

ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISION
Public Works Department
Salt Lake County**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings and recommendations of an organizational review of Salt Lake County's Planning and Development Services Division conducted during the latter part of 2008.

Before proceeding with findings, the review team acknowledges the impact a review process has on the staff of the agency and their participation with us. We also acknowledge the many positive aspects of the organization and its employees. Organizational reviews are often difficult upon employees and that proved to be true in this case. The absence of co-workers and the Division Director who was placed on administrative leave shortly before the organizational review began contributed to a sense of unease and wariness about this process.

We appreciated the open, honest and candid discussions we had. The candor of each employee demonstrated a purposeful desire to have their working conditions improve and provided us an honest assessment about the work environment, employee attitudes and business practices. ***We're confident that with strong leadership, effective management and a clear sense of purpose, the employees of Planning and Development will positively and responsibly do their part to move this agency forward. We'd like to thank them for their participation.***

Despite having their organization under scrutiny, the employees of the Division continued to provide service to the citizens of Salt Lake County. This is a tribute to their commitment to public service and their hope for a positive outcome at the end of this process.

The report is broken into eleven sections, including purpose, scope, process and findings. Throughout this review, the team looked for broad themes that emerged from both the survey we conducted and through the interview process. This executive summary will briefly address the topics presented. More detail can be found in the body of the report.

The review team found a remarkable disparity between the Division managers' perceptions and the staff's perceptions regarding the health of the Planning and Development Services Division. While most Division managers painted a picture of a competent, functional organization, staff generally painted a picture of a troubled Division lacking a cohesive vision and identity; management resistant to change; an environment that discourages, at times, teamwork and shared responsibility for customer service; a general lack of professionalism modeled by management; and a sense of distrust and cynicism among employees. Additionally, the structures designed to address some of these issues such as the communication, decision-making and accountability systems seem broken or, at best, poorly utilized.

Unfortunately, some employees seem resigned to these working conditions, apparently believing that most organizations operate in a similar fashion. This outlook further erodes morale, deepens cynicism about the future and contributes to a dysfunctional atmosphere.

We recognize that the issues surrounding the most recent Division Director and his impact upon the Division contribute to the current work environment and should not be minimized. However, the level of dysfunction within the Division did not develop overnight and is part of the collective mythology (the story employees tell themselves) over a long period of time. Employees shared examples that point to long-standing attitudes and practices that in some instances can be traced back to the creation of the Division in 2000.

Summary of Major Themes

- Vision – There is a lack of vision and identity for the Division. Despite the Department Director providing guidance to the former Division Director regarding her expectations: 1) develop a Countywide Cooperative Plan, 2) focus on customer service, and 3) address employee issues, staff say there was little knowledge of and/or support for these priorities.
- Teamwork – There seems to be little teamwork within sections of the Division and essentially no teamwork across sections. Management and staff operate in “silos,” in some cases intentionally isolating themselves from the rest of the agency.
- Decision-Making – Decision-making processes are at best undefined and inconsistent. A majority of the staff mentioned they do not understand how decisions are made or how they can access the results of those decisions. Additionally, decisions seem to be made in isolation and often appear last minute. As a result, it is perceived that customers are held to different standards in the planning and permitting process.
- Communication – An effective communication process is generally missing. Staff express frustration regarding communication (giving and receiving) within their sections and across sections. Very little information is codified in writing. ***Because of the poor communication structures, staff, to their credit, have taken the initiative to open communication with their peers.***
- Accountability – A clear accountability system is generally missing. Employees report they either hold themselves accountable based upon their personal work ethic, or customer expectations hold them accountable. As an afterthought, employees report they receive feedback on their job performance from their superiors annually, or when they do something wrong.
- Professionalism – A professional work environment is generally missing. Gossip is pervasive throughout the Division, unprofessional conversations among employees are tolerated and most upper Division management does not abide by, nor enforce, policies and procedures.
- Trust – At every level of the organization, trust is missing – staff generally does not trust management, management does not trust the Department and the Mayor’s Office, and only slightly more than 50% of the staff trusted the former Division Director.

- Customer Service – Staff appear to be very focused on customer service. Systemic problems within the organizational structure, however, limit the ability to effectively serve customers.

More detailed examples of these issues and more thorough analysis is contained within the report.

Efforts to establish a professional working environment within Planning and Development Services will require a combination of strong leadership, clear vision, effective management and individual responsibility. A complete list of recommendations is contained in the end of the report. A summary is listed below:

- Establish and communicate a clear purpose and vision for Planning and Development Services at all levels within the Division and hold managers and staff accountable for knowing, understanding and modeling behavior to meet the vision.
- Hire a strong administrator capable of setting professional expectations and holding people accountable for their actions and behaviors.
- Share with employees the professional standards of conduct expected of every employee in Salt Lake County. Ensure they understand the professional working environment expected and hold employees accountable for their behavior under these standards.
- Develop, implement and model an “accountability structure” based upon setting clear expectations for employees, providing regular and timely feedback to them and willingness to use appropriate management tools as necessary.
- Develop and implement an effective communication system that embraces transparency and provides relevant information to employees so they can successfully function in their jobs.
- Develop and implement a “decision-making structure” that codifies decisions at all levels, shares the decisions, and makes them accessible throughout the Division.
- Identify best practices and best structures for similar organizations and implement as appropriate in Salt Lake County.
- Provide employees with the support and encouragement necessary to help build a first class Planning and Development agency.

PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

In late October 2008, the Director of the Public Works Department, Linda Hamilton, requested a thorough organizational review of the Planning and Development Services Division as a result of concerns she had within the Division. The purpose of the review was “to provide a comprehensive assessment of factors that potentially affect morale. The results of the analysis and recommendations should provide the Public Works Department Director with information and tools to improve morale in the Planning and Development Division.” While “morale” was a major concern for the Director, at her request, other factors that impact morale (e.g., the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency, management practices, operating procedures) were part of this review effort.

CREDENTIALS

Patrick Leary

Mr. Leary serves as the Associate Director for the Department of Administrative Services and has been in this position for 3 years. Prior to that he served as the Chief Administrator for the Office of the District Attorney with responsibilities for human resources management, budget and fiscal matters and day-to-day operations for over 200 employees including lawyers (prosecution, litigation and civil law functions), law enforcement officers, social workers and office support personnel with an annual budget of approximately \$20 million.

He has worked for Salt Lake County since 1991 and has a background in organizational structure and culture. He has taught courses on County policy and managerial responsibilities and led large group work in organizational change efforts. He has a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and history and is completing a master’s degree in Public Administration from the University of Utah.

Kelly Colopy

Ms. Colopy has over 17 years of professional experience in program evaluation across areas as diverse as education, human services and use-of-technology. She serves as the Associate Director for the Department of Human Services and has been in this position for 4 years. Prior to her time in Salt Lake County, she served in state government, working as the Research Director for the Utah State Division of Substance Abuse, and as a research consultant with both the Division of Child and Family Services and the Utah State Department of Human Services. She also spent time in Washington DC working in research positions with both Policy Studies Associates and Mellman & Lazarus, Inc.

Ms. Colopy has designed and implemented national and local survey tools for political issues, program evaluation and customer/employee satisfaction and has led large group work around organizational change efforts. She has a bachelor’s degree in political science and mathematics, and a master’s degree in Public Policy from Duke University.

Jeff Gravier

Mr. Gravier serves as Salt Lake County’s Coordinator of Emergency Services. He has over 25 years as a senior executive in public safety with a proven track record of delivering creative approaches to

homeland security, emergency management, law enforcement and infrastructure safety. His career with the Utah Department of Public Safety included responsibilities as Deputy Director of Homeland Security/Director of Emergency Management, the Bureau Commander for Davis, Weber, Morgan and Box Elder counties, the Bureau Commander for Homeland Security, Deputy Director of the Peace Office Standards and Training agency, as well as other roles in law enforcement.

Mr. Gravier has extensive personnel and program management experience and holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Columbia College.

SCOPE OF WORK

The review team was asked to gain familiarity with the mission and goals of the Planning and Development Services Division along with day-to-day operations and to gather data from employees and managers to factors that potentially affect morale, impact customer service, and analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and operations. As part of the assessment, the team reviewed:

- Organizational culture
- Communication – bottom-up and top-down
- Organizational structure
- Leadership
- General management practices and styles
- Other factors

PROCESS/PROJECT APPROACH

The process began with an initial staff meeting which occurred on October 30, 2008, to introduce the scope of work, the review team members and the process. At that meeting the review team informed staff it would conduct an anonymous survey to gather information, and follow that survey with individual employee interviews. At the completion of these processes, the team would analyze the major themes that emerged and prepare a report for the Public Works Department Director.

