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MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

EVALUATION OF PERMIT CENTER OPERATIONS

CLARK COUNTY, WA

MARCH 15, 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) was retained by the Clark County Community Development Department (County) to conduct an operations evaluation of the Permit Center, a unit of the Community Development Department. To initiate our analysis, Citygate conducted on-site interviews and an employee survey. We also reviewed documents, City webpages, and other information obtained during the project (e.g., organization charts, permit processes, etc.). Stakeholder input and the results of the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop held on January 26, 2018 were utilized to identify key themes or categories for best practices, analyze and determine findings, formulate recommendations, and develop an Action Plan to guide the implementation of Citygate's recommendations.

"Whether speaking to elected officials or customers, there is clearly an overarching desire and sense of urgency for the Community Development Department to be a partner with, and advocate for, building permit applicants who are improving the County and growing the economy."

Whether speaking to elected officials or customers, there is clearly an overarching desire and sense of urgency for the Community Development Department to be a partner with, and advocate for, building permit applicants who are improving the County and growing the

economy. Over the past decade, the Community Development Department has dealt with the ebbs and flows of the economy, adjusted to a new form of government, and adapted to changes in County leadership. The next steps for the Community Development Department, and other County departments and divisions involved in the permitting process, must include transforming the culture of the organization to one that delivers excellent customer service and addresses the many workflow needs.

Citygate wishes to express its appreciation to the leadership and staff of the Community Development Department for their exemplary cooperation, professional conduct, and outstanding candor throughout this study. Enduring a management study of this nature is rigorous, demanding, and burdensome because it takes focus away from the immediate day-to-day service delivery demands of applicants and customers. Citygate appreciates the consistent and positive support from this Department!

Furthermore, we appreciate the cooperation of the County Council and County Manager's Office and many other individuals in the Administration who participated in and supported Citygate's study efforts. And finally, the contract and project management, scheduling, and facilitation provided by Community Development Department staff was outstanding. We are grateful to all the professionals we encountered throughout Clark County.

Organization of this Report

Citygate's report consists of a number of sections reflecting the study process, including:

Executive Summary

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Stakeholder Input

Section 3: Comparison to Best Practices

Section 4: Findings and Recommendations

Section 5: Action Plan

Our Action Plan in Section 5 comprehensively lists all recommendations by responsible party and relative resource requirement.

For continuity and consistency throughout this report, nine themes were used to organize the stakeholder input, the discussion of best practices, the findings and recommendations, and the Action Plan. These nine themes are:

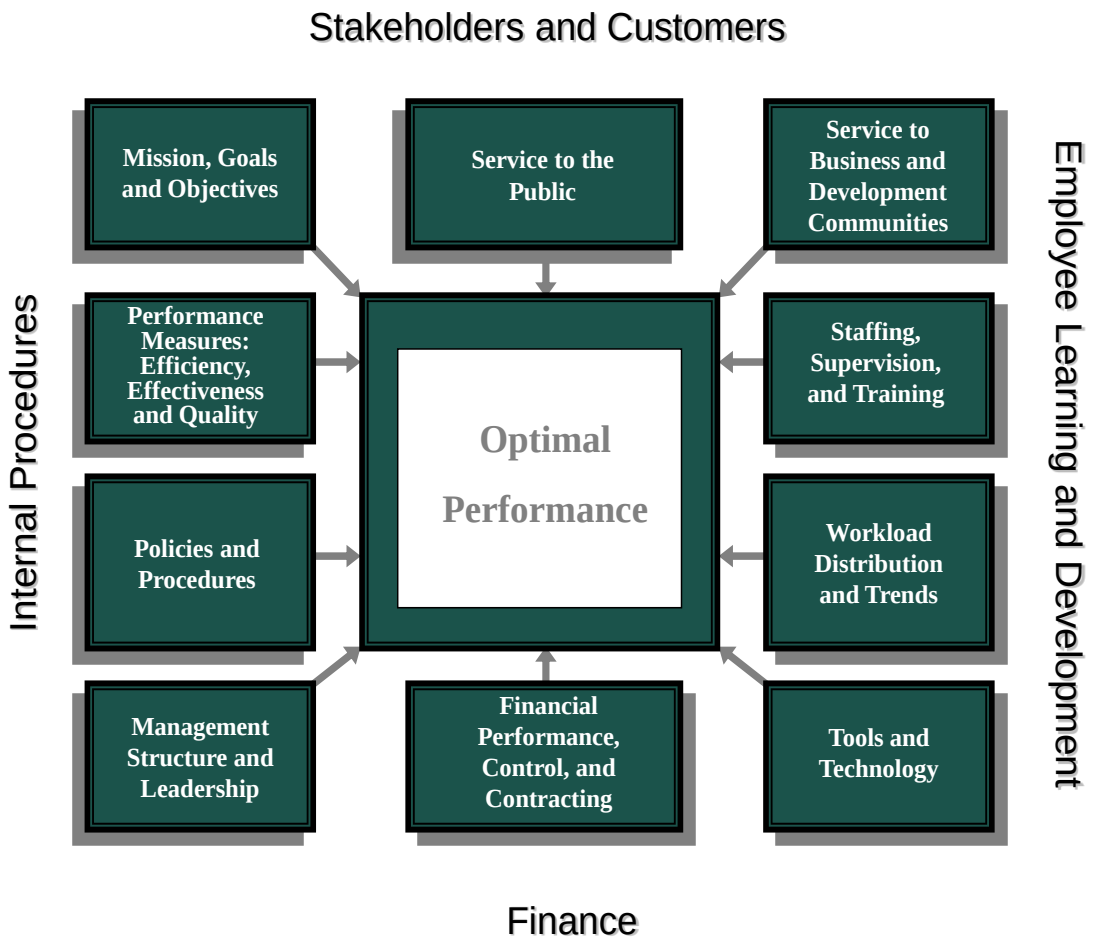
1. Organizational Culture and Roles Alignment
2. Process Definition and Documentation
3. Organization
4. Performance Measurement and Management
5. Physical Space
6. Stormwater Management
7. Financial Management
8. Technology
9. Staff Development and Retention

Relationship to Performance Assessment Factors

Citygate uses a performance assessment framework based on the four key perspectives and measures from the balanced scorecard approach to performance management.[1] The four perspectives and measures are shown in Figure 1.

[1] Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *The Balanced Scorecard – Measures that Drive Performance* (Harvard Business Review, January-February 1992), pp. 71-79.

Figure 1—Assessment Factors



These four perspectives and measures are correlated to the nine themes from this report in the following table.

Table 1—Relationship of Assessment Perspectives, Measures, and Report Themes

Perspective	Measures	Theme
Stakeholders and Customers	Mission, Goals, and Objectives	1. Organizational Culture and Roles Alignment
	Service to the Public	
	Service to Business and Development Communities	
Internal Procedures	Performance Measures: Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Quality	4. Performance Measurement and Management
	Policies and Procedures	2. Process Definition and Documentation
		5. Physical Space
		6. Stormwater Management
	Management Structure and Leadership	3. Organization
Finance	Financial Performance, Control, and Contracting	7. Financial Management
Employee Learning and Development	Tools and Technology	8. Technology
	Workload Distribution and Trends	9. Staff Development and Retention
	Staffing, Supervision, and Training	

Summary of Strategic Findings and Recommendations

In summary, the Community Development Department has made significant improvements in some areas, but there are also areas where improvements must still be made. Specifically, these areas include customer service, performance management, and staff development. Our report addresses these areas using the nine themes from Table 1.

For each of these themes, Citygate has provided a brief review of best practices in the field, and a comparison of Clark County to those practices. We also developed strategic findings and strategic recommendations for most themes, as well as additional recommendations that are not deemed as strategic or critical. Each strategic recommendation in this report includes recommended actions necessary for full implementation, which appear in the Action Plan located in Section 5.

The following is a summary of the strategic findings and strategic recommendations for seven of the nine themes. No strategic findings or strategic recommendations exist for Theme Six (Stormwater Management) or Theme Seven (Financial Management), although additional recommendations are provided for these two themes and many of the other themes in sub-section 4.2. The following strategic statements are supported by considerable detail and analysis in the following sections of this report.

Theme One: Organizational Culture and Roles Alignment

Strategic Finding #1: A foundation of trust needs to be built for the desired culture changes to occur.

Strategic Recommendation #1: Begin creating a culture of trust by starting fresh and allowing the new changes to take root for the next six months (April 2018 – September 2018). The County Council's relationship with the new County Manager needs to be built and this person needs to be given time to adjust to the role and begin to lead. The Community Development staff need to be given the time and flexibility to implement changes, make adjustments, and prove that the changes will stick and be effective. The development community needs clear and frequent communication as changes occur, needs to know that its voice has been heard, and needs the opportunity to provide feedback along the way.

Strategic Finding #2: Ongoing personal contact with Permit Center customers is important as relationships and trust are built.

Strategic Recommendation #2: Begin a "listening tour" that is designed to build relationships, build trust, and listen to the building industry about trends.

Strategic Finding #3: The County Council and County Manager need to fully transition to the Council-Manager form of government as defined in the Home Rule Charter.

Strategic Recommendation #3: Adhere to the role of the County Council and County Manager as defined in the Home Rule Charter.

Theme Two: Process Definition and Documentation

Strategic Finding #4: Acceptance of the stamp of licensed professionals on plans is critical for improving the efficiency of the permitting process and the relationship of the development community.

Strategic Recommendation #4: Adopt a policy for plans, including stormwater plans, submitted from licensed professionals to be accepted with minimal to moderate review.

Strategic Finding #5: Developing, updating, and communicating checklists for all processes is critical to improve efficiency and increase staff understanding.

Strategic Recommendation #5: Create or update checklists for all processes, especially for customers who are new to the permitting process. Assign responsibility for each checklist to one person who is responsible to keep the content current and distribute this information.

Strategic Finding #6: When significant changes are made to procedures and/or policies, there needs to be communication with front-line staff and all customers that are impacted by the changes.

Strategic Recommendation #6: Issue guidance documents when needed for front-line staff and the public before significant new procedures or policies are implemented.

Strategic Finding #7: Ongoing process improvement needs to be institutionalized to ensure a process is in place and there is continual focus on improvement.

Strategic Recommendation #7: Create a process improvement team with the responsibility to review all proposed process improvements with recommendations to the Community Development Director. This team's charter should include evaluation of all "pinch" points and the elimination of unnecessary processes. Consider the list of proposed process improvements from the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop plus other short-term process improvement projects (Sprints).

Theme Three: Organization

Strategic Finding #8: The challenges of multiple-department involvement in permit processing need to be resolved.

Strategic Recommendation #8: Assign the County Manager or their designee the responsibility to coordinate multiple-department permitting projects. Consider identifying projects of community and economic significance and have the County Manager assign a project manager.

Theme Four: Performance Measurement and Management

Strategic Finding #9: The shortcomings of current management reports need to be addressed, especially for the Permit Center Manager.

Strategic Recommendation #9: Create reports that allow the Permit Center Manager to understand the volume of requests in progress, to quantify and identify requests which are late, or at risk, and provide the report daily to help prioritize the work. The following reports should be provided: permit status report, cycle-time report, and interventions report which details any permits that have been rejected or placed on hold.

Theme Five: Physical Space

Strategic Finding #10: The challenges of physical space need to be addressed in phases with the first phase being urgent changes in the Permit Center.

Strategic Recommendation #10: Phase 1 – Improve the layout and functionality of the current Permit Center including moving land use staff to the third floor, expanding counter space, enhancing security, and addressing ergonomic issues. Consider a separate line for frequent customers, a "drop-off" point for corrections, and empowering the counter services staff with training and authority to make specific decisions.

Note: Phases 2 and 3 are described as additional recommendations in sub-section 4.2.5.

Theme Six: Stormwater Management

No strategic findings or recommendations were identified for this theme; however, sub-section 4.2 outlines two "additional recommendations" for this theme.

Theme Seven: Financial Management

No strategic findings or recommendations were identified for this theme; however, sub-section 4.2 outlines one "additional recommendation" for this theme.

Theme Eight: Technology

Strategic Finding #11: The County needs access to all of the data contained in the new Land Management Software system to provide much-needed management reports.

Strategic Recommendation #11: Insist that the Computronix Land Management Software vendor make the County's data available in a common data pool or data warehouse.

Theme Nine: Staff Development and Retention

Strategic Finding #12: The training of Permit Center staff is an urgent need which will require additional resources.

Strategic Recommendation #12: Add a Permit Center Lead to break the "vicious cycle" that exists and accelerate the training of Permit Center staff.

Strategic Finding #13: Additional resources are required to stay focused on the implementation of the Citygate recommendations and to develop reports from the Land Management Software system.

Strategic Recommendation #13: Add a 12–18-month temporary project lead for implementation of the Citygate recommendations and to develop management reports and conduct ongoing analyses on the health of the process.

To best understand Citygate's analysis, findings, and recommendations, we encourage the reader to study and thoughtfully read this entire report.

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SECTION 1—INTRODUCTION

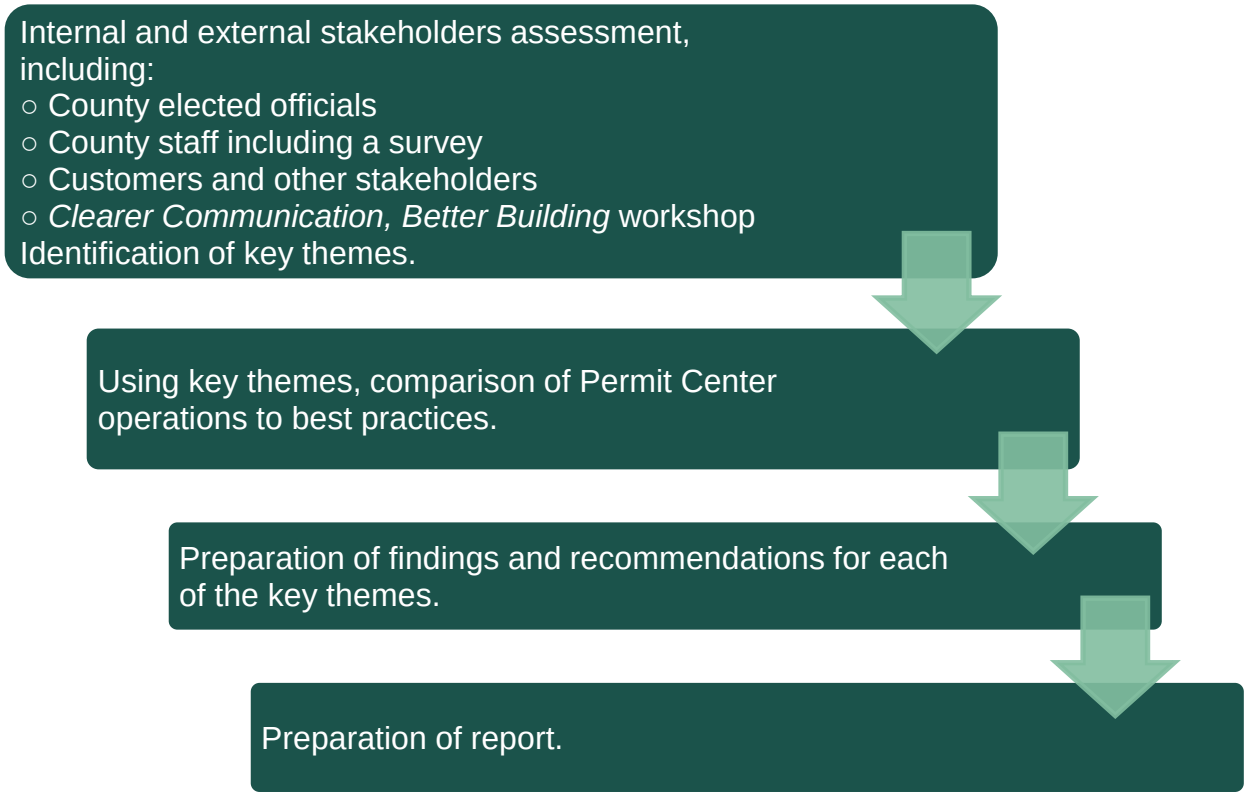
SECTION 1—INTRODUCTION

Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) was retained by the Clark County Community Development Department (County) to conduct an operations evaluation of the Permit Center Division, a unit of the Community Development Department. Based on the scope of work included in the County's Request for Proposal (RFP), Citygate designed a Work Plan which specifically addresses the 13 items from the scope of work listed in Table 2 at the end of this section. This introduction of the report outlines the Work Plan, including the scope and organization of the report, and how the report recommendations were developed.

1.1 APPROACH AND SCOPE OF THE PERMIT CENTER REVIEW

The approach or process Citygate used in reviewing the Permit Center Division consisted of four major components, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 2—Overview of Citygate's Review Process



On-site interviews and an employee survey were conducted. Citygate also reviewed documents, County webpages, and other information obtained during the project (e.g., organization charts, permit processes, etc.). This stakeholder input as well as the results of the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop held on January 26, 2018 were utilized to identify key themes or categories for identifying best practices, analyzing and determining findings, formulating recommendations, and developing an Action Plan to guide the implementation of Citygate's recommendations.

The Work Plan for the review was developed and implemented consistent with Citygate's experience conducting management and operations reviews in local government agencies across the western United States. Our Work Plan included six major tasks:

Task 1 – Initiation and Management of the Project

Citygate conducted a conference call with Community Development Department staff to initiate the study, enhance our understanding of the issues and scope, and to ensure that our process and schedule were agreeable to the County. Prior to and during that conference call, we also obtained

background information such as statistical reports, organizational structure, public documents, and URLs for relevant County webpages to begin the assessment process.

Task 2 – Assessment of Internal and External Stakeholder Perspectives

During the first on-site visit Citygate met with County Community Development staff, and conducted interviews with elected officials, the County Manager, and key stakeholders identified by the County. Customer interviews included homeowners, historic property representatives, community groups, small business representatives, contractors, and design professionals. Collaborating with Community Development Department staff, we determined that employees should be surveyed. From this information, the key themes used throughout this report were identified.

Task 3 – Comparison to Best Practices

Citygate prepared an overview of the best practices in the industry as they relate to each of the themes identified. These were compared to the current Community Development Department practices and used to prepare findings and recommendations.

Task 4 – Preparation of Findings and Recommendations

Once the best practices related to each theme were identified, findings and recommendations based on the stakeholder themes and best practices were prepared.

Task 5 – Presentation of Draft Findings and Recommendations and Preparation of Draft Report

A presentation of draft findings and recommendations to stakeholders was scheduled for mid-February. The feedback from these meetings, and an internal Community Development Department staff review to ensure the factual accuracy of the initial draft, are the primary sources for the final edits to this report.

Task 6 – Preparation and Presentation of Final Report

The final version of this report is based on the final edits received as part of Task 5. The presentation of the Final Report to the County Council is scheduled for March 2018.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

This report has six sections:

1. **Executive Summary** – Introduces the study, explains the report's organization, and summarizes strategic findings and recommendations.

2. **Section 1—Introduction** – Describes the purpose for this review, the study methodology, as well as report organization, recommendations, and implementation steps.

3. **Section 2—Stakeholder Input** – Describes the stakeholder input process and stakeholder perceptions.

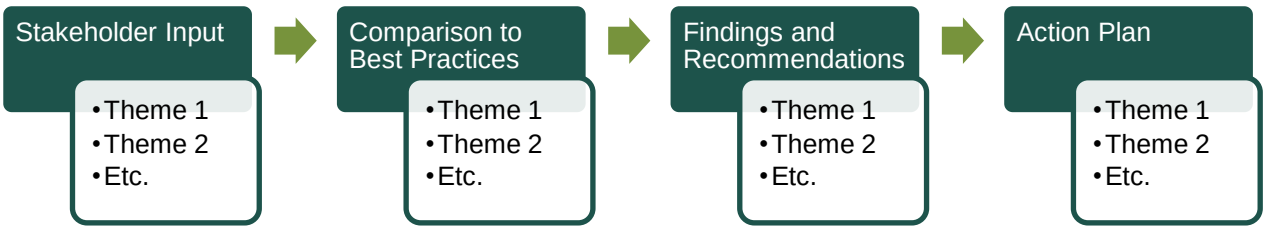
4. **Section 3—Comparison to Best Practices** – Outlines best practices and compares those to current practices in Clark County.

5. **Section 4—Findings and Recommendations** – Provides a set of findings and related recommendations that together comprise the strategy Citygate advises for the County to achieve the desired improvements in the Community Development Department.

6. **Section 5—Action Plan** – Offers a more detailed Action Plan with specific steps, relative resource requirements, and responsible parties in a tabular format.

To enhance continuity and consistency, the same themes are used to organize the stakeholder input, the discussion of best practices, the findings and recommendations, and the Action Plan sections of this report. However, theme content only exists within a report section if it is merited. For example, there were no strategic findings or recommendations warranted for Theme 6 (Stormwater Management) and Theme 7 (Financial Management), so Section 4—Findings and Recommendations and Section 5—Action Plan do not contain any information for those two themes. Also, sub-section 4.2—Additional Recommendations does not include recommendations for Theme Three (Organization) as there were none.

Figure 3—Use of Common Themes in Each Report Section



The themes are:

Theme One: **Organizational Culture and Roles Alignment**

Theme Two: **Process Definition and Documentation**

Theme Three: **Organization**

Theme Four: **Performance Measurement and Management**

Theme Five: **Physical Space**

Theme Six: **Stormwater Management**

Theme Seven: **Financial Management**

Theme Eight: **Technology**

Theme Nine: **Staff Development and Retention**

1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Citygate's Action Plan contains two levels of recommendations; the "strategic recommendations" should be used as a set of principles against which more tactical and day-to-day recommended implementation decisions should be evaluated.

In the early 1990s, as the change from a manufacturing-based economy to one based on knowledge continued, the need for new measures to gauge performance was recognized, which gave rise to the "balanced scorecard" concept.[2] This concept recognized that traditional financial measures did not adequately reflect how well an organization was executing its strategy, and that the most valuable assets of an organization had shifted from tangible assets like buildings, cash reserves, and inventories, to intangible assets like proprietary processes, databases, unique software, and individuals with critical knowledge and skill sets related to those processes and that information. The most valuable assets became the information, processes, and knowledge workers in the organization that are critical to achieving strategic objectives. Standard financial measures no longer reflected the complete "bottom line" regarding organizational performance.

[2] Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *The Balanced Scorecard – Measures that Drive Performance* (Harvard Business Review, January-February 1992), pp. 71-79.

This concept was subsequently incorporated into not-for-profit and public sector performance management systems in the early 2000s, and has become accepted as a best practice in public sector performance management.[3] The balanced scorecard approach includes four basic components, all of which relate to the overarching **strategy**—the organization mission, which describes why the organization performs the functions that it does, as well as customer, internal process, employee learning and growth, and financial strategic objectives. The four basic components are:

1. **Customer/Stakeholder Performance Measures** – How well the organization is achieving its strategic objectives related to the organization's customers. These should capture the perspective of both the customers who come to the County for a service (e.g., processing time for a building permit) as well as the stakeholders (e.g., the County Council) that desire certain outcomes (e.g., economic development).

2. **Internal Process Measures** – The degree to which internal processing strategic objectives are being met. These measures should gauge how well internal processes are working (e.g., volume, time, cost, etc.) and the efforts to improve those processes.

3. **Financial Measures** – Typical measures including revenues, expenditures, fund balances, etc. These should also include the degree to which strategic objectives (e.g., full cost recovery) are being met.

4. **Employee Learning and Growth Measures** – Staff development and training efforts designed to achieve the strategic objectives related to employee skill sets and knowledge.

Citygate used the balanced scorecard framework to assess the Clark County Permit Center function and to develop the recommendations.

