

City of Santa Paula

Joint City Council/Planning Commission

MAYOR LESLIE CORNEJO
VICE MAYOR PEDRO A. CHAVEZ
COUNCILMEMBER JENNY CROSSWHITE
COUNCILMEMBER CARLOS JUAREZ
COUNCILMEMBER ANDY SOBEL
CHAIRPERSON AARON DUNKEL
VICE CHAIRPERSON GRACE KELLY
COMMISSIONER AUSTIN AUGER
COMMISSIONER JASON HERBER
COMMISSIONER NOEL KIESEWETTER



JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SANTA PAULA JOINT CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024

6:00 PM - Joint City Council/Planning Commission Special Meeting

SANTA PAULA CITY HALL
970 VENTURA STREET
SANTA PAULA, CA 93060

JULIE LATSHAW, CITY CLERK
DAN SINGER, CITY MANAGER
MONICA CASTILLO, CITY ATTORNEY

BRINGING ITEMS BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL

You are invited to participate in all Regular City Council meetings. Agendas are posted in the front of Santa Paula City Hall, 970 Ventura Street, Santa Paula, 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meetings. The City Council's regular meetings start at 6:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 970 Ventura Street in Santa Paula. Special and Closed Sessions vary by date and time.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN PERSON DURING THE MEETING: If you wish to speak at a City Council meeting, please fill out a **Public Comment Form** noting your name and address and submit the form to the City Clerk. Include the Agenda item number you wish to speak on. Members of the public may address the Council on items on this agenda only. **Public Comments are limited to 3 minutes.**

HOW TO PARTICIPATE BEFORE THE MEETING: Members of the public are encouraged to submit email correspondence on any agenda item by sending an email to cityclerk@spcity.org. All public correspondence received by three hours before the meeting date will be provided to the legislative body before the meeting. Public Comments received after, will be provided to the legislative body the next day.

Your Participation in this meeting is in the public domain; meetings are cablecast; minutes of this meeting will reflect your participation in this meeting and are posted on the city's website.

PLEASE NOTE: *Be advised that if you bring a legal challenge to an action, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the meeting described in this Agenda, or in written correspondence delivered to the City Council at or before the meeting. Any action is subject to the ninety-day time period set forth in Code of Civil Procedure § 1094.6.*

*In compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk at (805) 933-4208. Notification 48 hours before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35, 102-35.104 ADA Title II). Written materials distributed to the City Council within 72 hours of the City Council meeting are available for public inspection immediately upon distribution in the City Clerk's office.*

SPECIAL MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER

1. CALL TO ORDER

REMINDER: in order to minimize distractions during public meetings, all personal communication devices should be turned off or put in a non-audible mode.

2. ROLL CALL

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item appearing on the agenda only. Individual Councilmembers or Commissioners may briefly respond to Public Comments or ask questions for clarification. **Public Comments are limited to three minutes.**

4. ORDER OF BUSINESS

4.A **PROCESS AND IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT SERVICES PRESENTATION BY CITYGATE ASSOCIATES RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council receive the report and provide feedback to staff and consultant.

5. ADJOURNMENT

State of California)-

County of Ventura)- ss

City of Santa Paula)-

I declare under penalty of perjury that I posted this Joint City Council/Planning Commission Special Meeting Agenda on the bulletin board near the front door of City Hall, 970 Ventura Street, Santa Paula, California.

On _____, at _____ Signed: _____

Julie Latshaw

City Clerk

**CITY OF SANTA PAULA
MEMORANDUM**

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Joint City Council/Planning Commission

From: James Mason, Community & Economic Development Director

Subject: PROCESS AND IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT SERVICES PRESENTATION BY CITYGATE ASSOCIATES

Date: June 24, 2024

Agenda Item: 4.A

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council receive the report and provide feedback to staff and consultant.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Santa Paula contracted with Citygate Associates to conduct a cross-departmental study and identify opportunities to improve the overall efficiency, transparency, and predictability of the City's planning, development review and permitting, and economic development processes. Develop a roadmap of recommendations to improve these processes and ensure the highest level of customer service—particularly considering anticipated increases in workload due to large-scale projects on the horizon. Provide an Implementation Action Plan template to assist in developing an annual work plan.

At the June 24, 2024 Study Session Citygate staff will present a Comprehensive Report, Executive Brief, and Implementation Action Plan, to the City Council and Planning Commission. Deliverables include recommendations and implementation strategies based on survey data, employee and stakeholder interviews, observational analysis, and document review.

ANALYSIS:

The Community and Economic Development Department program services are administered to guide the growth and revitalization of Santa Paula's physical environment, support residential and commercial development, and facilitate business and economic development. Program services are delivered through two departments: the Community and Economic Development Department (CED), comprised of two divisions, the Planning Division and the Building and Safety Division; and the Public Works Department Administration and Engineering Division (PWAE). Staff in other departments, primarily the Finance Department (e.g., billing for development agreements; processing consultant and customer payments) and the City Manager's Office (policy implementation direction) provide support.

To initiate its assessment, Citygate conducted a high-level review of documents provided by the City and completed relevant web-based research to gain an understanding of the City's goals, objectives, policies, and procedures. In addition, the Citygate Project Team conducted employee and stakeholder engagement processes to assist in the assessment of the Program. The information gathered through Citygate's assessment process guided an operational analysis which included identifying primary inputs, outputs, and sub-processes for key Program operations. The Citygate Project Team used this analysis, its own members' extensive experience administering community and economic programs and processes, and best practices in the management of municipal government services to develop the major themes, findings, and recommendations provided in the assessment report (Attachment A)

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The analysis, review and implementation of improvement measures outlined in the Citygate analysis will provide a work plan to improve operational improvements to the development review and economic development programs. These activities are in alignment with City Council Strategic Goal G. Operational Excellence, to provide excellent service to the community in a cost-effective manner with an engaged workforce with a focus on continuous improvement and outstanding customer service. Objective 1 of the Strategic Goal it to improve permitting by streamline the application and permitting processes for businesses.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

The are no fiscal impacts at this time. As staff works to develop and implementation schedule for process improvements there will be fiscal impacts as a result of technology enhancements and staff time. Any increase fiscal impacts or requirements for additional budget allocations required to implement improvements will be associated with process improvements will be reviewed by staff and presented to City Council for review and approval prior to implementation.

OPTIONS:

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment A, Santa Paula Assessment of CED Services \(06-19-24\).pdf](#)

[Attachment B, Santa Paula Report Presentation \(06-20-24\).pdf](#)

ATTACHMENT A

CITYGATE
ASSESSMENT REPORT



CITY GATE
ASSOCIATES

PROCESS AND IMPROVEMENT
ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

CITY OF SANTA PAULA

JUNE 19, 2024



CITY GATE
ASSOCIATES

WWW.CITYGATEASSOCIATES.COM

600 COOLIDGE DR., STE. 150 FOLSOM, CA 95630

PHONE: (916) 458-5100
FAX: (916) 983-2090



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Executive Brief	1
Executive Summary	2
Scope and Objectives.....	2
Contextual Summary	2
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats	3
Strengths	3
Weaknesses	4
Opportunities	5
Threats	6
Survey Methodology and Summary Results	7
Overall Methodology	7
City Employee Survey Summary	7
Summary of Recommendations.....	8
Prioritization—Timing Intervals	9
Prioritization and Implementation Criteria.....	9
Section 1—Introduction.....	20
1.1 Project Introduction.....	20
1.2 Background and Contextual Overview	20
1.2.1 Population and Housing Costs.....	20
1.2.2 Geographic and Cultural Overview	21
1.2.3 Planning Framework.....	21
1.2.4 Summary	22
1.3 Study Goal.....	22
1.4 Study Methodology and Approach.....	22
1.5 Summary Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis	24
1.5.1 Strengths	24
1.5.2 Weaknesses	25
1.5.3 Opportunities.....	27
1.5.4 Threats.....	28
Section 2—Operational Review and Analysis	30
2.1 Overview	30
2.2 Community and Economic Development Department	30
2.2.1 Economic Development.....	34
2.2.2 Planning	35
2.2.3 Building and Safety.....	39
2.3 Public Works Administration and Engineering – Development Review.....	41

2.4	Measuring Organizational and Operational Performance	42
2.4.1	Economic Development.....	43
2.4.2	Planning Division.....	43
2.4.3	Building and Safety Division.....	46
2.4.4	Public Works Administration and Engineering – Development Review	46
Section 3—Survey Process and Results.....		47
3.1	Overall Methodology	47
3.2	City Employee Survey.....	47
3.2.1	Summary	47
3.2.2	Planning Results Summary	48
3.2.3	Building Results Summary	48
3.2.4	Public Works Engineering Group Results Summary.....	49
3.2.5	Employee Survey Overview	49
3.2.6	Summary of Survey Responses by Division.....	49
3.2.7	Open-Ended Prompt – Response Summary.....	54
3.3	Stakeholder Survey.....	55
3.3.1	Summary	55
3.3.2	Stakeholder Survey Overview	56
3.3.3	Summary of Survey Responses by Division.....	58
3.3.4	General Questions.....	66
3.3.5	Question on Quality of Life and Economic Development.....	66
3.3.6	City Communication and Updates	68
3.3.7	Open-Ended Question – Response Summary	69
Section 4—Findings and Recommendations of the Program		71
4.1	Summary of Identified Themes	71
4.2	Observations and Recommendations	71
4.3	Theme 1—Financial Stability	71
4.3.1	Findings.....	71
4.3.2	Recommendations.....	71
4.4	Theme 2—Staffing and Reliance on Contract and Consultant Personnel	72
4.4.1	Findings.....	72
4.4.2	Recommendations.....	73
4.5	Theme 3—Policy and Procedural Clarity and Consistency	74
4.5.1	Findings.....	74
4.5.2	Recommendations.....	74
4.6	Theme 4—Communication, Outreach, and Customer Service	75
4.6.1	Findings.....	75
4.6.2	Recommendations.....	75
4.7	Theme 5—Technology Adoption and Implementation.....	76
4.7.1	Findings.....	76
4.7.2	Recommendations.....	76

4.8	Theme 6—Economic Development Opportunities	77
4.8.1	Findings.....	77
4.8.2	Recommendations.....	77
4.9	Performance Metrics	78
4.10	Implementation Fail Facts and Strategies	78
4.10.1	Fail Facts.....	79
4.11	Implementation Best Practices	80
4.11.1	Determine a Lead and/or Co-Leads for the Implementation of the Strategic Plan.....	80
4.11.2	Have a Communication Plan	80
4.11.3	Have a Clear Accountability Approach	81
4.11.4	Performance Monitoring.....	81

Appendices

Appendix A—City of Santa Paula Strategic Goals/Recommendations and Implementation Plan

Appendix B—City of Santa Paula Employee Survey Summary

Appendix C—City of Santa Paula Stakeholder Survey Summary

Table of Tables

Table 1—Top-Ten Methodologies Used for Implementation and Prioritization.....	10
Table 2—Summary of Recommendations	11
Table 3—Funded Full-Time Equivalent Positions by Fiscal Year	31
Table 4—Selected Administrative and Discretionary Planning Services and Activities (2018–2023).....	37
Table 5—Applications for Conditional Use / Home Occupation Permits (2018–2023)	38
Table 6—Employee Survey – Response Details	49
Table 7—Employee Survey – Respondents by Division.....	49
Table 8—Delivering Government Services – Planning Division.....	50
Table 9—Agreement with Statements Regarding Division or Department – Planning Division.....	51
Table 10—Delivering Government Services – Building and Safety Division	52
Table 11—Agreement with Statements Regarding Division or Department – Building and Safety Division.....	53
Table 12—Delivering Government Services – Public Works Engineering.....	54
Table 13—Employee Survey – Open-Ended Responses	55
Table 14—Stakeholder Survey – Response Details.....	56
Table 15—Place of Residence of Stakeholder.....	56
Table 16—Tenure of Residency of Stakeholder.....	57
Table 17—“Have You had Business with CED or PWAE Over the Past Two Years?”	57
Table 18—Stakeholder Survey – Categories of Responding Stakeholders	57
Table 19—Stakeholder Survey – Types of Projects Stakeholders were Involved With.....	58
Table 20—“Have You had Business with Planning Over the Past Two Years?”	58
Table 21—Planning Division – “How Planning Compares to Expectations for Government Service”	59
Table 22—“Have You had Business With Building and Safety Over the Past Two Years?”	60
Table 23—“How Building and Safety Compares to Expectations for Government Service”	61

Table 24—“Have You had Business with PWAE Over the Past Two Years?”	62
Table 25—“How PWAE Compares to Expectations for Government Service”	63
Table 26—“Have You had Business with Economic Development Over the Past Two Years?”	64
Table 27—“How Economic Development Compares to Expectations for Government Service”	65
Table 28—Responses to General Questions	66
Table 29—Responses to General Questions About Cost, Timeliness, and Quality of Permitting	66
Table 30—Responses to Degree of Agreement Statements on Quality of Life and Economic Development	68
Table 31—Responses to Question on Communication Mode Preferences	69
Table 32—Responses to Question on Frequency of Communication	69
Table 33—Responses on Top Priorities for CED	70
Table 34—Responses on Improving Process of Approving Land Use Applications or Building Permits.....	70

Table of Figures

Figure 1—Organizational Chart – Community and Economic Development Department	32
Figure 2—Planning Division – Ministerial Plan Review Process	45

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Request	Conduct a cross-departmental study and identify opportunities to improve the overall efficiency, transparency, and predictability of the City’s planning, development review and permitting, and economic development processes. Develop a roadmap of recommendations to improve these processes and ensure the highest level of customer service—particularly considering anticipated increases in workload due to large-scale projects on the horizon. Provide an Implementation Action Plan template to assist in developing an annual work plan.
Core Deliverables	A Comprehensive Report, Executive Brief, Implementation Action Plan, and a PowerPoint presentation to the City Council. Deliverables include recommendations and implementation strategies based on survey data, employee and stakeholder interviews, observational analysis, and document review.
Mission	The City of Santa Paula is committed to continually creating a safe, sustainable, and innovative place to live, work, and thrive.
Vision	The City of Santa Paula is an innovative and collaborative organization delivering exceptional services that enhance a sustainable and vibrant community where residents, families, and businesses can thrive.
Core Values	Innovation Collaboration and Teamwork Diversity and Inclusion Accountability
Community Priorities	Improve Infrastructure Economic Initiatives and Employers Improve Downtown Aesthetics Community Safety Public Spaces Process Improvements Timeliness and Certainty
Employee Priorities	Public Works Challenges Technology Timeliness Coordination and Communication with Divisions/Departments and Consultants Expedited Review Opportunities Fiscal Stability Training Opportunities Staff and City Council Relations Staffing Levels
Implementation Action Plan Template	The Action Plan is provided as Appendix A to the Report. The Report’s Executive Summary presents high-priority recommendations and estimated costs and assignments.
Six Core Themes	(1) Financial Stability (2) Staffing and Reliance on Contract and Consultant Services (3) Policy and Procedural Clarity, Timeliness, and Consistency (4) Communication, Outreach and Customer Service (5) Technology Adoption and Implementation (6) Economic Development Opportunities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the 2023-2024 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services (Program) that Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) performed for the City of Santa Paula, CA (City). Citygate commends the City for engaging in this effort to seek continuous improvement in its day-to-day operations. In doing so the City demonstrates to its customers and staff that it is not satisfied with the status quo and desires to increase the transparency and effectiveness of Program services. In addition, this effort validates that the City values feedback from customers and employees, even if the feedback may be negative or suggest changes in the City's operations.

This executive summary introduces the scope of work, synthesizes the feedback received from the staff and stakeholder engagement process, and presents a summary of the recommendations.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Program services are administered by the City to guide the growth and revitalization of Santa Paula's physical environment, support residential and commercial development, and facilitate business and economic development. Program services are delivered through two departments: the Community and Economic Development Department (CED), comprised of two divisions, the Planning Division and the Building and Safety Division; and the Public Works Department Administration and Engineering Division (PWAE). Staff in other departments, primarily the Finance Department (e.g., billing for development agreements; processing consultant and customer payments) and the City Manager's Office (policy implementation direction) provide support.

To initiate its assessment, Citygate conducted a high-level review of documents provided by the City and completed relevant web-based research to gain an understanding of the City's goals, objectives, policies, and procedures. In addition, the Citygate Project Team conducted employee and stakeholder engagement processes to assist in the assessment of the Program. The information gathered through Citygate's assessment process guided an operational analysis which included identifying primary inputs, outputs, and subprocesses for key Program operations. The Citygate Project Team used this analysis, its own members' extensive experience administering community and economic programs and processes, and best practices in the management of municipal government services to develop the major themes, findings, and recommendations provided in this report.

Contextual Summary

As further described in **Section 1**, Santa Paula's land use and planning framework exists within a complex State of California and regional planning framework, with overlapping layers of

regulatory bodies, land use legislation affecting zoning and housing policies, modest growth pressures, the City's historic and cultural significance, and numerous State and City goals and policies to consider and advance. This creates a challenging environment for Santa Paula staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Commission to engage in land use entitlement and related permitting decisions.

The City is interested in taking steps to streamline, clarify, and increase the transparency and predictability of its land use decision-making and other Program functions for stakeholders, as evidenced by commissioning this assessment.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

One of the tools Citygate employs is a SWOT analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Citygate utilizes this framework to help frame its assessment of Program Services and the perceptions, observations, and opinions Citygate consultants heard through the engagement process with City employees, City consultants, and other external stakeholders. It is used to organize the results of the assessment and, as such, reflects Citygate's analysis of information obtained. Select points follow. A complete list of the SWOT information can be found in **Section 1**.

Strengths

- ◆ Community and Economic Development Department (CED) staff care deeply care about the community and are generally viewed by customers and other external stakeholders as competent, helpful, collaborative, communicative, responsive, genuine, and open-minded.
- ◆ The City has been able to rely on a core team of consulting firms, some with years of service to Santa Paula, to provide sufficient personnel to improve the timeliness of development review and inspection services and permit City staff to focus on fewer functions.
- ◆ The City Manager and senior leadership team are seen as good and engaged leaders by City staff and external stakeholders.
- ◆ City leadership emphasizes a public service ethic and customer service. Teamwork is promoted, with staff expected to work together to resolve issues. Staff are not micro-managed.
- ◆ City staff are accessible and interested in serving and improving Santa Paula.
- ◆ Downtown is well laid out for events, economic development opportunities, and tourists and other visitors.

Weaknesses

- ◆ Fiscal insecurity, both currently and for the foreseeable future, results in chronic under-resourcing of City staffing and services.
- ◆ The City has yet to adopt and implement a state-of-the-industry online permitting system for development review and business licensing, causing frustration among staff and many customers.
- ◆ Planning, development review, and related administrative processes suffer from the City's failure to adopt, document, and consistently adhere to standard operating procedures (SOPs). More robust use of SOPs, rather than reliance on institutional knowledge, is especially critical for continuity and consistency of services during periods of staff and consultant turnover and to improve the onboarding process for new staff and consultants.
- ◆ A heavy reliance on consultants, coupled with staff turnover, undermines accountability. PWAE, in particular, lacks in-house development experience and has almost entirely delegated responsibility—including supervision—for ensuring private development and associated public infrastructure are properly designed and constructed to contractors and consultants. This arrangement engenders skepticism in the development community about the length and robustness of design review and inspection processes, conditions of approval, and City and consultant fees. While current practices appear to be appropriately protective of the public interest, developers and builders may view them as overly conservative when compared to past practice and driven by consultants, not City management.
- ◆ While the City is viewed as capably handling routine development matters (e.g., planning approvals for uses permitted in the zoning code “by right,” business licenses, tenant improvements), its administration of less routine matters (e.g., specific plan amendments, construction and dedication of public infrastructure, development agreement amendments, privilege licenses and permits) is seen as sometimes inconsistent, subjective, and unpredictable due to a lack of—or failure to follow—clear procedures.
- ◆ Application processing and communication/response regarding permitting requirements from staff in Planning, Building, Public Works, and City consultants suffers from inconsistent timeliness. This is exacerbated by the procedural lapses (e.g., accepting incomplete applications) which reduce efficiency and prolong project review. The absence of engineering staff at City Hall impairs the City's ability to support a one-stop shop for customers.

- ◆ Given the numerous and varied challenges facing the City—including resource constraints—innovation is critical but lacking.

Opportunities

- ◆ Review current vendor contract(s) to determine whether City has access to a state-of-the-industry platform and software package necessary to accept and process building permit applications, business license applications, and utility payments via online payment. Implement and provide training (onsite and one-on-one) for the new technology. Provide for staff input and ability to make key changes to the system. Identify and more fully utilize the current capabilities of the City’s existing technology.
- ◆ Improve PWAE services by adopting customer service standards, specifying performance standards in consultant contracts and, correspondingly, reassessing the possibility of bringing more work in-house versus continuing the current level of reliance on contract and consulting personnel, and, in addition, further integrating the Water Division of Public Works into the Department. While some level of reliance on contract staff may be unavoidable, the City should strive to use City employees in management roles.
- ◆ Improve Building and Safety Division customer service by offering same-day (so-called “over the counter”) building permits for simple or routine applications and unlocking the door to the customer service counter. These improvements are contingent on filling current vacancies in Building and Safety.
- ◆ Increasing the predictability of City processes, particularly discretionary development reviews, would help applicants plan and reduce costs and confusion for businesses. Consider, for example, adopting standards (e.g., 90 days for X, 180 days for Y) for common land-use entitlements and engineering and building plan review processes. Utilize the City’s interactions with applicants during the initial phase of projects or applications to support their understanding of permitting and review processes and reduce regulatory “surprises.”
- ◆ Identify and evaluate additional revenue generating opportunities. Consider, for example: a vacant property registration program and ordinance; short-term rental registration and licensing; proactive versus reactive code enforcement; cannabis businesses; smoking enforcement program. A fee study (currently in process) should be conducted. It needs to incorporate an escalation clause, be performed annually if possible, and implemented ASAP. The study should include interviews and shadowing of staff as part of the assessment. The City should also review its

policy on the utilization of building and planning fees for General Fund uses and dedicate appropriate expertise and time to seeking grant opportunities, including for additional staffing.

- ◆ The City has an opportunity to develop a robust employee recruitment, retention, and succession plan. It should be based on an analysis of the City's salary structure and current agreements with the City's employee bargaining groups. The duties of City positions should be assessed and adjusted as appropriate. The analysis should also examine whether consultants or full-time City employees are more cost-effective for various functions, particularly in PWAE.

Threats

- ◆ Legal and regulatory exposure resulting from the City's lack of clear policies. For example, when is a CEQA review for a Specific Plan amendment necessary and, if so, are developers allowed to hire their own consultant to undertake the analysis? There is also exposure due to a lack of consistent procedures. For example, will the City accept and begin processing applications lacking supporting technical documents for discretionary planning applications? For project construction, are bonds for the construction of public infrastructure consistently required? Are privilege licenses and permits reviewed and conditioned in a consistent way?
- ◆ Deficiencies in past project reviews and inspections undertaken by the City have resulted in incomplete or substandard public infrastructure that developers are responsible for building and dedicating to the City. If the City must incur costs to address these shortcomings, other projects in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will need to be deferred or foregone. While broadly applicable, this risk is currently concentrated in East Area 1.
- ◆ The City's ability to undertake timely and thorough review of new development may be overwhelmed by demand (especially large new projects) and stagnant or declining staff capacity due to attrition and/or an inability to recruit new staff.
- ◆ Declining City staff morale could eventually undermine existing staff's willingness to "put in the work" necessary to compensate for inadequate resources. While staff cite comparatively low pay as a contributing factor, several cited workloads that "feel overwhelming at times" as fueling a growing sense of discouragement.
- ◆ High City staff turnover due to burnout and compensation that lags that of other jurisdictions in the region. This threat is exacerbated by inadequate succession planning, resulting in a continuous loss of institutional knowledge.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY RESULTS

Overall Methodology

Citygate deployed internet-based staff and external stakeholder surveys between January 10, 2024, and February 7, 2024. Summary survey results are presented in **Section 3**. Additional details, including graphic summaries of responses and the responses to open-ended questions, are provided in **Appendix B** (Employee Survey Summary) and **Appendix C** (Stakeholder Survey Summary). A brief summary of the two surveys follows.

City Employee Survey Summary

From a staff perspective, survey results were candid and revealed both common and differing perceptions regarding the three functional units that support the Program. The employees that responded to the survey were most positive about their relationship with their leadership, including the timeliness and tenor of communication, and staff feel trusted by their supervisor or manager. They also share the view that economic development and growth are important to the community. However, Planning Division employees provided slightly lower assessments of their division's capacity, performance, and processes than did Building and Safety Division employees.

Staff across both divisions expressed negative perceptions regarding the coordination of land use and permitting reviews between divisions and departments, and about City staff coordination with outside consultants. Staff in both divisions were generally downbeat about the provision of services by PWAE. These results indicate a need to address staff capacity and roles, particularly in the PWAE and, to a lesser extent, the Planning Division; improve land use review and permitting processes; and enhance coordination between CED, PWAE and the City's consultants and contract staff as they relate to the provision of Program services.

The summary provided in **Section 3** provides an overview of the results; however, it is recommended the City's leadership and staff review the complete response summary in **Appendix B** and mutually agree on strategies to address staffing, improve workplace processes and coordination, and establish mutually agreed-upon customer service standards.

Stakeholder Survey Summary

Survey results were informative and useful regarding stakeholder perceptions of customer service, timeliness, transparency, predictability, communication levels, customer service, and clarity of codes and policies related to the Program services delivered by the Planning Division, Building and Safety Division, the Economic Development function, and PWAE. The summary in **Section 3** provides an overview of the results; however, it is recommended the City's leadership and staff review the complete response summary in **Appendix C** and mutually agree to a strategy to improve customer service by providing consistent, reliable, and timely information.

Overall, surveyed stakeholders expressed significantly positive sentiments about the accuracy and completeness of the initial information provided by the Planning Division and Building and Safety Division and, to a lesser degree, the PWAE. For the Planning Division, customers viewed the helpfulness of front counter assistance and the attitude of staff most positively. For the Building and Safety Division, survey respondents were most positive about the helpfulness of handouts on review processes and staff's understanding of private business. And regarding the Economic Development function, survey respondents appreciate the lack of complexity related to regulations and the ability of staff to solve problems and communicate with customers.

Less positively, stakeholders perceive a lack of coordinated review between the City's divisions, departments, and consultants. In addition, stakeholders see a lack of consistency in returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner. This information indicates a need to establish and reinforce customer services standards across all functions and provide customized staff training to raise the level of customer service.

The stakeholder survey also asked participants to express their views regarding various quality-of-life topics, and further requested that they prioritize the goals and objectives included in the City's recently adopted General Plan and the City Council's 2023–2025 Strategic Plan. Respondents indicated the most agreement with statements specifying that vacant properties in the downtown area should be a top priority; that they feel a strong sense of community in the City; and that the City is generally a safe place to live and or work. They were most likely to disagree that the City has sufficient nightlife opportunities and shopping choices, and that the City's economy is sound. In addition, the survey gave respondents an opportunity to provide an open-ended response stating what they believe should be the top priorities of the CED. Their top priority was improving road infrastructure—especially repaving deteriorated roads. The second most referenced priority was economic development, especially attracting and developing more employers. Notably, 71 percent of survey respondents expressed an interest in receiving updates and announcements on City operations on at least a monthly basis.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Citygate's assessment resulted in 17 findings and 40 recommendations organized into six themes, as presented in **Section 4**. The themes are as follows:

- ◆ Theme 1—Financial Stability
- ◆ Theme 2—Staffing and Reliance on Contract and Consultant Personnel
- ◆ Theme 3—Policy and Procedural Clarity and Consistency
- ◆ Theme 4—Communication, Outreach, and Customer Service
- ◆ Theme 5—Technology Adoption and Implementation

◆ Theme 6—Economic Development Opportunities

Table 2 provides a summary of each recommendation and improvements or underlying issues it addresses.

A suggested prioritization of the recommendations was provided, as the City’s intention is to review Citygate’s recommendations based on the City’s existing and future workplan priorities and Citygate’s analysis. Citygate offers and utilized the recommended methodologies as shown with **Appendix A** and Table 1.

Prioritization—Timing Intervals

Citygate suggests defining the prioritization based on achievable timing intervals. It can also be further defined by fiscal year to follow the City’s strategic workplans that guide staff work teams’ action plans. The following is one straightforward approach to prioritization timing:

- ◆ Near-Term: 0–2 years for recommended action to be completed
- ◆ Mid-Term: 3–4 years for recommended action to be completed
- ◆ Long-Term: 5+ years for recommended action to be completed
- ◆ Ongoing: Current/standard practice or no end date for recommended action

Prioritization and Implementation Criteria

There are several criteria that should be considered when evaluating the urgency or appropriate timing of recommendation implementation. They include prioritization and implementation, and are two of the most challenging aspects in management. As such, there are a variety of successful tools and techniques that can aid in successful outcomes. While both elements are required in any agency, it is even more critical and challenging within local government. As best practices can differ from one city to another, recommendations can be formulated based on a top-ten methodology, utilizing a combination of optimal and proven 360-degree approaches shown in the following table.

Table 1—Top-Ten Methodologies Used for Implementation and Prioritization

Methodology	Description
1. Balanced Approach	One size does not fit all. Spread the opportunities, resources, and funding throughout different goals.
2. Sequential Sense	Do not put the cart before the horse. Thoughtfully consider a plan and find efficient approaches to solving various challenges.
3. Input Considerations	Collect extensive and unbiased input from the community, volunteers, staff, and elected officials in a collaborative approach.
4. Data	Collect and analyze relevant data.
5. Fiscal Considerations	What can be funded and how can it support long-term fiscal stability?
6. Voting priorities	Who was involved and how were the priorities determined? Utilize voting in an appropriately weighted approach.
7. RICE Approach	Reach (How many people are impacted by this decision/choice?), Impact (How are these people impacted? Massively, high, medium, or low), Confidence (Gut instincts and awareness of emotionally charged or politically sensitive situations), Effort (What will it take to really accomplish this goal?).
8. Capacity	Understand limitations. Work towards appropriately growing capacity to meet needs.
9. MoSCoW Approach ¹	Determine “ M ust haves” for survival and safety; “ S hould haves” for efficient and effective approaches and goals that support priorities and the overall wellness of the community and organization; “ C ould haves” that will have to wait but are eventually desired; and “ W on’t haves” that have no current resource allocation and are a low priority.
10. Alignment	Does the work align with the culture, needs, and vision now and in the future?

¹ Clegg, Dai; Barker, Richards (1994). Case Method Fast-Track: A RAD Approach. Addison-Wesley. ISBN 978-0-201-70913-1.