The team received an organizational chart from the Division, as well as a summary of each employee and their primary job responsibilities. As part of the process, it reviewed similar organization reports from other agencies for background and structure.

The survey tool consisted of 48 questions and was distributed both electronically via "SurveyMonkey," and hard-copy. Employees could choose how they responded to the survey and were provided an opportunity to add comments as they felt necessary. The survey was conducted during the first week of November. Out of 57 employees in the Division, we received responses from 55 – 96% return rate. A copy of the survey responses is in Appendix B of this report.

The results from the survey provided the major focus for the interview questions, although other topics were discussed in the interviews as issues or items-of-interest were uncovered. The interview process began on November 12 and stretched through mid-December, with a limited number of follow-up interviews to clarify information.

In addition, the team interviewed Ms. Hamilton and the Public Works Associate Director (currently Interim Director for Planning and Development) Mr. Philip Bernal.

BACKGROUND OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning and Development Services Division is part of the Public Works Department led by Linda Hamilton, Department Director, within the Mayor’s portfolio of responsibilities. The Division has a Director and an Associate Director and is currently structured in five sections with each section corresponding to Mayor Corroon’s 2008 priorities. The sections and related Mayor’s priority are:

- Business Licensing & Customer Service – Quality Government
- Administration – Education
- Sustainable Communities – Quality of life, Natural Environment, Economic Development
- Development Engineering & Hydrology – Natural Environment
- Building Safety & Code Enforcement – Public Safety

Each section is led by a “section manager” who reports directly to the Associate Director. Within certain sections, additional management-level employees exist, either as “principal” employees, or “lead supervisors.” Overall, with a staff of 57 employees, there are 12 management positions within the agency.

The mission and purpose of the Division are outlined below. This information was drawn from the Division’s existing website.

MISSION STATEMENT

To protect the life, health, safety, property, and public welfare of the citizens of unincorporated Salt Lake County by:

- *Facilitating the orderly urban growth within the County;*
- *Encouraging development of well-designed communities with a full range of land use, housing types and densities, efficient transportation systems, open space and recreation opportunities that enhance the community, while preserving sensitive natural areas;*
- *Assuring an appropriate balance between protecting property rights and property values and the quality of life;*
- *Assuring that structures and impairments (sic) are constructed in accordance with ordinances, adopted standards, and approved plans;*
- *Licensing business activities in compliance with applicable health, fire, building and public safety standards.*

DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Planning and Development Services Division is responsible to oversee long range planning and development within the unincorporated County. These responsibilities are carried out by ensuring that all development complies with adopted Salt Lake County plans, ordinances and building codes. The review and approval process is carried out by providing land use information to citizens, property owners, developers, community councils, processing development applications, and interpreting and enforcing local ordinances. This is accomplished by:

- *Reviewing and evaluating land use proposals to insure compliance with established Ordinances;*
- *Coordinating development review and approval with Federal, State and other local public agencies and jurisdictions;*
- *Monitoring all proposed land uses for their impact on the County's storm drainage system;*
- *Working with the citizens and elected officials to accomplish long range planning goals by preparing updates and amendments to the County's General Plan when necessary;*
- *Amending land use ordinances to ensure they are effective tools for implementing adopted plans, keeping them consistent with changes in laws and changing development patterns and uses;*
- *Maintaining and updating zoning maps*
- *Reviewing building plans for new construction and modifications to existing buildings;*
- *Inspecting all construction to ensure compliance with building code requirements;*
- *Inspecting and resolving violations of land uses;*
- *Monitoring and licensing all business activities. The division also actively pursues establishing inter-local agreements with local jurisdictions to provide similar professional services to the jurisdictions.*

HISTORY OF AGENCY

Planning and Development Services consists of two formerly independent and autonomous Divisions that merged in 2000 – Planning and Zoning and Development Services. Planning and Zoning was formerly responsible for longer-range planning for the County as well as building code enforcement. Development Services was responsible for business licensing and “short-range” development review. In 2000, decision-makers determined for budgetary and functional reasons to merge the two agencies. As a result of the budgetary challenges, 16 positions were identified for reduction-in-force, although only 9 positions were actually eliminated. The “functional” reason that these agencies were joined was to create a “one-stop-shop” for the public under one roof.

This history is important to understand because some of the structural challenges within the current Division stem from the impact this merger had at the time, and the lingering effects today that continue to feed the organization’s “mythology” – that is, the story they continue to tell themselves.

At best, this merger resulted in an uncomfortable “marriage” of functions that contributed to a lack of unified purpose and/or identity for the Division that exists today. There appears to be an “identity crisis” within the Division – is it primarily a “development review” agency wherein long-range planning and code enforcement play important but supportive roles for all development within the County? Is it primarily a “long-range” planning agency, wherein development review and code enforcement play, again, important but supportive functions? Or is the health and safety of our community, that is, structural issues, the primary focus, with long-range planning and development review designed primarily to meet these needs?

This lack of identity has been exacerbated over time by employee perceptions about the “perceived” biases held by Division directors since the merger. To date, three directors have been at the helm of the new Division. The initial director of the new agency was formerly the Planning Division Director and was perceived by some employees to hold biases based upon his former position. The second director of the Division was placed in Planning and Development through a Career Mobility assignment for one year. After one year, he was promoted to the Division Director position. Staff reported they perceived him to be a “political” hire who lacked expertise in either discipline. The most recent director, hired through a competitive merit process with extensive credentials within the relevant disciplines, was perceived by some to carry his own biases for sections of the office. It remains clear the issues associated with the merger of two formerly independent agencies, the impact of the loss-of-jobs at the time, and the role of Division leadership since the merger have all contributed to a significant lack of identity for Planning and Development Services that exists today.

The fact the Division has seen three directors over a period of eight years, each with a unique management style, also contributes to a sense of shifting expectations for staff and a lack of clear vision. Additionally, outside forces beyond the control of the Division also contribute to a sense of unease about the future particularly due to the shrinking of the unincorporated County geography as a result of annexations and incorporations and the uncertainty regarding the future of County townships.

FINDINGS

Survey Results

The results of the survey showed high marks for the following positive areas (percentage of employees either strongly or mostly agreeing with the statement):

- Access to information needed for the job (95%)
- Availability of equipment that helps ensure safety on the job (91%)
- Customer service a priority (89%)
- Feel responsible for working toward achieving the organization’s mission and goals (89%)
- Appropriate workload (87%)
- Employees expected to maintain high standards and ethics (83%)
- Clear understanding of job responsibilities (83%)
- Resources and equipment available to do job (83%)
- Ability to use own judgment and initiative when carrying out job (82%)
- Work in a safe environment (82%)
- Employees of all cultures treated fairly and with respect (81%)

The survey also identified areas where employees responded negatively (percentage of employees agreeing to the statement):

- Communication is poor across sections of the division (72%)
- Management shows favoritism among employees (64%)
- Employees do not trust management overall (62%)

The results showed a number of areas where employees were split in their responses—approximately half agreed and half disagreed. In addition to the concerns identified above, the review team focused on the following areas as they highlighted areas of inconsistency in beliefs and focus:

- Recognition for good work.
- Understanding and supporting the director’s vision.
- Fair application of policies and procedures across employees.
- Teamwork among managers at all levels of the organization; teamwork among employees; teamwork across sections.
- Accountability for employees and managers for the work results.
- Respect among all employees.
- Employee involvement in decision making.

The interview questions were designed to address the issues identified in the “negative” category and “split” category. However, as the interviews were conducted, the interview team uncovered other issues and addressed these as well.

STRUCTURE

Management Structure

There are 12 managers/supervisors for a staff of 57 employees. Under the existing structure (see organizational chart) the Director has three direct reports, the Associate Director has 5 direct reports, and the existing section managers/supervisors have a disparate number of employees reporting to each. What is evident at a cursory glance, is the widely disparate management workload throughout the agency. For example, the Business Licensing section manager supervises eight employees, the lead supervisor for the building inspections section supervises 12 employees, while the Administrative section manager supervises only one employee, and the Sustainable Communities manager has two direct reports. This management/staff ratio may be a reflection of the complexity of jobs being “managed.” Nevertheless, the widespread divergent management-to-employee ratio may contribute to internal workload equity issues within the organization and impact employees and their perceptions of internal equity.

An emerging theme from our organizational review suggests the Division itself recognizes it may be “top heavy” with management. There is a certain perception that individuals were moved into management-level positions – or that management positions were created specifically for them – without real need or justification for those positions existing. When this perception is coupled with manager/lead/principal workers responsible for as few as one subordinate, such perception appears well-grounded.

