs to be re-thought and reorganized so that the Executive Offices can be more proactive than reactive, and more leadership-driven than operationally involved. The Director must be given the opportunity to spend more time shaping and articulating a vision for the Department and, to the extent required, for land use in the County.

We found that a major challenge for the Departments is keeping on top of the volume of informational requests from the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) and citizens. Some managers are spending much of their time fielding such requests. Constituent communications is a legitimate concern and a significant and appropriate part of any official's duties. Nonetheless, when department managers are spending much of their time responding to such service requests, it means the managers are not as focused on department productivity, process improvements, staff concerns and customer inquiries.

### ***IN CLOSING***

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Citygate Associates is optimistic with regard to the outcomes that should result from this report. We believe the DPLU's leadership team is dedicated to, and fully capable of, making the improvements set forth in the Action Plan (see Appendix A). We further believe that the other Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG) department heads that participate in the development review permitting process are also ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities presented in this report. We are indebted to them for their cooperation, honesty, and professionalism.

We commend and thank the Deputy County Administrative Officer and her staff for taking the initiative to address the important issues identified in this report.

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## SECTION II—INTRODUCTION

Citygate Associates, LLC is pleased to present this Organizational and Functional Analysis of San Diego County's Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) and the County's development review permitting process to the Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG) Deputy County Administrative Officer (DCAO). This introductory section will discuss the goals of the report, the work Citygate conducted, including our approach and assessment factors, and advise the reader on how best to handle this peer review. We will also outline the keys to successful implementation of change, discuss the complex environmental setting in San Diego County, and discuss the County's General Management System and Strategic Plan.

### *GOALS OF REPORT*

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The goal of the study is to provide an independent, objective, rigorously analytical third party analysis of the policies, procedures, management and operations of the DPLU, as they now exist, and to design a constructive, forward-looking, and creative strategy for improvement, as needed. As part of the study Citygate reviewed and analyzed the current organizational structure and service delivery of the DPLU as well as, to the extent necessary, the associated land development services provided by other departments of the County (e.g., the Departments of Public Works (DPW), Environmental Health (DEH) and Parks and Recreation (DPR)).

Prior to the initiation of this project, the County had been reengineering the Department of Planning and Land Use as well as the land development services provided by other County departments in order to:

- ◆ **Improve customer service**
- ◆ **Improve the quality and completeness of work**
- ◆ **Ensure that the land development process promotes safe and livable communities.**

As set forth in the scope of this engagement, Citygate solicited input from customers, stakeholders and employees to help define the goals and priorities that the County will consider in analyzing potential alternatives for improvement.

A key purpose of a general performance analysis design such as this engagement is to ensure that sufficient flexibility is provided to the consultant and the County to pursue issues that are most rewarding, while functioning within an agreed-upon contract budget. To accomplish this objective, the early analytical efforts were designed for the consultant to establish a familiarity with DPLU's overall planning and development review permitting processes, and the systems and procedures that support it, and to "scan" for issues that are material to the study in its early stages. This was done to make sure that the study was outcome driven. As a result of these early analytical efforts and our discussions with the DCAO and DPLU leadership team, Citygate was able to focus its time and attention on the issues we actually found in the Department and the actual issues identified by the County's employees, customers and stakeholders during our one-on-one interviews, our focus groups, and our surveys.

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## **WORK CONDUCTED**

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In varying degrees, depending on its relevance to the success of the development review permitting process as determined by us during our study, Citygate Associates examined the following key internal and external models:

- ◆ Current organizational and functional structure of DPLU and the components of DPW, DEH and DPR that are involved in the delivery of land development services
- ◆ Organizational and functional structure of other local/regional jurisdictions as it relates to their delivery of land development services
- ◆ Review of American Planning Association (APA) sources on best practices.

The specific focus of our assessment addressed DPLU's:

- ◆ Communication among staff and customers
- ◆ Current and future performance measures
- ◆ Support systems such as information technology, human resources, and accounting
- ◆ Organization of the support system components
- ◆ Management structure and effectiveness
- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Allocation of employees and other resources
- ◆ Personnel management, supervision, and reporting
- ◆ Staffing, budgeting, and Continual Improvement Programs that ensure ongoing reassessment of key programs and activities
- ◆ Workload trends
- ◆ Physical layout of building and workspace.

The scope of Citygate's engagement included neither a financial audit nor a compliance audit.

Citygate also set a goal of providing realistic recommendations that can be implemented to help improve DPLU as well as the overall effectiveness of the development review permitting process, while meeting the needs of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and the citizens whom they serve.

In executing this study, Citygate engaged in the following processes:

- ◆ Conducted interviews with the Chief Administrative Officer, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, and LUEG Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
- ◆ Conducted interviews with DPLU internal customers
- ◆ Conducted focus groups with external customers such as development applicants, environmental groups and Community Planning and Sponsor Groups
- ◆ Conducted Stakeholders meetings

- ◆ Conducted a focus group meeting with leaders from the County’s Community Planning Groups and Community Sponsor Groups
- ◆ Conducted interviews with members of the County Planning Commission
- ◆ Conducted a web-based survey of external customers of DPLU and other County land development services
- ◆ Conducted a web-based survey of DPLU employees
- ◆ Conducted a web-based survey of employees involved with land development services in other County departments, including DEH, DPR, and DPW
- ◆ Conducted interviews with the County’s Human Resources Department leadership
- ◆ Conducted interviews with the DPLU leadership team
- ◆ Conducted interviews with key employees and department heads outside DPLU that are involved in the development review permitting process, including DPW, DEH, DPR, and Deputy County Counsel
- ◆ Conducted interviews with all levels of DPLU staff
- ◆ Performed walkthroughs of offices and facilities
- ◆ Reviewed available documents and records relating to the management, operation, and budgeting of DPLU
- ◆ Compiled and performed analysis on various quantitative and qualitative data regarding DPLU operations, including customer service records and wait time records
- ◆ Considered best practices in comparable agencies for applicability in San Diego County.

Throughout this process, it was our policy to review findings of the study with multiple sources in order to validate findings used in the report. The data also was presented and discussed with the LUEG DCAO to allow an opportunity to provide evidence concerning aspects of the report that they felt were in error.

Based on our understanding of the County’s environment, Citygate Associates developed its own mission-oriented goals to guide our efforts in conducting the engagement, as follows:

- ◆ *Citygate Associates will deploy the County's investment in this assessment to enhance the DPLU and the County's development review permitting processes, when measured by the criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, and timeliness.*
- ◆ *Citygate Associates will make recommendations to improve DPLU by maximizing its organizational performance, to the extent possible, within a finite resource base.*
- ◆ *Citygate Associates will ensure that San Diego County receives an independent, objective, and rigorous review, while respecting unique local conditions and needs and encouraging constructive, positive results.*

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## ***CITYGATE’S APPROACH AND ASSESSMENT FACTORS***

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Citygate analyzed the goals of the County’s planning, development, and environmental review process and overall philosophy of DPLU and the County’s General Management System, and assessed the congruence of these critical guidelines with the orientation of the Board of Supervisors and its appointed leadership team as well as the needs of the County’s internal customers, the public, the development community, the environmental community, and the Community Planning and Sponsor Groups. Once this important step was completed, we examined the profile of processes to evaluate organizational structure and management systems, organizational relationships, allocation of employees and other resources, performance variables, budgeting and training, workload trends, communications systems, information technology, facilities and equipment, relationships with citizens, comparability to other jurisdictions and related aspects to determine if these were in alignment with the departments’ mission and policies as they relate to planning, development, and environmental review, including code enforcement.

In conducting our study, we used the following assessment factors:

### **Citygate’s Profile of Assessment Factors**



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### ***ADVICE TO THE READER***

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From time to time throughout this report, we will speak clearly and to the point without pulling any punches. It is not our intent to offend anyone. However, we believe that our client is best served by frankness. The characteristics of the County’s Department of Planning and Land Use,

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and more importantly the overall development review permitting process, have evolved over an extended period of time as a result of many factors. The process has both good and bad characteristics, none of which are the fault of any one person. This also applies to non-DPLU departments and programs that touch applications moving through the development review permitting process such as the Department of Public Works and County Counsel.

What ails the development review permitting system is a process problem, as opposed to being a personnel problem. That is not to say that there are not attitudes and philosophies that need adjusting in order to better reflect the policies of the General Management System and the administrative direction from the County's appointed leadership team. The DPLU and other County staff involved in the development review permitting process are, more often than not, working very hard and in a conscientious manner to do what is in the best interest of San Diego County. Many of them labor under difficult circumstances.

### ***THE KEY TO SUCCESS: THERE'S A ROLE FOR EVERYONE***

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In preparing our findings and recommendations, Citygate attempted to produce a report that can be owned by as many of the County's employees as possible. Ownership of change is the key to bringing about real lasting change. We believe that most people are not averse to change, they just do not like being changed, and they do not want to be told what to do and how to do it. If it is not their idea there may be resistance to it, lack of effort to implement it, or sometimes even a forceful opposition to the suggested improvement.

The degree to which the recommendations in our report reflect the information and ideas suggested by the County's employees, customers, stakeholders, elected officials, and administrative leaders will determine the extent to which lasting changes and improvements will be made. Great things can happen for the County in DPLU if everyone involved in the planning, land use, and development arena takes an active role in owning and implementing the recommended solutions. There is an essential supporting participatory role for everyone.

### **Customers and Stakeholders**

Expect great things from the County. Expect the County to treat you like a valued customer and to treat you with the highest respect at all times. In turn, recognize that County staff often labors under difficult circumstances due to the controversial nature of their work and its legal framework. Give them your respect and, when appropriate, your support. Be accurate, complete, and forthcoming with the details of your application submittals. Be quick to resolve issues through the DPLU chain-of-command so that successful processing can become an organizational habit. Be slow to resolve issues by end-runs, thus weakening the process and reinforcing dysfunctional behavior in the development review permitting process.

### **Deputy Chief Administrative Office**

You have taken key steps in the right direction by recognizing the need for improvement. You have implemented the Business Process Reengineering program, leading to significant improvements. You are supporting key technology initiatives. It is clear that you care about your County customers and your staff and that you are working hard under difficult circumstances to do everything you can to make the County's development review permitting

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programs run better. This is quite evident in the opinion of Citygate’s independent management review team, as well as in the opinion of many County customers and stakeholders. Take your significant talents and bring them to bear by boldly implementing the recommendations in this report.

### **DPLU Staff**

Embrace and support the Action Plan included in this report and support your managers and department leaders as they make improvements in the County’s development review permitting process. You may or may not see your individual recommendations in this report, and it may not contain everything you wanted, but it will go a long way towards making your agency excellent. Be patient, yet diligent. Expect and insist on working in one of the best community development agencies in California. Increase your skills and level of expertise. Be flexible and supportive. Put your customers first in all that you do. Identify their expectations, and then exceed their expectations. Welcome new colleagues as organizational changes are made, and work hard to be sure they are supported and integrated into the Department.

### **DPW Staff**

Citygate recommends moving some of your groups to a new departmental home. We know the move will be difficult and will no doubt offer many challenges. Be open and flexible, and work hard to make connection with your colleagues in your new department. Embrace and support the Action Plan included in this report and support your direct managers and department leaders as they make improvements in the County’s development review permitting process. This is your opportunity to work in one of the best agencies in California—expect and insist on it being that. Put your customers first in all that you do. Identify their expectations, and then exceed their expectations.

### **Key Staff in Other County Departments: DPW, DEH, DPR, County Counsel**

You have the opportunity to support this revolutionary change. It cannot happen without you. Embrace and support the Action Plan in this report. It is your opportunity to be a part of one of the best agencies in the State. Be flexible and supportive. For many of you, DPLU is the direct customer: put your customers first in all that you do, identify their expectations, and then exceed their expectations.

### ***SAN DIEGO COUNTY: HIGH GROWTH IN A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING***

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San Diego County is recognized as one of the most desirable places to live in North America for reasons that are well known and well publicized. The County’s high quality of life offers clean air, beaches, warm temperatures, and ample recreation opportunities. It enjoys a rich and diverse cultural environment rooted deeply in its relationship with Spain and Mexico and, more recently, its traditions and norms that are associated with its strong link to World War II, the Navy, and its related industrial complex. The County is blessed with a vibrant economy that is the envy of the nation.

San Diego County is one of the largest and most rapidly growing counties in the State of California. The State estimates the County’s population as of 2008 to be 3,146,274 people, increasing its rank to second place, ahead of its northwestern neighbor Orange County.

The following table presents San Diego’s rapid population growth since 1940:

**San Diego County Historical Populations**

Year	County Population	Percent Increase
1940	289,348	-
1950	556,808	92.4
1960	1,033,011	85.5
1970	1,357,854	31.4
1980	1,861,846	37.1
1990	2,498,016	34.2
2000	2,813,833	12.6
2008	3,146,274	11.8

The following table presents San Diego County’s population ranking since 1990 as compared to neighboring counties in Southern California:

**San Diego County Populations Compared to Southern California Counties**

County	1990 Population	2008 Population	Percent Increase
Los Angeles	8,863,164	10,363,850	16.9
<b><u>SAN DIEGO</u></b>	<b><u>2,498,016</u></b>	<b><u>3,146,274</u></b>	<b><u>26.0</u></b>
Orange	2,410,556	3,121,251	29.5
Riverside	1,170,413	2,088,322	78.4
San Bernardino	1,418,380	2,055,766	44.9

These tables demonstrate San Diego County’s rapid growth over the past half century, and the County’s growth rate in the context of nearby counties. San Diego’s historically high rate of growth significantly increases the challenges encountered in managing a development review permitting process in an effective, efficient, and customer service-oriented manner.

***THE DIVERSE AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT***

Coexisting with this enviable and rapidly growing human setting is a complex natural environment. San Diego County has a total area of 4,526 square miles (approximately the size of Connecticut), nearly all of which is quite varied in terms of terrain, topography and

**The County's Mission:**

"To provide the residents of San Diego County services in terms of quality, timeliness, and value to improve the regional quality of life."

**Guiding Principles:**

- Provide for the safety and well-being of those San Diego communities, families, individuals and other organizations we serve;
- Preserve and enhance the environment in San Diego County;
- Ensure the County's fiscal stability through periods of economic fluctuations and changing priorities and service demands; and
- Promote a culture that values our customers, employees and partners and institutionalizes continuous improvement and innovation.

**Required Disciplines:**

- Fiscal Stability
- Customer Satisfaction
- Regional Leadership
- Skilled, Competent and Diverse Workforce
- Essential Infrastructure
- Accountability/Transparency
- Continuous Improvement
- Information Technology

**Strategic Initiatives:**

- Improve opportunities for kids.
- Manage resources to ensure environmental preservation, quality of life and economic development.
- Promote safe and livable communities.

microclimates. This presents a complex challenge to the County in terms of the practical application of land use policy. On its western side is seventy miles of coastline. Snow-capped mountains rise to the northeast, while the Sonoran Desert lies to the far eastern side of the County. The Anza-Borrego Desert State Park occupies most of the northeast. Additional National Protected Areas include Cabrillo National Monument, the Cleveland National Forest, the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge, San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, and the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge. All of this is evidence of the County's unique environmental circumstances.

On more than one occasion during our research, our Citygate team encountered the statement *"San Diego has more endangered species than any other place in the country."* We heard this from staff, we heard this from members of the environmental community, and we heard this from the development community.

### Additional Demographics and Other Basics About San Diego County

There are 18 incorporated cities in San Diego County. In addition, there are numerous unincorporated communities in the County as well. Many of these unincorporated communities have Community Planning Groups or Community Sponsor Groups, including: Alpine; Bonsall; Borrego; Boulevard; Campo/Lake Morena; Crest, Dehesa, Granite Hills, Harbison Canyon; Cuyamaca; Descanso; Fallbrook; Hidden Meadows; Jacumba; Jamul Dulzura; Julian; Lakeside; Pala-Pauma; Pine Valley; Potrero; Rainbow; Ramona; San Dieguito; Spring Valley; Sweetwater; Tecate; Twin Oaks Valley; Valle De Oro; and Valley Center. These diverse and unique communities range dramatically in many aspects including density, uses and community character.

### THE COUNTY'S GENERAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND STRATEGIC PLAN

**General Management System.** When Citygate was engaged to do a best business practices review of the Department of Land Use and Planning for San Diego County, we did an extensive document search. Because of this we were very aware that any recommendations would need to be made within the context of the County's General Management System (GMS). The County refers to GMS as "a coherent

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management system” that consists of a five-step system, which begins with: (1) strategic planning; and moves to (2) operational planning; (3) monitoring and control; (4) functional threading; and finally (5) motivation, rewards and recognition.

**Strategic Planning** (Fiscal Years 2007-2012). The plan is the highest level management document in terms of establishing the County’s overall Mission, Guiding Principles, Strategic Initiatives and Required Disciplines. Of particular interest, in terms of the work of DPLU, is the focus on environmental preservation, quality of life, economic development and livable communities. DPLU’s regulatory and advanced planning functions are involved in all of these. Therefore, in making specific recommendations, Citygate always asked the question in terms of how we were supporting the County’s strategic goals and reinforcing the required disciplines.

**Operational Planning.** This is all about when and where to allocate sufficient resources for DPLU to get the job done. Citygate did an in-depth analysis of what DPLU needs to be successful. This meant making staffing changes either by moving certain staff groups or adding new staffing where needed. Resource considerations also included facilities and technology considerations. Citygate spent considerable time reviewing the current operation of the Director’s Office and whether it had the appropriate resources. For example, we believe it is important to reopen the DPLU satellite offices in terms of facilities. Another important resource allocation is to provide more training programs and the staff time to participate in such programs. These could be focused on customer service, project management or simple mentoring.

**Monitoring and Control.** Citygate also spent considerable time looking at the tools being used to measure activity, performance and productivity. We have several recommendations about the KIVA system and improvements that are needed. The most important is to move away from task management and toward project management, and to spend more time creating management procedures that all staff understand.

**Functional Threading.** Citygate paid particular attention to functional threading because of the many inter-divisional and inter-departmental interactions that occur. We captured this in the Functional/Organization Matrix (see page 24). DPLU has almost daily interactions with the Board of Supervisors, LUEG managers, County Counsel, Public Works, Parks and Environmental Health. Thus, in making our recommendations, we put an emphasis on improving these interactions. For example, the recommendation to move DPW’s Land Development group into DPLU was based on creating the strongest management relationship possible. Similarly, the recommendation to have County Counsel moved on-site reflected the need for stronger communications by virtue of being physically closer to each other.

**Motivation, Rewards, and Recognition.** Citygate has several recommendations dealing with the need for better communication and recognition. The DPLU staff are a highly professional group of people with different education and training. There was a sense that not all staff were viewed as being equally recognized. Thus, where we could, we recommended changes that it is hoped will improve recognition and therefore improve motivation.

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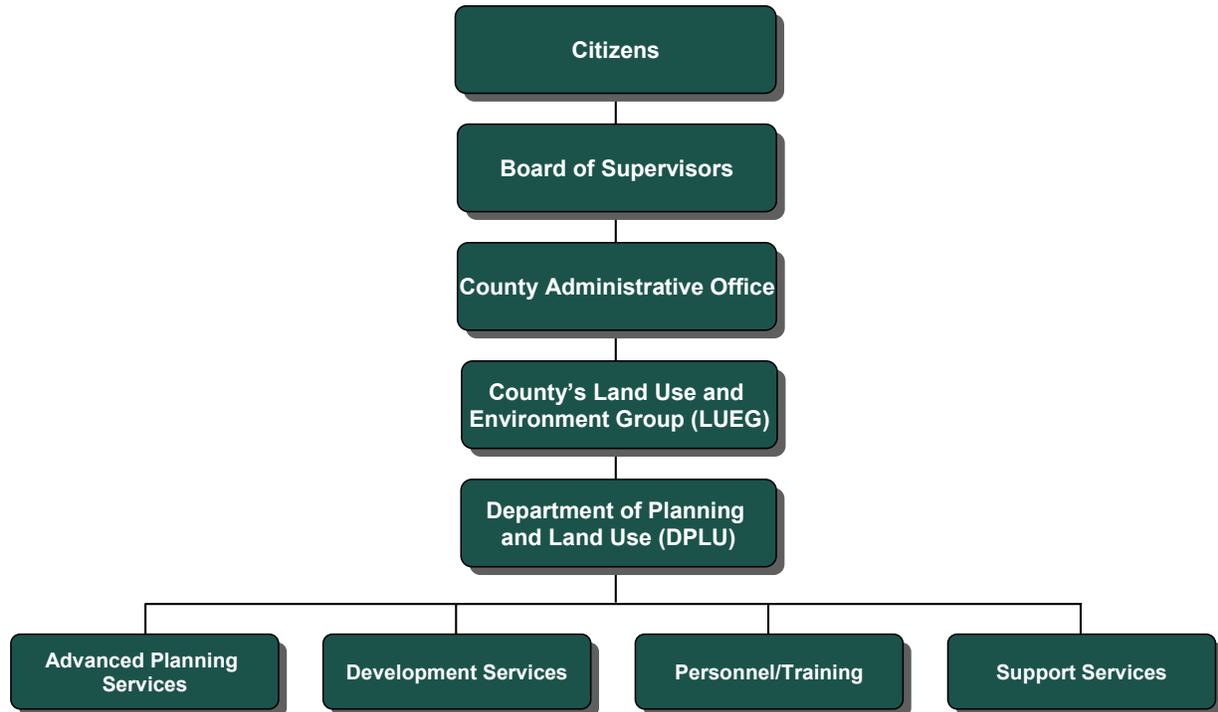
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## SECTION III—DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE (DPLU)

### *CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE*

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The current organizational structure chain-of-command for the Department of Planning and Land Use is illustrated in the following chart:



The DPLU is currently organized to include a Director and two Deputy Directors. The Advanced Planning Services Deputy Director currently leads 36 employees in the divisions of General Plan Update, Community Planning/Zoning Ordinance, Multiple Species Conservation Program, and the Fire Prevention Program. The Deputy Director for Development Services is responsible for the following divisions: Building Services; Code Enforcement; and Regulatory Planning. These three divisions together have 161 employees. There are an additional 27 employees supporting the Department in the Support Services and Personnel/Training divisions. The Department’s budget is approximately \$36 million and has 224 staff.

DPLU’s mission is to “Maintain and protect public health, safety and well-being. Preserve and enhance the quality of life for County residents by maintaining a comprehensive general plan and zoning ordinance, implementing habitat conservation programs, ensuring regulatory conformance, and performing comprehensive community outreach.” DPLU oversees the development review process for the County from early planning review, such as use permits and tentative maps, to building plan check and inspection, long-range planning functions, and code enforcement.

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## Director's Office

The DPLU Director primarily provides Department leadership, policy interpretation, responses to information requests from members of the Board of Supervisors, and Department performance accountability. The position also oversees administrative support services such as human resources, budgeting, purchasing, technology/GIS, and contract administration. The position does not have a formal active operational role in the development review permitting process inasmuch as authority to review and approve permits has been delegated to direct reports.

## Advanced Planning

**Advanced Planning Services**, as the name implies, takes the lead on updating and maintaining the County's General Plan. It also takes the lead on developing and securing Board of Supervisor approval of County land use policy by preparing, processing, and maintaining County ordinances. The Advanced Planning Services Division also manages special projects such as East Otay Mesa Business Park, Fallbrook Rezone, Lakeside Phase I, and the Upper San Diego River Redevelopment Plan. The Division has a role in the development review permitting process when a development proposal requires a General Plan Amendment, Zone Change, or Specific Plan.

The **Fire Prevention Division's** roles and functions are unique to San Diego County and the efforts of the Board of County Supervisors after the 2003 and 2007 wild fires to address fire prevention through code revisions and revised permitting processes, and to establish a methodology for the County to invest ongoing funds in volunteer fire organizations and fire districts in the unincorporated area.

The Division is actively involved in all phases of the development process, and coordinates with and provides services to local fire districts. In addition, the Division prepares code revisions, and San Diego County's codes are arguably unexcelled in their thoroughness concerning fire safe construction and fire-aware development.

The Division's staff also serve as key linkages to County Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the network of fire fighting agencies throughout the County.

Because of the unique nature of this division's roles and the fact that fire prevention continues to evolve in San Diego County, this division's functions are well served by inclusion in the land development process.

The **Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP)/Watershed Division** for the most part is unique to San Diego County, though other areas of California and the United States are beginning to follow suit. The State of California, as established under its Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act, entered into planning agreements with local landowners, the County of San Diego, and other stakeholders to prepare and adopt plans identifying the most important areas for a threatened or endangered species and the areas that are less important to preservation of these natural communities. These NCCP plans became the basis for a state permit to "take" endangered species in exchange for conserving their habitat. California's State Wildlife Agencies worked to combine the NCCP program with the Federal Habitat Conservation Plan process in order to provide for permits for listed species. The County took the lead in developing these plans, and, as a result, became the recipient of the State and federal permits.

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The current and pending NCCP plans include the South County MSCP Subarea Plan, the North County MSCP, and the East County MSCP.

The MSCP/Watershed Division is involved in the development review permitting process during Pre-Application Conferences, General Plan Amendments, Tentative Maps for Major Subdivisions, and other Major entitlement applications.

The MSCP/Watershed Division also develops plans for the County's watersheds for issues relating to development-related activities and projects. The County is also responsible to be the lead permittee for the Region's Stormwater Permit.

### **Development Services**

The **Regulatory Planning Division** is responsible for moving discretionary permit applications through the development review permitting process and for preparing/overseeing preparation of and circulating application-related environmental documents. The Regulatory Planning Division has two parallel groups that share the workload by performing similar duties on the issuance of Use Permits and Subdivisions. The Division also manages the County's Zoning/Building Plan Pre-Review (BPPR), special projects, landscape review, and developer deposits.

The **Building Services Division** is involved during two basic phases of the development review permitting process: building plan check and construction inspection process. During plan check, County staff reviews the permit application and building plans for compliance with the County's building codes. Construction inspection takes place after building permits have been issued. A Building Inspector approves each part of the project as it progresses, checking to see that the work is done safely and in accordance with the approved plans and codes. Building permits can be processed either as "regular permits," where the plans are submitted for review, or as "minor permits," where the plans are reviewed at the building counter. The Building Services Division accepts online applications for permits to replace residential water heaters, gas line repairs, and lawn sprinkler installations. Building plan check and inspection are key to the accomplishment of conditions imposed at earlier stages of the entitlement process.

The **Code Enforcement Division's** primary duties involve working with County residents to help bring them into conformance with various code violations. This can include illegal building or site development, abandoned vehicles and accumulations of waste. This is usually done through an initial warning, but can result in legal action if the person involved refuses to come into compliance.

### ***NON-DPLU PARTICIPANTS IN THE COUNTY'S DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PERMITTING PROCESS***

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The development review permitting process involves an array of key entities and participants. These key County participants in the development review permitting process add to or detract from customers' and stakeholders' experiences. To better understand the participants, it is necessary to understand each of their roles to ensure that the recommendations in this report are supportive and in-line with the desired outcomes of the County and the desired outcomes of the customers and stakeholders within the County.

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## Customers

The primary goal of the applicant customers is to get through the permit application process in a timely manner with the least amount of cost-increasing modifications to their project.

The customers gave DPLU the lowest rating in the area of processing permits in a timely manner. Words like “accountability, timeliness, time and money” were a common theme. Part of this concern was about the lengthy California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, and the role of County Counsel in that process. The customers also want a priority put on reducing the number of re-checks being done on an application in the permit process.

## Stakeholders

The primary goal of the stakeholders, including Community Planning Groups, Community Sponsor Groups, and environmental interest groups, had to do with changing the mindset of staff and making sure they had real make-a-difference input to the development review permitting process. Stakeholders also monitor development applications and permits for consistency with approved local community plans.

The stakeholders were most concerned about the executive team’s mindset. All stakeholders want top management to use common sense, be creative, be dynamic and visionary, and be the best team the County can assemble. The development-oriented stakeholders want DPLU management to show their clients respect, to enforce deadlines, to understand the urgency of the applicants in the process, to enforce discipline with the line staff in regard to all of these priorities, and to radically improve coordination between departments. The environmental interest groups place a high value on “*protecting the public good*” throughout the development review permitting process. Community Planning Groups and Community Sponsor Groups indicated that they would like a more transparent process and better access to information.

## Board of Supervisors

The County of San Diego government prides itself in being an award-winning and innovative government agency. The Board of Supervisors has a policy philosophy of running the County like a business. They rely heavily on the General Management System described in this report that is structured upon emphasizing accountability, efficiency and customer service. The County is committed to a high level of ongoing organizational and decision-making transparency and continual improvement.

## Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is charged with making sure that certain development review applications conform to both the County’s General Plan and development regulations. The Commission’s goals include well-run public hearings that provide a forum for both applicants and community interests, supported by excellent staff reports.

Staff, customers and stakeholders never brought up the Planning Commission. Citygate assumes that the Planning Commission process functions well enough that it is not a high priority for change on anyone’s list of concerns.

