Analysis of the Planning Review Process

NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

matrix consulting group

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary provides an overview of the analysis of the planning review process study and summarizes the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations contained in this report.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Napa County hired the Matrix Consulting Group to conduct an evaluation of the County's planning review process, which is primarily conducted by the Planning Division of the Planning, Building, and Environmental (PBES) Department. The study focused on the review, permitting, and public outreach activities of the Planning Division. Additionally, other Napa County divisions / departments were analyzed in relation to their role in the review process.

The purpose of the study was to assess the performance, efficiency, and customer services associated with the processing of planning applications. Based on this assessment, the project team developed a set of recommendations for changes related to the process, technology, public engagement, and staff training aimed at improving operations, while ensuring the integrity of County's objectives of safe and environmentally appropriate development.

2.   STUDY METHODOLOGY

The project team took a phased approached to completing this project over six months. Activities as part of this study included:

- Project kickoff, which included interviews with staff and representatives from the Planning Division, PBES management team, County Executive Office, Fire

Department, County Counsel, Public Works Department, and Planning Commissioners.

• Collected and analyzed data and sample reports regarding services provided, workload volume, and processing times for a variety of applications.

• Conducted an anonymous online employee survey, providing staff an opportunity for additional input into the process.

• Conducted an online survey of previous customers and community members.

• Completed five stakeholder / public meetings and follow-up phone interview to receive feedback from prior customers and County residents.

• Conducted a best practices comparison that gauged current practices in Napa County against a set of "best management practices" the consultants have compiled from their experience and work across the United States.

• Compiled a preliminary issues list based on workload analysis and best practice comparison, and discussed with the internal project team.

These project components provided an in-depth understanding of the County's planning process and operations, and is the foundation for conducting the analysis of the planning process. The understanding received from the multiple input sessions and analysis resulted in implementable recommendations, as detailed in this report.

3. KEY STRENGTHS

As part of this study, several aspects of the Planning Division's operations are representative of best practice. These strengths include:

• Staff are generally knowledgeable about the application and review process.

• All planning, building, and code enforcement operations are co-located in the same office suite, providing customers with one-stop services. Customers meet with all applicable representatives from each department at the time of application.

• Weekly project review meetings are conducted with appropriate review staff.

• A Planner is assigned as a project manager for each application.

- County Counsel staff is involved in the review process to ensure legal compliance.

- Historic application and permit data were recently digitized.

4. KEY FINDINGS AND THEMES

The overall findings of this assessment can be summarized in four key themes and functional areas. As a result of the corresponding themes, the report is organized by these key areas. The four thematic areas focused on:

- **Process Improvements**

- **Customer Education and Interaction**

- **Technology**

- **Policy and Personnel**

The key findings and recommendations are discussed at a summary level in the following subsections.

(1) Process Improvements

Several key themes emerged related to improving the overall review process. These improvements focused on improving the review process for both staff and the applicant. Key recommendations resulting from this study focused on:

- All applicable review divisions / departments should attend the preapplication meeting with the prospective applicant to provide adequate insight into the feasibility of a potential project and to inform the applicant of the process.

- All planning applications should include a checklist of all requirements that is signed off by both the applicant and staff to ensure completeness of the application at time of submittal. Applications that are clearly incomplete should not be accepted.

• All planning review comment letters should be standardized to include a response section for applicants to clearly note changes to resubmittal applications and plan sets, resulting in a faster turnaround time for resubmittals.

Each recommendation discussed here and others in Chapter 2 will enhance the customer experience for the applicant. Additionally, these changes will enhance streamlining of the review process and will minimize the perception of favoritism by the public for some applicants. Implementing the recommendations discussed in Chapter 2 will result in a consistent experience for staff and applicant, and increase the time staff have to review the application after initial submittal, while complying with California mandates.

(2) Customer Education and Interaction

Based on the feedback received from the stakeholder surveys and subsequent stakeholder meetings and staff interviews it was clear that applicants and the community desired greater access to information during the review process. Several key recommendations emerged that should be implemented in the near term, to help facilitate information sharing with the public.

• Reconfigure the PBES website to provide pages for specific functions, such as a dedicated webpage for application and review processes, revamp the current project webpage to clearly show the current status of each application, including a visualization of the project on a map, and provide more information by project type. Also, provide historical parcel data linked to the parcel map.

• Applications that require a public hearing before the Planning Commission should have the property posted (electronically or via other means) to inform the community of an application filing.

• Incorporate citizen working group when updating processes, ordinances, and policies related to planning and development.

- Meet on a regular basis with the development community and citizen groups to open dialogue on current concerns and provide information on upcoming changes.

Implementation of these recommendations will further enhance the customer experience. Furthermore, several of these recommendations are focused on providing greater information to the general public, resulting in the public being notified well in advance of public hearing. By involving the public earlier in the process, this will result in less hearing continuances and frustrations at the time of public hearing. This will result in a more efficient process and resolve many concerns shared with the project team from prior customers and the community.

(3) Technology

In order to improve the efficiency of the review process and provide enhanced customer service to applicants, several technology recommendations were noted. Technology recommendations include:

- Expand the type of applications that may be submitted electronically from just a few to all application types.

- Enhance the current permitting software to include more elements that correspond with the current paper based application and review process.

- Evaluate the integration of GIS and historic parcel data into the permitting software, in order to centralize all applicable information in one system. This information should be available on the County's website.

The implementation of these technology related recommendations will further enhance the experience of both the applicant and staff. Also, a more consistent experience will result for the applicant as the intake will be streamlined. Secondly, all review comments, permit issuance, and inspections will become electronic, resulting in greater consistency of the documentation process. Thirdly, applicants, the public, and

staff will have access to historical parcel information in one location, further reducing the

burden on staff to retrieve this information manually.

(4)   Policy and Personnel

The final recommendation theme is focused on policy and personnel issues. The

recommendations in this section are summarized in the following points:

• Implement an internal policy working group to identify current development trends and provide relevant information to decision makers. Subsequently develop code and ordinance changes if directed by decision makers.

• Create an employee guide for all Planning employees to provide guidance on their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, develop a succession plan and mentorship program to provide career progression of staff.

The recommendations presented will help provide staff and the Planning

Commission with proper guidance on the adopted vision for Napa County. The

implementation of internal working groups will help proactively inform and guide decision

makers on current development trends. Resulting in the ability to update regulations to

meet trends when applicable.

