



**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Peter Imhof, Planning and Environmental Review Director

**SUBJECT:** Planning and Environmental Review Department, Initial Assessment of PER Department Skillsets and Position Allocations

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discuss the Planning and Environmental Review (PER) Department Director's Initial Assessment of Existing PER Department Skillsets and Position Allocations and provide direction regarding possible Departmental re-organization.

**BACKGROUND:**

Strategic Recommendation #7 of the Citygate Organizational Assessment report, completed in June 2017, recommended that the new PER Director make an initial assessment of existing PER Department skillsets and position allocations within 90 days of starting. This Initial Assessment was intended to be a first step toward rebalancing skillsets and positions and rethinking the organizational structure of the Department to address report findings and recommendations. The Citygate report then envisioned a collaborative PER Department process to develop an "18-month PER Organizational Transition Plan" to re-orient skillsets away from vacant land development and toward Old Town development activities and greater coordination with other City departments.

The Citygate report found that the Department's current organizational structure "is not well suited to meet the changing demands" of planning and economic development as vacant-land development in the City decreases and infill development and repurposing of land, etc., increase (Finding #7.1), is too hierarchical (Finding #7.2), and "creates dysfunctions" (Finding #7.3). The report suggests fairly fundamental re-organization of the Department to a flatter, team-oriented structure based on interdisciplinary workgroups with a special focus on Old Town.

The new PER Department Director started work in August 2017. A draft of the Initial Assessment was prepared by mid-November and was circulated to the City Manager, and PER Department Division managers and staff for input, discussion and feedback.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Initial Assessment reviews existing Department structure, staffing levels, workload by Division and skillsets. It also offers thoughts and observations on options for Department structure and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of those options. Finally, it suggests specific actions that can be taken to address issues and improve Department functioning.

The City must make a fundamental decision whether to pursue a structural re-organization of the PER Department and embark on an 18-month Organizational Transition Plan, as recommended by Citygate. Whatever its potential merits and risks, re-organization would involve a significant additional work effort and require a commitment of staff time. The decision whether and when to undertake re-organization must therefore be made against the backdrop of the significant backlog of work in both the Advance and Current Planning Divisions, as well as the significant work efforts being undertaken in the Sustainability Program. In essence, the priority assigned to a possible Departmental re-organization must be assigned relative to the priority of other, competing work efforts, given finite staff resources.

### **Workload and Staffing**

The Initial Assessment reviews staffing, workloads and skillsets and makes specific observations and suggestions. Centrally, it observes that staffing levels in the Advance Planning Division, especially, are not adequate to handle current workload, given ongoing Advance Planning responsibilities, including oil and gas, the backlog of one-time work (especially ordinance-related work), and demands currently placed on the Division to handle a variety of special projects, including emergency operations support. It also recognizes that there is a significant backlog of process improvement work in the Current Planning Division (e.g., the Permit Tracking System, a permit procedures manual, standard conditions document, file management, and update of CEQA Guidelines). It recommends instituting a priority-setting process in the form of an Annual Work Program for the Department as a mechanism to allow the Council to prioritize the work of the PER Department and to ensure expectations are realistic and in line with available staff capacity.

### **Department Structure / 18-month Organizational Transition Plan**

The Initial Assessment is intended as preliminary to the 18-month Organizational Transition Plan recommended by the Citygate report. It offers thoughts and observations, but not ultimate conclusions on organizational structure.

The Initial Assessment evaluates three, possible structures: (1) the existing structure, (2) a modified existing structure, which eliminates a middle supervisory tier in the interest of "flattening" the organizational structure, and (3) a team-based approach that melds the Current Planning and Advance Planning functions.

The Initial Assessment (and the new PER Director) question whether a team-based structure and, in particular, “interdisciplinary working groups” with a focus on Old Town (suggested by the Citygate report) make sense or are justified:

- An organizational structure based around an interdisciplinary team for Old Town development is based on the incorrect premise that financial, marketing or CIP skillsets would be located in the PER Department. More likely, these skills would be assembled from different departments in interdepartmental working groups.
- The traditional division within planning departments between the processing of development applications (Current Planning) and the maintenance of the General Plan and associated duties (Advance or Long-Range Planning) exists because these two functions are substantively different. Planning organizations that attempt to meld the two, distinct functions encounter challenges in balancing work priorities.

Each possible structure has its strengths and weaknesses. The Initial Assessment contains a matrix that attempts to evaluate these pros and cons against evaluative criteria.

There is at least a good argument that issues within the PER Department are not so much structural, as procedural. The Initial Assessment recognizes the validity of the concerns and issues discussed by the Citygate report but questions the utility of undertaking a process to fundamentally restructure the Department. Such a process would be time-intensive, and compete with and distract from the Department’s ability to focus on its core work and responsibilities, at time when there is little, if any, management or staff capacity to spare.

### **Staff Feedback**

PER managers and staff were given the opportunity to review and provide input on the draft Initial Assessment, both individually and in a group discussion format. A range of different views were expressed. Several PER staff support pursuing a Departmental re-organization and feel it could have a number of potential benefits. Some staff are indifferent to the idea of Departmental re-organization and seem content with the current organizational structure. Other staff and managers are skeptical of the need for a re-organization or feel that the detriments/risks outweigh potential benefits.

Comments by those in support of pursuing a Departmental re-organization included the following:

- The Citygate report’s premise that the Department should shift to Old Town development may be off-base, but that doesn’t mean we should not consider restructuring the Department. Maybe a hybrid structure is possible that would be less hierarchical, but without a specific OT focus.
- The survey responses in the Citygate report show support for re-organization and underlying issues identified in the report still exist.

- The idea to reorganize the Department around teams is not necessarily a bad one. It would relieve pressure on Advance Planning and give opportunities for professional growth.
- There is still a silo-effect separating the two, main PER Divisions (Advance Planning and Current Planning) and it “feels very separate.” There are potential benefits of more Current Planning involvement in Advance Planning work.
- Teams could be based on timeline of deliverables instead of strict Advance Planning/Current Planning division. Short-term concerns (e.g., permitting workload) should not side track the Department’s long-term goals (e.g., process improvement), as has happened in the past.
- Planners expressed an overall interest in improvement, asking, how can we be better? Departmental re-organization breaks us out of an ossified and dysfunctional status quo.

