

One Stop Permit Center Evaluation

REDLANDS, CA



matrix 
consulting group

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Matrix Consulting Group was hired to conduct an evaluation of the development review processes in the City of Redlands. This study focused on the core functions of the land entitlement and building permitting processes, the management and physical environment of the City's One Stop Permit Center (OSPC), the communication mechanisms between divisions and departments involved in the process, and the use of technology for the development review and permitting process. The major departments involved in the development review and permitting processes included: Planning, Building, Fire and Municipal Utilities and Engineering (MUED). Other departments and divisions with more limited involvement were also included in the evaluation.

The overall goal of this evaluation was to develop a future plan for the OSPC and development review process that would enable the City to provide a consistent high-level of service to customers. The primary focus areas of this evaluation were: to assess the level of service provided to the public, improve services provided by the OSPC, ensure staffing allocations were appropriate and sufficient to meet service level needs, evaluate the City of Redlands against best management practices in the development review industry, and evaluate the effective use of technology in providing service to the public.

The recommendations outlined should enable the City to implement a positive new relationship between the City and the development community and consistently provide both highly responsive and high quality services to all customers. While many of the recommendations can be accomplished without significant investments in technology and

staffing, many critical elements will require investments in these areas to implement best in class services.

(1) Study Methodology.

The process utilized by the project team for conducting this study and developing recommendations is outlined in the following points:

- The project team conducted in-person interviews with key staff throughout the City organization who were involved in the development review process. This included all staff and directors involved in the process. These interviews were designed to acquaint the project team with the organizational structure and operations of the City's permitting process and identify key issues for inquiry.
- The project team conducted both direct interviews with key selected stakeholders and an electronic survey for stakeholders and customers to gather information regarding the City's service delivery related to development review processes. These two outreach efforts provided entitlement and permit applicants with an opportunity to share their perspective and opinions on the service provided by the City. This survey also served to identify potential issues for further analysis.
- The project team collected extensive data from the City, both on-site and electronically, in order to develop a detailed and accurate understanding of the OSPC structure and the workload, policies, and operational practices of the development review process. Documentation included:
 - Personnel data such as staffing numbers, organizational charts, pay scales, and job descriptions;
 - Application processing information in the form of requirements listings, meeting schedules of commissions/boards, and process flowcharts;
 - Workload data such as inspection schedules, weekly permit processing reports, and comprehensive electronic data from CityWorks on the completion of development review tasks;
 - Financial and administrative information such as budgets, development fees and schedules, and the use of existing software applications.
- The project team compared the policies, procedures, and operational practices of the City's development review process to "best practices" and those procedures utilized in other local government jurisdictions in order to identify current strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.

These process components provided an in-depth understanding of the City's development review process and its key issues, and they served as the foundation for conducting an analysis of the improvement opportunities for the City of Redlands.

(2) Strengths of the Current Operations.

While the focus of this study was to evaluate the overall development review process in order to identify opportunities for improvement and offer recommendations for improving customer service and achieving operational efficiencies, the project team also noted a number of strengths and areas where the City is aligned with "best practices" in the course our review. Illustrative examples of these strengths include the following:

One Stop Permitting Center:

- The City's OSPC is open from 7:30 to 5:30¹, providing a wide timeframe within which applicants can come to submit, discuss, and pick up plans.
- An experienced planner, building permitting staff and MUED representative, all with customer service experience, are stationed at the OSPC to provide assistance and clarification to applicants.
- Planners and staff at the OSPC have desktop access to GIS including the assessor parcels, general plan categories, zoning districts, aeriels, flood and drainage data, utilities, etc.
- The Building and Safety Division uses CityWorks, the permitting software, to accept and track permit applications, route them to the appropriate divisions for plan check and approval, and issue permits. Planning Division utilizes the system to log all applications.
- The Building and Safety Division uses CityWorks to generate reports on processing time and efficiency for performance management purposes.
- Fire inspectors use mobile technology to record inspections from the field.
- Requests for building inspections consistently receive a response within one workday of the request.

¹ The City is closed an alternating Fridays.

Entitlement Process:

- The City uses a Development Review Committee that is comprised of all of the disciplines involved in the development review process to review applications and determine conditions of approval.
- The zoning map, general plan, and general plan land use map are available online.
- The planner at the OSPC provides zoning clearance for simple building permit applications.
- The Planning Division has a formal written scheduling system for processing land entitlement permits.
- Staff reports and recommendations are clear and are based on the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plan, and other adopted guidelines.

Technology:

- Applications for a wide variety of permits and entitlements, as well as checklists and information about them, are available on the OSPC website.
- Cycle time objectives have been set for the length of time for completion of processing of building permits.
- Building plan review processing time for initial submittals averages close to 10 days, which is the established metric.
- CityWorks is available to use to track and manage all entitlement and permit activity.

These existing strengths provide a foundation for increasingly sound operational practices and future efficiency improvements in the City's development review and inspection processes.

(3) Key Themes Raised By Stakeholders.

Several approaches were utilized to ascertain the perceptions regarding the key stakeholder's perceptions of the OSPC and development review processes in the City of Redlands. These included individual interviews with selected prior customers, a public survey, and an interview with the Chamber of Commerce. It should be noted that the

individuals who received a personal interview were generally ones who had previously expressed concerns related to the service provided. While the online survey was available for any member of the public to complete (and was advertised in the OSPC and on the City's website), respondents self-selected whether or not to complete the survey. As such, it may or may not reflect the perceptions of all customers. Key issues that were identified through these efforts included:

- Customers generally felt that staff exhibited a strong work ethic but that inadequate staffing allocations, staff turnover, staff training, and experience levels impacted their ability to consistently provide a high level of service. While these concerns were most notable related to OSPC building permitting staff, they were also shared regarding other departments involved.
- Generally, the land development process received positive feedback despite the complexity of the process. However, the processes related to the building permitting functions were generally viewed less favorably with plan review times noted as taking too long, and timely access to service at the OSPC being below desired levels.
- The vast majority of stakeholders and prior customers desired to see the City implement greater use of technology to streamline the process and make it more transparent. Key issues noted included: ability to request inspections online, ability for simple trade permits to be processed online, the desire to submit applications electronically, and the ability to see current status (both related to the status of plan reviews for each discipline, but also the comments issued) online.
- Clearer communication regarding submittal requirements to assist the applicants in making a full and complete submittal and to understand the overall development process.

The concerns identified by stakeholders mirror those identified by the best practices review and evaluation conducted by the project team, as outlined in the following section.

(4) Key Findings that Emerged from the Evaluation.

To place this evaluation of the One Stop Permit Center into context, there are several key themes and findings that developed during the evaluation. These are worth

noting in this executive summary as the recommendations were developed to address these issues:

- Over the last year or so, Fire, Building and Safety, and Planning have all experienced significant staff turn-over and the City has been unable to effectively recruit replacement employees. This is severely impacting service delivery to customers as many positions remain unfilled and existing staff who are asked to fill in for vacant positions and new staff who are not intimately familiar with the City's codes and processes.
- The City's adopted performance standard for building permitting activities is best in class – the issue is that staffing levels are insufficient to provide building permit plan review and inspection services within the adopted standard on a consistent basis.
- The City needs to get all involved departments and divisions aligned in providing service focused on meeting customer needs and implementing greater transparency and accountability in the process.
- To remain best in class in the development review and permitting activities and to accommodate the requests of the development community, additional technology improvements must be implemented, including electronic plan submittal and review, and online permitting.
- The City needs to fully utilize technology to streamline and automate the processes, to provide greater customer service, and implement accountability and management oversight. The available technology is not fully utilized by all Departments and Divisions responsible for development review and permitting. Further the existing software must be reconfigured to accommodate all permit types and processes and all departments must be required to utilize the system.
- To fully implement the desired OSPC approach, the City needs to modify the OSPC to better accommodate the public and include all staff conducting development review. To accomplish this, some facility modifications will be required to accommodate staff and enhance the customer experience.
- The City needs to enhance communication with the public to make the development review and permitting processes easier to understand and navigate.

The following section outlines in detail the specific recommendations listed. These have been developed to address the key findings and themes listed above and provide

the ability for the City to consistently provide a high level of service to customers of the OSPC.

(4) Listing of Recommendations and Priority of Implementation.

The following table contains a summary of the recommendations proposed by the project team. For ease of review, these are in three service level categories: Base Level – representing items that should be implemented to provide a solid based level of service; Intermediate Level – those recommendations to be implemented to provide an enhanced level of service; and Premium Level – these recommendations, if implemented, would elevate the service level provided by the City.

Additionally, for each recommendation, the project team has assigned a priority, a service level category, responsibility for implementation and the cost impact of the recommendation. The table is also sorted by priority of implementation (high, medium, low) within each service level category (base, intermediate, premium). Sorting by the Service Level Category provides a more meaningful view and implementation plan and provides a phased approach. Typically items identified in the base service level should be addressed before those in higher categories

There is an appendix that contains the listing of recommendations in the order in which it appears in the report for ease of reference.

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Recommendations (Base Level)					
Process / Customer Service	The City should develop an Application/Permit Matrix that outlines the timeframes for performance, the parties responsible for review, and major submittal requirements for each type of application or permit.	Staff time.	High	Base	2.3
Process / Customer Service	Checklists should be utilized during the intake process to ensure submitted applications are complete. Incomplete applications should not be accepted.	Staff time.	High	Base	2.7
Process / Customer Service	Checklists utilized should be made available on the City's website for use by the public in self-evaluating their own applications in advance.	Staff time.	High	Base	2.7
Process / Customer Service	The assigned case planner should develop and provide summary notes to all applicants who participate in the informal development review meetings on projects prior to formal submittal.	Staff time.	High	Base	2.10
Process / Customer Service	The City should formally adopt processing standards for each entitlement and permit type.	n/c	High	Base	2.12
Process / Customer Service	If staffing modifications are implemented, the City should not modify the existing performance standards (10-day first review; 5-day subsequent reviews) for building permit activities as these should be consistently attainable.	n/a	High	Base	2.12

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Process / Customer Service	Monthly performance reports outlining the percentage of plan reviews and inspections completed within established time frames should be developed, distributed to key administrative and elected officials, and posted to the Internet. The report should be broken down by functional review area (i.e. – Planning, Building (by trade), Engineering, etc.).	Staff time.	High	Base	2.12
Technology	CityWorks should be expanded to fully configure and utilize its available functionalities, including field entry of inspection results and online status review with visible comments.	\$85,000 allocated Mid-Year FY 2015-2016	High	Basic	3.1 and 3.2
Technology	Expanded CityWorks training should be provided for staff so that they are able to take advantage of the full functionality of the system.	\$18,900/session (up to 10 staff members) allocated Mid-Year FY 2015-2016	High	Base	3.2
Technology	The City should require all application processing and permitting activities to be recorded and processed through the City's permitting software application, CityWorks. Separate spreadsheets and logs maintained outside of CityWorks should be eliminated once modifications are made to CityWorks to accommodate all application and permit types.	n/c	High	Base	3.1(1)

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Technology	The City should implement online or IVR inspection requests for all development review inspections in order to streamline the inspection scheduling process and to reduce the workload of the counter permitting staff.	\$500/year for online scheduler/one-time fee of \$18,000 for Interactive Voice Response (IVR)	High	Base	3.1(3)
Technology	The City's website should be modified to provide easier access to development review and permitting information. All information should be consolidated into a single Development Review/Permitting page rather than by department and division. Enhanced search capabilities of content, more intuitive grouping of forms and information, and expansion of informational materials should be implemented.	\$10,000 (no cost if done with existing City resources)	High	Base	3.4
Technology	Permitting Software User Guide and Administrative Procedures should be developed so that all staff are appropriately trained on the process and they are applying it consistently. These should be two separate documents – one outlining use of CityWorks and one outlining the administrative processes staff utilize in handling work activities.	Staff time if developed internally.	High	Base	3.6
OSPC Operations	The City should consider options such as a concierge, information kiosk, or expanded signage for orienting applicants when they first arrive at the permitting center.	Estimated at \$20,000	High	Base	4.2(1)

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
OSPC Operations	The City should implement a clear and consistent method for assigning an order for permitting applicants to come to the counter.	Covered above.	High	Base	4.2(2)
OSPC Operations	The City should ensure that there is sufficient and comfortable seating and suitable workspace for applicants.	Covered above.	High	Base	4.2(3)
OSPC Operations	Longer-term, the City should provide access to a kiosk for electronic plan review submittal and educational materials for applicants.	Covered above.	High	Base	4.2(3)
OSPC Operations	The City should modify the OSPC to develop a configuration that will enable full incorporation of all staff into the OSPC.	Estimated at \$20,000	High	Base	4.2(4)
OSPC Operations	A quarterly development review training session should be implemented for all staff directly involved in Development Review and Permitting functions. The specific training topics for each meeting should be developed by staff but could include topics such as: customer service training, review of inter-departmental issues, more in-depth discussion of the role of a specific department/division, etc.	Staff time.	High	Base	4.3

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Personnel and Staffing ²	To fill staffing vacancies, the City should reclassify the Senior Plans Specialist to a Senior Plans Examiner position and the two (2) Plans Specialist positions to two (2) Plans Examiner positions.	\$14,514.56 ³	High	Base	5.1 and 5.4
Personnel and Staffing ⁴	The Division should develop a contingency plan that includes the use of external resources or overtime, when they are unable to complete plan review and inspection workloads within required timeframes.	\$25,000 (for use only as needed)	High	Base	5.5
Process / Customer Service	The City should consider the consistent implementation of a resubmittal fee for all applications that require more than two reviews beyond the original review. Application fees should be set at a level that incorporates two reviews within the base fee.	n/c	Medium	Base	2.18(3)
OSPC Operations	A training needs assessment should be conducted for all staff involved in development review. Individual employee training plans should be developed that focus on maintenance of existing certifications / licenses and then expansion of skills.	Staff time.	Medium	Base	4.3

² Staffing costs include salaries (at Step C) with benefits

³ Additional cost above FY 2015-2016 budgeted amount for all three positions (initial annual compensation for the Plans Examiner would be \$97,233.83; reclassified Plans Examiner would be \$89,092.95, and Senior Plans Examiner would be \$113,372.78).

⁴ Staffing costs include salaries (at Step C) with benefits

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Personnel and Staffing ⁵	The City should add a new position of Senior Building Inspector to address existing workloads.	\$104,489.85	Medium	Base	5.3
Recommendations (Intermediate)					
Process / Customer Service	An increase in the dialogue between the City and the development and construction community and the Chamber of Commerce should be adopted including quarterly training and meetings, newsletters, and frequent outreach for input.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	2.1
Process / Customer Service	The City should institute an email newsletter to increase the level of dialogue with customers that is focused on educating applicants regarding changing policies and procedures, providing educational information regarding code compliance, and discussing available training sessions.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	12.1
Process / Customer Service	The City should develop a comprehensive Development Guide that provides an overview of the development process. This would be used to train new staff in the process and improve the public's understanding of the process.	n/a if done internally. \$15,000 if contracted out; this cost could include assistance with developing applications, checklists, etc.	High	Intermediate	2.2

⁵ Staffing costs include salaries (at Step C) with benefits

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Process / Customer Service	Application forms should be updated to fillable PDF format and made available online for customers to complete and print out.	Staff time. if done internally	High	Intermediate	2.4
Process / Customer Service	Staff should document interpretations of the land development code, building code, and internal policies and procedures and make these available to the public on the City's website.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	2.8
Process / Customer Service	The conditions of approval utilized by all of the divisions and departments in the review of discretionary and administrative permits should be documented and utilized internally to increase consistency of review, streamline the review process, and ensure consistency.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	2.9
Process / Customer Service	A planner should be formally designated as the project manager for each entitlement application. The project manager should be given authority to guide applications through the review process and assist applicants in resolving interdepartmental issues and reaching a decision as quickly as possible.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	2.10
Process / Customer Service	The City Council, Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission should conduct joint meetings at least annually with a primary focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities and streamlining the review and approval process.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	2.14

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Process / Customer Service	The City should conduct a fee study to update the development review fees associated with Planning, Engineering, and Fire.	Estimated at \$50,000	High	Intermediate	2.18(1)
Process / Customer Service	The City should adopt a formal cost recovery policy outlining the targeted level of revenues for the development review function that will be covered by fees.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	2.18(2)
Process / Customer Service	The City should consider establishing the development review functions as an enterprise fund.	n/c	High	Intermediate	2.18(2)
Technology	The City of Redlands should implement laptop / tablet use for the resulting of inspections in the field by all field inspectors (building, fire, engineering, etc.).	\$3,000 allocated at Mid-Year FY 2015-2016 Building & Safety	High	Intermediate	3.3
OSPC Operations	The City through the City Manager and Managers overseeing the various development review functions should provide training to all staff regarding the “focus” of the City on providing high-quality services in a timely manner.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	4.3
Personnel and Staffing ⁶	The City should implement two (2) permit technician positions on the front counter to assist the public, review applications as received, and process over the counter permits.	\$157,995 ⁷	High	Intermediate	5.2

⁶ Staffing costs include salaries (at Step C) with benefits

⁷ Cost for new Permit Tech I (\$77,273.70) and Permit Tech II (\$80,721.70)

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Process / Customer Service	The City should conduct an annual and ongoing customer satisfaction survey.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	2.1
Process / Customer Service	Detailed submittal requirements and a checklist to ensure that they are met should be developed for each application and permit type and made available to applicants in order to ensure that more complete applications are received.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	2.5
Process / Customer Service	Post common plan check corrections on the City's website to provide guidance to architects and design professionals on the development requirements in the City of Redlands.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	2.6
Process / Customer Service	The City should require all applicants to submit a checklist showing all corrections made in reference to comments received on all resubmittals.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	2.7
Recommendations (Premium Level)					
Technology	To the extent feasible, online permitting, electronic document submittal, and electronic routing of documents for review, should be considered.	Estimated at \$50,000 for online permitting/\$120,000 for electronic document review	High	Premium	3.2 and 3.5
Process / Customer Service	The City should develop a policy and procedures for the use of consultant services for the preparation of CEQA/NEPA documents.	Staff time.	Medium	Premium	2.11
Process / Customer Service	The City should implement an "expedited" permit processing option for applicants for whom the standard permit turnaround times are insufficient.	Staff time.	Medium	Premium	2.13

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Area of Improvement	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Service Level Category	Report Chapter / Section
Process / Customer Service	The City of Redlands, when implementing a new fee schedule, should implement a technology fee to provide a revenue stream to cover the maintenance, upgrade and utilization of effective technology solutions. These fees should be allocated to a dedicated fund only for use in supporting the technology needs of the development review and permitting processes.	n/c	Medium	Premium	2.18(4)
Technology	The City should undertake a comprehensive assessment of all software systems that involve or impact the development review process and develop a plan for integrating data across platforms to increase data access and make it easily accessible for use by staff.	Part of Citywide, multi-year effort to be conducted by IT	Medium	Premium	3.5
OSPC Operations	The City should consider full consolidation of all development review and permitting functions into the OSPC and place overall oversight and accountability with a single manager.	Costs to be determined at time of implementation.	Medium	Premium	4.1
Personnel and Staffing ⁸	The City should add a Planning Technician position and reclassify an Administrative Analyst to Senior Administrative Analyst.	\$75,284.70 + \$7,460.83 ⁹	Medium	Premium	5.4

⁸ Staffing costs include salaries (at Step C) with benefits

⁹ Additional cost above FY 2015-2016 budgeted amount for the Senior Administrative Analyst position (initial annual compensation would be \$98,543.98).