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## County Administrative Office

San Diego County’s administrative functions are lead by the Chief Administrative Office, which is divided into five groups including; Public Safety, Health and Human Services, Community Services, Finance and General Government, and the Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG). LUEG, which is lead by a Deputy County Administrative Officer, has seven departments responsible for a wide variety of public services; including Department of Public Works (DPW), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Environmental Health (DEH) and Planning and Land Use. The purpose of the Land Use and Environmental Group is to:

- ◆ Develop and implement land use strategies to balance housing, open space preservation, parks and recreation, infrastructure and economic development needs of County residents, taxpayers and businesses.
- ◆ Develop and implement resource conservation programs.
- ◆ Protect, sustain and restore the quality of water, air and habitat in the County.
- ◆ Reduce environmental risk through education, outreach, regulation, intergovernmental collaboration and leveraging public and private resources.

## Department of Environmental Health (DEH)

The DEH plays a supporting role at the beginning, middle, and end of the development review permitting process, including the stages that involve entitlement issuance, building permit issuance, and occupancy. At the entitlement stage, DEH is a reviewing agency and contributes conditions of approval. The DEH issues permits for septic tanks, water wells, multi-family dwellings such as apartments, condominiums, hotels, bed and breakfasts, organized camps with kitchens, jails, and detention facilities, and backflow protection devices, recycled water irrigation systems, cross connection systems, gray water systems, on-site sewage disposal systems, small water systems, and mobile home and rural housing.

The mission of DEH is: “The Department of Environmental Health (DEH) enhances San Diegans’ quality of life by protecting public health and safeguarding environmental quality, educating the public to increase environmental awareness, and implementing and enforcing local, State, and federal environmental laws.” DEH regulates the following: retail food safety; public housing; public swimming pools; small drinking water systems; mobile-home parks; onsite wastewater systems; recreational water; underground storage tanks and cleanup oversight; and medical and hazardous materials and waste. In addition, DEH serves as the solid waste Local Enforcement Agency, prevents disease carried by rats and mosquitoes, and helps to ensure safe workplaces for County employees. The goal of the Department of Environmental Health – in terms of their role in the development review process – is to ensure that development projects (planning and building) are consistent with the mandates and regulations expressed in their mission statement. One specific function is to make sure that approval and installation of septic systems and wells in the rural area meets the County code.

Customers or stakeholders never brought up DEH. Citygate assumes that the DEH functions well enough that the program is not a high priority for change on anyone’s list of concerns. It should be noted that some staff in DPLU expressed concerns about coordination with DEH.

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## **Department of Public Works (DPW)**

Portions of DPW's Land Development Division are a key participant in the entitlement and engineering construction plan phase of the development review permitting process in the County. The Division reviews and inspects improvement plans for grading, roads, storm water, flood control, tentative and final subdivision maps, and utilities. The Division is divided into several service areas. As part of a pilot project a land development team has been co-located at the DPLU offices to facilitate DPLU/DPW interdepartmental communication and consistency. The change has been well received by all parties.

The Land Development Division offers meetings throughout the development review permitting process to provide applicant's engineers an opportunity to discuss their design assumptions and concepts with staff. This is intended to provide DPW staff the opportunity to better understand the project from the applicant's engineer's perspective. There is little evidence from our stakeholder meetings or focus groups to indicate that these changes, which were instituted in July 2007, have yet had much of an impact in terms of changing customer satisfaction in a measurable way. The Land Development Division has also added a mandatory engineering review meeting after the first plan check in order to identify potential issues at the earliest opportunity in the plan review process.

DPW's Transportation Planning/Traffic Section is also a key participant in the development review permitting process. The Transportation Planning staff are involved in the entitlement phase with determination of roadway alignments for vehicle access and circulation and capacity needs to accommodate increased traffic resulting from proposed project. The Traffic Engineering staff are involved particularly at the engineering construction plan phase reviews and approve traffic plans for striping and pavement markings, traffic signs, traffic signals and flashers, guardrail installations, traffic control plans, and traffic calming installations.

DPW's mission is "Preserve and enhance public safety and quality of life through reliable, cost effective infrastructure. Foster partnerships that strengthen relationships with communities and industry. Provide quality and responsive service through highly motivated, professional, and knowledgeable staff in a safe and fair work environment. Continually improve quality of service through optimal resource management."

DPW is particularly responsible for the "final" phase of the development review process and plays a review role in the early planning or "preliminary" phase that is primarily DPLU's responsibility. DPW's goals in the development review process include ensuring that adequate provision is made for infrastructure of every type that DPW oversees.

Concern about the DPW Land Development group was mentioned in the stakeholder focus groups and by customers and staff. The priority pointed to by all parties was the need to create a more seamless development review process between DPLU and DPW Land Development (engineering review group).

## **Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)**

The DPR plays an active, yet supporting, role in the development review permitting process. At the entitlement stage, DPR is a reviewing agency and contributes conditions of approval for project applications. The Department works with the Advanced Planning Division of DPLU to formulate the County's Open Space Element of the General Plan and is involved in its

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implementation on a development-project-by-development-project basis. The DPR is involved in the open space mitigation work as it relates to land development projects being processed in the County. DPR reviews development projects to ensure compliance with the County's Park Lands Dedication Ordinance program as well as the County Trails Plan. DPR may be involved in land development to ensure mitigation in accordance with both programs.

DPR's mission is "To provide opportunities for high quality parks and recreation experiences and to preserve regionally significant natural and cultural resources." DPR's main goal in the development review process is to make sure that they are informed of pertinent aspects of development applications and to ensure that parks and trails are properly addressed.

Customers or stakeholders never brought up DPR. Citygate assumes that the DPR functions well enough that the program is not a high priority for change on anyone's list of concerns. It should be noted that some staff in DPLU and DPR expressed minor concerns about coordination with and between the agencies. DPR has a priority that applications get flagged for their concerns and input early in the process.

### **County Counsel**

County Counsel plays an intimate and important role in the entitlement phase of the development review permitting process. County Counsel is particularly involved in advising, if not directing, DPLU and DPW staff during the environmental assessment stage. County customers have repeatedly pointed out their frustrations with what they believe is a high degree of inflexibility on the part of County Counsel. Most notably, they argued that if the County insists on applicant indemnification of the County, then in turn, the County should allow more flexibility to the applicant. County Counsel drafts County land use related ordinances for consideration and adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

County Counsel is mandated to defend all civil actions against the County, its officers, boards, commissions and employees, and to provide related civil legal services. The County Counsel's primary goal in the development review process is to make sure that actions on development applications are legally defensible, especially in terms of CEQA.

Both the stakeholder interviews and the customer survey pointed out dissatisfaction with the County Counsel regarding CEQA review. The number one problem identified by the stakeholders was the need for a reasonable and balanced approach to CEQA.

### ***FUNCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATRIX***

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Citygate developed the following Function/Organization Matrix as a way to understand and then to explain to the reader: (1) the wide range of functions the DPLU performs; and (2) the various complex inter-divisional and inter-departmental organizational working relationships in which DPLU is involved. We identified 55 different functions that the Department performs. In truth, the Department performs hundreds of functions. However, we reduced the number in order for the reader to work through the chart at a glance.



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## SECTION IV—WHAT EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS, AND STAKEHOLDERS ARE SAYING

### WHAT EMPLOYEES ARE SAYING

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Citygate conducted Internet-based employee surveys between February 5 and February 15, 2008 for the employees of San Diego County’s DPLU and associated land development services provided by other County departments, including DEH, DPR, and DPW. For DPLU, 234 employees were invited to participate in this survey. For the other County departments of DEH, DPR, and DPW, a total of 96 employees were invited.

The table below shows the total number of completed surveys listed by department, compared to the total number of employees invited in each department.

Department(s)	Completed Surveys	Total # Possible	Response Ratio
DPLU	119	234	51%
DEH, DPR, and DPW	36	96	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>47%</b>

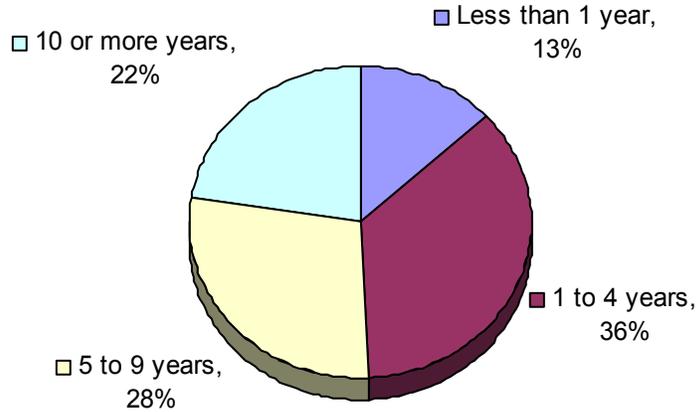
Apart from several employee classification questions, the survey consisted of closed-ended “degree-of-agreement” statements organized into 8 different sections. For each “degree-of-agreement” statement, respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statements from “Strongly Agree” (5) to “Strongly Disagree” (1) with the statement. For DPLU, there were 57 of these statements; for the other County departments of DEH, DPR, and DPW, there were 37 of these statements. Additionally, 9 open-ended questions were asked in both surveys to provide employees with an opportunity to fully express their opinions, concerns and suggestions. Each of the sections addressed different topics including:

- ◆ Section 1 – Mission, Goals and Objectives
- ◆ Section 2 – Organization, Workload and Staffing
- ◆ Section 3 – Morale and Positive Work Environment
- ◆ Section 4 – Customers and Service
- ◆ Section 5 – Organizational Effectiveness
- ◆ Section 6 – Decision-making and Communication
- ◆ Section 7 – Resources and Technology
- ◆ Section 8 – Leadership and Supervision.

### Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) Employee Survey Results

The following pages provide an overview summary of the DPLU Employee Survey results. For a more detailed explanation of the results, please see Appendix A provided in Volume 2 of this report.

## How long have you worked for the DPLU?



### What is your job function?

	# of Responses	Response Ratio
Non-Supervisory Staff	75	65%
Supervisor (including Program Managers and Planning Managers)	23	20%
Manager (including, Chief, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, Director)	7	6%
Other, please specify*	11	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* (1) Cashier; (2) Land Use Technician; (3) Environmental Planner III; (4) Code Enforcement Officer; (5) Departmental Payroll Specialist; (6) Technical; (7) Technician; (8) Inspector; (9) Student Intern; (10) Code Enforcement; (11) Building Inspector.

### Summary of DPLU Employee Survey Results

The results for the DPLU Employee Survey are summarized below. This summary includes the 10 highest ranking statements and the 10 lowest ranking statements.

The **highest ranking** statements include: ‘Service to the public is strongly emphasized in my Division’ (4.08); ‘Service to the public is strongly emphasized in the DPLU’ (3.91); and ‘I understand my manager/supervisor’s expectations of the job I perform’ (3.62).

The **lowest ranking** statements include: ‘Given the level of staffing within my Division, the goals and objectives of the Division are achievable’ (2.49); ‘There is an effective flow of information between management and staff of the DPLU and associated land development services in other County departments’ (2.50); and ‘There is good coordination of projects and functions between the DPLU and associated land development services’ (2.52).

### 10 Highest Ranking Statements

(Presented in *descending* order. 5 is the highest score)

Statement	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
IV-1. Service to the public is strongly emphasized in my Division.	<b>4.08</b>	4	4	0.92
IV-2. Service to the public is strongly emphasized in the DPLU.	<b>3.91</b>	4	4	1.09
VIII-9. I understand my manager/supervisor’s expectations of the job I perform.	<b>3.62</b>	4	4	1.09
I-5. I agree with the mission statement put forth by the DPLU.	<b>3.62</b>	4	4	0.85
IV-5. Customer inquiries are responded to in a reasonable amount of time.	<b>3.58</b>	4	4	1.06
VIII-6. My manager/supervisor keeps commitments he/she makes to me.	<b>3.55</b>	4	4	1.26
VIII-5. My manager/supervisor values my time as much as his/her own.	<b>3.53</b>	4	4	1.25
VIII-7. My manager/supervisor encourages teamwork in my Division.	<b>3.50</b>	4	4	1.28
VIII-3. I receive clear and specific direction from my supervisor(s) regarding my work assignments.	<b>3.48</b>	4	4	1.17
I-3. The established goals and objectives of my Division have been clearly communicated to me.	<b>3.47</b>	4	4	1.11

### 10 Lowest Ranking Statements

(Presented in *ascending* order. 1 is the lowest score)

Statement	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
II-8. Given the level of staffing within my Division, the goals and objectives of the Division are achievable.	2.49	2	2	1.21
II-5. There is an effective flow of information between management and staff of the DPLU and associated land development services in other County departments.	2.50	2	2	1.01
VI-5. There is good coordination of projects and functions between the DPLU and associated land development services.	2.52	3	3	1.04
IV-4. I believe that customers perceive that the DPLU is consistently doing a good job.	2.55	3	2	0.93
VI-6. There is good coordination of projects and functions between the DPLU and other County departments.	2.57	3	3	1.04
II-2. I believe the workload within the DPLU is equally divided among my co-workers.	2.57	3	3	1.10
VI-2. Overall, I believe the decision-making in the DPLU is consistent.	2.65	3	4	1.15
VI-4. There is good coordination of projects and functions between my Division and other Divisions involved in the DPLU.	2.69	3	2	1.08
V-2. I believe the DPLU is an efficient, well-run organization.	2.70	3	3	1.04
V-3. I receive sufficient training for the effective completion of my job responsibilities.	2.72	3	4	1.21

### *Open-Ended Questions*

Below, a summary of the responses to the 9 open-ended DPLU Employee Survey questions is presented. The results are summarized by common themes identified in each response and are organized by count (frequency) of each response.

#### **1. *What do you believe are the DPLU’s best accomplishments?***

Count	#1 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
12	Talented staff and their commitment to serving public; High standards/quality of work/customer service
10	Fire/crisis response efforts; Special care for fire victims (fee waivers, etc.)
5	MSCP program
5	Teamwork
4	Usable computer programs; GIS; Making information available to public electronically

#### **2. *What do you believe are the primary reasons for complaints about the DPLU?***

Count	#2 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
<b><i>External Reasons for Complaints</i></b>	
23	External: Long processing times for customers
13	External: Customer service issues (includes excessive wait time)
7	External: Misperception of review/compliance under complex laws, regulations, ordinances; Unwillingness to accept NO
6	External: Inconsistency in application of procedures, regulations, compliance, etc.
3	External: Placating/misleading customers without involving them in decisions
<b><i>Internal Reasons for Complaints</i></b>	
21	Internal: Too few staff; Too heavy workloads.
12	Internal: Continual staff turnover; Resultant lack of experience/history; Insufficient training and knowledge
8	Internal: Poor morale; Production over people; Favoritism
7	Internal: Management philosophy, which has shifted away from the planning process to project processing; Lack of vision
7	Internal: Unprofessional/unfair treatment of staff by management

3. *Are there bottlenecks in the Development Review Permitting Process? If yes, what are they?*

Count	#3 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
9	Time consuming interdepartmental and interdisciplinary procedures that must be followed even if project is a GO; Project not complete until all reviews are in
5	Not enough staff
3	Frequent turnovers requires re-assignments, which take learning time and must be fit into already full schedules
3	Insufficient team attitude, particularly between departments
3	Lack of understanding all parts of the process; Insufficient training on entire process

4. *What resources (computer technology, staff, equipment, training, etc.) could improve process timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and customer services?*

Count	#4 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
34	Computer software (KIVA, KRONOS, etc.) needs upgrading or replacing; Network performance/downtime is unacceptable
16	More staff at various levels (Code Enforcement, Planners, clerical, etc.)
14	More complete and better training/knowledge sharing/mentor system
5	Need more equipment (laptops/notebooks, paperless, Bluetooth or hands-free phone) in field, for staff to access information
2	Need more work space to accommodate computers for each employee, etc.

5. *What, if any, re-organizational changes could improve process timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service in the Development Review Permitting Process?*

Count	#5 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
5	More staff to improve timeliness, not more productivity per worker
4	Redistribution of tasks among staff so work is more aligned to job title
4	Investigate combining staff from DPLU, DPW & DEH into one department
4	Have management make timely decisions based on Regulations and Code rather than politics
3	Management should lead/offer guidance, not micromanage day-to-day activities

**6. *If you were appointed DPLU Director tomorrow morning, what area(s) would you target to improve operations?***

Count	#6 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
13	Consider causes of high turnover/low morale and how to fix this
12	Evaluate the quality/outlook/ability/size of management team; Look at leadership potential; Investigate current poor relationship with staff
9	Revamp interaction in & between departments to improve customer service and reduce waiting; Improve teamwork
8	Value the staff; More employee recognition, promotion and tangible appreciation
7	Enhance training, including management training, seminar attendance

**7. *Do you believe that there are areas where the customer or "user" of the DPLU's services could assist with its effectiveness? If yes, list those areas.***

Count	#7 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
5	Accept the requests from DPLU and provide the information required completely, correctly, uncomplainingly and in a timely fashion
1	Be knowledgeable about the project to expedite the process
1	Follow directions to next step rather than wasting time and effort attempting to get the answer they want
1	Submit all documents electronically (PDF or Word) from customer's office
1	Patience and awareness there are other customers to be served

*Note: There were 39 responses to this question. Except for the ones above, the rest were not answers to the question asked. Instead, the employees responded as if the question was reversed to 'what can DPLU do to make the system more effective?' These responses were not included*

**8. *What are the DPLU's greatest challenges that prevent your operation from having the "most" effective and efficient programs and processes?***

Count	#8 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
5	Insufficient staff
4	Inconsistent determination on projects due to political pressure
4	Authoritarian management prohibiting staff teamwork/communication
4	Low morale
4	Computer programs do not work well/freeze
3	Lack of communication as to management conceptual direction leads to slowdowns
3	Lack of management skill/experience
2	Perception that suggestions by staff will not get a hearing from management
2	Lack of an updated General Plan
2	Lack of timeliness in decision making

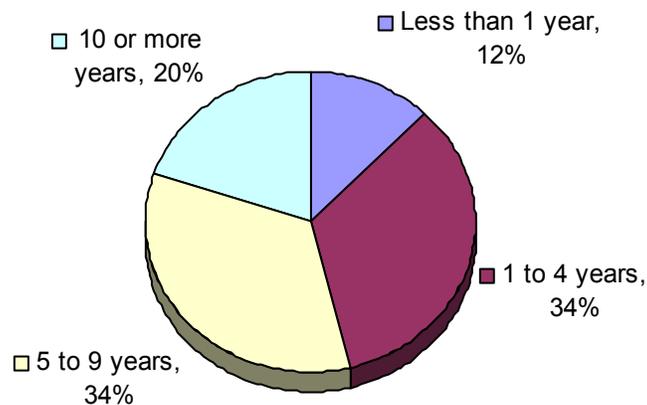
9. *What other suggestions or recommendations do you have to improve efficiency, effectiveness, or the working environment?*

Count	#9 — DPLU Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
4	Need qualified, visionary leadership at the top who can inspire staff
3	Need new management team
2	Staff numbers are inadequate
2	Need good training and mentoring
2	Need a new tracking system that is fair and recognizes good employees

**Employee Survey Results From Other County Departments (DEH, DPR, and DPW) Participating in the Development Review Permitting Process**

The following pages provide an overview summary of the Non-DPLU Employee Survey results. For a more detailed explanation of the results, please see the Appendix 1 provided in Volume 2 of this report.

**How long have you worked with the Development Review Permitting Process?**



*In which department do you work?*

	# of Responses	Response Ratio
DPW	17	47%
DPR	4	11%
DEH	15	42%
Other, please specify	0	0%
<i>TOTAL</i>	36	100%

*What is your job function?*

	# of Responses	Response Ratio
Non-Supervisory Staff	20	56%
Supervisor	8	22%
Manager (Division or Department)	4	11%
Other, please specify*	4	11%
<i>TOTAL</i>	36	100%

\*(1) discretionary review; (2) Manager (Section); (3) civil engineer; (4) Civil Engineer/project conditioner for L-D teams.

*Summary of Employee Survey Results from Other County Departments*

The results for the DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey are presented below. This summary includes the 10 highest ranking statements and the 10 lowest ranking statements.

The **highest ranking** statements include: ‘Service to the public is strongly emphasized in my Division’ (4.17); ‘My manager/supervisor encourages teamwork in my Division’ (3.85); and ‘It is clear to me what my role is in the process of the larger task that is to be performed with regard to the DRPP’ (3.82).

The **lowest ranking** statements include: ‘Overall, the DRPP computer tracking systems address our application tracking needs’ (2.71); ‘I believe the DPLU coordinates the DRPP in an efficient and effective manner’ (2.72); and ‘There is good coordination of projects and functions between my Division and other Divisions involved in the DRPP’ (2.72). **Note: Development Review Permitting Process is abbreviated as DRRP throughout the survey.**

### 10 Highest Ranking Statements

(Presented in *descending* order. 5 is the highest score)

Statement	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
IV-1. Service to the public is strongly emphasized in my Division.	4.17	4	4	0.85
VIII-3. My manager/supervisor encourages teamwork in my Division.	3.85	4	4	1.13
VI-2. It is clear to me what my role is in the process of the larger task that is to be performed with regard to the DRPP.	3.82	4	4	1.00
I-3. The established goals and objectives of my Division have been clearly communicated to me.	3.77	4	4	1.00
IV-4. Customer inquiries are responded to in a reasonable amount of time with regard to the DRPP.	3.76	4	4	0.96
VIII-4. I understand my manager/supervisor's expectations of the job I perform with regard to the DRPP.	3.72	4	4	1.14
I-1. The goals and objectives of my Division manager are reasonable with regard to the DRPP.	3.71	4	4	1.04
IV-2. The County has an effective process for listening to citizen or customer concerns with regard to the DRPP.	3.53	4	3	0.96
VII-1. I have sufficient resources to complete my work, such as office space, computers, etc.	3.49	4	4	1.12
VI-4. I generally find that I have adequate decision-making authority in processing an application, administering a permit, or assisting a customer in another way.	3.44	4	4	1.08

## 10 Lowest Ranking Statements

(Presented in *ascending* order. 1 is the lowest score)

Statement	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
VII-4. Overall, the DRPP computer tracking systems address our application tracking needs.	2.71	3	2	1.00
V-2. I believe the DPLU coordinates the DRPP in an efficient and effective manner.	2.72	3	3	0.96
VI-3. There is good coordination of projects and functions between my Division and other Divisions involved in the DRPP.	2.72	3	2	1.02
II-1. There is an effective flow of information between management and staff with regard to the DRPP.	2.76	3	3	1.16
IV-3. I believe that customers perceive that the County is consistently doing a good job with regard to the DRPP.	2.82	3	3	0.98
II-3. Written policies and procedures are consistently followed in day-to-day operations with regard to the DRPP.	2.82	3	3	1.00
III-5. There is good cooperation among the departments and divisions involved in the DRPP.	2.83	3	4	1.12
VIII-5. I receive adequate recognition by management for my DRPP accomplishments and efforts.	2.85	3	3	1.33
V-3. I believe there is good interdepartmental teamwork in the DRPP.	2.89	3	3	1.28
III-3. I believe my Division does not operate under a crisis management approach.	2.91	3	3	1.19

Below, a summary of the responses to the 9 open-ended DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey questions is presented. The results are summarized by common themes identified in each response and are organized by count (frequency) of each response.

### 1. *What do you believe is working well in the Development Review Permitting Process?*

Count	#1 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
6	Interaction between different departments; Coordination between DEH and DPLU staff; Teamwork
3	Nothing is working well; Process takes too long/costs applicants too much
2	The process itself
1	The goal to limit the number of iterations required
1	Rapport with contractors

2. *What do you believe are the primary reasons for complaints about the Development Review Permitting Process?*

Count	#2 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
10	Long wait times; Takes too long
6	Excessive costs
5	Too many rules and policy changes, not clearly expressed to customer; Changing requirements over life of a project
3	Staff turnover, causing lack of knowledge and relearning of projects
2	No clear outline of entire process, including requirements of other departments

3. *Are there bottlenecks in the Development Review Permitting Process? If yes, what are they?*

Count	#3 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
2	Lack of working out solutions for immitigable circumstances (traffic, septic)
2	Lack of coordination between departments
2	Top heavy management; Micromanagement
2	Databases/Computer programs
1	Specialist reviewers

4. *What resources (computer technology, staff, equipment, training, etc.) could improve process timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service in the Development Review Permitting Process?*

Count	#4 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
8	Make computer systems work better/redesign/less cumbersome; More integration
5	Provide relevant technical training for staff
2	Hire more staff
1	Allow reasonable hours per assignment
1	Flexibility to work from home or remote locations

5. *What, if any, re-organizational changes could improve process timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service in the Development Review Permitting Process?*

Count	#5 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
4	Improved inter-departmental coordination; Create teams from DEH, DPLU, DPW
3	Management should do less micro-managing and self-aggrandizing and more morale building of staff
1	Consistent use of KIVA across all departments; Smoother interface; Log on only once for menu-driven front end.
1	Location of staff
1	Eliminate duplicative driving, allowing more work time

6. *If you were appointed Director of your Department tomorrow morning, what area(s) would you target to improve operations of the Development Review Permitting Process?*

Count	#6 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
5	Improve inter-department communication
4	Team building to ensure consistency
2	Improve morale; Stand up for staff with others
2	Eliminate duplication of work/redundancies/overlap
2	Determine/track actual costs and tie to adequate revenue

7. *Do you believe that there are areas where the customer or "user" could assist with timelines and effectiveness in the Development Review Permitting Process? If yes, list those areas.*

Count	#7 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
6	Submit accurately, completely and on time
3	Follow directions; Know rules
3	Respond promptly to requests from County staff
2	Don't complain to Board; Use correct chain-of-command
2	Assign only professionals familiar with County requirements

**8. What are the greatest challenges that prevent your operation from having the "most" effective and efficient participation in the Development Review Permitting Process?**

Count	#8 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
3	Lack of appreciation for employees
3	Lack of communication/common procedures between departments
2	Inefficiency of existing computer systems; Lack of needed systems
2	Lack of accurate, complete and up-to-date procedures
2	Executives/upper management kowtowing to customer complaints; Politics

**9. What other suggestions or recommendations do you have?**

Count	#9 — DPW, DPR, and DEH Employee Survey Responses (Summarized)
1	Treat staff with dignity and respect
1	Be open to new ideas
1	Involve staff in bigger picture
1	Promote for leadership skills, ability to inspire/lead, not just time on the job
1	Base bonuses on performance, not fictitious goals
1	Provide training relevant to job
1	Department consolidation not a good idea; teams consisting of key staff are preferable
1	Determine if the goal is to find ways to approve all projects or sometimes say "no" and mean it
1	Support staff by emphasizing what they do right, not what is wrong
1	Adhere to County policies, standards and/or regulations
1	Evaluate all staff positions as to title, job responsibilities and pay scale
1	Management lowers morale and undermines staff by empathizing with appeals made by customers after a staff decision that displeases them.

**WHAT CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS ARE SAYING**

Citygate conducted an Internet-based Customer Survey for customers of San Diego County's DPLU and other land development services in the County. The survey was "open" to accept input between March 6 and March 28, 2008. The availability of the survey was advertised via hard copy invitation letters and email invitations to applicants who have had business with DPLU and other land development services within the past two years. Approximately 3,802 hard copy invitation letters and 162 email invitations were sent. In total, there were 234 completed surveys.

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Details of the deployment are shown below.

Customer Survey	
<b>Launch Date</b>	03/06/2008 – 1:00 PM
<b>Close Date</b>	03/28/2008 – 5:00 PM
<b>Visits<sup>1</sup></b>	410
<b>Partials<sup>2</sup></b>	0
<b>Completes<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>234</b>

The survey consisted of a number of closed-ended, open-ended, and yes/no questions. Customers were asked to rate the divisions of Regulatory Planning, DPW Land Development Division, and Building Services, and were only asked to rate the divisions(s) they had business with. Of the 234 total completed surveys, 177 customers responded to questions about Regulatory Planning; 140 responded to questions about DPW Land Development Division; and 118 responded to questions about Building Services. For each of the three divisions addressed in the survey, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with specific aspects of each division. In the Regulatory Planning section of the survey, there were 22 of these aspects; in the DPW Land Development Division section, there were 19; and in the Building Services section, there were 16. Respondents were also asked to rate 5 staff characteristics of each division. The rating scale for each aspect/characteristic was “Far Exceeds Expectations” (5) to “Unacceptable” (1). Respondents were also asked several open-ended questions about each division.

For a more detailed explanation of the results, please see Appendix B provided in Volume 2 of this report.

### Classification Statements

The survey began with the following classification statements. They are included here to demonstrate the type of customer who responded to the survey.

