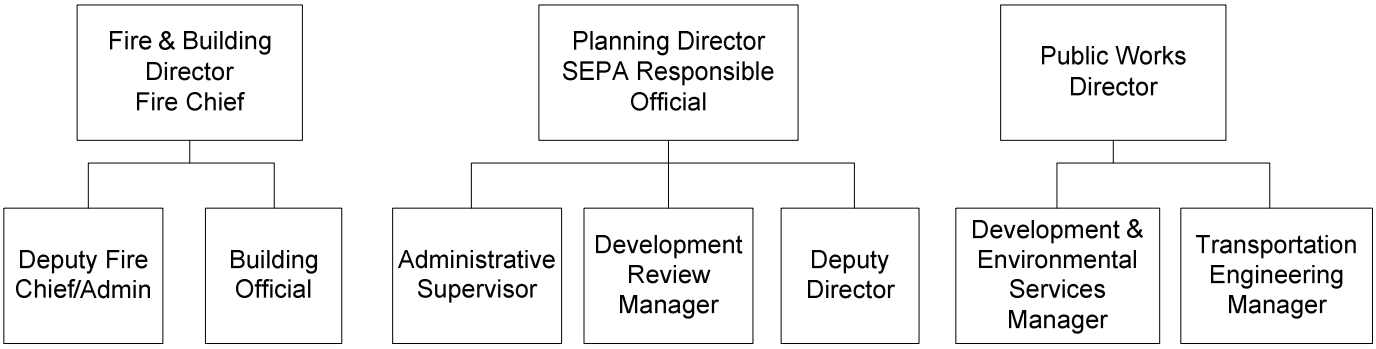
III. ISSUES RELATED TO ENTIRE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FUNCTIONS

A. ORGANIZATION ISSUES

Kirkland's Organization

The City's Development Services functions are organized under the three departments of Fire & Building, Planning, and Public Works as shown in Figure 2. The functions are often referred to as Development Services but there is no actual organization with this title. On the organization chart we were given, Planning includes both the current and long-range planning functions. Fire & Building and Public Works only include the development related functions.

Figure 2
Development Services Organizations



Alternative Ways to Organize

There are many alternative ways to organize the development and planning functions. Having worked with over 160 cities and counties in 31 states, we have our own database of alternative organizational patterns. We have also discussed organizational issues with some 10,000 planners in seminars. Finally, we have conducted a comprehensive survey of the nation's 50 largest cities. A few features stand out as follows:

- **Combining Fire and Building**

  Although we have seen this combination in one or two communities, it is clearly not the norm. Evidently it was once the trend in parts of Washington but most of the combined functions no longer exist. None of the 50 largest cities had this combination.

- **Combining Building and Planning**

  Combining Building and Planning is increasingly a normal combination in many communities, particularly small and mid-sized communities like Kirkland. However, only a third of the 50 largest cities have this combination.

- **Combining Current and Long Range Planning**

  Most communities have combined Current and Long Range planning in one department. Some have combined Current Planning and Building in a development-oriented department with Long-Range Planning as a standalone department. Ten percent of the 50 largest cities have Long-Range Planning separate from Current Planning but 40 of them or 90% have them combined.

- **Engineering**

  Engineering is often a division within a larger Public Works Department. However, many communities have created two departments with Engineering handling development review and Public Works operations. A relatively new trend is to have Engineering either merged into a Development Department (Building, Planning, and Engineering) or at minimum collocated with the other functions and, in some cases, having the function in a subordinate position, even if staff remain Public Works or Engineering department employees.

- **Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering**

  Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering are normally located within a Public Works or Engineering department; however in a few places Transportation Planning is located within the Planning function. Either or both functions may be included in a combined department.

- **Code Enforcement**

  Code Enforcement is generally located either within Planning or Building. A few communities have created a combined Code Enforcement Department pulling together code enforcement functions from a variety of city functions. Combined Functions or Departments would generally include Code Enforcement.

- **Combined Functions**

  A variety of communities have combined Building, Current Planning, Long Range Planning, Engineering, Transportation Planning, Traffic Engineering and Code Enforcement into one integrated department. Sometimes the entire Public Works function is included in this combination; however, often the operational aspects of Public Works are in a separate department.

We have worked with virtually all of the combinations outlined above. The best approach is highly dependent on a variety of local and historic factors in the community. We have worked with cities where separated functions operate too much

as silos, which often leads to the desire to consolidate functions. On the other hand, we have worked with fully combined functions that still exhibit silo mentality within the functions. Although we at time recommend consolidation of functions, we tend not to be fans of re-organization for re-organization sake. We did create a new department for Columbus, Ohio, which is close to the Combined Functions alternative. We have worked with combined function departments in San Jose, California; Maricopa, Arizona; McKinney, Texas; Calgary, Alberta; Markham, Ontario; Fremont, California; and San Antonio, Texas.

Key Features for All Alternatives

All of the alternatives should include the following key features.

- **Collocation and Permitting Systems**

  All attempts to integrate functions and better serve the customers start with collocating the function and having all functions work with a common permitting system. Kirkland has already collocated the functions. However, as outlined in the Office Space section below, much more could be done in relation to counter functions to better integrate functions, irrespective of any organizational changes and the current collocation.

  Kirkland has had a combined permitting system called Advantage/Permit Plan for many years. This system is no longer supported by its creator and is in the process of being replaced by EnerGov. It will likely be a number of months until this new system is fully operational.

- **Processing Systems, Timelines & Performance Standards**

  Irrespective of organizational structure, it is important to have integrated processing systems, with agreed timelines and performance standards across all functions. Kirkland has what appears on the surface to be integrated processing systems and has had an excellent Development Review Committee Manual documenting the processes. However, as noted in other parts of this report, much can be done to improve these systems. The area most needing attentions is the use of clear performance standards, timelines and a monitoring system to enforce timelines. In many case Kirkland's timeline are too long. Additionally the performance standard system, although partially used, has not been perfected or enforced.

- **Project Managers**

  Another key feature, irrespective of organization, is the use of clear project manager systems where it is clear to both staff and the applicant who is in charge of the application. In theory, Kirkland has solved this by having a planner in charge during the planning and entitlement phase and a building plan checker in charge at the building phase. However, this system is not as clear as it should be and the way engineering and tree issues and timelines get

resolved by the Project Managers has been an issue. Strengthening this system is discussed in other parts of this study.

- **Staff Attitudes**

  Another key feature is the need for clarity of staff attitudes. Kirkland's staff has prided themselves in working well together and being customer friendly and in many cases we have seen this in operation. Key to this is that staff see themselves in a problem solving, "how can I help you" role. According to our research, Public Works does an excellent job in this regard, the best we have seen in our many studies. It appears that Building and Fire do reasonably well in this area but could still improve. Finally, we received a considerable amount of feedback that the how can I help you attitudes within Planning needs to be improved.

