

City of Santa Barbara, California

Land Development Process Improvement

Project Report / August 2020



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August 10, 2020

Paul Casey
City Administrator
City of Santa Barbara
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Mr. Casey:

We are pleased to provide this report regarding the City's land development and construction permitting process. This report describes the current organizational structure, staffing arrangements, and process steps associated with land development projects, and makes recommendations for improvement. Included are also the summary comments from focus group interviews and an online survey of customers of the land development process. The report identifies several recommendations designed to improve the customer and staff experience for projects going through discretionary and ministerial permit review and approval. The recommendations included in this report are informed by interviews with staff, feedback collected from stakeholders, and a process improvement exercise conducted with City staff.

Land development staff have been proactively working to implement improvements in the process and have a commitment to the community that is commendable. The high standards of the review process have allowed for the consistent character of Santa Barbara, results that speak for themselves. As improvement efforts continue, it is important to continuously monitor and adjust practices to ensure staff, technology, and the volunteers involved in the process are fully and effectively utilized.

The recommendations included in this report are intended to create an environment where continued improvements and adaptations can take effect. Implementation of these changes will take time; the current land development process was built over decades, so making improvements will not happen overnight. Leadership and staff should begin a long-term commitment to improving the land development process.

Sincerely,

Julia Novak
Executive Vice President

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Executive Summary

In January 2020, The Novak Consulting Group, now part of Raftelis, began an assessment of the City's Land Development Process. The project team was tasked with completing a comprehensive review and evaluation of the process from plan and design review to construction inspection. The goal was to develop a process that retains valuable steps and identifies improvement areas for both the process and organizational operations and engage City staff in developing an implementation plan for the proposed strategies.

To complete this assessment, the project team interviewed staff members from all the City departments that participate in the land development process to develop an understanding of how the process works and identify strengths and potential improvement areas. As part of that effort, the project team utilized data and staff feedback to map the path of several past projects that were challenging to execute. Both stakeholders and customers were engaged to understand their experience with the process. A key theme of all these different methods of engagement was that all user groups value the outcomes of the land development process – the look and feel of the community – but there are consistent process challenges and issues.

A key feature of the assessment was a Process Improvement Exercise (PIE), which was a facilitated work session with 38 employees who were tasked with developing specific process improvements related to the land development process gap analysis, articulating a shared process vision, and strengthening team cohesiveness. The PIE will serve as an important foundation for implementation. The PIE created space for employees to have frank and honest discussions with colleagues about the process and work together to solve problems. Employees are engaged and motivated to improve the process for customers and the community at large.

The PIE recommendations developed by the project team can be organized into six broad focus areas:

1. Vision, Outcomes, and Customer Service
2. Intake and Application Screening
3. Technology and Performance Measurement
4. Process Clarity and Consistency
5. Design Review Process
6. Staffing and Organization Structure

The actionable recommendations under each focus area will help the City of Santa Barbara and the land development team better serve both customers of the land development process and the community. These recommendations should serve as the starting point for an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. The land development process was created over many years; changing it will require time and dedication. Through a commitment to continuous improvement, the City will create a culture and environment that embraces change and customer service, allowing the land development process to meet the needs of the community and provide excellent customer service.

The following table summarizes the recommendations included in this report. It also indicates the source of the recommendation, whether it came from the project team or the participants in the PIE.

Table 1: List of Report Recommendations

Number	Recommendation	PIE or Consultant Recommendation
1	Define a consistent land development process vision and customer service expectations.	Consultant with modifications from the PIE
2	Establish and enforce clear PRT and DART meeting attendance and plan review guidelines.	Consultant
3	Create and communicate clear service level and process expectations to applicants, stakeholders, and staff.	PIE
4	Establish a customer service training program to create comprehensive and consistent service standards and expectations across all plan review and inspection disciplines.	PIE
5	Update the City's website and internal and external online communications tools to ensure ease of use and access to useful information.	PIE
6	Develop video and communications tools to educate customers and the public about the land development process.	PIE
7	Refine and update the phone tree system to provide more direct routes of communication.	PIE
8	Create a checklist and clear guidelines for when to include different workgroups in plan and permit review.	Consultant
9	Improve the intake process to screen applications for completeness.	Consultant
10	Reduce the use of resubmittals to provide additional comments beyond what was originally provided.	Consultant
11	Complete Accela software implementation and align workflow processes.	Consultant
12	Utilize Accela to report process milestones to both the architect/developer and the homeowner/property owner if applicable.	Consultant
13	Clearly define the starting point of the discretionary review process and the documentation required.	Consultant
14	Assign individual building plan checkers throughout the length of the project.	Consultant
15	Develop project tiers that trigger different routing and levels of review.	PIE
16	Create a streamlined approval process for simple permits and "homeowner" projects.	PIE
17	Redesign the pre-application review process by creating a dedicated weekly time for customers to receive conceptual feedback.	PIE with modifications from Consultant
18	Identify changes to the municipal code and other regulations to reduce or eliminate process steps.	PIE
19	Complete necessary policy and/or code revisions to allow greater focus of review on the scope of work for the project in question.	PIE
20	Conduct a benchmarking analysis of stormwater regulations and design standards with neighboring and peer communities.	Consultant
21	Create clear, objective design guidelines for each design review board.	Consultant
22	Create a staff report process for the design review boards.	Consultant
23	Clearly define standards for the point at which previously approved plans are resubmitted to design boards.	Consultant
24	Reduce the number of design review triggers.	PIE
25	Create visual examples of acceptable "pre-approved" designs.	PIE
26	Eliminate the Single Family Design Board (SFDB) or reassign its duties in order to streamline and simplify the land development process.	PIE
27	Transfer the Creeks Division and the administration of private site-based stormwater regulations to the Public Works Department to align with broader public stormwater infrastructure.	Consultant
28	Monitor inspections workload and adjust staffing or performance standards.	Consultant
29	Establish a committee of land development employees to discuss and resolve cross-departmental issues and provide feedback to leadership.	PIE with modifications from Consultant

Number	Recommendation	PIE or Consultant Recommendation
30	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.	PIE with modifications from Consultant
31	Develop a robust onboarding process for staff who participate in the land development process and create a clear professional development and skill-building framework.	PIE

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Background and Methodology

In January 2020, the City of Santa Barbara engaged The Novak Consulting Group, now part of Raftelis, to conduct a review and evaluation of the City's land development and construction permitting process. The goal of this assessment was to examine the workflow of plan review and approval, building permit review and approval, and the inspection process, then acknowledge and retain effective areas of the process and identify areas where process or organizational improvements are needed. Organizational structure, workflow steps, and technology tools involved in the land development process were analyzed to identify opportunities to streamline the process for City staff and customers.

This review was informed by interviews with 55 City staff representing all workgroups involved with the Santa Barbara discretionary review and ministerial permit review process. Staff from the Building and Safety Division and Planning Division of the Community Development Department, the Public Works Department, the Fire Department, the Creeks Division of the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Environmental Services Division of the Finance Department shared their perspectives. During field work, the project team also participated in a tour of the facility used by Community Development and Public Works staff as well as a demonstration of the City's Accela plan review and inspections tracking software program.

In addition to interviews with City staff, the project team facilitated six focus groups with stakeholders and administered an online customer survey to understand their experiences with the land development process. Four focus groups were conducted with 27 customers from various industries (e.g., realtors, property owners, developers, engineers, architects, and contractors). A focus group was conducted with eight volunteers representing the City boards and commissions involved in the land development process. A focus group with six representatives from Santa Barbara interest groups was also conducted to get the perspective of residents of the City. The interest groups represented were Allied Neighborhoods Association, Pearl Chase Society, Our Mesa Neighborhood Inc., and League of Women Voters. These groups were identified by City staff as representative of the perspective of neighborhoods and customers. These interviews provided valuable insights into how stakeholders perceive the land development process and City staff, as well as the overall perception of development in the community. The online survey was sent to applicants of the land development process who have applied in the last five years, and 88 individuals responded. A discussion of the responses is included in this report.

The project team worked with City staff to create process maps for five projects that had gone through the land development process. These projects represented different types of development and design review. Staff validated the process maps and added context or perspective on the different stages of each project. The purpose of this exercise was to catalog the interactions throughout the land development process, including each major process step and the general timeline of different phases. The process mapping involved nine staff members from the Community Development Department, who directly interacted with the different projects.

Staff were engaged in a three-day Process Improvement Exercise, where they worked together to identify barriers in the land development process and brainstorm solutions to improve the customer experience. There were 38 staff engaged from each of the departments involved in land development, and, in total, they identified 16 priority recommendations to improve the process. These recommendations are included in this report, and a comprehensive summary of the PIE is included as an attachment to this report. A recommended process map is also included as an attachment and notes how different recommendations impact the process.

Feedback and perceptions gathered during field work interviews and the customer survey, along with the process mapping, informed the analysis and recommendations included in this report. The project team also incorporated best practices research from national professional associations as well as experience from working with clients across the country.

Summary of Land Development Staffing and Structure

The land development process in the City of Santa Barbara involves five different City departments: Community Development; the Engineering, Transportation Planning and Parking, and Water Resources Divisions of Public Works; the Fire Prevention Division of Fire; the Creeks Division of Parks and Recreation; and the Environmental Services Division of Finance. Each department fulfills a specific purpose in the plan review process that impacts the safety or design of the final project.

Structure

The Community Development Department leads the land development process and is responsible for planning, building and safety, as well as the housing and human services functions within the City.¹ The Planning Division manages long-range planning, zoning plan review, design review, development review, and zoning enforcement. Design review staff manage the boards and commissions involved with design review: Architectural Board of Review (ABR), Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), and Single Family Design Board (SFDB). The Development Review workgroup reviews and comments on development proposals that require land use approvals and provides staff support to the Planning Commission and Staff Hearing Officer (SHO). Zoning and Enforcement staff review proposed plans and building permit applications for compliance with zoning requirements, in addition to serving as a resource to applicants and community members.² The Building and Safety division has three workgroups within it. Building Inspections and Enforcement conduct inspection and code enforcement in the field. Records and Archives manages the imaging, storage, archival, and review of land development documents. The Plan Check and Counter Services workgroup reviews engineering and architectural plans for compliance with building code and issues building permits.³

The following figure shows the Community Development Department organizational structure, including the various divisions and workgroups. The FTE counts reflect the share of positions that are involved with the land development process and are not reflective of all budgeted FTEs in the Department.

¹ City of Santa Barbara Website, Community Development, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/cd/default.asp>

² City of Santa Barbara Website, Planning, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/cd/planning.asp>

³ City of Santa Barbara Website, Building and Safety, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/cd/building/default.asp>

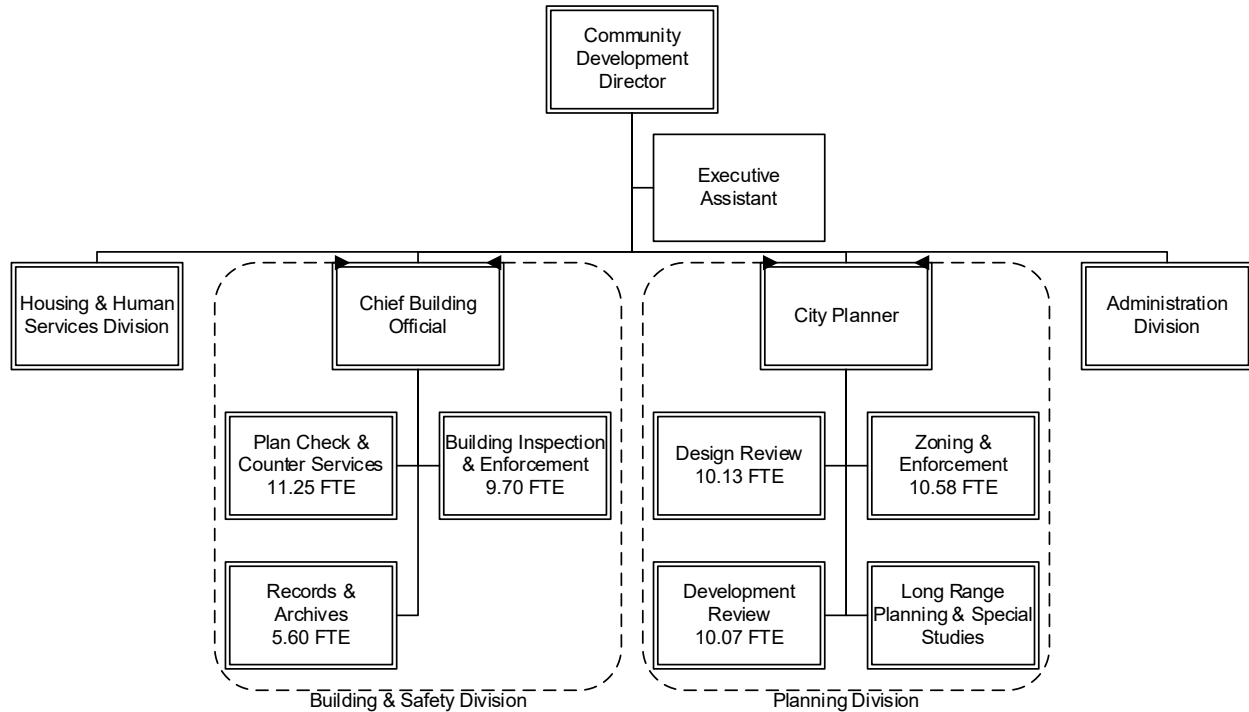


Figure 1: Community Development Department Organizational Structure, FY2020

The Public Works Department has three divisions that are involved in the land development process. The Engineering Division reviews land development projects, issues public works permits, ensures compliance of projects with City rights-of-way, and inspects all public improvements. The Transportation Planning and Parking Division reviews site plans for conformance with municipal code related to access and parking as well as with the City's pedestrian and bicycle master plans, traffic management strategy, and vision zero strategy. The Water Resources Division is involved in the land development process as it relates to projects connecting to the City's water and wastewater systems. Water Resources also implements the City's water conservation program, including the types of plants used in landscaping. The following figure shows the divisions and staff involved in the land development process. The FTE counts reflect the share of positions that are involved with the land development process and are not reflective of all budgeted FTEs in the Department.

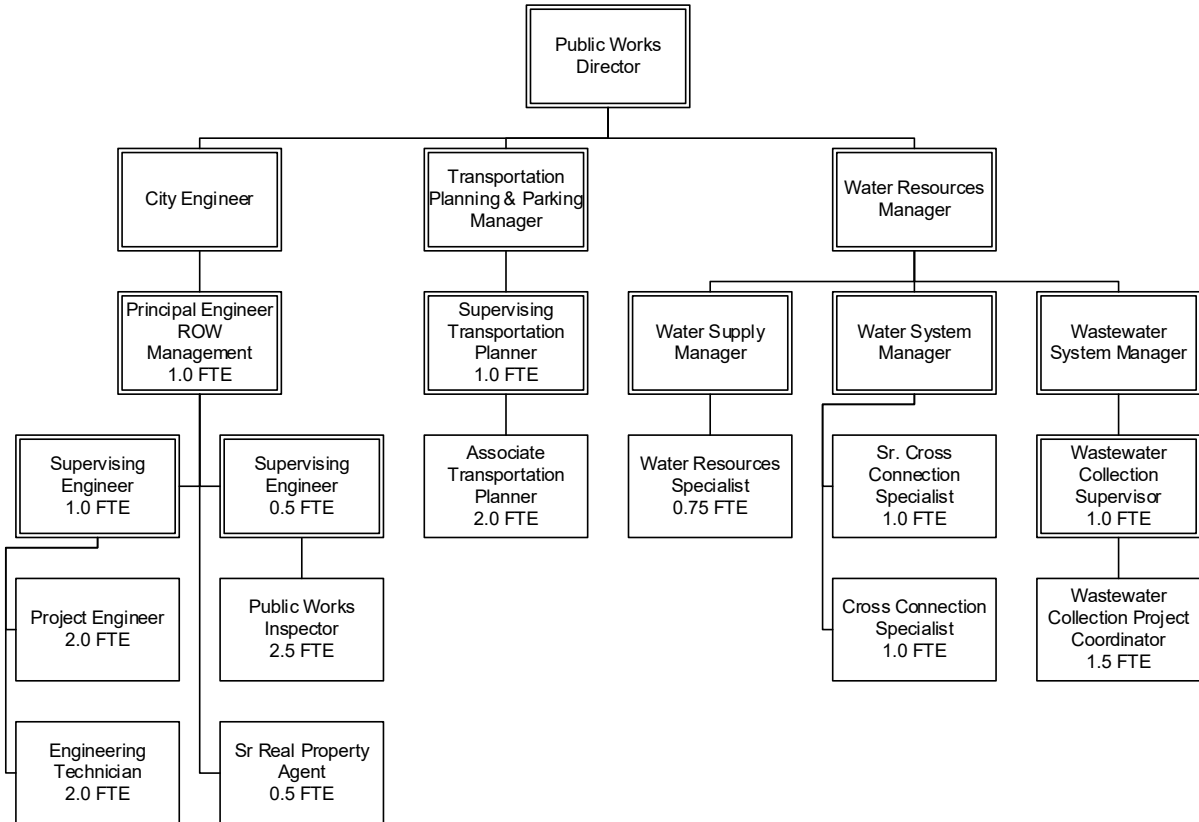


Figure 2: Public Works Department Organizational Structure, FY2020

The Fire Prevention Division of the Fire Department reviews plans and performs inspections related to the fire code. This work is supervised by the Fire Marshal. The following figure shows an organizational chart of the staff involved in the land development process within the Fire Department. The FTE counts reflect the share of positions that are involved with the land development process and are not reflective of all budgeted FTEs in the Division.

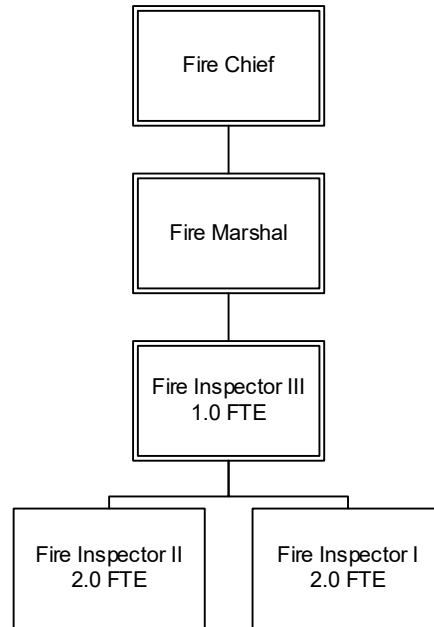


Figure 3: Fire Prevention Division Organizational Structure, FY2020

Stormwater management and regulations are enforced by the Creeks Division of the Parks and Recreation Department. They work to improve creek and ocean water quality through stormwater and urban runoff pollution reduction.⁴ Creeks staff review plans and building permit applications to comment on how stormwater is treated on the site of a project. The following figure is an organizational chart of the Creeks Division. The FTE counts reflect the share of positions that are involved with the land development process and are not reflective of all budgeted FTEs in the Division.

⁴ City of Santa Barbara Website, Creeks, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/parksrec/creeks/default.asp>

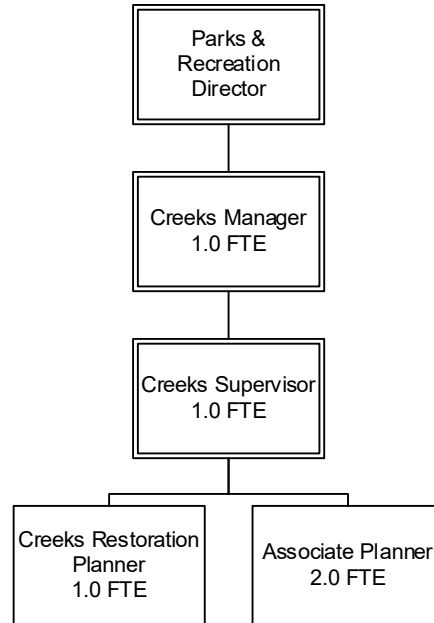


Figure 4: Creeks Division Organizational Structure, FY2020

The Environmental Services Division of the Finance Department has managed the trash, recycling, and composting services for the City. Staff in the division provide comments on projects as they relate to refuse containers and requirements for size and spacing. These issues often have an impact on the design of a project. This Division will be relocated to the new Sustainability and Resilience Department as part of the FY2021 budget. The following figure is an organizational chart of the Environmental Services staff currently involved with land development. The FTE counts reflect the share of positions that are involved with the land development process and are not reflective of all budgeted FTEs in the Division.

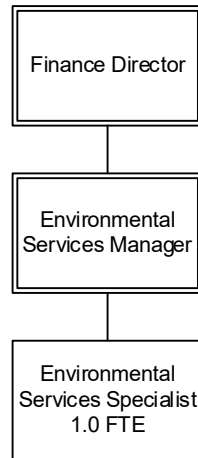


Figure 5: Environmental Services Division Organizational Structure, FY2020

Each of the workgroups involved in land development provides comments as part of discretionary review and ministerial permit review. These two distinct phases of the land development process can represent different experiences for customers and are different processes for staff. The discretionary review phase is the project concept and plan review part of the process. The ministerial permit review phase includes both application for building and public works permits, as well as inspections and ultimate issuance of certificates of occupancy. Both phases are described in more detail in sections that follow, and macro process maps capturing the overall flow of a project from application to completion are included as an attachment to this report.

Staffing

Staffing levels for the departments and divisions involved with land development have increased by about 9% since FY2016. This increase has been primarily in the Community Development Department as well as the land development engineering workgroup in Public Works, which added 5.9 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees and 2.1 FTEs over that period, respectively. The Community Development staffing increase was for 4.55 FTEs in the Building and Safety Division and 1.35 FTEs in the Planning Division. The Transportation Planning workgroup in Public Works saw a decrease in staffing of 1 FTE. Other Divisions have not added any staff in the last five fiscal years. The following table shows the staffing changes over time for the departments involved in the land development process. Divisions dedicated to plan review are shown for Public Works, Fire, and Parks and Recreation. The FTEs dedicated to land development are shown for Community Development. The following table does exclude Public Works staff in Water Resources and Finance staff in Environmental Services since staff who contribute to the land development process are part of larger programs that do not involve land development so staffing levels would not reflect resources dedicated to land development.

Table 2: Authorized Staffing Level by Department or Division, FY2016 – FY2020

Department	FY2016 Budget	FY2017 Budget	FY2018 Budget	FY2019 Budget	FY2020 Budget	Percentage Change FY2016 to FY2020
Community Development, Land Development Programs	51.43	55.28	54.33	55.33	57.33	11%
Public Works, Land Development Engineering	7.50	8.30	9.10	9.10	9.60	28%
Public Works, Transportation Planning	5.45	5.20	4.20	4.45	4.45	-18%

Department	FY2016 Budget	FY2017 Budget	FY2018 Budget	FY2019 Budget	FY2020 Budget	Percentage Change FY2016 to FY2020
Fire, Fire Prevention Division	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	0%
Parks & Recreation, Creeks Division	8.85	8.85	8.85	8.85	8.85	0%
Total	79.23	83.63	82.48	83.73	86.23	9%

Budget

According to data provided from the City's financial software, the budget associated with Divisions and Departments involved with land development has increased by 27% since FY2016. This is primarily due to Community Development, which saw an increase of \$1.8 million, \$1.2 million of which was in personnel costs. The following table shows the change in expenditures by Department or Division for the last five fiscal years; capital spending has been excluded for Creeks. Divisions dedicated to or primarily focused on plan review are shown for Public Works, Fire, and Parks and Recreation. The Community Development budget dedicated to land development programs is shown. The following table excludes Water Resources in Public Works and Environmental Services in Finance since land development is a small portion of larger programs, so budget levels would not reflect resources dedicated to land development.

Table 3: Land Development Related Expenditures, FY2016 – FY2020

Department	FY2016 Actual	FY2017 Actual	FY2018 Actual	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Budget	Percentage Change FY2016 to FY2020
Community Development, Land Development Programs	\$7,454,980	\$9,340,955	\$8,387,882	\$8,453,546	\$9,300,652	25%
Public Works, Land Development Engineering	\$1,144,477	\$1,639,039	\$1,502,054	\$1,583,618	\$1,743,470	52%
Public Works, Transportation Planning	\$900,594	\$769,769	\$680,615	\$750,573	\$878,503	-2%
Fire, Fire Prevention Division	\$1,288,446	\$1,384,731	\$1,517,802	\$1,370,530	\$1,479,907	15%
Parks & Recreation, Creeks Division ⁵	\$2,014,675	\$2,202,083	\$2,254,706	\$2,299,132	\$2,830,877	41%
Total	\$12,803,172	\$15,336,577	\$14,343,058	\$14,457,399	\$16,233,409	27%

⁵ Creeks Division actuals exclude transfers for capital outlay.

Summary of the Land Development Process

Overview of the Discretionary Review Phase

The discretionary review phase of the land development process begins at three different starting points depending on the project details and applicant preference. Applicants can choose to begin the plan review process with the Pre-Application Review Team (PRT), the Development Application Review Team (DART), or with design review by the appropriate board or commission for the project. This approach provides some process flexibility; however, it also creates the need for multiple resubmittals and some applicant confusion regarding how best to navigate the process. Before any discretionary project can advance to the permit and inspections phase, it must receive two things: a determination of application completeness, including an environmental review, and final design approval from a board, commission, and/or council depending on the project details.

PRT and DART review are similar in that they involve all the different disciplines included in plan review and provide one source of communication to the applicant through a letter and an applicant meeting. PRT review tends to be conceptual, before projects are fully detailed, while DART review includes more detailed plan design. Certain projects require PRT review according to ordinance requirements: annexations; high-density housing projects on lots greater than 15,000 square feet; conditional use permits; new or conversions of condominiums; non-residential additions of greater than 3,000 square feet; general plan or zoning amendments; hotel conversions; and subdivisions.⁶ Most projects that go through PRT review will also go through DART review. Most projects that require review by the Planning Commission or Staff Hearing Officer must go through DART review. Applicants are seeking a determination of application completeness as part of the DART review, and part of this determination includes a conceptual review of the project by the design board or commission over the project. After the completeness determination, staff will conduct an internal environmental review before the project goes to the Planning Commission or the SHO. The PRT or DART review will also identify necessary approvals from outside agencies, such as the County Health Department if the site has environmental issues. These reviews are useful because they allow applicants to meet with each plan review discipline early in the process so that potential development issues can be identified and modified in subsequent plan review submittals.

The Planning Commission reviews projects depending on the details of the project or location within the Coastal Zone. Planning Commission members are appointed by City Council; some may have expertise in the land development process, but that is not a requirement. Planning staff approve projects through the SHO role. The SHO reviews projects that involve modifications, performance standard permits, development plan approvals, lot line adjustments, and negative declarations for environmental review.⁷ After review by the Planning Commission or SHO, a project must return to the appropriate board or commission for final approval before it can proceed to the building permit submittal phase.

Projects that do not go through DART begin with a 30-day completeness review of the application by Planning Division staff. Once an application is deemed complete, a project will go to the appropriate design review board or commission for review. Three bodies review projects depending on their location, type, or scope. The Historic Landmarks Commission reviews all projects involving buildings with historic significance as well as any project in the El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District.⁸ The Single Family Design Board reviews single-family residential projects outside of the HLC jurisdiction.⁹ The Architectural Board

⁶ City of Santa Barbara, Pre-Application Review Team Submittal Requirements, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=17595>

⁷ City of Santa Barbara Website, Staff Hearing Officer, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/nz/sho/default.asp>

⁸ City of Santa Barbara Website, Design Guidelines, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/services/planning/design/default.asp>

⁹ City of Santa Barbara Website, Design Guidelines, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/services/planning/design/default.asp>

of Review reviews multi-residential, commercial, or mixed-use projects.¹⁰ The majority of projects that go through the land development process require design review by one of these three boards or commissions, except for purely ministerial projects. Each is made up of Council-appointed, volunteer members and many of the positions are required to have expertise in the architectural or design field. Planning staff manage these boards, but the positions that do so tend to be entry-level, and staff are often early in their careers. As a result, the design review process is often driven by the Chairs of the boards or commissions.

Overview of the Ministerial Permit Review Phase

Once final discretionary approval is issued for a project, it can move to the next phase of the land development process. The ministerial permit review phase has a single entry point with an application for a permit. Projects will require a building permit and, depending on the scope, a public works permit if work is needed in the City's right-of-way or there is a need to connect with City utilities. Building permit review involves multiple disciplines and requires approval by each of the workgroups involved in the land development process before a permit will be issued. This includes multiple reviewers within each department. For example, an application may require up to three different reviews by the Fire Department, depending on the details of the project. Public works permits require approval from the appropriate workgroups within the Public Works Department and, in some cases, the Creeks Division of the Parks and Recreation Department when certain stormwater requirements are triggered.

After the necessary permits are issued, inspections staff will check in with the applicant or contractor for large or complex projects to understand the needed phasing or construction stages of a project. Applicants request inspections when they are ready. This is currently done by calling the Community Development Department or Public Works Department and leaving a voicemail message. Each morning, inspections staff split up the requests and normally complete the inspection within two days of the request submittal, often within 24 hours. Staff cited instances where community members or neighbors called the City to request the inspection of an ongoing project; this is not uncommon for projects with a high degree of visibility or that elicited community comments during design review. During the course of construction and inspection, changes to the project will occur. If a revision is needed, the applicant will need to resubmit for a changed or new permit. If the exterior of a project has changed, and the project was originally subject to design review approval, the applicant must resubmit for design review after final approval to the appropriate board or commission. Examples of these exterior changes include moving a window or a change in the design for a railing. Some of these reviews after final approvals can be handled administratively by staff. Staff report that it can be challenging to enforce design standards on projects at this stage because inspectors are focused on life and safety issues, not necessarily exterior design.

¹⁰ City of Santa Barbara Website, Design Guidelines,
<https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/services/planning/design/default.asp>

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

A key part of improving the land development process is understanding the stakeholder experience and perception of the process. City staff must balance the needs and desires of applicants, neighbors, and interest groups in the City as they administer land use and development regulations. This includes both the customer experience in interacting with staff and the perception of the process outcome on the community. Often these interests are in conflict, and adjusting the process requires an understanding of the current perceptions of different stakeholders. To understand these perspectives, the project team engaged customers, volunteers, and neighborhood representatives. In total, 115 customers, eight volunteers, and six representatives of four interest groups shared feedback via a focus group or an online survey.

The stakeholder engagement revealed common themes across the different perspectives on the land development process:

- Appreciation for the outcome but issues with the process
- Value staff professionalism and expertise but feel the process is inconsistent
- Issues with staff communication and project timeline
- Frustration with the subjectivity of design review
- Lack of process clarity and predictability

Stakeholders expressed a general appreciation for the outcomes of the land development process. They value the look and feel of Santa Barbara and understand the desire to protect the design of the community. Many expressed a desire to get the design and project "right" before approving a new project. Some even feel this is important enough that limiting development was an appropriate outcome of the land development process. However, there was broad frustration with the process and method for executing this vision of maintaining the look and feel of Santa Barbara.

In general, stakeholders appreciate the professionalism and expertise of Santa Barbara staff, often knowing the appropriate staff member to contact with specific questions or to clarify issues raised during the process. Many also acknowledged that senior staff have left the organization in recent years, which has impacted the ability to quickly resolve issues. However, they also expressed frustration at the inconsistency of the plan review approach, noting that comments and the level of scrutiny can vary drastically depending on the staff reviewer assigned to the application. Customers perceive that the number of resubmittals required is excessive and that new comments are often generated on unchanged portions of plans after resubmittal. There is also a belief that stormwater and ADA requirements are unnecessarily stringent and go above and beyond the State requirements.

The communication of staff to stakeholders was a common issue raised. Many feel that staff do not clearly communicate about the process or what the next step should be for a stakeholder. Specifically, customers shared issues about unclear comments on plans and application materials requiring follow-up with staff before they are able to address the comments. Stakeholders also felt that staff were not available or difficult to contact. These frustrations with communications and inconsistent plan review led to an overall issue with the timeline for land development projects. Customers felt it takes too long to get approval for a project, and these delays impact their business and the businesses that want to open in Santa Barbara. Stakeholders are frustrated that because of the long timelines, only large projects or projects backed by well-funded developers could get through the land development process. This changes the types of projects that get approved and impact the perception of the look and feel of the community.

Design review is perceived as subjective and a source of delays in the overall process. Stakeholders expressed frustration with the boards and commissions and the outsized role they can play in the land development process. They noted that comments from boards can vary depending on the members in attendance on a given day or their desire to expand beyond the scope of design review. Customers also felt that the need to reengage with design review after approval of a project was excessive and unnecessary.

Many of these frustrations were echoed by the representatives of the boards and commissions. They shared that the design review standards are not clear, which leads to each member of a board or commission interpreting them differently. This lack of consistency allows for board members to exceed their scope and provide the variety of feedback reported by customers. Some felt that staff have a "light touch" during design review, and providing more guidance to the boards would improve their experience and the customer experience.

There was a desire for improved predictability and clarity in the land development process across the different perspectives of stakeholders. Many felt that the process is overly complex, which makes it difficult to know how a project should proceed through the process. Without this clarity, the process is unpredictable and can vary by project without stakeholders clearly understanding why. Some of this frustration with the complexity could be addressed through improved customer service; stakeholders referenced frustrating interactions with staff who did not provide clear answers or options for them to pursue. Even if the process is complex it can be made clearer and, therefore, predictable by improved customer service and communication.

These themes were all expressed by stakeholders in different ways and from different perspectives. A commonality among all of these issues is the lack of a unified City "philosophy" around development. It was evident that customers and stakeholders can have different experiences depending on the individual staff member they interact with or who reviews their project. There is a perception that the City's development review philosophy centers on finding a way to say "no" rather than collaborating to get to "yes." This perception exists even between staff members interviewed by the project team. Clearly communicating a unified philosophy will help stakeholders understand the perspective of the City and set expectations around land development.

Customer Survey Results

To allow for additional participation in the assessment by the customers of the process, an online survey was administered to provide another opportunity for customers to give feedback on their experience with the land development process. Survey questions were developed by the project team with input from City staff, and the link to the survey was sent to all applicants in the City's software system who had applied for review with the City in the last five years. The survey was available from Friday, May 8, 2020, to Friday, May 22, 2020, and 88 responses were received. The respondents to the survey were overwhelmingly based in Santa Barbara, with 94% indicating they or their company were based in the City. About 69% of respondents identified themselves as an Architect or Designer; the next largest group was Land Use Planners or Permit Expeditors at 14%. The following is a discussion of themes from the survey; more detail, along with the complete text of open-ended responses, is included as an attachment.

More than half of the respondents had interacted with each of the discretionary review bodies in the last six months to one year. On average, about 66% of respondents had interacted with the design review boards or the Staff Hearing Officer, and about half of the respondents had projects reviewed by the Planning Commission. Over 71% of respondents had interacted with the building or public works permit process in the last six months. These results suggest that respondents have a good familiarity with all aspects of the land development process.

Respondents were asked to rank several statements about the land development process on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Disagreement was high for seven of the eight statements, with over 40% of respondents disagreeing. About 82% of respondents indicated that the land development process is not easy to understand or navigate, the highest for any statement. More than 75% of respondents felt that the City is unresponsive when issues arise in the process. About half of respondents disagreed with statements about understanding requirements for approval, knowing who to talk to if experiencing issues, and getting questions answered about unclear review comments. One statement did receive a high level of agreement:

about 73% felt clear about the materials required for design review submission. The following table shows the full results of the survey statements regarding the land development process.

Table 4: Agreement with Statements about Land Development Process

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The land development process is easy to understand and navigate.	6.5%	10.4%	29.9%	51.9%	1.3%
I understand the requirements necessary for my application to be approved.	10.4%	39.0%	32.5%	16.9%	1.3%
I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for design review.	15.6%	57.1%	22.1%	5.2%	0.0%
I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for Development Application Review Team (DART) review.	6.5%	39.0%	37.7%	5.2%	11.7%
I know who to talk to if I experience an issue during the design review, building plan application, public works permit, or inspection process.	10.4%	36.4%	32.5%	19.5%	1.3%
The City of Santa Barbara is responsive when issues arise in the Land Development process.	3.9%	16.9%	35.1%	40.3%	3.9%
If I receive comments that are unclear, I can contact City staff to get my questions answered.	5.2%	36.4%	31.2%	24.7%	2.6%

Respondents who selected "Strongly Disagree" for any of the previous statements were given an opportunity to expand on why with an open-ended response. An analysis of the responses shows that respondents feel there is a culture of saying "no" to projects and that customers feel they receive poor communication from staff. There was also concern about inconsistencies experienced in the land development process as well as a level of complexity that customers did not like. Other common themes referenced the time it takes to go through the land development process, the customer service received, and a perception that staff are not cooperative. The following table summarizes the themes of the open-ended responses. The full text of the responses is included in Attachment A.

Table 5: Themes from "Strongly Disagree" Open-Ended Comments

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Culture of saying no	9	15.8%
Poor communication	9	15.8%
Staff or process are inconsistent	8	14.0%
Process is complex	7	12.3%
Slow process	4	7.0%
Poor customer service	4	7.0%
Poor cooperation	4	7.0%
Staff not empowered	2	3.5%
No single point of contact	2	3.5%
Process is arbitrary and staff driven	2	3.5%
Historic designation	1	1.8%
Staff need training	1	1.8%
Comments added on unchanged portions of plans	1	1.8%

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Difficult for new customers to navigate	1	1.8%
Inspections are subjective	1	1.8%
Process limits development	1	1.8%
Total	57	100.0%

Respondents were asked to rank five additional statements about specific aspects of the land development process and specifically the comments received from City staff at these stages. Four of the five statements received more than 40% disagreement, with comments from building inspections being the only statement that did not. Notably, about 36% responded "N/A" to the inspections statement, most likely indicating an unfamiliarity with that portion of the land development process. Respondents indicated that comments received from City staff are not clear and helpful; this includes design review comments (57%), PRT and DART comments (49%), comments related to modifications (59%), and building permit comments (65%). This is an area for improvement in customer service. The following table shows the full results of this question.

Table 6: Agreement with Statements about Comments Received

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Design review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	5.3%	34.7%	40.0%	17.3%	2.7%
Development review (PRT and DART) plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	5.3%	27.6%	38.2%	10.5%	18.4%
Comments from City staff related to modifications are clear and helpful.	10.7%	29.3%	41.3%	17.3%	1.3%
Building permit plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	6.6%	26.3%	31.6%	32.9%	2.6%
Building inspection comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	4.0%	33.3%	17.3%	9.3%	36.0%

Respondents who indicated "Strongly Disagree" to any of the statements were given the opportunity to explain why. The project team conducted an analysis of the open-ended responses, and the most common reasons customers felt this way pertained to the customer service they received from City staff. Respondents indicated that the comments received from staff were often inaccurate or unclear and that communication with staff was poor. Several also indicated frustration with the length of the process and the subjectivity of design review. The following table summarizes the themes of the open-ended responses.

Table 7: Themes from "Strongly Disagree" Open-Ended Comments

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Poor customer service	13	25.5%
Comments are unclear or inaccurate	10	19.6%
Poor communication	7	13.7%
Process takes too long	5	9.8%
Design review is subjective	5	9.8%
Staff or process are inconsistent	2	3.9%
There are too many reviews	2	3.9%

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Design standards too complex	1	2.0%
DART process unpredictable	1	2.0%
Stormwater requirements hard to comply with	1	2.0%
PRT process is vague	1	2.0%
Staff need training	1	2.0%
Culture of saying no	1	2.0%
Process creates additional expense	1	2.0%
Total	51	100.0%

Respondents were then asked to comment about the strengths of the City's land development process. Similar to themes discussed in the focus groups, respondents indicated they appreciate the ultimate outcome of the process and enjoy the look and feel of Santa Barbara. Many also expressed an appreciation for the expertise and friendliness of City staff. Over 30% of the comments mentioned staff as a strength in the process. The following table represents the themes of the open-ended responses regarding process strengths; the full text of comments is included in Attachment A.

Table 8: Themes from Open-Ended Comments about Process Strengths

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Outcome of community look and feel	10	15.2%
Friendly and helpful staff	9	13.6%
None	7	10.6%
Knowledgeable staff	7	10.6%
Staff availability	5	7.6%
Communication between City departments	4	6.1%
Counter service	4	6.1%
Avoids bad projects	2	3.0%
Intent of the process	2	3.0%
How thorough it is	2	3.0%
Online submission	2	3.0%
Website	1	1.5%
Convenient location	1	1.5%
Board and commission members	1	1.5%
Clear submittal requirements	1	1.5%
DART process	1	1.5%
Outsourcing building plan checks	1	1.5%
Early reviews through PRT process	1	1.5%
Permit Streamlining Act	1	1.5%
Serves large projects well	1	1.5%
Public communication	1	1.5%

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Authority	1	1.5%
Regulate development	1	1.5%
Total	66	100.0%

The survey also asked respondents to expand on the weaknesses they experience in the land development process. The most mentioned themes support the takeaways from the stakeholder focus groups. Respondents indicated that the process is too slow, overly complex, and inconsistent. Although perceived as a strength in the previous question, respondents also indicated that they receive poor customer service and communication from staff and that staff has a culture of saying "no." Respondents also expressed frustration with the design review boards and their lack of oversight, as well as what is seen as burdensome submission requirements. The following table summarizes the themes from the open-ended responses about process weaknesses.

Table 9: Themes from Open-Ended Comments about Process Weaknesses

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Slow process	15	16.5%
Process is too complex or unclear	9	9.9%
Poor customer service or communication	8	8.8%
Culture of saying no	8	8.8%
Boards have no oversight or training	7	7.7%
Inconsistent process	6	6.6%
Poor coordination with other departments	4	4.4%
Submission requirements are burdensome	4	4.4%
Distrust of applicants	3	3.3%
Staff are not empowered	3	3.3%
ADA codes too rigorous	3	3.3%
None	2	2.2%
Design review process is excessive or subjective	2	2.2%
Comments are unhelpful or inaccurate	1	1.1%
Design decisions are not enforced	1	1.1%
Creeks is an obstacle	1	1.1%
Not enough information is provided during design review	1	1.1%
Closed every other Friday	1	1.1%
Favoritism	1	1.1%
Coastal codes too rigorous	1	1.1%
Materials online are out of date	1	1.1%
Counter staff not knowledgeable	1	1.1%
Meeting reminders needed	1	1.1%
All projects get the same level of scrutiny	1	1.1%
Neighbors have too much say	1	1.1%

Comment Theme	Mentions	Percentage of Total Mentions
Process favors large projects	1	1.1%
No accountability	1	1.1%
Building needs more plan checkers	1	1.1%
No point person for applications	1	1.1%
Lack of transparency and accountability	1	1.1%
Total	91	100.0%

In general, the survey responses support the comments and themes from the stakeholder focus groups. They show a clear need to improve the culture and philosophy of the land development team. This is particularly evident in the way staff were discussed as both strengths in the process and weaknesses. These seemingly conflicting results indicate an environment where City staff are not all on the same page; customers find support and clear communication from some individuals while receiving poor customer service from others. The lack of clarity, consistency, and predictability in the process is also evident in the responses. Improving the land development process to clearly communicate expectations and the path from submission to completion will allow staff to provide better customer service and give customers the clarity they seek.

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Analysis and Recommendations

Based on the information provided by City staff, stakeholders, and customers, the project team has identified six focus areas for improvement to the land development process:

- Vision, Outcomes, and Customer Service
- Intake and Application Screening
- Technology and Performance Measurement
- Process Clarity and Consistency
- Design Review Process
- Staffing and Organization Structure

A discussion of the recommendations for each focus area is included in the following sections.

Vision, Outcomes, and Customer Service

There is a need to define a consistent land development process vision and establish clear expectations for customers, so they know what to expect when interacting with the process. Currently, there are varying views across departments and divisions about staff's role in helping to advance a project. Internal expectations for timelines and attendance at joint meetings need to be clarified as well.

Recommendation 1: Define a consistent land development process vision and customer service expectations.

The land development process, by its nature, involves conflict. Applicants want to complete a project as efficiently as possible and with the least possible cost. The City is tasked with ensuring that all development meets established design, zoning, environmental, and building safety requirements. Residents and neighborhood groups want to ensure that the look and feel of the community are maintained, that their voice is heard, and their interests are protected in the development process. Though staff from each plan review discipline acknowledge these sometimes-competing values and interests, there are varying views about the role of staff in helping to advance a project.

These varying philosophies create conflict with applicants and create tension among staff and between divisions. Some staff see their role as serving customers and getting to "yes," while others view themselves as guardians of the process and draw a more distinct line between staff's role and the goals of the applicant. This was reflected in the customer survey, where a common issue raised by respondents was a culture of finding a way to say "no" to projects. There is a need to protect the guidelines and standards that have made Santa Barbara the beautiful community it is; however, there is also a need to provide a level of customer support that helps applicants advance a project efficiently within the framework of existing regulations.