Table 2—Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
	Theme 1—Financial Stability	
1	Ensure the City's ability to meet community needs both now and into the future by stabilizing the City's long-term fiscal situation, increasing staff in critical functions, and providing competitive salaries to improve the City's ability to attract and retain an adequate number of capable staff.	• Address City's chronic fiscal insecurity • Enhance City's ability to provide Program services
2	Administration Department staff should review the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) best practices referenced in Citygate's report to use as a guide when enhancing written policies for the City.	• Enhance effectiveness of organizational policies
3	The City should formalize the development of performance measures per GFOA best practice as a tool to gauge operational effectiveness.	• Enhance effectiveness of organizational policies • Increase accountability • Reduce service costs
4	The City should review and adopt, as appropriate, GFOA's four areas of Economic Development Best Practices: (1) Establishing an Economic Development Incentive Policy; (2) Coordinating Economic Development and Capital Planning; (3) Creation, Implementation and Evaluation of Tax Increment Financing; and (4) Role of the Finance Office in Economic Development.	• Develop cost effective incentives for economic development • Revenue growth
5	The City should conduct annual fee assessments that include an escalation clause utilizing a collaborative approach and community outreach, as necessary. (Note: the City has initiated a fee study, using a consultant, in the period since this study began.)	• Enhance City's ability to cover the cost of/provide Program services
6	Explore new funding sources, partnerships, grant opportunities, and other possibilities related to generating revenue.	• Enhance City's ability to cover the cost of/provide Program services • Fund new initiatives

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
	Theme 2—Staffing and Reliance on Contract and Consultant Personnel	
7	Consider adding either a planning or economic development position. With this added position, the Director could either “offload” tasks directly, or the new position could assume some of the Assistant Director’s responsibilities so they, in turn, could assume responsibilities currently residing with the Director. Adding this type of staffing should increase the robustness of the City’s economic development and downtown improvement efforts and the City’s development review processes. This position may also become critical to meet new development demands.	• Improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness • Maintain and improve customer service • Enhance City’s ability to pursue economic development and downtown revitalization
8	Identify and evaluate options for adding administrative capacity within the CED. An Administrative Analyst, Executive Assistant, or Administrative Secretary could enable the Department to stay current on development agreement billing and processing of consultant invoices, improve the coordination and timeliness of the Department’s work, and free the Director (and, to an extent, the Building Official and Senior Permit Technician) to focus on other priorities, including economic development. (Note: the City has hired an Administrative Analyst for CED in the period since this study began.)	• Increase City’s capacity to manage third party service providers • Improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness
9	Assess the City’s current processes for collecting developer funds pursuant to development agreements and the payment of consultant invoices. Determine the division of responsibilities between the CED and Finance Department. Ensure staff assigned to these tasks have the appropriate knowledge, training, and capacity to perform them in a timely manner.	• Improve financial management
10	Evaluate the possibility of hiring more PWAE staff versus continuing the current level of reliance on contract and consulting personnel. This should include hiring a City Engineer. At minimum, undertake a cost comparison of the two approaches—including an analysis to identify industry-competitive salary scales for public sector engineers and inspectors in the greater region—to provide contrast with current contracting expenditures.	• Potentially reduce cost of Program services • Potentially reduce development costs for customers • Improve customer service • Increase accountability

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
11	Develop and launch a coordinated new hire recruitment and retention initiative that includes best practices, benefits analysis, and innovative approaches, including creative marketing strategies.	• Address staffing deficiencies • Improve staff retention and, by extension, organizational efficiency and customer service • Improve morale and reduce “survival mode’ mentality
12	Consider utilizing a lean innovation approach to determine and/or implement the previous recommendations related to recruitment and retention initiatives.	• Enhance efficiency of recruitment and retention initiatives
13	Consider limited shared services with other public agencies.	• Improve ability to add staff at a lesser cost • Enhance Program services, including potentially adding services City is not currently able to offer

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
	Theme 3—Policy and Procedural Clarity and Consistency	
14	Review the City's development codes and applicable state laws to update the City's policies and procedures for discretionary planning approvals and privilege licenses and permits. More robust adoption and use of Standard Operating Procedures is critical for continuity and consistency of services and to improve the on-boarding process for new staff and consultants. Consider using a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to establish a "bench" of qualified CEQA consultants for projects requiring CEQA review.	• Reduce inconsistency, subjectivity, and unpredictability for customers of Program services • Improve communication with customers • Reduce legal and regulatory risk associated with discretionary planning processes and privilege licenses and permits
15	Adopt and/or reinforce policies (e.g., regarding timing, bonding) and standards for infrastructure that developers construct and dedicate to the City.	• Reduce (if possible, eliminate) lapses in the administration of development agreements • Reduce City's risk of incurring unnecessary financial obligations for the construction and/or maintenance of public infrastructure • Assure public infrastructure is provided for residents/property owners of new development
16	Consistently require all developers subject to a development agreement to post adequate fee deposits prior to City review of their applications. (Note: the City engaged legal counsel to review development agreement payments in the period since this study began.)	• Improve City's cash management and ensure its consultants are paid timely
17	Bring developers current on consultant costs the City has expended for their projects. (Note: the City has hired an Administrative Analyst for CED in the period since this study began to focus on this matter.)	• Improve City's cash management and ensure its consultants are paid timely
18	Develop and adopt a community benefits/options checklist that is added as a standard condition of approval for conditional use permits and other development.	• Increase efficiency and consistency of Program services by increasing standardization of CUPS and other development approvals

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
	Theme 4—Communication, Outreach, and Customer Service	
19	Adopt a fee schedule for PWAE review of building permit applications so plan review can commence upon submittal.	• Enhance customer service by removing an avoidable delay • Improve organizational culture by resolving an inefficient internal process and distracting issue
20	Adopt and/or reinforce existing customer service standards for the timeliness of PWAE plan review and inspection services. Specify performance standards in consultant contracts for development review.	• Improve customer service with uniform standards to ensure fair, timely, and predictable review and inspection services
21	Streamline plan review and approvals for projects on parcels in the flood plain, including the issuance of building pad elevation certificates.	• Raise organizational efficiency • Improve customer service through consistent and timely plan review and final signoffs
22	Consider relocating PWAE engineering staff to City Hall, even on a limited but regularly scheduled basis, to enhance customer service (i.e., as an initial step towards a possible “one-stop shop” for development services) and facilitate coordination with the CED staff responsible for development review and related permit services.	• Improve customer service by offering a higher level of service that is in line with best practices • Enhance collaboration and facilitate effective communication amongst staff and with customers
23	Monitor Ventura County’s provision of plan review and fire inspection services. Address with Ventura County as necessary to meet the City’s customer service standards.	• Enhance customer service by reducing avoidable delays • Improve and cooperation communication with a partner agency and service provider
24	To strengthen internal communications and services, consider developing and implementing a shadowing program for staff to support cross-training, efficiency, connections, public speaking, and presentation skills.	• Improve organizational culture by strengthening team environment and improving collaboration and team relationships • Improve customer service by increasing staff knowledge and strengthening staff communication methods and practices • Support succession planning

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
25	Address employee burnout by developing a staff morale improvement plan. It could include providing coaching, using councilors to provide support, offering empathy sessions, and other activities to enrich and support positive employee culture and performance. Develop a service philosophy and include it as a performance measure for employee evaluation and accountability.	• Enhance organizational culture by supporting the health and wellness of staff • Increase organizational efficiency • Improve customer service
26	Based on the results of the community survey, implement an external communications and outreach strategy to connect more regularly with the community. Include bilingual messaging and materials.	• Improve the regularity and effectiveness of City's communication with residents and customers • Increase City's procedural efficiency by increasing customer awareness and knowledge of City requirements and processes

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
	Theme 5—Technology Adoption and Implementation	
27	Evaluate, adopt, and implement a state-of-the-industry online permitting system for development review, business licensing, and receipt of payments, including utility payments. In the interim, add an online fee calculator.	• Increase organizational efficiency • Improve customer service • Improve staff morale by tackling and resolving an inefficient internal process
28	During fee assessments and updates—including for development-related fees—evaluate and provide for cost recovery for current and future technology needs.	• Provide funding to improve and maintain technology City relies on to provide Program services
29	Implement accountability measures, training, and best practices for staff utilization of current and new technology.	• Improve organizational efficiency and staff morale by reducing stressors and frustration about technology
30	Have onsite Development Services staff take lead on technology training, needs, follow-ups, implementation, tracking, updates, issues, coordination.	• Increase organizational efficiency • Improve customer service • Improve staff morale by tackling and resolving an inefficient internal process
31	Evaluate the current software services contract and potentially amend as necessary based on above needs.	• Increase organizational efficiency • Improve customer service • Improve staff morale by tackling and resolving an inefficient internal process
32	Evaluate staff's technology equipment needs such as monitors, portable tools, etc.	• Increase organizational efficiency • Improve customer service • Improve staff morale by tackling and resolving an inefficient internal process

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
	Theme 6—Economic Development Opportunities	
33	A strong infrastructure foundation is critical to attracting investment and creating sustainable and thriving communities. Thus, addressing core infrastructure issues in a strategic and cost-effective approach is key. This initiative should be undertaken and coordinated annually through the Capital Improvement Planning processes of the City and other public agencies and utilities undertaking capital improvement projects in Santa Paula. Immediate infrastructure needs should include maintaining sewer systems, including providing capacity for growth; adopting standards for clean drinking water and improvements to roads and sidewalks; and evaluating and developing affordable and reliable transportation mechanisms including pedestrian, bicycle, and other micromobility transportation modes.	• Support current business needs and potential growth • Enhance quality of life for Santa Paula residents and business owners, increasing community's appeal as place to live and invest • Reduce automobile dependency
34	Evaluate and update current communication systems.	• Increase organizational efficiency • Improve City's ability to communicate with residents, visitors, and business and property owners
35	Develop 3–5 new business incentive programs. Possibilities to consider include a City-managed community revolving loan fund, a tiered façade improvement grant program, and an “adopt-a” program (e.g., sidewalks, parks, murals, special events).	• Support existing businesses • Facilitate business formation • Enhance Santa Paula's physical environment/aesthetics
36	Invest in improving job training and employment opportunities by setting “locals first” requirements; offering or supporting broad-based internship/apprenticeship programs; and creating immersion opportunities in businesses, schools, and government agencies.	• Increase employment opportunities for Santa Paula residents • Support businesses by growing the pool of job-ready employees
37	Boosting innovation can lead to new technologies, advancing businesses, creating efficiencies, and supporting enhanced techniques—including inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs through collaborative, creative, and project-specific events.	• Facilitate business formation including, potentially, of industry clusters

Recommendation		Improvements / Issues Addressed
38	Invite, encourage, and create community and business leadership hubs to gather and develop actionable ideas related to implementation of elements of the Specific Plan.	• Grow connection and partnership between business community and City • Increase private support for and involvement in the implementation of the General Plan • Support collaboration within business community
39	Conduct a business needs assessment and build a business retention and expansion program. The assessment should include an inventory of existing businesses and availability of land, commercial, and retail space. It could also survey businesses regarding what they need to survive, prosper, and grow. The program could also include visiting businesses to offer support, offering roundtable discussions that have focus and purpose, experimenting with an economic summit, and creating a marketing strategy to support economic development.	• Acquire information to strategically and cost effectively support existing businesses • Address building vacancies, especially downtown • Grow connection and partnership between business community and City • Support collaboration within business community
40	Add an Economic Development Manager/Specialist to support planning and economic development. This could be an FTE or (initially) consulting support. (Note: the City has hired a Management Analyst to focus on housing policy and issues in the period since this study began.)	• Increase City's capacity to concurrently and consistently pursue strategic land use planning and economic development activities
41	Develop key metrics for the City to focus and improve upon. Consider the following example: growth in employment rate by 5; growth in number of businesses; growth in per capita income; reduced poverty rate; decline in unemployment rate by 2 percent; increase internship positions by 20 percent; increase foot traffic in retail sales in downtown by 10 percent.	• Increase accountability – "What is measured gets attention" • Increase efficiency and performance of City • Guide City's budget process
42	Downtown lacks curb appeal in terms of lighting, enhanced art displays (examples include mosaics/sculptures), and signage. Evaluate various esthetic enhancements and prioritize each option.	• Enhance Santa Paula's physical environment/aesthetics • Enhance quality of life for Santa Paula residents and business owners, increasing community's appeal as place to live and invest

SECTION 1—INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Paula, CA (City) retained Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) to conduct this Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services (Program). The City administers these services to guide the growth and revitalization of Santa Paula’s physical environment, support residential and commercial development, and facilitate business and economic development. Program services are delivered through two departments: the Community and Economic Development Department (CED), comprised of two divisions, the Planning Division and the Building and Safety Division; and the Public Works Department Administration and Engineering Division (PWAE). Staff in other departments, primarily the Finance Department (e.g., billing for development agreements; processing consultant and customer payments) and the City Manager’s Office (policy implementation direction) provide support.

To initiate its assessment, Citygate conducted a high-level review of documents provided by the City and completed relevant web-based research to gain an understanding of the City’s goals, objectives, policies, and procedures. In addition, the Citygate Project Team conducted employee and stakeholder engagement processes to assist in the assessment of the Program. The information gathered through Citygate’s assessment process guided an operational analysis which included identifying primary inputs, outputs, and subprocesses for key Program operations. The Citygate Project Team used this analysis, its own members’ extensive experience administering community and economic programs and processes, and best practices in the management of municipal government services to develop the major themes, findings, and recommendations provided in this report.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

1.2.1 Population and Housing Costs

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, and Point2 Homes Demographic information which was derived from the 2021 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Santa Paula’s estimated resident population as of July 1, 2022, was 31,018. Of this population, female persons are 49.9 percent with males at 50.1 percent. US-born citizens make up 69.86 percent of the residential pool, non-US-born citizens account for 10.86 percent and non-citizen represent 19.28 percent. The racial make-up of the city is as follows: Caucasian alone 69.3 percent, Black or African American Alone .6 percent, Hispanic or Latino 81.7 percent, Two or more races 13.4 percent, Asian alone 1.1 percent, American Indian and Alaska Native alone 1.5 percent, Caucasian (not Hispanic or Latino 14.8 percent). There are approximately 724 known veterans and an overall median age of 33.7 years.

There are an estimated 8,972 households in Santa Paula, with 6,832 comprised of family households and 2,140 non-family households. 52.8 percent of these households are owner occupied while 47.2 percent are renter occupied. The median value of a home with a mortgage is \$457,800. In general, mortgage housing costs can run around \$1,487 per month while rental costs can run around \$1,800–\$4,100 per month with a median rent on average at \$2,450. Most homes are a mix of bungalows, cottages, victorian-style, and craftsman. The average income in Santa Paula is estimated at \$69,133.

1.2.2 Geographic and Cultural Overview

The City of Santa Paula is 5.53 in square miles as of 2020 based on U.S. Census data. The majority of the area is comprised of land while 2.41 percent is water. Santa Paula is in the Santa Clara River Valley area within Ventura County, California. Santa Paula has been nicknamed by tourists as the “Citrus Capitol of the World.” Hosting a warm-mediterranean type climate during the summers and cooler winters with temperatures ranging from 100 to 37 degrees with an average of 53 degrees. Originally occupied by the Chumash Native Americans then by the Spanish in 1769. In 1872, Nathon Blanchard purchased 2,700 acres by which he planted orange trees and laid out the town, thus was considered by many as the founder of the community. The incorporation of Santa Paula occurred in April 1902.

The community has survived many environmental devastations including The Great Flood of 1862, St. Francis Dam Disaster in 1928, The Thomas Fire of 2017, the Maria Fire of 2019 and the Santa Clara Wastewater plant industrial disaster. As a resilient and unified community, the town continues to thrive thanks to the beautiful sense of pride and commitment from its residents and businesses.

As an agriculturally based community the stable climate has enabled the city to be a prime place for growing citrus, and more recently avocados. With a small-town vibe, local museum, historical sites, mural art and many local popular festivals and events, and a designated downtown filled with shops, restaurants and more, Santa Paula is a popular tourist location and that continues to grow and invest in its future.

1.2.3 Planning Framework

Santa Paula’s land use and planning framework exists within a complex State of California and regional planning framework with overlapping layers of regulatory bodies; land use legislation affecting zoning and housing policies; modest growth pressures; the City’s historic, cultural, and environmental significance; and numerous State and City goals and policies to consider and advance. This creates a challenging environment for Santa Paula staff, Planning Commission, and City Commission to engage in land use entitlement and related permitting decisions.

The City’s Master Plan was most recently updated in 2020 and is known as the 2040 General Plan. The City’s General Plan, also known as *The Blueprint*, was a critical step towards developing and

solidifying the City’s framework, vision, and goals to guide resources for current and future health, stability, conservation efforts, protections, infrastructure, fiscal allocations, and growth of the Santa Paula community.

1.2.4 Summary

These circumstances—a complex legal framework; overlapping layers of regulatory bodies; recent land use legislation affecting zoning and housing; modest growth pressures; the City’s historic, cultural, and environmental significance all create a challenging environment for Santa Paula staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Commission to engage in land use entitlement and related permitting decisions.

The City is commended for continuing to take steps to streamline, clarify, and increase the transparency and predictability of its land use decision-making for stakeholders, as evidenced by the commissioning of this stakeholder engagement and community and economic development assessment.

1.3 STUDY GOAL

The Citygate project team undertook a cross-departmental study to *identify opportunities to improve the overall efficiency, transparency, and predictability of the City’s land use planning, development review and permitting, and economic development processes*. Anticipated increases in workload due to large development projects on the horizon magnify the need for improvement. Based on its research and analysis, Citygate is providing the City recommendations to improve these processes and deliver the highest level of customer service possible with the resources available to the City.

This assessment will provide additional information to support the City’s mission and vision while providing a transparent, inclusive, and a third-party impartial perspective that provides recommendations and analysis for the City’s consideration. Thus, this report provides more clarity, removes obstacles, provides efficiency, leverages resources, and shed light on various ways to bring more effective and efficient governance.

1.4 STUDY METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Citygate initiated this study in September 2023 working with the Director of the Community Development Department.

Working with the City staff, the following approach was used to complete the study:

- ◆ Reviewed relevant documents provided by the City and available on the City’s website. For example, these documents included existing land use and permitting processes; forms of communication and engagement with stakeholders; City

Council economic and development-related policies, resolutions, and ordinances pertinent to the study; technology used to communicate and process land use and permit applications and communicate with customers; etc. This overview better informed the Citygate team and served as the basis for the next stage of the study, which was the internal City staff and external stakeholder engagement process.

- ◆ Conducted fifteen (15) confidential interviews with City staff including department heads and select managers, supervisors, and frontline employees who are engaged with the Program to gain insight into operational processes and interactions with external stakeholders. The list of individuals who were interviewed was supplied by the City. In addition, Citygate conducted six (6) confidential interviews with consultants representing the City in the development review process. These individuals were also selected by the City.
- ◆ Conducted nine (9) confidential interviews with external stakeholders identified by the City to gain insight into their experiences with the Program. They included City Council members, representatives of the development community, both large and small developers, small business owners, community governmental partners, and industry professionals. Although participation by external stakeholders was limited due to the unavailability and unresponsiveness of some persons who were invited to speak with Citygate, information was provided that is useful to this study.
- ◆ Conducted a confidential, internet-based external stakeholder survey. The survey questions, reviewed and approved by the City, focused on stakeholders' perceptions of timeliness, transparency, predictability, communication levels, customer service, and clarity of codes and policies related to the Program. The survey also asked participants to share their perceptions about quality of life in Santa Paula and their level of agreement with aspects of the General Plan and the City Council's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. The City invited recent customers to participate in the customer survey; a total of 50 customers participated.
- ◆ Conducted a confidential, internet-based City employee survey developed in coordination with the City. The employee survey generated eight responses from staff. The survey asked staff to respond to two sets of statements. The first set of statements asked employees to assess their capacity, performance, and planning processes; the second set of statement asked about the City organization.
- ◆ Prepared a Mid-Project Review Report that was presented in a videoconference meeting with the City where the preliminary themes, findings, and recommendations were detailed and discussed with the City. The City reviewed the report and provided comments regarding the information presented.

- ◆ Completed an Executive Brief, Implementation Action Plan, and a PowerPoint presentation for the City Council.

1.5 SUMMARY STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS ANALYSIS

One of the tools Citygate employs is a SWOT analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Citygate utilizes this framework to help frame its assessment of Program Services and the perceptions, observations, and opinions that Citygate consultants heard through the engagement process with City employees, City consultants, and external stakeholders. It is used to organize the results of the assessment and, as such, reflects Citygate’s analysis of information it obtained.

1.5.1 Strengths

- ◆ CED staff care deeply care about the community and are generally viewed by customers and other external stakeholders as competent, helpful, collaborative, communicative, responsive, genuine, and open-minded.
- ◆ Many of the staff feel a sense of family and connection to their co-workers.
- ◆ The City has been able to rely on a core team of consulting firms, some with years of service to Santa Paula, to provide sufficient personnel to improve the timeliness of development review and inspection services and permit City staff to focus on fewer functions.
- ◆ City staff are accessible and interested in serving and improving Santa Paula.
- ◆ CED staff strongly appreciate their director, who they consider helpful, caring, smart, and effective.
- ◆ Finance staff also view their director positively and appreciatively, and are satisfied with the Department’s culture, cohesiveness, and the willingness of Finance staff to “put in the work” despite inadequate resources.
- ◆ The City Manager and senior leadership team are seen as good and engaged leaders by City staff and external stakeholders.
- ◆ City leadership emphasizes a public service ethic and customer service. Teamwork is promoted, with staff expected to work together to resolve issues. Staff are not micro-managed.
- ◆ There is lots of heart and strong pride within the community, from the staff and the community perspectives.

- ◆ Downtown is well laid out for events, economic development opportunities, and tourists and other visitors.

1.5.2 Weaknesses

- ◆ Fiscal insecurity, both currently and for the foreseeable future, results in chronic under-resourcing of City staffing and services.
- ◆ The City has yet to adopt and implement a state-of-the-industry online permitting system for development review and business licensing, causing frustration among staff and many customers.
- ◆ Planning, development review, and related administrative processes suffer from the City's failure to adopt, document, and consistently adhere to standard operating procedures (SOPs). More robust use of SOPs, rather than reliance on institutional knowledge, is especially critical for continuity and consistency of services during periods of staff and consultant turnover and to improve the on-boarding process for new staff and consultants.
- ◆ A heavy reliance on consultants, coupled with staff turnover, undermines accountability. PWAE, in particular, lacks in-house development experience and has almost entirely delegated responsibility—including supervision—for ensuring private development and associated public infrastructure are properly designed and constructed to contractors and consultants. This arrangement engenders skepticism in the development community about the length and robustness of design review and inspection processes, conditions of approval, and City and consultant fees. While current practices appear to be appropriately protective of the public interest, developers and builders may view them as overly conservative when compared to past practice and driven by consultants, not City management.
- ◆ The City struggles to pay its development review consultants on a timely basis, particularly those it engages for East Area 1. CED bears primary responsibility for these processes. This is attributed to a failure to adopt and institute adequate procedures for this purpose, including for receipt of developer funds to cover consultant costs and for reliably coding and processing consultant invoices. Financial management and invoicing are more generally a substantial drain on CED staff as the Department lacks staff for fiscal and management analysis. CED has recently added an Administrative Analyst position to, in large part, focus on this issue.

- ◆ The CED Director is spread too thin, impairing his capacity to respond when his involvement and decision-making as an executive are needed. This frustrates both reviewers and customers.
- ◆ While the City is viewed as capably handling routine development matters (e.g., planning approvals for uses permitted in the zoning code “by right,” business licenses, tenant improvements), its administration of less routine matters (e.g., specific plan amendments, construction and dedication of public infrastructure, development agreement amendments, privilege licenses and permits) is seen as sometimes inconsistent, subjective, and unpredictable due to a lack of—or failure to follow—clear procedures.
- ◆ The City’s current practice of routing building permits to PWAE so their consultant can determine their fee to review the application delays the start of City review by as much as three weeks. This contributes to a perception that plan check delays are due to the City’s reliance on contracted engineering staff.
- ◆ Application processing and communication/response regarding permitting requirements from staff in Planning, Building, Public Works, and City consultants suffers from inconsistent timeliness. This is exacerbated by the procedural lapses (e.g., accepting incomplete applications) which reduce efficiency and prolong project review. The absence of engineering staff at City Hall impairs the City’s ability to support a one-stop shop for customers.
- ◆ While conference attendance, online training, and other educational opportunities are offered to City staff, training is primarily focused on current responsibilities. Career development plans are given insufficient attention. There is a general lack of adopted standard operating procedures. New staff, or staff assigned new duties, are thus often expected to “figure it out.”
- ◆ CED leadership is insufficiently accountable for challenging employees, including tenured employees resistant to change. In some cases, performance improvement plans are not being implemented where needed, resulting in a lack of accountability and awareness of issues. Performance measures are unclear and should be developed and tied to City’s core values, service approach, and vision.
- ◆ Given the numerous and varied challenges facing the City—including resource constraints—innovation is critical but lacking.

1.5.3 Opportunities

- ◆ Review current vendor contract(s) to determine whether City has access to a state-of-the-industry platform and software package necessary to accept and process building permit applications, business license applications, and utility payments online. Implement and provide training (onsite and one-on-one) for the new technology. Provide for staff input and ability to make key changes to the system. Identify and more fully utilize the current capabilities of the City's existing technology. One low-hanging opportunity is to provide customers editable PDFs for applications the City already makes available on its website (e.g., for a business license).
- ◆ A substantial number of parcels in Santa Paula are located within the flood plain. An opportunity exists to streamline the development review process for projects on such parcels including (by PWAE) of plan review and issuance of building pad elevation certificates.
- ◆ Improve PWAE services by adopting customer service standards, specifying performance standards in consultant contracts and, correspondingly, reassessing the possibility of bringing more work in-house versus continuing the current level of reliance on contract and consulting personnel, and further integrating the Water Division of Public Works into the Department. While some level of reliance on contract staff may be unavoidable, the City should strive to use City employees in management roles.
- ◆ Improve Building and Safety Division customer service by offering same-day (so-called "over-the-counter") building permits for simple or routine applications and unlocking the door to the customer service counter. These improvements are contingent on filling current vacancies in Building and Safety.
- ◆ Increasing the predictability of City processes, particularly discretionary development reviews, would help applicants plan and reduce costs and confusion for businesses. Consider, for example, adopting standards (e.g., 90 days for X, 180 days for Y) for common land-use entitlements and engineering and building plan review processes. Utilize the City's interactions with applicants during the initial phase of projects or applications to support their understanding of permitting and review processes and reduce regulatory "surprises."
- ◆ Improve communication between CED and PWAE, including through more regular meetings between staff in these departments involved in the development review and inspection processes. Include consultants as appropriate. Include updates on new projects, organizational changes, emerging issues, Council meetings, etc.

- ◆ Identify and evaluate additional revenue generating opportunities. Consider, for example: a vacant property registration program and ordinance; short-term rental registration and licensing; proactive versus reactive code enforcement; cannabis businesses; and smoking enforcement program. A fee study (currently in process) should be conducted biannually. It needs to incorporate an escalation clause, be performed annually if possible, and implemented ASAP. The study should include interviews and shadowing of staff as part of the assessment. The City should also review its policy on the utilization of building and planning fees for General Fund uses and dedicate appropriate expertise and time to seeking grant opportunities, including for additional staffing.
- ◆ The City has an opportunity to develop a robust employee recruitment, retention, and succession plan. It should be based on an analysis of the City's salary structure and current agreements with the City's employee bargaining groups. The duties of City positions should be assessed and adjusted as appropriate. The analysis should also examine whether consultants or full-time City employees are more cost-effective for various functions, particularly in PWAE.
- ◆ Continue to build stronger relations with key stakeholders in the business community. This could include actions such as:
 - Monthly or quarterly meetings, preferably action-oriented, in addition to Chamber of Commerce meet-and-greet events.
 - Providing social media support and guidelines (bilingual).
 - Adding strategic events that generate revenues and support businesses (e.g., wine tastings).
 - Determining how the community wants to communicate with the City.
 - Developing resource guides.

1.5.4 Threats

- ◆ Legal and regulatory exposure resulting from the City's lack of clear policies. For example, when is a CEQA review for a Specific Plan amendment necessary and, if so, are developers allowed to hire their own consultant to undertake the analysis? There is also exposure due to a lack of consistent procedures. For example, will the City accept and begin processing applications lacking supporting technical documents for discretionary planning applications? For project construction, are bonds for the construction of public infrastructure consistently required? Are privilege licenses and permits reviewed and conditioned in a consistent way?

- ◆ Deficiencies in past project reviews and inspections undertaken by the City have resulted in incomplete or substandard public infrastructure that developers are responsible for building and dedicating to the City. If the City must incur costs to address these shortcomings, other projects in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will need to be deferred or foregone. While broadly applicable, this risk is currently concentrated in East Area 1.
- ◆ The City's ability to undertake timely and thorough review of new development may be overwhelmed by demand (especially large new projects) and stagnant or declining staff capacity due to attrition and/or an inability to recruit new staff.
- ◆ Declining City staff morale could eventually undermine existing staff's willingness to "put in the work" necessary to compensate for inadequate resources. While staff cite comparatively low pay as a contributing factor, several cited workloads that "feel overwhelming at times" as fueling a growing sense of discouragement.
- ◆ Keeping up with complex State mandates.
- ◆ A lack of attainable housing impacts the ability of the City and other employers to attract and retain qualified employees.
- ◆ High City staff turnover due to burnout and compensation that lags that of other jurisdictions in the region. This threat is exacerbated by inadequate succession planning, resulting in a continuous loss of institutional knowledge.
- ◆ Loss of economic vitality and development due to market conditions.

SECTION 2—OPERATIONAL REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

2.1 OVERVIEW

The City delivers Program services primarily through two departments. The Community and Economic Development (CED) Department serves in the lead role and has two main divisions: the Planning Division and the Building and Safety Division. Economic Development is a third area of responsibility; however, this is not represented by a specific division. The Public Works Department Administration and Engineering Division (PWAE) is the second division directly providing Program services. Staff in other departments (i.e., City Manager’s Office, Finance Department) provide support.

This section of Citygate’s report describes and examines the resources and processes involved in the provision of Program services. It is based on documents provided by the City; material available on the City’s website; and information gathered during interviews with City staff, City consultants, and external stakeholders. This analysis, in combination with the results of the employee and stakeholder surveys, serves as the foundation for the themes, recommendations, and implementation plan Citygate presents in other sections and appendices.

2.2 COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The CED is allocated 12 full-time positions in the City’s adopted budget for fiscal years 2023/24 and 2024/25, which is one more than in fiscal year 2022/23. However, as reflected in the following table, three positions are currently vacant.

Table 3—Funded Full-Time Equivalent Positions by Fiscal Year

Position	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	Filled / Vacant
Community & Economic Development Director	1	1	1	Filled
Management Analyst	--	1	1	Filled
Planning Division				
Planning & Economic Development Manager	1	1	1	Filled
Associate Planner	1	1	1	Vacant
Assistant Planner	1	--	--	--
Assistant Planner/GIS Analyst	1	1	1	Filled
Community Development Technician	1	1	1	Filled
Building and Safety Division				
Chief Building Official	1	1	1	Filled
Code Enforcement Inspector	*	1	1	Vacant
Building Inspector I	1	1	1	Vacant
Permit Technician			1	Filled
Community Development Specialist	1	1	1	Filled
Administrative Analyst	1	1	1	Filled
Total	11	12	12	

* This position was limited term in FY 22/23

The following figure shows the organizational chart for the CED.

Figure 1—Organizational Chart – Community and Economic Development Department



The CED is led by the Community and Economic Development Director. They directly supervise three staff: the Planning and Economic Development Manager, the Chief Building Official, and a recently added Management Analyst. The Director oversees the functions of planning, building, code enforcement, and economic development. In addition, they serve as lead staff for the Planning Commission and three joint City Council-Planning Commission committees: the Housing and Homelessness Standing Committee, the Economic Development Standing Committee, and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Oversight Committee.

The Director is also assigned various duties for which they have limited or no staff support. These responsibilities include downtown revitalization; property analysis and property negotiations (purchase, sale and/or lease agreements); and the formation and negotiation of partnerships with affordable housing developers. The Director's other responsibilities include managing Community Development block grants, coordinating the City's participation in a first-time homebuyer program, and staffing the Housing Trust Fund. They also coordinate City involvement with third-

party organizations providing shelter and services for unhoused people and mitigating homeless encampments.

