Squamish
Service
Initiative

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OUTDOOR RECREATION CAPITAL OF CANADA

Planning,
Building,
Environment &
Trails Services

Core Service
Review

LAND USE   SCHEDUL
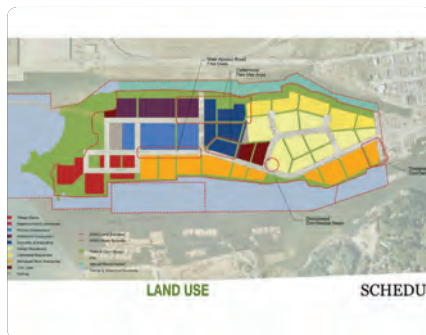
Service Squamish Initiative
Planning Department
Core Service Review Final Report

I am pleased to present the Core Services Review findings for the Planning, Building, Environment and Trails Services departments. Core Services Reviews are an integral part of the 2010 Service Squamish Initiative and form the basis for better civic government. This is the sixth core service review and one of the most important.

The information and insight we have gained through these reviews are based on the extensive engagement processes we have undertaken. For the Planning, Building, Environment and Trails Services Department this included over 100 interviews with key stakeholders including Council, staff and a number of community groups and individuals with a vested interest in how we do business. I would like to personally thank all of those who participated in this process. We received a large volume of data and comments that validated many of the issues and opportunities that we had ourselves identified, as well as new ideas and concepts to consider. This input has given us a new sense of urgency and priority for key areas of our business operation.

I am optimistic that by creating a thoughtful and forward-looking plan, we will be able to address many of the concerns that we received through the interview process and restore the District of Squamish's reputation as an industry leader in the area of Planning, Building, Environment and Trails Services. I am particularly excited by some of the "quick win ideas" that we received and are committed to putting into action in 2012. We acknowledge that some of the work we need to undertake will require a significant amount of time however, we have developed a three-year plan to ensure that these long term strategies are a priority and are allocated the resources they need to move forward year over year.

The engagement of our staff, our customers and the community will continue to be critical to our success as we move forward. We intend to continue the consultation process to ensure that the strategies and tactics we implement have the intended positive impact on our service and reputation. For me, this is the most important initiative for 2012 and I am committed to working with our staff and Council to ensure it receives the focus and resources it needs to be successful.

In April of 2010 the Service Squamish Initiative was introduced by the District of Squamish to vision a new approach to doing business within the Municipal operation. As part of that initiative a key aspect was the introduction of the Core Service Reviews to permit an evaluation of the efficiencies, effectiveness and deficiencies within each Municipal service area. The Planning, Building, Environment and Trails Services Department was the sixth in a series of reviews conducted throughout 2010 and 2011.

The review included extensive interviews with many key stakeholder groups and individuals including:

- Full participation (one on one interviews) by the District's elected officials
- Full participation (one on one interviews) by all the District's PBTES employees
- Full participation (one on one interviews) by the District's senior and key employee positions
- Full participation (one on one interviews by representatives from the District's key planning, development and building partnerships (associations, advocates, partnerships, key employee positions)

Input was also sought through a web-based survey as well as customer feedback. The five key areas probed in the review included:

1. Service Quality
2. Structure
3. General Processes
4. Focus
5. Effectiveness

The District's PBTES functions have, or understand, all the basic needs for planning, engaging, processing, implementing and managing the retention, development and sustainability of community, property and business development. Despite this, and as suspected by many within the District, the reputation of the District of Squamish's ability to attract, facilitate and sustain development is critically low. This reputation did not take shape without warning and has evolved over many years. Some indications are that current perceptions have existed, to different degrees, for over fifty years. The results are clear – the District stakeholders have limited confidence in the District's ability to manage the processes and change is needed to support the growth and development required. As with most issues within a business relationship, work is required from all stakeholders to restore the confidence and respect required and desired by the District. The District is sincerely dedicated to begin this work and collaborate with stakeholders to meet objectives.

Highlights of the feedback are provided below. It should be noted that while the general tone of the feedback in some cases is quite negative, recent improvements through changes in senior leadership and a willingness on behalf of the District to tackle some of the issues and matters being raised is viewed as positive.