Secondly, by implementing an employee guide and mentoring plan, it will further

the commitment to training employees and providing them with necessary knowledge and

skills. Furthermore, mentoring efforts will both identify and prepare employees for the

next step of their career. Both of these employee related efforts will further improve

employee knowledge and skillsets.

Each of the findings and recommendations presented in this executive summary

are discussed in greater detail in this report. Many of the recommendations should be

implemented in the next six months and all should be fulfilled within 18 months.

CHAPTER 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

This chapter of the report will focus on findings and recommendations related to the land use review process for intake, review, and approval of applications. All land use and entitlement permits are issued by the Planning Division in PBES. Below is an overview of the generalized application process.

Application Process
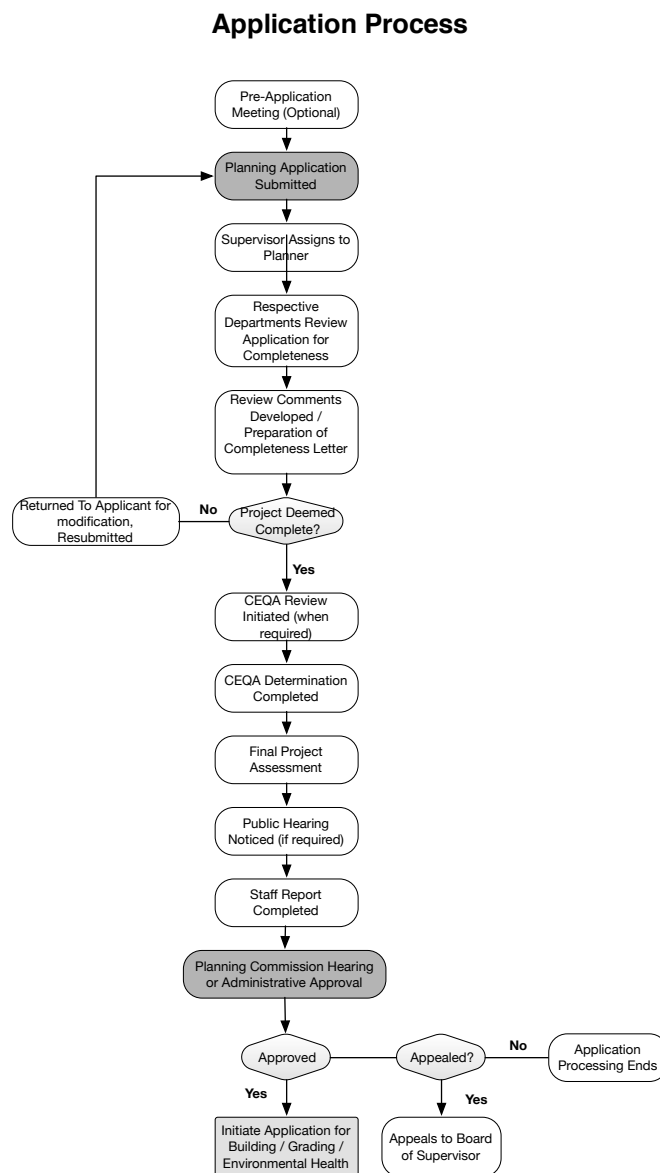
In addition to the process flow, it is important to understand which application types can be approved administratively versus a public hearing. The application process for administratively approved applications is similar to the application process flow chart above, up to the first decision point. At the first decision point, the PBES staffing member who may approve the application will review and make a decision. The following table shows the approval authority by application type.

Authority Level	Application / Permit Type
Director	Very Minor Modifications Erosion Control Plan* Administrative Viewshed Telecommunication – Administrative & Modification Sign Permit Temporary Events Category 2B, Category 3, and Subsequent 4 Site Plan – Standard Approval Site Plan – Modification Home Occupation Hot Air Balloon Launching Site Firearms Fence Entry Structure Permit Temporary Trailer Small Wind Energy System Cottage Food Operation Addressing / Street Name Change
Zoning Administrator	Minor Modification Variance* Viewshed* Certificate of Non-Conformity Roads & Streets Standards Exception* Temporary Events – Category 4*
Planning Commission (Final Action)	Use Permit* Major Modification* Conservation Regulation Exception* Telecommunication – Use Permit* Surface Mining Land Division – Tentative* Comprehensive Sign Plan

Authority Level	Application / Permit Type
Planning Commission (Recommendation)	General Plan Text or Map Amendment* Municipal Code Amendments – Other* Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment* Zoning Map Amendment* Specific Plan Amendment – Napa Valley Business Park* Development Agreement*
Board of Supervisors	General Plan Text or Map Amendment Municipal Code Amendments – Other Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Zoning Map Amendment Specific Plan Amendment – Napa Valley Business Park Development Agreement Appeal Williamson Act Contract

* Note: Any companion action which is necessary to approve a permit and/or legislative action shall be processed concurrently with the final decision body.

It is important to note that staff felt that the review process was inefficient. 38% of employees who responded in the employee survey indicated disagreement that in general, the land use process in the County is an efficient, well-run process, while only 17% were in agreement. This Chapter of the report will focus on improvements to the land use review process, with an emphasis to achieve greater efficiencies for both the applicant and staff.

(1)   The Permit Center is Considered Best Practice and Should Continue with Slight Modifications.

PBES has implemented two best practice approaches to meeting with customers in their office. The first best practice includes having all visitors electronically sign in on a tablet. By signing into the tablet, it allows for an electronic record of individuals arrival and the order in which they arrived. Secondly, it allows for staff to retrieve relevant information related to the reason of the customer's visit, when applicable. This approach also allows for staff to track the number of customers and the time it took to serve them.

In 2016, a total of 2,488 planning customers signed into the system. Since the new check in system was established, those individuals who had Planning-related issues had an average time between check in and acknowledgement of 11 minutes and 39 seconds. The average time associated with each Planning visit was 44 minutes and 3 seconds. PBES staff should continue to track the average time associated with each division and note changes in the wait times. This performance measure should be tracked quarterly.