The analysis and discussion regarding each recommendation is contained in the noted chapter and section of the report.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

In reviewing the existing processes and procedures utilized by the City of Redlands in performing development review functions, there are several recommendations that have been developed with a focus on improving the level of service provided to customers and to more efficiently and effectively utilize staff resources. These recommendations have been developed to address issues identified (through interviews with staff and stakeholders, a community survey, customer feedback, and best management practices evaluation).

In general, these recommendations are designed to further enhance and improve operations in the following key areas:

- 1) Transparency of operations;
- 2) Efficiency of operations;
- 3) Clarity of expectations;
- 4) Effectiveness of operations; and
- 5) Customer service.

As previously noted, there are several strengths in the current City operation related to development review that forms a strong base for implementation of these changes. The recommendations provided need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner over several years to achieve the full impact on service improvement that all parties are trying to achieve.

The following recommendations address key areas where the development process can be improved in Redlands. This includes recommendations about the steps

that applications go through to reach a final decision, the management of the application process, and the timing and execution of the steps in the development review process.

1. THE LEVEL OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY SHOULD BE INCREASED.

The City should strive to implement a philosophy of customer service excellence in all aspects of OSPC and development review activities. Staff involved in the development review process need to focus on providing a much higher level of communication, dialogue and interaction with the development community in a proactive manner – not simply working with them when problems arise or interacting on a reactive basis. To accomplish this will require clear direction, strong levels of staff accountability, staff training and the provision of adequate staffing to meet existing workloads.

This should be started by implementing quarterly training sessions and meetings hosted by the City (including representatives from Planning, Building, Fire and MUED) for those practicing in the development industry to inform them of changing policies, new code requirements, and providing education on the application of the codes. In addition, staff should routinely attend meeting of local Contractors Associations, Homebuilders Associations, etc. for more informal interaction and dialogue. To address this issue, the project team suggests that the City should partner with the local construction industry associations to jointly sponsor these sessions and garner participation.

Most communities that implement this approach utilize a one to one-and-a-half-hour meeting that is focused on a specific topic. The format should vary by topic but typically would include a presentation by staff on the topic at hand, a period of questions and answers, and a time for informal interaction between the parties.

Additionally, the City should periodically issue a newsletter targeted towards information the construction industry can utilize in their interactions with the City staff. Typically, these newsletters would cover issues such as changing code requirements, training opportunities, education regarding new codes or code interpretations that are planned for implementation, etc. These newsletters should be posted on the City's website and emailed directly to all individuals that sign-up to receive them.

Finally, the City should consider implementation of an annual survey of the development community to evaluate their level of performance. This can be accomplished through the use of a short on-line survey. Staff should consider whether there are a significant number of customers that wouldn't be able to respond online and if so, hard copy forms of the survey should be available in the permit center. Additionally, comment cards should be made available to all applicants at the issuance of the permit on a post card, asking them to evaluate the level of services provided on their case.

The City Manager should have staff develop a customer comment card that is distributed to all individuals / firms that submit development and permit applications. This comment card should ask that the applicant rate the City on several key factors:

- Level of Customer Service Provided (rating each department/division interacted with);
- Accessibility of staff;
- Thoroughness of staff;
- Satisfaction with the process;
- Specific areas / individuals that provided exceptional service;
- Specific areas / individuals where service problems were encountered; and
- An opportunity for the applicant to make general comments about the process.

A semi-annual report should be developed outlining the level of satisfaction provided to applicants. Information gathered from this survey should be utilized for on-going evaluation of staff and improvement of the process.

It is important to note that these educational and outreach efforts will require time on the part of staff to implement. This time will obviously reduce slightly their time available for performing other primary duties (such as plan reviews and inspections).

Recommendation: An increase in the dialogue between the City and the Construction Services Industry and the Chamber of Commerce should be adopted including quarterly training and meetings, newsletters, and frequent outreach for input.

Recommendation: The City should institute an email newsletter to increase the level of dialogue with customers that is focused on educating applicants regarding changing policies and procedures, providing educational information regarding code compliance, and discussing available training sessions.

Recommendation: The City should conduct an annual and ongoing customer satisfaction survey.

2. THE CITY NEEDS TO DEVELOP AND MAKE AVAILABLE A COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT GUIDE FOR CUSTOMERS.

At the present time, the City does not have a comprehensive “how to develop” guide available for use by the public in a manner that makes the City’s requirements easy to understand and readily understandable for all customers. The web page for the OSPC offers a summary of the process, but it does not yet provide enough detail for applicants to use it as a guide. A comprehensive development guide document should be created that covers the entire development review process from project concept through the final certificate of occupancy. In developing this guide, the City needs to ensure that it is developed in a “plain English” approach that is understandable for all audiences and not just those that work within the development arena on a daily basis.

This document needs to be more than a simple recitation of the ordinances and codes, but clearly explain the steps of the process, how to comply and appropriately submit an application, and identify the review that will be conducted by staff. Within this document, it would be appropriate to include copies of checklists for each phase of the process that clearly identify to the applicant the information that must be submitted and why it is required. Also included within the document should be a section that clearly outlines the review time standards that have been adopted by the City.

Another critical component of the guide should be a section outlining the standard conditions of approval for each of the reviewing departments/divisions. Each reviewing entity should document their standard conditions of approval for inclusion in this manual and posting on the website.

This document, when fully developed, should be made available to the public on the OSPC's web page. Staff should become highly familiar with the document, and it should be used as a tool for orienting new staff and introducing them to the development review process in the City of Redlands.

Recommendation: The City should develop a comprehensive Development Guide that provides an overview of the development process. This would be used to train new staff in the process and improve the public's understanding of the process.

3. THE CITY SHOULD MAKE AVAILABLE A MATRIX OF KEY STEPS, REQUIREMENTS AND TIMEFRAMES FOR EACH APPLICATION AND PERMIT TYPE.

The review process for the various application types in the City of Redlands differs by application type based on the reviewing departments, the number of meetings or hearings required, and the complexity of the application. In order to provide clarity to applicants, the project team recommends that the City develop an application/permit

matrix to outline key components of the development review process for each application type. This matrix would include:

- A list of the major submittal requirements for each application type.
- A list of the review steps for each application type, including the responsible reviewing department and the established timeframe for review.
- A list of the required board/commission hearings and meetings and their frequency.

When complete, the matrix will provide a clear picture of what applicants can expect for each application type, which will help to eliminate confusion for applicants and improve the level of understanding in communication between the City's staff and the customers they serve. The document should be made publicly available on the City's website and updated periodically.

Recommendation: The City should develop an Application/Permit Matrix that outlines the timeframes for performance, the parties responsible for review, and major submittal requirements for each type of application or permit.

4. THE CURRENT APPLICATION FORMS SHOULD BE UPDATED TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE IN FILLABLE PDF FORMAT FOR ONLINE / ELECTRONIC COMPLETION BY CUSTOMERS.

The development review process in Redlands entails the use of dozens of application types for the various entitlements and permits issued by the City. Physical copies of these applications are available in the OSPC, and the City's web page also provides downloadable PDF scans of these forms. For most application types, applicants must print and fill out these forms by hand before bringing them in along with the other submittal requirements to apply for their entitlement or permit.

The project team recommends that the City upgrade all of the existing online application forms from a scanned PDF format to an electronically fillable PDF format so

that applicants can fill in the required fields electronically after downloading the form without having write their information in by hand. In addition to making the process easier for the applicant, this will help to ensure that all necessary information is captured on the form. This will also serve as a step toward the eventual goal of fully electronic application submittal, since eliminating printed forms altogether would require the fillable PDF format as well.

Recommendation: Application forms should be updated to fillable PDF format and made available online for customers to complete and print out.

5. ALL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH APPLICATION TYPE SHOULD BE COMPILED, CHECK LISTED AND MADE AVAILABLE ONLINE AND IN THE PERMIT CENTER.

The various entitlement and permit application types in the City of Redlands have different requirements attached to them. Some of these requirements are listed on the application form itself, and others are listed separately online or in the physical document display in the OSPC. Other application forms are available online but do not include a list of submittal requirements.

The project team recommends that the City develop a comprehensive list of submittal requirements for each application type and an accompanying checklist that applicants can use to ensure that they have met all of the requirements. The list of submittal requirements should include a description of the required documentation and answers to some of the most frequently asked questions. These documents should be made available alongside the applications themselves, both online and in the OSPC, for use by the public.

The development of detailed submittal requirements and checklists should help applicants understand more clearly the steps and documentation they need to complete

along with their application. This should lead to more complete applications being submitted and fewer applicants turned away due to incomplete applications.

Recommendation: Detailed submittal requirements and a checklist to ensure that they are met should be developed for each application and permit type and made available to applicants in order to ensure that more complete applications are received.

6. A COMMON PLAN CHECK CORRECTION LISTING SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR EACH DISCIPLINE INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

Each of the departments, divisions and entities involved in plan review should develop and publish on the City's website a listing of common comments and corrections noted during the plan check process. Separate documents should be developed for each Department and Division that list the most common ten or twelve comments noted by Plans Examiners on applications reviewed. These corrections should be analyzed, with the most common comments for each construction type (residential or commercial) posted on the City's website.

As an example, the type of corrections noted for the Building Permit function could include the following topics.

Fire protection	Mechanical, electrical, plumbing
Room sizes, lighting, ventilation	Noise insulation
Exits, stairways, railings	Energy conservation
Roofing	Foundation requirements
Masonry	Framing
Garages	Plot plans
Elevations	Floor plans

The posting of the correction library will provide guidance to architects and design professionals in understanding the unique requirements for development / construction in the City of Redlands, and should include the requirements of all divisions and agencies involved in the review process in the City. It will identify those corrections most commonly noted during the review process and provide a “check list” for the design professionals to utilize in checking plans prior to submission. Many examples exist from other communities of these type of documents to serve as a guide for staff in developing a comparable document for the City of Redlands.

Recommendation: Post common plan check corrections on the City’s website to provide guidance to architects and design professionals on the development requirements in the City of Redlands.

7. THE CITY SHOULD IMPLEMENT INTAKE CHECKLISTS AND NOT ACCEPT INCOMPLETE INITIAL SUBMITTALS OR RESUBMITTALS.

The plan review function, both in terms of comments issued and the timeframe for receiving comments, was by far the most significant concern expressed among all individuals interviewed from the construction industry. Many, if not most, of the architects and design professionals indicated during private discussions that the most significant issue they faced was timely access to staff and service in the OSPC, and the overall processing time required for decisions on their applications. This perception persists despite recent improvements in processing times.

The first area of change that must be implemented within the process is a change in the intake process and procedures for entitlement and permit applications. The intake staff should notify the applicant immediately if the application is incomplete and the application should not be accepted as processing cannot begin until it is complete. When deeming an application complete, staff is noting whether all required information is

present in the application packet not whether the information is accurate. For example, the permit technician would ensure that all required calculations are present but not review the calculation for accuracy.

The ability to identify early in the process applications that are not complete saves time for both the plan reviewers (from reviewing incomplete plans) and the applicants (who can revise and resubmit plans before the initial round of review). Implementation of an approach where incomplete submissions are not accepted will require support from top management of the City.

While it will be a change for the City to reject incomplete applications, if appropriately implemented with extensive public education and the provision of detailed checklists regarding submission requirements, the quality of applications being reviewed will increase over time. Based upon the project team's experience with other communities that utilize a permit technician approach, the City should also note a decrease in the number of reviews conducted as items that previously would have been noted as incomplete on the first plan review cycle, should be significantly reduced. As noted, checklists must be developed for each functional plan review type and these need to be made available to the public for their use in self-evaluating their applications prior to submission.

Similarly, the City should implement a checklist approach for resubmittals, for all applications and permits that requires the applicant to identify for each comment received, the action taken in the resubmitted plans that address the comment or note a reason why a change was not made. While this is currently being done in some cases, it is not a universal practice for all types of applications. Upon resubmittal, the project manager

should ensure that each comment has been addressed prior to deeming the resubmission complete and accepting it for review. This approach should limit the number of reviews being conducted and increase the completeness of each review performed.

Recommendation: Checklists should be utilized during the intake process to ensure submitted applications are complete. Incomplete applications should not be accepted.

Recommendation: Checklists utilized should be made available on the City's website for use by the public in self-evaluating their own applications in advance.

Recommendation: The City should require all applicants to submit a checklist showing all corrections made in reference to comments received on all resubmittals.

8. FORMAL CODE INTERPRETATIONS SHOULD BE PUBLISHED ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE.

A review of any and all existing interpretations of the codes and/or regulations should be undertaken to ensure that they are still accurate and valid. Once completed, these interpretations should be compiled into a document that is posted to the City's website. The interpretations should be developed in a consistent format that provides, at a minimum, the following information:

- Effective date of interpretation.
- Section of the Code / Regulation referenced.
- Description of the interpretation.
- Legal basis for the interpretation (if applicable).
- Applicability of the interpretation – outline of the circumstances under which the interpretation is applicable and not applicable.

This type of sharing of information will increase the ability of applicants to prepare submissions that are in line with the policies and procedures being enforced by staff and may eliminate the need for revisions to be made in applications. Only those interpretations that have been fully reviewed and that are intended to be utilized for all future applications should be included in this manual.

Recommendation: Staff should document formal interpretations of the land development code and building code and make these available to the public on the City's website.

9. THE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL UTILIZED BY ALL REVIEWING ENTITIES FOR DISCRETIONARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS AND PERMITS SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED FOR INTERNAL USE TO INCREASE CONSISTENCY IN APPLICATION.

All divisions and departments involved in development review activities should develop their own standard conditions of approval. This would include Planning, Quality of Life, Public Works Engineering, Fire, and Building. These standard conditions of approval (related to land entitlement and land development applications) should be utilized to provide consistency in conditioning projects, to the extent feasible. The Planning Division should take lead responsibility in facilitating the development of these standard conditions of approval by all of the divisions and departments.

Recommendation: The conditions of approval utilized by all of the divisions and departments in the review of discretionary and administrative permits should be documented and utilized internally to increase consistency.

Recommendation: The Planning Division should take lead responsibility in facilitating the development of these written conditions of approval by all of the divisions and departments.

10. PLANNERS SHOULD BE ASSIGNED PROJECT MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY OVER ALL ENTITLEMENT APPLICATIONS WITH RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

Each application for an entitlement is assigned to a planner if it requires planning review and/or a formal decision by a decision-maker as part of the approval process. The assigned planner is responsible for conducting the planning review portion of the process and participating in (and leading) the development review committee meetings. The planner does not, however, have clear authority to oversee the entirety of the

development review process, enforce deadlines, or resolve issues of communication or disagreement between reviewing divisions.

The project team recommends that the development review process for entitlements be led by the assigned project planner, and that the planner be designated as the Project Manager for that application. This consolidation of leadership responsibility would ensure that there is clear accountability for guiding applications through the review process, keeping the project on track to meet review timeframe goals, and resolving issues of communication or disagreements about requirements or conditions between reviewing departments. Since the planner is assigned with preparing reports on applications for the Planning Commission, City Council, and Historic and Scenic Preservation Commission, the planner is the appropriate individual to take responsibility for facilitating inter-departmental communication and overseeing the application on its way to those decision-making bodies. The City should make clear the role and responsibility of the assigned project planner in overseeing all other reviewing entities during the entitlement process. This includes enforcing review timeframes, resolving conflicts in requirements and conditions of approval issued by each reviewing entity, and serving as the principal point of contact for the customers.

Additionally, the project planner should be responsible for developing written feedback to applicants who avail themselves of the informal review process prior to submittal of a formal application. At the present time, all feedback provided in the meeting prior to formal submittal is done verbally. This had led to inconsistent interpretations, miscommunications to the applicant about requirements, and leads to frustrations on the

part of both City staff and applicants during the process (especially when projects change from initial review to formal submittal).