Reputation

As mentioned above, key stakeholders have lost some confidence in the District's ability to attract, facilitate and sustain positive development. This is due to a variety of issues including a lack of a formal appeal process, a perception that there is a lack of alignment with key staff members and no comprehensive development vision for the District.

While some positive changes are occurring, they are not happening at the pace or depth desired by many. Having said that, high level planning seems to be working well. Staff are viewed as skilled in their roles and passionate about their jobs, but their communication can also be interpreted as defensive at times.

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Working on their foundation (i.e. optimizing staff resources, simplifying processes and ensuring their consistent application) will enhance the reputation of the District. However, the real work lies in clarifying the Economic Development Strategy, and proactively communicating with the community around plans, roles and progress. Stronger engagement with key stakeholders and associations to better align decision-making with community priorities will also be key.

Service Delivery

There was mixed feedback relating to the delivery of services from the District. Complaints included processing time and delays, poor communication relating to changes in policy, procedures and processes, and lack of transparency in the communication process. Inconsistent application of policies practices and regulations was also cited as a key concern.
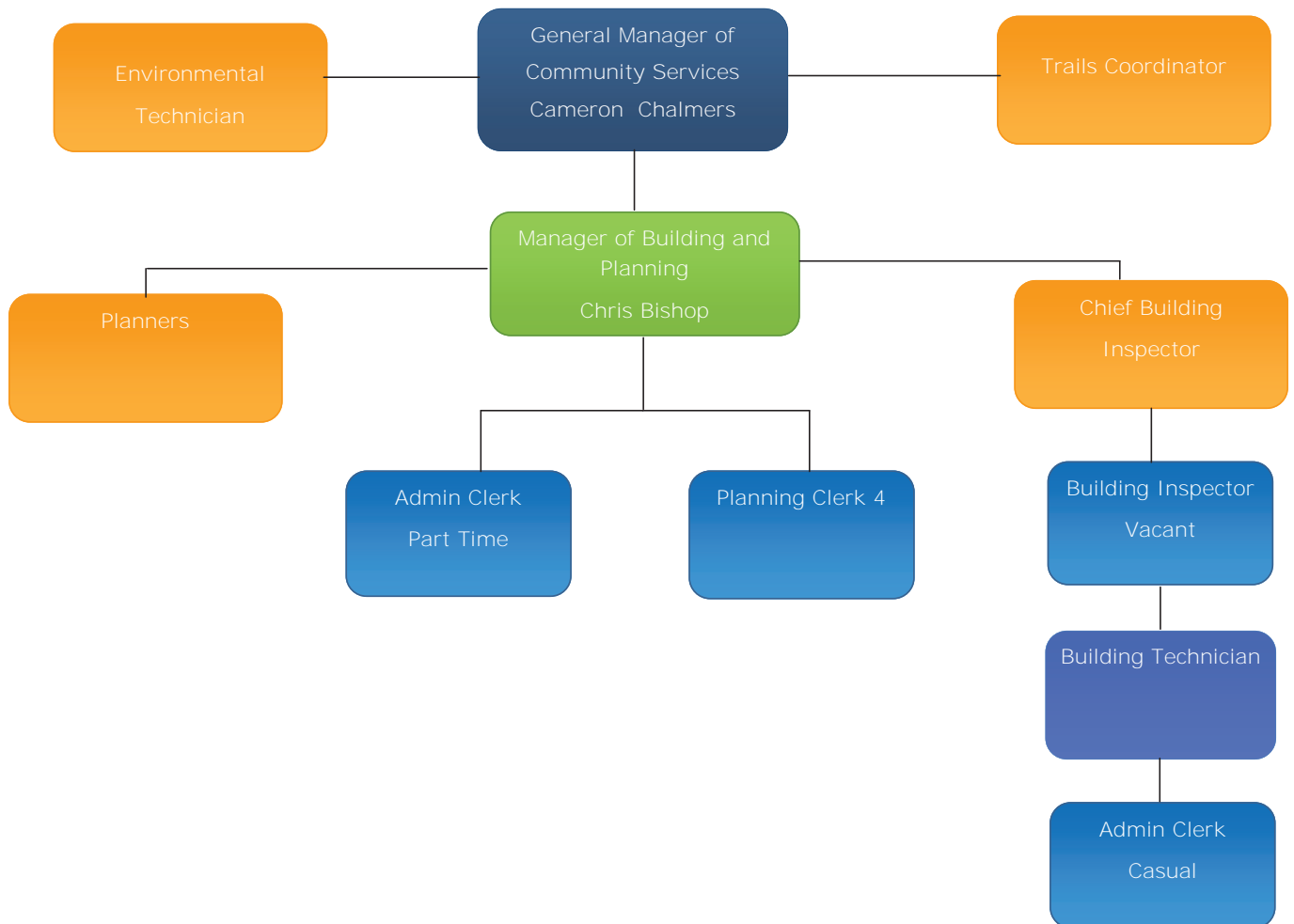
Simplifying and communicating policies and processes will be instrumental to improving in this area. Ensuring that applicants are knowledgeable and helping to facilitate this process will also be important. Finally, looking at ways to better utilize technology and innovation as a means to improve service delivery is key to future success.

