

VIII. EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS

Two confidential questionnaires were completed by many of the employees in the Development Services Departments as shown in Table 27.

A short, closed-ended questionnaire (shown in Appendix B) was completed at two staff meetings by 61 employees and collected by the consultants. The raw scores and tallies of this survey are also shown in Appendix B.

A longer, 15-page questionnaire (shown in Appendix C) was completed by 24 employees and mailed or emailed to the consultants in San Diego to assure confidentiality. In most of our studies, only half of the employees that complete the short questionnaire take the time to complete the long questionnaire. Information obtained from these questionnaires was essential to our analysis.

Table 27
Number of Employees Responding to Questionnaires

Function	Number of Short Questionnaires	Average Response to Short Questionnaire	Number of Questions With Averages Under 3.0	Number of Long Questionnaires Received
Building Division	17	3.60	4	14
Fire Division	4	3.28	12	
Management	7	4.21	0	6
Planning & Community Development	21	3.85	1	18
Public Works	12	3.71	3	11
Total	61			49

The short questionnaire also asked employees to list pet peeves and give suggestions for improvements. These comments were used as part of our analysis for this report but remain confidential.

The short, closed-ended questionnaire consisted of a series of statements to be rated by the respondents. Responses were tallied and averaged and the raw scores are displayed in Appendix B. The statements were designed to elicit the mood and feelings of each employee about overall division or department excellence. For each of the 37 statements, the employee was asked to respond as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 – Strongly Disagree | 4 – Somewhat Agree |
| 2 – Somewhat Disagree | 5 – Strongly Agree |
| 3 – Neutral | 6 – Not Applicable |

Generally, the higher the rating (i.e., 4's and 5's) the better the employee perceives the subject area and the more excellent the division or department.

We've conducted this survey in many building, fire, planning and public works departments and divisions. Generally, a score below 3.0 is an indication of issues that need to be addressed. We like to see average scores in the high 3's and 4's. We believe that the scores give a reasonably accurate assessment of the employee's view of their division or department. The seven managers scored the highest with an average score of 4.21. It is common the managers believe their organization is performing better than do the employees. The average score for the Building Division was 3.60, the average Planning and Community Development was 3.85 and the average for Public Works was 3.71. Overall these are good scores indicating a generally positive employee attitude.

Questions with average scores below 3.0 are discussed below.

Building Division

The Building Division had scores below 3.0 on four questions.

- *#1. Our Division seeks to identify problems quickly. (2.94)*
- *#14. We have an efficient records management and documentation system in our Department. (2.61)*
- *#16. I have enough time to do my work as it needs to be done (2.61).*
- *#27. We are doing the right amount of Long Range planning. (2.78)*

Question 1, 14, and 16 all relate to management issues. We noted that Question 1, and 14 were also scored low by the Fire Division. Both of these Divisions are in the same Department and report to the Director of Fire and Building. We speculate that some of these issues could relate to the large Fire Department and large span of control of the Director of Fire and Building. Nevertheless, these are serious issues that need to be addressed, particularly Question 1. Hopefully, Question 14 can be addressed by the new Energov permitting system. In other parts of this study, we will also make organizational recommendation that can assist in this area.

211. Recommendation: The Director of Fire and Building should meet with the staff of Fire and Building to discuss Questions 1 and possible solutions. It may be useful if this takes place in a facilitated retreat setting.

Question 16 addresses staffing issues. Eleven of the 18 employees, or two thirds indicated they do not have enough time to do their work. We will address this issue in other parts of this report that indicate staffing issues.

Fire Division

The Fire Division had average scores below 3.0 for 12 Questions. Four of these questions reflected only one person so we have not given them significance. However, four of the questions relate to four employees. These questions all relate to organization and management issues that need to be addressed by the Deputy Fire Chief.

- *#1. Our Division seeks to identify problems quickly. (2.25)*
- *#2. When problems are identified, our Division moves quickly to solve them. (1.75)*
- *#6. Managers in our Department encourage and advance new ideas from employees. (2.50)*
- *#8. Management in our Department discusses objectives, programs and results with employees regularly. (2.25)*
- *#14. We have an efficient records management and documentation system in our Department. (1.50)*
- *# 17. I am kept abreast of changes that affect me. (2.25)*
- *# 22. Permit and development processes in the City are not unnecessarily complex nor burdensome on the applicant. (2.25)*
- *# 37. The Code Compliance program in the Division is effective*

212. Recommendation: The Director of Fire and Building and Deputy Fire Chief should review the eight employee questions with low scores and develop a strategy to address them. A facilitated employee retreat may be in order to gain more insight into the issues.

Management

The seven managers had no average scores for any of the questions below 3.0. Additionally, the average scores for each manager ranged from a low of 3.97 to a high of 4.52. Managers normally score higher than their employees; however, these are some of the highest scores we have seen in our many studies.

We did notice that four of the seven managers scored 2 on Question 16, “I have enough time to do my work as it needs to be done.” We generally feel that low scores from managers on this question can be troubling. When managers feel they are short of time, often the management tasks suffer and in turn the organization suffers since the completion of management tasks are critical for the organization. All seven

managers have enough staff that they should be able to delegate adequate functions to solve their time problems. As such, we suggest that City Management meet with this management group to discuss the time issue and also, as needed, provide courses on management delegation.

213. Recommendation: City Management should meet with the Development Services managers to discuss workload and delegation issues, and offer training as appropriate.

Planning and Community Development

Planning and Community Development had an average score below 3.0 for only one question. Eight of the 21 employees answered this Question either 1 or 2.

- #7. *We have a strong emphasis on training in our department. (2.85)*

Planning is a rapidly changing field and by its very nature is designed to look ahead and be in a leadership role. As such, good staff training is essential. We normally suggest that a minimum of 2% of the employee personal costs and 5% of employee time be devoted to training as outlined in this study.

214. Recommendation: The Planning Director should discuss Department training needs as part of a staff meeting or staff retreat and address employee concerns.

Public Works

The Public Works Department had average scores below 3.0 for three Questions.

- #7. *We have a strong emphasis on training in our department. (2.83).*
- #14. *We have an efficient records management and documentation system in our Department. (2.25).*
- #16. *I have enough time to do my work as it needs to be done (2.58).*

Four of the 12 employees commented on training indicating a possible need for management to examine how training is distributed in the organization.

215. Recommendation: Public Works management should examine how it distributes time and money for training of staff.

Fire, Public Works and Building all commented on the records management and document system. Care should be taken to see that Energov is designed to gradually address this issue.

The staffing issue are examined in other parts of this study.