



**Agenda Item C.1**  
**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM**  
**Meeting Date: April 15, 2008**

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**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Steve Chase  
Planning & Environmental Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Management Partners Report on Land Use Function Improvements

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- A. Receive a presentation from the Planning & Environmental Services Director and Management Partners on the results of a process improvement study about the City's land use planning function. (Refer to Attachment 1).
- B. Provide comments and general direction to staff on the list of recommendations included within the report.
- C. File the report with the expectation that staff will incorporate the City Council's comments and direction into the Strategic Plan, Budget, codes and administrative processes relative to land use planning and design review.

**BACKGROUND:**

Between December 2006 and March 2007, the City Council and Design Review Board conducted several public study sessions on the land use planning process. The study sessions brought focus upon difficulties encountered in the permitting of small residential projects, both from a technical and a customer service perspective. The information gathered focused on the structure and membership qualifications of design review boards, whether design review is decisional or advisory, their jurisdictional purview, as well as the processes and tools they employ.

The public study sessions also focused on zoning standards, design controls and administrative processes conducted by the Planning & Environmental Services Department. The issues that emerged had more to do with the City's adoption of long-standing County land use regulations, practices and organizational behaviors. While it was necessary to implement the County's regimen of rules and tools for a period of time, the City found itself wanting to invest in home grown measures shaped around Goleta's specific needs and desires. It was broadly acknowledged that the time had come to pull away from the County rules, tools and culture of doing business.

Several responsive actions were taken by the City Council in March 2007, including:

- The composition of the Design Review Board (DRB) was adjusted to seven members, with the majority of the positions designated for licensed professionals (e.g. architects, landscape architects and landscape contractors).
- The point of appeal of DRB decisions was advanced to the preliminary review phase.
- The DRB trigger was adjusted to 750 square feet for single family unit additions.
- The 50% expansion cap was rescinded for single family unit additions.
- The side yard setback on corner lots was adjusted for single family units.
- Floor area ratios were re-characterized as guidelines rather than absolute standards.
- Public notice and appeal requirements were streamlined for discretionary projects.

During the study sessions, members of the City Council expressed a desire for process improvements, a demystifying of the planning process, and an overarching emphasis placed on customer service. What staff heard from Councilmembers was an expectation that the planning process deliver high quality results through fair, consistent and normative planning practices that take far less time. That set the stage for the commissioning of a process improvement project as a precursor to the preparation of the City's home grown zoning ordinance and other planning and design controls to come.

As a result, staff suggested that a professional management consulting firm be commissioned to provide best practice evaluations and independent peer review of the City's land use planning function. On March 19, 2007, the City Council authorized a contract with Management Partners, Inc., for a process improvement project that largely centered on an operational review of the Planning & Environmental Services Department. The scope of work included the following sub-tasks:

- A survey of staff and stakeholders on processes, tools and customer service issues.
- A charting of process maps.
- Benchmarking with peer agencies.
- Best practices research.
- Articulation of a range of solutions.
- A model exercise to achieve buy-in across planning staff and other departments.
- Preparation of a detailed implementation plan.

This staff report presents the Management Partners report as Attachment 1.

## DISCUSSION:

Over the course of last summer and fall, Management Partners conducted interviews with 22 staff members and 20 stakeholders of the City's land use function, so as to validate their understanding of baseline conditions and challenges that lie ahead, as well as to adjust the scope of work to match new issues and ideas. Interviewees included members of the City Council, Planning Commission and Design Review Board, the City Manager and some of the Department Heads, various community stakeholders, private sector land use professionals that do business with the City, as well as staff from the Planning & Environmental Services Department, Neighborhood Services Department and Community Services Department. The interviews produced information about current processes and workloads, community values and expectations, desired outcomes of the study, areas for further inquiry and analysis, numerous recommendations for process improvements.

Several progress report meetings were held by a staff subcommittee to validate information and test-out current and suggested process steps and system refinements. Most importantly, the meetings created a forum for idea-making and examination of benchmark comparisons with peer jurisdictions, process maps or flow charts, as well as process improvement recommendations to come forth from the study. Mr. Shine Ling of the Planning & Environmental Services Department served as a staff coordinator/liaison with the staff of Management Partners. An extensive review of City documents was also conducted as part of the study.

Management Partners conducted surveys with nine selected peer jurisdictions that led to benchmark comparison charts on a host of subjects. The peer jurisdictions included Dana Point, Encinitas, Manhattan Beach, Mountain View, Poway, Redondo Beach, San Clemente, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz. The communities of Aliso Viejo, Monterey, San Bruno and San Juan Capistrano were invited to participate but elected otherwise. The benchmark comparisons covered a range of topics, including (refer to pages 19 – 29 of Attachment 1):

- Staffing (Goleta is at an average staffing level for planning positions and considerably below average for in-house building inspectors and plan examiners, when adjusted for work load and contract services).
- Caseload volume by planner position (slightly above average).
- Processing rates as a ratio of positions (considerably below average).
- Building Permits processed as a ratio of plan examiner positions (average).
- Building inspections as a ratio of positions (average).
- Turnaround times for planning applications for
  - New single family residences (considerably above average).
  - Room additions (considerably above average).
  - Conditional Use Permits (above average).

The benchmark comparisons also measured the land use function relative to fiscal considerations, finding that Goleta's annual budget of \$2.4 million for the Planning &

Environmental Services Department is in line with the peer jurisdictions. Peer comparisons were made for the following fiscal categories (pages 41 – 49):

- Expenditures per position in the Planning & Environmental Services Department (Goleta is about average).
- Expenditures per percentage of total General Fund (Goleta is twice that of average).
- Equipment and services budget (average).
- Permit fees and charges for services (considerably less than average).
- Permit fees and charges for services per position (considerably less than average).

From a management perspective, the report includes a comparison of organizational structures across peer jurisdictions (page 34) and a critique of the challenges that Goleta's management is facing in creating a home grown system as it breaks away from the County model (pages 35 – 41 and 49 – 50).

Process maps were constructed to better understand the path that various permit types must follow. They, in turn, raised many questions and challenges pertaining to how the Planning & Environmental Services Department operates within and across its four functional divisions (Current Planning, Advance Planning, Building & Safety, and Planning Commission/Design Review Board), as well as with other related City services such as the Engineering Services Division within the Community Services Department. Matters such as counter intake, routing, cash handling, timelines, etc. were analyzed and process improvement recommendations made and some tested (pages 51 – 63).

Public service issues were also assessed and measured against best practices in the field of community development (pages 64 – 72). This analysis included a review of technology needs, such as a web-based Geographic Information System, an on-line permit tracking system, digital records retention system, an on-line transmittal system for ministerial permits, and a one-stop counter system for stakeholders having business with the City, (including fire, engineering, code enforcement, redevelopment and revitalization).

Detailed recommendations are provided throughout the report. Staff of the Planning & Environmental Services Department and Engineering Services Division were invited to comment on each recommendation. Management Partners retained ownership of the recommendations and had the final say throughout this review and comment process. A tally of the recommendations is provided as Attachment A of the report.

The recommendations represent Management Partners' independent assessment of what needs to be accomplished by the City if it is to meet its stated objectives. Those objectives bear repeating: timeliness; consistency; injecting more certainty or predictability into the process; measurement accountability; transparency; and assuring that there are multiple points of public access into the land use function. An overview of the final report and findings will be provided via PowerPoint by representatives of Management Partners.

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

The recommended actions of the report directly relate to several Strategic Plan goals, including: General Plan, Ordinances & Implementation Measures; Develop & Improve Communication to Residents; and Protect Character, Quality & Diversity of Neighborhoods.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

N/A.

**FISCAL IMPACTS:**

A contract in the amount of \$62,700 was authorized with Management Partners for the conduct of the process improvement project and report preparation and is consistent with the City's budget allocation for this service.

Submitted By:

Reviewed by:

Approved By:

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Steve Chase, Director  
Planning & Environmental  
Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Greene, Director  
Administrative Services

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Singer  
City Manager

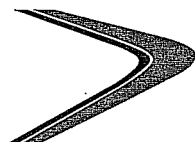
**ATTACHMENTS:**

Management Partners Report on Land Use Function Improvements, April 2008

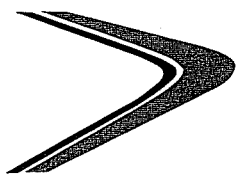
**CITY OF GOLETA, CALIFORNIA**

**LAND USE FUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS**

**April 2008**



**MANAGEMENT PARTNERS**  
INCORPORATED



# MANAGEMENT PARTNERS

I N C O R P O R A T E D

April 2, 2008

Mr. Steve Chase, Director  
Planning and Environmental Services Department  
City of Goleta  
130 Cremona Drive, Suite B  
Goleta, CA 93117

Dear Mr. Chase:

Management Partners is pleased to present this report of our analysis of the City's land use function processes.

Stakeholders seek a clear, consistent and predictable land use process. The City Council, City management and staff are all interested in quality results for the community. Both interests can be met through a land use process that has up-to-date technology systems, stated and measured performance expectations, consistent policies, and clear roles for each of the reviewing parties.

Goleta employees work very hard to provide high quality service to stakeholders and spend significant time with them, providing information and assisting at the counter. Nonetheless, the system can be improved by a variety of changes to include policies, procedures and technology. Specifically, this report recommends:

- Creating a cost recovery plan for the operation with goals and targets that are regularly measured.
- Implementing centralized permit tracking software
- Establishing performance standards for the operations and a system to measure effectiveness in meeting these goals
- Updating the zoning code as a critical component to better customer service
- Breaking up broad application types into smaller, more specific application types with thresholds
- Clarifying routing, review times, and review letters with reviewing agencies.

We are confident that through our recommendations, the City can improve its land use process for the benefit of stakeholders, the community, staff effectiveness, advisory bodies and the Council.

Thank you for your support of this project. We also greatly appreciate the staff members who gave their time, insight and expertise for this report. They were accommodating and responsive. We look forward to assisting the City in implementing these recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Newfarmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "G".

Gerald E. Newfarmer  
President and CEO





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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The City of Goleta is suffering some “growth pains” as it evolves from an unincorporated County area to an incorporated City with stakeholder demands for City amenities and services and some dissension among City residents and policymakers on growth issues. In the six years since incorporation, the City has operated without a fully functional General Plan which, in turn, impeded other important policy improvements; staff has been forced to operate on “shifting sands” as the General Plan was being prepared, and now is under an amendment process. The quantity and complexity of land use has increased in recent years. Since incorporation, staff members have been busy processing daily workload and have been unable to put a comprehensive and considered system for land use function improvements in place. The City is fortunate to have a reputation as a desirable residential location, and to have on staff many skilled, knowledgeable, and hard-working employees with a focus on customer service and an understanding of “the big picture.”

Due to the City’s desirable characteristics, these land use function workload pressures will continue for the foreseeable future. The slow start of a new land use system in the early years of the City’s history artificially limited development, resulting in the current increase in workload. Goleta is fortunate, however, that it is in a position to maintain high-quality land use standards, protect critical environmental assets and maintain the quality of life for current residents as new residential growth occurs.

By adopting the Santa Barbara County zoning code, Goleta has joined an exclusive regional club with a unique land use process unlike that of the rest of California and the United States. The current zoning code is unique and consists of broad “umbrella” application types that encompass what are divided into more specific types in other cities. The result is the need for a high degree of interpretation for each review and approval, with custom-made permits. This is akin to the difference between a custom-made and a manufactured watch; the former process, while technically proper and artful, is far less efficient. Though there will necessarily be differences in individual land development sites, the review process should be streamlined to the maximum extent possible by adopting a more specific (and non-conflicting) zoning code and design guidelines so that staff can independently act to move things forward.

Currently, the system depends upon the historical and technical knowledge of one or two staff who can make fast decisions based upon precedent; should those staff members depart, the system would be

considerably weakened and the hiring pool constrained to the local region for those familiar with the unique code now in use.

Finally, this unique system creates an unnecessary barrier to entry for developers unfamiliar with local custom and codes; those who already know the system have a definite business advantage in gaining approval.

The City is in need of a sizeable investment in technology to serve as the backbone for this process. Technology helps to ensure consistency and clarity of review by tying all parties into the loop, creates an archive of information on a given project or address, and provides the data and reports necessary for proper operation and management of performance.

Clarifying the coordination aspects of the land use process is critical. Staff from various departments must come together to set specific thresholds as to what types of applications are routed, to whom, when, and with defined turnaround times. Expectations of all parties must be made clear.

Goleta's staff provides a high level of personal service, but the City is lacking in educational materials and needs to move stakeholders to a "self-service" model by which they can remotely retrieve information and project status online.

The very nature of a study of organization and process is to look for ways of improving the services under review. As such, the positive aspects of the service delivery and those employed in providing that service are considered to be givens. As the findings and recommendations for the land use and building permit processes are reviewed, it is important to note that there is a dedicated and loyal group of employees working in the City who, on a daily basis, attempt to provide good service to the public. In many cases they are the victims of organizational decisions, past practices, and regulations promulgated by others that impact the method in which they undertake their work.

Also, the very nature of regulatory functions can be expected to create tensions and frictions between the service provider and the stakeholder. The challenge to the public agency is to create an atmosphere whereby the agency works with the stakeholder in meeting the regulatory requirements. With proper direction, procedures, and resources, City employees exhibit a willingness and ability to implement and enact the recommendations of this report successfully. Many employees expressed enthusiasm that improvements are being considered and expressed a desire to work with management and the stakeholders to bring about improvements to the land use process.

The City of Goleta is in an excellent position to move forward and we are confident that management and staff are skilled to ensure implementation occurs.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

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This study is one of the key strategies that the City has adopted to improve the land use process for Goleta. The objective of improving the land use process is to enhance customer service, increase understanding on the part of land use applicants and staff as to the constraints and priorities of the City, and to support appropriate economic development to improve services to existing residents. The study includes a comprehensive review of the process, with particular attention focused on financial, technological, customer service, and process improvements. Since its incorporation in 2001, the City's growth and land use issues have been among the more important policy issues it has addressed.

Following incorporation, the City deemed it necessary to quickly put in place land-use policies and land use codes. Goleta found it expeditious and sensible to adopt existing Santa Barbara County regulations and land use processes. While new cities commonly adopt County regulatory procedures, the situation in Goleta was somewhat unusual due to the fact that the County of Santa Barbara developed an unusual and complicated land use regulation approach, based on environmental impact in response to a variety of large scale land use proposals, including oil drilling, that shaped the land use planning agenda in the 1970's and 1980's when modern (CEQA compliant) planning policies were developed. Such policies, while arguably appropriate for consideration of undeveloped property, are problematic for a suburban / urban area such as Goleta, especially for areas that were developed haphazardly prior to the development of the current County system.

Since incorporation and, more recently, a change of City Council composition, demand on the land use function has increased. As a result, the City has engaged Management Partners to evaluate the land use approval process and make recommendations for improvement. Not only is it an appropriate time in the early life of the City to evaluate processes and procedures, but to improve the process, ensure financial stability, and increase the level of stakeholder satisfaction as well, an important goal of the study.

This study by Management Partners is a continuation of the improvements the City has implemented internally over the last year. Some recent internal improvements have included minimizing redundant appeals loops and public noticing requirements and fully staffing the Advance Planning function. The improvements recommended in this report will build upon an existing tradition of continuous improvement within the organization.

## **PROJECT APPROACH**

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Management Partners' study of the City of Goleta's land use process was conducted using a number of analytical and management techniques. Data was collected through interviews with elected officials, employees and stakeholders, by reviewing documents, and by obtaining information from several comparable cities. In developing recommendations for improvement based on the data analysis, we also relied on our experience and knowledge of best practices in municipal land use.

This report will focus primarily on opportunities to make improvements, based upon a model process and system that is functioning well and staffed by knowledgeable, talented and hard-working individuals. As in most systems, employees may be constrained from improving the quality of services because of obstacles or inconsistencies in the process itself.

The very nature of a regulatory environment can create tensions and friction between the City and its stakeholders. This is particularly so in a new city such as Goleta where environmental and quality of life concerns are paramount. The challenge is to create an atmosphere in which the public agency works with stakeholders to meet regulatory requirements (however stringent they may be), while balancing meaningful public comment and engagement. It is also critical to facilitate land use functions of the community as envisioned by the General Plan.

### **Individual interviews**

Management Partners interviewed 22 staff members and 20 stakeholders of the City's land use function, including Commissioners, Board members, Council members and stakeholders or users of the land use function. The stakeholder perceptions section of this report summarizes key points made. Salient points and information from staff interviews also are included throughout this report.

During these interviews, Management Partners asked questions about process strengths, opportunities for improvement and key issues that should be addressed. These interviews produced information about current processes and workloads, community values, expectations and desired outcomes from this study, areas for inquiry and analysis, and suggestions for process improvement. In addition to the individual interviews with staff, ideas for improvements were collected during a

project status report meeting before the recommendations in this report were developed.

## **Document review**

During the course of this review, Management Partners analyzed numerous City documents related to the land use function and building permit process. These documents included procedures manuals, stakeholder handouts, budget and fiscal documents, and a description of the previous improvements implemented by the staff. Computer reports showing activity dates for various project applications were also reviewed to give an overview of the process from start to completion.

## **Benchmarking**

With input from the City, Management Partners selected 13 peer jurisdictions for benchmark comparisons. These 13 jurisdictions were surveyed to gather specific workload and staffing data; nine responded. Benchmarking data was analyzed and compared to available statistics for the City of Goleta. The results of this analysis are described in the Peer Comparisons section of the report.

## **Process Maps**

Management Partners developed process maps, or flow charts, of the land use permit and development plan processes based upon information provided during the interviews with employees, stakeholders and other stakeholders. These process maps were validated by City employees and then used to identify bottlenecks in the process. They were provided to staff under separate cover.

The process maps represent the best understanding of the general flow of the City's processes and serve as a basis for discussion of process improvements. Throughout the process of information gathering, we have focused on common themes and problems identified by staff and stakeholders which led to recommendations for improvement.

## **STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS**

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A review of any process should include a discussion of the process with users to gain insight into their perceptions and observations. The City provided a list of interested parties and stakeholders of the land use and permitting process for Management Partners to interview. Of the 20 individuals on the list who were contacted, Management Partners was able to interview 10 of them.

Stakeholders interviewed for this study included residential developers, homeowners, architects, home-building contractors, Design Review Board members, Planning Commission members, and other non-staff involved in Goleta's land use and permitting process.

Stakeholder perceptions are just that – perceptions. They may conflict with one another based upon who the stakeholders are, and they may not be entirely accurate. Nonetheless, any organization seeking to improve should learn from what its stakeholders are saying about its provision of service. General themes that emerged during stakeholder interviews are summarized by topic below.

### **The Process**

- The process is getting closer to supporting peoples' legal right to go through the process and get approval. From the City Council down to the staff at the counter, citizens are becoming better served by this City.
- While it is understandable that many people do not like the County's way of doing business, it is important not to discount every single thing they do; by trying to reinvent every detail about the way Goleta performs its business, the City is over-reacting and potentially missing some sound practices.
- The General Plan needs to be strengthened; some of those interviewed are concerned about how this will occur. Goleta lacks focus on the core issues. For example, – future vision for Old Town, use of the Community Center, etc.
- The process by which Comstock was able to negotiate a land swap resulted in a huge "win-win" for everyone.
- The conflict in the zoning ordinance is significant. Although the City is working to rectify the problem, consider an interim solution that eliminates projects having to consistently generate zoning amendments.