These issues can be addressed with a consistent and unified vision for the process and associated customer service expectations. This vision should respect the standards that set Santa Barbara apart but also create clear customer service expectations and foster a sense of employee empowerment and trust to troubleshoot issues and help advance a project forward. It can be challenging to create a sense of employee empowerment in a politically sensitive context like the land development process. If an employee makes a judgment call that creates negative political reverberations, that employee becomes less likely to make those judgment calls in the future. As a result, the process loses its flexibility. Empowered staff thrive in an environment with a consistent, unified vision, targeted outcomes, and clear support and direction from

senior City leaders. This broad goal was a major focus of the Process Improvement Exercise. While morale was generally positive throughout this review, a clarified vision for the process will further contribute to staff engagement and satisfaction.

Participants in the PIE had a robust conversation about their vision for customer service and expectations for each other. Based on that conversation, participants agreed to the following commitments for customers and applicants to the land development process:

- Our applicants and customers have a right to expect...
 - Clear and simple communication about our processes delivered in a respectful manner
 - Knowledge of the upfront costs in both time and money
 - That the process is consistent and fair

These expectations should inform the work of every member of the land development team. Being able to communicate complex information in a clear and simple way should be a skill that is encouraged and valued. It was also important for participants that respect be at the center of communication, including for customers, with each other, and in the communication from customers. Staff and customers should be held accountable to this standard. Customers should be able to know the cost in time and dollars spent to go through the land development process. Staff recognized that this is not necessarily possible currently, but as changes are made to the process and improvements are implemented, this should be a goal. Customers approach the land development process expecting that the process will be consistent and fair; if there are issues that arise or reasons that the process becomes inconsistent, staff should address them.

One of the keys to implementing and setting a unified vision for the land development team is buy-in and commitment from the leaders in the process. PIE participants discussed a "cultural conflict" where divisions and workgroups within the land development process do not work well together, or animosity exists between the staff and leadership of different divisions. Staff felt that they work well together across divisions at a peer level, but a lack of trust and an adversarial relationship at the management level sets the tone for staff. PIE participants outlined several commitments that they wanted to see supervisors and managers make:

- Land development staff request managers and supervisors make a commitment to...
 - Respect every person and every division's role in the process and foster a culture of respect and trust
 - Hold staff, supervisors, and managers accountable to these values
 - Support and empower leaders at all levels of the organization
 - Publicly defend staff and their decisions
 - Be responsive and follow through
 - Engage with conflict in a timely manner
 - Be decisive

These commitments will support staff in their efforts to serve customers and work together to administer the rules and regulations that make up the land development process.

Land development leadership must work with frontline staff to further develop the customer expectations and manager commitments to establish a clear vision that all members of the team commit to and adopt. This may also involve shared values and a mission statement for the land development team. This shared vision should be communicated both internally and externally; it should form the foundation of decision-making and guide the implementation of process improvements. Supervisors and managers need to lead the way in modeling how the vision informs day-to-day work and hold others accountable to that vision. This continuous communication and commitment will begin to change the culture within the land development team and eventually change the perception of the process with customers and stakeholders.

Recommendation 2: Establish and enforce clear PRT and DART meeting attendance and plan review guidelines.

Plan review by both the Development Application Review Team and Pre-Application Review Team uses meetings to gather comments from the various plan review disciplines (e.g., Zoning, Building, Creeks). There are two sets of meetings for both review teams: an internal meeting among staff to share comments and discuss issues that might impact other disciplines and a second meeting with the applicant to answer questions about the comments provided by staff. The scope of the comments and level of review do differ between PRT and DART. Projects going through PRT review are usually at the conceptual stage, with details of the project often still unknown, while DART projects should be more developed. For both types of review, they often occur before design review in the land development process.

The PRT and DART meetings provide a useful opportunity for applicants to meet with each plan review discipline to identify issues to be aware of as the project is further developed and assessed. This joint approach helps streamline the plan development, review, and approval process. Staff report that these meetings allow disciplines to work out conflicting guidance or brainstorm to resolve issues collaboratively and quickly.

One of the broad customer service issues is that staff, due to competing project and time constraints, are not always available to attend both internal and applicant PRT and DART meetings, and sometimes offer generic guidance when they do attend. This was an issue raised by both customers of the land development process and staff members, who expressed frustration with a lack of attendance and accountability. A discussion of potential changes to the PRT process is included in the Process Clarity and Consistency section of this report, but this issue would apply to any review process or customer meeting that involves staff members from different disciplines.

The utility and value of the PRT and DART meetings will be enhanced by establishing clear expectations regarding meeting attendance and associated site visits. Attendance at these meetings needs to be incorporated into performance reviews for staff members, and supervisors need to hold their staff accountable for participating in these meetings. Doing so will improve customer service and the experience of going through the land development process. In addition, improved attendance will allow projects to go through the land development process more smoothly.

The second issue is the generic nature of the comments provided by staff members. This is a more difficult issue to untangle because two factors contribute to staff providing generic comments as part of the PRT and DART reviews. First, similar to the issue with meeting attendance, staff have time constraints due to other projects and responsibilities, so generic comments are the feedback they are able to provide with the time available. Second, especially for PRT review, there may not be enough detail submitted by the customer for detailed comments to be supplied by staff. For example, more specific guidance around compliance with building code requirements related to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) may not be possible when the project is in the conceptual stage.

The comments provided to customers from PRT and DART review will be enhanced by setting clear expectations regarding the level of scrutiny and detail staff should provide. Performance expectations should be established for staff involved with PRT and DART. If there is truly not enough detail provided by the customer for more specific comments, then staff should define what is missing and what would be needed to provide more information.

Recommendation 3: Create and communicate clear service level and process expectations to applicants, stakeholders, and staff.

As discussed previously, there is a clear need for setting common expectations that can be communicated to the public. Service level and process standards are necessary for both telling customers and stakeholders what to expect as well as holding staff accountable for their performance. Process Improvement Exercise participants reported that a lack of clarity regarding customer service expectations and the overall process

creates issues with customers and other staff members. This was also expressed in the customer survey where a majority of respondents felt that the process was difficult to navigate (81.8%), felt the City was not responsive when issues arose (75.4%), did not feel they could get their questions answered if they contacted the City (55.9%), and did not know whom to contact if issues arose (52.0%).

PIE participants recommended establishing clear expectations across all workgroups. This would ensure that staff have a common understanding of what to expect of each other. Participants also discussed the need for accountability up and down the hierarchy of the organization and that supervisors and managers needed to be held to similar standards as frontline staff. Doing this helps establish trust in the process and will create a benchmark for self-assessment and transparency.

Building on the customer expectations discussed previously will provide tangible service level expectations. A team of land development staff should assess standards for turnaround time, which would require an update to the City's internal "Timeline Matrix," and communication with customers about projects or plan comments. This should be done in a collaborative manner across disciplines, departments, and divisions.

Recommendation 4: Establish a customer service training program to create comprehensive and consistent service standards and expectations across all plan review and inspection disciplines.

Land development staff work with and serve customers regularly. This looks different depending on the individual staff person's role but can range from dealing with walk-in customers at the counters in the Garden Street building to managing public meetings with boards and commissions or going to a construction site to conduct an inspection and provide comments to a customer. Currently, staff do not receive customer service training as part of their onboarding or ongoing professional development. However, interactions with the public, customers, and stakeholders drive perceptions of the process and staff service.

Customers in both focus group interviews and the customer survey raised the issue of poor customer service from land development staff. This is one of the most common issues with the land development process and is something that is wholly in control of land development staff. Even if customers ultimately do not get what they desire from the process, they can still have a positive interaction through good customer service.

Process Improvement Exercise participants expressed the need for training in customer service and desire for a training program that would give them additional tools to provide good customer service. They noted that establishing customer service standards is a good start, but it is not fair to expect staff to perform to those standards without training. This training program would allow all land development team members to have the same baseline training and tools to uphold the commitment to customer service. The training also creates a regular opportunity for dialogue and relationship-building across the different land development team workgroups and divisions. It is also important that the training program meets the specific environment of the land development process. Participants recognized that the conflict inherent in the process means staff need more specialized training than might be applicable in a traditional retail or service situation.

Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL) is a professional association for local government practitioners and a resource for best practices and case studies on a variety of public sector issues. ELGL published an article about customer service in the planning and development field, written by a planning director in the State of Texas. This guidance should inform the City's customer service training program. First, it is crucial to recognize that not all customers are the same in the land development process as each has different needs and expectations:¹¹

¹¹ Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL), Planning & Shaping Cities: Customer Service, <https://elgl.org/planning-shaping-cities-customer-service-2/>

1. **The Experienced Professional:** Developers, architects, designers, engineers, surveyors, contractors, consultants, and real estate professionals. They are frequent customers who are familiar with the process and even the history and changes made to the process.
2. **The Concerned Citizen:** This might be property owners, homeowners, business owners, or renters. These customers are often concerned about how a specific project will affect their neighborhood.
3. **The Novice:** Homeowners seeking a permit or first-time business owners. These customers do not regularly deal with regulations and development and may only interact with the process every few years at most, based on individual projects.
4. **The Internal Customer or Partner:** Other departments within the organization, the executive team, and board members. Partners might be non-profit organizations, interest groups, schools, and others who want to work with the City toward a common goal.

Staff should be trained on the different types of customers they interact with and how to meet their unique needs. A training program should ask staff members to think about the experience of interacting with the land development process from each of these perspectives. This will allow staff to put themselves in the shoes of the customers they serve and even adjust the process to better meet their needs.

As the City develops a training program specific to the land development process, these tips should be incorporated into the materials and design:¹²

- **Speak Plainly:** Customers are coming to the City for answers, whether from the website, application materials, presentation, or meetings. Avoid using jargon, referencing acronyms, and complex terminology that is not clear. Give the bottom line; be straightforward to help customers understand what they need to do.
- **Listen:** When interacting with customers, ask questions, provide them multiple methods to give feedback, and demonstrate listening by summarizing what they said and asking for confirmation or promptly responding.
- **Start Fresh Each Time:** Staff will have to deal with angry, upset customers, and that can lead them to a defensive mode bracing for the next negative encounter. By starting fresh with each customer, or with the same customer each time, staff can develop their skill at navigating these situations and potentially develop positive relationships.
- **Set and Manage Expectations:** Do not take for granted that a customer is familiar with the process or that they know what is required. Clearly communicate the timeframe, who is involved, and when they can expect a resolution for their project.
- **Present Options:** Options are easier to hear than a hard "no." Staff should share alternative approaches, project or plan modifications, or examples of successful projects. The feeling of choice will have a positive impact on the customer.
- **Be Able to Answer "Why?" if Asked:** Often, it is not sufficient to explain that a requirement must be met. Many customers want to understand why that requirement exists. When this happens, it is both an educational opportunity and a trust-building moment.
- **Be a Shepherd:** Perception is reality, especially for customers. Instead of simply referring customers to another department or division, make the introduction and hand them off. Guide them through the process and ensure their questions are answered.
- **Demystify Board and Commission Meetings:** Advise customers on what will happen during a meeting and when they will need to speak. Clearly communicate the decision of the board or commission and be prepared to answer questions from the customer.

Using these guidelines and working in partnership with the Human Resources Division of the Administrative Services Department, land development team leadership should establish an ongoing

¹² Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL), Planning & Shaping Cities: Customer Service, <https://elgl.org/planning-shaping-cities-customer-service-2/>

customer service training program. The program should cover the basics for all land development team staff and specific training for the different customers each workgroup interacts with most regularly. Ongoing training should be part of the program to ensure staff are continually meeting the expectations of the organization and its customers.

Recommendation 5: Update the City's website and internal and external online communications tools to ensure ease of use and access to useful information.

According to staff, customers often express frustration with the ability to find information about the land development process online. The customer expectation is that the information is readily available online, but the current online communication provided by the City about the land development process is difficult to navigate. This sometimes happens when several departments, divisions, and workgroups are involved in the process, and information is provided based on departmental structure versus how the public interacts with the services provided.

A key component of high-quality customer service is clear communication. For customers to understand the process and how to navigate it, communication tools that explain it are needed. The best method is to use the City's website. There has been an effort to centralize some information; the City has a "Planning Central" landing page with forms, handouts, and applications that involve several departments.¹³ The City should build on this effort to provide more information about the land development process in a clear, understandable manner.

Process Improvement Exercise participants underscored the need to update the City's communications and access to useful information. Land development team staff should work closely with the City Administrator's Office and the Information Technology Division of the Administrative Services Department to develop a workplan for identifying, creating, and publishing clear information about the land development process on the City's website. The communications should cover high-level and basic information about the process, as well as detailed information related to specific steps in the process.

These communication tools could also be approached in creative or new ways. One idea brought up during the Process Improvement Exercise discussion was the creation of an interactive software tool to screen applicants and projects similar to the way software like TurboTax screens tax-related questions. Essentially, customers could answer short, simple questions, and by doing so, narrow down the information they need to provide and clarify the path they will go to get approval from the City for their project.

Recommendation 6: Develop video and communications tools to educate customers and the public about the land development process.

As discussed previously, information on the land development process is often available publicly on the City's website; however, it can be difficult to navigate and find the appropriate information that customers need. In addition, one of the common issues staff face when serving customers is educating them about the process and requirements needed to build in the City. Although improved availability of information and process improvements will make this easier over time, there will still be a need to educate the public about land development.

Currently, the City does not have any information dedicated to public education regarding the land development process. Applicants must navigate through different webpages and documents to teach themselves. One of the best ways to build trust in a process is clear and accurate information, especially delivered in easy to understand ways.

Participants in the Process Improvement Exercise recommended that simple and clear communications tools like videos or electronic process maps be created to help educate customers. These would be publicly

¹³ City of Santa Barbara Website, Planning Central,
<https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/services/planning/forms/default.asp>

available on the City's website and could be shared as needed based on questions received from customers. In particular, a library of videos explaining different parts of the land development process or showing examples of approved projects would be helpful to staff. This creative communication would also help humanize the land development team.

The land development team should work closely with the City Administrator's Office to develop a communications plan for educating the public about the land development process. Topic areas should be identified and a workplan for developing educational materials created. The early focus of the education should pertain to the changes being made as a result of implementing the recommendations in this report.

Recommendation 7: Refine and update the phone tree system to provide more direct routes of communication.

According to staff, a regular complaint they receive from customers and the public is that they have a hard time getting in touch with members of the land development team via telephone. This aligns with a general issue raised during the focus group interviews and the customer survey about the responsiveness of land development staff. There is currently a phone tree system that allows callers to direct their call to the appropriate workgroup or staff member.

There are two issues with contacting individual staff members: knowing whom to contact about questions or problems and navigating the phone tree system at the City. Improving the overall land development process and providing more educational information on the website should improve the ability for customers to know whom to contact, but the phone tree system will still need to be updated so customers can get in touch with individual staff members. Staff report that the current tree system is confusing and out of date, often directing callers to the incorrect staff member.

Participants in the Process Improvement Exercise proposed that updating the City's phone tree system would allow customers to better contact staff members and find the appropriate person with whom to speak. There is also a need to develop a comprehensive list of the staff members that should be contacted based on the customer's question; this resource list would inform an update to the phone tree system, the beginning of a Land Development Team organizational chart is included in the Background and Methodology section, and this should be built on and provided as a tool to staff. One potential barrier to implementing this recommendation is that staff report the City currently has an analog phone system rather than a voice over internet protocol (VOIP), making it difficult to add lines. Land development staff should work with the Information Technology Department and Facilities Division of Public Works to identify the best method for updating the phone tree system and ensuring all workgroups and members of the land development team are available via phone.

Intake and Application Screening

A checklist and clear guidelines for staff need to be established to ensure submittals are complete and receive appropriate routing and review. Currently, intake and routing are at the discretion of the staff member who receives the application, creating inconsistency and situations where disciplines are left out, which leads to perceptions of a "late hit" when they do get involved.

Recommendation 8: Create a checklist and clear guidelines for when to include different workgroups in plan and permit review.

One of the common issues expressed by respondents to the land development customer survey was about the consistency of the process. Many felt the same project could experience different levels of review and scrutiny. In addition, the complexity of the process makes it difficult for customers to understand the path their project can or should take. One of the issues with consistency is the routing of projects and the involvement of the appropriate workgroups based on the details of a project.

When an application is submitted, the routing of that project is at the discretion of the staff member who receives the application. The experience and expertise of the staff member are what dictates whether the appropriate workgroups are included in the workflow, not necessarily the type of project. This inconsistent workflow leads to some disciplines being left out of the process altogether or coming in much later, and the customer experiencing a "late hit." Focus group interviews with customers all referenced late hits they had experienced going through the land development process. Particularly frustrating were late hits that impacted design or another aspect of the project, forcing the applicant to go back and get their project approved again by the design board or other staff reviewers.

Improper routing and inclusion on projects also impact the ability of workgroups to plan out their work. If staff are brought in at the end of a process, they need to drop everything to review a project, making it hard to plan and distribute assignments; a delayed project takes precedence over the planned work to which a staff member is assigned.

Creating a clear checklist, workflow, and guidelines will ensure that the appropriate workgroups are flagged based on the project type and location, independent of the individual staff member intaking the application. This, paired with the following recommendation on application screening, is a fundamental rethinking of the intake step in the land development process. If the applicant or application does not have enough information for staff to properly route the project at intake, it should be rejected.

Staff report they have several checklists already and often expressed cynicism at the need for another checklist during the Process Improvement Exercise. While the City has several checklists associated with the land development process, they are not accomplishing their goal or having the intended impact. Staff should rethink the current checklists and ensure all workgroups are involved in the creation of new checklists and screening questions. This approach to screening and routing applications to the land development process should be regularly evaluated to assess whether they are producing their intended outcome; if the new checklist does not improve the customer experience and eliminate the frequency of late hits, then the intake screening and routing process should be reassessed. This needs to be a part of the process that is continuously evaluated and improved.

Recommendation 9: Improve the intake process to screen applications for completeness.

When applications are submitted to the land development process, there is not a clear or consistent screening process at intake. Staff report that incomplete plans will be accepted, routed to the appropriate reviewer, and staff time is spent assessing completeness later in the process, or an application spends valuable time waiting for review when there is not enough information for staff to conduct an appropriate review. Alternatively, some staff do provide guidance to customers upon submittal that plans are incomplete and will tell them what is missing. This inconsistency creates frustration in the process for customers. Similarly, it is a poor use of staff time for reviewers to reject plans well after submittal when an application could be rejected immediately at intake.

Both the DART process and design review process include what staff refer to as a "determination of application completeness." It is clear from reviewing comment data and the process mapping exercise that this determination is not just a review of the materials submitted upon intake to check for all the necessary information. It is an intensive review that can include several cycles of staff feedback and applicant resubmittal. Before this review process begins, it is important that an application is screened upon intake to ensure staff have all the information they need to provide clear, helpful comments to the applicant and property owner. This should reduce the number of resubmittals that are currently associated with the plan review process.

A formal checklist and screening process will allow counter staff to appropriately screen applications upon submittal and provide direct, immediate feedback to customers. This process will avoid the need for plan review staff to spend time on incomplete plans, which would allow them to focus on other complete applications. It also limits the ability of applicants to submit incomplete plans as a means to move along a

project to mitigate pressure from their clients; this is a common challenge in development review processes and one that is evident in the Santa Barbara process as well.

In conjunction with the previous recommendation on application routing and workgroup inclusion, this recommendation should be thought of as rethinking the intake process. By creating more robust screening upon the intake of an application, staff can save time for both the applicant and other land development team members downstream of the process. For example, projects submitting for a modification review currently have a clear checklist required for review; if an application does not adhere to that checklist, it should be immediately rejected upon intake rather than the reviewer rejecting it later. Obviously, there will be exceptions and projects that slip through this screening, but clear intake standards will save staff time in the land development process.

Recommendation 10: Reduce the use of resubmittals to provide additional comments beyond what was originally provided.

Customers report that after receiving comments from plan reviewers, in both the discretionary and ministerial permit review phases, they will submit corrections and, rather than getting approval, receive additional comments that were not included originally. This can go on for multiple cycles; for the five projects mapped as part of the process mapping exercise, each received at least four cycles and as many as eight resubmittals and comments in multiple segments of the process; these cycles of review and resubmittal are shown in Attachment C.

There may be reasonable instances that require multiple cycles of review and resubmittal. This can sometimes occur as a result of major changes to the project design or necessary changes in materials or scope due to project cost considerations. In those cases, it is appropriate for additional review cycles to occur. In addition, there are also valid perceptions among staff that architects are resubmitting plans without addressing comments, requiring another cycle of review and resubmittal.

However, it is not appropriate to rely upon subsequent review cycles as an opportunity to address issues that should have been addressed early in the review process or to expand the scope of review beyond the focus of a project. Ideally, the process should lead to fewer comments on each successive review. There is a need to limit "multiple bites at the apple" by staff. However, a mechanism is needed to ensure quality applications are submitted and that applicants address comments provided by staff. The quality of applications will be addressed by enhancing completeness review at intake, as discussed in Recommendation 9. To ensure applicants are addressing comments provided by City staff when multiple review cycles are necessary, the City should create a formal mechanism for mediation with a manager should resubmittals exceed a specified number. Through this mechanism, a manager in the land development process meets with both the applicant and the staff reviewer to problem solve and create a shared path forward for the project.

Reducing the use and frequency of resubmittals may require that staff dedicate more time to the first review and comments provided for a project. This may affect the turnaround time and performance standards for the first plan review; the time standard for additional rounds of review should be reduced to reflect the streamlined focus of subsequent reviews.

Technology and Performance Measurement

The Accela software implementation needs to be completed, and workflow processes need to be aligned with the functionality of the system. In addition, Accela should be used to improve communication and transparency with customers of the land development process.

Recommendation 11: Complete Accela software implementation and align workflow processes.

In 2019, the City updated its plan review software and transitioned to the Accela platform. Accela is a cloud-based software program with modules for streamlining review in both planning and building services.

The platform is designed to assist with reviews for rezoning, site plans, land use entitlements, construction permits, and inspections.¹⁴ The City set out to enhance plan reporting data collection and, most importantly, transition to electronic plan submittal and review. Electronic plan review was also a desire of customers of the land development process.

To facilitate the implementation of the software, the City drew land development staff away from their regular duties and assigned the software implementation as a special project.. Despite IT support and land development staff assigned to implementation and design, implementation was not completed before the software went live. According to staff, the implementation was about 50% complete when the software went live. Workflows were not finalized nor aligned between workgroups, and functionality was not at the same level as the previous software used by staff. As a result, there are several unused features, and some implemented features are not fully functional. This approach to implementation has led to inconsistent workflows and adoption of features of the software between departments, divisions, and workgroups.

Workflow and usage of the software vary by department and workgroup. This results in some workgroups not entering information into the system in the same way and creating barriers to finding the correct information. It also leads to poor routing of plans to the appropriate staff. For example, Inspections staff reported that they often must spend time interpreting layers of comments to figure out what has been addressed and what they need to pay attention to in the field. Also, not all features of the software have been adopted across the land development team. Some staff do not use electronic plan review to provide comments to the applicant; this leads to communication outside of the software and makes it difficult for other staff to understand the details of the project and focus their time and energy. There are also issues with how cases are numbered across workgroups; there are different numbering systems for the Planning Division compared to the Building and Safety Division with the same Department. Staff also report that the new software does not allow for the same public information as there used to be, so members of the public must submit records requests for items that were available online in the past. In general, staff estimate that because of poor implementation, the same tasks are taking longer in Accela than they did in the previous software.

Re-dedicating resources to software implementation will allow land development staff to get the most out of the system they have. Creating proper workflows and documentation can also improve collaboration and transparency. However, it is unreasonable to expect staff to manage this implementation in concurrence with their normal duties. As such, it will be necessary for the City to dedicate additional resources to this effort. The approach to implementation needs to be collaborative across the divisions and workgroups associated with land development. Even if there is a core team of staff working the problems and implementing the updates, a team of representatives from all workgroups should be informing the direction and providing feedback on implementation. The City should dedicate resources to complete the implementation and maintain the software, in partnership with Accela and the IT Department, and identify an advisory body that represents all facets of the land development team to inform the implementation.

Recommendation 12: Utilize Accela to report process milestones to both the architect/developer and the homeowner/property owner if applicable.

Communication is a common challenge in development review processes. Several parties are involved in the formation and approval of a project, both on the side of the City and often on the side of the property owner as well. The number of stakeholders creates opportunities for conflicting narratives relative to the progress of a project through the process. When a project or process encounters a roadblock, there is often conflict as to the source of the impediment.

This conflict occurs in Santa Barbara; customers often expressed frustration with the length of time it takes to advance through different portions of the process. On the other hand, staff shared that often they supply

¹⁴ Accela Website: Planning & Zoning, <https://www.accela.com/solutions/planning/>; Building, <https://www.accela.com/solutions/building/>

comments to the architect, engineer, or developer in a timely manner, and delays occur as they are addressing the City's comments and making corrections to plans. While it is clear that there are process challenges in the Santa Barbara land development process, it is also clear from a review of plan submittal comment data that incomplete plans are often submitted for plan review. In addition, plans are often resubmitted without addressing the comments provided by City staff.

This is a difficult issue to address systematically. One approach is to enhance the practice of completeness reviews at intake, based on defensible and clearly articulated plan submittal guidelines. However, there is also an opportunity to broaden and improve communication. Specifically, the City can use internal performance metrics to enhance communication and accountability in the process. This data can be expanded and reported to both architects and the homeowners as a means to generate transparency in the process. This would provide clarity to the public and allow the City to monitor internal standards and adjust proactively.

The Accela software system has features that the City can implement to encourage and automate this communication. The software has built-in performance reporting that can be published online to show the progress through the land development process. In addition, Accela has online access portals designed for both customers and the general public as well as integration capabilities to customize the information or enable push notifications.¹⁵

The City should implement these features and create a transparent communication tool for customers and property owners to check on the status of their project. Creating transparency around the communication and status of projects going through the land development process will build trust. A clear understanding of the time a project has been in the process will also allow supervisors and managers to step in and proactively mitigate issues or resolve conflicts. A status update tool can and should be used as both an internal performance evaluation method and an external communication device.

Process Clarity and Consistency

One of the most common issues brought up by customers both in focus group interviews and the customer survey was a lack of clarity and consistency in the land development process. In the customer survey, 81.8% of respondents felt the land development process was not easy to understand or navigate. The current process has a lot of flexibility built into it; for example, applicants are allowed to choose their starting point and where they begin the review of their project. This flexibility is viewed as a benefit but creates confusion for customers and staff. The starting point and routing of plans in the discretionary review process should be clearly defined and consistent.

One of the drivers of the lack of clarity in the land development process is the regulatory environment in Santa Barbara. As part of the Process Improvement Exercise, staff recognized that part of what makes the process complex is the number and complexity of the regulations they enforce. The following section has several recommendations to begin the process of changing the policies, City Code, and ordinances in Santa Barbara to improve the customer experience and streamline the process. This approach to changing regulation should be done across all the land development workgroups and, when possible, benchmarked against nearby communities.

¹⁵ Accela Website: Planning & Zoning, <https://www.accela.com/solutions/planning/>;
Building, <https://www.accela.com/solutions/building/>

Recommendation 13: Clearly define the starting point of the discretionary review process and the documentation required.

The current discretionary review process allows applicants to "choose their own adventure" when it comes to starting plan review. As can be seen in the process maps included in Attachment C, applicants start the process with a choice between design review, review from the Pre-Application Review Team, or review by the Development Application Review Team. Others start with informal meetings with City staff. Each of these different starting points requires a different level of documentation and detail, and this choice also allows for different intake standards and routing of plans. This distinguishes the discretionary review phase of the land development process from the ministerial permit review phase, which has a clear entry point for review and approval.

Allowing applicants to pick their own starting point creates inconsistency in the customer experience and the quality of materials received by staff. It also provides applicants with the ability to "shop" different processes for a favorable outcome, such as avoiding certain approval bodies like the Planning Commission. Inconsistency was one of the most common issues brought up by customers in the focus group interviews as well as the customer survey.

This flexible process also makes it difficult to communicate how to navigate the process to a customer, especially one who is inexperienced with the Santa Barbara process. Clearly defining and agreeing on the starting point for all projects will simplify the customer experience as well as staff routing and coordination.

The land development team should identify a single entry point into the discretionary review process and the minimum documentation and details provided during intake. The level of detail required for submission should be clearly established. Both customers and staff expressed frustration at the level of detail included in applications as part of the land development process. For customers, there was frustration at the amount of time and money required to develop detailed plans early in the life cycle of a project, while staff often felt there was not enough detail provided to conduct a review of the project. Creating a single entry point into the discretionary review process, along with the intake and application screening recommendations outlined previously in this report, will both clarify the process for customers and improve the quality of materials received by staff.

A single point of entry for the discretionary review process does not mean there cannot be multiple routes of review and approval. As will be discussed in Recommendation 15, tiers of review can be established based on the individual details and location of a project.

Recommendation 14: Assign individual building plan checkers throughout the length of a project.

Currently, in both discretionary plan review and ministerial permit review, an applicant can get a different plan checker from the Building and Safety Division of the Community Development Department with each round of review. According to both customers and staff, it is not uncommon to address comments resulting from one round of review only to have a different reviewer receive the resubmittal and sometimes provide conflicting comments or comments on unchanged portions of plans. This creates inconsistent reviews and means that the plan checker must quickly acquaint themselves with a project and often make review comments from notes alone.

This method of assignment for Building and Safety plan reviewers is different than the practice for the Planning Division of the Community Development Department, where the same planner is assigned to a project from beginning to end. Assigning individual plan check reviewers to discrete projects through the life of the project would improve the efficiency of review and provide more consistent customer service to the applicant.

However, while improving the customer experience and making the process more consistent, changing this approach may have staffing implications for the Building and Safety Division. Currently, the Division uses a contracted service to handle the workload for building plan checks. This is an understandable approach

for the Division given the building boom Santa Barbara is experiencing and the resulting spike in demand for plan check services. The need for contracted help in building plan checks indicates that there is currently not enough staff in the Building and Safety Division to handle the workload, especially if the practice changes to assigning the same plan checker throughout the length of a project.

Rather than committing to adding more staff immediately, the Division should implement other process improvements and monitor the impact of implementing the recommendations in this report. A process improvement that could assist the Division is a revision of the resubmittal intake process. Building and Safety plan checkers should establish weekly "intake time" or office hours where applicants can schedule time with their assigned plan checker to submit revised plans and address changes made to the project. This scheduled weekly time could also be used for customers to ask questions of Building and Safety staff or get real-time feedback on revisions. This would need to be organized time, available for customers to schedule meetings with plan checkers, preferably not just drop-in "office hours."

Creating predictability and consistency for customers should be the goal of any change or process improvement. Assigning the same building plan check staff to a project from beginning to end, either in the discretionary review or ministerial permit review phases, should be a goal of the Division. Understandably, this may take time as other improvements and recommendations are implemented in order to create the capacity necessary to allow this staffing and assignment practice.

Recommendation 15: Develop project tiers that trigger different routing and levels of review.

Currently, projects submitted to the land development process all get similar levels of scrutiny by staff and the design review boards, regardless of the scope of the project. This practice is out of alignment with customer expectations; customers are often frustrated by the hoops they have to jump through for relatively simple or small projects. Participants in the Process Improvement Exercise identified the level of scrutiny staff give to projects that homeowners often conduct without a contractor, like installing a fence or painting, as problematic.

Participants in the Process Improvement exercise recommended rethinking the intake process and establishing different tracks and levels of review for projects depending on their scope. This would shift the current intake process from just accepting applications and routing them to the necessary workgroups to evaluating the project itself and determining the appropriate tier necessary for the project. The examples shared were to create an administrative approval process from staff for smaller projects, projects requiring design review escalating to the next tier of scrutiny, and a project requiring land use review receiving the highest level of scrutiny.

The ultimate number of tiers and level of scrutiny applied during review should be established by a cross-departmental workgroup of the land development team. There should be tiers established for both discretionary review and ministerial permit review. By treating applications differently depending on their scope, staff time can be dedicated to the projects most in need of attention.

Rethinking the routing process would also allow staff to easily communicate requirements to customers. Meeting a certain set of guidelines or requirements could qualify a project for a lower tier of review, while a clear need for assessment by the Historic Landmarks Commission, for example, might always require the highest level of review and scrutiny.

When establishing these different tiers and levels of review, staff should keep in mind the perspective of the customer and their experience going through the process versus their expectation. These changes should be continuously monitored and improved to meet the needs of the community and land development staff. Use performance metrics to monitor whether the tiers are having an impact on the customer experience and project review time.

Recommendation 16: Create a streamlined approval process for simple permits and "homeowner" projects.

Currently, when customers enter the land development process, the scope or size of their project does not affect the level of review or approvals needed to allow the project to go forward. As discussed in the previous recommendation, there is a need to develop distinct routes of review and approval based on the individual details of a project. Specifically, participants in the Process Improvement Exercise recognized the need for a streamlined approval process for small, simple projects.

Customers are often frustrated with the level of scrutiny and approvals needed for relatively simple projects. This is especially an issue for homeowners or customers who are new to the land development process and expect a simple approval for a project that they can complete on their own. These "homeowner" projects, as participants dubbed them, should receive a streamlined review and approval process, allowing customers to walk in with their application and walk out with a permit. A potential unintended consequence of creating "homeowner" specific rules is that they may attempt to use the streamlined process for projects that require a contractor. There was some discussion of how this type of review could be manipulated by applicants, but PIE participants reached a consensus that having the streamlined process rely on project type rather than applicant identity would reduce the ability for manipulation.

A team of land development staff should identify the types of projects that qualify for this streamlined review and design the application or submittal process for it. The application process should still allow for the City to collect all the appropriate information needed to make determinations about life and safety issues, as well as the design issues that might apply.

This recommendation from the Process Improvement Exercise participants would meet the customer expectation for smaller projects and free up capacity for City staff who spend time thoroughly reviewing these projects currently. Creating a streamlined review and approval process creates capacity downstream in the land development process because staff no longer have to spend time on these projects, allowing them to focus on the projects that need additional scrutiny.

Recommendation 17: Redesign the pre-application review process by creating a dedicated weekly time for customers to receive conceptual feedback.

One of the current entry points into the discretionary review process is via the Pre-Application Review Team. This is a conceptual review of a project completed by City staff from different disciplines within the land development process.¹⁶ This process is required for several project types including high-density projects larger than 15,000 square feet, condominiums, additions of more than 3,000 square feet, hotel conversions, and amendments to plans or conditional use applications outside of the coastal zone.¹⁷ The process is optional for all other types of projects. Although it is intended to be a conceptual review, applicants are required to submit detailed information about the project, including specifics about the structure, usage, parking, landscape, and drainage. In addition, detailed site plan drawings and tentative maps are required before PRT review can be scheduled.

Staff report that this process is burdensome for customers, and this often leads them to not take advantage of it even if it would save them time later in the land development process. During focus group interviews and in the open-ended responses to the online customer survey, customers expressed frustration with the current PRT process because comments provided by staff are too high-level or vague. Often comments are "boilerplate" and ultimately do not help the applicant advance or inform their project. This sentiment was also expressed during interviews with land development staff; often there is not enough detail about a project to provide more specific comments at the PRT stage.

¹⁶ City of Santa Barbara, Pre-Application Review Team Submittal Requirements

¹⁷ City of Santa Barbara, Pre-Application Review Team Submittal Requirements

Participants in the Process Improvement Exercise discussed the need to rethink or redesign the pre-application process. There was debate about whether an additional process should be created to complement the PRT process or if the PRT process itself should be changed. There was a consensus that the current options for customers to get questions answered and conceptual feedback is not working well. The current PRT process can be overkill for small projects, which discourages its usage. A redesign of PRT review should still allow for substantive design or zoning feedback to be provided but in a timelier manner.

The PRT review process should be redesigned. Rather than a formal application process requiring a level of detail that is often cost-prohibitive at this stage of a project's life cycle – which still does not provide enough information for detailed comments from City staff – a less formal approach should be taken. Process Improvement Exercise participants suggested the use of regular hours where customers could schedule meeting time with a cross-departmental team and get conceptual feedback customized to the level of detail the customer brings to the meeting. This may mean a "brainstorming" meeting for a customer wanting to know what is possible on their property or comments on site plan drawings if those are provided.

The land development team should establish a dedicated time block and day of the week to create these conceptual meetings. Customers should schedule time within that block, and the number of meetings should be capped based on availability and capacity. Comments and feedback provided during these meetings should be conceptual and not represent an entry into the discretionary review phase of the land development process. Customers should use the meetings to inform their eventual application, which will still need to meet the minimum requirements and screening standards established by land development staff.

Implementing this change will require a change to the Santa Barbara Municipal Code. The current PRT review process is codified under Title 30 Zoning – Inland. The Chapter about Common Procedures outlines pre-application review and makes it mandatory for certain types of projects.¹⁸

Recommendation 18: Identify changes to the municipal code and other regulations to reduce or eliminate process steps.

As participants went through the Process Improvement Exercise, a theme emerged surrounding the regulatory environment in Santa Barbara. Participants recognized that many of the issues facing customers and delays in the land development process are due to the sheer amount and scope of the regulations that staff are required to administer and enforce. Because City staff execute policy adopted by elected officials, to make process improvements that could positively impact customer experience or overall process timeline, changes would be needed to the municipal code or other regulations adopted by City Council. There are certainly improvements that can be made by staff without regulatory changes, and those are outlined in the Intake and Application Screening and Technology and Performance Measurement sections as well as Recommendations 13, 14, 15, 21, 22, and 23. However, participants felt that to make impactful, long-lasting change, there would need to be revisions to the regulations and policies adopted by City Council.

It should be noted that many of the regulations staff implement come from the State of California, but PIE participants recognized that this moment of assessing the land development process is an opportunity to take a look at what staff should be reviewing as part of that process, and eliminate any self-imposed steps or layers that are no longer necessary. This is especially important to think about in terms of the customer experience, making changes that will have positive impacts on the customer compared to the value the City receives from the individual regulation or policy.

Identifying code and regulation changes should be a long-term process involving several stages:

¹⁸ Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Title 30 Zoning-Inland, Division IV: Administration and Permits, Chapter 30.205 Common Procedures, 30.205.030 Pre-Application Review

1. **Identification:** Staff should identify code, ordinance, or policy changes that they believe will have an impact on the overall process and customer experience.
2. **Analysis:** These identified changes should be analyzed to assess whether the requirement is a necessary part of administering State Law or if it is a regulation controlled by the City. The value of the individual rule or regulation should be compared to the impact removing it would have on the land development process.
3. **Feedback:** These changes and the analysis backing up their identification and impact should be presented to City Council for feedback. This is also an opportunity for the Mayor and Council Members to suggest other changes that could be made.
4. **Implementation:** Based on the feedback, staff should develop an implementation plan for these changes to the land development process. Changes should be planned out based on the impact and the relative amount of effort or work necessary to make them.
5. **Monitor and Adjust:** Once changes are implemented, monitor the impact they have on the overall process and customer experience. If the changes are not having the desired impact, make adjustments and try different approaches.

As part of the implementation, there will be a need to prioritize code and regulation changes in order to develop a work plan. One method of prioritization that could be used by staff is a modified affinity matrix. This method helps to sort items based on two factors: difficulty to accomplish and impact. The first step in using the matrix is to sort all items on a continuum of easiest to accomplish to most difficult. Then the items should be sorted vertically by impact, deciding for each item if achieving it will produce a big or small payoff. Going through this process will result in each item being located in one of four quadrants, shown in the following figure.

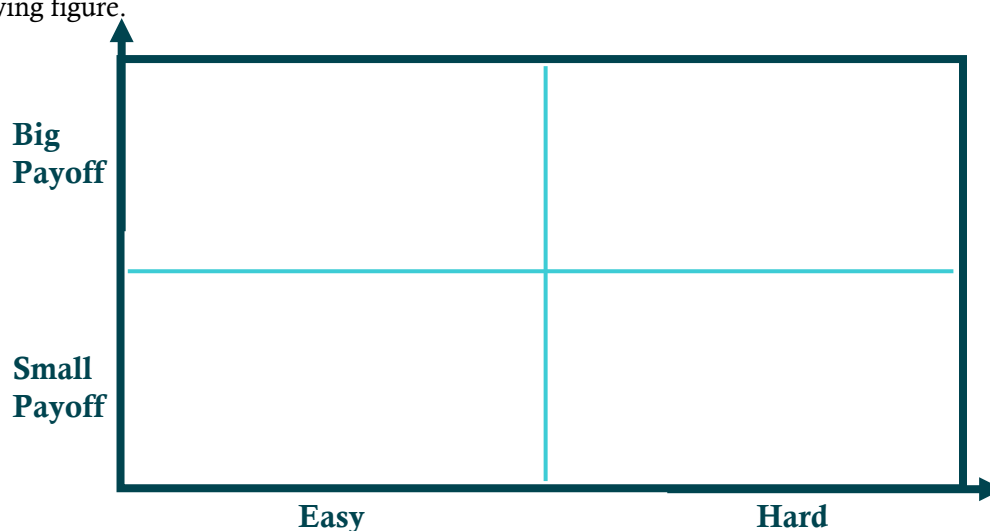


Figure 6: Modified Affinity Matrix

Understanding the impact of an individual regulation or policy change, as well as the difficulty to implement, will inform the work planning of land development staff. Solutions that are easy to implement and will have a big impact on the process should be prioritized for implementation, followed by other easy to implement changes and then difficult to implement changes based on their impact on the process.

Identifying, assessing, and implementing policy, code, or ordinance changes will take time. City staff and City Council should work together in evaluating and prioritizing the changes that will have the most impact on the experience of customers in the land development process. Making these kinds of changes to policy

and the environment that staff operate in have the ability to make the changes associated with the process long-lasting and more impactful than process improvements alone could.

Recommendation 19: Complete necessary policy and/or code revisions to allow greater focus of review on the scope of work for the project in question.

An issue identified by participants during the Process Improvement Exercise was the practice of scope creep by plan review staff. This was also an issue raised by customers during stakeholder focus group interviews. Essentially, staff use a land development application as an opportunity to review the "whole property" for compliance with historic plans and the latest design guidelines or regulations. This results in scope creep for a project, forcing applicants to address a myriad of issues on the property rather than just the project they submitted for review. This often results in applicants adding corrective work to their project, which may require additional approvals. For example, it may require additional approvals from design review boards. This practice causes the cost of projects to balloon, and it causes frustration for customers who applied to do one thing and are now being asked to address items that had no relation to the project application.

Participants in the PIE discussed the need to eliminate this practice, and there was a general consensus that it would improve the customer experience to do so. However, staff also noted that this practice is the result of a requirement within the City Code. It is unclear what section of the code they were referencing, but it is likely related to the common procedures chapter under the Title 30 Zoning-Inland. Within that chapter, there is a section about the scope of approvals that outlines actions subject to enforcement and periodic review of approvals.¹⁹ Staff report that the interpretation of this code requires them to review the entire property as part of a land development application review. This additional review requires more staff time for a project to be reviewed and is out of alignment with customer expectations.

This practice should be eliminated and, if necessary, the City Code should be changed to no longer require this scope of review. Staff did note during the PIE that this type of expansive review may be necessary depending on the property type, project details, or location within the City. In addition, some customers may be interested in this additional research and want to make corrections or address violations, but they are unaware of the issues, and this comprehensive review is a method for flagging those issues. The elimination of this practice should be restricted to instances where the additional research and review is truly outside of the scope of the project and unrelated to the application. If violations are discovered during plan review, correcting them should become an enforcement case, not part of the discretionary review or ministerial permit approval.

Implementing this recommendation will require additional research from City staff and should be incorporated with other policy, code, and regulation changes.

Recommendation 20: Conduct a benchmarking analysis of stormwater regulations and design standards with neighboring and peer communities.

Customers in the focus group interviews and the open-ended responses to the customer survey expressed their frustration with the local stormwater regulations in Santa Barbara. Many feel that the City's rules are overly burdensome, restrictive, and are not flexible enough when details of a site or project make it difficult to comply.

Stormwater regulations are often developed to improve local water quality and mitigate ongoing water quality issues. The most common way to address stormwater runoff on private sites is the use of post-construction regulations, requiring the property owner to address how stormwater is controlled and treated. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers a permit program under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) as part of the Clean Water Act. This program allows

¹⁹ Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Title 30 Zoning-Inland, Division IV: Administration and Permits, Chapter 30.205 Common Procedures, 30.205.100 Scope of Approvals

states to perform permitting and enforcement aspects related to stormwater regulations for new development and redevelopment projects.²⁰ As with the implementation of any policy, municipal enforcement of these regulations can create the need to develop new processes and procedures. In addition, development practices to comply with these regulations have impacts on the engineering and development communities who must plan, design, construct, and maintain best management practices (BMPs) to address the mandates.

While these BMPs provide water quality, environmental, and other community benefits, there are also associated costs with the construction and ongoing operation and maintenance requirements. As such, post-construction regulations may be met with scrutiny and careful inquiry by external stakeholders regarding stringency, comparability to neighboring municipalities, and alignment with NPDES requirements.

As an NPDES Phase II permittee, the City of Santa Barbara has been implementing stormwater requirements since 2006. Regulations and policies have gone through multiple iterations as program requirements have been updated and NPDES permits have been re-issued. Post-construction regulations have evolved over time, most recently with the 2013 NPDES Phase II General Permit issuance.²¹ As part of the 2013 permit, new post-construction requirements were issued for stormwater management as developed by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Central Coast Stormwater Program regulates stormwater discharges from municipalities, construction, and industrial activities with the goal of protecting, maintaining, and improving watershed quality affected by stormwater runoff.²² The Central Coast Stormwater Program carries out this mission by permitting construction activities and municipalities.