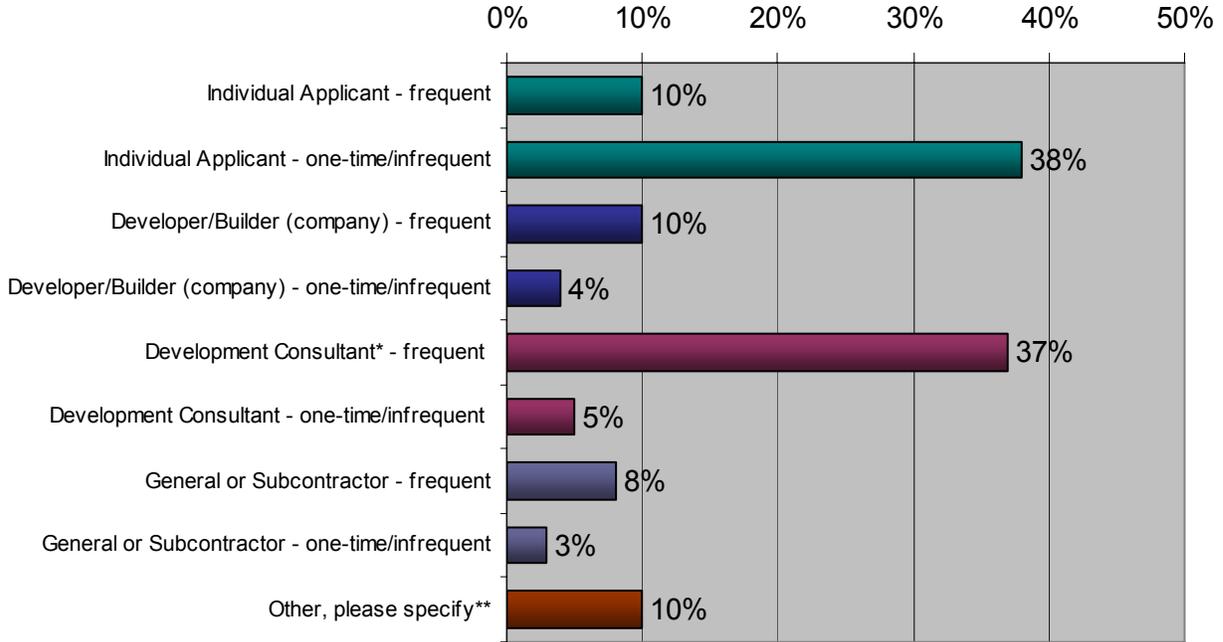
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<sup>1</sup> “Visits” – the total number of times the survey site was visited during the open period.

<sup>2</sup> “Partial” – the number of surveys that were begun but not completed. These surveys *cannot* be added to the database.

<sup>3</sup> “Completes” – the number of surveys that were *completed* and *successfully* added to the database.

**First, please mark all of the categories that apply to you as a customer.**



\* (e.g. engineer, architect, landscape architect, lawyer, planner, etc.)

\*\* Other responses include: (1) Rice Canyon Fire Victim; (2) Valley Center Community Planning Group; (3) CEQA document preparer, Biologist; (4) Community Planning Group member; (5) stakeholders; (6) Owner, general contractor, developer, architect; (7) Individual/Building Inspector; (8) Tentative Map 8057 approved 1998; (9) Lot Split; (10) property owner; (11) Civil Engineer; (12) retiree; (13) Owner builder; (14) interested community member; (15) Acoustical Consultant; (16) Wildland Fire Consultant; (17) Planning Group Member; (18) Planning Group and Design Review Board Member; (19) will be returning for a garage permit soon; (20) Planning Group; (21) Chair of Sponsor Group attend meetings w/owners; (22) Ramona Community Planning Group; (23) One permit, frequent visits; (24) Planning Group/Sponsor Group Chair.

## Regulatory Planning Results

The results for the Regulatory Planning section of the Customer Survey are summarized below. Of the 234 total completed surveys, 177 customers responded to questions about Regulatory Planning. As part of the survey, customers were asked to rate 22 specific aspects of Regulatory Planning on a scale from “Far Exceeds Expectations” (5) to “Unacceptable” (1). This summary includes the 5 highest ranking aspects and the 5 lowest ranking aspects.

The **highest ranking** aspects include ‘Informative brochures and handouts’ (2.70) and ‘Use of technology (web site, record research, plan check, document submittal)’ (2.69).

The **lowest ranking** aspects include ‘Processing / turnaround times of environmental (CEQA) documents’ (1.82) and ‘Processing / turnaround times of application review’ (1.87).

### 5 Highest Ratings

(Presented in *descending* order. 5 is the highest score)

Subject	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Informative brochures and handouts	2.70	3	3	0.91
Use of technology (web site, record research, plan check, document submittal)	2.69	3	3	1.02
Pre-application review meeting	2.60	3	3	0.93
Helpfulness of planners	2.54	3	3	0.93
Effectiveness of project meetings	2.50	3	3	0.95

### 5 Lowest Ratings

(Presented in *ascending* order. 1 is the lowest score)

Subject	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Processing / turnaround times of environmental (CEQA) documents	1.82	2	1	0.95
Processing / turnaround times of application review	1.87	2	1	0.98
Timeliness of staff written comments	2.03	2	1	0.98
Overall process	2.08	2	2	0.87
Staff ability to assess and resolve project issues	2.08	2	1	1.01

### Regulatory Planning Staff Ratings

In addition to rating 22 specific aspects of Regulatory Planning, respondents were asked to rate Regulatory Planning staff based on five characteristics: courtesy; timeliness; positive attitude; knowledge; and fulfilling commitments. For each characteristic, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction from “Far Exceeds Expectations” (5) to “Unacceptable” (1). Below, the responses for these five characteristics are presented:

Characteristic	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Courtesy	3.01	3	3	0.79
Timeliness	1.99	2	1	0.97
Positive Attitude	2.58	3	3	0.99
Knowledge	2.53	3	3	0.98
Fulfilling Commitments	2.13	2	1	1.04

## Regulatory Planning Open-Ended Questions

Customers were asked 5 open-ended questions about Regulatory Planning. Below, a summary of the responses is presented. The results are summarized by common themes identified in each response and are organized by count (frequency) of each response.

**1. *Have you noted any positive changes in the services provided in REGULATORY PLANNING during the past two years? If so, what?***

Count	#1 — Regulatory Planning (Summarized)
46	No improvement or worse than before
13	Yes, better attitude and availability of staff
10	Yes, improved customer service focus
8	Yes, reorganization
8	Yes, improved staff responsiveness
7	Yes, website and email usage improved
5	Yes, improved teamwork
5	No, inexperienced staff
3	Yes, Glenn Russell's customer service commitment
2	Yes, improved counter service

**2. *In what areas should REGULATORY PLANNING focus its attention in the next year to provide excellent service to the public?***

Count	#2 — Regulatory Planning (Summarized)
21	Improve the timeliness of the process and responding to applicants
19	Improve staff attitudes toward public
18	Consistency in applying regulations and policy
16	Improve training for staff
10	Less adversarial staff
9	Establish a point person for project questions
8	Improve coordination between DPW and DPLU
5	Lower fees
4	Revamp entire process
4	Simplify regulations

3. *What resources would you like to see provided by REGULATORY PLANNING (e.g., more effective and updated descriptions of the processes, more information on the website, etc.)?*

Count	#3 — Regulatory Planning (Summarized)
24	More information available on website
18	Customer-oriented staff
11	Streamline processing
11	Consistency in interpretation of ordinances and planning documents
8	Improve the website and make navigation easier
8	Provide online project status report
6	Improved training for staff
5	Improve communication skills (phone & email)
4	Publish a step-by-step description of process
3	Reduce conflicts between departments

4. *If your project included processing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), what comments or suggestions do you have for improving the process?*

Count	#4 — Regulatory Planning (Summarized)
17	Simplify and compress the process
14	EIR requirements need to be consistently applied
10	EIR process is too time consuming and costly
8	Findings are too arbitrary
6	Streamline County Counsel involvement in process
5	Educate staff in requirements and regulations
4	Fewer rounds of comments and revisions; County Counsel involved earlier in the process
3	CEQA experts should be involved as Project Managers
2	Current process is acceptable
1	Joint site visit would be helpful

5. *Please add any comments you may wish to elaborate on any of the responses above.*

Count	#5 — Regulatory Planning (Summarized)
21	Very slow and expensive process
20	Staff not service-oriented
15	Staff has adversarial attitude towards public
13	Lack of consistency in staff decisions
9	Constantly changing Project Managers
6	Department of Public Works not cooperative
7	Reduce and streamline timeframes; Eliminate time extensions to cut process time
4	Staff turnover a serious problem
2	Reorganization needed
1	Lack of concern for developer and end user

### DPW Land Development Division Results

The results for the DPW Land Development Division section of the Customer Survey are summarized below. Of the 234 total completed surveys, 140 customers responded to questions about DPW Land Development Division. As part of the survey, customers were asked to rate 19 specific aspects of DPW Land Development Division on a scale from “Far Exceeds Expectations” (5) to “Unacceptable” (1). This summary includes the 5 highest ranking aspects and the 5 lowest ranking aspects.

The **highest ranking** aspects include ‘Application checklist requirements’ (2.65) and ‘Helpfulness of DPW front counter assistance’ (2.59).

The **lowest ranking** aspects include ‘Number of re-checks’ (1.81) and ‘Communication on project status’ (2.04).

#### 5 Highest Ratings

(Presented in *descending* order. 5 is the highest score)

Subject	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Application checklist requirements	2.65	3	3	0.77
Helpfulness of DPW front counter assistance	2.59	3	3	0.93
Informative brochures and handouts	2.55	3	3	0.79
Use of technology (web site, record research, construction plan check, document submittal)	2.41	3	3	0.91
Thoroughness of construction plan review	2.30	2	3	0.93

### 5 Lowest Ratings

(Presented in *ascending* order. 1 is the *lowest* score)

Subject	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Number of re-checks	1.81	2	1	0.90
Communication on project status	2.04	2	1	1.00
Accuracy / consistency of code interpretations	2.05	2	1	0.89
How well project manager manages all reviews from other departments related to each project	2.05	2	2	0.94
Overall process	2.05	2	2	0.89

### DPW Land Development Division Staff Ratings

In addition to rating 19 specific aspects of DPW Land Development Division, respondents were asked to rate DPW Land Development Division staff based on five characteristics: courtesy; timeliness; positive attitude; knowledge; and fulfilling commitments. For each characteristic, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction from “Far Exceeds Expectations” (5) to “Unacceptable” (1). Below, the responses for these five characteristics are presented:

Characteristic	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Courtesy	2.84	3	3	0.80
Timeliness	2.09	2	2	0.94
Positive Attitude	2.47	2	3	0.93
Knowledge	2.65	3	3	0.93
Fulfilling Commitments	2.21	2	1	1.04

### DPW Land Development Division Open-Ended Questions

Customers were asked 2 open-ended questions about DPW Land Development Division. Below, a summary of the responses is presented. The results are summarized by common themes identified in each response and are organized by count (frequency) of each response.

**1. *Have you noticed any positive changes in the services provided in the DPW LAND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION during the past year? If so, what?***

Count	#1 — DPW Land Development Division (Summarized)
42	No improvement or worse than before
9	No, still takes too long; Costs too much
9	Yes, some improvement in project managers/staff/counter service
3	No, many staff turnovers; New corrections; Have to start over
3	Yes, plan check improved
3	Yes, attitudes improved; Better communication
3	Yes, BPR an improvement
2	Yes, willingness to meet/discuss issues helpful
2	No, closure of San Marcos office decreased service
1	Yes, water quality information and updates have improved

**2. *In what areas should the DPW LAND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION focus its attention in the next year to provide excellent service to the public?***

Count	#2 — DPW Land Development Division (Summarized)
21	Focus on customer service/knowledge/attitude/helpfulness/communication/next steps in process
14	Reduce time for process; Keep to schedule; Streamline
14	Speed up plan check process; Identify issues early in process; Provide accurate comments without boilerplate; Minimize iterations
7	More timely responses; Respond to phone and email in 24 hours
7	Avoid inconsistencies/inserting personal preferences/misleading/changing decisions/ additional requirements/failure to include all players
7	Hire competent, experienced, qualified staff; Remove others
6	Need competent, experienced project managers, empowered and willing to make decisions
6	Process needs improvement/all comments at once; Forms are confusing, etc.
5	Improve web site; Provide accurate info; Provide project status online; All forms/requirements
5	Lower fees

## Building Services Results

The results for the Building Services section of the Customer Survey are summarized below. Of the 234 total completed surveys, 118 customers responded to questions about Building Services. As part of the survey, customers were asked to rate 16 specific aspects of Building Services on a scale from “Far Exceeds Expectations” (5) to “Unacceptable” (1). This summary includes the 5 highest ranking aspects and the 5 lowest ranking aspects.

The **highest ranking** aspects include ‘Timeliness of inspections’ (3.23) and ‘Thoroughness of inspections’ (3.10).

The **lowest ranking** aspects include ‘Communication on project status’ (2.22) and ‘Complexity of regulations’ (2.24).

### 5 Highest Ratings

(Presented in *descending* order. 5 is the highest score)

Subject	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Timeliness of inspections	3.23	3	3	0.95
Thoroughness of inspections	3.10	3	3	0.98
Accuracy of inspections	3.05	3	3	1.00
Informative brochures and handouts	2.86	3	3	0.75
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	2.82	3	3	0.93

### 5 Lowest Ratings

(Presented in *ascending* order. 1 is the lowest score)

Subject	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Communication on project status	2.22	2	3	0.96
Complexity of regulations	2.24	2	3	0.86
Processing / turnaround times of plan review	2.27	2	2	1.03
Accuracy / consistency of code interpretations	2.30	3	3	0.91
Cost of permits (fees)	2.32	2	3	1.07

## Building Services Staff Ratings

In addition to rating 16 specific aspects of Building Services, respondents were asked to rate Building Services staff based on five characteristics: courtesy; timeliness; positive attitude; knowledge; and fulfilling commitments. For each characteristic, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction from “Far Exceeds Expectations” (5) to “Unacceptable” (1). Below, the responses for these five characteristics are presented:

Characteristic	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Courtesy	2.97	3	3	0.87
Timeliness	2.38	2	3	1.13
Positive Attitude	2.67	3	3	1.01
Knowledge	2.73	3	3	1.01
Fulfilling Commitments	2.57	3	3	1.06

### Building Services Open-Ended Questions

Customers were asked 2 open-ended questions about Building Services. Below, a summary of the responses is presented. The results are summarized by common themes identified in each response and are organized by count (frequency) of each response.

1. *Have you noticed any positive changes in the services provided in BUILDING SERVICES during the past two years? If so, what?*

Count	#1 — Building Services (Summarized)
25	No improvement or worse than before
4	No, turnaround time is far too long to get through process
3	Yes, improved staff; Better communication skills; Less waiting
2	Yes, inspectors courteous, timely, helpful
2	Yes, front counter has knowledgeable/friendly personnel

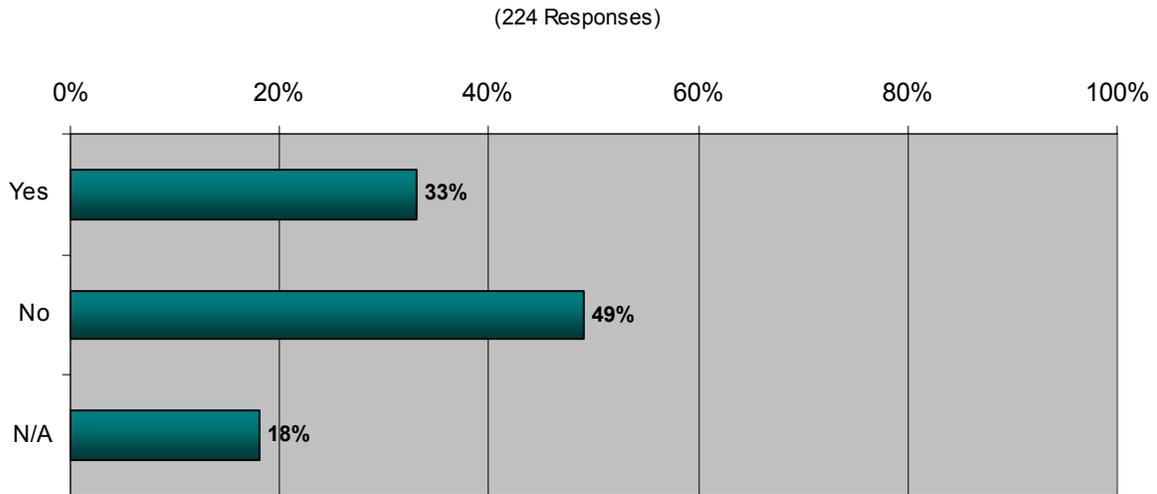
2. *In what areas should BUILDING SERVICES focus its attention in the next year to provide excellent service to the public?*

Count	#2 — Building Services (Summarized)
14	Improve processing time and consistency on plan check and re-checks
9	Improve/increase/replace/upgrade staff
6	Better communication/customer service; Less arrogance; Knowledgeable
6	Provide consistent, constant, complete, unchanging instructions from all inspectors
6	Streamline/improve/redesign the entire permit process
4	Need more staff/techs empowered to make things happen
4	Provide accurate, complete information/instructions/requirements on first visit
4	Provide reasonable and flexible interpretation/communication of plan compliance
4	Open/re-open satellite office(s)
3	Provide a firm schedule; Have staff accountability

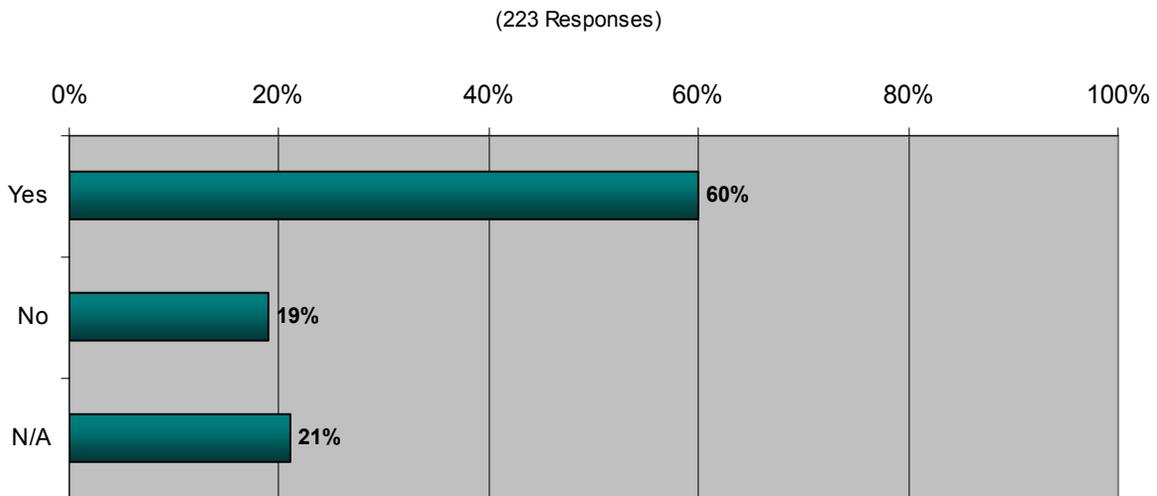
## General and Yes/No Questions

Customers were asked to respond Yes/No to the following 4 questions.

*Initial information given to me by DPLU and DPW was accurate and complete.*

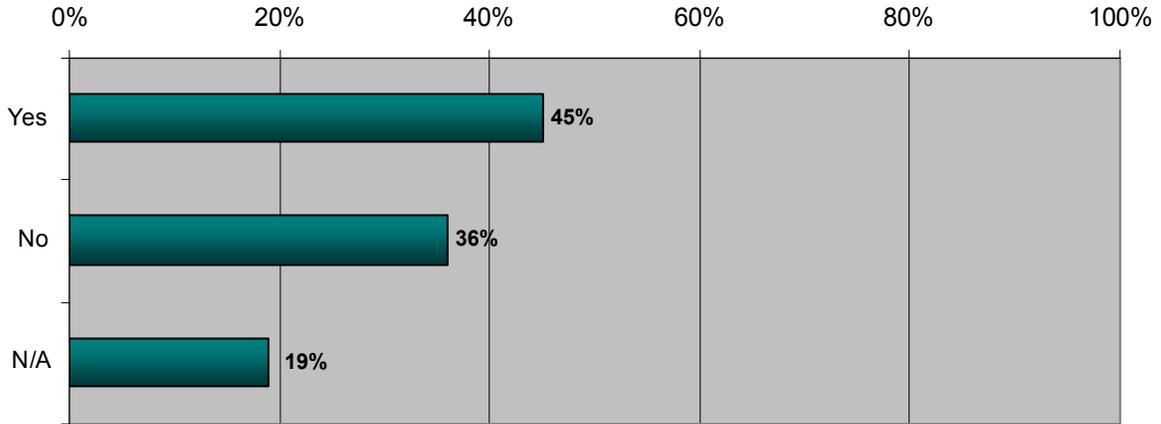


*Additional substantial changes to my project that should have been brought up in the first review were not required or revealed to me until subsequent reviews.*



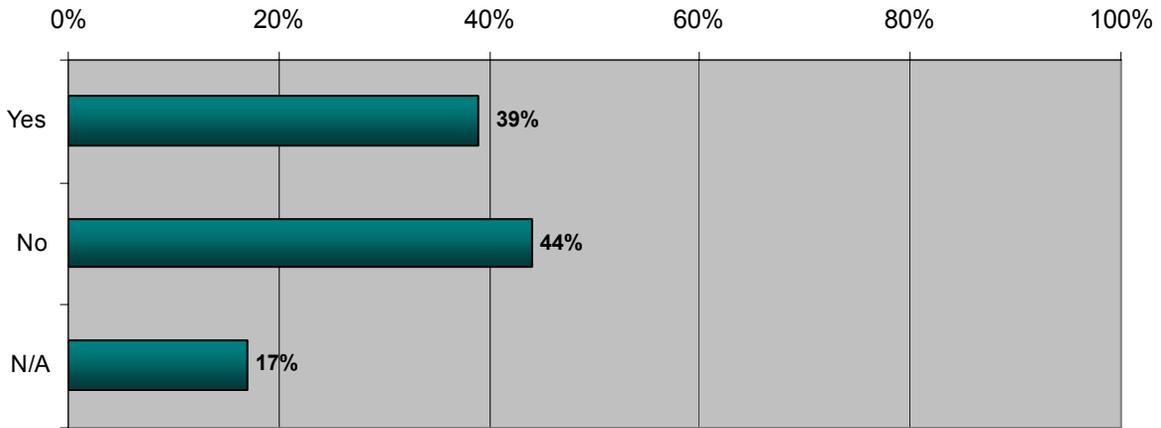
***I would consider the option to pay extra for “express” processing.***

(222 Responses)



***I would consider the option to pay increased fees if it would increase timeliness and quality of work.***

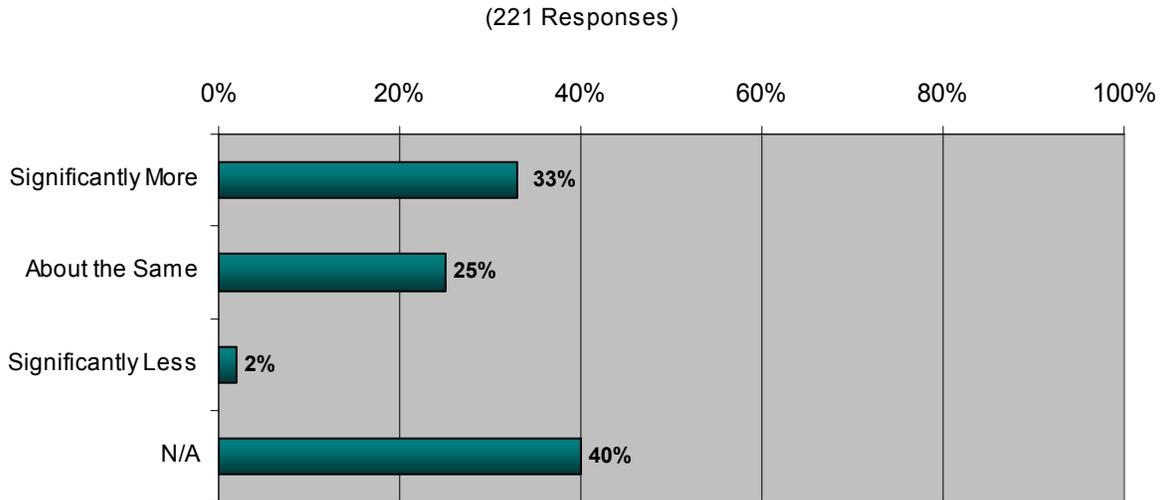
(222 Responses)



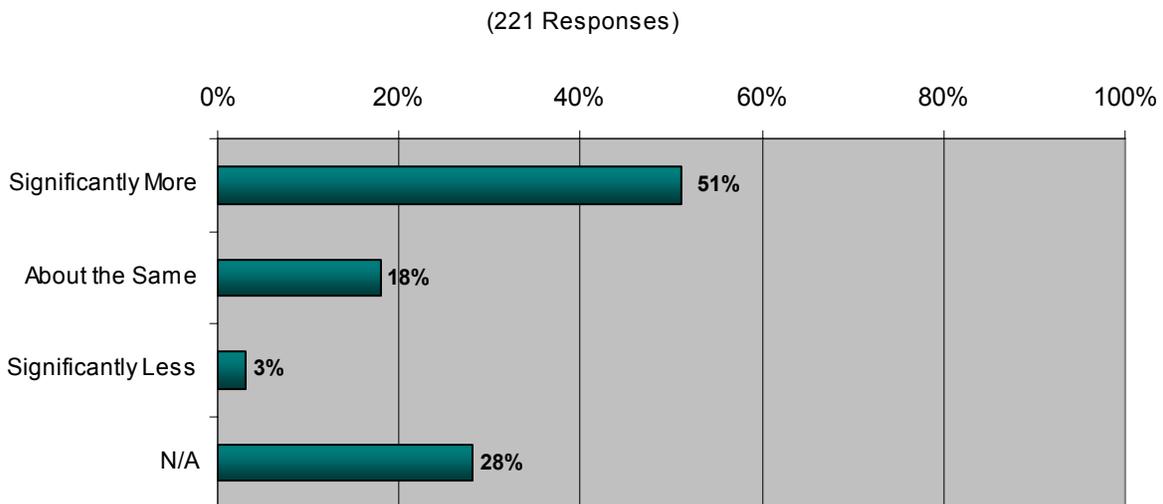
## General Questions

Customers were also asked to respond to the following 3 general questions.