- Workshops and comment periods are working well.
- At the Land Use stage, the application process is too lengthy. The City takes the full 30 days to deem the application complete or incomplete. Each subsequent submittal requires another 30 days of review.
- The submittal checklist is very clear, but is incomplete. For example, the City deems a submittal incomplete based on a detail that was not included in the original checklist. At this stage, the more information required up front, the easier it will be to get through the process. A more complete checklist would also result in fewer staff hours wasted on re-checking submittals.
- The pre-application meeting is very helpful.
- When work has begun on the EIR, the City allows no interaction between the contractor and applicant.
- At the EIR administrative draft stage, the applicant does not get to review the document – it is for the City only. As a result, the applicant cannot identify issues with the draft report before it is distributed. The best solution is to let the applicant see the administrative draft and submit comments in writing so there is a record. This way, the City would still have control and the applicant will not have to face recirculation of another draft report.
- Goleta's process to select the EIR contractor is lengthy: 45 days to scope the EIR, one month to develop the Request for Proposal (RFP), one month to allow for proposals to come in, one month to review proposals and select a contractor, and one month to get City Council approval.
- The new policy allowing the Planner to prepare staff reports at the same time as other processes, such as preparing the Final EIR, is a good one.
- The longer the delays in processing applications, the harder it is to keep the product affordable in the end.
- Regarding a recent, high profile project: Staff was receptive to seeing the project through and "has extended every courtesy." Staff is always available for phone calls, and is willing to visit sites to understand project needs.
- Too much work, such as plan checking and inspecting, is outsourced.
- The rules that came from the County, which were comprised of lots of different rules depending on rural versus urban areas, and the zoning ordinance need to be completely rewritten. It is hard for staff and the public to understand such poorly written code. The City is trying to change the rules.

- The County's influence is still huge: the City is adding provisions to the County's zoning ordinance, which is a convoluted way to write ordinances.
- The people doing building plan check are going too far and being unrealistic in their expectations. For example, they worry about whether the screws in a connection are the right size. They want things drawn a certain way; even though experienced professionals know that their drawings are correct, they will be criticized because of the reviewer's unnecessary requirements.

## City Council

- This Council is good at recognizing the projects that are congruent with stated City goals and allowing them to move forward.
- They need to come to some regional vision and coordination with other institutions that have influence over Goleta (Santa Barbara Airport, University of California, Santa Barbara [UCSB], Amtrak, California Department of Transportation [Caltrans], the Water District and Sanitary District).
- The Council is able to give good direction to staff as to what they want and do not want.
- Council has been able to eliminate some appeals loops; previously, anyone with \$200 could appeal a project, easily resulting in a 60-180 day delay for each appeal cycle.
- It sometimes appears as if they have already made up their minds about certain projects.
- They threw out the old General Plan before giving it a chance to work. They asked for *everyone's* input on what to change – this could be a big can of worms they opened. With the General Plan in flux, staff has no direction.
- The General Plan “policies things to death.” It does not provide a preamble that says they recognize there may be competing policies and that it is up to the Council to decide particulars. There should be something that says that not every policy absolutely has to be applied equally.
- They need to recognize the fiscal impacts of growth – short-term increases versus long-term negatives when you consider Proposition 13's effect – will the City recoup the costs of land use in future tax revenues? Unlikely as the cost of services continues to increase.
- They spend much less time on project-related decisions and are very businesslike. They need more patience and to consider the consequences of their decisions.

- While the impression is they are very developer friendly, this is not exactly true. They are not simply letting developers pave over whatever they want.
- Staff reports are sometimes incomplete or too general, or they are not forceful in declaring a planning recommendation (i.e., the reports are too neutral).
- Since incorporation, there has not been a Planning Commission so the Council took on a lot of the planning details themselves. The Design Review Board (DRB) became a body that had a lot of influence over some very minute details, and the public thought it was too much. They did not have adequate policy direction. The City is in the process of changing that now.

### **City Manager and Planning Director**

- They have done a good job with protecting staff from political interference, allowing them to do their jobs.
- The City Manager is very available and approachable.
- The Planning Director is a good leader and nurturer.
- The Planning Director takes a lot of credit for positive changes that occur. He needs to share the credit with his staff more.
- Planning management is very detail oriented, but has trouble seeing the big picture.
- The key people on staff are extremely high quality.

### **Staff**

- They work well together and seem to understand one another.
- Work at the counter has improved in its fairness, speed, and equity.
- Some building inspectors reinterpret Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) laws to their own satisfaction.
- At times, staff does not appear to care whether or not a project gets approved.
- They do a great job being professional and responsive as compared to other jurisdictions.
- Sometimes staff reports are not made available to the public until late in the game, e.g., a report is ready Friday afternoon for a Monday meeting, although this is not as big a problem as it used to be. (Note: Some interviewed described this as being better than in other cities.)

- They are beginning to be creative problem solvers, now that they have permission to do so in the current Council and leadership scheme.
- Staff are very customer-oriented. They greet you, usher you into a conference room, offer bottled water, etc. They are available to chat and they quickly respond to emails.
- Staff continues old County ways (particularly staff who came over from the County) and can be inflexible.
- Some staff look at themselves not as problem solvers, but rather impartial bureaucrats.
- Recruiting new staff is a huge problem – no one can afford to live here.
- The City does not have enough staff. It sounds like they have six years of work in front of them. They are working on things that they have been working on for years, some of it before incorporation.
- People there remember your name. Nothing just comes up out of the blue, and there have not been any hidden agendas or requirements.

### **Design Review Board/Planning Commission**

- The DRB used to get caught up in some small thing that would result in a complete redesign. They were too rigid and would not consider reasonable deviations from their stated process.
- Forming a Planning Commission was the right thing to do – it lets the Council spend their time on City business instead of trying to make decisions where they do not have the expertise.
- The DRB chairman is excellent and very reasonable. Some other members inject their own personal issues rather than design concepts.
- DRB is good at handling heated disagreements between neighbors.
- DRB comments are invaluable, but there is often something lost in translation to the stakeholder. If staff could articulate their position better, it would be helpful.
- None of those interviewed had many insights to the Planning Commission since it was just recently formed.

## **LAND USE BEST PRACTICES**

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Management Partners has researched best practices in land use services as part of projects we have completed for clients throughout the country. We have interviewed employees and stakeholders in communities that have a reputation for providing predictable, efficient and high quality land use services.

Reviewing data from comparable cities and examining best practices is an important part of our work for the City of Goleta. Based on our experience with the land use function, we have identified the following elements that we believe are vital for the City of Goleta or any other city to reach the objective of improving the land use function.

### **Treat the Land Use Function as a Single Line of Business**

Land use services are typically carried out by employees in several different city departments and, at times, separate organizations, such as special districts. This is probably the single most important factor that leads to miscommunication, redundancy, conflicting direction and long processing times.

It is not surprising that each department has different priorities, standards and time frames. It is not unusual for applications and permits to languish on the desk or in the computer of an employee whose department or division has its own higher priorities. The overall time to process the permit for the stakeholder is determined by the lowest common denominator (i.e., "the slowest truck in the convoy"). It is not unusual for each department to set its own review time frames or to have none at all.

Because employees involved in the review come from several different departments, it is most likely that there is no oversight and accountability for the entire process. No overall time standards or consistent deadlines apply for the many required reviews. To solve these problems, it is vital that land use service delivery be viewed as produced by a single organization, not separate departments working independently.

To bring about substantial and lasting improvement, jurisdictions must assign accountability for results to a single manager who has the authority to address problems and issues that cut across departments. In smaller jurisdictions (such as Goleta), this can be handled by the City

Manager. In larger ones, an Assistant City Manager is often given responsibility to coordinate the various departments involved in land use functions. Major projects can be most effectively handled if assigned to a project manager who has the authority and the responsibility to work across department lines.

Of course, for the process to be evaluated, managed and improved, an effective permit tracking technology must be developed and maintained. This task is quite often assigned to permit technicians who provide regular reports to a responsible manager.

### **Establish Stakeholder-Driven Standards of Performance**

Cities with a reputation for providing quality land use services have clear standards of performance for processing times involved for the various applications and permits. Ideally, these standards are established through discussion with stakeholders to understand their needs and expectations, and through a clear understanding of the process steps involved in delivering quality results.

One of the most prevalent complaints from stakeholders of the land use function in cities nationwide is there is no consistent or predictable turnaround time established. In many cases, cities have established turnaround standards but consistently fail to meet them. In this situation, the stakeholder is forced to apply and then wait with no idea of how long the process may take (while potentially having significant financial obligations at risk).

Once the standards have been established, the next step is to develop a performance measurement and reporting system that will track the process results against the established standards. This way, the City can be certain that it is meeting stakeholder expectations for response times or can identify instances when the standards are not met.

### **Establish a Service and Problem-Solving Culture**

Unfortunately the traditional land use services culture nationwide is often characterized as having a "bureaucratic regulator mentality." Many organizations describe their primary responsibility as rule enforcers, with no responsibility or accountability to provide responsive and efficient service to their applicants.

In this environment, the applicants are not considered stakeholders at all; rather, they may be considered potential rule breakers who require close scrutiny and inspection.

An alternative mission for land use services would be to help stakeholders to protect the quality of the public and private infrastructure,

the safety and integrity of the built environment, the natural environment, and the livability of the City while pursuing their projects.

Such a change in organizational culture requires consistent organizational leadership, effective stakeholder service training, knowledgeable stakeholders and a service-oriented attitude on the part of employees.

Cities that provide excellent customer service use many of the same tools that other businesses use, including surveys of their stakeholders. This provides timely and accurate feedback to the organization about the quality of their services from a stakeholder's perspective.

## **Develop a Financial Model That Will Sustain Quality Services through All Land Use Cycles**

Goleta, like all cities, will suffer through substantial peaks and valleys in the land use workload. This is a predictable element of the land use industry. It is very difficult to develop and maintain high-quality and efficient services if the City is forced to alternately lay off and then attempt to rehire experienced, talented employees. This is especially true for employees with the technical knowledge necessary in land use.

This cycle results in inconsistent service to stakeholders and low morale among employees. To avoid such cycles, the City can carefully develop a fee and reserve policy. The first step is to identify all of the direct and indirect costs of providing the services, and then to adopt a fee policy that recovers the desired percentage of the cost of service.

This percentage could vary, depending on the perception of the community benefit for individual services. There is no common policy that can be recommended for every city. The policy should reflect the philosophy and the approach of the community as represented by the elected officials.

Jurisdictions also must adopt a reserve fund as an operational "cushion" to support land use services through all cycles. In essence, the City should be transferring excess revenue into a reserve during peak workloads, and withdrawing funds from the reserve to maintain a core staff and quality services during periods of reduced land use activity.

The appropriate amount to be set aside in this fund depends upon the financial approach of individual communities. Generally, it should be funded sufficiently to cover a downturn in land use-related revenues for a reasonable period of time to avoid layoff of experienced staff.

Figure 1 below lists some proposed guidelines from the City of Bellevue (Washington) for developing a fee policy and appropriate reserve fund.

**FIGURE 1: PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR FEE POLICY AND RESERVE FUND DEVELOPMENT**

<p><b>Proposed Guiding Principles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fees should be regionally competitive while allowing for timely, high-quality services</li> <li>• Permit applicants should pay for the direct services that they receive, adjusted to account for broader community benefits</li> <li>• Fiscal management should be development-services wide, not department by department</li> <li>• The funding structure should support the management of land use services as a line of business, through economic cycles and fluctuations in workload</li> <li>• Fees should be predictable and understandable to the customer</li> <li>• The fee system should be efficient and cost-effective to manage</li> </ul>
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Figure 2 below shows a proposed model for setting cost recovery objectives based upon the type of service.

**FIGURE 2: PROPOSED MODEL FOR COST RECOVERY OBJECTIVES**

Policy Development X %	Public Information X %	Pre-Submittal X %	Discretionary Review X %	Engineering Review X %	Inspection X %
Central Support Functions X %					

The proposed goal of a reserve and workload management strategy would be to:

- Ensure that all functions can respond effectively to economic cycles, both up and down.
- Further insulate the General Fund from dramatic cost swings, especially as land use activity increases.
- Establish core staffing levels to retain institutional knowledge and core service levels.

### Summary of Best Practices

The above four elements are often found in cities with a reputation for providing excellent land use services. Other attributes not described above can also enhance top-notch agencies. One of the most important is the effective use of information technology (IT). IT allows service organizations to dramatically improve their communication processes



across departmental and divisional boundaries, and to meet or exceed stakeholder expectations.

Innovation in the use of information technology also is critical in the land use services business. Effective information technology allows employees to more effectively manage and improve processes, and to provide up-to-date information to stakeholders. A good permit-tracking information system allows managers to compare performance against adopted standards, and to provide positive and corrective feedback to the appropriate team members. The information produced is the foundation for a comprehensive performance management system.

Management Partners has identified opportunities for improvement in each of these components required for an effective and stakeholder-driven land use service. We have included recommendations for the City of Goleta based upon these key best practices from our research and our evaluation of other cities' innovative practices.

## PEER COMPARISONS

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As part of this study, Management Partners conducted a review of benchmark data from 13 peer cities selected in coordination with City management. The purpose of this assessment is to provide general insight into Goleta's staffing and employee workloads for land use services, compared with those in other peer jurisdictions.

While no comparison of cities is perfect because of the inherent differences between jurisdictions and inconsistencies in reporting information, benchmarking provides a reliable snapshot and general comparison of staffing and workloads with the purpose to determine if Goleta is within general norms or not. The goal of benchmarking is to identify significant variances, if they exist.

### Methodology

In total, 13 municipalities were chosen as comparative benchmarks to the City of Goleta. Criteria for selection included population size, coastal community, college towns, and high quality land use standards, among others. The 13 benchmark communities (with population) included:

▪ Aliso Viejo	62,817
▪ Dana Point	36,765
▪ Encinitas	62,774
▪ Manhattan Beach	36,843
▪ Monterey	30,641
▪ Mountain View	72,242
▪ Poway	50,675
▪ Redondo Beach	67,325
▪ San Bruno	45,215
▪ San Clemente	65,338
▪ San Juan Capistrano	36,078
▪ Santa Barbara	94,154
▪ Santa Cruz	56,451

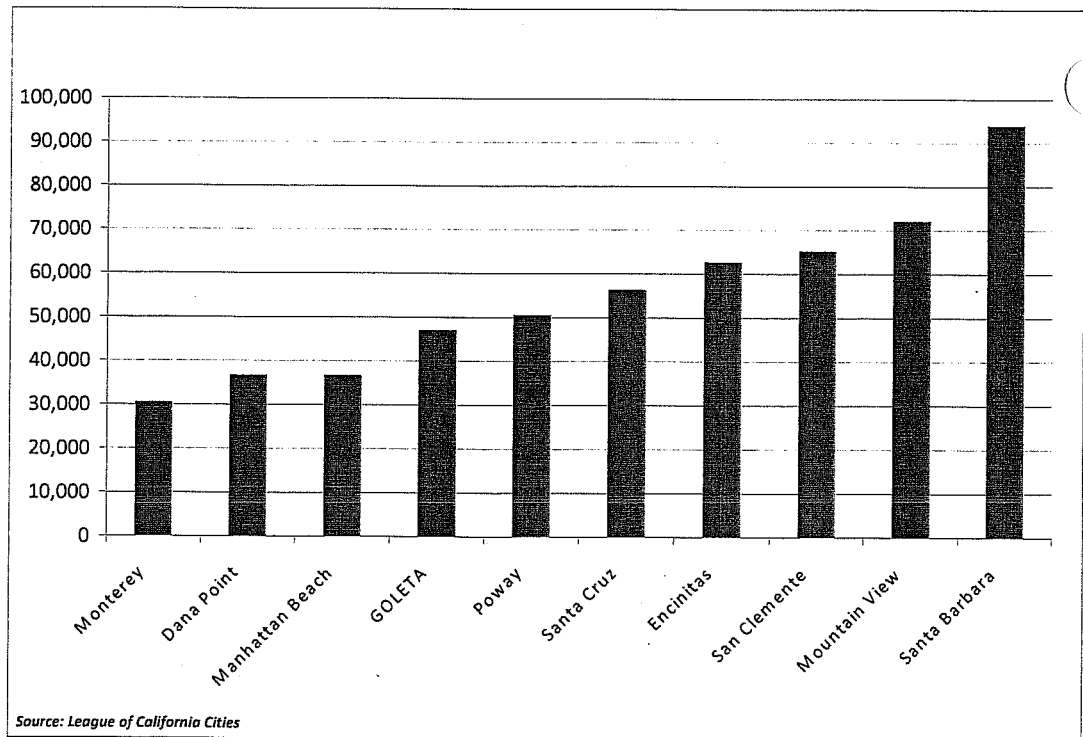
Benchmark surveys were sent to all 13 peer jurisdictions, and responses were received from nine. The four jurisdictions that did not participate in the survey were Aliso Viejo, Monterey, San Bruno, and San Juan Capistrano.

Management Partners collected benchmarking data and demographic information from municipal websites, budget documents, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the State of California Controller's *Local Government Annual Financial Report*. In addition, information was self-reported by the benchmark jurisdictions, so the information provided is accurate as reported to Management Partners. Cities did not always complete all sections of the survey, thus individual cities may not appear in each comparison below. Data in this assessment is from the 2006 calendar year – the last full year for which information is available.

### Municipal Comparisons

To illustrate the relative size of the benchmark jurisdictions, Figure 3 below highlights the 2006 population in each jurisdiction. The City of Goleta, with a population of 30,679, falls below the overall average of 55,299 and below the median of 53,563. As can be seen, Santa Barbara is an “outlier” with population significantly above the rest; if Santa Barbara is excluded, the average falls to 50,982. In summary, Goleta’s population is slightly less than average for the peer cities.

**FIGURE 3: YEAR 2006 POPULATION OF BENCHMARK JURISDICTIONS**



## Staffing and Workload

A review of staffing and workload is useful in determining whether the City has the resources necessary to provide timely service.

Table 1 below shows staffing in full-time employee equivalents (FTEs) for various land use functions of peer cities. The overall peer average is then compared against Goleta's FTEs, with the far right column showing how Goleta compares to the peer average.

**TABLE 1: LAND USE STAFFING BY POSITION**

	Dana Point	Encinitas	Manhattan Beach	Mountain View	Poway	Redondo Beach	Santa Cruz	Santa Barbara	San Clemente	PEER AVERAGE	GOLETA	VARIANCE
Current Planners	5	11	6	8	4	4	contract	14	4	7.0	7	0.0
Advance Planners	5	3	6	3	1	1	3		2	3.0	3	0.0
Engineers (private dev't review)	2	4		5	3	3	varies	1	2	2.9	2	(0.9)
Building Plan Checkers	2	3	2			2	1	6	4	2.9	0.5	(2.4)
Does City contract building plan checkers?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No		Yes	
Building Inspectors	2	3	4	4	2	4	5	8	6	4.2	0.5	(3.7)

As can be seen, both current and advance planning functions have exactly the same staffing levels as the peer average. Goleta is almost one FTE lower than the peer average in number of engineers reviewing private land use projects. Goleta is 2.4 FTEs lower for building plan checkers and 3.7 FTEs lower for building inspectors, but this makes sense as the City contracts for those services. However, the City should continue to review engineering and building plan check and inspection resources to ensure adequate staff is available for the work; this can be done, in part, through use of performance standards noted later in this report.

Figure 4 below illustrates the number of land-use applications that were processed in 2006 as a ratio to the number of planners in each jurisdiction. Because San Clemente's total number was extremely high compared to the other cities, it was excluded and considered an outlier. The data with remaining cities shows that each planner in Goleta reviewed an average of 67 land-use applications in 2006 while the peer average was 58.7.