Comments from those indifferent to or skeptical of pursuing a Departmental re-organization included:

- The Citygate report was based on a snapshot in time. The issues that existed then were a product of the moment and are not (as) present anymore.
- There are good, practical reasons for the traditional division between Current and Advance Planning in planning departments. It’s a natural division of labor.
- My role is specialized and the Department structure doesn’t really affect my job responsibilities.
- Development in Old Town is market-dependent. An interdisciplinary team approach is off-base, because the mix of skill sets necessarily involves other departments, not just Planning.
- We still need to accomplish the same core functions (e.g., permitting, code compliance, General Plan management), regardless of Departmental structure. The existing structure provides clarity and accountability within each area of core function, which are important.

Planners also commented more generally on the need for more clarification of the PER Department’s role within the larger City organization. On the one hand, planners felt planning input should be integrated better and earlier into the City decision-making process, e.g., prior to major commitments to Public Works projects and property acquisitions. On the other hand, there is a perception that PER is frequently assigned work that is not within its normal purview, e.g., management of parks/open spaces, and that the division of labor between City departments is not clear enough.

Planners also wanted to know how the decision about Departmental re-organization will be made. They underlined that the discussion is an opportunity to educate Council and favored a strong recommendation.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

Fundamentally, decision whether to undertake a re-organization of the PER Department at this time should be made in the context of PER Department work priorities. Because Department has a big backlog of deferred workload and is already oversubscribed, the new PER Director questions the wisdom of moving forward with a Departmental re-

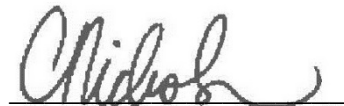
organization immediately. The Director prefers to make substantial progress on clearing the existing backlog, which will also give staff and Council time to see how the Current Planning workload changes as major projects are completed. If, as projected, Current Planning workload declines, the PER Department managers can gradually shift available Current Planning staff capacity to Current Planning special projects and to Advance Planning. Possible Departmental re-organization should be considered as a new project competing for limited staff time and discussed and prioritized in the context of other, competing projects.

**FISCAL IMPACTS:**

Since the Initial Assessment is just a preliminary study of Departmental workload, staffing and structure, there are no fiscal impacts from the Initial Assessment itself.

Fundamental structural changes to the PER Department, should the City decide to undertake them, would have unknown implications for existing staff positions, compensation structure and budget and would need to be worked out.

**Reviewed By:**



Carmen Nichols  
Deputy City Manager

**Approved By:**



Michelle Greene  
City Manager

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. Initial Assessment of PER Department Skillsets and Position Allocations



## Attachment 1

### Initial Assessment of PER Department Skillsets and Position Allocations





**Initial Assessment of Existing Planning and Environmental Review (PER)**  
**Department**  
**Skillsets and Position Allocations**

**Introduction**

The June 2017 Citygate Organizational Assessment report recommended that the new PER Director make an initial assessment of existing PER Department skillsets and position allocations within 90 days of starting (Strategic Recommendation #7). This initial assessment is intended as a first step toward rebalancing skillsets and positions and rethinking the organizational structure of the Department to address report findings and meet other report recommendations.

I began my present role with the City of Goleta in mid-August 2017 and completed a draft of this assessment in November 2017. Having observed the Department in operation over this period and having met with all regular staff individually, I understand the Department's current structure and approach to core functions, as well as staff allocation and workload. I begin this initial assessment by reviewing current staffing levels and workload by Division, include thoughts and observations about the current Department structure and reorganization options, and conclude with a number of specific ideas for interim actions that may be taken now to improve Department operations.

The Citygate Report recommended rebalancing planning skillsets and position allocations as a means "to improve organizational efficiency, enhance long-range environmental planning, and increase the effectiveness of the City's Old Town economic development program through increased collaboration with the Neighborhood Services Department" (Strategic Recommendation #7). The report found that the Department's current organizational structure "is not well suited to meet the changing demands" of planning and economic development as vacant-land development in the City decreases and infill development and repurposing of land, etc., increase (Finding #7.1), is too hierarchical (Finding #7.2), and "creates dysfunctions" (Finding #7.3). The report suggests fairly fundamental re-organization of the Department to a flatter, team-oriented structure based on interdisciplinary workgroups with a special focus on Old Town.

This initial assessment is intended as preliminary to an 18-month PER Organizational Transition Plan, as recommended by the Citygate report, which is to be "the product of an open and collaborative process among the [PER staff]," with active participation by other City departments (Recommendation #7.1). While it offers thoughts and observations, it does not reach ultimate conclusions on organizational structure, leaving that for the 18-month Organizational Transition Plan.

Responding to the Citygate report's recommendations, this assessment nevertheless preliminarily addresses re-organization options, including "interdisciplinary working groups"/teams, the specific alternative structure suggested by the report. Transition to

that alternative structure would represent a fundamental change for the Department. I question whether on balance that suggested structure is either warranted or desirable. It is not clear that its benefits outweigh its downsides. It would have unknown implications for existing staff positions, compensation structure and budget, which are beyond the scope of this assessment, but which would need to be thoroughly understood.

### **Current PER Staffing and Department Organization**

The PER Department staffing is currently organized into three, main divisions as follows.

#### Advance Planning:

- 1 manager + 2 FTEs (2 senior planners)
- Consultants: Rincon (Venoco work, Ellwood Mesa work), Althouse & Meade, RECON, RRM, J.H. Douglas, JDL Mapping, Willdan, ICF Jones & Stokes, Storrer Environmental Services, Campbell-GEO, Bengal Engineering (approximately 3.0 FTE equivalent)

#### Current Planning:

- 1 manager + 8 FTEs (2 supervising senior planners, 2 associate planners, 1 limited-term associate planner, 1 assistant planner, 1 planning technician, 1 Code Compliance Officer).
- Consultants: Jan Hubbel (10 hours/week) + Linda Gregory (10 hours/week) (0.5 FTE equivalent)

#### Sustainability Program:

- 1 Sustainability Coordinator

#### Building & Safety:

- 1 Building Official (0.2 FTE) + 1 Deputy Building Official (0.4 FTE) + 1 Building Technician (0.8 FTE) + 2 Building Inspectors (0.8 FTE each) (contracted through Willdan) = 3.0 FTE total

#### Department, Other:

- 1 PER Director
- 1 Management Assistant

Total full-time staff: 15 regular employees + 3 FTE Building & Safety Willdan employees

Contract and consultants: approximately 3.5 FTE equivalent

## Staffing Levels and Workloads

My initial assessment of staffing levels within the current Department structure:

- **Advance Planning Division.** Staffing levels in the Advance Planning Division are not adequate to handle current workload, given ongoing Advance Planning responsibilities, including oil and gas, the backlog of one-time work (especially ordinance-related work), and demands currently placed on the Division to handle a variety of special projects, including emergency operations support work. During most of my tenure here to date, the Division has been short-staffed, with only one of the two senior planner positions filled, which has exacerbated the workload problem. The Division manager is oversubscribed. She has been assigned as project manager/subject matter specialist on a number of special projects, which interferes with her ability to manage the work of the Division.