Secondly, the Permit Center is designed in an efficient manner that promotes positive interaction among the customer and staff. The U-shaped design allows for customers to meet with multiple development disciplines in one location. Most inquiries and application types require multiple division or staff members to review an application. The physical design of the facility allows for the customer to meet with different staff members when needed. The drawback of this approach, is that representative personnel from each division must be available at the counter all day, which limits their ability to work on other tasks, especially considering the longer counter hours established since the merger. Also, it should be noted that the desks in the Permit Center are adequately sized to allow for paper plan sets to be unrolled and discussed. As PBES continues to implement digital application submittal, consideration should be given to expand technology infrastructure at each station.

Recommendation:

Continue the use of electronic check in for customers and expand technology resources in the permit center.

(2)   To Ensure Application Completeness, All Applications Should Include a Checklist That is Utilized by the Applicant and Staff.

As part of the application review process, it is vital for staff to have all and correct documentation as part of the application. During project team interviews with staff and stakeholders there was much confusion about the completeness of applications at the time of submittal, and whether an application should be accepted if deemed incomplete. Secondly it was noted by staff and stakeholders that checklists are not consistently utilized at the time of application submittal. This is an interesting finding since checklists are included in most online application packets.

Additionally, it is important to note that in the stakeholder survey and as discussed in stakeholder meetings, a large number of applicants are unsure about application requirements. Results from the stakeholder survey are presented below:

PREPARATION OF APPLICATION				
Statement	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
Email Respondents				
10. I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include in my application.	2%	50%	30%	18%
Web Link Respondents				
8. I clearly understood what approvals / permits would be required for my project.	2%	33%	21%	9%

Based on the survey results, it is clear that there is confusion regarding documentation requirements for applications. In order to clarify application requirements, staff should conduct and implement the following steps:

•   Review all applications and update documentation requirements.

•   Update the checklist to include a check box for both the applicant and staff.

•   At time of application submittal, staff should go through the application packet with the applicant and verify that all documentation is included.

•   Only accept applications that include all necessary documentation.

•   Immediately reject applications that are clearly not complete.

•   Provide a copy of the checklist to the applicant as a receipt of application completeness.

Incorporating these steps into the application and at the time of submittal will ensure that only complete applications are accepted. Also, this step will require staff to thoroughly review the application at the time of submittal to ensure completeness. This check and balance system will inform the applicant of the necessary documentation of the application and verify that staff has reviewed the application at submittal. Accepting completed applications will help ensure a timelier review of the application, and potentially reduce future issues during the review process.

Recommendation:

Update application checklists to include all required documentation, provide signoffs for the applicant and staff, and only accept complete applications.

(3)   Preapplication Meetings Should Be Attended by All Applicable Personnel Involved in the Development Process.

The purpose of preapplication meetings is for the applicant to meet with staff to gain a better understanding of feasibility of their project and the application and review process. Best practice indicates that preapplication meetings should be required for all major development projects. However, many of the major applications in Napa County are represented by hired consultants who are well versed in the application process. Given due consideration, the preapplication meeting may not be required in all instances.

Regardless if preapplication meetings are required or not, they are still optional, and should be modified to better serve potential customers.

During the stakeholder meetings, several discussions were held in respect to preapplication meetings. The majority of these conversations focused on the lack of staff attending preapplication meetings. It was indicated that most of the time, only Planning staff attended a meeting. While Planning staff are typically well versed in their knowledge of the planning application, they have limited knowledge of other divisions and/or departments which may review the planning application outside of the Planning Division. Preapplication meetings should include knowledgeable representatives from all PBES divisions, along with other divisions or departments that may be involved in the planning or subsequent application review (e.g. Fire Marshal, Public Works, etc.). The intent of a preapplication meeting is not to review an application, but to discuss the process, potential problems (and solutions), and to determine if the potential applicant's idea is feasible.

A complete and thorough preapplication meeting that includes all applicable review personnel in attendance will increase the completeness of each application, resolve potential issues proactively, and ultimately reduce the review time period associated with each application. This will result in staff being more efficient, and reduce the applicant's cost.

Recommendation:

Preapplication meetings should include staff from all applicable review divisions and departments and not just Planning staff.

(4)   Weekly Project Review Meeting Structure Should be Revised to Focus Solely on Reviewing Projects.

Each week, Planning staff and other staff members involved in the review of planning applications meet to distribute new applications and discuss review comments on other projects.   Weekly project review meetings are considered best practice. These meetings result in staff reviewing and discussing each project.

Reviewing projects in this manner is a great practice. However, review meetings should focus on discussing applications that have already been reviewed by staff and not the distribution and possible discussion of new applications. In order for review meetings to be more productive the following steps should be taken:

•   Application review meeting date should be set at the time of application submission. Ideally, review meeting date should be the week prior to the review deadline.

•   Distribute the review meeting agenda a minimum of three days before the meeting.

•   Staff should review the application before the review meeting.

•   Discussion should focus on major issues or concerns with the application.

•   New applications may be distributed to staff, but not as part of the formal agenda.

Implementing these steps will help ensure that weekly review meetings are efficient and stay on topic. It is imperative for staff to review applications that are on the agenda in advance of the meeting to provide meaningful insight. Also, this will provide an additional milestone in the review process for all reviewers to complete their review in a timely manner and to meet review deadlines, resulting in more timely reviews, and further expediting the review process.

Recommendation:

Weekly review meetings should focus only on reviewing applications. Staff should review application in advance of review meetings.

(5) **A Revised Approach to the Distribution of New Applications and Assigning a Project Planner Should be Implemented.**

The Planning Division utilizes a project manager approach to assigning new applications to staff for review. New applications are typically reviewed by the Planning Supervisor and assigned to planners based on current workload, project type, and complexity of the application. Assigning new applications to staff who will serve as the "project manager" for that application is considered best practice.

During interviews with staff, it was determined that the assignments of new applications does not always occur within 48 hours of receiving the application, and may be delayed several days. The delay in assigning new applications to a planner results in further delays in the distribution of applications to reviewers outside of the Planning Division. Subsequently, in stakeholder interviews many frequent applicants discussed alternative approaches to how they obtain relevant information about their applicants by circumventing the actual project planner assigned to their application. These two points create several issues related to consistent intake, distribution, and review of new applications. Further negatively influencing the effectiveness and efficiencies of the review process.