Staff

There were a number of positive comments made about staff throughout the interview process. As mentioned above they are generally seen as passionate and skilled in what they do. There is an acknowledgement, however, that a stronger focus on building a customer-centric culture would benefit the District and its customers. Also, ensuring that clear performance expectations are set for staff and appropriate training and support provided is critical. The District would be well served to both "engage" and "enable" staff moving forward.

More detailed findings are found in the following pages.

BUILDING, PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & TRAILS

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                          General Manager of
Environmental             Community Services          Trails Coordinator
Technician                Cameron  Chalmers


                          Manager of Building and
                          Planning                    Chief Building
Planners                  Chris Bishop                Inspector


              Admin Clerk          Planning Clerk 4   Building Inspector
              Part Time                               Vacant


                                                      Building Technician


                                                      Admin Clerk
                                                      Casual
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As a result of the Core Services Review Process, the following general and key themes emerged from Building and Planning:

General

The public Planning processes are generally well received and respected:

- Development community does not believe the District knows what it wants to become in terms of economic development.

- There is a lack of a clear and understandable economic development vision and strategy outside the District leaders, and a lack of integration of that vision in the development process.

- There is recognition of recent attempts to make improvements.

- The District is good at acknowledging the importance of planned growth and the balance required with all community and stakeholder interests.

- The depth and complexity of Planning studies and requirements is high for many of the development community. Recognition of the desired outcomes of studies is agreed, but the approach is not.

Reputation & Relationships

- The overall development reputation of the District is significantly damaged and recent attempts to mend the damage are not working.

- Relationship between development community and environmental community is healthy and productive.

- Significant decision making issues exist between Council and development stakeholders.

- Significant need for more engagement and openness to new ideas from all stakeholders.

- Development conflicts are long and intense and there are inconsistent conflict management and resolution capabilities.

- Recent changes have been recognized and received great feedback.

Service Delivery

- The "straightforward" development application processes are general good experiences.

- Significant and unpredictable process delays and inconsistencies in some areas (consistently in Building and relatively often within Planning).

- Lack of process, information and decision making transparency.

- Significant and legendary mismanagement of files plans and documents.

- Inconsistent professionalism with customer communications and follow-up.

- Generally good experience with straightforward applications and processes.

- Need for more performance-based commitments and reporting.

- Lack of cross function/department integration – work, decisions, files, process.

Staff

- District employees are passionate, skilled, and do understand their specific industry and the basics process and service needs.

- Lack of role and responsibility definition and understanding amongst staff and stakeholders.

- Lack of integration between District departments and functions.

- A lack of individual performance management processes and evolving business unit performance measurement scorecards.
- District employees are generally open to development and changes to their work environment.
- Although many employees are aware of the policy and process gaps – they do not feel empowered to act.