Citygate's Action Plan contains two levels of recommendations (see Section 5—Action Plan). At the strategic level, the "strategic recommendations" that relate to each theme should be used as a set of principles against which more tactical and day-to-day recommended implementation decisions should be evaluated. Citygate's strategic recommendations are intended to serve the County over the longer term regardless of the timeframe for implementation, and Citygate recommends that all strategic recommendations be implemented over the next six months (i.e., April–September 2018), subject to the availability of funds in existing budgets.

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[3] Paul R. Niven, *Balanced Scorecard Step-by-Step for Government and Non-profit Agencies, 2nd Edition* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), pp. 25-43.

The more detailed recommendations (called "recommended actions") are provided in a tabular Action Plan format in Section 5. The speed at which these are implemented will depend on the level of resources and determination made available; however, they are all strategic in nature, and should also be implemented over the next six months.

1.4 Correlation to Scope Elements from the City's RFP

The elements from the original County scope of work are listed in Table 2 along with the number of the themes under which those elements are addressed in our report. In some cases, the stakeholder input from the earlier steps in the process led to a greater emphasis in certain areas (e.g., customer service) and less emphasis in others (e.g., benchmarking). Nevertheless, all scope elements have been addressed as part of Citygate's review.

Table 2—Relationship of Scope Elements to Report Themes

Scope Element from the County's RFP	Theme Numbers
a. Develop protocols for the County to use when faced with implementing mandated changes from state and/or federal government to regulatory permitting requirements associated with land development and building. These protocols must include the time period that precedes the effective date of these changes and are intended to assist the County with successfully managing these internally and externally.	2, 4, 6
b. Performance indicators/metrics associated with the Permit Center operations to assess effectiveness shall be developed and provided by consultant. These metrics may become foundational for assessing current effectiveness and may also be used for the after action progress review and evaluation.	2, 4
c. Focus on "low hanging fruit" and quick implementation of any improvements needed. Look for process bottlenecks; ways to reduce wait times in permit center lobby. Evaluate service capacity (staffing levels; knowledge/empowerment of staff; necessary tools to do job); look at intake staffing as well as reviewers/approvers; look at management structure and support. Look at permit center layout and recommend improvements if any. Evaluate television screen programs being aired in lobby and recommend other alternative programming (perhaps a "doing business with the County Permit Center" rolling video as an idea).	1, 2, 5, 8, 9

Scope Element from the County's RFP	Theme Numbers
d. How well does the triage process currently work (by complexity; by type of permit/approvals necessary – is current process designed with customer service experience in mind)? Does the current process clearly communicate timelines and requirements to customers? If not, recommend improvements. Does the County have a permits and approvals flow chart? If not, should there be one as a handout and on the web? Is there an opportunity for permit application submittals via the web? What is available now and in the near and long-term? Are there more opportunities to "save a trip" to the permit center by leveraging electronic technology? Are there opportunities to reduce permit center wait times with the use of technology?	2, 4
e. Review and approval process efficiencies. Application review/approval (back and forth) opportunities/improvements using electronic technology? Does this already happen? Is there an opportunity for displaying milestone progress for permit review/approvals so customers are aware of the status? Are there other process inhibitors that can be revised to reduce timeliness while maintaining statutory responsibilities?	2, 6, 8
f. Ask our customers: Meet with certain customers who do business with other entities, ask for their input about likes/dislikes, and ideas for improved service. Also meet/survey a few infrequent customers and collect their thoughts on their experiences with the County permitting process, and ideas for improved service (i.e., single-family homeowners who remodel, add a shop/structure, or build a home). Review and analyze the survey data that the County has collected from permit center customers.	1, 2
g. Ask ourselves: Meet with County staff/managers, ask for their input about likes/dislikes and ideas for improved service. What do County staff/managers believe would help them be successful with providing better service to customers? What is needed for staff to complete their work in an efficient manner while maintaining high quality standards? What changes can be made to create an atmosphere where staff feel more empowered to implement solutions to customers' questions and concerns? Ask front-line staff and those who routinely interact with the public "What is your perception and description of your job responsibility?"	1, 2, 3, 9
h. Review handouts/brochures/educational materials and information on web about permits and approvals provided by the County. Revise/create helpful handouts. They need to be current and applicable. Recommend process and timeliness for keeping materials refreshed.	1, 2, 8
i. Categorize recommended improvements by time, money, and implementation burden on County staff: Minimal investment (0-3 month implementation), Medium investment (3-6 month implementation), Larger investment (6-12 month implementation), Other longer investment strategies (12+ month implementation).	4, 7
j. Draft and Final Report capturing the scope and results of this evaluation; provide three presentations total, one presentation to Community Development Managers; one presentation to County Manager; and one presentation to Board of County Councilors (all presentations to occur at Clark County offices).	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Scope Element from the County's RFP	Theme Numbers
k. Draft and Final Report action progress review and evaluation report; provide three presentations total, one presentation to Community Development Managers; one presentation to County Manager; and one presentation to Board of County Councilors (all presentations to occur at Clark County offices).	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
l. Develop process and timeframe to review and modify Permit Center improvements implemented (consultant to propose timeframes for this based upon their past experience).	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
n. Consultant should provide a fully resourced schedule as part of their proposal.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Citygate's scope of work consisted of neither financial nor compliance auditing. The field work for this project was conducted between November 28, 2017 and February 14, 2018.

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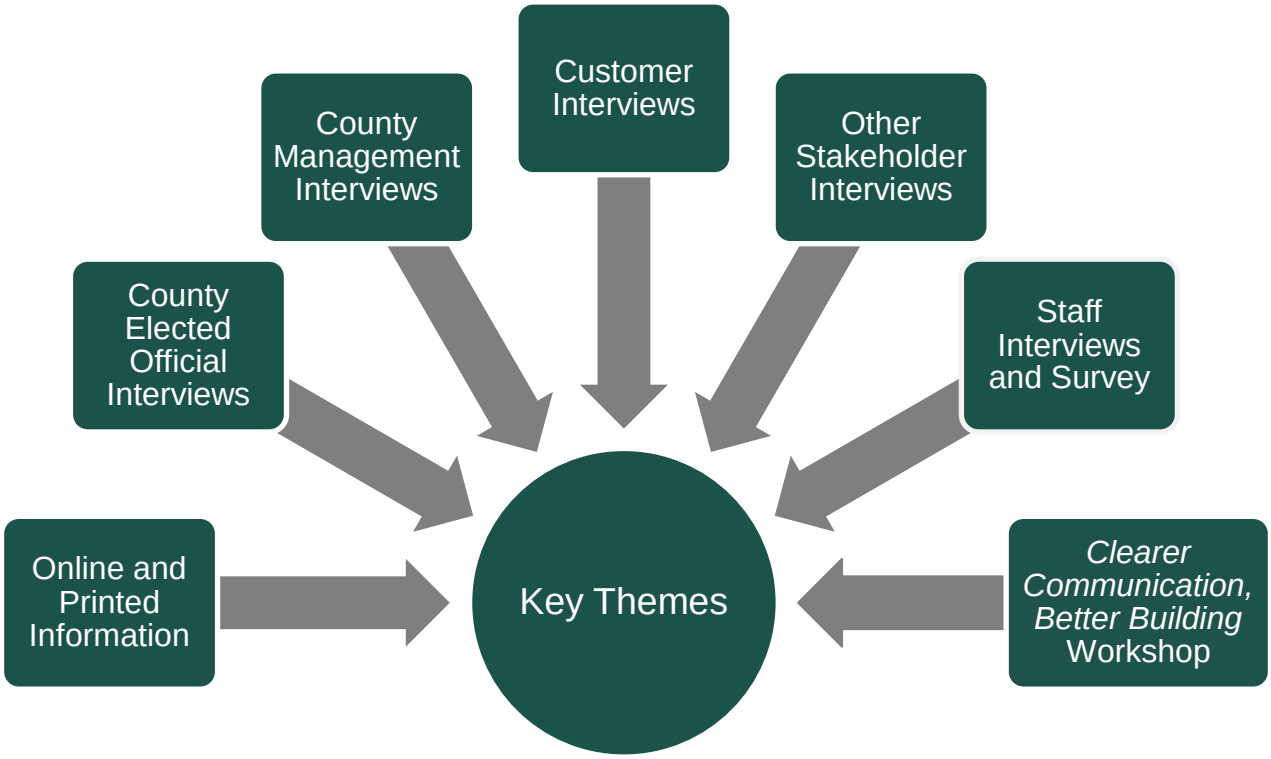
SECTION 2—STAKEHOLDER INPUT

EXIT

SECTION 2—STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Prior to conducting on-site interviews and meetings, Citygate reviewed online and printed information including permit statistics, budget and staff levels, organizational structure and processes, customer inputs, and similar information. On-site customer interviews were held, as well as interviews with Clark County elected officials and staff. Additional follow-up communication also occurred along with the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop held on January 26, 2018. After discussing preliminary findings, Citygate and Community Development Department staff decided to survey employees.

Figure 4—Stakeholder Input



A total of 29 interviews were conducted that included 40 individuals. The questions asked in each interview included:

1. Please tell us about you and your role relative to the Permit Center.
2. What do you think is working especially well?
3. What do you think could be improved?
4. If you could identify one thing you would like to us to recommend in our report, what would it be?

The comments from all interviews are confidential, so no specific individuals have been identified.

2.1 Employee Survey

All 106 Community Development Department employees were invited to participate in an employee survey. In total, there were 70 completed surveys, for a response rate of 66 percent.

The employee survey results were used to corroborate the themes and issues in this section, as well as create a baseline for measuring improvement.

Many statements were included in the employee survey, and for each statement respondents were instructed to indicate whether their expectations were being met on a scale from 1 to 5. A score of 3 indicates that expectations are being met. A score less than that indicates that some perceive this is not the case. Figure 5 shows the 10 highest ranking statements from employees.

Figure 5—10 Highest Ranking Employee Survey Statements

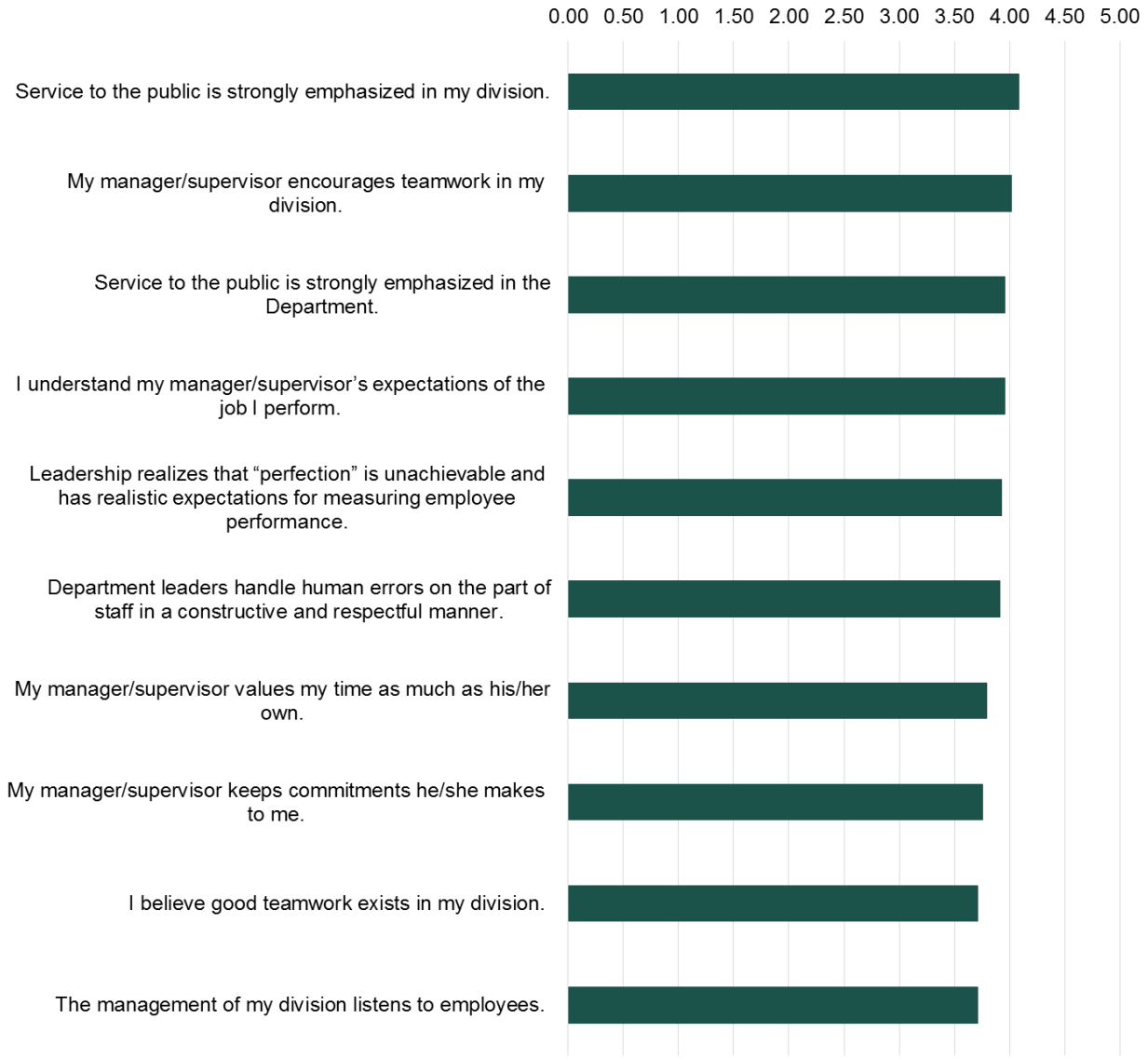
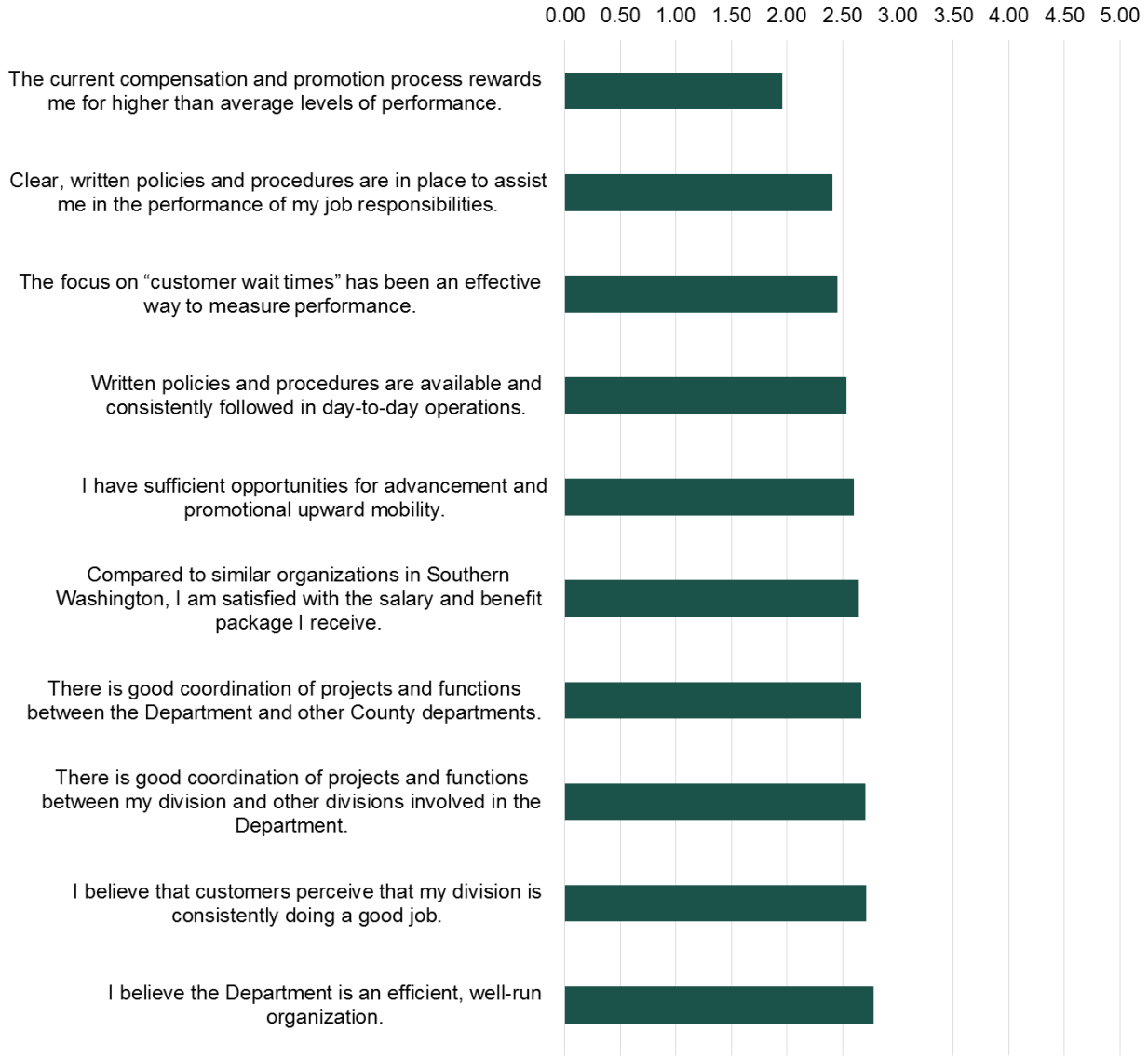


Figure 6 shows the 10 lowest ranking employee statements. These indicate the areas with the greatest opportunity to improve. It is evident that compensation and promotion are significant concerns to employees. **Appendix A** includes a more detailed presentation of the employee survey questions, results, and analyses.

Figure 6—10 Lowest Ranking Employee Survey Statements



Through examination of the materials provided by the County, from the comments during interviews, and from the employee survey, most agree that the Permit Center has made significant improvements in some areas; however, there are also areas where significant

improvements still need to be made. Specifically, these areas include customer service, performance management, and staff development. In these three areas, we found the most notable opportunities for improvement.

Nine key themes emerged from the review of materials, interviews, meetings, and surveys. These themes are used to organize the input in this section and the remainder of the report. The statements listed under each theme heading were created by combining and summarizing individual comments. In some cases, different groups offered what appear to be conflicting comments. Those are included as well because they reflect stakeholder groups' perspectives and sentiments, even when they are different or inconsistent. Citygate was careful to write this stakeholder feedback as we received it, and as accurately as possible, even when it seemed inconsistent or difficult to validate.

2.2 Stakeholder Input Across the Nine Report Themes

The following stakeholder input was obtained through interviews and is not necessarily Citygate's assessment.

2.2.1 Theme One: Organizational Culture and Roles Alignment

- "The County should partner with developers … we need these people to create economic development opportunities."
- "The bar is too low—set the bar high and stick to it. This creates an uneven or perhaps an unfair playing field."
- "We want and need certainty. It can take years to go through the County's process. Why should we invest in Clark County when other jurisdictions can provide certainty?"
- "We have ongoing challenges with consistency and finality. For most production builders, having to make alterations to previously approved designs, or address additional permit conditions mid-application, creates significant confusion among the developer's staff who feel like they are trying to hit a moving target. It creates delay for the developer, increases review costs to the County, and fosters inefficiency through inconsistency."
- "The implementation of new or previously unenforced construction requirements, particularly with respect to environmental regulations, without a "phase-in" period tends to create frustration and mistrust among developers that are legitimately attempting to comply with these very complex regulations."

- "There is no systematic way to give feedback about our interactions with the County."
- "For plan review the culture is that the County is always right. It is hard to have a conversation … either you do it or do not get the permit. Most developers just do what is asked to avoid delays."
- "The change in the form of government has caused a situation where there is no accountability. Often there is no path to the resolution to a problem."
- "We can bypass the Permit Center by going to the Building Official or County Council. We do not like to do this but at times it is necessary."
- "Customers are bypassing the system and going to Councilors. Customers know what strings to pull."
- "Communication is difficult—within our group, and outside our group. Our customers should come first."
- "The County Manager and Community Development Director should not be constantly solving problems with customers."

2.2.2 Theme Two: Process Definition and Documentation

- "We need to know how long the review is going to take—timeliness and consistency are very important."
- "The County is micro-managing our engineers. The engineer's stamp is disregarded which usually means that we start over."
- "It costs us 15 percent more in Clark County because of regulatory implementation. All jurisdictions are basically enforcing the same rules. The difference is that others accept engineer stamps and that we must hire our own legal counsel for all land use reviews. It costs more money, takes more time, and the quality is no better."
- "Other jurisdictions are 10 times faster than Clark County. This adds costs to the projects."
- "There is inconsistent, outdated, and a shortage of information regarding the code and current review procedures (CRPs) both online and in handouts. There is a lack of information for homeowners and contractors regarding the "how to" which leads to incomplete applications."

- "One of the most pervasive issues in development permitting is the addition of new requirements after the first review. All major requirements for permit approval should be included in the first review."
- "We need checklists for all of our customers, especially those that are not frequent flyers."
- "Staff are required to spend a lot of time with customers because they have lots of questions—our website and written materials need to be improved in order to help with this."
- "We have to chase down a lot of items when the requirements have been placed by other departments. The system needs to be updated."
- "One bottleneck is legal lot determinations. I am open to the option of doing some of the work outside of the County system which will cost me more but will speed up the process."
- "Occasionally significant new policies or procedures are not fully translated to front-line staff."
- "The LEAN process works great for perfect submittals. Small fixes are taken care of within 24 hours. With more significant changes the system totally breaks down; the application goes to the bottom of the pile."
- "LEAN is working well for single-family [houses] in subdivisions but it is unfair for rural [areas]."
- "With small issues we should not put the application on the bottom of the pile."
- "Customers currently do not know who to call back to. A potential solution is that one person takes the call and email, keeps a log, then the next person adds to it. This can be rotated between staff."
- "There is a communication disconnect. We need to be able to help our customers understand but often cannot tell them how long it will take."
- "We need to tell customers that we can spend 30 minutes with them. If more time is needed then they come back with an appointment."
- "Answering the phone is difficult because of the volume which causes others to have to answer."

- "We are more worried about how long a customer may wait in the lobby than how many times the contractor does not supply accurate application packets for us to process the first time."

2.2.3 Theme Three: Organization

- "There is a lack of communication between departments which stalls processing, even on land use."
- "Constant change is difficult to manage, including expectations from different departments."
- "Communication is poor; the layout of the office does not work; communication between departments is not good; and customers are telling us about new County policy."
- "With building permit reviews the communication with applicants goes back and forth. We need a single point of contact. Our staff are not wanting to share information they do not understand (training issue). Applicants are left holding the bag."

2.2.4 Theme Four: Performance Measurement and Management

- "People should never need to come back four or five times, which happens all the time."
- "Who's receiving the outcome results? Are all laws and ordinances being followed? Are we getting to yes? We need to escort our customers through the process."
- "Are we closely tracking the population and other trends to project staffing needs, workloads, etc.?"
- "Performance measures need to be set, measured, and reported."
- "There are extended wait times in the lobby and overall for permit approval. This is caused by workload, the research that is required in multiple databases, and approvals from other departments."
- "There is so much pressure because of wait times. We accept applications that are incomplete which creates problems downstream."
- "To meet wait time goals we are accepting incomplete applications which "starts the clock" and causes problems for other staff."

- "We are short staffed in all departments. The workload exceeds our capacity."

2.2.5 Theme Five: Physical Space

- "The seating arrangement in the Permit Center hinders communication."
- "Community Development should all be on one floor or in a separate building."
- "We prefer the open concept floor plan for the Permit Center."
- "Planners are still sitting in the Permit Center. We need to move them and reconfigure the space. There is a lack of space. They are currently backroom."
- "Senior staff need to sit next to junior staff so they can help."