In addition to a broad range of ongoing responsibilities, the backlog of Advance Planning work includes ordinance-related work (New Zoning Ordinance, Cannabis, Accessory Dwelling Unit, Food Truck, Telecom, Historic Preservation, etc.), Local Coastal Program certification, Airport Land Use Plan integration and a variety of special plans and wished-for special projects (e.g., Ellwood Mesa Habitat Management Plan, Creeks and Watershed Master Plan, revisiting the General Plan Amendment initiation process, etc.). Attachment 1 contains a more detailed list of Advance Planning Division work.

Because of extreme short-staffing and the high priority of ordinance work in the Advance Planning Division, I have re-assigned some Current Planning staff (less than 1 FTE) to assist with ordinance work. As discussed in more detail below, I recommend instituting an Annual Advance Planning Work Program as a mechanism to allow the Council to prioritize the work of the Division and to ensure expectations are realistic and in line with available staff capacity.

- **Current Planning Division.** Staffing levels in the Current Planning Division seem approximately correct for the current permitting workload, although there is a significant backlog of one-time process improvement work. There is a steady workload of smaller, ministerial projects. However, as the Citygate report recognizes, the number of large development projects is likely to decline over time and the nature/composition of permit applications may change as the City builds out. One-time process improvement work includes development of a Permit Tracking System (PTS), scanning of approved plans and permits for integration into the PTS, development of a Permit Procedures Manual and Standard Conditions, Design Guidelines/design review process reform and update of CEQA thresholds of significance. Attachment 2 summarizes Current Planning Division Workload.

- **Building & Safety Division.** The Building & Safety Division appears adequately staffed. However, it is heavily reliant on key individuals in specialized roles (especially the Building Technician and main Building Inspector), with little to no redundancy/back-up. The lack of redundancy makes it vulnerable to disruption, should unexpected staffing changes occur. The existing system for tracking of B&S permits and plans, which functions very well thanks to the Building Technician's high level of organization, should be integrated into the new Permit Tracking System and formalized.
- **Administrative Functions.** Administrative staff are oversubscribed, with only one, full-time management assistant and one, part-time, contract administrative assistant/clerk (responsible for Planning Commission minutes and archiving/scanning). The management assistant splits her time between hearing support (agendas, noticing, etc.) and invoices/payment of consultants, with the latter function requiring an inordinately high percentage of her time. In my experience in other organizations, invoices and payment of consultants have been an accounting/finance function and really require accounting expertise. As detailed below, I recommend shifting responsibility for invoices and payment of consultants to the Finance Department, together with billing under developer deposits.
- **Sustainability Coordinator.** Sustainability Coordinator position (1 FTE) is adequately staffed for this program's workload, but it does not integrate neatly into the Department structure. By its nature, the work of the Sustainability Coordinator is interdepartmental and city-wide. The Sustainability Coordinator has suggested in the past that, as a result, the position might be better located in the City Manager's Office. However, the integration of sustainability programs with PER Department work is in line with the other work of the Department and location within the PER Department may help ensure that the Sustainability Coordinator program receives dedicated attention.

### **Workload Breakdown**

There is a large amount of short-term, one-off work related to systemic upgrades and reforms in both the Current Planning and Advance Planning Divisions. These short-term work needs compete with regular, ongoing responsibilities for staff time. Depending on staffing levels, I estimate that most of this work should be accomplished within a period of 1-3 years.

- **Advance Planning Division.** Short-term, one-off work consists principally of one-time ordinance work related to the NZO, other specialized new ordinances, Airport Land Use Plan integration, Local Coastal Program certification, as well as the closure of Platform Holly, the Ellwood Onshore Facility (EOF) and Line 96, etc. New

ordinances will require maintenance when completed, but the bulk of the time and effort required is one-time, upfront work in developing and adopting the ordinances.

- **Current Planning Division.** Short-term, one-off work includes, Permit Tracking System (PTS) development, and development of: (1) a Permit Procedures Manual; (2) Standard Condition of Approval language; (3) Design Guidelines/design review process reform; and (4) update of CEQA thresholds of significance. An ongoing project is the scanning of approved plans/permits and documents for integration into Permit Tracking System.

Workloads in both Divisions should diminish over time as we work through this backlog. While we are working through this backlog, the Department should rely primarily on consultants and extra-help planners under contract to take up the slack (i.e., not hire additional full-time employees, whose work would no longer be needed within a relatively short time-frame of a few years).

With respect to the Advance Planning backlog in particular, work should be paced through the Advance Planning Annual Work Program, as recommended. The Advance Planning Division, with three, full-time FTEs and approximately 3 FTE equivalents in support from various consultants, has more work than it can realistically handle, especially given short-term, one-off work. Attachment 1 lists current work and requested new projects.

In the Current Planning Division, based on the Cumulative Case Log, new permit applications have ranged over the last five years between 126 and 179 per year, averaging just over 150 per year. Of those new permit applications, on average approximately ten have been discretionary projects, with the balance ministerial. Attachment 2 provides detail.