- **Overall Coordination**

  In theory, overall coordination is the easiest to do in a Combined Organization since traditional management techniques can be utilized. Lacking this, some communities have had an Assistant City Manager serve this coordinative role. This has not been the role of the Assistant City Manager in Kirkland. Kirkland has at least partially solved this issue by use of a Development Review Committee II consisting of the Building Official, Planning Development Review Manager, and Public Works Development and Environmental Services Manager. We had the opportunity to observe this Committee in practice and were most impressed with the apparent level of coordination and cooperation. There is one piece missing in this picture and that is how the long-range planning functions and the Planning Director tie into this coordination pattern.

Recommendation

Although we would not object to the City moving to a Combined Department, organizational change of this magnitude can be very disruptive and may not be the best approach, at least at this time and in the short term. This would likely require the hiring a Director and some support staff, which may have a negative economic impact. Instead we see a staged approach with the following features:

- **Combined Counters**

  As part of the City Hall remodel, combine the Building, Engineering, and Planning counters.

- **Fire/Building**

  Should the regional Fire Authority become a reality, create a separate Building Department including the features outlined in this report or combine the Building function with Planning. (See the Fire/Building chapter for more discussion of this issue)

- **Performance Standards**

  Revise the performance standards and monitoring systems as outlined in this report.

- **Development Review Committee II (DRCII)**

  Continue the use of the Development Review Committee II and strengthen its role as seen needed. This group could be given the responsibility to oversee the implementation of this report. The City Manager should designate one of the three members as chair of the Committee and periodically rotate this responsibility amongst the three key functions.

- **Assistant City Manager**

  Should the above feature prove not to be as successful as desired, have the three functions be coordinated by an Assistant City Manager.

- **Turnover**

  Should any of the key top management positions have a turnover, revisit the possibility of a combined department at that time.

2. ***Recommendation:*** **The City should pursue a staged approach to re-organizing the permitting and planning functions as outlined above.**

B. ANNEXATION

The City completed a major annexation effective June 2011. The annexation increased the City population from 48,787 to 80,505. This has had a major impact on activity levels for the Development Services functions. Each function made service level projections and a variety of staff positions were added or retained to service the projected increased activity demands. In addition to this added activity, it appears that applications in the pre-annexation City have also begun to increase. Unfortunately, as part of this study it has not been possible to obtain good data for the annexation area. Staffing levels will need to be based on the combined areas, which roughly appear to be higher than total activity levels in the higher activity years prior to annexation.

C. CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service issues are discussed throughout this report. Listed below are a number of generic issues or approaches that cut across all Development Services functions.

Business Cards

Customers often come in contact with staff and then later can’t recall whom they talked with. A good policy is that any customer who is in contact with staff is always given a business card.

3. ***Recommendation:*** **All Development Services staff should follow a policy of giving out a business card to every customer they talk with.**

Email Lists

The use of email can be an effective tool for good customer service. The Development Services functions should have comprehensive lists of all professionals and special interest groups operating in the City and use these to communicate new policies and regulations or obtain input on a variety of issues.

4. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services functions should develop comprehensive customer email lists and use them as a communication device.**

Forms and Handouts

The Development Services functions use a variety of different formats for their handouts and forms. When these are in one of the handout racks, they can be very confusing for customers. The top of the form or handout should be the title in quarter inch or larger lettering, rather than the City of Kirkland, which should take a smaller title on the handout. We also noted that there is inconsistency in requesting email addresses. Email addresses should be requested for the property owner, contractor, and contact person.

5. ***Recommendation:*** **Development Services handouts should be uniformly designed with the title in large letters at the top and with a comprehensive request for email addresses.**

Personnel Issues

In virtually all of our studies, it becomes clear that when one or more staff has poor customer service skills or attitude, it can create impressions that negatively flavor the entire organization. Some customers will say that they avoid such staff whenever possible. We are not under contract to do personnel evaluations and do not list names of employees that are named over and over again. However, in our experience, managers are already aware of the staff with customer service issues but have not effectively dealt with the issues. Such employees need to be trained and counseled and in many cases reassigned to a less sensitive position or find an organization more suited to their desires or style.

6. ***Recommendation:*** **Development Services Managers should more aggressively address employees with known customer service issues.**

Phone Calls and Emails

The Building Division has a policy to return all phone calls the same day received. This is a policy we support but the policy should also include emails.

The Planning and Community Development staff indicated that no formal or informal policy exists for the Department for returning emails and phone calls the same day; however all staff strive to return calls the same day or within 24 hours. Customer surveys and focus group workshops indicate that there have been, at times, issues with receiving timely return emails and telephone calls from staff. We recommend that a formal policy be instituted by the Development Services Departments to require all staff to return all phone calls and emails before the end of the day.

Another way we say this is, no one goes home at night until they have returned all phone calls and emails. We consider this to be Best Practice. We suggest that this policy be adopted by all the Development Services functions.

7. ***Recommendation:*** **All staff in the Development Services functions should return phone calls and emails the same day they are received.**

Problem Solving

A key to good customer service starts with staff attitude. The customer wants staff to understand their needs or problem and then help them solve it. This is a "what can I do to help you" rather than this is what you need to do or this is how you don't meet our policies and regulations. According to our research, the Public Works staff in Development Services does an outstanding job in this area. We suggest this staff should conduct a lunch hour discussion of their approach with all of the other Development Services staff.

8. ***Recommendation:*** **the Public Works Development Services staff should conduct a lunch hour seminar with other Development Services staff to explain how they approach problem solving for customers.**

Surveys

Best Management Practices include being sensitive to customer needs and actively soliciting their feedback regarding the quality of services being provided to them. One of the most frequently utilized tools for gathering this type of information is customer comment cards and/or website customer service surveys. Gathering a customer's comments regarding their specific experience working with City staff can provide great insights into opportunities for enhancing customer service and can also help identify and recognize incidents of outstanding employee performance. The survey currently on the City's website is well organized to collect valuable information, however, very few surveys are actually completed and no specific program is in place to compile and distribute the results of the surveys. At the initial stages of this study, attempts to access the online survey forms were unsuccessful due to errors in the hyperlink connection. Interviews with staff also suggest there has been no direction to staff to encourage customers to participate in the surveys.

Planning sends out a survey form to applicants with the notice of approval. This is an excellent approach and the form is well designed.

9. ***Recommendation:*** **A Customer Comment Card similar to the on-line survey should be developed and staff should be directed to encourage customers to complete the cards or the on-line survey upon completion of the counter transaction and again at project completion.**

10. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Review Committee II should periodically confirm the on-line survey is operational and develop a system to compile the survey results and make them available to staff for the purpose of enhancing future customer service.**

As part of this study, a customer email survey was sent to 500 applicants. The responses from this survey are discussed in Chapter IX and shown in Appendix D. Overall the Development Services functions scored much better than we have found with most of our clients. The biggest concern was slow timelines, which is discussed extensively throughout this report. Overall, the respondents were very positive in relation to how staff handles customer service.

The City also conducts a broader annual survey of all City services. Zoning and land use had the lowest scores of all functions on this survey with only 4% of respondents scoring service as Excellent and 26% Above Average. These are very low scores and should be of concern to Development Services function.

D. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC)

The DRC is a regularly scheduled hour-long weekly meeting conducted with staff and supervisors from various city departments involved in the development review process. The DRC is generally attended by a current planning supervisor, the planner, Development & Environmental Services Manager and Supervisor, the Development Engineer, the Plan Review Supervisor, the Permit Tech Supervisor, and the Fire Marshall. Staff indicates that the primary purpose of the DRC meeting is to discuss the permit review status report generated by EnerGov, in order to help drive staff review timeframes and the permit process. In addition, the meeting is used to distribute new project plans to department reviewers.

Our observations and interviews with staff indicated that this meeting could be more effective if more time was spent as a forum to review, discuss and resolve-issues with current land use permits as a team, rather than a meeting to distribute plans and discuss reviewing time line issues.

Effective DRC meetings are structured so that designated reviewing staff gathers for a coordinated review of new development projects on a weekly basis, during the staff

review period. Staff representatives from planning, public works, building, fire, and urban forestry should be designated to attend every meeting. When designated staff is unavailable, substitute staff should attend on their behalf. Designated planning staff should be charged with preparing agendas, and summarizing outcomes. A Supervising Planner should continue to manage the meeting. Agendas should be distributed electronically in advance of the meeting to all participants. The Supervising Planner should ensure that each designated member consistently conducts their full scope of review on each project in advance of the meeting, rather than relying on other participants. Members, who are unsure as to their scope of review, should be educated accordingly. Participants should be required to review projects listed on the agenda prior to the meeting and provide written comments to the assigned planner, who is the lead on the project. The written comments are then collected by the assigned planner and folded into a master list of review comments, which are forwarded to the applicant in the next business day.

To provide designated DRC members with as much time as possible to conduct reviews, paper and electronic submittal materials should be routed to reviewers as soon as accepted. The Planning Supervisor should also consider using a projector and laptop to display an electronic copy of each project plan scheduled for discussion in order to focus discussions. To further guide discussions, the Planning Supervisor should consider creating a DRC review checklist to ensure that projects are consistently reviewed to cover the full scope of review of each discipline including Public Works, Fire/Building, Urban Forestry, Planning, etc. More experienced planners (e.g., seniors and supervisors), should use the meeting as an opportunity to proactively help less experienced Planners improve their reviewing skills.

Once the DRC is restructured and functioning as a forum to review, discuss and resolve-issues with current land use permits as a team, the Department should consider inviting applicants with complex projects to attend the DRC. After staff discusses the project, the Applicant could be invited into the meeting so that they have the opportunity to ask questions, clarify issues, receive feedback from staff, and when possible work with staff to resolve any outstanding issues or concerns.

11. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Review Manager should restructure the DRC so that there are designated participants from each discipline, a Planning Supervisor is in charge of and runs the meeting, agendas and plan review materials are distributed in advance of the meeting and that participants attend regularly, are prepared, and thoroughly outline issues which encompass their entire scope of review.**

12. ***Recommendation:*** **The Planning Supervisor should create a checklist of discussion items for use by the assigned Planners for each project**

scheduled for DRC to guide the review discussion, so that meetings are predictable and efficient, and provide consistent, timely and relevant feedback to applicants on all relevant issues.

13. ***Recommendation:*** **Once DRC meeting are working effectively, applicants with complex projects should be invited to attend the DRC meeting, during the time that his/her project is scheduled on the DRC Agenda. Time should be set aside during the meeting to answer applicant questions and address issues.**

E. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE II

The Development Review Committee II (DRCII) consists of the Building Official, Development and Environmental Services Manager from Public Works and the Development review Manager from the Planning Department. The Committee was created to assume the responsibility to address policy issues that arise as a result of the individual departments working together to provide development services. A separate committee, the Development Review Committee I, has the responsibility to meet and discuss actual projects and consists of first-line supervisors. Many other communities have actually created a Development Services Department comprised of the appropriate employees from the Building, Fire, Planning and Public Works Departments reporting to a single Department Head. This DRCII has essentially assumed the role of providing a platform to resolve policy conflicts that would otherwise be the responsibility of the director of the combined department. We believe this concept has merit in lieu of a single Development Services Department. To be effective, such a committee needs to truly focus its attention on the bigger picture policy issues, be willing to assertively address conflict and develop solutions that all participants will actively promote. Recording and distributing these decisions to all staff is essential for group communication and to establish the credibility of the Committee's work. A DRC Manual has been created, but some of the information is outdated as a result of the implementation of the EnerGov System and not all employees are familiar with the existence of the Manual.

14. ***Recommendation:*** **The DRCII should actively seek to resolve policy issues that affect the staff working in development services and the existing DRC Manual should be updated to reflect policy decisions made by the Committee.**

Given the importance of the DRC II it would be appropriate to have a slightly tighter structure. We suggest there be a designated chairperson for the DRC II, which could be rotated every six months between Building, Engineering and Planning.

15. ***Recommendation:*** **The DRC II should have a chairperson.**

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City has an economic development staff that reports to the City Manager. The focus is mostly on business retention with some recruitment. Given the City Council's interest in economic development and an expanded tax base, this appears to be an important function. With most of our clients, we see a conflict between the economic development efforts and planning. While the two functions appear to work reasonably well in Kirkland, planners should be reminded that the economic health of the community is an integral planning issue. This is a critical issue for the Totem Lake area and economic issues should be a key part of the up-date to the Comprehensive Plan. It may be useful for planners to take a more active role in economic development efforts than they have been in the past.

16. ***Recommendation:*** **The Planning staff should review its approach to economic development issues. A seminar with the Economic Development Manager could be part of this effort.**

G. FEES

Overview/Philosophy

Most Best-Practice communities have a full cost recovery approach to development processing fees. In addition to direct cost, these fees often include an allocation for external overhead, which may add 15% to 30% to the base fees. Fee structures also may include excess revenue designed to build a reserve account for use when there is a down cycle in applications, avoiding the need to layoff trained staff or other disruptive activities. We used to have a rule of thumb that the target for the reserve account should be nine months of the normal operating budget. However, as part of a recent contract for Calgary, Alberta, we did a detailed analysis for possible down cycles similar to those experienced in the United States. As part of that analysis we concluded that a better rule of thumb would be a reserve equal to 12 months of the normal budget. As part of the Calgary study, Calgary staff followed our recommendation and increased its reserve account from 30 million to 60 million.

Some believe that full cost recovery fees are contrary to economic development goals and strive to keep fees low and below that for surrounding or competitive communities. However, developers are more interested in short timelines and clear, consistent processes. The fees are a very small part of the project. We have used this approach with many of our client communities. One of our studies was for a very aggressive economic development community, Fort Worth, Texas. The economic development staff in Fort Worth told us that they never once had a prospective company complain about processing fees.

However, it should be noted that:

- This analysis relates only to processing fees and not impact fees. Impact fees require a different type of analysis.
- Full cost recovery may also need to be modified for small applications such as a water heater, deck, or small residential addition. Actual full cost for these types of applications may be quite high in relation to the cost of the construction. As such, many communities subsidize these out of the general fund. Others tend to slightly over-charge larger projects to help subsidize the smaller project.