Based upon local conditions and development constraints, the City pursued an exemption from the 2013 Central Coast Stormwater Program post-construction requirements in favor of the continued implementation of its pre-existing requirements. It was the City's opinion that its existing program provided for greater water quality protection than the proposed Central Coast regulations.²³ This exemption request was submitted to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board in 2012, and the City's exemption was granted in January 2013.

The City maintains criteria for Tier 1, 2, and 3 projects (small, medium, and large projects respectively) and the corresponding types of BMPs that must be implemented to meet current regulations. These regulations include the following:

- Peak runoff discharge rate requirements: Peak runoff discharge rate shall not exceed predevelopment rate up to the 25-year, 24-hour storm
- Volume reduction requirements: Retain on-site the larger of the two volumes:
 - Difference between pre- and post- conditions, or
 - The 1-inch, 24-hr storm
- Water quality treatment requirements:
 - For volume-based BMPs, retain and treat the 1-inch, 24-hr storm
 - For flow-based BMPs, size for rainfall of 0.25-in/hr for 4 hours

²⁰ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/about-npdes>

²¹ California State Water Resources Control Board, Phase II Storm Water Program, https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/phase_ii_municipal.html

²² Central Coast Storm Water Program https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/stormwater/

²³ City of Santa Barbara Website, Storm Water Management Program, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/parksrec/creeks/quality/storm.asp>

To meet these design requirements, engineers and developers may use the practices detailed in the Storm Water BMP Guidance Manual.²⁴

The City has also maintained a list of discretionary projects that are exempt from these post-construction requirements, including the following:

- Excavations/demolitions that do not result in 500 square feet or more of developed or redeveloped impervious area
- Vertical structures with impervious surface area of less than 500 square feet
- Building additions of impervious surfaces that total less than 500 square feet

A full list of discretionary exemptions may be found in Appendix J of the City's Storm Water BMP Guidance Manual. It should be noted that the appendix also provides a potential exemption for the reasons of technical or legal infeasibility of implementing post-construction BMPs – where strict compliance with the City's stormwater runoff requirements is found to be infeasible, the development is required to achieve the greatest feasible compliance possible.

By maintaining existing post-construction requirements, the City avoided incurring costs associated with new regulation development such as rainfall analysis, cost-impact analysis, design standard updates, manual updates, and extensive outreach and training efforts. However, the City has received feedback from external stakeholders, particularly the development community, that these regulations remain too restrictive, creating a contrast in the development environment compared to surrounding communities.

The City of Santa Barbara is not alone in receiving negative feedback from developers and designers regarding post-construction requirements. This type of reaction is common across the country. Many stormwater programs receive similar feedback because implementing these types of controls requires a cost commitment from the developer. Not only do BMPs incur construction and installation costs, they can also take up property that would otherwise be sold as usable space as part of the development.

To identify the positive and negative implications of the City's current stormwater regulations and understand if developers are faced with similar regulations in neighboring communities, the project team recommends conducting a benchmarking exercise; specifically, compare peer community post-construction regulations and BMP design standards used to comply with these regulations. A benchmarking exercise will provide insights that can be used to inform both the City and the development community. If regulations are, in fact, aligned with State requirements and peer communities, the comparison will show the development community is used to complying with similar requirements in surrounding jurisdictions. If regulations differ drastically from peer communities, the benchmarking will provide the City an opportunity to evaluate why regulations are in place and if they are still appropriate.

While every municipality has different drivers for administering stormwater regulations, design standards and regulations can be used to provide objective comparisons with peers. Drivers that may vary from community to community include geographical factors, local water quality conditions and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), local effluent limits, specific pollutants of concern, and current development densities. However, NPDES permit requirements provide a baseline for what is expected of Phase II permittees. Additionally, trends typically exist regarding the current evolution and generation of post-construction regulations based on research and testing of BMPs designed for compliance with these regulations.

The first step of the benchmarking work should be to complete a comprehensive review of the City's existing regulations, including interviews with stakeholders to understand perceived program successes or

²⁴ City of Santa Barbara, Storm Water BMP Guidance Manual, July 2013, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=16665>

inefficiencies. This should include an evaluation of not only the current development standards, but also the reasons they exist and flexibility that is allowed in BMP design alternatives to meet the intent of the requirements. This initial effort should be followed by peer community research. Much of the information regarding peer community regulations can likely be collected through online research. However, surveys and phone interviews will likely be useful to better understand administration, program successes, and the evolution of standards over time. Peer communities should be selected based upon similar demographics and program size of the City of Santa Barbara, NPDES Phase II permittee delegation, and nearby jurisdictions that the local development community may also develop in.

While this recommendation may not have direct staffing implications, it is recommended that the City procure a neutral third-party entity to perform this work. This objective party would be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the City's current regulations, perceived impacts on external stakeholders, and a rounded synopsis of the regulatory climate of peer communities.

Design Review Process

The boards and commissions currently tasked with design review responsibility should be given clear, objective standards as well as staff recommendations to inform their evaluation of projects. These bodies are made up of volunteers and are currently given little direction from staff. This allows for subjective and sometimes conflicting feedback to applicants that extends the length of a project. In addition, there are several stages where projects must be reapproved by a board or commission. A threshold of importance should be established for review after final, empowering staff to approve minor adjustments.

Recommendation 21: Create clear, objective design guidelines for each design review board.

The City of Santa Barbara has a long history of design review and high architectural standards. The original Architectural Board of Review was formed in 1925, and in 1967, when the City's charter was adopted, ABR was included as a Charter Board.²⁵ The El Pueblo Viejo historic district was first established in 1959, and the Historic Landmarks Commission was created in 1977 before being added to the City's Charter in 1993.²⁶ Design review is clearly a value in Santa Barbara.

However, the stakeholder engagement results showed frustration with the design review process. About 57% of customer survey respondents indicated that the comments provided as part of design review are not clear or helpful. Focus group participants also raised issues with the design review boards, specifically the personality-driven feedback from board members and the tendency of boards to provide comments on items outside of their scope. Customers are willing to comply with the City's standards but are seeking clarity.

The City's has three design review boards, each with its own focus area: the Architectural Board of Review reviews commercial and multi-family residential projects, the Historic Landmarks Commission reviews projects involving buildings with historic significance as well as projects in the El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District, and the Single Family Design Board reviews single-family residential projects outside of the HLC jurisdiction. The ABR and HLC are both specified in the City Charter, along with their general purpose and charge.²⁷

The members of each body are volunteers who have professional expertise in architecture or related fields. ABR membership includes two licensed architects and three members with experience in landscape

²⁵ City of Santa Barbara Website, Boards & Commissions, Architectural Board of Review, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/ac/abr/default.asp>

²⁶ City of Santa Barbara Website, Boards & Commissions, Historic Landmarks Commission, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/dm/historic/default.asp>

²⁷ Charter of the City of Santa Barbara, Including updates through the November 6, 2018 Election, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/cityhall/charter.asp>

architecture, building design, structural engineering, or industrial design.²⁸ HLC membership must include two licensed architects, one professional architectural historian, and one licensed landscape architect.²⁹ Membership for SFDB must include two licensed architects, one licensed landscape architect, and three people with professional qualifications in related fields like building design, structural design, structural engineering, industrial design, or landscape contracting.³⁰

These design review boards serve as the primary mechanism, outside of the zoning code, to preserve the look and feel of the community. However, the existing design guidelines that inform design review board decisions are often highly subjective and, in some cases, unclear. As a result, the feedback given to customers can be unclear and even conflicting. In addition, design review boards tend to opine upon design elements that may be outside of the scope of their review. This creates conflict with applicants and prolongs the land development process.

An example of the subjectivity of the current guidelines is the focus on size, bulk, and scale. Staff report this is a common focus area for design review board members and is often interpreted differently depending on the project or individual. The nature of the design review process will always include some element of subjectivity and discretionary review; however, to the degree possible, it is appropriate to create clear, objective design guidelines. This will result in process transparency for applicants allowing them to be better prepared for design review. It will also allow staff to hold design review board members to those guidelines, keeping them focused and on topic.

Planning Division staff should work to develop clear, objective design guidelines for each review body. Volunteer board members should provide feedback, and, ultimately, the guidelines should be adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council if appropriate.

Recommendation 22: Create a staff report process for the design review boards.

The staff assigned to manage the design review boards are not intended to facilitate the decision-making process; rather, that task is left to the board chairs. Staff members assist with the agenda process but are not expected to make recommendations or intervene to keep board members focused. This has led to the performance of the boards being determined by the individual characteristics and skills of the board chairs. Staff report that some chairs are more willing to engage in discussion outside the scope of the board and some have tended to drive the conversation around their own interests. The City has attempted to focus the efforts of design boards by assigning a land use attorney to each meeting; however, this is an expensive intervention.

The agenda and board management process for the Planning Commission offers an alternative to the current practice for the design review boards. Staff assigned to the Planning Commission are tasked with developing staff reports for projects to both inform and guide board members. The staff reports explain the project details, the purpose of the discussion or hearing, and relevant background information. Importantly, the report also includes an analysis of the project and a recommendation for action by the Planning Commission. This process does not exist for the design review boards; staff report that they are not asked to provide any analysis or recommendation to board members.

The issues customers experience with design review boards can, in part, be addressed by creating a more formal role for staff assigned to the design boards and creating a staff report process, whereby staff define the issues in question for the board's consideration and make recommendations based on the regulatory

²⁸ City of Santa Barbara Website, Boards & Commissions, Architectural Board of Review, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/ac/abr/default.asp>

²⁹ City of Santa Barbara Website, Boards & Commissions, Historic Landmarks Commission, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/dm/historic/default.asp>

³⁰ City of Santa Barbara Website, Boards & Commissions, Single Family Design Board, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/nz/sfdb/default.asp>

environment and precedent. The Community Development Director should empower staff involved with design review to begin developing staff reports for each design review board with recommendations for action involving each project before the boards.

Recommendation 23: Clearly define standards for the point at which previously approved plans are resubmitted to design boards.

During each stage of the land development process, including after Planning Commission review, building plan review, and building inspection, projects can require resubmittal to the appropriate design review boards for review after final approval. This circular process adds length to the process and is often in response to minor adjustments (e.g., changing a window location or guard railing material). Staff report that this is a requirement of the City Code and that any change to the design approved by a board or commission needs to be approved by the board again.

The Santa Barbara City Code outlines two paths for projects that have been changed after an approval has been issued. The Community Development Director can approve the change by determining it is in substantial conformance with the original project description, findings, and conditions.³¹ If the Director determines the change is beyond substantial conformance, it requires approval by the original review authority.³² Key to the substantial conformance determination is that the changes "would not increase the intensity of any aspect of the project that could have a potentially detrimental effect."³³

In practice, almost any change to the plans has resulted in the customer going back to the design review board for approval. During the process mapping exercise that the project team conducted with City staff, four of the five projects that were mapped required review after final approval by the appropriate design review board. For the 101 State Street project, changes were made during construction to a balcony guardrail and the design of a mosaic fountain requiring review after final by the HLC. For the 400 S Hitchcock project, which was to build an electric car dealership, the applicant had to return to ABR for review after final to add charging stations and enclosures to the project. These examples are clearly minor changes and do not increase the intensity of the projects, but staff reported that it is normal for these kinds changes to go back to the design board for approval. The full process maps of the five projects are included as Attachment C.

This is both a customer service issue and an unnecessary burden on the workload of the design review boards. Reducing the amount of reviews after final will allow board members to devote more focus to the projects that truly require their attention and will also reduce delays for customers in completing their projects. These issues can be mitigated by defining a threshold of importance for when a change is substantial enough to require referral to the design review boards. Otherwise, staff should be empowered to approve minor adjustments to advance a project.

Recommendation 24: Reduce the number of design review triggers.

During the Process Improvement Exercise, participants commonly cited the design review approval process as a common source of delays and uncertainty in the overall land development process. They shared that design review is often needed even for small projects that may not present significant design concerns or have much of an impact on the neighborhood or community. The reason for this is the varied ways that a project can trigger the need for design review and approval. The more reasons or categories that require design review, the more likely a project will need that approval.

³¹ Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Title 30 Zoning-Inland, Division IV: Administration and Permits, Chapter 30.205 Common Procedures, 30.205.130 Changes to Approved Plans

³² Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Title 30 Zoning-Inland, Division IV: Administration and Permits, Chapter 30.205 Common Procedures, 30.205.130 Changes to Approved Plans

³³ Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Title 30 Zoning-Inland, Division IV: Administration and Permits, Chapter 30.205 Common Procedures, 30.205.130 Changes to Approved Plans

Participants recommended reducing the number of projects that require design review as a simple way of reducing the impact of design review on the overall land development process. By reducing the number of projects going through design review, more staff capacity is created, and design review boards will have more time to focus on the projects that need design review. Rather than requiring a full review by a design board, staff could approve projects using a ministerial process. For example, PIE participants brought up a five-foot fence that, if it meets certain requirements, would be straightforward to approve but currently requires review by design boards.

However, the General Guidelines for each design review board outline several project types where administrative approval already could be used instead of requiring approval by the design review board. There are over 20 project types that, using the current guidelines, could be eligible for administrative staff review and approval. They vary slightly by the specific board or commission. The following table shows the different project types that are eligible for administrative approval by design board.

Table 10: Project Types Eligible for Administrative Approval by Design Board³⁴

Project Type Eligible for Administrative Approval	ABR	HLC	SFDB
Accessory Structures: Sheds, Spas, and Trash/Recycling Enclosures	✓	✓	✓
Additions: Minor, One-Story, Two-Story	✓	✓	✓
Awnings	✓	✓	✓
Chimneys and Metal Flues	✓	✓	✓
Color Changes: Exterior	✓	✓	✓
Decks and Porches	✓	✓	✓
Doors: Minor Alterations	✓	✓	✓
Driveways/Paving/Minor Sitework	✓	✓	✓
Fences	✓	✓	✓
Garages and Carports		✓	✓
Landscape Alterations or Improvements, Including Tree Removals	✓	✓	✓
Lighting: Exterior	✓	✓	✓
Mechanical Equipment: General or Rooftop	✓	✓	✓
Roofs (and "Reroofs")	✓	✓	✓
Sidewalk Seating for Commercial Outdoor Dining Areas	✓	✓	
Skylights	✓	✓	✓
Soil Remediation Systems: Temporary	✓	✓	
Time Extension	✓	✓	✓
Trellises	✓	✓	
Walls: Freestanding	✓	✓	✓
Window: Minor Alterations	✓	✓	✓

Leaders in the land development process should empower staff to begin handling the design review and approval for these project types immediately. Rather than a policy or regulation, it seems that the volume of projects going to the design review boards is a practice, and this could be changed by staff without any

³⁴ City of Santa Barbara: Architectural Board of Review General Design Guidelines & Meeting Procedures, Revised April 2017, Part I Section 11; Historic Landmarks Commission General Design Guidelines & Meeting Procedures, Revised April 2017, Part I Section 4; Single Family Design Board General Design Guidelines & Meeting Procedure, Revised December 2011, Part I Section 3

change to policy. In addition, staff should use this list as a starting point for determining other project types that should be handled by staff review and approval rather than the boards and commissions. There may be additional projects that align with the current list that can be added.

Recommendation 25: Create visual examples of acceptable "pre-approved" designs.

As discussed previously, the design review process by its nature is subjective and often up to interpretation. This has been reflected in the customer feedback received through stakeholder interviews and the customer survey. In addition to empowering staff to handle more design approvals through an administrative process and providing staff recommendations to the boards, the City can also better communicate clear examples of approved designs to customers. Staff report that customers are willing to meet design guidelines, but the current guidelines are unclear or require interpretation of comments from design board members.

Participants in the Process Improvement Exercise noted having established, pre-approved designs would allow customers, especially for small scale projects, to have examples to work from rather than coming up with their own design. To meet this need, participants recommended creating visual examples of designs that could be approved quickly, similar to a catalog of approved designs or samples. If a project uses these designs, it could receive a streamlined approval. This would reduce the time and financial barriers for minor projects and would eliminate steps for customers.

Land development staff should work with the design review boards to develop a catalog of examples for small but frequent projects or design aspects. The examples could include a selection of approved colors, details for materials, options for decorative elements, or other common design characteristics. These examples should be illustrated and made available to the public via the City's website and printed materials.

Recommendation 26: Eliminate the Single Family Design Board (SFDB) or reassign its duties in order to streamline and simplify the land development process.

The City currently has three design review boards: Historic Landmarks Commission, SFDB, and Architectural Board of Review. Currently, every project requires review by one of the three design review boards. Each board requires separate public meetings and agenda processes as well as staff support and communication needs.

ABR and HLC are part of the City's Charter.³⁵ The jurisdictions of these boards are unique and do not overlap. HLC is charged with reviewing and approving the design for any changes to historic structures as well as any construction in the City's historic district. ABR approves design outside of the historic district, with a focus on commercial and multi-family buildings. The most recently created board, the SFDB, was created in 2007.³⁶ According to staff, before the establishment of the SFDB, design review for single-family homes was done by the ABR or staff.

Participants in the Process Improvement Exercise identified the number of design review boards as an area for simplification when it comes to the land development process. They recommended that the City pursue combining or eliminating design review boards. This change would allow staff to approve projects without review by a board. Specifically, participants questioned the utility of the SFDB and felt it could be eliminated. This would simplify the process for customers and would reduce time demands on staff, creating capacity for other work.

³⁵ Charter of the City of Santa Barbara, Including updates through the November 6, 2018 Election, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/cityhall/charter.asp>

³⁶ City of Santa Barbara Website, Boards & Commissions, Single Family Design Board, <https://www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/brdcomm/nz/sfdb/default.asp>

However, the role of the SFDB is outlined in the City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code.³⁷ To eliminate that board or reassign its duties to another board like ABR, a Code change would need to be approved by City Council. Staff should work with City Council to assess the utility of the SFB and whether retaining that board is still valuable compared to the improvements to the customer experience and staff capacity that would be created by eliminating it or transferring its duties to the ABR or staff.

Staffing and Organizational Structure

As part of the assessment, several organizational changes and staffing considerations became evident. There is a need to change the organizational alignment of stormwater review and integrate private, site-based regulations with broader public stormwater infrastructure. Performance standards and staffing for inspections also need to be monitored. The Process Improvement Exercise also identified changes that impact organizational structure, staffing, and onboarding.

Recommendation 27: Transfer the Creeks Division and the administration of private site-based stormwater regulations to the Public Works Department to align with broader public stormwater infrastructure.

In the City of Santa Barbara, stormwater regulations and plan review are handled by the Creeks Division of the Parks and Recreation Department. The funding for this work stems from voter approval of Measure B in 2000, when the City's occupancy tax was increased by 2% with restrictions on the use of funding for the creeks restoration and water quality improvement program.³⁸ In FY2020, revenues were about \$4.3 million; this funding is used to support 8.85 FTEs and a capital program. In addition to community outreach and research efforts, the staff administer stormwater regulations and compliance with State law.

The Creeks Division and the administration of stormwater regulations were frequently cited by customers in the land development process as sources of delay or "late hits." In the projects that were process mapped in Attachment C, Creeks was often one of the last workgroups to approve a project during the ministerial permit review phase, requiring several rounds of review. It is also clear that the regulations administered by the Creeks Division apply to private, site-based development, but coordination with the overall public infrastructure in the City that impacts the collection and distribution of stormwater could be improved.

Raftelis has worked with a wide variety of stormwater utilities across the country and has assisted organizations with understanding the best location for stormwater within their structure. Across the industry, stormwater utilities are often located with a public works function that handles above-ground and surface infrastructure that is critical to drainage, conveyance, and water quality. Examples of this type of infrastructure include drainage swales, curb and gutter, street inlets, detention basins, and green infrastructure. In fact, even roadways serve as stormwater conveyance systems, which is recognized by National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 permits. It is this facet of stormwater that often drives a stormwater utility's connection to public works, engineering, or street maintenance functions. The other common location for stormwater is with a wastewater utility function. This most frequently occurs in communities with combined sewer systems, where one set of pipes handles both sanitary sewer and stormwater collection.

Regardless of the location of a stormwater utility, staff administering stormwater regulations need to collaborate and align their work with staff from engineering, street maintenance, and wastewater. This collaborative framework requires staff time to develop a collaborative work plan and ensure service levels are being met by each department. This collaboration is especially important regarding regulatory compliance, long-term capital improvement planning, and public outreach and education.

³⁷ Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Title 22 Environmental Policy and Construction, Chapter 22.69 Single Family Design Board

³⁸ City of Santa Barbara, Adopted Two-Year Financial Plan for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, Page F-12

In the City of San Diego, California, the stormwater program is located within the Transportation and Storm Water Department. This has allowed the City to align its stormwater management program with its overall asset management. Specifically, they have created asset management plans for each of the six watersheds located within the City, identifying the critical infrastructure required to deliver City services and allowing them to align water quality improvement plans with those infrastructure plans.

The Public Works Department in the City of Santa Barbara already has divisions associated with streets management, engineering, and water resources. These are the functions that the Creeks Division should be closely collaborating with and developing annual work plans. The Creeks Division should be transferred to Public Works because of the alignment and collaboration that would be made possible with streets, engineering, and water resources. The alignment related to the land development process is only a small piece of the overall impact this transfer would have on the organization and work planning for stormwater.

This change would result in the transfer of 8.85 FTEs and the associated operating and capital budget. Since the Division is supported by a dedicated funding source and special revenue fund, the budget impact would only be in the departmental reporting for the Parks and Recreation and Public Works budgets. There would be no budget ordinance amendment necessary. Public Works is responsible for managing the public infrastructure that impacts stormwater collection and conveyance; aligning the work of the Creeks Division around private site-based regulation and other public infrastructure will take the City's stormwater work to the next level. Part of the integration will need to address where Creeks Division staff should be located physically within the City. Ideally, Creeks staff would be near other Public Works staff with whom they will be working closely. The Public Works Department should identify office space where the Creeks Division can be physically near other Public Works staff, rather than their current location in the Parks and Recreation building.

Recommendation 28: Monitor inspections workload and adjust staffing or performance standards.

The Building Inspections and Enforcement workgroup handles the final stages of the land development process. As customers complete construction, they request inspections, and staff go out in the field to assess their compliance with building code and the plans approved by City staff. Staff report the workgroup is often tasked with enforcing conditions of approval outside of their normal scope of duties, such as design modifications that Planning Division staff do not have the capacity to inspect and enforce. The current process for requesting and scheduling inspections is a labor-intensive method where customers call a voicemail line and staff transcribe and schedule the inspection in Accela; this often requires three to four hours a day of staff time.

Due to the high level of construction activity in Santa Barbara, the inspections workgroup has a high demand for their services. Staff report there are approximately 50 inspection requests each day, and the current standard is to perform an inspection within two days of the request. This volume translates to each individual inspector performing about 12 inspections a day. However, some inspections staff are expected to assist with plan review, which reduces the workgroup's ability to manage their inspections workload. Staff report they often need to use overtime to get the inspections done in the required time frame.

A high level of workload and overtime usage can create burnout among inspections staff and is not the most efficient use of resources. This workload for inspectors indicates that there is not adequate staffing to meet the current inspections performance standards in a sustainable manner. Solving this problem can be approached in two ways: additional staffing in inspections or adjustments to performance expectations for turnaround time from inspection request to completion. There is also a need to address the demand for plan review for inspectors and whether the current practice of using inspectors to perform plan review is the best use of resources.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused this workgroup to adjust their practices and become more innovative. Staff report they are performing virtual inspections via video, and this has allowed them to keep up with their workload while working from home. This flexibility and problem solving is an example of

the creativity and talent exhibited by land development staff and shows their willingness to implement process improvements to meet the needs of customers. This kind of change in practice should be monitored and continued if found to be effective.

In addition, another recommendation included in this report will impact the workflow of inspections staff. Full implementation of the Accela software should include a module to improve the inspections requesting process. This would create capacity for inspection staff that currently must transcribe voicemail requests each day before beginning their inspection route.

These improvements to the inspections process may eliminate the need for additional staff. The Chief Building Official and Community Development Department Director should monitor the impact on the inspections workload of implementing the recommendations included in this report as well as the changes made by inspections staff as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on changes to their workload, adjustments should be made to either turnaround time performance standards or additional staffing should be considered. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting financial fallout, adding staff may not be possible. Instead, the Department could change inspections performance standards by increasing turnaround time from two days to four days, for example. As long as this is communicated to the development community, staff can still meet stakeholder expectations and better manage their workload.

Recommendation 29: Establish a committee of land development employees to discuss and resolve cross-departmental issues and provide feedback to leadership.

A common theme discussed during the Process Improvement Exercise was the need for staff from across the land development team to meet regularly and address issues that might arise. Currently, staff do not have a mechanism to address problems or collaborate to find solutions with other land development team members. Issues can be elevated to supervisors or managers but are not always addressed in a cross-departmental way.

Long-time staff members referenced a committee that had existed previously called the Counter Committee. This was a cross-departmental committee made up of staff who worked the counters and directly with the public. The committee created a method for staff to identify common trends or issues that they could not solve independently. Importantly, it involved staff from multiple functions and included supervisors, managers, and front-line staff. Participants expressed the need for a similar committee, not necessarily focused on counter staff but on identifying and resolving issues that affect multiple departments or divisions. This is particularly important to resolve accountability or performance problems.

The City should create a committee of land development team members representing all of the workgroups involved in the land development process. This group should be charged with discussing issues and developing solutions. A cross-departmental committee could also work on the implementation of the recommendations in this report and continuous process improvement within land development. This would also create a structure and staff roles to own the implementation phase of this process improvement.

However, participants expressed that any committee would be ineffective if management did not address the issues raised or recommendations made by the group. Follow-through from management will be critical to the engagement and success of the work of the committee. Importantly, what gets developed by the committee needs to be supported and implemented by the entire leadership of land development, across all departments and divisions. One of the current issues expressed by staff is that managers and directors of different workgroups are not always on the same page. A committee of land development team staff will allow frontline staff to work out issues and resolve conflict, but there also needs to be a commitment from leadership to support their work and collaboratively implement solutions or changes they recommend. It may be appropriate to involve someone from the City Administrator's Office with the committee to ensure follow-through on items and to hold all land development team staff accountable.

Recommendation 30: 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.

One of the issues customers face when they come to the City's Garden Street building to begin the land development process is understanding where to go. It is unclear where to begin or how to get questions answered, particularly for customers with no experience with the process. According to staff, this manifests itself in two ways that impact both staff workload and customer experience. First, customers will approach the counter with no line regardless of whether or not this is the appropriate counter for their project or get their question answered. Staff report that this has often led to staff at the records and archives counter fielding questions from customers. Second, customers may assume they need to talk to staff at a specific counter and will wait in line to do so when it is unnecessary.

Creating a method to triage questions and direct customers in the right direction would improve the customer experience and save staff time. Participants in the Process Improvement Exercise reported that the City used to have a receptionist in the lobby who was able to answer questions and direct customers to the appropriate place. The position was eliminated several years ago as part of budget reductions after the Great Recession. Participants felt it was worth reinstating the position to improve the customer experience with the land development process.

However, before adding a full-time position to the lobby to serve this role, the City should pursue other options to meet this need, especially considering the potential impact of electronic plan submission on the volume of in-person visitors to the Garden Street building. There are two options the land development team should test to meet the needs of customers coming to the lobby and looking for guidance.

First, the City should develop a cross-training program to give counter staff the tools they need to direct customers in the right direction and answer general questions about all aspects of the land development process. This would allow customers to approach any counter to ask questions, and any staff member would have the tools necessary to serve walk-in customers.

Second, during periods of high traffic or demand for counter staff, the City should deploy a staff member to go to the lobby and approach customers, triaging their questions and directing them to the correct counter (essentially deploying a receptionist based on demand rather than permanently stationing a position in the lobby).

The City should then monitor the effectiveness of these alternatives. One way to do so would be to measure whether there is an improvement in the perception of customer service. Counter staff could also be engaged to give their perspective on the number of customers waiting to speak with them unnecessarily or approaching the incorrect counter with questions.

Recommendation 31: Develop a robust onboarding process for staff who participate in the land development process and create a clear professional development and skill-building framework.

When new members of the land development team are hired, each department handles the respective onboarding of that employee. Some divisions also provide specific onboarding to new employees. However, there is not an onboarding process common to all members of the land development team. Often this means that staff do not have a clear understanding of other pieces of the land development process outside their individual role. As they spend time on the job, staff may learn to navigate the process and understand the other pieces, but this is not something that is part of onboarding.

In addition, land development staff do not have a common training or skill-building program. Each department or division may have its own professional development approach, but there is not a clear framework across all of the land development workgroups. This also prevents staff from understanding development opportunities that they might qualify for or positions within the process but in a different workgroup that could allow them to advance in the organization.

Process Improvement Exercise participants identified the need to create a common onboarding program as a priority recommendation. In conjunction with an onboarding program, participants were interested in establishing a framework for ongoing training so staff could build their skills and develop within their respective professions. A joint onboarding and ongoing training program would improve staff understanding of the land development process across all departments and would build consistent expectations for staff. It would also help staff build the knowledge to guide customers through the process.

Additionally, a joint onboarding and training program would help build cross-departmental relationships and a sense of team commitment. Bringing employees together to work on skills regularly outside of their normal day-to-day duties would encourage camaraderie and teamwork.

Staff reported that the current onboarding program within the Public Works Department could serve as a model for the land development team. Due to the varied nature of the services provided by Public Works, they established a cross-functional onboarding program so staff would understand all the different aspects of the Department. A similar approach could be taken with the land development team, allowing new staff to learn about the various workgroups and their role in the overall process. In addition, it could be explained how each workgroup or discipline impacts each other.

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Implementation

The opportunities for improvement identified through this assessment and the recommendations outlined in this report represent an extensive undertaking for the departments and staff involved with the land development team. Many of these changes represent a shift in philosophy and culture, something that does not happen overnight. The current land development process was created over years, and changing it will take time. This should be seen as the beginning of changing the land development process, not the end. The City will need to commit resources to implementation, but most importantly, staff time will need to be dedicated to and prioritized on the work of implementation.

Each recommendation should have an individual staff member assigned to own the implementation, progress tracking, and reporting. Regular updates should be given to both the City Administrator's Office and City Council. The City Council sub-committee that recently formed to focus on implementation should be actively engaged in the implementation process, providing feedback and guidance to staff and helping to communicate progress and changes to the public.

Implementation of these recommendations represents an additional burden of work beyond the normal duties for land development team members. The City needs to establish dedicated time for staff to work on these initiatives. One method for doing so is dedicating specific days to this work. Currently, land development staff work a 9-80 schedule, which means that over a two-week pay period, staff work 80 hours over nine workdays. This results in offices being closed to the public every other Friday. An approach to dedicating staff time to implementation with minimal disruption to customers would be to use the Fridays where staff are working to focus on implementation. This would result in every Friday being closed to the public, but with a commitment that the reduction in availability would result in an improved process and better customer experience.

The project team will also provide an implementation plan as a deliverable with this report. It will identify major steps, timeline, priority, and owners for each of the recommendations. This can be used as a tool to manage the implementation process and should be continually adjusted as staff work through the implementation.

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Conclusion

The land development process serves an important role in the City of Santa Barbara. The unique look and feel of the community are a direct result of the work of dedicated members of the land development team. These staff are tasked with ensuring that any development that occurs in the City is safe and does not detract from the character of the community. This responsibility does affect the customers of the land development process; design and code requirements that ensure safety and character represent a cost to developers. Each additional layer of regulation or policy affects the financial ability for customers to complete their project, whether they are a developer building an affordable apartment building or a homeowner replacing their windows. These regulations and requirements are also deemed valuable by the community; stakeholders and residents want to maintain the City they love and want their values reflected in any new development. This tension is necessary and, in fact, valuable, but it does not have to be adversarial.

The land development process should instead be thought of as a collaborative method to work through this conflict so that both the needs of the City and the development community are addressed. The ultimate results of the current process speak for themselves, and according to interviews with staff members and stakeholders, there are elements of the process that work well. It is also clear that land development team members are dedicated to making the process better, and they want to ensure both customers and the community feel served. The talent and dedication of City staff will be a key resource to lean on as changes are made and the City sets a new, more collaborative vision.

The recommendations in this report outline an actionable path forward for the City to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the land development process. The process also highlighted the depth of expertise and commitment to process improvement that is evident among land development team staff. In fact, throughout this project, staff have implemented many process improvements, such as electronic plan submittal and review, independent of this assessment effort. This foundation of professionalism will serve as the City's greatest tool to further strengthen the development process.

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Attachment A: Customer Survey Responses

As part of the effort to understand the customer experience going through the land development process and interactions with City staff, an online survey was sent to all the external customers that have submitted a project in the last five years. There were 88 responses to the survey, and there were several questions that asked for open-ended feedback. The following tables show the results of the survey as well as the full text for the open-ended responses.

Table 11: Role of Customer Survey Respondents

Role	Responses	Percent
Builder / Independent Contractor	1	2.0%
Homeowner	2	3.9%
Architect / Designer	35	68.6%
Property Developer	3	5.9%
Land Use Planner / Permit Expediter	7	13.7%
Civil Engineer / Land Surveyor	0	0.0%
Other	3	5.9%
Total	51	100.0%

Table 12: Location of Customer Survey Respondents

Location Based	Responses	Percent
Santa Barbara	80	94.1%
Southern California	0	0.0%
California	2	2.4%
Other	3	3.5%
Total	85	100.0%

Table 13: Most Recent Interaction with Discretionary Review Bodies

Last Interaction	Architectural Board of Review (ABR)	Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC)	Planning Commission	Single-Family Design Review Board (SFDB)	Staff Hearing Officer
Last 6 months	45.5%	35.3%	33.8%	43.4%	31.5%
6 months to 1 year	24.7%	26.5%	16.2%	23.7%	34.2%
2 to 3 years	6.5%	10.3%	13.2%	11.8%	13.7%
3 to 5 years	7.8%	5.9%	5.9%	5.3%	5.5%
More than 5 years ago	2.6%	2.9%	8.8%	3.9%	4.1%
Not applicable	13.0%	19.1%	22.1%	11.8%	11.0%

Table 14: Most Recent Interaction with Ministerial Permit Process

Last Interaction	Building Permit Process
Last 6 months	71.1%
6 months to 1 year	12.0%
2 to 3 years	6.0%
3 to 5 years	4.8%
More than 5 years ago	6.0%
Not applicable	0.0%

Table 15: Agreement with Statements about Land Development Process

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The land development process is easy to understand and navigate.	6.5%	10.4%	29.9%	51.9%	1.3%
I understand the requirements necessary for my application to be approved.	10.4%	39.0%	32.5%	16.9%	1.3%
I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for design review.	15.6%	57.1%	22.1%	5.2%	0.0%
I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for Development Application Review Team (DART) review.	6.5%	39.0%	37.7%	5.2%	11.7%
I know who to talk to if I experience an issue during the design review, building plan application, public works permit, or inspection process.	10.4%	36.4%	32.5%	19.5%	1.3%
The City of Santa Barbara is responsive when issues arise in the Land Development process.	3.9%	16.9%	35.1%	40.3%	3.9%
If I receive comments that are unclear, I can contact City staff to get my questions answered.	5.2%	36.4%	31.2%	24.7%	2.6%

After being asked to rate their level of agreement with the previous statements about the land development process, an open-ended question allowed those who selected "Strongly Disagree" to provide the reason they selected that response.

Question: If you selected "Strongly Disagree" for one of the following statements, please describe why.

- The land development process is easy to understand and navigate.
- I understand the requirements necessary for my application to be approved.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for design review.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for a Development Application Review Team (DART) review.
- I know who to talk to if I experience an issue during the design review, building plan application, public works permit, or inspection process.
- The City of Santa Barbara is responsive when issues arise in the Land Development process.
- If I receive comments that are unclear, I can contact City staff to get my questions answered.

1) The development review process is unnecessarily complex --see labyrinth of application forms and guidelines at the City's website. 2) Divisions act as disconnected agencies, with no one in charge or responsible for the overall outcome of the overall process. 3) Community Development fosters a culture of distrust instead of cooperation.

Because I have 20 years of experience processing development applications through the City, I can agree with most of the statements above. In my opinion, a customer that is not experienced would be overwhelmed with the land development process. I feel that it is difficult to reach staff and obtain clarification on the building plan check comments.

Briefly, there is too much minutiae, period. Submittal requirements, multiple design review standards, hearing processes, etc. are located in various multiple locations. To the point where you know it is impossible to

Question: If you selected "Strongly Disagree" for one of the following statements, please describe why.

- The land development process is easy to understand and navigate.
- I understand the requirements necessary for my application to be approved.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for design review.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for a Development Application Review Team (DART) review.
- I know who to talk to if I experience an issue during the design review, building plan application, public works permit, or inspection process.
- The City of Santa Barbara is responsive when issues arise in the Land Development process.
- If I receive comments that are unclear, I can contact City staff to get my questions answered.

understand and locate all of it so you just do your best to reasonably address all the requirements. TOO MUCH MINUTIAE. Respo[n]ses to these questions require more nuance than a simple agree/disagree.

Bureaucracy at its best. One step forward-two steps back.

City doesn't like unique or special conditions. They tend to push the bigger more paperwork solution when it is not really necessary. Staff is SCARED to make a decision that could be misconstrued as favoritism by the noisy neighbor or no growth people.

City staff is fully entrenched in saying no to all applications. The process is far too arbitrary and personal rather than professional.

Easy it is not.

I WAS TOLD THAT DURING PLAN CHECK BACK CHECK I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TALK WITH PLAN CHECKER, ONLY BY EMAIL. THAT'S NOT GOOD!!!

I have processed several permits in the last couple of years at the City and I have never known if there is a single point of responsibility in the planning department for my projects; aka an assigned planner. In addition I typically have to write several (more than 2 emails) to get a response from most (not all) planners.

I submitted plans to add units to a property in the downtown area about 7 or 8 years ago. The original plans were to add 7 units. We followed all the rules, but were arbitrarily turned down. Considered to "big" I have resubmitted plans over the years and am now down to a proposed 4 units. I have spent almost \$80,000 in architectural and city fees and still do not have a permit. It's completely insane!

I understand the process and requirements very well, but staff continually changes their "internal" policies and moves the goals posts. They are not helpful and not responsive. On the building side, plan check comments are repeatedly in need of discussion and in some cases interpretation.

In this survey you can only pick one date which doesn't ask how long it has been there!!!!

Inconsistent city employee information.

It is not obvious what is needed, even after asking. Discretion is everywhere and calls are not always returned. The furlough Fridays cost us time and money.

Lack of clarity, lack of staff responses, lack of staff follow-through. Misinformation. Inability to see options or assist with needed change in the system.

More often than not, the planner assigned to my project is not well trained in their position, and therefore I am required to guide them through the process. one modification I applied for [23 s.f. addition] took a year to process and have a hearing.

My experience of the planning department that they find every opportunity to say no, put up barriers and create delay and expense to prevent projects from being approved or executed. The opposite of what I have experienced from "public servants" in other cities and states. I do not understand why the attitude of yes and an owners investment in our community like I experience in other cities and counties where it is the interest of a community to create projects that meet all stakeholder needs.

My home was determined to be "historic" without my consent. Replacing an air conditioner incurred extra costs via the permit and extra demands I found unreasonable.

Planning was so poorly done that I gave up on a project and put it on the market. They lost my materials, required me to duplicate work, etc.

Regarding question 1, I believe the process is difficult to navigate by design. I have developed knowledge such that I do understand the requirements necessary, but much, if not all, of that has been learned through trial and error and wringing the answers out of staff. If the intent of questions 2 and 3 above was to inquire about whether the City has actually provided information so that an applicant can understand the requirements and materials prior to initial application, then my answer would be strongly disagree. Similarly I have reached a point where I mostly receive answers to my questions, but that has taken years of effort at building relationships with City staff. At the beginning, I would not have had the ability to contact City staff to get my questions answered.

so many people with so many answers, there's no 1 person that has the solution. Finding many decisions change as applications go through the process.

staff fails to tell you everything; answer narrowly; process takes too long; inconsistent responses—depends on their personal point of view; not keep project plans so neighbors can compare during project progresses; not much can be done online

Question: If you selected "Strongly Disagree" for one of the following statements, please describe why.

- The land development process is easy to understand and navigate.
- I understand the requirements necessary for my application to be approved.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for design review.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for a Development Application Review Team (DART) review.
- I know who to talk to if I experience an issue during the design review, building plan application, public works permit, or inspection process.
- The City of Santa Barbara is responsive when issues arise in the Land Development process.
- If I receive comments that are unclear, I can contact City staff to get my questions answered.

Staff is rarely available to answer questions. Or they refuse to address questions that challenge their determinations, which determinations are often factually and legally erroneous. This has delayed projects for months in some cases, and for weeks in many more cases.

The City is confusing and unresponsive, especially now that they've switched to a digital system. I just spent the entire day trying to figure out their naming conventions, pdf specs, and the rest of the upload process. I've been e-mailing questions to the Building Official, who can't seem to read my questions carefully, so I never get completely satisfactory answers. The pdf specs are impossible to figure out. I've been waiting SIX MONTHS for them to produce an agreement for a PSP permit. The Planner kept trying to get a follow up with the supervisor, then finally GAVE UP and told me I had to contract him directly. Which I did, no response. It's unbelievable.

The land development process is ad hoc, arbitrary and subject to the whims of city representatives
the land development process is complicated to begin with and the documentation provided by the City online and at the counter doesn't clarify much.

The land development team is not a team. They all have different opinions about the way the process works depending on mood, knowledge, staffing, or day of the week. When issues arise, they are typically unwilling to listen to compromise or creative solutions to stringent requirements. They don't care about schedules. The Building Dept staff is unwilling to talk face-to-face to resolve conflicts or unclear comments.

The land use and design review process is very discretionary. Opinions and interpretations of code vary from one individual to the next. It seems like there is always some new sensitivity that shows up that was not anticipated. There is a general culture for staff to spend most of their time finding creative ways to identify nonconformities. Answers to questions are almost always to the detriment of the applicant. Staff appears to be of the mind that architects and developers are bad people who are always trying to get away with things. There is not a code anywhere that this city has not adopted and then put on steroids.

The Land Use process in Santa Barbara is broken. The culture is not conducive to problem solving, only positioning roadblocks. City staff individuals I have talked to quietly express their concerns due to retribution from senior staff. My feeling is that the problems stem from the top administrative staff. Politicians come and go, yet the culture remains. Other jurisdictions will analyze land use issues from a solution perspective, whereas the City of Santa Barbara consistently finds ways to further impede or stop development, even though it is allowed by their own ordinances. "Community Development" should be relabeled as "Community Anti-Development". There is no clear roadmap to even the simplest projects. For example, the State of California mandated ADU program that was modified January 1, 2020 made it pretty clear what Cities and Counties could do until they actually have an ordinance in-place. Unfortunately, the City is taking a position that local ordinances are still in-effect, contrary to the State of California law.

The overall permitting process is subjective and arbitrary, some of which is the nature of permitting in Santa Barbara. However, the permit process is often subjective, unclear and multiple reviews are required.

The permitting process feels like it is always changing for each individual project and is never consistent.

The persons who respond--at the counter--change from time to time and the answers change from time to time and there appears to be no effective oversight or review and therefore no consistency in application of confusingly worded regulations, advisory statements and ordinances drafted by insiders with no experience with an actual application.

The planning and building departments are non-functional, byzantine and cannot be considered user-friendly in any way shape or form.

The Planning Department Cursory Reviews are always multiple, and always uncover something that wasn't mentioned in the previous round. Getting in front of a review board takes months, but the City says they encourage "Concept" reviews. There is no clear path through the process.

The process especially with inspectors is overly subjective and an overall negative experience. It actually has negative consequences for the city with homeowners intentionally circumventing the permitting process so as not to be overly burdened in responsibly attempting to make improvements. This nets less revenue to the city and potentially unintended yet unsafe construction.

The process is a mess. Staff think they can play god and make arbitrary decisions. It seems like staff's main goal is to make work for themselves, to make it challenging for homeowners, and earn as many fees as possible for the city. Too much is left up to an individual staff member's discrimination. The City is widely known for the entitlement

Question: If you selected "Strongly Disagree" for one of the following statements, please describe why.

- The land development process is easy to understand and navigate.
- I understand the requirements necessary for my application to be approved.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for design review.
- I know what materials are required prior to submitting an application for a Development Application Review Team (DART) review.
- I know who to talk to if I experience an issue during the design review, building plan application, public works permit, or inspection process.
- The City of Santa Barbara is responsive when issues arise in the Land Development process.
- If I receive comments that are unclear, I can contact City staff to get my questions answered.

of its staff. They have power to make lives miserable and they know it. I once had a supervisor say to my face when I politely questioned why they could not produce a document they insisted they had and this man said "I can make your life miserable!" Oh how I wish I had recorded that. It's true though. The overall impression is that staff even manipulates council members and other elected officials. Another time I asked a staff member at the counter to please ask the planner to rush the document as my clients were in a very challenging predicament and had already waited the amount of time posted for this report. The counter person said, "Are you sure you want me to ask? She hates to be pushed and if I do ask, she'll do this ..." as he gestured taking a page from the top of the pile and putting it on the bottom of the pile. It was his smirk and contempt for the public, the customer, that was so wrong. These actions are typical of the city staff. I'm sure there are some helpful people there, but the majority treat the public with contempt and with the sense that we're lucky we even get to talk to them. I've been dealing with this for about 20 years. The County is WAY better.