**FIGURE 4: LAND-USE APPLICATIONS PER PLANNER**

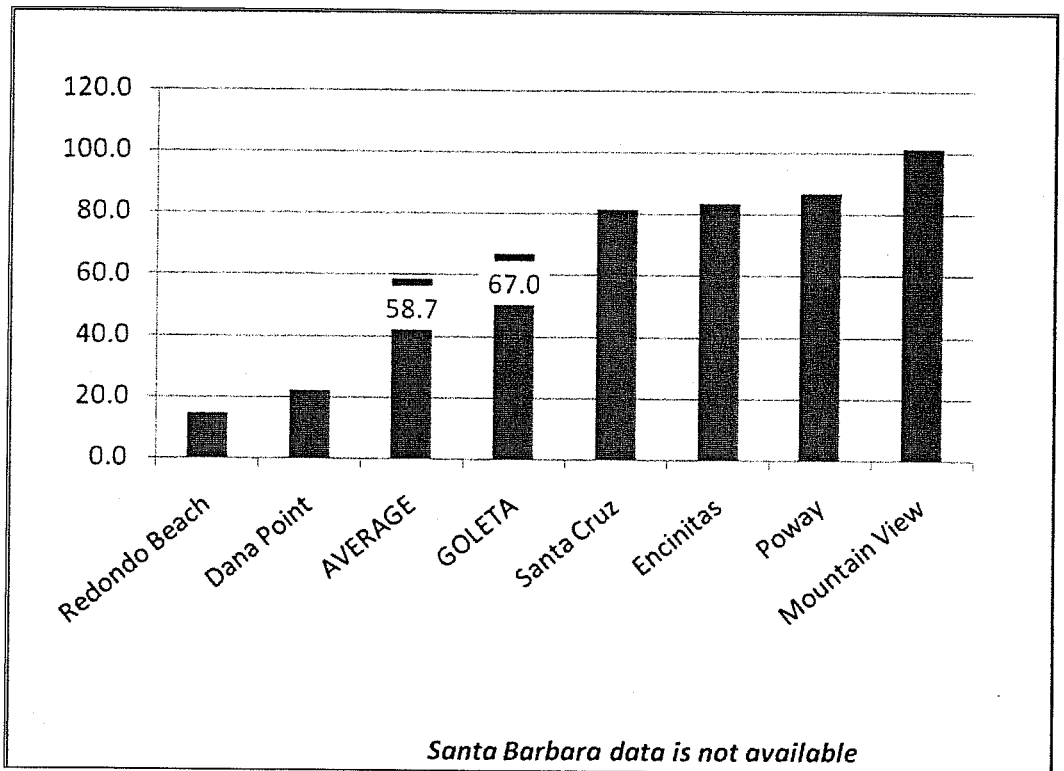


Figure 5 below illustrates the number of land-use applications that were approved in 2006 as a ratio to the number of planners in each jurisdiction. The data shows that for each planner in Goleta, 40 applications were approved in 2006 while the peer average was 56.1. Again, given the complexity of the Goleta zoning code and process and the limited use of administrative approvals, this is not surprising.

**FIGURE 5: LAND USE APPLICATIONS APPROVED PER PLANNER FTE**

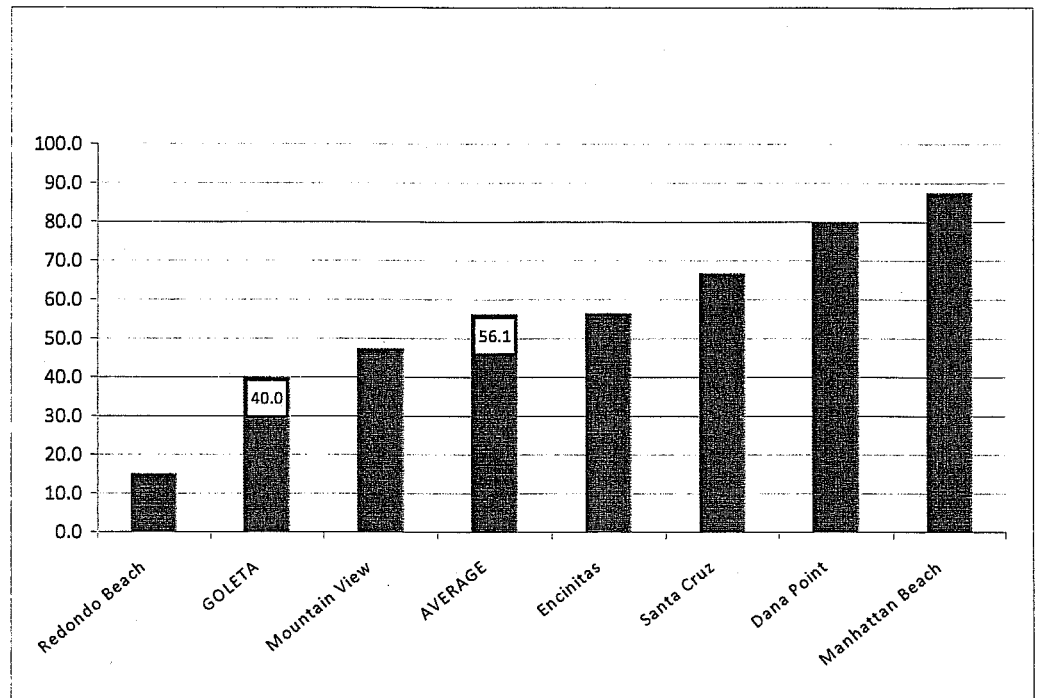


Figure 6 compares building permits issued to plans examiner positions. By comparison, plans examiners in Goleta processed 750 permits per FTE, as compared with 737.2 among the peer averages. The Building and Safety Division operation appears to be quite efficient.

**FIGURE 6: BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED PER PLANS EXAMINER**

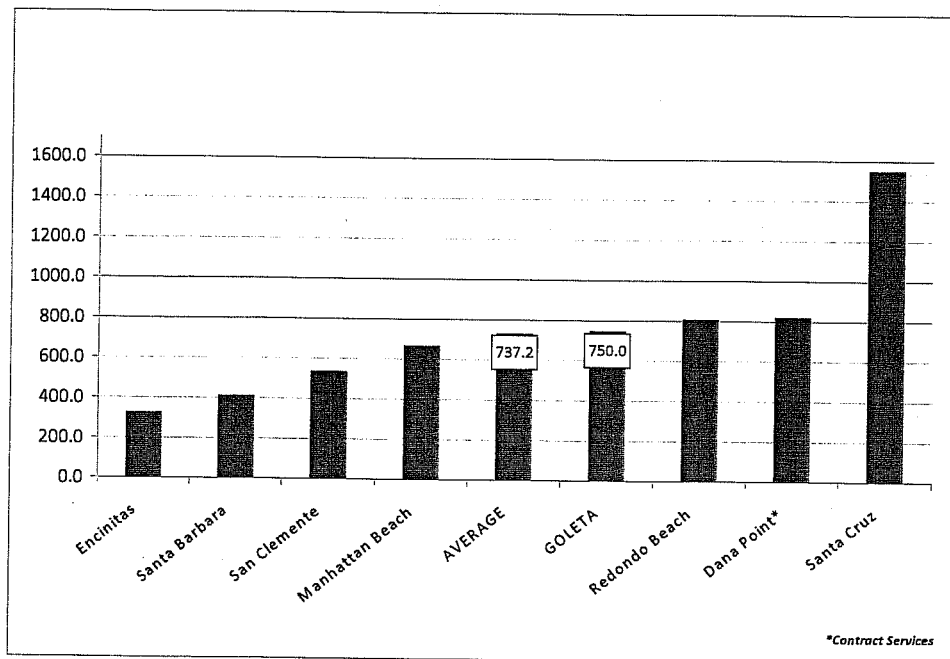
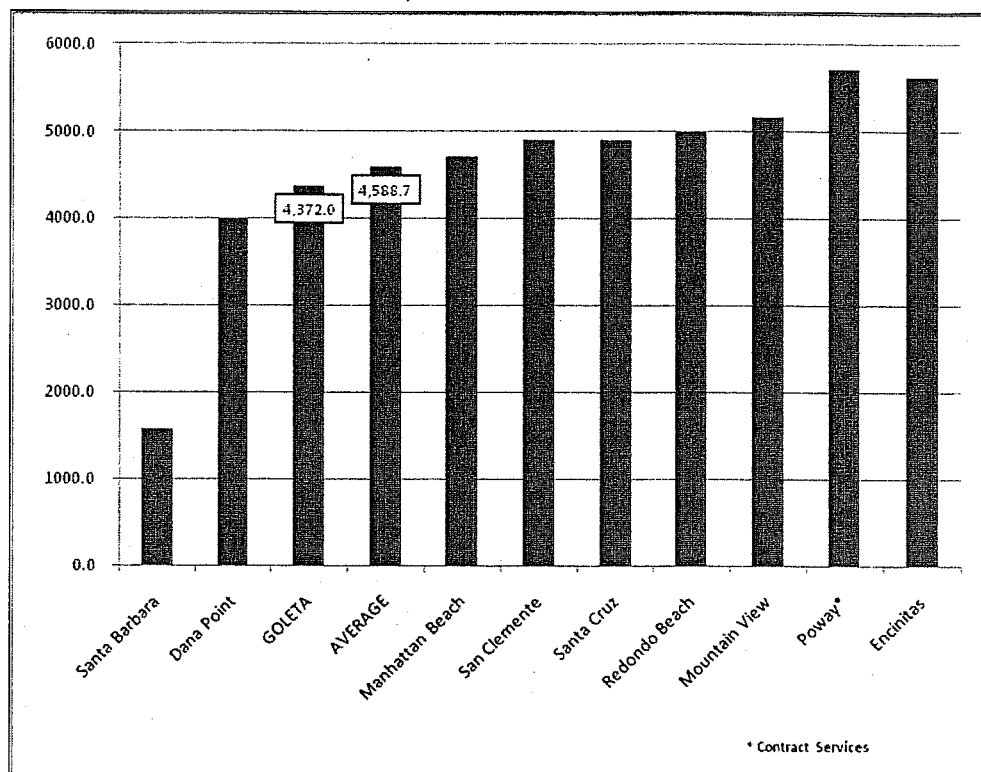


Figure 7 below shows the number of inspections per building inspector positions. Building inspectors in Goleta conducted 4,372 inspections per FTE in 2006. This figure is below the benchmark median of 4,589 inspections per FTE.

**FIGURE 7: BUILDING INSPECTIONS PER BUILDING INSPECTOR**



In general, Goleta appears to have adequate staffing levels for planning and building plan check and inspection work and runs just below peers in terms of workload. Staffing levels for the engineering review function should be examined more closely.

## Processing Times

One of the primary concerns for any land use function is turnaround time; many applicants care more about the timing (an expeditious process) than the fees and costs involved. Management Partners compared turnaround times of certain application types for Goleta against its peers. It should be noted that all information is self-reported by the jurisdictions and that times are in calendar days.

Many cities have developed performance standards or targets for processing planning entitlement applications. Fewer cities have actually measured actual results against the standards, and fewer still have published or reported this information. This is especially true for smaller



cities such as Goleta. Planning permits are not uniform, and each application raises different questions which have implications for processing time and the process itself. For this reason it is notoriously difficult to establish meaningful standards and it often requires years of data to begin to draw meaningful inferences from the results of measuring the processing times.

This is particularly true in an environment like Goleta that is complex and where development projects are often contentious. On the other hand, efficient processing is consistently noted as the number one concern of the development community and the public and it is virtually impossible to improve efficiency without measuring results. Therefore it is an accepted "best practice" for planning departments to establish processing standards and make meaningful measurements.

A common performance standard is that a City makes a commitment to processing applications for "permit type X" within Y number of business days 80% of the time. A policy like this benefits developers and the community by providing some meaningful estimate of how long processing will take.

It also benefits staff to have such a standard because it can reveal clearly to applicants and the community the complications that can arise in processing an application (for the 20% of cases that are not processed within Y number of business days). Some of these complications can be easily remedied, such as a lack of understanding of the constraints or policies affecting development on a specific site, an unwillingness to work with other stakeholders, or an application that is submitted with incomplete information. This provides a good incentive and feedback loop for the development community as well. (Management Partners has often found that the developers complaining the loudest about poor processing are submitting the most incomplete applications; but without a measurement system in place, a city cannot prove this point.)

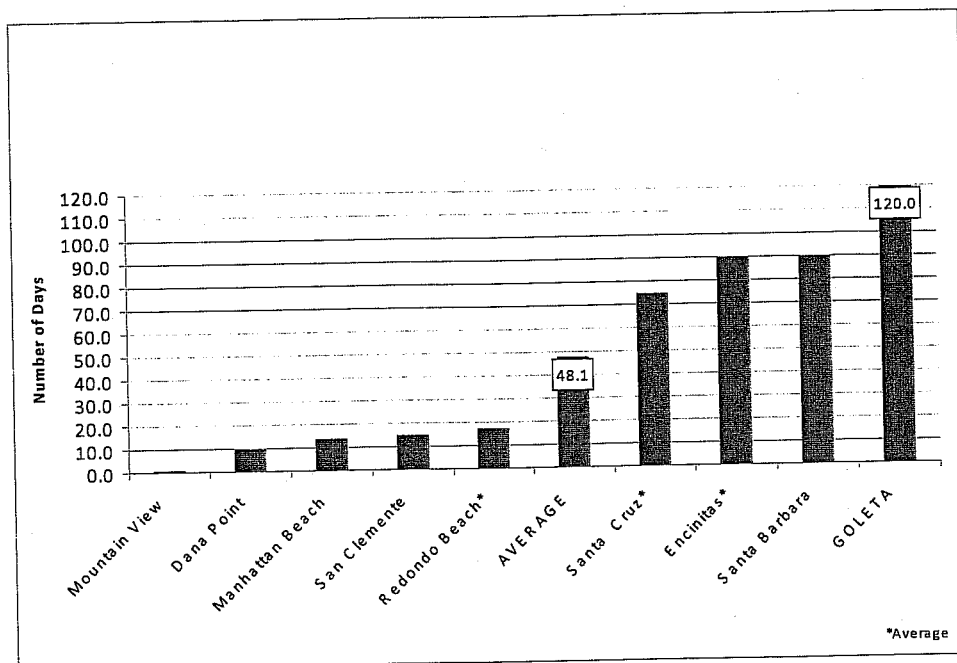
While Goleta's turnaround times appear longer than those in peer jurisdictions based upon limited information available, this is indicative of many issues and not a direct reflection upon staff commitment. As noted earlier in this report, the City is a very sensitive environmental setting. The City has adopted an exceptionally complex process designed for a County government dealing primarily with new development (rather than infill). This process is also weighted toward the public input and appeals process, providing many means by which to delay project processing. There is no automation or central permit tracking software in place to assist staff and track status. As a new city, Goleta operates with land use policies and regulations that are in flux, with the General Plan being reopened for amendments, and a new zoning code deferred until the General Plan is finalized. Goleta's turnaround and processing times must be examined within this context.

In addition, planning permits and processes are not uniform among cities and it is not always possible to make a strict apples-to-apples

comparison. Nonetheless, it is instructive to see how Goleta compares in a general sense to its peers.

As Figure 8 below shows, planning applications for new single family residences averaged 48.1 days from start to finish for the peer agencies, well below the 120 days reported for Goleta.

**FIGURE 8: TURNAROUND TIME FOR PLANNING APPLICATION FOR NEW SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE IN 2006**



The Cities of Redondo Beach, Santa Cruz and Encinitas self-reported a range of days when asked, "What is the standard or average review time that is provided to customers for....new single family home construction." Their answers spans several days (e.g. 12-21 days), so they were averaged for the purposes of the above comparison.

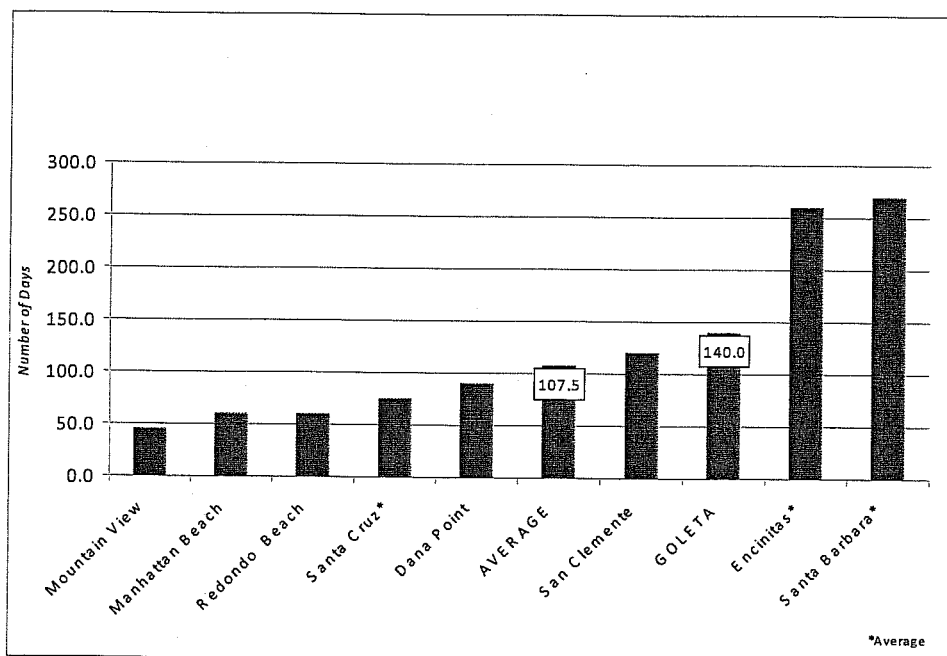
One reason Goleta may take longer is that the Design Review Board is involved and reviews all new single family residences. Depending on the quality of initial submittal, this process can take at minimum four meetings. The DRB meets only every other week, which means that the review calendar for projects can be backed up from time to time, and applicants also need time to make revisions between meetings. This can lead to some delay and increase in turnaround times.

Management Partners also surveyed the peer cities to find out how long they reported that it took to process a typical development application. The plan was to compare this information against actual data collected for Goleta to get a feel for what a good standard might be for Goleta. While actual data was available for Goleta, peer data was self-reported and unverified. When comparing the results, we found that Goleta's actual

processing times were much longer than the self-reported processing times in other jurisdictions, and the peer jurisdictions did not have strong measured data to support the estimates they provided. Actual processing times in Goleta for development plans ranged from 300 to over 700 business days, while self-reported data from the other cities indicated a broad range of from 30 days to 700 days, with most not exceeding 180 days. Given the planning complications in the peers and the lack of supporting data, conclusive findings are not available regarding development plan turnaround times.

As Figure 9 below shows, applications for Conditional Use Permits were processed by peers an average of 107.5 days compared against 140 days in Goleta.

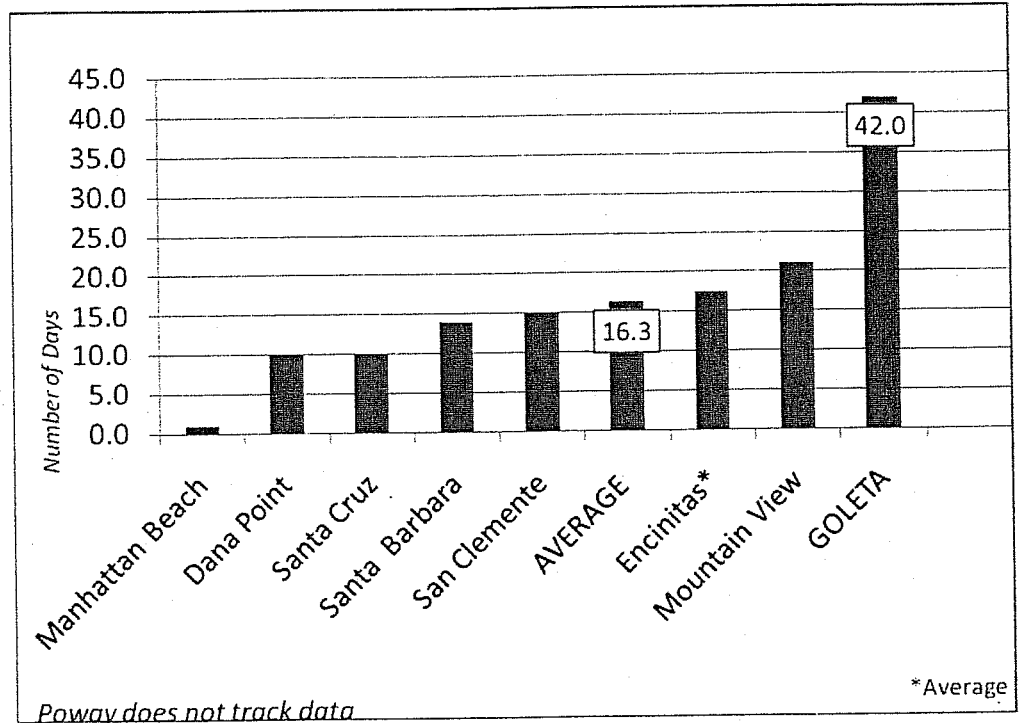
**FIGURE 9: TURNAROUND TIME FOR PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT IN 2006**



Again, the Cities of Santa Cruz, Encinitas and Santa Barbara self-reported a span of days for review. In the above comparison, an average was used.