Office Structure

The Planning and Development Division has five sections that operate in relative autonomy. These sections are discussed below:

Division Management (Director, Associate Director)

The upper level management of the Division appears to consist primarily of 4 employees:

- 1 Division Director
- 1 Associate Director
- 1 Planning and Development Liaison
- 1 Office Coordinator

There are some additional anomalous reporting relationships to the Division Director. While all section managers formally report to the Associate Director, one “principal” position and two, functional positions report directly to the Director. Specifically:

- The long-range “principal” planner and his team bypass the common management model within the agency with a direct-report to the former Director and an “advisory” relationship to the Sustainable Communities section. We were unable to adequately understand this

reporting relationship, although some discussion indicated that the challenges for managing both day-to-day short range planning and long range planning were too great for one person to handle adequately, so the Director changed the reporting relationship. Secondly, there appear to be personality difficulties that also contributed to the restructuring of this reporting relationship. No reason was provided as to why this area of the office did not report to the Associate Director in the same manner as all other sections of the office.

- The GIS (Geographic Information Systems) position within the agency also reports directly to the former Director. The GIS position provides direct services to many sections within the office, but primarily to the Sustainable Community section. This reporting relationship does not make sense.
- The “Planning and Development Liaison” position maintained a direct report relationship to the former Division Director. This was a newly created position in 2008 whose purpose and role are extremely vague. Ostensibly, the purpose of this liaison position was to provide a “liaison” between the Division and the Mayor’s office, as well as to the community at large. However, our conversations revealed widespread lack of understanding regarding the role, function and day-to-day job responsibilities. Also, there appears to be confusion regarding the responsibilities of this position and the Office Coordinator position, the latter reports to the Associate Director but provided significant day-to-day work for the former Director.

Business License & Customer Service

The Business License and Customer Services section (also known as the “Front Counter” staff) consists of one section manager and eight employees:

- 1 Business License Inspection Specialist
- 3 Business License (Office) Specialists assigned multiple roles answering phones, cash handling at the front counter and issuing business licenses
- 1 Development Review Planner (Planner) assigned to application intake
- 3 Customer Service Specialists – a Building Permit Specialist, a Business License Permit Specialist and a Planning Specialist.

The manager-to-employee relationship is the second heaviest in the office. If the section truly is designed to facilitate customer service and serve as the face of the agency – that is, the direct interaction with walk-in applicants – the fracturing of job titles and responsibilities serves to diminish this commitment. Although employees will say they are “customer service oriented,” in practice they perceive their first responsibility as what is reflected in their job titles.

This section suffers from a lack of cohesion, mutual and supportive commitment to the Division’s responsibilities and a lack of mutual respect for one another. This has been a historical problem that management has not addressed and contributes to significant morale issues among employees, fosters mutual distrust and, at times, open animosity within the group. Strong, customer service oriented management is needed to hold employees accountable for working together in a

professional setting. Employees report that the deeply rooted dysfunction of this section and lack of effective management over time contribute to a number of problems impacting the Division.

Administration/Fiscal

The Administrative section of the Division consists of two individuals:

- 1 Fiscal Manager
- 1 Fiscal Assistant

This section is responsible for the budget management for the agency, the day-to-day purchasing and bill payment functions, and is responsible for ensuring that county policies regarding cash handling and receipting are followed. Despite the overarching role of this section with respect to the fiscal administration of the Division, the individuals handling cash and/or payments from the front counter do not report to the fiscal staff. There may be a reasonable and appropriate fiduciary reason for separating the oversight of this process from the day-to-day management of the function (e.g. a separation of fiscal responsibilities allows for greater safeguards and checks and balances), however, the contorted reporting relationship also may contribute to a lack-of-accountability. That is, if an individual knows he/she is going to have his/her work double-checked anyway, and there remains no consequence for getting the information accurate because he/she does not report to the fiscal staff, why worry? This attitude unfortunately seems compounded by the lack of mutual management support in resolving problems across sections.

Secondarily, the Division holds numerous financial bonds that are posted by customers to ensure the successful completion of projects based upon the terms outlined by the Division. In many cases, these bonds are upwards of thousands of dollars in value and customers are anxious to have their dollars returned to them at the earliest moment in time. Currently, the position responsible for administering the bond responsibility is within the Development Engineering and Hydrology section. There may have been a time historically that this made sense, but with the widespread use of “bonds” across many sections of the agency, the importance of ensuring adequate safeguards and cross-training for this position, we question why this is not most appropriately a fiscal function and housed within the administrative section of the office.

Overall, the “administrative” section appears to be specifically a “fiscal” section. Commonly, a true “administrative” section might include all the overarching functions of the office such as human resources, payroll, technology/computer support, and fiscal functions.

Sustainable Communities (Planning)

The Sustainable Communities section is made up of seventeen employees:

- 1 Section Manager
- 3 Principal Planners
- 9 Planners
- 2 Planning Commission Coordinators
- 1 GIS Specialist
- 1 Imaging/Documents/Recordings Specialist (Personal Computer Technician)

As reported earlier, while the long-range planning function and the GIS function are both housed within this section, they enjoy a direct-report relationship to the Division Director rather than to the manager of this section.

- *Long Range Planning:* This team has an “advisory” relationship to the Sustainable Communities section. The purpose of the team (composed of a principal planner and three planners) is to focus upon long range planning, specifically working on the Countywide Cooperative Master Plan and the “Matrix” – a comprehensive database of infrastructure.

The team appears to be intentionally isolated from the rest of the Sustainable Communities section. It does not engage in section meetings when they are held, nor lend planner support to the front counter on a rotating basis as other planners are expected to do within the section. We recognize that this team may have significantly different responsibilities from the rest of the section that legitimately segregate it from sharing in the routine business processes with their colleagues. Nevertheless, the unusual reporting structure, the isolation and exceptions from routine responsibilities granted to the team and the dearth of information flowing from this team fosters a perception of favoritism. Such a sense, whether justified or not, may contribute to lack of cohesion within the agency and lead to resentment by other employees.

- *GIS Specialist and Personal Computer Technician:* The GIS specialist and in-house computer technician for the Division (who also serves as the backup to the GIS position) is housed under the Sustainable Communities section of the Division.

The remaining Sustainable Communities section employees are broken into two units managed by “principal” planners based upon geographic areas – one section handling the Magna, Kearns and remaining unincorporated County area, and the second responsible for the Millcreek, Copperton and Emigration townships. The two principal planners report to the section manager. This division of labor was instituted in 2008. Planners rotate through the two teams with the intention of broadening their exposure to a variety of geographic issues (e.g., development issues unique to the Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone, known as FCOZ, to urban planning issues, to agricultural area planning issues, etc.). While this structure purports to deepen planners’ experience by widening their exposure to different planning issues (and keeps the job “fresh” by providing a variety of assignments), it

generated a host of other challenges. For example, the principal planners responsible for managing these sections have widely different management styles, hold their employees accountable to different standards, and have strongly divergent points-of-view on ordinance interpretation. As a result, the Division runs the risk of having similar development projects in different parts of the County being held to conflicting standards. While we did not attempt to identify examples, staff-level planners expressed this concern.

Theoretically, the section manager would be responsible for ensuring consistent standards be applied not only to employee issues within the Division, but with development projects throughout the County. Unfortunately, the employees express a lack of confidence in the section manager's efforts to ensure such consistency.

Development Engineering & Hydrology

The Development Engineering and Hydrology section has:

- 1 Section Manager
- 2 Engineers
- 2 Engineering Review Specialists
- 1 Financial Bond Specialist (Bonding Coordinator)
- 1 Subdivision Inspections Supervisor
- 1 Subdivision Inspector

This section provides feedback to the planners regarding certain engineering and hydrology issues associated with development. To this end, the planners rely heavily upon the timely expertise and response of this group to successfully move projects forward. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a sense of mutual support from this section and the planning section. This section has developed a poor reputation regarding response times within the office. While we recognize there may be legitimate reasons for slow turn-around times on projects, the discussion among the Division management designed to solve the problem apparently has not occurred nor is it a priority.

The financial bonding specialist in this section seems misplaced and perhaps more appropriately should be housed in the fiscal section. Additionally, it seems unusual that the Grading Review Specialist is not placed in this section and is housed within the Building and Code Enforcement section of the office.

We are also unclear why the Division needs a "Subdivision Inspections Supervisor" to supervise one employee. These two employees are responsible for "off-site" inspections, primarily curb and gutter installations, storm drain installations and tie-ins from road to existing infrastructure. While these responsibilities and skill sets may be crucial to the successful operation of the Division, our conversations revealed that the County overall often has multiple county representatives on particular job-sites. Through the course of our interviews, we were informed that often representative(s) from Public Works Engineering and or Operations may be onsite meeting their obligations, at the same time Planning and Development's off-site inspector is onsite looking at

similar issues, at the same time a building inspector may be onsite. Such a situation begs the question of whether a more collaborative approach to these varied functions may exist and be appropriate.