The process is generally terrible, inconsistent, and endless. Planning staff is completely ineffective.

The process is inefficient, illogical, and lacks common sense, creativity, and vision. It is overly complex, fee heavy, and creates duplicative effort and confusion. The laborious process may pay for P&D Salaries but it does not help our city to grow in a healthy vibrant way. Rather - the process causes unneeded additional work and cost to the owner / developer. This translates into more un-permitted work and higher overall construction and housing cost. Santa Barbara's P&D process is "killing the city" over controlling and limiting our ability to be creative and to grow causing frustration and stagnation.

The process is too complex, with every changing requirements and policies that go beyond the governing ordinances.

The published org chart has been woefully out of date in recent years. The City puts bureaucracy before common sense, and is unresponsive to our concerns.

The questions you are asking make it sound straight forward but they don't get to the root of the problem which is the culture that the City has nurtured over the years. for example, you may KNOW who to talk to overcome obstacles but that doesn't help to solve the problem. The lack of interdepartmental collaboration and communication is also a problem.

Too long. Lack of support

two staffs have two different interpretation of code requirements

Table 16: Agreement with Statements about Comments Received

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Design review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	5.3%	34.7%	40.0%	17.3%	2.7%
Development review (PRT and DART) plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	5.3%	27.6%	38.2%	10.5%	18.4%
Comments from City staff related to modifications are clear and helpful.	10.7%	29.3%	41.3%	17.3%	1.3%
Building permit plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	6.6%	26.3%	31.6%	32.9%	2.6%
Building inspection comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.	4.0%	33.3%	17.3%	9.3%	36.0%

After being asked to rate their level of agreement with the previous statements about the land development process, an open-ended question allowed those who selected "Strongly Disagree" to provide the reason they selected that response.

If you selected "Strongly Disagree" for one of the following statements, please describe why.

- Design review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Development review (PRT and DART) plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Comments from City staff related to modifications are clear and helpful.
- Building permit plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Building inspection comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.

"One-size" fits all stormwater requirements are at times impossible to comply with. A 1/4 hillside lot should NOT be held to the same scrutiny as a 1/2 acre flat lot.

again to many thing are of opinion and not consistent.

As i stated above, my planner for my modification was so untrained that she and her supervisor overlooked a requirement for sfdb review of a trash enclosure, then discovered that the project was in the flood plain but did not know how to direct me as to what i need to do to move forward. the flood plain management building planner was rude and also took up additional 6 month beyond the 1 year in planning without giving me proper direction.

Building Dept comments aren't helpful, do not cite code references or basis of their interpretations nor are they willing to discuss creative solutions to problems wasting valuable time guessing as to their preferences. Building inspectors comments are vague and inconsistent.

Building Dept Plan Check comments are often simply wrong, requiring me to obtain assistance from higher level staff. Comments are also nit-picky and of no relevance to the accuracy of the drawings or to code compliance. Plan checker is going excessively over the top to seemingly prevent permit issuance and prolong the plan check process.

Building staff, with the exception of Andrew, are rarely helpful.

Comments from Building, especially Elizabeth Sorgman, are often unclear, and it's IMPOSSIBLE to get clarification from her. She seems committed to being as uncooperative and unhelpful as humanly possible.

Communications with the city are emotionally based and controversial.

Design review comments are fairly good, as most of those people are private sector individuals, however, the system tolerates one bad egg to take over a board and create problems- no one does anything about this when it happens. The PRT process is joke and waste of time because the staff gives no definitive answers to key questions. The DART process is completely unpredictable. I don't think there has every been an application deemed complete the first time, and there are always new regulations that come out of no where. I just received a DART response letter follow up meeting regarding a large new development on the bluff. The primary topic was if the City agrees with the bluff setback that my geologist were proposing. I have the best geologists in CA representing my client in this meeting to trying to decipher what City staff was questioning about the GEO report in their response letter, and the City didn't even send one of their 3 bluff specialists - it was a complete waste of time. Design review comments are often (perhaps mostly) subjective, personal, and in furtherance of personal agendas. Lack of objectivity makes it very difficult to respond successfully to comments on the design. Guidelines that are subject to personal interpretation are also a problem.

Design review is extremely challenging. We've had several projects hang up in design review for as many as 5 or 6 rounds of "Concept Review (at ABR, for this example). Projects can comply with all the land use regulations, but then be stopped in their tracks by these discretionary reviews because of 1 or 2 people's opinions. This causes huge burdens to the owners by way of time and money, and makes development much more challenging than it should be.

Even when trying to be helpful, staff are locked into a discretionary mode.

exact wording needs to be maintained for public inspection

For reasons stated above, the inspectors are subjective and difficult to work with.

I don't even know where to start. This process is totally impossible.

I had a fire at a property about a year and a half ago. The city inspector said I had changed the building from when I purchased it 25 years ago. I had not and had to appeal the decision. I did win the appeal, but this an example of the difficulty it is dealing with the city.

In general, as stated above - Santa Barbara seems to be "hard wired" and somehow proud of it's widely known difficult process. This attitude and resulting blockages are harmful to Santa Barbara's health and vitality. Policies and attitudes must be changed to be one of service and helpfulness to find ways to solve problems and to get permits issued efficiently and for reasonable cost. From the top - leadership needs to be positive and visionary - in line with the community - and always be at the ready to guide younger staff to make decisions to allow projects to

If you selected "Strongly Disagree" for one of the following statements, please describe why.

- Design review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Development review (PRT and DART) plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Comments from City staff related to modifications are clear and helpful.
- Building permit plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Building inspection comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.

move forward when issues arise. About Design Review, Objective Design Standards (ODS) and other Guidelines: SB needs housing especially in the downtown - with focus on workforce housing. To achieve this - buildings need to be as large and simple as possible (max units and cheaper to build). Beautiful large and simple buildings exist and are created through thoughtful design - proportions, fenestration, and details. A notion somehow prevails - that small buildings are better than big buildings - and is reflected in the ODS as complicated design requirements to break up and try to make big buildings look small. This is a design technique, but the notion that the smaller is better than bigger - regardless of zoning or allowable height - is not true and these requirements force a more complicated design, approval, and construction process. It also increases professional and agency fees and construction costs resulting in increased cost overall and for housing. Santa Barbara's most beloved famous buildings are all our bigger buildings fully illustrating that through creativity and design - big or small - a delightful built environment can result. Design review and approval should be separate from Zoning review and approval. We need expansive thinking, questioning of preconceived ideas, and leadership to make real changes that simplify the process and SUPPORT creative design expression.

Inconsistent city employee information

It isn't necessarily the clarity of the comments from staff, it is the minutiae involved that is baked in to guidelines and standards and the mindset of the review boards.

It took us nearly a year to obtain a simple permit, with multiple revisions, including revisions to previously approved items, planning and building routinely failed to respond in 30 days and the comments received were typically illogical or contradicted prior comments.

Lack of feed back

No one left a contact number nor left a way to question the additional added changes needed to complete my replacement.

Often DART members come unprepared to meetings --or don't show up altogether. Clarity and appropriateness of Building comments depend on the reviewer --some are completely obscure and vague, without any hint of what may be the desired outcome of the inquiry. (This is referred to as "chasing the Unicorn" --trying to figure out what is the solution to a problem that does not seem to exist.) There should be a way to eliminate the need for those Zoning Modifications that are universally supported.

One tells you to do one thing and the next says something else/different

Plan check reviewers at times make up their own interpretation of a clearly stated building code

Plan check takes multiple reviews with comments that are not based on code requirements, causing undue delays. The process takes an excessive amount of time, especially for plan check, which causes owners to have to carry projects for longer than necessary. State Street, prior to COVID19, is a clear example of businesses trying to open and getting stuck in the plan check process.

Recently we had applied for PDA from HLC for a project at 801 State Street. The application was routed through the Application Completeness Review, and the list of comments we received back was not helpful. It ended up being very easy to satisfy the comments, but I had to take a meeting with staff and go through point by point and ask what they meant by each comment. After that discussion it was clear. I explained to staff how they could have written the comments in order to make them clear, but I have not experienced a change as of yet. I also followed up with emails to George and Renee with suggestions on how to make the application completeness review more streamlined, as did our architect, Brian Cearnal. I have not heard back.

Regarding Design Review, it has become a power play of egos and personal biases. Personal feelings should never play a role in the direction of a project. We have experienced substantial hardships at all levels of review due to an individual's direction at the moment (which has changed depending upon their mood). This becomes an undue hardship to the design professional and developer over the course of the project. It is a sad day when you have a layperson on a design review board having a direct influence over the architect. (It's like telling your cardiologist that you read an article and know more than they do.) Regarding the building permit process, we will rarely find a plan check correction that influences any code decision. It becomes an exercise in redundancy, not affecting life/safety issues at all. Building Dept. requirements in this City generally require hundreds of additional

If you selected "Strongly Disagree" for one of the following statements, please describe why.

- Design review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Development review (PRT and DART) plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Comments from City staff related to modifications are clear and helpful.
- Building permit plan review comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.
- Building inspection comments I receive from City staff are clear and helpful.

hours of noting and justification. Standards will vary from project to project. We recently had a simple R-3 project that (between Planning, Public Works and the Building Dept.) had 16 different sets of initials noted on the plan review set. This appears to be an inordinate amount of oversight for such a simple project. This caused hundreds of hours of justification, clarification and additional work which did not affect one item on the plan set. Is there something wrong here?

Review staff tends to go round and round with no one wanting to take responsibility until finally someone says no. Staff comments are often ambiguous and/or erroneous. Or they request things that have already been provided. Several staff will not respond in a timely manner when we try to seek clarification.

the city plan checkers are NOT helpful, they won't meet with us and they don't listen to our professional interpretations. there is NOTHING easy about the process...ever. Not even a re-roof permit.

The criteria I observe from many comments do not enhance life safety but instead create expense and barriers to project approval. Contract documents permitted and safely executed in other cities have less than 50% of the amount of documentation and process required. It costs owners and extraordinary amount of time and money and literally is a disincentive for owners to improve their and invest in the economic and cultural vitality of our community. I put much of the vacant properties on state street as a direct result of the building department practicing extreme process. Other cities in the country build safely with a fraction of the time and expense required by Santa Barbara. It is a shame and if the process continues will doom Santa Barbara to be largely vacant and force its talented young people to leave the city to move to other cities. Why does the building department not visualize themselves as a member of the community that should support whenever possible an owners investment in the community? I am simply astounded by what I see on project after project. Let's make it as difficult and expensive as possible. Let's treat every small project like it is bad that it is even allowed to proceed. No wonder I have to manage that owners are so angry and made to feel like they are the enemy.

The major concern is the rigidity of certain BLD plan checkers and Creeks Staff that see only fixed answers. They don't understand may be infeasible and force this solution because it is possible. The great expense for the property owner is not considered. Thus, reasonableness is lost.

The new online review comments are "cryptic" and don't clearly indicate what a review is for, then whether or not it is complete.

The scale responses should include an option between "agree" and "disagree". I generally agree with the statements, but often the written comments require a verbal interpretation or clarification.

There is always the "disclaimer" by staff that nothing in the comments waives an actual requirement and the catch-all phrase that everything is subject to review again and again. When rules change, what rules apply is not answered consistently. Promises are rarely kept by staff.

WORKING WITH OTHER CALIF. CITIES IT IS FAR LESS ARDUOUS. THE CURRENT BLDB. DEPT. HAS AN ATTITUDE.

Respondents were asked about the overall strengths of the land development process in the City of Santa Barbara.

What are the strengths of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

Ability to reach Brend Beltz. She is one of the only staff that responds to our questions. And we have many. Absolute authority

answers are available over the counter

ARDUOUS AT BEST. EVEN THOUGHT THERE ARE TONS OF MEMOS ETC. FOR GETTING THROUGH THE PROCESS, THE COUNTER STAFF DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE. REMEMBER YOUR LEAST PAID REPRESENT YOU.

Cannot think of any.

Clear submittal requirements. Opportunity for early reviews such as PRT or Pre-App meetings. Knowledgeable public counter staff.

What are the strengths of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

excellent and hardworking staff. Very Friendly staff. The Planning and zoning part of the "system" works well

For large projects they are probably welcomed. However, on the smaller scale they seem over-burdensome and entail extra expense.

Generally very good results - Our city looks really good because of the review process (HLC, ABR, SFDB, etc.)

Good commitment to preserving what makes SB unique

Good website. Planning staff is good & helpful. Public works OK.

I have always found the City Community Development and Public Works development staff to be invariably accessible, helpful, and knowledgeable. Santa Barbara is a beautiful place to live because of its long tradition of good thoughtful planning.

I have no idea what the strengths are. I am not really a developer. I own apartments and I am willing to follow the city guidelines to expand, the guidelines are fine, but the different committees and individuals are so arbitrary in their decisions. I have hired architects and land use planners. It just adds to the expense.

I think the City does have some really good individuals within the system. They have very limited tools but do what they can understanding each individual situation.

I'll have to give that more thought

In general and with few exceptions, the City has very talented and dedicated staff, board and commission members.

In our experience there are only weaknesses and nearly every aspect of the process requires improvement. From a counter staff that is unhelpful to borderline aggressive, to a submittal process that appears designed to insure applications are incomplete to opaque review and illogical comments I can't think of a single positive thing to say about the process.

In some respects the city is attempting to keep the character of our city charming.

It avoids the most egregious major planning/design disasters. Its so byzantine it makes it almost impossible for out of town firms or lay people to navigate the process, providing more work for local professionals.

It's really thorough and nearly impossible for anyone to understand. Which keeps me and my staff employed in well paying jobs because we are some of the few people who manage to get anything approved through the City.

I've noticed a recent change in the counter staff being much more willing to help solve problems.

Keeping our City 'pretty' and forcing all projects to have a public process permit process.

Keeps the character of the city's architecture. Prevents Wild West development.

Like all regulation the intent is good.

Lots of people

Matthew in ABR has been the only one

None

Not many

Nothing wrong with the intent of the rules

Once in the door, the path forward is clear

Permit Streamlining Act deadlines

Persons who apply want to do the right thing--they are not the enemy but are treated as the enemy by the most experienced and top level of staff.

Posting documents online.

Prior to COVID-19, I appreciated the personal contact with staff at the counters.

Projects are thoroughly vetted - as in beating a dead horse.

Santa Barbara is an extremely unusual city. Has a very strong design heritage, the city is constantly walking a 'tight rope' trying to satisfy the needs of the developer/homebuilder and also manage it's strong architectural heritage and respecting those that reside here to maintain and improve our city 'experience'.

sending out information prior to both Modification and SFDB meetings prepping me for gathering the proper information for those meetings.

Some members of the planning staff have shown willingness to accept creative answers to zoning and permitting questions in order to allow innovation with how we use commercial spaces. This allowed the redevelopment of the Funk Zone into the thriving neighborhood it is today.

Staff, 90% of the time, responds to complete, clear packages of information which are attuned to understanding the parameters and guidelines that they must follow (e.g. CEQA, ordinances, processes for review in place, interpretations of senior staff) Most are very patient - I have observed their responses to homeowners and professional applicants while standing in line. Our ordinances and processes are geared to protect what we have - as best they can.

That there are a few staff members that really try to help

The City does a good job of trying to keep the various City Departments "in the loop".

What are the strengths of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

The City's staff is generally personable and approachable. I believe they care about the community and try to do a good job.

The collaborative staff review (DART), that staff meet and discuss their individual issues, comments and provide a letter to the applicant in order to avoid conflicting comments. The building plan check process whereby the plans are routed to each division/department and the applicants receive a cumulative correction list and marked up plans. (As compared to other jurisdictions where each division or department has a separate plan review process).

The departments communicate fairly well and you typically get quick access to the bad news. Staff responds pretty quickly to emails. Outsourcing building plan checks help their process quite a bit.

The only strength is the convenient location and all departments being close together.

The only strength is when actually done projects are generally well done.

The Planning staff individually are knowledgeable and genuinely want to do a good job. Certain planners are a pleasure to work with and want to get a project through the process as efficiently as possible and do so without sacrificing quality.

The process works, and works just fine as is! the staff is highly capable.

The spirit of the land development process to regulate development

The system works well -even though slightly cumbersome and expensive

There are individuals at planning that sincerely try to do their best to serve the public.

There are many staff members who are very knowledgeable and helpful through this complicated process. I do appreciate their effort and attention when needed. As a design professional with 18 years experience in SB I can say that at times the City has been easier to deal with than the County but more recently that is not the case.

They are restrictive and thwart over development.

they think "time" doesn't matter; they have endless

totally digital, no paper---saves trees, potential of more efficient use of staff time, somewhat quicker response time for emails and phone calls

very nice staff.

Respondents were also asked to provide feedback on the weaknesses of the City's process.

What are the weaknesses of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

The planning staff's general attitude is that of opposition. When researching a project I find that I have to draw all of the answers out of the staff and generally find them to not be forthcoming unless a very specific and direct question is asked. There also seems to be very little accountability and or ownership of assigned projects.

1) an embedded culture of distrust, 2) an overly-complicated development review process that gets worse with every passing year, 3) a permit processing system that favors large, expensive projects, 4) Lack of staff overview and training of ABR, SFDB and HLC members. 5) Lack of "ombudsman" to lead applications through the labyrinth.

Again, policy and processes needs to follow the narrative of the review boards and the municipal requirements they are charged with protecting. If a Concept Review allows for sketches to be brought in for discussion, why does Planning require fully dimensioned and noted Site Plans, Floor Plans, Elevations, etc. just to get to that initial Concept Review? It's contradictory. Additionally, the Forms and Documents available online reference old code sections and ordinances. Providing a Client with inaccurate forms with City headings is not a good representation of the professional relationship we like to suggest exists between the professional community and the City. Update the forms.

answers given over the counter could be overturned by staff later.

Arbitrary comments not based on code or ordinance requirements and a generally lack of ownership that delays in the review process can and should be addressed.

Asking for too much information and detail for a project too early on in the design process, before we even know if we have a project.

at this point: not at all intuitive, too many options that seem irrelevant, 1 or 2 links not going where they say they will

clear rules or implementation and interpretation of rules

Clients find it wieldy and a huge confusing situation.

ENFORCEMETN IS ALMOST NON-EXISTANCE. THE REVIEW BOARDS MAKE DECISIONS AND GIVE APPROVAL AND THEN BLDG. DEPT. DOESN'T FOLLOW THROUGH. THE SYSTEM IS COMPLAINT DRIVEN. HAVE STAFF GET OFF THE BUTTS AND LOOK AROUND THIS CITY.

If there is a way to interpret a code or law to the detriment of an applicant they will jump on it. Accessibly codes are enforced far to rigorously. Coastal codes are beyond insane, and they don't even know what they are doing -

What are the weaknesses of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

making it up as they along. Some plan checkers are clearly egocentric or sociopathic. They will send an entire plan check back several times for either incidental items, or because they don't feel it is their job to tell you what specifically they are looking for.

Inconsistencies in assistance.

Inconsistency, unpredictability, time taken to get approval, no transparency

it takes entirely too much money, time, and energy to get approvals for even the smallest of projects. They treat small remodel projects the same as large development projects.

Its too complex - way too many guidelines, policies, rules, etc. with no single staff person taking responsibility to manage an application through the entire process. Consolidate and simplify. Takes too much time and is very slow in processing. The community often suffers as a result due to lost opportunities and excessive permitting costs.

Look for means to expedite at all steps. Most staff does not seem empowered / confident to make binding decisions on their own making it difficult for applicants to rely on their input and guidance. I often feel this is a reflection on the complexity of the system as well as a management issue. Design review is excessive: smaller projects should be subject to administrative or staff level review, or reviewed on a consent basis and not full board. There should be higher thresholds for full review and trained in house staff or on call consultants to handle the smaller stuff. This would speed up the overall process.

It's very slow & painful - resulting multiple rounds of comments which could have been addressed earlier on.

Lacking trust and vision that results in a "grid locked" system.

Long and expensive permitting process for significant SFR projects impede the responsible upgrading of our community.

Management is not there to help and the fact that legal staff will not step in and correct ABR commissioners

Miscommunications between departments and the messaging from the commissions is arbitrary.

Moving forward is inconsistent with full employment of expensive (highly paid) city staff and therefore keeping projects under review keeps staff busy and employed.

No one is really in charge. The culture is not about helping. Creeks is a horrible obstacle to Land Dev. Too much discretion at the Design Review Boards.

No weakness

Only two things: 1. Planning Staff shows a lot of favoritism to their friends! 2. The building dept. could use 2 more plancheckers

Please see previous comments. In addition, staff has a hard time coordinating with other departments.

Process would be more efficient if applicants provided ALL the submittal requirements for the first review. And staff needs to be diligent/and forceful to require them so design review has everything at the first review (or applicant must wait to get on the agenda until provided). Most often not included is adjacent property building footprints. Applicant also needs photo looking at the property with adjacent properties in a single photo. Material board before requesting PDA. The elevation drawings should not be real tiny, with two or three on one sheet for a big project elevation. Elevation drawings need to be large enough so design review can see clear enough to evaluate, especially at the first review where design review make their first comments. Not efficient if applicant doesn't go transportation prior to design review to make sure the turning radius works, or parking plan works, etc. before first review at design review. Big problems last couple of years with how a built project looks regarding back flow equipment - many good looking or beautiful projects are mared in the front by one (or maybe two on a big project) that are not screened from view, as required by our guidelines. Applicants need to show trash location at first review, mechanical equipment, electrical panels, roof top equipment and screening, or other utility equipment at first review so planned into the project from the beginning (more efficient review process and more successful results. Shame that applicants sometimes say stuff to do with drainage (concerns by adjoining property owners) will be handled at building permit stage (so next door owners are uncertain if potential water flow onto their property is properly taken care of (neighbors have value historical information about drainage pattern). Terrible when applicant, after PDA, comes back and says because of value engineering that they have to reduce quality of materials (which can be major) - and before PDA design review could have evaluated the project with the real materials to be used - and maybe design review could have suggested some changes to reduce the visual important of these lesser quality materials. On large projects would be good if PRT or DART comments available online for neighbors or public to review, and could see some of the challenges with the site or design, etc. With the state mandated 5 reviews total on some types of projects, it is especially important that as much information as possible is provided at the first review, otherwise only 5 reviews could be a real problem (especially if applicant needs to go to SHO for modification); unclear if signage review is considered a review, and same for the two-step process for tree removal (street tree committee, then Parks & Rec. review for approval). Sometimes or often applicant ghosts in the top floor of a three or floor-story project saying the top floor can't be seen; top floor needs a hard line - top floor can be seen from a slight angle or very nearby intersection - and this visibility also applies to screening of rooftop equipment. Be sure to have preliminary landscape design at first review (for efficiency) as

What are the weaknesses of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

design may depend on it - and verbal description not sufficient. Generally it should be about the project and design elements on the drawings not a verbal description about what it can be like - less verbal, stuff on the sheets.

Projects are hijacked by neighbors who are well connected and organized, irrespective of applicants compliance with the rules. The hearings are set up so that applicants have no way to respond to outright lies of neighbors at meetings, which become part of the public record Staff frequently revises their criteria, resulting in trying to hit a moving target. City projects are green lighted without receiving the abusive scrutiny that private development experiences. Appeals are rejected by commissions and City Council in short sessions, against the recommendations of staff who have spent thousands of hours vetting a project. The City makes applicants go through expensive and legal challenges that are VERY costly to the city when courts finally decide that the City acted improperly.

Putting a priority on avoiding appeals and operating their department over good sensible forward thinking planning, The Bldg Dept's ADA compliance form is incorrect regarding the code and a source of too much misinterpretation.

See above.

See answer to #9. There are also many staff members who are not helpful and actually mislead owners and agents. In particular the planning counter rotates counter staff regularly which is not a problem in and of itself, but some of the rotated staff aren't familiar enough to staff the counter. They can't or won't answer specific questions regarding interpretation of processes and ordinances. When asked about specific questions regarding ADUs, modifications, exemptions, design board review, etc. they often give agents handouts in response. As a design professional I have already reviewed these documents and often have a copy of that exact document with me at the counter. For those agents without much experience the handout may be helpful but in my case the questions are not answered in the handout. As an alternative response they could say, "I don't know" and give me the email/number of the person who does. I learned a long time ago that this is an appropriate response. On the other hand, when property owners come into the planning & building counter alone and ask questions the staff tell them that it's easy all you need to do is... Admittedly this has all been relayed to me by those property owners who are maybe trying to downplay the worth of my profession but I have been a witness in many of these interactions personally as I wait my turn in line. This process is anything but easy. I know this response is solely focused on staff but in my opinion your code and process can be as complicated as you want as long as the staff is educated on its interpretation and implementation.

Slow - even small projects such as Modifications can take a year to process. New comments/conditions are sometimes added late in the review. Delays in staff responsiveness on major/big picture questions.

Slow, complicated

Some of the issues that arise are very time consuming, the city staff seem to take a long time at times to get things done, but also, they are being overworked and deluged with all the new laws coming down from Sacramento.

Sometimes you are placed on an agenda two months into the future and need more than a few days lead time as a reminder that my project will be heard on a certain day and time.

Staff has been saying no to all development for so long they no longer know how to simply help the development process. They are personally invested in a no-growth policy. The rules are Byzantine so staff often does whatever they feel is right rather than applying the code.

Staff in general have no interest in helping anyone. They believe they exist to collect a salary and benefits, not to serve the public who pays for those things. When they are wrong about something (which happens a lot) they get offended if you try to resolve the issue. When they eventually do admit a mistake, even a mistake that has cost an applicant time and money, they are unapologetic. They do not do anything to help make up for the mistake and they don't seem to understand that this would be the appropriate thing to do.

Staff is often unclear in the application process.

Staff seems to hide behind closed doors and there is no accountability for customer service. The process is oftentimes not clear.

Takes way too long. Too many variables and late last minute hits by Staff members who didn't do their homework earlier. Just because they missed it earlier doesn't mean that they can't ask for it now!

Terrible inefficiencies, lost work product, inexperienced staff, unclear direction.

The biggest missed opportunity is that the very talented and highly educated and trained local design professionals are not cultivated as a partner in the process. At best they are tolerated. How in any universe does that ever make any sense?

The biggest weakness in my experience is the building plan check process. I am not an architect, but I have experienced massive disruptions to project timelines due to city employees pushing the envelope during the plan check process. There is absolutely no willingness to err on the side of allowing a permit to be issued. A perfect example of this is that applicants have resorted to paying outside Certified Access Specialists to certify compliance with accessibility requirements in order to bypass certain City staff members. The head building official will override his own Casp with that third party certification, but he will not take steps to correct his staff's process.

What are the weaknesses of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

The culture of slow or no growth that is imbedded in the City's bureaucracy makes the process of getting projects through the approval process very difficult. Lack of constant interdepartmental communication creates unnecessary delays. Lack of adherence to objective standards allows too much discretion and personal opinions to be used in the process to deny projects or burden them with overregulation.

The HLC had some rude difficult volunteer commission members for far too long. It is better now.

The level of detail necessary to obtain a complete determination; often staff will require a level of detail that is more appropriate for a construction level plan. Design Review - the relatively new completeness review process needs improvement. For example, a 2nd submittal to address minor comments should not require a subsequent 30-day review to be placed on a design review agenda for action. Staff should triage these application. Our perception is that the applications are not reviewed until day 29 and then an incomplete letter is generated. Often the applicant could have been contacted, address the minor issues, resubmit and have staff confirm the comments were addressed and move the application along. Instead, day 29 arrives and if one issue isn't resolved, another incomplete letter is issued.

The other side of the coin of the strengths are that most staff come up through the ranks - they are not necessarily trained as planners. Their understanding is therefore limited and yet they are forced to apply what they know at the counter. If an applicant doesn't know the right questions to ask, they might get the wrong answer. As in any organization, staff are only as good as their training and training only supports prior education and philosophy. Diamonds in, diamonds out. Applicants may have to find the 'way' as best they can through the process - rather than always having the same, consistent treatment from any and every staff at every level. Inhabitants of the City are confirmed in their belief that its better to ask for forgiveness and it is painful to try to personally do everything by the book and ask my clients to, when others do not and ask for and receive less strict enforcement of their actions. There is no point to regulations if they are not enforced. The training of design review volunteers needs work. Orientation, continuing training and monitoring throughout, and choosing and training chairpersons is critical.

The process is convoluted, often subjective where objectivity is expected and therefore expensive

The weaknesses are that none of the departments work cohesively together. It feels like each department works separately from one another and do not work as a team. I also find that as a whole, there is a "no" culture at the City throughout all departments. The City staff should want to help us and work with us to make projects happen and help develop the City. Instead, they are constantly telling us what we cannot do, changing the rules, and not supporting projects that will help the City. It is extremely frustrating to propose a housing project in a City with a housing crisis, where they say that we need housing and that the City Council supports it, yet at the planning and permitting level we get nowhere.

There are very few upper level planners available to help navigate their process and will repeat myself that their staff is undertrained and take up a great deal of the applicant's time in navigating the process with repeat and new plan check items upon resubmittals. I believe my modification submittal had 3-4 intakes.

They are authoritarian, excessive in their requirement, and inflexible. Their systems are designed to allow inexperienced, unqualified people to do the work, so they transfer to responsibility to the design professionals. It's absurd, and very unfair to the owner's who have to pay for this.

They are closed every other Friday (and staff dose not actually work 40 hours that week as they are supposed to. So it is this factor that puts them behind and causes a "line"

They are restrictive and thwart over development. It takes too long to process projects.

They seem to lose their best people and retain the worst. Staff can sometimes dig in their heels and can never admit a mistake. "Interpretations" of ordinance language always works in their favor, instead of feeling like teamwork, all trying together to accomplish an approval. At the same time that I have a tough time with an approval, another similar application from another breezes through. Changes to ordinances sometimes feel like they were trying to fix a problem that didn't exist. Some building plan checkers have no common sense, and seem to search for obscure corrections to make, over the course of several resubmits.

they think "time" doesn't matter - process not engineered for approvals, just recycle with newer "comments"

Throughout the process there is a lack of transparency and accountability. A strong example of this is the City's implementation of Accela, which can be utilized to increase transparency for the public - through documented routing, comments included in the public record and transmittals uploaded and included in the system. None of which Santa Barbara incorporates.

Too complicated

Too many layers of bureaucracy, too complicated, too costly, too time consuming, too arbitrary, too ad hoc, hinders innovation. One can have a project approved by one department, only to have it substantially changed by another. Inspectors can add on their own modifications above and beyond what has already been approved.

Too much minutiae. Too many design guidelines, too many design review boards, too many development standards (e.g. open yard requirements, accessory structure/garage minutiae, height standrds differing between zoning and design guidelines), etc. It is impossible to predict what internal policy may exist or what little known policy/standard interpretation may be applied to a project.

What are the weaknesses of the City's land development process? (500 word limit)

Too regimental. You need extra personnel to help homeowners that may go through the process once in 20 years and need extra support.

Too slow. Too many rules. Inconsistent, unfair. Repeat comments. Biased and ignorant design review members. Staff acts like their goal is to obstruct projects and prevent anything from happening.

Unfortunately, the culture is a very top-down system. There is no incentive for City staff to find solutions to problems. The process has become top-heavy, burdensome and extremely inefficient. Simple R-3 projects are taking 4-5 years to grind through what should be a simple ministerial process. Design review boards have too much clout. Their mission is obfuscated at best. Architects are not allowed to practice architecture. Parameters need to be simple and understood at all levels. We are choking on our own regulations. Change needs to occur from the top.

The final question allowed respondents to share anything else not covered at that point.

Is there anything else you would like the consultants to know about your experiences with the land development process? (500 word limit)

One gets the feeling the process is deliberately difficult and costly to simply discourage anything from happening. Slow/No growth, I get it. Great for those who already have theirs, not so much for the rest of the community. But there's a question of social justice that results.

We were told in the beginning to submit As Built Drawings..... 5 years in the process and \$30,000.00 later! a pre-submittal meeting may be helpful to iron out possible contradictions along the way.

ABR is not acting as architectural over site. They are making recommendations based on personal expectations of the city they would like it to be. They have too much power and influence. we build from a defined set of laws and rules. Its a complete guess what any group of ABR members will find acceptable. .

ABR Members do not follow state laws for expediting housing Projects

After 30+ years of developing in Santa Barbara, I can attest that the system is rife with abuses and back-channel dealings. Development should be a collaborative activity, not the adversarial process that exists now. There should be a mediation dept as part of planning to minimize conflicts and "misunderstandings".

Applicants often come forward to permit some aspect of their home after the work has been completed. When this is done voluntarily (not in violation), staff often treats the project as if every single aspect is under review. The result is applicants spend thousands of dollars and many months permitting items they did not intend for and become discouraged. When projects are minor or the applicant is permitting something otherwise unpermitted, staff should see the big picture. At the end of the day it discourages that individual from getting a permit in the future and they choose to spend their money developing in other cities.

Be kind to the novices entering your domain, it's scary.

Enhance the electronic submittal process.

Having Creeks review storm water management outside of Building is difficult, and they are the most difficult to work with

HIRE A QUALIFIED DESIGN PROFESSIONAL TO REVIEW ALL SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS, ESPECIALLY AT SFDB SO THAT THE BOARD CAN HAVE COMPLETE SETS OF DRAWINGS

I believe the most important step the City can take is to appoint and empower an advocate general to be the point person that advocates for projects, removes obstacles, holds staff accountable and implements the recommendations of the Novak report. This person must be authorized by City Council and report results regularly to the City Council.

I feel the city is kinda now being under attack for its strict development guidelines. We are not a NORMAL city, and it never will be, that's why it's such an amazing place. However, there seems to be certain advocates that feel Santa Barbara needs to be punished because of its strong architectural heritage, however, with the pandemic now and the internet changing everything about the downtown experience, all bets are off! A whole new approach needs to be looked at about our community, but be careful, applying what works in one community doesn't necessarily work for ours! ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!

I have been involved in the Process improvement at the County Development and I am confirmed in my feeling that most staff are fundamentally good people who are trying to do their best but are hampered by internal politics, by applicants appealing to political appointees for favoritism which degrades morale. I have encountered wonderful staff and I have encountered rude,imperious and arrogant staff - I'm sorry to say.

I have been processing development projects through the City for over 30 years. I process about 80 projects a year through the City. I have seen these types of surveys before and they seem to always end up the same way. There will be some kind of recommendation for streamlining the system. We don't need more streamlining, we already have pretty good access to the bad news. We need a new culture of city employees who enjoy helping people and seeing improvements made to their community. I believe the staff still work under the old mind-set that

Is there anything else you would like the consultants to know about your experiences with the land development process? (500 word limit)

all development is bad, and builders, developers, and design professionals are bad people trying to exploit our resources and open space to make a buck. This town has changed and now need more housing, and progressing thinking, rather than an endless supplies of NOs.

I have never had a positive experience over the years. Every time I have wanted to do any kind of improvement it has been a battle. I currently own over 60 units in Santa Barbara. Everyone of these properties could be upgraded and made better and more efficient. If the process was better it could be a win for the City, the tenants and for me. Currently it is not worth the effort.

I know staff are now forced to learn the new system so it's not always easy for customers and staff.

I sincerely hope that Novak can outline steps to improve the chaos and inertia that has grown continuously worse in the past 25 years.

I suggest that the building counter re-institute plan checker hours so that applicants can have questions answered prior to filing an application. This may result in fewer rounds of plan check review.

I would say one of the biggest problems is the senior level staff does not seem to have the ability to change the way their subordinates operate. This is particularly apparent in the building department. I have had multiple conversations with the director and the head building official, where they seem to understand what needs to change, but they are unable or unwilling to effect change. I have many thoughts and suggestions that I am not able to get into a survey answer, but you are welcome to reach me at [REDACTED]@[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. - Joe Corazza

Information from one staffer needs to be consistent with another staffer.

It appears everything favors process and not people.

I've been doing this in SB for 40 years, and it simply gets harder, more expensive and more time consuming every year. Building plan check staff is a disaster. Creeks MUST be removed for the Land Dev. process. Their function should reside in PW or CD.

Minutiae has to be stripped away, and this includes stormwater regs. Processes are not clear and too complicated. It isn't so much staff as it is the baked in minutiae that they are forced to apply and interpret.

Most Staff members are noticeably trying, the problem seems to be in the knowledge base and execution of leadership.

Need a good ombudsman (ombudsperson?) to proactively get all city departments on the same page, and the same team. SB has good ordinances to maintain our uniqueness, but need to get rid of people with attitude if they can't be retrained.

Nightmare.

Over the last five years it has gotten increasingly more frustrating to work in the City of Santa Barbara. Less people want to do business with the land development team because of how much time, money, and effort is spent to get a permit. We need a supportive staff and management that actually want development. Otherwise, Santa Barbara is going to continue to spiral downhill and no one will want to open up a business or build new developments here. I grew up in Santa Barbara and used to spend many weekends wandering downtown State Street with friends. State Street is now completely different, and each day another shop leaves because no one is spending their time and money downtown anymore. We need developments to draw people to downtown and keep them there. Such as housing downtown and experiences.

Owners and their design professionals are committed members of the community and want a wonderful, vibrant and successful community. Their investment should be honored by the City and the City should advocate for projects and help the project teams achieve an authentic yes to a well designed project of any scale. Project are good for a community. Otherwise we have a vacant and deteriorating city. Look at our city it could be extraordinary. Instead no change is the ideal. Lao Tzu in the 6th century stated that anything that is perfect and can not grow or change is by definition dead. The City policy and process is encouraging Santa Barbara to be a dead city. How is that good?

Planning Dept appears unable to listen to ideas of change and progress. Change is necessary. The City downtown will not survive without change.

Please see previous comments.

Provide Standard Plan Check list Standardized documents preparation procedures - eliminate forced duplicative information during plan check! Work with architects Make Standard City issued requirements sheets like Green Building Code The interiors of P&D is not fresh or inspiring. THANK YOU!

Staff training in customer service needed

SWMP is wrong. Doesn't make sense that our City is significantly more difficult than neighboring Cities. It is maddening that the City Council doesn't care. It frustrating that Paul Casey hasn't tried years ago to get it changed. He is in charge of the City employees and could have adjusted their workflow to make this a priority. The SWMP review process should be reviewed by the Planning Department or Public Works and not by the Creek's Department. The Creeks take an anti-growth, or make it as minimal, or as expensive as possible, so that the impact is minor or project dies. They don't understand that human development has a footprint. We cannot return

Is there anything else you would like the consultants to know about your experiences with the land development process? (500 word limit)

back to the past and undue the past harm in just one generation of new projects. Too expensive and no one will build, or will build without permits to avoid the process.

The City staff have created a crazy multi-tiered, convoluted system of laws, ordinances, review boards, design standards, neighborhoods/districts, and public noticing/input to confuse even the staff hired to enforce them. It's time to send many of these ordinances to the shredder and sunset the review committees.

The enforcement teams are generally lazy and rely upon form letters which they don't read before sending out and the review and appeal processes are handled by an out of town "parking ticket" firm which is apparently a computer programmed with standard and offer irrelevant answers.

The fees are way too high!!!! The city stormwater requirements are absolutely ridiculous and impossible to comply with!

The ineptness and lethargy of some of the planning staff impact the ability to efficiently and effectively process permits, discouraging development (whether new or remodels), and ultimately lessens the potential increased tax basis (money coming in).

The only thing they excel at is prolonging work for themselves. I have done other non land development projects though that went well. It's the land use process that's a mess.

The plan check process was, until recently, taking a long time to get through. This had less to do with staff/personnel issues and more to do with a very busy economy for new construction. With the Corona virus pandemic, this may change. But, the City may want to look at increasing staffing levels for building permit plan check review. The City could also do a better job of putting out a plain English explanation of what is now required for residential and small commercial projects with respect to Clean Water Act NPDES construction requirements. Many people complain about the amount of time it takes to get through City design review. However, in my experience, this has more to do with delays caused by applicant architects and engineers in providing complete plans/specifications in their first submittals and in not responding quickly and comprehensively to plan check comments.

The process works just fine as is and does not need to be changed in any way

The process is so costly, both in treasure and time (rarely can you get an approval in under a year for residential, much more for commercial projects), that profits are too low to justify the investment. This has a negative impact on housing availability (chronic shortage) and rent affordability.

The review committees like Historic and A.B.R. are capricious and have way too much power. They waste vast amounts of time and developers money over completely insignificant details. While they dither over details the owner or tenant is losing money every day.

Trust that design professionals are interested in improving the built environment, not trashing it!

We are developers and property owners that have worked nationally for many years and have rarely worked with a jurisdiction that is so incompetent, irresponsible/irresponsible and borderline corrupt.

When submitting plans to the building department for a permit there is no verification that the plans submitted have been received. I just hope they got it and I have no idea who will be working on them.

While Santa Barbara is a nice little city, developing here is anything but a positive experience. For whatever reason, the vocal minority carry a disproportionate amount of clout with the City Administrators. It makes it very difficult for credible projects to proceed. Local architects and developers are the experts and need to be listened to proportionately.

Yes, the city stormwater ordinance is way too onerous and difficult (almost impossible) to comply with. It really needs to be significantly changed !

You are going to hear similar things from virtually everyone that takes this survey. Because those things are true.

You have to understand that professionals are not the only ones interested and invested in this process. Property owners are as well and a majority of them in the City are not familiar with the process and may only go through it once in their life. If your process is too complicated for professionals to understand - and I think that your responses will validate this statement - then you need to simplify the process enough for the "layman" to understand or at minimum tell them that they NEED to hire a professional.

Attachment B: Process Improvement Exercise Summary

From June 23, 2020 to June 25, 2020, 38 members of the land development team engaged in a Process Improvement Exercise. The exercise provided an opportunity for staff to collaborate on a shared path forward, building internal relationships and taking advantage of internal expertise to improve the overall land development process. The project team, along with three City staff members, facilitated the session. This report summarizes the three-day virtual retreat.

In advance of the Process Improvement Exercise, participants were sent briefing materials that provided background on the land development process improvement project, including a summary of the process and focus areas for improvement; an overview of the design, purpose, and goals of the Process Improvement Exercise; a summary of stakeholder engagement; process maps of five projects that had gone through the land development process; and the memorandum provided to Santa Barbara City Council on June 2, 2020. The section of the briefing materials describing the Process Improvement Exercise and the goals is included at the end of this summary.

June 23, 2020

Setting the Stage

The exercise participants were joined at the beginning of the first day by the City Administrator and senior leadership from departments involved with the land development process. Jonathan Ingram and Julia Novak from The Novak Consulting Group, part of Raffelis, kicked off the session by welcoming participants and the senior leadership team. The City Administrator addressed the group, recognizing the challenge of staying engaged during a long virtual meeting but being excited about the possibilities of the exercise and hearing the outcomes from the participants. The Community Development Director also spoke, encouraging folks to stay engaged and addressing the need for staff from all divisions and departments to work together and reestablish a commitment to do their best. The senior leadership left the virtual room, and the project team gave an overview of the agenda and ground rules.

To prepare participants for the three-day session, Mr. Ingram provided context to the project and shared what the project team had learned through its field work and research, specifically highlighting the common themes that stakeholders and staff held. Those common themes were respect for the outcomes of the land development process; recognition that the process needs enhancement; an inconsistent philosophy around development review and customer service; and a lack of process clarity and predictability. He also highlighted the structure of the three-day exercise, including a focused goal for each day and an opportunity to present recommendations to the senior leadership team on day three. The goals outlined for the Process Improvement Exercise were as follows:

1. **Vision and Customer Service** – Define what an applicant/customer has a right to expect from the land development process. Establish reasonable, clear, and measurable customer service expectations for both discretionary review and ministerial permit review. Establish mechanisms to address issues when those expectations are not met.

2. **Process Consistency** – Establish clear and consistent entry points for applicants accessing the land development process and their path to receive staff and design review.

Small Group Idea Generation

Goal 1 – Vision and Customer Service

Participants were split into three small groups made up of a cross-section of staff from different departments involved in the land development process. Each group first discussed a goal regarding vision and customer service. Groups were encouraged to think about the barriers preventing the City from accomplishing the goal and identifying solutions to address those barriers. Each small group had a City facilitator as well as a representative from the project team to assist and capture the themes of the conversation.

Each group reported out on their identified barriers and solutions. Below is a summary of what was shared with the large group at the end of the idea generation.

