

2018 Citygate Associates, LLC Report - Evaluation of Permit Center Operations

Strategies for Implementation of Citygate Recommendations (Highlighting denotes revised strategies/actions)

Citygate's Strategic Findings/Recommendations	Proposed Strategy/Action - Subject to Modification by FOT	Time Frame*	Deadline	Primary Lead(s)
1 - A foundation of trust needs to be built for the desired culture changes to occur.	Provide timely and factual responses to Councilors;	Immediate	Ongoing	Mitch
2 - Begin a "listening tour" that is designed to build relationships, build trust, and listen to the building industry about trends.	Director and Managers are attending BIA, ROCC and ICC meetings to receive feedback and hear suggestions for permit process improvements that will benefit our customers. In addition, in implementing the Citygate strategic recommendations, we will establish a Functional Oversight Team (FOT) comprised of permit process stakeholders -including BIA members- who will work collaboratively to identify and eliminate permit processing pinchpoints, competing interests and impediments.	By June 1, 2018	Ongoing	Mitch
3 - Adhere to the role of the County Council and County Manager as defined in the Home Rule Charter.	Work on restoring trust and credibility through strong departmental leadership, better communication, and good service, the result being that Councilors will become confident with County building and development permitting and feel less of a need to be involved with departmental operations and able to focus more on countywide policy; work closely with the County Manager, at his/her request, to assist with this transition	Immediate	Ongoing	Mitch
4 - Adopt a policy for plans, including stormwater plans, submitted from licensed professionals to be accepted with minimal to moderate review.	Met with Building Safety, Fire Marshal and Development Engineering leadership to discuss modifying plan review practices and timelines. Scheduled to discuss the matter with DEAB in June for feedback and recommendations.	April	June	Mitch, Jim, Jon, Ravi, Ali, Greg
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.	Identify checklists and SOP's that need updating and assign updates to appropriate staff; create SOP's for all processes to ensure new and existing employees have written guidelines and procedures for training and development. Distribute new SOP's and checklists to internal and external stakeholders for review; incorporate input and final.	April	June	Mike and Staff
6 - Issue guidance documents when needed for front-line staff and the public before significant new procedures or policies are implemented.	Creation of guidance documents requires work to fully understand the necessary level of quality of communication between staff and customers to ensure mutual success. This will occur during FOT review.	April	May	Division Managers
7 - Create a process improvement team with the responsibility to review all proposed process improvements with recommendations to the Community Development Director.	Develop a framework to convene a team to address process improvements on a continuous basis. Note: The Functional Oversight Team identified in item No. 2 will transition to a Continuous Improvement Team following implementation of the Citygate recommendations .	May	June	Mitch
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.	The Community Development Department - as the lead agency- will coordinate with permit process stakeholders to create an internal pre-application review team for complex projects requiring multi-departmental review and approvals.	June/July	Ongoing	Mitch
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.	Long Term: Continuous Improvement - Develop and prioritize list of reporting needs; develop schedule to create reports; determine appropriate methods of communication of KPIs such as installing monitor in lobby to display key data/ reports; respond to issues and trends that result from the KPIs in a manner that enhances efficiency and predictability of permitting operations	April	July	Mike and Désirée
10 - Improve the layout and functionality of the permit center.	Complete design plan; if budget approved, schedule work for 2018	April	2018	CD Mgmt
11 - Insist that the Computronix Land Management Software vendor make the County's data available in a common data pool or data warehouse.	Letter to Cx for access to data in LMS	April		Mitch, Carol and Mark