As part of this approach, all entitlement applications and submittals should be submitted directly to the Planning Division staff to ensure that the Planner assigned as Project Manager is aware of documents being submitted. All submittals, whether initial or on resubmittal, should be subject to a completeness review at the time of submittal to ensure that all documents required to conduct a review (including any technical studies) are included. While applicants often desire to submit incomplete applications to get initial feedback from staff, reviews conducted without complete submittals typically lead to complications in the process when feedback provided is inconsistent or conflicts with formal feedback provided after review of a complete submittal package. The City can best ensure complete and accurate reviews, when feedback is provided on complete applications.

Recommendation: A planner should be formally designated as the project manager for each entitlement application. The project manager should be given authority to guide applications through the review process and assist applicants in resolving interdepartmental issues and reaching a decision as quickly as possible.

Recommendation: The assigned case planner should develop and provide summary notes to all applicants who participate in the informal development review meetings on projects prior to formal submittal.

11. CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PROCURING ASSISTANCE FOR THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY CEQA/NEPA.

The City should explore consultant assistance for the preparation of environmental documents required by the California Environmental Quality Act, National Environmental Policy Act, or other environmental laws. The preparation of environmental documents, such as Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, and Environmental

Impact Reports, is a time-consuming process and has the potential to cause of delay in processing applications. In addition, the City does not have the in-house ability to produce many of the technical studies that are necessary to prepare the necessary environmental document, such as traffic studies, air quality studies, greenhouse gas studies, and noise studies. As a result, applicants are required to provide these technical studies and staff incorporates the findings into the environmental document. This practice can call into question the results of the studies and therefore, the finished environmental document. A better practice would be for the City to maintain a list of on-call consultants that could prepare both the technical studies and the finished environmental documentation for staff's review. By using independent consultants, documents would be unbiased and the integrity of the process would be maintained. This option could be utilized when there are constraints on staff's time and applicants wish to expedite their projects. While staff time will still be necessary to review and approve these types of documents, staff would have more time to focus on other tasks and projects. A policy and procedure should be developed to guide the use of consultant services for the preparation of environmental documents.

Recommendation: The City should develop a policy and procedures for the use of consultant services for the preparation of CEQA/NEPA documents.

12. REVIEW TIME STANDARDS SHOULD BE CLEARLY ESTABLISHED AND COMMUNICATED TO THE PUBLIC AND A MONTHLY PLAN REVIEW PERFORMANCE REPORT ISSUED.

In order to provide timely and consistent service to the development community in Redlands, the City has adopted a set of permit review timeframes to serve as goals for completing initial and subsequent reviews of applications. The City's current goal for permit applications is to complete initial permit reviews by all reviewing entities within ten

(10) business days of receiving a complete application and to complete reviews of subsequent submittals within five (5) business days of receiving a complete resubmittal. These time standards, while being generally met in recent months, have historically not been met by the City for a variety of reasons.

The adopted standards of ten (10) days for initial permit review and five (5) days on resubmittals are among the fastest of comparable cities in the region. The following table shows how the City of Redlands compares to other communities for building permit plan reviews.

Community	Building Permitting Plan Check Performance Standard	
	First Plan Review	Second and Subsequent Submittals
City of Redlands	10	5
City of Huntington Beach	20	10 (5 for 3 rd and subsequent submittals)
City of Rancho Cucamonga	10	5
City of Santa Monica	3 weeks	2 weeks
City of Colton	10	5
City of Loma Linda	15 to 30	n/a
City of Beaumont	10	n/a
City of Chino Hills	10 days (smaller projects) 20 days (larger projects)	5 days (smaller projects) 10 days (larger projects)
City of Menifee	7 days	10 days
City of Claremont	3 to 4 weeks (large complex projects)	3 to 4 weeks (larger / complex projects)

If the City were able to meet these standards consistently, customers would not have reason for any concern regarding the timeliness of service provision by the City. In the project teams experience, these timeframes are very aggressive and do not account for the varying levels of complexity in the types of applications received by the City. Many communities would have longer time frames established for large and complex projects, and shorter timeframes for smaller and less complex processes. Establishing separate tiers of turnaround times for different application types would better reflect the amount of effort that is required to process, route, and review applications of different types. At this

time, the project team is not recommending any modifications to the established processing times until full staffing is achieved within the OSPC.

If, however, vacant positions are not filled and staffing modifications are not implemented, the existing permit processing time standards will be difficult if not impossible to consistently achieve and consideration should be given to alternative performance standards such as the following:

Review	Target Processing Time – Initial Review (Business Days)	Target Processing Time – Resubmission (Business Days)
Small Projects (Single Family, additional, remodels, etc.)	10	5
Large Projects (Commercial, Industrial, Office, Multi-family)	15	7

While entitlement decisions have much longer review periods, staff should similarly adopt processing time standards in accordance with the Permit Streamlining Act against which to measure their internal performance. The City should adopt standards following the review of the zoning code and possible changes to administrative approvals discussed elsewhere in the report. However, a formal review standard against which performance is measured should be adopted to provide customers with a reasonable expectation of the schedule and timing to reach a decision.

There are currently few reports that are developed and distributed that document the performance of staff related to their development review functions (plan review times and inspection cycles), although the Building Division has recently developed one for the City Manager.

The project team recommends that the City develop detailed reports in CityWorks that are sufficient for communicating staff performance in processing all entitlement and permit applications across all entities involved in the development review process. This

would include Planning, Building, MUED, Fire and Quality of Life. Every reviewing entity should be measuring and reporting their performance in processing entitlements and permits.

All existing entitlement applications and permit types should be covered by a performance standard and a performance report. The format of these reports should be standardized so that viewers can easily review and understand them. The data necessary to develop these should be easily captured in the permitting system rather than requiring staff to expend significant time in the development of these reports. The only difficulty here is that the software is not currently configured to capture all required data fields for all applications and permit types. This is discussed further in the section detailing technology utilization.

Additionally, there should be varying level of details for these reports based upon the intended audience. For example, there should be a more detailed report for use on a day to day basis by project managers and staff assigned to the plan review and inspection process (so that performance by department, division, function and trade – especially in plan review functions – can be ascertained, monitored, and evaluated), a summary report should be prepared and provided to the City Manager for use in understanding the current status of projects. Finally, a report should be prepared that is suitable for monthly distribution to the City Council that outlines project status. These reports should show the percentage of applications (or inspections) that are completed with the established time frames.

To facilitate this effort, the City must adopt clear performance targets for the processing of each land entitlement process and permit type. These targets should be

prominently posted in the OSPC and online. While the City's permitting review times (generally 10 and 5 days) are appropriate, it is important to note that the review times for entitlement reviews are longer given the complexity of these review, and therefore would be different and longer than permit plan review times. While final decisions regarding many entitlements are made by the Planning Commission, Historic Commission or City Council, the reports should measure staff time in reviewing and preparing a recommendation for consideration by the specific body as this is within their control. The actual decision timing may depend upon the meeting schedule of the applicable commission or council. What is critical is that staff have adopted a performance standard, are documenting their performance and sharing this information with the public.

Copies of the report distributed to the City Council should also be posted to the City's website. This will enable staff to share information regarding performance with the development community and interested citizens on the level of activity occurring and the performance of the City against established performance levels. This level of transparency and reporting of performance will, assuming staff are able to meet plan review and inspection targets, demonstrate to the public that the City takes seriously its commitment to timely service provision.

Recommendation: The City should formally adopt processing standards for each entitlement and permit type.

Recommendation: If staffing modifications are implemented, the City should not modify the existing performance standards for building permit activities as these should be consistently attainable.

Recommendation: Monthly performance reports outlining the percentage of plan reviews and inspections completed within established time frames should be developed, distributed to key administrative and elected officials, and posted to the Internet. The report should be broken down by functional review area (i.e. – Planning, Building (by trade), Engineering, etc.).

13. THE CITY SHOULD IMPLEMENT AN EXPEDITED BUILDING PERMITTING PROCESS FOR APPLICANTS WHO REQUEST IT AND MEET ESTABLISHED CRITERIA.

The City's development review process does not currently offer any expedited building permit processing for applicants who feel that the standard review times are insufficient¹⁰. All permits are subjected to the same goals for review and turnaround time without regard to size of project or urgency of need.

There are often situations that arise where applicants – due to conditions or situations beyond their control – need to have building permit plans reviewed in a time period shorter than that provided for under the City's normal processing time goals. While staff may not always be able to accommodate these situations, the City should develop and implement a procedure for accepting applications under an "expedited" review process. Typically, these expedited review process require the payment of an additional fee – above and beyond that required for normal plan review. The fee should be set at a level that is designed to cover the actual costs of staff providing the review on overtime.

The expedited permit plan review would be conducted based upon the availability and willingness of staff to work overtime to complete the review. If staff is unable to meet the expedited review (or are unable to work the overtime to conduct the plan review), the fee would not be charged to the applicant and the application would be handled through the normal review process. Alternatively, the City can adopt a listing of qualified external plan reviewers that applicants may utilize. These third party plan reviewers would be authorized to review the building permit plans on behalf of applicant and against the

¹⁰ Fee for expedited review is available and offered to customers; however, there is no formal process/standard for its use.

adopted City codes and regulations. The cost of this expedited plan review would be paid directly by the applicant to cover the city's contracted cost with the third party reviewer and any direct administrative costs incurred by the City.

In implementing the expedited review, the City should establish reasonable guidelines and conditions for the types of projects that will be eligible for this program. The criteria for selection should be focused on those projects that have a demonstrated economic impact for the City and the specific criteria should be established in conjunction with the City's Economic Development staff. The program should be conducted on a pilot basis and reviewed after six months. Since entitlement review processes are difficult to expedite (due to noticing and scheduling requirements for public meetings), entitlements should be excluded from this effort at the present time but all building permits could be included.

In order to provide a higher level of service to the development community, the City should consider offering an "expedited" permit process, which would provide applicants with the option of paying an additional fee to have their permit applications processed faster than the standard review timeframe.

Recommendation: The City should implement an "expedited" permit processing option for applicants for whom the standard permit turnaround times are insufficient.

14. THE CITY COUNCIL SHOULD CONDUCT A JOINT MEETING EACH YEAR WITH THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION WITH A FOCUS ON REDEFINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND STREAMLINING THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

It is extremely critical for the effective implementation of the entire development review process that the City Council, Planning Commission and Historic Commission

need to be operating with a common view and approach for the City of Redlands – especially since on many projects review and approval is needed from more than one entity. It is critical that the members of these critical boards and commissions be working with a single vision. Regular meetings, not less than once annually, keep lines of communication open between the bodies, preventing rifts and misunderstandings.

In addition, these meetings are a good time to discuss potential changes (at a high level) in the enabling ordinances utilized by the City. This session can include a joint visioning exercise between the Planning Commission and the City Commission to provide guidance to staff in making changes in the enabling ordinances and setting work priorities for the coming year. By conducting this joint visioning exercise for the updating of the enabling codes / ordinances / plans, listening to ideas (and complaints) about a range of neighborhood and citywide issues, the City Council and the Commissions can provide early input and direction to these critical policy documents, to assure the document incorporates the important perspectives and concerns of all interested parties. This will reduce the chances of being “blind-sided” by critical comments at the end of the process or the City Council and the Commissions proceeding in different directions related to development review functions.

Additionally, this would focus attention and time to discuss alternative approaches to handling entitlement decisions. The City should evaluate several aspects of the current process and consider modifications that would provide a more streamlined, predictable, and consistent approach to customers. Specific areas of review for modification should include:

- **Elimination of the “information meeting” before City Council on larger projects.** This type of meeting is not typical, and while providing advance notice

and information to decision-makers, adds a time element (and additional step) for applicants. During interviews with customers, this was not viewed as a positive attribute of the City's process.

- **Clarification of roles, responsibilities and timing of reviews by the various boards and commissions.** Existing policies and practices leave some confusion regarding which entity has primary and final authority over certain decisions, and in which order approvals must be granted for the applicant to move forward. The City should clearly delineate the role of each reviewing entity and the order in which applicants must proceed through the process. Where multiple approvals (or concurrence is needed), Planning staff should be held accountable for ensuring that projects are scheduled in the most efficient manner possible.
- **Consideration should be given to further delegating final approval.** Some approvals currently approved by City Council could be, and often are in other communities, delegated to the Planning Commission (such as final approval of tentative maps). Similarly, some of the current Planning Commission approvals could be delegated to staff for final administrative approval. This would entail delegating to staff formal approval of smaller and minor approvals rather than having applicants required to proceed to the Planning Commission or Council for for action. The City should consider the adoption of clear design review guidelines to ensure well designed projects, in alignment with the Council's vision for the City, are an outcome of staff reviews and approval. This approach the benefit of not only providing more timely approvals, but focuses the work of the commissions on the larger and more complex projects and enables staff to review and approve more routine items. This element should be reviewed in conjunction with the City's commitment under the Strategic Plan to review and update the zoning code following completion of the General Plan update.
- **Implementation of electronic agendas.** The development and distribution of agenda packets for commissions is a time consuming process. The ability to provide all materials electronically can simplify the process and enable email distribution to all committee and commission members is a more cost effective and timely manner. The City should consider implementation of electronic agenda preparation and distribution.

The City should pursue streamlining of the entitlement process through redefining the roles, responsibilities and approval authority of staff and each commission. This likely will require extensive discussion at the policy level and a level of public input and discussion to provide confidence that the changes will improve the process.

Recommendation: The City Council, Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission should conduct joint meetings at least annually with a

primary focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities, and streamlining the review and approval process.

17. ANALYSIS RELATED TO THE CITY'S FEE APPROACH.

While conducting of a dedicated fee study was not within the scope of this engagement, the City is set to undertake a review building permitting fees in the near future. However, there are several aspects related to fees that should be considered by the City.

(1) The City Should Review Planning, Engineering and Fire Fees Related to the Development Review Process.

As noted, the City is soon going to be undertaking an evaluation and review of all building permit fees. This will ensure that these fees are established at a level consistent with the cost of providing service and that address local market conditions (i.e. – competitiveness with neighboring communities). However, building permits are only one component of development review. The City should also review all other development review fees (Planning, Engineering and Fire) to ensure these are also established at the appropriate level and that the City's fees are not too high or too low. Fees associated with land entitlement and land development activities are often much higher than a building permit fee and therefore ensuring they are set at the appropriate level is critical for the City. A comprehensive fee study of this nature should not exceed \$50,000.

Recommendation: The City should conduct a fee study to update the development review fees associated with Planning, Engineering and Fire.

(2) The City Should Adopt a Cost Recovery Policy.

The City should adopt a formal cost recovery policy outlining the percentage of costs for the development review process that will be covered by fees. Most communities have adopted a target of 100% cost recovery (including applicable administrative costs

for general city services) for this function (covering current planning, building permitting, fire and engineering reviews). Notwithstanding this prevailing and best practice, there are times when the City may desire to consider setting fees at a level below full cost recovery such as: to encourage economic development, to maintain competitiveness with surrounding communities, and historic preservation.

In the project team's experience across the nation, the standard prevailing practice is that fees are utilized to fully support the development review function and the general fund should not need to subsidize this service. The establishment of a formal policy is necessary so that fees can be established and maintained in the future at the appropriate level to cover processing costs. Future increases in fees should be considered whenever the existing fees are not covering the cost for providing services. The City should also give consideration to establishing this function as an enterprise fund to dedicate revenues received to the provision of services.

Recommendation: The City should adopt a formal cost recovery policy outlining the targeted level of revenues for the development review function that will be covered by fees.

Recommendation: The City should consider establishing the development review functions as an enterprise fund.

(3) Staff Should Implement a Resubmittal Fee for Applications and Permits Requiring Three (3) or More Submissions.

The City should set development review fees at a level that fully cover the initial review and up to two resubmittals as part of the original filing fee. Any plan that requires reviews beyond two should be subject to a resubmittal fee set at a level designed only to cover the actual costs of performing the review. While this change may initially encounter

resistance from the development community, if it is implemented at the same time as other changes recommended (such as other noted customer service improvements), the project team has seen less concern about this fee being implemented. Additionally, the increased availability of common plan correction and review checklists on the City's website will provide additional information that should assist the applicant in gaining compliance earlier in the process and avoid the resubmittal fee.

Recommendation: The City should consider the consistent implementation of a resubmittal fee for all applications that require more than two reviews beyond the original review. Application fees should be set at a level that incorporates two reviews within the base fee.

(4) A Technology Fee Should Be Established to Provide Dedicated Funds to Maintain Technology Necessary for the Development Review Activities.

The technology currently in place, and being implemented, by the City of Redlands is critical to the performance of duties by staff and to implementing many of the online and more efficient processes outlined within this evaluation. To ensure that sufficient funds are available to maintain the technology investment, the City should consider the implementation of a technology fee during the next fee adoption. This fee should be designed to cover the costs of supporting technology upgrades or new systems to automate these processes. These fees would be directly tied to the cost of purchasing and installing the systems and placed in a dedicated fund that can only be utilized for technology purchases that will benefit the development process.

Recommendation: The City of Redlands, when implementing a new fee schedule, should implement a technology fee to provide a revenue stream to cover the maintenance, upgrade and utilization of effective technology solutions. These fees should be allocated to a dedicated fund only for use in supporting the technology needs of the development review and permitting processes.

3. ANALYSIS OF TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION

The following sections and recommendations focus on improvements in the utilization of technology for providing entitlement and permitting service in the City of Redlands. The City's permit processing software is CityWorks, which is used by counter staff, plan reviewers, and inspectors in each of the involved departments and divisions at varying levels.

1. THE CITY MUST SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE USE OF CITYWORKS FUNCTIONALITY TO STREAMLINE AND AUTOMATE PROCESSES.