Without a Permit Tracking System, it is difficult to assess caseload per planner or average processing time per permit. However, self-reported caseloads from September 2017 provide a snapshot of caseload per planner. At that time, the four associate and assistant planners were carrying an average caseload of 20 projects, consisting of on average 4 discretionary and 16 ministerial cases each. Caseload ranges from a low of 9 to a high of 32 total cases per planner. Discretionary project caseload ranged from zero to 7 cases/planner, while ministerial cases ranged from 9 to 25 cases per planner. Supervising senior planners carry an average discretionary caseload of 4.5 cases. The Code Compliance Officer handles about 40 new cases/month and reports a current caseload of about 70 cases, in addition to Code Compliance process improvement efforts. The Permit Technician handles over-the-counter permits, zoning inquiries, permit application intake, and Design Review Board process support. All told, Current Planning staff are busy, but – the backlog of one-time work aside - they are not oversubscribed in terms of their regular workload.

## **Special Skills and Expertise**

Specialized skills and expertise are needed by the PER Department in a number of areas at least periodically and, in some cases, on a regular basis. These special skillsets include:

- Accounting/billing
- Archaeologist/ Cultural Resources
- Architectural historian
- Biologist
- Building inspectors
- Coastal permitting
- CEQA specialist
- Geologist
- GIS/mapping
- Oil/energy permitting

The PER Department relies on outside consultants as needed for most special skillsets. However, the City has come to rely on certain PER staff members, who are viewed as possessing a particular skillset, when that expertise is needed, even where the reliance on that staff member's skillset conflicts with the staff member's titular role and responsibilities.

A prime example is the Advance Planning Manager doubling as the staff biologist. While the Department also relies on consultant biologists (John Storrer, Dan Meade, etc.) for larger projects, the Advance Planning Manager's time and attention are diverted from Advance Planning management in order to act as project manager on Current Planning and Public Works matters (e.g., open space management, such as Ellwood Mesa tree removal and habitat restoration) involving biological issues or requiring biological expertise. She has similarly been given projects requiring Coastal Act permitting expertise (e.g., Bacara emergency permit), even where a permit application would otherwise normally be considered Current Planning.

Another example is the management assistant, who spends an inordinate amount of time reviewing invoicing and paying consultants, even though she does not have finance/accounting training or background. Her focus on responsibilities more typically reserved for an accounting or finance department limits her availability for other Department administrative support functions.

The Citygate report envisions reorganization of the PER Department into interdisciplinary working groups focused on Old Town revitalization with skillsets including financing, marketing and Capital Improvement Program expertise, in addition to permitting and

Advance Planning knowledge. The PER Department does not presently possess such financial, marketing or CIP skillsets, which are not skillsets found in a typical planning department. At present, when a particular City project requires these diverse skillsets, the City assembles an interdepartmental team, drawing as necessary from Public Works, Neighborhood Services, and Community Relations as well as PER for these skills.

If the Department ultimately reorganizes itself into interdisciplinary working groups along the lines suggested by the Citygate report, it may not be realistic or necessary for such teams to include financial, marketing or CIP skillsets within the PER Department itself, as the Citygate report appears to suggest. More likely, these skills would be assembled from different departments in interdepartmental working groups as they are now. Including these skills within the PER Department itself would be duplicative of skillsets already available in other City departments.

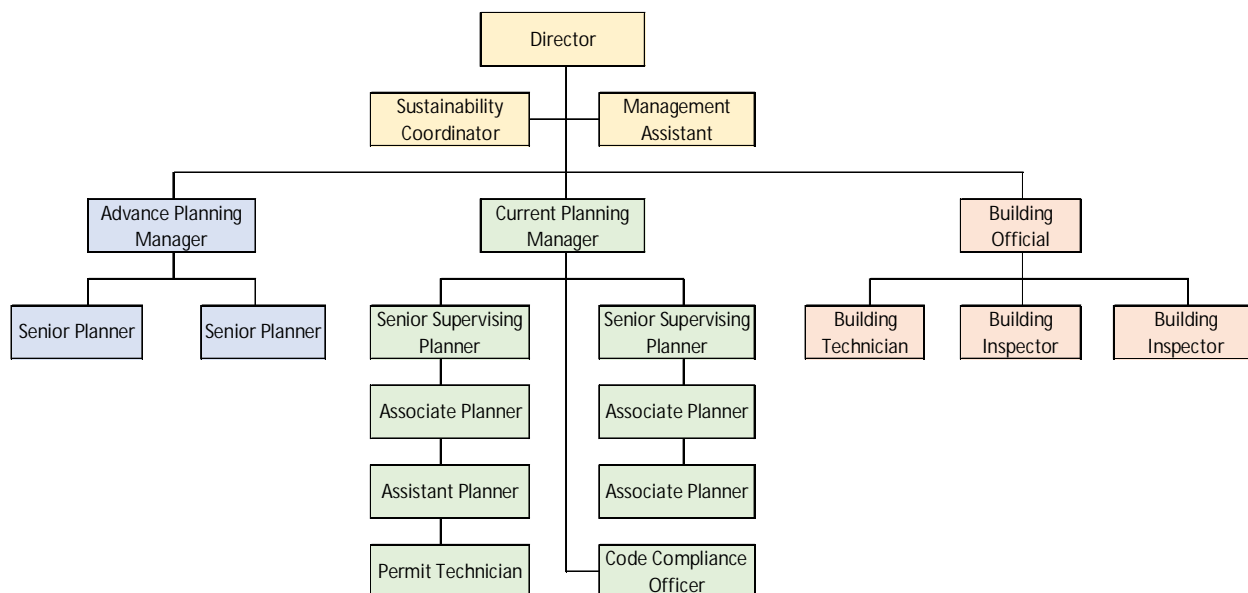
### **Thoughts and Observations on Department Structure and Options**

- **Considerations.** In thinking about organizational options for the PER Department, a number of considerations are important, several of which are addressed in the Citygate report.
  - *Efficiency/Distribution of Workload.* However the Department is organized, the same total amount of work must be accomplished. There is a need to right-size staffing to match the Current and Advance Planning workloads in both the short and long-term. Though not the only one, an important consideration is therefore what organizational structure is most efficient in accomplishing this work. What structure makes the most efficient use of all available staffing resources?
  - *One-time work.* The structure of the Department should anticipate changes in total workload over time as the backlog of one-time work is completed.
  - *Changing Nature of Development/Old Town Focus.* The Citygate report emphasizes that available vacant land in the City is rapidly being developed, implying a shift to infill, re-use and mixed use development. Department organization should be structured to address this trend. The Citygate report suggests that interdisciplinary working groups with a focus on Old Town should be the response. However, these development trends may not necessarily be limited or specific to Old Town. It is not clear to me that an Old Town Opportunity Group, which is geographically specific, makes sense as a major organizational division.
  - *Flattening Hierarchy.* The Citygate report identifies the need to flatten the current hierarchical organizational structure of the Department, if possible, to address dysfunction, improve morale and make the Department more dynamic.

