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Santa Barbara
Grand Jury

July 11, 2005

The Honorable Judge Anderson
Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Attention: Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Honorable Judge Anderson and Members of the Grand Jury:

The City of Lompoc has reviewed the final report entitled "An Ounce of Prevention" prepared by the 2004-2005 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury. The City's responses are provided below.

Finding 1

Mission statements, when available, were often outdated and did not list customer satisfaction as a primary goal.

Response:

Disagree. The City of Lompoc provides mission statements for the City as a whole as well as each department and division in its biennial budget. The City Council's mission statement calls for provision of exceptional quality public service to the people of Lompoc, and the City Administrator's mission statement indicates that employees are to serve citizens and stakeholders by effectively and efficiently handling municipal services and related issues, requirements, and problems. These mission statements are mandates to all City departments, which identify customer service as a priority. They are available at City facilities and on the City's web site.

Recommendation 1

Planning departments should have mission statements specific to their department. These mission statements should have customer satisfaction as a primary goal.

Response:

The recommendation has previously been implemented; mission statements identifying customer service as a priority will continue to be included in the City's future biennial budgets, which are applicable to all City departments, including the Planning Division.

Finding 2

Planning departments did not have basic customer satisfaction procedures in place.

Response:

Disagree. The City employs a number of planners with various levels of experience to provide a full service planning counter. The counter is open during regular business hours and it is rare that a planner is not available to assist customers. The planners are trained to understand the development review process for simple projects as well as complex, and to explain the process to customers. Assistance to customers is provided beyond provision of information. The planners assist customers in completing necessary paperwork and perform courtesy reviews of proposals. Courtesy reviews are free of charge and are performed in a 24-hour time frame. Planners are also trained as to how to respond to complaints. This level of effort is provided solely to achieve customer satisfaction.

Recommendation 2

To increase customer satisfaction, each planning department should publicly post the agency's mission statement, post timelines and mitigating factors, provide easy access to all relevant forms with adequate explanations as to their use, post a list of key personnel involved in completing an application, and clearly define the complaint process. In addition, handouts should be provided to each customer explaining the application and complaint process.

Response:

Portions of this recommendation have previously been implemented. The City's mission statements, Planning Commission calendar with timelines, and complaint process and form are posted on the City's web site. All forms are available at the planning counter and the planners explain the process for the customer's specific project, which results in personalized service.

The portion of this recommendation regarding a list of key personnel will not be implemented because it is not reasonable and would not improve customer service. Each project is assigned to a planner who assists the customer in contacting necessary personnel as needed. This results in providing a primary contact to the customer, rather than leaving the customer to try to find the proper employee to assist in another department. Due to the vast variation in the nature and complexity of projects, it is not possible to provide a short list of key employees. For example, the engineering staff member who would assist with an encroachment permit for a curb cut on a small residential addition would not be the same engineering staff member who would assist with grading and drainage plans for a residential subdivision.

Finding 3

Notification of changes to land and property use in most jurisdictions was limited to mandated State *minimum* requirements to owners only, and within 300 feet from the borders of the property site.

Response:

Agree.

Recommendation 3

Notification of land use changes should include the owner *and occupants* within at least *500* feet of the border of the property site.

Response:

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Public hearings are well attended in Lompoc and the City has not received complaints regarding its notification procedures. Increasing the notification scope would add unnecessary costs to projects and burden the planning staff with unnecessary work.

Finding 4

The complaint process in most jurisdictions was not designed for quantifiable analysis and could not be used to find strong and weak points in the planning process.

Response: Agree.

Recommendation 4

Planning agencies should track all complaints and conduct random quantifiable surveys of 10% of the customers who have used their services. Agencies should use the results of these surveys to make the planning process more customer friendly. The results should also be added on a quarterly basis to the department website for public viewing.

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. In February, the City implemented a computer program to track complaints. It is currently in use within City facilities, and the City plans to make it available on-line once the initial test period is completed.

Thank you for your report and for the opportunity to comment upon its findings and recommendations. Please contact Arleen Pelster, AICP, Community Development Director at (805) 875-8274 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Gary Keefe
City Administrator

Attachment: Computer Disc