2.2.6 Theme Six: Stormwater Management

- "There is no formal review process in place for stormwater review."
- "We must adhere to state code. New regulations in 2016 tightened restrictions. Now we have new fees which are harder on customers."
- "We are touching stormwater applications four or five times. The short form of instructions is 130 pages long; 25 pages just for Clark County. Permit technicians are reviewing with a checklist. Engineers are hired by the applicant. Development engineering is not working well and is expensive."

2.2.7 Theme Seven: Financial Management

- "The financial modeling system needs to be improved."
- "Funding will be needed to keep the technology up-to-date."
- "The Permit Center revenues have fluctuated significantly due to market fluctuations."

2.2.8 Theme Eight: Technology

- "Information needs to be on-line and written."
- "The new LMS [Land Management Software] system is not functional and transparent. There are lag times and lack of permissions."
- "LMS is not transparent upfront, and requires digging into layers to find information and complete processes."

- "The LMS numbers do not correlate to the date accepted which is a problem for who gets reviewed next."
- "The website is not user-friendly. Usability of LMS for the older generation is difficult."
- "There are bandwidth issues with connecting laptops in the field."
- "In our permit system we cannot track parcel splits or retirements."

2.2.9 Theme Nine: Staff Development and Retention

- "Responsibility for formalized training for the Department needs to be assigned."
- "We need to update the training and stop hiring staff until we are all up to speed."
- "Put together a training schedule. Begin with the newest [employees] and work your way through all that have not been trained."
- "If training improves the confidence of the staff will increase."
- "The training is inconsistent so we get different results with different inspectors."
- "There needs to be an employee orientation for every new community development employee."
- "It takes two years to fully train a permit technician."
- "Staff are expected to know everything. It takes a long time to get this level of knowledge. There is not enough training. There should be primary training and also specialty training."
- "The Permit Center is understaffed."
- "We should take away technical questions from permit technicians to address the workload issues. If they still cannot handle the workload then we are understaffed."
- "It is expected that permit technicians know and interpret Title 40 (Land Use, Engineering and Environmental Constraints), Title 6 (Fees), Title 15 (Fire Code), and IRC and IBC (Building Codes)."
- "The leads are not helping with customers because they are addressing and putting out fires. Given the environment they are required to respond right now!"

- "We have great people who are dedicated and customer-focused that operate in a fast-paced world."

2.3 CLEARER COMMUNICATION, BETTER BUILDING WORKSHOP

On January 26, 2018 a facilitated workshop was held that was entitled "Clearer Communication, Better Building." There were 82 participants representing the County Council, County staff, and the many facets of the building industry. A case study was utilized entitled "Pete learns the ropes." Citygate representatives attended the workshop and provided their summary of the results. The actions proposed by the 10 groups (tables of 8) included the following (in alpha order). There are two categories: (1) Immediate Implementation – will take less than six months to complete; and (2) Strategic Improvements – will take longer than 6 months to complete.

2.3.1 Immediate Implementation

- **Checklists** – Assign responsibility for each checklist to one person who is responsible to keep the content current and distribute the information.
- **County Councilor's Role** – Concerns were raised that builders go directly to Councilors when they do not get what they want or need. Councilors are being used as a hammer versus working together. When this is allowed it causes delays for the other applicants. Some County staff appear to be reluctant or fearful of making decisions, and Councilor involvement impacts this.
- **Customer Service Approach** – Create a customer service philosophy that includes: (1) a sense of teamwork and partnership; and (2) face-to-face or telephone communication whenever solving a problem.
- **Listening Tour** – Communication with customers of all types has been deemed of high importance. A "listening tour" should be considered that is designed to build relationships, to build trust, and to listen to the building industry about trends, etc. Participants from the County could include County Councilors, the County Manager, the Community Development Director, and Division Managers, as appropriate. One approach could include having dinner with a small group of customers (8 to 10) every other month (6 times per year). There should be ongoing collaboration, including sitting down outside of the office to talk.
- **On-Line Permit Processing** – Accelerate the implementation and staff training on the on-line permitting process which allows applicants to check the status of a permit at any time.

- **Permit Center Layout Improvements** – In the short term, a study should be undertaken to improve the layout and functionality of the Permit Center's existing space. Customers suggested that the redesign should include a separate line for frequent customers and that as much as possible should be done up front. A "drop-off" point at the front counter where customers with corrections to plans can simply leave them should be created.

- **Primary Point of Contact** – Assign a project manager for each permit who serves as the primary point of contact throughout the permitting process. This person becomes the project advocate for the applicant which includes assistance when needed.

- **Process Improvement Team** – Create a process improvement team with the responsibility to review all proposed process improvements with recommendations to the Community Development Director. This team's charter should include evaluation of all "pinch" points and the elimination of unnecessary processes. The message should be that we have a culture of continual process improvement. The initial proposals could include: (1) use of engineer's stamp; (2) pre-application meetings with homeowners; (3) whether face-to-face meetings are required, desired, or optional; (4) when and how communication can occur with outsourced resources; (5) process improvements between the departments that are involved in the permitting process; (6) whether there should be a "rip-cord" option for applicants which delays the process but includes a meeting with all appropriate County team members; and (7) whether there should be a streamlined process for re-applications.

2.3.2 Strategic Improvements

- **Applicant Incentive Program** – This is similar in concept to "Good Landlord" programs around the country. The concept is that regular customers of the Permit Center could complete a training, maintain quality applications, and receive a reduction in fees.

- **Decision-making and Empowerment** – Create a decision matrix that defines who (by position) has what decision-making authority. There should be one plan reviewer for each permit, and a definition should be provided for when exceptions are allowed. Communicate this information to applicants and train staff. Include decision-making in performance evaluations. Codify unique situations to allow decisions to be made at the lowest level. Develop an appeals process that includes conflict resolution and final decision authority by the County Manager. Include a

peer review option and utilize the existing development engineering advisory board when appropriate.

- **Education Program** – There are several components to this proposed program including: (1) tracking of required training for each Community Development employee; (2) growth training for specific employees as contained in the Succession Plan; (3) on-boarding for all Community Development employees including the review of the mission and annual goals of the Department, organizational overview, and required trainings such as sexual harassment, etc.; and (4) training for applicants regarding policies and processes (for those who do not participate in the applicant incentive program).

- **Facility Consolidation** – The many layers of communication challenges suggests that consideration should be given for Community Development to be consolidated into one building or one floor. This would also improve the convenience for all customers.

- **Performance Measurement and Management** – Create a system to evaluate performance including: (1) metrics at all levels, including Department, Division, Lines of Business, and individual staff members; (2) quality assurance and control; (3) management reports, e.g., frequency of third and fourth reviews, etc.; (4) clear expectations from all organization levels and individuals including timeline expectations; and (5) strategies for dealing with the ebbs and flows including steps to take when at capacity or when there is a drop in business.

- **Vision, Mission, Goals, Culture, and Expectations** – First, create a shared **vision** statement (County Council, County Manager, Community Development Department, and clients). Second, update the **mission** statement for the Department including a refreshed statement and graphics. Third, define the annual **goals** for the Department and share them widely. Fourth, create a **culture** that includes getting the project done as quickly as is reasonable and starting with "yes." One of the hallmarks of the Department should be professional and courteous service. The message should be that the Department wants economic growth and the jobs that come with it. Fifth, create a list of **expectations** similar to the following examples: that permit applications are complete when submitted; that staff have "one bite at the apple" that is only one plan review; that there is consistency which includes the best trained staff at the front counter of the Permit Center; that there is communication by the project manager throughout the process; and that decisions are made at the lowest level possible.

2.3.3 Alignment Summary

The alignment between the nine themes and the results of the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop is summarized as follows:

Table 3—Alignment of Nine Themes to the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* Workshop

Theme	Immediate Implementation	Strategic Improvements
1. Organizational Culture and Role Alignment	County Councilor's Role Customer Service Approach Listening Tour	Applicant Incentive Program Decision-making and Empowerment Vision, Mission, Goals, Culture, and Expectations (list of 5 items)
2. Process Definition and Documentation	Checklists Process Improvement Team (list of 7 items)	-----
3. Organization	Primary Point of Contact	-----
4. Performance Measurement and Management	-----	Performance Measurement and Management (list of 5 items)
5. Physical Space	Permit Center Layout Improvement	Facility Consolidation
6. Stormwater Management*	-----	-----
7. Financial Management	-----	-----
8. Technology	On-line Permit Processing	-----
9. Staff Development and Retention	-----	Education Program (list of 4 items)

* Stormwater Management was not included in the workshop because policy and legislation in this area should be addressed through a different process.

SECTION 3—COMPARISON TO BEST PRACTICES

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SECTION 3—COMPARISON TO BEST PRACTICES

Citygate was asked to identify best practices and compare them to current practices in the Clark County Permit Center. This section provides that information, and is organized using the nine themes listed in Section 1. The themes are not listed in any specific order (i.e., priority), but many are interrelated, and Citygate strongly encourages the County to consider them as a package.

3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND ROLES ALIGNMENT

3.1.1 Organizational Culture

In best practice organizations there is a clear culture that is reinforced at all levels. Whether that culture is perceived to be "pro-business," "pro-environment," or something else, all parties are aligned. For functions like a permit center, the type of organizational culture that results in the highest level of applicant satisfaction is one in which the staff are truly committed to providing excellent customer service to achieve the County's development objectives.

There are five important aspects of customer service that represent best practices: customer focus, customer perspective, predictability and transparency, communication, and customer experience.

Customer Focus

The key characteristics of customer-focused community development organizations are that they:

- Listen to their customers

- Incorporate customer feedback into their operations
- Empower staff to deliver consistently high levels of customer service
- Are willing to test new and innovative ideas.[4]

Customer feedback can take many forms, including interviews (like those used in this review), comments from face-to-face contact or comment cards, and ongoing user group meetings. The Clark County Community Development Department and Permit Center can use the currently constituted Development Engineering Advisory Board on a more frequent and regular basis to obtain customer feedback, and thus regularly utilize customer input to improve customer service.

Empowering staff to enhance customer service entails providing the necessary resources (e.g., information, training, and equipment) and authority to make decisions. Relinquishing authority to allow front-line staff to make more decisions is a delicate balancing act as managers must support staff who will inevitably make mistakes, and at the same time be accountable. This often requires significantly higher levels of information sharing, teamwork, and trust.

Customer Perspective

In addition to the characteristics described previously, a customer-focused organization also tries to offer the services they provide from the perspective of the customer, not that of the organization. In local government permitting processes, it is a best practice to provide a customer-oriented portal to the services provided. On the other hand, organization-centered local governments essentially force customers to learn and navigate the organizational structure and processes to obtain a permit. The difference in these two perspectives is illustrated in Figure 7.

Clark County has attempted to provide a customer-oriented portal through the Permit Center, but the implementation of the concept has not been as successful as needed to meet customer expectations. In addition, as will be discussed in a later section, the permit tracking technology as currently deployed is more organization-centered.

Predictability and Transparency

Organizations that are serious about customer service also make predictability and transparency cornerstones of their operations. These two factors are arguably the greatest source of customer dissatisfaction in building and community development departments. To address these two issues, organizations must make the requirements of customers clear and unambiguous, have well-defined and straightforward processes, and have predictable timeframes. This is discussed in more detail later in this section.

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[4] Wendelyn Martz, *Customer Service in the Planning Department* (International City/County Management Association Management Information Service Report Volume 27/Number 5, May 1995), p. 2.

Figure 7—Example of Customer- and Organizational-Centered Perspectives

Organizational Perspective

Customer Perspective

What, if any, permits do I need for this?	Who needs to review and inspect this?							
	Planning	Building	Fire	Engineering	Utilities	Transportation	Business License	Code Compliance
Zoning Map Amendment	○							
Building Permit	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Street Encroachment				○	○	○		
Traffic Control			○			○		
Utility Service				○	○	○		
Business License	○	○	○		○		○	○

Communication

Customers will not be well served unless they are communicated with effectively. The most important forms of communication that can be provided to the Clark County Permit Center customers are:

- **Applications** – The main purpose of an application is to provide the information needed to review the proposed project. Well-designed applications should save time and reduce costs for both the applicant and staff. It is a best practice for the same application checklist to be used by both applicants and staff, and it is provided with the application.

- **Processes** – This should outline, in simple graphics and text like the example in Figure 11 (page 56), the steps and sequence for review of all applications, responding to inspection requests, etc. To paraphrase a concept founded in quality management and continuous improvement, "If you can't explain your application review process, you don't have one."
- **Timeframes or Schedules** – The expected and maximum time required for each step of the process, as well as scheduled meetings, hearings, etc., should be available before an application is submitted so the customer can predict when other steps in the development or redevelopment process should be scheduled, and how long the process should take.

As many customers expect this same information online, and as processes are being managed more often with permit tracking software, it is even more important for the information requirements, processes, and schedules to be clearly defined and documented. In most cases, the Clark County Permit Center does not currently provide this level of communication with customers.

Customer Experience

Finally, it is a best practice for staff to create a positive experience for customers when interacting with them. Based on the stakeholder input Citygate received, the most important customer experience factors that the Clark County Permit Center should recognize and strive to improve are being:

- Courteous and respectful to customers
- Prompt and effective in communication
- Knowledgeable about the Building Code and other requirements
- Thorough in reviewing plans and answering questions
- Helpful by providing information and solutions.

Organizations that utilize best practices include measures of customer service like these in their budgets and performance management systems. These factors should be included as individual- and division-level performance measures in the future.

"An underlying or foundational issue that has emerged from the interactions during this study is that there is a need to build trust between all parties."

Building Trust

An underlying or foundational issue that has emerged from the interactions during this study is that there is a need to build trust between all parties. Leaders who truly care about others develop

the ability to understand their needs and have the motivation to help fill those needs. These individuals also have a high degree of integrity that manifests itself in dependability, reliability, and honesty. This unique blend of caring and integrity with skills and competence provides the foundation for leaders who can be effective in their positions. They are worthy of trust.

Importance of Trust

Trust is the beginning place, the foundation upon which relationships are built. Stephen R. Covey claims that "trust—or the lack of it—is at the root of success or failure in relationships and is the bottom-line results of business, industry, education, and government."[5] Organizational trust begins and ends with the actions of leadership. Leadership teams that disagree on the fundamental critical issues facing an organization will be unable to perform effectively and will lose the trust of their employees.

Trust is more likely if people in the organization share common values that guide the way they are supposed to act. As a leader, you must take the responsibility of respecting the values. If your actions belie your commitment to the values, those values become useless. There is a direct relationship between trust and fear. The higher the level of trust, the lower the level of fear, and vice versa.

What Trust Is

Trust is a generalized expectation that the verbal statements of others can be relied upon, and that an individual will perform as they committed to do. It is also the degree of confidence one feels when thinking about a relationship. It is a power that moves one to action and is one of the most motivating of all forces in human life. Trust is affected and created by a person's perceptions. If trust is present, people can choose to risk because they expect that others will act with integrity. It is reciprocal in nature. To win someone's trust, one must first be willing to invest trust in them. It is a voluntary offering.

Disadvantages of Low or No Trust

If trust is operating on a low level, or if it is nonexistent, the relationship suffers greatly. Strategies of distrust absorb the strength of the person who distrusts to an extent that leaves them little energy to explore solutions and adapt to the environment. If distrust is too deep and too prolonged, it can develop into serious issues. At best, distrust may be useful if it is moderate and temporary.

Benefits of Trust

Trust benefits the person who is trusted as well as the person who trusts, because it is the relationship itself that is strengthened by trust. Trust between individuals tends to become mutual trust, and distrust becomes mutual distrust. If a high degree of trust exists, there is greater

[5] Stephen R. Covey, *Principle-Centered Leadership* (Free Press, 1991), p. 31.

productivity and cooperation, a climate conducive to change, an inclination to give the benefit of the doubt, deeper commitment, respect, loyalty, honesty, reliability, credibility, predictability, and consistency.

Things People Do That Build Trust

The following examples are things that people do that build trust:

- Be honest with others and keep confidences
- Allow people to do their job (and not over-supervise)
- Fulfill promises and be predictable
- Give others the benefit of the doubt when questions arise
- Encourage, compliment, and thank others
- Treat others with fairness
- Explain the reasons behind the policies or rules
- Be patient, kind, and forgiving
- Live and lead by example; inspire others
- Be well organized and plan ahead
- Be competent, professional, and always try to do the best job possible
- Value differences
- Be willing to admit a mistake
- Tactfully evaluate others
- Be nonjudgmental.

Things People Do That Hinder Trust or Create Distrust

The following examples are things that people do that hinder trust or create distrust:

- Poorly prepare, and poorly follow-through
- Be inconsistent and unreliable
- Show inexperience and incompetence
- Criticize and make debasing comments
- Be insensitive, dishonest, and selfish
- Compromise standards or exercise a double standard

- Be unwilling to handle differences of opinions
- Divulge information given in confidence
- Have a hidden agenda and not taking the time to listen
- Interpret sincere comments as disloyalty
- Become angry over minor mistakes
- Forget assignments or things that are important
- Give few compliments
- Make promises and statements cannot be kept.

Strategies for Repairing Broken Trust

To repair broken trust the parties must realize and expect that the process of repairing broken trust can be difficult, requires much effort, and can be slow.

In the specific situation between the County Council, Community Development Department, and the development community, there needs to be a willingness to have a fresh start and allow the new changes to take root. The County Council's relationship with the new County Manager needs to be built and this person needs to be given time to adjust to the role and begin to lead. The Community Development staff need to be given the time and flexibility to implement changes, make adjustments, and prove that the changes will stick and be effective. The development community needs clear and frequent communication as changes occur, needs to know that their voices have been heard, and needs the opportunity to provide feedback along the way.

"In the specific situation between the County Council, Community Development Department, and the development community, there needs to be a willingness to have a fresh start and allow the new changes to take root."

A reasonable timeframe to try this should initially be six months. Citygate will be returning in six months to assess the progress that has been made.

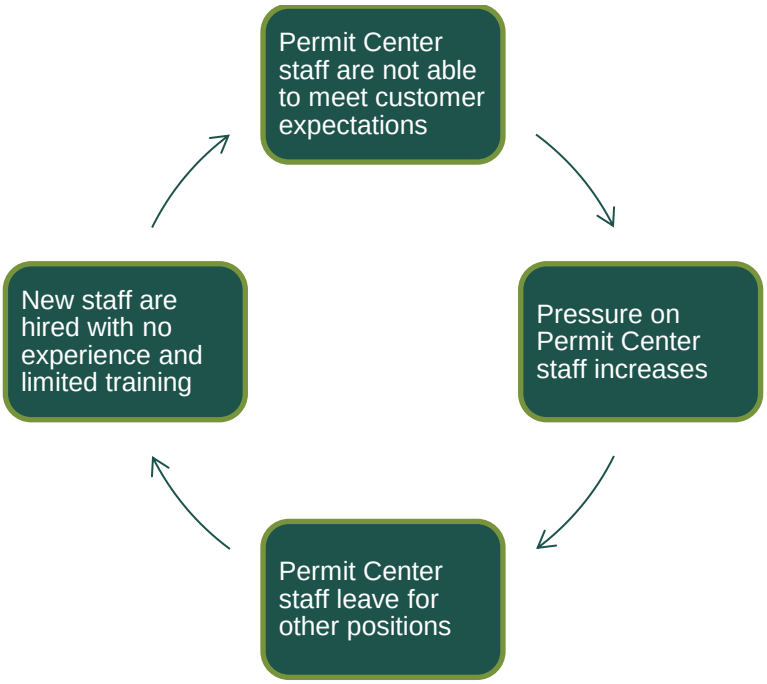
3.1.2 Roles Alignment

In addition to reinforcing a customer service culture at all levels, best practice organizations also have clarity on the role each level in the organization plays in providing that customer service. Moreover, these roles are distinct and complement each other.

In Clark County, which is undergoing the transition to a Council-Manager form of government based on the Home Rule Charter adopted on May 27, 2017, these roles have not been clarified and are causing challenges for both customers and internal County operations.

The Permit Center staff are expected to handle a wide range of tasks from answering questions to issuing permits. New staff are not experienced and have limited training. Given the workload and lack of training and experience, staff are not able to meet customer expectations. Customers then complain to Council members who intervene creating pressure on the staff and causing applications to be processed out of the order customers expect. Staff then leave for other divisions when they get the opportunity to because of the pressure of the workload and unmet Council and customer expectations. New staff are then hired with little experience, and the result is a self-reinforcing system that is a "vicious cycle" (i.e., they are not able to meet expectations, pressure increases, staff leave, new staff are hired who have limited experience and training, they are not able to meet expectations, pressure increases, staff leave, etc.).

Figure 8—Vicious Cycle Resulting from Lack of Alignment on Roles in Organization



As the County continues the transition to establishing a strong manager role, the County Manager and their staff should take responsibility for intervening on behalf of customers and allow the Council to focus on the legislation and budgeting roles consistent with the Home Rule Charter. To clarify roles and reflect best practices in that transition process, the County Manager should identify the performance that can be expected given the funding that the Council allocates and manage the organization to deliver the promised performance. Performance measurement and management is discussed in more detail as a separate theme.

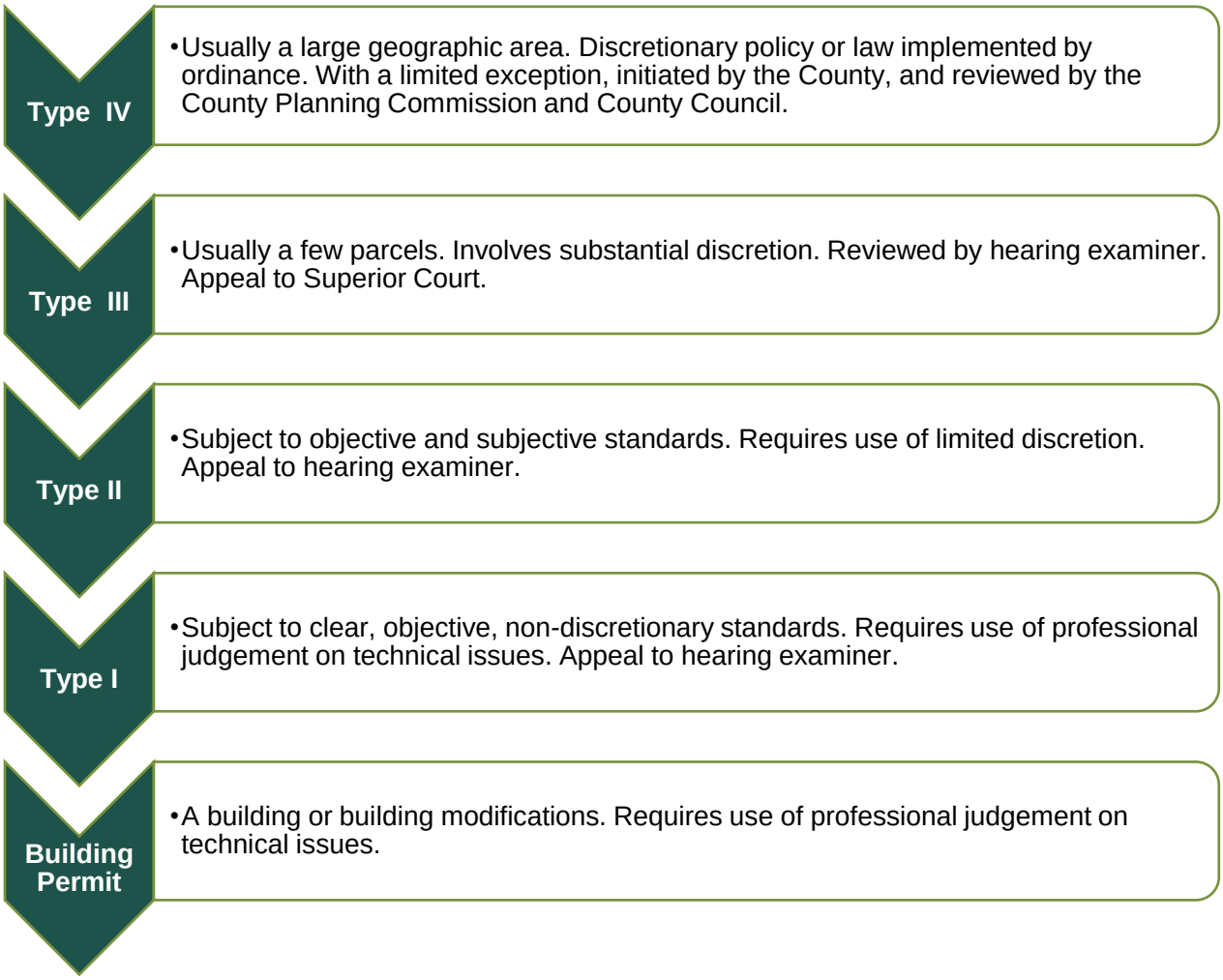
3.2 Process Definition and Documentation

If there is one statement that represents the view of the widest range of stakeholders, it is that the Clark County permitting process needs to be predictable, consistent, and timely. This is a best practice.