As can be seen in Figure 10 below, the peer average to process a building permit for a residential room addition from start to finish was 16.3 days, as compared with 42 days in Goleta. This chart has been adjusted to remove Redondo Beach, whose data was extremely high and excluded as an outlier. The City of Encinitas self-reported a span of days for building permit review; in the below comparison, an average of this span was used.

**FIGURE 10: TURNAROUND TIME FOR BUILDING PERMIT FOR RESIDENTIAL ROOM ADDITION IN 2006**



Goleta's processing times are generally longer than those in other cities, for the numerous reasons noted throughout this report. The City's contract service provider recently committed to reducing this process turnaround to 21 days, so improvements should be forthcoming.

Municipal benchmarking is a complicated and often perplexing task – largely because there is no such thing as a perfect comparison. When examining performance and service level, however, benchmarking is an invaluable tool for highlighting areas that represent significant variances and should be examined in greater detail.

## **ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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In undertaking this review, it has become obvious that the City of Goleta is a unique environment in which to work and conduct business. In an effort to protect its residents, the City has developed numerous complex regulations with which stakeholders must comply and employees must enforce. The highly participatory nature of the Goleta community adds greater intricacy and time delay to many processes. The peak volume of land use occurring in the community due to the opening up of development since incorporation and a change in City Council has served to strain existing resources. Given this environment, the City will derive great benefit by continually striving to move toward a consistent, streamlined and methodical approach to doing business. With improvements to the organization and processes, limited staff resources can be better utilized.

A variety of interests and stakeholders play a role in the future land use in Goleta:

- **City residents** are interested in what gets built in the community, with some desiring more retail variety and others content with the current mix of services, amenities and level of land use. Many are concerned about maintaining the residential flavor of the community and minimizing impacts of second stories and accessory dwellings.
- **City officials** are interested in quality design and land use that will enhance the tax base and foster continued vibrancy of the community.
- **Developers** have an interest in predictable, timely processes, with clear guidelines and expectations, so they can make prudent investment decisions about where and when to build.

It is the City staff's role to interpret policy direction contained in hundreds of pages of documents, and balance sometimes competing interests. This section provides analysis and recommendations on the following:

- Organizational Structure
- Management Issues
- Financial Issues
- Policy Issues
- Process Issues
- Service Issues
- Technology Issues
- Physical Workspace Issues

As noted earlier in the Executive Summary, existing positive aspects of the City's processes are considered to be givens for the purposes of this review; our purpose is to look for ways of improving services. Readers should be reminded that there is a dedicated and loyal group of employees working in the City who, on a daily basis, attempt to provide good service to the public. Past practices, regulations, and the very nature of regulatory functions can be expected to create some tensions between the City and stakeholders. The best public agencies are able to create an atmosphere in which the agency works with applicants to meet the city's regulatory requirements (however detailed they might be) and to respond to other stakeholder concerns. This customer service approach of helping to comply ("saying yes") rather than using regulations to throw up roadblocks ("saying no") and having standards for the timely provision of service are critical to improving overall stakeholder satisfaction.

## **Organizational Structure**

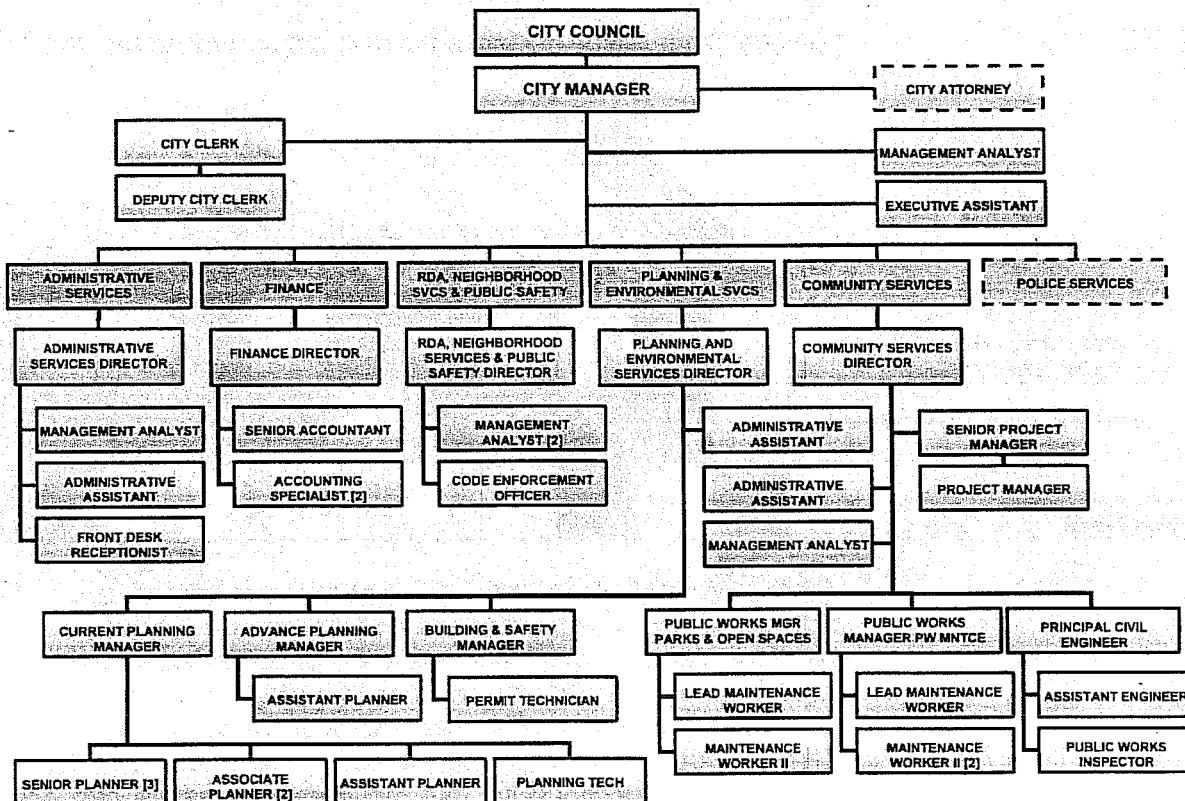
A review of each City's organizational structure with regard to land use services, code enforcement, and economic development/redevelopment is also instructive.

Figure 11 below shows Goleta's current organizational structure with the exception that an additional Senior planner has since been added to the Advance Planning Division.

**FIGURE 11: CURRENT CITY OF GOLETA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART By Position



Goleta's Planning and Environmental Services (PES) Department is comprised of three divisions: Current Planning, Advance Planning, and Building & Safety. In the recent past, code enforcement (which was formerly a part of the Building & Safety Division within PES) was rolled out to a new department of Redevelopment and Neighborhood Services, and includes the City's redevelopment efforts and public safety contract.

Table 2 below shows a comparison of three organizational structure components for the peer organizations, based upon publicly available information. Black squares denote that the jurisdiction “has” that component (is affirmative).

As can be seen, all cities but Goleta and Mountain View include their code enforcement efforts within a community development, planning, or building department. Five cities included economic development and redevelopment under one of those departments. Four peer cities and Goleta have a segregated division or work unit for advance or long-range planning.

**TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ACROSS PEERS**

	GOLETA	Dana Point	Encinitas	Manhattan Beach	Monterey	Mountain View	Redondo Beach	San Bruno	San Clemente	San Juan Capistrano	Santa Barbara	Santa Cruz
Has Economic Development/RDA within Community Dev't/Planning/Building												
Has Code Enforcement within Community Dev't/Planning/Building												
Has separate Advanced Planning section/division												

Code enforcement is the implementing arm of the land use function; without it, the zoning ordinance and the permits issued lose purpose. As can be seen above, the majority of peer communities link code enforcement and land use services in a single department because there is benefit in having a close working relationship between them. In many cities, code enforcement is directly linked via software with land development functions so that violators’ addresses can be flagged to ensure no future permitting is allowed. Code enforcement officers are often co-located near building inspectors so that there is free flowing dialog about various sites and cases throughout the community. The creation of sign codes and other ordinances can and should reflect input from those charged with enforcing their provisions.

Because the split of code enforcement and housing programs into a separate department is a recent occurrence in Goleta, Management Partners does not recommend changes to the current organizational structure at this time. However, given that the majority of peer communities link code enforcement and land use services in a single department, it is likely that having a strong linkage between the two yields benefit. This same benefit can be achieved in the short-term through carefully planned and coordinated efforts on the part of the two existing



departments, but Goleta may want to consider re-merging these functions in the future as the City grows.

**Recommendation 1: Analyze and clarify the respective roles of the Neighborhood Services and Planning and Environmental Services departments and streamline processes involving both.** Staff from both departments should work together to clarify roles and process steps, to maximize the City's best interests of having both departments involved without burdening the stakeholder.

**Recommendation 2: Build linkages between the departments into tracking software.** Automating the linkages can provide substantial benefits. For example, if code enforcement in Neighborhood Services can input a "hold" for building permits on any property with unresolved violations, this improves outcomes for the City and helps to streamline linkages in the process.

As noted above, Goleta is fairly unique for a small-sized city in having a dedicated Advance Planning division within Planning and Environmental Services. Many cities do not organize with a dedicated division but rather parcel out advance planning work to the same planners doing current planning work, thus having planners do both advance and current work. The Director believes Advance Planning should be a focus for the City and, therefore, merits a division status. Given Goleta's particular planning issues including the need for revision of numerous policy documents that form the foundation of planning in the City, Management Partners agrees.

## **Management Issues**

Management of the land use services system rests primarily with the Planning and Environmental Services (PES) Director, although the whole system involves collaboration with other City departments (e.g., Public Works, Redevelopment and Neighborhood Services) and external agencies (such as the Santa Barbara County Fire Department). In general, those interviewed were quite favorable about management, noting that the new PES Director was hard-working and capable, but that he had a large task to reform the system. The Current Planning Manager is uniformly respected as a subject matter expert and dedicated employee. The new City Manager is viewed with optimism and considered to have an earnest desire to improve the system.

The most basic need for current permitting operations is a requirement of clarity, organization and accountability in the structure and the employees tasked to complete the work. The key is to establish a framework within which employees can function effectively and efficiently. The City has not developed a mission statement or formalized goals for land use which can act as a roadmap for City staff.

**Recommendation 3: Develop a statement of overall goals and objectives for the land use function.** For the land use permit processes in particular, the role of employees should be to help applicants pursue their projects in concert with the City's values, as promulgated in the General Plan and zoning ordinance, and to invite applicants to play a collaborative role with other stakeholders in the planning process.

Probably the primary management issue for land use services in Goleta is the lack of data-driven performance standards. Aside from state-mandated timeframes, Goleta has no specific turnaround time standards in place. Tracking does occur but is limited, in part due to problems with technology (more below). Turnaround times for routed reviews (how long Public Works Engineering will have to review a project, for example) have not been formalized and agreed upon by all parties, resulting in frustration on both sides as timeframes are considered either unreasonable or are not met.

Most best practices organizations in land use have established specific performance standards and turnaround times that increase the predictability and timeliness of the process for stakeholders (an interest more important than cost to many developers), but it builds accountability for results at the City, department, division, and individual employee level.

**Recommendation 4: Establish performance expectations and timelines for land use processes, identify the data to be collected and methods for collection, and regularly review the data for continuous improvement.** Organizational and work program goals, as well as service delivery (primarily in terms of turnaround times), should be included in the review of performance expectations for the departments and divisions involved in the land use function. Once clear goals for the land use function are established for turnaround time, quality and other issues, they must be measured. If expected performance is not achieved, the data should be sufficiently informative to pinpoint the source of the problem and the manager should take steps to improve the process accordingly. The results should be used as one means of input on employee performance evaluations, but not be used as a hard standard or as the sole criterion for an employee's review.

While the City has set some broad goals for review turnaround times, they are not clearly documented, and accountability for meeting these goals is limited. Performance standards should be developed jointly by all the regulatory review disciplines (e.g., planning, building, engineering, fire, utilities), as well as stakeholders. Once

performance standard and turnaround time tracking is under way, staff will be able to assess process issues and problems more readily, and take steps to address them on an ongoing basis. This will encourage an organizational culture of continuous improvement, which is critical to delivering service in a regulatory environment.

Sample performance standards are provided in Attachment B in this report.

In reviewing an organization, analysis of the management span of control (ratio of staff to managers) is important. The Director of PES currently has four direct reports including the Current Planning Manager, Interim Building and Safety Manager, Advance Planning Manager, and an Administrative Assistant. This is reasonable for a department head.

The Interim Building and Safety Manager has one staff report plus oversight of the Willdan contract, a lower span of control than normal due to the City's contracting out the vast majority of building permit functions. The City's new Advance Planning Manager, hired in April 2007, has recently added a second planner report to her operation.

Span of control is an issue, however, in the Department's largest division, Current Planning. At present the Current Planning Manager has seven direct reports plus two contract staff reports, for a total of nine direct reports. This is sizeable in number and even more so when one considers that the Planning Manager in Goleta also is actively involved in processing daily workload. The result is a lack of time on her part for proactive management and process improvement. It also does not assist in developing the knowledge and skill sets of planning staff. A large reason for this is the City's use of the County of Santa Barbara's zoning code, which requires greater subjectivity in processing of applications and, thus, greater involvement required on the part of the Planning Manager.

While the Current Planning Division is not of the size to merit an Assistant Current Planning Manager, the level of daily oversight by the Planning Manager can and should be reduced. Currently, Senior Planners have been assigned to supervise various office functions such as the front counter operations, Design Review Board, and new case review. This is an excellent first step, but can be taken further.

**Recommendation 5: Train and empower senior planners to supervise junior planner work.** In most planning agencies, senior planners act as "mentors" and make decisions when necessary on behalf of more junior planners. This is done as a part of their work as senior planners, in lieu of having the Planning Manager make all judgment calls. Senior-level planners should be responsible for, and evaluated on, supervision of the work of other planners. The need for a supervising Principal

Planner position should be considered in the future. For now, the Planning Manager should meet regularly with the senior planners to track workload and to act as advisor for those tough calls that require her input and assistance. But in general, decision-making should be pushed down in the planning division.

Another key aspect of management is planning for development, training, and succession of staff. This is particularly important in the land use function, where competition with the private sector for qualified staff is high and the learning curve long – a new staff member in land use services often can take multiple years to get a true handle on local ordinances and regulations. The need for succession planning is well documented as both private and public sector organizations face the approaching baby boomer retirement wave with fewer workers in subsequent generations to take their place.

Government pension systems also contribute to the problem, as there can be disincentives to working years beyond the typical retirement date in a defined benefit plan. In the private sector, which has moved largely to defined contribution plans, this disincentive does not exist.

Additionally, an anti-government bias that has been evident in the last 20 years has discouraged young people from selecting public service careers. Other factors include that government organizations are often viewed by younger generations as slow, technologically behind the private sector, bureaucratic and not competitive in terms of salaries and benefits. College students and others are still selecting public service careers, but simply not in the numbers as before.<sup>1</sup>

The government sector in California is being affected by some other factors as well. Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, and the anti-government sentiment represented by its passage, local governments and elected officials have been hesitant to increase fees, assessments or special use taxes as the cost of providing services increased. Consequently, cities and counties have had to reduce personnel to live within their means. One common strategy over the years has been to thin the middle management level so that direct service delivery positions are

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<sup>1</sup> As noted by the International City/County Management Association (Preparing the Next Generation: A Guide for Current and Future Local Government Managers," ICMA 2003):

New generation employees are most attracted to organizations with current technology and a collaborative working environment. Young people in Generation X (born 1964–1977) and Generation Y (born 1977–1997) exhibit values different from older, baby-boomer managers. The younger generations emphasize a balanced life and are less willing to sacrifice family and other personal activities in the interest of career advancement. Focus groups report that current Generation X local government employees often perceive chief executives to be singularly focused on work and overwhelmed, abused, and attacked. To exacerbate matters, city and county managers have done a poor job of promoting the benefits and rewards of their work.<sup>1</sup>

preserved. The result today for many local government organizations is a lack of bench strength at the upper middle management level – particularly at the assistant department director level, where successor department directors would normally be found.

Recent awareness of the higher pace of retirements, and the smaller pool of people to replace retirees, has led cities and counties to explore new ways of ensuring they have the talent and skills necessary to provide service in the future.

The traditional approach of filling positions is the “just in time” method of beginning a recruitment process once someone has announced his/her retirement. It worked well in the past because there was a large pool of people interested in working for local government and enough employees in the middle ranks who were interested in moving into leadership positions. But that is not the case now.

A new approach is to engage employees several years before they expect to retire in the process of planning for succession. That could prevent significant institutional knowledge from disappearing as larger numbers of people leave in a more compressed period of time. Organizations also should document institutional knowledge where possible, provide for overlap from the incumbent to the new person in a position, and mentor candidates in advance so they will be ready to take on higher-level responsibilities.

Goleta’s PES Director and supervisors have been proactive in employee development and, according to staff, have routinely supported employee training and development. This best practice can be improved and expanded into the future.

**Recommendation 6: Identify employees interested in career development and create individual development plans for each of them.** Plans should include skills inventories, training objectives, possible career ladders and “destination” jobs. Responsibility for career development is shared by the employee and the organization.

**Recommendation 7: Require all managers and supervisors to include “talent development” as part of their primary job responsibilities, and evaluate them on the basis of their performance on that indicator, among other key performance indicators.** All supervisors and managers should have development of staff and preparation for promotion within the City as main responsibilities.

Training for line employees and supervisory/management staff is also a critical part of this program. Employees require general training to improve personal and technical skills so they can successfully compete

for promotions. Supervisors and managers need training on how to coach, mentor and develop staff.

**Recommendation 8: Create a training goal for each employee and implement it.** PES and other City staff should be encouraged, and given the time and opportunity to participate in outside training and coaching sessions to develop their skills. A specific goal such as sixteen hours of training per year per employee (for example) should be established and funded.

By the very nature of land use services being a regulatory process with stakeholders required (and not desiring to) participate, it is normal that management will often hear negative feedback from policymakers and the public. These complaints tend to get much more attention than the good things done by staff, which are often taken as a matter of course. The workplace environment and employee retention can both be improved by ensuring that managers constantly praise, recognize, and (if possible) reward good performance.

**Recommendation 9: Formalize a program by which staff are regularly praised, recognized, and rewarded for good work.** Creating some formalized program by which employees are "caught being good" can be a motivational tool and help in creating a more balanced view of the operation. Some departments in other cities, for example, review and read aloud any positive stakeholder comments or "thank you notes" about specific staff members during staff meetings and shared with policymakers and the public as a way to recognize their efforts, give public kudos, and ensure a balanced perspective on performance.

In interviews, City staff members were divided as to the quality of communication within the City and within the PES Department. While some staff felt that communication was fine, others felt that as the City had grown from a few employees to a larger staff, communication protocols had not yet been developed accordingly. The result is that sometimes more people than necessary are involved in discussions, and at other times key persons who should be involved are left "out of the loop." Some employees felt that communication had gotten worse in the years since incorporation. In particular, PES employees expressed some concern that the City Manager and PES Director engaged in meetings and negotiations with stakeholders but did not always share the outcome of those meetings with staff, resulting in embarrassment when stakeholders knew more than staff and an impression that "the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing" within the City. The PES Director acknowledges that this has happened in the past during periods of rapidly evolving development which necessitated swift action. He agrees that it is not the preferred manner of doing business and that staff must be kept "in the loop" as much as possible.

**Recommendation 10: Establish communication protocols to determine who should be involved in various discussions within the City organization.** As this relates to the land use process, posting of notes on project discussions on a shared intranet for now and, later on an automated tracking system, will ensure that everyone knows the status of an application and/or proposed future project.

## Financial Issues

The PES Director and Current Planning Manager agree that the Department is not covering its costs and hopes to improve cost recovery. According to the City's budget, FY06 actual revenues for plan check fees and building permits and planning fees totaled just over \$1 million; conversely, the PES Department had \$2.1 million in expenditures. Thus, the City can be said to have subsidized land use in Goleta to the tune of approximately \$1.1 million in the recent past.

It must be recognized that, being just seven years old, Goleta is in the transition phase from its capital-intensive "startup" phase to a more mature phase as a city. In recent years, the City has had to provide service while also funding the costs of the land use function infrastructure, including various policies and procedures, and these costs are likely reflected in the financial peer comparisons. As Goleta matures, the costs of refining and maintaining this infrastructure are not as great and financial comparisons should fall into line. To summarize, the City has subsidized its land use operations to a greater extent in the past than it should need to in the future.