As a result of the Core Services Review Process, the following general and key themes emerged for Environment and Trails:

Environment

- The District's integration of environmental policies and practices within the planning processes and general stewardship is good.
- Environmental Services has created a good relationship with its stakeholders.
- The Environmental Services function was praised for the amount of preliminary and exploratory work they conducted prior to making decisions.
- Environment Review Committee: There is a lack of awareness with some of the key groups that would be considered to participate. Concerns that this committee has been dissolved.
- The advancement and success of recent environment initiatives (watercourse bylaw) speaks to the support Council(s) generally gives to the Environment function.
- The current Environmental Technician position lacks strategic guidance and focus and is not being as effective as it could be.
- There is a need to ultimately distribute elements of Environmental leadership to all or more of the District employees and stakeholders so the responsibility for environmental stewardship can be shared and ultimately more effective.

Trails

- Creation, support and management of trail-based events are very good.
- The District employees and volunteer groups have passion and commitment to Trails.
- The scope and focus of the Trails Coordinator position is too diverse including:
  - Hands-on trail building and maintenance;
  - Event coordination; stakeholder liaison;
  - Trail Strategy & Planning;
  - Policies and procedures.

Strategic Framework

Based on the review and core findings identified, a Strategic Framework has been developed. The framework, which includes goals, outcomes, priorities and metrics is reviewed on the following pages.

In developing the framework the District felt that it needed three years to address some of the issues raised through the review. As a result the "outcomes" (i.e. desired results) are what will have been achieved at the end of 2015. Key priorities for Year One have been identified and the District is formulating its resourcing plan to ensure that key initiatives can be implemented with a minimal impact on service and operations of the departments.

Mission Statement

To provide for the long-term sustainability of the community by balancing current opportunities for growth and densification, with elements that contribute to the overall livability of the community.

3-Year Goals and Outcomes[1]:

2015 Outcomes:

* See Appendix A

Goal 1:
Build a High Performing Team

Outcome 1.1:
Highly Engaged Employees

Outcome 1.2:
Highly Enabled Employees

Outcome 1.3:
Customer Centric Culture

* See Appendix B

Goal 2:
Ensure Organizational and Cost Effectiveness

Outcome 2.1:
Staff Resources are Optimized

Outcome 2.2:
Processes and Policies enable Service Delivery

Outcome 2.3:
Technology and Innovation enable Service Delivery

Outcome 2.4:
Long-term Environmental sustainability of community

Goal 3:
Deliver Service Excellence

Outcome 3.1:
Customers' Expectations are Consistently Exceeded

Outcome 3.2:
Applicants Understand Systems and Processes

Goal 4:
Ensure Confident Stakeholders

Outcome 4.1:
Consistent and Predictable Economic Growth

Outcome 4.2:
District has a Strong and Positive Reputation

Outcome 4.3:
Council and Staff are aligned in Supporting Development

Goal 1: Build a High Performing Team:

The Core Services Review process helped to identify many strong attributes of the existing team and employees at the District, as well as some opportunities for improvement. Having a high performing team in place is foundational to all the other initiatives that are and will be underway. Employees and Leaders throughout the organization must be committed to making change, have the tools and resources to undertake change and move towards a more customer centric culture.

The three core outcomes identified for this goal include:

1.1 Highly Engaged Employees: this outcome is about ensuring that all employees in the Planning and Building team are motivated to bring their best everyday. The core strategies contemplated to achieve this align with years of best practices work associated with employee engagement.

1.2 Highly Enabled Employees: this outcome focuses on ensuring that not only do employees "want" to bring their best everyday, they have the tools, resources, focus and support to do so.

1.3 Customer Centric Culture: this outcome is about creating the values, skills and processes to ensure that customer's expectations are consistently exceeded.

Detailed Plan

Outcomes	Core Strategies	Priority[2]
1.1 Highly Engaged Employees	1.11 Ensure strong leadership	High
	1.12 Ensure all employees understand how they contribute to the departmental goals and strategies	High
	1.13 Ensure that all employees feel valued for the contributions they make on a daily basis	High
	1.14 Create a process to meaningfully gather input from staff on an ongoing basis	High
	1.15 Ensure that all volunteers are engaged in the plan and feel valued for their contributions	Low
1.2 Highly Enabled Employees	1.21 Ensure all employees understand key changes and the impact on their roles and responsibilities	High
	1.22 Ongoing implementation of performance management framework	High
	1.23 Develop and implement an overall learning and development strategy	Medium
1.3 Customer Centric Culture	1.31 Develop customer experience philosophy and protocol and communicate/engage all employees in it	Medium

2 Priority Allocation: High – first half of 2012, Medium – second half of 2012, Low – 2013 and beyond based on budget funding.