One additional component used by many communities is the use of a surcharge to fund special long-term improvements to the processes. Sometimes these are for a limited period of time, such as five years.

Kirkland's Approach

We reviewed a variety of financial reports and discussion of Kirkland's fees for development services approach and were most impressed with the depth of thought and analysis, which match many of our Best Practice approaches. In the past the City used a top down approach to setting fees that did not include detailed staffing analysis for each type of permit. We were told that a new fee study will be conducted that will use a bottom up approach calculating staff time for various types of permits. This is the normal approach that we support and is considered Best Practice. Staff indicates that some types of permits routinely require multiple reviews and that some of these have additional fees. However, these fees may not accurately reflect all of the time spent on subsequent reviews. This should be corrected in the new fee study.

The City Council discussed an overall approach to fee recovery in 2007 using the approach shown in Table 2. The actual full cost recovery for 2011 is shown in the last line of the Table. It was 81% for Building, 88% for Planning and 103% for Public Works.

Table 2
Cost Recovery Rationale, 2007 & Actual Recovery, 2011

Cost Layer	Building	Fire *	Planning **	Public Works
Direct Development Services These costs represent the direct, hands-on work performed to provide development services. Planning & Public Works consider part of their regulatory responsibilities benefit the public by protecting existing City environment, character, and infrastructure, whereas, Building and Fire solely benefit the private projects they regulate.	100%	100%	80%	80%
Code Enforcement These costs are associated with ensuring compliance with City code. The cost recovery is based on not penalizing compliant development projects for those who do not follow City regulation. A portion of these costs might be recovered through fines and penalties.	0%	0%	0%	0%
Public Information Cost recovery based on department judgment of the amount of front-counter time that is attributable to the level of development active in the City.	50%	50%	20%	50%
Policy Development This level of recovery was determined because much of the City's planning and policy development focuses on maintaining a specific community "look and feel" for the public. In addition, much of the planning aspects the City performs are required regardless of the level of ongoing development	20%	21%	20%	20%
Weighted Average Target Recovery	**91%**	**88%**	**55%**	**72%**
Full Cost Recovery in 2011	**81%**	**25%**	**88%**	**103%**

*Includes only that portion of Fire Prevention related to development review.

In late 2005 the City Council established the Development Services Reserve designed for a combined staffing stabilization and work in progress approach with a balance of $920,000. The reserve was used to backfill and maintain staff in 2008 ($400,000) and in 2009 ($425,000).

In 2011, Building fell short of meeting the cost recovery target and the difference was offset by holding vacant positions open. Planning and Public Works exceeded the target recovery due to higher than projected activity levels. Funds were set aside in reserve to fund resources to accomplish work for which fees were collected that year, but the work would take place in 2012 or subsequent years.

A draft 2012 Competitiveness Assessment Study for Kirkland indicted that Kirkland's permit fees are on the higher end of seven comparison communities. This was true for all permit categories except for Strip Retail. While this may give City Council some

pause in further increasing fees, it should be noted that developers are more interested in short timelines and clear processes than in the relatively small amount of permit fees. Given the competitive issues, it may suggest that more expedited processes could be a more acceptable way to increase revenue.

Conclusion

Like most cities, Kirkland has had to adjust to the economic downturn and appears to have done a better job than most. As related to the development processes, the real issue will be how to handle staffing levels as activity returns to more normal levels. Given the lack of data, we were unable to prepare detailed staffing models. Once the new fee study is completed, it should be possible to do so.

However, if service levels and good performance standards are to be retained, some additional staffing will likely be needed in the future. We see several ways to approach this.

- Once a detailed fee analysis is completed a staffing model can be constructed and staffing set in relation to fee revenue and cost recovery philosophy.
- We suggest the City consider, over a five-year period, adjusting fees to full cost recover for all development related functions.
- In the short term, the City has made budgetary strategy based on projected development revenues. As revenues begin to increase beyond these projections, additional staffing or consultants should be added as needed to meet the pre-set performance standards we have recommended in this report. We understand that Building revenues are currently at about 100% of the budgeted estimate, but Engineering and Planning are exceeding the budget. Most of the excess revenues are being placed in a Development Services Reserve account, some are being released for needed added staffing, and some are carrying over for work in future years.

17. ***Recommendation:*** **Develop a staffing model as part of the proposed fee study.**

18. ***Recommendation:*** **Over a five-year period, gradually adjust fees to full cost recovery or achieve full cost recovery through expedited fees.**

19. ***Recommendation:*** **In the short term, as development revenues exceed budget projections, use excess revenues to supplement staff as necessary to meet the performance standards recommended in this report.**

H. LEGAL ISSUES

In addition to the City Attorney, the City has two Assistant City Attorneys, one who handles plats and subdivisions, and another enforcement issues. The attorneys suggest

that the Development Services departments work will with them and most cases are settled with little need for litigation. Development Services staff handle most issues at the Hearing Examiner and an attorney attends only if asked. Not having an attorney routinely at the Hearing Examiner is unusual but an approach we favor and which we consider to be Best Practice. Planners as well as attorney's need to know the planning laws and Kirkland's planners appear quite sophisticated in this regard.

I. OFFICE SPACE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Overview

The Kirkland City Hall is one of the more interesting and creative City Halls we have experienced. Views of the outside are present in all directions, private offices have glass walls, and all cubicle walls are low in height allowing open views throughout the space. This layout should facilitate good communication across functions.

Reception Function

The entrance to City Hall by customers can be confusing. The key feature upon entrance is a major reception desk. However, this desk is only staffed part time and only on three days a week. It appears that the main purpose of this desk is to issue passports. During our visit, there were two large signs on the counter saying, "I am temporarily away from my desk. Please see the Cashier for assistance." This sends a confusing message to anyone coming to City Hall for the first time.

Figure 3
Reception Sign

Given the open nature of City Hall, some type of reception function at the entrance is appropriate. There are several choices for this function.

- The reception function could be staffed at all times and become a true reception function for all of City Hall. Staff would be cross-trained to answer additional questions. This would be similar to the way Bellevue has organized their new City Hall. Since we did not review all City Hall functions, we are not in a position to make a recommendation on this approach. There could be a staffing cost to this alternative unless some of the reception functions from various City Hall departments re-located with staff cross trained.
- Another, and likely less costly approach, would be to identify the reception function as part of one of the operating departments. To some extent, the Fire/Building permit counter already performs part of this function because of its location and the outgoing and friendly nature of its counter staff.

20. ***Recommendation:*** **As part of the proposed City Hall remodel, a decision should be made on how to handle the City Hall reception function.**

Development Services Intake and Information Counters

A key to Best Practices for planning and developments is co-location of staff. Kirkland has this feature with Building, Engineering, Fire, and Planning all being located in City Hall. However, these functions operate out of three separate counters. It is not unusual that a customer is routed from one counter to another. Since by policy, the functions only accept complete plans (another Best Practice used in Kirkland), there is actually a process called, “walk about”, where the customer starts at the Building counter and then must go to the Engineering and Planning counters for a sign off prior to submitting an application. Even the term used to describe this function is an indication of a problem.