- *Quality Control/ Clear Chain of Command.* At the same time it seeks to flatten hierarchy and allow for cross-training, Departmental organization must retain enough structure to assure the quality control of work. Span of control (the number of people supervised by any one person) limits the degree to which the organization may be flattened. At any given time, each planner should ideally report only to one supervisor.
- *Breakdown Silos.* The Citygate report perceived the need to break down barriers between Divisions within the Department. Barriers create a silo effect that impedes communication across Divisions, blocks beneficial sharing of knowledge and experience, and limits opportunity for cross-training.
- *Interdepartmental Coordination.* Intra-Department divisional structure should be flexible enough to facilitate easy coordination and collaboration with other City departments.
- *Provide Professional Growth and Training Opportunities.* Departmental structure should allow for and prioritize training and professional development. E.g., it should allow current planners the opportunity to obtain Advance Planning experience and vice-versa.
- **Organizational Options.** Several, possible alternatives exist for the organization of the Department. The following list is not exhaustive - there may be other possible, viable structures.
  - *Existing Structure.* Keep the existing divisional structure and right-size staffing within each existing Division. This option may achieve efficient processing of work and allow for quality control within a clear chain of command. However, it does not address the various challenges and perceived problems identified by the Citygate report connected with the current structure (changing nature of workload, overly hierarchical structure, silos, dysfunction/morale, etc.). It is worth noting that the Citygate report assessed conditions at a point in time approximately one year ago. While the Citygate report identified “dysfunction,” it did not explain its nature. To the extent that circumstances have changed in the interim, e.g., as a result of staffing changes at different levels of the City organization, it is important to focus on today’s issues.



**Figure 1: Existing Structure**

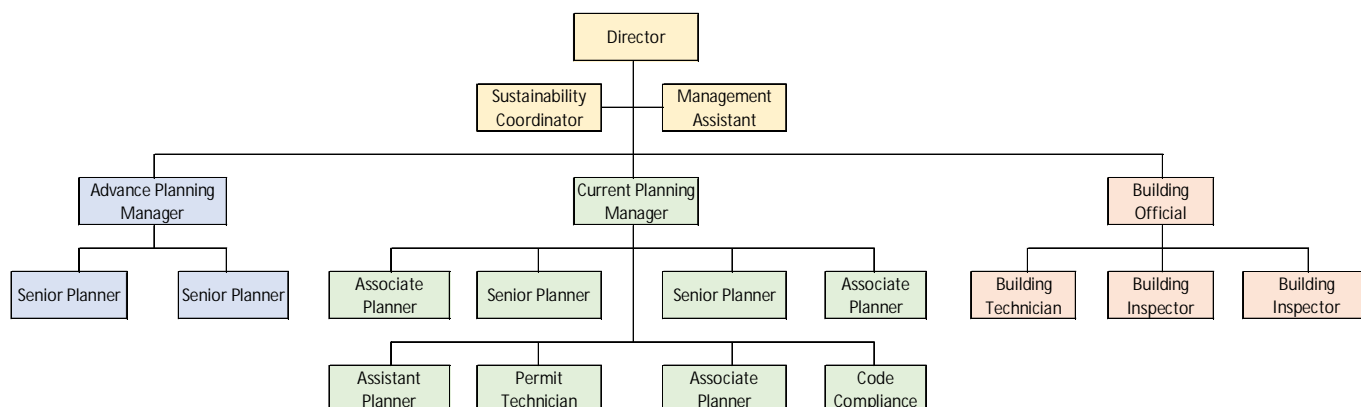


- *Modified Existing Structure.* Keep the basic divisional structure, but right-size staffing within Divisions to match workload and modify the structure within divisions to make it less hierarchical. For example, this option might eliminate the middle manager/supervisory tier in the hierarchy, so that all staff report directly to the Division manager.

A modified structure within the Current Planning Division would flatten the organization by eliminating one tier, could be an efficient work structure that continues to acknowledge the distinct nature of Current and Advance Planning work, and retains enough structure to assure quality control. However, depending on the number of staff per Division, span of control could be an issue. The Current Planning Division currently has eight staff members, too many for a single manager to supervise effectively. This structure would also not address the concern about silos or opportunities for cross-training.

This is essentially the structure that existed prior to 2013. Recognition that this structure placed too heavy managerial burden on the Current Planning Manager led directly to the addition of the Supervising Senior Planner role. Introduction of this new planner class was also supported by the Class/Comp study undertaken by the City in 2013/2014. A reversion back to this previous structure could subject the PER Department to the problems previously encountered.