*In my experience, the cost of processing any permit or application with San Diego County when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the San Diego area is:*

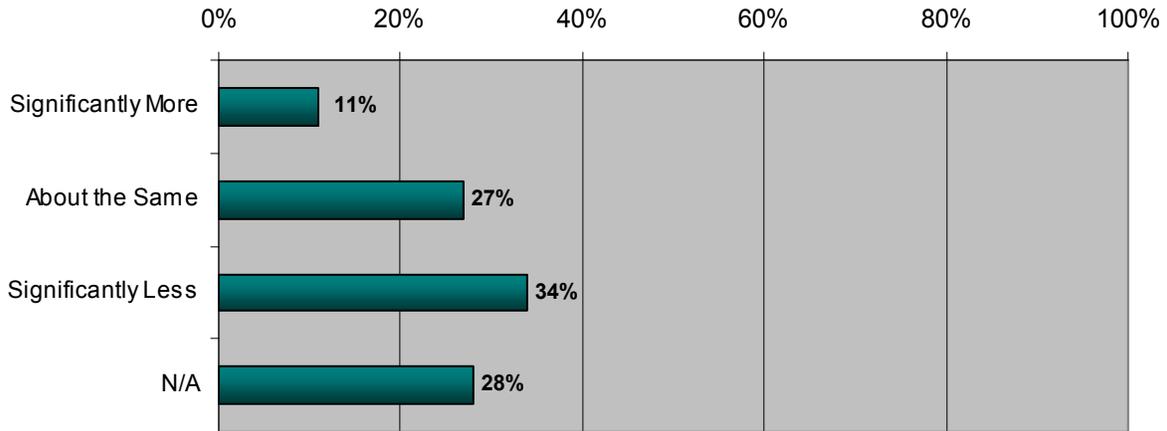


*In my experience, the time to process any permit/application with San Diego County when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the San Diego area is:*



*In my experience, the overall quality of processing any permit or application (knowledge of project management, problem solving, and communication) with San Diego County when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the San Diego area is:*

(220 Responses)



*Please add any specific comments or suggestions you may have for improving services in DPLU and DPW overall.*

Count	Customer OVERALL Responses (Summarized)
12	Staff improvement needed (speed, knowledge, customer service & comfort, hours of operation)
6	Better customer service (less adversarial, more helpful, return calls, etc.)
6	Reorganize entire organization/"Chaos"; Need new management/staff
5	Need to streamline process, reduce requirements, notify applicants of all up front
5	More realistic approach by staff when dealing with professionals
4	Better/more staff/team players; Follow management direction
3	Establish department-wide ordinance interpretations; Apply uniformly/fairly
3	Lower fees; Fees should not be charged due to staff's lack of preparedness
3	Time required too long; Greatly exceeds other comparable jurisdictions
3	No fee increase unless guaranteed 'not to exceed' or be refunded for staff errors
3	DPLU needs to be revamped; More realistic/Less conservative environmental requirements
3	No extra fees for express service; All service should be express
2	Lack of business/real world experience in DPLU line staff is a major problem
2	Too many hurdles to overcome in processing a project
2	Review plans thoroughly when first submitted; Reduce/eliminate subsequent reviews/visits

Count	Customer OVERALL Responses (Summarized)
2	Better website; Submissions should be all electronic; Plan check status on-line
2	Improved communication/coordination between DPLU/DPW
2	See customers as partners, not enemies
2	Need a central point of contact; Process too complicated to navigate alone
1	Hourly fee for unregistered line staff is too high
1	Combine DPW/DPLU under one manager (and one set of deadlines/approach)
1	Have staff offer acceptable solutions when issues are found during review
1	Difficult to hire consultants willing to work in SD County due to prior experiences
1	More communication with public on changes, procedures, etc.
1	Re-open outlying annexes

### Stakeholders' Meetings

Citygate conducted two *Stakeholders' Meetings* that were advertised throughout the County. Invitations were sent to a broad category of prospective participants including development applicants as well as environmental groups and planning groups. The meetings were well attended, lively, and informative. Over a period of several hours, participants were given an opportunity to express their experience working with the County at any step along the development review permitting process. As facilitators, Citygate solicited input regarding:

1. **DPLU strengths**
2. **Characteristics and skill sets that as stakeholders they would like to see in the DPLU Executive Team**
3. **Areas for improvement in DPLU and the overall development review permitting process.**

During the course of the meetings Citygate recorded and placed on the meeting room wall all the comments and suggestions that were offered up by the participants. At the end of each session the participants were given a finite amount of red dots with which they could affix to the items on the wall that they felt best reflected their individual priorities. The following tables reflect the red dot tallies and, thus, are a good reflection of the intensity and consensus of the participants.

### *Strengths*

In summary, the participants offered very few dots on the Strength items. Those who did “spend” their finite amount of dots on the DPLU strengths felt that the front-line staff is helpful, the executive leaders are competent and accessible, and the GIS is great.

DPLU Strengths	Dots
Helpful administrative/counter staff	1
Competent and open/accessible executive staff	1
GIS	1
New KIVA-Net	
Some helpful professional staff	
Some competent professional staff	
Online zoning info	
Centrally located	
DEH is good	
Tracking system	
Friendlier mid-managers	
Industry Advisory Group	
Quick meetings compared to other agencies	
Use of technical committee	

### *Executive Team Characteristics*

The stakeholder participants were very interested in offering their thoughts on the characteristics and skill sets the County should be considering as the decisions are made with regard to permanent appointments to the Executive Team (see table on following page). The list of traits is far reaching. The message is focused on putting the customers and stakeholders first, particularly around issues of time: respect for clients; enforce deadlines; sense of urgency; willing to discipline; and courage to “get at dead wood.” The participants also valued having a dynamic and visionary leader who did not micro-manage.

Desired Traits of Executive Team	Dots
Respect for clients	20
Willingness to enforce deadlines	18
Common-sense on CEQA	17
Creative planners/TOP LEVEL	16
Sense of urgency	14
Dynamic leaders; Visionary-delegator	13
Willing to discipline	12
Not a micro-manager	12
Stick to decisions	8
Courage to get at “dead wood”	8
Minimize personal agenda(s)	8
Attract/develop/train competent staff	7
Management without fear or intimidation	6
Integrity	6
Fresh face; new perspectives	6
Not ego-driven	6
Private-sector experience	5
Flexible/adaptable to outside input	5
Results oriented	4
Listen to constructive criticism	4
Proven consistency	4
Understand Organizational Development	4
Know how to run a business	4
High quality “people skills” and “political skills”	4
Able to manage County Counsel	4
Technical knowledge	2
Ability to create a first-class work environment	2
Accessible to public and practitioners	2
Ability to hear and connect with frontline staff	1
Proven life-long learner	1
Staff development skills	
Look outside the box	
Public experience	
Team builder with customers	

### *Areas for Improvement*

In terms of making improvements to DPLU and the development review permitting process, again, the message is focused on time-based values and putting the customers and stakeholders first: eliminate late hits; honor prior commitments; and honor schedules. It is worth noting that “culture of fear” earned 21 dots. In discussing this with the participants, they informed us that they sense many individuals in the organization are afraid to make decisions, especially at the front-line planner level. There was a consensus that the County’s biology review program was isolated and unaccountable. An emphasis was also placed on improving interdepartmental coordination and, most importantly, accountability.

Needed Improvements	Dots
Eliminate late hits	32
Remove personal agendas of staff	24
Performance-based incentives (\$\$\$)	24
Honor prior commitments	22
Culture of fear	21
Implement interdepartmental Project Manager’s with accountability	20
Honor schedules	20
Biology	19
Improve quality of staffing	18
Toss BPR	18
Stop unwritten policies	18
County Counsel is the “Driver”/“Black Hole”	16
Stop caving into resource agencies	16
Use customer feedback “exit polls”	12
Tentative Tract Maps too detailed	11
Conscience of time and money	11
DPW obstructions	11
No \$\$\$ accountability	10
Repetitive Planning and Engineering processes	8
Too concerned about lawsuits	8
Get rid of “Bad Actors”	6
Think outside the box	6
Billing Accountability	6
Traffic department	4
DPW not knowledgeable	4
County has abdicated authority (detail) to State/Feds	4

Needed Improvements (Continued)	Dots
Remember that the person on the other side of the counter is the customer	4
Implement real training program	4
Hire former military	4
Encourage constructive risk taking	4
DPLU obstructions	3
More/better skilled staff	3
Too much regulatory piling on	2
Traffic Impact Fee	2
Early Assistance/No 2nd Bite at Apple	2
Appeal costs should be nominal	2
Mentoring Program	2
Prove your mandates	2
Repair accounting system	2
County Counsel too conservative	1
Consolidate County, State, and Federal permitting	1
County Counsel is an excuse	1
One Case Manager	1
Highly efficient technology	
Interdepartmental conditions compatibility	
Most staff here to hinder development	
Improve hiring and education standards	
Billing rates reasonableness	
Deliverable-based billing	
Consolidate departments	

## Focus Groups

In conjunction with this study, Citygate conducted 4 focus group meetings, including one each for Large Residential Customers, Small Residential Customers, Commercial/Industrial Customers, and Community Planning/Sponsor Groups. The results of the focus groups are summarized below:

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## **LARGE RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS**

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- ◆ More accountability
- ◆ Commitment to timelines
- ◆ Case planner/engineer stability
- ◆ More institutional memory
- ◆ Good staff left or retired
- ◆ Control staff's personal no-growth agenda
- ◆ Inexperienced staff
- ◆ Need to retain talent
- ◆ Cost more to review report than prepare it
- ◆ "Blank Check" review fee is offensive
- ◆ Need to improve self-service early assistance
- ◆ Need Case Manager from beginning to end
- ◆ Retain customer-sensitive staff; get rid of others
- ◆ Mid-Managers need to be accountable for cycle times
- ◆ Treat customers like restaurant customers
- ◆ Board should be up front about wanting smart growth; it's OK
- ◆ Get rid of the kiosk; slowest common denominator in line
- ◆ Fee schedule is a mess
- ◆ Get rid of voice activated voice system; voice mail boxes are full
- ◆ Increase staff's appreciation for time and money
- ◆ Seriously understaffed
- ◆ Under qualified staff
- ◆ DPW can't make decisions
- ◆ Environmental section "rolls over" to Feds
- ◆ County Counsel is calling too many of the shots
- ◆ County wants both control AND indemnification
- ◆ MYTH: Fear of CEQA lawsuits
- ◆ CEQA process needs to be triaged/scaled to complexity of project
- ◆ After Pre-App there should be functional collaboration
- ◆ Follow the Project Manager Duty List
- ◆ Doesn't have to be perfect; too review oriented
- ◆ No interdepartmental sync of conditions of approval
- ◆ Project Manager should sync conditions of approval (understaffed)
- ◆ Empower staff
- ◆ Need continuity of staff, reviews, and design standards
- ◆ Abuse of authority by not tying requirements to the law or clear Board policy
- ◆ Get rid of open-ended trust fund deposit w/o accountability
- ◆ Bill customer AFTER delivery of a review product
- ◆ More "Smart Site" self help

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### ***SMALL RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS***

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- ◆ Failure to separate risk analysis from risk management
- ◆ No institutional memory due to turnover
- ◆ Need more communication BEFORE ordinance changes
- ◆ Multiple bites at the apple during engineering plan check due to turnover
- ◆ DPW intra-divisional coordination is poor
- ◆ Biologists are unbelievable
- ◆ Afraid to make decisions after the fire
- ◆ Weak early intervention of common sense judgments
- ◆ 5 years to process a non-vested Tentative Tract Map (40 lots) is the norm
- ◆ Examine the deemed complete letters
- ◆ 5 Project Managers on 1 project
- ◆ Staff is very adversarial
- ◆ Cannot appeal because you must sign away your rights in order to move your application forward

### ***COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT CUSTOMERS***

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- ◆ DPW is the problem, not DPLU
- ◆ DPW is inconsistent in their plan checking
- ◆ Second bites at the apple
- ◆ Incompetent Traffic Engineering
- ◆ DPW makes up their own rules
- ◆ No nexus between exactions and project impacts
- ◆ The problem is not the system/process, it's a few bad people
- ◆ DPW needs a "Glenn"; a go-to guy
- ◆ Move Traffic and Subdivision Engineering into DPLU
- ◆ No more lawsuits; just simply causes staff to just say no
- ◆ County Counsel is a problem
- ◆ Previous DCAO left a cultural legacy that remains, particularly with a few bad staff people
- ◆ Reinstate the Development Review Team
- ◆ DPLU is doing too much reviewing regardless of project size/complexity
- ◆ Turnover is ridiculous
- ◆ Worried Glenn will leave
- ◆ No organizational tolerance for error, so staff just says NO
- ◆ Previous DCAO would publicly ridicule; the culture of fear is still present
- ◆ High level of fear in DPLU staff
- ◆ Previous DCAO consolidated power/authority and got rid of independent decision makers
- ◆ Look at single Director over entitlement process
- ◆ Solve the County Counsel problem
- ◆ Give up control when asking for CEQA indemnity
- ◆ It's a few-bad-people problem not an organizational problem

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## COMMUNITY PLANNING/SPONSOR GROUPS

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- ◆ Interim Director has improved communication, (e.g., he calls the chairs)
- ◆ Too much churning of assignments between different planners
- ◆ Would like to see more complete and accurate packets
- ◆ Fire plan checkers are “out of control”
- ◆ Community Plans need to be more specific to protect neighborhood character
- ◆ SANDAG is “arrogant” relative to local concerns
- ◆ Trouble getting in touch with planners
- ◆ Go-to office support person for CPG’s is helpful, but not a planner
- ◆ Environmental planners don’t know real estate
- ◆ Some staff are excellent
- ◆ Get wrong plans for projects that are outside of CPG’s jurisdiction 4 times out of 60
- ◆ Idea: Get all chairs together to develop a common e-mail noticing system
- ◆ No consensus as to whether CPG/CSG should be advisory only – some say no, some say yes
- ◆ The County needs to update and strengthen the quality and details of community plans
- ◆ Processing costs too much
- ◆ General Plan update leader is a “straight shooter”
- ◆ Reduce the size and makeup of CPG/CSG’s should be considered
- ◆ Need better custodianship of records
- ◆ Bad drawings – no legends – should standardize map submittals
- ◆ There is a perception by a couple of members that projects are “charmed” by Board of Supervisors; not a consensus on this point.
- ◆ Don’t always have grading plans on Tentative Parcel Maps
- ◆ Weak environmental mitigation conditions of approval, monitoring, and enforcement

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## SECTION V—FINDINGS/ISSUES IDENTIFIED

In this section Citygate identifies and briefly discusses the ten (10) major overarching findings and issues that were identified during the course of this study. All of these findings and issues are important to understanding what needs to be done in order to continue to reshape the organization and build upon its current successes. The list of ten is not intended to reflect an order of priority.

Then in the next chapter of Citygate’s report, Section VI, we present the recommendations formulated to address each of these challenges.

### ***1. CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN ALL DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS***

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County departments and programs associated with the land development process struggle to consistently provide highly effective customer service. The outcome of this struggle was evidenced and documented throughout our interviews, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and in the customer survey conducted with this study. Sometimes the customer experience was negative simply because of a staff attitude or tone in a conversation. Sometimes it was simply because staff did not understand the customer’s perspective. At other times, the relationship between staff and the customer devolved into a “Them vs. Us” situation. Customers with whom we had contact in many instances would complain about a regulatory policy. This is not unusual in Citygate’s experience. But more often than not, customers simply wanted to get accurate, consistent, and well coordinated information in a timely fashion. More than anything else, they want to be contacted proactively by staff about a project issue, rather than having to worry about chasing down information within a non-transparent organizational interdepartmental maze.

### ***2. PROCESSING TIMES FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TAKE TOO LONG***

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A common customer complaint with planning agencies is “everything takes too long.” San Diego County is no exception. DPLU has historically had problems meeting process time targets. In the last couple of years DPLU has taken a number of actions to reduce the backlog and improve productivity. However, there are still problems meeting schedules and with overall timeframes for many projects. One significant issue is the level of scrutiny done in the CEQA process. The DPLU staff and County Counsel spend an extensive amount of time on review of CEQA issues and documentation, well beyond what might be expected in other jurisdictions. It was noted by many customers that the County Counsel appears to drive the CEQA process and should work to be more reasonable and flexible in CEQA interpretation. The lack of effective communication between DPLU and DPW staff regarding development applications also results in increased process times. There is also a problem with availability of senior managers to meet with line staff regarding potential problems with an application. The lack of training, mentoring and access to managers results in staff not being sure what needs to be done, resulting in delays.

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### ***3. INTERDEPARTMENTAL AND INTERDIVISIONAL COORDINATION IS INCONSISTENT AND OFTEN WEAK***

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A common theme throughout Citygate’s data-gathering phase, both from staff within DPLU and other departments involved in the development process, as well as from external customers, was issues with communication and coordination between departments involved in the process. Reluctance to ask another department staff relevant questions, and unproductive pre-application meetings were cited and are indicators of coordination issues. Staff interviews revealed a common concern with silos and walls between divisions and departments. Communication and coordination issues are common throughout organizations—any agency having more than a handful of employees encounters this. As a result, customer and stakeholder inquiries are often inappropriately shuffled back and forth between departments, delaying the ability and effectiveness for the County to respond to such inquiries. These problems must be confronted on a regular and ongoing basis or they will result, as they have here, in serious and significant customer service problems and internal dysfunction.

### ***4. PERFORMANCE AND ACCURACY INCONSISTENCIES IN THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAVE REVEALED A NEED FOR ONGOING REGULATORY, PROCEDURAL, AND COST ACCOUNTING IMPROVEMENTS***

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A key customer concern is accurate and complete information at each stage. A key County concern is that no policy or regulation get “missed” at any stage, allowing a project to develop in a manner inconsistent with policy and regulation. In an environment where the institutional memory is weak due to lack of experienced planners of long tenure, DPLU has evolved extensive procedures to attempt to bridge this gap. Even so, several areas of concern remain, notably including pre-application meetings, “second bites at the apple” or late identification of issues. It is common that as a project evolves and is modified, often in response to agency comments, new issues arise and must be addressed. However, when a customer receives comments from the agency, modifies the design or other features, and then receives additional input not arising from the modifications, they are justifiably upset and the “second bite” issue surfaces. Training and mentoring, and better access for junior staff to more experienced staff, as discussed elsewhere in these Findings, are all needed to assist with this issue.

### ***5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS NOT ADEQUATELY CUSTOMER ORIENTED***

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Citygate would describe the current application review process as “activity management” and not “project management.” Project management is the discipline of planning, organizing, and managing resources to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals and objectives. This includes making sure the customer is an integral part of the process in terms of understanding and reaching the goals and objectives. Activity management is incremental and compartmentalizes work, shutting the customer out of the process. Project management would help the process become more transparent to the customer, and result in both quantitative and qualitative improvements in customer service delivery.

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## ***6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE LIMITED IN TERMS OF QUALITATIVE EFFECTIVENESS***

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The DPLU performance/productivity measurement system is a strong and robust system, yet it is focused on the measurement of tasks and does not measure outcomes sufficiently. The existing system is a powerful tool and provides much data, but its downside is that it reinforces an incremental, task-by-task approach as opposed to a comprehensive and more organic project management approach. As presently understood by staff, it does not sufficiently encourage customer contact. Further, it does not sufficiently encourage staff to take responsibility for completion of the larger project. Although it should be noted that this is not the intent of the system and the system does provide for contact. Qualitative indices would include measures of customer satisfaction as well as the achievement of desired project outcomes

## ***7. TECHNOLOGY WILL BE AN ONGOING CHALLENGE; THERE ARE CURRENT AND FUTURE ISSUES***

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Time tracking using the KIVA system is a key technology issue – it has systemic problems. First, the system is not designed to be a fully integrated platform that can utilize data from other sources. This means that separate systems need to be bridged by other means. Second, it measures discrete activities rather than process milestones. The County is working to implement the more advanced Accela system, but full implementation is still a few years out. Accela was designed from its inception to process development applications and integrate related software and systems, and it should result in significant improvements, both internally and with external customer service delivery.

## ***8. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT FULLY ALIGNED WITH CURRENT NEEDS; STAFFING AND TURNOVER NEED TO BE ADDRESSED***

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Training and professional development programs must address a variety of needs: knowledge and understanding of County and departmental policies and procedures, basic professional knowledge and skills updates relevant to specific job classes, preparation of junior staff to advance to upper levels, customer service, and organizational development issues such as team building, trust, and communication, to name just a few. Citygate reviewed training logs for supervisory staff. The current training program has a few notable gaps, for example training in Project Management is lacking, and a comprehensive program of professional development is not in place. Training and professional development are key to creating consistency in the application review process, as well as facilitating the organizational structure changes recommended in this report.

Also, DPLU has experienced above-average turnover in past years, including what is often referred to by DPLU staff as “mass exodus one and mass exodus two,” and there is considerable concern among staff that this may occur again. Although this turnover has slowed in the past year, the impacts are still being felt in the Department.

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## **9. THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY**

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Customers complain that they do not receive clear and ongoing communication from staff while their project is under review, and that the process is opaque to the customer. Staff complains that interdepartmental and interdivisional communication is poor, often unwelcome, and lines of communication are unclear. A significant factor underlying problems with external communication is that the current “activity management” process can be interpreted by staff to discourage them from talking or meeting with the applicant. Although this is not the intent of the system and the system does provide for such communication, this is because the contact is not counted as legitimate “productive” work in the KIVA system. The internal communication problems are primarily structural and organizational. The engineers are in a separate department from the planners, and neither DPLU staff nor DPW staff have an incentive from management to communicate better. Legal Counsel is located in a different office building; however, Counsel can co-locate to DPLU on an as-needed basis.

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## **10. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DOES NOT MEET CURRENT OR FUTURE NEEDS**

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Not all staff participants view the development review permitting process across the lines of their individual professional disciplines. An *across-departmental-lines perspective* is important when the DPW and DPLU organizations are trying to align their day-to-day work with the policy goals of the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. No step in the process can be viewed in isolation, be it planning, engineering, financing, infrastructure construction, building inspection, or post-occupancy mitigation monitoring.

Everyone in the County organization who is involved in the development review permitting process needs to see and understand the big picture. They need to see and understand how their function fits into the policy goals of the County and the administrative expectations of the County’s leadership team. In numerous instances already noted in this section, customer service improvements can be achieved through streamlining, improved management approaches, training, and enhanced internal and external communications. In other situations, customer-centric improvements may also require addressing organizational structure issues, including the principle of “unity of command.”

In addition, Citygate found that there are challenges with the current executive leadership structure. Upper management needs to be re-thought and reorganized so that the Executive Offices can be more proactive than reactive, and more leadership-driven than operationally involved. The Director must be given the opportunity to spend more time shaping and articulating a vision for the Department and, to the extent required, for land use in the County.

We found that a major challenge for the Departments is keeping on top of the volume of informational requests from the DCAO and citizens. Some managers are spending much of their time fielding such requests. Constituent communications is a legitimate concern and a significant and appropriate part of any official’s duties. Nonetheless, when department managers are spending much of their time responding to such service requests, it means the managers are not as focused on department productivity, process improvements, staff concerns and customer inquiries.

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The Director's Office currently consists of only two people: the Director and the Director's Assistant Secretary. Both the Personnel and Support Services groups are treated as separate organizational units like Advanced Planning Services and Development Services.

Neither the interim Director nor the future Director will be able to fulfill their leadership or visionary role with the existing organizational structure. As the Director's Office is currently organized, the Director is put in the position of spending the majority of his or her time being reactive and either answering emails or addressing constituent issues. This situation needs to change.

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## SECTION VI—RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS FINDINGS/ISSUES IDENTIFIED

In this section of the report, Citygate restates each of the previously noted findings of our study and offers an overarching Major Recommendation aimed specifically at the issue identified and discussed in each finding. Where appropriate, we expand on our findings in order to add more meaning and relevance. We offer examples to illuminate our findings and the Major Recommendations. We also offer additional detailed and specific recommendations for actions that can be taken to support implementation of the Major Recommendations set forth in this section.

### ***1. CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN ALL DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS***

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#### **Major Recommendation: Customer service must be the top priority in the new organization.**

Providing highly effective customer service is a significant challenge for most public agencies. The County of San Diego is no exception. After all, the DPLU does not have the benefit of having to compete in the marketplace, nor does it have the benefit of having profit incentives to help motivate everyone in the organization. These are serious limitations. Moreover, the DPLU is fundamentally a regulatory agency that is in the business, in many instances, of making people do things they may not want to do, and often having to say no.

In order to offset these disadvantages, the DPLU leaders and managers must take extraordinary steps to institutionalize customer-centric thinking in all that the Department does, day in and day out. In the following text, Citygate offers some observations, suggestions, and recommendations to help put customer service front and center in the organization.

In 2007, the County experienced a significant slowdown in the building industry. As a result, the number of building permits and consequently revenue from building permits decreased sharply and significantly. As a result, the County was forced to close its satellite permit offices (San Marcos and El Cajon) and reduce staffing. Following the sharp slowdown in the building industry, building counter wait times at the County rose significantly due to the decreased staffing levels. Following these office closures, customers encountered high wait times at the Kearny Mesa building permit counter. Although the Building Division staff worked aggressively to address the wait times (and made improvement), the high wait times translated into customers feeling the level of service was below their acceptable standard. Since that time, extended counter wait times have been reduced. This is due in part to less building activity in the County and the County's use of the Department's financial reserves in order to add temporary counter staff. Over time, the reduced wait times will not be sustainable with the current resources because of increased building activity in the future or the lack of financial resources.

The customer processing times in the permit center can run over 2 hours at times. Part of the problem is that the customers are often being shuttled from one counter to another. This happens

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between DPLU groups and with other departments. A one-stop permitting or express permitting process is not currently offered, but could help address this problem.

**Recommendation 1.1:**                    **When financially feasible, re-open the satellite service centers.**

A single intake counter for a county the size of San Diego is a significant customer service issue in itself. The travel time to the site from some of the more remote areas is significant. The satellite offices are currently closed as a result of insufficient revenue from building permits. It is recommended that when sufficient revenue is captured, the County strongly consider reopening the satellite offices.

**Recommendation 1.2:**                    **Increase the cost of permit fees in order to adequately fund the customer service function and maintain reasonable wait times. Maintain these fees at an adequate level by annual indexing and frequent review.**

Customers rarely like to see fees increased, however in this case; it is recommended that fees be increased to improve customer service. The current revenue from fees collected for permits is insufficient to provide the staffing levels that can adequately process customers in a timely manner. As a result, wait times are above that which customers consider acceptable.

**Recommendation 1.3:**                    **Display real-time wait times on the web to help customers self-select when to come down to the permit center.**

With a single counter to serve a very large (geographically as well as population) county, it is important to let people know what the current wait time is as well as when peak times are. The web site does not currently include this information. It is important to communicate if there will be a wait when entering a customer service process like the LUEG counter. Given the Q-matic technology in the Department, there is no reason this information cannot be made available in real-time on the web. This will be even more important when a satellite office is opened and people can decide which permit center to drive to.

**Recommendation 1.4:**                    **Establish an online document/plan submittal process.**

Establishment of an online document/plan submittal process will enable customers to submit plans online versus physically submitting plans to a County permit center. Although the process will reduce wait times, it will more importantly allow customers to choose the submittal method that is most desirable to them as the customer.

**Recommendation 1.5:**                    **Eliminate the “hand-carry by applicant” permit system and replace it with an internal routing system.**

**Recommendation 1.6:**                    **Create a Permit Center express drop-off service.**

The current application process is in contrast to a user-friendly “one-stop shop” experience. The current system relies on the applicant to hand carry plans from department to department,

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counter to counter, and generally requires multiple visits to accomplish a permit. This has spawned a class of professional “counter waiters.” The alternative is to have the customer drop off their materials and have the staff route them to the appropriate groups.

**Recommendation 1.7: Provide an appointment system by Internet.**

An online appointment system would allow customers to schedule appointments via the internet from their personal computers.

**Recommendation 1.8: Assign project managers to project applications early in the process and have them remain as the customer’s “go-to person” on ALL aspects of the project through completion.**

The current system of workload management results in the frequent rollover of projects from planner to planner. Much of this problem can be traced to turnover and promotions. Nonetheless, this works at odds with having a single point of contact for the applicant. It also leads to projects which have had tasks shown as complete but for which, in reality, fundamental processes have not been completed. The best system is one where a single point of contact is a case manager, and this manager is empowered to process the application throughout the development review process.

**Recommendation 1.9: Appoint a technical editor to review the array of customer documents for user friendliness and clarity of purpose.**

There is no self-service system such as a kiosk for informational brochures, applications, and so forth for discretionary permit applications. On the other hand, the Building and BPPR counter has thorough application packets for each type of application, and these same materials are available on-line.

Public information documents could benefit from an editor—someone with strong writing skills coupled with a technical planning background. There are a few obvious typos, and the layout is not attractive. There are opportunities to emphasize the benefit to the applicant of certain processes. Overall, the documents could be much more customer friendly. We also note that forms and handouts are available in English only.

**Recommendation 1.10: Establish on-going customer service training.**

A customer service program should be initiated for the Department that identifies customer service strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, to provide training for needed areas. This program should solicit and consider the feedback from customers. The program and training should be an on-going initiative, and more than a one time occurrence.

**Recommendation 1.11: Institute an “Unanticipated Service” program.**

Instituting an “Unanticipated Service” program in DPLU is likely to increase customer satisfaction and reduce complaints from applicants.

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DPLU’s customers are often frustrated by their inability to obtain reliable and timely information about the status of their applications. This frustration, Citygate believes, only adds fuel to customers’ concerns about other aspects of the development review permitting process. In our experience, when applicants are kept informed, they are less likely to assume the worst. Conversely, when applicants are not kept informed, they assume the worst with regard to what is happening to their applications and their project. It is axiomatic that in the absence of information, people “fill in the blank” with negative perceptions or fear of worst case scenarios. This negative perception can take hold and be very difficult to reverse, irrespective of a public agency’s efforts to improve systems and procedures.

The principle of “Unanticipated Service” is a simple one:

**“Customer satisfaction increases most dramatically  
when a customer receives a service they did not expect.”**

Examples of how it could be used in DPLU include the following:

- ◆ The DPLU Director sends a personal letter to the Department’s most active applicants, consultants, or environmental advocacy groups describing to them improvements and changes that are underway in the Department.
- ◆ The planner or engineer assigned as Project Manager calls applicants and stakeholders of larger projects **at least every other week** to let them know the status of the application and to identify and discuss how issues can best be resolved in a mutually satisfactory manner. The applicant is also asked if he or she has any concerns regarding the application’s status.
- ◆ The developer receives a letter from the Project Manager at the conclusion of the hearing wherein he or she is asked how the Department might improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

Holding employees accountable for delivering “Unanticipated Service” is an essential element of a successful development review permitting process customer service program.

Citygate believes that once the “Unanticipated Service” program is developed, adopted and publicized, most employees in the Department will respond by meeting the new expectations, particularly if the time spent providing the service is recognized as a legitimate and tracked project cost.