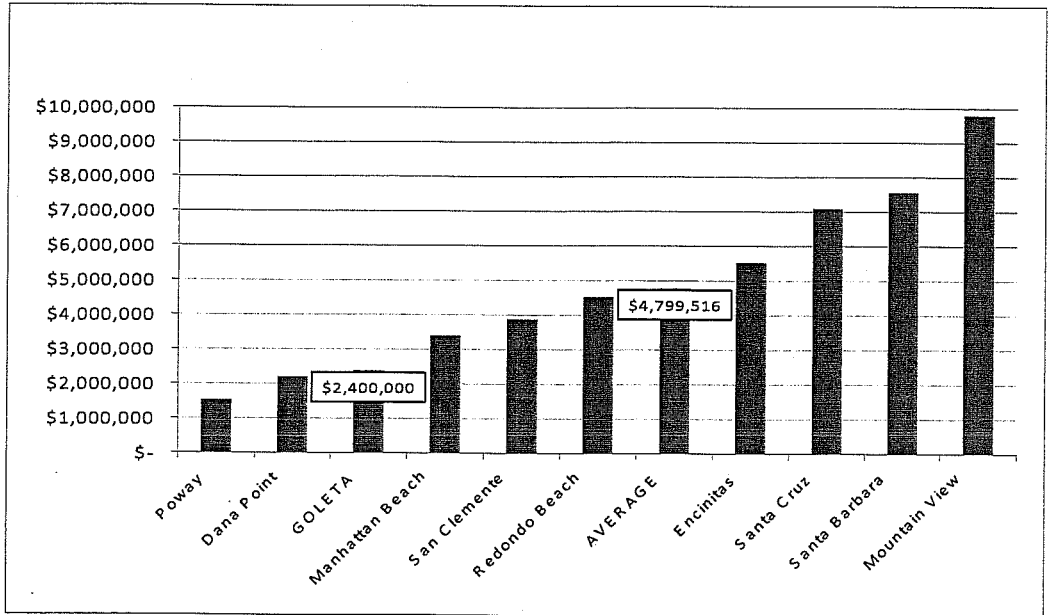
Full cost recovery is usually not truly attainable, but is a common goal for land use function operations. Many cities operate them as an enterprise fund (like a utility) which must cover costs to operate. The goal is to ensure that development pays for itself and residents are not paying for someone else to build in their community, that land use services is a "charge for service" system.

As noted earlier in the Land Use Best Practices section of this report, having a financial model in place to establish cost recovery goals and manage the peaks and valleys of land use cycles is appropriate to proper operation of the system. During this review, Management Partners was unable to identify any targets or goals for overall revenues for the land use function though we recognize that the PES Director meets regularly with the Finance Director on system finances.

**Recommendation 11: Develop and adopt a financial model that includes appropriate fees, a reserve fund and core staffing that will sustain quality land use services through all land use cycles.** The City Council should adopt cost recovery objectives for key services and an appropriate reserve fund policy to support services for all land use cycles. (See the Land Use Best Practices section of this report for more information). Once the policy is established, Department management will be held accountable to monitor expenses and meet the targets for cost recovery of the operation from development revenues. The City also should adopt a core level of staffing required to meet customer service expectations and standards, even during periods of low land use activity and workloads.

As a part of this review, Management Partners compared Goleta's expenditures and revenues against peer jurisdictions. As Figure 12 below shows, in terms of total community development expenditures, Goleta comes in well below the peer average. While the peers average \$4.8 million in expenditures, Goleta is at \$2.4 million. Given variations in population size, residential versus commercial, etc., this is not surprising and shows that Goleta's overall expenditures are not out of line.

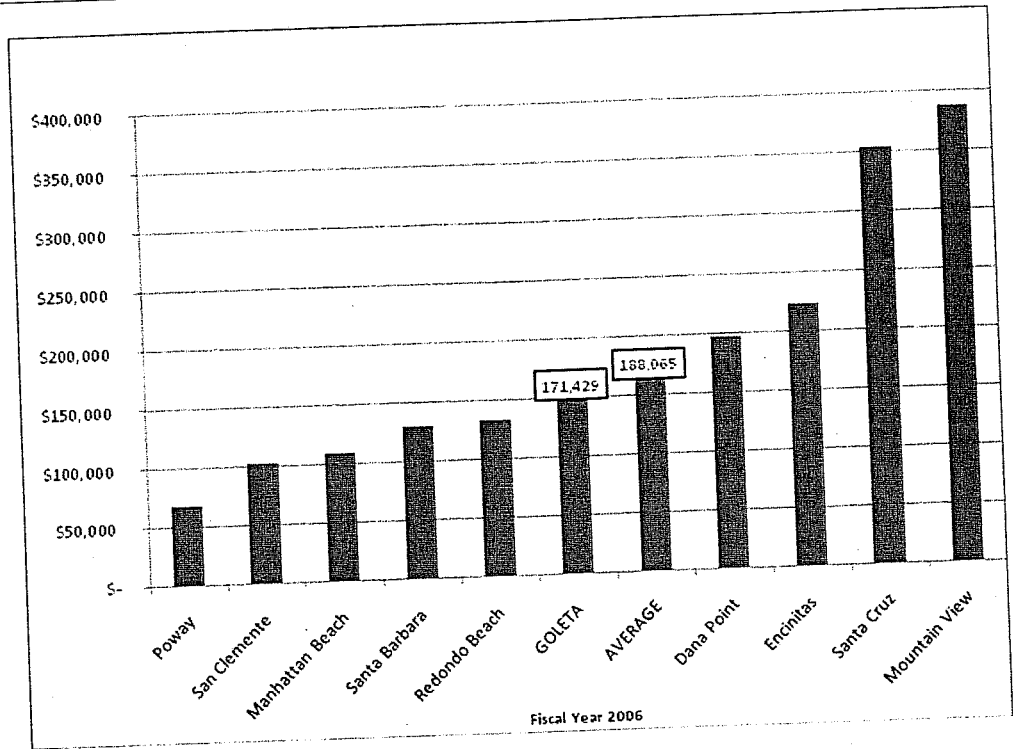
**FIGURE 12: FY 2006 TOTAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES**





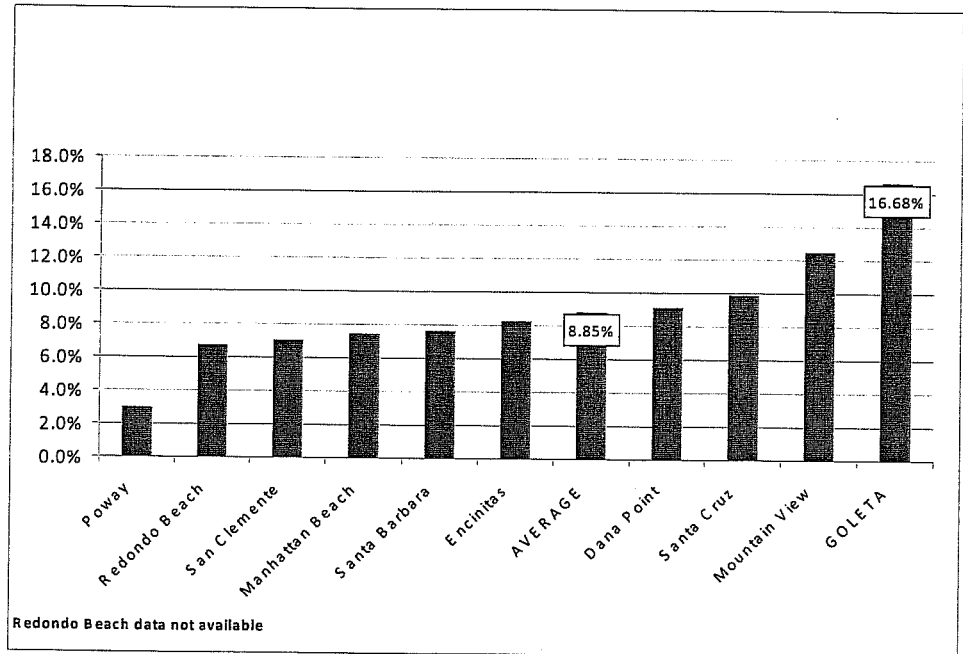
As Figure 13 below illustrates, total expenditures per employee for Goleta are just below the average of peer cities. Goleta spends \$171,000 per employee as compared with an average of \$188,000 for peers.

**FIGURE 13: TOTAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES PER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FTE**



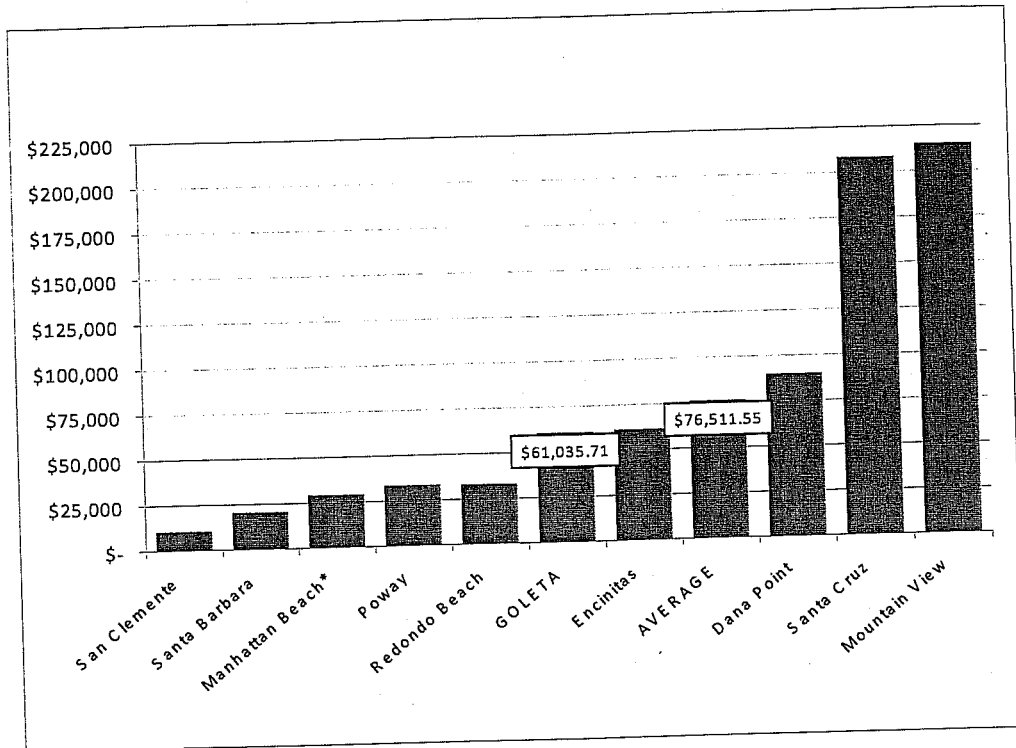
Another comparison that can be illustrative is total community development expenditures as a percentage of total City General Fund expenditures. As Figure 14 below shows, the peer city average is 8.85% while Goleta is at the top of the peer cities at 16.68%. This is not surprising given that Goleta is fairly unique in having a separate fire district and not funding fire services through its General Fund budget, which greatly reduces the overall General Fund budget size and, consequently, increases the proportion spent on community development. Goleta is also paying the "startup costs" of creating a full set of land use policies (including a complete General Plan and zoning ordinance) and has a high volume of applications being processed due to pent-up demand following incorporation.

**FIGURE 14: FY 2006 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES**



It can be useful to review spending on non-personnel costs in order to see relative priorities for an operation. Figure 15 below shows that Goleta is just below the peer average in spending on equipment and services per employee. While the peer cities on average spend \$76,500 per community development FTE on equipment and services, Goleta spends \$61,000.

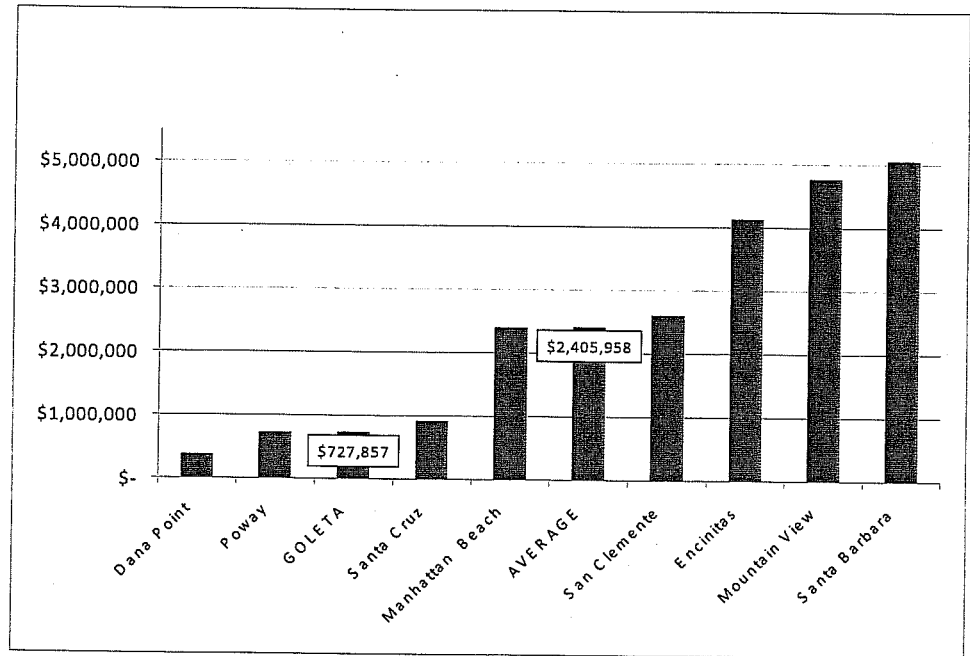
**FIGURE 15: EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES BUDGET PER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FTE**



PES management and the City's Finance Director both express concern that fees and charges are too low and are not at local market rates. Data from peer jurisdictions seems to confirm this.

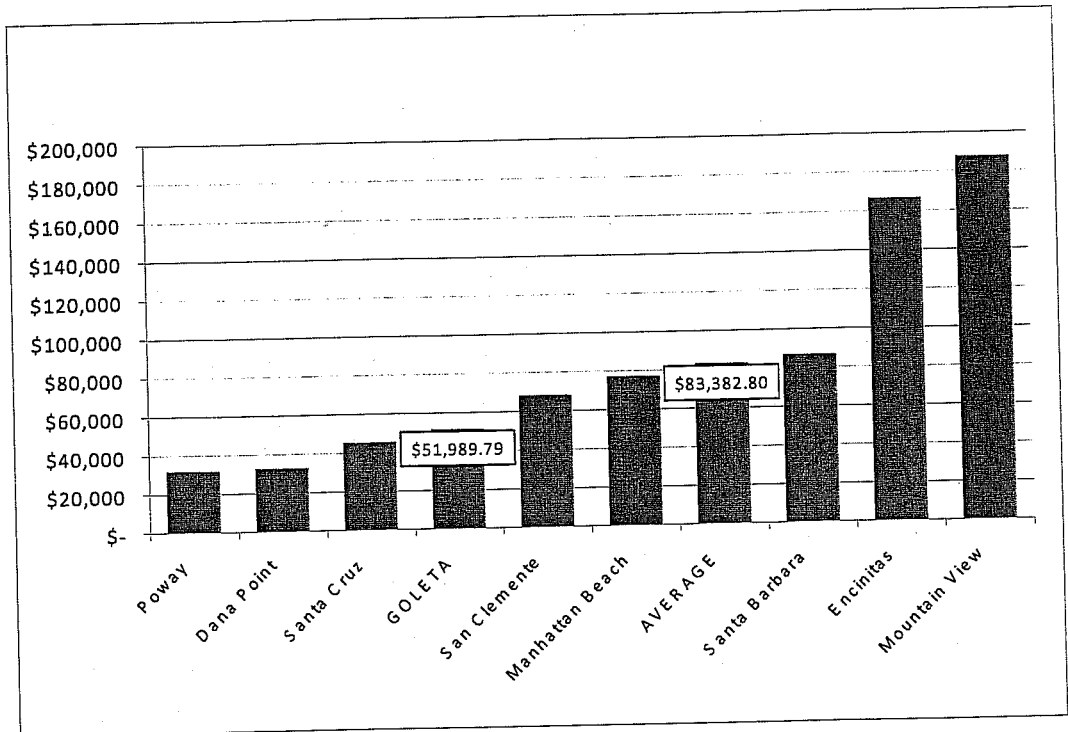
Figure 16 below shows that Goleta is well below the average permit fees and charges for service revenue (not including development mitigation impact fees) of the peer jurisdictions. This includes planning charges for service plus building permit fee revenues. While the peer average is \$2.4 million, Goleta brings in roughly \$728,000, or just 30% of the peer average revenues.

**FIGURE 16: FY 2006 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PERMIT FEES AND CHARGES FOR SERVICE REVENUE**



Similarly, when this amount is converted to a per employee ratio, Goleta continues to be low. Peers average revenue of \$83,000 per community development employee, as compared with \$52,000 in Goleta. This is 37% less revenue per employee than in peer jurisdictions.

**FIGURE 17: PERMIT FEES AND SERVICE CHARGE REVENUE PER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FTE**



The City is in process of two fee studies for User Fees and Development Impact Fees (DIF) and should act upon the recommendations therein.

**Recommendation 12: Increase fees based upon recommendations of the User Fee and Development Impact Fee studies.**

While increasing revenues is one method of bolstering an operation's fiscal stability, another is to reduce leakage that already exists. Staff in the PES, Public Works, and Finance Departments of the City agree that the lack of automation between PES and Finance has resulted in "leakage," with fees not collected when due and other items dropping through the cracks. A primary reason for this is the lack of integrated technology between PES and Finance.

In the past, some confusion occurred as to which department – PES or Finance – was responsible for tracking charges against developer deposit accounts. PES and Finance have recently met to resolve this issue and

the Finance Department is now reconciling the accounts and invoicing stakeholders to collect fees due to the City.

At present there is no direct electronic link between Planning and Environmental Services and the City's Finance Department software. This is a major obstacle to automation, causing redundant entry of similar information, as well as inability to easily balance revenues and cash collection. The process by which time is accounted for and billed to the stakeholder is manual and time intensive. By all accounts, there likely is considerable "leakage" as revenues that are entitled to the City are lost in the manual system and not billed for, fee schedules are not updated in the software system, and other calculation errors are made.

Planners enter time spent on accounts into the computer along with the appropriate account number. The Finance Department backs out payroll-related costs, and then multiplies the hours by the billing rate to invoice the stakeholder. The Finance Director is in the process of setting up separate accounts so that each project can be individually reconciled. In July, the City Council approved a change such that revenues associated with these invoices would be deposited into the appropriate project account (as opposed to the General Fund, as was done previously).

**Recommendation 13: Hold a workshop with City Finance staff, IT staff and land use departments to agree upon the best course for ensuring automation of financial information between the systems, and move forward with implementation.** This high-priority issue must be resolved to ensure consistent and accurate entry of financial information for the City's land use function operation, real-time monitoring of developer account activity (done by Finance but available to PES staff), and the provision of regular monthly statements for developer accounts.

There are fees available to the City that are not currently being charged. California state law provides that cities can charge an advance planning surcharge on all building permits in order to raise funds to help pay the cost of preparing these documents. Typical advance planning fees in California run 4-6% of building permit fees. The City of Los Angeles currently charges 6% while the City of Santa Barbara charges 11%. According to the State Controller's Report for FY05, Goleta had building permit revenues of \$376,000 which would result in \$22,560 annually if a fee of 6% were adopted by the City.

**Recommendation 14: Adopt an advance planning surcharge on building permits in order to raise funds to pay for advance planning and policy document preparation.**

Similarly, California state law provides that cities can charge a technology surcharge on all building permits in order to raise funds to help pay for the

cost of technology improvements for land use services. As will be noted further in the Technology Issues section of this report, the City is in dire need of technology improvements for this business. Typical technology surcharges in Southern California run 4-6% of building permit fees. The City of Los Angeles currently charges 6% while the City of Santa Barbara charges 2.95%. As with the advance planning fee above, Goleta could gain an additional \$22,560 per year from a 6% technology surcharge.