**Figure 2: Modified Existing Structure, All Current Planning Staff Report to Division Manager**

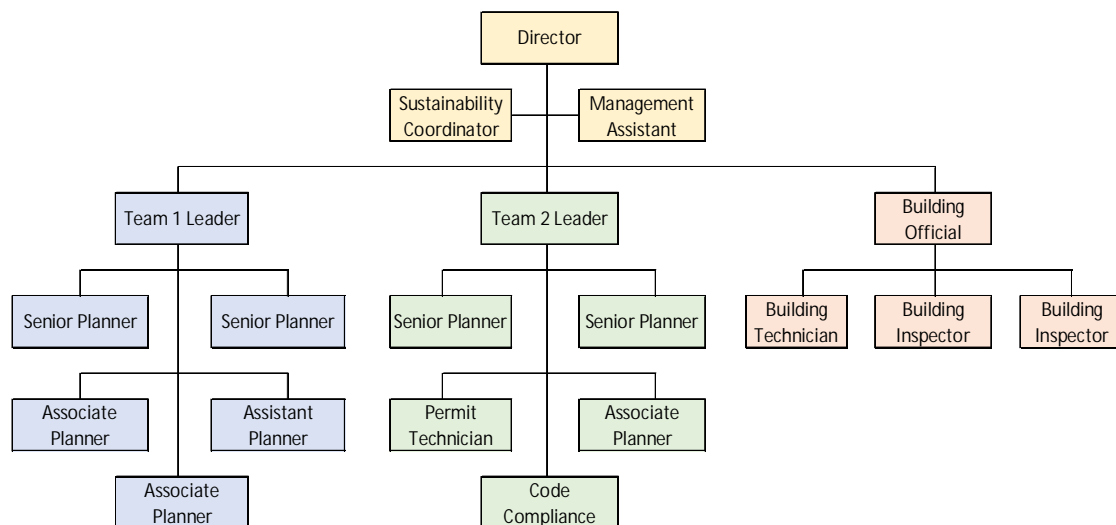


- *“Interdisciplinary working groups”/Teams.* Eliminate the existing division between Current Planning and Advance Planning and re-organize the Department into teams with mixed skillsets, as suggested by the Citygate report. E.g., two teams of 6 people or three teams of 4 people each, with a team leader for each group. Each team would be capable of handling any planning work, whether permitting, Code compliance or Advance Planning work. The Department director, management assistant, and Sustainability Coordinator would presumably remain outside the team structure.

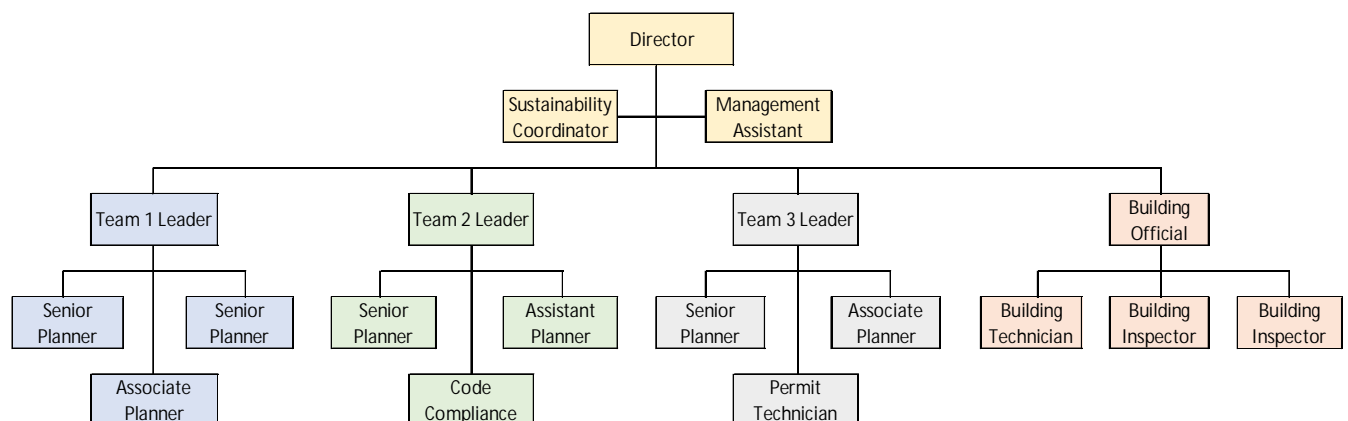
This structure would have the advantage of breaking down silos, reducing hierarchy, and allowing for cross-training while still retaining clear chain of command/ assuring quality control. However, it would blur the traditional distinction between Current Planning and Advance Planning work, possibly resulting in an inefficient distribution of workload/ use of staff resources.

The Citygate report posits that a team-based organizational structure would respond more flexibly to changing development trends, principally because the report assumes “interdisciplinary” teams mixing skillsets such as finance, marketing and Capital Improvement Program expertise with typical planning skillsets. The report assumes that such interdisciplinary teams would be better suited to address infill/re-use development. However, as previously commented, any need for such special skillsets is more likely to be addressed by inter-departmental collaboration than by including these novel skillsets within PER. If PER is contributing only traditional planning skillsets, it is not clear how a team structure is better tailored to infill/re-use development than other possible structures. Where there is a need for an interdisciplinary approach, the real issue is effective interdepartmental coordination, an issue equally relevant to any PER organizational structure.

**Figure 3: Team-based Structure, 2 Teams**



**Figure 4: Team-based Structure, 3 Teams**



- *Other/Variations?* There may be other possible structures or variations on structures beyond those described above that are worth considering.
- **Matrix: Organizational Options.** The matrix below compares the three organizational options discussed against the listed considerations. On balance, it would appear that the team-based structure offers some advantages over the other two options. The main concern is that it eliminates the traditional current planning vs. advance planning structure at the expense of efficiency.

None of the options has an advantage with respect to the issue of one-time work, which really relates just to overall staffing level and use of consultants to address additional short-term needs. Similarly, none of the options is inherently better at addressing interdepartmental coordination.

<b>Considerations</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Modified Existing</b>	<b>Teams</b>
<i>Efficiency/Distribution of Workload</i>	Y	Y	N?
<i>One-time work</i>	?	?	?
<i>Changing Nature of Development/Old Town Focus</i>	N	N?	Y?
<i>Flattening Hierarchy</i>	N	Y	Y
<i>Quality Control/ Clear Chain of Command</i>	Y	Y	Y
<i>Breakdown Silos</i>	N	N	Y
<i>Interdepartmental Coordination</i>	Y?	Y?	Y?
<i>Provide Professional Growth and Training Opportunities</i>	N	N	Y

- **Current Planning and Advance Planning Remain Distinct Functions.** The traditional division of labor within planning departments between the processing of development applications (Current Planning) and the maintenance of the General Plan and associated duties (Advance or Long-Range Planning) exists because these two functions are substantively different. The timelines, processing requirements and workload cycle for Current Planning and Advance Planning work are also different. Planning organizations that attempt to meld the two functions (e.g., the California Coastal Commission) in my experience encounter challenges in balancing work priorities. Current Planning work often takes priority to the detriment of Advance Planning work efforts, which typically have longer timeframes.

Of course, this observation also applies to the Building and Safety function. Building and Safety, while related to the Current Planning function in that it deals with the permitting of development, is also distinct from Current Planning.

## **Actions**

Without pre-supposing the outcome of the 18-month Organizational Transition Plan recommended by the Citygate report or the ultimate Departmental structure (assuming the City elects to pursue such a re-organization), I perceive several steps that can be taken to address issues and improve Department functioning.