**Recommendation 1.12:**                    **Develop a LUEG-wide sense of urgency and timeliness of development processes; encourage, support, and promote staff that embraces this philosophy.**

**Recommendation 1.13:**                    **Improve the timeliness and accuracy of the accounting software program; provide secure Current Account Status online for DPLU customers.**

It should be noted that the County’s current effort and commitment to implement Accela will help to address this problem.

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## ***2. PROCESSING TIMES FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TAKE TOO LONG***

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**Major Recommendation: Processing times need to be monitored closely to ensure leadership is available to support responsive high-quality decisions close to the point of contact with the customer.**

Throughout the course of this study Citygate encountered complaints and concerns about applications and permits that became stalled in the process. This is a common problem with local government land use agencies, particularly in California.

The recommendations set forth in the following subsections, especially those regarding **Interdepartmental and Interdivisional Coordination** and **Organizational Structure**, when implemented, will help identify and problem-solve when applications are taking too long in the development review permitting process or are “getting lost” between departments. In other words, long processing times are a result of several issues identified in this report, but will improve through the implementation of the recommendations throughout this report.

## ***3. INTERDEPARTMENTAL AND INTERDIVISIONAL COORDINATION ARE INCONSISTENT AND OFTEN WEAK***

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**Major Recommendation: The silos and walls between the departments and divisions involved in the development review permitting system need to be eliminated.**

### **Description of the Walls and Silos**

On a person-to-person basis, Citygate found many great examples of people in different departments working well together. However, Citygate did not find a high degree of **institutionalized** interdepartmental coordination overall. DPLU day-to-day operations rely heavily on interactions with several external groups. These groups are:

#### **Land Development Engineering – DPW.**

The engineering group is the most critical external group in terms of the DPLU processes. This is because development applications, including Tentative Maps, are processed by DPLU as lead, and development implementation, including Final Maps, are processed by DPW as lead. Each group participates in the other’s process. A major issue identified was that the DPW engineering group has limitations in responsiveness and coordination with DPLU during the entitlement phase. Similarly, it was noted that there are limitations with the responsiveness of DPLU during the Final Map phase. The DPW staff are located in the same building as DPLU at the Ruffin Road site. However, each talked about the “wall” where applications got “thrown over.”

There are five (5) DPW engineering teams. All of the teams work on project applications on a geographic basis, but DPLU does not divide work on this basis. DPW feels the geographic approach allows for a better understanding of their customers, and their customers know whom to call. Therefore, the question is whether DPLU’s function specialization or DPW’s geographic knowledge works best for the customer and the process. It is important to reconcile which approach or hybrid approach is the most efficient for all groups to use in a consistent manner.

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The major advantage to the use of geographic territories is that the staff develop a greater understanding of the needs and differences of specific regions.

One team has been co-located and combined with DPLU on a test basis. All indications are that this is a very productive and successful arrangement.

The problems with the other four teams are anecdotal. Many of the junior DPLU staff feel intimidated by the more tenured engineers and do not like to ask them questions. Others feel that the engineering groups are not responsive because they are not part of DPLU and are not focused on the DPLU mission.

DPW staff feel that DPLU staff are not responsive (and not proactive in seeking needed information) and that development review functions are insufficiently integrated.

DPW is concerned that the planners in DPLU do not always understand or value engineering issues and judgments. DPW management is concerned that if the development review engineers were to be moved into DPLU, that it could compromise the integrity of design requirements, as well as material and equipment specifications. Independence of engineering judgment from undue applicant influence is a strong DPW value.

**Land and Water Quality** – Department of Environmental Health (DEH). Like DPW, DEH is involved in development at two stages: review of development applications and, later, implementation of projects at the building stage. Many of the DPLU development proposals, in the rural unincorporated area, require the use of wells and/or septic systems. They require an external review and approval from DEH before a building or development permit can be issued. Only the DEH permitting staff is located in the building at the Ruffin Road site.

**Park Development** – Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). DPLU does not have as much interaction with the Parks group. However, DPR staff expressed concern that DPLU is not notifying them consistently of projects that may require conditions related to the Park Management Plan. For example, land may need to be dedicated for trails or may need to be protected because of its ecological values. DPR is not located in the building at the Ruffin Road site. DPR management told Citygate that DPLU is doing a better job recently of forwarding development applications to them that may need conditions. The DPR and DPLU must continue to work together to focus on solutions for trail impact and open space mitigation requirements of land development projects.

**County Counsel** – The County’s legal counsel’s most significant interaction with DPLU development applications is related to CEQA requirements. However, many DPLU staff believe that this review has become too inflexible and is a key factor in the lengthening of application processing times. The fact that the County Counsel is located downtown in the County Administration Center building also causes problems in terms of timely communications about projects.

**Sheriff’s Department** – Code Enforcement communicates with the Sheriff’s office on some complaints. The issue of noise is the most frequently raised. There is not a clear differentiation on which agency is responsible for minor offenses.

**Land Use and Environmental Group (LUEG)** provides the management oversight to DPLU. Because of this LUEG has daily interactions with the DPLU. Its contact with DPLU may be to discuss an issue raised by the Board of Supervisors, a sister agency or by someone with LUEG

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management. Although these daily contacts are to be expected, it does add to the time that DPLU staff spends responding to inquiries and not processing applications.

**The Board of Supervisors** was mentioned numerous times by both managers and line staff. The primary concern was not about the Board overtly interfering with or trying to influence staff decisions. The major problem is the volume of requests from the Board. Some managers are spending much of their time fielding such requests. Constituent communications is a legitimate concern and a significant part of any elected official's duties. However, when department managers are putting much of their time into answering such questions, then it means the managers are not focused on department productivity, process improvements, staff concerns and customer needs.

### Development Review Team (DRT) Improvements

Currently, the County has a mixed bag of approaches to interdepartmental and interdivisional coordination regarding projects, as described in the following:

- ◆ DPLU has a “*Project Issues Resolution*” (*PIR*) committee to address project-related problem issues that have become problematic or that require policy definition.
- ◆ DPLU staff has the ability to pull together ad hoc groups to consider pre-applications. We note, however, that this is an area of significant dissatisfaction both in-house and with customer clients. Typical complaints suggest that “participating” staff does not take this responsibility seriously. Some department representatives feel free to skip meetings. The people sent are often too junior; thus, they lack the ability to speak authoritatively for their working groups. As a result, the output of these meetings is seen as incomplete, unreliable, and as creating too many “multiple bites at the apple.”
- ◆ The Department has standing planning staff meetings to discuss projects and to prepare for Commission and Board meetings. These meetings, however, lack an inter-disciplinary approach to problem solving and often lead to only partial solutions in advance of the public meetings.
- ◆ Most cross-departmental information is gathered by a process in which the project is forwarded from inbox-to-inbox without the ready opportunity for meaningful discussion.

A formalized and institutionalized **Development Review Team** would assist the County in a number of ways as detailed below. The DRT should have a regular standing membership, with resource people made available as needed. The Team should meet on a regular weekly basis to ensure a high level of customer satisfaction.

It is critical that the DRT be made up of staff with sufficient experience and “horsepower” to identify and commit to solutions to development issues and to cut through obstacles to project development. It should be clear that the Team has the authority to speak for the departments.

The DRT will serve to review projects at several stages:

- ◆ Pre-application review of projects to provide guidance to the project proponent in completing and refining the application

- ◆ Early review of completed project applications to ensure that all department representatives are on the same page when completing their individual reviews and comments
- ◆ Review after departmental comments are prepared to ensure that the total comment package is consistent and complete
- ◆ Issue resolution should a project “stall” in the review process.

In order to provide complete customer service to projects, full representation on the team is necessary. At a minimum the following groups should be represented:

- ◆ Planners with expertise in Zoning, Land Division, General Plan, and CEQA (including MSCP issues)
- ◆ Engineers with expertise in public infrastructure, utilities, and traffic
- ◆ Fire Prevention
- ◆ Park development
- ◆ Department of Environmental Health
- ◆ County Counsel
- ◆ Building (as needed)
- ◆ Code Enforcement (as needed).

Individual project planners to whom development applications are assigned would attend DRT meetings to present their applications and receive input regarding them.

**Recommendation 3.1:**                    **Institute a Development Review Team to review appropriate large discretionary projects, and smaller ones when warranted or requested by applicant.**

**Recommendation 3.2:**                    **Empower members of the Development Review Team with authority to solve development issues and make commitments for their respective Department(s).**

**Recommendation 3.3:**                    **Increase the amount of time that team member(s) from the County Counsel’s office are co-located to be on-site at DPLU.**

The offices of County Counsel and DPLU have initiated a practice that has proven to be quite successful in the past year. The practice of co-locating County Counsel in DPLU has improved communication between the departments and thus improved the work product related to the land development process. This practice should be continued and expanded as appropriate and useful.

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**Recommendation 3.4: Improve the quality of the pre-application conferences and reinforce mandatory attendance for key staff from DPLU and other departments.**

This would include the requirement for the staff in attendance to be familiar with the project scope and how their department may condition the project.

**Recommendation 3.5: Have experienced on-the-spot decision makers from each discipline in attendance at the DRT at all times.**

This will require that senior management be assigned to the DRT. Attendance should be mandatory. Citygate recommends the core team be made up of staff at the Planning Manager level or equivalent for other departments. Such staff is senior enough to have the requisite experience and authority while being close enough to the project processing level to have direct day-to-day understanding of the complexities of application processing. The staff assigned to processing of individual applications would be responsible to bring the projects before the Team and present them. This would provide staff at this level the opportunity to sharpen their presentations skills, to receive input and mentoring from senior staff, and to receive the necessary input, information, and decisions required to move the project forward.

The DRT should be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Managing general scope of project, conformance with General Plan and County Ordinances
2. Holding pre-application conferences with applicants, and institutionalizing a “Red Team” concept for priority projects
3. Establishing conditions of approval for discretionary entitlement applications
4. Identifying and resolving development review permitting problems in a timely manner
5. Monitoring for consistent application of Planning, Engineering and Building standards
6. Tracking development applications to make sure they are processed in a timely manner (in conjunction with the KIVA system currently in place)
7. Monitoring customer service to both internal and external customers through all phases of development review and permitting.

A mature DRT will assist LUEG by continually heightening awareness of time frames and by producing consistent and clear development standards. The DRT will also deliver reliable fee and timing estimates for DPLU customers.

In short, the DRT will institutionalize highly effective and efficient communication throughout the development review permitting process, week in and week out.

The DRT will facilitate interdepartmental coordination and team building. It will also build a sense of urgency and institutionalize re-enforcement of the CAO and Board of Supervisors’ expectations regarding growth and development. The Director, Assistant Director, and Deputy Directors should assist in providing guidance and leadership and, most importantly, provide the authority and the resources to keep things moving forward in a timely fashion.

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The DRT should immediately begin work on formulating its agenda for its weekly meetings. Much of the agenda will be driven by the submittal of projects. In addition, the DRT should identify mechanisms for streamlining the review process for each permit category to meet and improve cycle-time standards.

For purposes of an example only, the DRT weekly agenda could include the following topics:

<b>Development Review Team</b>
<b>AGENDA</b>
1. Review and Conditioning of Pending Projects
2. Discussion of Upcoming Commission and Board of Supervisor Action Items
3. Review of New Projects
4. Review of Pre-Applications for Priority Projects
5. Updates regarding “Red Team” Projects
6. Status of DRT Continual Improvement Items
7. Around-the-Table Comments and Requests for Help
8. Adjourn.

The precise agenda that would work best in the County should be refined and developed collaboratively by the DRT. Meetings should begin and end on time. Attendance should be mandatory. As the DRT matures and establishes a track record of efficiency, it should be encouraged to take on additional responsibilities that are in support of the County’s development-related activities and program.

The following can serve as a guiding light for the Development Review Team. In a publication of the American Planning Association (James van Hemert, “The Development Review Process: A Means to a Nobler and Greater End,” in the *Zoning Practice*, January 2005), the typical Planning “best practices” are outlined. Citygate Associates used these expectations and other best practices criteria while performing this project.

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## What Applicants Want

### **Predictability**

- Clear expectations, no surprises
- Clear process and decision points

### **Fair Treatment**

- Rules are the same for everyone
- No “good” or “bad” developers – offer trust and be trustworthy

### **Accurate and accessible information**

- Easy to find and understand
- Clear application requirements and standards

### **Timely processing**

- Establish early tentative dates for hearings
- Guaranteed review turn-around times
- Published commission and council/board of commissioners meeting dates

### **Reasonable and fair costs**

- Application fees
- Development commitments
- Impact fees

### **Competent staff**

- Staff team should have a balance of “hard” technical skills and “soft” people skills

### **Elegant regulations**

- That fit
- That are easy to navigate
- That are rational
- The most desired outcomes are easy to meet

Source: James van Hemert, “The Development Review Process: A Means to a Nobler and Greater End,” in the *Zoning Practice* (January 2005) outlined the typical expectations of customers (one might also call these “best practices”).

## Interdivisional Observations

Staff in and outside of DPLU want to do a better job of communicating. There is relatively little finger pointing and blaming others for the process problems. This positive, supportive attitude is commendable and valuable.

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Internally, some DPLU groups believe they are not as valued or get less management attention and recognition within the DPLU organization. The Building, Code Enforcement and Advanced Planning groups have expressed the most concern about this. Citygate observed that the core mission of DPLU in practice is the review of development applications and that is the mission of the Regulatory group. For that reason, most of management’s focus is on that group. This message came across in both the one-on-one staff interviews and in the employee survey.

There is also a lot of talk about “silos” and staff “tossing applications over the fence” to the next group with little or no communication. In most cases, this could be categorized as organizational “finger pointing.” This is true of both interdivisional and interdepartmental groups. This is consistent with the comments Citygate received from customers and stakeholders.

Citygate was struck by the complexity of the Department’s organizational chart. There are a number of questions from staff about where in the organizational structure some groups are, why they are there, and how this impacts their performance.

The Watershed Program and Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) groups are located within the Advanced Planning Services Division. However, they are primarily environmental planning groups whose functions interact with and are mirrored by similar groups in the DPW, DPR, and DEH. Citygate understands that the County is considering moving the Watershed team, which is currently combined with the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) team, out of the Advanced Planning Services Division in DPLU and into the DPW. We concur that this move will enhance program effectiveness.

Staff raised the issue of whether Advanced Planning Services should even be in DPLU. The tie from creation of policy to implementation seems to be weakly felt within the Department. The County and DPLU should continue to place strong support on Advanced Planning, including policy and ordinance development, and strengthen its tie to regulatory services.

There are two separate Regulatory teams that perform the same reviews in terms of subdivisions and special use permits. These two groups are not divided as geographic groups or functional groups, and appear to exist simply to address span of control issues.

Developer deposits are located in the Regulatory Division. This makes sense in that these monies pay for the regulatory application review. However, it is primarily an administrative function and is not a best management practice that any public or private auditor would condone.

There are other administrative/financial activities (e.g., fees, developer agreements, developer deposits, cost-of-service, reserve fund, interest earnings) that do not have a single administrative group responsible for them.

**Recommendation 3.6: Empower and reward those employees who demonstrate results across divisional and departmental lines.**

**Recommendation 3.7: Move the developer deposit function to the Support Services team in order to maintain greater fiscal control.**

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#### **4. PERFORMANCE AND ACCURACY INCONSISTENCIES IN THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAVE REVEALED A NEED FOR ONGOING REGULATORY, PROCEDURAL, AND COST ACCOUNTING IMPROVEMENTS**

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**Major Recommendation: Delivering a high quality, highly consistent and highly coordinated work product requires an ongoing, continual reassessment of regulations, procedures, and cost accounting.**

##### **Regulatory Improvements**

Over time, the DPLU staff has made a number of important regulatory improvements through their Business Reengineering Process (BPR). The BPR effort was noted by staff to be patterned after the Japanese Kaizen process (Kaizen literally means “to take it apart and put back together in a better way”). This is then followed by standardization of this “better way” with others, through standardized work. These written processes spell out both the necessary task steps and provide checklists to make sure the task steps are completed correctly.

There is also a 7-year sunset provision in order to keep regulations up-to-date.

During the interviews, there were a number of staff who stated they did not understand how the current regulatory processes came into being. The problem is probably that the staff are new and did not participate in the BPR activities. Examples of recent, successful BPR changes are primarily in the area of discretionary permits. Despite the BPR-related improvements, there is still a belief among staff that the current development code is overly complex and hard to work with.

In general, the core planning documents, including the General Plan (together with the Housing Element) and Zoning Code are seriously outdated. It is in part due to this issue, that the DPLU created a Policy and Ordinance Development (POD) program this past year to address such outdated documents. In addition to the code and ordinance updates that the POD program is pursuing, the County is also currently completing a comprehensive General Plan Update.

**Recommendation 4.1: Continue the POD program; if needed, expand the POD program in the future.**

Most development codes, policies and ordinances are the product of decades of changes. Unfortunately, when new policies are added or changed, they often create inconsistencies in the code or are not clear and objective in their intent or application. This leads to various interpretations. This is a problem often identified by both staff and stakeholders. The DPLU POD program works to update County policies and ordinances that are used in the regulatory process. These updates serve to improve the regulatory process for the communities and residents of the County, as well as the customers of DPLU.

There are several reasons to do policy and ordinance updates:

1. Create clear and objective development standards, and resolve ambiguities in the code language. Recommend changes proposed in a three-tiered proposal of: (1) Scrivener’s errors; (2) ambiguous/inconsistent language; and (3) possible policy change.

2. Develop "smart growth" codes if desired to, for example, encourage the construction of walkable, mixed use neighborhoods and the revitalization of existing places.
3. Develop a performance zoning code if desired. Performance zoning specifies the intensity of land use that is acceptable. In other words, it deals not with the use of a parcel, but the performance of a parcel and how it impacts surrounding areas.

## Procedures Improvements

DPLU has spent considerable time creating written development review procedures to guide staff through each process. Much of this has been done through the Best Practices Reengineering (BPR) process in terms of improving existing processes as described in Regulatory Improvements.

It was noted by staff that the environmental permitting procedures were very good, but that the regulatory procedures were still in development. However, it was also noted that there are many cases where the applicant's environmental consultant makes the case for the applicant's financial benefit and not the County's environmental benefit.

The Regulatory Planning function has exceptionally well-documented processes and guidance documents.

This documentation is tied in to the performance measurement system via KIVA in a way that allows an often-overwhelming system of management reporting at the group and individual level.

Documentation of processes is at a much lower level for the remaining functions: Building Plan Check/Inspection, Code Enforcement, and Advanced Planning.

Documentation of procedures for supervisory/management processes is more rudimentary.

**Recommendation 4.2:                    Designate one staff person, and a designated back-up, to manage all sign-offs for final approval of a project.**

The process for an applicant to complete and finalize a project requires the applicant to personally get all of the appropriate sign-offs from several internal and external regulatory groups. The process is difficult for the applicant to navigate and is not coordinated by the DPLU for the most part. Designating one staff person, and a back-up, to manage all sign-offs would create a more consistent, streamlined and more user-friendly process for final project approval.

**Recommendation 4.3:                    Eliminate multiple "bites at the apple" during the development review permitting process.**

In order to achieve this, the Department leaders in both DPW and DPLU must reinforce the goal of providing all comments during the first round of project review, pre-application, or plan check. Best practice agencies achieve this goal in excess of ninety percent of the time. They do so by doing three things over and over again: (1) making sure their "*Early Assistance*" programs and services, such as application brochures, pre-application meetings, etc., are exhaustive, highly customer friendly, and coupled with direct early customer contact; (2) making sure that any "second bite at the apple" is fully justified as the direct result of a change in the project submittal generated by the customer and, moreover, that the correction has been discussed and reviewed by

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a supervisor before going out; and (3) making direct apologies for instances wherein a “second bite” is required not due to a customer-generated change.

Multiple review cycles for private applications are a problem in both DPLU and DPW. While some portion of these can be attributed to less than competent preparers and to instances where the applicant “doesn’t want to get it,” the volume suggests additional issues. One of these issues is insufficient clarity in establishing expectations, both at the outset and in the first review of a project.

**Recommendation 4.4:                   Have DPLU provide direct contracts for the preparation of EIRs and Negative Declarations as a customer service option.**

It is important, and State law requires, that environmental review be biased in favor of full disclosure of environmental factors and protection of the natural environment and protecting the citizens of the County. It is not to be biased in favor of maximizing profit for a project proponent. Best practice agencies work hard to ensure the neutrality of the CEQA process. In fact, many such agencies require that all contracts for preparation of major environmental review documents be directly between the agency and the firm preparing the documents. Providing direct contracts for the preparation of EIRs and Negative Declarations as an option to the customer would improve customer choice and customer satisfaction.

**Recommendation 4.5:                   Institute a more flexible and collaborative problem-solving approach to the County’s CEQA review of EIRs and Negative Declarations to increase customer satisfaction.**

County Counsel plays an intimate and important role in the entitlement phase of the development review permitting process. County Counsel is particularly involved in advising, if not directing, DPLU and DPW staff during the environmental assessment stage. County customers have repeatedly pointed out their frustrations with what they believe is a high degree of inflexibility on the part of County Counsel. Most notably, they argued that if the County insists on applicant indemnification of the County, then in turn, the County should allow more flexibility to the applicant.

Both the stakeholder interviews and the customer survey pointed out dissatisfaction with the County Counsel regarding CEQA review. Stakeholders identified the need for a reasonable and balanced approach to CEQA as a high priority.

The County and its customers would be well served to institute flexible and collaborative problem-solving approaches to the County’s CEQA review of EIRs and Negative Declarations. The objective should be to increase customer satisfaction for customers and stakeholders. These groups include applicants, community members, environmental groups and all other customers and stakeholders that have an interest in the land development process. Providing high-quality customer service during CEQA review cannot be done in a vacuum. Rather, it can be achieved by establishing ongoing, institutionalized communication directly with County customers. This can best be achieved by the County first asking County customers and their legal advisors how ongoing, institutionalized communication can best take place: regular weekly meetings; monthly meetings; as needed meetings; ad hoc meetings, etc.

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## Cost Accounting Improvements

DPLU is on track with systems to account for the cost of doing business and charging them back to the applicant. Full cost recovery is a recognized goal, but not a reality.

A first step has been taken toward a transparent approach to the customer: DPLU handles billing for all the development-related functions, notably including DPW and Parks. (However, the process still requires separate accounts for processes in separate departments.)

Fees are regularly updated. (However, fees are often partly based on retrospective data, and thus can be behind the curve.)

A regularly updated fee study for more activities will give customers increased financial predictability, which is very important to the County's customers and was expressed often during Citygate's focus group meetings.

DPLU has an extensive cost accounting process utilizing Kronos software for the staff time accounting. This system requires numerous manual tweaks and use of batch processes. The interaction with Oracle is problematic.

The cost accounting system occasionally allows deficit issues to arise with developer project funding, leading to collection issues. One problem leading to this is that there is no effective "alarm system" to readily and proactively identify low balance accounts.

Lack of integration between Kronos (timekeeping) and KIVA (performance measurement) is a problem. The data from these two sources is not compared for consistency, and the types of data do not easily correlate. There is potential to "game the system."

Since staff cannot list in-person or telephone meetings with applicants as a KIVA activity, the staff tries to avoid them. This results in applicants being unhappy with the lack of customer service.

**Recommendation 4.6:**                      **Improve real-time systems for developer accounts; eliminate deficit spending.**

**Recommendation 4.7:**                      **Time spent communicating with applicants, whether in a meeting or by telephone, needs to be an accepted time activity that is measured toward productive time.**

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## 5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS NOT ADEQUATELY CUSTOMER ORIENTED

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**Major Recommendation:    Emphasis must be placed upon delivering desirable outcomes for the County and its customers/stakeholders.**

In past years, the DPLU has been so focused on error-free production and measuring process activities that it has lost sight of measuring outcomes. However, it should be noted that in the past year, the Department has made gains in focusing on "end game" outcomes and solutions.

The CEQA process has been inflexible, untimely, and not at all streamlined. There is too much worrying about making every application legally bullet proof.

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DPW Land Development and DPW Traffic Engineering operate too much as silos outside the development review permitting process. There is little progress toward the County's goal of "functional threading." Customers are suffering from all of these issues.

Staff needs help being more sensitive to the issues of the customers, particularly with regard to time and money issues.

Second "bites at the apple" are a LUEG-wide problem in and out of DPLU.

More emphasis needs to be given to timely completion of major policy initiatives for long-range planning to provide vision and guidance to the implementation mission of the Department, specifically including completion of the General Plan update and the two remaining Multiple-Species Conservation Plans. These efforts should have senior leadership and needed resources to make rapid progress.

**Productivity vs. Quality.** The perceived emphasis on "productivity" over "quality" has resulted in some line staff believing that they are not appreciated as people or professionals, and believing that they are viewed as "cogs in a machine." Some line staff also think that this emphasis on productivity has come at the expense of management taking time for mentoring, training and professional development. Citygate believes that these staff perceptions are not what the Department's management is trying to achieve, thus, there exists a substantive disconnect that needs to be addressed aggressively.

**Project Management.** It is Citygate's evaluation that measurement of work/tasks is over-emphasized at the expense of actual qualitative outcomes such as good communication with the customers and stakeholders, proactive problem solving, transparency, and high levels of customer and stakeholder satisfaction.

Regulatory planners are referred to as "project managers." However, the current system for assigning work and measuring performance does not sufficiently promote a true project management approach. The result is process/task management versus results/outcome-oriented management of the Department.

In a project management model, the employee is focused on specific outcomes and milestones. Project management is the discipline of planning, organizing, and managing resources in order to bring about the successful completion of specific project goals. A project has a specific start and finish date. This finite characteristic of projects stands in sharp contrast to processes or operations, which are permanent or semi-permanent functional work items that repetitively produce the same product or service. In practice, the management of these two systems is often found to be quite different, and requires the development of distinct technical skills and the adoption of a separate management philosophy.

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**Recommendation 5.1:**                    **Maintain a single case project manager for the life of the project.**

**Recommendation 5.2:**                    **Establish project management teams consisting, at a minimum, of Planning, Engineering and legal counsel via the Development Review Team, or DRT.**

Implementing a true project management approach will help maintain an efficient, timely application process review and it is a good alternative approach to activity measurement. It is also important to codify how this new approach works procedurally for all staff.

**Recommendation 5.3:**                    **Provide management direction and performance tools to ensure that pre-application meetings are productive.**

Pre-application meetings are a critical element of any development process. These meetings are not currently used to best effect, which should require that: (a) the persons who will be processing the application be present; (b) the materials be obtained and distributed prior to the meeting with sufficient time to ensure that staff is prepared and available to ask the questions/make the comments needed to ensure that the application will be complete when received; and (c) the correct staff attend that have the authority to make preliminary decisions.

**Recommendation 5.4:**                    **Revise the workload measurement system to place more value on needed meetings with applicants, including pre-application meetings and issue-resolution meetings.**

Although current workload measurement systems allows for meetings and phone calls with applicants, it is recommended that this system be revised to place more value on such activities. Phone calls and meetings are often effective ways to achieve the desired level of customer service being recommended in this report.

**Recommendation 5.5:**                    **Institute performance measures that relate to customer satisfaction issues, specifically including timeliness and completeness on the initial review.**

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## ***6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE LIMITED IN TERMS OF QUALITATIVE EFFECTIVENESS***

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**Major Recommendation: Performance measures need to address a broader set of more qualitative factors.**

DPLU has one of the most advanced activity and time tracking systems that Citygate has encountered. The level of application activity tracking and performance measurement is quite extraordinary. The DPLU productivity model is very complex and measures numerous sequential activities within any application process and assigns “estimated” hours that the staff is allowed to complete each activity. Every staff person is given a weekly estimate of how many “productive” hours they must achieve. This is based on a variety of variables such as position level, professional experience and specialization.

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When combined with the detailed level of procedures, the line staff better know what is expected of them and when. It is also a powerful management tool used to track overall department performance.

Any variance of five or more (5) hours over or under the estimated value must be approved by management. Variances of four (4) hours or less do not require approval. The “productive” hours are measured weekly and over four-week periods. If a staff person consistently falls below the targeted weekly hours, it becomes a personnel issue requiring discussion with the supervisor and may be grounds for discipline.

For all of its strengths, this approach emphasizes staff doing time management and not project management of applications. Instead of managing the overall application process, incremental activities related to an application are measured and managed.

Citygate met with the key staff responsible for maintaining the activity tracking system to understand how it works. Many of the managers, let alone line staff, do not understand how the KIVA productivity model works. It is often perceived as a “black box” by staff. This lack of understanding how KIVA works and is used, or what the underlying assumptions are, leads to staff questioning the validity of the application time estimates and the value of the process and the data it generates. Although the system has many strengths, it is imperative that staff understand how it is intended to work.

We also noted that the KIVA system is subject to being “gamed” by some staff. We learned of instances where staff will “click off” a task in order to meet a stated timeline, even though the task is not completed. Then the staff will work on the activity when they can find the time. Evidence of this is anecdotal; nonetheless, managers should discuss it with staff with an eye towards correcting the issues that result in this behavior.

