



City of Santa Barbara Land Development Team - Proposed Process Improvements
August 2022

Priority	Recommendation*	Novak Rec #	% Complete	Notes				
Vision, Outcomes, and Customer Service								
1	Define a consistent land development process vision and customer service expectations.	Rec #1	100%	✓				
1	Establish and enforce clear PRT and DART meeting attendance and plan review guidelines.	Rec #2	100%	✓				
2	Create and communicate clear service level and process expectations to applicants, stakeholders, and staff.	Rec #3	25%					
2	Update the City's website and internal and external online communications tools to ensure ease of use and access to useful information.	Rec #5	75%					
2	Develop video and communications tools to educate customers and the public about the land development process.	Rec #6	60%					
3	Establish a customer service training program to create comprehensive and consistent service standards and expectations across all plan review and inspection disciplines.	Rec #4	10%					\$
3	Refine and update the phone tree system to provide more direct routes of communication.	Rec #7	0%					\$
Intake and Application Screening								
1	Create a checklist and clear guidelines for when to include different workgroups in plan and permit review.	Rec #8	100%					
1	Improve the intake process to screen applications for completeness.	Rec #9	80%					
3	Reduce the use of resubmittals to provide additional comments beyond what was originally provided.	Rec #10	75%					
Technology and Performance Measurement								
2	Complete Accela software implementation and align workflow processes.	Rec #11	75%					
2	Utilize Accela to report process milestones to both the architect/developer and the homeowner/property owner if applicable.	Rec #12	20%					
Process Clarity and Consistency								
1	Create a streamlined approval process for simple permits and "homeowner" projects.	Rec #16	100%					
1	Identify changes to the municipal code and other regulations to reduce or eliminate process steps.	Rec #18	35%					
2	Clearly define the starting point of the discretionary review process and the documentation required.	Rec #13	80%					
2	Redesign the pre-application review process by creating a dedicated weekly time for customers to receive conceptual feedback.	Rec #17	25%					
2	Complete necessary policy and/or code revisions to allow greater focus of review on the scope of work for the project in question.	Rec #19	100%					
2	Conduct a benchmarking analysis of stormwater regulations and design standards with neighboring and peer communities.	Rec #20	100%					
3	Assign individual building plan checkers throughout the length of the project.	Rec #14	100%					\$
3	Develop project tiers that trigger different routing and levels of review.	Rec #15	40%					
Design Review Process								
1	Create a staff report process for the design review boards.	Rec #22	100%					
2	Clearly define standards for the point at which previously approved plans are resubmitted to design boards.	Rec #23	0%					
2	Create visual examples of acceptable "pre-approved" designs.	Rec #25	75%					\$
3	Create clear, objective design guidelines for each design review board.	Rec #21	20%					\$
3	Reduce the number of design review triggers.	Rec #24	15%					
3	Reassign or consider eliminating the Single Family Design Board (SFDB) duties in order to streamline and simplify the land development process.	Rec #26	10%					
Staffing and Organizational Structure								
1	Establish a committee of land development employees to discuss and resolve cross-departmental issues and provide feedback to leadership.	Rec #29	100%	✓				
2	Transfer the Creeks Division and the administration of private site-based storm water regulations to the Public Works Department to align with broader public stormwater infrastructure.	Rec #27	0%					\$
2	Develop a robust onboarding process for staff who participate in the land development process and create a clear professional development and skill-building framework.	Rec #31	10%					\$
3	Monitor inspections workload and adjust staffing or performance standards.	Rec #28	100%	✓				\$
3	Field and triage questions from walk-in customers to the Garden Street building by training counter staff and deploying additional lobby personnel based on demand.	Rec #30	55%					\$

= "Just Do It"
 = In Progress/Underway
 = Requires Code/Guideline Amendment
 = Potential Budget Impact
 = Long Implementation Period

*Source: City of Santa Barbara, California: Land Development Process Improvement Project Report, The Novak Consulting Group, August 2020