The CED Director is currently spread too thin. The depth and breadth of their responsibilities and the Department's thin staffing result in managerial and administrative bottlenecks. The demands of the Director's duties impair their ability to respond in a timely manner when their executive involvement and decision-making are needed to support staff and City consultants engaged in core CED processes. The overextension of the position also hinders the Director's—and, by extension, the City's—capacity to pursue high-priority goals and objectives. Given all that is asked of the Director, one or more key functions continuously receives inadequate attention. An apt analogy is the juggler given too many objects to juggle at once: while some objects are maintained in the air, others fall to the ground.

This same dynamic of workloads exceeding staff resources extends throughout the CED, though it appears more pronounced in the Planning Division than the Building and Safety Division. During Citygate's interviews, City employees consistently communicated significant stress due to heavy workloads. Citygate's scope did not include an analysis of individual projects and outcomes; rather, Citygate relied upon information provided by staff, City consultants, and stakeholders regarding project status and workloads. Those who contributed to Citygate's understanding reported considerable work backlogs, particularly in development review. However, Citygate had trouble determining the extent of the backlog in each function. This was due to **two factors**:

1. City staff provided only a small amount of the data requested by Citygate related to current and historical workloads; current work plans; and anticipated workload projections for each function, as well as for contract staff and City consultants.
2. Management reports measuring key performance metrics for Program services such as application aging, assignments, deadlines, milestones, and review times, are at best sporadic and appear to be largely nonexistent.

This is not surprising. The City's fiscal insecurity, both presently and for the foreseeable future, results in chronic under-resourcing of City services and a "survival mode" mentality among staff. Strategic initiatives and performance measurement and reporting tend to be secondary priorities that are only given sporadic focus.

These challenging circumstances are currently mitigated by some of the CED's strengths. CED staff express a strong appreciation for their Director, and City staff and external stakeholders generally describe the City's senior leadership team as good and engaged leaders. Current CED staff appear to care deeply about the community and are generally viewed positively by customers and other external stakeholders. The City has also been able to rely on a core team of consulting firms, some with years of service to the City, to provide personnel for development review and inspection services and enable City staff to focus on fewer functions. However, declining morale among City staff could eventually undermine current staff's willingness to "put

in the work” necessary to compensate for inadequate resources. And the reliance on consulting services may create inertia while absorbing financial resources needed to build the staff complement.

2.2.1 Economic Development

The City’s economic development programs seek to foster business growth and economic vitality through activities focused on business attraction, business creation, retention and expansion of existing businesses, and marketing and promotion of the City and its business community. Economic development and associated downtown revitalization activities are primarily staffed by the CED Director. The Planning and Economic Development Manager and the City Manager’s Office provide limited support. In total, these important functions are likely staffed with less than one full-time equivalent (FTE) position. This diminishes the City’s ability to advance the “Economic Development” objectives and various “Connected and Healthy Community,” “Community Vitality,” and “Operational Excellence” objectives the City Council adopted in its Two-Year Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2023–2025. Vigorous pursuit by the City related to these strategic objectives may represent the best opportunity the City has to improve the community’s medium-to-long-term economic outlook. Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan could also enhance the City’s fiscal position and, accordingly, the City’s capacity to provide Program and other services to City residents and businesses.

External stakeholders indicated to Citygate a strong desire for the business community to be more connected and involved, and to partner more extensively with the City and other businesses on economic development, downtown revitalization, and other matters. External stakeholders also indicated a desire for additional and timely communication from the City (e.g., regarding the Ventura 150 event). Further, some downtown business owners view the regulatory environment as murky, making them hesitant to invest further. As established in the City’s Strategic Plan and reflected in Citygate’s recommendations for Theme 6 – Economic Development Opportunities, there are numerous and diverse initiatives the City can pursue to address these stakeholder interests and concerns. Some significant steps have already been taken, including the formation of the downtown Property Business Improvement District (PBID), which property owners voted to fund with a property-based assessment. In the last year, the PBID and City partnered to create the “Downtown Façade Improvement Pilot Program.”

To build on this momentum, Citygate’s recommendations include that the City consider adding—perhaps by filling vacant position(s)—either Planning or economic development staff and administrative capacity (e.g., Administrative Analyst, Executive Assistant) to enable the Director to focus more on economic development. Alternatively, the new positions could assume some of the Planning and Economic Development Manager’s responsibilities so they, in turn, could assume some of the Director’s current duties and/or devote more time to economic development. Adding a planner or economic development professional should increase the robustness of the City’s

economic development and downtown improvement efforts and the City's development review processes. This position may also become critical to meet new development demands.

Citygate is aware that in the period since it began this analysis, the City has filled the vacant Management Analyst and Administrative Analyst positions. The CED Director informed Citygate that the Management Analyst will focus on housing issues and the Administrative Analyst on billing for development agreements and processing consultant invoices. These staff additions should help the Director and other staff allocate more time to economic development and downtown revitalization. Citygate urges the City to continue assessing whether it is staffing these strategically critical functions commensurate with its priorities.

2.2.2 Planning

In larger jurisdictions, there is typically a functional and organizational distinction between staff dedicated to advance planning and staff dedicated to current planning activities. In Santa Paula, as in many smaller jurisdictions, the advance planning and current planning workloads are intermingled, making it difficult to separate their respective workloads.

The foundation for advance planning is a community's General Plan. The City's Planning Division is responsible for preparing, updating, and coordinating compliance with the General Plan, as well as applicable state of California laws and City ordinances. Advance planning also includes the development of specific plans for a particular geographic area of a City. Santa Paula has adopted specific plans for the Airpark, East Area 1, East Gateway, and Santa Paula West Business Park.

The focus of current planning is on review and processing of development applications. This includes reviewing land use entitlement applications and building permits for compliance with the General Plan, zoning and other (e.g., subdivision) development regulations, and relevant design guidelines. Current Planning staff are also typically responsible for responding to public inquiries at the City's front counter, by telephone and email, and for preparing community and neighborhood notifications for projects undergoing review.

The current City budget allocates four positions for the Planning function: a Planning and Economic Development Manager who leads the Planning division and reports to the CED Director; an Associate Planner; an Assistant Planner / GIS Analyst; and a Community Development Technician. The Associate Planner position is currently vacant. The Planning Division also contracts with a consulting firm for the services of a Lead Planner for the East Area 1 project. This contract Planner has been assisting the City with East Area 1 since 2013.

The City's authorized Planning staff of 5, including assistance from the contract Planner, is responsible for all advance and current planning activities. Citygate has observed that the allocation of staff resources in smaller jurisdictions usually favors the acute and urgent. This is due to stakeholder intervention more than available staffing, existing workload, or strategic priorities. This dynamic tends to influence staff to focus on *current* planning because it has

customers—developers, property owners, business owners, and even other public agencies—that are investing money in, seeking approvals for, and advocating for their projects. When an overextended planning staff has to prioritize its workload, advance planning initiatives such as General Plan amendments and zoning code updates are more easily deferred than project applications unless there is substantial support from the Planning Commission, City Council, and/or a party with a strong vested interest (e.g., a property owner seeking a Specific Plan) for advance planning.

This does not necessarily mean, however, that the advance planning work backlog exceeds the current planning work backlog. The City has addressed and accomplished important advance planning initiatives in recent years. Most notably, it prepared and adopted the current General Plan in 2020—the first major update to the General Plan since 1998, with the year 2040 as the planning horizon. Recently, the City also obtained California Department of Housing and Community Development certification of a revised Housing Element of the General Plan for the 2021–2029 period.

In the City, the current planning workload includes review and processing of various types of land-use entitlement and plan check applications. Some require only administrative (a.k.a. ministerial) approvals while others are subject to Discretionary Approvals that require one or more public hearings before the Planning Commission and/or City Council. Most, but not all, of these applications are listed in the following table.

**Table 4—Selected Administrative and Discretionary Planning Services and Activities
(2018–2023)**

Administrative Approvals	Discretionary Approvals [Require Public Hearing(s)]
Concept Review This is Santa Paula’s non-binding pre-application review. The applicant can request either staff or Planning Commission review.	Annexations
Design Review Major, Minor, Home Occupation Permit, Landscape Plan	Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Major (e.g., for new construction, site improvements, alcohol sales) and Minor (e.g., for change of use, freestanding signs requiring a CUP)
Plan Check Review Includes discretionary Parcel and Tract maps; new construction; Second Unit Permit	Other, including: Development Agreements, General Plan Amendments, Historic Landmark Certification, Modifications to Planned Development or CUP
Signs	Planned Development Permit
Temporary Occupancy Permits	Specific Plan
Site Development Permit	Temporary Use Permit
Tree Removal Permit	Variance
Zoning Clearances	Adult Business
	Massage Businesses/Clinics
	Subdivision Map Act Parcel Map; Tentative or Vesting Tract Map
	Environmental Review

As discussed previously, Citygate had trouble determining the extent of the backlog of work for the various Program services, including current planning. For example, and as shown in the following table, while the City provided Citygate with data related to the number of Conditional Use permits and Home Occupation permits it received and processed in recent years, the data was not sufficiently complete or accurate to determine the length of time it took to review and approve each of these applications.

Table 5—Applications for Conditional Use / Home Occupation Permits (2018–2023)

Year	Conditional Use Permits	Home Occupation Permits
2018	4	12
2019	5	6
2020	10	22
2021	3	24
2022	2	27
2023*	1	25
Total	25	116

*Through September

In the City’s proposed budget for fiscal years 2023–25, the CED reports that its FY 2022/23 accomplishments included improving plan check and development review processes, greater efficiency, and enhanced customer service as it has shifted to more online and virtual services in response to state legislation requiring permit streamlining. This is supported by anecdotal information Citygate obtained from applicants and other stakeholders indicating that, generally, the Planning Division is capably handling routine administrative approvals (e.g., planning approvals for uses permitted in the zoning code “by right,” business licenses, and tenant improvements). Stakeholders did generally complain, however, about the timeliness of communication and City response—including returning phone calls and responding to emails about permitting requirements from staff and City consultants across all Program services.

The information Citygate obtained from City employees, consultants, and other stakeholders also indicates the Planning Division, as well as the PWAE, struggle with administering discretionary applications and other, less routine requests, including Specific Plan amendments, development agreement amendments, privilege licenses, and permits. The processing of such requests is viewed as sometimes inconsistent, subjective, and unpredictable due to a lack of—or failure to follow—clear policies. How, for example, does the City, in compliance with state law, determine whether a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for a Specific Plan amendment is necessary? If a CEQA review is deemed necessary, may the developer hire their own consultant to undertake the analysis? There can also be legal and financial exposure due to a lack of consistent procedures. Will the City accept and begin processing applications lacking supporting technical documents for discretionary planning applications? Are privilege licenses and permits reviewed and conditioned in a consistent way? Citygate recommends the City review its development codes and applicable state laws to update the City’s policies and procedures for discretionary planning approvals as well as privilege licenses and permits.

One particular concern is that lapses in the implementation or amendment of development agreements could result in the City needing to construct and/or maintain incomplete or substandard public infrastructure that a project developer or builder was supposed to build and dedicate to the City. If the City must incur such costs, other projects in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will need to be deferred or foregone. While broadly applicable, this risk is currently concentrated in East Area 1. Citygate recommends the City adopt or reinforce policies and standards for the infrastructure that developers construct and dedicate to the City. This includes consistently requiring all developers to post appropriately sized bonds for the construction of public infrastructure.

2.2.3 Building and Safety

The Building and Safety Division is responsible for permitting and inspecting the design, construction, and alteration of all structures and buildings on private property in the City. Its work program includes the review of plans for compliance with national, state, and municipal codes; the issuance of building, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical permits; performing inspections during construction; emergency inspections; and maintaining building records and plans.

The Building and Safety Division provides two primary services: plan review and approval, and building inspection and occupancy certification. The current City budget allocates six positions for the Building and Safety Division: Chief Building Official, who leads the division and reports to the CED Director; Permit Technician; Building Inspector I; Code Enforcement Inspector; Administrative Analyst I; and Community Development Technician. The Building Inspector I and Code Enforcement Inspector positions are currently vacant. The Building and Safety Division also utilizes consultants as needed for building plan review (especially for larger structures), structural engineering, and inspections.

The Chief Building Official (CBO) started their tenure with the City in January 2023. Prior to that, the City had contracted for this position with another municipality. As a certified building official, the CBO is responsible for the development, administration, interpretation, application, and enforcement of codes adopted by the City. The information Citygate obtained from City employees, consultants, and other stakeholders indicates that the CBO has had a marked positive impact on the Building and Safety Division's operation. The CBO has added capacity across the Division's range of activities by performing plan review, conducting inspections, and assisting with permit issuance. Nevertheless, the Division would benefit from filling its vacant position(s). Additional staffing would enable CED to offer same-day (so-called "over-the-counter") building permits for simple or routine applications and facilitate unlocking the door to the customer service counter. If a building inspector is hired, they could also be trained to review plans.

Citygate did not receive the data necessary to fully assess whether the Building and Safety Division has backlogs of plan review applications and inspections. The anecdotal information Citygate

obtained from staff, consultants, and other stakeholders indicates these services are generally keeping pace with demand and there appears to be no persistent workload backlog.

Citygate identified two primary issues impacting Building and Safety Division operations. The first is that the City has yet to adopt and implement a state-of-the-industry online permitting system for development review and business licensing, causing frustration among staff and some customers. While adopting such a system would also assist other City staff—especially in the Planning Division, but also in the PWAE and the Finance Department—it would most benefit the daily operations of the Building and Safety Division. Citygate urges the City to review current vendor contracts to determine whether it has access to a state-of-the-industry platform and software package necessary to accept and process building permit applications, business license applications, and utility payments online.

At minimum, Citygate recommends the City identify and more fully utilize the capabilities of the City’s existing technology. To maximize the potential of either the City’s current permitting platform or, should it become necessary to change platforms, a new platform, the City must provide sufficient training (onsite and one-on-one) for the technology and allow staff to provide input and the ability to make key changes to the system. And while the City’s IT staff, particularly a programmer, must be fully engaged in the process, the CBO is a logical choice to co-lead the assessment of the current system and an initiative to either fully employ its capabilities or help select and lead the adoption of a new system. In addition, Department leaders must hold staff accountable for fully utilizing current and new technology. Lastly, Citygate also heard from stakeholders that small business and property owners and small contractors would welcome more assistance navigating permit and application processes.

The second major issue impacting the Building and Safety Division’s operational efficacy and efficiency are delays in the permit review and issuance and inspection processes attributable to PWAE’s involvement in the process. While this issue is addressed in the preceding subsection, concerns include:

- ◆ The City’s current practice of routing building permits to PWAE so that their consultant can *determine their fee* to review the application delays the start of City review by as much as three weeks.
- ◆ A substantial number of parcels in the City are located within the flood plain. Building permit applications for development on these parcels requires PWAE review and (reportedly) frequently results in significant delays.
- ◆ Once a building permit is issued for a site that requires construction of a building pad, the applicant must obtain a PWAE elevation certificate for the completed pad. This (reportedly) also frequently results in significant delays.

- ◆ A lack of development engineering services at City Hall impairs the City's ability to support a one-stop shop for customers.

2.3 PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION AND ENGINEERING – DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The Public Works Department Administration and Engineering Division (PWAE) reviews and approves private development projects throughout the City that impact City rights of way and public infrastructure. PWAE relies entirely on contract personnel and consultants for these services. The City contracts with m6 Consulting Inc. for an Interim City Engineer and a Deputy City Engineer for land development review services for all of the City except East Area 1. The Interim City Engineer also oversees the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Additionally, the City contracts with Willdan Group, Inc. for land development engineering services, including a Deputy City Engineer for East Area 1. The Public Works Director has effectively delegated these responsibilities to the aforementioned contractors.

Contracting arrangements have benefitted the City for years. The City has been able to rely on these firms to provide engineers for development review and inspection services, particularly for East Area 1, during periods when it has struggled or been unable to hire City employees for these roles. Using contract engineers has also allowed City staff to focus on fewer functions.

However, over the course of Citygate's employee and stakeholder interviews, **concerns were raised regarding the City's reliance on such arrangements.** Some customers believe the City's dependence on engineering consultants results in customer service lapses, reduces accountability, delays projects, and increases development costs. The City's contract staff are viewed by some in the development community as conflicted (i.e., because more robust review and inspections generate more fees for them) and excessively conservative (i.e., operating to reduce their own professional liability rather than solely to protect the City's interests).

Citygate recommends the City again evaluate the possibility of hiring more PWAE engineers and inspectors versus continuing the current level of reliance on contract and consulting personnel. This should include the possibility of hiring a City Engineer. At minimum, the City should undertake a cost comparison of the two approaches—including an analysis to identify industry-competitive salary scales for public sector engineers and inspectors in the greater region—to compare with current contracting expenditures. While some level of reliance on contract staff may be unavoidable, the City should strive to use City employees in management roles.

If the City decides to continue its reliance on contract staff and consultants for land development review, Citygate recommends the City take the following steps:

1. Incorporate and enforce customer service standards, including application review and inspection timeliness standards, in the City's contracts with consultants.
2. Adopt a standard fee schedule for PWAE review of building permit applications so plan review can commence upon submittal.
3. Streamline plan review and approvals for projects on parcels in the flood plain, including the issuance of building pad elevation certificates.
4. Consider locating Public Works Engineering staff at City Hall, even on a limited but regularly scheduled basis, to enhance customer service (i.e., as an initial step towards a possible "one-stop shop" for development services) and to facilitate coordination with the CED staff responsible for development review and related permit services.
5. Improve communication between CED and PWAE, including through more regular meetings between staff and consultants involved in the development review and inspection processes.
6. Train both City staff and contractors to utilize interactions with applicants during the initial phase of projects or applications to support their understanding of permitting and review processes and reduce regulatory "surprises."

2.4 MEASURING ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

"What gets measured gets managed."

While this longstanding management maxim is not strictly true—when an individual or organization focuses on obtaining a certain result, they are more likely to achieve it—management literature also cautions that measuring and emphasizing the wrong performance outcomes can be counterproductive to a person's or organization's core interests. For example, a person may achieve career goals at the expense of their personal relationships or health.

However, measuring organizational and operational performance *can* help individuals and organizations define goals and objectives and motivate them towards achieving chosen goals. To the extent Citygate could determine, only one of the four functional areas (Building and Safety Division) has started to emphasize performance measures. As previously noted in this section, this is not surprising. The City's fiscal insecurity and staffing challenges, not to mention the many pandemic-related and other disruptions of recent years, engender a "survival mode" mentality among employees. Strategic initiatives and performance measurement and reporting tend to be secondary priorities that are given sporadic focus—if they are emphasized at all.

Still, Citygate believes that the City is more likely to successfully address the challenges it faces and improve its delivery of services to residents, businesses, and other stakeholders if:

1. The City compiles, organizes, and produces public data for each of the main four Program services.
2. The City sets performance goals and objectives and consistently reports on their progress, or lack thereof, within the City organization and to the community. The performance reporting should include annual (or more frequent) reports and be adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council, as well as relevant partner organizations.

The remainder of **Section 2** provides performance measurement suggestions for each of the four main Program services.

2.4.1 Economic Development

Citygate suggests that the City's Economic Development staff and the City Manager formulate annual goals and objectives and a plan for pursuing them as part of the City's budget process. Given the cooperative and collaborative nature of economic development and related programs such as downtown revitalization, the internal City goal-setting process should be preceded by discussions with the City's partners for these activities. The plan should include only a small number of goals and objectives that will be vigorously pursued and objectively assessed.

The annual performance plan should include key metrics for the City to focus and improve upon. Consider the following examples:

- ◆ Growth in employment by __ percent
- ◆ Growth in number of businesses by __ percent
- ◆ Growth in per capita income by __ percent
- ◆ Increase internship positions by __ percent
- ◆ Increase foot traffic in retail sales downtown by __ percent

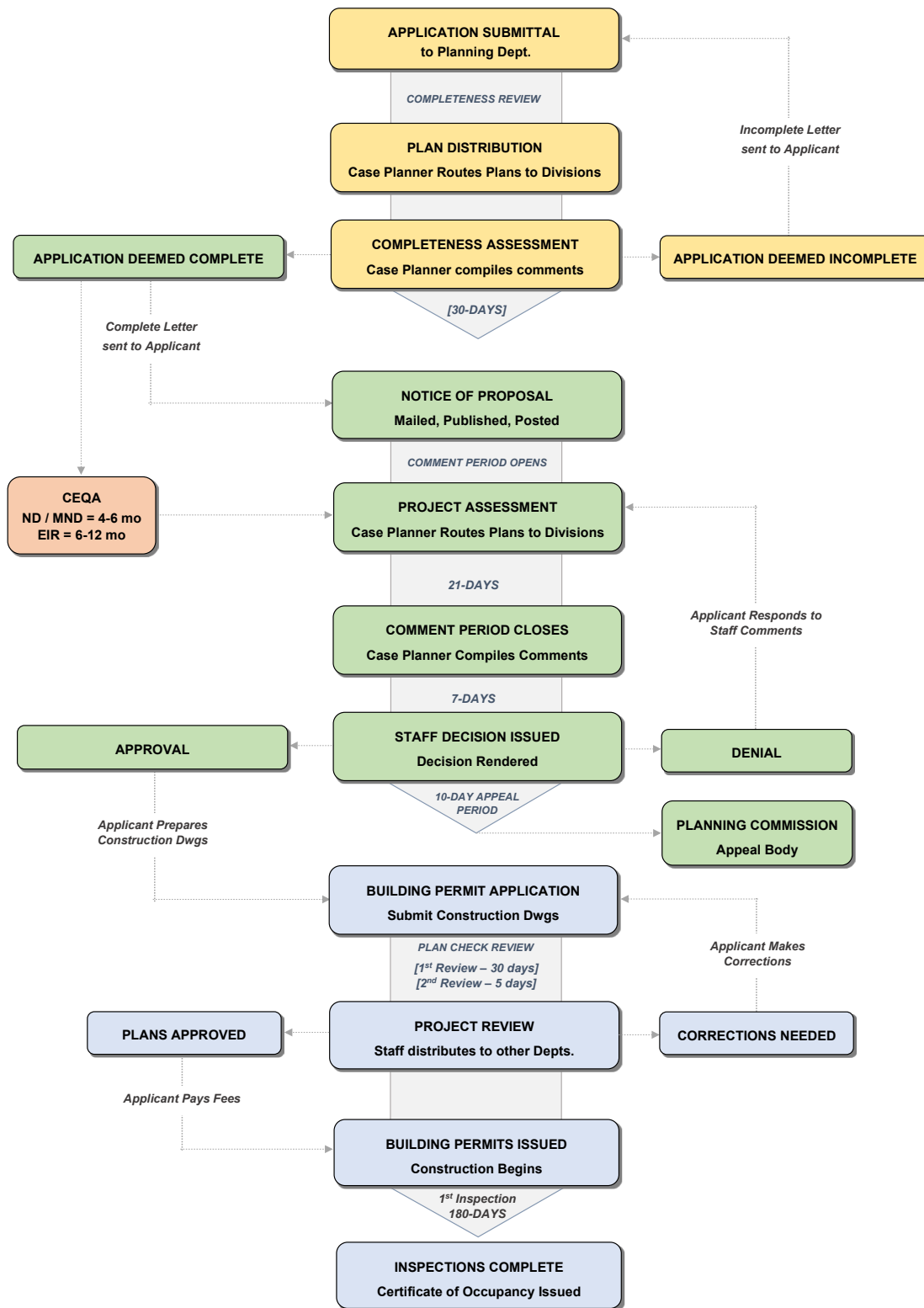
2.4.2 Planning Division

For advance planning, Citygate suggests the Planning Division, CED Director, and City Manager work with the Planning Commission to develop an annual work program specifying the advance planning activities that staff will focus on in the coming year. This should be done on either a calendar year basis or in conjunction with the budget process. The premise underlying this approach is that, while advance planning work may need to be deferred to focus on current

planning, the City's advance planning priorities for the year are clearly understood by staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.

For current planning, the most critical initial activity is to begin compiling and organizing data related to the applications it receives and processes, including the number of applications received (by type) and how long it takes to reach milestone processing dates. Performance metrics should track or exceed statutory requirements and can be developed from, or in conjunction with, process flow charts. The following figure provides an example for design review and was provided by the City's Planning staff.

Figure 2—Planning Division – Ministerial Plan Review Process



Once the Planning Division has compiled past performance data, staff and the Planning Commission can begin defining and adopting performance goals that will help increase the predictability and consistency of development review processes. Consider, for example, adopting standards (e.g., 90 days for X, 180 days for Y) for common land-use entitlements and building plan review processes. Improving the predictability of City processes would help applicants plan and would reduce costs and confusion for businesses.

2.4.3 Building and Safety Division

Through its interviews with City staff and as indicated in the City’s adopted budget document, the Building and Safety Division has already set a goal for fiscal years 2023–25 of improving its tracking of development activity to “provide better metrics for fiscal forecasting.”

While performance standards are best developed by each jurisdiction, based upon plan type and local conditions, a typical best practice for reviewing a complete set of plans for building permit is 10 days, with an outside limit of 20 days, simultaneously reviewing these plans for all trades/disciplines. Meeting these best practice milestones may require significant improvements in work prioritization and reporting.

2.4.4 Public Works Administration and Engineering – Development Review

Citygate’s recommendations for PWAE parallel Citygate’s recommendations for current planning. The most critical initial activity is to begin compiling and organizing data related to the applications it receives and processes, including the number of applications received (by type) and how long it takes to reach milestone processing dates. Performance metrics should track or exceed statutory requirements and can be developed from, or in conjunction with, process flow charts. Once PWAE has compiled past performance data, staff and the Planning Commission can begin defining and adopting performance goals to help increase the predictability and consistency of PWAE’s development review processes.

SECTION 3—SURVEY PROCESS AND RESULTS

3.1 OVERALL METHODOLOGY

Citygate deployed internet-based, confidential City employee and stakeholder surveys between January 10, 2024, and February 7, 2024, as part of the Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services study.

The focus of the surveys was to gain more direct and specific feedback from the respondents. This input, and with information gleaned from Citygate’s operational analysis and the interview engagement process, were used to formulate the report’s major themes, findings, and recommendations. The objective survey questions were developed by Citygate and approved by the City’s Project Team. They included an opportunity for respondents to provide open-ended responses.

The list of employees who received the employee survey was determined by the City. The City also invited stakeholders to take the stakeholder survey. Employee survey recipients were directly involved with providing or supporting the Program in the Planning, Building, Economic Development, and PWAE functions. Stakeholder survey recipients were recent customers, businesses, and community partners who accessed or were somehow engaged in the Program services provided by the City. The general public was also invited to take the survey. The individual responses to the survey were kept confidential and not recorded in the summary results to maintain anonymity and integrity of the process.

The following are summaries of the results for the two surveys. Additional detailed information is provided in **Appendix B** and **Appendix C**.

3.2 CITY EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The City is cautioned that the sample size for this survey was exceedingly small. Because the sample size is exceedingly small, even a single divergent opinion among respondents can dramatically change computed mean (average) scores.

3.2.1 Summary

CED employees in the Planning Division and the Building and Safety Division responded to the survey. No PWAE staff responded to the survey. Survey results were candid and revealed both common and differing perceptions regarding the three functional units that support the Program. The employees that responded to the survey were most positive about their relationship with their leadership, including the timeliness and tenor of communication, and staff feel trusted by their supervisor or manager. They also share the view that economic development and growth are important to the community. However, Planning Division employees provided slightly lower

assessments of their division's capacity, performance, and processes than did Building and Safety Division employees.

Staff across both divisions expressed negative perceptions regarding the coordination of land use and permitting reviews between divisions and departments, and about City staff coordination with outside consultants. Staff in both divisions were generally downbeat about the provision of services by PWAE. These results indicate a need to address staff capacity and roles, particularly in the PWAE and, to a lesser extent, the Planning Division; improve land use review and permitting processes; and enhance coordination between CED, PWAE and the City's consultants and contract staff as they relate to the provision of Program services.

The following summary provides an overview of the results; however, it is recommended the City's Program leadership and staff review the individual response tables and collaborate to agree on strategies to improve the workplace communication and teamwork practices and establish mutually agreed-upon customer service standards.

3.2.2 Planning Results Summary

Planning Division employees provided neutral to slightly low assessments of the Division's capacity, performance, and processes. They rated their ability to solve problems and be helpful to customers most positively. They viewed final and parcel map approval processes, coordination of reviews between divisions and departments, and coordination with outside consultants most negatively. Staff responded more positively to two statements about the organization – receiving timely responses from their leadership and being trusted by their supervisor or manager. They also agreed with the statement that economic development and growth are important to the community. The survey responses indicate Planning Division staff are most concerned about the City's fiscal stability; a lack of expedited plan checking, inspection, and other development review processes; and an insufficiency of training opportunities.

3.2.3 Building Results Summary

Building and Safety Division employees generally responded slightly more positively than Planning Division staff to the survey statements. Building and Safety Division staff were most confident about their ability to provide thorough and timely inspections and solve problems, and of their knowledge of building safety issues. Like Planning Division staff, they responded negatively to statements about the coordination of reviews between divisions and departments and about City staff coordination with outside consultants. In response to the statements about the organization, Building and Safety Division employees, like Planning Division staff, were most positive about receiving timely responses from their leadership; being trusted by their supervisor or manager; and that economic development and growth are important to the community. They also view their communication with leadership as respectful.

3.2.4 Public Works Engineering Group Results Summary

No PWAE staff responded to the employee survey.

3.2.5 Employee Survey Overview

Table 6—Employee Survey – Response Details

Survey Summary	
Launch Date	January 10, 2024
Close Date	January 31, 2024
Total Responses	8

Table 7—Employee Survey – Respondents by Division

Division	Number of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Planning	4	50.4%
Building	5	62.5%
Public Works Engineering Group	0	0.0%

Note: Sum of responses is greater than eight because respondents could mark all that apply.

3.2.6 Summary of Survey Responses by Division

Following is a presentation of survey responses by division, sorted from highest to lowest mean score. Responses are presented in two tables. The first table reflects the assessment how each division does delivering Program services on a scale from 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations) to -2 (Unacceptable), with a score of 0 representing neutrality. Columns have been added to compare (A) the mean score provided by staff within the Division, and (B) the mean score provided by staff outside the Division. The second table shows staff's degree of agreement with a series of statements related to their division or department on a scale from 2 (Strongly Agree) to -2 (Strongly Disagree), with a score of 0 representing neutrality. Detailed information for this survey is found in **Appendix B**.

Planning Division Results

The following table shows responses for survey directions that stated, "In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how the PLANNING DIVISION does in delivering your government services."

Table 8—Delivering Government Services – Planning Division

Statement	All Respondents Mean	Division Staff Mean	Non-Division Staff Mean
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.4	0.8	0.0
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.3	0.5	0.0
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.3	0.0	0.5
Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations	0.3	0.5	0.0
Clarity of codes and policies	0.1	0.0	0.3
Professional courtesy	0.1	0.5	-0.3
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.1	0.3	0.0
Complexity of regulations	0.0	0.0	0.0
Positive attitude	0.0	0.5	-0.5
Processing of 'minor' changes to plans	0.0	0.0	0.0
Timeliness/number of re-checks	0.0	0.0	0.0
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	0.0	-0.8	0.8
Ease of accessing a planner to discuss project	-0.1	-0.5	0.3
Providing complete process information at public counter	-0.1	0.0	-0.3
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	-0.1	0.0	-0.3
Understanding of private business	-0.1	0.0	-0.3
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3
Communication on project status	-0.3	-0.8	0.3
Overall process	-0.3	-0.5	0.0
Fulfilling commitments	-0.4	-0.3	-0.5
Process for tentative/parcel map approval	-0.4	-0.8	0.0
Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner	-0.4	-0.3	-0.5
Coordination and service with outside consultants	-0.5	-0.8	-0.3
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.6	-1.0	-0.3
Process for final/parcel map approval	-0.6	-1.0	-0.3

The following table shows responses for survey directions that stated, “For the statements that follow, please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree.”