In order to make the review process more efficient and provide a more manageable workload for Supervising Planners, the project team recommends that counter staff route the application for comment as soon as it is accepted, as part of the intake process. The

Supervising Planner will then assign it to the appropriate Planner within two business days. These steps will ensure that divisions and departments outside of the Planning Division will have the application as soon as possible, and that the Planner will be assigned the project in a timely manner, providing a more efficient service for applicants.

Recommendation:

Route new applications for comment immediately and ensure that new applications are assigned to planning staff within two days of intake.

(6) The Review Comment Letter Template Should Be Revised to Incorporate a Response Section For the Applicant to Note Revisions to Their Application.

Currently the Planning Division has templated many of the standardized forms that are distributed to applicants. Included is a standardized template for review comments. This approach is considered best practice. However, there are improvement opportunities with the current form and process.

In order to better serve the applicant and to provide increased consistency for review comment letters, existing forms should be modified to include the following:

- All comments should reference applicable adopted codes.

- A text box should be incorporated under each comment to allow the applicant to insert comments.

- Include a staff sign off box at the conclusion of each comment.

All review comments should be factually based, and thus reference an adopted code or standard. By incorporating a code reference for each review comment, the letter will clearly identify the deficiencies in the application, and will allow the applicant to be able to more easily address the comment. Secondly, it provides any subsequent staff reviewer specific guidance on what they should be reviewing upon resubmittal. This helps

prevent "late hits" on subsequent reviews and provides greater efficiency and better customer service to the applicant.

When reviewing resubmittals, it is important for staff to review only the applicable changes. By incorporating a text box below each comment (the review letter should be in fillable PDF format), it allows the applicant the ability to insert comments. This will allow the applicant to identify how and where a comment was addressed within the application package. When a reviewer knows specifically where to find changes, it further increases the efficiency of the subsequent review.

Additionally, including a sign off box after each comment section, will allow for the reviewer to indicate that the comment has been addressed, allowing for the project manager to quickly identify that each issue has been resolved.

Recommendation:

Revise the comment letter template to include applicable code references, applicant comment boxes, and staff sign off.

CHAPTER 3: ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC INTERACTION

This Chapter of the report focuses on opportunities to promote greater information exchange between staff, applicants, and constituents regarding the planning process. The emphasis of this Chapter is continuing to improve the County's dedication to enhanced customer service.

Providing clear, comprehensive, and accessible information to the public about the land use process improves the quality of applications, which reduces the amount of time staff spends on reviewing. Secondly, improving the dissemination of application information to the general public will help reduce staff's workload, but also improve the public hearing process.

Additionally, improved communication between Napa County and stakeholders promotes goodwill and provides better avenues for the public to provide meaningful feedback in a timely and efficient manner. These channels will make staff more aware of the issues that the applicant or citizens may have regarding a particular application.

(1)   The PBES Website Provides Many Resources, But Should Be Reconfigured to Better Serve the Customers and Public.

The current PBES website provides a wealth of information about various applications and permits provided by PBES. The website is designed in such a way that each PBES division has a dedicated webpage. This section of the report will focus solely on the Planning Division and associated webpages.

The Planning Division webpages meets a variety of best practices regarding application and public information. These best practices include but are not limited to the following:

• Planning applications are co-located on one webpage.

• Current projects webpage includes detailed project information.

• Brochures and fact sheets are provided for most common projects and applications.

• Links to applicable adopted policies, plans, and ordinances.

• Updated fee schedule.

The items presented in the list above are in accordance to best practices relating to information that a municipal website should have related to the land use process. However, in the customer survey responses, 73% of the respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that the County's website had the information they needed to prepare an application. There are several areas that should be changed to better improve the experience of potential applicants and the public. Potential improvements include:

• Dedicated webpages for specific functions. E.g. policies, plans, and ordinances, brochures, applications, etc.

• Create a webpage dedicated to the application and review process. Should include a flow chart of the process with estimated timelines for completion.

• Current project webpage should show the status of each project. E.g. project is in the application review stage, EIR analysis or review, etc.

• Co-locate land use application types by the level of decision-maker (e.g., Director, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors).

• All major current projects should be mapped to show the location of active projects.

- Update the "Latest Information" section on the PBES home page to include the most relevant updates. This section includes many items that are more than one year old.

- Provide a link to the recently digitized historical permit information data set. This should be searchable by address, parcel, and permit numbers.

Incorporating these changes to the current PBES and Planning Division webpages will help consolidate valuable information in a more user-friendly design, further increasing the information available to the applicant before and during the review process. These changes will provide relevant project information to both the applicant and public in a timelier manner and subsequently reduce the communication need between staff and the public. Additionally, this will make it easier for the public to gather information about a project in advance of public hearings and may reduce the number of continuances, and hopefully the number of appeals.

Recommendation:

Update the PBES and Planning Division webpage to provide a more centralized depository of information, along with a diagram of the land use process.

(2)   Properties That Have an Active Application That Requires a Public Hearing Should be Posted.

Currently, Napa County meets the state minimum notification requirements for applications that go to public hearing. The public is notified via the following: 1) Adjoining property owners located within 1,000 of the applicant property receive a letter indicating an application has been filed, 2) public notice is published in the local newspaper, 3) the public notice is published on the County's website, and 4) the application may be listed under the current projects link on the PBES webpage. Napa County is in compliance of

all applicable state and local laws related to publishing notice for public hearings, and

exceeds some minimum requirements by sending letters to property owners within 1,000

feet of the applicant's property, compared to the 300-foot buffer as required by state law.

Napa County should be applauded for having a 1,000-foot buffer notice, as this is best

practice, but in a largely rural setting with larger parcels, this notice may only go out to a

limited number of neighbors. In order to better inform the adjoining land owners and the

public of the major applications, alternatives approaches may be considered.

Napa County should require that a sign be placed on the subject property for all

applications that require a public hearing. This practice occurs in most jurisdictions that

issue use permits and zoning changes. This allows for increased awareness of potential

changes and allows for the exchange of public information in advance of public hearings.

In order for the signage to be most effective, standard guidelines should be

established. Guidelines would include:

- Timeline for when the sign should initially be placed (e.g. within one week after application is deemed complete, etc.).

- Application types that require signage (e.g. major use permits, etc.).

- Required information on sign (e.g. application number, application type, public hearing date, etc.).