Group 1

- Barriers:
 - Code is extremely complicated and convoluted.
 - Current communication to the public does not utilize graphics or materials and is often out of date.
 - The training and onboarding given to staff need to be enhanced and made consistent across divisions and departments.
 - Communication with applicants is sparse. Hard for them to know where to access helpful information, especially for someone new to the process.
 - There are significant time constraints. Staff must consider and incorporate decisions that have already been made. Staff have to shuffle applicants around, which prolongs the final decision or prevents an applicant from getting the information they need to move forward.
 - There is not an emphasis on coming to a resolution quickly. Plan review and different disciplines have different standards and expectations.
 - Staff have different views on how to help applicants navigate the process. Planning staff will spend time handholding applicants while building staff do not have capacity to do so.
 - Staff need to put themselves in each other's shoes. Some of us deal with irate people while planning and zoning errs on the side of following a process. Planning will discuss and dive into the bigger picture, but building doesn't have that option.
 - There is a conflict of authority between boards and staff. Question about whether there should be more administrative approvals; there is currently so much oversight from review boards and commissions.
- Solutions:
 - Develop new communications tools like instructional or educational videos.
 - Upgrade the website. Make it easier for applicants to access information they need.
 - Create a single point of contact for each project. This will require consideration about how to structure this relationship with customers and who the contact(s) should be.
 - Leverage technology to help applicants navigate the process; could develop screening tools (similar to the way software like Turbo Tax uses screening questions) rather than sending people around to all of the counters.
 - Set up office times and appointments to resolve technical issues.
 - Create customer service training, so there is consistency and staff become solution-oriented. Shift to becoming a process advocate for the applicant throughout a construction project.
 - Rethink the way staff are brought on and onboarded. Establish professional development opportunities.

Group 2:

- Barriers:
 - The team mentioned that they had similar barriers to Team 1. They categorized their barriers into four areas: institutional framework, inconsistencies, limitations, and poor morale.
 - There are unclear assignments and goals. This uncertainty filters to the applicant, resulting in inconsistencies between reviewers.
 - There needs to be more consistency between the boards and commissions; their rules and procedures are different.
 - There was a conversation about the overall process timeline and expectations for applicants.
 - The group agreed to a statement about customer expectations: "Our applicant is the person at the counter; our customer is everyone affected by the project. Applicants and customers have a right to expect clear and respectful communication in a two-way manner, knowledge of the upfront costs in both time and money, and that the process is consistent and fair."
 - There has been changing political influence. This can lead to "line jumping," where an applicant complains to the right person and gets their project to the front of the line. This creates inconsistencies and unfair dynamics.
 - There is a lack of clarity between departments on what each discipline or workgroup does.
 - There's a huge demand for land development services and no funding to expand staffing to meet that demand. We currently staff for the average workload, not booms.
 - There is poor morale within staff due to a lack of effective training and a lack of accountability from supervisors and each other.
 - There are no consequences for being late on a review, and many felt that there were no definable expectations.
 - Poor morale leads to bad customer service.
- Solutions:
 - Establish standards rather than leaving review decisions up to the discretion of the reviewer or boards.
 - Create a single template for completeness reviews, no matter the path the project takes.
 - Improve digital communications and website.
 - Create a Public Information Officer.
 - Create term limits for review board members.
 - Simplify regulations for clarity.

Group 3:

- Also talked about expectations and agreed to the following: A reasonable expectation for applicants is that deadlines will be met and that the process is easy to follow. Currently, the process is too bureaucratic. Staff and customers do not understand why certain policies are in place. We need to make sure all divisions and workgroups have that understanding.
- Barriers:
 - Staff tend to be reactive versus proactive.
 - There are not enough staff to "hand-hold" applicants through the process; that takes time.
 - Staff are under pressure to meet deadlines and do not have enough time to provide good customer service.
 - There are often conflicting department needs, which can result in the inability to reach resolution.
 - Internal staff communication and training could be improved.
 - Many of the land development rules are overcomplicated. We have created too much flexibility in the process; this may be beneficial, but it also causes uncertainty.

- There is often unclear direction from management and a lack of a cohesive statement. There is a history of why things were put in place; we should understand and change it if it is no longer the case.
- City Council needs to better understand the process, and if they want it to change, they should make those decisions and change the rules and regulations. Those kinds of changes will trickle down into process management.
- There is a culture of fear that stems from the political climate and pressure. Staff feel that that they give priority to neighbors rather than applicants.
- Solutions:
 - Educating City Council about the land development process to ensure they have a good understanding moving forward.
 - Directing customers at the counter.
 - Improve the website; all agreed that the website needs improvement, and there should be one single source of information as well as an easy access area. This would make it more cohesive for applicants.
 - Having an architect on-site to review applications as part of design review.
 - Create standardized design preapprovals.

Attendees discussed the solutions and barriers shared by each group and were asked to send any other ideas to the project team by the end of the day. In addition, participants were asked to review the process maps and to send ideas about process improvements. The project team incorporated the ideas reported by participants and additional emailed suggestions into a summarized list of proposed solutions. These excluded solutions that the project team had identified as recommendations to City Council in the presentation given on June 2, 2020.

The following figure is a visualization created by the project team summarizing the highlights of the discussion from the first day of the Process Improvement Exercise.

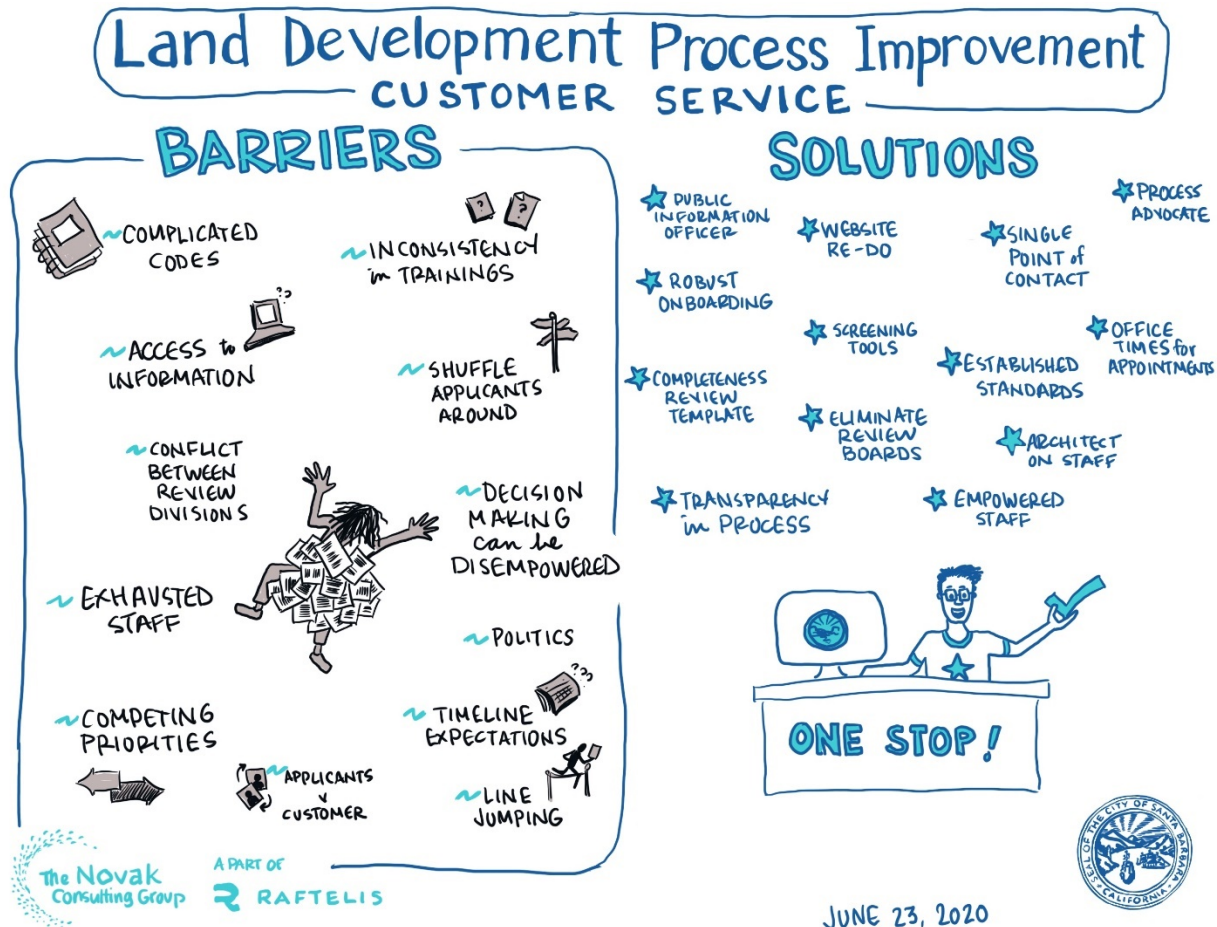


Figure 7: Visualization of PIE Discussion from June 23, 2020

June 24, 2020

On June 24, 2020, the session began with a review of the Goal 1 solutions. Solutions were categorized into four areas: customer service and accountability; public communication; simplify rules and regulations; and design review. Participants discussed each solution and came to a consensus on the wording for each solution. The solutions were then prioritized within each category using an electronic voting method, and the most impactful solutions were identified. The number of votes each item received and the percentage of votes received are shown in parentheses.

- Customer Service and Accountability
 - Create and communicate clear service level and process expectations to applicants, stakeholders, and staff (24; 20%)
 - Establish a customer service training program to create comprehensive and consistent service standards and expectations across all plan review and inspection disciplines (23; 19%)
 - Create dedicated intake/receptionist personnel in the lobby who can field and triage questions and issues (19; 16%)
 - Develop a robust onboarding process to create a clear professional development and skill-building framework (15; 13%)

- Establish a supervisory and management training program to create consistent skill sets and expectations regarding accountability and consistency throughout the hierarchy (15; 13%)
- Assign a staff ambassador for every project to serve as a point of contact for helping the applicant navigate through the process. Create clear workflows and points of contact for specialty processes (13; 11%)
- Build scripts for customer service personnel and provide basic FAQs (10; 8%)
- Public Communication
 - Update the City's website and internal/external online communications tools to ensure ease of use and access to useful information. Example: Develop electronic screening tool (30; 34%)
 - Develop video and communications tools about the process (19; 22%)
 - Refine and update phone tree system to provide more direct routes of communication (18; 21%)
 - Revise and update process descriptions to simplify and visually summarize the land development process (15; 17%)
 - Develop a Spanish language communication strategy – phone options, materials, etc. (5; 6%)
- Simplify Rules and Regulations
 - Create a streamlined approval process for simple permits and "homeowner projects" (30; 34%)
 - Identify changes to the municipal code and other regulations to reduce or eliminate process steps (25; 28%)
 - Complete necessary policy and/or code revisions to allow greater focus of review on the scope of work for the project in question (15; 17%)
 - Establish a single and/or limited appealable actions per project to simplify appeals process (11; 13%)
 - Establish appeal criteria to provide an avenue for the appeal body to dismiss appeals on merit (7; 8%)
- Design Review
 - Reduce the number of design review triggers. Example: 5-foot fence. (22; 26%)
 - Create visual examples of acceptable "pre-approved" designs. e.g., catalog of approved examples. (21; 24%)
 - Combine or eliminate review boards (19; 22%)
 - Establish thresholds of entry into the design review process to ensure that core land use and building permit issues have been identified (14; 16%)
 - Amend code to make concept review optional for PC, SHO, and design review boards (10; 12%)

After the Goal 2 discussion, another solution was added to the Customer Service and Accountability category for Goal 1. Although the solution came about from the Goal 2 discussion, there was consensus that it more closely aligned with Goal 1. The solution was identified as a priority recommendation and was included with the four solutions that received the most votes in the final presentation to the leadership team.

- Re-envision the Counter Committee – include staff from multiple functions; balance staff rotation.

Goal 2 – Process Consistency

Participants returned to the three small groups assigned at the beginning of the exercise to tackle the second goal focused on process consistency. Participants once again identified the barriers preventing the City from accomplishing the goal and solutions to address those barriers. Each small group had a City facilitator as well as a representative from the project team to assist and capture the themes of the conversation.

Each group reported out on their identified barriers and solutions, this time in reverse order from the previous day. Below is a summary of what was shared with the large group at the end of the idea generation.

Group 3:

- There are currently a lot of entry points into the process; this makes it confusing for customers and staff.
- Customer service, in general, can be a barrier because customers have a varied experience when interacting with the process.
- People do not understand the process or which counter to go to, and that creates a level of impatience which affects the interactions with City staff.
- Currently, there are different check-in processes for the different counters, talked about making them consistent.
- The process is not very clear, customers are not sure where to start, and not all staff know where to direct them.
- Because divisions and workgroups do not know each other's processes well, it is difficult to assist customers and answer questions outside of your own discipline. For example, building height is decided during the discretionary review process and is not something that should be approved as part of a building permit.
- Discussed whether staff should provide a partial list of corrections so that the applicant could have a head start on addressing comments instead of waiting for all to be compiled.
- Talked about bringing back the counter committee, it has not been active for a number of years but worked well in the past to talk about different counter issues and training. The committee would meet every month or so and help make a connection between different counters.³⁹
- There is a need to update the website, possibly create online flow charts or videos. This could be especially helpful considering the ongoing COVID-19 situation and the inability to meet in-person with customers.
- Create preapprovals on certain projects; for example, applicants could choose a predesigned wood fence or go through an approval process if opting for a chain-link fence.
- Establish project tiers as part of the review process: small, medium, and large. Requirements will differ based on projects but essentially begin the same way.

Group 2:

- Applicants and the general public are not familiar with our terminology and process. For example, they do not know what PRT or DART are; that extends to some staff who don't work with those processes regularly.
- Staff do not generally have enough information to help with other disciplines, even within their own division. That is often due to specialization needed for different types of work, but could some cross-training be done to allow folks to better assist customers?
- Participants discussed all of the options for applicants to enter the process. The group consensus is that there are too many options, and there's a need to funnel down to fewer options.
- Expectations are unclear for applicants before they enter the process.

³⁹ Further discussion about this solution centered on the need for a committee with representatives of all land development workgroups to discuss issues and resolve conflicts. The discussion resulted in adding this solution to the Goal 1 list under Customer Service and Accountability.

- Group discussed whether there was a need to create a pre-application meeting as a solution with representatives from each group; would be less formal than PRT.
- Comments and updates do not always make it to the owner if they are not the applicant. Understandable because architects are doing three to four jobs, but the City often gets blamed for delays when they have plans for up to two months.
- Discussion of the amount of detail going to design review; sometimes, there is not enough detail going to design review boards, so their comments are unhelpful.
- PRT should be more customized based on the scope of the project; what might be required by the project prior to design review.
- Outcomes and decisions are not clear to applicants, and that's a particular pain point in the process because applicants do not want to spend time or money on stages of the process with no results.
- Would like to have more staff in meetings with applicants or hold office hours where customers can meet with all divisions and departments. Recognize that is a pie in the sky idea with current staffing realities.
- Incomplete applications should be rejected immediately. Applicants won't like it, but it saves them money and better for the overall project.
- Discussion of finding a way to get a multi-discipline review near the beginning of the process so that issues or approvals that affect design could be identified before application.
- There is a need for more staff to ensure all disciplines have capacity to do both their day-to-day work and the collaborative work with other departments. If new meetings are created for customers, that is another layer of work, time, staff, which is not currently possible without more resources.
- Idea similar to Group 3 about creating tiers of meetings and more customized levels of review based on the project.

Group 1:

- Design review boards currently grant approval for items that are not allowed in the City's code. There needs to be a mechanism for staff review or correction to ensure errors aren't made by the boards.
- Need to establish more clearly defined roles for the review boards; it can be unclear to applicants what comments are required versus preferred.
- There is a lot of uncertainty in the design review process, and there are multiple stabs at review for each project.
- The City should work to limit the number of reviews in each stage of the land development process; this will free up staff capacity and improve the customer experience. This would mean establishing consistent submittal standards and ensure there is commonality between departments.
- More work needs to be done so that staff can make applicants more aware of the process for discretionary approval upfront, the time commitment, and what kind of approval they will need.
- Define project triggers (outside of DART) that would facilitate a broader LDT team review for design review projects.
- Better utilize appointments to create more valuable use of staff time and applicant time.
- Utilize web-based communication tools for group meetings/applicant meetings.
- Clearly communicate the discretionary application review findings/standard of review for each project.

Attendees discussed the solutions and barriers shared by each group and were asked to send any other ideas to the project team by the end of the day. The project team incorporated the ideas reported by participants and additional emailed suggestions into a summarized list of proposed solutions. These excluded solutions that were already discussed as part of Goal 1 and solutions the project team had identified as recommendations to City Council in the presentation given on June 2, 2020.

The following figure is a visualization created by the project team summarizing the highlights of the discussion from the second day of the Process Improvement Exercise.

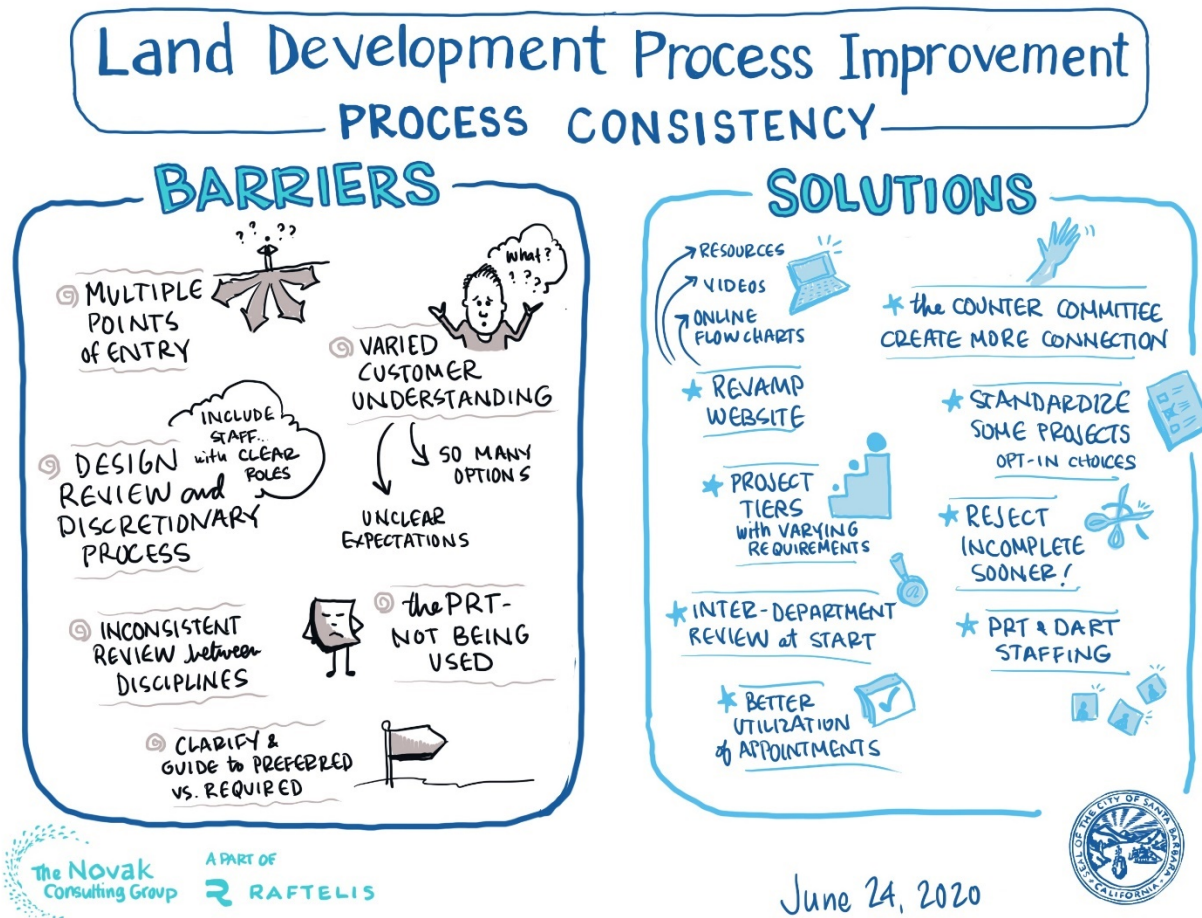


Figure 8: Visualization of PIE Discussion from June 24, 2020

June 25, 2020

On June 25, 2020, the session began with a review of Goal 2 solutions. Solutions were all categorized as part of process clarity. Participants discussed each solution and came to a consensus on the wording for each one. The solutions were then prioritized using an electronic voting method, and the most impactful solutions were identified, the number of votes each item received and the percentage of votes received are shown in parentheses.

- Process Clarity
 - Develop project tiers – small (building permit/ministerial), medium (design review), large (design review and land use) – that trigger different routing and levels of review; specific entry point assigned to each tier. (26; 41%)
 - Standardize and streamline check-in practices at all counters and processes across all plan review disciplines and divisions. (16; 25%)
 - Create a process, similar to PRT, where staff from each land review discipline provide conceptual but substantive guidance early in the design review process. Could involve rethinking/making the PRT process more of a meeting structure rather than a formal review. Consider making PRT optional. (15; 23%)

- Make concept review in Design Review, PC, and SHO optional. Clarify what is required and what is optional to potentially add value. (7; 11%)

Presentation of Recommendations to City Administrator and Leadership Team

On the third day of the Process Improvement Exercise, the list of recommendations was reviewed, and Goal 2 recommendations were prioritized. In total, 28 recommendations were identified, and participants selected 16 priorities that will have the most impact on the land development process for each of the following categories: Customer Service and Accountability; Public Communication; Simplify Rules and Regulations; Design Review; and Process Clarity.

Before returning to small groups to develop the presentation for the leadership team, participants discussed customer service expectations and agreed to the following statement:

Our applicants and customers have a right to expect clear and simple communication about our processes delivered in a respectful manner; knowledge of the upfront costs in both time and money; that the process is consistent and fair.

Some participants noted that these expectations were not something that the land development team currently offers to applicants and customers, but they were worth setting as a goal to strive toward.

Participants also discussed a cultural conflict among divisions and workgroups within the land development process. Participants alluded to this conflict throughout the exercise, noting that staff do not work well together and that animosity exists between the staff and leadership of different divisions. Many participants feel that there is a lack of respect and trust between divisions, especially between the Planning Division and Building and Safety Division of Community Development. Many staff feel that they work well together across divisions at a peer level but that a lack of trust and an adversarial relationship is reflected at the management level, and that sets the tone for staff. This cultural issue is corrosive, and if it is not addressed, then broader process improvements will not be impactful.

To solve this internal cultural conflict, a small group came up with several changes they would like to see supervisors and managers make. When presented to all of the participants, there was consensus that they should be included in the presentation to the leadership team. Participants felt that if their managers could meet the following commitments, it would help to ease the conflict that exists between divisions and departments.

Land development staff request a commitment from managers to...

- Respect every person and every division's role in the process and foster a culture of respect and trust
- Hold staff, supervisors, and managers accountable to these values
- Support and empower leaders at all levels of the organization
- Publicly defend staff and their decisions
- Be responsive and follow through
- Engage with conflict in a timely manner
- Be decisive

Following this discussion, participants went back to their small groups to create a presentation that summarized the priority recommendations within the framework of the original issues to be resolved by the Process Improvement Exercise. Each group added more detail to the priority recommendations and took charge of presenting a section of recommendations. A summary of the recommendations follows.

Customer Service and Accountability

Create and communicate clear service level and process expectations to applicants, stakeholders, and staff.

The project team recognized the need for setting common expectations. This was one of the main goals of the PIE. Expectations are necessary for both communicating to the public and holding staff accountable for their performance. Participants reported that a lack of clarity regarding customer service expectations, and the overall process creates issues with customers and other staff members.

Participants recommended establishing clear expectations across all workgroups. This would allow staff to have a common understanding of what to expect of themselves and each other. Participants also discussed the need for accountability up and down the hierarchy of the organization and that supervisors and managers needed to be held to similar standards as frontline staff. Doing this helps establish trust in the process and will create a benchmark for self-assessment and transparency.

Establish a customer service training program to create comprehensive and consistent service standards and expectations across all plan review and inspection disciplines.

Currently, staff do not receive customer service training as part of their onboarding or ongoing professional development. However, staff often interact with the public, and both customers and stakeholders expressed a perception of poor customer service from land development staff. Establishing customer service standards is only symbolic if training is not provided to help staff achieve those expectations.

Participants recommended creating a customer service program that would convert the customer service philosophy into a practical process and curriculum. This would allow all land development team members to have the same baseline training and tools to uphold the commitment to customer service. The training also creates a regular opportunity for dialogue and relationship-building across the different land development team workgroups and divisions. It is also important that the training program meets the specific environment of the land development process. Participants recognized that the conflict inherent in the process means staff need more specialized training than might be applicable in a traditional retail or service situation.

Develop a robust onboarding process to create a clear professional development and skill-building framework.

Currently, each department or division handles the onboarding of staff involved in the land development process. Often this means there is not a clear understanding of other pieces of the process outside the individual's role. Staff learn to navigate the process and identify professional development opportunities as they spend time on the job, rather than having a clear framework from the beginning.

Creating a common onboarding program was a priority recommendation from participants. In conjunction with an onboarding program, participants were interested in establishing a framework for ongoing training so staff could build their skills and develop within their respective professions. A joint onboarding and ongoing training program would improve staff understanding of the land development process across all departments and would build on consistent expectations for staff. It would also help staff build the knowledge to guide customers through the process. Additionally, a joint onboarding and training program would help build cross-departmental relationships and a sense of team commitment.

Staff reported that the current onboarding program within the Public Works Department could serve as a model for the land development team. Their onboarding covers the varied divisions within the department and explains the different services provided by Public Works staff.

Create dedicated intake or receptionist personnel in the lobby who can field and triage questions and issues.

One of the issues customers face when they come to the City's Garden Street building to begin the land development process is understanding where to go. It is unclear where to begin or how to get questions answered, particularly for customers with no experience working with the process. In the past, the City had a receptionist in the lobby who was able to answer questions and direct customers to the appropriate place.

To improve the experience for customers coming to the City, participants recommended creating a new role to help customers navigate the process. It would allow for a consistent pathway for customers to access services and the appropriate staff for their projects. It would also prevent customers from spending time waiting in line for a counter with which they do not need talk. This would help the process be less intimidating for customers new to it and would assist staff who work the different counters.

Re-envision the Counter Committee.

A common theme discussed during the PIE was the need for staff from across the land development team to meet regularly and address issues that might arise. Currently, staff do not have a mechanism to address problems or collaborate to find solutions with other land development team members. Issues can be elevated to supervisors or managers but are not always addressed in a cross-departmental way.

Long-time staff members referenced a committee that had existed previously called the Counter Committee. This was a cross-departmental team of staff who worked the counters and directly with the public. The Committee created a method for staff to identify common trends or issues that they could not solve independently. Importantly, it involved staff from multiple functions and included supervisors, managers, and front-line staff. Participants expressed the need for a similar committee, not necessarily focused on counter staff but on identifying and resolving issues that affect multiple departments or divisions, particularly any accountability or performance problems. This group could also work on process improvement within land development. However, participants expressed that the committee would be ineffective if management did not address the issues raised or recommendations made by the group. Follow-through from management will be critical to the success of a re-envisioned counter committee.

Additional recommendations

Participants identified three additional recommendations. These were not top priorities compared to the others within Customer Service and Accountability but could also have an impact on the land development process:

- Establish a supervisory and management training program to create consistent skill sets and expectations regarding accountability and consistency throughout the hierarchy.
- Assign a staff ambassador for every project to serve as a point of contact for helping the applicant navigate the process. Create clear workflows and points of contact for specialty processes.
- Build scripts for customer service personnel and provide basic FAQs.

Public Communication**Update the City's website and internal and external online communications tools to ensure ease of use and access to useful information.**

Current communication provided by the City about the land development process is unclear and hard to navigate. The information is often difficult to locate or is outdated. Part of high-quality customer service is clear communication. In order for customers to understand the process and how to navigate it, there need to be communication tools that explain it.

Participants expressed that the public now expects that the information they need is readily available online. Although communication is difficult due to the complexity of the land development process, more effort needs to be made to update and clarify the communication currently on the City's website. This

would also be helpful internally for staff from other departments or divisions to understand the overall process and have the information needed to help customers. This could also be approached in creative or new ways. One idea brought up during the discussion of this recommendation was creating a software tool to screen applicants and projects similar to the way software like TurboTax screens tax-related questions. By answering short, simple questions, a customer could narrow down the information they need to provide and clarify the path they will go to get approval from the City.

Develop video and communications tools about the process.

One of the common issues staff face when serving customers of the land development process is educating them about the process and requirements needed to build in the City. Although process improvements and simplifying regulations will make this easier over time, there will still be a need to educate the public about land development. Currently, the City does not have any resources dedicated to public education regarding the land development process, and applicants must navigate through different webpages and documents to teach themselves.

Participants recommended that simple and clear communications tools like videos or electronic process maps should be created to help educate customers. These would be publicly available on the City's website and could be shared as needed based on questions received from customers. In particular, a library of videos explaining different parts of the land development process or showing examples of approved projects would be helpful to staff. This creative communication would also help humanize the land development team.

Refine and update the phone tree system to provide more direct routes of communication.

A regular complaint that staff receive from customers and the public is that they have a hard time getting in touch with members of the land development team via telephone. There are two issues with contacting individual staff members: knowing whom to contact about questions or problems and navigating the phone tree system at the City. Improving the overall land development process and providing more educational information on the website should improve the ability for customers to know whom to contact, but there will still be a need to update how customers can get in touch with individual staff members.

Staff participants proposed that updating the City's phone tree system would allow customers to better contact staff members and find the appropriate person to contact. They noted that the current phone tree is out of date or directs calls to the incorrect staff person. Participants also discussed the need to add direct phone lines to staff members who can answer questions about specific processes. One barrier with this solution is that staff report the City currently has an analog phone system rather than a voice over internet protocol (VOIP), making it difficult to add lines.

Additional Recommendations

Participants identified two additional recommendations. These were not top priorities compared to the others within Public Communication but could also have an impact on the land development process:

- Revise and update process descriptions to simplify and visually summarize the land development process.
- Develop a Spanish language communication strategy.

Simplify Rules and Regulations

Create a streamlined approval process for simple permits and "homeowner" projects.

Currently, when customers enter the land development process, the scope or size of their project does not affect the level of review or approvals needed to allow the project to go forward. This is a common issue for homeowners or customers who are new to the process that expect a simple approval for a project that they can complete on their own.

Participants recommended creating simple or streamlined approval processes for these straightforward projects. These projects are something that customers could walk in and get approval for right away without

a long review and approval process. This would meet the customer expectation for this size of project and free up capacity for City staff who spend time thoroughly reviewing these projects currently.

Identify changes to the municipal code and other regulations to reduce or eliminate process steps.

An important realization and takeaway from the PIE was that many of the issues customers deal with are required in the municipal code or other regulations adopted by City Council. City staff execute policy adopted by elected officials; there are certainly improvements that can be made by staff, but to make impactful change, especially for issues that customers frequently bring up, participants recognized that change would need to come from City Council.

Identifying code and regulation changes will need to be a long-term process involving staff analysis of policy changes that would impact the process and getting feedback from City Council before ultimately having Council formally adopt changes. It should be noted that many of the regulations staff implement come from the State of California. However, participants recognized that this is an opportunity to take a look at what staff should be reviewing as part of the land development process and eliminate the self-imposed steps that are no longer necessary. This is especially important to think about in terms of the customer experience compared to the value the City gets from reviewing or regulating something.

Complete necessary policy and/or code revisions to allow a greater focus of review on the scope of work for the project in question.

One of the specific process issues raised by participants involves scope creep by plan review staff. This is the practice of staff reviewing for code or design violations at the property outside of the scope of the project a customer submitted. This was also an issue raised by customers who felt that they would submit plans for a project, and City staff would use it as an opportunity to review the whole property and force them to perform corrective work or get additional approvals outside of the original project.

Participants recommended eliminating this practice, but many noted that it is a requirement within the City's code. Staff expressed that this type of review may be necessary depending on type property, project details, or location in the City. Some customers may also be interested in this additional research and want to make corrections or address violations, but they are unaware of the issues, and this comprehensive review is the only method for flagging those issues currently. This recommendation will need additional research from City staff and may require identifying other ways of addressing violations.

Additional Recommendations

Participants identified two additional recommendations. These were not top priorities compared to the others within the Simplify Rules and Regulations category but could also have an impact on the land development process. Both were about the appeals process, which currently creates delays and uncertainty in the process:

- Establish a single and/or limited appealable action per project to simplify the appeals process.
- Establish appeal criteria to provide an avenue for the appeal body to dismiss appeals on merit.

Design Review

Reduce the number of design review triggers.

The design review process was cited as a common source of delays and uncertainty in the overall land development process. Design review regulates small projects that may not present significant design concerns. One of the reasons for this is the frequency with which a project triggers the need for design review and approval. The more reasons or categories that require design review, the more likely a project will need that approval.

Participants recommended reducing the number of projects that require design review as a simple way of reducing the impact of design review on the overall land development process. By reducing the number of projects going through design review, more staff capacity is created, and design review boards will have

more time to focus on the projects that truly need design review. Rather than requiring a full review by a design board, staff would approve using a ministerial process. Staff brought up an example of a five-foot fence that, if it meets certain requirements, would be straightforward to approve but currently requires review by design boards. This creates times delays in the process and can introduce additional costs.

Combine or eliminate design review boards.

The City currently has three design review boards: Historic Landmarks Commission, Single Family Design Board, and Architectural Board of Review. As the design review process is currently enforced, every project requires review by one of the design review boards. This requires parallel public meetings and agenda processes as well as duplicative staff support and communication needs.

Combining or eliminating design review boards was recommended by participants. This change would allow staff to approve projects without review by a board, which may require code or regulation changes. Specifically, participants questioned the utility of the SFDB and felt it could possibly be eliminated. This would simplify the process for customers and would reduce time demands on staff, creating capacity for other work.

Create visual examples of acceptable "pre-approved" designs.

Design review can be a very subjective process for customers. Participants noted that feedback provided by design review board members may not be particularly helpful for small projects or homeowners. Participants also expressed that many customers would be willing to just meet pre-approved designs rather than coming up with their own.

Participants recommended creating visual examples of designs that could be approved quickly, similar to a catalog of approved designs or samples. A project could be approved immediately if its design used one of the preapproved examples. This would reduce the time and financial barriers for minor projects and would eliminate steps for customers.

Additional Recommendations

Participants identified two additional recommendations. These were not top priorities compared to the others within the Design Review category but could also have an impact on the land development process:

- Establish thresholds of entry into the design review process to ensure that core land use and building permit issues have been identified.
- Amend code to make concept review optional for PC, SHO, and design review boards.

Process Clarity

Develop project tiers that trigger different routing and levels of review.

The land development process currently treats every type of project with a similar level of scrutiny, no matter the size or details of a project. This creates confusion and frustration for customers who expect a more streamlined review for smaller or simpler projects. Participants recommended rethinking the intake process and establishing different tracks and levels of review for projects depending on their details. The example shared was that small projects get a ministerial or administrative approval from staff, a medium project might also require design review, and a large project would require design review and land use review. Rethinking the intake and routing process would allow staff to more easily communicate requirements to customers.

Create a process, similar to PRT, where staff from each land review discipline provide conceptual but substantive guidance early in the design review process.

Participants discussed the need to rethink or redesign the pre-application process. There was some debate about whether an additional process should be created to complement the PRT process or if the PRT process should be changed. There was a consensus that the current options for customers to get questions answered and conceptual feedback is not working well. The current PRT process can be overkill for small projects, which discourages its usage. Rethinking the process should allow for substantive design or zoning feedback to be provided but in a timelier way. One idea was to establish regular hours where applicants could schedule meeting time with a cross-departmental team and get feedback customized to the level of detail the customer brought, brainstorming or providing comments on draft plans before formal submission.

Additional Recommendations

Participants identified two additional recommendations. These were not top priorities compared to the others within the Process Clarity category but could also have an impact on the land development process:

- Standardize and streamline check-in practices at all counters and processes across all plan review disciplines and divisions.
- Make concept review in Design Review, PC, and SHO optional. Clarify what is required and what is optional to potentially add value.

PIE Briefing Book Overview

The following is the section of the briefing materials about the Process Improvement Exercise. Other sections summarizing the land development process and the attachments to the materials are not included because the same information is available in other sections of this report.

Process Improvement Exercise Overview

The PIE is an employee work session designed to focus on a specific aspect of business processes that need attention and improvement through re-engineering. The PIE will be a three half-day facilitated session with employees who carry out the work of day-to-day operations. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the facilitated session will be virtual and take place from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM PDT each day, with an additional report out period from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM on the third day of the session.

The facilitated session works as follows: Management sets improvement goals for the operation and assigns teams of staff to develop recommendations for achieving the established goals. The staff teams develop recommendations during the PIE and then present the recommendations to management. Management either approves or rejects each of the recommendations, and an action plan for implementing the approved recommendations is then developed.

PIE Design and Organization

The PIE will involve staff members from the following departments: Community Development, Public Works, Fire, Creeks Division of Parks and Recreation, and the Environmental Services Division of Finance.

The PIE is an intensive, three half-day session with City staff that is structured and designed to accomplish the following:

- Focus on specific aspects of the Land Development process that require attention and improvement
- Address improvement goals identified by the City and project team
- Provide staff involved in the Land Development process the opportunity to develop recommendations to address the goals of the City and project team
- Provide a forum for meaningful multi-department discussions and information-sharing in the process of identifying process improvements

- Allow staff to present improvement recommendations to the City and project team and answer questions from City leadership
- Have the City leadership approve or reject staff recommendations

The following project team from The Novak Consulting Group will facilitate and direct City of Santa Barbara staff in all PIE activities:

- Julia Novak, Executive Vice President
- Jonathan Ingram, Manager
- Ben Kittelson, Consultant

The following City staff from the City of Santa Barbara will facilitate small group exercises.

- Julie Ruggieri, Risk Management
- Angela Olsund, Facilities Management
- Norma Cervantes, Library Services

PIE Participants

There is a total of 38 staff who while participate in the PIE. Each participant will be assigned to one of three teams for all small group discussions. The list of PIE participants and there assigned PIE team is detailed below:

- Team One
 - Austin, James
 - Cloonan, Michael
 - Dippold, Stephen
 - Grant, Jessica
 - Kokinda, Ellen
 - Martinez, James
 - Niro, Matthew
 - Ozyilmaz, Matthew
 - Rosales, Daniela
 - Showers, Jasmine
 - Swenumson, Eric
 - Unzueta, Irma
 - Vaughn, Krystal
- Team 2
 - Aguilar, Marck
 - Becker, Jeffrey
 - Bedard, Michelle
 - Bolton, Timmy
 - De Busk, Allison
 - Dunn, Timothy
 - Heinrich, Margaret
 - Nielsen, Brenda
 - Rivera Gomez, Jose
 - Rumbley, James
 - Salinas, Marisela
 - Swanson, Stephanie
- Team 3
 - Arciniega, Megan
 - Banuelos, Jesus
 - Beltz, Brenda
 - Boughman, Anthony

- Diguilio, Ryan
- Escobar, Dale
- Foreman, Christy
- Hoffenberg, Dana
- Kato, Daniel
- Lombardi, Terrance
- Mamulski, Kaitlin
- Plummer, Pilar
- Routhier, Stephanie

Land Development Management Team

The senior managers of each department involved in the Land Development process served in an advisory capacity throughout the Land Development Process Improvement project. The City has worked closely with the project team in designing the PIE and in identifying the goals that will guide participants and teams in key areas for re-engineering. Members of the management team include the following:

- Paul Casey, City Administrator
- George Buell, Director of Community Development
- Andrew Stuffer, Chief Building Official
- Renee Brook, City Planner
- Rebecca Bjork, Director of Public Works
- Brian D'Amour, City Engineer
- Adam Hendel, Principal Engineer
- Rob Dayton, Transportation Planning and Parking Manager
- Joe Poire, Fire Marshal
- Jim Austin, Fire Inspector III
- Jill Zachary, Director of Parks and Recreation
- Cameron Benson, Creeks Manager
- Rene Eyerly, Environmental Services Manager

The management team will attend the start of the PIE to present the goals to the participants and to set the stage for the importance of the retreat and the work ahead. The team also will stress the need for process innovation and change and the role of PIE participants in achieving this goal.

After laying the groundwork for the session, the management team will depart so the PIE participants can communicate and work freely without management in the room.

PIE Goals Explanation

The following explanations are supplied for each of the two goals developed for the process improvement exercise. The explanations give information about issues that each of the three teams should address during the PIE and provide participants with questions that should be considered in developing specific process improvements for each goal.

Before the PIE, all team members should review the goal explanations thoroughly and each of the process maps. As you review the explanations and process maps, think about issues and concerns that should be addressed during the exercise and your specific ideas for improvement. If you have ideas or suggestions for improvement that relate to goals other than the one you are assigned, please make a note and email it to Ben Kittelson at bkittelson@thenovakconsultinggroup.com. He will make sure that it is forwarded to the appropriate group for consideration.

Goal 1: Define what an applicant/customer has right to expect from the land development process. Establish reasonable, clear, and measurable customer service expectations for both discretionary

review and ministerial permit review. Establish mechanisms to address issues when those expectations are not met.

There was widespread concern from customers and stakeholders that the City has a development review philosophy of "Finding a way to say 'no' rather than collaborating to get to 'yes.'" This perception extended to City staff, where folks expressed frustration with a lack of continuity in philosophy across departments and workgroups. Ensuring everyone is on the same page and that staff, no matter the department or division, are working toward the same goal will be a key outcome of this exercise. In addition, customers expressed frustration with the number of reviews necessary to get approval for different aspects of their projects. There was also a sense that City staff add comments about unchanged portions of plans on subsequent reviews, as well as inconsistent feedback on how codes are interpreted. City staff expressed similar concerns that each review was treated as an opportunity to address the site or property as a whole rather than just the scope of the project. Clear expectations for internal staff and communications to customers will be a key outcome of this process.

Issues/Questions to consider:

- The role of City staff and workgroups in assisting customers with advancing a project
- If the land development process, by its nature, involves conflict, what's the role of City staff in reducing, resolving, or navigating that conflict?
 - Different stakeholders have different perspectives on the land development process. How are the perspectives of customers, Santa Barbara residents, Santa Barbara business owners, and visitors different?
 - Does the current process favor the perspective of one of the stakeholders? Should it?
- What should be the outcomes of the land development process? How does the process contribute to the City's policy goals?
- How should City staff interact with and treat one another?
- Once a vision is identified, how can the Land Development Team ensure all staff are working toward it?
- Are the current review timelines reasonable for different reviewers and workgroups?
 - Do they take into account the volume of applications?
 - Do they take into account the number of staff available to complete reviews?
 - If they are not reasonable, what are reasonable timelines for each department and reviewer?
 - How do the review times impact other workgroups and reviewers?
- Customers expressed frustration with review times and the number of reviews needed to get approval.
 - What do customers expect from reviewers in terms of review quality, communication, and follow-up?
 - What do staff expect from the customer submittals? Are those reasonable expectations?
 - How many cycles of review are reasonable?
- What process or communication changes can be made to meet customer expectations?
- What commitments can Land Development Team members reasonably make regarding review quality, review timeliness, communication, and follow-up with applicants?
 - How quickly should initial comments, completeness determinations, and subsequent reviews occur?
 - How should the City change its process to meet new State requirements and subsequent customer expectations?
 - What proactive communication regarding the review process or review issues should the City initiate with customers?
- What does it look like for Land Development Team members to be held accountable for meeting established deadlines?

- What process should be in place to proactively communicate with customers and supervisors when review deadlines are not met?
- What reasonable performance expectations should be established for review timeliness and quality? What mechanism can be established to track whether these expectations are met?
- How will the City's conversion to electronic plan review impact the ability of City staff to meet customers' reasonable expectations for reviews?

Goal 2: Establish clear and consistent entry points for applicants accessing the Land Development process and their path to receive staff and design review.

Both customers and staff expressed frustration with the lack of clarity around navigating the Land Development Process. Customers broadly see the process as overly complex, and only those with years of experience feel comfortable navigating the process. Similarly, City staff cannot communicate the process clearly because of the complexity. As a result, some reviewers or disciplines can be left out of the review process and come in for a "late hit" once they have been included. Creating a clear entry point for different types of applications and a path that can be easily communicated to customers will be a key outcome of this process.

Issues/Questions to consider:

- Currently, customers can choose their own entry point into the Land Development process. This makes it difficult to communicate the process and the options to customers who are not veterans of the process.
- How can the process be adjusted to make it clear to customers that have never interacted with the Land Development process?
- What should be communicated to customers about the path from submittal to approval?
- How should the public counters at the Garden Street building be used to establish clear entry points?
 - Should types of projects be accepted on different days of the week?
 - How should these counters be staffed to best meet customer expectations?
- How should PRT and DART review be communicated to customers? How can these processes be changed to clearly communicate entry points for new projects?
- Currently, design review and PRT or DART review can be done concurrently. Is that the best use of limited staff hours?
- How should staff work together to resolve issues when staff members from different disciplines have conflicting comments?
- How should applications be screened when they are accepted?
 - Is it clear what needs to be included for all reviewers to provide appropriate comments?
 - If something is missing when an application is submitted, what should be done?
- How are different disciplines, workgroups, and departments included in the Land Development process now?
 - Do all staff know when different reviewers should be included on a project?
 - Are there review types or disciplines that are consistently left out of the process?
- How are staff trained to know where applications should be routed?
- How do reviewers get added to a project, and how does that work with Accela?
- How can counter staff be given the knowledge or training to know the appropriate reviews and workgroups to include?
 - What triggers the need for review by different disciplines?
 - Can a checklist be created?
 - How does the routing change with different types of projects or locations within the City?
- What level of detail is needed for different disciplines to complete their review?