Table 9—Agreement with Statements Regarding Division or Department – Planning Division

Statement	Mean
Economic development and growth are important for our community	1.5
My leadership responds to me in a timely fashion when I ask questions	1.0
We need more training as it relates to communication, including dealing with difficult people	1.0
We understand what excellent service is	1.0
My supervisor or manager trusts me	0.8
We do a good job connecting and communicating with the community	0.8
Communication with leadership is respectful	0.5
The City's vision is clear	0.5
The City Council and staff work well together	0.3
The City's organizational goals are clear	0.3
We are a risk-averse community/city	0.3
We are flexible, agile, and open to creative solutions	0.3
We communicate well about development review processes	0.3
We provide excellent service	0.3
Division or Department goals are clear	0.0
We have good standard management practices in place	0.0
Innovation is an important part of the City's planning processes	-0.3
Standard operating procedures for application and review processes are effective	-0.5
We are provided with training opportunities	-0.5
We do a good job promoting and marketing offerings and opportunities to the community	-0.7
The training opportunities available to me are sufficient to support my needs	-0.8
The public clearly understands what is needed to process permits and applications	-1.0
We are fiscally stable	-1.0
We offer expedited opportunities related to plan checking, inspections, and other development processes	-1.3

Building and Safety Division Results

The following table shows responses for survey directions that stated, “In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how the BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION does in delivering your government services.”

Table 10—Delivering Government Services – Building and Safety Division

Statement	All Respondents Mean	Division Staff Mean	Non-Division Staff Mean
Thoroughness of inspections	0.9	1.0	0.7
Timeliness of inspections	0.9	1.0	0.7
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.8	1.0	0.3
Knowledge of building and safety	0.8	0.8	0.7
Providing complete upfront information regarding inspections	0.8	1.0	0.3
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.6	0.8	0.3
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.6	1.0	0.0
Overall process	0.6	1.0	0.0
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	0.6	0.8	0.3
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.6	0.8	0.3
Clarity of regulations	0.5	0.6	0.3
Ease of accessing Building staff to discuss project	0.5	0.6	0.3
Complexity of regulations	0.4	0.6	0.0
Positive attitude	0.4	1.0	-0.7
Professional courtesy	0.4	0.8	-0.3
Providing complete process information at public counter	0.4	0.8	-0.3
Thoroughness of plan review	0.4	0.6	0.0
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.3	0.6	-0.3
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	0.3	0.6	-0.3
Communication on project status	0.1	0.6	-0.7
Fulfilling commitments	0.1	0.6	-0.7
Understanding of private business	0.1	0.0	0.3
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	-0.1	0.4	-1.0
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3
Coordination and service of outside consultants	-0.5	-0.4	-0.7

The following table shows responses for survey directions that stated, “For the statements that follow, please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree.”

Table 11—Agreement with Statements Regarding Division or Department – Building and Safety Division

Statement	Mean
My leadership responds to me in a timely fashion when I ask questions	1.6
Communication with leadership is respectful	1.4
Economic development and growth are important for our community	1.4
My supervisor or manager trusts me	1.4
We communicate well about development review processes	1.3
Division or Department goals are clear	1.2
We have good standard management practices in place	1.2
We understand what excellent service is	1.2
We are flexible, agile, and open to creative solutions	1.0
We do a good job connecting and communicating with the community	1.0
We provide excellent service	1.0
Innovation is an important part of the City's permitting process	0.8
Standard operating procedures for application and review processes are effective	0.8
We do a good job promoting and marketing offerings and opportunities to the community	0.8
We offer expedited opportunities related to plan check, inspections, and other development processes	0.8
We need more training as it relates to communication, including dealing with difficult people	0.6
The City's organizational goals are clear	0.4
The City's vision is clear	0.4
The public clearly understands what is needed to process permits and applications	0.4
We are provided with training opportunities	0.4
The training opportunities available to me are sufficient to support my needs	0.2
We are a risk-averse community/city	0.2
The City Council and staff work well together	-0.4
We are fiscally stable	-0.4

Public Works Engineering (PWAE) Group Results

The following table shows responses for survey directions that stated, “In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how the PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING section does in delivering your government services.” Since no staff from Public Works Engineering completed the survey, no comparison can be made between their responses and the responses of others.

Table 12—Delivering Government Services – Public Works Engineering

Statement	Mean
Positive attitude	0.0
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	-0.1
Professional courtesy	-0.3
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	-0.4
Providing consistent and dependable process information by staff	-0.4
Complexity of regulations	-0.5
Providing complete process information by staff	-0.5
Clarity of codes and policies	-0.6
Ease of accessing Public Works staff to discuss project	-0.6
Knowledge of public works engineering	-0.6
Understanding of private business	-0.6
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	-0.8
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	-0.8
Fulfilling commitments	-0.9
Overall process	-0.9
Providing consistent and dependable process information by consultants	-0.9
Coordination and service with outside consultants	-1.0
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	-1.0
Providing complete process information by consultants	-1.0
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	-1.0
Communication on project status	-1.1
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-1.1
Processing of 'minor' changes to plans	-1.3
Process for final/parcel map approval	-1.4
Timeliness/number of re-checks	-1.4
Processing / turnaround times of construction plan review	-1.5

Since no staff from Public Works Engineering completed the survey, there are no degree-of-agreement data to report.

3.2.7 Open-Ended Prompt – Response Summary

The following tables show summaries of responses to the open-ended employee survey prompt. Employees were asked to “Please add any specific comments or suggestions you may have for

improving services in your division or the Economic Development or Community Development Departments overall.”

Table 13—Employee Survey – Open-Ended Responses

Count	Comment
3	More staff are needed.
1	Building and Safety need a Building Inspector and another Permit Technician.
1	Communication with different departments needs to be united. There are solutions for everything and more efficient ways always to complete tasks.
1	Documented standard operating procedures are needed.
1	More fiscal resources are needed.
1	Permitting software should include customer login for project status to reduce calls and emails to staff.
1	Public Works Department turnaround times need to be faster.
1	Reliance on outside consultants is inefficient and costly.
1	The permitting software needs to be running effectively to increase staff effectiveness.

3.3 STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

3.3.1 Summary

Survey results were informative and useful regarding stakeholder perceptions of customer service, timeliness, transparency, predictability, communication levels, customer service, and clarity of codes and policies related to the Program services delivered by the Planning, Building and Safety, Economic Development, and PWAE functions. The following summary provides an overview of the results; however, it is recommended the City’s leadership and staff review the full response summary in **Appendix C** and mutually agree to a strategy to improve customer service by providing consistent, reliable, and timely information.

Overall, surveyed stakeholders expressed significantly positive sentiments about the accuracy and completeness of the initial information provided by the Planning and Building and Safety divisions. For the Planning Division, customers viewed the helpfulness of front counter assistance and the attitude of staff most positively. For the Building and Safety Division, survey respondents were most positive about the helpfulness of handouts on review processes and staff’s understanding of private business. And regarding the Economic Development function, survey respondents appreciate the lack of complexity related to regulations and the ability of staff to solve problems and communicate with customers.

Less positively, stakeholders perceive a lack of coordinated review between the City’s divisions, departments, and consultants. In addition, stakeholders see a lack of consistency in returning phone

calls and/or emails in a timely manner on the part of both the Planning Division and the Building and Safety Division. Though few, survey results for the PWAE were almost wholly negative. The most critical sentiments expressed were related to returning phone calls in a timely manner; the timeliness and/or number of “rechecks” for plans; and the provision of consistent and dependable process information by staff and consultants. This information indicates a need to establish and reinforce customer services standards across all functions and provide customized staff training to raise the level of customer service.

The stakeholder survey also asked participants to express their views regarding various quality-of-life topics, and further requested that they prioritize the goals and objectives included in the City’s recently adopted General Plan and the City Council’s 2023–2025 Strategic Plan. Respondents indicated the most agreement with statements specifying that vacant properties in the downtown area should be a top priority; that they feel a strong sense of community in the City; and that the City is generally a safe place to live and or work. They were most likely to disagree that the City has sufficient nightlife opportunities and shopping choices, and that the City’s economy is sound. In addition, the survey gave respondents an opportunity to provide an open-ended response stating what they believe should be the top priorities of the CED. Their top priority was improving road infrastructure—especially repaving deteriorated roads. The second most referenced priority was economic development, especially attracting and developing more employers. Notably, 71 percent of survey respondents expressed an interest in receiving updates and announcements on City operations on at least a monthly basis.

3.3.2 Stakeholder Survey Overview

Table 14—Stakeholder Survey – Response Details

Survey Summary	
Launch Date	January 10, 2024
Close Date	February 7, 2024
Total Responses	50

Basic Information Results

The following table indicates where persons who responded to the survey reside.

Table 15—Place of Residence of Stakeholder

Category	Count	Percent of Respondents
I live within the City of Santa Paula limits	41	82.0%
I live outside of the City limits	9	18.0%
I am unsure	0	0.0%

The following table indicates how long persons who responded to the survey have lived in their current place of residency.

Table 16—Tenure of Residency of Stakeholder

Category	Count	Percent of Respondents
Less than 1 year	1	2.0%
1 to 5 years	14	28.6%
5 to 10 years	11	22.4%
More than 10 years	23	46.9%

The following table indicates whether a survey respondent had been a customer of the CED or PWAE within the prior two years.

Table 17—“Have You had Business with CED or PWAE Over the Past Two Years?”

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	17	34.0%
No	33	66.0%

The following table shows all the customer categories that apply to stakeholders that responded to the survey.

Table 18—Stakeholder Survey – Categories of Responding Stakeholders

Category	Frequent Customer	Percent of Respondents	One-Time/Infrequent Customer	Percent of Respondents
Individual Applicant	2	4.0%	8	16.0%
Developer / Builder (company)	4	8.0%	1	2.0%
Development Consultant	1	2.0%	1	2.0%
General / Sub Contractor	4	8.0%	0	0.0%
Local retail/restaurant business owner	2	4.0%	2	4.0%
Other	3	6.0%	1	2.0%

The following table shows the types of projects with which customers were involved.

Table 19—Stakeholder Survey – Types of Projects Stakeholders were Involved With

Project Type	New Construction	Percent of Respondents	Modification	Percent of Respondents
Single Family Detached	2	4.0%	7	14.0%
Single Family Attached / Multi-family	2	4.0%	2	4.0%
Agricultural / Commercial / Industrial Facility	3	6.0%	3	6.0%
Church / Institutional	0	0.0%	1	2.0%
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	0	0.0%	1	2.0%

3.3.3 Summary of Survey Responses by Division

Following is a presentation of survey responses by division, sorted from highest to lowest mean score. Each division's responses are reflected in two tables. The first table shows the number of customers who responded to the survey that had business with the function in the past two years. The second table shows customers' assessment of how each division does delivering services compared to their expectations, on a scale from 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations) to -2 (Unacceptable), with a score of 0 representing neutrality. Detailed information for this survey is found in **Appendix C**.

Planning Division Results

Table 20—"Have You had Business with Planning Over the Past Two Years?"

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	10	58.8%
No	7	41.2%

The following table shows customers' assessment of how the Planning Division compares to their expectations for government service.

Table 21—Planning Division – “How Planning Compares to Expectations for Government Service”

Statement	Mean
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.8
Positive attitude	0.8
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	0.6
Process for final/parcel map approval	0.6
Professional courtesy	0.6
Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations	0.5
Understanding of private business	0.5
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	0.4
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.4
Process for tentative/parcel map approval	0.4
Providing complete process information at public counter	0.4
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	0.4
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.3
Complexity of regulations	0.3
Coordination and service with outside consultants	0.3
Fulfilling commitments	0.3
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.3
Cost of processing application (fees)	0.2
Overall process	0.2
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	0.2
Clarity of codes and policies	0.1
Ease of accessing a planner to discuss project	0.1
Processing of ‘minor’ changes to plans	0.1
Timeliness/number of re-checks	0.1
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.0
Communication on project status	0.0
Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner	-0.1

Building and Safety Results

Table 22—“Have You had Business With Building and Safety Over the Past Two Years?”

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	12	70.6%
No	5	29.4%

The following table shows customers’ assessment of how the Building and Safety Division compares to their expectations for government service.

Table 23—“How Building and Safety Compares to Expectations for Government Service”

Statement	Mean
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.9
Understanding of private business	0.9
Knowledge of building and safety	0.6
Positive attitude	0.5
Professional courtesy	0.5
Providing complete process information at public counter	0.5
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	0.5
Timeliness of inspections	0.5
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.4
Complexity of regulations	0.4
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	0.4
Coordination and service of outside consultants	0.4
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	0.4
Fulfilling commitments	0.4
Thoroughness of inspections	0.4
Clarity of regulations	0.3
Communication on project status	0.3
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.3
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.2
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.2
Thoroughness of plan review	0.2
Cost of processing applications (fees)	0.1
Ease of accessing Building staff to discuss project	0.1
Providing complete upfront information regarding inspections	0.1
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	0.1
Overall process	0.0
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	0.0

Public Works Engineering (PWAE) Group Results

Table 24—“Have You had Business with PWAE Over the Past Two Years?”

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	4	23.5%
No	13	76.5%

The following table shows customers’ assessment of how PWAE compares to their expectations for government service.

Table 25—“How PWAE Compares to Expectations for Government Service”

Statement	Mean
Knowledge of public works engineering	0.0
Positive attitude	0.0
Coordination and service with outside consultants	-0.5
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	-0.5
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	-0.7
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.7
Professional courtesy	-0.7
Understanding of private business	-0.7
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	-0.7
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	-1.0
Clarity of codes and policies	-1.0
Complexity of regulations	-1.0
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	-1.0
Ease of accessing Public Works staff to discuss project	-1.0
Fulfilling commitments	-1.0
Overall process	-1.0
Processing of ‘minor’ changes to plans	-1.0
Providing consistent and dependable process information by consultants	-1.0
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	-1.0
Communication on project status	-1.3
Cost of processing application (fees)	-1.3
Process for final/parcel map approval	-1.3
Processing / turnaround times of construction plan review	-1.3
Providing complete process information by consultants	-1.3
Providing complete process information by staff	-1.3
Providing consistent and dependable process information by staff	-1.3
Timeliness/number of re-checks	-1.3
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	-1.7

Table 26—“Have You had Business with Economic Development Over the Past Two Years?”

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	5	23.5%
No	12	76.5%

The following table shows customers’ assessment of how Economic Development compares to their expectations for government service.

Table 27—“How Economic Development Compares to Expectations for Government Service”

Statement	Mean
Complexity of regulations	0.8
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.5
Communication on project status	0.5
Cost of processing application(s), license(s), and permit(s) (fees)	0.5
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	0.5
Expertise related to economic development processes	0.5
Fulfilling commitments	0.5
Helpfulness of resource guides on processes	0.5
Helpfulness of staff	0.5
Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations	0.5
Overall process	0.5
Positive attitude	0.5
Professional courtesy	0.5
Providing complete process information	0.5
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.3
Clarity of codes and policies	0.3
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	0.3
Helpfulness of demographic and market data	0.3
Offerings of housing assistance programs	0.3
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.3
Support for business site selection	0.3
Support for special events	0.3
Support for starting a business	0.3
Support for tourism opportunities	0.3
Timeliness of processes	0.3
Timely art project processes	0.3
Timely filming project processes	0.3
Understanding of private business	0.3
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator, status updates, resources)	0.3
Ease of accessing staff to discuss project	0.0
Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner	0.0

3.3.4 General Questions

The following tables shows customers' responses to general questions.

Table 28—Responses to General Questions

Statement	Yes	No	N/A
Initial information given to me by the Planning and Building divisions in Community Development was accurate and complete.	11	3	3
Initial information given to me by the Public Works Engineering Division was accurate and complete.	6	4	7
Additional substantial changes to my project that should have been brought up in the first review were not required or revealed to me until subsequent reviews.	6	4	7
I would consider the option to pay extra for 'express/expedited' processing.	10	4	3
I would consider the option to pay increased fees if it would increase timeliness and quality of work.	7	7	3

Table 29—Responses to General Questions About Cost, Timeliness, and Quality of Permitting

Statement	Significantly More	About the Same	Significantly Less	N/A
In my experience, the cost of processing any permit or application with the City of Santa Paula when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the Ventura County area is:	3	9	1	4
In my experience, the time to process any permit/application with the City of Santa Paula when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the Ventura County area is:	6	6	2	3
In my experience, the overall quality of processing any permit or application (knowledge of project management, problem solving, and communication) with the City of Santa Paula when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the Ventura County area is:	3	8	3	2

3.3.5 Question on Quality of Life and Economic Development

This section of the survey asked stakeholders to indicate their agreement with statements about the City overall, the perceived quality of life in Santa Paula, and aspects of community and economic

development. The scale was from 2 (Strongly Agree) to -2 (Strongly Disagree), with a score of 0 representing neutrality. The focus is on the City’s overarching General Plan and the recently adopted City Council 2023-2025 Strategic Plan that includes seven Core Council Priorities of: arts, culture, and entertainment; economic development; infrastructure, transportation, and mobility; connected and healthy community; public safety and emergency preparedness; community vitality; and operational excellence.

The following table shows stakeholders’ responses to these general statements.

Table 30—Responses to Degree of Agreement Statements on Quality of Life and Economic Development

Statement	Mean
Vacant properties in the downtown should be a top priority	1.0
I feel a strong sense of community in the City	0.9
The City is generally a safe place to live and/or work	0.6
The downtown has adequate parking	0.6
There is good access to arts and cultural opportunities in the City	0.6
The City is a good place to raise children	0.5
The overall quality of life in the City is good	0.5
The City has the right amount of events	0.4
The City supports its business community	0.4
The City is environmentally friendly	0.2
The City has a vibrant downtown area	0.1
The residential areas in the City are attractive	0.1
The downtown has adequate parking for big events	-0.1
There are adequate parks and recreation amenities in the City	-0.2
The City draws good business investments	-0.3
The City has sufficient restaurant options	-0.3
The City is adequately marketed as a tourist destination	-0.3
The City's infrastructure is sufficient	-0.3
There are adequate employment opportunities in the City	-0.4
There is good business and economic development planning within City government	-0.4
Retail shopping areas in the City are attractive	-0.5
The commercial areas in the City are attractive	-0.5
The City's economy is sound	-0.6
The City has sufficient choices for shopping	-0.7
The City provides sufficient nightlife opportunities	-0.7

3.3.6 City Communication and Updates

The survey also posed two questions to stakeholders regarding the manner, including communication in Spanish, and how often respondents prefer to receive information on City operations. The following table shows their responses to the question on mode of communication.

Table 31—Responses to Question on Communication Mode Preferences

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Email Newsletter	32	71.1%
Printer Newsletter	7	15.6%
Facebook	17	37.8%
Twitter	2	4.4%
Nextdoor	10	22.2%
City website	24	53.3%
Attending City Council meetings	9	20.0%
Postings at key government facilities	3	6.7%
Postings at business establishments	6	13.3%
In Spanish	6	13.3%

This table shows stakeholders’ responses to the question on the frequency of communication.

Table 32—Responses to Question on Frequency of Communication

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Monthly	34	70.8%
Quarterly	8	16.7%
Semi-annually	1	2.1%
Annually	1	2.1%
I do not wish to receive City announcements	6	12.5%

3.3.7 Open-Ended Question – Response Summary

The following tables shows the responses to two open-ended stakeholder survey prompts. Only themes with more than one instance are shown.

The first of these questions asked stakeholders to specify priorities that should be focused on by the CED, in order of importance.

Table 33—Responses on Top Priorities for CED

Count	Item
22	Improve road infrastructure, especially including repaving deteriorated roads
12	Attracting and developing more employers and other economic development initiatives
6	Improve thoroughfare and downtown aesthetic, including cleanliness, sign regulations, etc.
4	Improve and support community safety and policing
3	Improve public spaces, such as parks, trails, open space, etc.
2	Improve the process to open a business, making it faster and easier
2	Process building permits and other customer inquiries faster

The second question asked stakeholders to add specific comments or suggestions on how City of Santa Paula departments and external agencies can improve services related to the process of approving land use permits in Santa Paula.

Table 34—Responses on Improving Process of Approving Land Use Applications or Building Permits

Count	Item
4	Doing business with the City should be simpler, faster, and easier. Examples include a more predictable approval and permit process, as well as more available (no appointment needed) and helpful staff via phone and visit. a simplified development code to make the application and approval process more predictable.
2	Build more housing via vacant properties or tiny homes
2	Improve road infrastructure, especially including repaving deteriorated roads
2	Improve or grow parks and green spaces
2	Starting a business should be easier

SECTION 4—FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

4.1 SUMMARY OF IDENTIFIED THEMES

Based on the stakeholder engagement process, including interactions with city employees and external customers through interviews, focus groups and surveys, Citygate has compiled the following themes, findings, observations, and recommendations.

- ◆ Theme 1—Financial Stability
- ◆ Theme 2—Staffing and Reliance on Contract and Consultant Personnel
- ◆ Theme 3—Policy and Procedural Clarity and Consistency
- ◆ Theme 4—Communication, Outreach, and Customer Service
- ◆ Theme 5—Technology Adoption and Implementation
- ◆ Theme 6—Economic Development Opportunities

4.2 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Citygate’s assessment process provides a framework for Citygate to develop and provide the City recommendations and an implementation plan specifying opportunities to improve the overall efficiency, transparency, and predictability of land use planning, development review, permitting, and economic development functions. Citygate has identified the following recommendations organized by six identified themes.

4.3 THEME 1—FINANCIAL STABILITY

4.3.1 Findings

Finding #1: Fiscal insecurity, both currently and for the foreseeable future, results in a “survival mode” mentality and chronic under-resourcing of City staffing and services.

Finding #2: There are potential opportunities for the City to increase revenue and, conversely, reduce the cost of providing planning and development review services.

4.3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Ensure the City’s ability to meet community needs both now and into the future by stabilizing the City’s long-term fiscal situation, increasing staff in critical functions, and providing competitive salaries to improve the City’s ability to attract and retain an adequate number of capable staff.

- Recommendation #2:** Administration Department staff should review the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) best practices referenced in Citygate’s report to use as a guide when enhancing written policies for the City.
- Recommendation #3:** The City should formalize the development of performance measures per GFOA best practice as a tool to gauge operational effectiveness.
- Recommendation #4:** The City should review and adopt, as appropriate, GFOA’s four areas of Economic Development Best Practices: (1) Establishing an Economic Development Incentive Policy; (2) Coordinating Economic Development and Capital Planning; (3) Creation, Implementation and Evaluation of Tax Increment Financing; and (4) Role of the Finance Office in Economic Development.
- Recommendation #5:** The City should conduct annual fee assessments that include an escalation clause utilizing a collaborative approach and community outreach, as necessary. (Note: the City has initiated a fee study, using a consultant, in the period since this study began.)
- Recommendation #6:** Explore new funding sources, partnerships, grant opportunities, and other possibilities related to generating revenue.

4.4 THEME 2—STAFFING AND RELIANCE ON CONTRACT AND CONSULTANT PERSONNEL

4.4.1 Findings

- Finding #3:** The CED Director’s responsibilities—overseeing development review, long-range planning, building, economic development, and downtown revitalization—and the Department’s thin staffing result in one or more of these functions continuously receiving inadequate attention; managerial and administrative bottlenecks; and stress and discontent among staff, consultants, and customers.
- Finding #4:** The City struggles to pay its development review consultants in a timely manner, particularly those it engages for East Area 1.
- Finding #5:** The City’s Public Works Department has largely outsourced development review. Some customers believe the City’s reliance on engineering consultants results in customer service lapses, reduces accountability, increases development costs, and engenders an overly conservative approach by consultants concerned about professional liability.

4.4.2 Recommendations

- Recommendation #7:** Consider adding either a planning or economic development position. With this added position, the Director could either “offload” tasks directly, or the new position could assume some of the Assistant Director’s responsibilities so they, in turn, could assume responsibilities currently residing with the Director. Adding this type of staffing should increase the robustness of the City’s economic development and downtown improvement efforts and the City’s development review processes. This position may also become critical to meet new development demands.
- Recommendation #8:** Identify and evaluate options for adding administrative capacity within the CED. An Administrative Analyst, Executive Assistant, or Administrative Secretary could enable the Department to stay current on development agreement billing and processing of consultant invoices, improve the coordination and timeliness of the Department’s work, and free the Director (and, to an extent, the Building Official and Senior Permit Technician) to focus on other priorities, including economic development. (Note: the City has hired an Administrative Analyst for CED in the period since this study began.)
- Recommendation #9:** Assess the City’s current processes for collecting developer funds pursuant to development agreements and the payment of consultant invoices. Determine the division of responsibilities between the CED and Finance Department. Ensure staff assigned to these tasks have the appropriate knowledge, training, and capacity to perform them in a timely manner.
- Recommendation #10:** Evaluate the possibility of hiring more PWAE staff versus continuing the current level of reliance on contract and consulting personnel. This should include hiring a City Engineer. At minimum, undertake a cost comparison of the two approaches—including an analysis to identify industry-competitive salary scales for public sector engineers and inspectors in the greater region—to provide contrast with current contracting expenditures.
- Recommendation #11:** Develop and launch a coordinated new hire recruitment and retention initiative that includes best practices, benefits analysis, and innovative approaches, including creative marketing strategies.

Recommendation #12: Consider utilizing a lean innovation approach to determine and/or implement the previous recommendations related to recruitment and retention initiatives.

Recommendation #13: Consider limited shared services with other public agencies.

4.5 THEME 3—POLICY AND PROCEDURAL CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY

4.5.1 Findings

Finding #6: The City’s handling of discretionary development review processes (e.g., Specific Plan amendments, construction and dedication of public infrastructure, development agreement amendments) and privilege licenses and permits is viewed by some stakeholders as subject to inconsistency, subjectivity, and unpredictability.

Finding #7: A lack of clear policies and consistent procedures for discretionary planning processes and privilege licenses/permits exposes the City to legal and regulatory risk.

Finding #8: Lapses in the implementation and amendment of development agreements may expose the City to unnecessary financial obligations for the construction and/or maintenance of public infrastructure developers are responsible for building and dedicating to the City.

4.5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation #14: Review the City’s development codes and applicable state laws to update the City’s policies and procedures for discretionary planning approvals and privilege licenses and permits. More robust adoption and use of Standard Operating Procedures is critical for continuity and consistency of services and to improve the on-boarding process for new staff and consultants. Consider using a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to establish a “bench” of qualified CEQA consultants for projects requiring CEQA review.

Recommendation #15: Adopt and/or reinforce policies (e.g., regarding timing, bonding) and standards for infrastructure that developers construct and dedicate to the City.

Recommendation #16: Consistently require all developers subject to a development agreement to post adequate fee deposits prior to City review of their applications. (Note: the City engaged legal counsel to review development agreement payments in the period since this study began.)

Recommendation #17: Bring developers current on consultant costs the City has expended for their projects. (Note: the City has hired an Administrative Analyst for CED in the period since this study began to focus on this matter.)

Recommendation #18: Develop and adopt a community benefits/options checklist that is added as a standard condition of approval for conditional use permits and other development.

4.6 THEME 4—COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH, AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

4.6.1 Findings

Finding #9: The City’s customers express concern about the timeliness of application processing; permitting requirements; and communication with and responses from staff in the Planning Division, Building and Safety Division, PWAE, and City consultants.

Finding #10: Community outreach efforts could use improvement.

4.6.2 Recommendations

Recommendation #19: Adopt a fee schedule for PWAE review of building permit applications so plan review can commence upon submittal.

Recommendation #20: Adopt and/or reinforce existing customer service standards for the timeliness of PWAE plan review and inspection services. Specify performance standards in consultant contracts for development review.

Recommendation #21: Streamline plan review and approvals for projects on parcels in the flood plain, including the issuance of building pad elevation certificates.

Recommendation #22: Consider relocating PWAE engineering staff to City Hall, even on a limited but regularly scheduled basis, to enhance customer service (i.e., as an initial step towards a possible “one-stop shop” for development services) and facilitate coordination with the CED staff responsible for development review and related permit services.

Recommendation #23: Monitor Ventura County’s provision of plan review and fire inspection services. Address with Ventura County as necessary to meet the City’s customer service standards.

Recommendation #24: To strengthen internal communications and services, consider developing and implementing a shadowing program for staff to support cross-training, efficiency, connections, public speaking, and presentation skills.

Recommendation #25: Address employee burnout by developing a staff morale improvement plan. It could include providing coaching, using councilors to provide support, offering empathy sessions, and other activities to enrich and support positive employee culture and performance. Develop a service philosophy and include it as a performance measure for employee evaluation and accountability.

Recommendation #26: Based on the results of the community survey, implement an external communications and outreach strategy to connect more regularly with the community. Include bilingual messaging and materials.

4.7 THEME 5—TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.7.1 Findings

Finding #11: The City does not accept development applications, business license applications, or utility payments online.

Finding #12: There is a lack of funding for updated and ongoing technology needs.

Finding #13: There is some staff resistance to using current or new technology.

4.7.2 Recommendations

Recommendation #27: Evaluate, adopt, and implement a state-of-the-industry online permitting system for development review, business licensing, and receipt of payments, including utility payments. In the interim, add an online fee calculator.

Recommendation #28: During fee assessments and updates—including for development-related fees—evaluate and provide for cost recovery for current and future technology needs.

Recommendation #29: Implement accountability measures, training, and best practices for staff utilization of current and new technology.

Recommendation #30: Have onsite Development Services staff take lead on technology training, needs, follow-ups, implementation, tracking, updates, issues, coordination.

Recommendation #31: Evaluate the current software services contract and potentially amend as necessary based on above needs.

Recommendation #32: Evaluate staff's technology equipment needs such as monitors, portable tools, etc.

4.8 THEME 6—ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

4.8.1 Findings

Finding #14: There is a strong desire in the business community to be more connected, more involved, and to partner with the City and other businesses.

Finding #15: There is a need to support the business community both fiscally, through start up and improvement costs, and through employment opportunities.

Finding #16: The City should evaluate and address infrastructure needs to support current business needs and potential growth.

4.8.2 Recommendations

Recommendation #33: A strong infrastructure foundation is critical to attracting investment and creating sustainable and thriving communities. Thus, addressing core infrastructure issues in a strategic and cost-effective approach is key. This initiative should be undertaken and coordinated annually through the Capital Improvement Planning processes of the City and other public agencies and utilities undertaking capital improvement projects in Santa Paula. Immediate infrastructure needs should include maintaining sewer systems, including providing capacity for growth; adopting standards for clean drinking water and improvements to roads and sidewalks; and evaluating and developing affordable and reliable transportation mechanisms including pedestrian, bicycle, and other micromobility transportation modes.

Recommendation #34: Evaluate and update current communication systems.

Recommendation #35: Develop 3–5 new business incentive programs. Possibilities to consider include a City-managed community revolving loan fund, a tiered façade improvement grant program, and an “adopt-a” program (e.g., sidewalks, parks, murals, special events).

Recommendation #36: Invest in improving job training and employment opportunities by setting “locals first” requirements; offering or supporting broad-based internship/apprenticeship programs; and creating immersion opportunities in businesses, schools, and government agencies.

Recommendation #37: Boosting innovation can lead to new technologies, advancing businesses, creating efficiencies, and supporting enhanced techniques—including inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs through collaborative, creative, and project-specific events.