- Location of signage on property. Parameters should include distance from road, visibility, etc.

Incorporating these guidelines will promote consistency in the posting of

properties, further resulting in increased communication about an application between the

public and staff in advance of a public hearing. Communicating well in advance of public

hearings will help promote good will between the community and staff and ultimately the applicant, resulting in more effective discussion during public hearings.

Recommendation:

Post properties that have major use permit applications (or modifications) with proper signage to better inform the public that an application has been filed.

(3)   PBES Should Incorporate Citizen Working Groups to Work With Staff When Updating Processes, Ordinances, and Policies.

During the course of this study, the project team conducted customer focus groups to obtain feedback from former applicants and citizens. One item that was mentioned multiple times in the focus group meetings was the need to continue efforts of utilizing citizens and local professionals when the County desires to review and update processes, ordinances, and policies. Several individuals discussed the recent use of a citizen working group that helped to update the Road and Street Standards. This process received praise from individuals who participated, along with others in the focus groups. Collaboration between citizens, professionals, and County staff while undertaking the updating of codes, processes, and policies is considered best practice. Incorporating working groups allows for citizens and professionals to provide insight and feedback into the process, while also providing increased information sharing with these professions. Utilizing a working group results in the public being more informed of proposed changes, well in advance of a public hearing and possible adoption.

A citizen and professional working group incorporates important collaboration between the public and County staff when considering changes to the status quo. It is important to have proper due diligence efforts between the public and staff to better inform

both sides of potential changes and their consequences. Working groups allow for more information exchange between all parties and serves as a place to have meaningful discussion and input with the individuals responsible for developing and implementing the changes. Additionally, it will help alleviate educating the public during the public meeting / hearing process. Overall, this approach will improve communication between staff and the public and provide a more efficient process for the public to provide input to proposed changes.

Recommendation:

Continue and expand efforts to utilize public working groups to work with PBES staff when considering changes to adopted processes, ordinances, and policies.

(4)   The County Should Hold Quarterly Meetings With the Development Community and Citizens.

Based on the feedback from the stakeholder and focus groups, it was clear that both the stakeholders and community desired increased communication with County staff. In addition to the citizen and professional working groups that should be established to work on proposed changes, PBES should meet quarterly with the professional development community (e.g. planners, engineers, builders, etc.) and citizen groups. These meetings should be held separately, as the topic of discussion will focus on different areas.

For the professional meeting, a wide array of professions should be invited. These individuals may include frequent customers to PBES, with an emphasis on development related activities. Representatives from consults, may include planners, engineers, architects, winery trade groups, and environmentalist just to name a few. Invites should

be limited to key individuals who have significant knowledge of development activity in Napa County, and are frequent customers of PBES. Invites should be limited to 15 to 20 individuals.   In addition, several individuals from PBES should be included to facilitate the quarterly meetings. PBES individuals would include the Director, Assistant Director, Planning Manager, Code Compliance Manager, Environmental Health Manager, Engineer Manager, and the Building Official. Other County representatives should attend when there is an agenda item related to them (e.g. County Counsel, Public Works Director, Fire Marshal, Economic Development, etc.). Including individuals who oversee development related operations for the County will open an additional channel of communication between the professional community and County staff. Resulting in management having a pulse of potential concerns in the field before they become a major issue. Additionally, this will help ensure that concerns are expressed through proper channels and to the correct staff member.

Additionally, PBES staff should hold a quarterly meeting with the public and specialty groups that are concerned with development activities in Napa County, but are not intimately involved with permitting and development. This will allow dialogue between staff and the public regarding current issues that the County is working on, but also allow the public an informal way to express their concerns to staff. A wide variety of topics should be covered by staff that relate to current development and undertakings of the County. The same County staff that would attend the professional quarterly meeting should attend the public meetings.

For both meetings, it is important for staff to provide an agenda for the meeting at least one week in advance. For the professional meeting this would be distributed via email to specific individuals, and for the public should be posted on the County's website and social media pages. Both meetings should be between 1 and 1 and ½ hour, and focuses on a specific topic. Meetings should include a time for staff (or stakeholder, when applicable) presentation on a specific topic, followed by a period of discussion between all parties. The result of these meetings is to build rapport between staff and the development community (and public), and allow for open communication about issues each are facing. Allowing resolution in a constructive manner.

Recommendation:

To increase dialogue between the community and Napa County, a quarterly meeting should be held between staff and development professionals, and a separate meeting held between staff and the public / special interest groups.

(5)   Annual Employee Training Should Incorporate Elements Related to Newly Adopted Regulations.

Napa County places a strong emphasis on ensuring that all development is safe, environmentally sensitive, and keeping within the County's character. While attempting to strike a balance between processing applications and effectively ensuring regulatory compliance may be challenging at times, in order to provide more effective services and a more consistent experience, annual regulatory training should be provided to all PBES employees.

In the employee survey, only 23% of respondents agreed they are provided formal training in the technical skills needed for their role in the review process. In order to provide better customer service, it is critical for staff to be well trained with the technical

skills needed to perform their duties. This is doubly important when it comes to knowing and understanding statues regulating planning and land use development, especially state adopted regulations. It is critical that each staff member in the review process receive appropriate training related to newly adopted regulations to ensure consistency on their impact and enforcement. Staff should receive timely training on new regulations after their adoption. This will improve consistency in the interpretation of the new regulation and how it applies to the applicant. Further improving the efficiency of the review process both internally and externally.

In addition to training related to regulatory changes, it is important for staff to participate in professional training to improve their technical skills. Networking with other professionals allows staff to continuously improve their skills, learn new techniques, and expand their knowledge base. Moreover, professional organizations may provide training on regulatory changes that occur at the state or federal level, further positively impacting staff's knowledge and ability. Annual professional and technical training allows staff to become more efficient at the review process and the ability to develop solutions during the review process.

Staff should receive on going professional training to enhance their technical skills related to the review process. Implementing these training opportunities will improve customer service while maintaining the integrity of the review process.

Recommendation:

Annual staff training should focus on professional skill sets and elements related to newly adopted regulations.

CHAPTER 4: ASSESSMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND PERMITTING SOFTWARE

This chapter examines the use of technology for accepting, reviewing, and issuing permits, as well as the completion of inspections for permitted projects.