Finally, there appear to be some management challenges within the section that need resolution. Strong leadership, a sense of mutual support and responsibility in meeting customer needs and a clear understanding of the section responsibilities within the overall structure of the Division needs to occur.

Building Safety & Code Enforcement

The Building Safety and Code Enforcement section has:

- 1 Section Manager (Deputy Building Official)
- 1 Lead Supervisor (Lead Building Inspector)
- 1 Grading Review Specialist
- 3 Plan Check Specialist (One Structural Engineer, Two Plans Examiners)
- 5 Building Safety Inspectors (Building Inspectors)
- 1 Dispatch Position (Inspection Services Coordinator)
- 6 Code Enforcement Officers (Enforcement Officer)

This section appears to function fairly well. Employees report they receive regular feedback on job performance, understand the expectations of their supervisor and receive the support and backing of their superior. Interestingly, however, they attribute this to the formal and informal management of the lead supervisor, not the section manager. The lead supervisor has the formal responsibilities of managing the largest number of employees in the Division, and has become the “informal manager” for the rest of the section due to his availability, responsiveness to the employees and advocacy on their behalf.

While employees report that the section manager has the necessary expertise to make decisions and is a “likable” person, he has a reputation of being non-responsive and non-available. Employees report that the former director attempted to re-assign management responsibilities within the section to lighten the load on the lead supervisor and provide more direct supervisory responsibilities to the section manager, but that the employees themselves vigorously objected to the proposed re-assignment and insisted upon remaining under the supervision of the lead supervisor.

While this section appears to function more cohesively than much of the rest of the Division, it too has embraced a “silo” mentality. Future management efforts should be focused upon promoting cross-section teamwork and support so that the mission of the Division is accomplished collectively.

Other Structure/Process Issues

Hiring

Through the course of our interviews, many employees reported perceptions that jobs and promotions within the Division were based more upon favoritism or “cronyism” than on need. Further, the actual processes involved often exacerbated these perceptions. Employees reported that positions were created and filled without competitive processes, despite some employees being encouraged to apply, only to find out later that management filled the position with “pre-selected” individuals. While County policy reserves the right of “how” positions are filled by management, the mixed messages sent certainly contribute to a lack of faith and trust in management and overall impacts the morale of the agency. These hiring issues have been long-standing practices within the Division.

Impact of Simon Ginn on the Division

Mr. Ginn served as the third director of this Division since 2000. Controversy surrounds the hiring of Simon Ginn. It was the goal of the Public Works Director to hire a subject matter expert that could lead the efforts of long range planning for the County and help guide the West Bench project. The Public Works Director conducted a competitive hiring process for the position.

Mr. Ginn had impeccable credentials and appeared to be the solution to meet the goals of the Department Director. As a result the County made a significant investment in hiring Mr. Ginn that required a process of gaining legal authority for Mr. Ginn to live and work in the United States. Nevertheless, Mr. Ginn was a polarizing figure within the Division with perceptions fracturing primarily along management/staff lines—generally, division management did not express support for him while staff expressed their support. Depending on the interview, Mr. Ginn was either failing because he lacked the appropriate technical skills and knowledge specific to ordinances and policies of the Division or he was improving morale and doing a great job in moving the Division in the right direction.

Hansen Software System

The main data-system for the Division is known as the “Hansen” Software system. The system is plagued with very real limitations, not the least of which is the lack of support from the company and the outdated software. In many ways, the current system is held together with “bailing wire and duct tape.” While the limitations of this system are well-documented, particularly in a 2007 business case drafted to replace this system (developed and written with County Information Technology staff), we were somewhat surprised by the lack of strong emotion around this problem. Employees and management recognize the magnitude of this problem and do not minimize the impact the poor data-system has upon the agency. However, many employees of the Division recognize that until data management policies and practices are cleaned up, a new system will not be a panacea to the problems they face. If daily data-management practices are not codified and uniformly applied throughout the Division, a new system will not resolve the problems inherent in the current Hansen system.

CULTURE AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

Overall, the culture and work environment in Planning and Development discourages effectiveness, openness and positive employee morale.

The discussion regarding the structure of the organization and the issues within the sections above touches on a number of issues that are inherent to the Planning and Development Services Division. These issues, also highlighted in the survey results, are discussed below.

Vision / Direction

Planning and Development Services operates with little, if any, vision or direction from Division management. In the survey, 89% of staff said they feel responsible for achieving the Division's mission and goals. However, only a few employees were able to state the Division's mission — "Protect the health, safety and welfare of Salt Lake County." This is the mission statement listed on the Division's website. Division managers generally believe they are meeting this mission because the standards, codes, and enforcement activities met the mission. However, there is no vision that the entire organization could state, focus on together, and begin to work toward.

The Public Works Director provided guidance to the former Division Director when he came on board regarding her expectations — develop a Countywide Cooperative Plan (a Mayor priority); focus on customer service and address employee issues (Department Director priorities). The former Division Director moved forward on these priorities but staff say there was little Division management support for them. Fewer than half of the staff (48%) said they had a clear understanding of the vision and even fewer (41%) said management supported and worked toward this vision.

The Countywide Cooperative Plan is specific to one section of the Division — Long-Range Planning. It is not a focus that the overall organization participates in. Because of this, most employees are not aware of this priority, nor committed to it. On the other hand, most are aware of a focus on customer service. The long-range planning focus does not encourage employees to learn about the activities and issues in other sections, nor to reach across the section boundaries to communicate and improve services — the "silo" mentality is clear. Most would say things were working well within their section and blame other sections for breakdowns in process and completion.

Teamwork

Teamwork is not the norm in Planning and Development Services (with the exception of employees in the Building Safety Inspections Unit). There seemed to be insufficient teamwork within the sections of the Division, and little teamwork across sections. In the survey, fewer than half (44%) of employees said there was good teamwork among managers at all levels and only 48% said there is good teamwork among employees across different sections. For example, in the Planning Section, there are three "groups" that operate separately and do not operate under the same guidance and

ordinance interpretation. In the Customer Services section, groups of employees spend time keeping track of other groups of employees, leading to poor employee morale within the section and ineffective service.

In addition, the five sections of the Division operate in relative autonomy despite each section playing a role in the overall mission and the necessity of working *across-sections* to effectively deliver customer service. As a result of the strong autonomy, there appears to be a significant silo-mentality among the employees, with many individuals reporting an overall lack of teamwork across sections resulting in challenges to service delivery. For example:

The Sustainable Community section (planning and development review) must rely upon the Development Engineering and Hydrology section in order to process applications for development. As part of this process, the planners request information on applications from the various stakeholders and subject matter experts so that they can prepare a comprehensive overview and/or recommendation to the planning commission. These stakeholders consist of internal employees such as the hydrology, engineering and soils experts as well as input from external stakeholders such as the fire department, the Health Department and others. The planners rely upon strict deadlines for planning commission hearings and must in turn rely upon the subject-matter experts to respond within established timeframes. When the timeframes are not met, it causes a delay before the planning commission, and therefore a delay for customers. Employees from the sustainable community section report that it is routine for the Engineering and Hydrology section to either miss deadlines (usually an agreed upon two-week window for response), provide questionable due diligence on the project, or appear to gloss over critical review for their area of responsibility. In contrast, however, there appears to be good compliance with deadlines from external stakeholders.

An exception worth noting, however, is the response provided internally from the “grading review” expert. This employee was almost universally lauded for his comprehensive and often “ahead of schedule” response to the planning section.

The autonomy and lack of teamwork and group-focus allows the separate sections within the Division to easily blame another section for issues as they arise, and leads to breakdowns in the permitting and review process resulting in longer wait times for customers.

Management

Employee Perception

Employees discussed many frustrations with management that can be categorized in three major areas and are exacerbated, ironically, by the existing number of managers. Employees report that management is: 1) routinely “missing” or “unavailable;” 2) “non-responsive;” or 3) “incapable of managing,” and/or “incapable of making a decision.”

Managers Unavailable

Employees report it is not uncommon to seek decisions from section managers only to discover closed offices up and down the hall. (It is important to note that most of the managers are segregated from office staff at the opposite end of the Division. This physical distance may contribute to a sense of psychological separation and isolation from their supervisors). Routinely, employees report that if the Director happened to be out of the office, most of management would be gone. This lack of availability causes discomfort for employees who are reportedly admonished to “use their chain-of-command,” but who often cannot find a person in their “chain.” It is important to note that this “theme” of unavailability is directed towards section management, not necessarily towards “lead” or “principal” management levels. In many cases, lower level management are the only level available for decision-making. This “non-availability” of section management is such a concern that it manifested itself in how the employees’ spoke to us regarding the overall office structure. Many employees did not level this observation as a criticism, but rather simply described the situation as “what is” – that is, non-available management is so common, it comes as a surprise when managers are in the office. The irony is potentially having too many managers, yet being unable to find one when you need one.