- Recommendation #38:** Invite, encourage, and create community and business leadership hubs to gather and develop actionable ideas related to implementation of elements of the Specific Plan.
- Recommendation #39:** Conduct a business needs assessment and build a business retention and expansion program. The assessment should include an inventory of existing businesses and availability of land, commercial, and retail space. It could also survey businesses regarding what they need to survive, prosper, and grow. The program could also include visiting businesses to offer support, offering roundtable discussions that have focus and purpose, experimenting with an economic summit, and creating a marketing strategy to support economic development.
- Recommendation #40:** Add an Economic Development Manager/Specialist to support planning and economic development. This could be an FTE or (initially) consulting support. (Note: the City has hired a Management Analyst to focus on housing policy and issues in the period since this study began.)
- Recommendation #41:** Develop key metrics for the City to focus and improve upon. Consider the following example: growth in employment rate by 5; growth in number of businesses; growth in per capita income; reduced poverty rate; decline in unemployment rate by 2 percent; increase internship positions by 20 percent; increase foot traffic in retail sales in downtown by 10 percent.
- Recommendation #42:** Downtown lacks curb appeal in terms of lighting, enhanced art displays (examples include mosaics/sculptures), and signage. Evaluate various esthetic enhancements and prioritize each option.

4.9 PERFORMANCE METRICS

Citygate recommends that basic metrics be developed for performance for each work unit. To be meaningful, metrics selected should convey important information about the City's activities and priorities, be relevant to the City's specific priorities and goals, be useful and readily understandable, and enable the collection and maintenance of consistent information with relative ease.

4.10 IMPLEMENTATION FAIL FACTS AND STRATEGIES

The strategic planning process is an important tool for the community to identify its vision for the future and the resulting Strategic Plan provides a road map to that desired future. Once created, however, the plan must be implemented in a clear and thoughtful manner if the strategic planning process is to be fully successful. Unfortunately, it is too often the case that an organization will

invest the time and other resources necessary to create a Strategic Plan, but it will fail to adequately recognize the importance of developing a thoughtful implementation plan and then using that plan to guide future actions and decisions to assure that the Strategic Plan is implemented.

4.10.1 Fail Facts

What causes plans not to work out the way we envision them? Often, once a plan has been carefully developed, things can and do go awry. Ongoing daily attention and care must be taken throughout the implementation process to achieve optimal results. It is important to recognize that, even with the best of intentions, efficient efforts, and resource alignment, the end results may differ from the original vision.

A plan's implementation could fail if there is...

- ◆ minimal investment/buy-in to alignment with the plan
- ◆ no clear, consistent communication from leadership
- ◆ added work assigned to staff without any work taken away
- ◆ a lack of accountability
- ◆ a shortage of patience
- ◆ a lack of clarity among staff regarding the strategy
- ◆ “everything is a priority” syndrome
- ◆ no true allocation of resources
- ◆ a lack of perceived fairness, recognition, rewards, etc.
- ◆ an absence of innovation fostered by leadership
- ◆ neglect to utilize the right approach in execution
- ◆ no recognition that some failures are successes
- ◆ limited understanding of the real problem; distraction with other concerns
- ◆ an inaccurate perception of actual organizational capabilities
- ◆ no awareness of the cultural landscape
- ◆ no understanding of who is in charge.

While there are various tools and styles for implementation of the community vision as outlined in the Strategic Plan, Citygate recommends that taking a human-centered approach has been found to be the most successful. This type of approach emphasizes collaboration and a long-term planning horizon. Among the implementation strategies that can be employed to ensure accountability and productive implementation of the plan are *the preparation of annual reports to the City Council to be delivered prior to the annual budget sessions; the use of technology to track progress; ongoing communication, support, and training for staff; and regular progress work sessions.*

4.11 IMPLEMENTATION BEST PRACTICES

While there are many standards and best approaches to implementation, there are some fundamentals and key factors that support successful execution of any well laid plan. There are six core components needed to support implementation: people, resources, structure, systems, culture, and vision. The City of Santa Paula has done tremendous work in setting their vision, strategically determining what additional resources and people are needed, and ultimately developing a comprehensive Plan.

As the roll-out begins, the most important factor will be the clear, consistent, thoughtful, timely communication of the plan to City staff, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, and the community. This communication will set the tone as the plan unfolds. As the roles are determined, workload gets assigned and the execution and experimentation begin, there will be a need for on-going accountability and monitoring, adjustments and pivots, and continuous review and reflection of what did or did not work well. Following are some helpful tips and steps for the journey towards completing the desired objectives.

4.11.1 Determine a Lead and/or Co-Leads for the Implementation of the Strategic Plan

This can include special assignment pay or other incentive. This is also an opportunity for growth and mentorship for someone interested in such opportunities. Some agencies seek out low-cost limited-term staffing such as ICMA-Management Fellows or the utilization of current or new committees.

4.11.2 Have a Communication Plan

Quarterly executive one-page briefs for the City Council and community would be advisable. This information should be a combination of postings that are easy to find and clearly located on the website, newsletters, community signage, and social media. A more detailed report should occur annually. Internal communication from the lead/co-leads and assigned staff should be included in the weekly or monthly reports to the appropriate division/department manager. This should also be a factor in their performance evaluations as appropriate. Other communication factors include

adopting an “embrace mistakes” mantra, reward and celebrate the wins, and setting realistic expectations.

4.11.3 Have a Clear Accountability Approach

Clear accountability is both beneficial for the individual and the organization. Some of the key factors include seeking and giving feedback (360 feedback, self-evaluations), and consider using an accountability app for the team like Time Doctor, Toggle track, Clockify, Deskttime, or others. Thoughtful feedback questions could include:

- ◆ What did I learn and what can I do differently next time?
- ◆ How did my actions or the results affect the team, department, organization, and community?
- ◆ Was that my best?

4.11.4 Performance Monitoring

After goal-setting is accomplished, it is important to factor in effort and not just outcomes, to be empathetic and patient, to create improvement goals, to encourage often, to coach and mentor, to create opportunities for feedback, to make time for reflection, to help staff and other parties stretch and grow, to seek potential, to recognize the good, and to use Smartsheets or some similar record-keeping, scorecard-type tool. Some of the top performance indicators used include: quality of work, velocity of work, engagement (with community and staff), timeliness / keeping to schedule, efficiency, empowerment (courage, bravery, stepping out of one’s comfort-zone, experimentation and appropriate risk, asking challenging questions, increased participation), friendliness, and innovation.

It is important to remember that everyone grows and learns in different ways and at different paces. Some learn by doing (tasks, projects, experimenting); some learn more by training (courses and seminars); and some learn better with others (coaches and mentors). Often, a mixed approach is appropriate.

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

STRATEGIC GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Strategic Goals/Recommendations and Implementation Plan covers priorities and recommendations gleaned from both community and employee surveys, stakeholder interviews, historical data, and point-in-time items. This document includes “Combined Priorities” (items of importance to the City Council, City staff, and key stakeholders) and “Citygate Recommendations” (recommendations developed as part of Citygate’s Departmental review).

There are **63** total Priorities and Citygate Recommendations within the 6 Core Themes. These priorities and recommendations concern the following areas:

- ◆ Economic Development Incentives
- ◆ Infrastructure
- ◆ Process Improvement
- ◆ Fiscal Stability
- ◆ Technology
- ◆ Relations with City Council
- ◆ Communication, Outreach and Customer Service
- ◆ Staff Training Opportunities
- ◆ Open and Public Spaces
- ◆ Public Works
- ◆ Expedited Opportunities
- ◆ Timeliness and Certainty
- ◆ Downtown Aesthetics
- ◆ Recruitment, Retention, Salary and Benefits
- ◆ Reliance on Contract and Consulting Services

This document is an appendix to Citygate’s Final Report. It includes priorities and recommendations to be considered for implementation over the next three years. Citygate recommends implementation actions begin by June 30, 2024. The actions related to the various goals detailed in this document should be started and/or completed within the next 12–36 months, thus providing time for planning and resource allocation.

This document and discussion also provide ongoing opportunity for any necessary pivots, accommodations for any resource or staffing changes, input from current and/or new councilmembers, and continued enhanced communications through ongoing community engagement—thus providing for a more effective and thoughtful process that is in greater alignment with current trends, challenges, expectations, and opportunities.

There are 63 goals addressed within this document. The City will have the option to workshop the prioritization of these goals with the City Council or submit to council for approval based on the

Departments and Citygate’s recommendations. In addition, since the beginning of this project, there have been several goals that were addressed, completed, or are still in process including (but not limited to) two critical Department positions being filled, the initiation of a fee study and municipal code update with a consulting team, the initiation of a wayfinding signage project, and addressing the timeliness of consulting invoice payments and review on contract to reset standards and expectations. The CEDD and his team are commended for the expeditious efforts and accomplishments thus far.

Table 1 shows each Combined Priority and Citygate Recommendation, the estimated cost (if applicable), notes regarding implementation, and the recommended implementation priority as 1, 2, or 3.

Priority 1 indicates the *highest* priority. Recommended to be completed within first six months – one year.

Priority 2 indicates a *mid-level* priority.

Priority 3 indicates a *lower* priority.

NOTE:

- Numbering of all goal items, whether City priorities or Citygate recommendations, is provided in the far-left column. Items specifically reflecting Citygate’s recommendations are also numbered within the second column to provide reference to their placement within Citygate’s report (e.g., item 18 / #33, etc.).
- In the “Estimated Fiscal Impact” column of the table, “OG” refers to “ongoing” and reoccurring costs while “OT” refers to “on-time” cost allocation.
- The estimated allocation of hours and estimated cost impacts should assume hourly rates for assignment staff unless otherwise notes within the notes section for consulting, training, overtime, or outside support/resources.
- Performance measures and Lead/Co-Lead designations to be developed and completed by City staff (TBD).

Table 2 has been included as an important and recommended tool that can be utilized to support the City’s priority decisions and rankings.

Table 1—Strategic Goals/Recommendations and Implementation Plan

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/ Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
Staff Priorities							
1	Public Works (processes, timelines, communication)	1	Process or service response time (track time taken to process applications or respond to customer and resident inquiries)		60		
2	Technology (training, assessment)	1	Completion (design and implement)		120	\$25,000 (OT)	
3	Timeliness (calls, emails, projects)	1	Process or service response time. Annually survey customers to assess satisfaction		40		Service philosophy, performance measures/standards, staffing
4	Communication/coordination with divisions/departments/consultants	1	Survey in 6 months to determine if there has been improvement		80		
5	Expedited opportunities (plan review, inspections etc.)	2	Completion (design and implement)		80	Cost passed to applicant	Assess, develop policies and procedures, resource allocation, marketing
6	Fiscal stability	2	Prioritize and implement Recommendations 4, 5, & 6 within Theme 1 during the first six months				See also Theme 1 items (all recommendations contribute toward fiscal stability)
7	Training (skills, difficult customers [by unit], communication)	2	Completion (design and implement)		50	\$15,000 (OT)	Courses, workshops, inhouse standards/accountability measures
8	Improve tentative/final map timelines	2	Process or service response time		20		
9	Staff and City Council relationships	2	Survey in 6 months to determine if there has been improvement		24	\$5,000 (OT)	Training, discussions, meetings

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/ Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
10	Staffing (recruit, retain, access)	2	Completion (design and implement)		60		
Stakeholder Interviews (Combined Priorities)							
11	Improve Infrastructure (especially repaving)	2	Track CIP for road and other core infrastructure projects with quarterly and annual reporting, including budget expenditure rate and status (i.e., projects in design, under construction, and completed)		80		See also item 18 (CIP)
12	Economic Development Incentives (more employers)	1	Completion (design and implement) then track business openings and jobs created				See also Theme 6 items
13	Improve downtown aesthetics (cleanliness, signs, landscape, lighting)	1	Completion (design and implement)		120	\$50,000 (OT)	
14	Improve/support community safety/policing	1	Crime incidence rate; solicit (e.g., survey) public on their perception of the safety of community		40		Assessment, update, consider new opportunities

City of Santa Paula, CA

Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/ Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
15	Improve public spaces (parks, trails, open space)	3	Track CIP for parks and open space projects with quarterly and annual reporting, including budget expenditure rate and status (i.e., projects in design, under construction, and completed)			\$40,000 (OT)	Parks and Rec. Plan (consulting costs)
16	Improve process for opening a business (faster, easier)	2	Design and implement ongoing input mechanism for customers to rate process/service				Lean innovations or collaborative teams
17	Process building permits and inquiries in a timelier manner	2	Design and implement ongoing input mechanism for customers to rate process/service				
Economic Development Opportunities (Theme 6 Recommendations)							
18	#33: CIP (maintenance sewer system, capacity for growth, standards for clean drinking water, road/sidewalk improvements, transportation mechanisms (ped/bike), other micromobility)	2/3	Design and implement process to evaluate CIP consistency with City's General and Strategic Plans.		120		
19	#34: Evaluate and update current communication systems.	1	Completion (design and implement)		8		
20	#35: Develop 3–5 new business incentive programs (e.g., façade improvement, loan improvement)	1	Completion (design and implement) then track business openings and jobs created		120	\$50,000 (OT)	Seed money for year one
21	#36: Invest in improving job training and employment opportunities, “locals first” requirements, internships/apprenticeship programs, immersion opportunities in businesses, schools and government agencies.	3	Completion (design and implement) then track jobs created and unemployment rate		80	\$2,500 (OT)	Marketing
22	#37: Boosting innovation (training, teams, research, partnerships)	3	Completion (design and implement)		25		

City of Santa Paula, CA

Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
23	#38: Community and business leadership hubs (actionable ideas and implementation)	2	Completion (design and implement)		40		
24	#39: Conduct a business needs assessment, retention and expansion program.	2	Completion (design and implement) then track business openings and closings		60		
25	#40: Consider adding an Economic Development Manager/Specialist position (FTE, LTE)	1	Completion		25		
26	#41: Develop Key Performance Metrics for Department including ones within consulting contracts.	2	Completion (design and implement) with staff involvement		20		Align with Vision, Mission, Values, Service Standards
27	#42: Curb appeal evaluation of downtown	1	Completion (design and implement)		120		Cleanliness, facades, landscape, lighting, art (Downtown Specific Plan)
Policy and Procedural Clarity and Consistency (Theme 3 Recommendations)							
28	#14: Review development codes and state laws to update policies and procedures for discretionary planning approvals, licenses and permits.	2	Completion		40		
29	#15: Adopt/reinforce policies (timing, bonding) and standards for infrastructure that developers construct and dedicate to the city.	1	Completion (design and implement)		20		
30	#16: Consistently require all developers subject to a development agreement to post adequate fee deposits prior to City review of their applications	1	Adopt and apply policy		10		
31	#17: Bring developers current on consultant costs the city has expended for their projects.	1	Completion		30		
32	#18: Community benefits/options checklist	1	Completion (design and implement)		16		Benefits lists may differ depending on project; thus, standard practice is to have up to three lists. Collaborate with all departments for input and needs and work with legal on final recommendations.

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/ Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
Communication, Outreach, and Customer Service (Theme 4 Recommendations)							
33	#19: Adopt a fee schedule for PWE review of building permit applications so plan review can commence upon submittal.	1	Completion (design and implement)		25		
34	#20: Adopt and/or reinforce existing customer service standards for the timeliness of PWE plan review and inspection services.	1	Completion (design and implement); Follow with regular survey or other measurement of customer satisfaction		10		
35	#21: Streamline plan review and approvals for projects on parcels in the flood plain, including issuance of building pad elevation certificates.	2	Completion (design and implement)		30		
36	#22: Consider relocating PWE engineering staff to City Hall, even on a limited but regularly scheduled basis, to enhance customer service (i.e., as an initial step towards a possible “one-stop shop” for development services) and facilitate coordination with the CED staff responsible for development review and related permit services.	2/3	Completion (design and implement)		40		Assessment
37	#23: Monitor Ventura County’s provision of plan review and fire inspection services and address as needed to meet city’s service standards.	3	Initiate and maintain practice		10		
38	#24: Consider developing a shadowing/cross-training program.	3	Completion (design and implement)		100		
39	#25: Staff morale improvement plan. Consider coaching, councilors, empathy sessions, enrichment programs, culture agreements based off employees input and needs.	2	Completion (design and implement) then annually (or more frequently) survey staff		40	\$10,000	
40	#26: Implement an external communications and outreach strategy to connect more regularly with the community. Include bilingual messaging and materials.	3	Completion (design and implement) then regularly ask public how helpful and useful the information they receive from City is to them		40	\$5,000 (OT)	

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/ Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
Technology Adoption and Implementation (Theme 5 Recommendations)							
41	#27: Evaluate, adopt, implement a state-of-the-industry online permitting system for development review, business licensing, and receipt of payments, including utility payments.	2	Completion (design and implement)		120	?	What elements of the current contract include any portions of this?
42	#27: Add an online fee calculator.	2	Completion (design and implement)		16		Full integration and update 1,000 Hours
43	#28: During fee assessment evaluate and provide for full cost recovery for current and future technology needs.	2	Completion (design and implement); Incorporate in the budget process		10		
44	#29: Training for staff on current technology (onsite) including considering and onsite staff expert.	1	Completion (design and implement)		40		Potentially training included with current contract?
45	#29: Implement accountability measures and best practices for staff utilization of current and new technology.	2	Completion (design and implement)		20		
46	#30: Have onsite Development Services staff member take lead on technology training, needs, follow-ups, implementation, tracking, updates, issues, coordination.	2	Identify, train, and empower designated staff			SA Pay (5–10%) for six months based on staff salary	Consider special assignment pay for the staff lean on this project; likely six months
47	#31: Evaluate the current software services contract and potentially amend as necessary based on above needs.	2	Completion		8		Amendments may not be available, thus consideration of updated tech.
48	#32: Evaluate staff's technology equipment needs such as monitors, portable tools, etc.	2	Completion			\$5,000	

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/ Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
Budget/Fiscal Stability (Theme 1 Recommendations)							
49	#5: Fee Study	1	Completion (conduct every 1–2 years)		160	\$75,000 (OT)	Consulting fee, biannual process recommended, process initiated and includes Municode update. Costs for this should be part of cost recovery within developer fees etc.
50	#1: Increasing staffing in critical function areas	1	Completion and incorporate in the budget process		20		
51	#1: Assessment and providing competitive salary (comp analysis) and benefit packages (recruitment/retention program)	2	Completion (design and implement)		250	100,000 (OT)	
52	#6: New funding sources (grant writer, partnerships, shared services/positions/facilities)	2/3	Identify and complete key steps then measure gains in funding and other resources		20/200	\$20,000 (OG)	If using consultant as needed, hourly rate \$50 hr.
53	#3: Formalize development of performance measures based on best practices f/GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association)	2	Completion (design and implement)		40		
54	#30: CIP Plan	2	Track CIP with quarterly and annual reporting, including budget expenditure rate, for parks and recreation projects in design, under construction, and completed		200	\$75,000 (OT)	Consulting Fee (see item 18 above)
55	#4: Review and Adopt GFOA's four areas of Economic Development best practices.	1	Completion		80		
56	#2: Written Policies recommended by GFOA	2	Completion		60		

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

#	Priority/Recommendation	Priority Level (Tiers 1–3 per CG)	Potential Performance Measures	Lead/ Co-Lead	Estimated Time (Hours) Allocation	Estimated Fiscal Impact	Notes
Staffing and Reliance on Contract and Consultant Personnel (Theme 2 Recommendations)							
57	#7: Add an economic development specialist position	1	Completion		30		Pending reorganization?
58	#8: Adding administrative capacity (management analyst level or executive assistant)	1	Completion				Completed recently
59	#9: Assess and update process for collecting developer funds and payment of consultant invoices.	1	Completion				In process (based on new hire)
60	#10: Consider FTEs versus consulting services related to Public Works Engineering (including cost comparisons).	1	Completion		20		Potential cost savings
61	#11: New hire and retention program (with innovative approaches and marketing strategies).	2	Completion (design, implement, evaluate)		40		
62	#12: Consider Lean Innovation approaches within recruitment/retention and other areas of focus.	3	Completion		40	\$5,000	Training, Implementation
63	#13: Consider limited shared services with other local agencies.	2	Completion		40		Potential cost savings
	Total	Priority 1 25 Priority 2 31 Priority 3 7			2,483– 2,663 Hours	One-Time \$ Ongoing \$	<i>These additional hours do not reflect current duties and assignments.</i>

The following table is an important and recommended tool which can be utilized to support the City’s priority decisions and rankings.

Table 2—Top Ten Prioritization Methodologies

Methodology	Description
Balanced Approach	One size does not fit all. Spread the opportunities, resources, and funding throughout different goals.
Sequential Sense	Do not put the cart before the horse. Thoughtfully consider a plan and find efficient approaches to solving various challenges.
Input Considerations	Collect extensive and unbiased input from the community, volunteers, staff, and elected officials in a collaborative approach.
Data	Collect and analyze relevant data.
Fiscal Care	What can be funded and how can it support long-term fiscal stability?
Voting Priorities	Who was involved and how were the priorities determined? Utilize the voting in an appropriately weighted approach.
RICE Approach	<i>Reach</i> (how many people are impacted by this decision/choice), <i>Impact</i> (how are these people impacted; massively, high, medium, or low), <i>Confidence</i> (gut instincts and awareness to emotionally charged or politically sensitive situations), <i>Effort</i> (what will it take to really accomplish this goal).
Capacity	Understand limitations. Work towards appropriately growing capacity to meet the needs.
MoSCoW Approach	Determine “ <i>Must haves</i> ” for survival and safety; “ <i>Should haves</i> ” for efficient and effective approaches and goals that support priorities and the overall wellness of the community and organization; “ <i>Could haves</i> ” that will have to wait but are eventually desired; and “ <i>Won’t haves</i> ” that have no current resource allocation and are a low priority.
Desire/Passion Alignment	Does the work align with the culture, needs, and vision now and in the future?

APPENDIX B

CITY OF SANTA PAULA EMPLOYEE SURVEY SUMMARY

CITY OF SANTA PAULA EMPLOYEE SURVEY SUMMARY

1. OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) conducted an internet-based employee survey between January 10, 2024, and January 24, 2024, as part of our Process and Improvement Assessment for the Community and Economic Development Department for the City of Santa Paula, CA. Employees were invited by the City to participate in this survey. The survey deadline was extended to January 31, 2024.

Survey Summary	
Launch Date	January 10, 2024
Close Date	January 31, 2024
Total Responses	8

The survey consisted mostly of closed-ended statements with which employees could rate their level of agreement or the degree to which their expectations were met. In addition, employees were given an opportunity to provide written responses to an open-ended prompt.

Respondents were not required to answer every question. Additionally, they were permitted to respond “Don’t Know or N/A” to many statements, and these responses were excluded from the mean response calculations. Therefore, the response totals to a particular question may not always correspond with the total of eight completed surveys.

2. ORGANIZATION OF SUMMARY

The results for the survey are organized in the following order:

Division Experience

- ◆ Summary data regarding the division respondents work in.

Planning

- ◆ Scores for each statement response by respondents regarding Planning.

Building and Safety

- ◆ Scores for each statement response by respondents regarding Building and Safety.

Public Works Engineering

- ◆ Scores for each statement response by respondents regarding Public Works Engineering.

Open-Ended Prompt – Response Summary

- ◆ Each response which respondents provided to the open-ended prompt.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The terms defined below are encountered in the information that follows:

1. Mean: An arithmetic mean that is the sum of the responses for each statement divided by the number of responses for each statement.
2. Standard Deviation: Standard deviation expresses how spread apart the responses are from the arithmetic mean. A standard deviation close to zero indicates that most responses are close to the mean response and that a greater degree of agreement exists regarding the statement. A greater standard deviation indicates that there was a wider spread of variation in the responses and that a greater degree of disagreement exists regarding the statement.

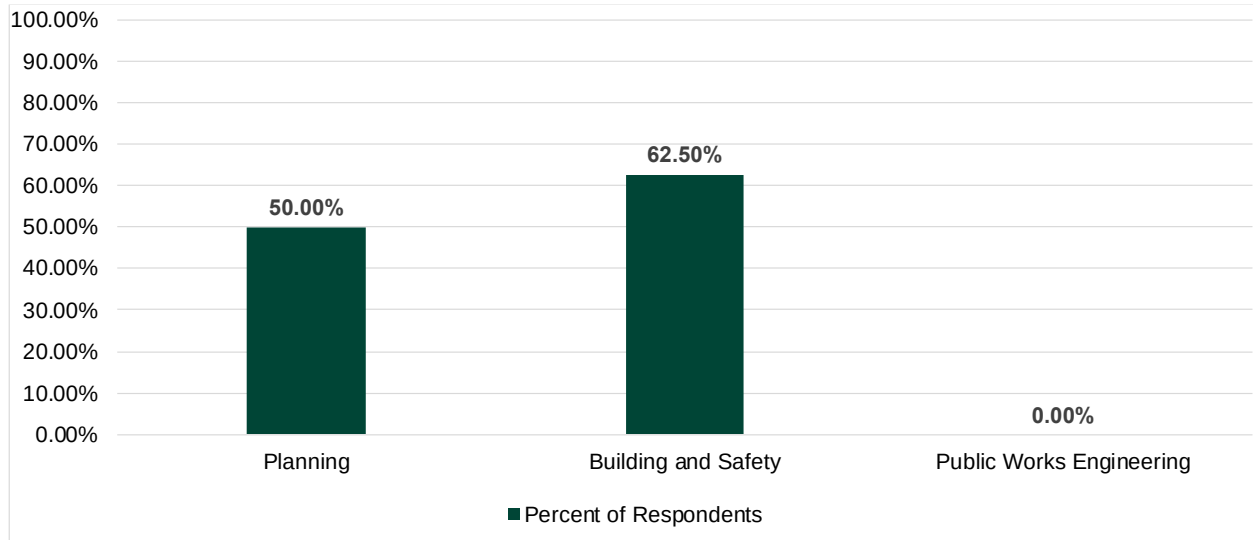
4. DIVISION EXPERIENCE

Please mark the division(s) in which you work:

Division	Number of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Planning	4	50.0%
Building and Safety	5	62.5%
Public Works Engineering	0	00.0%

This information is represented graphically in the following image.

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services



5. PLANNING

5.1 Meeting Expectations

The following statements were rated by all respondents regarding the Planning Division. Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

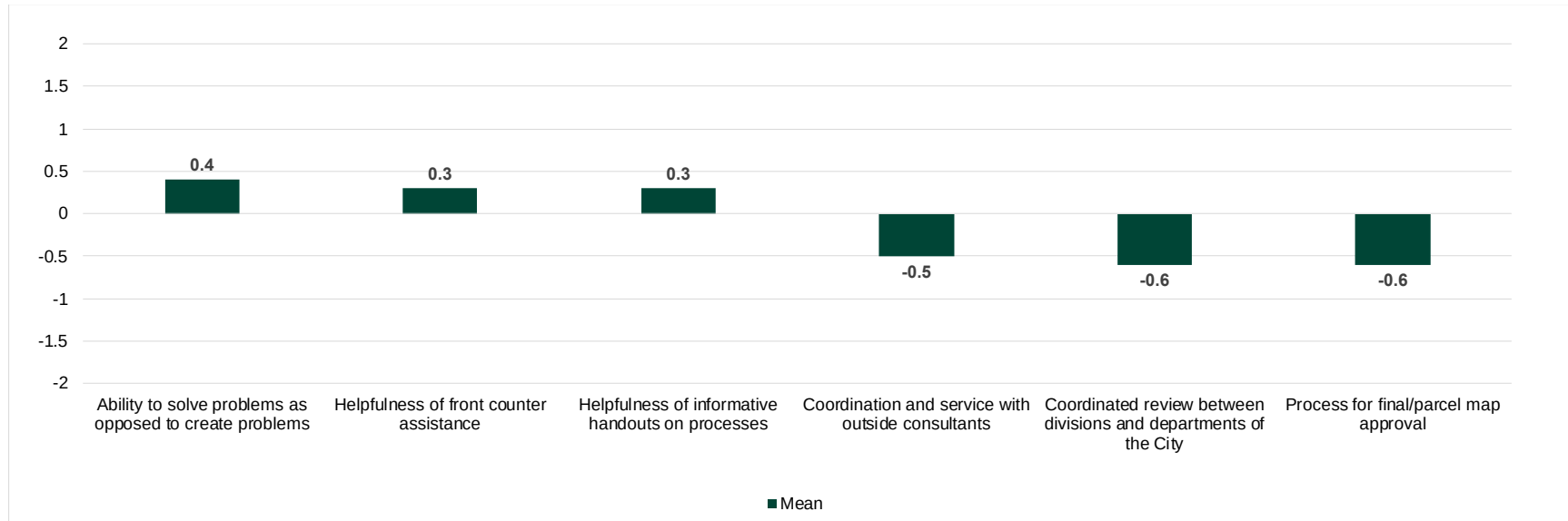
In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how the PLANNING DIVISION does in delivering your government services.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.4	0.7	0.0%	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.3	0.7	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.3	0.7	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations	0.3	1.0	12.5%	0.0%	37.5%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Clarity of codes and policies	0.1	0.6	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Professional courtesy	0.1	0.8	0.0%	12.5%	75.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.1	0.6	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Complexity of regulations	0.0	0.8	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Positive attitude	0.0	0.8	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Processing of 'minor' changes to plans	0.0	0.5	0.0%	12.5%	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Timeliness/number of re-checks	0.0	0.5	0.0%	12.5%	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	0.0	0.9	0.0%	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Ease of accessing a planner to discuss project	-0.1	0.6	0.0%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Providing complete process information at public counter	-0.1	1.0	12.5%	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	-0.1	1.0	12.5%	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Understanding of private business	-0.1	0.8	12.5%	0.0%	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	-0.3	0.7	0.0%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication on project status	-0.3	0.7	0.0%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Overall process	-0.3	0.7	0.0%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Fulfilling commitments	-0.4	0.9	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Process for tentative/parcel map approval	-0.4	0.7	0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner	-0.4	1.1	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coordination and service with outside consultants	-0.5	0.9	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.6	0.9	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Process for final/parcel map approval	-0.6	0.9	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%

In the following figure, the three highest ranked statements are graphed near the three lowest ranked statements.



5.2 Meeting Expectations – Comparison between Staff

In the following table, the results for each statement shown previously are again organized from highest to lowest mean score. However, in this table, columns have been added to compare (1) the mean score provided by staff within the Division, and (2) the mean score provided by staff outside the Division.