**1. Action:** *Institute Annual Work Program to Prioritize Planning Work.*

Given the backlog of work and competing work priorities, the PER Department needs some mechanism to allow the City Council to set work priorities, while recognizing trade-offs and staffing limitations. This mechanism is needed regardless of Department structure.

I recommend preparation of a PER Department work program on a periodic basis (most likely annually) that comprehensively summarizes especially Advance Planning and Sustainability Program plans and projects and available staffing and that explicitly prioritizes work, with tentative schedules and progress updates. It is important for the Council to recognize and work within limitations of time and staffing. The Council should have the ability to decide explicitly what planning work should be accomplished and how it should be prioritized. Initially, for as long as a backlog of work also remains in the Current Planning Division, the work program should encompass the work of Current Planning Division as well.

The Council has the fundamental choice to commit resources in way that reflects its priorities. It can budget more staffing, if desires more work to be completed sooner, or it can pace work over time within the limits of existing, available staff capacity. An Annual Work Program will help Council move away from spontaneous, ad hoc assignment of new work projects.

**2. Action:** *Adjust Staffing Between Current and Advanced Planning Divisions to Address Advance Planning Workload Backlog.*

Given the large backlog of Advance Planning work and the priority of the new zoning ordinance and other ordinance work, I have already taken the step, as an interim fix, of shifting some Current Planning staff time (less than 1 FTE) to assist with Advance Planning work. If in fact there is a drop-off in large development applications in the near term, additional staff time could be shifted in this manner.

**3. Action:** *Maintain Clear Division of Labor between Division (and Departmental) Work Assignments, but Allow for Cross-Training of Planners between Divisions.*

In the past, the Department has not always kept a clear delineation between Current Planning and Advance Planning work. For example, Current Planning taking on some ordinance work (e.g., ADU, Historic Preservation) and Advance Planning has assumed some permitting work (e.g., Bacara EMP, Ellwood Mesa Tree Removal EMP). Some cross-assignments appear to be the result of particular staff expertise in one Division that does not exist in the other (e.g., familiarity with Coastal Commission process, biological expertise).

For the time being, until the ultimate Departmental structure is determined, a clear division of labor between the two Divisions should be maintained. There is value in a clear division

of labor and consistent assignment of work. E.g., placing all ordinance work under a single manager ensures consistency of approach. However, shifting staff between Divisions to assist with the workload backlog, as described above, will still allow opportunities for cross-training.

Similarly, there should be a clear division of work between City departments. In particular, the management of the City's open spaces, such as the Ellwood Mesa and Lake Los Carneros, should be the primary management responsibility of Public Works. While PER staff can provide support in reviewing draft environmental documents or providing permit process guidance, Public Works employs experienced contract planners, who should handle open space permit needs.

In keeping with this principle, I have re-assigned work between the two main Divisions. In particular, I have assigned development of the Permit Tracking System, 65402 consistency reviews, and coastal emergency permits (including the Bacara EMP) to the Current Planning Division and assigned all ordinance work, with the exception of the historic preservation ordinance, to the Advance Planning Division. (The Current Planning Manager has expressed a special interest in continuing to manage the historic preservation ordinance, based on her experience in this area.)

**4. Action:** *Rely on Consultants and Extra-help Positions to Take Up Slack until One-time Work Is Completed.*

The Department should rely as much as possible on planning consultants and extra-help contract planners to augment full-time staff until the backlog of one-time work has been addressed. Of course, managing contracts, amendments, and budgets for a large number of outside consultants can be a job in and of itself and require a lot of staff time. A staff person dedicated to contract management may be needed to provide reliable, consistent contract management oversight. Where we can anticipate ongoing responsibilities, such as oil & gas permitting, the continuity of a dedicated, full-time staff person may make more sense than an outside contractor.

**5. Action:** *Shift Consultant Invoicing and Payment to the Finance Department*

Review and payment of consultant invoices should be transferred from the management assistant within the PER Department to the Finance Department, if possible. This change will align invoicing work with finance/accounting skillsets in the Finance Department and free up capacity for administrative support within the PER Department. This re-alignment will make more efficient use of staff resources and assure invoicing is handled correctly. As an alternative, a PER management analyst with an accounting background dedicated to contract management and billing could fill this need.

**6. Action:** *Transition Developer Deposits/Billing to Finance Department using a Security Deposit and Regular Billing Cycle Model*

Management of developer deposits and billing should similarly be transferred wholly to the Finance Department as soon as possible, limiting planner involvement in this function. The Finance Department is obtaining new software that will allow it to do regular billing on a monthly or quarterly cycle. As soon as this software is ready, billing should transition to a true deposit system, where the initial deposit paid by the permit applicant is held as a security and the full amount owed is billed regularly with an itemized accounting of time worked. The security deposit should only be drawn down in the event of non-payment, but should normally be returned at case closeout for accounts that are current.

**7. Action:** *Decide Whether to Pursue an 18-month Organizational Transition Plan*

With input from PER staff, the City should decide whether an 18-month Organizational Transition Plan, as envisioned by the Citygate report, is really warranted or necessary. The Citygate recommendation appears to have been based at least partly on the questionable assumption that the PER Department should be structured around an interdisciplinary Old Town team and house all expertise needed for such a team. The idea of an interdisciplinary Old Town team is a good one. However, any such team would necessarily be interdepartmental, since some of the skill sets (finance, marketing, etc.) reside in other City departments, and are not specific to PER.