Management “Non-Responsiveness”

When section managers are available for employees, employees report they are quite often “non-responsive.” Questions to supervisors are rarely answered – or if answered, not in a timely fashion. To the credit of the Associate Director, at his level, questions are answered and decisions made. However, the decisions or rationale for the decisions is not documented. Many employees reported they would press an issue to his level in order to reach a decision. In one example, an employee at work in the field was attempting to reach the section manager by phone to resolve an issue. The section manager was in the office but simply ignored the desk phone and the calls on the mobile phone. In frustration, the employee contacted the Associate Director, who walked next door and told the section manager to call the employee back. Again, throughout the course of the organizational review, we heard such lack of responsiveness was the accepted operating procedure within the majority of the Division (the exception is the Building Inspections Lead Supervisor).

The review team was provided numerous additional examples of management non-responsiveness during the interviews. While we recognize there may be many legitimate reasons that affect section managers and their responsiveness – reasons that may involve managers prioritizing competing requests and are appropriately within the purview of management to decide – we heard that such behavior was a “norm” not the exception to the rule. Examples include the slow “release of financial bonds,” information “sitting on the manager’s desk,” and routine delays in getting responses from a section manager on building development issues. Whether the delays are caused by legitimate concerns or not, the accepted business practice within the agency reveals a lack of management. If delays or the lack of timely responses are due to workload issues, expectations for response-times should be modified; and when expected timelines will not be met, communication should occur outlining the reasons for the delay. Alternatively, if delays are the result of a lack of follow-through or other reasons, sections managers should be held accountable by their superiors.

Management Incapable of Managing/Making a Decision

Employees report that quite often supervisors either refuse to resolve issues, seem incapable of resolving issues, or more often than not, push the decisions back down the chain-of-command. This results in a high degree of frustration on employees who then spend their time attempting to resolve issues without the involvement of management or are forced into a circular process that delays resolution of various issues for clients and customers. We recognize there may be legitimate issues that individual section managers may be reluctant to resolve on their own due to the potential policy implications for the Office, but given the general lack of responsiveness and follow-through from section managers as reported by employees, it appears routine decisions get delayed and thereby impact the public.

Secondarily, there appears to be widespread perception within the Office that certain managers lack the necessary skills to effectively manage. Clearly there seems to be a lack of formal managerial training. Even with formal training and education, some managers within the Division struggle with some of the basic competencies required to effectively manage diverse people and responsibilities.

Managements' Perception

Our conversations with the Associate Director and section managers (those individuals who directly report to the Associate Director) revealed a significantly different perspective. Almost to a person, the interviews revealed an attitude of “If the administration [meaning the Department Director and Mayor’s Office] would simply leave us alone, we’d be able to get our jobs done.” In fact, we heard from more than one section manager that it usually takes a year to eighteen months to “break in” a new administration, but the current administration has not left them alone.

The Associate Director doesn’t trust the Public Works Director or the County’s Chief Administrative Officer. He believes the Corroon administration is secretive, is the worst concerning trust issues and that 95% of the Division staff feel this way. He also believes Division management is trusted and respected by staff. This belief is contrary to the survey results—62% of staff said they did not trust the Division management and 64% said management shows favoritism.

Other Managerial Issues

Lack of Will to Manage Appropriately

Interviews showed that although tools exist in the County and Division to manage appropriately, managers rarely use them to effectively correct poor behavior. Generally speaking, if a behavior problem is identified, the only corrective action taken by management is to verbally correct the employee’s behavior. There is little or no documentation used to record the appropriate date, time, and subject matter of the poor behavior or the action taken to correct the behavior. Several examples were provided by different employees throughout the interview process that describes the lack of will to manage appropriately.

- When section managers cannot resolve employee problems, the Associate Director resolves the problem by telling the employee to “knock it off and get back to work.”
- Complaints were made to management about an employee who does not get along with co-workers. After attempts to correct the behavior through discussions, management determined the best course of action to correct the behavior was to require an escort for the employee each and every time the job required business to be conducted at the other employee’s location.
- For some employees, micromanagement is the rule and not the exception. As an example, some staff must email their supervisor for permission before leaving their work space. This course of action was instituted to prevent employees from vacating the work area and leaving customers unattended.
- The Planning Section was separated into three distinct work units because two of the managers were often in conflict on how to apply County ordinance and were further unable to work together to resolve their differences. The third unit was then placed under the direct supervision of the Division Director due to the inability of the section manager to effectively supervise his subordinate. This created a split between the east and west sides of the County and distanced long range planning within the section. These changes run the risk of conflicting interpretation of ordinance between the east and west sides of the County.
- One manager spends an inappropriate amount of time with a subordinate female (although not a direct report) who is also an employee of the Division. Many staff discussed this in interviews and described the situation as disruptive to the office. The former Division Director gave explicit instructions to the Associate Director to ensure the behavior stopped. When the behavior continued, the former Division Director called a meeting with the Associate Director and the offending manager and verbally counseled the employee to stop. Nothing was documented in the personnel file and reportedly the behavior continues.

The examples above are a few in a list of many that describe an ineffective Division management staff that either lacks the appropriate training to take corrective action or a simple lack of will to do what is right. Furthermore, Division management ignored the Department Director directives to clean up personnel issues within the Division.

Lack of Support Among Management Team

Collegiality and support among the management staff is significantly lacking. Personnel issues have been complicated because of this lack of support for fellow managers. For example, one manager had been working through a disciplinary issue with an employee concerning part of a work product. The employee was upset about the pending discipline and went to another manager in an effort to stop the discipline. This resulted in circumventing the disciplinary process and left the employee's immediate manager helpless to resolve the problem. Furthermore, the two managers failed to communicate their actions leaving the original problem unresolved and creating another problem, that of "manager shopping."

The relationship between the former Division Director and many on the division management team was dysfunctional and lacked trust and support. For instance, the Associate Director believed the Division Director lacked leadership and technical skills and had no understanding of County policy and procedure. This was further complicated by the Associate Directors statements of mistrust for the Department Director and Chief Administrative Officer. In his words, "they don't get it."

Managers are generally unavailable and fail to communicate and/or coordinate their time away from the office. This often leads to employees unable to receive direction at crucial times during the work process. Additionally, staff complain that management fails to resolve problems and that some do not understand the work process therefore inhibiting problem solving.

Chain-Of-Command

Chain-of-Command is a common topic throughout the interviews but it is unclear if it's a good or bad practice. Nearly all employees referenced the chain-of-command in the Division and discussed the requirement to take issues up the chain-of-command and to not go around it. However, it became clear to the interviewers that there is inconsistent use of and enforcement of the chain-of-command structure. Examples include:

- Employees look to their supervisor to resolve questions and receive direction. If their supervisor is unavailable, they go to the next level. Sometimes, they reported, it was so difficult to find a manager in their "chain" they went to whoever they could find to answer the question.
- When decisions are made, the information does not reach the manager/supervisor responsible for implementing the decision which results in a search for a manager who knows the information.
- Employees feel they can get a "better" answer by asking other managers ("I didn't like that answer, I'll ask someone else")
- Employees seek a manager that will provide support in a situation when their manager will not.

Generally, managers followed the chain-of-command when making requests for work. Managers were frustrated with the former Division Director because he tended to go directly to employees to assign work instead of following the chain-of-command.

Communication

An effective communication process is generally missing in Planning and Development. The survey results indicated 60% of employees feel communication within their section is effective, only 28% said the same for the overall Division. This highlights the “silo” mentality. While the management team discussed holding regular management team meetings and sharing the results with their section staff; line staff, overall, told a different story. They expressed frustration with the communication system. Frustrations include:

- Cancellation of regularly scheduled unit meetings so Division issues are not discussed.
- No consistent process for sharing information — staff generally heard about changes through the grapevine or after breaking a new procedure (and being reprimanded for something they did not know about).
- Little, if any, documentation of new decisions, policies, or procedures. No one could tell us where they could find the most current status of this information. Some thought that some other person might have a book, or it might be on a shared computer drive, but they were not sure.
- When staff have questions, it is difficult to find consistent answers to the question – ask three different managers, get three different answers.
- Although staff are told there is an “open door” policy, when issues are raised, they are generally not addressed.

Staff also discussed frustration with communication across the sections. They tended to blame breakdowns in the review process on a lack of information from staff in other sections (e.g., planners did not receive the information they needed from either the front counter or Development Engineering; Development Engineering said they did not receive the information needed from the planners). This lack of information slowed review processes and reduced the ability to provide good customer service.

The chain-of-command expectation is also cited as a problem for the flow of information. Staff from one section are required to talk to their manager, who then talked to the manager of the other section, who then talked to their subordinate. Some staff determined this process to be too frustrating and inefficient and chose to go directly to the appropriate employee for information.