Best Practices generally have the staff do the walking rather than the customer. Under a Best Practice scenario, the three counters would be merged into one Development Services counter. Intake staff could be cross-trained to take in all types of applications, or if necessary, specialized staff could still be located near the counter to serve customers as necessary. However, staff would move to the customer, not the customer to staff. A joint counter could work irrespective of any decision on merging functions. At minimum, it could have the three primary functions operating side by side. At maximum, counter staff would be cross-trained in all functions. Those activities that are directly related to providing customer service should be located in proximity to the counter. Other activities, such as purely administrative support functions, can be located in areas not requiring direct public access.

21. ***Recommendation:*** **As part of the proposed City Hall remodel, consideration should be given to having one counter for the Development Services functions.**

Cashier Function

Once one of the Development Services functions has completed its transaction or review, the applicant is sent to the Cashier station to pay. A better approach, and Best Practice, would be to pay at the same counter where the transaction is taking place. A good example of this would be a typical department store where the sales clerk also processes your payment. Merging the counter functions as suggested above would facilitate this change since it would result in one pay station rather than having pay stations at three separate counters or sending the customer to a separate cashier.

22. ***Recommendation:*** **Payments for permits should be made where the transaction takes place, not at a separate Cashiers function.**

Customer Participation

We consider Best Customer Service Practice as having the customer actually participate in the process. There are at least three features that address this issue.

- Currently when a customer wants to apply for an over-the-counter permit in Building, (electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and similar permits), the customer completes a form at the counter which the Permit Technician then takes to an office to complete the transaction while the customer waits out front. The customer may wonder why it is taking so long, did the staff go for coffee, or what is happening. A better approach is to have the customer join the staff to be a part of the transaction, and in some cases, even helping the Technician avoid errors in entering data.
- Many of the transactions can currently be completed over the Internet without the customer needing to come into the office. If the customer is a one-time user of the system, it is appropriate that staff handle the transaction for them. However, for repeat customers, they should be encouraged to learn how to apply through the Internet. One way to do this is to have a computer station where staff can sit with and work with the customer while they submit their application. Staff indicates that they attempt to do this.
- Some transactions require staff to use a computer screen at the counter. When this is the case, it is useful if the customer can participate in and see the transaction as it is taking place. Some communities use a dual screen for this purpose. One screen faces the staff and another, the customer. Public Works does have this set up at their counter.

23. ***Recommendation:*** **As counter and intake functions are revised, use of customer participation techniques should be included.**

Stand Up or Sit Down Counters

Stand up counters can be useful for short transactions and reception functions. However, for longer transactions, sit down counters are preferable. Some sit down counters are also useful to meet disability regulations. Many communities now use virtually all sit down counters. We also favor increasing the use of what is called, "over-the-counter" permits. These are transactions that are completed while the customer is still in City Hall. While Kirkland uses some over-the-counter permits, we believe additional ones would be desirable. Sit down counters are useful for over-the-counter permits that may require additional time.

24. ***Recommendation:*** **As part of the decision to merge Development Services counters, at least a few sit down stations should be available near any stand-up counter.**

Technical Staff Backup

Regardless of how well counter staff is trained and cross-trained, there is often a need for a staff specialist to help the customer. The various Development Services functions do a good job of having such staff available. For example, Planning has a planner of the day assigned for this purpose. During our time in Kirkland, specialized staff were readily available to help us. This could have been just because of the nature of our study. However, this approach to customer service appears to be a standard part of the approach being used in Kirkland and is Best Practice.

J. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Interviews with staff have revealed that employees in some departments do not routinely receive formal performance evaluations. Comments from several staff members suggested that this lack of periodic performance appraisals has contributed to continued poor performance by some employees. It has been our experience that resolving performance issues with employees is made even more challenging when the jurisdiction has not provided the employee with frequent and specific performance evaluations. If the results of customer service feedback reveal the need for corrective action to improve an employee's performance to an acceptable level, the use of a performance evaluation will be a useful tool in achieving that result. Performance evaluations are an important tool that helps to ensure successful staff performance. They provide the necessary feedback and mentoring to help employees be motivated, do better and accomplish more. They also facilitate communication between supervisors and staff.

25. ***Recommendation:*** **Development Services managers should initiate a system to ensure that all employees receive annual performance evaluations that reflect the employee's adherence to established performance standards.**

K. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS/TIMELINES

One of the major issues uncovered in this study is the need to set shorter performance standards for many of the Development Services processes. As would be expected, many staff raised the issue as to how this can be accomplished. The first approach always seems to be to ask for more staff. While this may be needed in some instances, it is not always the case. It is important that the City and staff see this in a broader perspective. Some of the issues to be considered include the following:

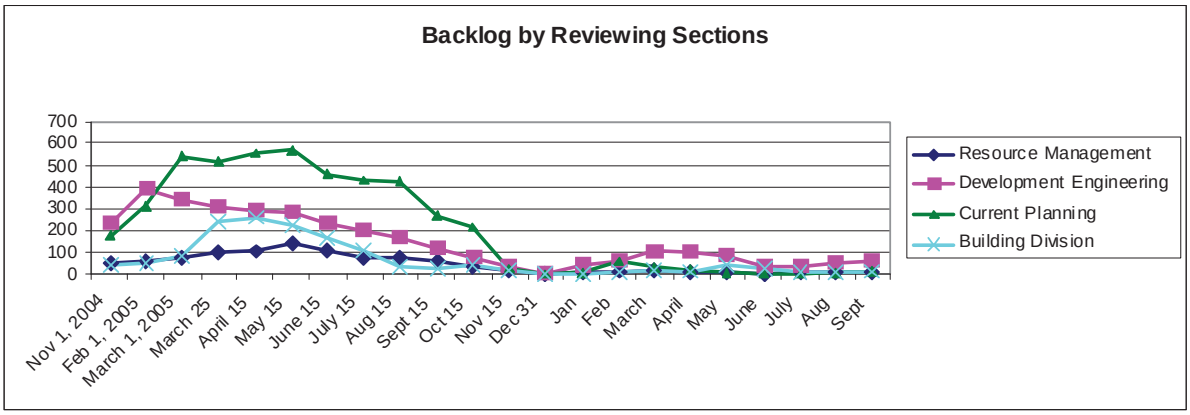
Backlog

The existence of a backlog of applications can impact the shortening of timelines and performance standards. For example, it is not unusual that if the performance standard is 10 days, an application is not actually looked at until the 9th or 10th day, even if the actual review time is only two hours. This generally means that there is a backlog of cases. The concept of backlog is not well understood. Backlog is calculated as follows:

- List the average number of applications per category received per month. For our example we will use building permits. There were 625 in 2011 or an average of 52 per month.
- Now, the number of projects (52) is multiplied by the process time in months. The performance standards for building permits is 6 weeks or 1.15 months. So, 52 is multiplied by 1.15 resulting in 59.8 applications. Any number over that amount can be considered backlog. We are recommending a 3-week timeline, which is .58 months. So, 52 is multiplied by .58 resulting in 30.16. Anything over that amount can be considered backlog. As can be seen, as performance standards are shortened, backlog goes up.