Fundamentally, as discussed above, the classic Planning Department division of labor between Advance Planning, Current Planning and Building & Safety functions has distinct merit. There is at least a good argument that issues within the PER Department are not so much structural, as procedural. Improving and clarifying procedures and instituting a regular process for prioritizing work in line with available staffing may go a long way toward addressing inefficiencies and dissatisfaction. By contrast, embarking on a process to revisit the PER Department's fundamental structure may turn out to be a time-intensive and ultimately unproductive exercise that detracts from the Department's ability to focus on its core work and responsibilities. No organizational structure will ever be perfect. Our best bet may be to enhance the one we have by improving Departmental processes.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Advance Planning Division Workload
2. Current Planning Division Workload
3. Sustainability Program Workload

### Attachment 1: Advance Planning Division Workload

CURRENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS		Staff FTE	Consultant Cost
Administrative		0.5	\$0
	Interdepartmental coordination and support		-
	Supervision		-
	Performance evaluations		-
	Budgeting		-
	Grant writing and management		-
	Contract management		-
	Other public workshops and outreach		-
	Respond to public inquiries regarding General Plan and other questions		-
Required Services		0.5	
	Maintain General Plan		\$12,600
	General Plan Housing Element Implementation		-
	General Plan Annual Report (prior to April each year)		-
	Department of Finance and HCD Annual Housing Survey Forms		-
	Department of Finance Annual Boundary/Annexation Survey in June each year		-
	CIP - Required General Plan Conformity Annual Report (prior to Budget Adoption)		-
	Maintain GIS System to Implement Regulations, Policy Programs and Maps		\$45,000
	Intergovernmental relations/ coordinate with UCSB, County, City, Airport, and Goleta Slough Management Committee on projects/future growth and planning issues		-
	Comment on other agency documents that affect the City		-
	SBCAG liaison		-
	Census and LUCA updates and maintain demographic statistics		-
Energy/Oil and Gas Programs		0.3	\$306,000
	Address legal non-conforming oil and gas uses at 421 and EOF		
	Oversee EOF, including safety audits, compliance, inspections		
	Oversee permitting of the 421 piers/wells, including audits, compliance, inspections		
	Implement Line 96 Decommissioning and ARCO pipeline decommissioning, restoration and monitoring.		
	Oversee air monitoring station permitting		



	Permit and oversee removal of remnant oil and gas beach hazards		
	Ellwood well abandonment monitoring.		
	Miscellaneous oil and gas projects		
<b>General Plan Amendments</b>		<b>0.1</b>	<b>\$0</b>
	Coordinate the initiation of GPA requests and development of the policy wording		-
<b>Ordinances</b>		<b>1.5</b>	
	New Zoning Ordinance	0.5	\$153,000 <sup>1</sup>
	Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance	0.25	-
	Cannabis Use Ordinance	0.25	
	Food Truck Ordinance	0.25	-
	Telecom Ordinance	0.25	-
<b>Environmental Programs and Plans</b>		<b>1.0</b>	
1	Ellwood Mesa Habitat Management Plan/Butterflies & Trees	0.2	\$221,000
2	Ellwood Trails/Restoration Project MND & permitting	0.2	\$19,000
3	Assist PW with Lake Los Carneros Management Plan permitting	0.1	-
4	Assist PW with Bacara Ellwood Scrub Restoration	0.1	-
5	Coordinate Comstock/Ellwood Open Space Plan Mitigation Funds (with Public Works)	0.1	-
6	Assist with the Bike and Ped Plan (with Public Works)	0.1	-
7	Assist with Complete Streets (with Public Works)	0.1	-
8	Assist with Old Town Revitalization (with Public Works and Neighborhood Services)	0.1	-
9			
10			
<b>Total Subscribed</b>		<b>3.9</b>	
<b>Division Staff</b>		<b>3.0</b>	
<b>Current Available Capacity</b>		<b>-0.9</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Remaining costs. Costs will be split approximately 60-40 between FY 17-18 and FY 18-19. Hourly rate is \$195/hour.

## Attachment 2: Current Planning Division Workload

<b>Permit Applications</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Average/year</b>
Ministerial	118	170	150	125	146	141.8
Discretionary	8	9	13	9	9	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>151.4</b>

<b>Average/month</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Ministerial	11.8	14.2	12.5	10.4	12.2
Discretionary	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>12.9</b>

Source: PER Department Cumulative Case Log

### Planner Caseload Snapshot (as of 9/17)

	Ministerial	Discretionary	Total
Average/Planner (Associate and Assistant)	16	4	20
Avg./Supervising Senior Planner	0	4.5	4.5

Source: Current Planners, Self-Reported

<b>CURRENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS</b>		<b>Staff FTE</b>	<b>Consultant Cost</b>
<b>Required Services/Administrative</b>		<b>0.8</b>	
	Planning Commission Secretary/Minutes	0.0	\$8,320
	Design Review Board Secretary	0.0	\$16,640
	Plan and permit scanning	0.1	\$4,680
	Supervision	0.5	-
	Performance Evaluations	0.1	-
	Budgeting	0.1	-
<b>Development Services and Project Permitting</b>		<b>8.0</b>	
	Case Permitting (Ministerial and Discretionary)	7.0	\$29,000
	Code Compliance	1.0	
<b>Special Projects</b>		<b>1.05</b>	
	Permit Tracking System (PTS) development	0.3	\$315,887
	Standard Conditions	0.1	\$0
	Design review process reform/Design Review Board Bylaws	0.2	TBD
	Development of a Permit Procedures Manual	0.2	\$0
	Update of CEQA thresholds of significance, including SB 743	0.25	\$0

Ordinances		0.25	
	Historic Preservation	0.25	\$185,000
Total Subscribed		<b>10.1</b>	
Division Staff		<b>9.0</b>	
Current Available Capacity		<b>-1.1</b>	

### Attachment 3: Sustainability Program Workload

CURRENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS		FTE	Consultant Cost
		1.0	
1	100% Renewable Energy Plan	0.2	
2	Southern California Edison Distributed Energy Resources RFP	0.2	
3	Community Choice Aggregation Feasibility Analysis	0.1	\$7,500
4	STAR Certification activities to support preparation of a Sustainability Plan	0.2	\$10,000
5	Assist with Southern California Edison Light Pole Acquisition and LED Conversion (with Public Works)	0.1	
6	Staff Liaison (Green Business Program, South County Energy Efficiency Partnership, Central Coast Sustainability Summit, Bike Share, SustainSB)	0.1	
7	Federal programs (National Renewable Energy Lab Solar PV Training/RFP, DOE SolSmart Program)	0.05	
8	Statewide Membership Participation (Local Government Sustainable Energy Coalition, Green Cities California)	0.05	
Total Subscribed		1.0	
Program Staff		1.0	
Available Capacity		-0.0	

POTENTIAL NEW PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS		Staff FTE	Consultant Cost
1	Sustainability Plan	0.25	-
2	Community Choice Aggregation Program Implementation (contingent on feasibility analysis)	0.2	TBD
3	Southern California Edison Distributed Energy Resources Program	0.2	TBD
Total		0.65	