It was also noted that staff meetings and phone calls with applicants are not counted as “productive” time, even when the applicant asks for such a meeting and the applicant would be paying for the meeting out of their developer deposit. This misunderstanding of the system may contribute to negative customer service because staff believes that such time and effort will “count against them.” This results in staff trying to not meet or talk with the applicants.

Staff also talked about the problems associated with activity “time management” versus “project management.” The rigidity of the prescribed procedures and tracking of them as activities leaves staff seeking more opportunity to make timely decisions. As staff understand the current system, they must get a change in approach approved by their manager before moving forward with such change. However, the managers are also very busy and cannot provide timely answers or find time to talk to them.

The level of time management and what functions are allocated as “productive” time is not adequately explained to staff. A potential reason for this is that DPLU managers and senior line staff do not have time to mentor or train their staff or do quality control. Staff repeatedly expressed frustrations with accessing their managers or getting guidance from their managers or senior staff. Planning Managers carry their own caseload, thus limiting their ability to do the mentoring, coaching, and supervision required to maximize front line efficiency and effectiveness.

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**Recommendation 6.1:                   Reevaluate the activity tracking and measuring system to measure more outcomes.**

The tracking system should be augmented to include more measurement of outcomes, yet retain and balance the current information on activities that has proven successful.

**Recommendation 6.2:                   Revise the measurement system to place value on needed meetings with applicants, including pre-application meetings and issue-resolution meetings.**

The KIVA tracking system is a powerful “best practice” information tool, however, to reach its full potential it must be augmented to encourage increased direct and when appropriate, face-to-face communication between staff and customers.

**Recommendation 6.3:                   Institute additional performance measures in order to capture qualitative customer satisfaction issues.**

The County does an admirable job of measuring work tasks that relate to application process cycle times and completeness on the initial review. It is important that the County build on this success by also measuring qualitative outcomes such as good communication with the customers and stakeholders, proactive problem solving, transparency, flexibility in achieving the regulatory purpose, and high levels of customer and stakeholder satisfaction.

Examples of customer satisfaction activities that could be measured include:

- ◆ Proactive telephone contacts initiated by staff to the customer, meetings with the customer initiated by and held by staff with the customer
- ◆ Tracking of “Unanticipated Service” as discussed in this report
- ◆ Exit interviews conducted by staff with customers upon completion of the development review permitting process.

The above are offered only as examples. The actual revisions to the measurement system should be based on suggestions developed collaboratively by managers and staff in the Department.

**Recommendation 6.4:                   Hold employees accountable to cross-departmental cycle time standards.**

Cross-departmental accountability is an issue in many jurisdictions. When a process such as land development spans multiple departments, it is difficult for an employee in one department to hold another department accountable for cycle times. The County must work to improve the current situation as such accountability is lacking. Several of the organizational recommendations discussed later in this report are intended to help address this issue.

**Recommendation 6.5:                   Measure and reward performance that reinforces the County’s/Department’s goals and vision.**

**Recommendation 6.6:                   Reduce Planning Manager caseload so they can mentor, coach, and supervise front line personnel.**

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## **7. TECHNOLOGY WILL BE AN ONGOING CHALLENGE; THERE ARE CURRENT AND FUTURE ISSUES**

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### **Major Recommendation: The County and the Department need to continually invest in and train for new technologies.**

DPLU uses three primary technology software systems (KIVA, Kronos, and Documentum) to help manage day-to-day project caseload and activities.

**KIVA** (all permitting and inspection activities). KIVA, produced by Accela, automates and centralizes the Department's land, permit, inspection, and resource management activities within a centralized information system. Applicants have access to KIVA through KIVA Net Public, which provides the ability to lookup permit status and history. It also allows staff to electronically sign off activities of individual applications. KIVA Citizen was launched in the summer of 2008. It allows applicants to apply for permits on-line.

**Kronos** (time accounting). Kronos is a web-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application for time accounting. All County departments use Kronos, which is integrated with Oracle Financials for all employee pay and customer account management.

**Documentum** (document management). This is a software platform that allows anyone on the network to access documents, plans and photos, regardless of file size. The system provides for a central management of records, minimizing space necessary to house physical records, decreasing the amount of redundant and unorganized files, and allowing for easy retrieval and deletion of records that have expired.

The Department also uses a variety of other software and hardware applications:

- ◆ Field laptops. The County has launched a pilot mobile workforce project using Accela wireless for building inspections.
- ◆ Q-matic. This system is a line queuing management system. It also provides reporting capabilities to measure wait times at public counters.
- ◆ Web site use. The County provides access to information such as procedures.

In addition, the Department provides the following technology for applicants:

- ◆ Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR). This is currently used for the scheduling of building inspections.
- ◆ Autocad is currently in use, but only for final engineering documents.
- ◆ There are several GIS sections within LUEG departments, including DPLU and DPW. In addition to these County GIS staff, the County is a participating agency in San Diego Geographic Information Source, a Joint Powers Agency with the City of San Diego that is responsible for maintaining base geographic information such as parcels, lots, and roads.

Although the County is working to improve and upgrade the DPLU web site, the current web site has several deficiencies that should be addressed. The current DPLU web site:

- ◆ Does not enable the applicant to determine where their application is in the regulatory process.

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- ◆ Provides for only limited online permit applications.
  - ◆ Does not show current permit center wait times.
  - ◆ Does not allow for the scheduling of building inspections.
  - ◆ Does not show the “balance” in developer accounts. Access could be via a secure online account and would increase transparency.

The lack of interface between KIVA and Kronos creates inefficiencies in terms of data entry/analysis and creates duplicate work for staff. However, the County is planning to transition from KIVA to Accela Automation (Accela’s next generation web-based permitting and inspection system) that will move much of the invoicing and financial account management for customers from Oracle to Accela. In addition, the system will integrate much better with Documentum and GIS. The Accela implementation is set to begin in February 2009 and finish in July 2010. The Accela system tracks and manages all of the community development activities including land use and building permits, inspections, and investigations. Accela also reviews zoning, project plans and code enforcement. It also allows the entire staff to have access to input data, verify activities, check permit status, and obtain complete parcel information. This will speed up the process of getting from application to occupancy, while reducing errors and redundancy through the use of a single software platform.

The importance of staff managing the GIS system is because staff can process an information request in a more timely manner. Staff can also create more useful applications once they better understand how the GIS system works and what the full range of applications really are.

Finally, Citygate found that there is significant unhappiness with the outsourced IT. Network outages are a frequent occurrence. One description: “more bad days than good days.”

**Recommendation 7.1:                      Aggressively scan and convert files to electronic form.**

**Recommendation 7.2:                      Upgrade the web site to allow point-of-sale on small permits, publish permit center wait times, and allow for customers to schedule building inspections.**

Best practice agencies allow customers to secure and pay for small ministerial permits, such as patio covers, pools, roof repairs, water heater installations, etc. Providing this self-help service will save customers time and money. Publishing up-to-the-minute wait time estimates will help customers avoid driving down to the permit center only to find they have to wait an hour or more for service. Many building permit inspections can also be scheduled online.

**Recommendation 7.3:                      Continue to aggressively pursue Accela implementation.**

Continuing to implement Accela will help staff keep better track of applications as they move through, or are delayed, in the development permitting review process. Having instant reliable processing information available to staff and, in turn, available to applicants and stakeholders will enhance customer satisfaction.

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**Recommendation 7.4:** Provide project status and projected timeline through the web site.

**Recommendation 7.5:** Create an electronic sign off process for final applications.

The document management system in DPLU is good news. Assigning and tracking applications by using bar codes is state-of-the-art in terms of development review. As mentioned previously, the Documentum software allows centralized control and decentralized access to any number or size of documents. The County is on the right track with converting an antiquated, unwieldy, and insecure paper system to a modern document-imaging system.

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***8. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT FULLY ALIGNED WITH CURRENT NEEDS; STAFFING AND TURNOVER NEED TO BE ADDRESSED***

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**Major Recommendation: The Department needs to make a serious commitment to ongoing training and professional development for its valued employees, particularly as it affects staffing and turnover.**

The County's Supervisory Academy got high marks from the new supervisors who have attended it.

Citygate reviewed training logs for DPLU supervisors. Based on this review, it is apparent that relatively little technical, ongoing training in the practice of planning is occurring. The bulk of training is in the application of the County's processes and policies as they relate to the running of the Department.

Project management as a teachable skill does not seem to be more than a minimal part of the County's training curriculum.

Mentoring is little used, perhaps in part due to the significant dearth of more experienced planners and lack of available time.

**Recommendation 8.1:** Establish a focused and ongoing mentoring program, as well as training programs in management, professional development and project management.

**Recommendation 8.2:** Conduct a training needs assessment for the Department that includes professional development expectations for each staff person.

This can be achieved by instituting 5-Year Professional Development Plans, renewed in conjunction with performance evaluations.

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**Recommendation 8.3:**                    **Provide for and support training in the technical job knowledge and skills to remain up to date.**

**Recommendation 8.4:**                    **Create a customer perspective training program for DPLU staff.**

Such a program would bring in architects, engineers, builders, title company officers, real estate agents and land use attorneys to talk about their role and expectations in the development process. The program should include the applicant perspective of time and money, balanced with achieving the public good.

**Recommendation 8.5:**                    **Develop a multi-year rotation program for planners.**

A multi-year rotation program would enable planners to cross train in multiple functions and expertise of the land development process. Planners would ensure experience in areas such as use permits, major subdivisions, minor subdivisions, policy and ordinance development, etc. This rotation program would ensure planners achieve a variety of experience and allow for diverse work experience to avoid “burn out” in a specific area.

### **Organizational Change Team Building Support**

Later in this report, Citygate recommends significant changes to the County’s DPLU organization—including changes to processes, to positions, to reporting relationships, and to the physical location of work for some parts of the organization.

It is a normal and natural human reaction to resist change—even change for the better, even when the change may benefit the individual in question. Perhaps to be more precise, people resist being changed.

DPLU has experienced significant change in recent years, and the “change capacity” of the organization is low.

In addition to the issues around some of the simpler changes that Citygate is recommending, there are some recommendations that include integration of work teams with rather different corporate cultures. First, there is the recommendation to integrate planners and engineers more tightly into the development review permitting process.

In order to facilitate and integrate this significant organizational change, it will be necessary to support the change and the people that are being called upon to make the change.

A key activity in supporting the desired organizational change is through team building. This process uses known organizational development processes and strategies to facilitate the integration of new team members into existing teams and to support the creation of new work groups and relationships.

Effective team building will include a number of components, including values clarification, communication of new organizational goals—**critically including a clear understanding of the “why” behind the goal**—and a systematic approach to understanding other team members’ approaches and communication styles.

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Excellent team building and staff development in a customer service setting will often involve representatives of customer groups to assist in identifying and clarifying common issues and desires.

The County could, for example, choose to initiate a from-the-bottom-up re-look at the Department's Vision and Mission Statement. This would also strengthen the integration of any employees transitioned from one department to another.

What does success look like? Following effective teambuilding:

- ◆ Team members are energized
- ◆ Teams and their members are focused on common goals and values
- ◆ Staff are clear on processes and procedures to achieve personal and organizational goals
- ◆ Staff members across work units communicate clearly and cleanly, with common organizational goals ahead of personal agendas.

Teambuilding is not a one-time event. Rather, it is a process that must become an ongoing organic part of the organization.

There are a number of organizations and programs established to assist organizations with organizational development, teambuilding, and communications enhancement. A few are particularly targeted to an expert with public sector organizations and local government in particular.

**Recommendation 8.6:                    Establish a team-building program to support all staff, especially the staff affected by any recommended organizational changes set forth in this report.**

### **Staffing and Turnover**

In past years, DPLU has experienced above-average turnover, including what is often described as “mass exodus one and mass exodus two,” and there is considerable concern among staff that this “Brain Drain” may occur again. It should be noted that over the past 6-12 months, this turnover has significantly decreased. The turnover problem, although diminishing, has left staff with a lingering sense of burnout.

Adding to the burnout perception problem is staff's additional perception that upper management views processes as being more important than people. There is a pervasive belief that employees are valued only as inputs to productivity, not in human terms. There is a significant level of perception that all processing must be done “by the book” and that this precludes the application of individual initiative and creative approaches. The message being heard, whether intended or not, is that the management philosophy of the Department is “more procedure than relationship.”

These perceptions need to be addressed by the leadership in very sincere and meaningful ways. If they are left unaddressed then the line-level Planner will continue to see himself or herself as merely “checking off all the boxes” rather than functioning as a true project manager. This will result in the top talent not being motivated to stay, thus continuing the cycle of turnover, burnout, and more turnover.

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- Recommendation 8.7:** Empower appropriate, experienced staff to use the written procedures as guidance rather than as a rote cookbook.
- Recommendation 8.8:** Provide the support systems necessary for excellent performance—accounting, technology, training, etc.
- Recommendation 8.9:** Establish a reliable exit interview process to identify actual, as opposed to anecdotal, evidence of factors that contribute to turnover.

### **Classification and Compensation System Changes**

During the course of Citygate’s review and interviews, we repeatedly and deliberately elicited comments from staff regarding any concerns they might have over job classifications or compensation. We were able to corroborate from multiple sources that salary compaction at the Chief level is an important issue of concern as it relates to the overtime pay received by the represented Planning Managers. Based on anecdotal evidence, it is not unusual for Planning Managers to earn significantly more than their supervisors. This situation causes a morale problem among some supervising employees.

- Recommendation 8.10:** Conduct a compensation study and resolve any compaction issue between Chiefs and Planning Managers that may or may not exist.

## ***9. THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY***

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**Major Recommendation: Leaders and managers need to continually talk to and be supportive of staff, and the Department needs to increase and improve communications with its external customers, stakeholders, and Planning Groups.**

It is human nature that when there are informational voids within an organization they will be filled by negative assumptions. Effective leaders institutionalize two-way communication throughout their organizations.

A fundamental communication leadership piece is lacking: the Department has no one to tell their story in terms of external communications about new programs or process improvements. As an example, a departmental mission statement or statement of values/goals/objectives is not readily available. The goals and objectives found on the web site have not been recently updated, and currently refer to the 2003-04 year. All such information should be easily found on the web, on posters and otherwise disseminated to all staff. They should also become the ongoing basis for staff discussions, as should the implementation of Citygate’s recommendations.

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There is also a significant shortfall in both intra- and inter-departmental communication. In particular, there is not a good process to communicate and reinforce the goals and values established by the County's long-range planning processes, as managed by Advanced Planning.

Because of the number of layers of management, the communication chain can get lengthy and too hierarchical. For instance, a CEQA issue might go from the Planner (project manager) to the Planning Manager to the Chief to the Deputy Director to the Director to the County Counsel's office, and back again.

Another aspect of communication is letting customers and staff know who is who on staff and what they do. An organizational chart with names, position title and location in the Department should be located on the web and in the permit center.

**Recommendation 9.1:**                    **Bring in team member(s) from the County Counsel's office for co-location to support to DPLU functions on-site at Ruffin Road.**

**Recommendation 9.2:**                    **Prepare and distribute up-to-date mission/goals/values statements.**

It is imperative that the staff of the new DPLU organization collectively participate in this activity. The process will be a way to buy into and take ownership of the Department's new philosophy.

**Recommendation 9.3:**                    **Identify and create effective communication tools to distribute important information about the Department and its processes.**

**Recommendation 9.4:**                    **Put a large organization chart in a prominent place that both staff and customers can view.**

**Recommendation 9.5:**                    **Increase outreach and coordination with community groups such as planning and sponsor groups.**

The County has many community groups that represent the various communities and citizens within the County. Groups such as the Community Planning and Sponsor Groups were established in part to serve an advisory role on planning and land use matters. The County does an admirable job of working with these groups. Many jurisdictions within California do not even have such groups established. However, the DPLU would be well served to increase the coordination with these groups.

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## 10. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DOES NOT MEET CURRENT OR FUTURE NEEDS

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**Major Recommendation:** The County needs to organize around the development review permitting process, rather than within its historical silos; the executive management structure needs to be re-thought.

As detailed and documented in the “*What Employees, Customers, and Stakeholders Are Saying*” section of this report, Citygate observed a major disconnect, in terms of process and communications between DPLU Regulatory Planning and DPW Land Development. As documented earlier in this report, the customers and stakeholders said:

- ◆ DPLU and DPW should focus on customer service
- ◆ There is a need for better coordination with DPLU and DPW
- ◆ Forty-nine percent of the customer survey respondents responded “No” when asked if initial information given by DPLU and DPW was accurate and complete
- ◆ Too many re-checks occur
- ◆ Customers need more communication on project status
- ◆ Project Managers do not manage reviews from other departments
- ◆ DPW and DPLU need to focus on customer service / knowledge / attitude / helpfulness / communication / next steps in process
- ◆ Eliminate “late hits”
- ◆ Implement interdepartmental Project Managers with accountability
- ◆ Need Case Managers from the beginning to the end of the process
- ◆ Multiple bites at the apple occur during engineering plan check due to staff turnover.

Let us first remind the reader that this type of customer feedback is not unusual or at all unique to San Diego County. Keep in mind, the County is in the regulatory business and the staff is charged first with looking out for the public good at large. Nonetheless, it is clear that these comments are symptomatic of the significant customer service disconnect between DPLU and DPW that we observed internally.

These problems can be traced to two elements. First, regulatory/review staffs from DPLU and DPW are in two different departments, reporting to two different management structures and operating under two different professional expectations. Second, planners and engineers are trained differently and are inclined to approach problem solving and customer and stakeholder relations very differently. Planners tend to approach a problem as a policy fix. Engineers tend to approach a problem as a need for better project management.

A common best practice for local jurisdictions is to place both the planning and engineering development review functions within a single department. This organizational structure approach adheres to the principle of “unity of command.” Unity of command can facilitate quicker decision-making and customer problem resolution, more nimble management of

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resource allocation, and better execution of project management. All of these factors have the likely potential of improving customer service.

Citygate therefore recommends that the County combine the development review functions of the DPW Land Development Division as detailed below with DPLU, creating a separate Division with a Deputy Director reporting to the Department Director. Doing so will better align the Land Development and the Regulatory Planning functions and geographic territories. This move will also enhance development review times and improve communication both internally with staff and externally with customers.

We note that one of the DPW Land Development teams was physically moved to co-locate with DPLU. This move has proved to be a very positive change. We recommend this successful approach be expanded.

All staff participants, particularly planners and engineers, need to view the development review permitting process across the lines of their individual professional disciplines. This is important when the DPW and DPLU organizations are trying to align their day-to-day work with the policy goals of the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. No step in the process can be viewed in isolation, be it planning, engineering, financing, infrastructure construction, building inspection, or post-occupancy mitigation monitoring. The Business Process Reengineering (BPR) initiative is an effort to develop a perspective on the development review permitting process that is more integrated and complete from beginning to end. Applications and projects all fall somewhere along the development review permitting process line.

Everyone in the County organization who has a hand in the development review permitting process needs to see and understand the big picture. They need to see and understand how their function fits into the policy goals of the County and the administrative expectations of the County's leadership team.

Within the DPW Land Development Division most of the DPLU interaction is with Private Projects Review Section of the Division, made up of five teams (North, South, East, Central and DPW/DPLU hybrid). There also exist two additional working groups that provide support and follow-up work in coordination with the Land Development group. This includes the Counter Services group that assists customers throughout the intake and review process, as well as issue various engineering-related development permits, and the Construction Inspectors group that follows up to make sure the engineering requirements are built correctly. Both these functions, counter staff and inspectors, should be combined with DPLU.

This change is important because the management overseeing the development review and permitting process needs to be able to directly manage and reinforce the need for better communication, improve teamwork and promote a more seamless process. The development engineering staff needs to know that development processing is Job #1, and both planners and engineers need to know that collaboration and communication in furtherance of this goal is critical.

Undoubtedly, this significant proposed organizational restructuring will require further study and analysis by LUEG. Many tradeoffs may need to be made in order to improve and optimize customer service. These tradeoffs may include which actual DPW organizational units should be placed with DPLU, versus which units can be co-located within their existing reporting relationships and still achieve optimal customer service delivery. In either case, significant

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analysis of procedures, policy and project coordination, risk management and liability exposure, the perspectives of key customers and stakeholders, and many other considerations will need to be made before this recommended restructuring can be completed. Whatever outcomes result from the analysis, it is clear that maintaining the organization's structural status quo will block the County's goal of significantly improving customer service in the development review permitting process.

**Recommendation 10.1:                      Combine Land Development Engineers, Inspectors, and Counter staff from DPW with DPLU and create a new department with a new name focused on ensuring development of communities consistent with the General Plan and Community Plans.**

DPW and DPLU staff should work together to determine precisely which positions and which individuals should move out of DPW and into the newly formed department. The decisions should be measured against the following three-tiered criteria:

1. Does the position/individual "touch" plans, applications, or permits as they move through the development review permitting process?
2. Does the position/individual spend a majority of his/her time fulfilling criteria number 1?
3. What is best for the customer, as opposed to the individual?

### **Co-Locate DPW's Transportation Planning with DPLU**

Citygate noted in our focus groups and stakeholders' meetings that often the timing and coordination comments were aimed at difficulties encountered when trying to solve transportation and traffic related issues.

It is a best practice to have land use and transportation planning and traffic engineering integrated as closely as possible because these programs interact closely and have significant potential to conflict with each other. In fact, there is a classic "chicken and egg" challenge about how these two functions should influence each other. Does building a road attract more intensive development or does planning for new development result in the new road?

Transportation planners and traffic engineers and land use planners have many of the same conflicting perspectives as those previously discussed between DPW and DPLU. As long as the staff responsible for these functions is in separate departments and physically separated, there will be significant potential for communication breakdowns, conflicting views on how and why planning is done and whose views are more important. For example, planners may prefer traffic calming methods like narrowed streets and traffic roundabouts. However, Public Works staff may think that these designs cause more headaches for emergency vehicles and there are capacity and safety concerns.

The transportation planning and traffic engineering staffs are key participants in the development review permitting process. The DPW engineers involved in transportation planning review important long-range planning documents such as the General Plan, Circulation Elements, and Specific Plans. They review and comment on related environmental documents and provide proposed mitigation. The DPW engineers involved in traffic engineering review and approve traffic plans for striping and pavement markings, traffic signs, traffic signals and flashers,

guardrail installations, traffic control plans, and traffic calming installations. At the entitlement stage and the plan review stage, both DPW groups play an important role in the development review permitting process.

Co-locating, co-leading, and co-integrating the transportation planning and traffic engineering staffs from DPW will go a long way to improving internal communication and producing more consistent County policies.

**Recommendation 10.2:** **Co-locate the Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering Plan Review and Permits groups from DPW with DPLU to better coordinate the development review permitting process.**

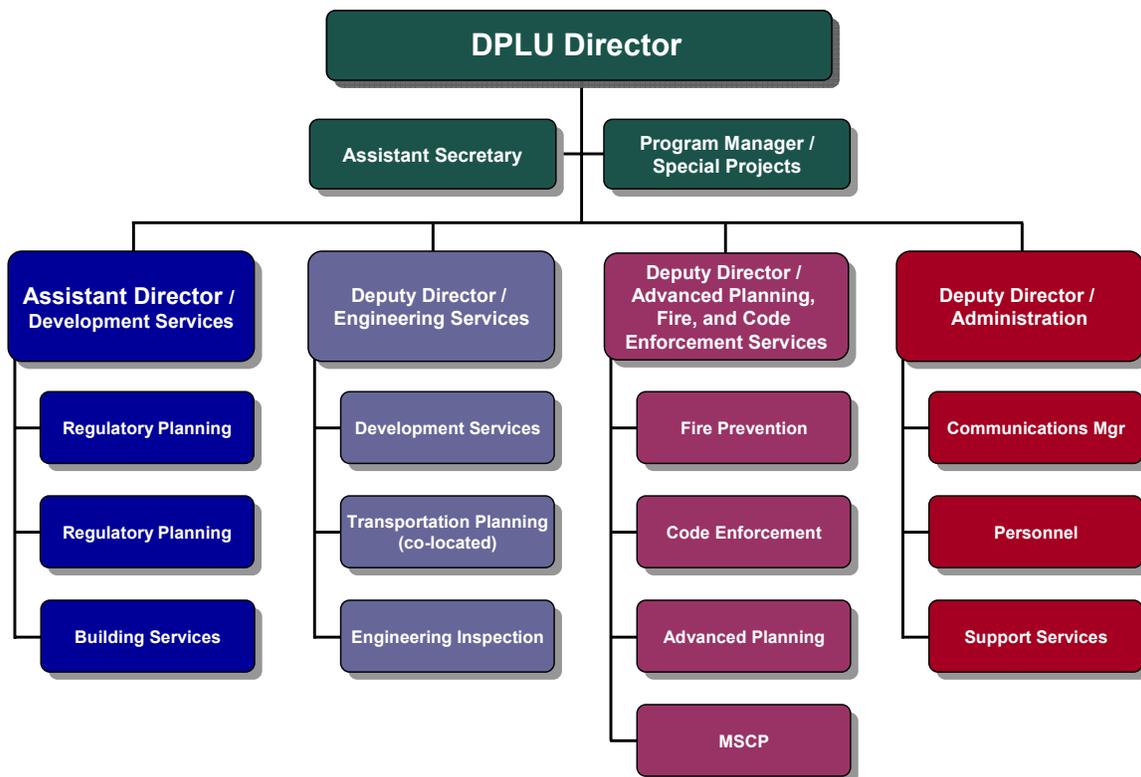
As noted above for the development engineers, DPW and DPLU staff should work together to determine precisely which transportation planning and traffic engineering positions, and which individuals, should be co-located out of DPW and into the newly formed department.

**Combine DPLU Watershed and DPW Watershed**

**Recommendation 10.3:** **Combine DPLU Watershed and DPW Watershed teams so that both teams operate within DPW Watershed.**

The County has watershed protection programs that operate out of DPLU and DPW. It is Citygate’s understanding that LUEG is considering combining these programs. Citygate agrees with and supports this movement to better align similar programs and expertise.

**Recommended Organizational Changes**



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## **The Ideal Directorship for Serving the County In the Future**

Citygate has identified the functions within an ideal DPLU Director's office, and describes below the skill sets, positions, and chain-of-command to support these functions. These functions include the following:

- ◆ Department leadership and vision
- ◆ External/internal communications
- ◆ Administrative Support Services (HR, Budget, Accounting, IT)
- ◆ Internal management and operations
- ◆ External management and operations
- ◆ Board member service requests.

Citygate has found that there are challenges with the current executive leadership in terms of functions, skill sets, positions, and chain-of-command. As a result, we believe upper management needs to be completely re-thought and reorganized so that the Director can be more proactive than reactive, and more leadership-driven than operationally involved. The Director must spend more time shaping and articulating a vision for the Department and, to the extent required, for land use in the County.

A major challenge for the Department and the Director is keeping on top of the volume of informational requests from the DCAO and citizens via the Board of Supervisors. Some managers are spending much of their time fielding such requests. Constituent communications is a legitimate concern and a significant and appropriate part of any elected official's duties. Nonetheless, when department managers are spending much of their time responding to such service requests, it means the managers are not as focused on department productivity, process improvements, staff concerns and customer inquiries.

The Director's Office currently consists of only two people: the Director and the Director's Assistant Secretary. Both the Personnel and Support Services groups are treated as separate organizational units like Planning Services and Development Services.

Neither the interim Director nor the future Director will be able to fulfill their leadership or visionary role with the existing organizational structure. As the Director's Office is currently organized, the Director is put in the position of spending the majority of his or her time being reactive and either answering emails or addressing constituent issues.

This rethinking and reshaping of the Director's Office is critically important, particularly in light of the fact that DPLU will be adding a significant number of personnel to its ranks by way of transfers from DPW, as detailed earlier in this section of the report.

In addition, the administrative support of the Department is fragmented because the Personnel function is separated from the balance of the administrative group.

The Department has no one to focus on telling its story. The external communications about new programs or process improvements is currently very weak. The fundamental communication leadership component is lacking.

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Citygate recommends the Director's Office be reorganized and expanded to more comprehensively address the issues and functions of the Department, as well as the needs of the Board of Supervisors and the public.

**Recommendation 10.4: Change the Chief of Administration position to a Deputy Director for Administration.**

DPLU currently has a Chief position that manages several administrative functions for the Department. This classification should be restructured so that the position becomes a Deputy Director for Administration. This position would function in an *Administrative Officer* capacity, and have expanded duties discussed further in this report.

**Recommendation 10.5: Have the Support Services Division and the Personnel Division be led by the Deputy Director of Administration.**

Citygate recommends that an *Administrative Officer* type position be established as a member of the Director's staff. In terms of the management hierarchy, the position should report to the Director and would provide supervision of budget, personnel, technology, and training services.