Why is this important? If performance standards are to be shortened, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to improve processes that have a backlog. In other words, the process needs to be stable before it can be fully managed. An example of this was some extensive work we completed for Pierce County. As can be seen in Figure 4, the County had a very large backlog of building permits. We set in place a process to bring the backlog down to zero within a year. This was done through supplemental staff and the use of consultants. Once completed, the County was in a position to manage the process.

Figure 4
Pierce County Backlog Example
Parkinson's Law



A well-known and accepted theory is called Parkinson's Law, which holds that- work expands to fill the time available for its completion. Most people experience this in their personal life, and it is also present in the work place. It is not unusual in government development activities to see that in times of high volumes, staff time per application is less than it is in times of low volume. This has been shown time and time again in many studies and staff has experienced how this actually was the case in Kirkland.

Performance Standards/Deadlines

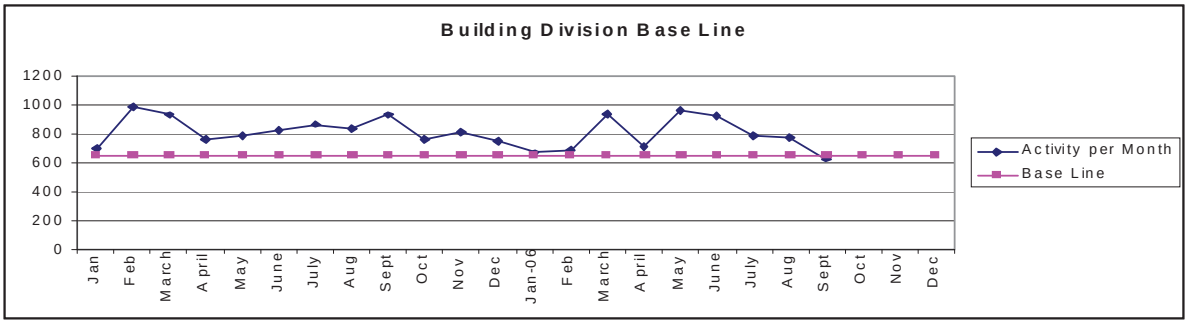
The setting of a deadline or performance standard to complete a task, in and of itself, impacts the performance. However, to be successful timelines need to be monitored and there needs to be either a penalty for not meeting the standard or a way to meet it. Kirkland has had a system of performance standards for the Development Services functions, however, in some cases they have not been clear to staff, the monitoring system is incomplete, and there is no clear strategy for what to do if the standard is not met.

Here is a very simple example of how a deadline can effect a timeline and performance. Instead of answering phone calls and emails in 24 or 48 hours, we have recommended that they be answered the same day received. Staffs' response is often that they are too busy to meet this goal. However, we then ask if the actual amount time spent on the phone call or email is less if answered the next day. The answer is generally that the time is the same. Thus, the shorter performance standard has little or no impact on the actual staffing requirement. Of course, if the phone calls or emails are never answered, that is another matter.

Time Required to Complete a Task

Irrespective of the impact of Parkinson's Law and Deadlines, an average amount of hours is needed to complete a task. For most of the Development Services tasks, these hours are not known and as such it is difficult to construct a staffing model. In a few cases in this report we have tried to make estimates to help with the analysis, however, in the final analysis a good staffing model is needed. The proposed new fee study will be designed to fulfill this need. A good example of this concept is work that the Pierce County building function completed as shown in Figure 5. They calculated how many permits on the average the staff could handle each month, a base line. Any applications over that amount were routed to consultants.

Figure 5
Pierce County Base Building Staff Model



Summary

In order to implement the proposed new timelines, Development Services management and staff will need to use the methodology described above and develop a specific implementation approach for each type of application. Some of the timelines may be accomplished by simply changing the performance standards and clearly communicating that to staff. There will be some trial and error in this process. Key tasks will include:

- Agreeing on the proposed performance standards.
- Projecting workload by sub- type of application for 2013.
- Calculating backlog for each type of application.
- Work with EnerGov to complete the appropriate monitoring system.
- Sample actual average staff time required to process a variety of applications.
- Hire consultants as necessary to remove the backlog or supplement staff as needed. As discussed under fees, any revenue beyond the original budget estimates should be used for this purpose.

26. ***Recommendation*: The City and Development Services should adopt the approach outlined above to implement the proposed new performance standards.**

L. STAFFING ISSUES

Staff Numbers

The budgeted staffing numbers for 2007 to 2013 are shown in Table 3. The increased staffing starting in 2011-2012 is primarily related to the estimated workload from the annexation area. Public Works and Fire/Building estimated a 38% increase. Planning estimated a 25% increase in land use permits as well as code enforcement.

Table 3
Development Services Budgeted Staffing**

Function	2003-2004	2005-2006	2007-2008	2009-2010	2011-2012	2012-2013
Fire & Building	17.53 (3.5)*	19.53 (3.5)	21.53 (2.5)	17.28	21.28 (1.6)	21.78 (1.6)
Planning & Community Development	21.56 (1.0)	22.56 (1.50)	23.56 (.5)	19.95	24.25	23.45
Public Works	7.00	7.00	7.00 (1.0)	6.50	7.95	8.95
Total	46.09	49.09	52.09	43.73	53.98	54.18
Temporary Positions	(4.50)	(5.00)	(4.00)	(0.00)	(1.60).	(1.60)
Grand Total	**50.59**	**54.09**	**56.09**	**43.73**	**55.58**	**55.78**

*Numbers is parentheses are temporary positions and are in addition to the other numbers in the cell. **Numbers may not reflect layoffs or unfilled positions.

Billable Hours

For productivity analysis and analysis of staffing levels it is useful to examine the actually billable hours available to employees in Kirkland. These are shown in Table 2. Employees work a 40-hour week less holidays, personal time, vacation time and sick leave. A maximum of 96 hours per year is authorized for sick leave and for purposes of this analysis we use 50 percent. Vacation time varies by the length of employment. For our purposes we have used the category for 11 to 13 years resulting

in 144 hours per year. Should the average move to higher staff longevity, time could increase to as much as 200 hours. For staffing analysis, we never assume that employees can operate at 100% at all times and feel a more reasonable allocation is 80%. Thus actual productive or billable hours for the Kirkland government employees as shown in Table 4 are 1,338 hours per year.

Table 4
Annual Billable Hour Analysis

Category	Hours
40 hour work week	2,080
Holidays, 13 days	104
Vacation, based on 11 to 13 years employment, which is the medium of existing staff. Actual varies between 104 and 200 hours.	144
Sick leave, maximum of 8 hrs. per month or 96 hours. Use half or 48	48
Net available hours	1,784
Rest periods, two 15 min. per day	112
Second Net	1,672
80% of Second Net	1,338

Overview

We were able to obtain detailed staff numbers by project type for Planning and Community Development for a nine-month period. While we will be using some of these numbers for our staff analysis, some of the numbers are suspect. There may be some double counting and some of the totals exceed the available staff hours, which we cannot explain. Similar numbers were not available for Fire/Building, or Public Works.