Planning staff are split among three supervisors who tend to disagree on policy and ordinance interpretation. To be more consistent, planning staff report developing their own informal communication network — joining each other at regular informal lunches to discuss issues they face.

Decision-Making Process

The decision-making processes within Planning and Development Services are, at best, undefined and inconsistent. While the survey found that 95% of the employees say they have access to the information they need for their job, interviews with staff painted a very different picture. A majority of staff mentioned they do not understand how decisions are made or how they can access the results. Management discussed regular meetings where discussions are held and decisions made regarding policies and procedures as well as management issues, but staff indicated they often do not learn of the decisions until they are in violation.

In addition, managers and supervisors make decisions interpreting and clarifying ordinances and policies without consultation with others. In a number of cases, staff disagreed with the interpretations but were required to operate in ways they felt were in conflict with the ordinance. In other cases, proposed new ordinances were drafted with very little input from Division staff. A majority of staff said when decisions are made that changed policy, procedure, or application of an ordinance, it was rarely documented. This leads to inconsistent adherence and enforcement and the inability to refer to a clarifying source. Inconsistent enforcement of ordinances causes customer complaints, “Why do I need to do this if my neighbor does not?”

Decisions are provided last minute and lack time for involvement, discussion, or preparation. This often results in a negative impact to the customer and poor morale in the Division.

Accountability

Most employees (83%) said they have a clear understanding of their job responsibilities, yet the employee survey found that only half (50%) felt employees are held accountable for the results of their work and 49% said managers are held accountable for the results of their sections. The lack of accountability was a common theme in the interviews, except among the building safety inspectors and code enforcement employees. Within that section, they were all very aware of the expectations for their work, are held accountable for its completion, and for following policies and procedures. It is important to note, however, they attribute this to their lead supervisor rather than to the section manager.

Some staff indicated they are not held accountable by their managers, but have high expectations for themselves so they work hard to get the job done. Other employees said their customers keep them accountable by ensuring certain work product was completed in certain time frames to meet the customer need. It was telling to the review team however, that when asked this question about who held them accountable, most of the staff looked to outside customers or their personal work ethic for feedback first, and only to management as an after-thought.

Feedback is an important component to accountability within an organization. Without it, an organization can not improve. Staff describe an atmosphere of little feedback. Many said their primary formal feedback occurs annually in their performance evaluations — which is insufficient to allow for growth. Others said they receive feedback only when something goes wrong.

The themes around accountability are similar to those addressed throughout this report. In general, there is little accountability for:

- **Work completed:** Interviews indicated that staff and managers are not held accountable for completing their work, ensuring accuracy, and addressing issues when they are discovered. Staff report that duties and responsibilities go unattended while management staff are out of the office because they fail to assign these duties to somebody else. This impacts customer service poorly as well as morale – employees are left providing excuses to the customers as to why the work has not been completed.
- **Decisions:** Decisions, when made, are rarely documented and often not shared fully with the staff. This makes applying and enforcing decisions consistently very difficult.
- **Policy/procedures:** The application of policies and procedures is inconsistent. Dress codes, time off, breaks/lunches, and discipline are inconsistently applied across sections and employees. Employees are held accountable at different levels and in different ways.
- **Poor Behavior:** In both the Planning section and Front Counter, employees describe “work arounds” for employees instead of holding them accountable for behavior.
- **Managers:** There is an atmosphere of cronyism and favoritism. In the perception of much of the staff, management appears to excuse themselves from the rules and apply rules differently throughout the Division. Managers appear to make their own hours, accumulate compensatory time and have significant flexibility. In contrast, however, staff is required to work and be accountable for 40 hours per week. This is such an issue that a written memo was distributed about the importance of being honest in reporting their work hours. Despite this, staff report most of management leaves by 3 PM, often earlier on Fridays, and some take long lunches and breaks.

Generally, when policies/procedures are violated or employees are engaged in unprofessional behavior, they are told to “knock it off” instead of being held accountable through the use of disciplinary tools such as written warnings. Because of this, there is little documentation of violations in personnel folders.

The lack of accountability existed throughout the Division prior to the appointment of the most recent Director. It appears the former Division Director attempted to hold management accountable for job performance but that “entrenched management” were resistant to these attempts.

Professional Ethic

In the survey, 83% of respondents said “employees are expected to maintain high standards and ethics.” Yet, interviews revealed a general lack of professional ethic at all levels within the organization. It is clear that there is a real disconnect between what employees believe and office practice. For example:

- Managers reportedly arrive late and leave early during the day, with no expectation for office coverage and coordination.
- Unprofessional conversations among employees occur. While this has been reduced in the past year, it appears to continue.
- Personal relationships occur among employees on county time.
- Support across sections to ensure work is completed accurately and in a timely manner is lacking.
- Accountability for completing tasks and serving the public is minimal.

In addition, the work environment is considered unsafe (due to a fear of retribution) for many in the Division. Some staff members talked of keeping personal lists of bad or unethical decisions made by management to protect themselves and the County against future retribution. Many were hesitant to be honest with the inquiry due to their fear of the “wrath of management.”

There is also a pervasive perception among employees that some members of the management team override (or instruct staff to override) ordinance and/or the review, permitting, or code enforcement processes. Some staff said a member of the management team required them to sign documents they felt were incorrect or they were uncomfortable with so that the manager did not have final responsibility for the decision and could avoid blame.

Trust

Trust in management is lacking in Planning and Development Services. Only 54% of employees said they trust the (former) Division Director; slightly fewer (51%) trust their section manager; and even fewer (38%) trust the management team, overall. Interviews bore out these findings. Staff in most sections discussed a number of issues that had led to this distrust:

- Staff do not rely on management to back them up. If customers are unhappy with a decision made at the staff level, they can seek out management to overturn decisions. Staff are accused of making poor decisions and left feeling defensive because of the accusatory way management approaches them about the subject.

- Staff reported that some members of upper management show disdain for planners.
- Decisions are made among the management team without input or feedback from staff. Staff members know management meetings occur but they “don’t know what happens in there. Decisions are made and we’re not sure why.” Staff are told there is an open-door policy for input but when ideas/concerns are shared, nothing is done about them.

The management team also reports a lack of trust for the Public Works Department Director. Division management believes that the Department Director does not trust their expertise and does not understand the issues the Division faces. Management questions the decisions made at the Department level and believe that decisions and assignments are given without appropriate support. The management team expresses frustration at the multiple reviews of their Division. They believe that things are going well and the organization should be left to conduct its business.

Gossip

Gossip is pervasive within the Division and is very destructive. Gossip is the informal communication network — information spreads quickly. Early on, the former Division Director addressed the issue and put into place a “no gossip” rule. The situation improved some, but gossip continues. Reviewers were surprised by the efficiency of the grapevine, as some information from one interview was back to us by the next day in other interviews.

Customer Service

Most staff told us customer service is a focus for Planning and Development Services. The survey showed 89% of the employees believe customer service is a high priority for the Division and 82% say the Division provides high customer service. Customer service was a priority for the former Division Director and there was significant discussion about the need to provide good customer service. However, discussions of process and employee activity indicated to the review team that their view of customer service was limited. Examples include poor direct customer service; incorrect applications (e.g., building permits, conditional use permits); inconsistent permitting process and treatment of customers; inattention to deadlines and lack of coordination across sections which slows the permitting process; and lack of updates to customers as they participate (or wait) for the process.

Staff report that these issues were brought to the attention of Division management. There appears to be little effort to address them or to build a “cross-sectional” sense of cohesion and teamwork based upon a shared sense of responsibility in meeting customer needs.

Training & Orientation

The availability and desire for training varied. Interviews with employees painted a picture of a stagnant learning environment. In the survey, approximately two-thirds of employees said they received the training and education they needed to do their jobs. While some employees had the opportunity to attend out-of-state training and conferences, others had not received any training for a number of years beyond what was needed for certification. Most agreed, little Division funding is available for training. Newer employees described starting the job without the necessary tools and general support — particularly in the Planning area. Most said they had little or no orientation or mentoring, and that they learned review processes by looking at what other planners did and previous plans to determine the steps. Reviews of policies and procedures were also lacking. One planner discussed setting up his own computer, ordering his own long distance access code, and accessing an identification card. This lack of early guidance can lead to longer start-up productivity and inconsistent practice. The Building Safety section did not have the same issues. They reported strong support and orientation through the Lead Supervisor.