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2012 Priorities

- Clarify roles and accountabilities for managers and employees
- Engage staff in implementation of plan
- Improve inter- and intra- departmental communications
- Continue with implementation of performance management framework
- Identify training and support that staff need for plan implementation

Proposed Metrics

- Employee Survey
- Customer Survey
- # of performance reviews completed
- Absenteeism/Turnover

Steps Recently Undertaken

We have separated the functions of the Trails Coordinator position into appropriate business lines:

- Operations now looks after all core District Trail maintenance and will support developing partnerships with local organizations for extended trail maintenance.
- Planning will deliver on the objectives from the Trail Masters Plan and will look at larger District-wide trails planning.
- Outdoor Recreation programming position has been created as part of the Recreation Core Services Review to partner with local stakeholders and live up to our motto of the "Outdoor Recreation Capital of Canada". This position will also be a liaison with local trails user groups.
- Real Estate, in consultation with key stakeholders, will look at developing a Trail Land Use Agreement.
- The Economic Sustainability Office will liaise with event stakeholders to ensure needs are met.
- We are in the process of creating a stakeholder group to meet regularly the five functional areas above and create synergies to advance the interest of trail users.

Goal 2: Ensure Organizational and Cost Effectiveness:

The Core Services Review process also helped to identify ways for the department to function more effectively. Many of the recommendations and suggestions came from the employees themselves in addition to customers. Again this is a core foundational piece of the plan. If the department is not set up to run smoothly then how can it deliver excellent service to their customers. The focus of this goal is ensuring that the department operates as a well oiled machine.

The four core outcomes identified for this goal include:

2.1   Staff Resources are Optimized: This outcome aims at ensuring that the right person is in the right place at the right time and that the organizational structure enables effective service delivery. Flexibility in assigning staff to priority areas will be key moving forward, and in doing so anticipating and developing employees to perform a variety of functions will be important.

2.2   Processes and Policies enable Service Delivery: Several comments were made throughout the interview process relating to processes and policies. Moving forward, the department will be looking to streamline processes and ensure the consistent application of relevant policies for their customers.

2.3   Technology and Innovation Enable Service Delivery: Technological advancements are being made that would improve the delivery of service in this area. A review of current and emerging technology has already taken place and the department will be looking at how to integrate recommendations coming out of that report. Ensuring that an ongoing opportunity for innovation that supports service delivery is also critical.

2.4   Long-term Environmental Sustainability of Community: Fundamental to the District's goals is ensuring that the environment and impact upon it is considered in all decisions. This is particularly relevant for this department and this outcome is about integrating environmental thinking into all relevant decisions.

Goal	Strategies	Priority (H/M/L)
2.1 Staff resources are optimized	2.11 Review current organizational structure and make recommendations based on desired improvements in service delivery and to reinforce service culture	High
	2.12 Create a strategic workforce plan to ensure that the right employee is in the right role at the right time	Medium
	2.13 Ensure staff are being allocated to overall departmental priorities	Low
2.2 Processes and policies enable effective execution of service	2.21 Review and simplify key cross departmental processes (i.e. building permits, inspections, development permit, etc.)	High
	2.23 Review and validate all current policies and guidelines impacting development processes	High
2.3 Technology enhances service delivery	2.31 Develop a future focused technology evolution plan that will support the creative use of technology in improving service delivery	Low
	2.32 Review all current technologies and identify opportunities to further optimize them and demonstrate open government	High
	2.33 Be seen as an industry leader in the delivery and provision of building and development services	Medium
2.4 Provide for the long-term environmental sustainability of the community	2.41 Enhance the Environmental and Sustainability portfolio within the District	High

