

## Memphis & Shelby County Division of Planning & Development Efficiency/Innovation Report

Beginning in the spring of 2008, the Division of Planning and Development began an extensive review process that included several phases.

- Interviews: Two hundred employees were interviewed to determine actual work performed (not based on job description), customer supplier chains and cultural issues. Emerging themes were identified by section and Division that were then addressed.
- Observations: Work was observed to identify key processes, activity flow and efficiencies.
- Leave Audit: One emerging theme in the interviews was employee complaints of coworkers taking extensive leave. An audit was conducted of employee leave that spanned a 3.5 year period. Identified abuse of leave was then addressed with management and employees.
- Workload & Revenue Tracking: Productivity was analyzed in Code Enforcement by tracking workload over a 5-year period. Additionally, revenue by the various sections was tracked. Charting the workload and revenues, facilitated determining the number of positions that could be eliminated and not adversely affect overall work performance and customer service. Based on the data, 31 filled positions throughout the Division were eliminated in February 2009.
- Visioning Retreat: All employees (except Code Enforcement) participated in a half day visioning retreat. They identified barriers to being a “first rate” division, functions the Division should be doing and those that should be eliminated, skill sets needed by employees, additional funding sources, communication needs, technological needs, workforce strengths and weaknesses, political issues that affect the work, and policy development and approval responsibilities.
- Cost Reduction Measures: During the interviewing phase, employees’ suggestions for cost cutting measures and/or revenue enhancing activities were noted and implemented where feasible. In addition, managers were engaged in determining cost cutting measures that could be taken. Twenty-three vacant positions were eliminated and the Division wide budget was cut by 22.6% For example by centralizing the supply storeroom and controlling the inventory, significant savings were realized; and inspection routes were reconfigured for Code Enforcement resulting in less drive time for employees.
- Employee Teams: Teams of employees, both management and non-management have been engaged to study various key processes and determine methods to improve efficiency. For example, by flow-charting the sign permitting and renewal process, a team was able to identify and eliminate unnecessary work, streamline the process, and identify methods to increase revenues. A management team at Code Enforcement redesigned the permitting process for new commercial buildings, alterations and additions that will allow the projects to be better managed

and tracked over time. This team will continue to examine the key processes to build-in consistency and establish best practices across the disciplines of building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical.

- Fee Structure: Because fees have not been increased in 8-15 years, a study is underway to determine the actual costs to make specific inspections. A time-study was conducted through the automated tracking system at Code Enforcement to calculate personnel costs. This will be combined with equipment maintenance, fuel costs, etc. to accurately set a revised fee structure.
- Structure Redesign: Based on results of the Visioning Retreat a new team was recently formed to redesign the structure of the Division. Their charge is to research and benchmark other city and county planning divisions and recommend a new organizational structure. It is anticipated this will include relocating certain sections into a centralized area to best utilize the talents and skills of employees in a broader array of functions. This will be in contrast to the current organizational structure that perpetuates specialization and working in silos.

By concentrating on more data-driven information during the past year, the Division of Planning and Development has made difficult decisions, but has decreased expenses and maintained the workload. The Division will continue during the next year to find ways to work smarter and increase the revenue streams.