The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

Statement	All Respondents Mean	Division Staff Mean	Non-Division Staff Mean
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.4	0.8	0.0
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.3	0.5	0.0
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.3	0.0	0.5
Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations	0.3	0.5	0.0
Clarity of codes and policies	0.1	0.0	0.3
Professional courtesy	0.1	0.5	-0.3
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.1	0.3	0.0
Complexity of regulations	0.0	0.0	0.0
Positive attitude	0.0	0.5	-0.5
Processing of 'minor' changes to plans	0.0	0.0	0.0
Timeliness/number of re-checks	0.0	0.0	0.0
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	0.0	-0.8	0.8
Ease of accessing a planner to discuss project	-0.1	-0.5	0.3
Providing complete process information at public counter	-0.1	0.0	-0.3
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	-0.1	0.0	-0.3
Understanding of private business	-0.1	0.0	-0.3
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3
Communication on project status	-0.3	-0.8	0.3
Overall process	-0.3	-0.5	0.0
Fulfilling commitments	-0.4	-0.3	-0.5
Process for tentative/parcel map approval	-0.4	-0.8	0.0
Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner	-0.4	-0.3	-0.5
Coordination and service with outside consultants	-0.5	-0.8	-0.3
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.6	-1.0	-0.3
Process for final/parcel map approval	-0.6	-1.0	-0.3

5.3 Degree of Agreement

The following statements were rated by Planning Division respondents regarding their experience in the Planning Division. Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible degree of agreement is 2 (Strongly Agree). The lowest possible degree of agreement is -2 (Strongly Disagree). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

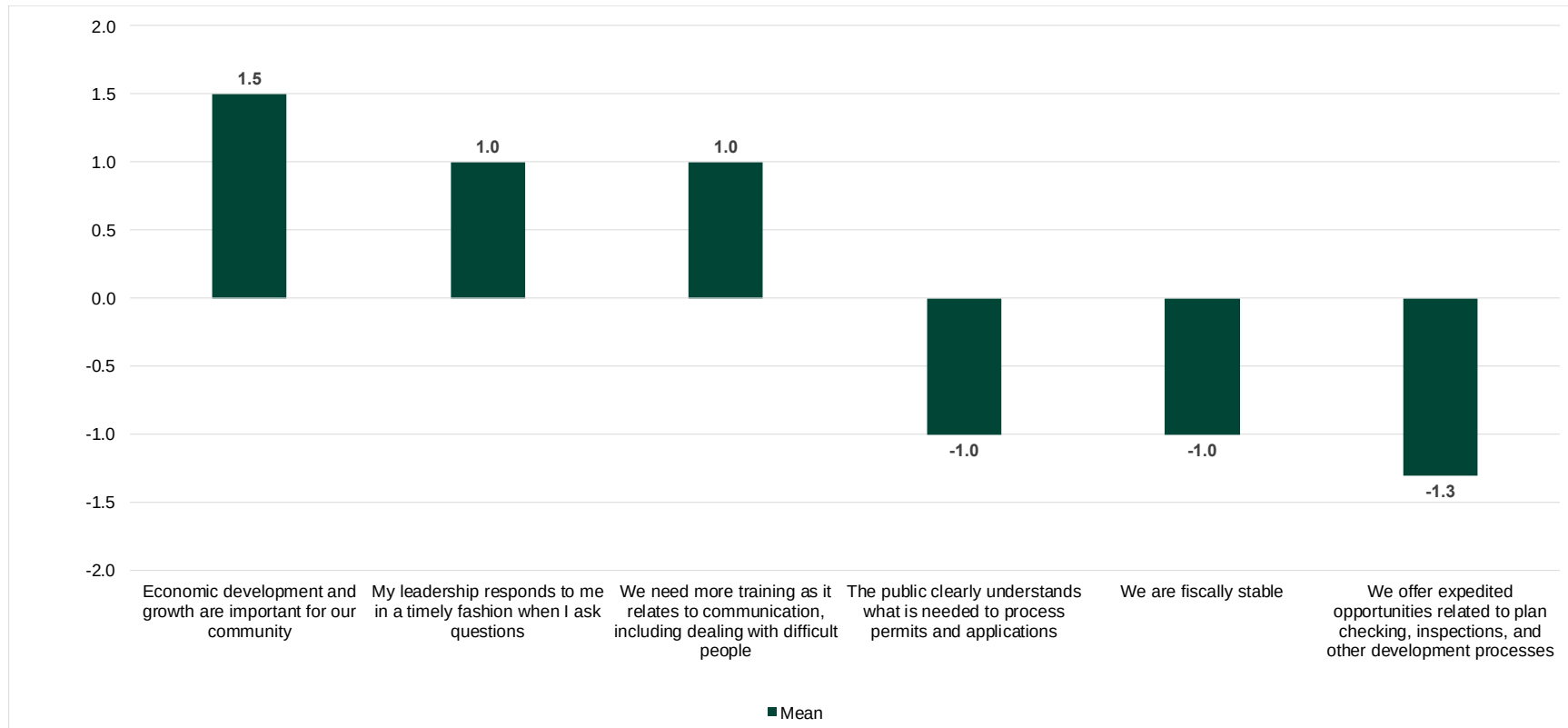
For the statements that follow, please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Strongly Disagree (-2)	% Disagree (-1)	% Neutral (0)	% Agree (1)	% Strongly Agree (2)	% Don't Know / N/A
Economic development and growth are important for our community	1.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
My leadership responds to me in a timely fashion when I ask questions	1.0	0.8	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%
We need more training as it relates to communication, including dealing with difficult people	1.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We understand what excellent service is	1.0	0.8	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%
My supervisor or manager trusts me	0.8	1.9	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%
We do a good job connecting and communicating with the community	0.8	1.0	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Communication with leadership is respectful	0.5	1.7	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%
The City's vision is clear	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The City Council and staff work well together	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The City's organizational goals are clear	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We are a risk-averse community/city	0.3	1.0	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We are flexible, agile, and open to creative solutions	0.3	1.5	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We communicate well about development review processes	0.3	1.0	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We provide excellent service	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Division or Department goals are clear	0.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We have good standard management practices in place	0.0	0.8	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Strongly Disagree (-2)	% Disagree (-1)	% Neutral (0)	% Agree (1)	% Strongly Agree (2)	% Don't Know / N/A
Innovation is an important part of the City's planning processes	-0.3	1.0	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Standard operating procedures for application and review processes are effective	-0.5	1.0	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We are provided with training opportunities	-0.5	1.7	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
We do a good job promoting and marketing offerings and opportunities to the community	-0.7	0.6	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
The training opportunities available to me are sufficient to support my needs	-0.8	1.3	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The public clearly understands what is needed to process permits and applications	-1.0	0.8	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We are fiscally stable	-1.0	1.4	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We offer expedited opportunities related to plan checking, inspections, and other development processes	-1.3	1.0	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

In the following figure, the three highest ranked statements are graphed near the three lowest ranked statements.



6. BUILDING AND SAFETY

6.1 Meeting Expectations

The following statements were rated by all respondents regarding the Building and Safety Division. Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

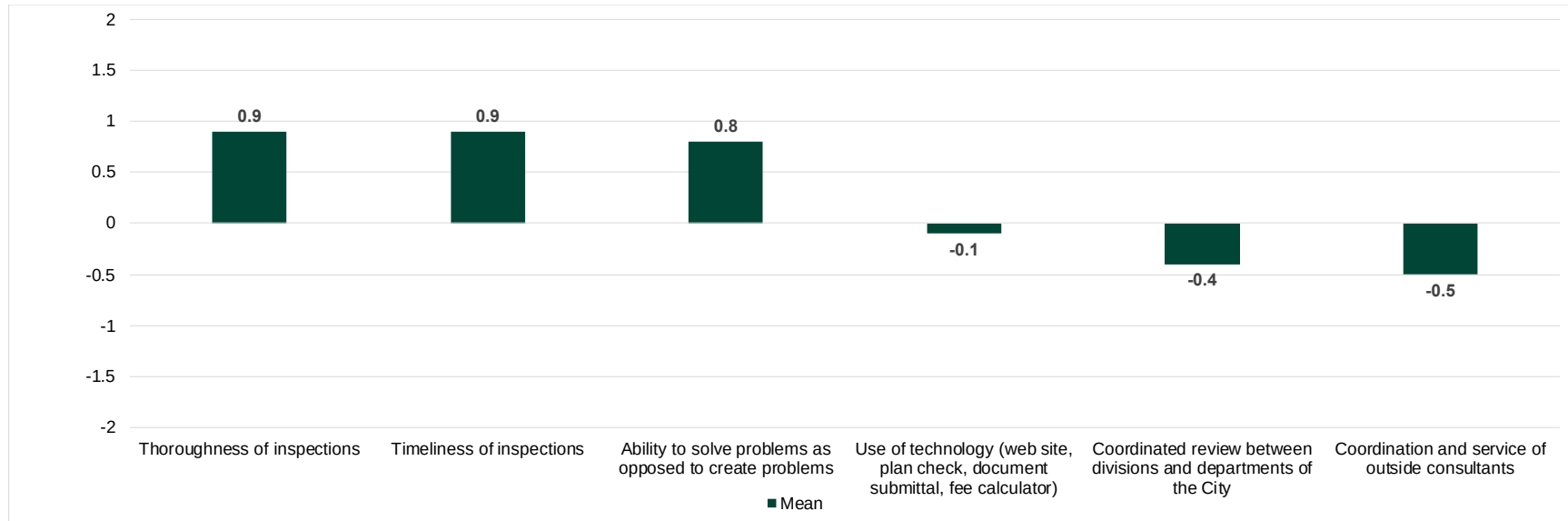
In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how the BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION does in delivering your government services.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Thoroughness of inspections	0.9	0.4	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Timeliness of inspections	0.9	0.4	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.8	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Knowledge of building and safety	0.8	0.7	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Providing complete upfront information regarding inspections	0.8	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.6	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.6	0.7	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Overall process	0.6	0.9	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	0.6	0.7	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.6	0.9	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Clarity of regulations	0.5	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ease of accessing Building staff to discuss project	0.5	0.8	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Complexity of regulations	0.4	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Positive attitude	0.4	0.9	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Professional courtesy	0.4	0.7	0.0%	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing complete process information at public counter	0.4	0.9	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Thoroughness of plan review	0.4	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.3	0.9	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	0.3	0.7	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication on project status	0.1	0.8	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Fulfilling commitments	0.1	0.8	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Understanding of private business	0.1	1.0	12.5%	0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	-0.1	1.2	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.4	0.9	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Coordination and service of outside consultants	-0.5	1.1	12.5%	50.0%	12.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%

In the following figure, the three highest ranked statements are graphed near the three lowest ranked statements.



6.2 Meeting Expectations – Comparison between Staff

In the following table, the results for each statement shown previously are again organized from highest to lowest mean score. However, in this table, columns have been added to compare (1) the mean score provided by staff within the Division, and (2) the mean score provided by staff outside the Division.

The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

Statement	All Respondents Mean	Division Staff Mean	Non-Division Staff Mean
Thoroughness of inspections	0.9	1.0	0.7
Timeliness of inspections	0.9	1.0	0.7
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.8	1.0	0.3
Knowledge of building and safety	0.8	0.8	0.7
Providing complete upfront information regarding inspections	0.8	1.0	0.3
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.6	0.8	0.3
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.6	1.0	0.0
Overall process	0.6	1.0	0.0
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	0.6	0.8	0.3
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.6	0.8	0.3
Clarity of regulations	0.5	0.6	0.3
Ease of accessing Building staff to discuss project	0.5	0.6	0.3
Complexity of regulations	0.4	0.6	0.0
Positive attitude	0.4	1.0	-0.7
Professional courtesy	0.4	0.8	-0.3
Providing complete process information at public counter	0.4	0.8	-0.3
Thoroughness of plan review	0.4	0.6	0.0
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.3	0.6	-0.3
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	0.3	0.6	-0.3
Communication on project status	0.1	0.6	-0.7
Fulfilling commitments	0.1	0.6	-0.7
Understanding of private business	0.1	0.0	0.3
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	-0.1	0.4	-1.0
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3
Coordination and service of outside consultants	-0.5	-0.4	-0.7

6.3 Degree of Agreement

The following statements were rated by Building and Safety respondents regarding their experience in the Building and Safety Division. Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible degree of agreement is 2 (Strongly Agree). The lowest possible degree of agreement is -2 (Strongly Disagree). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

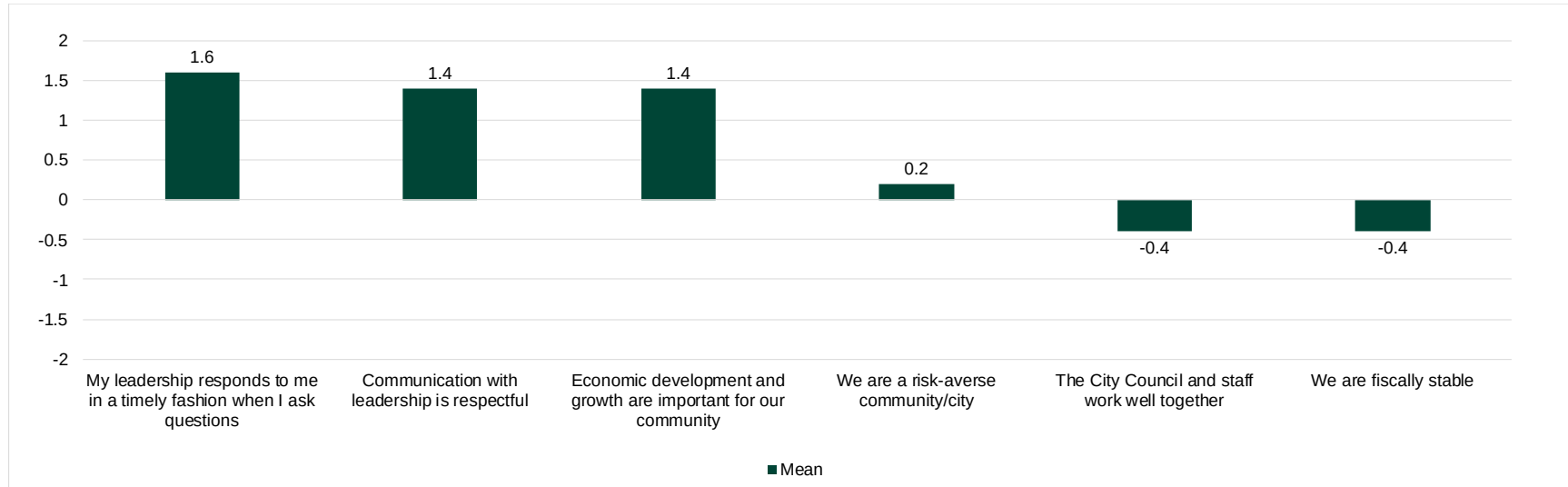
For the statements that follow, please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Strongly Disagree (-2)	% Disagree (-1)	% Neutral (0)	% Agree (1)	% Strongly Agree (2)	% Don't Know / N/A
My leadership responds to me in a timely fashion when I ask questions	1.6	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%
Communication with leadership is respectful	1.4	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%
Economic development and growth are important for our community	1.4	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%
My supervisor or manager trusts me	1.4	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%
We communicate well about development review processes	1.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Division or Department goals are clear	1.2	0.8	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%
We have good standard management practices in place	1.2	0.8	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%
We understand what excellent service is	1.2	0.4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%
We are flexible, agile, and open to creative solutions	1.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We do a good job connecting and communicating with the community	1.0	0.7	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%
We provide excellent service	1.0	0.7	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Innovation is an important part of the City's permitting process	0.8	0.4	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Standard operating procedures for application and review processes are effective	0.8	1.1	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%
We do a good job promoting and marketing offerings and opportunities to the community	0.8	1.0	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
We offer expedited opportunities related to plan check, inspections, and other development processes	0.8	0.8	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Strongly Disagree (-2)	% Disagree (-1)	% Neutral (0)	% Agree (1)	% Strongly Agree (2)	% Don't Know / N/A
We need more training as it relates to communication, including dealing with difficult people	0.6	1.1	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
The City's organizational goals are clear	0.4	1.5	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
The City's vision is clear	0.4	1.3	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The public clearly understands what is needed to process permits and applications	0.4	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We are provided with training opportunities	0.4	1.5	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
The training opportunities available to me are sufficient to support my needs	0.2	1.6	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
We are a risk-averse community/city	0.2	0.8	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The City Council and staff work well together	-0.4	0.9	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
We are fiscally stable	-0.4	1.3	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%

In the following figure, the three highest ranked statements are graphed near the three lowest ranked statements.



7. PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING

7.1 Meeting Expectations

The following statements were rated by all respondents regarding the Public Works Engineering Division. Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality. *No Public Works Engineering staff completed the survey.*

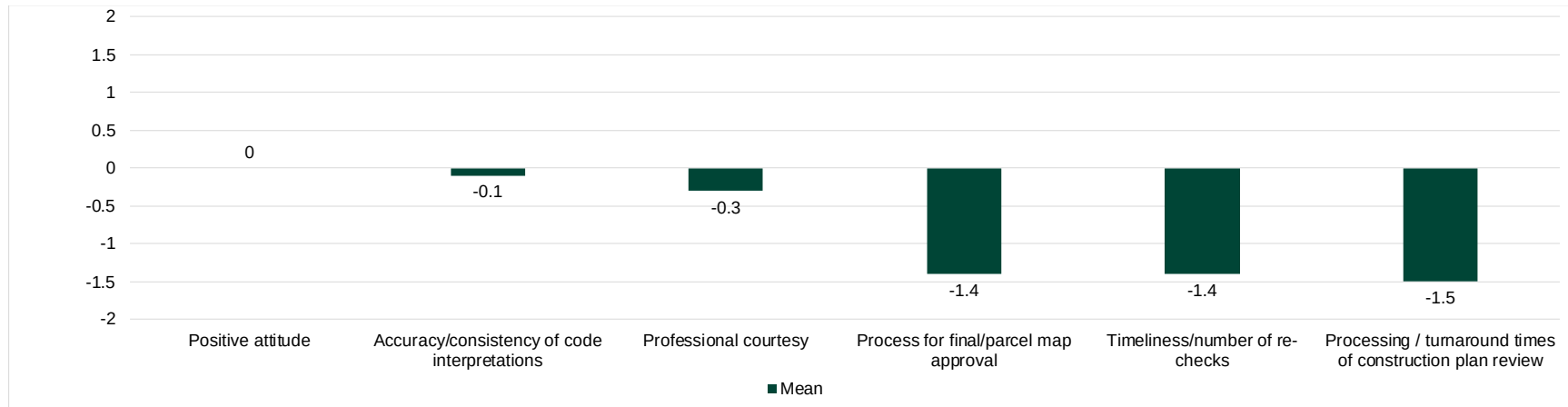
In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how the PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING section does in delivering your government services.

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Positive attitude	0.0	0.5	0.0%	12.5%	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	-0.1	0.4	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Professional courtesy	-0.3	0.5	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	-0.4	0.5	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information by staff	-0.4	0.9	12.5%	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Complexity of regulations	-0.5	0.9	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing complete process information by staff	-0.5	0.9	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Clarity of codes and policies	-0.6	0.7	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ease of accessing Public Works staff to discuss project	-0.6	1.1	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Knowledge of public works engineering	-0.6	1.1	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Understanding of private business	-0.6	0.9	25.0%	12.5%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	-0.8	0.7	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	-0.8	0.9	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Fulfilling commitments	-0.9	0.6	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Overall process	-0.9	1.1	37.5%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information by consultants	-0.9	0.8	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coordination and service with outside consultants	-1.0	0.9	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	-1.0	0.8	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing complete process information by consultants	-1.0	0.8	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	-1.0	0.9	25.0%	62.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication on project status	-1.1	0.8	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-1.1	1.1	50.0%	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Processing of 'minor' changes to plans	-1.3	0.7	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Process for final/parcel map approval	-1.4	0.8	50.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Timeliness/number of re-checks	-1.4	0.5	37.5%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Processing / turnaround times of construction plan review	-1.5	0.5	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

In the following figure, the three highest ranked statements are graphed near the three lowest ranked statements.



7.2 Meeting Expectations – Comparison between Staff

Since no staff from Public Works Engineering completed the survey, no comparison can be made between their responses and the responses of others.

7.3 Degree of Agreement

Since no staff from Public Works Engineering completed the survey, there are no data to report.

8. OPEN-ENDED PROMPT – RESPONSE SUMMARY

The following tables show summaries of responses to the open-ended employee survey prompt.

Please add any specific comments or suggestions you may have for improving services in your division or the Economic Development or Community Development Department overall.

Count	Comment
3	More staff are needed.
1	Building and Safety need a Building Inspector and another Permit Technician.
1	Communication with different departments needs to be united. There are solutions for everything and more efficient ways always to complete tasks.
1	Documented standard operating procedures are needed.
1	More fiscal resources are needed.
1	Permitting software should include customer login for project status to reduce calls and emails to staff.
1	Public Works Department turnaround times need to be faster.
1	Reliance on outside consultants is inefficient and costly.
1	The permitting software needs to be running effectively to increase staff effectiveness.

APPENDIX C

CITY OF SANTA PAULA STAKEHOLDER SURVEY SUMMARY

CITY OF SANTA PAULA STAKEHOLDER SURVEY SUMMARY

OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate) conducted an internet-based stakeholder survey between January 10, 2024, and January 31, 2024, as part of our Process and Improvement Assessment for the Community and Economic Development Department for the City of Santa Paula, CA. Stakeholders were invited by the City to participate in this survey. The survey deadline was extended to February 7, 2024.

Survey Summary	
Launch Date	January 10, 2024
Close Date	February 7, 2024
Total Responses	50

Apart from basic stakeholder informational questions, the survey primarily consisted of closed-ended statements for which customers could rate the acceptability of services they received from the City from Unacceptable (-2) to Far Exceeds Expectations (2). The survey then provided several other service-oriented statements for which customers were asked to respond, and finally concluded with an opportunity to provide open-ended feedback.

Customers were not required to answer every question. Additionally, “Don’t Know or N/A” responses were excluded from the mean response calculations. Therefore, the response totals to a particular question may not always correspond with the total of 50 completed surveys.

ORGANIZATION OF SUMMARY

The results for the survey are organized in the following order:

Basic Information Results

- ◆ Response summary for customer informational questions.

Service Acceptability Responses – Planning

- ◆ Scores for each closed-ended statement regarding the planning function, organized from highest to lowest mean score.

Service Acceptability Responses – Building and Safety

- ◆ Scores for each closed-ended statement regarding the building and safety function, organized from highest to lowest mean score.

Service Acceptability Responses – Public Works Engineering

- ◆ Scores for each closed-ended statement regarding the engineering function, organized from highest to lowest mean score.

Service Acceptability Responses – Economic Development

- ◆ Scores for each closed-ended statement regarding the economic development function, organized from highest to lowest mean score.

General Service-Oriented and Quality of Life Statement Summary

- ◆ Several general service-oriented and quality of life statements and a summary of customer responses.

Open-Ended Prompt Summary

- ◆ The prompts for which customers provided an open-ended response, with answers arranged by frequency.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The terms defined below are encountered in the information that follows:

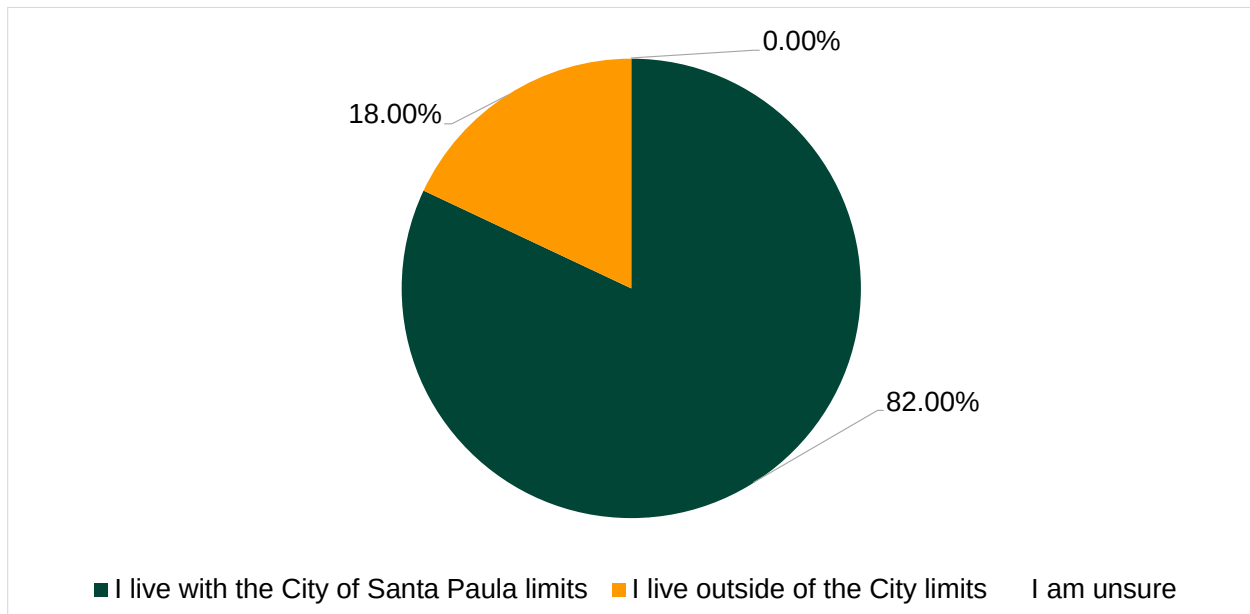
1. Mean: An arithmetic mean that is the sum of the responses for each statement divided by the number of responses for each statement.
2. Standard Deviation: Standard deviation indicates how spread out the responses are from the arithmetic mean. A standard deviation close to zero indicates that most responses are close to the mean response and that a greater degree of agreement exists regarding the statement. A greater standard deviation indicates that there was a wider spread of variation in the responses and that a greater degree of disagreement exists regarding the statement.

BASIC INFORMATION RESULTS

Please specify where you live:

Category	Count	Percent of Respondents
I live within the City of Santa Paula limits	41	82.0%
I live outside of the City limits	9	18.0%
I am unsure	0	0.0%

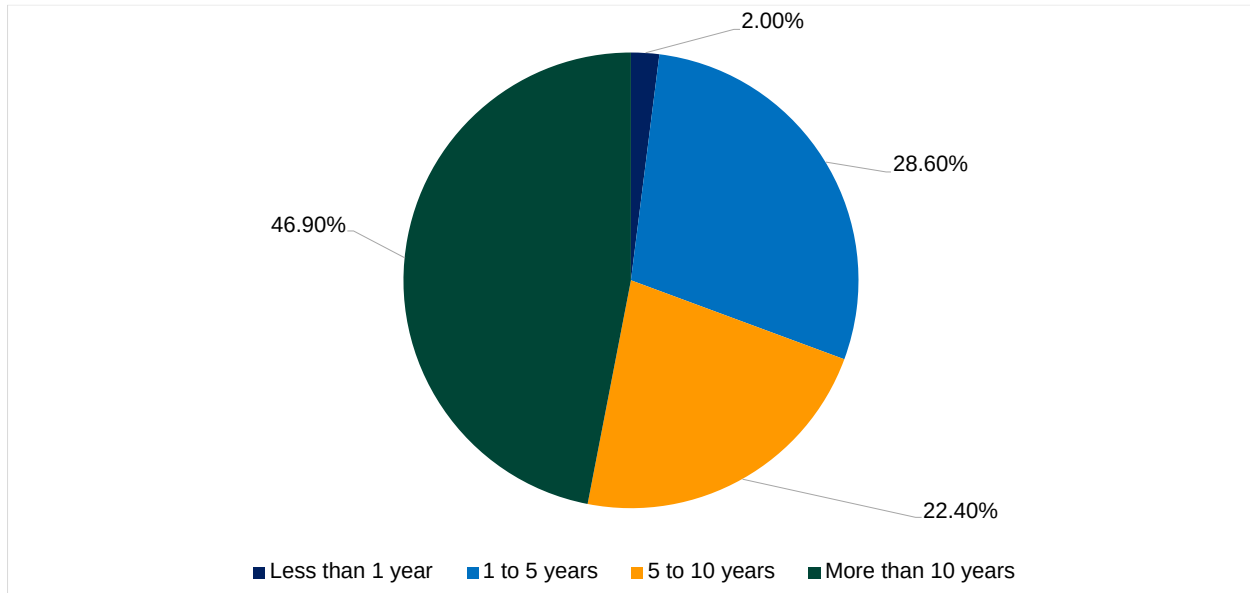
This information is represented graphically in the following image.



I have been living here for:

Category	Count	Percent of Respondents
Less than 1 year	1	2.0%
1 to 5 years	14	28.6%
5 to 10 years	11	22.4%
More than 10 years	23	46.9%

This information is represented graphically in the following image.



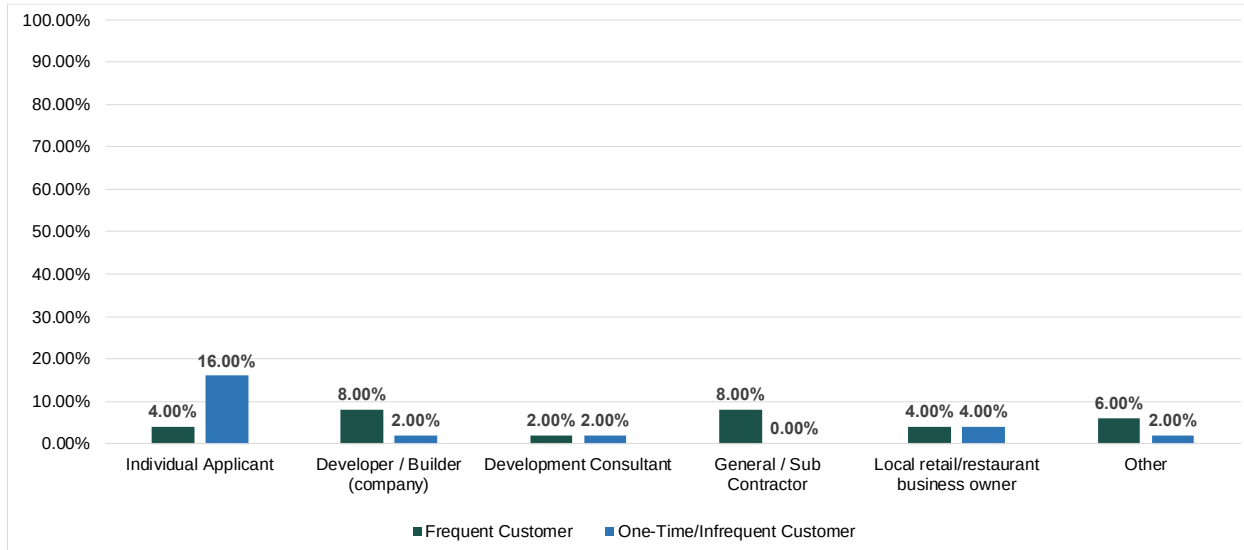
Have you been a customer of the Community and Economic Development Department, or of the Engineering Division in the Public Works Department, within the past two years? Examples include obtaining planning (i.e., land use), building, and public works engineering permit approvals from the City. Examples also include starting a business, tenant improvement processes, obtaining a business license, special events, art projects, filming in the City, tourism, demographic and market data, business site selection assistance, housing assistance programs, etc.

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	17	34.0%
No	33	66.0%

Please mark below all categories that apply to you as a customer:

Category	Frequent Customer	Percent of Respondents	One-Time/Infrequent Customer	Percent of Respondents
Individual Applicant	2	4.0%	8	16.0%
Developer / Builder (company)	4	8.0%	1	2.0%
Development Consultant	1	2.0%	1	2.0%
General / Sub Contractor	4	8.0%	0	0.0%
Local retail/restaurant business owner	2	4.0%	2	4.0%
Other	3	6.0%	1	2.0%

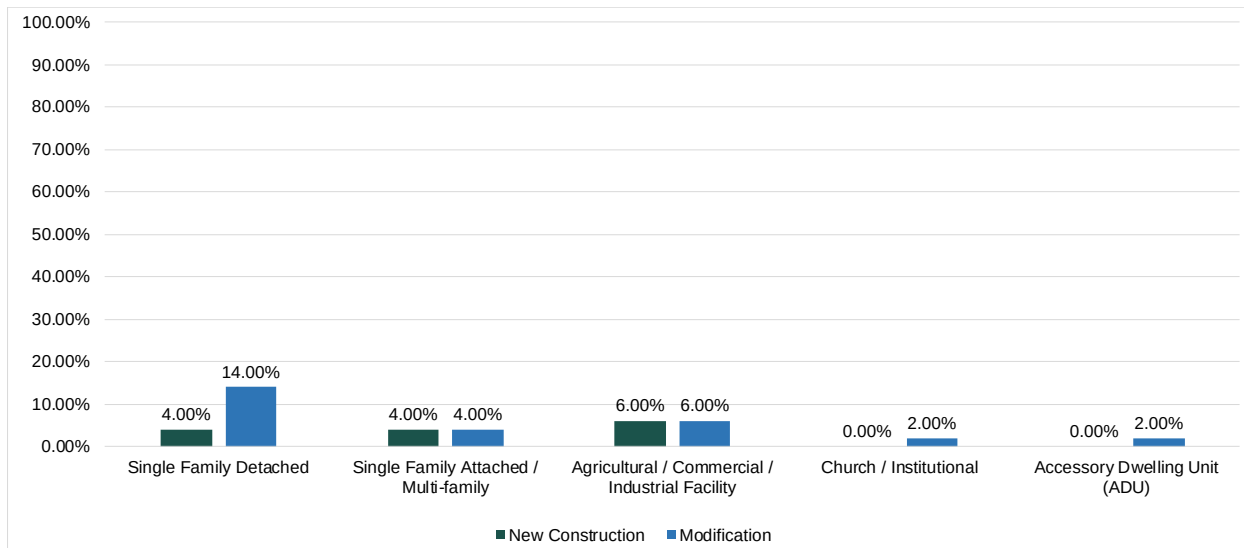
This information is represented graphically in the following image.