2012 Priorities:

- Continue to develop a virtual one-stop development services processing centre
- Review overall organizational structure
- Ensure staffing levels are matched with service needs and policy planning obligations
- Establish a leadership team committee for the oversight and direction of the process review (including consultation with key stakeholders)
- Continue to revise and streamline building permits process
- Map all other building, planning and engineering development processes
- Complete and implement all relevant policies and bylaws that affect the building and development processes
- Review and implement changes to staff roles relating to sustainability and environmental functions
- Enhance profile with external environmental agencies

Potential KPI's/Metrics:

- Service delivery metrics (i.e. response time, etc.)
- # of process reviews completed/year
- Improved effectiveness and efficiency measures

Steps Recently Undertaken:

We have hired a Chief Building Inspector with 12 + years of experience

Goal 3: Deliver Service Excellence:

Ensuring that customers are satisfied with the level and quality of service they receive from the District is imperative. The Core Services Review process provided key insight into what aspects of service delivery should remain the same, and where there were opportunities for improvement. Many of the strategies found in the first two goals of "Build a High Performance Team" and "Ensure Organizational and Cost Effectiveness" will translate to improvements in service delivery. Additional strategies specifically focused on the customer are found in this goal.

The two core outcomes for this goal include:

4.1   Customers expectations are consistently exceeded: Given the nature of the primary function of Building and Planning within the District, it is impossible to have all customers expectations exceeded every time. However, setting a goal to achieve this by ensuring that communications are timely, effective and transparent, process times are reduced and policies are applied consistently is the commitment the District is willing to make.

3.2   Applicants understand systems and processes: This outcome follows the philosophy of "Help us help you". The more that applicants understand the processes, policies and procedures associated with Building and Planning functions, the faster the process will be for them. Helping applicants understand what is needed from them and supporting them in completing their applications will help the process move faster.

Goal	Strategies	Priority (H/M/L)
3.1 Customers expectations are consistently exceeded	3.11 Ensure a high level of customer service	Medium
	3.12 Improve communications with customers and key stakeholders	High
	3.13 Ensure customers feel value for fees	Medium
	3.14 Ensure service delivery meets the needs of customers	High
	3.15 Ensure issues are dealt with in a timely and effective manner	Medium
	3.16 Balance quality development review with processing timelines	Low
3.2 Applicants are knowledgeable about the systems and processes	3.31 Develop and implement opportunities to educate customers and applicants on the services and processes of the District	Low
	3.32 Enhance communication material relating to building and development processes	Low

2012 Priorities:

- Identify and implement service improvement and communication "quick wins"
- Communicate the relationship between fees and service to all constituents
- Implement formal communication process for applications missing required information
- Develop and implement issues management process
- Explore 3rd party dispute resolution process

Potential KPI's/Metrics:

- Customer surveys
- Response times
- Process times
- # of "error free" applications

Steps Recently Undertaken:

- We have streamlined the process for individuals waiting to receive bonds back from the District.
- New permit application.
- Online inspection bookings.
- Created a service connection team to streamline utilities servicing and booking.

Goal 4: Ensure Confident Stakeholders

One of the biggest opportunities identified through the Core Services Review process was the opportunity to improve the District's reputation with regards to the Building, Planning and Environmental functions. This is critical for the District. Stakeholders in this regard refer to all individuals and groups who have a vested interest into how the District performs in these functions. They include Council, Management and Staff as well as external groups such as Environmental Groups, the Development Community, etc. Building a strong reputation in these areas can only serve the District in the long-term.

The three core outcomes for this goal include:

4.1   Consistent and predictable economic growth: This outcome ensures that staff and the broader community understand the role of the Building and Planning function in the District's Economic Development Strategy, and enables all those playing a role in this strategy to work together in an integrated manner.

4.2   District has a strong and positive reputation: This outcome is focused on the District doing more to both engage and educate the community and relevant community associations around the work the District is doing in Building and Planning. It also includes developing a stronger reputation outside of the community with current and potential key stakeholders.

4.3   Council has confidence and support District's Development function: This outcome ensures that Council has a sound understanding of the policies, processes and performance of the Building and Planning functions and that policies are applied consistently through Council decisions on development.