The City has made a significant investment in the acquisition and implementation of Cityworks as the City's permitting software. However, it is not being fully utilized by all City Departments nor are all available functionalities of the system being utilized to provide service to the public.

(1) Cityworks Should be used to Process and Record All Application Processing, Permitting and Inspection Activities.

CityWorks is currently used by staff in the Development Services Department, and other involved departments such as Fire and MUED, and at the OSPC to record most entitlement and permit applications, add comments, assign applications to the appropriate workflow, and record the availability and completion of tasks in the process. However, there are some development review activities that are not consistently recorded in CityWorks. A few examples include the following:

- Planners look up historic properties in a physical registry contained in a binder rather than by using CityWorks' ability to draw on GIS layers to make a determination about the historic status of a property.
- Building and Safety staff track the status of building plan checks in an excel sheet in order to stay on schedule rather than using CityWorks to track the deadlines for

plan checks. Staff is currently in the progress of migrating away from the excel spreadsheet to using CityWorks for this purpose.

- The progress of most entitlement applications is not tracked in CityWorks, and many applications that are opened in the system are not closed out. The project team noted this while analyzing the entitlement processing data provided from CityWorks.
- Engineering plan check transmittals are not recorded in CityWorks; they are recorded only in a binder at the OSPC.

To the greatest extent possible, the development review process should be fully processed and recorded in CityWorks. All reviewing departments/divisions should have full access to, and understanding of, the functionality the system provides to process and record each of their tasks and steps in the system. This would include the ability for all staff to view the status of all applications and permit types within the system – even those they are not formally reviewing.

While it should not be needed, staff from some departments/divisions may still choose to keep physical records of their activities. If they choose to do this, these records should be backup copies of the record in CityWorks. The permit processing system purchased and implemented by the City should be the primary and official means of recording all permitting activity. This will contribute to a greater measure of consistency in the development review process. It will also ensure a consolidation of relevant planning and permitting data, which can be used to generate timely, accurate reports on the workload and performance of the development review process.

The engineering and utility reviews are the most common areas where the utilization of CityWorks has not been fully implemented (though there is still a need to enhance utilization throughout the organization). It is critical that all applications and permits are tracked through the system and that training is provided to both City staff, and

applicants, about the use of the system. At the present time, applicants can review basic status information online; however, our discussions with applicants found that most are not aware of this feature and do not know how to access or utilize the functionality that currently exists.

Recommendation: The City should require all application processing and permitting activities to be recorded and processed through the City's permitting software application, CityWorks by all City Departments and Divisions. Separate spreadsheets and logs maintained outside of CityWorks should be eliminated once modifications are made to CityWorks to accommodate all application and permit types.

(2) Modifications to the Cityworks Workflows Are Necessary to Fully Implement and Include Those Departments not Currently Utilizing the System.

For various reasons, when CityWorks was initially implemented not all development review applications and permits had workflows and data field incorporated into the system. This was apparently done for a variety of reasons including staff preferences and no City-wide mandate to utilize the system. The City should fully implement the existing technology. The City will need to work with IT staff (and potentially the software vendor) to modify the existing system to fully accommodate the additional use and processes that should be incorporated into the system (most critically the land development reviews). This should be done by working individually with each division to implement the fields and processes in CityWorks to accommodate the applications and permits that are not currently incorporated. It will also require that all city staff utilize the system exclusively for processing their work processes and activities. By doing so, the current status of each application will be readily available through the system. Additionally, it will streamline the consolidation and compilation of review comments from the various disciplines for distribution to customers.

Additionally, it was noted during observation, interviews and review of data that staff are not consistently utilizing CityWorks as it is currently configured. Not all fields are used consistently across staff and this makes it more difficult to report on workload and performance in a consistent manner. This should be addressed through the training program that is discussed elsewhere in the report.

Recommendation: CityWorks should be updated to ensure that fields are used consistently and in a manner that makes for easy reporting of workload and performance on a regular basis.

(3). Inspection Scheduling Should be Automated and Conducted Online to Increase Service to the Public and Reduce OSPC Workloads.

To schedule building permit inspections, applicants currently must call the OSPC and speak with staff. The staff member physically writes down the details of the inspection request on a slip of paper and puts into a box. At the end of the day, the inspectors come to the OSPC and look at the slips of paper, at which point they decide how they will schedule the inspections and enter the inspection in CityWorks. This method has many drawbacks:

- It is time consuming for the counter staff, reducing their productivity and diminishing the level of service they can provide to applicants at the counter. More than half of the phone calls received by the counter staff at the OSPC are related to scheduling, confirming, or changing a building inspection. Counter staff must either let the calls go unanswered or take their attention away from applicants who are at the counter in order to answer the calls.
- It is not as reliable or efficient as an electronic means of scheduling inspections. Sifting through slips of paper takes time on the part of inspectors, and the slips can get lost or misfiled (although this is rare).
- It does not allow the City to track the time when requests for inspections are received, because the request is written on paper rather than recorded electronically. Only the scheduled date/time of inspection is recorded in CityWorks, meaning that there is no way to report on the amount of time that passes between the request for an inspection and the inspection itself.

The project team recommends that the scheduling of building permit inspections, and all development related inspections (including Planning, Fire, and MUED), be automated in order to reduce the workload on the OSPC's counter staff and allow them to focus on applicants at the counter. This could be accomplished by allowing applicants to request an inspection online, either through the City's website or a public access portal of CityWorks. It could also be accomplished by introducing an interactive voice response (IVR) system that would allow applicants to call the OSPC and make a detailed inspection request through phone prompts without taking additional counter staff time. Under either approach, the system will automatically assign the inspection to the appropriate discipline and to a specific inspector on the following day based upon established workflows. This change in the process of requesting and scheduling inspections will significantly streamline the process, reduce the workload of counter staff, and enhance service to the public as online or IVR inspection requests can be conducted 24/7.

This approach to scheduling inspections should be implemented for all departments and divisions that are conducting inspections related to development review activities including: Planning, Building, MUED, and Fire.

Recommendation: The City should implement online or IVR inspection requests for all development review inspections in order to streamline the inspection scheduling process and to reduce the workload of the counter permitting staff.

2. APPLICANTS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH THE ABILITY TO APPLY FOR SIMPLE BUILDING PERMITS ON-LINE AND UTILIZE ELECTRONIC PLAN SUBMITTAL FOR THE MORE INVOLVED/COMPLEX PLANS.

As discussed above, CityWorks is currently being used to record application intake, route plan review tasks to the appropriate personnel through the workflow function, and track the availability and completion of tasks, and close cases when they are

complete. It is also used to record the results of plan review and inspections on each case and make those results available online, and to generate some reports on average plan review turnaround time. While CityWorks' existing functions are useful and facilitate more efficient processing of applications than would be accomplished by tracking them in a spreadsheet, there are still potential improvements to be made in the City's software approach to land entitlements and permitting.

The status of each application received by the City is visible online by using the application number to access the record of completed and pending tasks for that application. The results of plan checks and inspections are visible, but the comments associated with those results are not. In order to provide applicants with as clear a picture as possible of the progress being made on their application, written comments should be included on the web portal that shows the current status of the application. This will allow applicants to see the City's reasoning for not approving plans or inspections, and, if correcting the plans in order to get approval is a matter simple enough to be handled by the applicant before they come in to pick up the plans, it will spare them an additional trip to the OSPC.

The City needs to implement workflows within CityWorks that identify reviews, approvals and inspections that are past due. These notifications should be sent to the employee involved, the assigned case planner (if applicable), and to the employee's supervisor. If the deadlines are going to be meaningful, they must be enforced, all staff held accountable, and when they are missed should be quickly identified with notice to the appropriate staff so that immediate remedial action can be taken. The applicant

should not be placed in the position of “enforcing the adopted time reviews” – this should be done by managers and supervisors within the process.

When inspectors are making on-site inspections, they do not have access to any mobile technology that allows them to record the results of their inspections in CityWorks or make notes about the property while they are in the field. Those tasks must be completed when they return to the office at the end of the day. This way of recording inspection results and comments requires the inspectors to write down their findings and impressions on site and then bring them back to the office and write them again electronically. If building inspectors are provided with mobile access to CityWorks via tablet, they will be able to bypass that additional step and record the results of their inspections, as well as detailed comments, through the CityWorks task manager while in the field. This would save time and allow inspectors to record their comments while the project is directly in front of them, instead of relying on notes later in the day. The City’s fire inspections are currently carried out using mobile technology to access CityWorks in the field, and the building inspectors could benefit from the same.

In addition to the changes outlined above, the City would ideally move to a more fully electronic model of permitting. This would include electronic plan submittal, where applications could be filed online for some simple permits that do not require the submittal of drawn plans, rather than coming in to the OSPC, similar to the way that San Diego County allows some online permit applications. For more complex permits, applicants could bring copies of their plans on a USB drive rather than bringing physical copies. Digital plans could be uploaded to the City’s permitting software, reviewed with the applicant, and routed for review upon acceptance. The plans could be marked and

comments attached electronically. For building permits that do not require plan reviews (such as water heaters, reroofing permits), permits could be issued electronically online without requiring the applicant to come to the OSPC.

These future state advances in the City's technological capabilities for permitting and plan review should be considered long-term goals rather than immediate ones. The development of electronic plan review technology will make fully electronic solutions such as this increasingly feasible in the coming years. In the immediate future, however, the City should focus on providing visible comments through the application status portal and implementing mobile access to CityWorks for field inspectors.

The City is currently exploring the implementation of electronic plan submittal software and anticipates selection of a vendor and implementation later this year. This implementation will enable the City to provide additional services to the public by enabling electronic submittal and review of plans – eliminating the need for paper submittals thereby reducing the costs of submittals for applicants. The City is estimating, based upon bid received, that the total cost of this implementation, including full CityWorks integration, will be approximately \$150,000.

Permits that do not require a plan check, such as single trade permits, often known as over-the-counter permits, are well suited to online permit processing. Similar to e-commerce transactions, such as buying products from a web site, this activity involves credit card processing and the printing of a permit. On-line processing of permit applications can be as basic as automating only the front-end information collection process or as complete as full automation of the entire over-the-counter permit transaction. While there are some state requirements and forms that limit the City's

ability to fully automate this process, the City should develop a plan to enable the application and processing of select permits online and longer-term to develop the technology infrastructure to enable complex plans to be submitted online and reviewed electronically by staff.

The City should develop the capacity for applicants to complete a building permit application via the Internet. Applicants complete online forms, transmit to the City and make their payments online. They are then able to remotely print the permit without having to visit the OSPC. This functionality should be available for an investment of approximately \$50,000.

Additionally, the ability to submit and have plans reviewed electronically is an increasingly common practice for development review and is becoming a best practice in the industry for progressive communities. The City has issued an RFP for an electronic plans software system and is currently reviewing the responses to determine the appropriate approach to implement. Based upon an initial review of the submittals, the City is estimating a cost of approximately \$150,000 for the EDR software.

The City of Redlands should pursue the required technology to implement electronic plan submittal, and the review and approval of simple trade permits, via online functionality including the full automation of the entire over-the-counter permit transaction. Initially, this would include only single trades permits such as plumbing, mechanical, electrical permits, and re-roof permits. Longer-term, this should be expanded to other types of permits. State of the art technologies allow the City to compare resubmittals against prior submittals to electronically “red-line” all changes in the two sets of plans. This ensures that staff can review all modifications easily and in a timely manner.

Recommendation: The use of CityWorks should be expanded to fully utilize its available functionalities, including field entry of inspection results and online status review with visible comments.

Recommendation: The City should implement online building permitting, electronic document submittal, and electronic routing of documents to increase service to the public.

Recommendation: Over the next year or two, the City should expand the use of technology to enable applicants to apply for over the counter building permits online and to provide functionality for electronic plan submission and review.

3. FIELD INSPECTOR EFFICIENCY CAN BE ENHANCED THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MOBILE DEVICES TO RECORD INSPECTION RESULTS IN THE FIELD.

In addition to the automation of the scheduling and assigning of building inspections outlined in the prior recommendation, the City of Redlands can further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of field inspections through the use of mobile devices (i.e. – laptops or computer tablets) for entry of inspection results while in the field. This functionality has recently been implemented by the Fire inspectors and has generally worked well. The ability to more efficiently result inspections, especially if the system is connected through cellular service, will enable the permitting system to be automatically updated and show the result of the inspection as soon as it is entered in the field by the inspector. The cost for implementation will depend upon the specific tablet acquired for use in the field but should not exceed \$500 per inspector. Tablet choice may be dictated by the mobile apps available from the permitting software provider. If the City chooses to implement tablets, all inspectors should be required to utilize them in the field for the resulting of inspections. Their use will also reduce the amount of time required to be in the office for data entry and will increase the number of inspections that each inspector can complete daily.

Recommendation: The City of Redlands should implement laptop / tablet use for the resulting of inspections in the field by all field inspectors (building, fire, engineering, etc.).

4. THE CITY'S WEBSITE RELATED TO DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING ACTIVITIES NEEDS TO BE UPDATED.

The City's website currently includes a page for the OSPC which lists information, requirements, a fee schedule, and application forms for each of the departments and divisions involved in the development review and permitting process. Other information regarding permitting and development review processes and requirements are spread across multiple department and division webpages – it is not easy to locate nor easy to determine where to find the necessary information. The current layout and content of the web page present some problems, however, particularly for applicants who are using the website to gather information for the first time about their project.

- While the OSPC page includes a significant amount of information regarding the development review and permitting process, the page is vertically long and not easily searchable. Links to applications and informational documents are not visually distinct, and they are not grouped alphabetically or by type. For an applicant searching the page for the first time, it can be difficult to find the desired information.
- The OSPC page is not linked to the Development Services page. The Development Services page does not include the downloadable forms, applications, and informational documents that the OSPC page provides, and an applicant browsing the Development Services page does not see a link to the OSPC page, which makes it more difficult to navigate to the information that they need.
- While many applications available on the website are accompanied by lists of requirements for that application type, checklists of the requirements for some application types are not listed on the web sites, or are listed separately from the application itself. The checklists of application requirements for variances, building permits, certificates of compliance, and grading permits, for example, are either not included on the OSPC page, or are listed separately from their respective application.

While these issues are not glaring deficiencies, they make it more difficult for the public to navigate the City's website and find the information they need. As a result, the OSPC sometimes receives phone calls from applicants seeking guidance about their projects that they could have found online if it had been organized more intuitively. Additionally, the confusion and misinformation that results from the difficulty of finding project information on the City's website can contribute to a perception that it is difficult to conduct development in the City of Redlands.

In order to address these issues, the City should reorganize and reformat the Development Services and OSPC pages so that applicants can easily navigate between them and find immediate guidance to the application forms, checklists, and requirements information that they seek. All information regarding development review and permitting activities should be placed together in one location focused entirely on development review and permitting information. All divisions and departments involved in the process should include their information in this single location.

The website should also prominently display the fee schedule, and ideally an online fee calculation tool, that applicants can use to estimate the anticipated cost of fees due to the City of Redlands for their project. While final fees cannot be determined until the project is submitted and no further changes to the plans are made, it is important for applicants to get a sense of the fee impact on their project budget.

The format of the page should be altered so that content is no longer divided by a long listing of headings and sub-headings. Instead, it should be searchable from the top of the page, allowing applicants to skip to the section or application type they need. Additionally, the downloadable forms should be grouped within each heading by type and

organized alphabetically. Requirement checklists and fee schedules should be displayed and made available for download immediately next to the application forms to which they apply. All educational and informational materials, applications, code and regulations, and development guides related to the City of Redland's development review and permitting processes should be placed in this location. It is estimated to cost \$10,000 if external resources are needed to complete this update and it cannot be completed by City staff.

Recommendation: The City's website should be modified to provide easier access to development review and permitting information. All information should be consolidated into a single Development Review/Permitting page rather than by department and division. Enhanced search capabilities of content, more intuitive grouping of forms and information, and expansion of informational materials should be implemented.

5. THE CITY SHOULD BETTER INTEGRATE AND UTILIZE AVAILABLE DATA AND INFORMATION BY LINKING AVAILABLE DATA TO PARCEL INFORMATION.

The ability of the City to fully understand activities that are occurring at a specific parcel would be greatly enhanced if more information were linked to parcels and data was better shared across software systems. The time spent conducting research on properties would be greatly reduced if all information regarding business licenses, entitlements, conditions of approval, permits issues, etc. were all centrally linked to each parcel and staff had access electronically.

Going forward, it will be important for the data management processes to be modified to provide more accurate and accessible information regarding each property in the City. Without regard to the software system in which data is maintained, if the parcel ID is used as a common data point, information across multiple systems can be linked providing staff with a much broader and comprehensive understanding of all city activities

that are related to that property. This would include information regarding business licensing, code enforcement activities, entitlements, permits, inspections, etc.

The current lack of easy access to these data elements necessitates that staff spend a significant amount of time in research to locate all necessary information to make decisions regarding entitlement or permit applications under review.

Implementing improved access to this information and linking it to CityWorks and GIS will require significant staff time to integrate data from various systems (including business licensing, Code Enforcement's Streamline system, and others) so that information is shared across systems and visible to staff. This will take a comprehensive assessment of all IT systems in use and development of a plan to further integrate them. It is estimated that this business assessment of software and development of a comprehensive integration plan to make additional information visible in CityWorks and linked to the GIS System would cost approximately \$50,000.

Recommendation: The City should undertake a comprehensive assessment of all software systems that touch or impact the development review process and develop a plan for integrating data across platforms to increase data access and make it easily accessible for use by staff.

6. A COMPREHENSIVE PERMITTING USER MANUAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED COVERING THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING PROCESSES.