Type of project(s) involved with:

Project Type	New Construction	Percent of Respondents	Modification	Percent of Respondents
Single Family Detached	2	4.0%	7	14.0%
Single Family Attached / Multi-family	2	4.0%	2	4.0%
Agricultural / Commercial / Industrial Facility	3	6.0%	3	6.0%
Church / Institutional	0	0.0%	1	2.0%
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	0	0.0%	1	2.0%

This information is represented graphically in the following image.



PLANNING

Have you had business with PLANNING over the past two years? Examples include evaluating all types of development applications, maintaining the City's development regulations, and providing information to the public.

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	10	58.8%
No	7	41.2%

Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

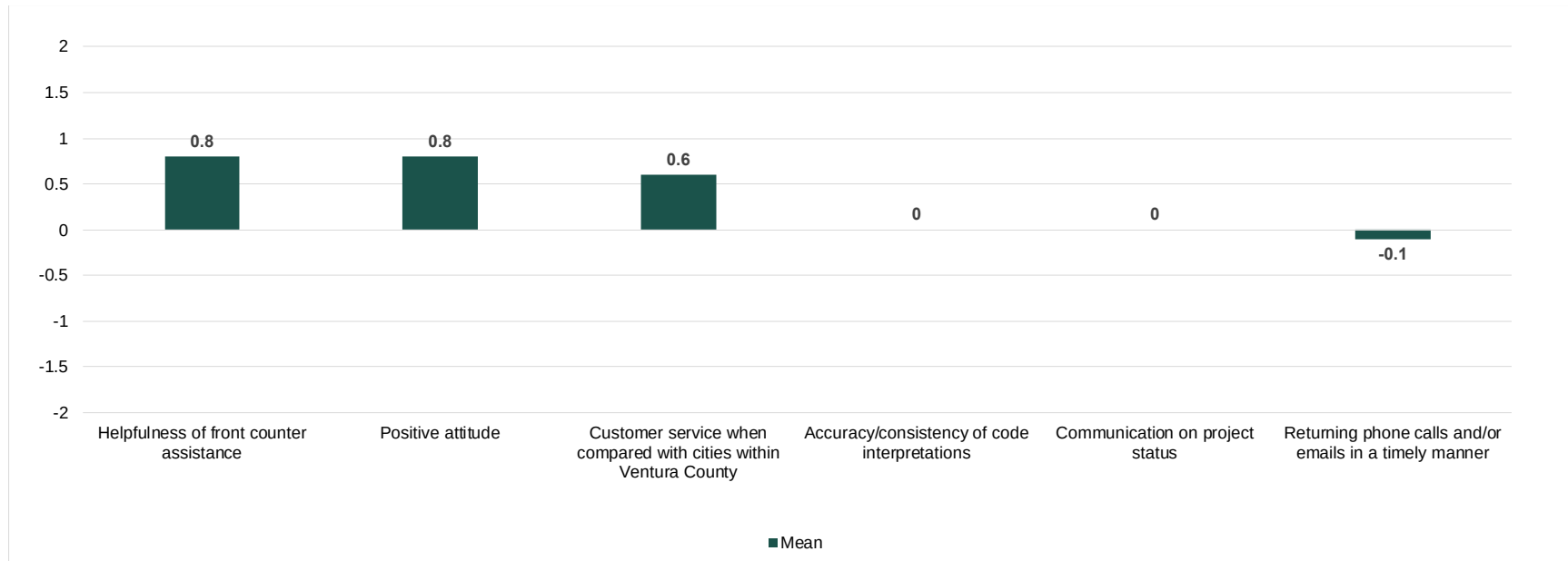
*In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how **PLANNING** compares to your expectations for government service.*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.8	0.9	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	50.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Positive attitude	0.8	1.0	0.0%	10.0%	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%	0.0%
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	0.6	1.1	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Process for final/parcel map approval	0.6	1.3	10.0%	0.0%	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Professional courtesy	0.6	1.0	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations	0.5	1.0	0.0%	10.0%	50.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Understanding of private business	0.5	0.9	0.0%	11.1%	33.3%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	0.4	1.4	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	30.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.4	1.1	0.0%	22.2%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%
Process for tentative/parcel map approval	0.4	1.3	11.1%	0.0%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%
Providing complete process information at public counter	0.4	1.4	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	0.4	1.4	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.3	1.4	20.0%	0.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Complexity of regulations	0.3	1.3	10.0%	10.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Coordination and service with outside consultants	0.3	1.3	11.1%	0.0%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Fulfilling commitments	0.3	1.3	0.0%	40.0%	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.3	1.3	10.0%	10.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Cost of processing application (fees)	0.2	1.0	0.0%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
Overall process	0.2	1.5	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%	10.0%	30.0%	0.0%
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	0.2	1.2	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Clarity of codes and policies	0.1	1.2	11.1%	11.1%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
Ease of accessing a planner to discuss project	0.1	1.4	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Processing of 'minor' changes to plans	0.1	1.4	11.1%	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%
Timeliness/number of re-checks	0.1	1.5	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	44.4%	11.1%	0.0%
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.0	1.3	22.2%	0.0%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
Communication on project status	0.0	1.5	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner	-0.1	1.4	10.0%	50.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%

The three highest and lowest scored items are represented graphically in the following image.



BUILDING AND SAFETY

Have you had business with BUILDING AND SAFETY during the past two years? Examples include building permit processing, building plan check, building inspection, etc.

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	12	70.6%
No	5	29.4%

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

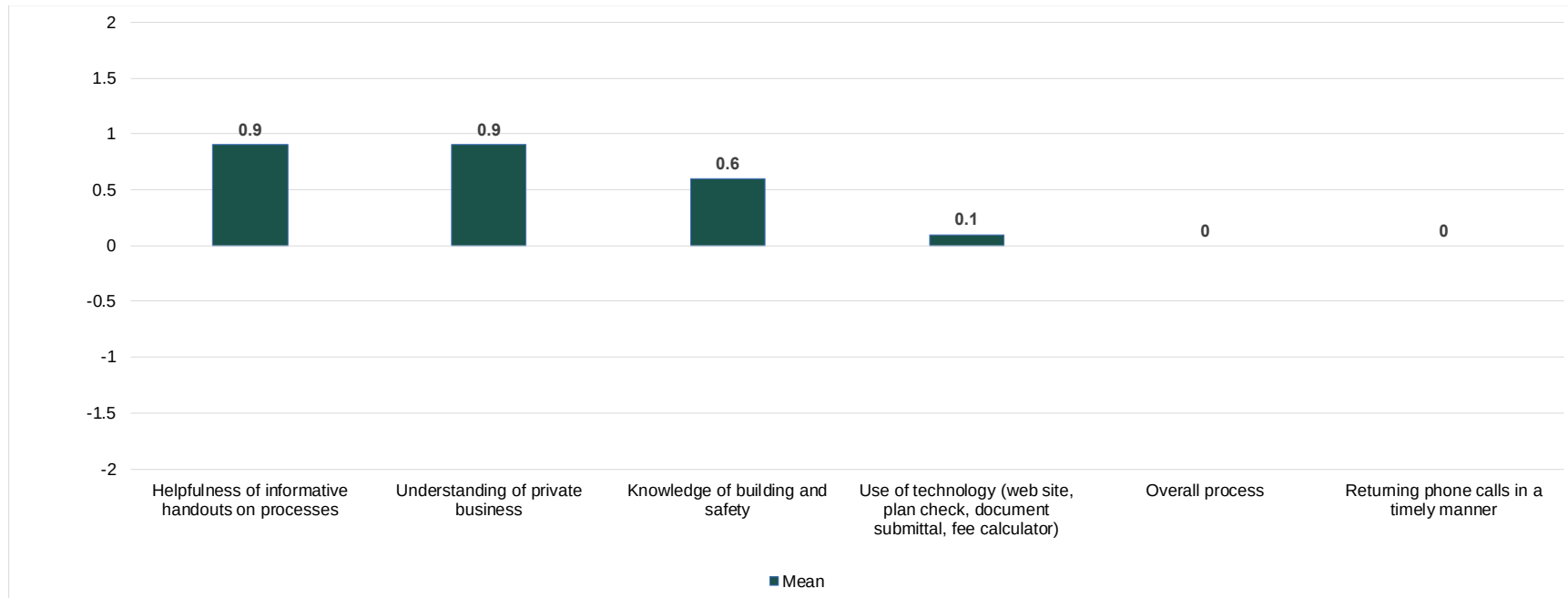
*In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how **BUILDING AND SAFETY** compares to your expectations for government service.*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	0.9	1.1	0.0%	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	27.3%	27.3%
Understanding of private business	0.9	0.9	0.0%	0.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	30.0%
Knowledge of building and safety	0.6	0.7	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	41.7%	8.3%	0.0%
Positive attitude	0.5	0.9	0.0%	9.1%	45.5%	27.3%	18.2%	0.0%
Professional courtesy	0.5	1.2	9.1%	9.1%	27.3%	36.4%	18.2%	0.0%
Providing complete process information at public counter	0.5	1.3	9.1%	9.1%	27.3%	27.3%	27.3%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information at public counter	0.5	1.2	9.1%	9.1%	27.3%	36.4%	18.2%	0.0%
Timeliness of inspections	0.5	1.2	8.3%	0.0%	41.7%	16.7%	25.0%	8.3%
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.4	1.2	9.1%	9.1%	36.4%	27.3%	18.2%	0.0%
Complexity of regulations	0.4	1.1	0.0%	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	0.4	1.4	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Coordination and service of outside consultants	0.4	1.3	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%	20.0%	30.0%
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	0.4	1.3	9.1%	0.0%	18.2%	27.3%	9.1%	36.4%
Fulfilling commitments	0.4	1.4	9.1%	18.2%	27.3%	18.2%	27.3%	0.0%
Thoroughness of inspections	0.4	1.2	10.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Clarity of regulations	0.3	1.3	10.0%	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Communication on project status	0.3	1.4	20.0%	0.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.3	1.4	20.0%	0.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.2	1.4	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Helpfulness of front counter assistance	0.2	1.2	9.1%	18.2%	27.3%	36.4%	9.1%	0.0%
Thoroughness of plan review	0.2	1.2	10.0%	10.0%	50.0%	10.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Cost of processing applications (fees)	0.1	1.4	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Ease of accessing Building staff to discuss project	0.1	1.2	18.2%	0.0%	45.5%	27.3%	9.1%	0.0%
Providing complete upfront information regarding inspections	0.1	1.3	18.2%	0.0%	54.5%	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	0.1	1.4	20.0%	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Overall process	0.0	1.3	18.2%	9.1%	45.5%	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	0.0	1.2	10.0%	30.0%	20.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%

The three highest and lowest scored items are represented graphically in the following image.



ENGINEERING

Have you had business with the PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING DIVISION over the past two years? Examples include grading, plan review, final map approval, etc.

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	4	23.5%
No	13	76.5%

Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

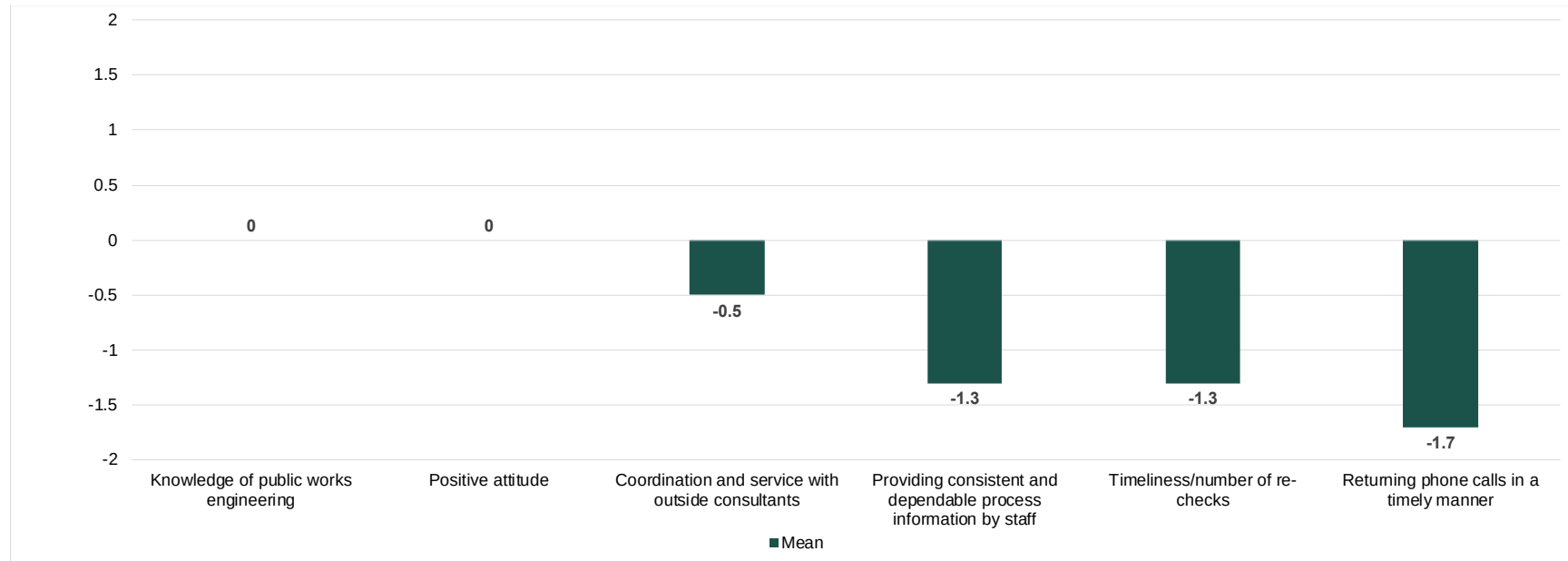
*In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how **PUBLIC WORKS ENGINEERING DIVISION** compares to your expectations for government service.*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Knowledge of public works engineering	0.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Positive attitude	0.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coordination and service with outside consultants	-0.5	0.7	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes	-0.5	0.7	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	-0.7	0.6	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	-0.7	1.2	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Professional courtesy	-0.7	0.6	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Understanding of private business	-0.7	1.2	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)	-0.7	1.2	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Clarity of codes and policies	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Complexity of regulations	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	-1.0	1.4	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Ease of accessing Public Works staff to discuss project	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fulfilling commitments	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
 Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Overall process	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Processing of 'minor' changes to plans	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information by consultants	-1.0	1.4	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	-1.0	1.0	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication on project status	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cost of processing application (fees)	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Process for final/parcel map approval	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Processing / turnaround times of construction plan review	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing complete process information by consultants	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing complete process information by staff	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing consistent and dependable process information by staff	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Timeliness/number of re-checks	-1.3	1.2	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Returning phone calls in a timely manner	-1.7	0.6	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The three highest and lowest scored items are represented graphically in the following image.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Have you had business with ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT over the past two years?

Examples include starting a business, tenant improvement processes, obtaining a business license, special events, art projects, filming in the City, tourism, demographic and market data, business site selection assistance, housing assistance programs, etc.

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	5	29.4%
No	12	70.6%

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Results for each statement are organized from highest to lowest mean score. The highest possible assessment is 2 (Far Exceeds Expectations). The lowest possible assessment is -2 (Unacceptable). A score of 0 represents neutrality.

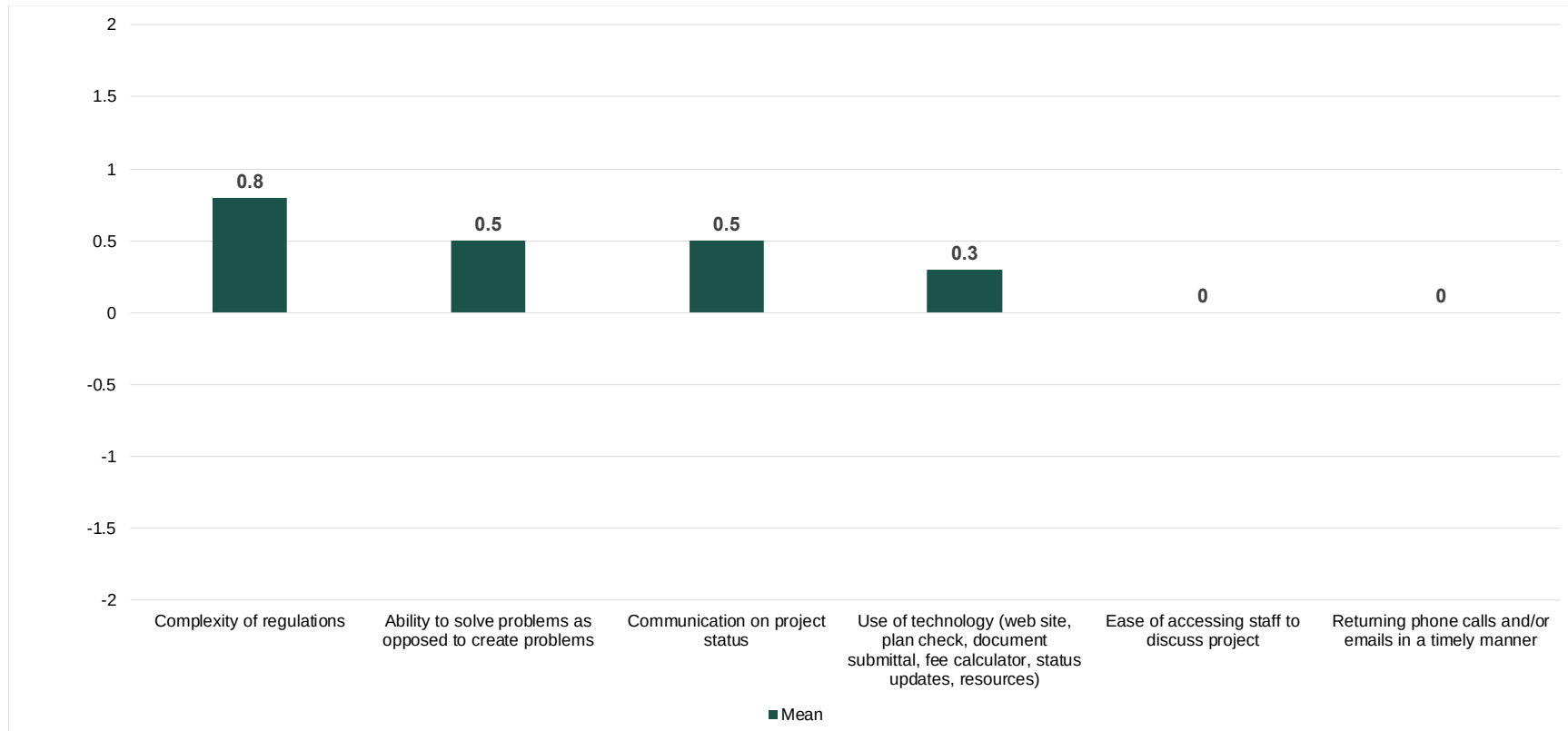
*In the statements that follow, please select the answer that best represents your assessment of how **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** compares to your expectations for government service.*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Complexity of regulations	0.8	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ability to solve problems as opposed to create problems	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Communication on project status	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cost of processing application(s), licence(s), and permit(s) (fees)	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Customer service when compared with cities within Ventura County	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Expertise related to economic development processes	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Fulfilling commitments	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of resource guides on processes	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of staff	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Overall process	0.5	1.0	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Positive attitude	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Professional courtesy	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Providing complete process information	0.5	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations	0.3	1.0	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Clarity of codes and policies	0.3	1.0	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Unacceptable (-2)	% Below Expectations (-1)	% Met Expectations (0)	% Above Expectations (1)	% Far Exceeds Expectations (2)	% N/A
Coordinated review between divisions and departments of the City	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness of demographic and market data	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Offerings of housing assistance programs	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Responsiveness to / consideration of customer concerns	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Support for business site selection	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Support for special events	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Support for starting a business	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Support for tourism opportunities	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Timeliness of processes	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Timely art project processes	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Timely filming project processes	0.3	0.6	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Understanding of private business	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Use of technology (web site, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator, status updates, resources)	0.3	0.5	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ease of accessing staff to discuss project	0.0	0.8	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner	0.0	0.8	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The three highest and lowest scored items are represented graphically in the following image.

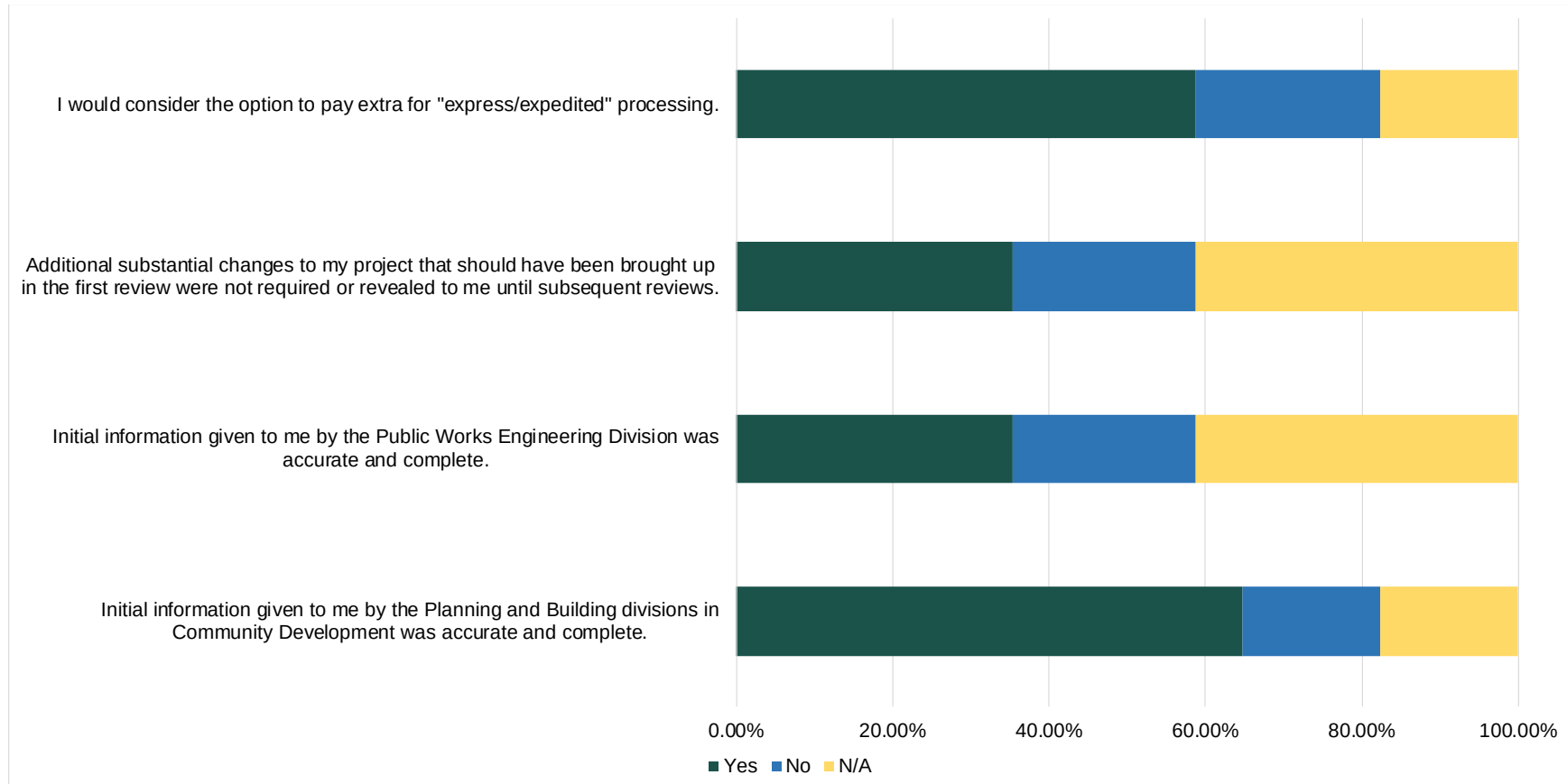


OVERALL DEPARTMENT AND PERMIT PROCESS QUESTIONS

Please respond to the following statements:

Statement	Yes	Percent of Respondents	No	Percent of Respondents	N/A	Percent of Respondents
Initial information given to me by the Planning and Building divisions in Community Development was accurate and complete.	11	64.7%	3	17.6%	3	17.6%
Initial information given to me by the Public Works Engineering Division was accurate and complete.	6	35.3%	4	23.5%	7	41.2%
Additional substantial changes to my project that should have been brought up in the first review were not required or revealed to me until subsequent reviews.	6	35.3%	4	23.5%	7	41.2%
I would consider the option to pay extra for 'express/expedited' processing.	10	58.8%	4	23.5%	3	17.6%
I would consider the option to pay increased fees if it would increase timeliness and quality of work.	7	41.2%	7	41.2%	3	17.6%

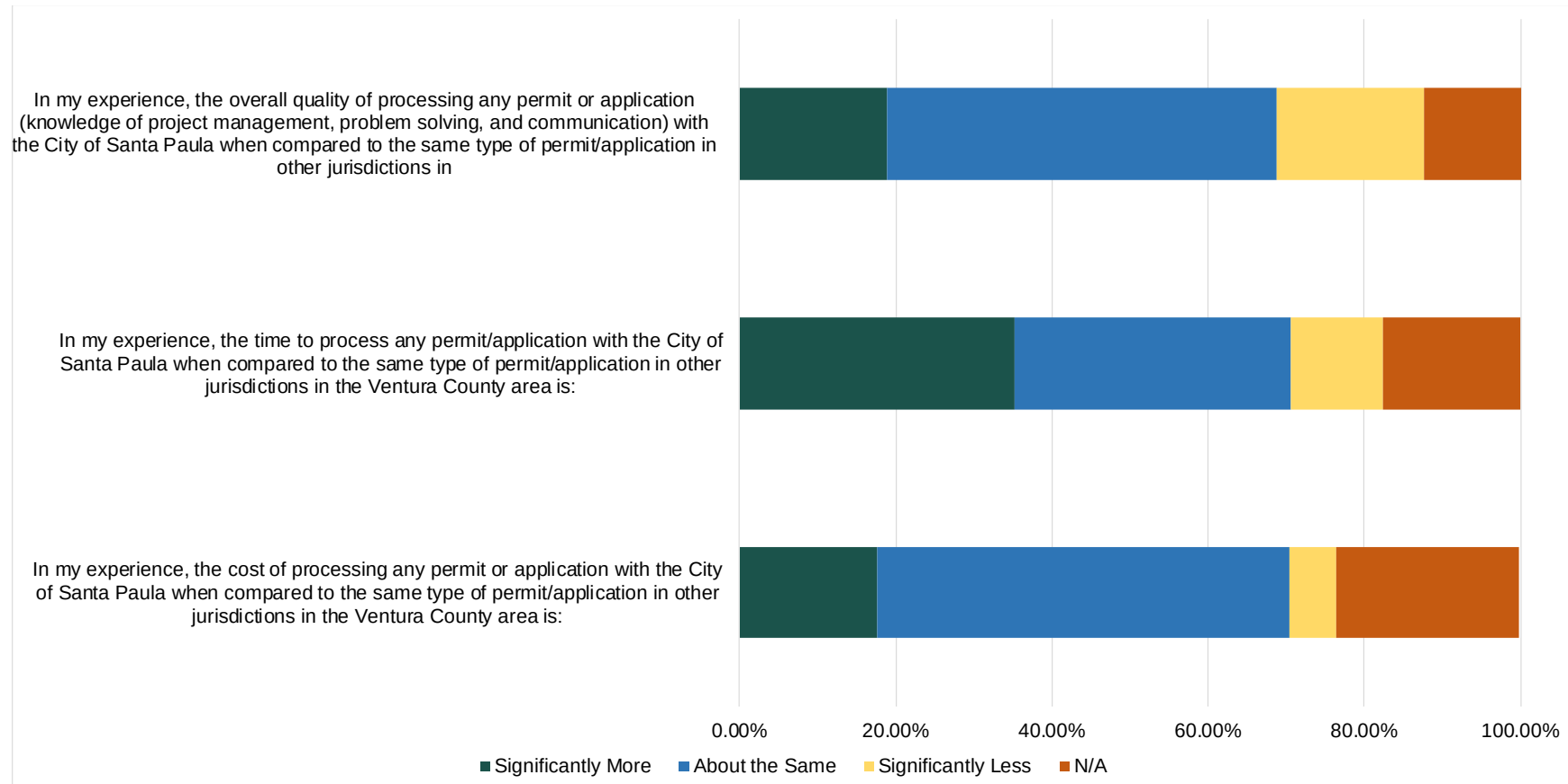
This information is represented graphically in the following image.



Please respond to the following statements:

Statement	Significantly More	Percent of Respondents	About the Same	Percent of Respondents	Significantly Less	Percent of Respondents	N/A	Percent of Respondents
In my experience, the cost of processing any permit or application with the City of Santa Paula when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the Ventura County area is:	3	17.6%	9	52.9%	1	5.9%	4	23.5%
In my experience, the time to process any permit/application with the City of Santa Paula when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the Ventura County area is:	6	35.3%	6	35.3%	2	11.8%	3	17.6%
In my experience, the overall quality of processing any permit or application (knowledge of project management, problem solving, and communication) with the City of Santa Paula when compared to the same type of permit/application in other jurisdictions in the Ventura County area is:	3	18.8%	8	50.0%	3	18.8%	2	12.5%

This information is represented graphically in the following image:



CITYWIDE, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although this section relates to the City overall, the perceived quality of life, and aspects of community and economic development, the focus relates to supporting the City's overarching General Plan and the recently adopted City Council 2023-2025 Strategic Plan that includes seven Core Council Priorities of: arts, culture, and entertainment; economic development; infrastructure, transportation, and mobility; connected and healthy community; public safety and emergency preparedness; community vitality; and operational excellence.