Goal	Strategies	Priority (H/M/L)
4.1 Consistent and predictable economic growth	4.11 Ensure understanding in the community and the District around the role of Planning and Building in the District's Economic Development Strategy	High
4.2 District has a strong and positive reputation	4.21 Develop a Public Relations Strategy	Medium
	4.22 Promote successes through speaking engagements at conferences, etc.	Low
	4.23 Identify and build strong relationships with partner agencies and advocacy groups	Low
4.3 Council has confidence and supports District's Development function	4.31 Council understands and upholds policies, procedures and bylaws	High

2012 Priorities:

- Ensure staff understand their role in the broader economic development efforts of the District
- Build stronger working relationships with Economic Sustainability Coordinator
- Develop communication plan to ensure appropriate timing and messaging to external audiences
- Enhance relationship with UDI and home builders association
- Provide extensive orientation for council members
- Improve staff reporting to clearly link recommendations with District policy
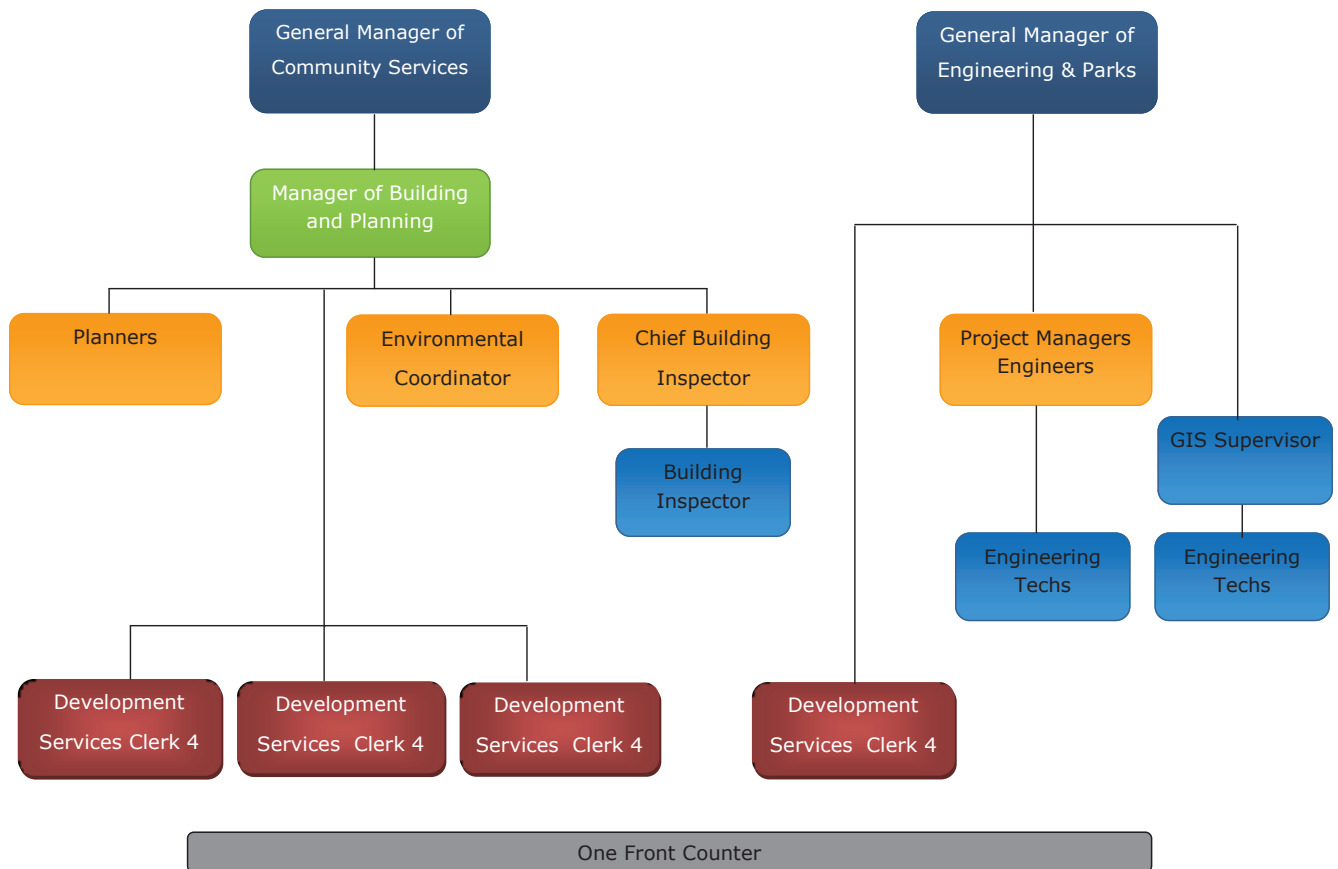
Potential KPI's/Metrics:

- Public surveys
- Key stakeholder surveys/input

Steps Recently Undertaken:

- We have hired an Economic Sustainability Coordinator
- We have conducted an extensive Council Orientation on the Role of Building and Planning and Council in the Development Process.

New Organizational Chart

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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                    General Manager of                          General Manager of
                    Community Services                          Engineering & Parks
                            |                                           |
                    Manager of Building                                 |
                      and Planning                                      |
              _____|_____               _____|_____
             |          |                 |              |                           |
         Planners  Environmental   Chief Building   Project Managers           GIS Supervisor
                    Coordinator       Inspector         Engineers                    |
                                          |                 |                         |
                                      Building         Engineering              Engineering
                                      Inspector           Techs                    Techs
      _____|_____|
     |            |                    |                |
  Development  Development       Development       Development
  Services     Services          Services          Services
  Clerk 4      Clerk 4           Clerk 4           Clerk 4

                    One Front Counter
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Technology Assessment

The Planning, Building, Environment and Trails Services Core Service Review, identifies technology improvements as a way to provide better service delivery. Technology improvements that are designed specifically to enable a service friendly operation with better connected departments, enhanced collaboration and improved efficiency.

The deficiencies identified in the Core Service stem from the use of outdated methodologies, awkward processes and poor communication. Staff need standardized processes and a better way to manage information. Citizens require quick access to their application information throughout the submission, planning and development process.

Investing in community development technology will deliver essential tools that provide access to critical information and automate key business processes. Addressing deficiencies relating to:

- Property information and land management activities,
- Permits and inspections,
- Planning and development processes,
- Regulatory enforcement and licensing,
- Citizen engagement.

The District is making fundamental decisions around technology and service delivery in all departments. Improvements have been made in IT and GIS. While document management, asset management and financial systems, have been identified for future development. Technology enhancements made in planning, building, environment and trails services will also impact and inform these choices.

The evaluation by staff of the technology options presented in this report will provide a strong basis for moving forward, helping to inform the RFP and software selection process.

Business Requirements

The planning, building, environment and trails services core review identifies a number of business requirements that would benefit from technology enhancement. Primarily, these requirements focus on improvements to internal and external communication - providing staff and the public with the ability to view information and provide input throughout the application, planning and development process.

Technology enhancements that allow staff and the public to access the most accurate and current information will increase response time, reduce errors and provide a basis for measuring key performance indicators. Through an integrated system, effectiveness and efficiency measures can be tracked and reported on. Performance metrics can be derived in a consistent and comparable way.

Centralizing these processes and connecting them with other organizational technologies increases the overall value of new investments. Given that most of these programs and services are property or location based, it is important that technology improvements leverage the investments made in Geographic Information Systems. The GIS property database provides a foundation for information data collection and reporting. Maps and geographic analysis of community development data will provide a dynamic visual representation of information for more effective communication.

Web-based and mobile technologies extend the reach of services into the field and to the public in general. Mobile data collection and site inspections connect the office to the field and provides for information continuity. Giving the public access through a secure web based community portal provides citizens, applicants, developers and contractors with a convenient way to access services at any time.

Meeting these business requirements means changing current business practices. Technology solutions exists that can provide the platform for these changes to occur.

Technology Options

The opportunities for technology enhancement are varied. Options range in system complexity and cost. Community development software that is targeted toward local government needs is available. These solutions offer tools specifically designed to help manage the community development process and provide transparency throughout the process; such as:

- Property information and land management activities;
- Permits and inspections;
- Planning and development processes;
- Regulatory enforcement and licensing;
- Citizen engagement.

As we roll out the Building and Planning Core Services Review we will be exploring these options closely in order to greatly enhance the customer service we provide.