**Recommendation 15: Adopt a technology surcharge on building permits in order to raise funds to pay for advance planning and policy document preparation.**

## Policy Issues

Goleta is a young city, having been incorporated only six years. In order to begin business upon incorporation in 2001, the City contracted to continue for land use services with the County that had already been providing the service previously. In doing so, the City also adopted the County's zoning code. Six years later, the City continues to use the same County zoning code which is an earlier version than what the County currently uses; in recent years the County revised and improved the code, leaving Goleta behind.

Contractors hired to provide land use services were too busy processing daily workload to set up systems or proactively plan the new City's operation. Since in-house staff has been hired, they too have been busy processing the pent-up demand for land use in the new City. As a result, they are unable to take the time necessary to conduct a "big picture" review of the system; hence, the purpose of this review and report.

The PES Department is greatly hampered by the lack of a policy infrastructure in terms of updated codes and regulations. These documents are critical to PES operations in providing a vision and framework within which staff can process applications. Managers are too busy dealing with daily workload to prepare these (sizeable and complex) documents in-house and have not been provided the resources necessary to contract out for the work. The result is continued use of an archaic policy infrastructure.

This is not to insinuate in any way that current staff is unfamiliar with, or unable to process within, current regulations; on the contrary, the Current Planning Manager is considered a subject matter expert on this particular zoning code and all staff were professional and knowledgeable in interviews. The issue is that the code itself is not specific to Goleta's needs, nor the best model available for modern cities.

Similarly, the lack of specific design guidelines makes aesthetic review of projects more subjective by providing a much broader context in which the applicant must work. Many cities in California have established design

guidelines that articulate aesthetic requirements such as architectural type ("mission style," for example), paint colors, signage, lighting standards, etc. Having such guidelines in place ensures there is a consistent vision as to what the community wants to look like and against which projects can be reviewed. Such guidelines also allow applicants to know upfront what the requirements will be. Finally, such guidelines can be built into the review process; in some communities projects that meet all established design guidelines are then exempt from appearing before the Design Review Board.

Some of the documents noted in interviews as needing to be revised or written include:

- Amending the new General Plan (in process)
- Revising the Zoning Code (budgeted for FY08)
- Creating a Local Coastal Plan
- Creating a new sign ordinance
- Streamlining regulations governing the use of appeals
- Creating formalized design guidelines
- Creating ordinance/design guidelines for lighting
- Creating ordinances regulating solar panels and units
- Creating calculations to limit size and scale of projects (Note: Floor Area Ratio (FAR) guidelines were adopted in Summer 2007)

In general, Goleta's review of projects, both for staff and policymaking bodies, would be improved by a sound infrastructure of policy documents that reflect the community's vision for quality land use.

**Recommendation 16: Identify and prioritize policy documents to be revised and updated and budget accordingly.** PES should prepare a work plan to prioritize and then ensure new policies and standards are developed and timelines and budgets established. While the Advance Planning Division should have primary responsibility for many of these items on its work plan, some will require leadership on the Current Planning side. Both Advance and Current Planning Divisions should have input on all documents. The City will likely need to utilize a combination of in-house and contracted expertise to ensure timely completion of this work. Since many models and examples are available in other jurisdictions, there is no reason for Goleta to "recreate the wheel."

As noted earlier in the Financial Issues section of this report, the City can pay for such documents in part through adoption of an advance planning building permit surcharge.



## **Process Issues**

One of the most difficult aspects of the land use function, as opposed to many other municipal processes, is the need for involvement by multiple agencies within, and outside of, the City. Process issues often arise in the “handoff” of project applications between parties, when lack of coordination about deadlines, review quality, and method of reporting can result in glitches between parties.

In this section we present process issues regarding each division within the PES Department, as well as issues relating to other City departments or divisions.

## **Current Planning**

Goleta’s land use function is fairly unique in that it is “planning-centric,” with an unusual focus on the planning side (as opposed to the building permit side, commonly the focus in other jurisdictions). There is good reason for this, steeped in the region’s history. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was literally borne out of the Environmental Studies program at the University of California – Santa Barbara (UCSB) in Goleta, and both the City of Santa Barbara (adjacent to Goleta) and Santa Barbara County have extremely strong environmental advocates which came to being, in part, from the offshore oil operations and California Coastal Commission involvement in the area. The natural beauty of the region, coupled with this historical interest in environmental protection and the fact that many of Goleta’s planners came directly from the County upon the City’s incorporation, results in a delicate political environment for land use and a focus upon the planning aspects of design and aesthetics which must occur prior to actual construction (i.e., the building aspects).

Upon incorporation in 2001, the City contracted with the County of Santa Barbara to continue its planning services. Soon after, a few key staff were hired to become permanent City employees, the Willdan firm was hired as a contract service provider for building department services, and the Hogle-Ireland firm was retained for contract planning department services. The City adopted the County’s zoning ordinance in order to rapidly begin moving. While this allowed for the City to continue to immediately process incoming workload, the zoning ordinance was not particularly apropos to a City but was, instead, a County document with County land use standards. Staff has continued to work using the documents but recognize that a new zoning ordinance is among many “foundational” documents which are necessary in order to create a firm foundation for the City’s work, as noted in Recommendation 16 above.

During its review of the process, Management Partners noted a significant difference in the process used by the City of Goleta and that of many other cities and counties for which it has performed reviews. Aside from the County and the City of Santa Barbara, Goleta’s land use process

is quite unique in its approach. While the basic concepts remain the same, the difference is that the zoning code in use has created very broad classifications of permit types, while other jurisdictions have segmented these into more specific types. For example, in Goleta the "Land Use Permit" (LUP) permit type is essentially a "catch all" that covers everything not specifically excluded in the zoning code. In other cities, many of the same project types covered in the LUP would have their own, specific application type and process broken out.

As one example, Management Partners has done work for the City of Novato, California. It is roughly similar in population to Goleta with the same desire for high quality design and an involved and active citizenry. Novato's primary planning application types include:

- Design Review (to evaluate architectural, landscape, and site design aspects of project)
- Single Family Design Review
- Accessory Dwelling

All three of these application types would fall under an LUP application in Goleta. While the end result is likely very similar, the process is considerably different. Management Partners wants to stress that the Goleta process is very unique. The concern is such a broad application type has several challenges associated with it. First, a broad application type makes it more difficult for the process user/stakeholder to understand the system and determine which permit type they will need to apply for any given project. Second, the uniqueness of the process provides a built-in barrier to new developers and system users who would not have experience with, or understanding of, this unique system. Third, the current process places a considerable strain upon senior planners who must make many "judgment calls" on how to handle individual applications, making the system more subjective than if a narrower set of requirements were placed in writing to limit the need for interpretation. This, in turn, makes it more difficult for junior staff to learn the system and, conversely, apply their knowledge from Goleta to other workplaces should they choose to work elsewhere in the future.

In addition, broad application types create an inherent barrier to setting and maintaining performance standards. Using the above City of Novato example, processing times for Single Family Design Review and Accessory Dwelling reviews can vary significantly and are accordingly measured individually. Under Goleta's LUP classification, both processes are tracked together and distinguishing the processing times by type is difficult (if not impossible).

At present, the success of the Goleta system rests considerably upon the historical and technical knowledge of the Current Planning Manager, who is extremely familiar with the current zoning code and can make decisions based upon past interpretations in a rapid manner. If she were to leave the City's employment, the uniqueness of the Goleta system would make it difficult to replace her.

**Recommendation 17: Break the Land Use Permit classification into smaller application types with specific thresholds, applications, and processes.** Since this task must coincide with a complete revision of the Zoning Code, staff should, in the interim, enact administrative changes to current systems for these specific permit types under the umbrella of the existing LUP process. In particular, establishing specific thresholds for single family projects would be of particular benefit.

It should be noted that the County of Santa Barbara, with the same zoning code, has already taken similar steps in its own improvement efforts and had worked to break out accessory structure and one-story structures into more specific streamlined processes.

The process of "LUP clearance" is also unique to this zoning ordinance. In its experience in many other cities, Management Partners had never seen a similar process. In essence, the Goleta ordinance requires that after an applicant receives a discretionary approval with conditions, s/he must resubmit for an LUP clearance in order to show how conditions will be met. The LUP clearance process is a means to enforce planning conditions.

Goleta staff members have already worked to minimize redundant noticing and appeals loops in its processes, which is an improvement. Santa Barbara County recently identified four specific application types that are exempt from the clearance process (as their data showed minimal neighborhood involvement or appeals for those types), including new home in tracts approved since 1990, applications following Conditional Use Permits, applications following Land Use Permits, and projects in a specific community plan area.

The clearance process is done differently elsewhere; the Goleta process is unique to the Santa Barbara County zoning code. In other cities, once a project has received land use approval with conditions from planning, the applicant may move forward and submit for grading and/or building permits. In many cases, building permit applications are routed to Planning so that construction drawings are reviewed by planners for compliance with planning conditions prior to building permit approval; if Planning does not sign off, a permit cannot be issued for construction. The costs of the Planning review are included in the building permit fee. In many communities, planners also make regular site visits throughout construction and just prior to final building inspection to ensure conditions are met in the field. This process eliminates a separate clearance submittal by the applicant and encompasses planning clearance within the building permit process.

**Recommendation 18: Review the LUP clearance process and determine the best method to streamline the process.** The clearance process is straightforward to Goleta staff but confusing to applicants and may not provide enough value to merit the time and effort spent on a separate submission and application. City staff should review the intent and purpose of LUP clearance and revise the process.

Nomenclature of the application types is confusing in Goleta. There is a LUP submittal, LUP clearance, Modification with "Big M" (in zoning code) and Modification with "Little M" (allowed for use with land use plans, development plans, and conditional use permits). Having similar names for distinct processes is confusing to system stakeholders.

**Recommendation 19: Review and revise names to differentiate and clarify various application types.** The stakeholder should be able to review application types and clearly understand which processes are required for his/her project. As with other code-related changes, internal steps will need to be taken administratively in the interim prior to adoption of a new zoning code.

One of the consistent concerns with the City's land use review was that the review process appears to be the same level of complexity for both large and small projects. For example, there is little differentiation between the review process for large developments and small single family homes. The Planning Division does not offer over-the-counter reviews and the use of administrative (i.e., Director or staff approved) approvals is rare. Many applications must move to a public hearing involving the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, and/or City Council. This is contrary to the process in many other jurisdictions, which attempt to increase the volume of over-the-counter reviews as much as possible, for two reasons: first, customers like immediate response/action ("I walked in and got my permit/approval") and second, applications taken in behind the counter are inefficient in requiring multiple staff members to handle them, add to the work queue, etc. Utilizing administrative approvals as much as possible helps to reduce overall work queues and waits by the customer, allowing staff to spend an appropriately greater portion of their work time on larger, more complex projects which should require greater scrutiny.

Table 3 below shows the project types that peer jurisdictions use administrative/ministerial approvals.

**TABLE 3: PEER USE OF MINISTERIAL (ADMINISTRATIVE) APPROVALS**

City	Projects Using Administrative/Ministerial Planning Approvals
Dana Point	Single family homes; remodels; tenant improvement.
Encinitas	Minor variances; minor use permits; time extensions; certificate of compliance; lost line adjustments; tentative parcel maps; coastal development permits for single family residences
Mountain View	Minor land use function permits, temporary use permits, sign permits, single-family homes in R-1 zoning district.
Poway	Minor land use, not in a Hillside/Ridgeline; Land Use Function in the business park.
Redondo Beach	Modifications; Administrative Design Review.
Santa Barbara	Attachment #2 (rooftop equipment; door changes; simple color changes; first 1-yr extension; temporary soil remediation systems; outdoor/sidewalk dining/seating; small ground equipment; minor residential window/door additions/alterations; small fencing; small awnings; small wood decks; minor outdoor lighting alterations; minor concrete/paving).
Santa Cruz	First floor additions on substandard lots. Sign permits, fence permits, lot line adjustments.
<b>GOLETA</b>	The Land Use Permit is used for minor additions to residences and commercial/industrial buildings; new single-family and duplex residences; and follow-up compliance to development plans and conditional use permits.

The desire to streamline process timing by reducing the number of public hearings must be balanced against the City's willingness to allow public and open debate on a project's design and is a policy decision. However, public hearings are time consuming, requiring agenda noticing and preparation, public noticing, staff report preparation, and more. Such processes can utilize a disproportionate amount of staff time that could be used for review of submittals.

**Recommendation 20: Increase the use of administrative and over-the-counter approvals.** Staff should review the data to determine when a hearing is truly needed, versus when projects go through with few issues and can be approved by staff. Administrative reviews should save a minimum of one month processing time.

The City of Goleta does not have formalized pre-application meetings. While many applicants discuss their vision with counter staff that walk them through the application checklist, there is no multi-agency review of the preliminary concept before an actual application is submitted. After

submission, the Development Review Committee (an internal staff committee) will meet on some projects to ensure their comments are coordinated.

Many cities utilize a formal pre-application process. This is similar to the current in-house Development Review Committee except that it occurs at the front end, prior to application submittal, with the applicant present. In this way an applicant can present general concepts and layouts for their plan and receive initial (non-binding) advice and suggestions from those agencies who will be conducting the review, including Planning, Building, Engineering, Fire, Sanitary Districts, and others. Such input at the front end can be extremely valuable to applicants to help them understand the pros and cons of their concepts, have some idea of what reviewers will be looking for, and to assist them in submitting better plans, leading to fewer re-submittals later on. Applicants generally appreciate the pre-submittal process, which can be implemented on a voluntary or mandatory basis for projects over a specific threshold.

**Recommendation 21: Create and implement a formal pre-application process for projects over a certain threshold.** The City should determine whether to make it voluntary (at the applicant's request) or mandatory. Many cities charge a flat fee to recover the time staff spent at the meeting. The meeting is scheduled, the applicant presents his/her concept, and reviewers react.

City staff and various stakeholders have indicated that the City's appeals process is used quite frequently. While appeals are a standard provision in land use processes to ensure due process and opportunities for decision-making, checks and balances should exist to ensure the process is not used for frivolous purposes to delay a project or aggrieve the applicant.

The process in Goleta for an appeal is quite easy and the fee extremely low at just \$200, with no criteria or threshold as to which appeals might be heard or who might apply for one. Applicants of discretionary projects who wish to appeal a decision on their own project are charged at the same hourly rate as for application processing. Staff in Goleta and board members took pride in noting recent improvements to the appeals process which eliminated the ability for a project to go through multiple, redundant appeals loops. These changes have definitely improved the process but, based upon peer jurisdictions, the City can go further.

A review of other communities shows that many have placed restrictions on the appeals process to ensure that only those with legitimate concerns and a true vested interest will pursue an appeal and that they will not be used for frivolous purposes. Fees for appeals processes elsewhere show fees four to five times higher than those in Goleta.

**TABLE 4: APPEALS FEES AND CRITERIA OF OTHER COMMUNITIES**

Jurisdiction	Fee(s)	Notes
Calabasas	N/A	Appeal can be made by applicant, property owner within 500 feet, or anyone who participated on the record previously. Appellants must provide radius map and stamped/addressed mailing envelopes for all radius properties for noticing.
Davis	\$200	Submitted within 10 days of the Final Determination of the Administrative Official or Advisory Body.
Goleta	\$200	
Hawthorne	\$1000	No separate appeal meeting, to be scheduled during regular Planning Commission agenda. 10 copies required of photos, drawings, and other required materials submitted in true colors and textures.
Thousand Oaks	\$930-1010	
San Jose	N/A	Filed by property owners or tenants within 1,000 feet of subject site.
Santa Barbara County	N/A	Filed by anyone who has participated previously in the process (is on record).
Ventura	\$850	

At the very least, appeals should provide for cost recovery such that the full cost of staff time associated with the appeal is paid for by the fee charged. Goleta's current fee of \$200 is insufficient to cover even the time of one planner for the process.

**Recommendation 22: Increase the appeals fee to recover costs and set criteria to define who may appeal and what constitutes valid grounds for an appeal.** The City should increase the fee to recover its costs and set specific criteria to define who may appeal. New fees should more closely resemble the actual cost of staff time spent on the appeal process.

The County of Santa Barbara found it useful to move the appeals process to the front of the review process to ensure early input for applicants.

**Recommendation 23: Review the timing of the appeals process to ensure it occurs at the earliest possible point in the process.** Hold appeals earlier in the review process rather than having appeals occur at the end of the process when applicants have spent large sums on design work and architectural drawings,

During process mapping and interviews with planning staff, Management Partners noted a cumbersome process used for the preparation of Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs). Currently, if staff determine an EIR is required for a project, they will put forth an RFP to consultants for preparation of the EIR. Consultants will bid on the RFP, staff will select the firm, the contract will be approved, and after an approximate one month delay, work will begin. Stakeholders interviewed also noted that this process takes a long time. This is an unnecessarily cumbersome process which can be streamlined.

**Recommendation 24: Hire EIR consultants under blanket purchase orders/contracts.** Other communities routinely do a blanket RFP every year or two years for EIR preparation services to consultants, take in all bids, and hire the top three consultants to perform the work. Each time a project is at hand, a brief summary is prepared to the three consultants with a request for a quote. Each consultant submits a quote for the work and staff selects the lowest one. Since all three are already under contract through a blanket purchase order, the one-month hiring process can be reduced to a week or less. The ability to do this is dependent upon the local market and availability of contractors to do this type of work.

### **Design Review Board and Planning Commission**

Goleta has two policymaking boards outside of the City Council for the land use function, the Design Review Board (DRB) and the Planning Commission. The DRB has been in existence for many years while the Planning Commission is new, having only just begun to meet in July 2007.

The DRB is comprised of seven members, of which three must be residents of the City. At least two members must be licensed architects and two licensed landscape professionals. The Planning Commission is comprised of five members of the public. The City has bylaws and guidelines regulating the role and function of each review body, and adopted by resolution of the City Council. These were recently amended and updated with the creation of the Planning Commission. In essence, the DRB reviews projects for aesthetic appeal and neighborhood "fit" and the Planning Commission ensures compliance with the General Plan and zoning code. The thresholds for project review are in process of being amended such that the DRB now reviews projects over 750 square feet, an increase from the previous threshold of 500 square feet.

Planning staff express respect for, and some reliance on, the professional expertise of DRB members to review the aesthetic components of projects. Most persons interviewed for this project were generally positive about the role of the DRB, but noted that in the past, its review at times would conflict with that of City Council and applicants could be bounced between the two bodies with project changes. According to the PES



Director, the recent creation of a Planning Commission is intended, in part, to address this issue and to ensure a more consistent vision in overall goals and roles and responsibilities between the bodies, as well as reduce the workload requiring City Council review.

Members of the DRB and Planning Commission felt existing training was good and that they were clear about their separate roles and responsibilities. They were respectful of staff's capabilities and felt that, in general, the process worked well. Stakeholders interviewed agreed and were surprisingly positive about the boards (which are often a point of contention in other jurisdictions). The primary complaint of stakeholders is that, in the past, they have been unclear about the criteria being used by the boards to review projects; in short, it would be helpful for applicants to know ahead of time the criteria for what these boards are reviewing. Both bodies have clearly outlined duties in the City's ordinances, but this information is apparently not shared with applicants before hearings.

**Recommendation 25: Provide all applicants with user-friendly handouts and specific information on the criteria and purpose of each body's review at the beginning of the process.** In this way, applicants will not be "shooting in the dark" and will have some idea of how to prepare and present their application for success. Applicants in general are happy to comply with local regulations and ideals when they are presented in a clear, easy-to-understand manner.

The City is lacking specific design guidelines. Many communities adopt specific design guidelines that provide guidance to applicants as to the aesthetic qualities required/desired by the City. A nearby example would be the "Spanish mission" style desired and encouraged by the City of Santa Barbara. Some communities provide manuals of design guidelines and a literal menu of choices for items such as paint colors, roofing materials, and outdoor lighting; if an applicant's project utilizes these menu items, they are exempt from Design Review Board review and only appear before DRB if they choose other alternatives. It is apparent that the City of Goleta seeks high-quality, aesthetically pleasing land use to complement the area's natural beauty. Preparing specific design guidelines to help applicants comply with the City's vision should be considered.