Only one section manager had completed a formal management training program, others had attended a few classes through County training opportunities, while the remainder of the group said they had had no formal management training. There is little appetite for improving management skills.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this organizational review revealed a deeply troubled Division beset with long-rooted dysfunction that will require significant efforts to correct. This dysfunction stems from historic problems such as the merger of two formerly independent divisions in 2000 whose complete integration failed to occur, a lack of strong leadership within the agency, a disengaged and disconnected division management team, an overall lack of vision for the agency, a lack of mutual respect and support among employees and across sections of the office, a pervasive and tolerated attitude of distrust, gossip and unprofessional conduct, and a overarching lack of professional ethic throughout most sections of the Division.

We recommend the following actions be taken to begin moving this Division forward:

- Establish and communicate a clear purpose and vision for Planning and Development Services at all levels within the Division and hold managers and staff accountable for knowing, understanding and modeling behavior to meet the vision.
- Hire a strong administrator capable of setting professional expectations and holding people accountable for their actions and behaviors. While it may be beneficial if this person has a professional background in Planning and Development Services, the primary focus should be upon his/her public administration skills and proven track record of effective management.
- Share with employees the professional standards of conduct expected of every employee in Salt Lake County. Ensure they understand the professional working environment expected and hold employees accountable for their behavior under these standards.
- Develop, implement and model an “accountability structure” based upon setting clear expectations for employees, providing regular and timely feedback to them and willingness to use appropriate management tools as necessary.
- Develop and implement an effective communication system that embraces transparency and provides relevant information to employees so that they can successfully function in their jobs.
- Develop and implement a “decision-making structure” that codifies decisions at all levels, (e.g., office policy, ordinance changes, day-to-day business practices), shares the decisions, and makes them accessible throughout the Division. This system must address the topic of the decisions and why decisions are made so that employees can begin to deepen their professional understanding of issues they face. Additionally, and most importantly, formal communication must be codified in writing to begin creating a history of decision-making.
- Identify best practices and best structures for similar offices around the Nation and implement best practices in Salt Lake County.

- Examine the existing organizational structure and work processes and make changes where needed, including examining the existing management structure and modifying it to an appropriate size for effective management and customer service.
- Insist upon on-going, formal management training for all persons in supervisory roles; consider requiring a minimum number of continuing education management hours per year for each person.
- Re-structure existing miscellaneous positions within the office to maximize the effectiveness of incumbents in the positions and where needed, modify job descriptions to add value to the organization.
- Develop an “ordinance review team” made up of all stakeholders within the Division (including the long-range planning team) and task them with on-going ordinance review, modification, drafting, and communication to ensure ordinances are not developed in isolation and can effectively be administered.
- Develop one, three, and five year goals and actions plans.
- Hold in-house, mandatory classes for all employees on anti-discrimination and harassment prevention and standards of conduct.
- Develop strategy to replace the Hansen technology system.
- Provide the employees with the support and encouragement necessary to help build a first class Planning and Development agency.

ATTACHMENT A – ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

ATTACHMENT B – SURVEY RESULTS



Salt Lake County Planning and Development Services Division 2008 Employee Organizational Chart

Updated: August 1, 2008

The Planning and Development Services Division is separated into five programs. Each Program is intended to support the 2008 County Priorities established by Mayor Corroon.

Business License & Customer Service: (Quality Government)

Administration: (Education)

Sustainable Communities: (Quality of Life, Natural Environment, Economic Development)

Development Engineering & Hydrology: (Natural Environment)

Building Safety & Code Enforcement: (Public Safety)

Salt Lake County Mayor's Office

Public Works Department Director

Planning & Development Services Liaison
Laurie Nish

Planning and Development Services Division Director
Simon Ginn

Office Coordinator
Kathy Hart

Associate Director & Chief Building Official
Delbert Swensen

Business License and Customer Service

- Section Manager**
June Wirthlin
- Business License & Inspection Specialist**
Sally Anderson
- Office Specialist**
Billie Lujan, Christine Malave, Open Position
- Development Review Planner**
Travis Van Ekelenburg
- Customer Service Specialist**
Brittany Grimes, Trena Freeman, Jim Nakamura, Open Position

(QF 93)

Administration

- Section Manager**
Randy Allen
- Controlled Assets/ Cash Handling/ Purchasing/Requisitions Specialist**
Nicki Kapos-Reich

(QF 99)

Sustainable Communities

- Section Manager**
Tom Roach
- Township & Community Development Review Processes, Entitlements, Boards/Commissions Support**
Magna, County, Kearns
- Township & Community Development Review Processes, Entitlements, Boards/Commissions Support**
Millcreek, Copperton, Emigration
- Township/Regional/Cooperative Planning, Ordinances, Sustainability "Green Building Practices", Matrix and Large Scale Development Processes**
- Principal Planner Development Review**
Debbie Riddle
- Principal Planner Development Review**
Tom Schafer
- Principal Planner Long Range Planning**
David White
- Development Review Planner**
Todd Draper, David Gellner, Carol Wong
- Development Review Planner**
Spencer Brimley, Craig Hinckley, Spencer Sanders
- Long Range Planner**
Elli Coskey, Max Johnson, Curtis Woodward
- Planning Commission Coordinator**
Jerelyn Willden
- Planning Commission Coordinator**
Chara Ellis, Acting-In
- Arc GIS Specialist**
Amy McClelland
- Imaging/Documents/ Recordings Specialist**
Glenn Hammer

(QF 91)

Development Engineering & Hydrology

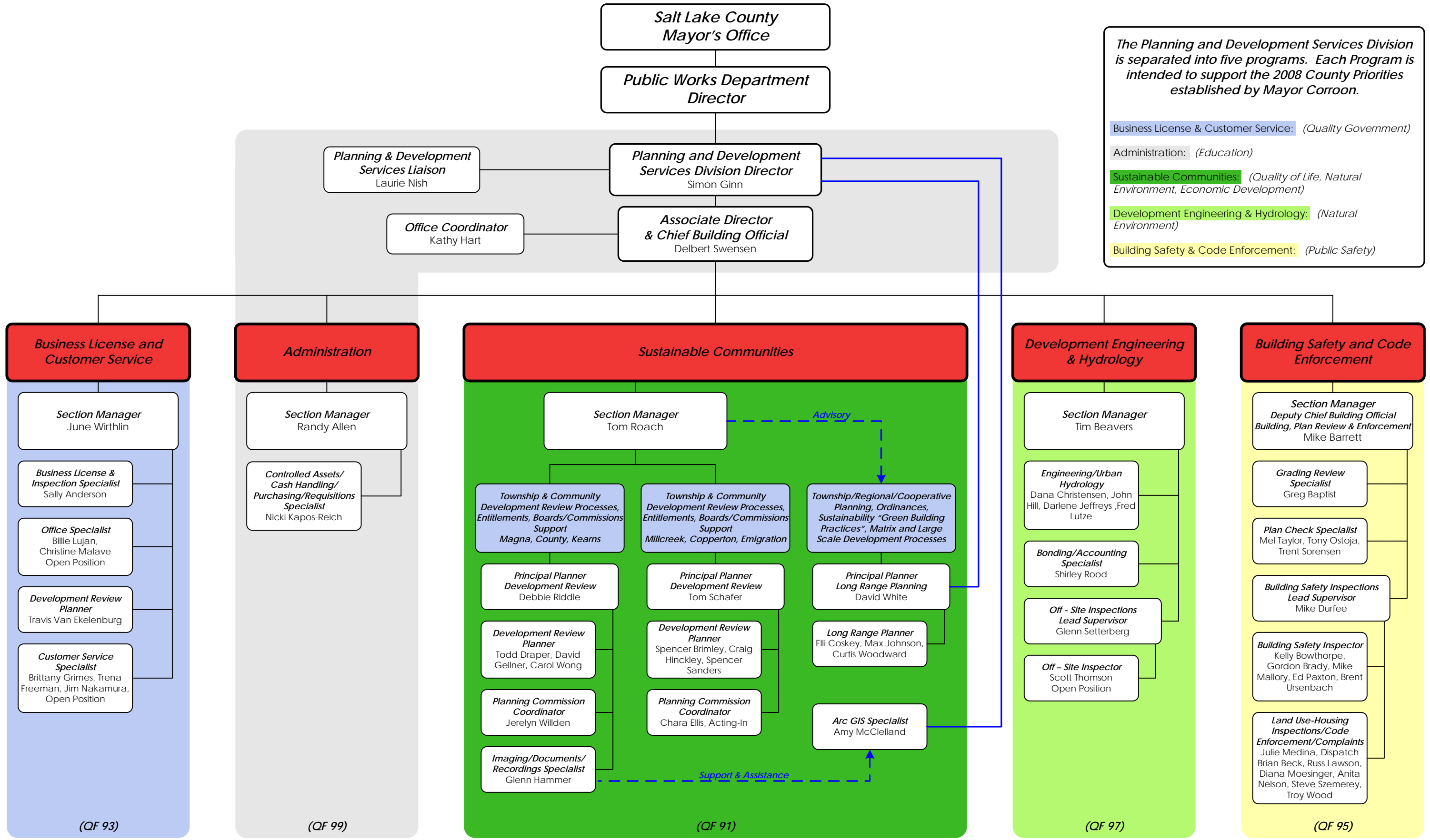
- Section Manager**
Tim Beavers
- Engineering/Urban Hydrology**
Dana Christensen, John Hill, Darlene Jeffreys, Fred Lutze
- Bonding/Accounting Specialist**
Shirley Road
- Off - Site Inspections Lead Supervisor**
Glenn Setterberg
- Off - Site Inspector**
Scott Thomson, Open Position