The position description should note that the Deputy Director of Administration:

- ◆ Assists the Director in planning, directing, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating the administrative activities of the Department
- ◆ Assists the Director in developing the Department's annual budget, and monitors revenue and expenditure transactions
- ◆ Conducts fiscal analysis and prepares cost projections
- ◆ Assists the Director in managing the Department's Human Resources program
- ◆ Assists the Director in managing the Department's Information Technology program.

The Director needs a Deputy Director of Administration who fulfills the sole job to assist in the management of the day-to-day support and operation functions in the Department, including responsibility for measuring performance, written procedures, staff training, budgeting and other departmental functions. The Deputy Director would also make sure training and professional development is taking place throughout the organization in support of the Director's vision and the needs identified by the planning staff and the Assistant and Deputy Directors.

The Deputy Director of Administration should be in charge of all administrative support services including personnel issues, document management, technology management, performance measures, budget and accounting. It is important to note that currently the developer deposits and the KIVA activity monitoring occur in the Development Services Division, but would be better located in the Administrative Division. Moving the KIVA activity tracking is important because performance measurements should be a department-wide function and not limited to development applications. Moving the developer deposits is important because there needs to be a higher level of fiscal scrutiny on these financial transactions and it would be better if the oversight occurred outside of the Development Services Division. There are three FTE associated with the deposits and with the KIVA functions that should be moved to the

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Administrative Division. The Developer Deposits that are currently in Regulatory Planning should be moved to this group.

Creating the Deputy Director of Administration position would free up the Assistant and other Deputy Directors to focus more on managing the planning functions of their respective divisions.

**Recommendation 10.6:                   Change the Deputy Director/Development Services title to Assistant Director/Development Services.**

We recommend that the County change the current Deputy Director/Development Services title to Assistant Director/Development Services in order to free up the Director to be able to create a more proactive and less reactive approach to leading the Department. Having a designated number two in the Department will allow the Director, as stated earlier, to spend more time shaping and articulating a vision for the Department and, to the extent required, for land use in the County.

Most of the day-to-day contacts with the County’s development review permitting process customers take place in the Development Services/Regulatory Planning arena. It is best to have the Assistant Director also be responsible for both “line” and “staff” functions, as is the case in other County departments. The Assistant Director/Development Services could serve as Acting Director in the Director’s absence.

**Recommendation 10.7:                   Add a program manager type position to deal with special projects and the day-to-day customer complaints and concerns.**

Citygate has seen a similar position function with effectiveness and efficiency in terms of resolving customer issues. This position would work between line staff and the applicant/citizen to resolve process issues, improve communication and identify systematic process issues that need to be resolved. It is important that this be a “people person” who is respected by the line staff and who has the full faith and confidence of the Director and the Assistant and Deputy Directors.

This position would also free up the Director and Assistant and Deputy Directors to focus more on managing the operations in their respective divisions.

The position would report directly to the Director and serve as a liaison to the other Assistant and Deputy Directors. Although this position would not have the line authority of an Assistant or Deputy Director, it is important that the position be seen as a vital peer who has authority from the Director to vigorously pursue customer and stakeholder concerns. The position would also be available to work on special projects that the Director identifies to further implement the Director’s vision for the Department.

**Recommendation 10.8:                   Add a new Communications Manager.**

The Communications Manager would be in the Administrative Division. This person would develop and implement a new department Communications Plan. Such a plan would address the need to improve the internal and external communications. Citygate understands that at the time of the writing of this report a communications expert has been hired.

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In terms of communications, there are a variety of possible communications devices that can be employed. This could include sending out an e-newsletter to external customers, creating an internal Director’s communication to staff, working with the press by either responding to inquiries or generating positive information. This person would also take on the important task of improving internal staff communications between management and line staff.

The Communications Manager would report directly to the Deputy Director of Administration. Again, this is important because the Communications Manager is not involved in operational functions, but is dealing with daily triage on media and other communication-related issues.

### **Desired Outcome**

The cumulative impact of restructuring staff to take on these important tasks will be that the Director can redirect his or her efforts towards providing potent organizational leadership for the staff and take on the task of articulating a vision for the DPLU organization as well as a vision of what the County will look like in the future and how that vision will be achieved.

### **Sequencing**

It is important to first hire the new Director. The new Director needs to be able to hire people who compliment his or her management style and personality. That is not to say the Director should hire people just like him or her. It is more important to hire people who will compensate for the areas in which the Director may be limited or need support.

### **Executive Team Traits When Considering Permanent Appointments**

The purpose of this sub-section is for Citygate, with an eye toward the future, to address the recruitment specifications for the new Executive Team and to examine the current DPLU leadership structure. Towards this end we have identified the extent to which DPLU has developed effective and thoughtful transition strategies in response to planned and unplanned recruitments. We have detailed herein the characteristics of the ‘Ideal Candidate’ for each of the five (5) DPLU executive team positions that are currently filled by an “Interim” appointee. Our descriptions include the professional qualifications, skill sets, and necessary experience of each position so that the Executive Team, as a whole, will be well positioned to lead DPLU into the future.

#### ***Leadership Transition Plan***

Prior to our engagement by the County, “Interim” appointments were made to the following Executive Team positions:

- ◆ Director
- ◆ Deputy Director Advanced Planning
- ◆ Deputy Director Development Services
- ◆ Chief, Land Use - Regulatory
- ◆ Chief, Land Use - Advanced Planning.

In order to fully understand the future leadership needs of DPLU and the County, Citygate first interviewed staff members at all points along the chain of command in DPLU. We also

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interviewed key staff members in other departments that interact with the development review permitting process, two Planning Commissioners, and the County Administrative Office leadership team. We held two stakeholders’ meetings and four customer focus groups, conducted an employee survey and a customer survey. We examined DPLU organization charts, organization programs and functions, workflow data, permit activity data, policies and procedures, and DPLU budget information.

We examined the DPLU mission, goals, and objectives, as well as the County’s General Management System.

Citygate concludes that the County has an effective and thoughtful transition strategy in response to planned and unplanned recruitments, based on the following findings:

- ◆ The County understands the urgency of filling the interim positions because of the need to improve staff morale, institutionalize process improvements and simply get back to normalized operations.
- ◆ The County hired Citygate with the express purpose of building a base set of best practice recommendations upon which new and existing staff can proceed in the future and build organizational confidence in the outcome.
- ◆ Citygate’s interviews with top management revealed a strong desire to move on and gain the staff’s confidence in real resolutions to both organizational and process issues.

### *Analysis of Current Organizational Setting*

The Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) has three levels of planning managers that make up the “Executive Team.” They are:



The information used in this analysis came from both the County’s Human Resources website and the documentation that the County provided to Citygate early in the process. Both sets of information were identical and consistent.

Director, Planning and Land Use: Since there is only one Director, there are no issues about insufficient information regarding job duties found in the other categories. Eric Gibson is currently the interim Director.

Deputy Director, Planning and Land Use: The Department has two Deputy Directors. One is the Deputy Director for Development Services and the other is the Deputy Director for Advanced Planning Services. These are two very different jobs. In the planning lexicon they are called “current planning” and “long range planning.” The demands of these jobs are entirely different on several levels. Jeff Murphy is the interim Deputy Director for Advanced Planning, and Glenn Russell is the Deputy Director for Development Services.

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Chief, Land Use: The Department has seven (7) Chiefs. They are in charge of Advanced Planning, MSCP/Watershed, Building Services, Code Enforcement, Support Services and two groups within Regulatory Planning. Again, all of the positions have very different missions and programs. The two acting Interim Chiefs are Jason Giffen (Regulatory) and Devon Muto (Advanced Planning).

### *Analysis of Current Job Classifications*

All of the job descriptions are more generalized than the actual work of the position holder, with the one exception being the Director because there is only one incumbent in the class within DPLU. A more generalized job description has the advantage of being used more broadly with less discussion about specific jobs duties. Conversely, having such a generalized position description makes it harder to address the specific qualifications that the jobholder needs to successfully complete his or her duties. This problem becomes more and more evident as one moves further down the job hierarchy.

Director, Planning and Land Use: The “classification purpose; distinguishing characteristics; knowledge, skills and abilities; and special notes, licenses, or requirement” sections comprehensively address the position needs. However, the “education/experience” section is inadequate. It merely says that “Education, training, and/or experience that demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities listed above.” San Diego’s Department of Planning and Land Use is one of the larger agencies in the country. It is also one of the most complex organizationally. One would expect that the position would require an advanced degree such as a Masters of Urban Planning or Master of Public Administration. It would also be important to state that the applicant needs many years of progressive management experience. It would be reasonable to require at least 10 years of such experience.

Deputy Director, Planning and Land Use: The “classification purpose; distinguishing characteristics; knowledge, skills and abilities; and special notes, licenses, or requirement” sections comprehensively address the position needs. The existing Deputy Director positions are polar opposites in terms of experience and day-to-day activities. Current planning and long range planning are very different in practice, in terms of constituencies and in terms of real job experience. The Deputy should have the same advanced degrees as the Director. For some reason, the job description does not even list any education requirements. The progressive job experience could be reduced to 5 years. The past job experience should be specific to the new job.

Chief, Land Use: The “classification purpose; distinguishing characteristics; knowledge, skills and abilities; and special notes, licenses, or requirement” sections comprehensively address the position needs. The job duties of the Chiefs are all over the map. One is even the head of “Support Services.” Oddly, the Chief does have more specific education requirements than the Director or Deputy Director. The Chief must have “five (5) years of professional experience,” “two years of which must have been at a level comparable to Land Use/Environmental Planning Manager” and have a “bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in urban or regional planning...”

The leader of the Advanced Planning Services program, which is currently held by an interim Deputy Director appointee, needs to play a visionary role in terms of helping the Director and Assistant Director create and promote the future of San Diego County. The person appointed to

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this position needs to be more than an able manager of the staff and the programs. This person must be able to communicate ideas and alternatives to the public and the media in a compelling way.

**Recommendation 10.9:**                   **Appoint a visionary leader for the County’s Advanced Planning program.**

*Customer/Stakeholder Input on Executive Team Skills and Traits*

It would be advisable to revise the position descriptions with the customer/stakeholder input in mind. Citygate conducted stakeholders’ meetings, customer surveys, and customer focus groups to find out what DPLU customers would like in terms of DPLU executive team professional qualifications, skill sets, and experience.

There was a general consensus that the Executive Team needed to be creative, top level, dynamic leaders. They also wanted an Executive Team that used common sense, instilled a respect for clients in their staff and demonstrated personal integrity. They wanted leadership that did not micro-manage, was willing to delegate decision-making and who made sure staff does not change their decisions later. When managing their staff, they wanted the Executive Team to convey the urgency of the client’s needs and to take disciplinary action when the staff failed to meet such high standards or were found to be carrying out personal agendas that were beyond the Department’s operational expectations.

*Staff Input on Executive Team Skills and Traits*

Citygate conducted interviews that included all levels of the County organization from the County Administrator, DPLU managers, down to the front permit counter staff. Several concerns, although not universally expressed, were nonetheless notable. They include the following:

- ◆ Some managers do not have the management skills to succeed in their jobs. They were promoted for various reasons, but not because they had a solid management background.
- ◆ The lack of experienced managers is a problem.
- ◆ There is management, but not leadership.

*Ideal Leadership Candidates: Desirable Traits, Knowledge, and Necessary Experience*

The education and experience of the Director and Deputy Director needs to be equal to or superior to that of the lower-level manager/supervisor. These positions should require at least a master’s degree and at least 10 years or 5 years (respectively) of management experience.

The individual positions need to articulate what the expectations are for the specific job. This is true for Deputy Director, Land Use Chief and Planning Manager. It is possible to keep the general job description and then add the specific for each of the types of positions that are available over time.

Given the abstract character of the customer/stakeholder input, it might be worth testing and/or training the Director and Deputy Director applicants for aptitude and attitude when it comes to managing customer relations and expectations. Citygate currently has a “Leadership

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Development” program that works with staff in leadership positions to evaluate them and teach them what the characteristics of leaders are and how to develop them.

There is an expectation that top management be more than efficient managers of a well-run organization. There is an expectation by the stakeholders to have a director who is “dynamic” and a “visionary.” Although there is no test for such qualities, it is possible to make site visits to the communities where the applicants currently reside. It is worth talking to civic leaders about whether the candidate has such qualities.

Citygate recommends that the County recruit for and expect the following professional qualifications, skill sets, and levels of experience for each of the executive team positions currently held by “Acting Interim” appointees:

#### Director

Desirable Traits: Leadership (visionary, teacher, server, organizer, mediator, idealist, provider)<sup>4</sup>. Also: team builder, exhibits empathy for internal and external customers, excellent communication skills, ability to triage/damage control, delegator and decision maker.

Knowledge: Principles, practices, techniques, and concepts of planning, as applied to county government. Skills: plan, organize, direct, and evaluate the overall activities of staff involved in the preparation and implementation of land use policies and public decisions.<sup>5</sup>

Necessary Experience: At least 10 years of progressive experience as a professional manager and a master’s degree in urban or regional planning, public administration or related field.

#### Deputy Director Advanced Planning

Desirable Traits: Experience in the development and implementation of General Plans, as well as other planning documents and programs. Also: team builder, empathy for internal and external customers, excellent communication skills, ability to triage/damage control, decision maker.

Knowledge: Concepts, principles and practices of planning, land development and the regulation, construction and other implementation mechanisms as applied by governmental entities. Skills: plan, organize, and direct the activities of divisional staff involved in the preparation and implementation of land use policies and public decisions and the review and processing of land development proposals and permits.<sup>6</sup>

Necessary Experience: At least 5 years of progressive experience as a professional manager and a master’s degree in urban or regional planning, public administration or related field.

#### Deputy Director Development Services

Desirable Traits: Experience in regulating private and public sector development projects. Also: team builder, empathy for internal and external customers, excellent communication skills, ability to triage/damage control, decision maker.

Knowledge: Concepts, principles and practices of planning, land development and the regulation, construction and other implementation mechanism as applied by governmental entities. Skills:

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<sup>4</sup> Character First categories. Character First Institute (<http://www.characterfirst.com/>).

<sup>5</sup> County of San Diego, Department of Human Resources, Class Specification No.002137

<sup>6</sup> County of San Diego, Department of Human Resources, Class Specification No.002288

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plan, organize, and direct the activities of divisional staff involved in the preparation and implementation of land use policies and public decisions and the review and processing of land development proposals and permits.<sup>7</sup>

Necessary Experience: At least 5 years of progressive experience as a professional manager and a master's degree in urban or regional planning, public administration or related field.

#### Chief, Land Use (Regulatory)

Desirable Traits: Team building, mentoring, staff direction.

Knowledge: Concepts, theories, and regulations governing the planning and development of private residential, commercial, and industrial land improvements and building construction (e.g., land use planning, environmental planning, capital facilities planning, growth management, land use, and land development regulations). Skills: administer, organize, assign, and supervise the work of multi-disciplinary professional and non-professional staff.<sup>8</sup>

Necessary Experience: At least 5 years of progressive experience as a professional manager and a bachelor's degree in urban or regional planning or related field. At least 2 years experience at a level comparable to Land Use/Environmental Manager.

#### Chief, Land Use (Advanced Planning)

Desirable Traits: Team building, mentoring, staff direction, visionary.

Knowledge: Concepts, theories, and regulations governing the planning and development of private residential, commercial, and industrial land improvements and building construction (e.g., land use planning, environmental planning, capital facilities planning, growth management, land use, and land development regulations). Skills: administer, organize, assign, and supervise the work of multi-disciplinary professional and non-professional staff.<sup>9</sup>

Necessary Experience: At least 5 years of progressive experience as a professional manager and a bachelor's degree in urban or regional planning or related field. At least 2 years experience at a level comparable to Land Use/Environmental Manager.

### Facility Improvements to Enhance Customer Service

Most of the development-related County groups that applicants need to work with are located in a central site on Ruffin Road.

The current building that houses the DPLU and related functions leaves a lot to be desired.

Citygate has observed that the quality and functionality of a building often reflects on how the public perceives the local government staff and County processes. In this case, the existing building is old and has obviously been retrofitted for DPLU use. The DPLU and DPW/Development groups all work in what was an old warehouse with no natural light.

The optimum facility would be inviting, organized, quiet, calm and highly professional. The County is planning to build a new facility within the next few years. However, given the current

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<sup>7</sup> County of San Diego, Department of Human Resources, Class Specification No.002288

<sup>8</sup> County of San Diego, Department of Human Resources, Class Specification No.000968

<sup>9</sup> County of San Diego, Department of Human Resources, Class Specification No.000968

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economic downturn, it is hard to say when such a facility may actually be built and opened. A great deal of attention needs to be spent in the design program phase to the actual functions and interactions of the DPLU groups, optimal adjacencies, etc. in order to maximize good communication.

A great deal of time and thought also need to be spent in designing a permit center that addresses customer needs efficiently and in an atmosphere that reflects what they are used to in the private sector.

**Recommendation 10.10:**            **Plan for the new facility to be built in the next 5 years around the development application communication flow.**

**Recommendation 10.11:**            **Design the new permit center with customer service and the permit process in mind.**

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## SECTION VII—REVIEW OF EXTERNAL AGENCY “BEST PRACTICES”

As part of this study, Citygate Associates undertook a survey of comparable county departments. We identified high volume growth, high volume development review permitting agencies – in Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties in California and Clark County in Washington – which have comparable functional areas to San Diego County. We set out to determine the operating practices they employ and to assess their ‘best practices.’ The comparable agencies have areas of similar growth characteristics and services as San Diego County.

### Demographics of Comparable Counties

Government Agency	Population	Growth
Sacramento County	1,407,000	1.4%
Los Angeles County	10,331,939	0.7%
Orange County	3,098,121	0.9%
<b>San Diego County</b>	<b>3,098,269</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

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All the agencies surveyed use some form of the community development model in terms of organizational structure. However, the development review functions were not always under the control of one agency. Citygate has observed that the best model, in terms of processing applications, is when one department directs and controls all development review permitting process activities. Sacramento, Los Angeles and Orange Counties have lesser and varying degrees of overall management direction and control of the development review permitting process. For example, Sacramento and Los Angeles Counties do not have the building permit or engineering functions in the same department as current planning. Orange County also does not have engineering in-house.

### Description of Comparable Agencies

Government Agency	Organizational Structure	Staff
Sacramento County, Planning and Community Development Dept	Some functions within a single department. This includes current and long range planning, and code enforcement. But not building, fire, engineering or environmental health.	96
Los Angeles County, Department of Regional Planning	Some functions within a single department. This includes current and long range planning, and code enforcement. But not fire, building, engineering or environmental health.	204
Orange County Planning Department	Some functions in a single department. Includes current and long range planning, and building. But not engineering, code enforcement, fire marshal or environmental health.	87
Clark County, Community Development Department	Most functions within a single department. This includes current and long range planning, building, engineering, fire marshal and code enforcement. But not environmental health.	160
San Diego County, Department of Planning and Land Use	Most functions within a single department. This includes current and long range planning, building, fire and code enforcement. But not engineering or environmental health.	230

### BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Citygate interviewed the department heads who oversee the development review permitting process in the top-ranked five counties. The purpose of the interview was to determine the types of best practices being used in each agency.

#### Best Management Practices Used by Comparable Agencies

Government Agency	Electronic Permitting System	Ongoing Electronic Permitting Training	Online/Fax on Demand Permitting	Ongoing Customer Service Training	Ongoing Process Procedures Manual	Process Performance Measures
Sacramento	Yes	Weak	No	No	No	No
Los Angeles	No	No	No	No	Yes	Weak
Orange	Yes	Weak	No	No	Weak	Yes
Clark County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>San Diego</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

A review of the five (5) county agencies' practices revealed varying degrees of contrast with those of San Diego County. As part of this performance review, Citygate contacted the planning

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directors and top staff in the five counties in order to identify best practices employed in these counties that could be used in San Diego County to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Most of the counties did poorly in terms of doing ongoing electronic permit training, customer service training, maintaining an ongoing procedures manual and identifying process performance measures. All of the counties, except Los Angeles, have some form of electronic permitting. However, only Clark County spent time doing ongoing training on using their systems. By far, San Diego had the most extensive and aggressive process performance measures program. Clark County also identifies process performance measures, but does not measure them in as much detail or in as automated a mode.

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## SECTION VIII—REVIEW OF LITERATURE SOURCES

The purpose of this section is to augment the County’s knowledge on current development review practices through Citygate’s survey and literature search efforts. A variety of published sources are listed below that provide national data on various benchmarks and operational norms, as well as case studies on the results of experimental and state-of-the-art land development service practices and other relevant issues. The results of our experience with comparable agencies, relevant literature in the profession, and our collective knowledge of best practices have been integrated into our study to maximize opportunities for defining the most contemporary and useful recommendations possible.

### LITERATURE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE LOCAL LAND USE AGENCY

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- McClendon, Bruce W., and Ray Quay. Mastering Change: Winning Strategies for Effective City Planning. Planners Press/American Planning Association, 1988
- McClendon, Bruce W. Customer Service in Local Government: Challenges for Planners and Managers. APA Planners Press, 1992
- Begg, Iain. Urban Competitiveness: Policies for Dynamic Cities. The Policy Press, 2002 (written from perspective of British agencies)
- Duncan, James, and Arthur Nelson. Growth Management Principles and Practices. APA Planners Press, 1995
- Zucker, Paul. ABZs of Planning Management. West Coast Publishing, 1983

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Branch, Melville. Urban Planning Theory. Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1975

Chapin, Stuart, and Edward Kaiser. Urban Land Use Planning. University of Illinois Press, 1979

Blair, Fredrick. Planning Cities. APA Planners Press, 1970

### *General Public Agency Management*

Radin, Beryl. Challenging the Performance Movement: Accountability, Complexity, and Democratic Values (Public Management and Change). Georgetown University Press, 2006

Managing Government Services: A Practical Guide, 3rd ed. International City/County Management Association

Agranoff, Robert, and Michael McGuire. Collaborative Public Management. Georgetown University Press, 2003

Bryson, John M. Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations. Jossey-Bass, 1995

### *Management*

A few **interesting books** for the manager:

Gardner, Howard, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and William Damon. Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet. Basic Books, 2002

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. Good Business: Leadership, Flow, and the Making of Meaning. Viking, 2003

Susskind, Lawrence, and Patrick Field. Dealing with an Angry Public: The Mutual Gains Approach to Resolving Disputes. The Free Press, 1996

### *Fiction*

**Fiction** has innumerable lessons for the manager. A couple of metaphorical guides to managing human assets that are also enjoyable reads:

Baum, L. Frank. The Wizard of Oz. HarperCollins Publishers

Asprin, Robert Lynn. Phule's Company. The Berkley Publishing Group, 1990

Asprin, Robert Lynn. Another Fine Myth. The Berkley Publishing Group, 1978

## **END OF VOLUME 1 REPORT**

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**APPENDIX A**

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:  
AN ACTION PLAN**

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# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: AN ACTION PLAN

## *OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN*

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A listing of our recommendations and a blueprint for their implementation are presented in the Action Plan. This Plan contains:

1. the priority of each recommendation
2. the suggested implementation time frame
3. the anticipated benefits of each recommendation
4. the responsible parties.

The legend at the bottom of each page of the Action Plan defines the level of each priority indicated by the letters “A” through “D.” It is important to note that priorities have been established independent of the suggested timeframe. For example, a recommendation may have the highest priority (indicated by the letter “A”) but may require an estimated six months to implement. Conversely, a recommendation with the letter “C” priority, which indicates that the recommendation is not critical but will improve operations, may have a two month timeframe, since the estimated implementation effort would not require an extended period of time.

It is also important to note that an “A” priority, which indicates that the recommendation is deemed “mandatory or critical,” should not be interpreted to mean that the recommendation is “mandated” by a statute or regulation – it is simply an “urgent” recommendation of the highest priority.

The timeframes indicated in the Action Plan do not necessarily mean the anticipated completion dates for the implementation of each recommendation.

## ACTION PLAN

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>1. CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN ALL DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation: Customer service must be the top priority in the new organization.</b>				
<b>Recommendation 1.1:</b> When financially feasible, re-open the satellite service centers.	C	As soon as financially feasible	Provide better customer service and better access to a very large geographic area.	DCAO
<b>Recommendation 1.2:</b> Increase the cost of permit fees in order to adequately fund the customer service function and maintain reasonable wait times. Maintain these fees at an adequate level by annual indexing and frequent review.	B	180 days	Maintain an adequate staffing level in order to process applications in a timely manner and to improve communication with applicants and internal staff.	DCAO, DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 1.3:</b> Display real-time wait times on the web to help customers self-select when to come down to the permit center.	C	90 days	Provide customer choice of when and/or where to go and will result in reduced wait times.	IT with Counter Managers
<b>Recommendation 1.4:</b> Establish an online document/plan submittal process.	B	120 days	Reduce the time spent submitting an application and create more consistency in the process.	IT with Counter Managers
<b>Recommendation 1.5:</b> Eliminate the “hand-carry by applicant” permit system and replace it with an internal routing system.	A	120 days	Create a faster and more efficient routing of customers and applicants.	Deputy Directors

**LEGEND**

- A Recommendation mandatory or critical
- B Strongly recommended
- C Not critical, but will improve operations
- D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 1.6:</b> Create a Permit Center express drop-off service.	B	120 days	Create a faster and more efficient routing of customers and applicants.	Deputy Directors
<b>Recommendation 1.7:</b> Provide an appointment system by Internet.	A	120 days	Improve the ability and timing of customers to schedule appointments and to expedite the development process.	Deputy Directors and IT
<b>Recommendation 1.8:</b> Assign project managers to project applications early in the process and have them remain as the customer's "go-to person" on ALL aspects of the project through completion.	B	90 days	Improve communication among staff and with applicants which results in improved customer service and satisfaction, and improve efficiency of process management and process accountability.	DPLU Director and Deputy Directors
<b>Recommendation 1.9:</b> Appoint a technical editor to review the array of customer documents for user friendliness and clarity of purpose.	D	90 days	Improve the ability of the customer to understand the requirements of the County for any project.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 1.10:</b> Establish on-going customer service training.	B	60 days	Improve the organizational culture to one focused on the customer as well as the process.	DPLU Director and HR
<b>Recommendation 1.11:</b> Institute an "Unanticipated Service" program.	C	60 days	Increase customer satisfaction.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 1.12:</b> Develop a LUEG-wide sense of urgency and timeliness of development processes; encourage, support, and promote staff that embraces this philosophy.	A	30 days	Change the culture of LUEG so that it is more customer service driven and less regulatory driven.	DPLU Director

**Appendix A—Action Plan**

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 1.13:</b> Improve the timeliness and accuracy of the accounting software program; provide secure Current Account Status online for DPLU customers.	B	120 days	Improve fiscal responsibility by DPLU staff and improve access to information for applicants.	IT, DPLU Administrative Division
<b>2. PROCESSING TIMES FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TAKE TOO LONG</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation:</b> Processing times need to be monitored closely to ensure leadership is available to support responsive high-quality decisions close to the point of contact with the customer.				
<i>See recommendations set forth in findings 3 and 4.</i>				
<b>3. INTERDEPARTMENTAL AND INTERDIVISIONAL COORDINATION ARE INCONSISTENT AND OFTEN WEAK</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation:</b> The silos and walls between the departments and divisions involved in the development review permitting system need to be eliminated.				
<b>Recommendation 3.1:</b> Institute a Development Review Team to review appropriate large discretionary projects, and smaller ones when warranted or requested by applicant.	A	90 days	Provide for greater staff understanding of specific projects and reduce later process problems for the applicant.	DCAO, LUEG Department Directors
<b>Recommendation 3.2:</b> Empower members of the Development Review Team with authority to solve development issues and make commitments for their respective Department(s).	A	90 days	Provide for greater staff understanding of specific projects and reduce later process problems for the applicant.	LUEG Department Directors

<p><b>LEGEND</b></p> <p>A Recommendation mandatory or critical</p> <p>B Strongly recommended</p> <p>C Not critical, but will improve operations</p> <p>D Recommended, but additional study required</p>
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Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 3.3:</b> Increase the amount of time that team member(s) from the County Counsel's office are co-located to be on-site at DPLU.	A	60 days	Improve day-to-day communication regarding legal issues that occur with applications.	County Counsel
<b>Recommendation 3.4:</b> Improve the quality of the pre-application conferences and reinforce mandatory attendance for key staff from DPLU and other departments.	A	30 days	Create a more comprehensive approach to informing the applicant about what they will need to do during the permit process.	LUEG Department Directors
<b>Recommendation 3.5:</b> Have experienced on-the-spot decision makers from each discipline in attendance at the DRT at all times.	A	30 days	Improve process timelines and decision-making.	LUEG Department Directors
<b>Recommendation 3.6:</b> Empower and reward those employees who demonstrate results across divisional and departmental lines.	B	Immediate	Make the permit review and long range planning processes timely and efficient.	LUEG Department Directors
<b>Recommendation 3.7:</b> Move the developer deposit function to the Support Services team in order to maintain greater fiscal control.	C	90 days	Creates greater fiscal accountability.	DPLU Director