"If there is one statement that represents the view of the widest range of stakeholders, it is that the Clark County permitting process needs to be predictable, consistent, and timely."

When viewed from a very general perspective, Clark County has the typical planning and building processes. As is the case with many jurisdictions, the responsibility for these processes is spread across multiple departments and divisions.

Figure 9—General Processes and Types of Permits



At the most general level, the County processes comprehensive plan and development code amendments (e.g., designation of land use districts) through a legislative process that involves the Planning Commission and County Council and is supported by the Community Planning Department (Type IV).

This creates the context for quasi-judicial actions (e.g., conditional use permits, subdivisions, appeals, and occasional forest practice permits) that require a public hearing by a hearing examiner and which are supported by various programs in the Community Development Department and other departments (Type III).

Administrative decisions (e.g., habitat permits, and a majority of site plan reviews) are processed by staff in various programs of the Community Development Department and other departments, and only require a public hearing in special circumstances or if appealed (Type II/IIA).

The Type I process is used for ministerial decisions (e.g., legal lot determinations, a limited number of site plan reviews, and floodplain reviews) and is supported by various programs within the Community Development Department and other departments. This process also includes an appeal period.

The final step in the planning and building process, issuance of building permits (e.g., permit to construct a house or commercial building), is primarily the responsibility of the staff in the Permit Center in the Community Development Department.

These processes are more clearly defined in Title 14 (Building Code) and Title 40 (Unified Development Code) of the County Code and summarized as follows:

- **Building Permit (BP)** – This process is used for the County to check building plans for consistency with the International Building Code, as modified by Clark County, and Unified Development Code. Once they are consistent, a permit to build can be issued. Building permits are required for construction, alteration, movement, demolition, enlargement, repair, replacement, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, and removal of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to the buildings or structures.

- **Type I** – This process is used for code interpretations, classification of applications, some similar use determinations, pre-application waivers, fully complete reviews, submittal requirements waivers, accessory dwelling units, legal lot determinations, some determinations of uses subject to review and approval, some site plan reviews, final site plan reviews, sign permits, some post-decision reviews, non-conforming use determinations, boundary line adjustments, final plats, some road modifications, some variances, sewer waivers, some critical aquifer recharge area permits, some floodplain reviews, some geologic hazard reviews, final wetland permits, and emergency wetland permits.

- **Type II** – This process is used for some similar use determinations, some determinations of uses subject to review and approval, some site plan reviews, some post-decision reviews, some master plans, planned unit developments, expansions of non-conforming uses, short plats, lot reconfigurations, plat alterations, some road modifications, some variances, some Columbia River Gorge permits, historic preservation reviews, some critical aquifer recharge area permits, some floodplain reviews, some geologic hazard reviews, habitat permits, and some preliminary wetland permits.
- **Type III** – This process is used for some site plan reviews, some post-decision reviews, some master plans, some expansions of non-conforming uses, conditional use permits, subdivisions, some plat alterations, some plat vacations, some road modifications, some variances, zone changes within Comprehensive Plan designations, some Columbia River Gorge permits, shoreline reviews, some critical aquifer recharge area permits, some floodplain reviews, some geologic hazard reviews, some preliminary wetland permits, and wetland variances.
- **Type IV** – This process is used for annual reviews (plan map amendments), zone change text amendments, and open space plan amendments.

The processes, the organizational units in the County potentially involved in each type of process, the Code-prescribed timeframes, and Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2017 volumes are shown in the following table.

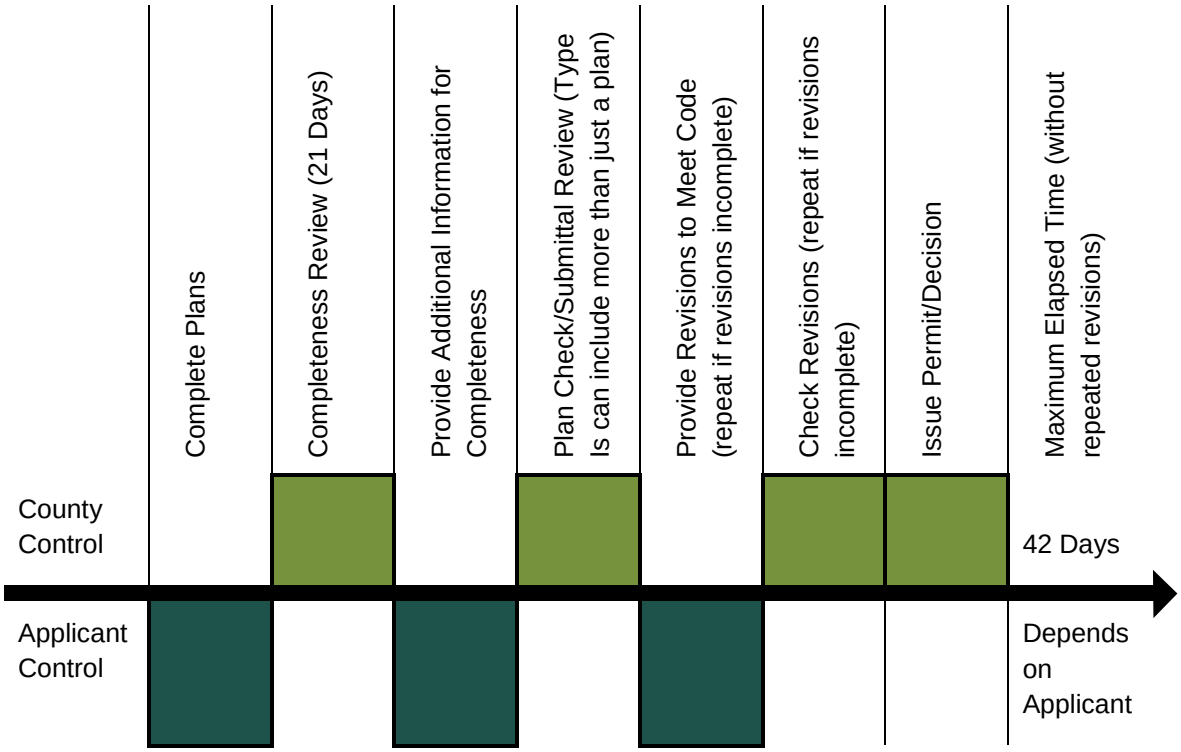
Table 4—Clark County Processes and Organizational Units

PROCESS TYPE	Community Development Department					Public Works Department	Public Health Department	Community Planning Department	Code Timeline[2] (Appeal Period)	Volume (FY 2016-2017)
	Permit Center	Land Use Review	Building	Fire Marshall	Wetland and Habitat					
BP	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		None	
I	■	■	■[1]	■	■[1]	■	■[1]		42 days (14 days)	4,876[4]
II/IIA	■	■	■[1]	■	■[1]	■	■		99 days (14 days)	546
III	■	■	■[1]	■	■[1]	■	■		113 days (21 days)	168
IV	■							■	Annual Cycle or Longer	39
Untyped[3]				■[3]						204

[1] On an as-needed basis
[2] Assumes single fully complete review and no re-submittal/hold periods
[3] Includes Fire Marshal burn and fireworks permits
[4] Includes Type I reviews completed concurrent with building permits

The County Permit Center, which is the focus of this report, receives many types of applications but primarily processes Building Permits and Type I applications. That process essentially includes up to seven steps: three of these are the responsibility of and controlled by the applicant, and four are the responsibility of and controlled by the County. These steps are illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 10—County- and Applicant-Controlled Steps in the Permit Center Review Process



As this chart clearly shows, neither the applicant nor the County staff can unilaterally control the elapsed time for a less complex building permit and/or Type I application review process. In addition to adequate staff and applicant resources for the volume of applications, the successful completion of the application review within the prescribed timelines is directly related to the extent to which the applicant and staff work together to meet each other's needs. The staff cannot be expected to complete review of an application in a timely manner when the applicant has not provided the required information or does not respond to the need to revise the plans (i.e., not timely). Applicants should not be expected to provide information if they do not know it is required (i.e., not predictable) or if the requirements vary depending on the staff person reviewing the application (i.e., not consistent). In other words, both parties must take responsibility for the County to have a consistent, predictable, and timely review process.

Figure 11 is an example of the type of documentation produced by best practice organizations to illustrate process consistency, predictability, and timeliness. Further discussion on measuring and reporting consistency is included in the Performance Measurement and Management sub-section (3.4) of this report.

Figure 11—Example Documentation of Consistent, Predictable, and Timely Process

Process Steps and Proposed Timeframes

Step	Application Submitted and Fees Paid	First Plan Review	Applicant Plan Corrections	Second and Subsequent Plan Reviews	Charge-out and Permit Issuance
Description	• Staff determines if application complete and correct plan check fee paid • If so, assigned to plan reviewers	• Zoning review • Building review • Fire review • Engineering review • Public Utilities review • Transportation review • Stormwater review	• Applicant or his/her designer make corrections identified during plan review	• If necessary corrections made, plans are sent for charge-out and permit issuance. • If not, corrections must be made and plans reviewed again	• Fees (e.g., water connections, impact fees, etc.) to be charged are calculated and permit ready to issue once fees paid.
Timeframe	• Completeness review, fee check, and distribution of plans completed within 2 working days	• Review of plans and any notice of corrections needed completed by all six reviewers in 20 working days	• The time required for this step is determined by the applicant and designer	• Review of plan corrections completed by all six reviewers in 10 working days	• Charge-out completed within 2 working days • Time for fee payment and permit receipt determined by applicant

Best practice organizations that consistently meet advertised performance standards like those in the example above, generally have two processes. The first is what is often termed "over-the-counter" permitting which means that customers can bring simple, straightforward plans to the permit center and receive a permit. Those types of simple permits can be approved "on-the-spot" by empowered technician level staff.

The second process is for more complex permits that must be routed to one or more additional organizational units. Best practice organizations in the Western United States route these types of plans through all reviewing units and complete over 95 percent of these reviews in 10 or fewer days (see Table 5 in the Performance Measurement and Management sub-section which is from a growing Western US jurisdiction with a population of approximately 250,000). This alleviates the need to single out certain customer groups and provide them with a different level of service, often alienating other customer groups. In other words, all customers receive the same high level of service so there is not a need for specialized services like the Clark County LEAN Program. It also provides an incentive to submit high-quality applications because all those that do not must make all corrections before re-submittal and then go through the 10-day process again. And, often an additional plan checking fee is charged after a set number of "re-reviews" (e.g., three reviews).

There are several other important characteristics of the processes used by best practice organizations. Most importantly, they have front-line staff who are empowered and trained to continually seek improvements to their processes as discussed in the Staff Development and Retention sub-section (i.e., they are trained in continuous improvement and expected to utilize that training as part of their jobs). With this type of training and a strong customer service culture

as described above (see 3.1.1), the staff and customers work together to constantly enhance service.

That said, there are other best practices that stakeholders and Citygate identified which Clark County does not currently employ to the extent that they could.

- **Checklists** – Best practice organizations have well-defined checklists for all of their processes. These checklists are particularly helpful for customers that are new to the permitting process or are not completely familiar the practices of this organization.
- **Acceptance of Plans from Licensed Professionals** – Best practice organizations usually accept plans from licensed professionals with minimal review. These professionals are licensed by the state, have their licenses "on the line" when they prepare plans, and are typically liable for their errors and omissions. It makes little sense for staff who do not have the same levels of licensing and expertise to perform detailed checking of their plans and require corrections to which the professional does not agree. An alternative approach that some organizations employ is to use a professional to perform quality control / quality assurance on other professionals. If there are consistent problems, those organizations will not accept work from that professional for a given period (e.g., one year).
- **Master Plans** – When the same plans are going to be used for multiple buildings (e.g., one of five house plans that is going to be offered in a subdivision), a "master plan" is reviewed thoroughly and then each time it is to be utilized the application is checked only for consistency with the master plan and to make sure it addresses any unique characteristics of the specific site.
- **"One-Bite-at-the-Apple" Process** – Essentially this means that any subsequent reviews of plans cannot result in corrections that were not required because of a previous review unless there is a change, or a public health and safety issue is identified. If the public health and safety issue was "missed" on the previous review, that is noted as a performance issue (see the Performance Measurement and Management sub-section). It is incumbent on the reviewer to "get it right the first time."
- **"Three-Strikes-and-Out" Process** – If additional reviews are required after three corrections, some jurisdictions essentially remove the plans from the review process and exercise one of several options. Those options range from charging a re-submittal fee (discussed above), to a mandatory review with a senior level staff member who is empowered to make the final decision on any item being disputed.

These and other improvements resulting from the ongoing quest for process improvements will move the County toward best practices in Permit Center processes and customer service.

3.3 ORGANIZATION

Citygate compared Clark County to best practices regarding organization of functions from two perspectives:

- **Overall process** – How the County is organized to provide customer service across the spectrum of application review functions, not just the Permit Center.
- **Permit Center** – How the Permit Center is organized to provide a "one-stop shop" for customers.

3.3.1 Overall Process

Depending on the scale and complexity, a project could be required to go through more than one process (see Table 4). It is important to have clear lines of authority and responsibility for all the processes. When the application review process is handled within a single division it should be the responsibility of that division manager. When the process spans two or more divisions in the same department, the department head should be the responsible party. Processes that span multiple departments should be the responsibility of the assigned Assistant County Manager, if that position exists, or the County Manager.

Clark County is not currently organized to reflect this best practice. The Type IV applications are in a separate Community Planning Department. This function is typically a program within the planning division of a community development department, or in a standalone long-range planning division within a community development department.

Likewise, in customer-service-focused organizations the new development engineering function is often located within the community development department. In this arrangement close coordination with the public works department engineering staff is essential because that department will ultimately take responsibility for infrastructure operation and maintenance.

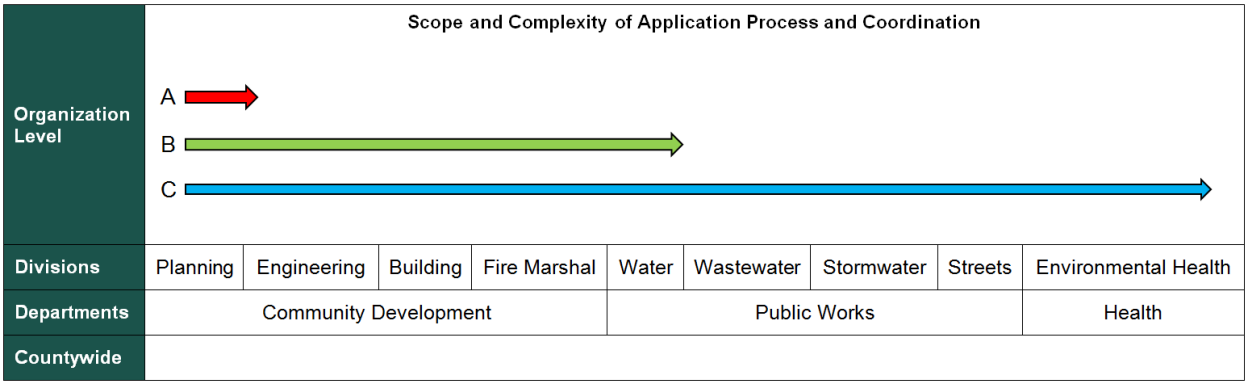
For the same reasons, it would make sense to locate the environmental health function in the community development organization. However, even though it is a part of the County organization, the health department and environmental health function serve a broader different and group of customers in both incorporated cities as well as the unincorporated County. Hence, it is considered a best practice to maintain that department and those functions as a separate entity that coordinates with other community development organizational units.

Figure 12 shows typical organization levels involved in application processing and coordination, depending on the scope of the permitting process. Organizations that use a predictable and consistent permitting process have an organizational and management structure that can address all scopes and levels of complexity.

As shown in Figure 12, process "A" involves only one division within a department. The example here is shown within the Planning Division. It could be wholly within another division, such as engineering for a right-of-way encroachment permit. In this example, the division manager is responsible for the process being completed effectively and efficiently.

"Organizations that use a predictable and consistent permitting process have an organizational and management structure that can address all scopes and levels of complexity."

Figure 12—Different Organization Levels, Application Process Scope and Complexity, and Coordination



In permit process "B" multiple divisions within one department are involved in application processing. This is often the case when a more complex application is, or multiple applications are, being processed. It is a best practice in the community development field for the department director to be responsible for the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall process, even if that role entails overruling one or more division managers when they have a disagreement which results in a delay in the processing of a permit. For example, this may happen when two divisions interpret the different policies or codes they are responsible for implementing, and those interpretations create conflicting direction to an applicant.

There are options for filling the multiple-department coordination **role** for permitting specific projects. A department head can be given the authority and responsibility for a specific project. Another option is to designate a project manager for special projects, and to delegate to that staff person the necessary authority from the County Manager. A third option is to create an ombudsperson role for a staff member and assign certain types of projects to that staff person. The scope of this work can be determined by the County's objectives (e.g., economic development-oriented, affordable-housing-oriented, etc.). A Countywide funding source would need to be identified or the expense offset by permit fee revenue.

To ensure multiple-department coordination on an ongoing basis, a **position** with the necessary authority and responsibility is considered the best practice. This position often has all department heads responsible for processing applications in the local government report to them. The most significant advantage with this arrangement is that multiple-department communication, coordination, alignment, and collaboration become the standard operating procedure versus the exception that occurs only when there are special projects.

3.3.2 Permit Center

Creating a single public service counter, although difficult to successfully implement, is considered a best practice employed by many local governments with a strong commitment to customer service. For the casual customer who does not frequent the County offices, it provides "one-stop" service. Rather than the customer first learning the organizational structure and location of different staff, the staff provide that service by determining who should assist the customer and meet the customer at the counter. Typically, the "one-stop" counter will include a general information or check-in counter where the customer need is ascertained. The appropriate staff are identified and called to the larger main counter, and the customer is directed to that staff person. The larger main counter is where various staff can meet with the customer. Additional seating and resources (e.g., computer with access to data, like property records, handouts, forms, etc.) are also usually included.

Out of necessity, the services available to the counter customer are limited. Customers who are more familiar with the County and know which staff person they need assistance from can reach that person directly through appointments, phone calls, or email. Otherwise, each customer at the counter would require much more time to be served and the customers who are waiting would experience long waiting times and what they perceive as poor customer service.

Based on observations and stakeholder input, it appears that the Clark County Permit Center is currently functioning as a sort of "hybrid" that is in part a "one-stop" counter with limited services and in part a substitute for appointments, phone calls, and emails with County staff. In other words, the Permit Center is trying to be all things to all customers and has had some measure of success that could otherwise improve. To paraphrase what one participant at the January 26, 2018 *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop stated: if you try to meet all the customers' needs and spend 45 minutes with each one, you can expect the other customers who are waiting to be served to become very angry. To address this situation, best practice organizations operate using the following principles:

- **Clarity about Services Offered at the Counter** – It is clear to the staff and customers what services are available at the counter and which ones require an appointment with a staff person with more specialized expertise.

- **Empowered Counter Services Staff** – The staff at the counter are adequately trained and fully empowered to make on-the-spot decisions regarding any of the services they do provide.
- **Availability of Specialized Expertise** – The counter staff have immediate access to specialized and technical staff if they need assistance, and they have the authority to arrange timely meetings between the customer and the specialized and technical staff if that becomes necessary.

Even though the organization chart may not show that they are assigned to work on the counter, all staff in the organization know that they are there to serve the customer and that is what is expected by the department director and managers at every level.

3.4 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT

"Performance management supports strategic planning and goal setting."

3.4.1 Performance Management[6]

The public sector is under intense pressure to improve its operations and deliver its products and services more efficiently and at the least cost to the taxpayer. Citizens want more effective and responsive government. They want action today, not five years from now. Performance management is being chosen by many local governments as a best practice and a key method of response.

Why is performance management important? Performance management improves internal and external accountability. Measuring the performance of programs gives management and policymakers a significant tool to achieve accountability and gives employees clarity in how their work helps the organization fulfill its mission.

Performance management is the use of performance measurement information to set performance goals, allocate and prioritize resources, review results, communicate with stakeholders, and to reward performance.

While publicizing performance information can be a major step for government officials, the public use of measurement data is one of the strongest benefits of a good performance management system. Carried to its logical conclusion, use of performance information to communicate results can lead to a far greater level of involvement by citizens in policy development. Using measures that are understood demystifies government for citizens and

[6] William B. Cook, *Public Works Performance Management: Creating Accountability and Increasing Performance* (American Public Works Association, 1999)

allows them to know how well services are being performed. They can then more competently recommend policy changes and better understand the implications of their ideas.

Performance management supports strategic planning and goal setting. Without the ability to measure performance and progress, the process of developing strategic plans and goals is less meaningful. While there are clear benefits to thinking and planning strategically, the evaluation of such plans and goals cannot be objective without measuring performance and achievement.

3.4.2 Performance Measurement[7]

When most of us think of performance measurement, we think of big formulas and a relentless stream of potentially useless information. For performance measurement to be useful in daily work and meaningful to citizens, it cannot be overly complex. Therein lies one of the biggest challenges—deciding what to measure, how to connect it to the real world of work, and not get lost in volumes of data.

"Performance measurement tools allow officials to support activities that are successful, to allocate resources based on what really works, and to build public credibility by being able to demonstrate the effective use of taxpayer dollars."

Performance measurement improves the quality of management and policy decisions by providing a clear picture of activity and accomplishments of the organization and/or programs. It does this by providing information about the performance characteristics of the organization, usually in the form of trend and ratio data. This data typically describes where the organization has been in terms of performance, where it is today, and how it compares with other, similar organizations elsewhere. Done well, the result of such an analysis is a detailed picture of performance, painted in graphical and statistical terms. It is this picture that helps officials make more informed policy choices and helps managers make better decisions.

Performance measurement in its simplest form is an assessment of how well people provide services. From a slightly different perspective, it is the regular gathering of specific information regarding the results of the services that are offered.

Performance measurement tools allow officials to support activities that are successful, to allocate resources based on what really works, and to build public credibility by being able to demonstrate the effective use of taxpayer dollars.

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[7] William B. Cook, *Performance Measurement in Public Works: A nuts and bolts guide for public works professional* (American Public Works Association, 2000)

Scholars have long recognized the central role that focus plays in performance. Best practices of local governments that are high performing have clear goals and a strong focus. The process of establishing performance measures requires that goals be clearly identified because performance cannot be measured until desired results have been defined.