CityWorks is used to record most of the applications received by the OSPC and all the inspections conducted by City staff. As outlined above, the project team recommends that the use of CityWorks be expanded further to consistently record all permitting and inspection activities across all reviewing and inspecting departments. Additionally, the project team recommends that the use of CityWorks be expanded, if possible, to accommodate electronic plan submittal electronic routing, and mobile access. With this

in mind, it is critical that all staff be fully trained on each of the functions that they need to use for their role in the development review process.

To this end, the project team recommends that a permitting software user guide be developed to serve as a training and reference tool for staff using CityWorks. The user guide should be accompanied by a set of administrative procedures to ensure that all staff have a common understanding of how to apply the development review process and how to use the permitting software to do so.

The software user guide should provide an explanation of each of the permitting procedures conducted by the City for application types at various stages of the development review process and a guide for conducting/recording those procedures and steps in CityWorks. It should also provide a general overview of CityWorks' role in each of the development review processes in order to acquaint staff in all areas with the system's purpose and functionality. If possible, the user guide should be developed with assistance from the manufacturer. It should be written in clear language and easily understood by development review and permitting staff in all areas. Examples of areas to be covered by the guide should include:

- Recording intake of new applications;
- Using the workflow feature to track the routing of plans and completion of tasks;
- Recording completed tasks and adding comments;
- Closing cases;
- Scheduling and modifying inspections;
- Recording inspection results;
- Generating reports on workload and efficiency.

In addition to the permitting software guide, a handbook of administrative procedures should be created to provide standardization to each of the administrative

tasks related to the development review and permitting process that City's staff conducts on a regular basis.

The administrative procedures should be grounded in the City's policies for processing land entitlement and building permit applications. They should cover the steps that are required to record applications at intake, search the City's databases for historic properties, reference land development and building codes in reviewing plans, prepare an application for review by a commission or council, direct applicants to resources for their application, and all of the other administrative tasks that the development review process entails.

This handbook should serve as a reference document and a training tool for new staff and should be updated on a regular basis to accommodate new or altered procedures in the City's development review process.

Recommendation: Permitting Software User Guide and Administrative Procedures should be developed so that all staff are appropriately trained on the process and they are applying it consistently. These should be two separate documents – one outlining use of CityWorks and one outlining the administrative processes staff utilize in handling work activities.

4. ANALYSIS OF ONE STOP PERMITTING CENTER (OSPC)

The following sections and recommendations address opportunities for improvement in the physical environment at the OSPC. These are intended to make it a more comfortable atmosphere for applicants, reduce or eliminate applicant confusion, and streamline the process of plan submittal and pick-up. Currently, the OSPC is open five days a week from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.¹¹. This provides extended access to customers beyond the typical business hours and is a best practice for high service communities. At the present time, these operating hours are creating significant issues for staff working the OSPC counter as workloads make it difficult to respond to emails and voicemails from customers in a timely manner. With the recommended staffing modifications outlined later in this report, the workload issue should be addressed and sufficient relief staffing should be available to address the issue. The City should not modify the current operating hours of the OSPC and should continue to provide service from 7:30 to 5:30 on days the OSPC is open.

There are several principal recommendations that were identified that will enable service enhancement and service level improvements within the OSPC.

1. THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING A FULLY CONSOLIDATED ONE STOP PERMITTING CENTER (OSPC).

The most significant organizational change that the project team is making relative to organizational structure involving the development review and permitting area is the

¹¹ OSPC and the civic center is closed on alternating Fridays.

creation of a single individual responsible for overseeing the entire entitlement and permitting effort at the City of Redlands. Given the complexity of the entitlement process (relative to the more routine permitting activities), consideration should be given to having the Planning Manager assume this role initially. To fully centralize this effort would require reorganizing the OSPC (discussed more fully in a later section) to include reallocation of the MUED staff and Fire Department staff (those that conduct plan reviews and permit related inspections) into the overall OSPC organizational structure, and having at least operational reporting relationships to the Planning Manager. Due to the technical nature of some review (principally Fire and MUED), it would not be inappropriate for technical advice to continue to be received from those departments. For example, the Fire Chief may retain final authority over Fire Code interpretations, but the Fire Inspector would be assigned full time to plan review and inspection activities within the OSPC organizational structure. The benefit of having a single individual responsible for oversight is that conflicts in processing can be addressed by a single individual who is accountable for resolving any processing issues that arise.

For the City of Redlands to implement this approach will require that all major functions related to development review (planning, building, fire and MUED) be centralized into the development services arena and OSPC. The close and seamless interaction of City Departments is critical to ensuring that a high level of customer service is provided in all development review activities. The oversight of this function should be under the direction of a single individual to ensure conflicts are resolved promptly. The location of these functions under a single Director also improves the ability of staff to work

together and provide a comprehensive and accurate review of applications and plans throughout the process.

The staff associated with conducting plan reviews are currently located in several departments under different Directors. When conflicts arise, the resolution point is the City Manager's Office. Routine processing issues should not require elevation to this level for resolution. Making a change of this nature is not a simplistic event and will require detailed planning and establishment of new procedures and organizational structure. As such, it should be a longer-term plan that the City pursues. Other recommendations in this report regarding implementation of staff, policies and procedures, processing changes, and technology utilization are more pressing and will have more immediate impacts in enhancing service to the public.

As an alternative to full consolidation of staff under a single Manager, the City could achieve a large percentage of the benefits through requiring all staff involved in development review to maintain office hours within the OSPC for public access to staff to discuss projects, applications, and status of reviews. For Departments, such as Quality of Life and Fire, where the workloads do not warrant a full-time position on the counter, this can be accomplished either through cross-training staff (likely best option for Quality of Life as they currently have a position in the OSPC), or by office hours (for Fire).

Recommendation: The City should consider full consolidation of all development review and permitting functions into the OSPC and place overall oversight and accountability with a single manager.

2. THE CITY SHOULD MODIFY THE OSPC TO ELIMINATE CONFUSION FOR CUSTOMERS AND IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY.

There are several modifications that should be made to the OSPC to improve service to the public and increase staff efficiency.

(1) Improved Signage and the Provision of A Kiosk Can Assist Individuals Utilizing the OSPC.

When applicants enter the OSPC, there is some signing indicating counter areas for Planning, Engineering, and Building and Safety. Applicants who are new to the development review process, however, or those unfamiliar with the duties of each division in the City of Redlands; thus, they may not have clear direction on where to take their applications or questions.

The project team recommends that the OSPC provide additional direction to applicants when they first walk in the door to ensure that they are able to quickly orient themselves and find the appropriate counter for their question or application. This could be in the form of an informational sign board that provides detail about the application process and indicates the appropriate counter for applicants with various types of questions or applications. It could also take the form of an electronic kiosk that can be used to interactively provide direction to applicants and answer questions, or a concierge-type employee who is stationed in the waiting area to guide applicants, answer questions, and provide assistance. The City should evaluate these options to determine how they can best eliminate confusion and most efficiently provide applicants with an understanding of the steps they need to take in order to move their application forward.

Additionally, the display of informational pamphlets, brochures, and checklists, which is currently placed in the back corner next to the Building and Safety counter, should be placed near the door in the waiting area so that applicants can take the materials they need when they first walk in. If the Building and Safety staff are moved to the counter location currently occupied by the Planning staff, these materials would still be close to them.

Recommendation: The City should consider options such as a concierge, information kiosk, or expanded signing for orienting applicants when they first arrive at the permitting center.

(2) The City Should Implement a Clearer and More Consistent Check-in System for Customers.

The City has a sign-in sheet for customers to write their name down upon arrival at the OSPC, if they cannot be immediately helped. Applicants are then called to the counter in the order they signed the sheet. However, current use of the sign-in sheet is minimal, and applicants tend to form a line at the counter to ensure that they will not lose their place instead of signing in and sitting in the waiting area.

When applicants come to the OSPC, they should be served at the counter sequentially and helped with their application / permit. Applicants should also be able to secure their place in line and wait in the waiting area without feeling that they need to stand close to the counter or risk losing their place in line. This will require the OSPC to implement a clear and consistent method for assigning an order to applicants and calling them to the counter. The City may want to use a take-a-number system for this purpose, or they may opt to continue using a sign-in sheet. In either case, the staff at the counter must consistently use the chosen system to call applicants to the counter rather than simply allowing the next person in line to approach the counter. In addition, they should make it clear to applicants that they should wait in the assigned waiting area rather than lining up at the counter. The changes to the waiting area described in the following point should make this more feasible.

An orderly and consistent method of coordinating the flow of applicants to the OSPC counter will reduce confusion on the part of applicants, allow staff to direct their

full attention to the applicant at the counter, and contribute to the overall sense of order and efficiency in the OSPC.

Recommendation: The City should implement a clear and consistent method for assigning an order for permitting applicants to come to the counter.

(3) Improvements to the Waiting area of the OSPC are Needed.

The OSPC currently has three chairs in the waiting area for applicants who are waiting their turn at the counter. The chairs sit against the wall across the waiting area from the planning and building counter in the OSPC. There are times during the day when the amount of seating available is not sufficient for the number of applicants, and the positioning of the chairs on the opposite side of the waiting room from the counter makes them feel disconnected from the staff behind the counter. These issues contribute to applicants' tendency to form a line along the window in front of the Building and Safety counter rather than waiting in the seats provided.

The project team recommends that the seating arrangement in the OSPC be expanded and repositioned in order to provide applicants with enough spots for waiting that provide them proximity to the counter when it is their turn to be helped. The City should add more chairs to the waiting area and place them closer to the middle of the room so that applicants will have sufficient spots available for waiting that position them close to the counter without requiring them to form a standing line. The City should also consider whether there is enough room for a table that would serve as a workspace for applicants who are waiting, further encouraging them to sit instead of lining up at the counter.

To further enhance the customer experience, the City of Redlands should provide a counter workspace, and longer-term an electronic plan review plan submittal kiosk in the OSPC foyer for use by applicants.

Recommendation: The City should ensure that there is sufficient and comfortable seating and suitable workspace for applicants.

Recommendation: Longer-term, the City should provide access to a kiosk for electronic plan review submittal and educational materials for applicants.

(4) The OSPC Should House all Staff Involved in Development Review Activities.

The current arrangement of counter staff in the OSPC places the Associate Planner at the front corner of the counter, closest to the door. The Engineering (MUED) Permit Counter Technician sits to the right of the Planner, farther from the door. The Building and Safety counter staff sit to the left of the Planner, close to the back office and facing the OSPC's window. The current layout does not provide a clear and easy to navigate customer flow or service.

The current arrangement places the Building and Safety staff far from the door, despite the fact that they spend a greater percentage of their time than the other Department's OSPC staff in direct contact with applicants. The previous points have noted that the waiting area and the system of managing applicant traffic should be modified to make visits to the permitting center more smooth and straightforward for applicants. In addition to those changes, the project team recommends that the City reconfigure the OSPC to provide better customer service.

The City should work to reconfigure the OSPC to provide more counter space to plan review and permitting activities, to provide a central intake location, staffed by the Permit Technicians, and to fully incorporate all development review staff in the OSPC (i.e.

– planning staff, MUED, and Fire). This may require reviewing alternatives that have impacts on the current staff from Revenue that are using a portion of the OSPC. Sufficient space should also be provided at the counter to enable plans examiner staff to review plans with applicants. Funding of \$20,000 should be allocated for conducting the necessary planning and design to configure the OSPC in a layout that will fully accommodate the incorporation of the new permit technician positions, as well as fully co-locating Planning, Land Development and Fire Plan Review and Inspection staff into the OSPC.

Recommendation: The City should modify the OSPC to develop a configuration that will enable full incorporation of all staff into the OSPC and improve intake through a more customer friendly approach.

3. ENHANCED TRAINING SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO ALL STAFF INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS.

To effectively begin this “new chapter” in the relationship between the City and the development community that the City is attempting to achieve through the implementation of recommended changes, it is absolutely critical that all staff fully understand the focus that will be attached to their primary mission of providing “high quality services in a timely manner”. This training should be conducted by the Department Managers overseeing development review functions (Planning, Public Works, Building, etc.) with support of the City Manager, and clearly communicate that the City’s focus is not going to be one based simply upon a “regulatory” model of simply ensuring compliance with the codes but as equally important is the provision of these services in a cooperative, friendly, and timely manner.

The City may wish to utilize an external training resource for this effort; however, if this is done, the training should not be a simply a standard off the shelf “customer

service training” package but one that is tailored to the City of Redlands’ approach to concierge customer service in the OSPC and that is cognizant of the development review process that is being implemented.

A component of all employee’s annual performance should be their contribution to the City’s success in transforming to this new mindset that values responsiveness to the customer as much as – but not to the exclusion of – quality plan reviews and inspections. Individual supervisors must ensure that they are evaluating staff in this area consistently with the desires of the City Manager.

In addition to the enhanced public education efforts and the specific technology training previously referenced, the City should commit to an increased level of staff training and education to ensure that all staff are not only fully trained in their technical areas of expertise, but have a common understanding of the level of customer service expected to be provided. Prior to the development of a training plan for staff, the Managers of the Planning, Utility, and Building Divisions should conduct a training needs assessment. The training needs assessment should be based upon a variety of efforts including:

- Survey of staff to identify desired training topics,
- Identification of training hours and topics necessary to maintain existing certifications (i.e. – trade certifications for Building Plan Examiners and Inspectors and AICP Certification for Planners),
- Training targeted at expanding existing skills and provide greater cross-utilization of staff, and
- Training in project management techniques, customer service, etc.

From the training needs assessment, individual employee training plans should be developed for each employee. Ideally this would be accomplished annually as part of employee performance evaluation and goal setting sessions.

This training should include a quarterly meeting of all staff involved in development review for a joint training session to address issues of inter-departmental and inter-divisional focus. Topics for these quarterly meetings should be developed by the Case Managers based upon issues seen and addressed during the preceding quarters. Additionally, at these meetings customer service principles should be covered in areas such as: responsiveness to emails and phone calls; assisting individuals in meeting submission requirements, etc.

All staff should receive customer service training consistent with the City of Redlands' desire to maintain the highest level of service to the public.

Another useful area of training is for these sessions to provide, on a rotating basis, general training on the major technical areas reviewed by each Department and Division so that employees in other Departments and Divisions become more aware of the issues reviewed by those in other areas. The purpose is not to make all employees technically proficient in the reviews conducted by other Departments/Divisions, but to ensure that everyone is aware of the major areas of review in each department and to gain a better understanding of the role played by each department in the process. Depending upon the needs assessment and specific training identified, the City should expect to allocate approximately \$1,000 annually for staff training per staff member.

Recommendation: The City through the City Manager and Managers overseeing the various development review functions should provide training to all staff regarding the "focus" of the City on providing high-quality services in a timely manner.

Recommendation: A quarterly development review training session should be implemented for all staff directly involved in Development Review and Permitting functions.

Recommendation: The specific training topics for each meeting should be developed by staff but could include topics such as: customer service training, review of inter-departmental issues, more in-depth discussion of the role of a specific department/division, etc.

Recommendation: A training needs assessment should be conducted for all staff involved in development review. Individual employee training plans should be developed that focus on maintenance of existing certifications / licenses and then expansion of skills.

5. ANALYSIS OF PERSONNEL AND STAFFING

The sections below deal with the personnel involved in the entitlement and permit application processes. This includes recommendations about the staffing allocations and organizational structure necessary to accommodate the development review workload. It is important to note one specific issue relative to staffing for the Development Review and Permitting activities at the City of Redlands – the primary factor impacting service delivery is staff turn-over and the ability to fill existing positions. This is due to a variety of factors – including workloads, limited advancement opportunities, and compensation levels.

While there is a demonstrated need (as will be discussed) to increase staffing in selected areas, the inability to attract and retain staff is a significant issue. This is a much greater issue facing the City than the actual number of staff assigned to most of the functions. There is much anecdotal evidence that the City's overall salary structure and benefit package are impacting the ability to attract and retain staff in key positions who support key elements of the development review and permitting process. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of every instance of turn-over or reasons for staff changes, but it is clearly evident that over the last two years the high level of turn-over, the number of vacancies, and the inability to fill existing authorized positions have greatly impacted the service level provided. In some cases, the City has increased staffing when workload warranted and a need was demonstrated (most recently by adding an additional position in Fire Inspections). The highest priority of the City must be in filling the existing vacancies and remaining at full-staffing and addressing those organizational issues (such as compensation) that are impacting the City's ability to attract and retain staff.

If the City is not able to fill the existing positions that are vacant, and increase staff levels as warranted, consideration should be given to reducing the hours the OSPC is open by 1 hour daily. From a review of work activity and volumes at the OSPC, it would appear that closing at the end of the day, from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., would be preferable to at the beginning of the day or over lunch. This change in hours would enable counter staff at least one hour daily to return calls, route plans, and timely complete other administrative duties that currently are not being addressed in a timely manner. While initially, this may appear counterintuitive to the provision of best in class service, it should increase customer satisfaction as one of the most common complaints was the inability to get a response to emails or voicemail left for staff at the OSPC. This option is recommended only if the staffing plan and allocations are not able to be implemented and the City continues to run short-staffed in the OSPC.

The implementation of other operational recommendations within this report will assist in improving service, but even the most effective and efficient processes will not guarantee high service to the public if the City is unable to staff the authorized positions.

1. THE CITY MUST FOCUS ON FILLING EXISTING VACANCIES.

As noted above, the City of Redlands has not operated with a full complement of staff assigned to the development review and permitting function for an extended period of time. This makes it difficult to assess some components of staffing and determine as precisely, the workloads that can be handled when the City is fully staffed in this area. Especially in recent months, existing staff have worked exceedingly hard to ensure service levels improved over historical levels; however, this has only been accomplished through working extra hours and outside of normal classifications (i.e. – all plan reviews

being conducted by the Chief Building Official and administrative staff assisting on the counter in the OSPC).

