Community and Economic Development Department Performance Review

City of Riverside, California

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Scope of Review

- Comprehensive performance assessment and review of key financial operations of the Community and Economic Development Department.

- Specific areas of inquiry included:
  - Strategic Planning
  - Organizational Structure (consolidation, outsourcing, succession planning, staffing levels, project management, etc.)
  - Economic Impact – Special/cultural events, permitting practices, business attraction/retention, and revenue generation opportunities.
  - Fee Calculation and Collection practices
  - Asset Management (real property inventory/management)
  - Programs and Services
  - Management Systems
  - Interdepartmental Communication and Collaboration
  - Service Effectiveness – benchmarking, best practice evaluation, and key performance indicators
  - Compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

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Key Findings and Observations

- Operations are relatively well-coordinated under a unified mission.
- Strong lines of communication from Divisions to Department leadership.
- Clear reporting of division and departmental activities and performance that align with city-wide priorities.
- Community engagement is a strength of Neighborhoods and Arts programs.
- Successful implementation of a one-stop permitting counter/center through the Streamline Riverside program.
- Dedicated unit that processes the City's acquisition and disposal of city owned property, access agreements, and rights-of-way.
- No concerns regarding financial management / overtime.

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Structure and Staffing Recommendations

- Realign positions to create more consistency across divisions and enhance reporting structure, service delivery and succession planning efforts:
    - Create Principal Plan Check Engineer position,
    - Create Senior Permit Technician (or Supervisor) position,
    - Create Grants Writer position.
    - Standardize supervisor titles across divisions.
    - Create position of Chief Building Official.
    - Reclassify Supervising Real Property Agent position to Manager to oversee Real Property Services.
- Consolidate Neighborhoods and Arts and Cultural Affairs Divisions.
- Develop succession plan for key positions.
- Expand contracted support for building plan check and inspection services.
- Explore contracting more property management functions.

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Economic Impact Recommendations

- Transfer processing of Special Event Permits, Block Party Permits, and Film Permits to the Planning Division.
- Transfer Accounts Payable for The Box to Finance.
- Create a more cohesive and clear mission for the Economic Development Division.

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Fee Recommendations

- Create a fee estimator on website for applicant use.
- Provide a link to fee schedule on each divisional webpage.
- Identify fees on schedule that require a technology and general plan maintenance fee.
- Ensure pass through fees are adequate to cover all costs associated with processing applications.
- Establish Building and Safety and Planning services as an enterprise fund.
- Consider implementing a deferred revenue fund for building permit services to cover services (plan review / inspections) that span multiple fiscal years.

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Asset Management Recommendations

- Involve Real Property Services staff in major city projects earlier in the planning and due diligence stage.
- Include Real Property Services staff in the development review process for projects involving access agreements, city accessed utility agreements and right-of-ways.
- A real property asset management program should be implemented for use by Real Property Services and General Services over the next 18 months.

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Program/Service Recommendations

- Incorporate sustainability and climate change regulations into the City's development ordinance and review applications for compliance.
- Increase dialogue between City development review staff and the local development community to enhance communication.
- Provide a private development project map on the City's website showing development projects under review, permitted, and under construction.
- Expand the role of the Neighborhoods Division to assist other division in civic outreach.

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Communications Recommendations

- Develop and implement a communication plan and strategy to provide consistent communication between leadership, staff, divisions and customers.

- Standardize templates and forms to encourage consistent dissemination of information between staff and customers.

- Real Property Services should develop a database of all city-owned parcels eligible for use by CEDD or other City operations.

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Performance Management Recommendations

- Standardize division performance reports by identifying key performance metrics and appropriate status updates including:
  - Ensure the new permitting system has the functionality to automatically generate meaningful performance reports.
  - Arts & Culture should develop and track occupancy and financial performance of their facilities.
  - Economic Development should expand the number of key performance indicators to provide a more robust analysis of business recruitment and retention efforts.
  - Neighborhoods should formalize metrics to track community engagement efforts.
- Create a more formal feedback mechanism to keep staff up to date on planned activities and changes within the department.

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Questions?

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