What the PIE Can Mean to You

The process improvement exercise is your opportunity to influence, improve, and enhance how the Land Development Process works daily. It will allow you to reassess and recommend strategies and actions related to work processes, procedures, and operations. Participants' different perspectives provide important insights for consideration and understanding during the exercise. Active participation from all will help ensure a smooth implementation.

After the exercise, you will be making recommendations to the City Administrator, Community Development Director, and other leaders involved in the land development process who will make decisions about each one after the PIE recommendations are presented. Your engagement will directly influence the future of how your work is assigned, managed, and completed.

This is a unique opportunity. The project team looks forward to facilitating this event in the hope that it makes a real difference for the Land Development Process and those with whom you interact.

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Attachment C: Current Process Maps

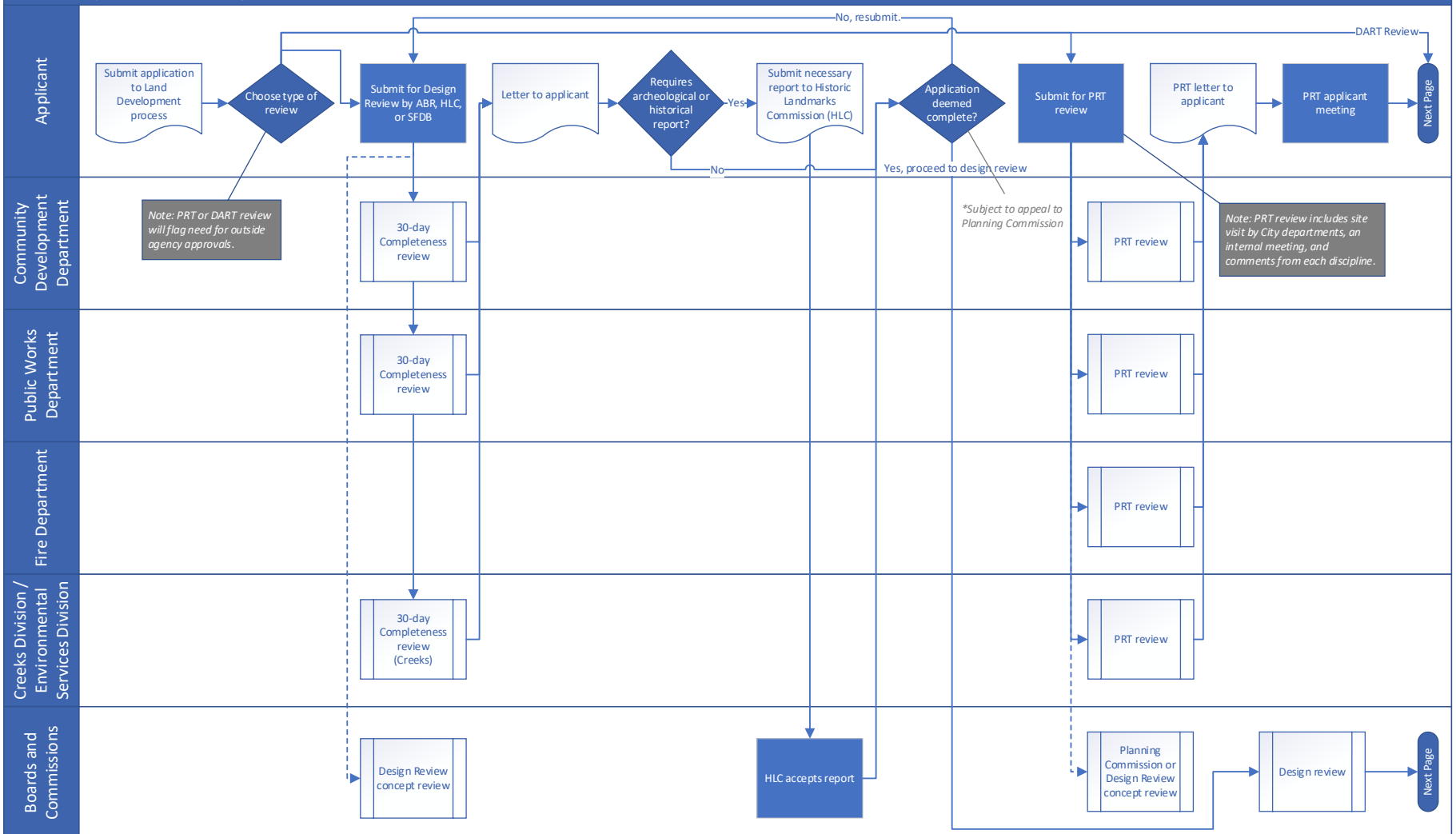
Overall Process Maps of Discretionary Review and Ministerial Permit review

The following figures show the discretionary review phase and ministerial permit review phase at a high level from application submission to final design approval and from permit submittal to certificate of occupancy. These maps have been confirmed with leadership and frontline staff in the Planning and Building & Safety Divisions of Community Development, the Public Works Department, and the Fire Department.

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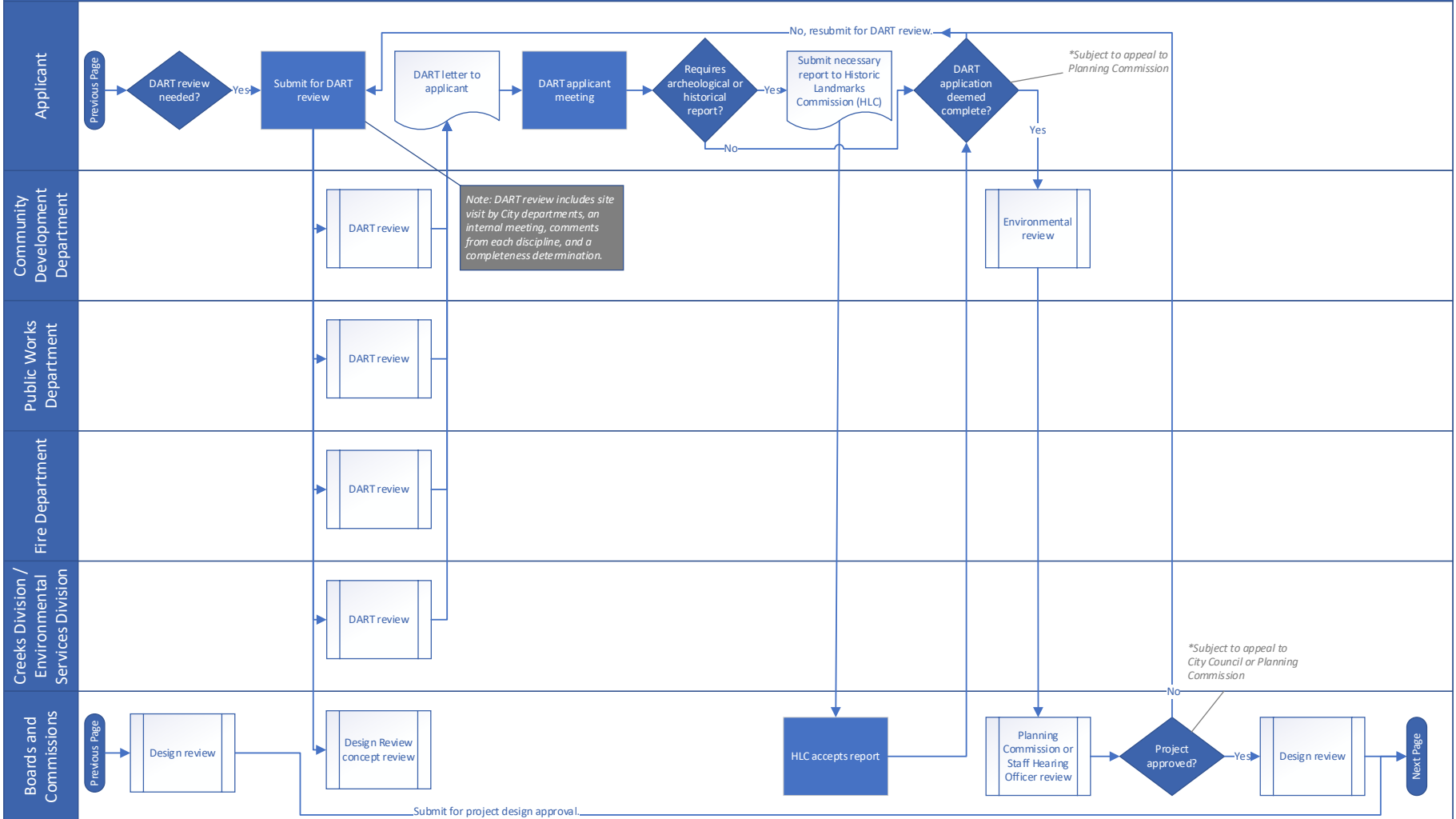
Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Discretionary Review Phase – Page 1



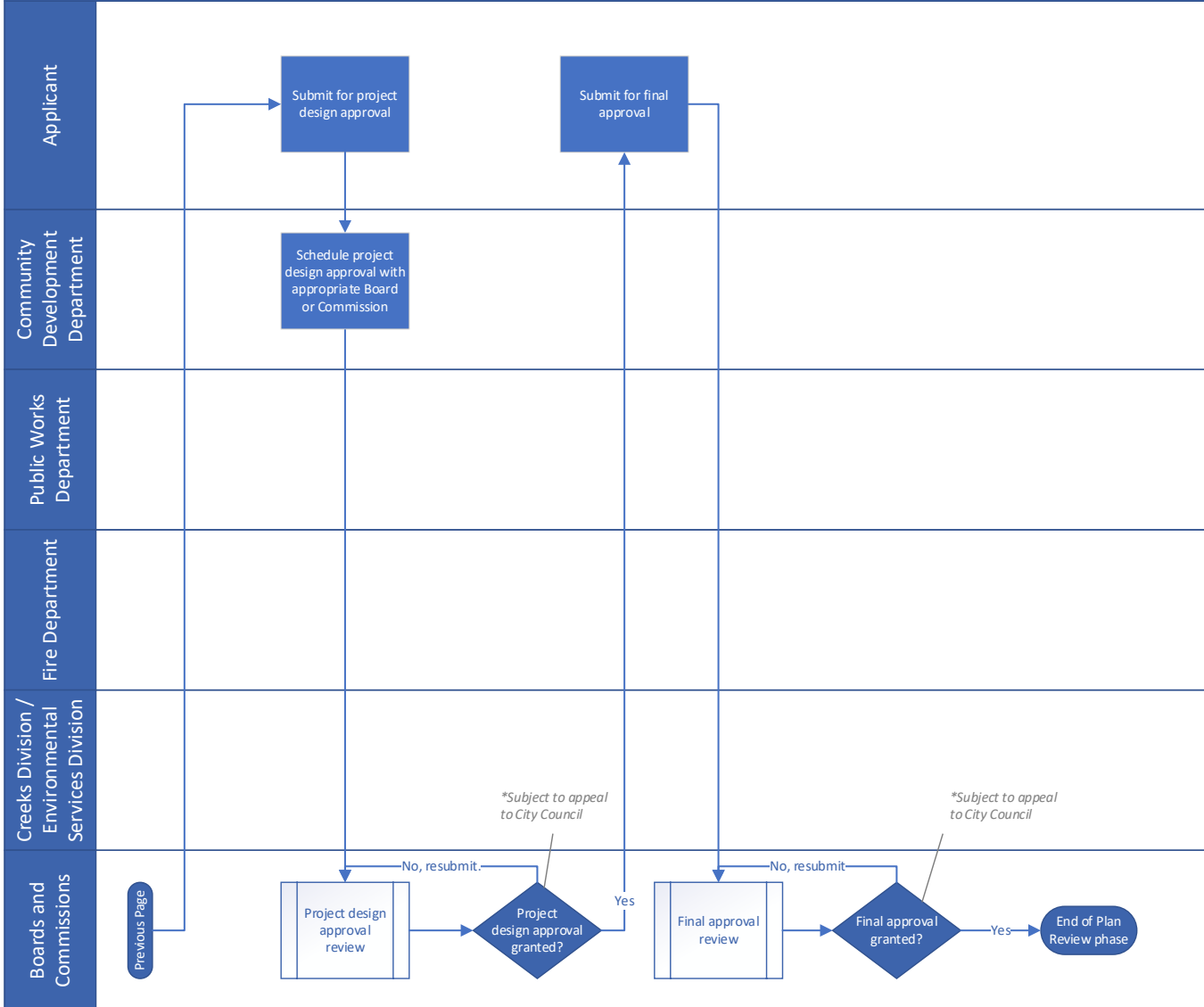
Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Discretionary Review Phase – Page 2



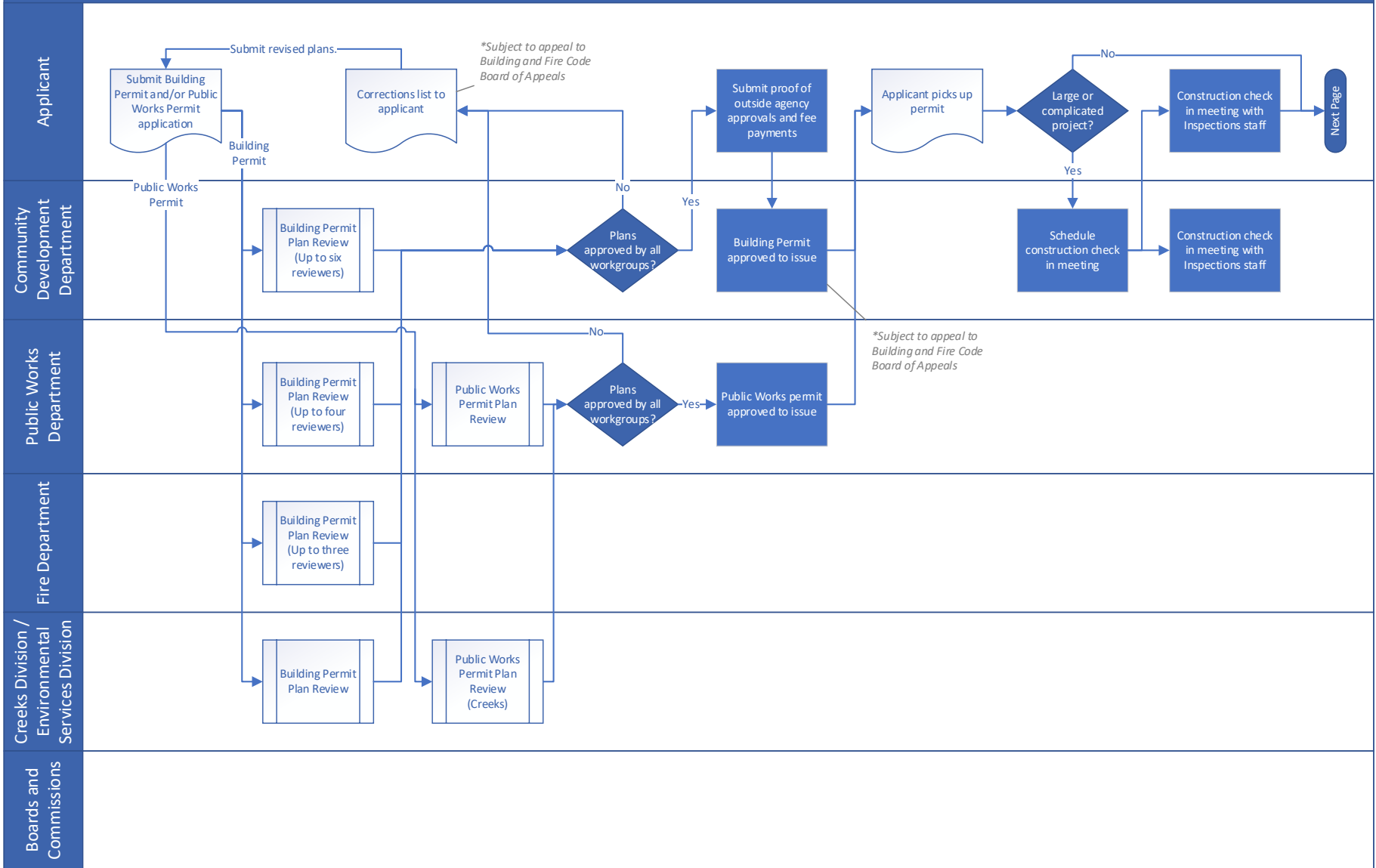
Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Discretionary Review Phase – Page 3



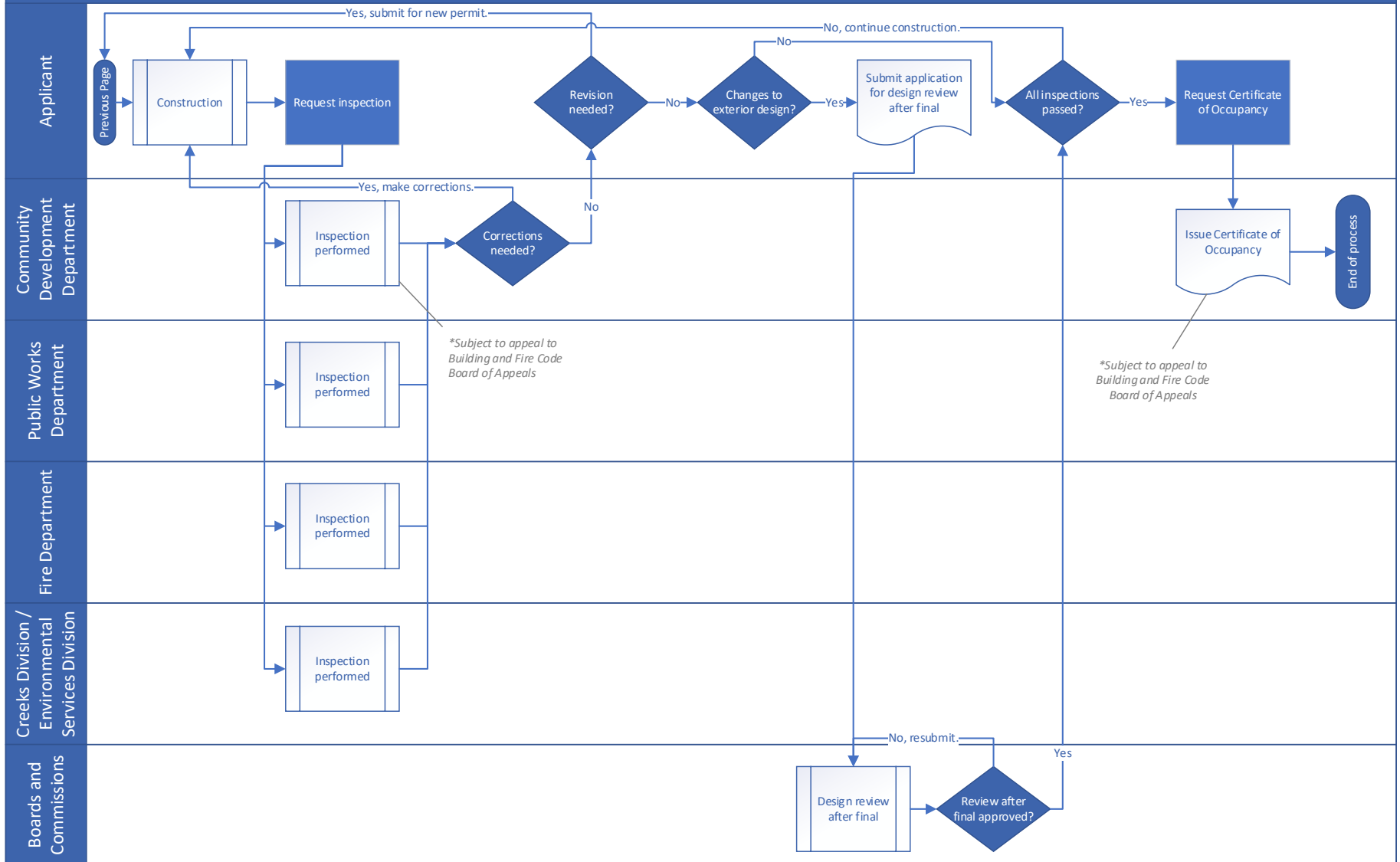
Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Ministerial Permit Review Phase – Page 1



Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Ministerial Permit Review Phase – Page 2



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Process Mapping Exercise

The project team conducted a process mapping exercise to document the path of five projects through the land development process. Community Development staff identified five projects representing various types of development and different levels of review. These projects tended to be complicated or had an issue during review or inspection. Data was provided from the City of Santa Barbara plan review software, Accela, which documents the major steps of the process, including dates for submittal and approval. The following projects were mapped and the processes confirmed with City staff:

- **101 State Street** – Hotel development that included DART review, a coastal development permit, and HLC design review.
- **1631 Shoreline** – Single-unit residential development that included DART review, a coastal development permit, and SFDB design review. This project also required a design review after final and comments from the Planning Commission to avoid appeal to City Council.
- **25 W Cota & 530 Chapala Street** – Adaptive re-use project for large commercial use; was two sites developed as a single project. Project involved HLC design review and PRT review.
- **400 S Hitchcock** – Commercial project for a car dealership. Included design review by ABR, as well as community benefit approval from City Council. There were also environmental issues at the site that needed remediation.
- **634 Anacapa** – Multi-unit residential development that required HLC design review, PRT review, and review by the Staff Hearing Officer.

Staff members involved with each project were engaged to provide comments and feedback on the process maps. Nine staff members from the planning, building, and inspections workgroups added context for the projects and explained any exceptions to the normal process. The detailed process maps are included in this Attachment.

One of the key themes of the process mapping exercise was how applicants could choose their starting point for the land development process. Some chose to do design review and PRT or DART review simultaneously; others engaged staff outside of the formal process to get feedback before submitting an application. In general, this leads to applicants familiar with the City's process navigating it more smoothly and in less time than applicants who may be unfamiliar or new to the land development process. Two of the applicants adjusted their project to avoid additional review by the Planning Commission. The 25 W Cota & 530 Chapala Street project kept the sites separate to avoid Planning Commission review even though it was developed as a single project. The 400 S Hitchcock project was split into two phases separating the portion of the project requiring Planning Commission review into a second phase that has not been pursued.

Multiple rounds of review are a common feature of the land development process. Whether it was PRT review, DART review, or building permit review, applicants were often asked to make corrections and resubmit their plans. This was most common with design review, which required four to eight submittals before final design approval. These resubmittals were driven by the boards and commissions providing comments on design review, but additional submittals resulted from Planning Commission review or some staff level reviews. The five projects also required four to seven resubmittals for building permit review. The Fire Department and the workgroups within the Public Works Department consistently approved plans within one or two rounds of review. Often the Creeks Division, Zoning workgroup, or Building and Safety were the final approval needed for an applicant to receive the building permit.

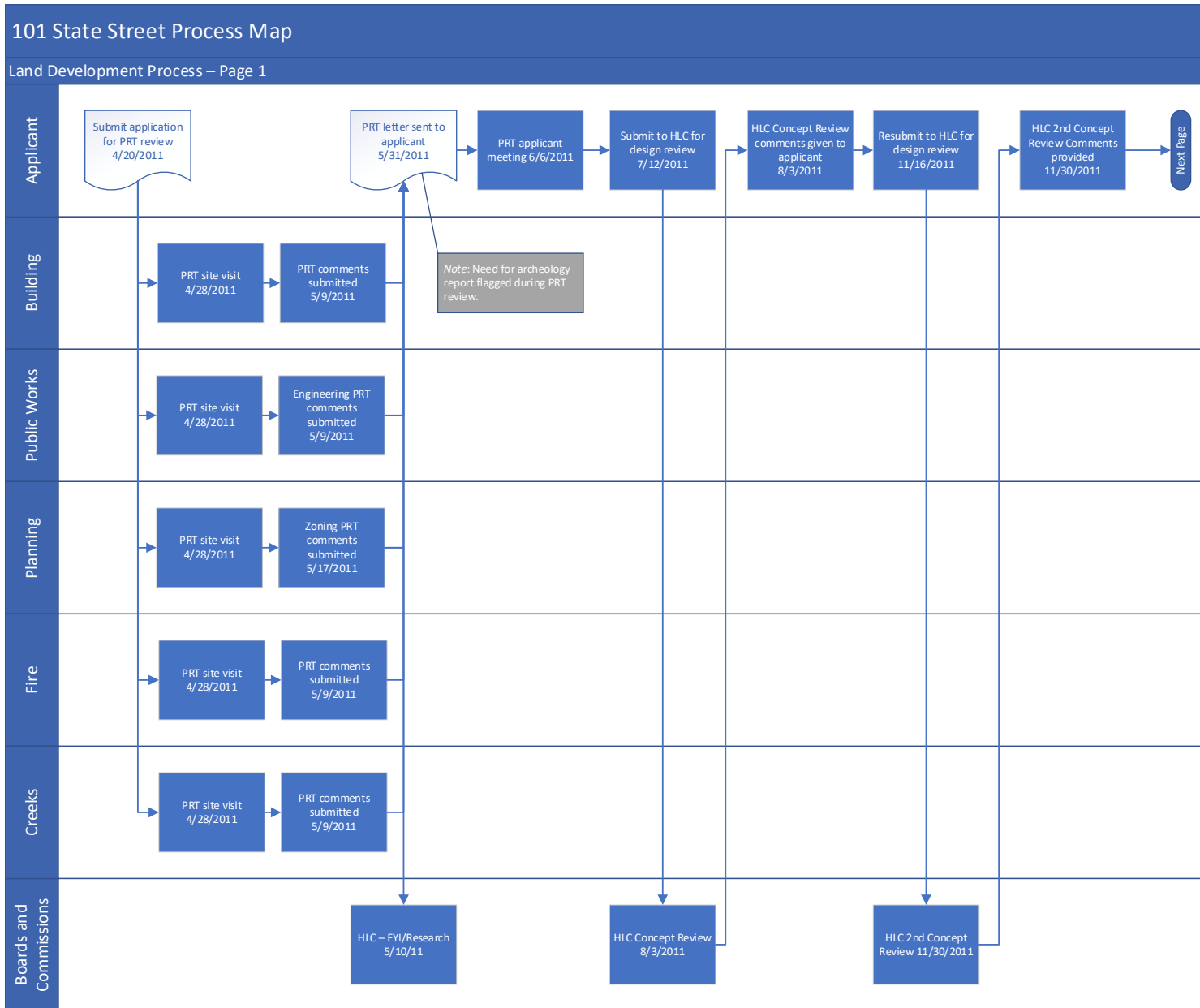
Four of the five projects required design review after final approval, some during the building permit approval process and others during construction. This was consistent with the customer feedback provided. Staff reported that the intention of these reviews after final is to ensure the plan records on file with the City match the actual finished product of the project in the community.

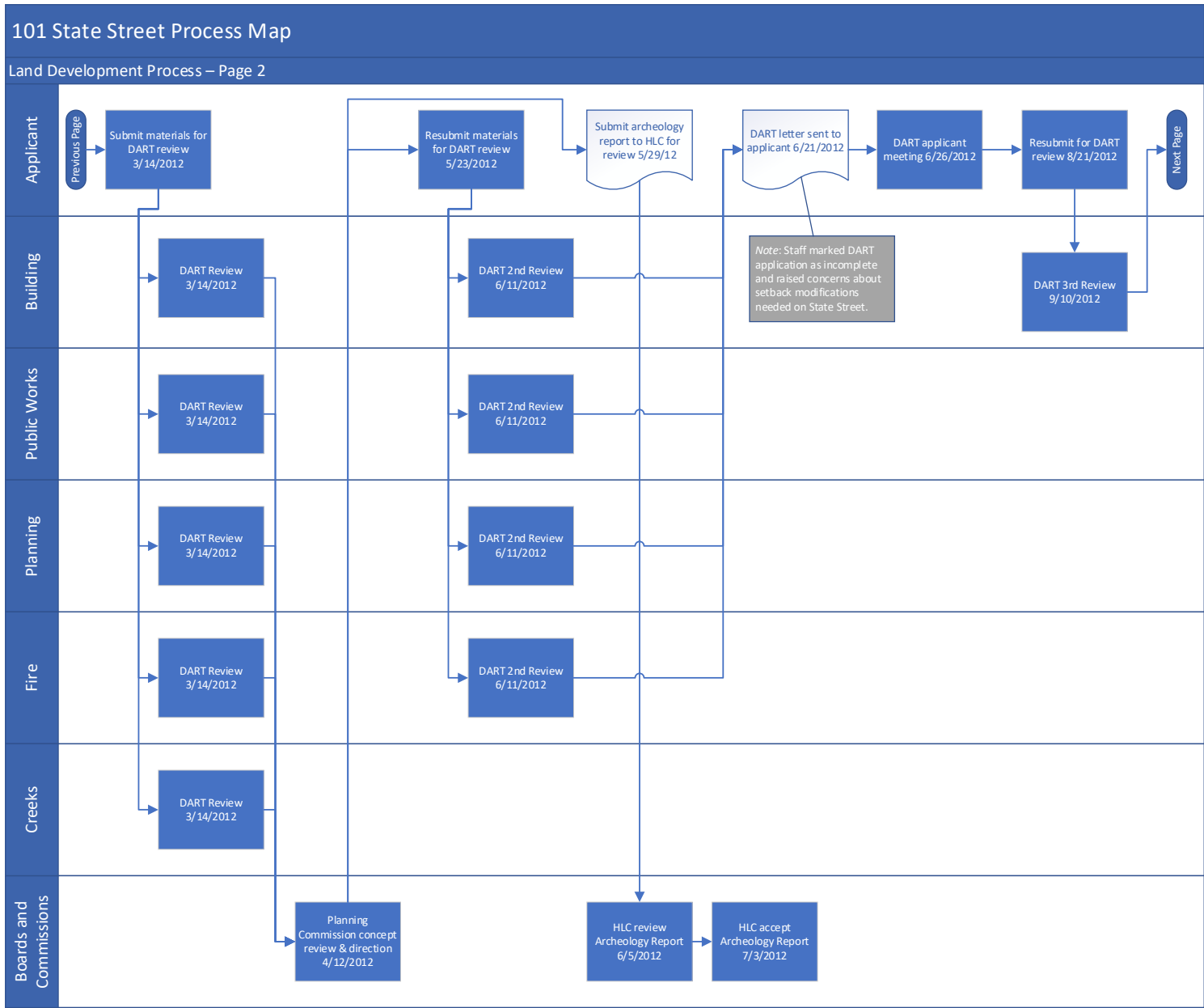
The time to complete the land development process was extensive. In fairness, this can be driven by the applicant. The time it takes to update plans or submit for a building permit can delay the overall timeline without the involvement of City staff. The time from application to final design approval ranged from 206 days to 1,435 days with a median of 539 days. The time from building permit application to issuance ranged from 118 to 867 days with a median of 230 days. This, again, reflected the reported customer experience.

Each project created its own path through the land development process. Staff reported that the processes documented were not uncommon or exceptions to normal operations. The context provided and shown in the attached process maps explains some of the individual features and steps of each process, but the maps also show that the process is driven by the individual applicant and the level of scrutiny given to the projects by City staff. This reflects the sentiments of customer focus group participants that there is a lack of process clarity and consistency. The process maps informed the recommendations and observations included in this report.

101 State Street Process Map

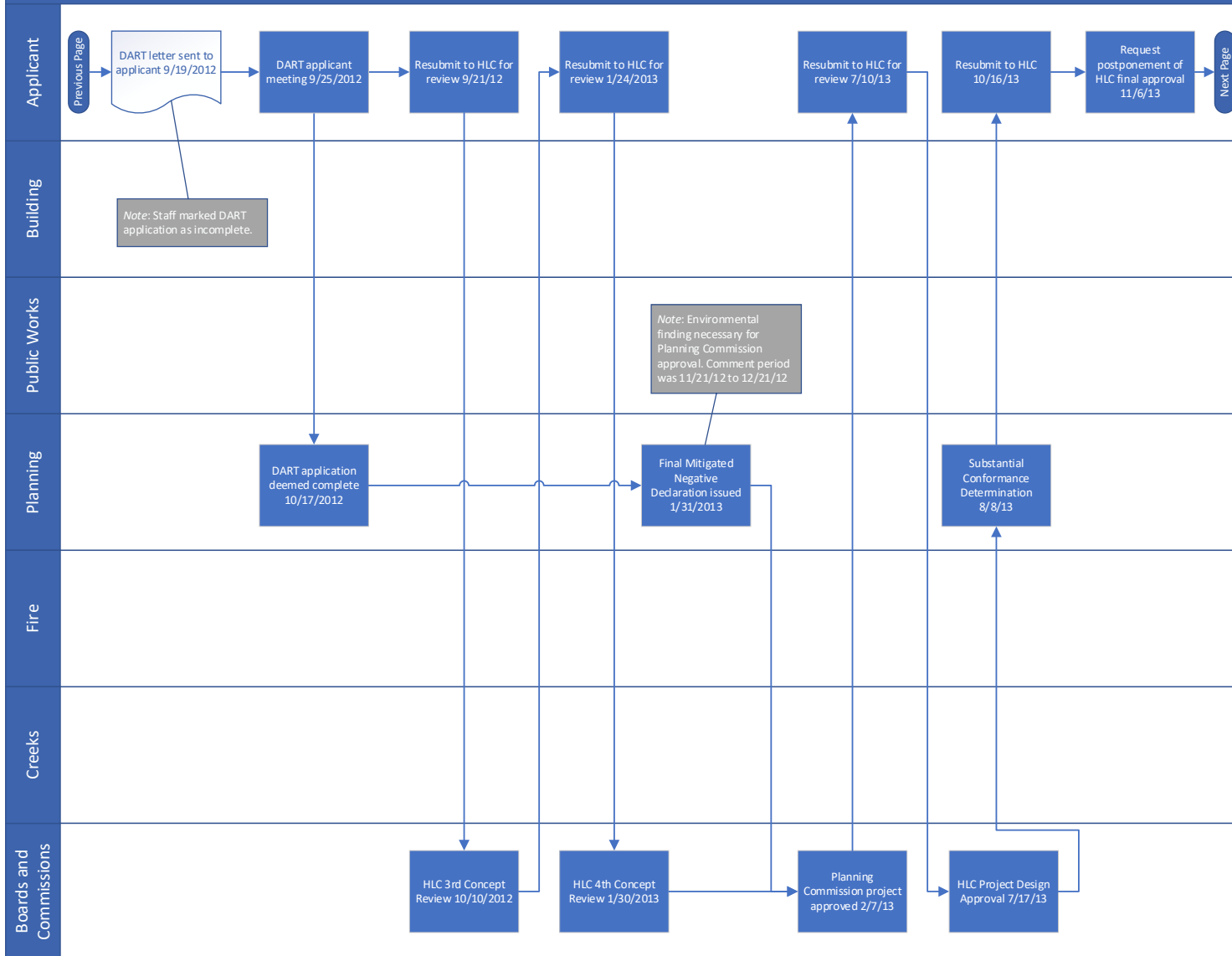
The following figure shows the path of the 101 State Street project. This project was a hotel development that included DART review, a coastal development permit, and HLC design review.