**Recommendation 26: Create specific design guidelines to assist applicants in preparing land use applications that comply with the City's vision.**

### **Advance Planning**

Goleta's Advance Planning Division is staffed by three FTEs. The Advance Planning Division was involved in the creation of the City's new General Plan which, at this time, is being reopened and revised due to Council, staff and constituent concerns. There is some question among

staff regarding the quality of linkage between current and advance planning staff members; for obvious reasons, it is imperative that any advance planning work takes into account Current Planning's ability to carry out and enforce the work. Conversely, Current Planning should consult with Advance Planning on projects of particular interest that are forthcoming or which might require amendments to the General Plan or other policy-related matters.

The City's second Advance Planning Manager was appointed this year and has two direct planner reports. This staffing level should be sufficient for the City for coming years and will provide coverage for both creation of policy documents in-house, oversight of consultants preparing documents, and representation of City interests on regional planning boards and commissions.

Advance Planning has created a work plan of items to be addressed, including:

- Oversight of regional planning efforts and participation on committees that plan for long-term water availability, regional housing needs, demographic forecasts, transportation planning, sphere-of-influence studies, etc.
- Amendments and revisions to the new General Plan
- Preparation of the City's housing element as required by State law (though enforcement will be the jurisdiction of the Neighborhood Services Department)
- Monitoring and tracking of affordable housing in coordination with the Redevelopment Agency (being transferred from the County).
- Revision/redo of the zoning code for consistency with the General Plan
- Review of environmental documents from neighboring jurisdictions such as the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) and Santa Barbara Airport
- Oversight of energy development projects
- Oversight of environmental programs
- Oversight of a Citywide GIS program

In August, PES requested approval for a detailed work plan in Advance Planning for amendments to the General Plan. In addition, Advance Planning staff regularly attend various regional planning committees and commissions including the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO), Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), and Santa Barbara Council of Governments, which makes growth projections. Other special projects include the Ellwood Mesa improvement plan, well-abandonment project, energy project, biological survey (Snowy Plover), and census updates, among other work.

One criticism of policy makers is that Advance Planning does not provide a strong enough coordination function among regional players such as UCSB, CalTrans, Amtrak, and sanitary districts. The PES Director and Advance Planning Manager agree that this role can be strengthened and

hope to reach staff capacity with the recent addition of a second planner in the Division.

**Recommendation 27: Ensure Advance Planning presence at regional boards and commissions so that Goleta is an active participant in regional planning.**

The linkage between Advance and Current Planning can be strengthened. Advance Planning has some concern that its comment is not requested by Current Planning when appropriate; for example, when an application was considered for a General Plan amendment on the Housing Element, Advance Planning was not consulted. Conversely, Current Planning does not feel its comment is requested in preparation of Advance Planning documents such as the new (soon to be revised) General Plan, which Current Planning staff must understand and enforce. Matters that should be formally coordinated between Current Planning and Advance Planning include: amendments to the General Plan (both City-initiated and applicant-proposed); projects that involve affordable housing units; components of applications that effectuate General Plan implementation actions; and Development Agreements.

Coordination between both planning units can be improved and clarified by clearly stating the application types and actions requiring each other's input. Staff members in both divisions agree that the routing and coordination process needs to be formalized. Routing is currently done on an informal, *ad hoc*, basis with many "shades of gray" as to what is given to the review agencies and what is not. By formalizing which project application types in Current Planning require Advance Planning review and vice versa, all parties can be "in the loop" as appropriate.

**Recommendation 28: Create a routing matrix/table that clearly shows which agencies receive routings based upon the type of application.** PES should prepare specific threshold agreements with all divisions and other reviewing agencies (internal to the City and external) receiving routings as to what application types they need to review, for both land use and building applications. Formalized memorandums of understanding or contracts between PES and external agencies can help define the scope of projects necessitating external review and reimbursement mechanisms for external agency review costs.

Agencies will need to determine the threshold with which they are comfortable; to minimize risk and ensure they review everything necessary, the number of applications routed will increase. Many reviewing agencies prefer to look at more applications and simply mark "no comment" if they have no relevant issues than to be excluded from the review process. Others may choose not to see some application types.

### **Building and Safety Division**

As noted above, the City of Goleta's land use process is unusually focused upon the land use and planning side. Nonetheless, the Building and Safety Division is at work processing building permit applications, inspecting, and ensuring health and safety of construction in the community. Stakeholders and policymakers were surprisingly quiet on the topic of the Building and Safety Division, with the vast majority of comments and concerns reserved for the planning and land use operations. Stakeholders praised the helpfulness of counter staff and noted improvements in that area.

The Division is comprised of two full-time employees, the Interim Building and Safety Manager, who divides his time between plan checking and building inspections, and a permit technician who works at the front counter. The Interim Building and Safety Manager provides plan check for tenant improvements and some remodels, while Willdan, a private firm, is contracted for remaining plan check work. The Interim Building and Safety Manager also provides most inspection services in the field but can call in Willdan for specialty inspection of larger projects on an hourly charge basis. Over the counter plans review is possible on small projects (re-roof, window change-outs, patio covers, etc.) if the Interim Building and Safety Manager is in the office and available.

According to the Interim Building and Safety Manager, who has served in the position for two years, the City currently pays approximately \$90,000 to Willdan for plan check services and \$30,000 for inspection services, with inspection services paid on an hourly rate based upon calls for service. While in-house staff provide the majority of daily inspections, Willdan is called in to assist with more complex cases or those requiring specialty knowledge. The \$120,000 being spent annually by the City approximates the loaded cost of one FTE; however, the City also benefits from the specialty expertise and flexible staffing backup that Willdan offers as a contractor. During the course of this review, Management Partners heard very few comments regarding the building process and, in general, stakeholders seem satisfied with the service. For these reasons, we do not recommend changing the existing contract arrangement.

Because the majority of the work is contracted out, and because staff numbers are low due to the contract arrangement, it might be easy for the Building and Safety Division to be overlooked. Because a face-to-face linkage with residents is valued, most cities find contracting works best in a hybrid arrangement including both in-house and contract staff, versus contracting out all the work. For this reason, it is important to ensure in-house Building and Safety Division staff receive ongoing training as noted in Recommendations 6 and 8 above and that they are considered valued members of the City's operation.

## Engineering

The City's Community Services Department provides engineering services for private development as a part of the land use services process through PES. PES staff will route planning and/or building applications to Public Works for engineering response. Encroachment permits for land use and other work are a stand-alone permit applied for and issued by, the Community Services Engineering Division.

Many current coordination issues can be resolved through implementation of Recommendation 28 above, the creation of a formalized routing matrix. Another common issue in routing is that timelines are either unknown or not agreed upon by both parties. There is evidence that this is the case in Goleta. PES staff complain that Community Services/Engineering response is slow. Engineering staff complain that there are no specific timelines given on items routed to them and would like them, in order to manage workload (which consists of items other than private land use). Review timelines must be realistic in order to be valuable; PES must engage the review agencies in the process of setting these review time goals to ensure they are practical and can be met the vast majority of the time.

**Recommendation 29: Agree upon review timelines and have the timeline clearly noted on a routing transmittal sheet.** Both Planning, and Building and Safety should provide plan sets to reviewing agencies with a transmittal cover sheet. The cover sheet should have a box for "Date Due:" and clearly note the date the review is required to be returned.

Similarly, review agencies need to be given the opportunity to outline the various components they require for each application type. A table outlining application requirements should be used as an intake checklist by staff to ensure all necessary components are taken in at the beginning. For example, Engineering must determine which project types require a title report and convey this to intake staff; intake staff can then ensure a title report is included in the submittal before taking in the application.

**Recommendation 30: Agree upon the components of a complete application set and screening at counter intake.** It is more efficient to screen submissions at the counter for missing items than to accept the package and request missing items in a piecemeal fashion later on. PES should work with review agencies to determine all necessary physical components of a submission by application type.

The Engineering Division contracts with a private consultant for traffic analysis work. The iterative process involved in receiving materials through PES, sending them to the contractor, receiving a response, and transmitting back to PES can result in time delays. Community Services

has made some recent changes to its method of tracking traffic study work; this should be monitored to ensure improvement.

## Service Issues

A high point in Goleta's organization is the level of service provided by staff at the counter. Despite policy disagreement in the community as to the approach toward development (pro-growth or no-growth), the majority of those interviewed agreed that Goleta City staff were extremely polite, helpful, intelligent, and respectful. Stakeholders noted that they were welcomed, offered a place to sit and provided glasses of water. These reviews were extremely positive as compared to other cities in which Management Partners has done reviews. Goleta should be proud of its staff's customer service skills.

Counter to this, the level of written educational materials on the land use services system in Goleta are minimal. The City lacks even basic brochures on various application types (a standard in the business) and virtually no information in other languages. The likely reason is that staff are extremely busy processing current applications and have little time to draft educational materials describing a process that does not quickly translate into written text. For this reason, the City has relied primarily upon verbal explanation to stakeholders to describe how the system works.

Best practices organizations in this field offer a wide variety of educational materials to stakeholders, including considerable information on the Internet site, brochures, sample building plans, and more. In particular, such agencies attempt to help the layperson or "mom and pop" users who are not professionals in the construction industry navigate and understand the components of the system and how they fit together. Many users are not accustomed to the professional jargon often used nor do they understand the difference between planning, building plan check, and inspection. Best practice agencies allow stakeholders to log in online, enter their application numbers, and determine the status and timeline of their applications. Goleta can improve customer service by increasing access to self-service tools for the stakeholder, as noted further below in the "Technology Issues" section of this report.

**Recommendation 31: Improve application forms so they pertain to specific types of projects, explain what applicants should bring, the fees they are expected to pay, etc.** Diversified written materials that cater to specific project types will provide a great benefit to both the stakeholder and staff. This sort of "special treatment" will reduce confusion, providing the applicant a concise overview of his or her project type.

**Recommendation 32: Create informational materials to be available during the pre-application process and in the Permit Center.** Inventory stakeholder issues not currently documented and then create an action plan for developing the written materials that are needed. Include a process by which designated staff regularly reviews the materials for accuracy.

In addition to general information about the process and what to expect, there are often instances in which changes in the code or requirements are poorly communicated to the public. Development professionals who are accustomed to the existing process have no way of knowing what changes have occurred or when the changes will go into effect.

**Recommendation 33: Establish procedures to regularly review application forms to identify needed updates and improvements.** Staff indicated that although they already have some written materials, these items are often out of date and not useful. The City should adopt a process to ensure that all written materials are kept up to date, particularly the stakeholder-facing items. This will reduce confusion and frustration for both stakeholder and staff. The Senior Planner overseeing permit center operations or the Current Planning Manager would be the natural positions to spearhead this effort.

According to staff, there is no consistent format used by all City agencies in preparing review letters back to the applicant. Letters to the applicant can be lengthy and are mailed separately by each reviewing agency. While a minor issue, use of a consistent letter template by all agencies and coordinated mailing of all comments together can improve customer service to the applicant by providing all necessary information together in one clear, consistent package. This ensures that applicants will not begin to make "piecemeal" changes to their plans based upon one set of comments, only to have to change it based upon the next set; the applicant can integrate all City requirements into a single resubmission.

**Recommendation 34: Create one consistent template to be used in preparing letters to applicants.** Some cities use a single format in order to prepare comments and response to applicants. For example, an indented list of comments/conditions, each with a text space and/or checkbox below, can then be used by the applicant to check off and note comments or plan locations as each comment is addressed. A copy of this completed letter can then be resubmitted back to the City with resubmittal plans.

**Recommendation 35: Coordinate the mailing of all comments back to the applicant for each review cycle.** For the Planning and Building and Safety routings, all reviewing agencies should submit their comments back to

a single contact person who will then transmit them as a package to the applicant.

## Technology Issues

Technology is a sizeable weakness for the City of Goleta. As noted previously, the City at first contracted with the County for continued services, then used a private contractor, then hired permanent staff. The contractor's legacy is a Microsoft Access database by which project applications were tracked. At present, the City uses a combination of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, carbon copy forms and ad hoc status requests to track building permits, planning applications and engineering permits.

There is no centralized permit tracking system in place in Goleta that is used by all players in the process. In best-practice cities, information technology plays an integral role and serves as a "backbone" for the land use function. The City has no easy way to ascertain review times by project type, individual employee performance as pertains to review times, overall workload and financial status. City staff cannot easily share project status information nor notes or documents about a given address or application across departmental borders.

The primary purpose of software for the land use function is:

- To tie the work of employees in the multiple departments and work units together in a single location, linked to the property address or parcel numbers; and
- To create one library of all-related information on a given site/address/parcel.

Purchasing a new application package is a time-consuming and costly endeavor that should not be taken lightly. The market for land use packages is limited, with few choices for purchasers. It is common for software developers to introduce new versions of existing products and purchase competing companies, thereby consolidating choices available to purchasers. Management Partners' experience in helping municipalities to decide on the optimal permit tracking system suggests that an open RFP process is the best method to assess the current market for such products.

**Recommendation 36: Choose and implement a permit tracking software application.** The City should convene a multi-department committee to ascertain user needs, determine requirements for a future system, prepare a bid document (i.e., RFP), invite potential vendors to demonstrate products and implement a new system.



It should be noted that financial software developers frequently offer add-on software components for permit tracking. Our experience is that such add-ons provide basic permit tracking functionalities but rarely provide the technological “backbone” that is necessary for a best practice land use operation. At present, the City uses financial software from INCODE Inc., which offers an add-on for permit tracking. The add-on should be reviewed against current standalone permit tracking systems on the market.

**Recommendation 37: Provide software training to all staff, even occasional users and managers.** All staff should be trained on proper usage of the system, including consistent data entry, addressing and usage of the system. It should be mandatory for staff to know how to properly enter information into the permit system to ensure accurate and current recordkeeping. Training should focus not only on the specific application, but also on the City’s responsibilities, policies and deadlines for land use projects, the importance of calculating and implementing impact fees, and tracking the labor spent on land use projects.

**Recommendation 38: Establish policies for the consistent entry of data and use of the permit tracking system.** To provide the kind of reliable information necessary to manage the process, the City must establish policies and procedures for use of the system. All involved departments must utilize the system and enter data in a consistent manner so that management reports are accurate. This information also will ensure accurate tracking of project status, provision of accurate information to the stakeholder, as well as guarding the City against stakeholders who might “shop for yes” by going to various parties within the City and asking the same question until they receive the desired response. The information in the tracking software will serve as the general repository of all information on a project or address.

Another area for future improvements is providing more online content to stakeholders. Goleta’s public website provides information on the land use function on the PES Department web page. The site provides explanatory information on the functions and services of PES, and allows stakeholders to obtain electronic copies of land use forms that are available at City Hall.

The City is currently considering revisions to its public website and is interested in the addition of electronic government services. Specific to online land use services and information, there are a myriad of options available to the City. Management Partners has found that stakeholders and, in particular large developers, increasingly want to be able to submit

permit applications and track project review status online. In many jurisdictions, a stakeholder can enter the permit or application number and learn immediately the status of the City’s review (e.g., Building plan check is done, but Engineering is not). Further, reviewing agencies, such as the fire or sanitary districts, often appreciate the ability to access the software over the Internet to submit comments and approvals.

Best practice cities provide an “online permit center” that introduces stakeholders to the land use function – from the initial planning stage through final building inspection. In addition to providing electronic copies of paper forms, online permit centers can provide answers to commonly asked questions, list land use fees, and allow stakeholders to apply for permits and forward submittals to the City electronically. Such web pages are often linked from or advertised on the municipal home page. Land use services are presented as a single municipal service, without the organizational distinctions of the involved agencies and departments.

**Recommendation 39: Establish a workgroup of technical and land use staff to evaluate implementation of an online permit center.** This should be done simultaneously with the City’s current effort to improve its public website and in conjunction with decisions about the purchase of a permit tracking system.

To assist the City with website revisions currently underway, Management Partners conducted a brief survey of the land use function components on peer city websites. The survey examined six online components, which are outlined in Table 5 below. Black squares denote that the jurisdiction “has” a component (is affirmative).

**TABLE 5: PEER SURVEY OF LAND USE FUNCTION WEBSITE COMPONENTS**

Website Components	GOLETA	Aliso Viejo	Dana Point	Encinitas	Manhattan Beach	Monterey	Mountain View	Redondo Beach	San Bruno	San Clemente	San Juan Capistrano	Santa Barbara	Santa Cruz
Link to permit information on the municipal homepage													
Development review process introduction													
Information on ordinances and regulations on the permits page													
Online permit application													
Fee information													
Handouts and applications													

As can be seen, all cities have handouts available online. Many have a link to permit services from the City’s main webpage and many others have information on fees for service; Goleta does not. PES staff are now

working on a City-wide committee to improve the website and are reviewing other city websites to identify improvement ideas.

Geographic information system (GIS) software and archival storage of electronic (as well as paper) documents are issues that will have to be addressed by Goleta in the near future. Both items are not only critical components of a best practice land use operation, they are also important aspects of municipal government, in general. During our review, land use staff expressed an interest using GIS more effectively and adding a web-based GIS application to the City's public website.

The City owns a software license for the ESRI ArcGIS application. The City provides access to its GIS data to a small subset of employees. ArcGIS is fundamentally a GIS or analyst's toolset. To be effective in its use it requires a fair training commitment. Commonly, cities create internal web-based GIS applications that contain property and occupancy information, zoning, land use, utility, demographic, crime and emergency response, and other community data that relates to geographic elements. The web-based applications require little or no training. These applications require a few months for GIS staff to develop, but can pay substantial dividends by pushing more information to each employee's fingertips, or even making it directly accessible to the public.

The City has made significant improvements in the area of GIS, including assigning responsibility to the Advance Planning Division, providing all staff access, and hiring a contract GIS specialist to maintain GIS data servers and software and provide training. Continued expansion and improvement of the GIS system will yield benefits to both staff and stakeholders.

**Recommendation 40: Develop a web-based GIS application for use by land use staff to allow easy access to property ownership, occupancy information, prior permit history, planning, zoning and land use information.** In conjunction, obtaining and importing parcel-based information from Santa Barbara County in the GIS application will limit (and possibly eliminate) the need for continual data requests for permit history data from the County.

Integrating GIS web applications with document management is a logical and generally fairly easy next step, making access to historical records faster. Recordkeeping, archives and file storage will become increasingly important as Goleta ages. Goleta has processed approximately 1,000 planning permits and 6,600 building permits since incorporation. The complexity and expense to archive records is likely to increase as the number of historical records grows; moving quickly to electronic storage will minimize the costs of converting old documents to electronic form.

**Recommendation 41: Evaluate implementation of a City-wide document management system, and provide sufficient funding to digitize and microfilm existing paper documents.** Electronic document storage offers multiple benefits – reducing space requirements, decreasing the time it takes for staff to respond to stakeholder research requests, reducing legal liability as the City is able to quickly provide documentation when challenged, and the ability to “group” documents from various reviewing bodies together around a central project name, address or parcel number.

**Recommendation 42: Create a comprehensive document retention policy.** All City departments should work under one comprehensive document retention policy that dictates length of retention and form of storage.

In addition to a technological solution to document management, the City must also develop a comprehensive document retention policy. This policy would not be enforced through PES, but rather through the department that maintains oversight to the system (e.g., City Clerk). The current setup for retaining documents involves storage of poorly catalogued files on insecure shelving with no safeties (such as fireproofing) available for use. With a sound City-wide system in place, the current document management issues should be resolved.

## **Physical Workspace Issues**

Physical workspace in the City is adequate, but not ideal. In the last year the City remodeled the PES offices, creating a separate entrance directly to the counter. One counter exists and is staffed by a Building and Safety Technician and a Planning Permit Technician.

PES staff are almost universally negative in their reviews of the remodel. While a welcoming lobby exists with sofas and reading material for waiting stakeholders, views of individual workspace (in the form of cubicle partitions) has decreased. Privacy and noise control is a primary complaint of Planning Division staff, who all sit close to the front counter, as they find it difficult to concentrate on detailed application review work. Staff members complained they have limited privacy to discuss sensitive stakeholder and environmental issues. Physical workspace in the cubicles is below standard for this profession and most staff do not have a drafting table, common practice to ensure adequate space for laying out plans. PES shares the wing of the building with the City's Police Department (through a contract with the County Sheriff). PES does not have a library of documents, common in many such departments, nor does it have adequate storage space for archival documents. During this review, cardboard boxes with storage documents were stacked in the hallways.