(QF 97)


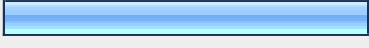
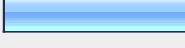
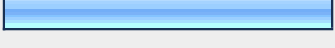
Building Safety and Code Enforcement

- Section Manager Deputy Chief Building Official Building, Plan Review & Enforcement**
Mike Barrett
- Grading Review Specialist**
Greg Baptist
- Plan Check Specialist**
Mel Taylor, Tony Ostoja, Trent Sorensen
- Building Safety Inspections Lead Supervisor**
Mike Durfee
- Building Safety Inspector**
Kelly Bowthorpe, Gordon Brady, Mike Mallory, Ed Paxton, Brent Urnsbach
- Land Use-Housing Inspections/Code Enforcement/Complaints**
Julie Medina, Dispatch Brian Beck, Russ Lawson, Diana Moesinger, Anita Nelson, Steve Szemerey, Troy Wood

(QF 95)



Planning & Development

1. Please indicate the section you work in.			Response Percent	Response Count
Business License & Customer Services			4.0%	1
Sustainable Communities/Planning			40.0%	10
Development			20.0%	5
Building Safety/Code Enforcement			36.0%	9
Management/Administration			0.0%	0
			answered question	25
			skipped question	30

2. Please check one box for each question.					
	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
1. I have access to the information I need to do my job.	37.0% (20)	57.4% (31)	3.7% (2)	1.9% (1)	54
2. I trust the information that the division Director provides to employees.	39.6% (21)	26.4% (14)	24.5% (13)	9.4% (5)	53
3. I trust the information that my program manager provides to employees.	31.5% (17)	35.2% (19)	25.9% (14)	7.4% (4)	54
4. The division director encourages open, honest, and constructive communication.	35.2% (19)	31.5% (17)	27.8% (15)	5.6% (3)	54
5. My section manager encourages open, honest, and constructive communication.	39.6% (21)	30.2% (16)	20.8% (11)	9.4% (5)	53
6. Management, overall, encourages open, honest, and constructive communication.	22.2% (12)	44.4% (24)	18.5% (10)	14.8% (8)	54
7. There is good communication within my section in Planning & Development.	18.5% (10)	42.6% (23)	22.2% (12)	16.7% (9)	54

8. There is good communication across sections in Planning & Development.	1.9% (1)	26.4% (14)	43.4% (23)	28.3% (15)	53
9. I have a clear understanding of my job responsibilities and expectations.	46.3% (25)	37.0% (20)	14.8% (8)	1.9% (1)	54
10. I have the resources and equipment I need to do my job.	35.2% (19)	48.1% (26)	9.3% (5)	7.4% (4)	54
11. I receive the training and continuing education I need to do my job.	24.1% (13)	44.4% (24)	24.1% (13)	7.4% (4)	54
12. I have the ability to use my own judgment and initiative when carrying out my job.	37.0% (20)	44.4% (24)	9.3% (5)	9.3% (5)	54
13. My workload is appropriate.	27.8% (15)	59.3% (32)	13.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	54
14. We have enough employees to do the work in my area.	24.1% (13)	40.7% (22)	20.4% (11)	14.8% (8)	54
15. I work in a safe environment.	33.3% (18)	48.1% (26)	14.8% (8)	3.7% (2)	54
16. I have equipment that helps ensure my safety on the job.	49.1% (26)	41.5% (22)	9.4% (5)	0.0% (0)	53
17. When I do well in my job, my contribution is recognized.	15.1% (8)	43.4% (23)	18.9% (10)	22.6% (12)	53
18. I believe I am adequately compensated for the job I do.	12.7% (7)	54.5% (30)	21.8% (12)	10.9% (6)	55
19. Management does not show favoritism among employees in Planning & Development.	3.6% (2)	32.7% (18)	30.9% (17)	32.7% (18)	55
20. I have a clear understanding of the division director's vision for the organization.	7.4% (4)	40.7% (22)	35.2% (19)	16.7% (9)	54
21. Management, overall, supports and is working toward implementing the director's vision for the organization.	7.8% (4)	33.3% (17)	43.1% (22)	15.7% (8)	51
22. I believe our organization is moving in the right direction.	11.3% (6)	49.1% (26)	28.3% (15)	11.3% (6)	53
23. My supervisor treats me with respect.	50.9% (27)	28.3% (15)	17.0% (9)	3.8% (2)	53

24. My section manager treats me with respect.	43.4% (23)	32.1% (17)	20.8% (11)	3.8% (2)	53
25. The division director treats me with respect.	41.5% (22)	26.4% (14)	24.5% (13)	7.5% (4)	53
26. All employees in the organization treat each other with respect.	1.9% (1)	40.4% (21)	28.8% (15)	28.8% (15)	52
27. Employees from all cultural backgrounds are treated fairly and with respect by other employees.	17.0% (9)	64.2% (34)	13.2% (7)	5.7% (3)	53
28. Policies and procedures are applied fairly to all employees in the organization.	11.1% (6)	38.9% (21)	27.8% (15)	22.2% (12)	54
29. Employees are expected to maintain high standards and ethics.	25.9% (14)	57.4% (31)	9.3% (5)	7.4% (4)	54
30. My section manager does a good job of involving me in decisions that affect me.	24.1% (13)	29.6% (16)	27.8% (15)	18.5% (10)	54
31. Customer service is a high priority in our organization.	44.4% (24)	44.4% (24)	1.9% (1)	9.3% (5)	54
32. Our employees are trained and prepared to serve customers from all cultural backgrounds.	11.5% (6)	50.0% (26)	30.8% (16)	7.7% (4)	52
33. There is good teamwork among managers at all levels in Planning & Development.	5.8% (3)	38.5% (20)	30.8% (16)	25.0% (13)	52
34. I am treated as a valued team member by other Planning & Development employees.	16.7% (9)	59.3% (32)	22.2% (12)	1.9% (1)	54
35. I would recommend Planning & Development to a friend seeking employment because I think it is a good place to work.	20.8% (11)	34.0% (18)	34.0% (18)	11.3% (6)	53
36. I have a clear understanding of the mission and goals of the organization.	14.8% (8)	44.4% (24)	33.3% (18)	7.4% (4)	54
37. I believe employees in Planning & Development trust the division director.	14.8% (8)	38.9% (21)	24.1% (13)	22.2% (12)	54
38. I believe employees in Planning & Development trust management, overall.	3.8% (2)	34.0% (18)	35.8% (19)	26.4% (14)	53

39. I believe employees in my section trust our section manager.	22.2% (12)	29.6% (16)	38.9% (21)	9.3% (5)	54
40. Employees at all levels in Planning & Development cooperate and work as a team.	0.0% (0)	44.4% (24)	37.0% (20)	18.5% (10)	54
41. All employees are held accountable for the results of their work.	3.8% (2)	47.2% (25)	26.4% (14)	22.6% (12)	53
42. Managers are held accountable for the results of their sections.	9.8% (5)	39.2% (20)	29.4% (15)	21.6% (11)	51
43. My section manager encourages employees to actively suggest ways we can improve the way we do things.	34.0% (18)	37.7% (20)	15.1% (8)	13.2% (7)	53
44. When mistakes are made, my supervisor emphasizes lessons learned rather than placing blame on someone.	29.6% (16)	42.6% (23)	14.8% (8)	13.0% (7)	54
45. I feel responsible for working towards achieving the organization's mission and goals.	37.0% (20)	51.9% (28)	9.3% (5)	1.9% (1)	54
46. There is good teamwork among employees of the different sections.	5.8% (3)	42.3% (22)	42.3% (22)	9.6% (5)	52
47. Issues of interpersonal conflict (personality conflicts, finger pointing, gossip, etc.) are not tolerated by management.	15.1% (8)	47.2% (25)	15.1% (8)	22.6% (12)	53
48. Planning & Development provides high quality customer service.	25.9% (14)	55.6% (30)	11.1% (6)	7.4% (4)	54
	answered question				55
	skipped question				0

3. Please provide any comments you would like to add:

		Response Count
		36
	<i>answered question</i>	36
	<i>skipped question</i>	19