As part of the new fee study, the City will be able to prepare a detailed staffing model for all the development applications. However, even when detailed numbers are available, managers and financial analysts needs to look at other variables before arriving at recommendations. Some of these variables are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6
Staffing Variables

Staffing Levels

Variables

- Competency levels of staff members
- Automation
- Approaches to peak seasons
- Approach to customer service
- Difficulty of measurement

Overstaffing

- Employees coming in late, leaving early, taking long lunch hours
- Employee boredom
- Conducting reviews in excess of need

Understaffing

- High turnover of staff
- Burnout and stress leave
- Employees complaining that they don't have enough time to complete their work
- Excessive overtime
- Poor maintenance of work areas and facilities

M. TECHNOLOGY

Overview

Overall, the City has had an excellent approach to technology and we were impressed with the staff working on technology issues. Some of the Best Practice features we observed include:

- All development related functions have been using the same application permitting system, Advantage.
- The City has an excellent GIS System.
- The City participates in the E-Gov Alliance for easy of building permit applications.
- Overall computers and screens are adequate.
- Some applications can be received over the Internet.
- Electronic plans can be received and electronic plan check systems are in use.

- Copy machines and printers are up to date and include an automatic Pdf function.
- The City is committed to a new permitting system, EnerGov.

The biggest technology issue we observed was the use and installation of the new Energov permitting system. Most of the staff are very unhappy about this new system. Some of this simply relates to learning a new system since the prior system was in use for many years. However, there have been major problems with the vendor and the way the new system is designed. The City's IT Department along with a staff EnerGov committee is working with the vendor to correct these issues. The City has not yet accepted the product from the vendor and will not do so until certain problems are solved. We see no advantage in our entering these discussions since staff appears to be well versed in the needs and adding yet another party to the transactions could be counterproductive. However, in the future, should the City feel additional support would be useful, our technology expert could be used for that purpose.

We have suggested features related to setting and monitoring performance standards and have been assured that this will be part of the new system.

Geographical Information System (GIS)

The City's GIS system is generally regarded as being a very useful tool for staff use, however, it is not being utilized to it full capabilities. Many staff members report that they are aware of the GIS System, but have not received sufficient training to feel comfortable in it use. Additionally, the GIS System is not fully integrated into the EnerGov System. Discussion between the City's Information Technology (IT) staff and the EnerGov vendor have not convinced staff that EnerGov's proposed integration solution meets their performance criteria.

27. ***Recommendation:*** **The City should consider expanding it GIS training program to include a larger group of staff members from all department.**

28. ***Recommendation:*** **The IT Department should continue to work with the EnerGov vendor to explore methods to fully integrate the GIS System into the EnerGov program or consider writing their own interface into the EnerGov System.**

On-line Permitting

The City of Kirkland currently offers customers the opportunity to apply for electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and low-voltage electrical and re-roofing permits online through MyBuildingPermits.com (MBP). The MBP system is the customer portal to the City's EnerGov System. We understand that efforts are underway to further expand the MBP system to allow the acceptance of all types of permits by

May, 2013. We strongly support this effort. The City should also be commended for its practice of encouraging on-line digital plan submittal for review. By utilizing an FTP site and BlueBeam software, the City has effectively implemented an on-line plan review program that represents a substantial step toward a paperless permit system.

29. ***Recommendation:*** **The DRC should continue to diligently work on expanding the scope of permits that can be issued through the MyBuildingPermit.com program.**

EnerGov is the single most frequently expressed complaint in employee surveys and during staff interviews was their disappointment with the performance of the EnerGov Permitting Software System. This system was implemented approximately two years ago in response to the need for the City to move off of the previously used Advantage Software System because the original company (Tidemark) was purchased by Accela and Accela was no longer going to support the Advantage software. While an exhaustive evaluation was conducted in conjunction with several other jurisdictions in the region and other jurisdictions using the existing version of EnerGov software were contacted for references prior to the City finally selecting EnerGov, in hindsight, it appears that EnerGov misrepresented its ability to deliver the features it promised on the new platform it was proposing. City Management has signaled that they are strongly committed to seeing that this software program be successfully implemented rather than consider replacing the system at any time in the near future.

The members of the internal EnerGov Committee should be commended for their continued efforts and patience while working with the EnerGov software vendor. At the time of our site-visit the Committee had compiled a list of over 80 system deficiencies that they had communicated to the vendor. Rather than create a comprehensive list of our own, we feel that the Committee has done an ample job identifying outstanding deficiencies. This position is reinforced by our belief that the members are very familiar with the desirable features that were available previously in the Advantage System but are currently unavailable in the new EnerGov System. One of our major concerns relates to an apparent lack of responsiveness by the vendor to address these outstanding deficiencies. Staff reports that frequently the vendor responds to these deficiencies with proposed corrections that create further problems with other parts of the system. It is reported that the vendor does not test their proposed “fixes” prior to sending them to the City. Essentially, the City has been expected to perform the quality control testing that traditionally is a responsibility of the software vendor.

30. ***Recommendation:*** **The City should insist that EnerGov establish a test environment that mirrors the Kirkland system at their facility and that all proposed software “fixes” be tested in that environment prior to shipment to the City.**

Members of the internal EnerGov Committee also participate with other jurisdictions that use the EnerGov System as part of local and regional User Groups. By sharing their issues with other jurisdictions that are also customers of EnerGov, efforts can be made to exercise greater influence on the vendor to address those issues important to Kirkland.

31. ***Recommendation:*** **The members of the internal EnerGov Committee should continue to participate in EnerGov User Group meetings to collectively exert pressure on the vendor to address those issues of greatest importance to the City of Kirkland.**

Website

Overview: The home page of the City's website, while attractive, is difficult to navigate to retrieve information about various development process. The entire site seems to have been designed around the concept of separating the functions of individual departments and divisions rather than highlighting the services that customers are likely to need and providing a path for them to follow to receive those services. It appears that customers are expected to try and guess which department, based on a list of Departments, might provide them the services they seek. Based on preliminary work available at the Kirklandpermits.net site, staff has demonstrated a desire to create a Development Services website page that combines relevant information from the various departments that currently participate in the development process. However, this website page is currently not available from the City's home page.

The City's home page includes tabs for Visitors and Businesses but nothing for residents seeking services. The Business tab does not provide any link to information about obtaining a building permit. There is no tab provided for Residents, which would be an appropriate location to identify a link to building permits. Businesses and residents are expected to assume they must look under the Departments tab and select the Fire and Building Department.

32. ***Recommendation:*** **The City should continue to work on developing a Development Services website page that combines relevant information from each of the Departments that support the development process.**

33. ***Recommendation:*** **The home page of the City's website needs to include a tab for Residents seeking services such as obtaining a building permit. The tab should lead them to a development services page that highlights the specific services that are available and links to how they can obtain those services.**

Table 5 below shows a list of the typical features that Best Practice Communities include on their website. The Table indicates whether the Development Services

Department's web pages include, partially include, or do not include typical features. Specific recommendations follow the Table.