While this has resulted in improvements on processing times, it came at the expense of completing normally assigned duties, and a focusing time and energy on implementing the basics needed to enhance and improve the overall process. The following table summarizes the staff assigned to the core development review and permitting functions (with vacancies noted as of the time of on-site work conducted). In addition to these personnel, Quality of Life conducts a review of some applications and permits but does not dedicate staff full-time, nor is it needed, to the OSPC.

Department	Position Title	# of Staff
Planning	City Planner	1.0
	Principal Planner	1.0
	Senior Planner	2.0 (one vacant)
	Associate Planner (one assigned full-time to OSPC)	3.0 (one vacant)
Fire	Fire Marshall	1.0 (vacant)
	Fire Inspector	1.0 (vacant)
MUED	Senior Civil Engineer	2.0
	MUED Counter Position	1.0
Building	Chief Building Official	1.0
	Building Plans Specialist	2.0 (one vacant)
	Building Inspector	2.0
	Senior Plans Specialist	1.0 (vacant)

These existing vacancies are a major impediment to the appropriate provision of service to the public.

Recommendation: The City should focus initial efforts on filling the existing vacancies with the divisions providing development review activities.

2. THE CITY SHOULD IMPLEMENT A PERMIT TECHNICIAN POSITION TO STAFF THE INTAKE COUNTER.

The front counter staff, those individuals that directly interface with the public on an on-going basis, have a significant impact on the performance levels of the OSPC and City. At the present time, the individuals responsible for the intake function have limited code and process knowledge to fully assist the applicant at the counter and the number of vacancies are impacting the ability to provide high levels of service. Additionally, due to workloads at the counter, these staff are not able to dedicate any significant time to plan review activities, and as will be discussed in the next section, plan review staffing levels are insufficient.

The City of Redlands should implement a permit technician approach at the front counter. This is a very common approach – if not prevailing practice – for one stop permitting centers based upon the project teams experience on a national basis.

The permit technician would handle all intake functions, and process all over the counter permits. These positions would serve a function, similar to that performed by the planner assigned for the intake of entitlement applications. The permit technician would be responsible for not only first line interaction with the applicants but to review submitted plans for completeness.

The implementation of the permit technician positions will enable the City to dedicate plan review staff to the actual conduct of plan reviews and handling more complex applications rather than handling routine over the counter transactions and

conducting intake. This recommendation is one of the highest priority recommendations in the report that can be immediately implemented to impact service provision.

Recommendation: The City should implement two permit technician positions on the front counter to assist the public, review applications as received, and process over the counter permits.

3. AN ADDITIONAL INSPECTOR POSITION IS WARRANTED BASED UPON EXISTING WORKLOADS.

The Building Division is currently appropriately monitoring inspection requests, inspection completion and generally is completing all inspection requests within one day of request. The division has adopted a standard of conducting all inspections requests within one day of receipt when staff is available. This is the appropriate standard that should be utilized, as it is the prevailing practice in the industry.

There were approximately 7,450 inspections conducted in 2015. The ISO rating agency recommends that each full-time inspector be scheduled approximately 10 inspections per day. In our experience with comparable communities, inspectors in similar jurisdictions are able to effectively complete twelve inspections per day. When inspection workloads exceed this level, Inspectors are not able to conduct comprehensive inspections or spend the appropriate amount of time providing customer service.

Applying this workload standard, the City has an inspection workload equivalent to 620 days of work. Since each inspector is available to work 204 days per year (based upon 234 days scheduled per year minus leave and training time of 30 days per year), this equates to a required inspector staffing level of just over 3 full-time building inspectors.

Both current inspectors carry workloads that are well above the typical recommended level. The City should add an additional inspector position – at the level of

Senior Inspector. It is recommended that this be a Senior Inspector to provide advancement opportunities and provide lead worker oversight of the other inspectors.

Recommendation: The City should add a new position of Senior Building Inspector to address existing workloads.

4. THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH STAFF ASSIGNED TO THE PERFORMANCE OF PLAN REVIEW ACTIVITIES OR COUNTER SERVICE TO PROVIDE THE DESIRED SERVICE LEVELS.

The project team reviewed the existing workloads to determine the appropriateness of staffing levels. The most glaring area of modification related to the services provided at the counter and in conducting building permit plan review.

The first table below outlines the estimated hours available by a current building plans specialist for review activities – with assumptions made regarding leave time, and staff meetings.

Element	Hours
Total Annual Hours	2,080
Holidays	88
Vacation	80
Sick Leave	80
Training	80
Staff Meetings (8 hours per month)	96
Administrative Duties/Projects (8 hours per month)	96
Total Annual Available Hours Per FTE to Conduct Plan Reviews	1,560

The hours required for plan review of each permit type are estimated based on the permitting time requirements from the City's previous fee study. During the upcoming fee study, these estimates should be updated based upon existing processes in place.

BUILDING PLAN REVIEW							
Type	2013 count	2014 count	2015 count	Hours Each	2013 hrs	2014 hrs	2015 hrs*

REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA
One Stop Permit Center Evaluation

1B-Block Wall-Retaining Wall-Fence Permit	81	83	87	3	243	249	285
1B-Commercial	7	6	3	30	210	180	98
1B-Commercial Additions	3	3	2	15	45	45	33
1B-Commercial Miscellaneous	44	64	53	30	1320	1920	1735
1B-Construction Trailer	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
1B-Demolition	9	7	5	2.5	22.5	17.5	14
1B-Electrical Permit		1	2	1.33	0	1.33	3
1B-Mechanical	286	313	215	1.33	380.38	416.29	312
1B-Mobile Home Placement	2	1		0	0	0	0
1B-Multi-Family Residential	1	3	3	30	30	90	98
1B-Plumbing	107	144	94	1.33	142.31	191.52	136
1B-Residential Additions	58	56	53	6	348	336	347
1B-Residential Garage & Carport	8	19	11	4.5	36	85.5	54
1B-Residential Patio, Deck, Misc.	112	107	61	1	112	107	67
1B-Residential Remodel	6	5	15	5.5	33	27.5	90
1B-Roofing	130	182	199	2.5	325	455	543
1B-Single Family Dwelling	23	24	46	12	276	288	602
1B-Solar	247	401	295	0.33	81.51	132.33	106
1B-Spa/Hot Tub	2	1	3	2	4	2	7
1B-Swimming Pool	23	31	35	5.5	126.5	170.5	210
1B-Tenant Improvements	69	58	49	14	966	812	748
Grand Total	1221	1510	1232		4701.2	5526.5	5486.7

*projected based on data gathered through first 11 months of 2015

As the table shows, the total hours required for building permit plan review in 2014 and 2015 is approximately 5,500 per year. At 1,560 available hours per FTE, an approximate total of 3.5 FTE's would be required to accommodate the total workload. This does not include the time required to provide customer service at the front counter. Currently, the Building Plans Specialist and the Chief Building Official are the only two staff doing plan reviews, and neither of their positions is intended to dedicate full attention to this function, and the Chief Building Official should not be carrying a full plan review case load. Based upon this review, and the earlier proposal to increase customer service at the counter through increased over the counter processing, there is support for increasing the staffing within the Building Division. To provide an adequate level of

staffing to provide the required staffing resources and implement the changes outlined in this report, the City should make the following staffing modifications:

- The two positions of Plans Specialist should be reclassified to Plans Examiner positions.
- The position of Senior Plans Specialist should be reclassified to a Senior Plans Examiner position.
- The Administrative Analyst position should be reclassified to a Senior Administrative Analyst position.

The Administrative Analyst position should be responsible for providing the necessary administrative support to the OSPC with a particular focus on public education, analysis of data, and reporting. This would include assisting in the development of professional looking handout materials (checklists, fillable forms, etc.) that are recommended in this document, development of the monthly performance reports outlining status of all applications and permits against adopted performance targets. While this position would not be responsible for the technical development of these documents (that would be handled by professional staff), the position would be charged with development of a professional looking handout based upon staff input and direction.

These modification, in addition to the implementation of ICC-certified Permit Technicians (as outlined earlier in this section) to staff the counter in the OSPC will provide a strong staffing resources suitable to providing the level of service desired and appropriate for the City of Redlands in handling plan review activities.

Additionally, the Senior Administrative Analyst will assist with the implementation of many recommendations in this report and provide assistance in the management of the OSPC. This will enable two positions to serve the public and process over the counter permits, and two positions dedicated to back-up support for the permit technicians and

principally dedicated to plan review activities. It is recommended that the Permit Technicians be implemented as one (1) Permit Technician I and one (1) Permit Technician II. This will provide growth and promotional opportunities in the future.

The other staffing change recommended, is the implementation of Planning Technician position that staffs the counter full-time to support intake, answer general public questions, and handle the more routine planning duties. This will enable the Planners to focus on higher-level duties, accept the increased responsibility of working as Project Managers, and provide back-up service at the Counter. All planners should spend at least one day per week supporting the counter. The Planning Technician position would be similar to the Permit Technician in duties and experience level and focused on handling the routine counter activities.

The addition of the planning technician position will enable the existing planners to focus their time and energy on the processing of current planning and historic preservation projects. The Associate Planners will have the necessary time available to assist with current planning projects and the Senior and Principal Planners can focus on advanced planning projects (such as the upcoming zoning code update). Greater focus on the advanced planning activities will enable the City to develop in a more thoughtful manner. Additionally, with the City's recent commitment to become a certified local government, this commitment requires that the City designate a planner as the Historic Preservation Officer. This role will require the majority of this individual's time and effort.

As previously noted, the City is likely to be able to provide an adequate level of service without the addition of staffing, however, it will be extremely difficult, if not impractical, to implement the other changes recommended – and to decrease wait times

at the OSPC - without these staffing resources. These positions could be phased in over time, if necessary, and based upon the level of customer service desired to be provided.

The allocation of staff against workloads was reviewed both from a qualitative and quantitative perspective, factored in discussions with staff regarding their ability to perform at an appropriate level, led the project team to the following conclusions:

- The recent addition of the additional Fire Inspector position was necessary and sufficient to address prior workload issues, and enable the completion of review and inspections in a timely manner. Current vacancies in place, obviously impact that.
- Planning staffing is generally appropriate with the notable distinction of the Counter staffing. Existing case loads prevent all planners from rotating to the Counter on a regular basis, and current counter workloads prevent the planner assigned there to handle any real case load.
- Building Inspectors are working at full capacity and are routinely scheduled for more inspections per day than best practices would dictate. Additionally, the absence of a single inspector prevents the City from completing inspections the day following request.
- No significant concerns were noted in the ability of the assigned staff from MUED in addressing assigned workloads at the present time. However, specific concerns were noted regarding inefficiencies in the process due to accessibility issues in the electronic document management system (most specifically the difficulty in accessing information easily from the scanned records), and the fact that not all work activities are tracked within CityWorks. MUED does not utilize CityWorks as the primary method of managing permits and applications and relies upon spreadsheets and logs outside of the system.
- The two vacancies in the Building Division have had significant impacts on the ability to process counter permits, timely intake new permits, and respond to customer inquiries via phone or email. Currently, all plan review activities are being performed by the Chief Building Official in order to provide service to customers. This has limited the amount of time this position can spend on his normally assigned duties and on developing and implementing improvements in processes and work practices.

As noted above, the first priority for the City must be a concerted effort to fill the existing vacancies within the Building Division to improve service delivery. This will go a

long way to providing the ability for the City to provide a consistent level of service to customers and will enable other staff to perform the duties they were originally hired to perform (i.e. – plan checking).

The new staffing allocations are shown in the following table. This does not include current vacancies but shows the overall staffing authorization that is recommended for the development review function.

Department	Position Title	# of Staff
Planning	City Planner	1.0
	Principal Planner	1.0
	Senior Planner	2.0
	Associate Planner (one assigned full-time to OSPC)	3.0
	Planning Technician	1.0
	Senior Administrative Analyst	1.0
Fire	Fire Marshall	1.0
	Fire Inspector	1.0
MUED	Manager	1.0
	Senior Civil Engineer	2.0
	MUED Counter Position	1.0
Building	Chief Building Official	1.0
	Senior Plans Examiner	1.0
	Building Plans Examiner	2.0
	Senior Building Inspector	1.0
	Building Inspector	2.0
	Permit Technician I (1) and Permit Technician II (1)	2.0

The net result of these staffing changes is four new positions within the overall Development Review arena: three positions in Building and one position in Planning.

Recommendation: The City should reclassify the Senior Plans Specialist to a Senior Plans Examiner position and the two Plans Specialist positions to Plans Examiner positions.

Recommendation: The City should add a Planning Technician position and reclassify the Administrative Analyst to a Senior Administrative Analyst position.

5. A CONTINGENCY PLAN SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS CAN BE MET DURING WORKLOAD VARIATIONS.

The adoption, publication and monitoring of work activities against established timeframes for completion will create (appropriately so) an expectation from the development community that the established timeframes are real – and will be met by staff. This is not a current perception within the community at this point. The industry perception is that the time it takes to get review comments issued significantly exceeds the established timeframes and in fact, that there really are no established timeframes for plan reviews. This is the one of the single largest issues of concern with the Division's customers that were expressed to the project team.

The City should adopt formal review targets for each permitting type. The following recommendations are sample guidelines for representative building permits:

- Initial Review Residential Review: 10 working days.
- Resubmittal Review Residential: 5 working days.
- Initial Submittal Tenant Finish (<5,000 s.f.): 5 working days
- Resubmittal Tenant Finish (<5,000 s.f.): 3 working days.
- Initial Commercial Review: 10 working days.
- Resubmittal Commercial Review: 5 working days.

Plan review targets should be adopted for all land entitlement and building permitting reviews. Ideally, resubmittal reviews should be ½ the time of the initial review.

As previously noted, the major change that the project team would recommend is that the performance measures for plan reviews (both residential and commercial) be separated into two categories – performance on completion of first review and performance in completing resubmittal reviews. To ensure that timeframes established can be met, the City needs to take a proactive approach and develop a contingency plan that outlines the steps that will be taken to meet performance standards when changes in workload exceed the capacity of the existing staff to meet them. This contingency plan should outline the conditions under which different options will be utilized. The options should include the use of the following:

- Overtime – for staff to work additional hours.
- Cross-training – to provide an internal “backup” to the existing staff that conduct plan review functions.
- External Resources – such as contract plan reviewers or inspectors contracted with the City or the utilization of external part-time plan reviewers.
- Professional Resources – such as the utilization of the ICC Plan Review service.

The actual resource utilized is less important than the development of an effective strategy to address workload increases and/or backlogs when staff are unable to meet plan review targets. The contingency plan should provide examples of when each type of resource will and will not be utilized and ensure – in the case of external resources – that appropriate preparation has occurred to have these resources available when needed (i.e. – evaluating, selecting, and pre-approving contract resources for use by the City). The establishment of performance standards alone will not improve the performance of the Division’s operations. These standards must be ones that can

consistently be met – meaning that performance to the goals should be targeted at 95% or above.

Recommendation: The Division should develop a contingency plan that includes the use of external resources or overtime, when they are unable to complete plan review and inspection workloads within required timeframes.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF ONE STOP PERMIT CENTER CUSTOMER SURVEY

As part of the Matrix Consulting Group's study of the development services function in Redlands, the project team conducted a survey to gauge the attitudes and perceptions of development services stakeholders on a variety of issues affecting development review and permitting process in Redlands. This report summarizes the results of the survey.

1. INTRODUCTION

The survey was divided into four sections. The first section asked respondents to provide some information about the nature of their interactions with the Redlands development services function. The second section asked them to respond to indicate their level of agreement with several statements about the development review process. The third section asked them to respond to multiple choice questions about their level of satisfaction with various aspect of the development review process and compare the process in Redlands to that of other municipalities. The fourth section allowed them to respond in their own words to a set of open-ended questions about the Redlands development services function. The survey was made available online through a website link. Flyers informing the public of the survey were available in and distributed by the One Stop Center. A total of 45 responses were received.

2. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

While responses to the survey were confidential, the project team asked respondents to provide some demographic information about themselves for data analysis purposes. The tables below outline the responses of survey participants to these questions.

What is your role in interacting with Redlands related to development review and permitting?	
Architect	8.9%
Business Owner	4.4%
Contractor	11.1%
Developer	11.1%
Engineer	4.4%
Homeowner	51.1%
Other	8.9%
TOTAL	100%

How frequently do you interact with Redlands development services?	
Several times per month	20.4%
Several times per year	27.3%
Once or twice per year	52.3%
TOTAL	100%

How recent was your last interaction with Redlands development services to request information or obtain a permit?	
More than a year ago	22.2%
6-12 months ago	11.1%
Within the last 6 months	66.7%
TOTAL	100%

The responses shown in these tables provide background knowledge of the survey's participants and the nature of their interactions with the Redlands development

services function. In the following section, this information has been used to conduct more detailed analysis of the survey responses received.

3. MULTIPLE CHOICE STATEMENT RESPONSES

The second section of the survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with thirty-one (31) positively phrased statements. The response options were “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. Respondents could also choose “N/A”. For discussion purposes, “strongly agree” and “agree” have been combined in the tables, as have “disagree” and “strongly disagree” to facilitate the analysis and show the major areas of agreement and disagreement.

(1) Many Respondents Find the Development Review Process Difficult.