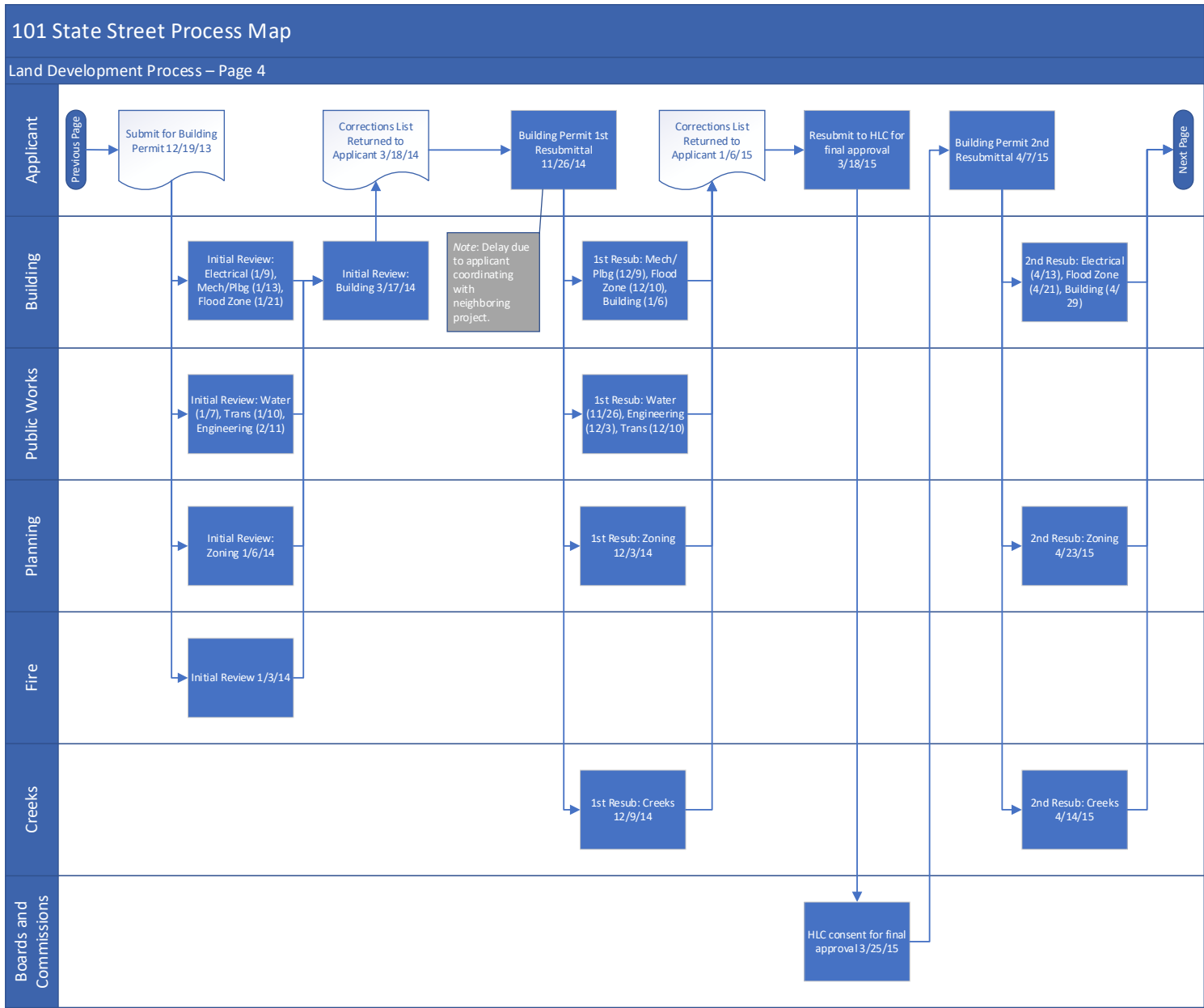


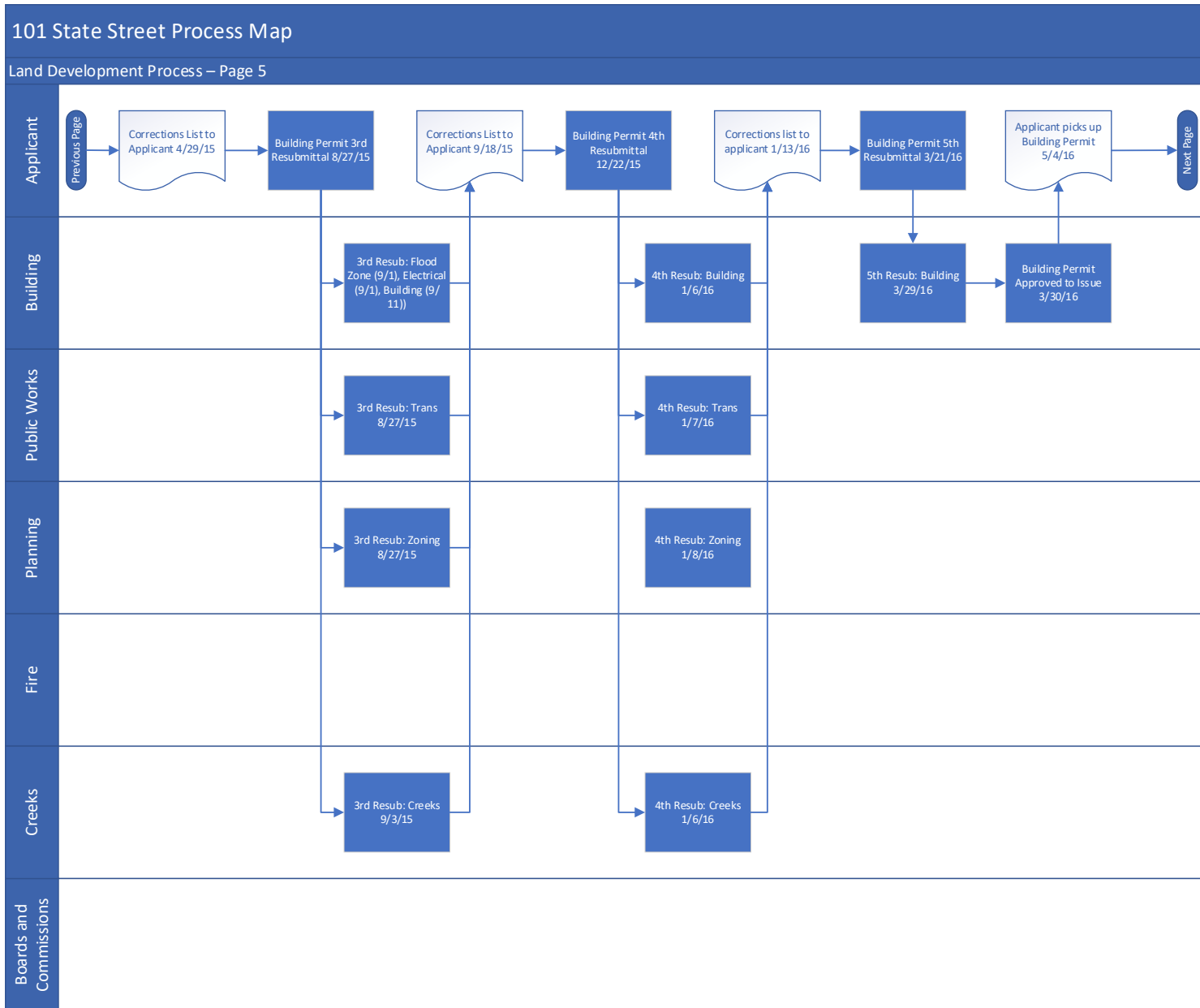


101 State Street Process Map

Land Development Process – Page 3

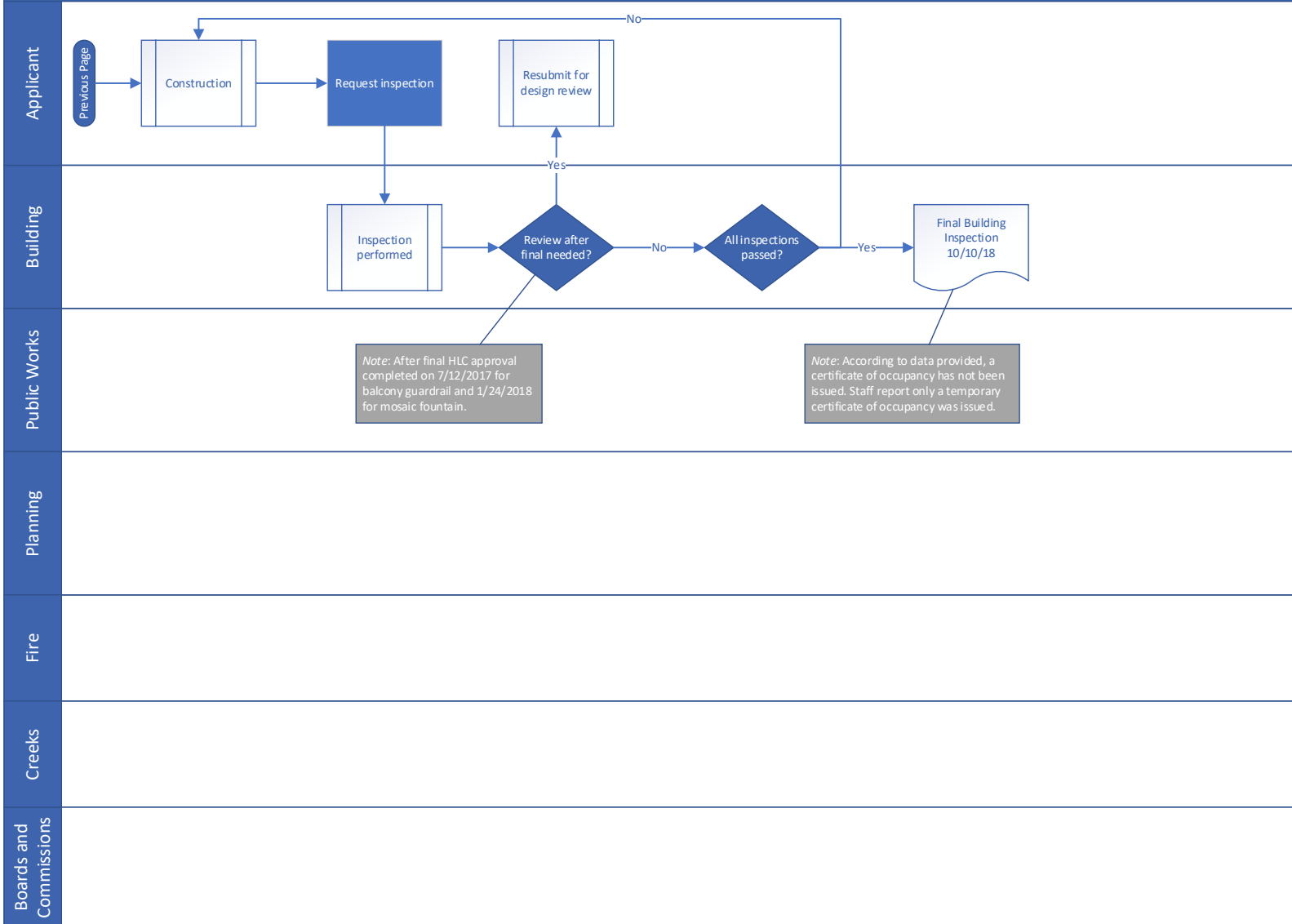






101 State Street Process Map

Land Development Process – Page 6



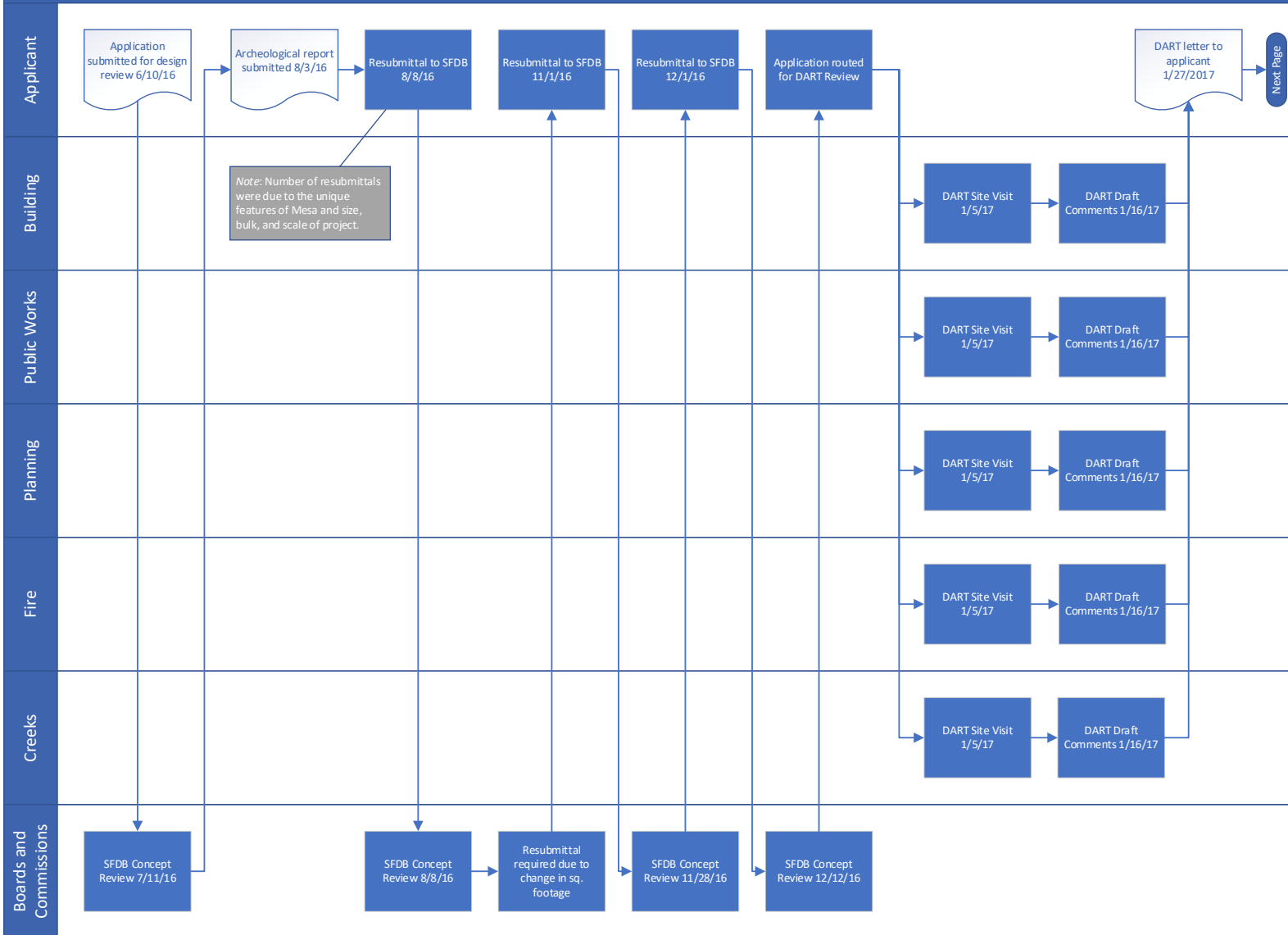
1631 Shoreline Process Map

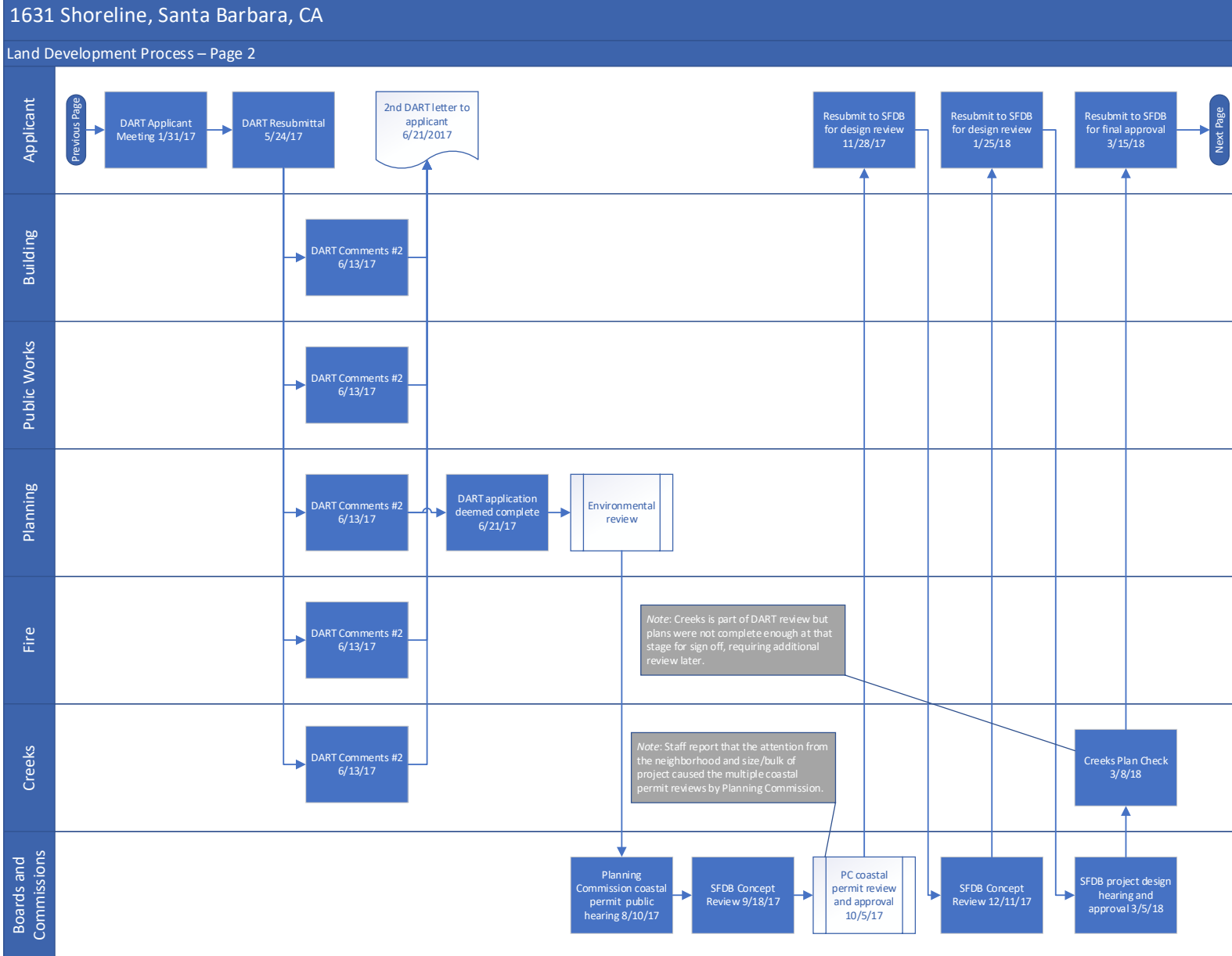
The following figure shows the approval process for the 1631 Shoreline project. This project was a single-unit, residential development that included DART review, a coastal development permit, and SFDB design review. This project also required a design review after final and comments from the Planning Commission to avoid appeal to City Council.

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1631 Shoreline, Santa Barbara, CA

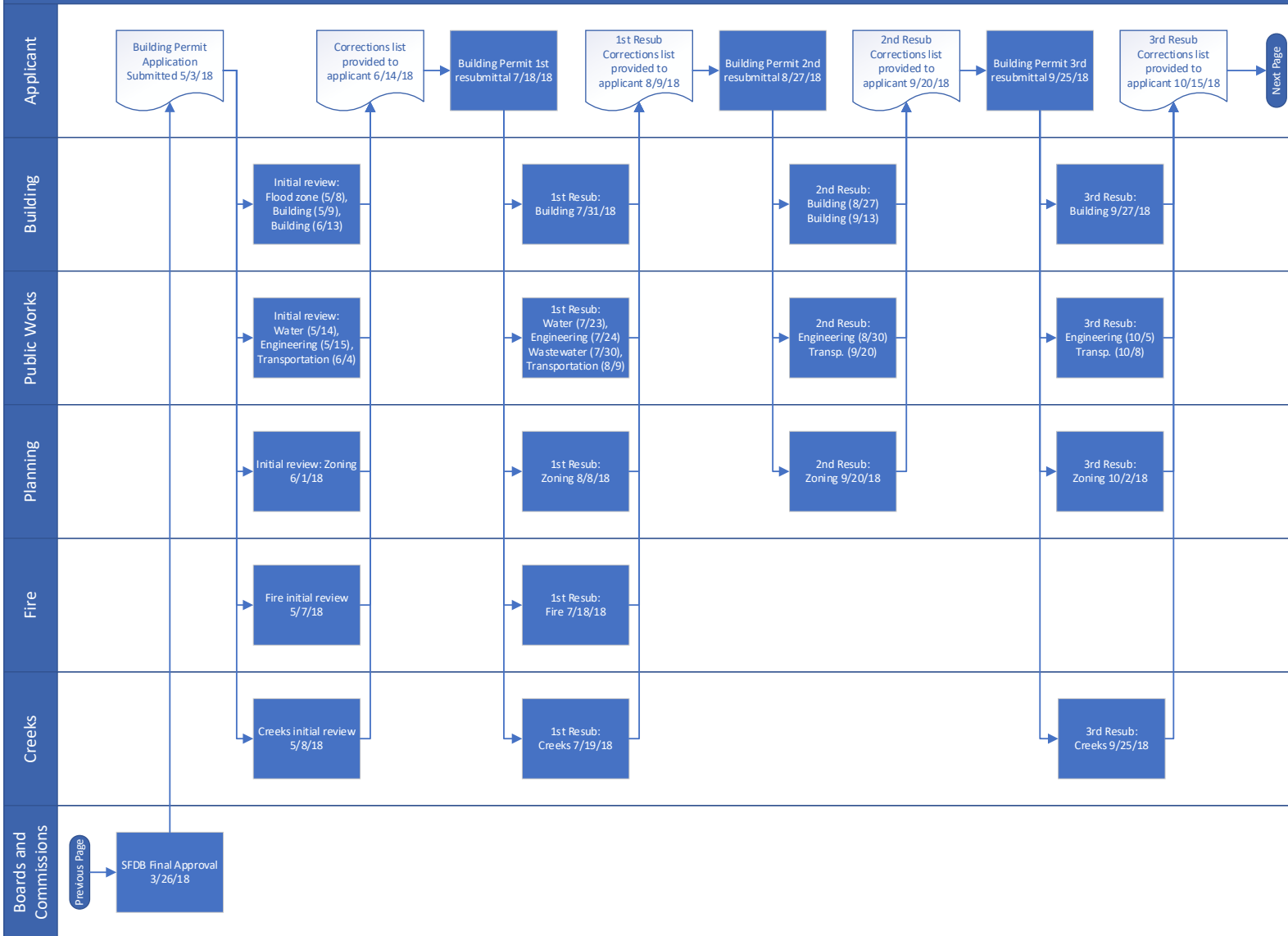
Land Development Process – Page 1





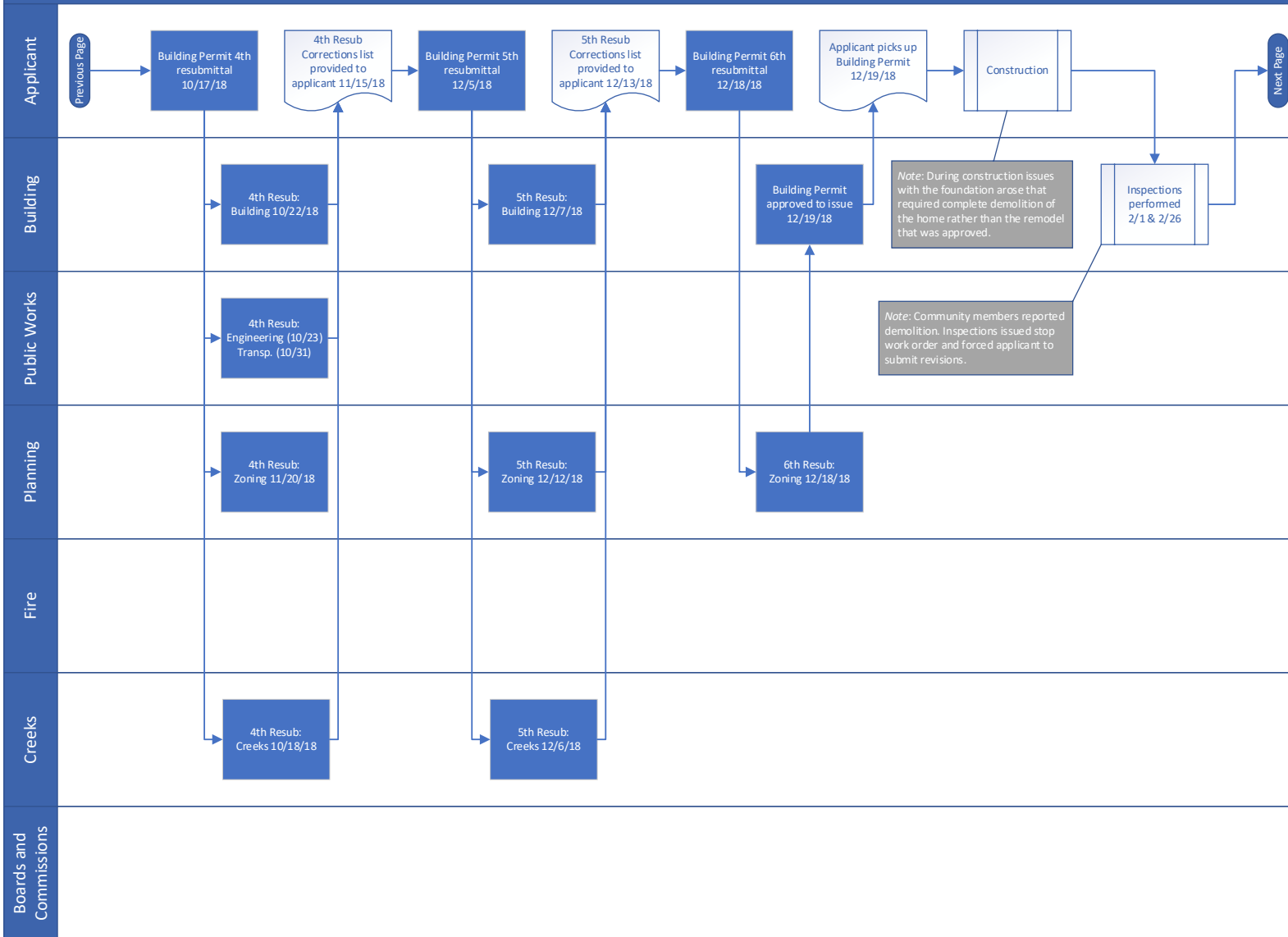
1631 Shoreline, Santa Barbara, CA

Land Development Process – Page 3



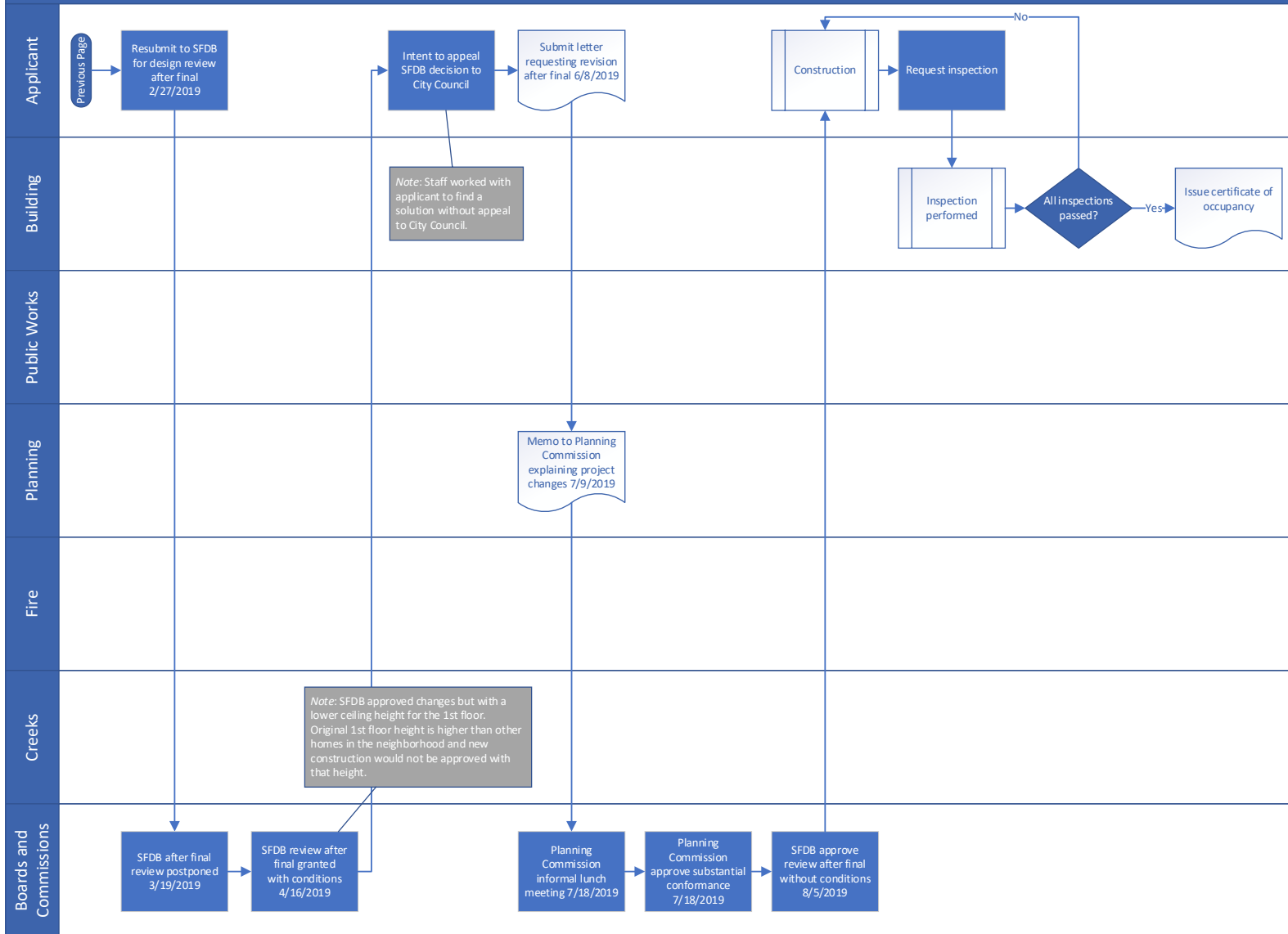
1631 Shoreline, Santa Barbara, CA

Land Development Process – Page 4



1631 Shoreline, Santa Barbara, CA

Land Development Process – Page 5

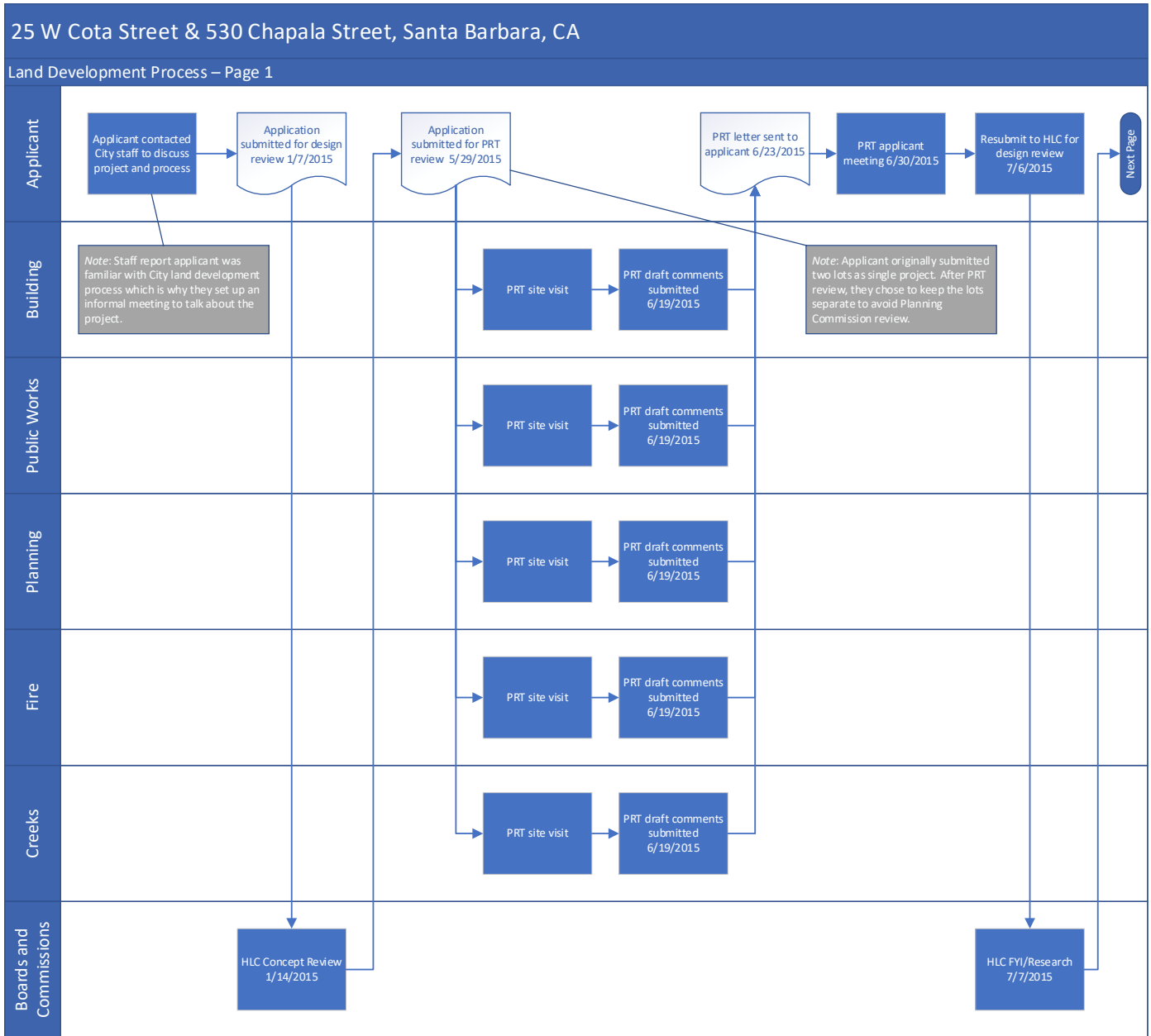


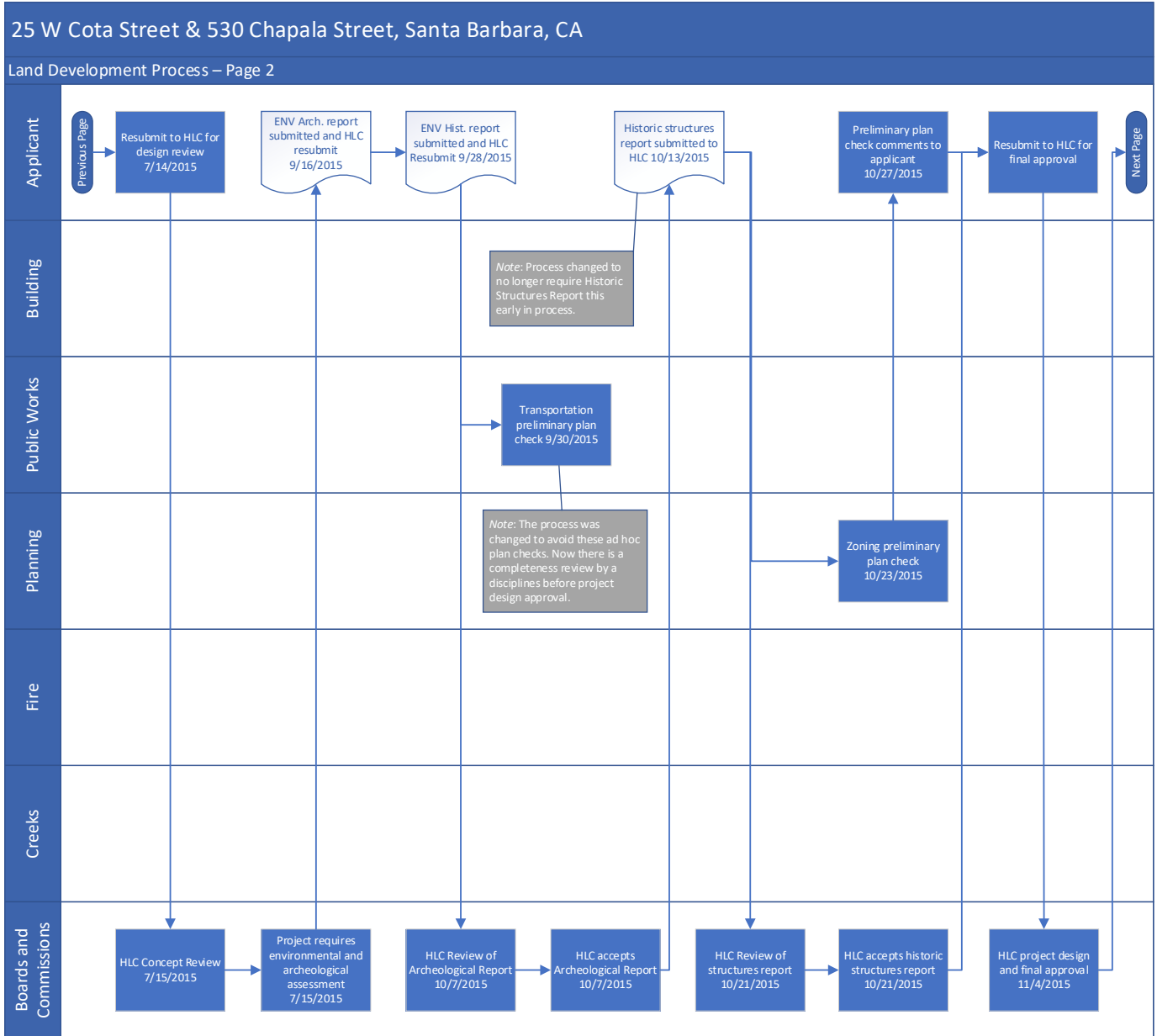
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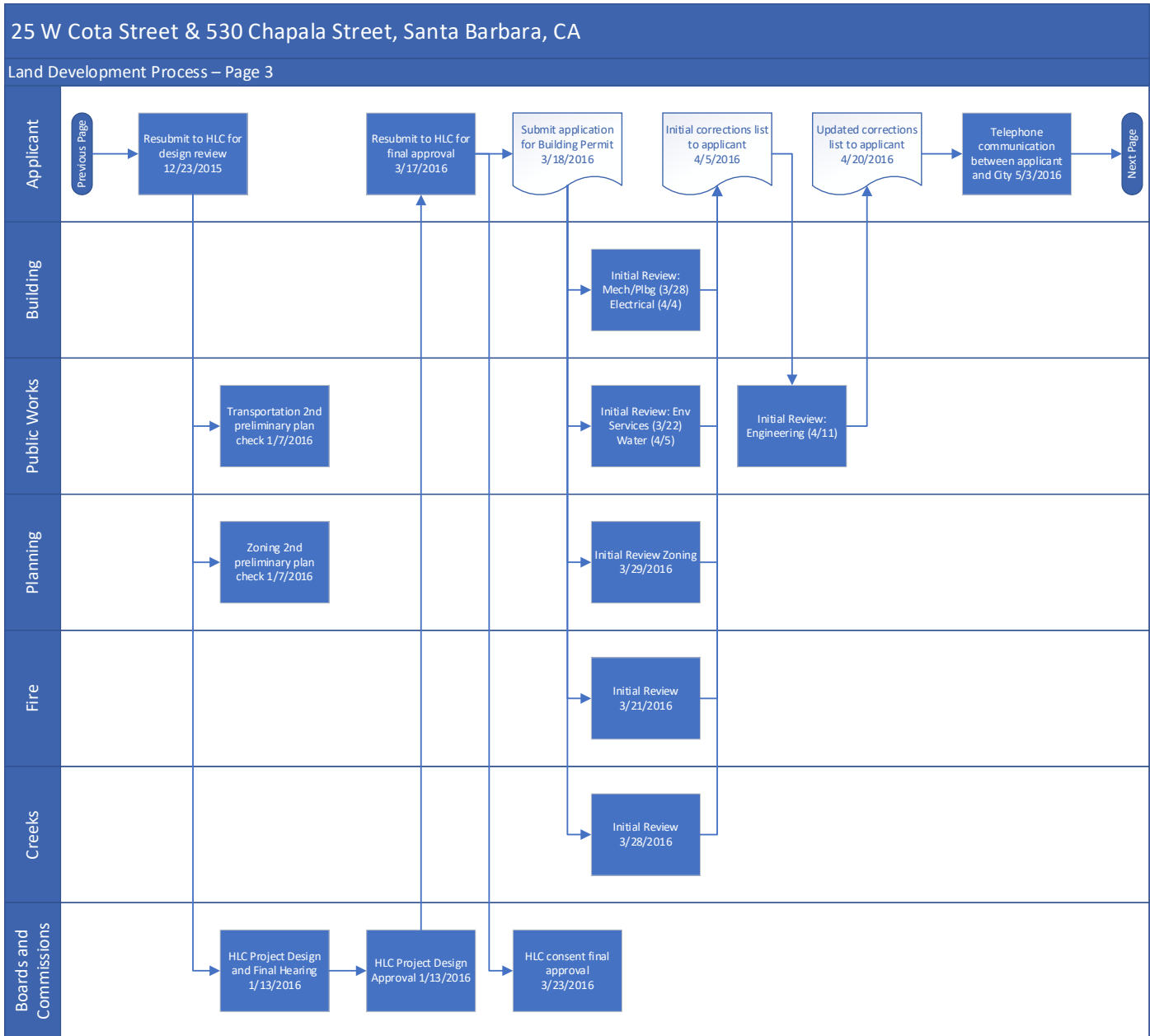
25 W Cota & 530 Chapala Street Process Map

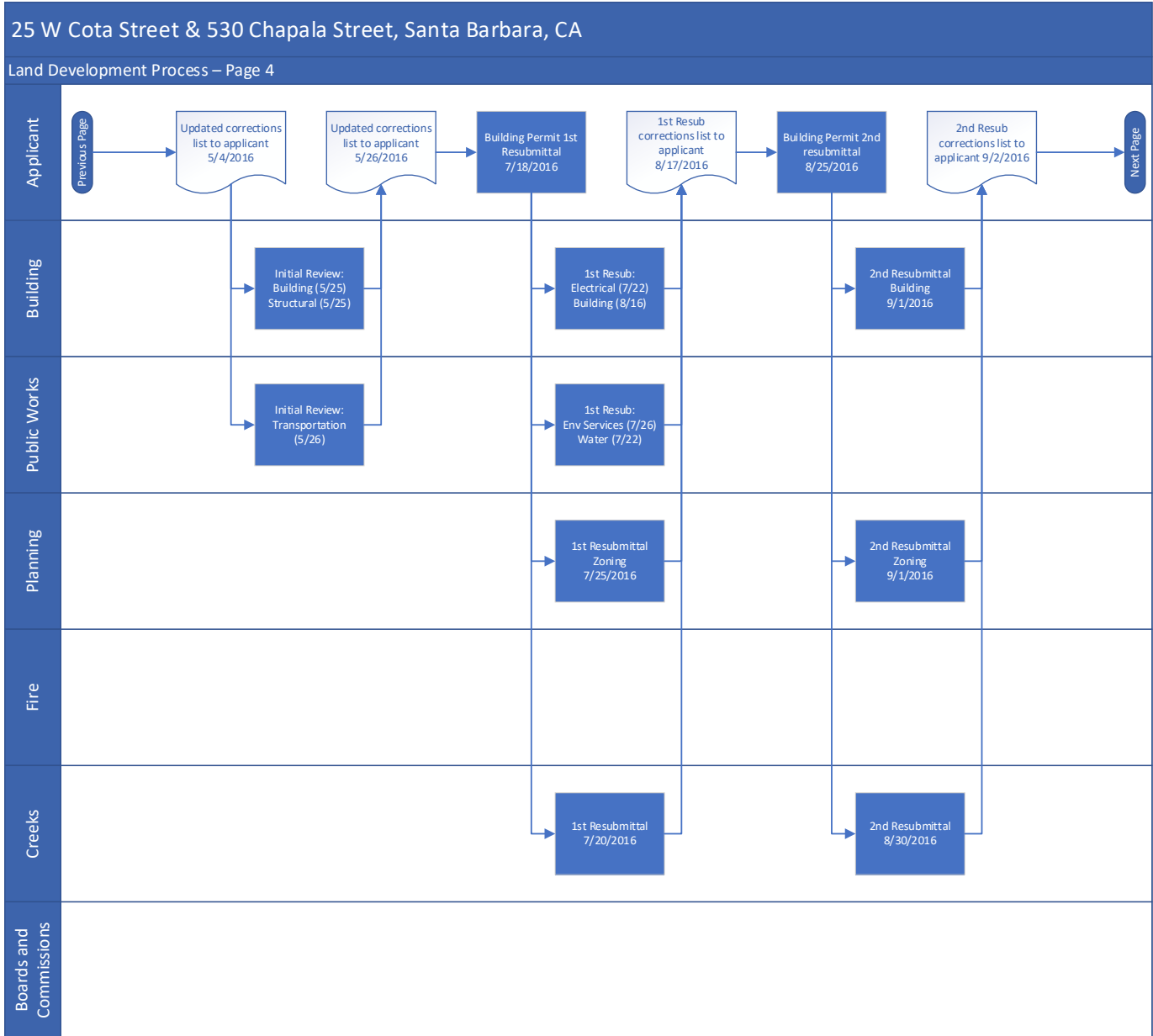
The following figure shows the path for the 25 W Cota and 530 Chapala Street project. This was an adaptive re-use project for large commercial use. The project involved HLC design review and PRT review. This project developed two lots but kept them separated, even though they were developed as one project, to make approval easier.

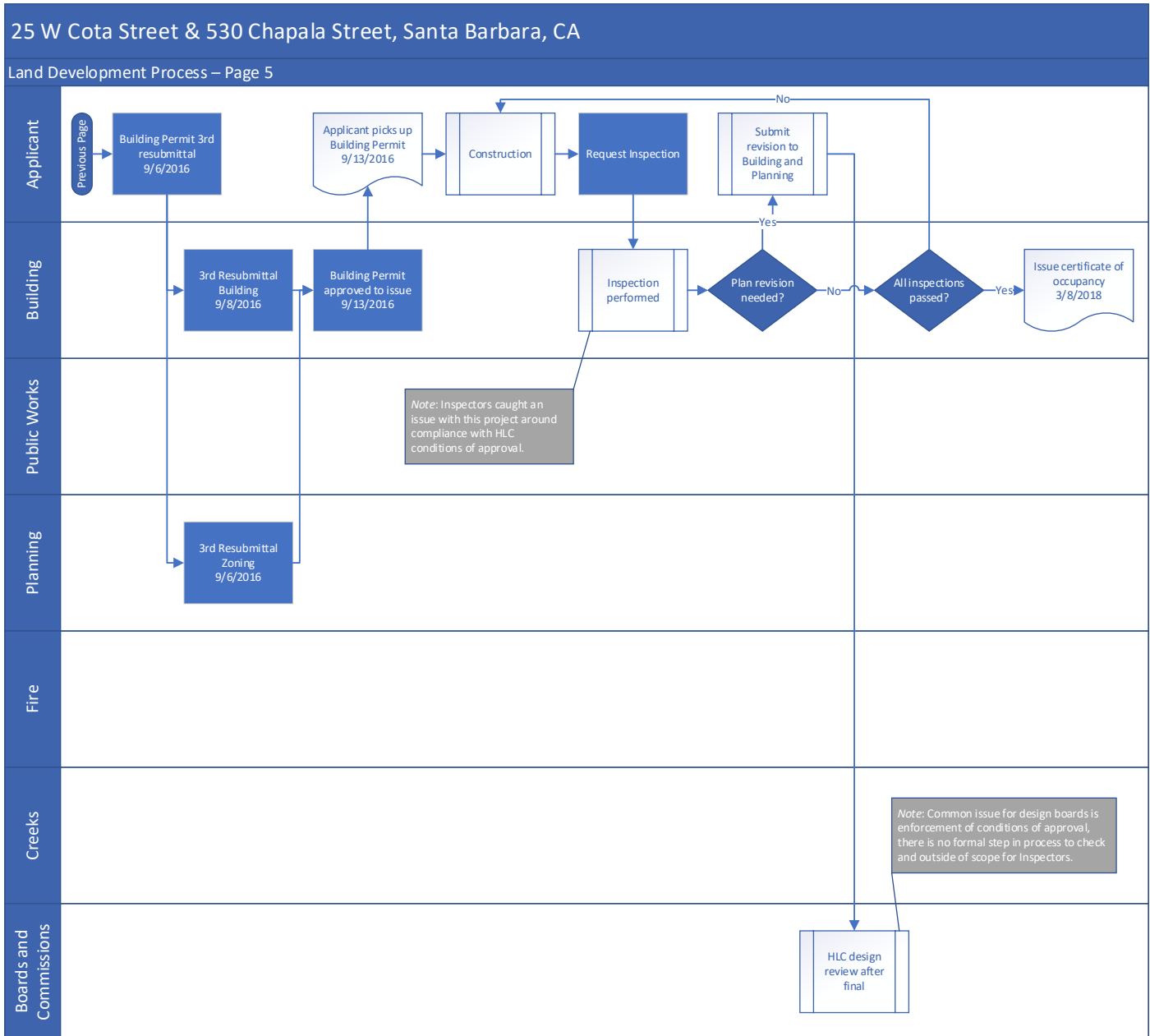
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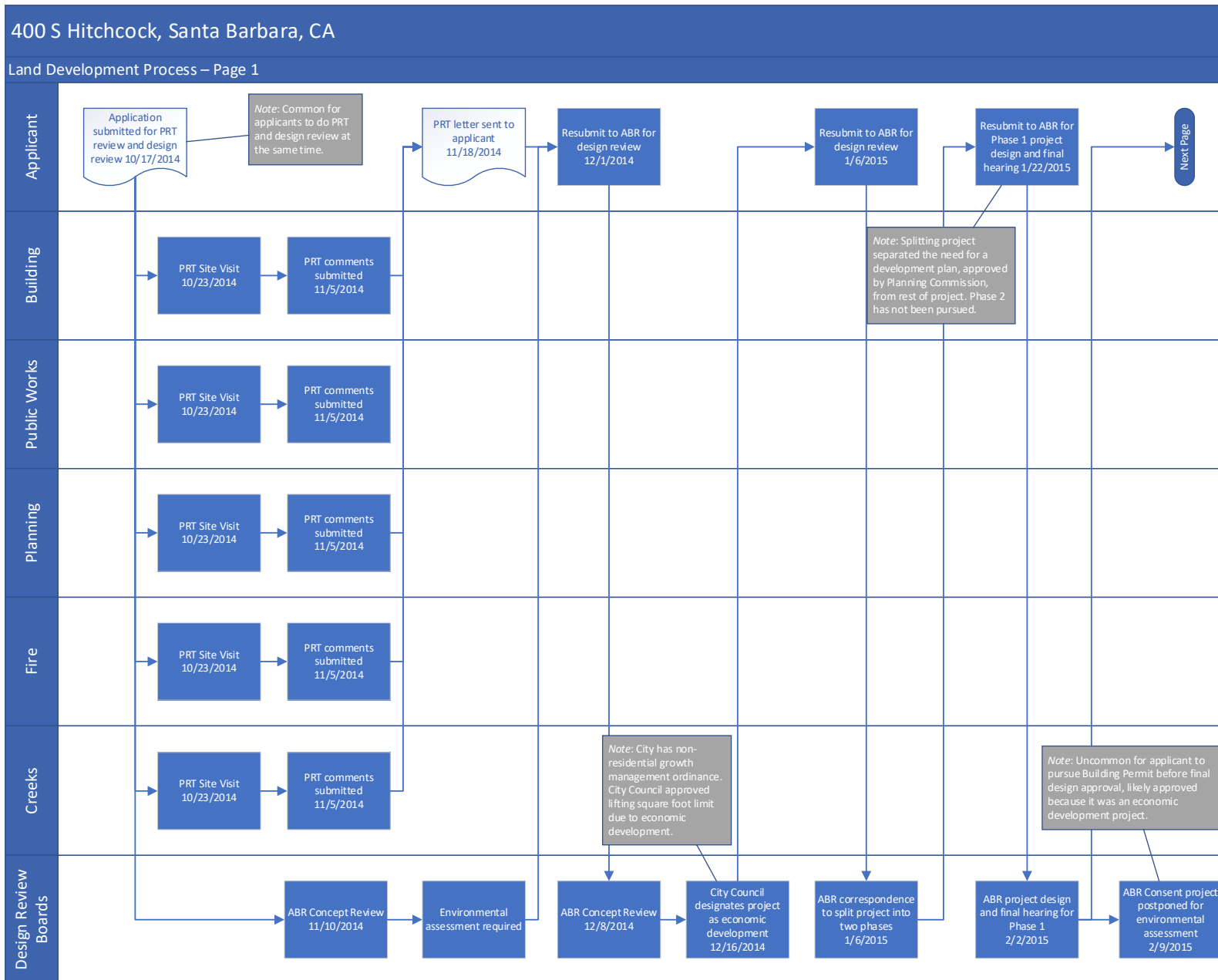


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400 S Hitchcock Process Map

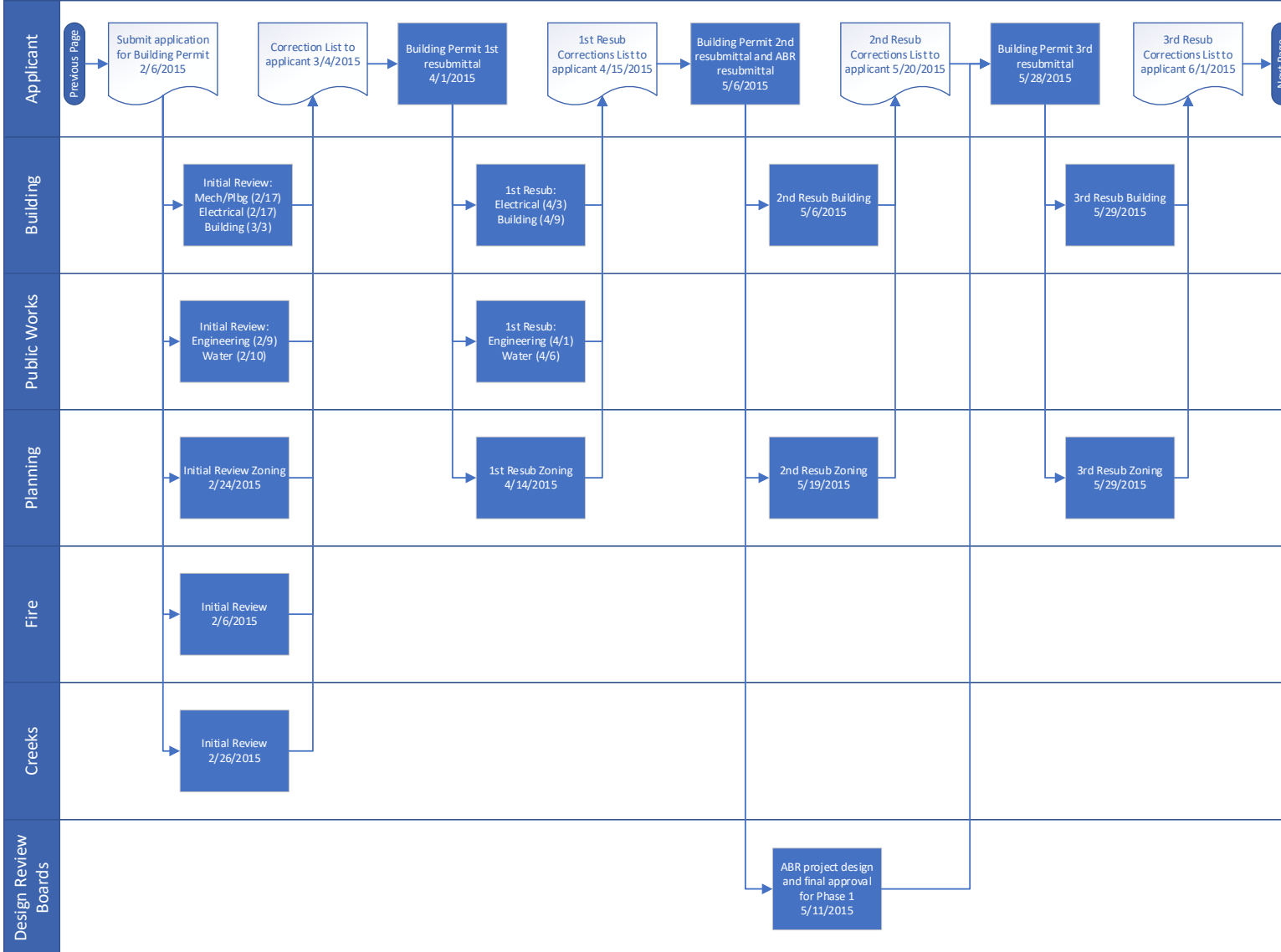
The following figure shows the approval process for the 400 S Hitchcock project. This was a commercial project for a car dealership, which included design review by ABR, as well as community benefit approval from City Council. There were also environmental issues at the site that needed remediation. This project was separated into two phases to make it easier to get approval; phase two has not been pursued.