Currently, Napa County uses Accela software for permitting. Accela is supported internally by a System Program Analyst. Napa County is not currently using the latest version of the permitting software, but is one version behind.

Napa County meets several best practices when it comes to technology and permitting software systems. Most recently, PBES has recently completed the task of digitizing all applicable land use and building records of the department. Additionally, several simple building permit types may be submitted and issued online. Finally, PBES utilizes a digital check-in for customers at their public counter. Napa County exceeds several best practices, but there are additional areas that may be enhanced to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided. These improvement opportunities are provided in greater detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

(1)   Napa County Should Expand Application Types That Are Submitted Digitally.

Currently, PBES only allows a few simple building permits to be submitted electronically. In order to continue to increase efficiency for applicants and staff, PBES should allow all applications to be submitted electronically. As PBES has recently digitized all historical files, it is important for all new applications to be electronically submitted, to eliminate the need to scan new applications in the future. However, the current application process is heavily paper based.

Secondly, by converting to an all-digital submittal, reviewers can receive new applications much quicker, can easily see comments from other reviewers, and reduce the overall review timeline. Digital application submittals provide several benefits:

- All reviewers are reviewing the same application and plan sets, reducing the likelihood that outside reviewers are not reviewing the most up-to-date application or not receiving the complete application.

- Reviewers have access to the complete application, not what is deemed necessary for their specific review.

- Reviewers can review the application at their respective offices, eliminating the need to review the application at PBES for non-department reviewers.

- Review comments can be seen by all reviewers, potentially reducing redundant comments.

- Staff review meetings may be more streamlined as reviewers should be more prepared for meeting since they will have access to other reviewer comments and may prepare to address concerns at the review meeting.

- Reviewers may track the application process more easily and identify the reasons why an application is delayed in the process.

- Increased accountability of reviewers, as all reviewers can easily track application progress.

- Eliminates the need to digitize applications and plan sets after approval.

- Digital applications reduce negative environmental impacts associated with paper applications.

Transitioning to an all-digital submission process should result in increased efficiency in the review process, reduce the number of plan sets needed for review, and increase coordination and accountability of all review entities. Also, historical documentation of applications and permits may easily be linked to a particular parcel (or address / business, etc.), creating a historical digital "paper trail" for future applications.

Digital application submission is the logical next step as PBES continues to utilize technology. However, there are several steps that are required to make this transition easier and will be discussed in the following subsection.

Recommendation:

Implement digital application submission for all PBES application types.

(2)   Enhancements to the Current Permitting Software Is Required to Improve Consistency of the Permitting Process.

As discussed previously the permitting software is currently used to track key milestones within the permitting process. However, it is not uniformly used by all reviewers, especially for individuals who are outside of PBES. Considering each review department utilizes different tracking methods of paper applications, it is important to incorporate a unified approach to the permitting software. Uniformity for all reviewers and users is important when reviewing applications in the permitting software. With a goal of efficiency, the permitting software system can and should be used by staff for the following:

Function	Description
Application Submission	All applications should be submitted electronically through a customer portal that requires a customer profile with the software system. Computers should be made available in-person at PBES for those individuals who may not have access to a personal computer.
Intake	Record application intake in the software. Application should be reviewed at this time by intake staff and either initially accepted or rejected.
Acceptance	Plan reviewers initially review the applications for completeness. Note "acceptance" in software.
Distribution	Application is distributed electronically to all reviewers with a target date for review completion. Important review dates noted in software.

Function	Description
Review	Reviewers enter review comments into the software. All reviewers should provide comments or indicate "no comment", "no issues" or "approved" in comments. If there are no comments, reviewer should have ability to check a box indicating their part of this review is complete.
Comment Letter	Assigned project manager (Planner) consolidates comments into a single document, which is stored in the permitting systems and associated with the application. Comment letter is then sent to the applicant electronically, preferably through the software system.
Resubmission	Record intake of complete electronic resubmission. Plans are attached to original application
Redistribution	Application is re-distributed electronically to those reviewers who previously had comments.
Issuance	After all comments have been addressed and application is considered approved (administratively or by commission / board), permits are issued, with conditions of approval noted in the software. Permits are distributed electronically.
Project Management	Software is used to track key "to do" items such as bonds, primary and secondary permits, erosion control plans, etc. Also, software is used to track application deadlines such as review and public notice deadlines.
Staff Reports	Software is used to develop and electronically distribute staff reports to applicable boards and commissions. All staff report and relevant project information is transmitted electronically to Commission members.
Templates	Software should include templates for each type of document, permit, letter, staff reports, etc. that is generated from the system. This will provide uniformity for documents provided to the public.
Inspections	Software list all required inspections for permits issued. Inspection results are entered into the software. Inspections results may be automatically emailed to the applicant.
As-built and Record Drawings	The applicant provides as-built or record drawings electronically, which are uploaded into the software system, GIS (if applicable) and attaches to the final permit record.
Certificate of Occupancy	A certificate of occupancy should be issued from the software system after all departments/divisions have signed off. A certificate of occupancy cannot be issued until all sign offs has been made.

Based on results of the employee survey it is clear that staff struggle with effectively utilizing the permitting software system. 37% of respondents agreed they are able to effectively utilize permit information systems and technology to track turnaround time for permits, record comments, corrections for permits, and conditions of approval,

and track other aspects of permitting. In order to improve the effectiveness of the software

system, staff should receive on-going training. Training will ensure consistency in how

the software is used and what elements of the application review process needs to be

incorporated at each step of the process. Training will result in a more efficient review

process. Moreover, by implementing the steps and software capabilities discussed in the

previous table, the transition to all digital plan submission will be streamlined, further

resulting in less headaches for staff and ultimately customers. In addition to providing

annual training, a frequently asked question document should be developed in

conjunction with users to identify common problems with the permitting system. This will

provide guidance to staff and customers. More importantly, the FAQ will provide a

valuable resource to new customers and staff.

Recommendation:

Incorporate on-going permitting software training. Utilize permitting software that allows for digital application submittal and the ability to effectively track the application process.