**Appendix A—Action Plan**

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>4. PERFORMANCE AND ACCURACY INCONSISTENCIES IN THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS HAVE REVEALED A NEED FOR ONGOING REGULATORY, PROCEDURAL, AND COST ACCOUNTING IMPROVEMENTS</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation:</b> Delivering a high quality, highly consistent and highly coordinated work product requires an ongoing, continual reassessment of regulations, procedures, and cost accounting.				
<b>Recommendation 4.1:</b> Continue the POD program; if needed, expand the POD program in the future.	B	1 year	Continual upgrading of the regulatory system to make sure it is current, relevant, and responsive to changing community needs.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 4.2:</b> Designate one staff person, and a designated back-up, to manage all sign-offs for final approval of a project.	A	120 days	Create consistency in the final approval process and identify improvements over time.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 4.3:</b> Eliminate multiple “bites at the apple” during the development review permitting process.	A	60 days	Expedite the permit review process and improve customer service.	DCAO, Directors of LUEG Departments
<b>Recommendation 4.4:</b> Have DPLU provide direct contracts for the preparation of EIRs and Negative Declarations as a customer service option.	B	180 days	Provides increased customer choice and customer satisfaction.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 4.5:</b> Institute a more flexible and collaborative problem-solving approach to the County’s CEQA review of EIRs and Negative Declarations to increase customer satisfaction.	A	90 days	Provides increased customer satisfaction; increased efficiency and effectiveness of the development review permitting process.	DCAO, County Counsel; DPLU Director

<p><b>LEGEND</b></p> <p>A Recommendation mandatory or critical</p> <p>B Strongly recommended</p> <p>C Not critical, but will improve operations</p> <p>D Recommended, but additional study required</p>
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Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 4.6:</b> Improve real-time systems for developer accounts; eliminate deficit spending.	A	90 days	Create greater fiscal accountability.	IT with Support
<b>Recommendation 4.7:</b> Time spent communicating with applicants, whether in a meeting or by telephone, needs to be an accepted time activity that is measured toward productive time.	A	30 days	Staff will spend more time with permit applicants and improve their communication.	DPLU Director with Deputies
<b>5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS NOT ADEQUATELY CUSTOMER ORIENTED</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation: Emphasis must be placed upon delivering desirable outcomes for the County and its customers/stakeholders.</b>				
<b>Recommendation 5.1:</b> Maintain a single case project manager for the life of the project.	A	90 days	Improve communication among staff and with applicants, enhance customer service and satisfaction, and increase efficiency of process management and process accountability.	DPLU Deputy Director, Development Services
<b>Recommendation 5.2:</b> Establish project management teams consisting, at a minimum, of Planning, Engineering and legal counsel via the Development Review Team, or DRT.	A	90 days	Improve communication among staff and improve efficiency of the operational process management.	LUEG DCAO, DPLU Director, County Counsel
<b>Recommendation 5.3:</b> Provide management direction and performance tools to ensure that pre-application meetings are productive.	A	Immediate	Improve the communication of information to the customer so they understand what is required.	DPLU Director and Deputy Directors

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 5.4:</b> Revise the workload measurement system to place more value on needed meetings with applicants, including pre-application meetings and issue-resolution meetings.	B	120 days	Staff will be able to spend more time with the applicants in terms of assuring that the project is processed in a timely and efficient manner.	DPLU Director and Deputy Directors
<b>Recommendation 5.5:</b> Institute performance measures that relate to customer satisfaction issues, specifically including timeliness and completeness on the initial review.	A	60 days	Expedite the permit review process and improve qualitative customer service.	DPLU Director, Deputies and Chiefs
<b>6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE LIMITED IN TERMS OF QUALITATIVE EFFECTIVENESS</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation:</b> Performance measures need to address a broader set of more qualitative factors.				
<b>Recommendation 6.1:</b> Reevaluate the activity tracking and measuring system to measure more outcomes.	A	Immediate	Increase staff productivity in processing applications and improve staff morale.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 6.2:</b> Revise the measurement system to place value on needed meetings with applicants, including pre-application meetings and issue-resolution meetings.	A	120 days	Improve the permit process for the applicant by providing more information.	DPLU Director/Deputy Directors
<b>Recommendation 6.3:</b> Institute additional performance measures in order to capture qualitative customer satisfaction issues.	A	30 days	Improve the permit process for the applicant by providing more information.	DPLU Director/Deputy Directors

<p><b>LEGEND</b></p> <p>A Recommendation mandatory or critical  B Strongly recommended  C Not critical, but will improve operations  D Recommended, but additional study required</p>
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Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 6.4:</b> Hold employees accountable to cross-departmental cycle time standards.	B	30 days	Make the permit review and long range planning processes timely and efficient.	LUEG Department Directors
<b>Recommendation 6.5:</b> Measure and reward performance that reinforces the County's/Department's goals and vision.	B	30 days	Reinforce the General Management System program.	DPLU Director/Deputy Directors
<b>Recommendation 6.6:</b> Reduce Planning Manager caseload so they can mentor, coach, and supervise front line personnel.	A	60 days	Provide line staff with more direction and reinforce overall consistency in the permit review process and in long range planning.	DPLU Director/Deputy Directors
<b>7. TECHNOLOGY WILL BE AN ONGOING CHALLENGE; THERE ARE CURRENT AND FUTURE ISSUES</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation: The County and the Department need to continually invest in and train for new technologies.</b>				
<b>Recommendation 7.1:</b> Aggressively scan and convert files to electronic form.	B	1 year	Provide easier access by staff to information and reduce the possibility of losing information.	Support
<b>Recommendation 7.2:</b> Upgrade the web site to allow point-of-sale on small permits, publish permit center wait times, and allow for customers to schedule building inspections.	A	1 year	Reduce staff time spent working directly with customers and increases the customers access to permits in less time.	IT with Deputies
<b>Recommendation 7.3:</b> Continue to aggressively pursue Accela implementation.	A	When feasible	Improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the permit review process.	DPLU Director; IT with Support Services Division staff
<b>Recommendation 7.4:</b> Provide project status and projected timeline through the web site.	B	90 days	Improve access to information for the applicant and reduce staff time spent answering questions on the telephone or in person.	IT

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 7.5:</b> Create an electronic sign off process for final applications.	B	120 days	Reduce the time spent submitting an application and create more consistency in the process.	IT with LUEG Directors
<b>8. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT FULLY ALIGNED WITH CURRENT NEEDS; STAFFING AND TURNOVER NEED TO BE ADDRESSED</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation: The Department needs to make a serious commitment to ongoing training and professional development for its valued employees, particularly as it affects staffing and turnover.</b>				
<b>Recommendation 8.1:</b> Establish a focused and ongoing mentoring program, as well as training programs in management, professional development and project management.	B	90 days	Improve the professionalism and productiveness of line staff and improve staff morale.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 8.2:</b> Conduct a training needs assessment for the Department that includes professional development expectations for each staff person.	A	180 days	Increase value, skills, and sense of ownership among employees; increase customer satisfaction.	DPLU Director, Personnel Analyst
<b>Recommendation 8.3:</b> Provide for and support training in the technical job knowledge and skills to remain up to date.	B	90 days	Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of staff in carrying out their duties.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 8.4:</b> Create a customer perspective training program for DPLU staff.	C	90 days	Improve the understanding of staff of what the private sector needs and how it functions.	DPLU Director and Deputies
<b>Recommendation 8.5:</b> Develop a multi-year rotation program for planners.	D	30 days	Improve staff experience and understanding of what DPLU does and improve staff morale. Ensure continued staff interest and capacity building.	DPLU Director and Deputies

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 8.6:</b> Establish a team-building program to support all staff, especially the staff affected by any recommended organizational changes set forth in this report.	A	60 days	Ensure that the Citygate recommendations are efficiently and effectively carried out.	DPLU Director, HR
<b>Recommendation 8.7:</b> Empower appropriate, experienced staff to use the written procedures as guidance rather than as a rote cookbook.	A	30 days	Increase the overall consistency of the permit process and staff decision-making.	DPLU Director with Deputies
<b>Recommendation 8.8:</b> Provide the support systems necessary for excellent performance—accounting, technology, training, etc.	A	90 days	Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of staff in carry out their duties.	DCAO, HR, IT, DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 8.9:</b> Establish a reliable exit interview process to identify actual, as opposed to anecdotal, evidence of factors that contribute to turnover.	D	30 days	Create a clear understanding of why staff leave DPLU and make improvements that reduce staff turnover.	DPLU Director and Personnel Analyst with HR
<b>Recommendation 8.10:</b> Conduct a compensation study and resolve any compaction issue between Chiefs and Planning Managers that may or may not exist.	B	180 days	Ensure there is compensatory fairness between these two groups.	HR

**Appendix A—Action Plan**

<p><b>LEGEND</b></p> <p>A Recommendation mandatory or critical</p> <p>B Strongly recommended</p> <p>C Not critical, but will improve operations</p> <p>D Recommended, but additional study required</p>
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Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>9. THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation:</b> Leaders and managers need to continually talk to and be supportive of staff, and the Department needs to increase and improve communications with its external customers, stakeholders, and Planning Groups.				
<b>Recommendation 9.1:</b> Bring in team member(s) from the County Counsel's office for co-location to support to DPLU functions on-site at Ruffin Road.	A	60 days	Improve day-to-day communication regarding legal issues that occur with applications.	County Counsel
<b>Recommendation 9.2:</b> Prepare and distribute up-to-date mission/goals/values statements.	B	30 days	Reinforce the General Management System program.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 9.3:</b> Identify and create effective communication tools to distribute important information about the Department and its processes.	C	90 days	Create greater understanding of the Department processes for customers and citizens in general.	DPLU Director with Communications Manager
<b>Recommendation 9.4:</b> Put a large organization chart in a prominent place that both staff and customers can view.	C	30 days	Improve the understanding by staff and the public about what specific employees do.	Communications Manager
<b>Recommendation 9.5:</b> Increase outreach and coordination with community groups such as planning and sponsor groups.	A	90 days	Improve customer satisfaction and quality of planning product.	DPLU Director

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>10. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE DOES NOT MEET CURRENT OR FUTURE NEEDS</b>				
<b>Major Recommendation:</b> The County needs to organize around the development review permitting process, rather than within its historical silos; the executive management structure needs to be re-thought.				
<b>Recommendation 10.1:</b> Combine Land Development Engineers, Inspectors, and Counter staff from DPW with DPLU and create a new department with a new name focused on ensuring development of communities consistent with the General Plan and Community Plans.	A	1 year	Break down the silo process problems and make the development review process seamless and accountable to one department director.	DPLU and DPW Directors
<b>Recommendation 10.2:</b> Co-locate the Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering Plan Review and Permits groups from DPW with DPLU to better coordinate the development review permitting process.	C	180 days	Break down the silo process problems and make the development review process seamless and accountable to one department director; enhance communication.	DPLU and DPW Directors
<b>Recommendation 10.3:</b> Combine DPLU Watershed and DPW Watershed teams so that both teams operate within DPW Watershed.	B	180 days	Creates greater coordination and consistency between related County programs.	DPLU and DPW Directors
<b>Recommendation 10.4:</b> Change the Chief of Administration position to a Deputy Director for Administration.	A	90 days	Improve intra-departmental coordination of administrative issues in terms of personnel, budget, accounting and GIS.	DPLU Director

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required

Recommendation	Priority A/B/C/D	Time Frame for Implementation	Anticipated Benefits	Responsible Party(ies)
<b>Recommendation 10.5:</b> Have the Support Services Division and the Personnel Division be led by the Deputy Director of Administration.	A	90 days	Improve intra-departmental coordination of administrative issues in terms of personnel, budget, accounting and GIS.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 10.6:</b> Change the Deputy Director/Development Services title to Assistant Director/Development Services.	B	60 days	Allow the Director to spend more time shaping and articulating a vision for the Department; provide organizational stability. Improve coordination of day-to-day operations and provide transition plan for DPLU.	DPLU Director, Human Resources Director, DCAO LUEG
<b>Recommendation 10.7:</b> Add a program manager type position to deal with special projects and the day-to-day customer complaints and concerns.	A	90 days	Improve customer service and customer communication by having one person work between the applicant and the staff to resolve issues.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 10.8:</b> Add a new Communications Manager.	A	90 days	Improve internal and external communication about policies, procedures and process improvements.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 10.9:</b> Appoint a visionary leader for the County's Advanced Planning program.	A	180 days	Provide for a more high profile leader in long range planning who can both communicate the need to plan for the County's future and work with interest groups to achieve it.	DPLU Director
<b>Recommendation 10.10:</b> Plan for the new facility to be built in the next 5 years around the development application communication flow.	A	Immediate	Improve the customers' experience when visiting DPLU and improves the overall permit process for staff and the customers.	DCAO and LUEG Directors
<b>Recommendation 10.11:</b> Design the new permit center with customer service and the permit process in mind.	A	Immediate	Improve the customers' experience when visiting DPLU and improves the overall permit process for staff and the customers.	DCAO and DPLU Director

**Appendix A—Action Plan**

<b>LEGEND</b>
A Recommendation mandatory or critical
B Strongly recommended
C Not critical, but will improve operations
D Recommended, but additional study required



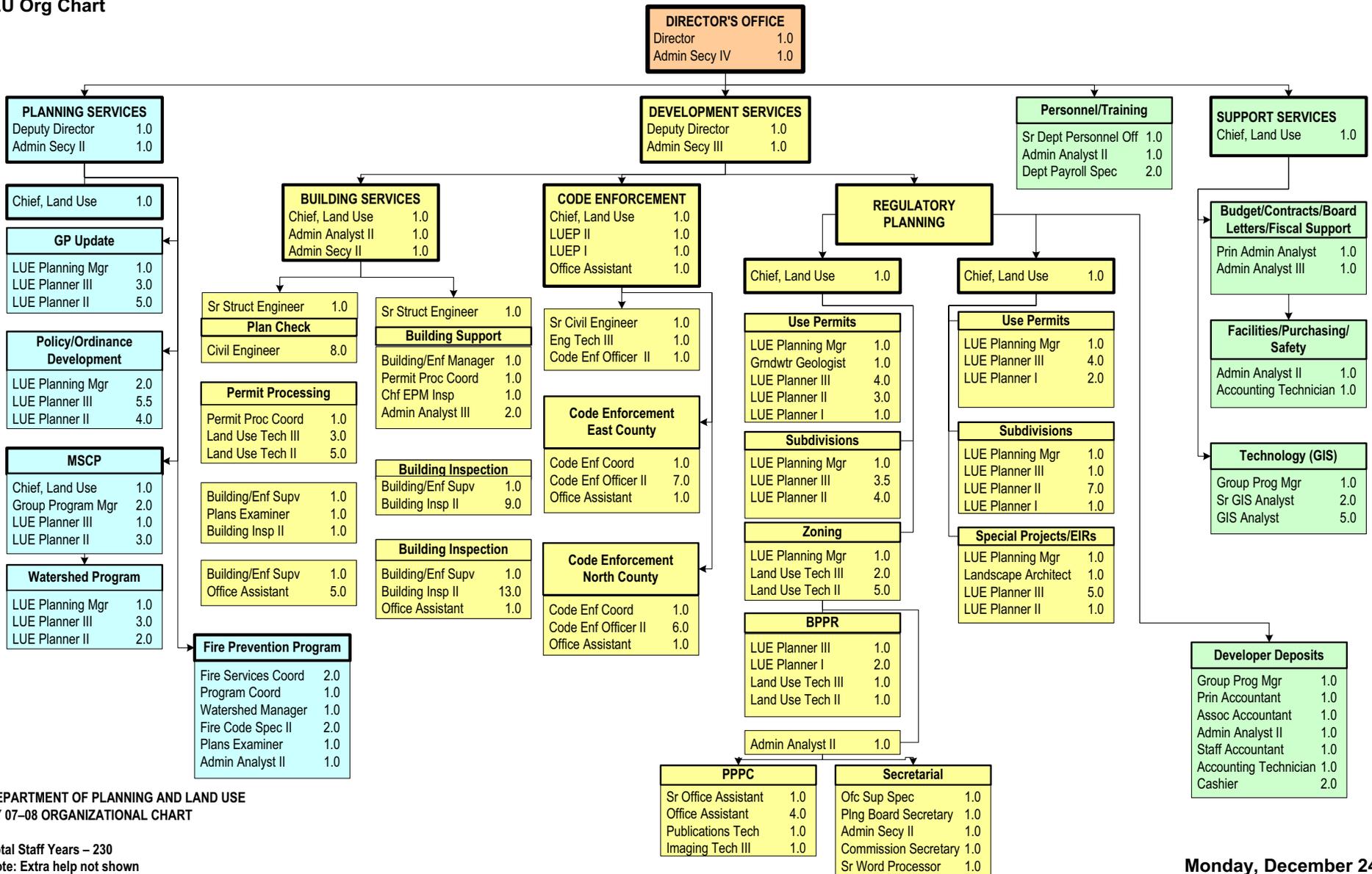
**APPENDIX B**

**DPLU ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



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# DPLU Org Chart

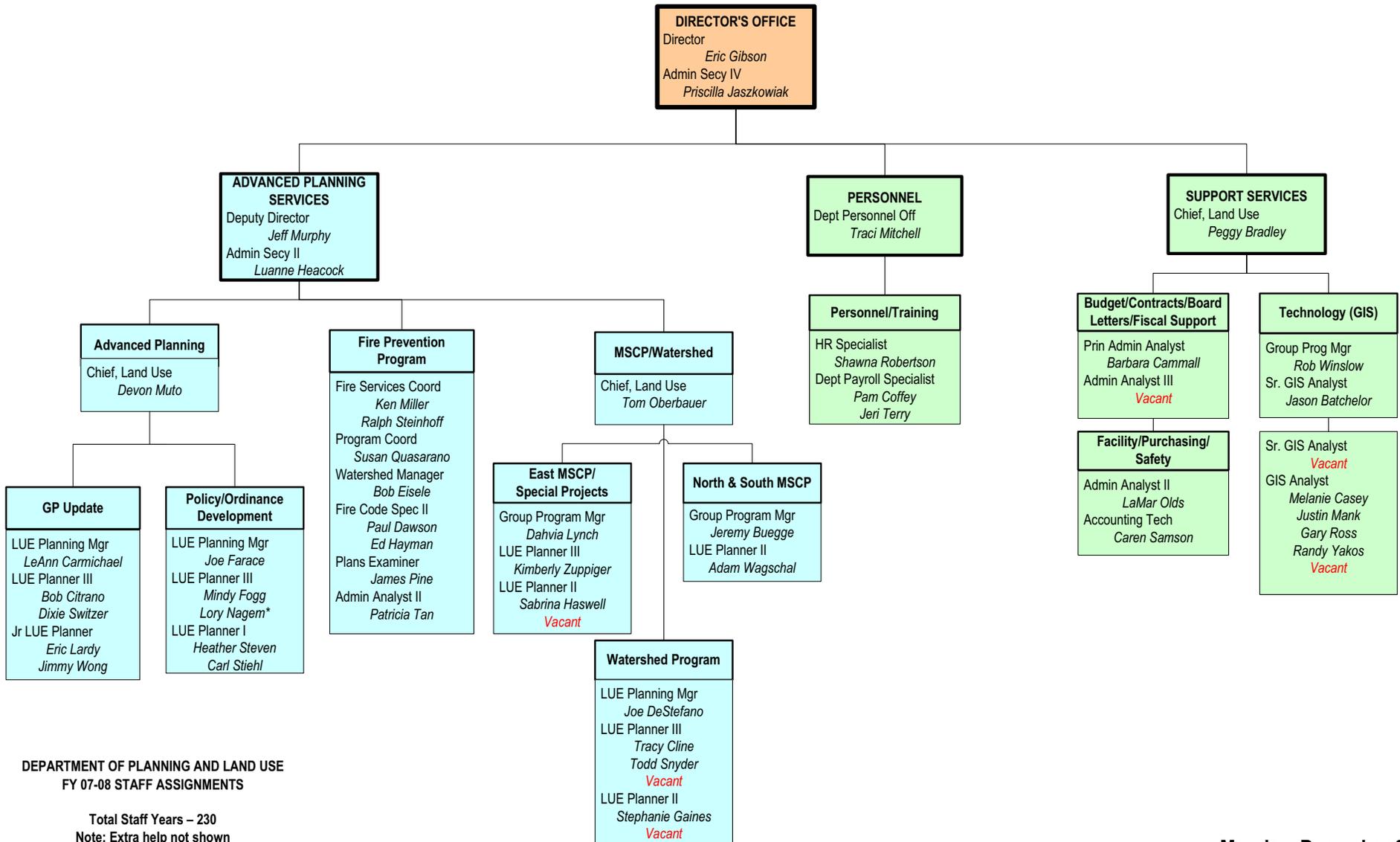


DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE  
FY 07-08 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

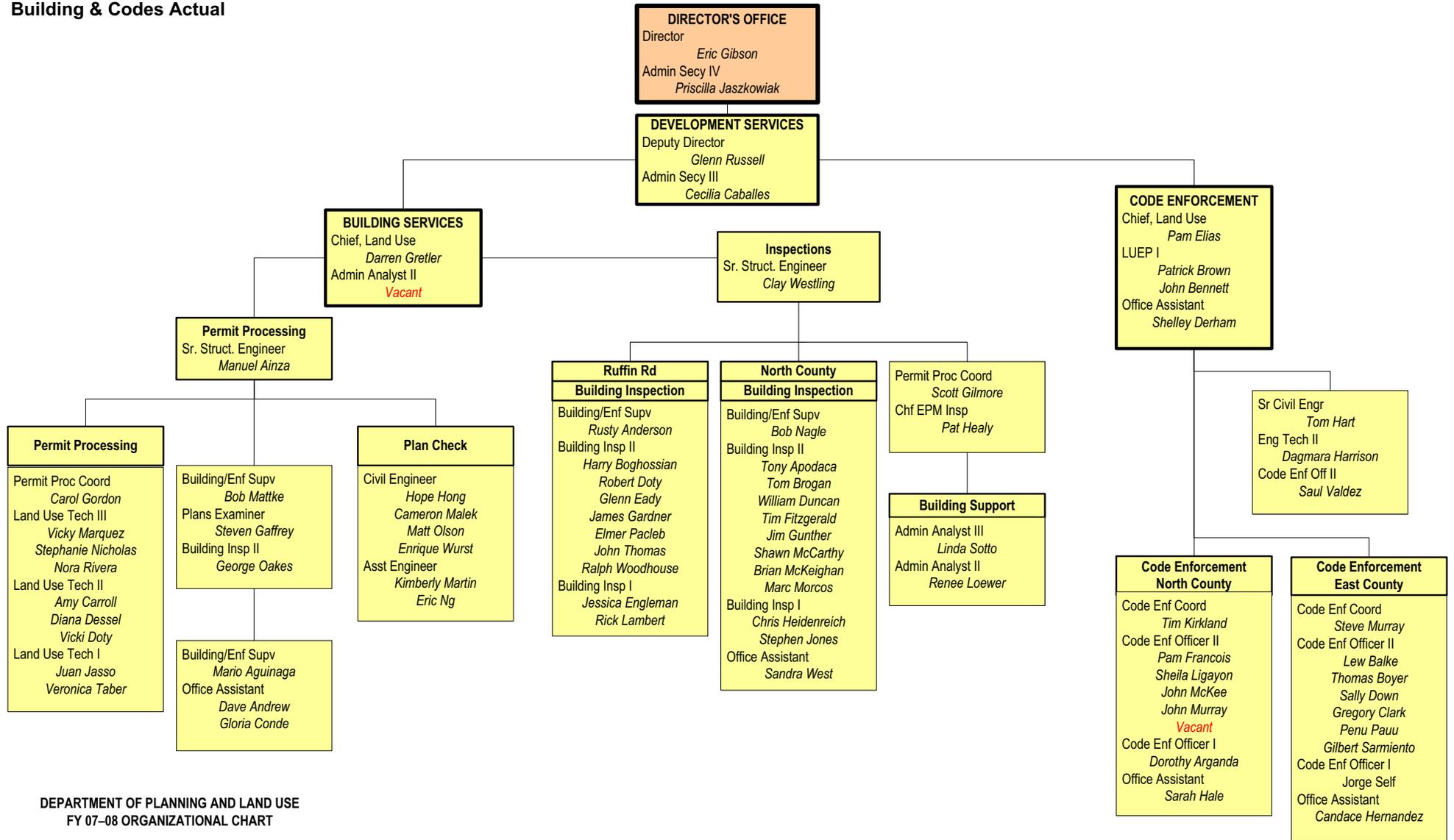
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Note: Extra help not shown

Monday, December 24, 2007

**Planning & Support Actuals**



**Building & Codes Actual**

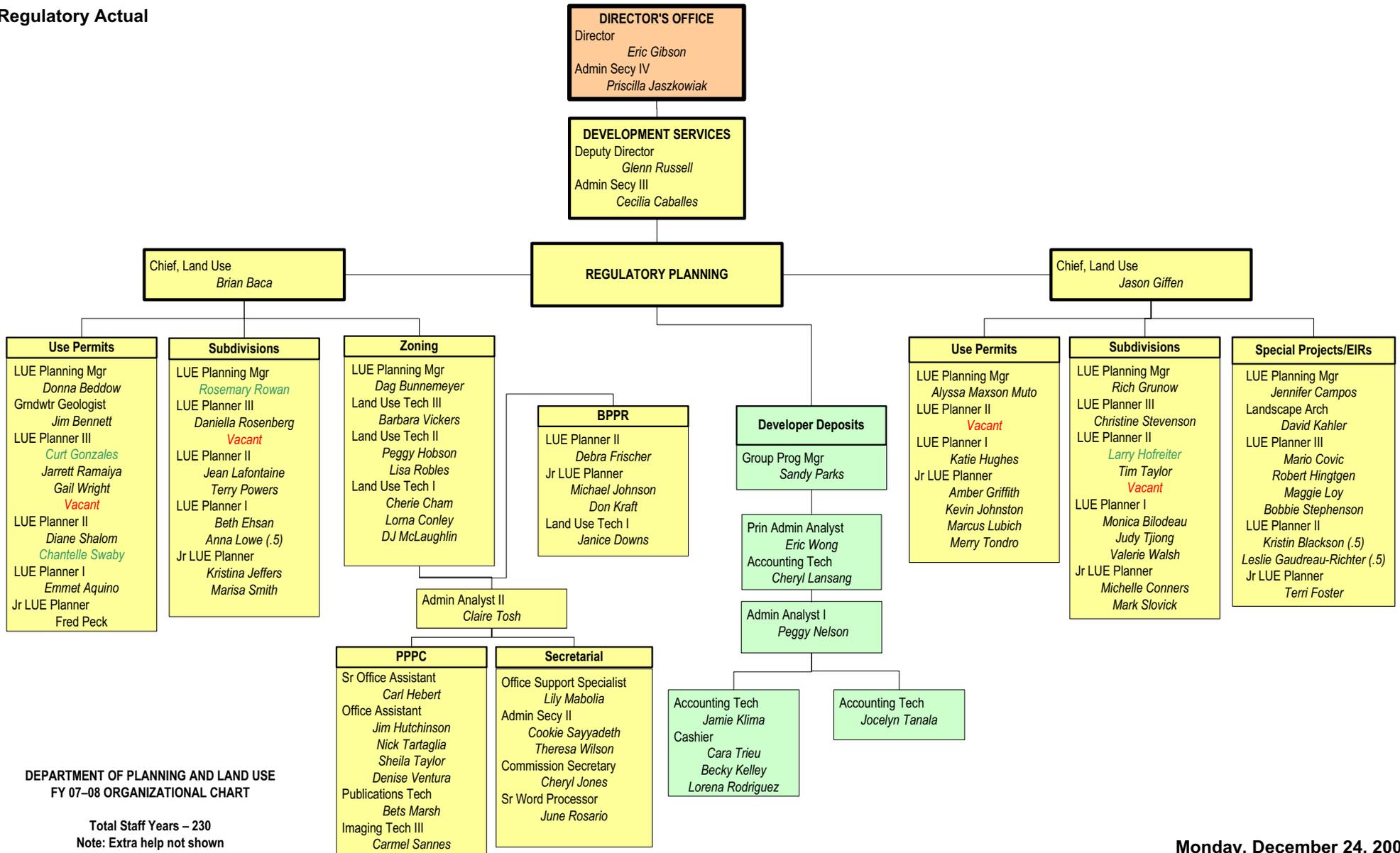


**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE  
FY 07-08 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

Total Staff Years – 230  
Note: Extra help not shown

**Monday, December 24, 2007**

**Regulatory Actual**



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE  
FY 07-08 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

Total Staff Years – 230  
Note: Extra help not shown

**Monday, December 24, 2007**