12 - Add a Permit Center Lead to break the "vicious cycle" that exists and accelerate the training of Permit Center staff.	Budget approval has been granted and recruitment will begin in June as soon as we complete the transition to Workday. To measure the success of adding the lead to the permit center team productivity metrics will be tracked and reported.	2018		
13 - Add a 12-18 month temporary project lead for implementation of the Citygate recommendations and to develop management reports and conduct ongoing analysis on the health of the process.	We will work directly with Auditor's office to develop metrics and QC/QA measures to monitor and report status of Citygate implementation, and for continuous improvement in all work groups.	April	April	Bob, Mitch and Mike
14 - Establish a regular process for identifying and addressing needed policy changes and code revisions.	This will likely be a stakeholder group (Functional Oversight Team) comprised of representatives of all development review departments who can meet as needed to identify and review values and impacts of pending code and policy changes, and provide reports and recommendations to the Directors and County Manager		August	Development Department Heads
15 - Establish a formal process to regularly obtain customer feedback and to improve customer service. Publicize the process so the public knows how their concerns will be resolved.	Create/ recreate post visit survey; compile in monthly report; publish on web	Immediate	May	Mike and Carol
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.	Respond to phone calls and emails within 24 hours; review triage process and prioritize responses. To alleviate the interruption of work flow for our non-forward facing staff we can establish a single, knowledgeable point of contact through which all calls would be routed for immediate response.	Immediate	Ongoing	Mike
17 - Improve decision-making and empowerment by creating decision matrix; designate ombudsman; develop appeals process.	At regular management team and staff meetings Mitch and the leadership team are working to ensure staff have access to proper training and are empowered to make well informed decisions at the earliest opportunity. This is also an ongoing component of our continuous improvement work. Managers must be trusted as ombudsmen to resolve conflict and build consensus in their workgroups, and to support employees to ensure they are comfortable in decisionmaking.			
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.	Mitch Nickolds will work with the Community Development Leadership team to develop and implement a bi-annual strategic plan for the entire department. Core components will include: continuous professional development and training, project and process management, secession planning and employee retention, customer service & communication, budget forecasts & continuity, and equity, diversity and inclusivity with intentionality.	Immediate	June	Mitch and Leadership Team
19 - Ensure predictability/transparency by defining and documenting information requirements (applications, checklists, forms, processes, timeframes and schedules).	See response to number 5			
20 - Utilize master plans for multiple buildings with checks for consistency with the master plan and any unique characteristics of the specific site.	Master plan is built into LMS; communicate and encourage stakeholders to take advantage of this beneficial program	April	Ongoing	Mitch, Jim, Mike and Ravi
21 and 22 - Adopt a policy that subsequent plan reviews do not result in corrections unless there is a change, or public health/safety issue; adopt policy for re-submittal fee charged if additional reviews required after three corrections cycles	Pending further analysis and council discussion			
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.	Work with County Auditor to identify and implement performance measurement	April		Mitch, Bob and Functional Oversight Team
24 - Inventory existing management reports and evaluate how well the reports detail how fast permits are cycled through the process.	Identify key lines business to measure and estimate metrics/ goals	May		Mike and Staff
25 and 26 - Phase2: Consider the consolidation of permitting functions into one building or on one floor. Phase 3: Consider the development of a standalone development services center outside of Vancouver and closer to the unincorporated area where the Permit Center's customers are located.	The fiscal impacts and budgetary implications require that this particular recommendation be segregated from the short term strategies and actions.			

27 and 28 - use stormwater multi-parcel plans; clarify decision-making authority of permit center staff with regard to stormwater management	On subdivision lots, look at Snohomish County's and other NPDES Phase 1 counties' checklists	April/May		Mike and Jeremy
29 - create fund balance policy/forecasting models	Develop fund balance policy for Fund 1011	2018 for 2019/2020 Budget	End of 2018	Bob and Mitch
30 - Accelerate the implementation/training of on-line permitting process which allows applicants to check the status of a permit at any time.	Implementation of the on-line permitting process is under an accelerated timeline. The training of the new permitting process is in progress. Applicants can already check the status of their permit on-line at any time.	Immediate	Ongoing	Carol
31 - Improve customer-oriented portal to services provided to meet customer expectations.	Customer expectations set the bar for our performance when they engage our processes. As we get further in to the implementation we will reach out to the customers to obtain their feed back on the changes they are experiencing. This will be done both online and in the permit center through a survey kiosk.	June	TBD	Carol and Mike
32 - Create a public website or portal where customer feedback can be provided.	Refer to #15 and 31.			
33 - Improve compatibility/integration of data functions, communication/coordination between teams, develop outcome driven understanding of process for all employees.	I beleive this can be accomplished through the FOT and continuous improvement, and will not require additional Citygate participation.	May	May	Carol, Mike, Bob, Mitch
34 - Develop long-term objectives for data and a data roadmap per the guidelines that have been provided.	Once KPIs are developed, need to identify existing data elements that can support	Immediate	Ongoing	Carol and Mitch
35 - Examine whether there are redundancies and/or gaps between existing software systems.	Clarity needed from Citygate	May	May	Carol, Mike, Bob, Mitch
36 - Expand education program/required training; on-boarding for all employees; training for all permit applicants regarding policies and processes.	This is a community development department-wide initiative that requires assignment of leads for work in each section (but also as a team), and collaboration with each other. The training needs of "applicants" will be determined once we understand exactly how our process works best, and we have streamlined it for maximum efficiency.	April	August	Mike for Permit Center; Leadership team for other on-boarding; Mike for permit applicant training
* Denotes 2018 if not otherwise noted				