 (3) **The Permitting Software Should Incorporate GIS and Historical Parcel Data Sets.**

As existing businesses expand, it is important for both staff and public to have

access to historical parcel and permit data. Considering that Napa County issues "use

permits" for most past development related projects, this information must be readily

accessible. Building on the recent digitization process of historic records, it is important

to catalog these records and associate them with address and parcel files in the permitting

software system. The permitting systems should serve as a database for all land use and

development related activity for a particular address or parcel number. By associating

historical records with their parcel, it allows both staff and the public easier access to respective historical documentation. Utilizing the permitting software as a historical database will further streamline the application and review process as staff (or the applicant) will spend less time locating historical parcel information. This is critical as staff indicated that many parcels have multiple use permits that have evolved overtime. The complexity of use permits and attached conditions of approval create additional steps during application review. Transitioning to using the permitting system as a database for parcel data, will help ensure that staff have all relevant information in one location.

In addition to linking historical data sets to parcels in the permitting system, it is important to fully integrate the Geographic Information System (GIS) layer files. Incorporating GIS into the software system will increase the analytical capabilities of staff. Staff should be able to provide greater analysis of the impacts of new applications, especially environmental impacts. As development occurs, it is paramount to utilize GIS in conjunction with the permitting software to determine the overall impact of each application on a larger geographical area.

Incorporation of GIS into the permitting software can also increase the analytical capabilities of the public and decision makers. GIS will allow for greater analysis of project impact in staff reports and presentation to the Planning Commission, resulting in a more informed staff, officials, and public. Also, incorporating GIS into the permitting system will allow for increased sharing of information through the public information portal. The public will have more information and analysis at their disposal for applications under review and active projects.

In sum, the permitting software system should be used as a historical data base for all PBES activity. Secondly, GIS should be integrated into the permitting software to provide greater analytical capabilities of staff.

Recommendation:

Incorporate historical parcel data and GIS data layers into the permitting software system.

CHAPTER 5: POLICY AND PERSONNEL ASSESSMENT

This chapter will focus on Planning Division and Napa County policies and staffing related issues.

(1)   A Policy Working Group Should Be Created to Provide Management and Officials Guidance on Current Development Trends.

In concurrence with the Planning Division's new emphasis on long range planning efforts, a Policy Working Group should be created to develop policies and procedures related to emerging trends in the planning, building, and development industry. As the Napa County economy continues to grow and different development opportunities arise, it is important for the County to be proactive in their approach to new development and emerging trends. In order to properly address emerging trends and the concerns from citizens, it is important for staff to have adequate avenues to discuss internally. In order to address emerging trends and concerns, a policy working group should meet on a regular basis. Moreover, the policy working group should be tasked with analysis of current trends and the resulting impacts in Napa County. It is important for the working group to have the ability to discuss emerging trends with management. Also, the working group should be tasked with recommending updates to policy associated with new trends.

Implementing a policy working group will help identify emerging trends and allow for a proactive approach to regulating issues before scores of applications are submitted. In today's fast changing culture and economy, it is imperative for government to react quickly to the ever-changing environment.

Recommendation:

Implement a policy working group to address emerging issues in a timely and constructive manner.

(2)   Development of An Employee Guide Will Enhance the Onboarding Experience of New Hires.

PBES should develop an employee handbook for each position within the Department, specific to the Planning Division. This would be in addition to the orientation binder that every new PBES employee currently receives. Considering the complexity of the permitting process for land development applications, an employee handbook is essential to training new hires. The Planning Division employee handbook should provide a comprehensive overview of the application review process from preapplication information through the certificate of occupancy process. An employee handbook should include the following elements at a minimum:

•   Application types

•   Application requirements and associated review time frames

•   Overview of the development process

•   Frequently asked questions

•   Contact information for agencies involved in the review process (inside and outside PBES)

•   Roles and responsibilities of each department in process

•   Individual job descriptions (e.g. Planner I, II, II, Supervisor Planner, etc.)

The employee handbook would include a detailed overview of the roles and responsibilities of staff and the application and review process. It should be utilized as a guide for staff so they consult the guide regularly to find solutions to the most common

questions and concerns. The employee handbook will serve as a training tool and guide

for all employee in the Department.

Recommendation:

Develop an employee handbook that explains the roles and responsibilities of each employee. Employee guide should be used as a training tool for new staff to learn about the review process.

(3)   A Staff Mentoring Plan Should Be Implemented to Provide Growth Opportunities For Staff.

Due to the size and complexity of the Planning Division and numerous positions

with similar job descriptions, it is important to provide proper mentoring, planning and

career mobility for staff. Currently, Planners comprise the majority of professional staff

within the Planning Division and are divided into three groups: Conservation, Current

Planning, and Advance Planning. There are five Planning job classification: Planner I, II,

III, Principal Planner, and Supervising Planner.   Planners I, II, and III represents the

majority (9 of 13) of the positions. Job duties are similar for Planners I, II, and III. However,

the major difference in duties is related to the complexity of the application they are

reviewing.   More complex and sensitive projects are assigned to higher-ranking staff

members.

Currently, there is no formal mentoring plan or career progression metrics in place

to promote the growth of staff. Based on the nature and complexity of the projects that

are typically reviewed by staff, it is important for staff to be well trained and provided

mentorship opportunities to build the skills necessary to progress up the career ladder.

In interviews and results received in the employee survey, staff indicated recent hardships

related to staff leaving and the struggles with properly handling the workload.

Additionally, longer tenured staff contain vast quantities of institutional and project specific knowledge. It is important to have proper metrics in place to transfer knowledge and skill sets to junior staff.

Implementing a formal mentoring plan provides multiple benefits. These benefits include:

- Broadening staff's knowledge of the planning and review process.

- Identifying key staff members who exhibit career ambitions and mentoring them for potential advancement.

- Define performance metrics that may be used as part of annual evaluation.

- Outline specific steps and actions for staff advancement.

- Formalize mentoring programs to provide skill sets other than planning and review process (e.g. management, public speaking / engagement).

- In the event of staff turnover, ensure internal staff have the necessary skill set to backfill position until new employee is hired. Also, the onboarding process for the new hire will be streamlined.

In order to develop a comprehensive mentoring plan, it is important for plans to be created for specific functions (Conservation and Current Planning). This will result in a tailored approach that will identify current skill sets and knowledge base within each functional area. Additionally, mentoring plans should be updated every three years or after staff turnover, resulting in an up-to-date plan that is achievable and effective.