Table 5
Planning & Community Development Department Proposed Web Features

Typical Best Feature Features	Included	Partially Included Link Provided	Not Included
Announcements, News/Events	X		
Automated Email contact feature	X		
Comprehensive List or Link to all planning & development related fees	X		
Comprehensive Information page for Hearing Examiner Planning Commission, Houghton Community Council, including Members, Hearing Schedules/Calendars Agendas, Minutes, Agenda Packets/Reports, including staff contact for project inquiries	X		
Comprehensive Staff Contact List with Automated email Contact Feature	X		
Credit Card Payment Options		X	
E-government online application completion	X		
Forms and Handouts		X	
Frequently Asked Questions Related to Planning & Community Development	X	X	
Functional Statement, Mission Statement	X	X	
Handouts/Applications for Land Use Mgt, Policy Planning	X		
How to Guides and flow charts	X		
Links to State & Regional Planning & Zoning related agencies	X		
Links to Municipal Code, Zoning, Subdivision Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan, other related regulations, plans, policies	X		
Major Project List (i.e., recently approved, on-going projects) for both Land Use Mgmt. (Current) and Policy (Future) Planning	X		
Office Location, Hours, Map/Directions to Offices		X	X
Online Submittal of Land Use Management Plans/Permits, Applications		X	
Organization Structure Chart			X
Permit Tracking		X	
Public Notifications Displayed	X		
Work Program for Department Posted	X		
Zoning Map/GIS	X		

As the above Table shows, the City has done a good job including important Best Practice features on their Development Services web pages. However, as observed

and uncovered in interviews and staff surveys, the website is generally difficult to navigate for first-time users due to the type and volume of content posted and its overall format. In addition, the search engines are limited and don't provide sufficient search assistance for users trying to locate information that may be placed in other locations on the websites.

We understand that the City will be undertaking a makeover of its websites with the goal of improving accessibility, which we applaud. Below are recommendations that should be included in the website overhaul project.

Comprehensive Staff Contact List with Automated email Contact Feature, Staff Photo. The Departments should consider renaming the "Directory" tab to "Staff Directory," so that the information is easier to locate. In addition, many of the Best Practice Communities that we have worked with include a staff photo next to the contact information.

34. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should consider renaming the "Directory" tabs to "Staff Directory," so that the information is easier for users to find.**

35. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should also consider adding staff photos along with staff contact information.**

Handouts/Applications/Forms/Guides: There are numerous applications, handouts, forms and other information sheets available for permit processes and are posted on the website. However, they are not categorized by Process Type, which would be a more intuitive format for locating needed applications, etc. In addition, not all have been updated. Further, the number of applications and handouts available can be overwhelming and confusing for users, as well as difficult for the Department to keep current. In addition, some additional handouts may be necessary to help customers understand complex concepts, which currently aren't available. For example, a handout on critical area regulations and procedures would be a useful tool to help new users understand and navigate this process. In addition, there are handouts that should be generated to explain Planning & Policy Division (long-range) concepts, such as growth management and the comprehensive plan, and regulations such as shoreline regulations.

The Departments should consider reviewing all of its handouts and applications and consolidate them where possible. Many best practice communities use a single application packet that uses a checkbox system to distinguish the type of permit(s) requested. In addition, all applications should be able to be completed online (fillable). Best Practice communities also create flow charts that show how applications are processed and appealed through the various decision-making bodies.

All handouts should be kept up-to-date and contain a revision date so that users know they have the most current version of the document. In addition, simple flow charts should be developed for processes to help users better understand how processes work.

36. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should update all online applications in a format that allows them to be filled in on line, and post them under their respective process type category under the "Applications and Forms" tab.**

37. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should update the public notice and tree removal request forms, and other forms, which are used routinely, in a format that allows them to be filled in online.**

38. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should review all of its handouts and applications to ensure they are written in clear concise language, and consolidate them where possible.**

39. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should update all applications and handouts and include a revision date so that customers know they have the most current version.**

40. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should prepare simple, accurate flow charts for permit processes, which should be posted on the website to help users understand how processes work.**

Frequently Asked Questions: The Fire and Building Department's Building and Construction website currently includes a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section. Traditionally the FAQs page has been the most frequently visited site for most development services departments. By providing a user friendly and comprehensive FAQs page customers are afforded an opportunity to get their information immediately 24/7 without requiring staff intervention and the information is always consistent. The information on the page should be geared towards users looking for quick answers to basic building-related questions. While many useful questions and answers are included among these FAQs, the question of "How Do I Obtain a Building Permit" is not included.

41. ***Recommendation:*** **The Building and Construction website page for FAQs should include a response to the question "How do I obtain a Building Permit?"**

Functional Statements, Vision, Mission, Goals: The Fire and Building Department's web pages contain a very basic description of the duties of the Department, however, there is no information regarding the Department's Mission

Statement, Functions or Goals to provide staff and customers with clear direction on the Department's purpose or function in the City. This information would provide an excellent opportunity to express the Department's commitment to work cooperatively with other staff throughout the City system to deliver excellent service to the customer. These statements need clarification for other functions as well.

42. ***Recommendation:*** **Add Functional and Vision Statements and a list of goals to the Department's main website page to precisely describe the Department's purpose and functions in the City.**

Links: The Department should add links to information on growth management laws and practices.

43. ***Recommendation:*** **The Development Services Departments should add links to information on growth management laws and practices.**

Map/Directions to Offices: The City's website does not include a link for directions and a map of City Hall. This information may be particularly important to permit applicants needing to come to City Hall to obtain a permit, especially if they are pulling a construction trailer and need to know where to park.

44. ***Recommendation:*** **A map and directions to City Hall should be included on the City home web page and links provided to that information from the proposed Development Services page and each of the Departments. The Fire and Building Department's web page should also include preferred parking information to direct contractors pulling construction trailers.**

Organization Structure Chart: The City has apparently chosen to not include Organization Structure Charts within the individual Department web pages. We believe this basic information is necessary in order for users to understand the structure of each Department. A logical place to include this information would be on a page that provided direct links to contact information for the individuals on the chart.

45. ***Recommendation:*** **Create a web page for each Department that includes an Organization Chart with links to contact information for the individuals listed on the chart.**

Permit Tracking: Various types of building and land use permits can be tracked online through the Mybuildinpermit.com, which is an is an easy-to-use permitting portal that also makes it possible to apply, pay for, and receive electrical, low voltage, mechanical, plumbing, and re-roof permits from the City as well as other ten participating jurisdictions.

Our interviews with staff revealed that neither the permit tracking system nor EnerGov provides the public with a means to conduct an overall status check of a permit to find out where it is being held up in the review process.

46. ***Recommendation:*** **EnerGov should be configured to provide the public with a means to conduct an overall permit status check to determine where permits are being held up in the review process.**