Performance measures not only focus the organization's activity toward defined goals, they strongly influence employee behavior. The reasons are straightforward—people react to what is measured. When goals are identified and employees know the basis on which they will be measured, they perform. To paraphrase an old adage, *"Be careful what you measure, you're likely to get it."*

For elected officials and managers one of the most tangible benefits of performance measurement is its ability to help in resource allocation decisions. Without the ability to measure accomplishments, the budget process can become a no-win game of slicing a shrinking fiscal pie into ever smaller pieces. Performance measures provide officials with new tools for evaluating resource allocation decisions on the basis of demonstrated accomplishment rather than solely on the basis of traditional funding or political clout.

Performance measures help recognize the achievements of employees, departments, and the organization as a whole. For employees, recognition of demonstrated achievements provides motivation and builds self-esteem. At the department level, performance measures can help identify successful activities and encourage their further use while steering away from less effective approaches. For the County as a whole, performance recognition can build trust. Demonstrated achievements can enhance credibility with all stakeholders.

Performance measurement is essential because:

> "If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure
>
> If you can't see success, you can't reward it
>
> If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure
>
> If you can't see success, you can't learn from it
>
> If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it
>
> If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support"
>
> –*Reinventing Government*[8]

[8] David Osbourne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (PLUME, 1993)

3.4.3 Cascading Performance Measures and Examples

It is important that the measures have a context that creates a clear alignment between an organization's strategic objectives, the individual performance plans for each staff member, and all organizational levels in between. An example of this concept, often referred to as "Cascading Performance Measures," is illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 13—Example Cascading Performance Measures

Community Development Department

Objective	Measure	Target
Provide prompt, consistent service to customers to improve small business retention and expansion	All building permit plan reviews and inspections completed on time	100%

Division: Building Safety

Objective	Measure	Target
Provide prompt and thorough inspections	Percentage of all inspections completed within 2 working days of request	100%

Individual: Combination Inspector

Objective	Measure	Target
Provide prompt and thorough combination inspections	Percentage of combination inspections completed in 2 days	100%

To illustrate how performance against these measures can be communicated, the following two examples are provided. This jurisdiction publicly states its performance measure for application review is at least 95 percent of the applications submitted will be reviewed within 10 working days. When an application is submitted it is either reviewed as an over-the-counter permit (i.e., permit issued on-the-spot), reviewed for completeness and accepted, or rejected if not complete. If accepted, it is routed to all reviewers within 24 hours. Each reviewer then has 10 working days to complete review.

The Clark County Permit Center should include these types of standards as part of its proposed budget, use them as part of a performance management system, and regularly report performance to stakeholders as a best practice.

Table 5 contains a report from the jurisdiction's website that shows how well it is doing in terms of the 10-day performance target by month for a twelve-month period.[9]

Table 5—Example Building Permit Application Processing Report

Month	Total Applications	Total Late*	Percent on Time
June 2016	925	26	97.2
July 2016	638	22	96.6
August 2016	911	18	98.0
September 2016	997	10	99.0
October 2016	633	6	99.1
November 2016	699	8	98.9
December 2016	666	16	97.6
January 2017	545	3	99.4
February 2017	518	5	99.0
March 2017	878	7	99.2
April 2017	792	24	97.0
May 2017	1,139	62	94.6
June 2017	1,109	33	97.0
Cumulative	10,450	240	97.7

* At least one reviewer held application for 11 working days or longer

Table 6 is a report from the permit tracking system software that shows the applications routed to a specific plan reviewer. It can be used to determine if any applications are nearing the 10-day performance target. The plan check supervisor uses this to track how staff are doing and adjusts as needed.

[9] This report can be found at: https://www.reno.gov/government/departments/community-development-department/building-planning-and-engineering-division/applications-and-documents/building-permit-review

Table 6—Example Application Routing Report

February 05, 2018

Plans Routed for Review

For the Period of 1/22/2018 to 2/19/2018

Reviewer: John Doe

Print Date: 2/5/2018

Case Number	Sent Date	Due Date	Days in Dept	Application Type
Building Review				
BLD18-05032	01/29/2018	02/01/2018	6	Commercial/New Construction/NA
BLD18-05015	01/29/2018	02/01/2018	6	Commercial/New Construction/NA
BLD18-05022	01/29/2018	02/01/2018	6	Commercial/New Construction/NA
BLD17-05769	01/30/2018	02/02/2018	5	Commercial/New Construction/NA
BLD18-05542	02/02/2018	02/08/2018	2	Residential/Remodel & Addition/NA
BLD18-06085	01/25/2018	02/08/2018	8	Commercial/Remodel & Addition/NA
BLD18-06075	01/25/2018	02/08/2018	8	Commercial/Remodel & Addition/NA
BLD18-06078	01/25/2018	02/08/2018	8	Commercial/Remodel & Addition/NA
BLD18-06101	01/25/2018	02/08/2018	8	Commercial/Remodel & Addition/NA
BLD18-06207	01/31/2018	02/14/2018	4	Commercial/Remodel & Addition/NA
BLD18-06258	01/31/2018	02/14/2018	4	Commercial/Remodel & Addition/NA
BLD18-06322	02/02/2018	02/16/2018	2	Residential/Remodel & Addition/NA
Total by Type of Review:			**12**	
Electrical Review				
BLD18-06262	01/31/2018	02/14/2018	4	Residential/Electrical/NA
Total by Type of Review:			**1**	
Total Reviews:			**13**	

3.4.4 Recognizing the Limitations

Performance management systems are not the end-all and be-all of good leadership and management in the public sector. If that were the case, everyone would feel comfortable leaving program decisions to automated data analysis. Performance management systems do have the following limitations:

- **Performance is impacted by the nature of the business** – When you do not pick and choose applicants, consultants, or customers, and are subject to their relative experience and understanding of the processes, the outcomes can be impacted which is the case in Clark County.
- **Performance information must be balanced with other considerations** – Not all outcomes of government can be measured quantitatively. In many cases, some services have been undertaken to meet a largely un-measurable public good. It must also be recognized that performance measurement itself is only a tool—it is not an outcome in itself.
- **Performance management can have more cost than benefits** – The system should not consume in resources more than its worth. An attempt must be made to use existing data sources or care must be given to collect the data cost effectively.
- **The usefulness of performance measurement varies by its use** – Performance measures are only useful to the extent that they are used and that they answer the right questions. At the program level, managers use measures to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of their efforts. The information helps managers make decision about the performance of their employees, the use of their allocated resources, and their ability to meet the specific needs of their customers. At the executive level the focus should be on outcomes almost exclusively. They need to examine whether the programs are actually improving the lives of the people in the community, and whether resources are allocated fairly among programs depending upon their ability to perform.

A successful performance management system has several important characteristics including:

- It contains a balanced set of the vital few measures.
- It produces timely and useful reports at a reasonable cost.
- It displays and makes available information that is shared, understood, and used by the organization, department, and program manager.
- It supports the agency's values and the relationship it has with all stakeholders.

3.5 PHYSICAL SPACE

Citygate assessed the Permit Center physical space from multiple perspectives: the layout of the current space, the Permit Center space within the context of the Community Development Department, the Permit Center and Community Development Department from the perspective of the development customer building in the unincorporated County, and from the perspective of potential changes in how service is delivered as new technology is deployed. One of the key issues facing the County, as well as many other organizations that deliver permit services, is successfully addressing current needs while correctly anticipating changes in how services are delivered in the future.

3.5.1 Permit Center

The current physical layout reflects the "hybrid" approach to service described in sub-section 3.3.2. That is, it is set up to receive customers and direct them to individual staff in the Permit Center "back office" area, but not to other specialized and technical staff in other Department offices. It does not have adequate space for relatively straightforward "over-the-counter" interactions. The "back office" spaces are intended to serve as spaces for staff to meet with customers and for staff to use as their day-to-day workspaces. They do not serve either purpose well. They do not provide for effective meetings between staff and customers (e.g., inadequate layout space), nor do they provide workspaces in a more open area in which staff can communicate, collaborate, and learn from each other as they review plans.

More effective permit center layouts have three distinct types of spaces: a larger counter that can be used by multiple staff and customers for relatively straightforward interactions (see the following example), adequate meeting spaces where customers can layout plans and meet with permit center and/or specialized staff, and a separate area with workspaces where staff can communicate and collaborate. Figure 14 shows the Roseville, California "one-stop" counter where development services customers are directed to the appropriate staff and can obtain a variety of "over-the-counter" services.

Figure 14—"One-Stop" Counter Example

3.5.2 Community Development Department

Although all the community development functions were previously co-located on the same floor in the County Service Center, the Permit Center was subsequently separated from the other functions and relocated to the first floor. As a result, the Permit Center is disconnected from the rest of the Department in terms of customer service support, specialized and technical expertise, and organizational culture.

Absent relocating other departments or moving all the Community Development Department to another location, the options for strengthening the internal departmental connections are largely limited to the use of technology. Some of the best practices in this area are discussed in the Technology sub-section (3.8) of this report.

3.5.3 Customer

When feasible, best practice organizations locate their services as close as possible to their customers. The Clark County Service Center is well located for Countywide services (i.e., those provided to both the cities and the unincorporated area), but the Permit Center customers operate in the unincorporated parts of the County. Moreover, it is often difficult to access the Permit Center due to parking limitations and the other activities at the Service Center and surrounding County facilities.

One of the best practices among counties is to create a stand-alone development services center or satellite services center outside of the main city and closer to the unincorporated area it serves. Figure 15 is the newly expanded Clark County, Nevada Development Services Center located in the unincorporated area outside Las Vegas.

Figure 15—Clark County, Nevada Development Services Center[10]

If, in the future, the County needs additional space in the Public Service Center for other functions, one option that can be considered is relocating Community Development offices to the unincorporated area. This can also be considered if other related functions (i.e., long-range planning and new development engineering) are combined with the existing community development functions.

3.5.4 Technology

In the past, planning for adequate physical space has been a more straightforward undertaking. With the advent of new technology to deliver services online 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, local governments are rethinking the need for expanding physical facilities. Although the trend away from brick and mortar retail is evident, it is not yet as clear in local government buildings. However, as is discussed in the Technology sub-section, the County is upgrading its technology and, with continued investment, will be providing more online services that may mitigate the need for expanding physical facilities.

3.6 Stormwater Management

Clark County is issued a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase 1 Municipal Stormwater permit from the Department of Ecology, under the federal Clean Water

[10] Picture used with permission from Simpson Coulter | Studio, www.simpsoncoulter.com

Act. This permit requires that the County comply with federal and state requirements to provide effective and efficient stormwater management. As most stakeholders know, there was an unsuccessful legal challenge in 2011 to the County's approach to managing stormwater. With the issuance of the 2016 NPDES permit and its more burdensome requirements, the County continues refining its new approach to implementing the state-mandated stormwater management requirements. Nevertheless, there has been enough time for stakeholders to identify some perceived problems with the new approach. By design, this was not a major topic of discussion at the January 16, 2018 *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop. However, it was one of the most frequently mentioned issues in stakeholder interviews Citygate conducted in late 2017.

Citygate has identified three best practices that can improve Permit Center operations as the County further refines this process:

- **Acceptance of Plans from Licensed Professionals** – As previously discussed in sub-section 3.2, best practice organizations usually accept plans from licensed professionals with minimal review. This approach is used for on-site stormwater management plans submitted by appropriately licensed professionals.
- **Multi-Parcel Plans** – This is a slight variation on the "master plan" best practice discussed in sub-section 3.2. In this case, when plans are submitted for a larger, multi-parcel area (e.g., a subdivision) and the stormwater management design standards and/or multi-parcel facilities are approved, the plans for individual sites are checked only for consistency with the multi-parcel plan and to make sure they address any unique characteristics of the specific site.
- **Clarify the Decision-Making Authority of Permit Center Staff** – Permit Center and stormwater management staff work together to clarify the extent of the authority of Permit Center staff to make final decisions on plans. All other decisions are automatically referred to the stormwater management staff.

3.7 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

To provide ongoing funding for application-related services, many best practice community development organizations attempt to balance fee revenues with application processing expenditures. When this approach is used, a separate fund or similar accounting method is used to keep revenues and expenditures segregated. Typically, fee levels are set so that this fund maintains a positive fund balance, but not high enough that excess reserves are accumulated.

To segregate development-related revenues and expenditures from a county's General Fund, many counties create a Development Services Fund (DSF), functioning as either a special revenue fund or an enterprise fund. A DSF allows a department to carryover year-end balances into subsequent years for activities directly related to the development permit review process. *The Clark County Community Development Department has such a fund*.

In the private sector, businesses are constantly focused on the services they provide their customers. This is because their revenues, and thus the fate of the company and its employees, are dependent upon customer satisfaction. It is good to establish in employees' minds this link between service, revenues, organizational stability, and employee pay. Everyone in the organization should see and understand this relationship. Heightening staff's awareness of this will increase efficiency, effectiveness, and employee pride and satisfaction. This can be accomplished, notwithstanding the fact that the County is in a regulatory business.

A best practice for community development departments that utilize a Development Services Fund is to create and maintain forecasting models that include reserves for the cyclical nature of the work, inspections that are in the future, capital funding for new technology and facilities, etc.

3.8 TECHNOLOGY

Permitting centers across the country are deploying automated permit tracking and review systems. Compatibility and integration of data functions remains a challenge given that these new systems are purchased and implemented with the need to integrate data from current systems—some of which will continue to operate and others will be abandoned. This complexity creates many challenges for those tasked with implementation.

Automated permit tracking and review systems offer a number of functions including: management information; automated application submittal; automated application review; digital plan submission; digital plan review; queries; and linkages to other information.

Clark County is in the midst of installing such as system. Computronix's Land Management Software[11] (LMS) system began installation in June 2016. Modules in this system are being deployed in four phases:

- June 2016 – home construction permits
- October 2016 – mechanical and plumbing permits
- March 2017 – six types of fire permits
- November 2017 – all residential and commercial permits.

The remaining stages have a planned three-year deployment cycle with the anticipated completion occurring in 2021:

- Phase III – Land Use, Environmental, Public Works, Clean Water, Forest
- Phase IV – Community Planning, Pet Licenses, Remaining Fire Permits
- Electronic Plan Review.

[11] https://www.computronix.com/solutions/land-management-system/

The intent of the LMS system is to enable expedited service for developers in terms of:

- The cost of traveling to/from the Permit Center and waiting in line
- Enabling account management and tracking project status
- Records, audit, and process tracking.

3.9 STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

One of the greatest challenges facing both public and private organizations is recruiting and retaining a talented workforce. Clark County operates in a job market that is very competitive, particularly for employees who are skilled in building and construction.

Best practices in the area of staff development and retention include an attractive staff development and training program. This is required for the organization to be competitive. The key components of this program include recruitment, orientation, training, and evaluation. Best practice organizations: are very clear about what kind of person they want, including their skills, level of commitment, and values; have an on-boarding system that includes an orientation that is both thorough and communicates the aspirations of the organization; include training that is position-specific and based on a professional development plan for that person; and have an effective performance evaluation system.

In 2015, the American Planning Association completed a study on the "office of the future."[12] The key findings from that study include:

- To attract and retain motivated and entrepreneurial workers the office of the future needs a driving purpose and clear sense of mission.
- Organizations need to be able to express why they do what they do, not just what they do or how they do it.[13] It is vital to imbue a workplace with a sense of passion and purpose for the work they do.
- Millennials clearly preferred a work environment that offered lifelong learning opportunities, including professional development, interdisciplinary cross-training, and retraining and ongoing exposure to new technologies and subjects.

[12] Planning Office of the Future Task Force | American Planning Association https://www.planning.org/events/course/3030992/

[13] The American Planning Association report cites the TED Talk by Simon Sinek, How Great Leaders Inspire Action. The County should consider using this resource. It is found at: https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action?language=en

These components must be built on a foundation of effective performance management and measurement. Before a meaningful professional development plan can be created and implemented, an employee and their supervisor must agree on the expectations for that position, and how the employee is performing relative to those expectations.

The Permit Center needs to implement a performance management and measurement system as described in sub-section 3.4, as well as a staff development program. There is a serious deficit in training for Permit Center staff. This deficit is well known within the Community Development Department and to the customers of the Permit Center. The resources necessary to address this situation need to be deployed as soon as possible.

SECTION 4—FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 4—FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Citygate is proposing a comprehensive package of changes that will significantly enhance how Clark County provides service to those who are improving the County and growing the economy. These findings and recommendations were developed directly from stakeholder input, the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop, and best practices. When fully implemented, they will further transform the Community Development Department culture to one with a focus on customer service, performance management and measurement, process improvement, financial management, technology, and staff development.

As described in the previous section of this report, there are several best practices that can and should be instituted in the Clark County Community Development Department. It is important to realize that these best practices are part of a system with components that reinforce each other. For example, improving customer service will require both a performance measurement and management program, and a staff development program. Hence, these findings and recommendations should be considered as a package.

4.1 STRATEGIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic-level findings and recommendations in this section reflect the stated desire of the County to enhance economic development by partnering with, and advocating for, Permit Center customers. The sub-sections that follow discuss strategic-level findings and recommendations in order of theme, although no strategic findings or strategic recommendations exist for Theme Six (Stormwater Management) or Theme Seven (Financial Management), although additional recommendations are provided for these two themes and many of the other themes in sub-section

4.2. Many "recommended actions" are needed to fully implement each strategic recommendation. These recommended actions are found in the Action Plan (see Section 5).

4.1.1 Theme One: Organizational Culture and Role Alignment

The issue of organizational culture was consistently identified by stakeholders and employees as the most significant area for improvement in the Community Development Department including the Permit Center. The issue was mentioned in relation to almost all organizational units involved in processing applications. Trust, or the lack thereof, is at the core of the culture issues. This is a multi-directional issue between all parties—the customers, the County Council, the County Manager, the Community Development Department, and other departments involved in the application process.

The comments by customers, detailed in Section 2—Stakeholder Input, express how frustrated they feel. Similar kinds of comments were expressed by employees through interviews and the employee survey.

The bottom line is that this level of frustration suggests that change is highly desired and is possible.

It should be noted that some stakeholders stated that these issues have escalated over the past several years which can be attributed to new stormwater regulations, the improved economy, and the sense of urgency to get permits/projects completed. However, all stakeholders indicated that the majority of the staff seem to be hard-working and dedicated.

The vast majority of staff and some customers also indicated that County Council involvement in day-to-day processing actually hinders the overall process. Almost all stakeholder groups, including staff and County Councilors, recognize that the County Councilors are involved as much as they are because they are trying to help constituents resolve problems. Ironically, both County Councilors and staff indicated that the preferred approach is for the County Council not to be involved. County Councilors recognize they should be spending their time and effort on legislative functions (setting policy and priorities, budgeting, etc.). County staff and some stakeholders recognize that by having the Councilors involved they are essentially "shifting the burden." By continually pushing for more applications to be accepted in shorter time periods, the burden is being shifted to later in the process. This is essentially addressing a symptom of a deeper problem and one of the unintended consequences is applicants are being required to provide more information at later stages in the application review process instead of up-front as part of application acceptance.

"The bottom line is that this level of frustration suggests that change is highly desired and is possible."

Alignment on organizational culture and roles is the highest priority for improving Permit Center operations. Without that, other recommendations will not be nearly as effective. The Council, staff, and applicants should think of this like a corporation does. Shareholder, customer, and employee needs must be met to be successful. The shareholders are the Clark County residents who want a safe, attractive, and economically vibrant community (i.e., shareholder value). The customers are those who will help create that community if they decide to invest in the community. That investment depends, in large part, on the customer service they receive. In other words, the common purpose that both the County Council and staff have is to create shareholder value through good customer service. Providing good customer service and having a safe, attractive, and economically vibrant community are not mutually exclusive objectives. In fact, they are complementary.

Strategic Finding #1: A foundation of trust needs to be built for the desired culture changes to occur.

Strategic Recommendation #1: Begin creating a culture of trust by starting fresh and allowing the new changes to take root for the next six months (April 2018 – September 2018). The County Council's relationship with the new County Manager needs to be built and this person needs to be given time to adjust to the role and begin to lead. The Community Development staff need to be given the time and flexibility to implement changes, make adjustments, and prove that the changes will stick and be effective. The development community needs clear and frequent communication as changes occur, needs to know that its voice has been heard, and needs the opportunity to provide feedback along the way.

Strategic Finding #2: Ongoing personal contact with Permit Center customers is important as relationships and trust are built.

Strategic Recommendation #2: Begin a "listening tour" that is designed to build relationships, build trust, and listen to the building industry about trends.

The role of County Councilors is clearly defined in the Home Rule Charter adopted on May 27, 2014. The powers of the Council are defined in Section 2.4 and include:

"… The council shall be the policy-determining body of the county. The council shall exercise its legislative power by adoption and enactment of ordinances, resolutions and motions … A. Levy taxes, appropriate revenue, and adopt budgets for the county … C. Adopt by ordinance comprehensive plans and land development codes, including improvement plans for present and future development in the county."

The County Manager has the following powers and duties as defined in Article 3—The Executive Branch.

"… 1. Supervise all administrative departments established by this charter or created by the council. 2. Execute and enforce all ordinances and state statutes not assigned to other elected officials … 5. Prepare and present to the planning commission comprehensive plans, including capital improvement plans, and development ordinances for present and future development; present the planning commission's recommendations on these matters to the council. 6. Determine the organizational structure of and assign duties to administrative departments which are not specifically assigned by this charter or ordinance."

Strategic Finding #3: The County Council and County Manager need to fully transition to the Council-Manager form of government as defined in the Home Rule Charter.

Strategic Recommendation #3: Adhere to the role of the County Council and County Manager as defined in the Home Rule Charter.

4.1.2 Theme Two: Process Definition and Documentation

There is a consensus amongst all that provided input to this study: the Clark County permitting process needs to be predictable, consistent, and timely. This is challenging given that the responsibility for these processes is spread across multiple departments and divisions. The five types of permits are typical of community development departments but this does add significant complexity for the customers to understand. Of the seven steps in the permitting process within the Permit Center, three steps are controlled by the applicant and four steps are controlled by the County.

Several best practices could be employed by Clark County to improve permit processing and to provide excellent customer service including: well defined checklists; acceptance of plans from licensed professionals; use of master plans; the "one-bite-at-the-apple" approach; and the "three-strikes-and-out" process. An approach for ongoing process improvement also needs to be implemented.

Strategic Finding #4: Acceptance of the stamp of licensed professionals on plans is critical for improving the efficiency of the permitting process and the relationship of the development community.

Strategic Recommendation #4: Adopt a policy for plans, including stormwater plans, submitted from licensed professionals to be accepted with minimal to moderate review.

Strategic Finding #5: Developing, updating, and communicating checklists for all processes is critical to improve efficiency and increase staff understanding.

Strategic Recommendation #5: Create or update checklists for all processes, especially for customers that are new to the permitting process. Assign responsibility for each checklist to one person who is responsible to keep the content current and distribute the information.

Strategic Finding #6: When significant changes are made to procedures and/or policies, there needs to be communication with front-line staff and all customers that are impacted by the changes.

Strategic Recommendation #6: Issue guidance documents when needed for front-line staff and the public before significant new procedures or policies are implemented.

Strategic Finding #7: Ongoing process improvement needs to be institutionalized to ensure a process is in place and there is continual focus on improvement.

Strategic Recommendation #7: Create a process improvement team with the responsibility to review all proposed process improvements with recommendations to the Community Development Director. This team's charter should include evaluation of all "pinch" points and the elimination of unnecessary processes. Consider the list of proposed process improvements from the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop plus other short-term process improvement projects (Sprints).

4.1.3 Theme Three: Organization

The coordination and cooperation between the various divisions within the Community Development Department (Permit Center, Land Use Review, Building, Fire Marshal, and Wetland and Habitat) and three other departments (Public Works, Public Health, and Community Planning) is vital to provide excellent customer service. The complexity of this many "players" cannot be overstated.

Strategic Finding #8: The challenges of multiple-department involvement in permit processing need to be resolved.