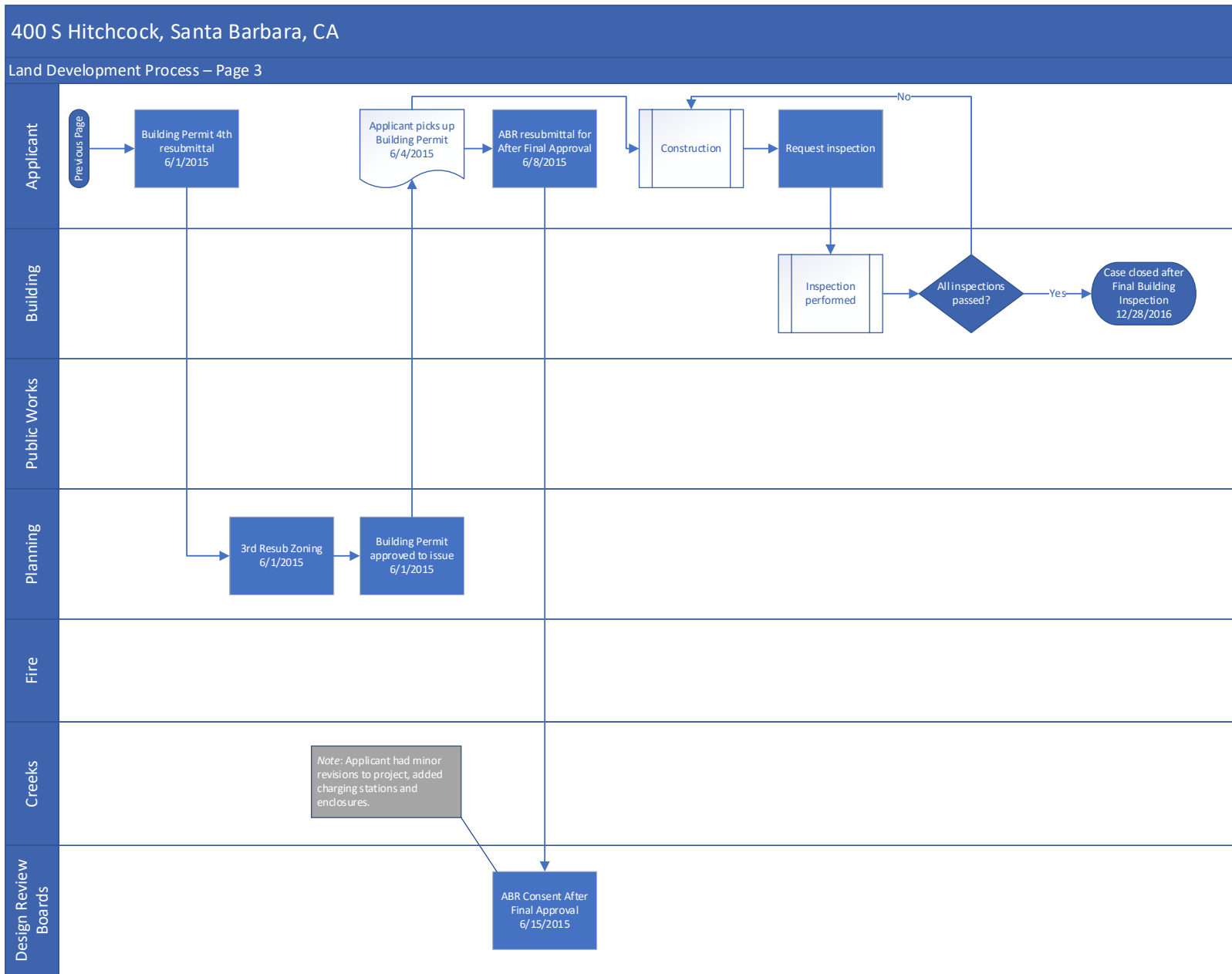
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400 S Hitchcock, Santa Barbara, CA

Land Development Process – Page 2



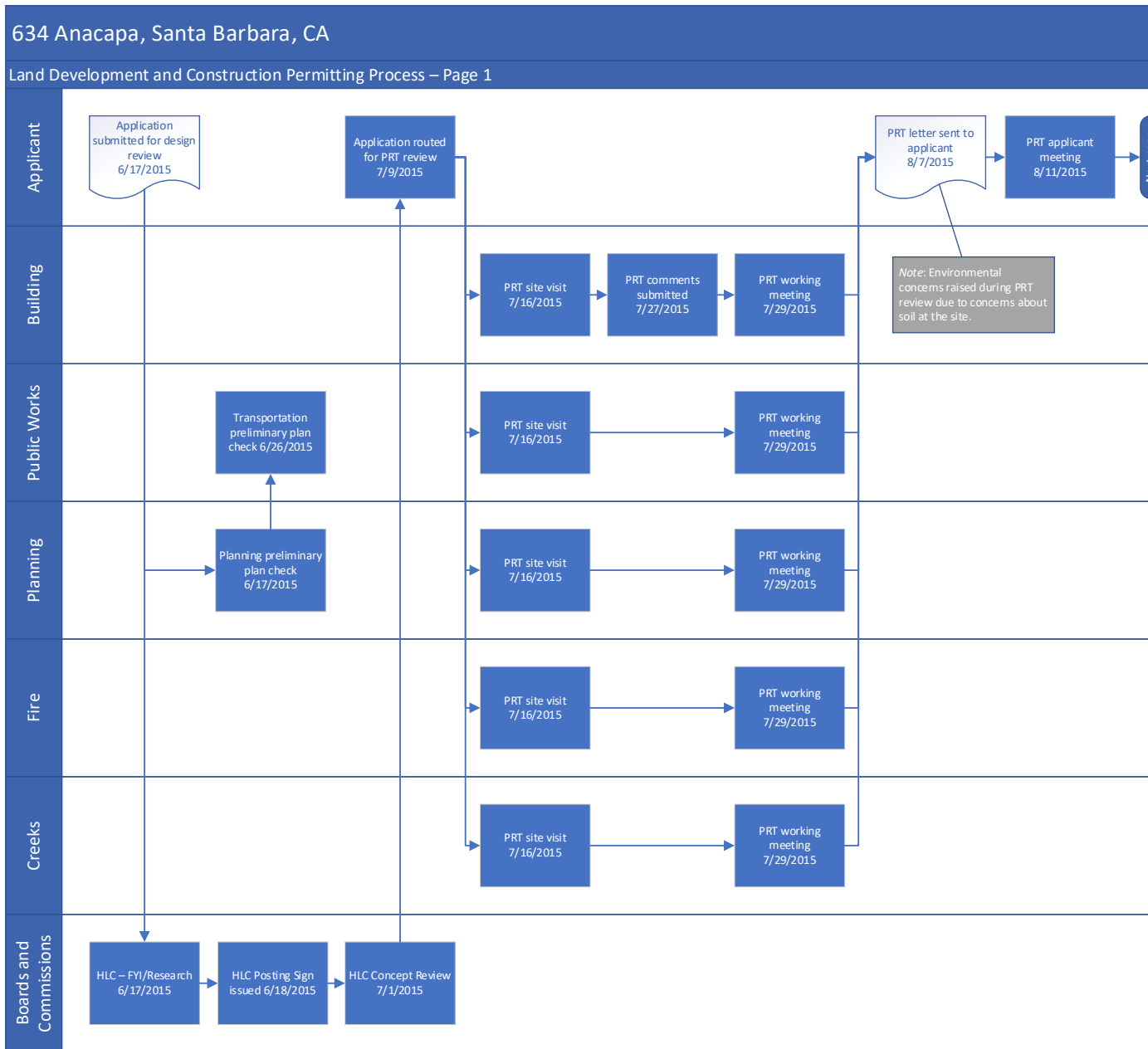


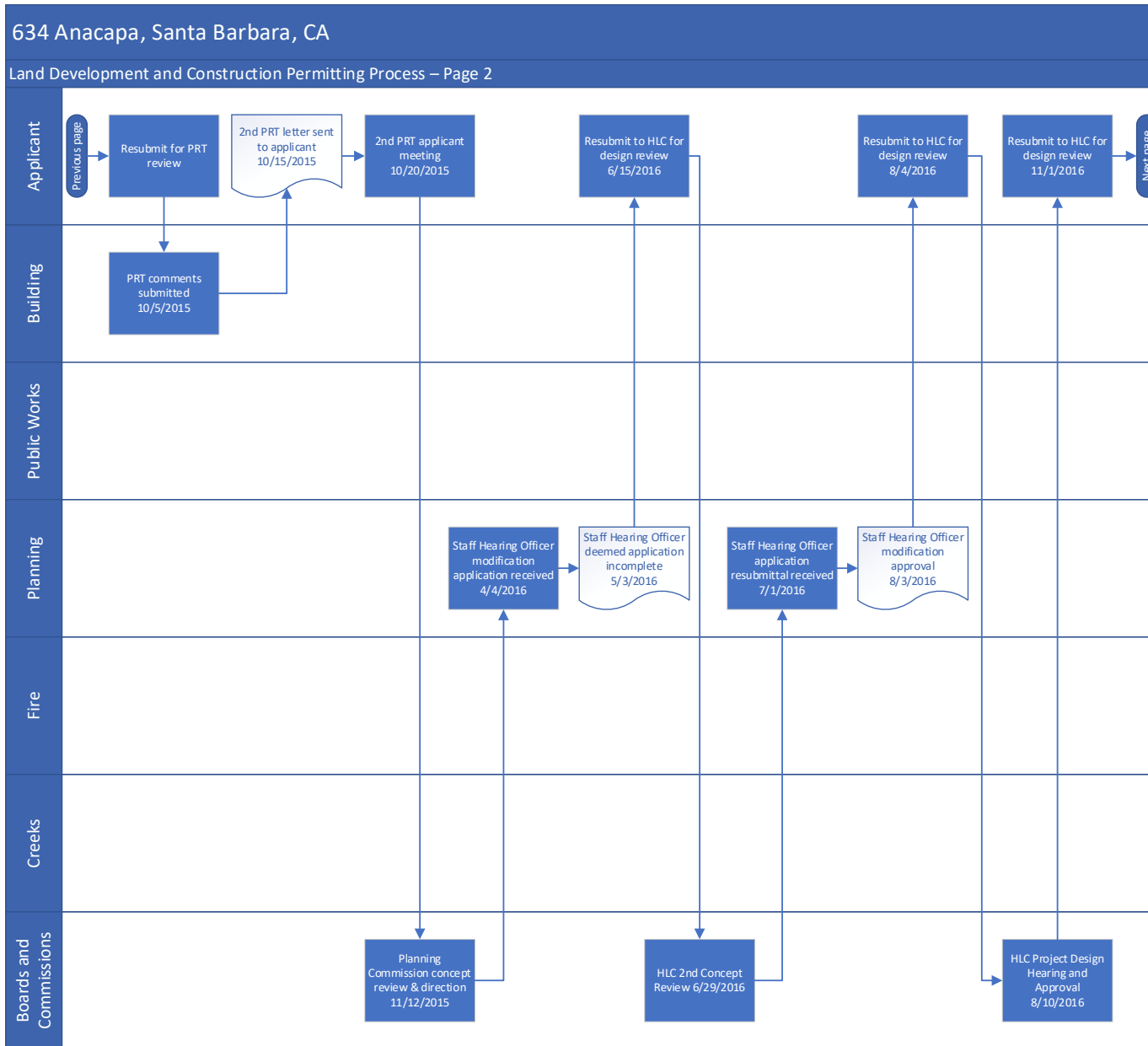
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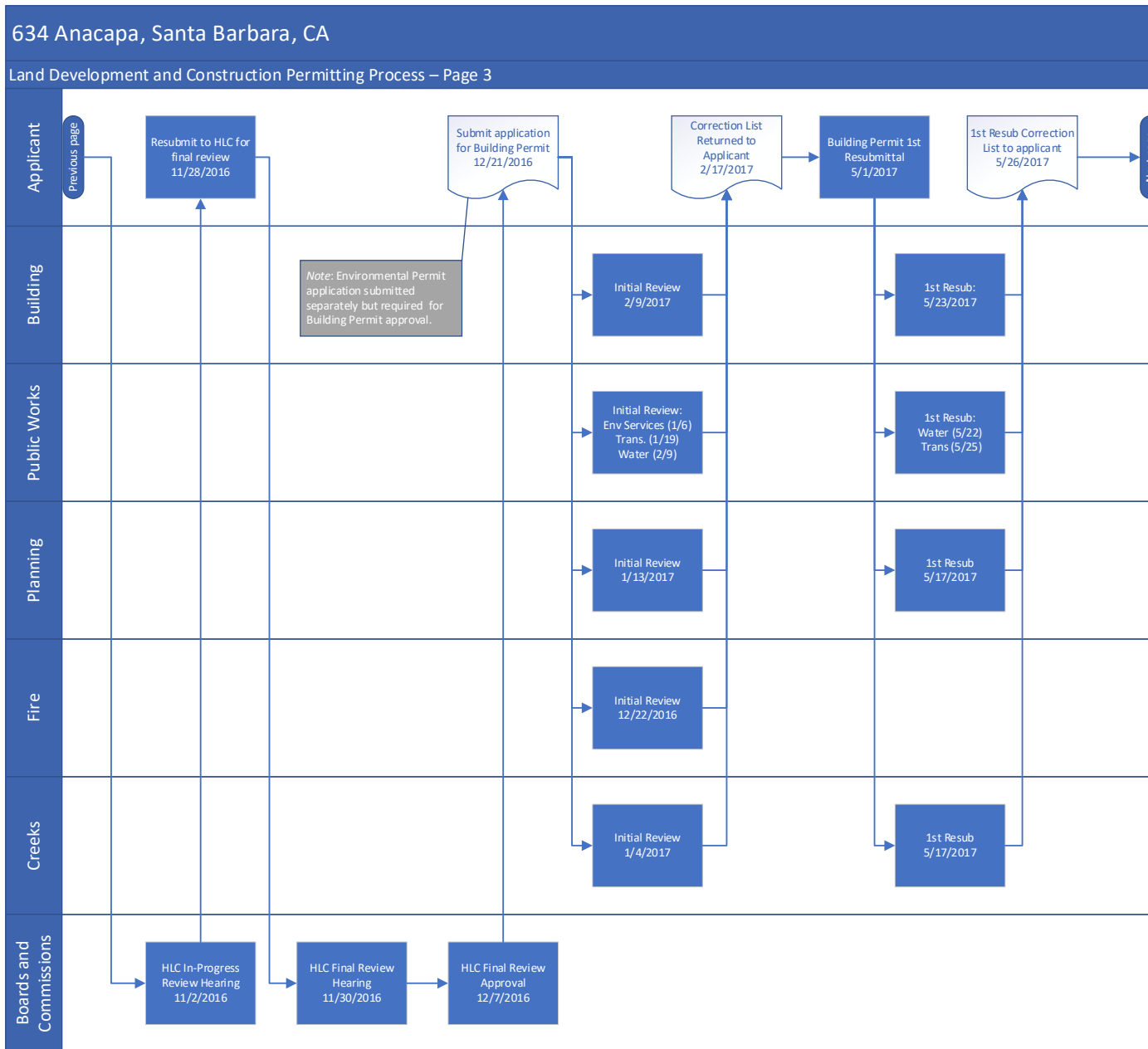
634 Anacapa Process Map

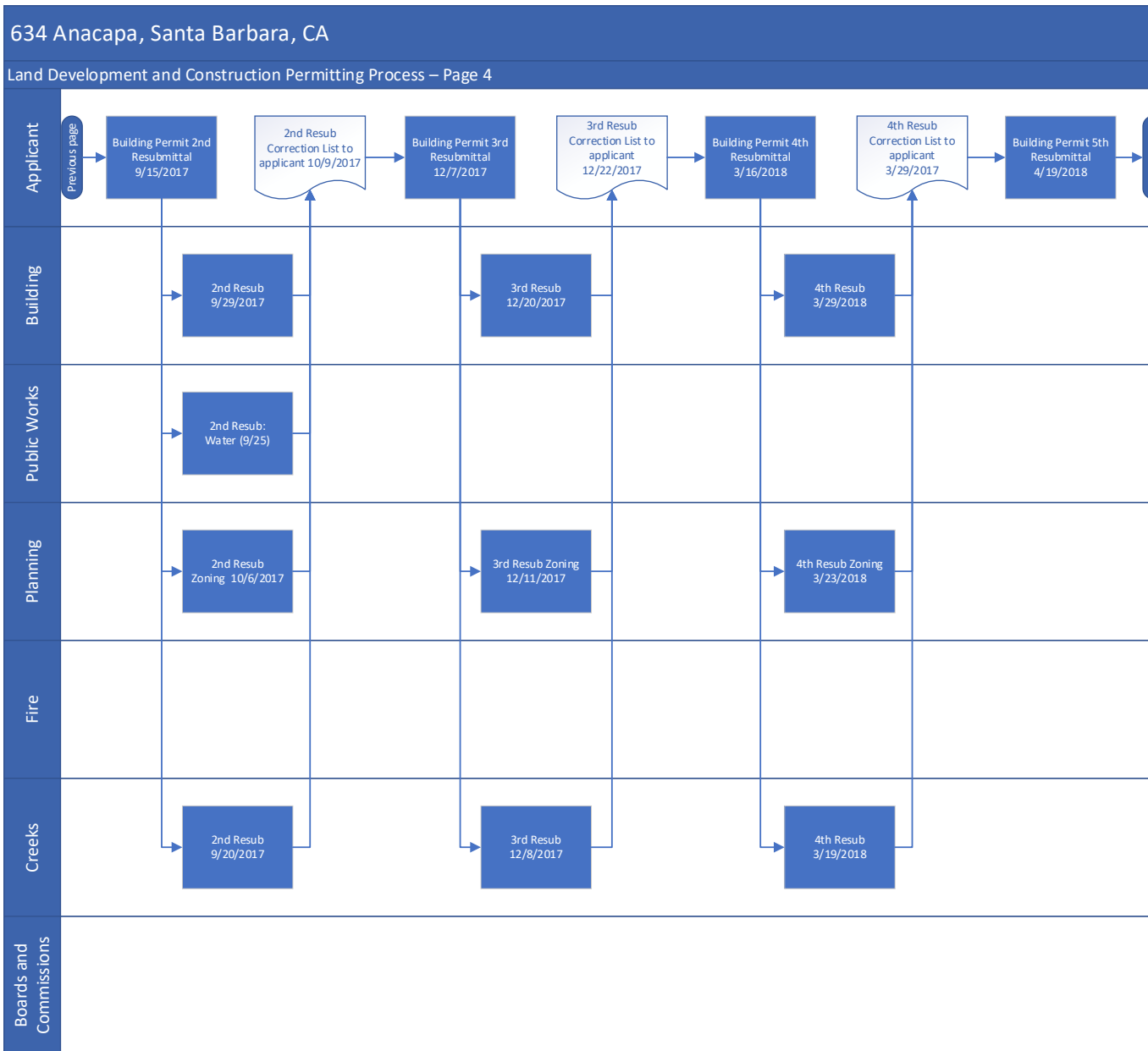
The following figure shows the approval process for the 634 Anacapa project. This project was a multi-unit residential development that required HLC design review, PRT review, and review by the Staff Hearing Officer.

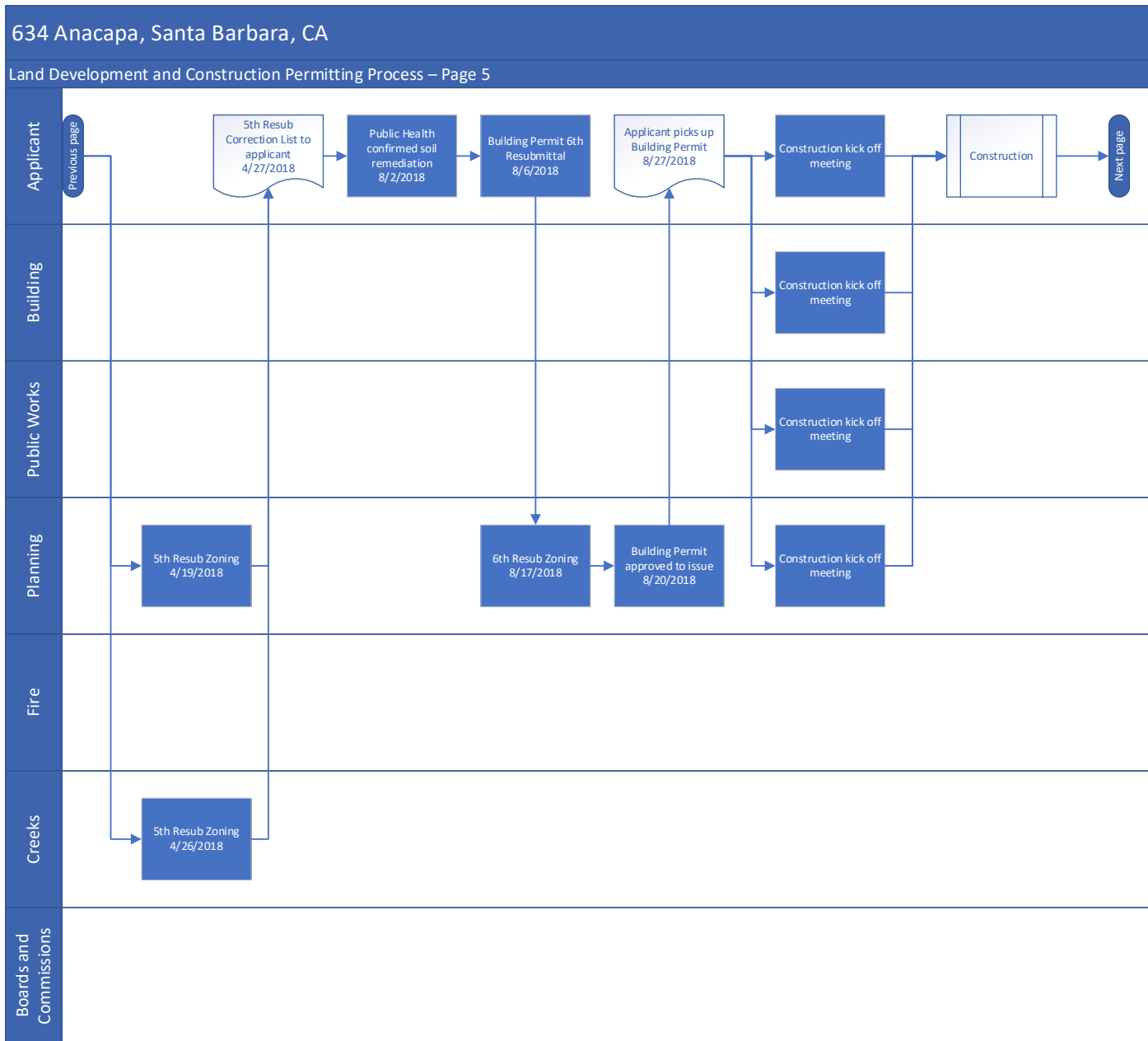
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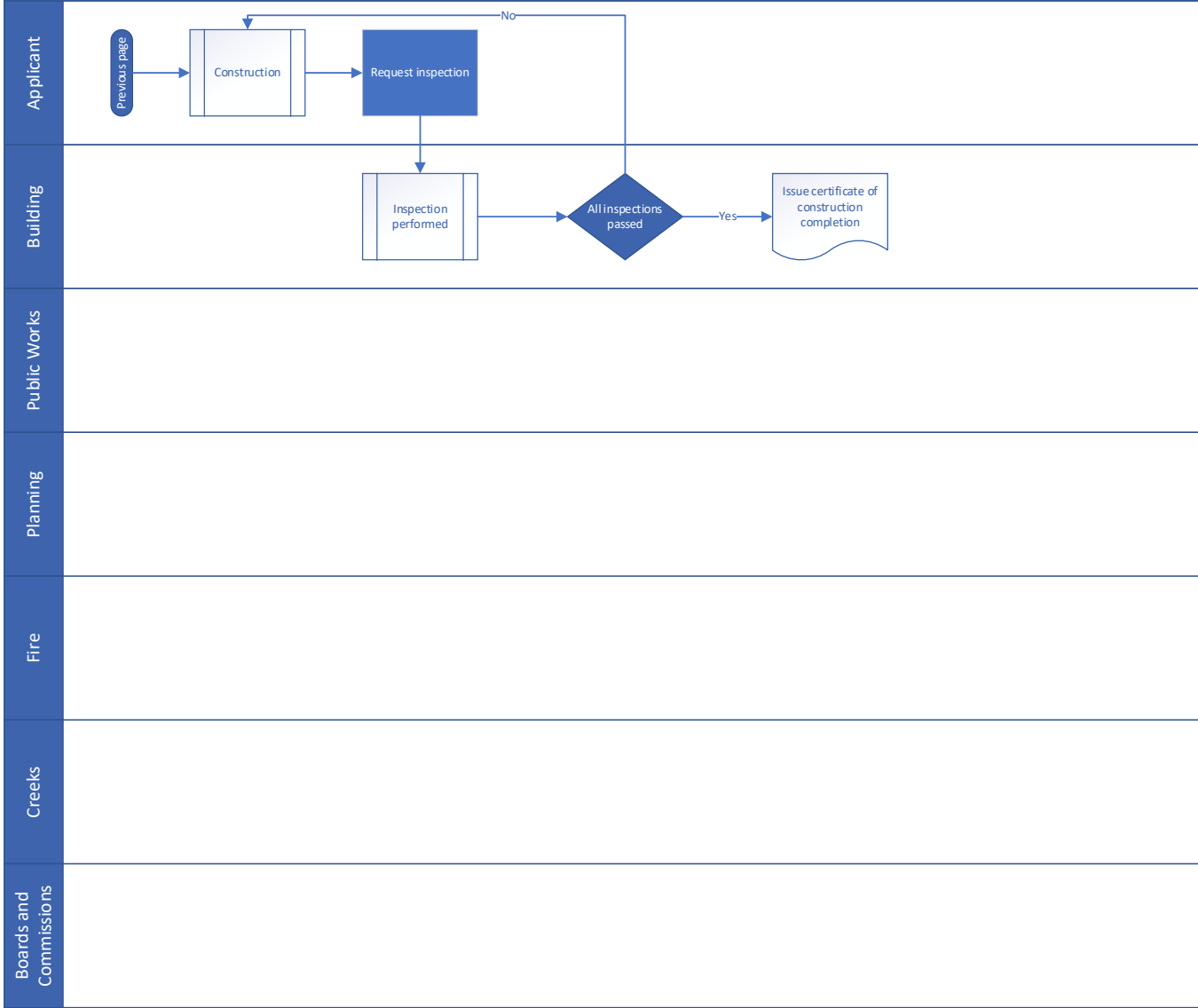






634 Anacapa, Santa Barbara, CA

Land Development and Construction Permitting Process – Page 6



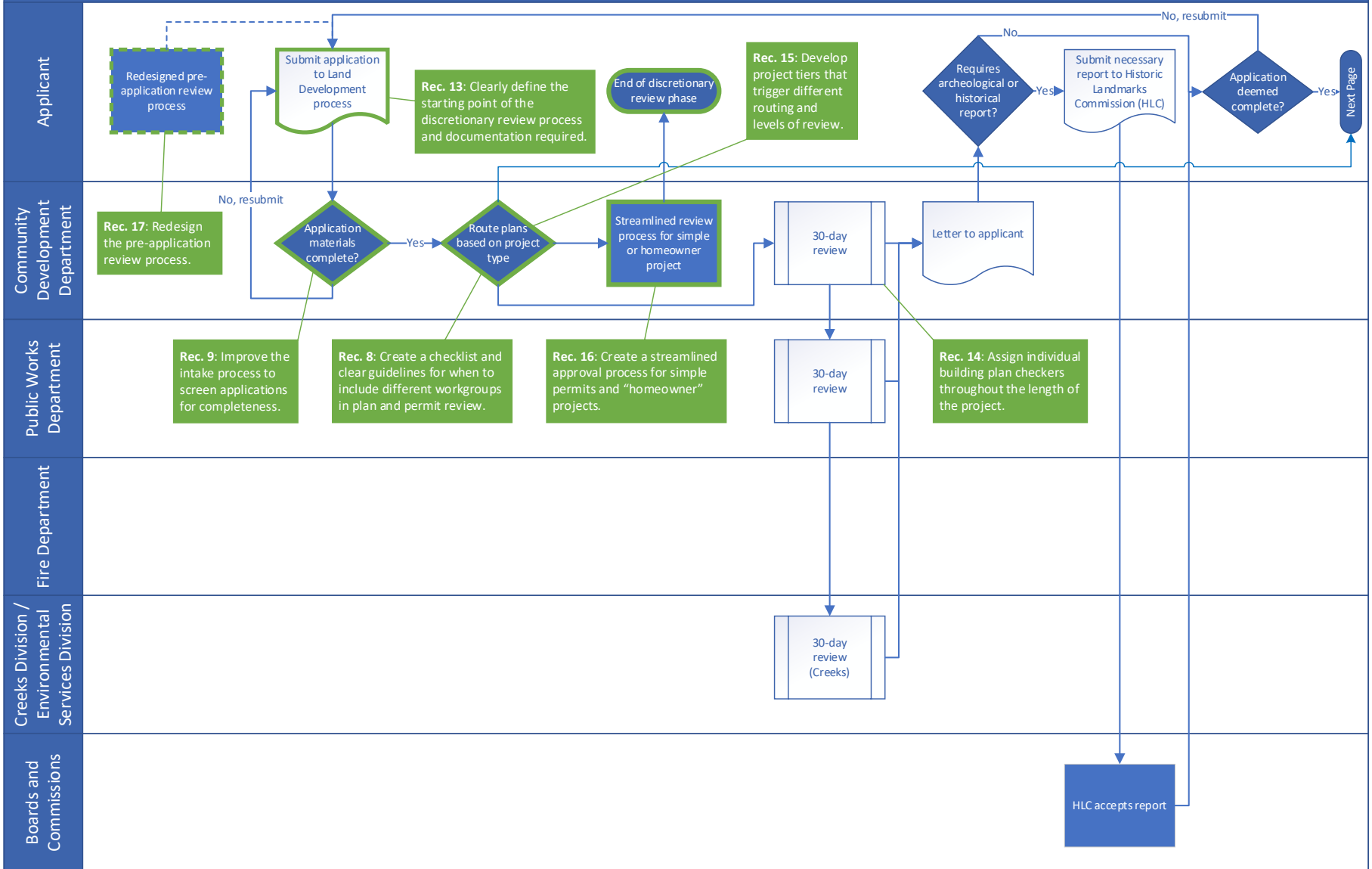
Attachment D: Recommended Process Maps

The following figures show the recommended process for the discretionary review phase and ministerial permit review phase. The process is depicted at a high level from application submission to final design approval and from permit submittal to certificate of occupancy. New or changed process steps are highlighted in green, and notes have been added referencing the specific recommendation that changes the process.

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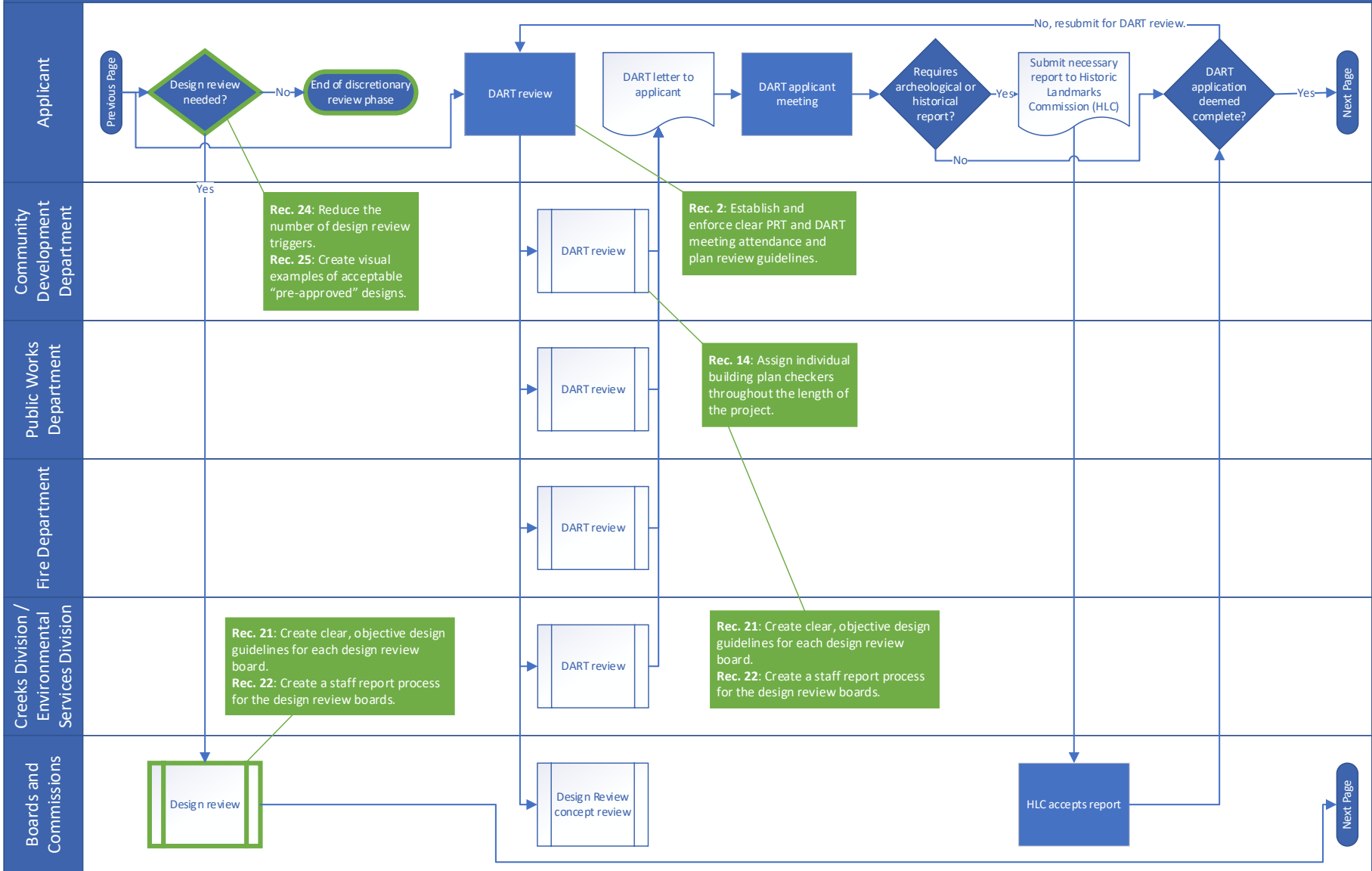
Recommended Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Discretionary Review Phase – Page 1



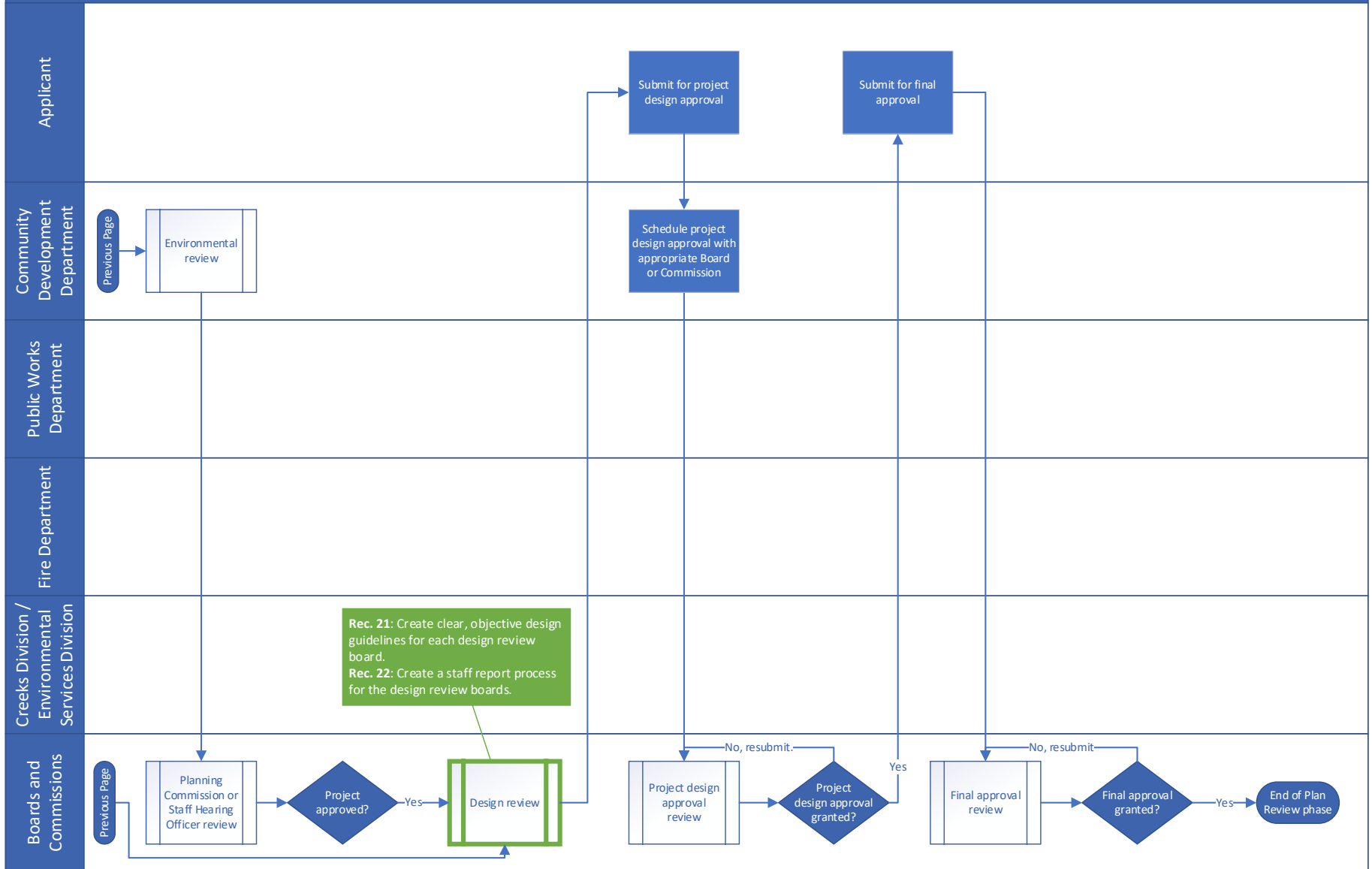
Recommended Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Discretionary Review Phase – Page 2



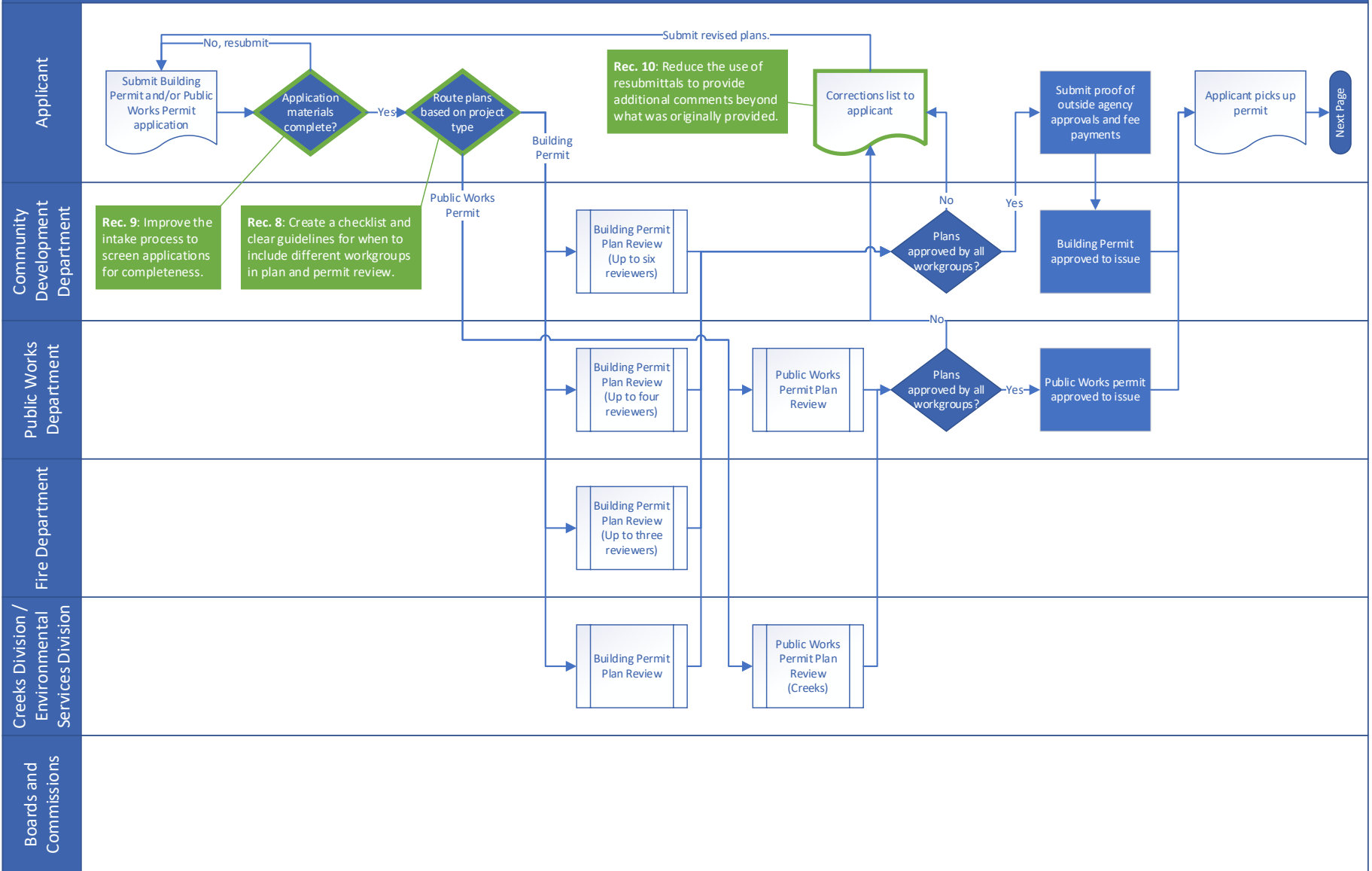
Recommended Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Discretionary Review Phase – Page 3



Recommended Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Ministerial Permit Review Phase – Page 1



Recommended Macro Process Map – Santa Barbara Land Development Process

Ministerial Permit Review Phase – Page 2