The front counter, while welcoming, is not sized appropriately for laying out plan sets for discussion. Land Use Services counters are traditionally much wider for such purposes. Many best practices cities have moved to a “banking/loan officer” model of physical layout, ensuring the stakeholder and staff member may sit down in a more relaxed manner to review plans and discuss their respective needs.

**Recommendation 43: Increase individual staff workspace to ensure adequate room for efficient review of plans.**

**Recommendation 44: Widen the front counter to ensure it is adequately sized for the intake of plans.**

**Recommendation 45: Provide space for a library and archival storage.**

A best practice in many cities is the creation of a physical “one stop shop” for stakeholders. This concept brings representatives from all reviewing agencies to a single physical location. In this way, an applicant can discuss their needs not only with PES staff, but also with Fire, Public Works, Code Enforcement, and other staff needed for processing. Most one stop shops incorporate a single, centralized cashier to collect payments and issue receipts for a wide variety of transactions. Many cities color code or number the various reviewer “stations” so that a receptionist can properly direct stakeholders. Cities such as Pasadena, Long Beach, and Santa Barbara have such one stop shop centers in place and can be viewed in site visits.

**Recommendation 46: Move toward a one stop shop concept as the City considers building a City Hall and/or leasing or acquiring more space.** As Goleta contemplates the construction of a City Hall in the future, the one stop shop concept should be given consideration.

The counter is staffed by a permit technician from the PES Department. In addition to PES payments, the technician must also process payments for the Parks & Recreation Department, which were previously handled by the main receptionist at the other office entrance, as well as page Engineering staff for their permit stakeholders. The result is the use of PES professional staff for general cashiering or clerical functions. This is an inefficient use of staff time and results in distractions from their professional work. It is also somewhat confusing from a stakeholder’s perspective.

**Recommendation 47: Create a central cashier station in the City to process payments from all departments and have it staffed by the Finance Department.** The City should establish a cashier station at the PES counter

and/or have the main receptionist at the other entrance  
accept all payments.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The City of Goleta has a land use services operation in place. Enough time has passed in the City's six-year history, for the community to shed its borrowed policy documents. Indeed, a primary benefit of being an independent, incorporated City is the ability to create standards to meet specific community needs and set the bar high to ensure quality projects.

Since incorporation, PES staff members have been busy processing daily workload and have been unable to prepare policy documents in-house or contract for outside assistance to prepare them due to the lack of financial resources. The current planning manager's span of control has been too large and her involvement in daily workload too high for her to focus on proactive management of the operation as she would have liked. The City is fortunate to have a reputation as a desirable residential location, and to have a staff of skilled, knowledgeable, and hard-working employees with a focus on customer service and a commitment to the community.

Management Partners has made several recommendations that will allow Goleta to build upon its already strong values of customer service and to make improvements in its land use function. The key recommendations in the use of information technology, specific land use application types, coordination between reviewing agencies, improved educational materials for stakeholders, and a new performance management system will, when implemented, allow staff to make significant system improvements.

It was stated at the outset of this report that, because the many positive aspects of the organization are not detailed here, the conclusions and recommendations could easily be construed as a negative assessment of current operations. That is not the case. We found City staff most knowledgeable and helpful in the preparation of this report, with a wealth of good ideas to improve the system.

The recommendations herein are designed to bring about improvements, and represent a means of utilizing the obvious talents and competencies of a very qualified staff. They will match with an expressed desire of an organization to provide quality services to its stakeholders within the parameters of the rules it is required to administer.

Careful, thoughtful and reasoned implementation of the recommendations in this report will have a positive impact on the City's organization, its employees and its stakeholders. Care should be taken to educate

stakeholders on any changes taking place so that they are aware and included in the transition process.

Management Partners wishes to thank the City Council, the City Manager, PES Director, and all City staff for their involvement in, and assistance with, this report. The employees who participated in the process revealed an earnest desire to improve the systems and a wealth of creative ideas to do so. The City is ready to take the next steps in bringing about those improvements.



## **ATTACHMENT A – LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Recommendation 1: Analyze and clarify the respective roles of the Neighborhood Services and Planning and Environmental Services departments and streamline processes involving both.

Recommendation 2: Build linkages between the departments into tracking software.

Recommendation 3: Develop a statement of overall goals and objectives for the land use function.

Recommendation 4: Establish performance expectations and timelines for land use processes, identify the data to be collected and methods for collection, and regularly review the data for continuous improvement.

Recommendation 5: Train and empower senior planners to supervise junior planner work.

Recommendation 6: Identify employees interested in career development and create individual development plans for each of them.

Recommendation 7: Require all managers and supervisors to include “talent development” as part of their primary job responsibilities, and evaluate them on the basis of their performance on that indicator, among other key performance indicators.

Recommendation 8: Create a training goal for each employee and implement it.

Recommendation 9: Formalize a program by which staff are regularly praised, recognized, and rewarded for good work.

Recommendation 10: Establish communication protocols to determine who should be involved in various discussions within the City organization.

Recommendation 11: Develop and adopt a financial model that includes appropriate fees, a reserve fund and core staffing that will sustain quality land use services through all land use cycles.

Recommendation 12: Increase fees based upon recommendations of the User Fee and Development Impact Fee studies.

Recommendation 13: Hold a workshop with City Finance staff, IT staff and land use departments to agree upon the best course for ensuring automation of financial information between the systems, and move forward with implementation.

Recommendation 14: Adopt an advance planning surcharge on building permits in order to raise funds to pay for advance planning and policy document preparation.

Recommendation 15: Adopt a technology surcharge on building permits in order to raise funds to pay for advance planning and policy document preparation.

Recommendation 16: Identify and prioritize policy documents to be revised and updated and budget accordingly.

Recommendation 17: Break the Land Use Permit classification into smaller application types with specific thresholds, applications, and processes.

Recommendation 18: Review the LUP clearance process and determine the best method to streamline the process.

Recommendation 19: Review and revise names to differentiate and clarify various application types.

Recommendation 20: Increase the use of ministerial and over-the-counter approvals.

Recommendation 21: Create and implement a formal pre-application process for projects over a certain threshold.

Recommendation 22: Increase the appeals fee to recover costs and set criteria to define who may appeal and what constitutes valid grounds for an appeal.

Recommendation 23: Review the timing of the appeals process to ensure it occurs at the earliest possible point in the process.

Recommendation 24: Hire EIR consultants under blanket purchase orders/contracts.

Recommendation 25: Provide all applicants with user-friendly handouts and specific information on the criteria and purpose of each body's review, preferably at the beginning of the application process.

Recommendation 26: Create specific design guidelines to assist applicants in preparing land use applications that comply with the City's vision.

Recommendation 27: Ensure Advance Planning presence at regional boards and commissions so that Goleta is an active participant in regional planning.

Recommendation 28: Create a routing matrix/table that clearly shows which agencies receive routings based upon the type of application.

Recommendation 29: Agree upon review timelines and have the timeline clearly noted on a routing transmittal sheet.

Recommendation 30: Agree upon the components of a complete application set and screening at counter intake

Recommendation 31: Improve application forms so they pertain to specific types of projects, explain what applicants should bring, the fees they are expected to pay, etc.

Recommendation 32: Create informational materials to be available during the pre-application process and in the Permit Center.

Recommendation 33: Establish procedures to regularly review application forms to identify needed updates and improvements.

Recommendation 34: Create one consistent template to be used in preparing letters to applicants.

Recommendation 35: Coordinate the mailing of all comments back to the applicant for each review cycle.

Recommendation 36: Choose and implement a permit tracking software application.

Recommendation 37: Provide software training to all staff, even occasional users and managers.

Recommendation 38: Establish policies for the consistent entry of data and use of the permit tracking system.

Recommendation 39: Establish a workgroup of technical and land use staff to evaluate implementation of an online permit center.

Recommendation 40: Develop a web-based GIS application for use by land use staff to allow easy access to property ownership, occupancy information, prior permit history, planning, zoning and land use information.

Recommendation 41: Evaluate implementation of a City-wide document management system, and provide sufficient funding to digitize and microfilm existing paper documents.

Recommendation 42: Create a comprehensive document retention policy.

Recommendation 43: Increase individual staff workspace to ensure adequate room for efficient review of plans.

Recommendation 44: Widen the front counter to ensure it is adequately sized for the intake of plans.

Recommendation 45: Provide space for a library and archival storage.

Recommendation 46: Move toward a one stop shop concept as the City considers building a City Hall and/or leasing or acquiring more space.

Recommendation 47: Create a central cashier station in the City to process payments from all departments and have it staffed by the Finance Department.

## ATTACHMENT B – SAMPLE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

### City of Santa Monica, CA

#### Division Program Highlights

266 CITY PLANNING  
210 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
01 GENERAL FUND

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	Actual	Actual	Estimated Actual	Target	Target
<b>OUTPUT AND EFFICIENCY:</b>					
<u>Customer Service</u>					
Telephone Information Requests and Responsiveness:					
Number of Calls Received	33,903/yr	33,777/yr	35,000/yr	35,000/yr	35,000/yr
Performance Target:					
Return 95% of Calls within 24 Hours	N/A	95%	95%	95%	95%
% Returned within 24 Hours					
FTE Required	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Counter Information Requests and Responsiveness:					
Number of Counter Customers	9,545/yr	9,345/yr	8,000/yr	9,000/yr	9,000/yr
Performance Target:					
Serve Customers within 30 Minutes	N/A	81%	90%	90%	90%
% Served within 30 Minutes					
FTE Required	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Customer Complaints and Inquiries:					
Number of Complaints/Inquiries	37	18	30	30	30
Performance Target:					
Process 85% within 10 Days	95%	100%	85%	85%	85%
% Responded to within Target					
FTE Required	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
<u>Department Work Program</u>					
Planning Division Priorities:					
Number of Policy Projects	8	5	3	3	3
FTE Required	0.9	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
<u>Development Review/Project Manager</u>					
Administrative Applications:					
Number of Business & Home Occupation Licenses Reviewed	1,450	2,308	2,000	2,000	2,000

## Division Program Highlights

266 CITY PLANNING  
210 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
01 GENERAL FUND

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2003-04 Actual	2004-05 Actual	2005-06	2006-07 Target	2007-08 Target
			Estimated Actual		
Performance Target*: Process 85% within 2 Weeks % Processed within Target	N/A	86%	85%	85%	85%
FTE Required	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.5
Number of Other Administrative Applications Reviewed:	198	186	175	175	175
Performance Target*: Process 85% within 8 Weeks % Processed within Target	N/A	86%	85%	85%	85%
FTE Required	2.9	2.5	1.6	1.6	1.6
Discretionary Applications: Number of Planning Commission Projects Reviewed	35	42	39	39	39
Performance Target*: Process 85% within 26 Weeks % Processed within Target	N/A	89%	85%	85%	85%
FTE Required	2	2	1	1	1
Number of Zoning Administrator Permits Reviewed	33	30	40	40	40
Performance Target*: Process 85% within 10 Weeks % Processed within Target	N/A	80%	85%	85%	85%
FTE Required	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Number of Architectural Review Board Permits - Board Approved	135	119	125	125	125
Performance Target*: Process within 8 Weeks % Processed within Target	N/A	89%	85%	85%	85%
FTE Required	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6

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## Division Program Highlights

266 CITY PLANNING  
 210 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
 01 GENERAL FUND

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2003-04 Actual	2004-05 Actual	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
			Estimated Actual	Target	Target
Number of Landmark Commission Permits	23	31	26	26	26
Performance Target*:					
Process 85% within 12 Weeks % Processed within Target	N/A	85%	85%	85%	85%
FTE Required	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
<u>Environmental Review</u>					
Number of Documents Prepared	8	8	8	8	8
Performance Target*:					
Process 100% within 12 Months % Processed within Target	N/A	85%	100%	100%	100%
FTE Required	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6

\* Performance standard is not applicable to applicant delay or applicant approved processing extensions.

## Division Program Highlights

321 BUILDING AND SAFETY  
210 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
01 GENERAL FUND

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	Actual	Actual	Estimated Actual	Target	Target
<b>OUTPUT:</b>					
<u>Plan Check Activity:</u>					
Number of Plan Checks Completed	1,486	1,713	1,950	1,950	1,950
Percentage of Plan Checks Performed at Counter	65%	55%	58%	58%	58%
Valuation of Plan Checks (in Millions)	\$ 245	\$ 279	\$ 198	\$ 198	\$ 198
<u>Permit/Inspection Activity:</u>					
Permit Valuation (in Millions)	\$ 169	\$ 180	\$ 251	\$ 251	\$ 251
Number of Building Inspection Performed	12,147	12,791	16,585	16,000	16,000
<u>Complaint/Code Enforcement Activity:</u>					
<u>Zoning Cases Filed/Initiated:</u>					
Auto Repair	23	12	193	200	200
Sign/Outdoor Merchandise	277	43	234	200	200
Noise Ordinance	73	57	60	60	60
Fences/Hedges	140	23	25	25	25
Nuisance Cases	65	114	166	170	170
Other Zoning Cases	<u>52</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>125</u>
Subtotal Zoning Cases Filed/Initiated:	630	333	801	780	780
<u>Building Cases Filed/Initiated:</u>					
City-Mandated Retrofit Orders	3	1	5	5	5
Housing	102	247	283	280	280
Construction Work Related	340	358	453	450	450
Other Building Cases	<u>517</u>	<u>309</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>150</u>
Subtotal Building Cases Filed/Initiated:	<u>962</u>	<u>915</u>	<u>888</u>	<u>885</u>	<u>885</u>
Total Complaints/Filed/Initiated	1,592	1,248	1,689	1,665	1,665



## Division Program Highlights

321 BUILDING AND SAFETY  
210 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
01 GENERAL FUND

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	Actual	Actual	Estimated Actual	Target	Target
<u>Compliance Inspections</u>					
Proactive Monitoring	121	177	0	125	125
Response to Complaints	<u>3,670</u>	<u>3,687</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Total Compliance Inspections	3,791	3,864	5,000	5,125	5,125
<u>Records/Information Activities:</u>					
Residential Building Records	1,290	1,043	1,071	1,100	1,100
<u>Administrative/Judicial Process:</u>					
Administrative Citations	129	33	62	60	60
Administrative Hearings	28	1	3	3	3
Criminal Cases Referred	3	0	0	0	0
Nuisance Abatement Board	1	0	0	0	0
Building and Safety Commission	2	3	0	0	0
<b>EFFICIENCY:</b>					
<u>Average Time Spent to Perform:</u>					
<u>Plan Checks:</u>					
First Review	5 weeks	3 weeks	6 weeks	6 weeks	6 weeks
Resubmittals	2.5 weeks	2 weeks	3 weeks	3 weeks	3 weeks
Building Inspections	40 minutes	34 minutes	35 minutes	35 minutes	35 minutes
Percentage of Building Inspections Performed Next Day	29%	22%	60%	85%	85%
<u>Average Number of Calendar Days from Receipt of Complaint to:</u>					
First Inspection	11	7	4	4	4
Obtain Voluntary Compliance	45	76	69	70	70
Transfer to Admin/Judicial Process	64	128	232	230	230
Obtain Compliance through Admin/Judicial Process	83	454	528	530	530
Number of Outstanding Complaints	690	734	632	630	630
	258				

City of Kirkland, WA



City of Kirkland

Development Services Report

MAR '07

**PERMIT REVIEW TIME**

These numbers reflect permits that are ready to issue

PERMITS	# of Permits this month	First Review Goal (weeks)	*First Review (Avg. Wks) this month	**Total Review Time (Avg Wks) this month	# of Permits YTD		First Review (Avg Wks) YTD		Total Review (Avg Wks) YTD	
					2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006
<b>Single-family-Review Type</b>										
New	8	5.0	6.6	12.9	32	18	8.3	6.0	21.7	17.1
Regular	14	3.0	4.3	18.6	37	43	4.6	2.7	17.3	14.9
Third Party	7	0.4	0.6	0.7	11	10	0.7	0.5	0.9	1.0
Addition/Alteration	1	2.0	8.3	9.1	7	18	3.6	2.1	5.7	5.5
Add/Alt	7	4.0	10.1	19.1	15	15	8.7	5.0	15.5	23.4
Regular	1	10.0	15.1	33.0	1	0	15.1	0	33.0	0
<b>Multi-Family</b>										
New	2	0.4	0.5	1.4	2	2	0.6	1.2	1.4	4.2
Addition/Alteration	0	2.0	0.0	0.0	10	16	1.9	2.3	3.3	2.9
Add/Alt	0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0	14	0	2.7	0	12.6
Regular	1	10.0	10.2	21.5	2	1	11.7	2.6	29.6	23.9
<b>Commercial, Public &amp; Indust.</b>										
New	0	0.4	0.0	0.0	1	2	0.1	0.7	0.4	1.2
Addition/Alteration	0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2	4	2.7	1.2	9.7	1.9
Add/Alt	0	3.0	0.0	0.0	1	8	8.9	5.2	20.1	20.2
Regular	3	0.4	0.7	1.9	16	13	0.7	1.6	1.7	2.6
<b>Tenant Improvement</b>										
New	1	2.0	0.3	2.0	4	21	1.2	2.0	7.8	6.4
Addition/Alteration	12	3.0	5.8	7.4	14	7	2.4	3.2	3.7	6.2
Add/Alt	9	0.4	0.7	0.9	12	16	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.0
Regular	1	2.0	2.0	4.9	1	19	2.0	2.2	4.9	3.3
<b>Mechanical</b>										
New	3	3.0	2.4	20.1	4	3	4.5	2.7	13.5	4.9
Addition/Alteration	1	4.0	6.0	21.0	6	11	6.8	8.8	24.1	24.0
Add/Alt	9	2.0	3.4	5.2	24	30	2.2	1.2	4.7	4.2
Regular	3	0.4	0.7	0.9	12	16	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.0
<b>Land Surface Modification</b>										
New	1	2.0	2.0	4.9	1	19	2.0	2.2	4.9	3.3
Addition/Alteration	3	3.0	2.4	20.1	4	3	4.5	2.7	13.5	4.9
Add/Alt	1	4.0	6.0	21.0	6	11	6.8	8.8	24.1	24.0
Regular	9	2.0	3.4	5.2	24	30	2.2	1.2	4.7	4.2

\*First review is the amount of time from permit application until the applicant is contacted, and asked to make corrections; or, if no corrections are required, until the permit is approved.  
 \*\*Total review is the amount of time from permit application to permit approval. This includes any time waiting for the applicant to resubmit drawings and excludes any time spent in SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) review, for those permits which are subject to such review.

## City of Fremont, CA

### Review Process

The extent of the review required to issue permits for a project depends upon the use or occupancy type of the structure, as well as its location and the impact of its construction on the environment. The timetables listed below are intended to give you an example of how long it might take to review various types of plans.

- [Major Project Review Flowchart](#)
- [Standard Project Review Flowchart](#)

### Plan Review Timetables

- [New Residential & Commercial Construction](#)
- [Residential Additions & Modifications](#)
- [Tenant Improvements](#)

<b>New Residential &amp; Commercial Construction</b>	
Preliminary Review	17 Business Working Days
First Working Drawings Review	23 Business Working Days
Revisions Review of Re-submittal	12 Business Working Days

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<b>Residential Additions &amp; Modifications</b>	
Single Story Additions less than 501 square feet and less than \$30,001 valuation	Same Day By Appointment
Interior improvements or alterations less than \$30,001 valuation	Same Day By Appointment
Accessory buildings and structures	Same Day By Appointment

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<b>Tenant Improvements</b>	
Office space less than 3,000 square feet, warehouse space less than 50,000 square feet, retail space less than 1,500 square feet or 49 occupants, or restaurant and deli spaces less than 49 occupants	Same Day By Appointment
Less than 100,000 square feet	Approximately 5 Business Working Days
100,000 to 200,000 square feet	10 Business Working Days for first review and 5 Business Working Days turnaround for subsequent review cycles

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A small residential addition may be reviewed and permits issued in one visit (Over-the-counter plan review) by appointment. Minor interior improvements of commercial space may also be processed in one visit by appointment. See [Standard Review Process](#).