

To: Planning and Zoning Commissioners
From: Sylvia Carrillo, CPM, ICMA-CM, City Manager
Date: March 30, 2023
Subject: Development Services Organizational Changes



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Commissioners,

Recent personnel changes and various customer service issues have prompted a thorough review of the Development Services Department which currently houses both planning and building services.

A review of department activity yielded an apparent inability to manage department workload and any ability to leverage technology or fully train the staff as demonstrated by the following:

- Over 600 building permits in various stages of incompleteness, yet the structures and homes have long been occupied.
- Over 7 plan submittals labeled “incomplete” since as far back as March of 2021 with no follow up to the customer or consultant.
- Over 5 platting exemption requests, some of which have been in the system since May of 2022 with no follow up to the customer.
- Many other neglected items related to customer requests.

I am proposing the following organizational changes:

- 1) *A renewed focus on Customer Service through a dedicated customer service division in the department utilizing a combination of existing positions that are reclassified.*

The repurposed positions are as follows:

Demotion:

- A vacant Sr. Planner position to a Planner Position.

Promotion:

- A promotion of the existing Coordinator to Customer Service Manager

Reclassification:

- The reclassification of a Permitting Technician to a Project Coordinator.

While difficult, these positions are less managerial and more operational to assist in carrying out the day-to-day workload.

Additions:

- Two (2) Sr. Inspectors,
- One (1) Plan Reviewer,
- One (1) Development Engineer,
- One (1) Construction Inspector

These positions will serve to carry out the work that was previously outsourced to third parties. (See Attachment 1 – Organizational Chart)

The net results of such changes are minimal, at less than \$30,000. If viewed in the max budget possible, the savings are over \$900,000.

- 2) *Transition of outside contracts totaling, a minimum, approximately \$600,000, and contract amounts not to exceed \$2,300,000.*

The inability to control inspection timeframes and plan review expediting when needed, leave an uncertainty about completion timeframes, that ultimately affect customer service and leave the city in a negative light.

The existing contract for 3rd party plan review is a Not To Exceed contract (NTE) in the amount of \$650,000.

The existing contract for 3rd party inspections is a NTE in the amount of \$800,000.

The existing contract for 3rd party engineering review for development is a NTE \$119,600.

An additional contract exists with Halff and Associates for other engineering work and is billed on an hourly basis or project basis. Additionally, there are 3rd party engineering costs for Dial Engineering for site/subdivision inspection. Often, these contracts are signed by the City Manager in amounts less than \$50,000 for which the council has little or no knowledge of their engagement or billed to other divisions such as water/wastewater or other utilities. While not out of the ordinary, and necessary for daily operations, I raise the issue simply to show the true cost of service for the department.

These amounts total \$599,592 in this fiscal based on the current pace but can be as high as \$2,325,268 as per the NTE contract.

The next expense result of the proposed changes is less than \$30,000 to the overall budget; a manageable amount with the appropriate management of resources including staff and technology.

Systematic changes to the department are challenging; as we move toward a customer service approach and process amendments, it is abundantly clear that the staff needs a wide range of training to be able to use critical thinking methods and make decisions in the most customer friendly manner possible.

Many code amendments will require a vote at the Planning Commission and to hold a public hearing. The public hearing process will not be circumvented; the public will have an opportunity to review any code amendments at both the Planning Commission, and at the Council level, and if so directed, we will hold more public hearings so that the residents are thoroughly engaged and educated on any amendments.

Lastly, the City brought on a consultant, George Arimes, who has over 45 years of experience in land development and process improvement, to assist in the review of the codes, process, and overall success of the department.

The residents and economic viability of our city remain my focus; it is my hope that the changes above, will reformulate our approach to customer service and our residents.

I am available for any questions either individually or collectively as an agenda item.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Carrillo, ICMA-CM, CPM
City Manager