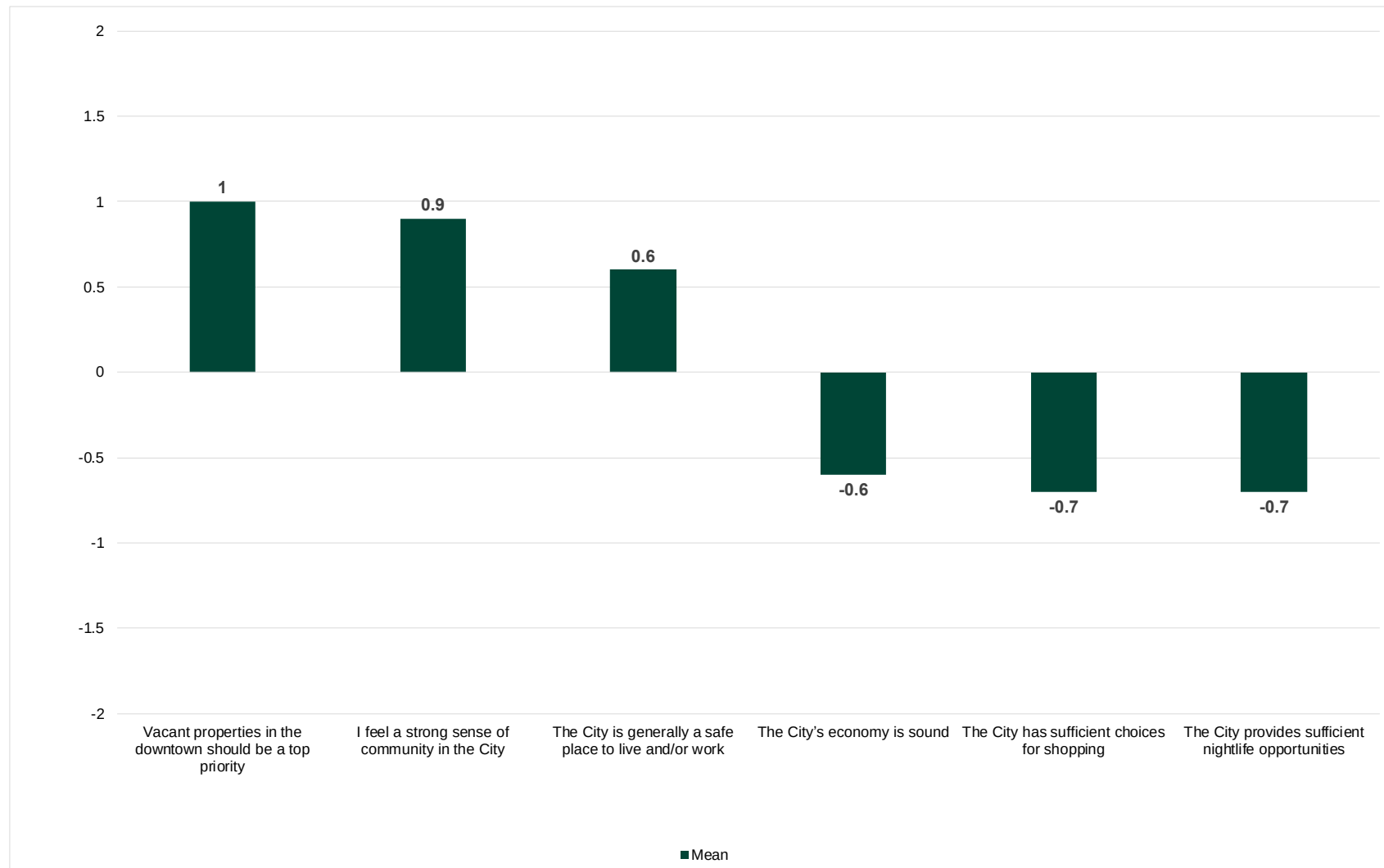
*Please rate your **LEVEL OF AGREEMENT** with the following statements from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” or “Don’t Know or N/A.”*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Strongly Disagree (-2)	% Disagree (-1)	% Neutral (0)	% Agree (1)	% Strongly Agree (2)	% N/A
Vacant properties in the downtown should be a top priority	1.0	0.9	0.0%	6.0%	20.0%	40.0%	28.0%	6.0%
I feel a strong sense of community in the City	0.9	0.9	0.0%	8.2%	18.4%	44.9%	24.5%	4.1%
The City is generally a safe place to live and/or work	0.6	0.8	2.0%	8.0%	26.0%	56.0%	6.0%	2.0%
The downtown has adequate parking	0.6	1.0	4.0%	12.0%	22.0%	46.0%	14.0%	2.0%
There is good access to arts and cultural opportunities in the City	0.6	0.8	0.0%	8.2%	30.6%	46.9%	10.2%	4.1%
The City is a good place to raise children	0.5	0.9	2.0%	8.0%	38.0%	38.0%	10.0%	4.0%
The overall quality of life in the City is good	0.5	1.0	2.0%	16.0%	24.0%	40.0%	14.0%	4.0%
The City has the right amount of events	0.4	0.9	2.0%	10.0%	40.0%	36.0%	8.0%	4.0%
The City supports its business community	0.4	1.0	4.0%	10.0%	38.0%	26.0%	14.0%	8.0%
The City is environmentally friendly	0.2	1.0	8.0%	10.0%	42.0%	26.0%	8.0%	6.0%
The City has a vibrant downtown area	0.1	1.1	6.0%	26.0%	30.0%	26.0%	10.0%	2.0%
The residential areas in the City are attractive	0.1	1.0	6.0%	20.0%	38.0%	30.0%	4.0%	2.0%

City of Santa Paula, CA
Process and Improvement Assessment of Community and Economic Development Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	% Strongly Disagree (-2)	% Disagree (-1)	% Neutral (0)	% Agree (1)	% Strongly Agree (2)	% N/A
The downtown has adequate parking for big events	-0.1	1.1	8.0%	28.0%	32.0%	22.0%	6.0%	4.0%
There are adequate parks and recreation amenities in the City	-0.2	1.1	12.2%	28.6%	22.4%	32.7%	2.0%	2.0%
The City draws good business investments	-0.3	0.9	10.0%	30.0%	36.0%	18.0%	0.0%	6.0%
The City has sufficient restaurant options	-0.3	1.0	10.0%	36.0%	28.0%	22.0%	2.0%	2.0%
The City is adequately marketed as a tourist destination	-0.3	0.9	6.1%	32.7%	36.7%	12.2%	4.1%	8.2%
The City's infrastructure is sufficient	-0.3	0.8	4.0%	34.0%	42.0%	12.0%	2.0%	6.0%
There are adequate employment opportunities in the City	-0.4	1.0	14.3%	28.6%	36.7%	12.2%	2.0%	6.1%
There is good business and economic development planning within City government	-0.4	0.9	12.0%	30.0%	38.0%	12.0%	2.0%	6.0%
Retail shopping areas in the City are attractive	-0.5	0.9	16.0%	32.0%	34.0%	14.0%	0.0%	4.0%
The commercial areas in the City are attractive	-0.5	1.0	14.0%	38.0%	30.0%	12.0%	4.0%	2.0%
The City's economy is sound	-0.6	0.9	20.4%	24.5%	40.8%	10.2%	0.0%	4.1%
The City has sufficient choices for shopping	-0.7	1.1	26.0%	34.0%	24.0%	12.0%	2.0%	2.0%
The City provides sufficient nightlife opportunities	-0.7	0.9	20.0%	42.0%	22.0%	12.0%	0.0%	4.0%

The three highest and lowest scored items are represented graphically in the following image.



CITY COMMUNICATION AND UPDATES

I would prefer to receive information regarding operations of City government in the following way(s): (check all that apply, including “In Spanish” if you would prefer information to be provided in Spanish)

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Email Newsletter	32	71.1%
Printer Newsletter	7	15.6%
Facebook	17	37.8%
Twitter	2	4.4%
Nextdoor	10	22.2%
City website	24	53.3%
Attending City Council meetings	9	20.0%
Postings at key government facilities	3	6.7%
Postings at business establishments	6	13.3%
In Spanish	6	13.3%

How often would you like to be updated on City operations/announcements?

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Monthly	34	70.8%
Quarterly	8	16.7%
Semi-annually	1	2.1%
Annually	1	2.1%
I do not wish to receive City announcements	6	12.5%

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION – RESPONSE SUMMARY

The following table shows the responses to the open-ended customer survey prompt. Only themes with more than one instance are shown.

In your opinion, what are the top two specific priorities that should be focused on by the City's Community and Economic Development Department in order of importance? Please state briefly (limit 40 characters each).

Count	Item
22	Improve road infrastructure, especially including repaving deteriorated roads
12	Attracting and developing more employers and other economic development initiatives
6	Improve thoroughfare and downtown aesthetic, including cleanliness, sign regulations, etc.
4	Improve and support community safety and policing
3	Improve public spaces, such as parks, trails, open space, etc.
2	Improve the process to open a business, making it faster and easier
2	Process building permits and other customer inquiries faster

Please add any specific comments or suggestions you may have to improve services related to the process of approving land use applications or building permits in the City of Santa Paula, including comments regarding other City of Santa Paula departments or external agencies that are involved with the process.

Count	Item
4	Doing business with the City should be simpler, faster, and easier. Examples include a more predictable approval and permit process, as well as more available (no appointment needed) and helpful staff via phone and visit. a simplified development code to make the application and approval process more predictable.
2	Build more housing via vacant properties or tiny homes
2	Improve road infrastructure, especially including repaving deteriorated roads
2	Improve or grow parks and green spaces
2	Starting a business should be easier



CITYGATE
ASSOCIATES

Process and Improvement Assessment of the Community and Economic Development Department

REPORT PRESENTATION

CITY OF SANTA PAULA, CA

June 24, 2024



Agenda

Two Part Session

☐ Presentation 6:00 pm -7:30 pm

- ☐ Overview of Report {Survey Data, Themes, Findings, Recommendation}

- ☐ Questions

- ☐ Optional Break

☐ Implementation Action Plan Discussion/Prioritization 7:35-9:00

- ☐ Review 63 Goals

Project Recap

Departmental and Functional Assessment

- Review of documentation
- Two surveys and interviews
- Analysis and recommendations
- Comprehensive Final Report

Who We Are...

MISSION

The City of Santa Paula is committed to providing and continually creating a safe, sustainable, and innovative place to live, work, and thrive.

VISION

The City of Santa Paula is an innovative and collaborative organization delivering exceptional services that enhance a sustainable and vibrant community where residents, families, and businesses can thrive.

CORE VALUES

Innovation | Collaboration/Teamwork | Diversity/Inclusion | Accountability

Employee Survey Response Highlights (8 Participants)

Planning Division

Planning Service Delivery

25 Questions

Met / Above / Far Exceeds Expectations – 77%

- Problem solving
- Helpfulness at front counter and handouts on process
- Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations
- Clarity on codes
- Professionalism and positive attitude
- Responsiveness to customer concerns
- Processing minor changes to plans | Timeliness of re-checks

Planning Service Delivery (cont.)

Below Expectations

- Complexity of regulations | Positive attitude | Access to a planner – 25%
- Use of technology | Accuracy of Code interpretation | Coordination with outside consultants | Communication of project status | Returning calls in a timely manner – 37%
- Coordinated review between divisions/departments | Process for tentative/parcel map and final map approval – 50%

Planning

24 Questions

Agree / Strongly Agree – 100%

- Economic development and growth are important for our community
- Need training on communication and dealing with difficult people

Agree / Strongly Agree – 75%

- Leadership is timely and and respectful
- Understand what excellent service is
- Supervisor trusts me

Planning (cont.)

Neutral 75%

- Council and staff work well together
- City's organizational goals are clear
- We provide excellent service
- Division/Department goals are clear (100%)

Disagree / Strongly Disagree 75%

- We offer expedited opportunities for plan checking, inspections, and other development processes
- We are fiscally stable
- Community has clarity on what's needed to process permits/apps
- The training opportunities available to me are sufficient to support my needs

Building and Safety Division

Building and Safety Service Delivery

25 Questions

Met / Above / Far Exceeds Expectations – 100%

- Thoroughness of inspections
- Timeliness of inspections
- Ability to solve problems
- Providing complete, up-front information regarding inspections
- Knowledge of building and safety (“far exceeds” – 12.5%)

Building and Safety (cont.)

Below/Unacceptable – 62.5%

- Coordination and services of outside consultants
- Coordinated review between divisions/departments
- Use of technology (website, plan check, document submittal, fee calculator)
- Fulfilling commitments
- Communication on project status

Building and Safety (cont.)

Agree / Strongly Agree – 100%

- My leadership responds to me in a timely fashion
- Communication with leadership is respectful
- Economic development and growth are important for our community
- My supervisor/manager trusts me
- We communicate well about the development review process (80%)

Building and Safety (cont.)

Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

- We are fiscally stable
- The City Council and staff work well together
- We are a risk-adverse community/City
- The training opportunities available to me are sufficient to support my needs
- The community understands what is needed to process permits/applications

Public Works Engineering Division

Public Works Engineering Service Delivery

26 Questions

What best represents your assessment of how the Public Works Engineering Section does in delivering your services

Met / Above / Far Exceeds Expectations – 75%+

- Positive attitude
- Accuracy/consistency of code interpretations
- Professional courtesy
- Ability to solve problems (62.5% met)

Public Works Engineering Service Delivery (cont.)

Below/Unacceptable

- *Processing/Turn around times*
- Timeliness/number of re-checks
- Process for final parcel map approval
- Processing of “minor” changes to plans
- *Coordinated review between divisions/departments*
- Communication on project status
- Returning phone calls timely

Open-Ended Questions

Count	Comment
3	More staff are needed.
1	Building and Safety need a Building Inspector and another Permit Technician.
1	Communication with different departments needs to be united. There are solutions for everything and more efficient ways always to complete tasks.
1	Documented standard operating procedures are needed.
1	More fiscal resources are needed.
1	Permitting software should include customer login for project status to reduce calls and emails to staff.
1	Public Works Department turnaround times need to be faster.
1	Reliance on outside consultants is inefficient and costly.
1	The permitting software needs to be running effectively to increase staff effectiveness.

Stakeholder/Community Survey Response Highlights (50 Participants | 28 Days)

Please specify where you live

Category	Count	Percent of Respondents
I live within the City of Santa Paula limits	41	82.0%
I live outside of the City limits	9	18.0%
I am unsure	0	0.0%

How long have you lived in Santa Paula?

Category	Count	Percent of Respondents
Less than 1 year	1	2.0%
1 to 5 years	14	28.6%
5 to 10 years	11	22.4%
More than 10 years	23	46.9%

Have you been a customer of ED, Building, Planning, or Public Works Engineering within the past two years?

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Yes	17 (10P, 12B, 4PW, 5ED*)	34.0%
No	33	66.0%

**Some customers have experience working with more than one division*

Category	Frequent Customer	Percent of Respondents	One-Time/Infrequent Customer	Percent of Respondents
Individual Applicant	2	4.0%	8	16.0%
Developer / Builder (company)	4	8.0%	1	2.0%
Development Consultant	1	2.0%	1	2.0%
General / Sub-contractor	4	8.0%	0	0.0%
Local retail/restaurant business owner	2	4.0%	2	4.0%
Other	3	6.0%	1	2.0%

How does **PLANNING** compare to your expectations for government service?

Met / Above / Far Exceeds Expectations – 70% – 90%

- *Helpfulness at front counter*
- *Positive attitude*
- Service compared to Ventura County
- Process for final parcel map approval
- Professional courtesy
- Knowledge of development review and zoning regulations
- Understanding of private business
- Coordination between divisions/departments

How does PLANNING compare to your expectations for government service? (cont.)

Below/Unacceptable

- *Returning phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner*
- Communication on project status
- *Accuracy/consistency of code interpretation*
- *Timeliness/number of re-checks*
- Processing of “minor” changes to plans
- Ease of accessing a planner to discuss project
- Use of technology
- Fulfilling commitments and overall process

How does **BUILDING AND SAFETY** compare to your expectations for government service?

Met / Above / Far Exceeds Expectations – 68% – 100%

- *Helpfulness of informative handouts on processes*
- Understanding of private business
- Knowledge of building and safety
- Positive attitude
- Professional courtesy
- Providing complete process info at public counter
- Providing consistent and dependable process info at counter

How does BUILDING AND SAFETY compare to your expectations for government service? (cont.)

Below/Unacceptable – 18% – 30%

- Returning phone calls in a timely manner / responsiveness to concerns
- Overall process
- *Use of technology*
- Providing complete up-front info regarding inspections
- Ease of accessing Building staff to discuss project
- *Cost of processing applications (fees)*
- Thoroughness of plan review
- Helpfulness of front counter assistance

How does **ENGINEERING** compare to your expectations for government service?

Met Expectations

- Knowledge of Public Works Engineering (100%)
- Positive attitude (100%)
- Coordination and service with outside consulting (33.3%)
- Helpfulness of handouts (33%)
- Ability to solve problems (33%)
- Coordination with divisions; understanding private business (67.7%)
- Professional courtesy (67.7%)

How does **ENGINEERING** compare to your expectations for government service? (cont.)

Unacceptable – 66.7%

- Returning phone calls in a timely manner
- Timeliness/number of re-checks
- Providing consistent/dependable/complete process info by staff, consultants
- Turnaround timelines
- Process for final map approval
- Cost of processing application (fees)
- Communication on project status

How does **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** compare to your expectations for government service?

Met / Above Expectations – 100%

- Complexity of regulations
- Ability to solve problems versus creating them
- Communication on project status
- Cost of processing applications (licenses / permit fees)
- Customer service compared within Ventura County (other municipal jurisdictions) and helpfulness of staff
- Expertise in Economic Development process and zoning regulations
- Fulfilling commitments
- Helpfulness of resource guides on process

How does **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** compare to your expectations for government service? (cont.)

Below Expectations

- Consistency of code interpretation
- Clarity of codes and policies
- Ease of accessing staff to discuss project
- Returning phone calls/emails in a timely manner

Overall Department and Permit Process Question

Statement	Yes	Percent of Respondents	No	Percent of Respondents	N/A
Initial information given to me by the Planning and Building divisions in Community Development was accurate and complete.	11	64.7%	3	17.6%	3
Initial information given to me by the Public Works Engineering Division was accurate and complete.	6	35.3%	4	23.5%	7
Additional substantial changes to my project that should have been brought up in the first review were not required or revealed to me until subsequent reviews.	6	35.3%	4	23.5%	7
I would consider the option to pay extra for 'express/expedited' processing.	10	58.8%	4	23.5%	3
I would consider the option to pay increased fees if it would increase timeliness and quality of work.	7	41.2%	7	41.2%	3

25 Overall Questions on Priorities and Quality of Life

Agree / Strongly Agree / (Neutral)

- Vacant properties in downtown should be top priority 68% (20% neutral)
- I feel a strong sense of community in the City 69.4% (18% neutral)
- The City is generally a safe place to work/live 62% (26% neutral)
- The downtown has adequate parking 60% (22% neutral)
- There are strong arts and culture opportunities 59% (31% neutral)
- There are the right number of events 44% (40% neutral)
- The City supports its business community 40% (38% neutral)
- The City has a vibrant downtown area 36% (30% neutral; 26% disagree)

25 Overall Questions on Priorities and Quality of Life (cont.)

Disagree / Strongly Disagree

- The City provides sufficient nightlife opportunities (62%)
- The City has sufficient choices for shopping (60%)
- The City's economy is sound (45%)
- Commercial and retail areas are attractive (52%)
- There is good Economic Development planning within City government (42%)
- The City's infrastructure is sufficient (38%)

Open Comments

Count	Item
4	Doing business with the City should be simpler, faster, and easier. Examples include a more predictable approval and permit process, more available and helpful staff via phone and visit (no appointment needed), and a simplified development code to make the application and approval process more predictable.
2	Build more housing via vacant properties or tiny homes.
2	Improve road infrastructure, especially including repaving deteriorated roads.
2	Improve or grow parks and green spaces.
2	Starting a business should be easier.

Collective Summary of Priorities – Community/Stakeholders

Community and Stakeholder Priorities (21 interviewed)

Count	Item
22	Improve road infrastructure, especially including repaving deteriorated roads.
12	Attract and develop more employers and conduct other economic development initiatives.
6	Improve thoroughfare and downtown aesthetics including cleanliness, sign regulations, etc.
4	Improve and support community safety and policing.
3	Improve public spaces such as parks, trails, open space, etc.
2	Improve the process to open a business, making it faster and easier.
2	Process building permits and other customer inquiries faster.

Collective Summary of Priorities – Staff

- Challenges with Public Works (processes, timelines, communication, etc.)
- Technology
- Timeliness of calls, emails, project status
- Coordination and communication with divisions/department and consultants
- Expedited review opportunities
- Fiscal stability
- Training opportunities (skills, difficult customers, communication)
- Processes/timelines for tentative/final map approval
- Staff and Council relations
- Access to planners

City Communication and Updates

I would prefer to receive information regarding operations of City government in the following way(s):

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Email newsletter	32	71.1%
Printer newsletter	7	15.6%
Facebook	17	37.8%
Twitter	2	4.4%
Nextdoor	10	22.2%
City website	24	53.3%
Attending City Council meetings	9	20.0%
Postings at key government facilities	3	6.7%
Postings at business establishments	6	13.3%
In Spanish	6	13.3%

How often would you like to be updated?

Statement	Count	Percent of Respondents
Monthly	34	70.8%
Quarterly	8	16.7%
Semi-annually	1	2.1%
Annually	1	2.1%
I do not wish to receive City announcements	6	12.5%

Implementation of 63 Recommended Priorities

- Prioritization and implementation are challenging
- A variety of successful tools and techniques exist
- Recommendations were formulated based on the following
Top Ten Methodologies

Top Ten Methodologies Used for Implementation and Prioritization

Methodology	Description
Balanced Approach	One size does not fit all. Spread the opportunities, resources, and funding throughout different goals.
Sequential Sense	Do not put the cart before the horse. Thoughtfully consider a plan and find efficient approaches to solving various challenges.
Input Considerations	Collect extensive and unbiased input from the community, volunteers, staff, and elected officials in a collaborative approach.
Data	Collect and analyze relevant data.
Fiscal Care	What can be funded and how can it support long-term fiscal stability?
Voting Priorities	Who was involved and how were the priorities determined? Utilize the voting in an appropriately weighted approach.
RICE Approach	Reach (how many people are impacted by this decision/choice), Impact (how are these people impacted; massively, high, medium, or low), Confidence (gut instincts and awareness to emotionally charged or politically sensitive situations), Effort (what will it take to really accomplish this goal).
Capacity	Understand limitations. Work towards appropriately growing capacity to meet the needs.
MoSCoW Approach Desire/Excitement/Passion	Determine “ Must haves” for survival and safety; “ Should haves” for efficient and effective approaches and goals that support priorities and the overall wellness of the community and organization; “ Could haves” that will have to wait but are eventually desired; and “ Won’t haves” that have no current resource allocation and are a low priority.
Alignment	Does the work align with the culture, needs, and vision now and in the future?

Themes

Six Core Themes

Theme 1: Financial Stability

Theme 2: Staffing and Reliance on Contracts and Consultants

Theme 3: Policy and Procedural Clarity and Consistency

Theme 4: Communication, Outreach, and Customer Service

Theme 5: Technology Adoption and Implementation

Theme 6: Economic Development Opportunities

Theme 1 | Financial Stability

Ensure the City's ability to meet community needs now and into the long-term future by stabilizing the City's long-term fiscal situation, considering economic development investments, increasing/adjusting staff in critical functions, and providing competitive salaries to assure the City's ability to attract and retain an adequate number of capable staff.

Theme 1 | Core Findings

- Fiscal Insecurity and chronic under-resourcing
- Revenue-generating opportunities
- Efficient and effective practices to reduce the cost of providing planning and development review services

Theme 1 | Recommendations

- Stabilize City's long-term fiscal situation
- Increase staff in critical functions
 - Limited-Term / Part-time / Management Fellow / Volunteers
- Provide competitive salaries and benefits
- Review and consider adoption of appropriate Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) practices related to written policies, performance measures, and the four areas of Economic Development best practices
- Annual/bi-annual fee assessment and updates
- Exploration of new funding sources, partnerships, grants opportunities, job/services/facility sharing, GFOA

Theme 2 | Staffing and Reliance on Contract and Consultants

Ensure the City is providing sufficient staff to perform its planning, economic development, and downtown revitalization functions and collect and disburse funds for vital consulting services on a timely basis. Improve customer service and accountability by reassessing needs, appropriate staffing levels, and reliance on contract staff and consultants in the engineering field.

Theme 2 | Core Findings

- The CED Director's responsibilities—overseeing development review, long-range planning, building, economic development, and downtown revitalization—and the Department's thin staffing result in one or more of these functions continuously receiving inadequate attention; there are also managerial and administrative bottlenecks; as well as stress and discontent among staff, consultants, and customers
- Challenges of outsourcing of Public Works Engineering development review
- Timely payment of development review consultants
 - New Administrative Analyst

Theme 2 | Recommendations

- Consider economic development specialty position
- Consider building inspection and tech positions (FTE, PT, LTE)
- Consider utilizing lean innovation approaches for recruitment, retention, training, etc.
- Continue reviewing contracts to add performance standards and requirements
- Reconsider FTE for Public Works City Engineer versus the current level of reliance on contract and consulting personnel

Theme 2 | Recommendations (cont.)

- New hire recruitment and retention initiative
- Assess the current processes for collecting developer funds
- Consider limited shared services with other agencies
- Identify and evaluate options for adding administrative capacity within the CED Department
 - New hire of Admin and Management Analysts

Theme 3 | Policy and Procedural Clarity and Consistency

Enhance the City's fiscal, regulatory, and legal security by adopting clear development codes, policies, and procedures. This will ensure consistent, predictable, and appropriate administration of discretionary development review processes, development agreements, privilege licenses, and permits.

Theme 3 | Core Findings

- Inconsistency, unpredictability, and lack of clarity concerning discretionary development review processes
- Lapses in implementation and amendment of development agreements, including setting standards, expectations and accountability measures
- These practices potentially expose the City to legal and regulatory risk and unnecessary financial obligations

Theme 3 | Recommendations

- Review and update development codes, policies, and procedures for discretionary planning approvals
- Adopt and reinforce policies (timing, bonding) and standards for infrastructure that developers construct and dedicate to City
- Consistently require developers subject to a development agreement to post adequate fee deposits prior to City review of applications
- Update developer fees/costs
- Develop and adopt a community benefits/options checklist as a standard condition of approval

Theme 4 | Communication, Outreach, and Customer Service

Invest and support in ongoing communication and improved outreach training for City employees to enhance service, improve efficiency, and bring alignment with the City's **Core Values, Mission, and Vision.**

Theme 4 | Core Findings

- Lack of timeliness of application processing, permitting requirements, and communication with and from staff in Planning, Building, Public Works, and City consultants
- Community outreach efforts could use improvement

Theme 4 | Recommendations

- Adopt a fee schedule for PWE review of building and permit applications so plan review can commence upon submittal
- Adopt and/or reinforce existing customer service standards for the timeliness of PWE plan review and inspection services
- Streamline plan review and approvals for projects on parcels in the flood plain, including the issuance of building pad elevation certificates
- Consider relocating PWE engineering staff to City Hall, even on a limited but regularly scheduled basis, to enhance customer service
- Monitor Ventura County's provision of plan review and fire inspection services

Theme 4 | Recommendations (cont.)

- **Internal** Communications and Services:
 - Consider developing and implementing a shadowing program for staff to support cross-training, efficiency, connections, public speaking and presentation skills
 - Address employee burnout by developing a staff morale improvement plan
 - Develop a service philosophy and include it as a performance measure for employee evaluation and accountability
- **External** Communications / Outreach:
 - Based on the results of the community survey, implement an external communications and outreach strategy to connect more regularly with the community; include bilingual messaging and materials

Theme 5 | Technology Adoption and Implementation

Assess, provide training, and consider improved technology measures to support short-term and long-term goals by providing more effective, efficient tools. Enhance communications and healthy advancements for the City, stakeholders, and community.

Theme 5 | Core Findings

- The City does not accept development applications, business license applications, or utility payments online
- There is a lack of funding for updated and ongoing technology needs
- There is some staff resistance to using current or new technology

Theme 5 | Recommendations

- Evaluate, adopt, and implement a state-of-the-industry online permitting system for development review, business licensing, and receipt of payments, including utility payments; in the interim, add an online fee calculator
- As a best practice, the City should continue cybersecurity assessments to determine strengths and weaknesses and follow through with a security plan to address any shortcomings
- During fee assessments and updates—including for development-related fees—evaluate and provide for cost recovery for current and future technology needs
- Implement accountability measures, training, and best practices for staff utilization of current and new technology
- Community Development Staff as in-house trainer/coordinator
- Contract assessment and possible amendment

Theme 6 | Economic Development Opportunities

Ensure the City's stability, resiliency, and wellness through economic development enrichment tools, activities, enhancements, and investments that ultimately improve the quality of life for all residents, businesses, and visitors of Santa Paula.

Theme 6 | Core Findings

- There is a strong desire in the business community to be more connected and involved, and to partner with the City and other businesses
- There is a need to support the business community both fiscally—through start-up and improvement costs—and through employment opportunities
- The City should evaluate and address infrastructure needs to support current business needs and potential growth

Theme 6 | Recommendations

- Addressing core infrastructure issues in a strategic and cost-effective approach will be key
 - This initiative should be undertaken and coordinated annually through the Capital Improvement Planning processes of the City and other public agencies and utilities undertaking capital improvement projects in the City
 - Immediate needs include maintaining sewer systems, including providing capacity for growth; adopting standards for clean drinking water and improvements to roads and sidewalks; and evaluating and developing affordable and reliable transportation mechanisms including pedestrian, bicycle, and other micromobility transportation modes
- Evaluate and update current communication systems

Theme 6 | Recommendations (cont.)

- Develop 3–5 new business incentive programs
- Invest in improving job training and employment opportunities
- Boosting innovation can lead to new technologies, advance businesses, create efficiencies, and spark the next generation of entrepreneurs
- Invite, encourage and create community and business leadership hubs to gather and develop actionable ideas for implementation of elements of the Specific Plan

Theme 6 | Recommendations (cont.)

- Conduct a business needs assessment and build a business retention and expansion program
- Add economic development manager/specialist position. (FTE, part-time, or (initially) consulting support, LTE)
- Develop key metrics for the City to focus and improve upon
- Downtown lacks “curb appeal” in terms of lighting, art, and signage; evaluate various aesthetic enhancements and prioritize each option

Communication 1, 2, 3



A plan's implementation could fail if there is...

- minimal investment/buy-in to alignment with the plan
- no clear, consistent communication from leadership
- added work assigned to staff without any work taken away
- a lack of accountability
- a shortage of patience
- a lack of clarity among staff regarding the strategy
- ***“everything is a priority” syndrome**
- no true allocation of resources
- a lack of perceived fairness, recognition, rewards, etc.
- an absence of innovation fostered by leadership
- neglect to utilize the right approach in execution
- no recognition that some failures are successes
- limited understanding of the real problem; distraction with other concerns
- an inaccurate perception of actual organizational capabilities
- no awareness of the cultural landscape
- no understanding of who is in charge

Rollout Timing

- The recommended official Launch Date is **June 30, 2024**—to lay the groundwork; develop a communications strategy; and recruit, develop, and/or reorganize the staffing, team, committees, consultants, and volunteers
- Initial start-up work related to accountability and performance approaches, adjusting cost estimates, and various research

Key Daily Questions for Success

- **Prioritization:** Am I putting people first?
- **Intention:** What is my primary focus today?
 - What matters most in one word?
- **Innovation:** How can I inspire and support others today?
- **Utilization:** Am I in alignment with our Service Philosophy and Vision? Am I being the kind of person I want to be?
- **Protection:** Have I reviewed the Fail Facts checklist to avoid common traps?
- **Reflection:** Do I take a minute at the end of each day to consider what I could have done better/differently and what I am happy with?





CITYGATE
ASSOCIATES

THANK YOU