The statements in the table below addressed the clarity of the development review process in Redlands and the level of difficulty that applicants have in navigating it.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
1. The land entitlement process in the City of Redlands is easy to understand and utilize.	12%	8%	44%	36%
2. The building permitting process in the City of Redlands is easy to understand and utilize.	24%	12%	60%	4%
3. It is clear to me who I should go to when I have a question about the interpretation of a regulation or code.	32%	4%	60%	4%
18. I am able to find necessary information regarding development standards and permitting requirements online.	29%	13%	46%	13%

- Statement #1, regarding the ease of understanding the land entitlement process in Redlands, received much more disagreement than agreement (49% to 12%, respectively). It also received 9 responses of “N/A”, mostly from homeowners. These “N/A” responses compose more than a third of all responses received.
- Statements #2 and #3 both received 60% majorities of disagreement and strong disagreement. These responses were spread across various types of customers, but those who claimed to deal with the department more frequently responded with

more negativity (at least 70% disagreement on both statements) than those who only interact with staff once or twice a year (those infrequent applicants disagreed at a rate of no more than 40%).

- Statement #18, regarding the ease of finding information online, received about the same amount of “agree” and “disagree responses” but three times as much strong disagreement (25%) as strong agreement (8%). Those with more frequent staff contact responded with more negativity (66% disagreement) than those who interact with the Department only once or twice a year (at only 18% disagreement).

The responses received to statements in this section clearly demonstrate that stakeholders in the development review process find it to be more difficult and unclear than they would like. They do not thoroughly understand the process, they are unclear about who to talk to about it, and they do not know where to find information about it online. These frustrations point to clear improvement opportunities for the City.

(2) Most Applicants, Particularly Frequent Applicants, Indicate Staff in all Service Areas Could Be More Helpful During the Process.

The statements in the table below focused on the helpfulness of the staff in the various divisions and departments with a hand in the development review process.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
4. Planning staff deal with me using a positive approach of "here's how to get your application approved", rather than a punitive approach of "you can't do it that way".	32%	4%	60%	4%
5. Building permitting staff deal with me using a positive approach of "here's how to get your application approved", rather than a punitive approach of "you can't do it that way".	28%	8%	60%	4%
6. Engineering plan review and inspections staff deal with me using a positive approach of "here's how to get your application approved", rather than a punitive approach of "you can't do it that way".	12%	16%	56%	16%
7. Fire plan review and inspection staff deal with me using a positive approach of "here's how to get your application approved", rather than a punitive approach of "you can't do it that way".	28%	28%	20%	24%

- Planning, Building, and Engineering staff each received majorities of at least 56% negative responses, with “strongly disagree” outnumbering combined agreement and strong agreement for each.
- For each of the statements above, more negative responses were received from applicants who come in multiple times per month (80% disagreement or more for Statements #4-6 and 31% for Statement #7), while infrequent applicants generally provided more positive responses (no more than 33% disagreement for Statements #4-6 and no disagreeing responses for Statement #7).
- Fire staff received more positive responses than other divisions, with more combined agreement and strong agreement (28%) than combined disagreement and strong disagreement (20%).

These responses from community stakeholders show that there is an issue with the way they feel staff approach their plan reviews. Ideally, staff would be viewed as collaborative partners during the plan review and permitting process who assist the applicant in getting their project approved. While some applicants clearly felt that way about the development review staff from the Fire Department (both of whom are no longer with the City), that perception is in need of strengthening for other departments.

(3) Most Applicants View Staff Availability and Communication as a Weak Point For the Department.

The statements in the table below discussed the availability and ease of communication with staff in the development review process.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
8. City staff clearly communicate to me the time required to process my application.	29%	17%	50%	4%
13. Planning staff are readily accessible by phone or in person when I need help or an explanation regarding my application.	42%	8%	50%	0%
14. Building permit staff are readily accessible by phone or in person when I need help or an explanation regarding my application.	24%	20%	48%	8%
19. I am kept aware of the status of my application / permit during the review process.	12.5%	17%	58%	13%

- Statement #8, that staff clearly communicate the timeframes for processing to applicants, received 50% negative responses, compared to 29% positive responses.
- In Statements #13 and #14, regarding the accessibility of staff, both Planning and Building staff received at least 48% disagreement and strong disagreement compared to 42% agreement and strong agreement on Statement #13 and 24% on Statement #14. Planning staff received more positive responses, but also slightly more negative ones.
- Statement #19, that applicants are kept aware of the status of their application/permit during the review process, received more than four times as many disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses as positive ones (58% to 13%, respectively).
- For each of the statements in this section, respondents who have more frequent contact with the department gave at least 44% more negative responses than those who deal with the development review process only once or twice a year.

The responses received to these statements demonstrate that stakeholders see a definite need for improvement in the level of availability and communication provided by staff in the development review process. While respondents were nearly split on the accessibility of planning staff, each of the other statements received a clearly negative response. This perception should be kept in mind as the City moves to implement changes that improve the level of customer service in the development review and permitting process.

(4) Applicants Are Not Satisfied with the City's Permitting Turnaround Times, and They Do Not Believe the OSPC Improves Efficiency.

The statements in the following table provided an opportunity to gather opinions on the efficiency and timeliness of the development review process in Redlands.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
9. The City consistently meets its goals for processing turnaround times.	20%	4%	60%	16%
12. The number of calendar days taken to review and approve my application is acceptable. I do not have to wait an unreasonable amount of time for review of my application and plans.	16%	8%	60%	16%

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
20. The one-stop approach utilized at the permitting center makes the development review and permitting process more convenient.	32%	16%	48%	4%

- Statements #9 and #12, regarding the City's consistency in meeting its turnaround times and the amount of time required to process applications, both received strong 60% majorities of disagreeing responses.
- Statement #20 asked whether the OSPC makes the development review process more convenient. While it received somewhat more positivity (32% agreement and strong agreement) than the other statements in this section, respondents still gave as many "strongly disagree" responses (32% overall) as combined agreement and strong agreement.
- For each of the statements in this section, respondents who have more frequent contact with the department gave at least 35% more negative responses than those who deal with the development review process only once or twice a year.

These responses indicate that the timeliness of plan reviews is a concern for a majority of applicants, and that the OSPC's current operational practices are not sufficient to meet the goal turnaround times established by the City. Improvements in speed and efficiency should be a primary focus of the City's adjustments to the process going forward.

(5) Most Applicants Do Not Feel that the Department's Application Reviews, Particularly for Land Entitlement Applications, Are Consistent, Thorough, and Accurate.

The statements in the following table addressed the thoroughness and accuracy of application reviews.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
10. After I submit my land entitlement application, the initial review and analysis of my application is complete and accurate, and future problems do not surface that should have been caught during the initial review.	8%	8%	48%	36%

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
11. After I submit my building permit application, the initial review and analysis of my application is complete and accurate, and future problems do not surface that should have been caught during the initial review.	20%	4%	52%	24%
15. The planning staff are consistent in applying the City's land development regulations to my application and plans.	24%	8%	52%	16%
16. The building staff are practical in applying the City's building codes to my application and plans.	32%	20%	36%	12%
17. Staff are knowledgeable and make few mistakes in reviewing my application.	30%	9%	48%	13%
21. The comments received from plan reviews are based upon adopted regulations or codes.	38%	13%	38%	13%

- Statement #10 asked about the completeness and accuracy of land entitlement application reviews to catch issues before they surface later in the process. It was met with very strong disagreement (48% negative compared to 8% positive). Statement #11 asked the same thing regarding building permit application reviews, and was likewise met with strongly negative responses (52% negative compared to 20% positive). For both statements, frequent applicants were especially negative (70% disagreement or more), while those who only visit the Department once or twice a year were more neutral.
- Statement #15 asked whether planning staff are consistent in applying the land development code to land development applications. It received more than twice as many disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses as agreeing and strongly agreeing ones. 77% of applicants who deal with the Department more than once or twice a year responded negatively, compared to only 25% of infrequent applicants.
- Statement #16 asked whether building staff are practical in applying the building codes to permit applications. It received nearly equal parts positive (32%) and negative (36%) responses, although all of the negative responses were “strongly disagree”.
- Statement #17, regarding the accuracy of staff’s plan reviews, received more 47% negative responses and 30% positive ones. Frequent applicants tended to respond negatively (66% disagreement), while less frequent applicants were less so (27% disagreement).
- Statement #21, regarding the basis for comments issued to applications, received equal parts agreement and disagreement (38% for both). Infrequent applicants were generally more positive in their responses than frequent applicants (50% agreement and strong agreement for infrequent applicants, 31% for those who see the Department more than once or twice a year).

The consistently high numbers of disagreeing responses to statements in this section suggest that respondents view the plan review function as inconsistent, inaccurate, and generally unreliable to properly identify issues and make progress on applications. This sentiment applies to both land entitlement and building permit applications. These perceptions should inform the City's efforts to develop experienced staff and provide training in the development review process.

(6) Applicants Generally Believe that Inspections Are Consistent, Accurate, and Reasonable in the City of Redlands.

The statements in the following table focused on the accuracy, reasonableness, and consistency of inspections.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
22. Inspectors make few mistakes when conducting inspections.	60%	8%	12%	20%
24. Inspectors are consistent in their interpretation of code requirements.	54%	13%	17%	17%
25. There are rarely conflicts in interpretation of building codes between plan review staff and building inspectors.	36%	24%	24%	16%
28. Inspectors do not ask for requirements that exceed code requirements.	46%	21%	13%	21%

- Statement #22, that inspectors make few mistakes when conducting their inspections, received a 60% majority of positive responses. Likewise, Statement #24, regarding inspectors' consistency in interpreting code requirements, received more than three times as much agreement as disagreement.
- Statement #25, that there are rarely conflicts of interpretation between building plan reviewers and inspectors, received slightly more agreement and strong agreement (36%) than disagreement and strong disagreement (24%).
- Statement #28 said that inspectors do not ask for requirements exceeding those required by the code. It received 46% total agreement and only 12% total disagreement, with "strongly agree" responses alone outnumbering "disagree" and "strongly disagree" responses (21% to 12%).

The quality of inspections was a bright spot in the survey, as every statement in this section received more agreement than disagreement. While the statement about conflicts of interpretation between inspectors and plan reviewers received less overwhelming support, that could be due to respondents' previously documented issues with the plan review process. The other statements all gathered more than three times as much agreement and strong agreement as disagreement and strong disagreement, showing that inspections are a strong point of the Department.

(7) Applicants Generally Have Positive Impressions of the Helpfulness and Availability of Staff Involved in the Inspection Process.

The statements in the following table discussed the accessibility and helpfulness of personnel involved in the inspection process.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
23. When inspectors find problems during their inspection, they are thorough and clear in explaining what needs to be done to fix the problem and get approval.	56%	16%	8%	20%
26. The process for scheduling an inspection is efficient.	36%	16%	24%	24%
27. When I call to schedule an inspection before the end of the day, an inspection is scheduled for the following day.	40%	20%	12%	28%
29. Inspectors are easily accessible when I need assistance in resolving problems.	38%	21%	17%	25%

- Responses to Statement #23 show that applicants believe inspectors are thorough and clear in explaining changes that need to be made when problems arise on the way to approval. It received 56% total agreement and only 8% total disagreement.
- Statement #26 asked about the efficiency of scheduling inspections. It received more agreement (36%) than disagreement (24%). Responses did not differ by applicant frequency.
- Statement #27 said that inspections are scheduled for the next day when they are requested before the end of the day. Applicants agreed or strongly agreed with this at a rate of 40% – more than three times the 12% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

- Statement #29, regarding the accessibility of inspectors, received more than twice as many positive responses (38%) as negative ones (16%).

These generally positive responses demonstrate that respondents have mostly high opinions of the inspection personnel and their ability to contact them and schedule inspections. The process for scheduling inspections was of some concern, receiving less convincing levels of agreement, but applicants generally expressed positive sentiments about the timeliness of inspections as well as the availability and helpfulness of inspectors.

(8) Applicants Generally Feel that Development Review Fees Are Too High.

The statements in the following table asked whether stakeholders felt that fees in the development review process are reasonable.

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
30. The fees charged for land entitlement applications are reasonable.	12%	20%	40%	28%
31. The fees charged for building permit applications are reasonable.	20%	24%	36%	20%

Both statements in this section received significantly more disagreement and strong disagreement than agreeing responses (at least 36% negative and no more than 20% positive for both statements). This was especially true for land entitlement applications. On both statements, the applicants who only visit the Department once or twice a year gave approximately equal parts agreement and disagreement, while those with frequent contact disagreed more strongly (54% total disagreement for both). Contractors also tended to be moderate, while Homeowners gave only one positive response to Statement #31 and none to Statement #30.

The level of disagreement received for these statements could indicate that the Department's fees are high compared to other municipalities (which would require a comparative study to verify), or that applicants simply do not feel that they are getting enough value in the development review process for the fees that they are required to pay.

4. ADDITIONAL MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION RESPONSES

The third section of the survey asked respondents to answer additional multiple choice questions about their experience with the development review process in Redlands and other communities.

(1) Stakeholders Have Mostly Negative Impressions of the Development Review Functions in Redlands. Building Inspections are an Exception.

In the first multiple choice question, respondents were asked to "please indicate your level of satisfaction with each development review and permitting function based on your experience with them." Respondents could choose "Very Satisfied", "Somewhat Satisfied", "Neutral", "Somewhat Unsatisfied", "Very Unsatisfied", or "N/A". For data display purposes, "Very Satisfied" and "Somewhat Satisfied" have been combined in the table below, as have "Somewhat Unsatisfied" and "Very Unsatisfied".

Function	Satisfied	Neutral	Un-satisfied	N/A
1. Building permitting – Plan Review	17%	0%	58%	25%
2. Building permitting – Inspections	42%	21%	8%	29%
3. Planning Reviews	17%	8%	54%	21%
4. Fire Plan Reviews and Inspections	30%	13%	23%	25%
5. Quality of Life – Plan Reviews	13%	17%	50%	21%
6. Engineering Plan Reviews and Inspections	21%	13%	50%	17%

As the table and chart above show, stakeholders have mostly negative experiences with the various development review functions. Fire review and inspections got mixed reviews, which aligns with responses received earlier in the survey. Building inspections were positively reviewed, which also aligns with responses from earlier in the survey. The other functions, however, each received more than twice as many unsatisfied responses as satisfied ones.

(2) Most Respondents Believe that the Development Review Process Is More Difficult in Redlands than in Other Places.

The second multiple choice question asked respondents whether they found the development review process in Redlands to be easier than in other municipalities, comparable to those municipalities, or more difficult than in other municipalities. The responses are outlined in the table and chart below.

Response	% of Responses
Easier than in other municipalities	15%
About the same as other municipalities	20%
More difficult than other municipalities	65%

As the table and chart show, most respondents believe that the development review process is more difficult in Redlands than in other municipalities. When asked to list some municipalities where the development review process is easier, they listed as examples the following governmental entities: Riverside, Yucaipa, Palm Springs, Colton, Fontana, and San Bernardino County.

(3) Some Respondents Believe Redlands Typically Has Higher Development Review Fees than Other Municipalities, While Others Believe the Fees in Redlands Are Typically Comparable.

The third multiple choice question asked respondents whether they typically found the development review fees in Redlands to be less than in other municipalities,

comparable to those municipalities, or more than in other municipalities. The responses are outlined in the table and chart below.

Response	% of Responses
Less than in other municipalities	5%
About the same as other municipalities	47%
More than in other municipalities	47%

As the table and chart show, respondents were split. Some believed Redlands' development review fees are similar to other places, while others believe they are higher than in other places.

5. OPEN-ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

The final section of the survey asked respondent to provide answers in their own words to a handful of questions about the strengths and opportunities for improvement in the City's development review and permitting process.

(1) Stakeholders Appreciate Staff's Efforts to Assist Them.

When asked what they felt were the greatest strengths of the process in Redlands, the stakeholders who chose to answer this question noted that although they view the City's development review and permitting processes as cumbersome and confusing, the staff working in the Department work hard and make every effort to assist applicants to the degree that they are able.

(2) Respondents See a Need For Improvement in the Quality of Staff, Focus on Customer Service, and the Management of the Development Review Process.

When asked what respondents saw as the biggest improvement opportunities for the Department, they provided a number of suggestions, from which a few key themes emerged. The most common responses dealt with the following:

- The level of staff competence and experience (8 responses)

- Customer service and the attitude toward applicants (8 responses)
- A perceived need for changes/improvements in management (5 responses)
- The number of staff at the OSPC (3 responses)
- The amount of detailed information about the process available (3 responses)

As these responses demonstrate, respondents' primary concerns with the process have to do with the ability of staff to help them navigate the process and the attitude that employees take toward customer service. They also see a need for more readily accessible information about the process in order to avoid surprises and confusion. In the mind of some respondents, these issues spring from the management of the development review process.

(3) Other Comments

When asked to provide further comments to the project team, some respondents wrote about issues that were addressed earlier in the survey, while others stressed the need for communication between departments, their desire for a facility more conducive to actually processing permits in a one-stop fashion, the need to remove stringent requirements for applications or project types where they are unnecessary, the need to streamline the approval process for minor permits, and the importance of respecting the City's history and sense of place.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

As part of the management study of the Redlands, California permitting processes and in addition to the online survey, the project team reached out to a number of stakeholders who have done business with the City in the past several years and conducted interviews with them regarding their experience with the City's OSPC and development review and permitting process.

The project team contacted various contractors, business people, and residents who have done business with the City for either entitlement or building permits. All feedback was provided through telephone interviews; reviewers were assured anonymity to encourage honest feedback.

Below is a summary of the feedback provided through interviews.

1. RESPONDENTS PRAISED STAFF A STRONG WORK ETHIC AND DEDICATION BUT EXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING HIGH TURNOVER AND LACK OF EXPERIENCE OF NEW EMPLOYEES.

Respondents consistently praised staff in both land use and building for their hard work, even when trying to navigate complex processes and requirements.

Recent high levels of staff turnover have been a source of frustration for some applicants, who noted that newer staff had less knowledge of the city's processes and that as a result the substance and quality of plan reviews was inconsistent.

The most common desire expressed was working with experienced, knowledgeable, and trained staff members.

2. THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS RECEIVED POSITIVE FEEDBACK.

Only one of the respondents had detailed experience with the land development process. That individual said that the process was predictable and time-lines were fair, and that staff were accessible and reasonable. He had no suggestions for improvement.

3. THE ENTITLEMENT PROCESS WAS DESCRIBED AS RIGOROUS, WITH SOME POTENTIAL AREAS FOR STREAMLINING OR SIMPLIFICATION.

Applicants noted that Redlands has high development standards and high expectations for the quality of work done in the town. No one interviewed believed that these should be compromised, but respondents did identify areas where the process itself could be streamlined.

Two respondents spoke extensively regarding the requirement that the Planning Commission and City Council review larger projects before the staff review process begins. Both stated that they thought a less cumbersome process could be used that met the intent of this policy.

The applicants argued that the current process was time consuming, especially because of notice requirements for both decision making entities, that the level of detail provided was more than the Commission and Council Members required, and that in some cases it led to elected bodies pre-judging a project before staff could review it against the city's standards.

Specific suggestions included:

- Providing a less detailed overview of the project to the Council, limited to a brief narrative and conceptual drawings.
- Have planning staff provide the Commission with an overview of projects in the pipeline, instead of having the applicants present.

- Raising the threshold for projects that trigger this requirement, especially for residential projects. Currently any residential project with greater than 35 units triggers this review.

Stakeholders also indicated that the scope and complexity of application materials seemed greater in Redlands than in other communities, even accounting for Redlands-specific standards. While the City provides excellent and clear checklists regarding what to submit, the actual submittal requirements were described as onerous. One example provided as the need for a socio-economic analysis, even in cases where this did not appear to add value. Applicants also stated that the required detail level in exhibits is higher than the norm.

One individual interviewed said that he regularly spent thousands of dollars on printing costs for one application packet or packet for board and commission members, and some of what was required did not seem to be necessary. He suggested that the City review submittal requirements and assess whether all are needed or could be simplified.

4. OVERALL, RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE CULTURE IN PLANNING BECOME MORE ORIENTED TO PROBLEM SOLVING AND LESS FOCUSED ON BUREAUCRATIC REQUIREMENTS.

Those interviewed stated that the Planning approvals process often became mired in details. One individual with extensive experience in Redlands stated that staff needed to work incredibly hard because the processes and expectations in Redlands were very much focused on detail, “ensuring that every “I” is dotted and every “T” is crossed, not on the purpose of the rules.” This respondent stated that he had seen some recent improvements in this area, with one staff member in particular focusing more on how to find a path forward for projects.

5. FOR BOTH ENTITLEMENTS AND BUILDING PERMITS, APPLICANTS WOULD LIKE THE CITY TO TAKE A GREATER ROLE COORDINATING BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS AND ADDRESSING CONFLICTS.

Planning staff manage and coordinate the process of obtaining comments on applications. However, respondents stated that when comments from departments conflict with each other the applicant is caught in the middle. They stated that some other jurisdictions are more pro-active in managing feedback from different review agencies.

Several applicants involved in building permits stated that the different departments do not seem to communicate with each other regarding permits and permit requirements. One noted a particular disconnect between building and fire.

Several applicants also questioned the value of having the “Quality of Life” division review building permit applications.

6. THE PRIMARY AREA OF CONCERN REGARDING BUILDING PERMITS RELATED TO TIME-FRAMES FOR BUILDING PERMIT REVIEW, ALTHOUGH THE PERCEPTION WAS THAT THIS HAS IMPROVED RECENTLY.

Applicants for building permits stated that turnaround times for initial plan reviews was often 4 weeks or more. They also stated that they could never predict when plan reviews would be completed, which made project planning difficult. According to interviews, fire review times have improved significantly recently.

Applicants also expressed concern that initial reviews were not complete and comprehensive, requiring them to re-submit multiple times and respond to a different set of comments each time. This problem appeared to be primarily due to the recent turnover in staff and the use of outside consultants to review plans.

7. CUSTOMERS PROVIDED POSITIVE FEEDBACK REGARDING INSPECTIONS.

All of those interviewed who are involved in construction stated that inspectors were responsive, fair, and reasonable. There were no significant concerns expressed regarding the quality or timeliness of inspection processes. The only suggestions provided on potential improvement opportunity was a more streamlined approach to scheduling inspections; as it was difficult to contact the OSPC by phone due to staff not having time to answer calls timely. This sometimes resulted in applicants coming into the OSPC in person solely for the purpose of requesting an inspection.

8. CUSTOMERS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON CODE REQUIREMENTS OR APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.

Customers seeking information prior to submitting an application had difficulty reaching anyone in the office or by telephone who could provide information regarding code requirements, submittal requirements, or next steps. One person interviewed stated that he visited the One-Stop Shop permit center and asked for information regarding what he needed to submit for a building permit application. Upon returning with all required information, he was told there were additional items that he needed to submit.

Applicants who work frequently with the Redlands building department have learned through experience what information was required and what standards needed to be met, but said that they witnessed people in the permit center who were seeking information that staff could not provide. This problem appears to have been exacerbated by recent staff turnover.

9. A CONSISTENT THEME AMONG STAKEHOLDERS WAS A DESIRE FOR MORE TECHNOLOGY.

Stakeholders indicated that the technology available in Redlands was inferior to that of other comparable cities. Specific items identified included:

- Submit electronic applications for review, including site plans and architectural drawings.
- Track applications on-line them through the review process, including looking up comments.
- Look up inspection results on-line.

The stakeholders strongly desired an increase in the City's use of technology to enhance service levels, provide additional remote access to services, and reduce the need to visit the OSPC in person for certain activities.

10. STAKEHOLDERS HAD A NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS.

All of those interviewed were asked for suggestions regarding changes that they would like to see. Below are key recommendations provided in the interviews:

- Consider accepting PDF plans at application time and only require the "official" paper plans at the end of the process.
- Reduce the number of plan sets required at building permit submission to 2 or 3, consistent with surrounding jurisdictions.
- Consider eliminating the Quality of Life review for building permits.
- Offer an accelerated or over the counter process for review of simple projects, potentially during specific hours.
- Expand the number and types of permits that could be issued over the counter.
- Prepare a more detailed inventory of submittal requirements for building permits.

APPENDIX C

LISTING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table contains a summary of the recommendations proposed by the project team. For ease of review, these are presented in the order in which they are presented in the report. For each recommendation, the project team has assigned a priority, a service level category, responsibility for implementation and the cost impact of the recommendation.

For the service level category, we have assigned each recommendation to one of three categories: Base, Intermediate or Premium. The base category contains recommendations that the project team identify as necessary to provide a base level of service to the public (no frills). The Premium category includes those recommendations that would place the City of Redland's service levels at best in class status. Those recommendations that fall in the middle category (intermediate) are between these two levels and represent an improvement over the status quo but does not take the City to best in class status. This categorization was utilized to provide options for the City to consider.

For the implementation responsibility category, we have identified whether this is a policy decision (i.e. – one that must be made by the City Council) or whether it is an administrative decision (one that can be implemented by the City Manager or his staff without policy direction).

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
Development Process Improvements / Customer Service Enhancements					
2.1	An increase in the dialogue between the City and the Construction Services Industry and the Chamber of Commerce should be adopted including quarterly training and meetings, newsletters, and frequent outreach for input.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Administrative
2.1	The City should institute an email newsletter to increase the level of dialogue with customers that is focused on educating applicants regarding changing policies and procedures, providing educational information regarding code compliance, and discussing available training sessions.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Administrative
2.1	The City should conduct an annual and ongoing customer satisfaction survey.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	Administrative
2.2	The City should develop a comprehensive Development Guide that provides an overview of the development process. This would be used to train new staff in the process and improve the public's understanding of the process.	n/a if done internally. \$15,000 if contracted out; this cost could include assistance with developing applications, checklists, etc.	High	Intermediate	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
2.3	The City should develop an Application/Permit Matrix that outlines the timeframes for performance, the parties responsible for review, and major submittal requirements for each type of application or permit.	Staff time.	High	Base	Administrative
2.4	Application forms should be updated to fillable PDF format and made available online for customers to complete and print out.	Staff time. if done internally	High	Intermediate	Administrative
2.5	Detailed submittal requirements and a checklist to ensure that they are met should be developed for each application and permit type and made available to applicants in order to ensure that more complete applications are received.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	Administrative
2.6	Post common plan check corrections on the City's website to provide guidance to architects and design professionals on the development requirements in the City of Redlands.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	Administrative
2.7	Checklists should be utilized during the intake process to ensure submitted applications are complete. Incomplete applications should not be accepted.	Staff time.	High	Base	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
2.7	Checklists utilized should be made available on the City's website for use by the public in self-evaluating their own applications in advance.	Staff time.	High	Base	Administrative
2.7	The City should require all applicants to submit a checklist showing all corrections made in reference to comments received on all resubmittals.	Staff time.	Medium	Intermediate	Administrative
2.8	Staff should document interpretations of the land development code, building code, and internal policies and procedures and make these available to the public on the City's website.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Administrative
2.9	The conditions of approval utilized by all of the divisions and departments in the review of discretionary and administrative permits should be documented and utilized internally to increase consistency of review, streamline the review process, and ensure consistency in writing approval letters.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
2.9	The Planning Division should take lead responsibility in facilitating the development of these written conditions of approval by all of the divisions and departments.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Administrative
2.10	A planner should be formally designated as the project manager for each entitlement application. The project manager should be given authority to guide applications through the review process and assist applicants in resolving interdepartmental issues and reaching a decision as quickly as possible.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Administrative
2.10	The assigned case planner should develop and provide summary notes to all applicants who participate in the informal development review meetings on projects prior to formal submittal.	Staff time.	High	Base	Administrative
2.11	The City should develop a policy and procedures for the use of consultant services for the preparation of CEQA/NEPA documents.	Staff time.	Low	Premium	Administrative
2.12	The City should formally adopt processing standards for each entitlement and permit type.	n/c	High	Base	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
2.12	If staffing modifications are implemented, the City should not modify the existing performance standards for building permit activities as these should be consistently attainable.	n/a	High	Base	Administrative
2.12	Monthly performance reports outlining the percentage of plan reviews and inspections completed within established time frames should be developed, distributed to key administrative and elected officials, and posted to the Internet. The report should be broken down by functional review area (i.e. – Planning, Building (by trade), Engineering, etc.).	Staff time.	High	Base	Administrative
2.13	The City should implement an “expedited” permit processing option for applicants for whom the standard permit turnaround times are insufficient.	Staff time.	Medium	Premium	Policy
2.14	The City Council, Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission should conduct joint meetings at least annually with a primary focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities, and streamlining the review and approval process.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Policy

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
2.18(1)	The City should conduct a fee study to update the development review fees associated with Planning, Engineering, and Fire.	\$50,000	High	Intermediate	Administrative
2.18(2)	The City should adopt a formal cost recovery policy outlining the targeted level of revenues for the development review function that will be covered by fees.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Policy
2.18(2)	The City should consider establishing the development review functions as an enterprise fund.	n/c	High	Intermediate	Policy
2.18(3)	The City should consider the consistent implementation of a resubmittal fee for all applications that require more than two reviews beyond the original review. Application fees should be set at a level that incorporates two reviews within the base fee.	n/c	Medium	Base	Policy

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
2.18(4)	The City of Redlands, when implementing a new fee schedule, should implement a technology fee to provide a revenue stream to cover the maintenance, upgrade and utilization of effective technology solutions. These fees should be allocated to a dedicated fund only for use in supporting the technology needs of the development review and permitting processes.	n/c	Medium	Premium	Policy
Technology Utilization					
3.1(1)	The City should require all application processing and permitting activities to be recorded and processed through the City's permitting software application, CityWorks. Separate spreadsheets and logs maintained outside of CityWorks should be eliminated once modifications are made to CityWorks to accommodate all application and permit types.	n/c	High	Base	Administrative
3.1(2)	CityWorks should be updated to ensure that fields are used consistently and in a manner that makes for easy reporting of workload and performance on a regular basis.	Depending upon IT resource availability contractual resources may be needed.	High	Intermediate	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
3.1(3)	The City should implement online or IVR inspection requests for all development review inspections in order to streamline the inspection scheduling process and to reduce the workload of the counter permitting staff.	Cost included above.	High	Base	Administrative
3.2	The use of CityWorks should be expanded to fully utilize its available functionalities, including field entry of inspection results and online status review with visible comments.	Depending upon IT resource availability contractual resources may be needed; \$20,000 estimated	High	Basic	Administrative
3.2	To the extent feasible, online permitting, electronic document submittal, and electronic routing of documents for review should be considered.	\$50,000 for online permitting/\$150,000 for electronic document review	High	Premium	Administrative
3.2	The OSPC must obtain expanded CityWorks training for staff so that they are able to take advantage of the full functionality of the system.	Depending upon IT resource availability contractual resources may be needed; \$10,000 estimated	High	Base	Administrative
3.3	The City of Redlands should implement laptop / tablet use for the resulting of inspections in the field by all field inspectors (building, fire, engineering, etc.).	\$2,000 for Building & Safety/\$5,000 for all divisions	High	Intermediate	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
3.4	The City's website should be modified to provide easier access to development review and permitting information. All information should be consolidated into a single Development Review/Permitting page rather than by department and division. Enhanced search capabilities of content, more intuitive grouping of forms and information, and expansion of informational materials should be implemented.	\$10,000 (no cost if done with existing City resources)	High	Base	Administrative
3.5	The City should undertake a comprehensive assessment of all software systems that involve or impact the development review process and develop a plan for integrating data across platforms to increase data access and make it easily accessible for use by staff.	\$50,000	Medium	Premium	Administrative
3.5	Over the next year or two, the City should expand the use of technology to enable applicants to apply for over the counter permits online and to provide functionality for electronic plan submission and review.	Covered above.	High	Premium	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
3.6	Permitting Software User Guide and Administrative Procedures should be developed so that all staff are appropriately trained on the process and they are applying it consistently. These should be two separate documents – one outlining use of CityWorks and one outlining the administrative processes staff utilize in handling work activities.	Staff time if developed internally.	High	Base	Administrative
One Stop Permit Center Operations					
4.1	The City should consider full consolidation of all development review and permitting functions into the OSPC and place overall oversight and accountability with a single manager.	Costs covered below.	Medium	Premium	Administrative
4.2(1)	The City should consider options such as a concierge, information kiosk, or expanded signage for orienting applicants when they first arrive at the permitting center.	\$20,000	High	Base	Administrative
4.2(2)	The City should implement a clear and consistent method for assigning an order for permitting applicants to come to the counter.	Covered in other facility costs.	High	Base	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
4.2(3)	The City should ensure that there is sufficient and comfortable seating and suitable workspace for applicants.	Covered in other facility costs.	High	Base	Administrative
4.2(3)	Longer-term, the City should provide access to a kiosk for electronic plan review submittal and educational materials for applicants.	Covered in other cost.	High	Base	Administrative
4.2(4)	The City should modify the OSPC to develop a configuration that will enable full incorporation of all staff into the OSPC and improve intake through a more customer friendly approach.	\$20,000	High	Base	Administrative
4.3	The City through the City Manager and Managers overseeing the various development review functions should provide training to all staff regarding the "focus" of the City on providing high-quality services in a timely manner.	Staff time.	High	Intermediate	Administrative
4.3	A quarterly development review training session should be implemented for all staff directly involved in Development Review and Permitting functions.	Staff time.	High	Base	Administrative

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
4.3	The specific training topics for each meeting should be developed by staff but could include topics such as: customer service training, review of inter-departmental issues, more in-depth discussion of the role of a specific department/division, etc.	n/c	High	Base	Administrative
4.3	A training needs assessment should be conducted for all staff involved in development review. Individual employee training plans should be developed that focus on maintenance of existing certifications / licenses and then expansion of skills.	Staff time.	Medium	Base	Administrative
Personnel and Staffing¹²					
5.1	The City should focus efforts on filling the existing vacancies with the Building Division.	n/c – existing resources.	High	Base	Administrative
5.2	The City should implement two (2) permit technician positions on the front counter to assist the public, review applications as received, and process over the counter permits.	\$157,995 ¹³	High	Intermediate	Administrative

¹² Staffing costs include salaries (at Step C) with benefits

¹³ Cost for new Permit Tech I (\$77,273.70) and Permit Tech II (\$80,721.70)

Summary Table of Recommendations					
Report Chapter / Section	Recommendation	Cost/Savings	Priority	Category	Implementation Responsibility
5.3	The City should add a new position of Senior Building Inspector to address existing workloads.	\$104,489.85	Medium	Base	Administrative
5.4	The City should reclassify the Senior Plans Specialist to a Senior Plans Examiner position and the two (2) Plans Specialist positions to two (2) Plans Examiner positions.	\$14,514.56 ¹⁴	Medium	Base	Administrative
5.4	The City should add a Planning Technician position and reclassify an Administrative Analyst to Senior Administrative Analyst.	\$75,284.70 + \$7,460.83 ¹⁵	Medium	Premium	Administrative
5.5	The Division should develop a contingency plan that includes the use of external resources or overtime, when they are unable to complete plan review and inspection workloads within required timeframes.	\$25,000 (for use only as needed)	High	Base	Administrative

The analysis and discussion regarding each recommendation is contained in the chapters and section listed.

¹⁴ Additional cost above FY 2015-2016 budgeted amount for all three positions (initial annual compensation for the Plans Examiner would be \$97,233.83; reclassified Plans Examiner would be \$89,092.95, and Senior Plans Examiner would be \$113,372.78).

¹⁵ Additional cost above FY 2015-2016 budgeted amount for the Senior Administrative Analyst position (initial annual compensation would be \$98,543.98).