

**2016 CSAC Challenge Awards
Executive Summary**

Planning & Development Land Development Process Reorganization

OVERVIEW: In 2012, the County Board of Supervisors established Planning & Development Services (PDS) as a new, centralized and consolidated department.

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE: Historically within the County of San Diego, land use processes were divided amongst three County departments - Planning & Land Use, Public Works and Parks & Recreation. When applying for permits, customers would work with all three departments separately, resulting in a process that was often lengthy, fragmented, difficult and confusing. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) continually received feedback from customers regarding extensive permit-processing times and dissatisfaction with the land development process and decision-making. This land use business model did not support the County of San Diego's commitment to providing exceptional customer service.

SOLUTION: In September 2012 the Board of Supervisors (BOS) established the new and reorganized PDS. The intent of the BOS was to dramatically improve land development services provided by the County through a centralized department with a culture of customer service and excellence. The newly established PDS leadership team quickly developed an immediate and strategic approach to engage customers and involve employees to achieve this direction, while at the same time improving department functions and services. The strategic plan, based on the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Baldrige performance criteria, framed and refocused all efforts to achieving "Organizational Excellence," by creating three high level goals and taking immediate short-term actions grouped under the five initial focus areas below:

Three Key Goals	Five Initial Focus Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improve customer service● Achieve a high performing workforce● Reduce costs and increase productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mission, Vision, & Values● Triple Bottom Line● Workforce Development & Training● Case & Project Management● Performance Management

All staff members are involved in this ongoing and recurring process. Dialogue with staff and executive leaders through monthly supervisor, quarterly small-group and all-staff meetings socialize organizational development. Community and customers are engaged through regular contact with land development industry groups and a

monthly digital “e-Blast” which reports PDS news and events. Initial efforts are now integrated and socialized through the PDS implementation of the County’s highly successful General Management System (GMS).

ORIGINALITY: Traditionally, land development services were spread over three departments. This system was reorganized and functionally improved to establish land development services under one unified and managed division. The Land Development Division was formed with the purpose and goal of providing exceptional customer service and the process reorganization has resulted in:

- A single point of case and project management from application to approval,
- Functionally threaded cross-departmental teams (Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Health, Agricultural Weights and Measures and General Services) have improved the completeness of work, quality control, and proactive issue identification and resolution, and
- A dramatic reduction of permit processing time.

COST EFFECTIVENESS: Consolidating land use services has decreased the cost of permit processing for customers and has reduced customer wait times for many permit types. In addition, the creation of a Performance Improvement Team within PDS has led to the development of several online tools for customers that make permit processing easier and quicker for customers and staff alike. The Performance Improvement Team’s online and process improvement projects have resulted in the saving of 6,062 hours in staff time and \$527,000 in total costs for the one-year time period from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

RESULTS: The revamped PDS has successfully reduced permit processing times for many permit types, improved the customer experience at our permit center, offered a number of new online services, established performance measures with published results online, and created an internal Performance Improvement Team dedicated to continuous improvement. The collective efforts of the PDS team continue to receive positive accolades from our customers, industry, environmental groups, and others. In May 2015, PDS was awarded the Golden Watchdog award from the San Diego County Taxpayers Association for the PDS Streamlined Permitting Process. Additionally, PDS received two 2015 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards for the Performance Improvement Team and the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program. Receiving these awards, as well as the ongoing positive feedback received from customers, symbolizes the department’s ongoing commitment to organizational excellence.

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