Strategic Recommendation #8: Assign the County Manager or their designee the responsibility to coordinate multiple-department permitting projects. Consider identifying projects of community and economic significance and have the County Manager assign a project manager.

4.1.4 Theme Four: Performance Measurement and Management

Performance management improves internal and external accountability. Measuring the performance of programs gives management and policymakers a significant tool to achieve accountability and gives employees clarity in how their work helps the organization fulfill its mission. Performance measurement on the other hand allows officials to support activities that are successful, to allocate resources based on what really works, and to build public credibility by being able to demonstrate the effective use of taxpayer dollars.

Accessing information and providing reports to management regarding performance is vital so that a wide array of decisions can be made.

For an in-depth analysis of all permitting process data, please refer to **Appendix B**.

Strategic Finding #9: The shortcomings of current management reports need to be addressed, especially for the Permit Center Manager.

Strategic Recommendation #9: Create reports that allow the Permit Center Manager to understand the volume of requests in progress, to quantify and identify requests which are late, or at risk, and provide the report daily to help prioritize the work. The following reports should be provided: permit status report, cycle-time report, and interventions report which details any permits that have been rejected or placed on hold.

4.1.5 Theme Five: Physical Space

The current Permit Center layout is a "hybrid" approach to service with a "back office." There is insufficient space for typical over-the-counter interactions. More effective layouts have a larger counter that can be used by multiple staff and customers, adequate meeting space where customers can layout plans and meet with staff, and a separate area with workspaces where staff can communicate and collaborate. These types of changes need to be made right away.

If, in the future, the County needs additional space in the Public Services Center for other functions, one option that can be considered is relocating Community Development Department offices to the unincorporated area. Co-locating functions such as long-range planning and new development engineering in an efficient design with Community Development would be beneficial.

Strategic Finding #10: The challenges of physical space need to be addressed in phases with the first phase being urgent changes in the Permit Center.

Strategic Recommendation #10: Phase 1 – Improve the layout and functionality of the current Permit Center including moving land use staff to the third floor, expanding counter space, enhancing security, and addressing ergonomic issues. Consider a separate line for frequent customers, a "drop-off" point for corrections, and empowering the counter services staff with training and authority to make specific decisions.

Note: Phases 2 and 3 are described as additional recommendations in sub-section 4.2.5.

4.1.6 Theme Six: Stormwater Management

No strategic findings or recommendations were identified for this theme; however, sub-section 4.2 outlines two "additional recommendations" for this theme.

4.1.7 Theme Seven: Financial Management

No strategic findings or recommendations were identified for this theme; however, sub-section 4.2 outlines one "additional recommendation" for this theme.

4.1.8 Theme Eight: Technology

The County elected to host its Land Management Software (LMS) in the cloud under a five-year contract beginning 2015. The benefits of hosting remotely include improved security and other redundancies. Under the current contract with Computronix does not provide backend access to the database. As such, the County is required to use canned reports for its reporting, or request custom reports from the vendor.

The scale and velocity of data required is too vast to depend on Computronix for reporting. A competent management analyst can bypass these rigors and simply pull the data themselves, if they have access. The County should amend or renegotiate its software contract to enable data mining.

Strategic Finding #11: The County needs access to all of the data contained in the new Land Management Software system to provide much-needed management reports.

Strategic Recommendation #11: Insist that the Computronix Land Management Software vendor make the County's data available in a common data pool or data warehouse.

4.1.9 Theme Nine: Staff Development and Retention

One of the greatest challenges facing both public and private organizations is recruiting and retaining a talented workforce. An attractive staff development and training program is an important management tool. Key components of this program are recruitment, orientation, training, and evaluation.

The current situation with the Permit Center is a "vicious cycle" where staff are not able to meet expectations, pressure increases, staff leave, new staff are hired who have limited experience and training, they are not able to meet expectations, pressure increases, staff leave, etc.

The Permit Center needs to address the immediate needs, implement a performance management and measurement system, and a staff development program.

Strategic Finding #12: The training of Permit Center staff is an urgent need which will require additional resources.

Strategic Recommendation #12: Add a Permit Center Lead to break the "vicious cycle" that exists and accelerate the training of Permit Center staff.

A 12–18-month temporary position is needed to serve as project manager for the projects identified in this report as well as to be responsible for overseeing the development and deployment of database assets from LMS and other related tools. This position should also develop a data cube—effectively a repository of related data fields from multiple sources which can be mined for analysis.

Strategic Finding #13: Additional resources are required to stay focused on the implementation of the Citygate recommendations and to develop reports from the Land Management Software system.

Strategic Recommendation #13: Add a 12–18-month temporary project lead for implementation of the Citygate recommendations and to develop management reports and conduct ongoing analyses on the health of the process.

4.2 Additional Recommendations

The following 23 additional recommendations should be considered in the second and subsequent years beginning in November 2018:

4.2.1 Theme One: Organization Culture and Role Alignment

Recommendation #14: Establish and implement an ongoing, regular process for identifying and addressing needed policy changes as part of the annual budget process and a regular cycle for reviewing and amending policies and code provisions.

Recommendation #15: Establish a formal process to regularly obtain customer feedback and to improve customer services. Publicize the process so the public knows how their concerns will be resolved.

Recommendation #16: Create a customer service philosophy that includes a sense of teamwork, partnership, and face-to-face or telephone communication whenever a problem is being solved. Consider resourcing a dedicated "chat/help" line and providing web conferencing when appropriate.

Recommendation #17: Improve decision-making and empowerment by creating a decision matrix that defines who has what decision-making authority. Document unique situations to allow decisions to be made at the lowest level. Designate an intermediary or ombudsman for complex projects to improve efficiency. Develop an appeals process that includes conflict resolution and final decision authority by the County Manager. Utilize the existing development engineering advisory board as a peer review option. Publicize the process so the public knows how its concerns will be resolved.

Recommendation #18: Create a shared vision statement. Update the mission statement of the Department. Define the annual goals for the Department and share them widely. Create a culture that includes completing the project as

quickly as is reasonable and starting with an attitude of "how can we help you." Create a list of expectations.

4.2.2 Theme Two: Process Definition and Documentation

Recommendation #19: Ensure predictability and transparency by clearly defining and documenting the information requirements in applications and checklists, forms and processes, and timeframes and schedules.

Recommendation #20: Utilize master plans for multiple buildings with checks for consistency with the master plan and any unique characteristics of the specific site.

Recommendation #21 Adopt a policy that subsequent reviews of plans do not result in corrections that were not required because of a previous review unless there is a change, or public health and safety issues are identified.

Recommendation #22: Adopt a policy that if additional reviews are required after three corrections, a re-submittal fee is charged.

4.2.3 Theme Three: Organization

No additional recommendations exist for this theme.

4.2.4 Theme Four: Performance Measurement and Management

Recommendation #23: Create a system to evaluate performance including: metrics at all levels; quality assurance and control; management reports; clear expectations from all organization levels and individuals including timeline expectations; and strategies for dealing with the ebbs and flow of business including steps to take when at capacity or when there is a drop in business.

Recommendation #24: Inventory existing management reports and evaluate how well the reports detail how fast permits are cycled through the process.

4.2.5 Theme Five: Physical Space

Note: Phase 1 of addressing the challenges of physical space was presented as Strategic Recommendation #10 in sub-section 4.1.5. Phases 2 and 3 are presented below.

Recommendation #25: Phase 2 – Consider the consolidation of permitting functions into one building or on one floor.

Recommendation #26: Phase 3 – Consider the development of a standalone development services center or satellite service center outside of Vancouver and closer to the unincorporated area where the Permit Center's customers are located.

4.2.6 Theme Six: Stormwater Management

Recommendation #27: Utilize multi-parcel plans where: (1) plans are submitted for a larger, multi-parcel area (e.g., subdivision) and the stormwater management design standards and/or multi-parcel facilities are approved; and (2) the plans for individual sites are checked only for consistency with the multi-parcel plan and to make sure they address any unique characteristics of the specific sites.

The plans are submitted and approved with drainage included. If the actual site work is not consistent with the approved plans then the applicant will either need to correct the problem or submit revised plans.

Recommendation #28: Clarify the decision-making authority of Permit Center staff with regard to stormwater management with all other decisions referred to the stormwater management staff.

4.2.7 Theme Seven: Financial Management

Recommendation #29: Create forecasting models that include reserves for the cyclical nature of the work, inspections that are in the future, capital funding for new technology and facilities, etc.

4.2.8 Theme Eight: Technology

Recommendation #30: Accelerate the implementation and training of the on-line permitting process which allows applicants to check the status of a permit at any time.

Recommendation #31: Improve the customer-oriented portal to the services provided to meet customer expectations.

Recommendation #32: Create a public website or portal where customer feedback can be provided.

Recommendation #33: Improve compatibility and integration of data functions, communication and coordination between teams, and develop an outcome-driven understanding of the process for all employees.

Recommendation #34: Develop long-term objectives for data and a data roadmap per the guidelines that have been provided.

Recommendation #35: Examine whether there are redundancies and/or gaps between existing software systems.

4.2.9 Theme Nine: Staff Development and Retention

Recommendation #36: Expand the education program to include tracking of required training for each employee, growth training for specific employees as contained in the Succession Plan, on-boarding for all employees, and training for all permit applicants regarding policies and processes.

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SECTION 5—ACTION PLAN

SECTION 5—ACTION PLAN

Citygate recommends the following specific actions to implement the strategic-level recommendations in the previous section of this report. This Action Plan is not the only possible series of steps that can be used to implement these recommendations, but taken as a whole, it provides a roadmap for successful implementation.

Citygate's Action Plan is presented in tabular format on the following pages. The Action Plan includes the responsible party and the relative resource requirements for each recommended action. The responsible party is the person who should be held accountable for implementing that specific recommended action. The relative resource requirements consist of three levels:

- **Low** – The staff should be able to implement these recommended actions given the current budget.
- **Medium** – These recommended actions will require dedicated funds in addition to those in the current budget. Funds should come from the current fiscal year budget, if available, or should be included in the proposed budget for the next or a subsequent fiscal year.
- **High** – These recommended actions will require an ongoing higher expenditure level for multiple years and should be considered in the context of other multi-year Countywide strategic priorities.

Each of these recommendations are strategic in nature, and should be implemented over the next six months (i.e., April–September 2018), subject to the availability of funds in existing budgets.

In the period between the completion of the Draft Report (late-February) to the issuance of the Final Report (late-March), the Community Development Department began to address the Action Plan recommendations. These actions, as well as the Community Development Department's response to these recommendations, are labeled "CDD Response / Actions to Date:" and included in the following Action Plan. Citygate encourages organizations to begin implementing recommendations as soon as possible and commends the Community Development Department for taking the initiative to make the changes indicated.

Table 7—Recommended Actions Arrayed by Strategic Recommendation

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #1: Begin creating a culture of trust by starting fresh and allowing the new changes to take root for the next six months (April 2018 – September 2018). The County Council's relationship with the new County Manager needs to be built and this person needs to be given time to adjust to the role and begin to lead. The Community Development staff need to be given the time and flexibility to implement changes, make adjustments, and prove that the changes will stick and be effective. The development community needs clear and frequent communication as changes occur, needs to know that its voice has been heard, and needs the opportunity to provide feedback along the way.		
1.1 Agree to allow the changes identified in this Citygate report to take root for the next six months (April 2018–September 2018).	County Council, County Manager, CDD[14] Director, PCD[15] Manager, PCD staff, development community	Low
1.2 Implement the 13 recommendations contained in this Citygate report by September 2018.	CDD Director	Low
1.3 Implement the additional 23 recommendations over the next two to three years.	CDD Director	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ Communication with Permit Center staff has occurred through several meetings, conveying the message that it should take about six months for changes and recommendations to become effective and refined. ◆ The Director of Community Development conducted a one-day off-site leadership team retreat in February of 2018 that focused on building trust and cohesion within the Department. A follow-up meeting in the spring is being planned.		

[14] CDD = Community Development Department

[15] PCD = Permit Center Division

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #2: Begin a "listening tour" that is designed to build relationships, build trust, and listen to the building industry about trends.		
2.1 Create a communication plan that details when and how this recommendation will be implemented.	County Council and Council staff	Low
2.2 Arrange all of the logistical items in the communication plan.	Council staff	Low
2.3 Begin and continue to hold listening events.	County Council, County Manager, CDD Director, CDD staff	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ The County hosted a workshop with developers, builders, other professionals, and the County Council on January 26, 2018. The workshop was entitled Clearer Communication/Better Building and was attended by over 80 external and internal people. The plan is to reconvene a similar workshop later in 2018.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #3: Adhere to the role of the County Council and County Manager as defined in the Home Rule Charter.		
3.1 Agree to fully transition to the Council-Manager form of government as defined in the Home Rule Charter.	County Council, County Manager	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #4: Adopt a policy for plans, including stormwater plans, submitted from licensed professionals to be accepted with minimal to moderate review.		
4.1 Draft a policy that indicates that plans from licensed professionals are accepted with minimal to moderate review.	County Attorney, CDD Director	Low
4.2 Receive input from stakeholders.	CDD Director	Low
4.3 Adopt the policy.	CDD Director	Low
4.4 Implement the policy.	CDD Director, CDD Managers, CDD staff	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ The County is required to make certain that submitted plans conform to applicable laws, regulations, and codes.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #5: Create or update checklists for all processes, especially for customers who are new to the permitting process. Assign responsibility for each checklist to one person who is responsible to keep the content current and distribute this information.		
5.1 Inventory all Permit Center checklists.	PCD Manager	Low
5.2 Assign responsibility for each checklist.	CDD Director	Low
5.3 Create or update checklists.	Individuals assigned	Low/Medium
5.4 Receive feedback from stakeholders.	PCD Manager	Low
5.5 Distribute checklists.	Individuals assigned	Low/Medium
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ New checklists have been developed for the single-family home construction lean process and also the new online permit application system (CC LMS). Additional updates are in process for stormwater and commercial development checklists.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #6: Issue guidance documents when needed for front-line staff and the public before significant new procedures or policies are implemented.		
6.1 Monitor when guidance documents are needed.	CDD Director, PCD Manager	Low
6.2 Prepare guidance documents as required.	CDD Managers	Low
6.3 Distribute guidance documents.	Assigned staff	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ Efforts to announce and provide guidance documents to internal staff and the public are ongoing. These include posting on the County website, in the Permit Center lobby, and at the desks of the permit technicians. Additional efforts include sending fliers to both the Building Industry Association of Clark County and Southwest Washington Contractors Association.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #7: Create a process improvement team with the responsibility to review all proposed process improvements with recommendations to the Community Development Director. This team's charter should include evaluation of all "pinch" points and the elimination of unnecessary processes. Consider the list of proposed process improvements from the *Clearer Communication, Better Building* workshop plus other short-term process improvement projects (Sprints).		
7.1 Develop a charter for the process improvement team that defines responsibilities.	Assigned staff	Low
7.2 Identify the process improvement team members.	CDD Director	Low
7.3 Appoint the process improvement team members including the lead.	CDD Director	Low
7.4 Convene and train process improvement team members.	CDD Director	Low
7.5 Begin the work of the process improvement team.	Lead	Low/Medium
7.6 Report progress to the CDD Director monthly.	Lead	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ Community Development is committed to improving processes where feasible, reasonable, and legal.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #8: Assign the County Manager or their designee the responsibility to coordinate multiple-department permitting projects. Consider identifying projects of community and economic significance and have the County Manager assign a project manager.		
8.1 Draft an ordinance change to assign the County Manager or their designee the responsibility to coordinate multiple-department permitting projects.	County Attorney or Council staff	Low
8.2 Consider adoption of the ordinance change.	County Council	Low
8.3 Implement the ordinance.	County Manager	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ The Director of Community Development will participate in any meetings the County Manager proposes to discuss this recommendation.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #9: Create reports that allow the Permit Center Manager to understand the volume of requests in progress, to quantify and identify requests which are late, or at risk, and provide the report daily to help prioritize the work. The following reports should be provided: permit status report, cycle-time report, and interventions report which details any permits that have been rejected or placed on hold.		
9.1 Define the reports needed by the Permit Center Manager.	PCD Manager	Low
9.2 Determine the data sources for the reports.	PCD Manager	Low
9.3 Design and test the reports.	Assigned staff	Low/Medium
9.4 Implement the reports.	Assigned staff	Low/Medium
9.5 Utilize the reports to monitor and make decisions.	PCD Manager	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ Permits are presently being tracked for single-family home construction. The data being monitored are the number of permits, application processing timelines, and the final approval or rejection. The new CC LMS permitting system will allow for similar tracking of other permits. By year's end, dashboards will be developed to track key business transactions.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #10: Phase 1 – Improve the layout and functionality of the current Permit Center including moving land use staff to the third floor, expanding counter space, enhancing security, and addressing ergonomic issues. Consider a separate line for frequent customers, a "drop-off" point for corrections, and empowering the counter services staff with training and authority to make specific decisions.		
10.1 Redesign the Permit Center and third floor layout.	PCD Manager	Low
10.2 Propose a budget supplemental request to address the costs associated with the redesign.	CDD Director	Low
10.3 Council consideration of budget supplemental request.	County Council	Low
10.4 Perform construction and office moves.	As contracted	Medium
10.5 Occupy the new space and begin functioning in the new layout.	PCD staff	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ Staff input related to design efficiencies are currently being obtained. A spring supplemental budget request for 2018 has requested budget authority in the amount of $115,000 to move land use staff to the third floor and reconfigure the Permit Center.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #11: Insist that the Computronix Land Management Software vendor make the County's data available in a common data pool or data warehouse.		
11.1 Write a letter to Computronix officially requesting access to all of the County's data.	CDD Director	Low
11.2 Negotiate with Computronix to determine final resolution.	CDD Director	Low
11.3 Confirm access to all data.	CDD Director	Low
11.4 Begin defining and testing the reporting requirements.	Management Analyst	Low/Medium
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ Access to the County's data is important. The project management team will submit a comprehensive request into the vendor regarding future access to the data.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #12: Add a Permit Center Lead to break the "vicious cycle" that exists and accelerate the training of Permit Center staff.		
12.1 Propose a budget supplemental request to add a Permit Center Lead position.	CDD Director	Low
12.2 County Council consideration of the budget supplement request.	County Council	Medium
12.3 Begin and complete the hiring process.	PCD Manager	Low
12.4 Train the Permit Center staff.	New Permit Center Lead	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ A lead permit technician position with an emphasis on training staff is requested in the 2018 spring supplemental budget.		

Recommended Action	Responsible Party	Relative Resource Requirement
Strategic Recommendation #13: Add a 12–18-month temporary project lead for implementation of the Citygate recommendations and to develop management reports and conduct ongoing analyses on the health of the process.		
13.1 Propose a budget supplemental request to add a management analyst position. This position is a 12-18 month temporary project lead to address the Citygate recommendations and develop management reports.	CDD Director	Low
13.2 County Council consideration of the budget supplement request.	County Council	Low
13.3 Begin and complete the hiring process.	Administrative Services Manager	Low
13.4 Begin project management and report development.	Administrative Services Manager	Low
CDD Response / Actions to Date: ◆ A management analyst position is requested in the 2018 spring supplemental budget.		

APPENDIX A

EMPLOYEE SURVEY ANALYSIS

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EMPLOYEE SURVEY ANALYSIS

Citygate conducted an internet-based employee survey between January 25, 2018 and February 6, 2018 for the employees of the Clark County Community Development Department. Based on information provided by the Department, 106 employees were invited to participate in this survey. The availability of the survey was announced via direct email invitations to staff. In total, there were 70 completed surveys, which means the Department's employee response rate was approximately 66 percent.

Details of the deployment are shown below.

Survey Summary	
Launch Date	January 25, 2018
Close Date	February 6, 2018
Survey Recipients	106
Total Responses	**70**

Apart from several basic employee classification questions, the survey mostly consisted of closed-ended "degree-of-agreement" statements organized into nine different sections. For each "degree-of-agreement" statement, respondents were directed to rate their agreement from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1). Additionally, one open-ended request was made to provide employees with an opportunity to fully express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions.

ORGANIZATION OF ANALYSIS

The results for the survey are organized in the following order:

Employee Classification Questions

- The raw data for all employee classification questions included on the survey.

Summary of Results

- The 10 statements receiving the *overall* highest and lowest mean score.

Response for Each Statement by Statement Section

- All the survey statements are presented with the calculation of the mean and standard deviation, along with the percentage of each type of response.
- Overall mean scores for each statement section.

Open-Ended Responses

- Summaries, by topic, of the open-ended responses, followed by the complete open-ended responses.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The terms defined below are encountered in the information that follows:

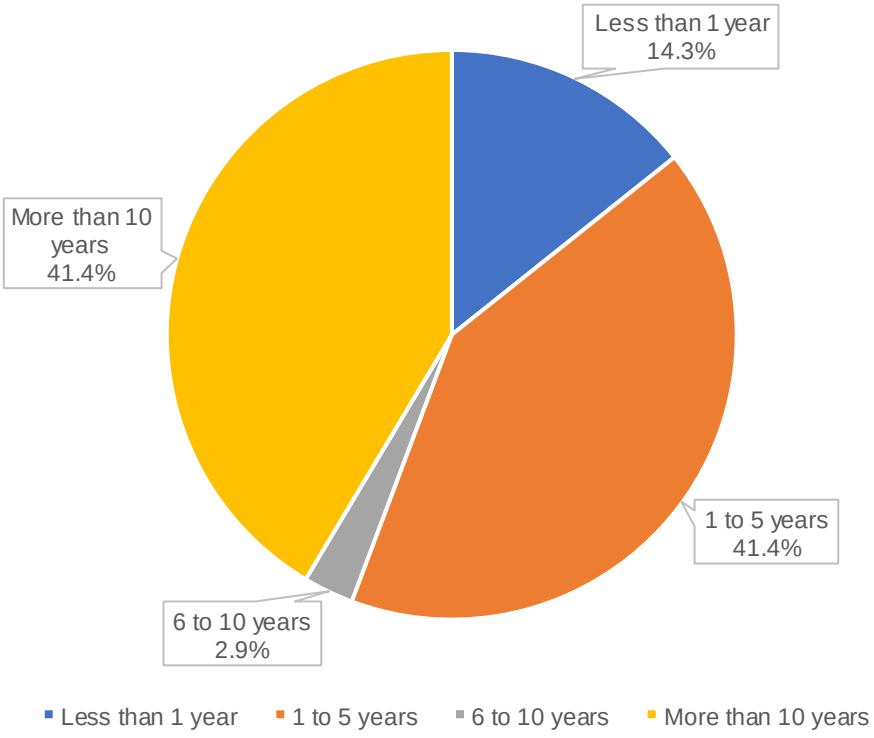
- Mean: An arithmetic mean that is the sum of the responses for each statement divided by the number of responses for each statement.
- Standard Deviation: Standard deviation tells how spread out the responses are from the arithmetic mean. A standard deviation close to zero indicates that most responses are close to the mean response and that a greater degree of agreement exists among employees with regard to the statement. A greater standard deviation indicates that there was a wider spread of variation in the responses and that a greater degree of disagreement exists among employees with regard to the statement.

EMPLOYEE SURVEY ANALYSIS: SURVEY RESULTS

How long have you worked for Clark County?

Timeframe	# of Responses	Response Ratio
Less than 1 year	10	14.3%
1 to 5 years	29	41.4%
6 to 10 years	2	2.9%
More than 10 years	29	41.4%
Total	70	100.0%

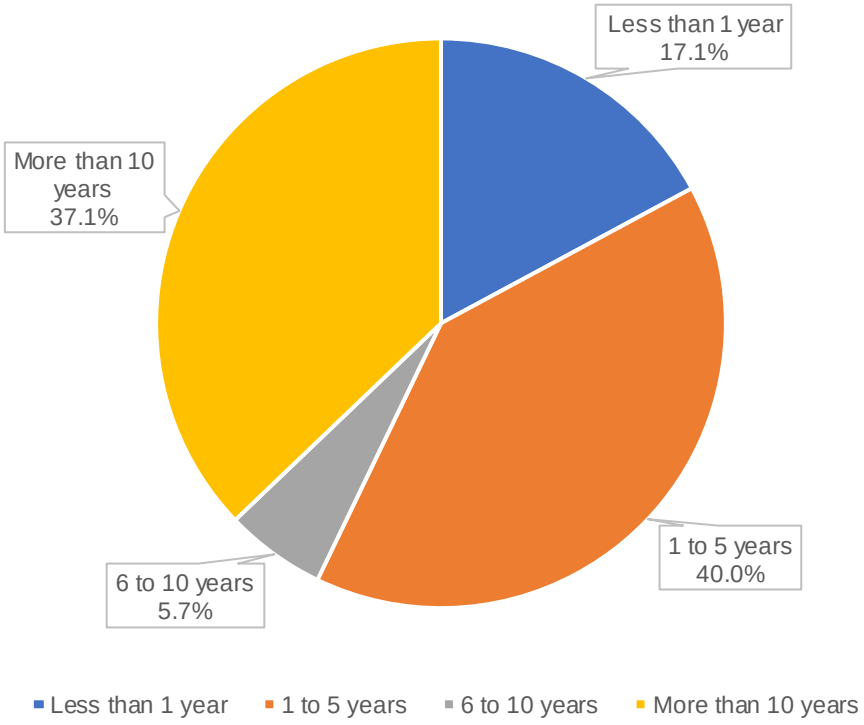
This information is represented graphically in the following image:



How long have you worked for the Department?

Timeframe	# of Responses	Response Ratio
Less than 1 year	12	17.1%
1 to 5 years	28	40.0%
6 to 10 years	4	5.7%
More than 10 years	26	37.1%
Total	70	100.0%

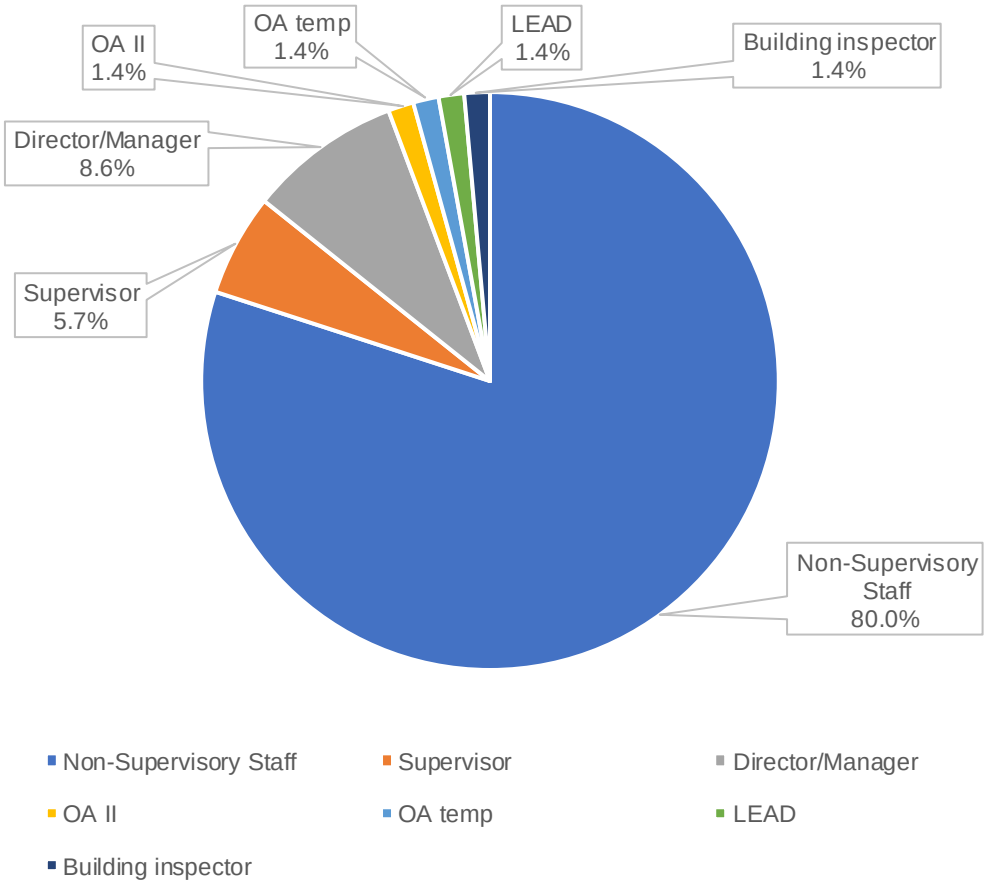
This information is represented graphically in the following image:



What is your job function?

Job Function	# of Responses	Percentage
Non-Supervisory Staff	56	80.0%
Supervisor	4	5.7%
Director/Manager	6	8.6%
Other, Please Specify[1]:	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

This information is represented graphically in the following image:



[1] Other responses include "OA II," "OA temp," "LEAD," and "Building inspector."

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The results of the employee survey of the Clark County Community Development Department are summarized in the following subsections. This summary includes some of the highest and lowest ranking statements.

10 Highest Ranking Statements

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

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Service to the public is strongly emphasized in my division.	4.09	0.97
My manager/supervisor encourages teamwork in my division.	4.01	1.14
Service to the public is strongly emphasized in the Department.	3.96	0.95
I understand my manager/supervisor's expectations of the job I perform.	3.96	1.01
Leadership realizes that "perfection" is unachievable and has realistic expectations for measuring employee performance.	3.93	1.00
Department leaders handle human errors on the part of staff in a constructive and respectful manner.	3.91	1.04
My manager/supervisor values my time as much as his/her own.	3.79	1.34
My manager/supervisor keeps commitments he/she makes to me.	3.76	1.27
I believe good teamwork exists in my division.	3.71	1.19
The management of my division listens to employees.	3.71	1.32

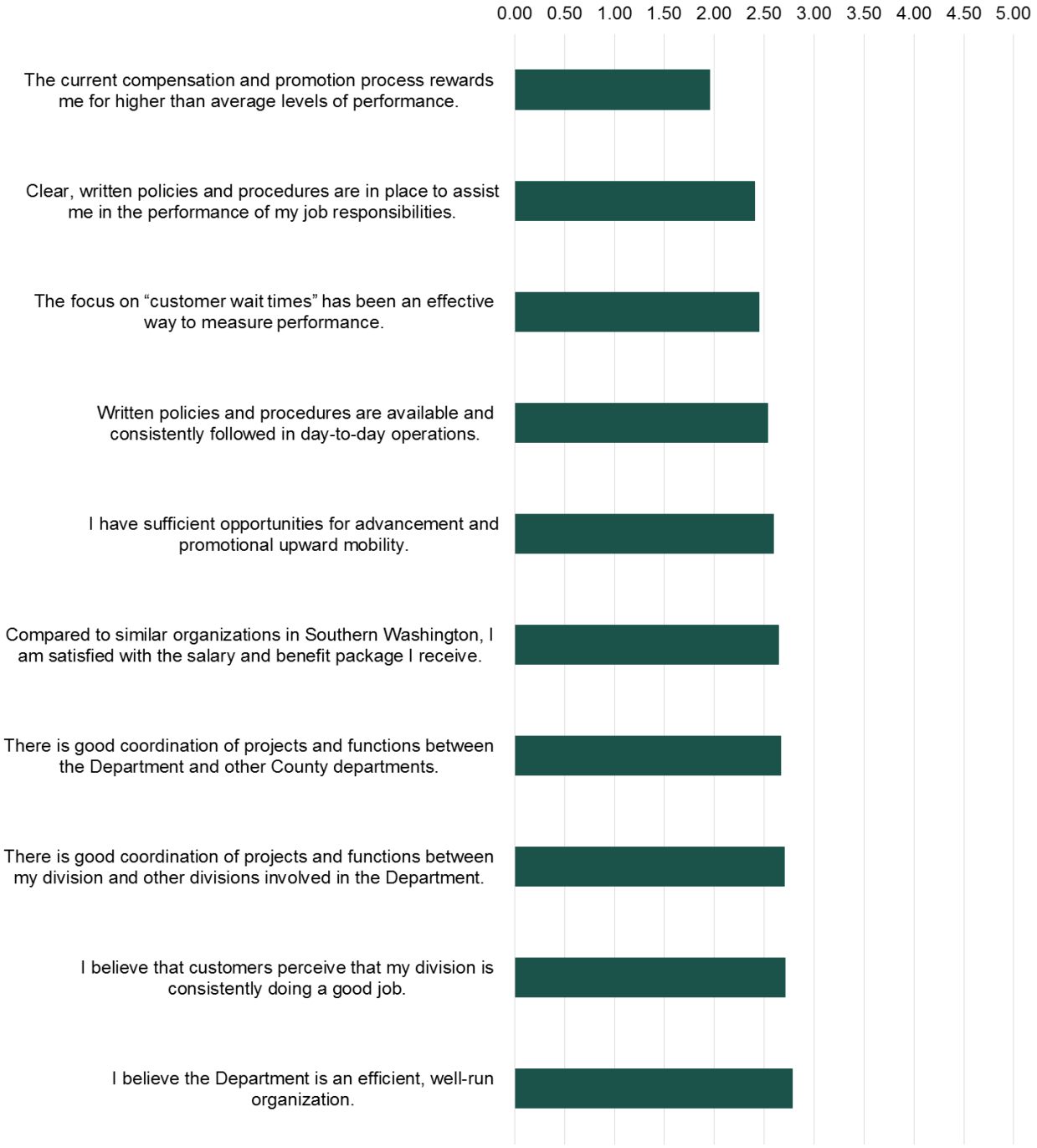
The following is a graph of the same information.

10 Lowest Ranking Statements

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

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
The current compensation and promotion process rewards me for higher than average levels of performance.	1.95	1.07
Clear, written policies and procedures are in place to assist me in the performance of my job responsibilities.	2.41	1.17
The focus on “customer wait times” has been an effective way to measure performance.	2.45	1.09
Written policies and procedures are available and consistently followed in day-to-day operations.	2.54	1.15
I have sufficient opportunities for advancement and promotional upward mobility.	2.60	1.16
Compared to similar organizations in Southern Washington, I am satisfied with the salary and benefit package I receive.	2.65	1.16
There is good coordination of projects and functions between the Department and other County departments.	2.67	1.15
There is good coordination of projects and functions between my division and other divisions involved in the Department.	2.71	1.20
I believe that customers perceive that my division is consistently doing a good job.	2.71	1.08
I believe the Department is an efficient, well-run organization.	2.78	1.10

The following is a graph of the same information.



Responses for Each Statement by Section

Below, all the employee survey statements are presented with the calculation of the mean and standard deviation, along with the percentage of each type of response, including "Don't Know or N/A."

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% Don't Know/NA
Mission, Goals, and Objectives								
The goals and objectives of my division are reasonable.	3.58	1.06	15.7%	45.7%	24.3%	5.7%	7.1%	1.4%
The goals and objectives for the Department are reasonable.	3.46	1.04	8.6%	50.0%	24.3%	5.7%	8.6%	2.9%
The established goals and objectives of my division have been clearly communicated to me.	3.33	1.00	8.6%	41.4%	28.6%	17.1%	4.3%	0.0%
The established goals and objectives of the Department have been clearly communicated to me.	3.13	1.07	7.1%	34.3%	31.4%	18.6%	8.6%	0.0%
Organization, Workload, and Staffing								
I believe the workload within my division is equally divided among my co-workers.	2.99	1.17	5.7%	37.1%	15.7%	27.1%	11.4%	2.9%
There is an effective flow of information between supervisors and staff within my division.	3.10	1.23	12.9%	31.4%	17.1%	27.1%	10.0%	1.4%
There is an effective flow of information between management and staff within the Department.	2.87	1.18	7.1%	27.1%	20.0%	28.6%	12.9%	4.3%
Clear, written policies and procedures are in place to assist me in the performance of my job responsibilities.	2.41	1.17	4.3%	17.1%	18.6%	32.9%	25.7%	1.4%
Written policies and procedures are available and consistently followed in day-to-day operations.	2.54	1.15	4.3%	20.0%	20.0%	34.3%	20.0%	1.4%
Given the level of staffing within my division, the goals and objectives of the division are achievable.	2.90	1.14	8.6%	22.9%	28.6%	27.1%	11.4%	1.4%

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% Don't Know/NA
I believe that the workload in my division is comparable to the workload of other divisions in the Department.	2.85	1.17	7.1%	22.9%	27.1%	22.9%	14.3%	5.7%
Morale and Positive Work Environment								
I am actively encouraged to try creative approaches to my work, even to the point of taking the initiative.	3.46	1.20	18.6%	40.0%	20.0%	11.4%	10.0%	0.0%
I feel that I have sufficient authority to uphold recommendations and policies when challenged.	3.41	1.20	14.3%	44.3%	18.6%	10.0%	11.4%	1.4%
I believe my division functions proactively, and does not simply react to crises.	3.11	1.24	11.4%	35.7%	18.6%	21.4%	12.9%	0.0%
I believe opportunities for employee involvement in goal-setting, decision-making, and other aspects of my work are adequate.	2.99	1.22	7.1%	35.7%	20.0%	20.0%	15.7%	1.4%
I believe good teamwork exists in my division.	3.71	1.19	28.6%	37.1%	15.7%	10.0%	7.1%	1.4%
The work environment in my division is supportive and positive.	3.63	1.27	28.6%	37.1%	11.4%	14.3%	8.6%	0.0%
My division is an inspiring place to work.	3.24	1.34	20.0%	30.0%	18.6%	17.1%	14.3%	0.0%
Customers and Service								
Service to the public is strongly emphasized in my division.	4.09	0.97	37.1%	45.7%	8.6%	5.7%	2.9%	0.0%
Service to the public is strongly emphasized in the Department.	3.96	0.95	30.0%	47.1%	12.9%	8.6%	1.4%	0.0%
The County has an effective process for addressing the concerns of citizens and customers.	2.91	1.13	7.1%	22.9%	25.7%	25.7%	10.0%	8.6%
I believe that customers perceive that my division is consistently doing a good job.	2.71	1.08	5.7%	20.0%	22.9%	40.0%	10.0%	1.4%
Customer inquiries are responded to in a reasonable amount of time.	3.70	1.03	21.4%	42.9%	20.0%	11.4%	2.9%	1.4%
Written and on-line communication with our customers clearly outlines our processes and timelines.	3.14	1.05	5.7%	34.3%	27.1%	18.6%	7.1%	7.1%

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% Don't Know/NA
Organizational Effectiveness								
I believe my division is an efficient, well-run organization.	3.16	1.11	10.0%	30.0%	31.4%	17.1%	8.6%	2.9%
I believe the Department is an efficient, well-run organization.	2.78	1.10	2.9%	25.7%	31.4%	21.4%	15.7%	2.9%
I receive sufficient training for the effective completion of my job responsibilities.	3.01	1.29	11.4%	30.0%	21.4%	17.1%	17.1%	2.9%
Overall, I believe my division's performance is above average.	3.43	1.21	20.0%	32.9%	25.7%	10.0%	10.0%	1.4%
I believe my division has a solution-oriented philosophy.	3.61	1.13	20.0%	42.9%	21.4%	5.7%	8.6%	1.4%
The focus on "customer wait times" has been an effective way to measure performance.	2.45	1.09	1.4%	18.6%	14.3%	34.3%	17.1%	14.3%
I believe that our processes and timeframes are comparable to those of surrounding jurisdictions.	2.98	1.05	4.3%	21.4%	25.7%	17.1%	7.1%	24.3%
The cost of doing business with our Department is perceived by our customers to be comparable with other jurisdictions.	3.00	0.92	2.9%	18.6%	32.9%	15.7%	4.3%	25.7%
Pay and Fairness								
I believe that my division's approach to employee discipline is fair and evenly administered.	2.97	1.32	11.4%	24.3%	17.1%	18.6%	15.7%	12.9%
The performance evaluations I have received have been completed in a timely manner and according to schedule.	3.06	1.42	18.6%	22.9%	18.6%	14.3%	20.0%	5.7%
The current compensation and promotion process rewards me for higher than average levels of performance.	1.95	1.07	2.9%	7.1%	12.9%	30.0%	40.0%	7.1%
Compared to similar organizations in Southern Washington, I am satisfied with the salary and benefit package I receive.	2.65	1.16	2.9%	24.3%	21.4%	25.7%	18.6%	7.1%
I have sufficient opportunities for advancement and promotional upward mobility.	2.60	1.16	4.3%	20.0%	24.3%	27.1%	20.0%	4.3%

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% Don't Know/NA
Decision-making and Communication								
Overall, I believe the decision-making within my division is consistent with Board of County Councilors' priorities.	3.12	1.14	5.7%	31.4%	28.6%	7.1%	12.9%	14.3%
Overall, I believe the decision-making within the Department is consistent with Board of County Councilors' priorities.	3.05	1.16	7.1%	24.3%	31.4%	8.6%	12.9%	15.7%
It is clear to me what my role is and how it contributes to the larger purpose of the Department.	3.63	1.14	18.6%	51.4%	12.9%	8.6%	8.6%	0.0%
There is good coordination of projects and functions between my division and other divisions involved in the Department.	2.71	1.20	7.1%	20.0%	25.7%	25.7%	18.6%	2.9%
There is good coordination of projects and functions between the Department and other County departments.	2.67	1.15	5.7%	15.7%	32.9%	21.4%	18.6%	5.7%
Generally, I have adequate decision-making authority to accomplish the work I am asked to perform.	3.54	1.19	21.4%	41.4%	14.3%	15.7%	7.1%	0.0%
Regulations and/or policies I am responsible for administering are reasonable and enforceable.	3.46	1.04	8.6%	50.0%	24.3%	5.7%	8.6%	2.9%
Resources and Technology								
I have sufficient resources to complete my work, such as office space, computers, etc.	3.60	1.10	20.0%	44.3%	15.7%	15.7%	4.3%	0.0%
The equipment and technology used in my division are up-to-date.	3.21	1.33	15.7%	38.6%	12.9%	17.1%	15.7%	0.0%
Resources and equipment needed for the performance of my job tasks are properly maintained.	3.64	1.08	14.3%	60.0%	10.0%	7.1%	8.6%	0.0%
Overall, my division's computer tracking systems address our project tracking needs.	2.91	1.16	4.3%	31.4%	25.7%	17.1%	15.7%	5.7%

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% Don't Know/NA
Leadership and Supervision								
The management of my division contributes to the productivity of the division.	3.51	1.25	21.4%	38.6%	17.1%	8.6%	11.4%	2.9%
The management of the Department contributes to the productivity of my division.	3.37	1.18	15.7%	34.3%	25.7%	10.0%	10.0%	4.3%
I receive clear and specific direction from my supervisor(s) regarding my work assignments.	3.59	1.15	20.0%	45.7%	14.3%	12.9%	7.1%	0.0%
The management of my division listens to employees.	3.71	1.32	32.9%	35.7%	10.0%	8.6%	11.4%	1.4%
My manager/supervisor values my time as much as his/her own.	3.79	1.34	41.4%	21.4%	12.9%	11.4%	8.6%	4.3%
My manager/supervisor keeps commitments he/she makes to me.	3.76	1.27	34.3%	35.7%	10.0%	11.4%	8.6%	0.0%
My manager/supervisor encourages teamwork in my division.	4.01	1.14	40.0%	40.0%	8.6%	4.3%	7.1%	0.0%
Department leaders handle human errors on the part of staff in a constructive and respectful manner.	3.91	1.04	31.4%	40.0%	14.3%	8.6%	2.9%	2.9%
I understand my manager/supervisor's expectations of the job I perform.	3.96	1.01	31.4%	45.7%	14.3%	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%
Leadership realizes that "perfection" is unachievable and has realistic expectations for measuring employee performance.	3.93	1.00	28.6%	47.1%	14.3%	4.3%	4.3%	1.4%

The following table shows the overall mean score by statement section.

Statement Section	Mean Score
Mission, Goals, and Objectives	3.37
Organization, Workload, and Staffing	2.81
Morale and Positive Work Environment	3.36
Customers and Service	3.42
Organizational Effectiveness	3.05
Pay and Fairness	2.64
Decision-making and Communication	3.17
Resources and Technology	3.34
Leadership and Supervision	3.75

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE SUMMARY

The following table shows a summary of the responses to the open-ended employee survey request. The results are summarized by common themes identified in each response and are organized by count (frequency) of each response.

Please add any specific comments or suggestions you may have for improving services in the Department overall or your division.

Count	Employee OVERALL Responses (Summarized)
7	County Council influence outcomes and/or meddle in operations to the detriment of the Department.
5	Employee determinations are being undermined by superiors.
4	Management are not knowledgeable regarding daily Department operations, and/or are under trained or underperforming.
4	Training is insufficient.
3	Managers need to empower and equip their employees.
3	Communication is poor.
2	Management is doing a good job.
1	Permit Center staff are still new; performance will improve with time.
1	Staff are overworked.
1	There are too many changes to effectively work through.
1	New computer system does not function efficiently.
1	Compensation is insufficient.
1	Access to historic records is poor.
1	Computer storage is insufficient.
1	Administration Division is a positive, respectful environment.
1	Standard operating procedures are needed.
1	Next-day inspections are not sustainable.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE FULL RESPONSES

The following are responses to the open-ended request, "Please add any specific comments or suggestions you may have for improving services in the Department overall or your division." As this is a professional report, all or parts of comments that contain personal references have been removed. Otherwise, these are exact quotes, and have not been modified in any way, apart from obvious typos being corrected.

- "Some managers need to trust their employees, listen to their concerns, not compare then to other employees, let them make mistakes and learn from them,

let them work and understand things their way not the managers way. Don't punish all the employees because another employee doesn't follow the rules. If upper-level management or Commissioners etc. are going to override rules, policies, codes so they look good to customers then change them so the employees can give out the correct information, good information and not look like the "bad guys" or be treated by customers that they don't know what they are talking about."

- "Management is clueless to the operation and daily functions of the department. They do not back us up when it comes to enforcing the code, rules, and regulations they tell us to enforce."
- "The County Council needs to implement the charter and start being ethical, start respecting staff for the professional work they do, and stop trying to micromanage the permitting process and influence outcomes that are in favor of their political constituents."
- "Several of the items checked above checked as disagree are based on the fact that the majority of the Permit Center staff have been employed less than 2 years. Combine with this a new manager that has been with us less than 6 months. In another 6 months I would anticipate that the majority of my responses would be greatly improved. Staff are overworked, exhausted and there seems to be no end to the constant changes that staff are expected to maintain. Changes are code changes, management decisions, a new computer system that appears we have more work-around options than the system actually functions. Based on the multiple work-around options required I'm not even sure our support team knows what a work-around is versus how the system was designed to function. Permit Center, Building Plan Examiner, Building Inspector's, Fire Marshal staff are impacted however the implementation team appears not to care and continues to work on the next project and not put up to STOP sign."
- "Have better communication between permit center and councilors. Too much taking of the contractors' side in order to make changes.
- "Managers should receive adequate training, know the job their people perform, update/maintain policies/procedures, receive training on gender bias in the work place, be held accountable for their poor treatment of employees, know what the heck they are doing, treat people fairly, and leave their personal issues out of the work place. Power and control should not be used to dominate and subjugate."
- "There is a major problem with communication between departments, councilors, and managers."

- "Find a way to get proper training in the department. There are only certain people that get assigned jobs, and if they leave, we are stuck not knowing it all. We are all very busy, but there needs to be a way to get the training in and correct."
- "More communication is needed, value all employees' contributions."
- "1. Training program for staff. 2. The Councilor's getting involved in review of individual projects/permits makes it hard especially when they tell you to go against what the code requires. It eats away at the credibility of staff."
- "A big part of what we do is based on code, laws or rules that are decided upon by others. There is little thought given to how these will be implemented or how they will affect our division or the citizens we serve. We have code that gets changed via the Board of County Councilors and I don't feel all programs have a opinion or any chance for input. Basically we get the revised code once it is adopted and then have to deal with it. Some recent changes were made to so we operate more like the City of Vancouver and this often has repercussions for our citizens and us trying to implement them. A few years ago we were tasked with re-writing title 40 in "plain talk". Something the Governor at that time was really pushing for. We did re-write and are still working on it but it is just as convoluted as it ever was. Too complicated for us and certainly too complicated for the average citizen to figure out. I don't feel we have had the Board's support for a long time and the fact that they really have no interest or respect for the importance of what we actually do is evident in the fact that the majority of them have never even stepped foot in the permit center let alone spent a little time here observing the level of service we actually provide. They have all been invited but none have taken us up on the offer. They are quick to judge, but know very little about what we do and how much impact the rule makers have on our ability to do your job efficiently and fairly. There is no support for staff, only for the few people that want to complain and at that they do not even speak to our staff regarding the issues. I think it spoke volumes on how committed they are when I heard all but 1 of them left the meeting with staff, the development community and you folks last week at noon. A meeting that was set up to improve communication. Again, how can we have the support to do our jobs efficiently, with a clear set of requirements for the citizens to follow when they can't even sit through a one-day meeting. I have to wonder if they will support the recommendations that Citygate comes up with?"
- "For the most part, I believe that communication with our direct management staff is efficient; however, communication between the board of councilors is lacking for not only the community development division but with outside

consultants as well. Decisions are made by the board without them understanding the effect that it will have on all the different division. There is a breakdown in communication that is detrimental to the functions of Clark County. In addition, there is a need for a class and compensation study for many divisions within Clark County as they are far behind other comparable jurisdictions. Land use has been asked to update their processes, but because management has to meet with many different committees to get internal and external customer input. The result of having so many people involved is no changes have been made. Some of these changes would take seconds but instead they haven't been completed. It is frustrating to outside applicants as well as external staff. In my opinion, Clark County allows too many outside organizations to have an opinion on their day to day processes."

- "Access to historic land use and development permit records (and auditor records) is terrible, and often unavailable in an electronic format. I was very surprised to learn how extraordinarily far behind Clark County is in comparison to rural Cowlitz County in regards to access to historic records. Additionally, computer storage capacity really needs to improve dramatically. Having to save decades worth of relatively recent permit information on a shared set of flash/thumb drives, because basic storage isn't provided is frankly irrational, cumbersome and time-consuming for our division. It further hinders staff access to basic property/project information. Overall, the lack of access to historic records is a real disappointment considering how advanced our publicly accessible GIS and associated public records system is. Scanning and providing electronic access to historic records should be elevated in priority, and it could greatly increase efficiency in project review."
- "It really comes down to being allowed to do your job without fear. If all staff is properly trained (and yes more training is needed and necessary). We will never make everyone happy as we are a regulatory agency…but I do believe that we strive to give our best each day. This somehow needs to be acknowledged vs being admonished for the decision made based on codes, rules, and conditions. Overall I believe we have a good Dept. in my division my direct supervisors are the best."
- "I believe that management is doing a great job. I believe that the councilors don't understand our process and make agreements with applicants that make a huge impact on all departments and makes our jobs difficult."
- "Our division (Admin) has a very welcome environment and everyone respects to each other working as a team."

- “We need to develop and implement Standard Operating Procedures and guidance documents for all processes and inspection types in our division.”
- “Managers should be properly trained and able to deal with people as well as know the actual job the employees are performing. Managers should not participate in and encourage dysfunctional interpersonal behaviors in their staff (i.e., talking behind people's backs, sharing personal information, putting staff members down in front of co-workers, and generally creating an unpleasant work environment whilst supporting the "majority" in picking on the "minority". Managers without prior management experience should receive training in working with people and their issues. Managers should also be encouraged to leave their personal baggage at home. We all have personal "issues" that color our approach to life but employees are expected to deal with them as should managers).”
- “It is not sustainable to inspect the small staff of inspectors to complete the amount of inspections called in on average per day. I believe that the County should limit or at least let the building community know that we may not be able to complete all inspections on the next day.”

APPENDIX B

PROCESS DATA ANALYSIS SUMMARY

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PROCESS DATA ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Different permit requests require different modules or functions, e.g., engineering, fire marshal, etc. As one Permit Center employee remarked, the time it takes to complete the process is proportional to the complexity of a request.

The staff appear to know their own functions well, but are less knowledgeable about how their work integrates with other functions, particularly regarding flow dependencies. The County should note that many staff are expanding their base of skill as they gain exposure to new components of the process. The County should also recognize that the work has a long learning curve that is not easily found in the marketplace.

Clark County has mapped its Permit Center processes to demonstrate general flow. Underneath each process map are business rules that provide more detail on how processes are managed. However, there is very little data to measure the health of the process. The Permit Center needs mechanisms and data to gauge elapsed time and count the frequency of events across the process flow.

The tools and systems currently in place allow the staff to perform their basic work, but they fall far short in helping monitor and prioritize work. This is as much a problem for management as it is for staff. Hard copies of request materials are organized by date and by the groups they pass through; however, much of the information physically attached to the hard copies cannot be viewed in one status report or analyzed in aggregate for process improvement opportunities. In fact, lack of data is inhibiting process improvement.

To truly understand which requests and processes need help, they need to be measured.

Seemingly simple questions are currently difficult to answer, such as:

- How long does it take to process requests?
- How many requests are currently in progress, and which staff are assigned?
- Which requests need attention?
- How large is the backlog, and when will it be cleared?

There are several conditions inhibiting these insights:

- Existing reports are few and limited in scope.
- Vendors of cloud-hosted software systems do not currently provide direct access to County data.
- Management is assembling reports by manually entering data into spreadsheets, consuming valuable time, and risking significant error.

Citygate recommends the County hire a management data analyst to develop management reports and conduct ongoing analyses on the health of the process. Land Management Software (LMS) is also currently hosted in the cloud, and rather than pay the development cost of creating multiple reports that may diminish in practical value over time, Citygate recommends asking the vendor to make the County's data available to this management analyst so that, where possible, reports can be automated or customized while in progress for deeper analytical questions.

Other key goals for the County should be to improve compatibility and integration of functions, communication and coordination between teams, and develop outcome-driven understanding of the process for all employees. Multiple inexpensive or free software solutions exist to assist with this.

High Level Process Flow

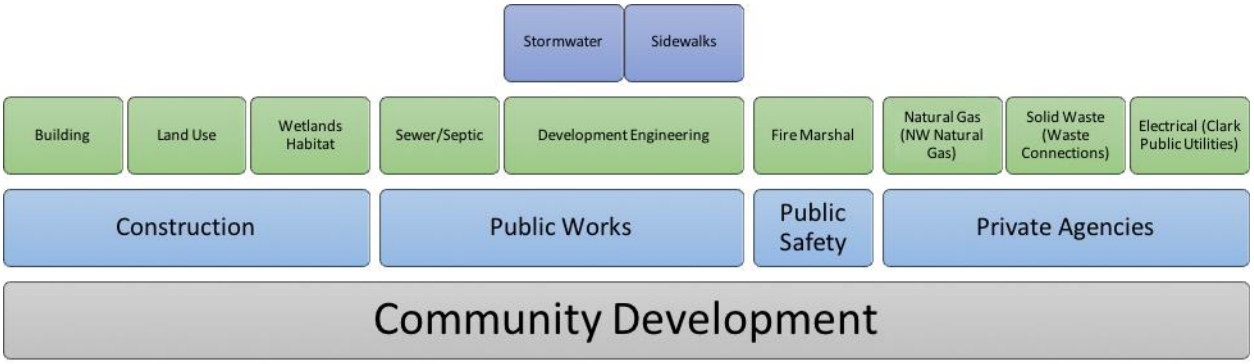
At the highest level, the flow of Permit Center operations is shown in the following diagram.

Figure 1—Permit Center Operations Flow

Within each step are sub processes with varying functions or modules required to complete the flow. Each step also contains critical trigger events that signal the next step in the flow.

The modular components that drive each step are outlined in the following tree diagram. The modules required for each permit depend on the nature and scope of the permit requested.

Figure 2—Modules Necessary for Types of Permit Requests



Customers are currently provided with estimated timelines to complete the process based on the permit classification.

Figure 3—Timeline Estimates for Building Permit Types

Building Permit	Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV
•Variable TImeline	•42 Days •14 Day Appeal	•99 Days •14 Day Appeal	•120 Days •14 Day Appeal	•Annual Cycle or Longer

These estimates do not appear to be based upon actual and ongoing measurement of the process, which creates several challenges for all parties involved.

Customers' timeline expectations may not be realistic. In fact, if permits are issued in significantly varied time frames, including early, customers may have difficulty appropriately scheduling materials, sub-contractors, and other essential aspects of projects.

Management may be tied to the expected timeline rather than the flow of the process. That is, there is a risk of managing to the expected timeline rather than the challenges within and across requests themselves.

Staff may not understand how to prioritize requests. Permit Center operations are modular, and staff may not yet fully understand flow dependency, particularly without data. Simple work in one team, if delayed, might impact complex review in another, potentially delaying permit issuance.

Critical Analysis of a High-Level Process

The LEAN permitting process is intended to provide new single-family residential permits in five days. The most important questions to ask of this process are:

- How many LEAN permit requests are there?
- How long are LEAN permits actually taking to process?
- How many requests were rejected?
- What are the largest causes of error?

Any process maps without basic quantifiable supporting data risk being over or under scrutinized. It is important to consider some basic points from the questions above.

How Many LEAN Permit Requests Are There?

The assumption is that LEAN permit requests account for sizable volume of Permit Center activity. If this turns out not to be true, then LEAN permitting may not be the right process to focus initial process improvement efforts. Using the Pareto Principal, the first job of any process

improvement is to focus on the vital few things that can truly make a difference. To determine what those are, some basic quantification of processes is key.

How Long Are LEAN Permits Actually Taking to Process?

There a few questions that must be answered regarding the length of the LEAN permitting process after it has been measured:

- Is the five-day expectation realistic?
  - If the answer is no, then what are the reasons why?
- Using the Pareto Principal, what are the vital few common reasons for a permit not to meet the expected time frame?
  - What can be done to address those problems?

How Many Requests Were Rejected?

It is important to gauge the number of requests that start flowing into the LEAN process that are rejected. In particular, current process dictates requestors are allowed one rejection before their request is relegated to the traditional process. This means there are effectively two reject events that should be tracked. Another important assessment is determining how many of all LEAN requests initiated fail on the first and second rejections.

What Are the Largest Causes of Error?

Classification of error is just as important as counting error rates. It is insufficient to determine a specific number of permits did not meet the timeline without also examining why. From where do the errors occur, and how much do these errors contribute to extended timelines? The sense among staff is that customer error is responsible for the majority of extended timelines, but there was no determination if that was actually true. If it is, the Permit Center should determine the causes of these errors and how it can help prevent them.

The function of collecting data of this nature is to understand objectively how the Permit Center functions so that meaningful improvements can be made.

A Brief Overview of the Process Improvement Paradigm

There are a variety of process and quality improvement tools and paradigms: Total Quality Management, Just in Time, the Toyota Production System, Lean, Six Sigma, and more recently Agile and Scrum, just to name a few.[1]

[1] Juran & De Feo, p. 73

Among all approaches are some common principals:

- Systems thinking is crucial to optimizing outputs[2]
- People are critical to the success of any system[3]
- Measuring process is necessary to gauge improvement[4]
- Standardization reduces error and variation[5]
- Small process changes are manageable and more likely to succeed.[6]

To the last point in particular, do not try to eat the elephant in one bite. Small changes, often called Sprints or Kaizen Events, add up quickly, create far less risk, and cost less. If an improvement produces unintended results, the ability to change or revert to a prior state is much less costly in small iterations.

The time to plan and define Sprints may vary considerably depending on the number of people required and the nature of the proposed change. Once planned and prioritized, Sprints should take place over the span of about two weeks and last no longer than one month. In other words, Sprints have:

- Well-defined objectives
- Limited scope
- Well-defined roles and responsibilities.

A simple way to begin defining a Sprint is to fill in the blanks in the following sentence: As a(n) _____ (*role*), I need to be able to _____.

A good place for the Permit Center Manager to begin a new Sprint might be to say: As the Permit Center Manager, I need a daily report detailing requests in progress, elapsed time, and current status.

Note the components defining this Sprint.

- Customer of the Sprint – Permit Center Manager
- Defined Need – A report containing requests in progress, elapsed time, current status
- Frequency – Daily

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[2] Jayaram, Das, & Nicolae, 2010
[3] Liker & Morgan, 2006
[4] Deming, 2000; Juran & De Feo, 2010
[5] Liker & Morgan, 2006
[6] Liker & Morgan, 2006

The format of this report needs further definition in a planning meeting, but the objective is clear. The Permit Center Manager needs to understand the volume of requests in progress, needs to quantify and identify requests that are late or at risk, and needs this report daily to help prioritize their day.

Other required components needed to fully define this Sprint include:

- Identifying data sources
- Defining the scope of requests being considered (all permits, or just single-family residences?)
- Identifying the functions the intended report will monitor.

Continuous improvement means there is a regular queue of Sprints being:

- Planned and defined
- Prioritized and scheduled
- Implemented.

Technical Considerations and Opportunities

Although Citygate does not have a complete accounting of all software systems used in the Permit Center, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the County needs to aggregate its permit process data into a common data pool, often referred to as a data warehouse, cube, data lake, etc.

Competent management analysts can pull data from multiple systems and aggregate them; however, there can be a significant time cost to doing so in the normal course of developing a report, particularly if that report is a one-time report. The variety of software systems is sufficiently large that the County would be better served by aggregating key data from disparate sources into a single data pool.

The design and architecture of such a data warehouse requires skill beyond that of this consulting team; however, the process of doing so essentially involves the following steps:

- Define the data problem (e.g., what questions need to be answered?)
- Identify data sources and the key fields to be imported into the data warehouse
- Develop and schedule automated routines to gather data from software systems and ensure they work as expected

- Author write-back routines to update software systems with new data (as needed[7])
- Optimize performance and maintain systems and backups.

Citygate understands this may be a longer-term gap to fill due to budget constraints. To begin, convincing the LMS to provide a County-accessible data warehouse for LMS data alone would be a giant leap forward in measuring operational current state. A management analyst would still need to assemble data together from other systems, but access to the raw LMS data is crucial to any long-term effort.

Although management needs access to the data warehouse, its most crucial consumer will be a new management analyst (+1 full-time equivalent) capable of authoring automated reports and performing deep-dive analysis. This management analyst will act as the liaison between management and the data to answer business questions. The analyst will also be responsible for helping the LMS understand what data is needed in the data warehouse. The analyst should have significant experience with query languages such as SQL or Power Query, as well as critical analytical tools and languages the County already uses.[8] There may also be value in the medium term for this analyst to have at least a basic level of skill with Lean Six Sigma statistical methods and tools such as Minitab.

While this position is being developed and filled, management should spend time developing wireframe analytical questions to be answered with data, such as: As a(n) _____ (*role*), I need to be able to _____. Developing just a few high-need statements using this technique will keep the recommended analyst very busy for some time.

Citygate suggests some good places to begin would be:

- Permit status report
  - Current work in progress
  - Backlog details
  - Escalations
  - At-risk requests
- Cycle-time report
  - 90th percentile elapsed permit issue cycle-time by permit type

[7] This should only be done in cases where there is no better solution.
[8] Assuming the County uses the Microsoft stack of analytical tools, this analyst should have significant skill with tools such as Power Pivot and/or Power BI, query tools such as Power Query and/or SQL, and analytical languages such as DAX.

- Month over month cycle-time growth by permit type[9]
- Table of outliers

- Interventions report (detailing any permits rejected or placed on hold)
  - Current quantity of holds and elapsed time
  - Prior period quantity of rejections by type
  - Prior period quantity of rejections by customer
  - Prior period proportion of LEAN permits reverting to the traditional process.

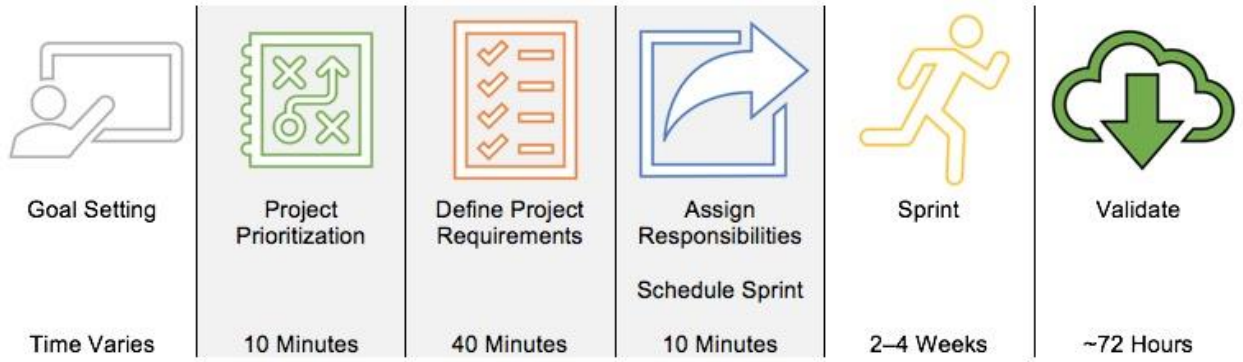
Developing just these few reports would be a major leap forward in understanding how well the Permit Center process is working.

Data and Reporting Development Process Flow

Citygate recommends developing the suggested reports (and others as needed) using the following flow.

Goal setting should be deliberative, but the project objective should be small enough to reasonably complete in two to four weeks.

Figure 4—Data and Reporting Development Process Flow



The grey shaded area represents a maximum one-hour planning meeting to prioritize well-defined projects, define project requirements, assign responsibilities, and schedule Sprints.

This meeting should occur regularly, typically three to six weeks prior to the next available Sprint, and can be used to discuss several potential projects simultaneously. The purpose of this

[9] Current Month/Prior Month – 1, or (Current Month – Prior Month)/Prior Month

meeting is to ensure requirements are clear, and, if not, return the project back to the goal-setting stage. Sprints should be scheduled based on available capacity and project priority but should also utilize available productive capacity whenever possible.

Those responsible for performing the work then carry it out and report and manage any issues that may arise during the Sprint.

Once all the work is completed, all involved parties validate whether the improvement works as intended, resolve or document outstanding issues, and accept or reject the solution.

Projects should also be classified into two classes: keep the business running and keep the business evolving. The latter is critical to any organization's long-term development.

Critical Data Points to Capture

Management needs to consider its long-term objectives in a data context and develop a data roadmap that facilitates fundamental development of the organization. Citygate can provide some critical data points to begin capturing as soon as humanly possible, but fully recognizes that data needs will and should evolve over time.

There are two classes of data to capture: measurement data and attribute data. Measurement data is just that, a way to measure a process. Measurements such as time and rates are crucial to any process. How one digests and understands the measurements is through attributes; that is how the measurements are framed.

To illustrate the difference, one can measure the elapsed time of the permit process, but this measurement is only useful if elapsed time has context attributes such as: LEAN permit requests in progress, and where total elapsed time exceeds five days, including customer revision time.

The following is a sampling of data points the Permit Center may already be capturing but has not been able to access due to vendor restrictions on data, time constraints, or other factors. This list is intended to serve as a good starting point, fully recognizing there is other data which is, or will become, valuable over time.

Table 1—Data Point Samples

Measurement Data	
Time	Elapsed Time Hold Time Revision Time Escalation Time - Time to Escalation - Time since Escalation
Rate	Rejection Rate Error Rate Hold Rate 1st Time Yield (% of Requests Completed Without Error) Late Rate (% Late Without Error) Permit Type Rate (Why are we busy?)

Attribute Data	
Customer/Account	Customer Name
Touchpoints (Responsible Groups)	Fire Marshall, Engineering, etc.
Escalation Flag	Escalated/Not Escalated
Expedite Flag	Expedited/Not Expedited
Assignee(s)	Doe, Jane; Buck, Joe
Occupancy Type	Commercial, Residential, etc.
Project Type	Environmental, Engineering, Land Use, etc.
Date/Time	Date/Time

Potential Process Measures

Citygate cannot foresee all of the possible measures the Permit Center should be monitoring but can suggest a variety of measures that should be useful. The following table shows some suggested measures and the logic for performing the calculations. Keep in mind that each of the calculations will need to be contextualized by attribute data to provide meaning to the metric.

Table 2—Suggested Measures and Calculations

Metric	Calculation	Data Granularity
Total Elapsed Time by Permit	Permit Issue Date – Permit Request Date	Date/Time
Hold Time	Sum (Time on Hold)	Date/Time
Customer Hold Time	Hold Time attributed to Customer Revisions	Date/Time
Permit Center Hold Time	Hold Time attributed to Permit Center Delays	Date/Time
Processing Time	Total Elapsed Time – Customer Hold Time	Date/Time
Permits in Progress	Quantity (Permits) <> Complete	Units
Permits Rejected	Quantity (Rejects)	Units
Permits on Hold	Quantity (Hold)	Units
Year over Year Request Growth Rate	Current Period Quantity (Permits) / Prior Period Quantity (Permits) – 1	Units

There are other options for analytical tools, but one suite that is inexpensive, or free to power users, comes from Microsoft.

This suite includes PowerPivot, which is an add-on to MS-Excel that uses an analytical language called DAX (Data Analysis Expressions) to summarize data in meaningful ways but, unlike traditional Excel, can dynamically slice data by attributes and accept millions of rows of data. The beauty of DAX is two-fold. The first is the ability to write one measure and reuse it multiple ways.

In addition to re-contextualizing the same measure with different attributes, new measures can be written by referring to an original measure. In fact, if the base measure is sophisticated enough, changing a base measure will dynamically update all other measures flowing from it.

The second advantage to DAX is in time intelligence. DAX allows one to quickly perform time intelligence calculations. Calculations such as Year to Date, Month to Date, Year over Year, etc. become simple to author.

PowerPivot is available in Enterprise and Professional versions of Microsoft Office 2013, 2016, and 365.

Power Query is another Excel add-on that is free. It is designed with the sole intent of empowering end-users to get and transform their own data without relying on information technology to provide a data dump.

Power BI Desktop is a free visualization and exploration tool that uses both DAX and Power Query to generate interactive dashboard reports. There is complete (one directional) portability from Excel files enhanced with PowerPivot to Power BI, including all of the queries and language used to develop the data for reports. Power BI Desktop files (.PBIX) can be emailed person to person and/or stored on drives shared for multiple users to access.

Process Analysis and Improvement Flow

The Lean Six Sigma (DMAIC) approach to problem solving follows this essential flow.

Figure 5—Lean Six Sigma Problem Solving

One of the essential tenets of any reasonable process improvement approach requires measurement of that process. Mapping a process, and even making changes to the map, do not necessarily improve processes. There is no way to know a process improved unless it has been measured before and after.

In fact, changing a process may not improve it and may have unintended consequences, and failing to measure a process may blind organizations to unintended consequences.

There are many commonalities between the DMAIC approach and the data and report development process flow mentioned previously.

In both cases, projects should be well-defined, measurable, small enough to manage, of short duration, and have clearly defined roles and objectives. There are subtle differences, however.

In the DMAIC method, measurement occurs beyond the life of the project. The improve phase validates that the new state is better than the old state. In essence, it serves as a check to validate the change was also an improvement. The control phase is essentially ongoing measurement of the process to ensure it remains in control.