Recommendation:

Develop and implement an employee mentoring plan to identify opportunities for staff and identify key staff members who can progress up the career ladder.

APPENDIX A: PROFILE OF THE PLANNING REVIEW PROCESS

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this profile is to document the existing organization, processes, workload, and technologies being used by Napa County for the planning review and permitting process. The completed profile represents the "as is" description of staffing, organizational attributes and processes utilized. It is the first step in this study focused on evaluating and identifying improvement opportunities in the discretionary land use application review process led by the Planning Division.

2. ORGANIZATION, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following sections provide a summary of the current organizational structure, staffing allocations, summary roles and responsibilities for each position involved in the discretionary land use application review process.

The majority of the discretionary land use application review process takes places in the Planning Division which is part of the Planning, Building and Environmental Services Department (PBES). While PBES is primarily responsible for management of the Planning Review Process, several other departments in the County are also involved in planning review. The table below illustrates the key roles of each department and division in the permitting process.

	Napa County, California Planning Review / Permitting Functions	
	Primary	Support
Planning, Building, and Environmental Services		
Planning Division -Current Planning -Advance Planning -Conservation	Reviews all land use related applications for compliance with the General Plan and zoning code. Determines appropriate CEQA requirements for each application.	Reviews building, grading, well permits for General Plan and zoning compliance. Also, provides review or impact analysis for all internal Napa County capital projects.
Environmental Health	Provides review and insight on land use applications, commenting on projects that have wastewater, commercial, and solid waste components.	Reviews all County projects for environmental compliance – water, wastewater systems, and any food service associated with an application.
Building	Reviews most land use related applications for future compliance with Title 24, California Building Code and County adopted building codes.	
PBES – Engineering	Reviews most land use related applications for compliance with road and street standards, grading, drainage, vineyard development technical adequacy, stormwater management, FEMA Floodplain Management, and enforcement response to code violations related the grading, and floodplain management regulations.	Issues grading, floodplain management permits, and preliminary road exception applications.
Fire Department		
Fire	Provides review and comments on land use applications related to fire access and fire life safety code compliance. Assists with ensuring compliance with RSS and processing of exception requests.	Reviews land use applications for public safety access, water, and safety compliance. Reviews construction plans and temporary events for fire abatement requirements and life safety components. Issues tent permits for marketing and other special events.
County Counsel		
County Counsel	Provides legal support and review on applications – variances, CEQA documents, public notices, staff reports, etc.	Reviews application for compliance of all County ordinances and standards, along with public noticing requirement compliance. Attends Planning Commission meetings and Board of Supervisor appeal and legislative application hearings.

	Napa County, California Planning Review / Permitting Functions	
	Primary	Support
Planning, Building, and Environmental Services		
Public Works Department		
Public Works - Engineering	Provides support on reviewing applications for legal lot status, lot line adjustments and certificate of compliance.	Reviews applications for compliance with legal lot status, lot line adjustments, certificate of compliance. Issues grading and floodplain management permits.
Public Works – Roads & Traffic	Reviews applications for public roads and traffic related impacts.	Reviews applications for traffic impacts and traffic mitigation fee assignment. Issues encroachment permits.
Public Works – Ground Water	Reviews applications for potential impacts to ground water and aquifers.	

Note: These are the primary internal County divisions and departments that are involved in the permit review process. Other County departments also may review projects, including the Sheriff's Department, Agricultural Commissioner, Assessor, and others. In addition, the review process involves local agencies such as cities, school districts, special districts, and LAFCO; as well as regional, state, and federal agencies. Finally, public comments also play a significant role in the permit review process.

A weekly project review meeting is held on Thursday (9 a.m.) for staff that are involved in planning and other development related projects to meet and discuss projects that are under review. New projects are typically distributed at these meetings and discussed.

(A)   Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department

The Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department is primarily responsible for the review and issuance of most planning, building and development related permits. (Encroachment Permits, Subdivision Maps, and Lot Line Adjustments are issued by the Public Works Department.) While Planning Division staff serves as the project manager for discretionary land use entitlement process, other divisions within PBES are also involved in the application review.

The current organizational structure as of July 1, 2017 for PBES is shown in the following graphic.

NAPA COUNTY PLANNING, BUILDING, and ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT						
Director						
Assistant Director						
Planning Mgr.	Env. Health Mgr.	Engineering Mgr.	Building Official	Staff Services Mgr.	Process Improvement/Code Compliance Mgr.	Parks Mgr.
Supervising Planner	EH Coordinator	Supervisor Engineer	Field Inspection Supervisor	Admin. Sec II	Compliance Super.	Principal Planner
Planner III	Senior EH Specialist	Assistant Engineer	Inspector III	Secretary	Planner III	Park Manager
Planner III	Senior EH Specialist	Assistant Engineer	Inspector II	Office Assistant II	Planner III	Park Maintenance
Planner II	EH Specialist II	Assistant Engineer	Inspector II	Office Assistant II	Inspector II	Park Aide
Planner II	EH Specialist II		Inspector III	Office Assistant II	Inspector II	Park Steward Assistant
	EH Specialist II			Office Assistant II		Park Aide
Supervising Planner	EH Specialist II		Permit Supervisor	Admin. Sec II		Park Aide
Planner III	EH Specialist II		Plans Examiner	Office Assistant II		Park Aide
Planner II	EH Specialist II		Plans Examiner			Park Aide
Planner II	EH Supervisor		Plans Examiner	Office Assistant II		Park Aide
Principal Planner	Senior EH Specialist		Plans Examiner	Staff Serv. Analyst II		Park Aide
Planner II	EH Specialist II			Sr. System Support Analyst II		Park Aide
Planner I	EH Specialist II		Permit Coordinator	GIS Departmental Coordinator		Park Steward Assistant
Planner I	Permit Tech		Permit Technician	GIS Technician I/II		Park Aide
	Permit Tech		Permit Technician			Park Aide
Principal Planner	Senior EH Specialist		Permit Technician			Park Aide
	EH Supervisor					Park Aide
	Senior EH Specialist					
	EH Specialist II					
	EH Specialist II	Solid Waste Mgr.				
		Senior EH Specialist				

The following table summarizes key roles and responsibilities of each position within the Department with substantial involvement in the various land use processes.

Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions Curr.	Auth.	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Administration			
Director of PBES	1.0	1.0	• Oversees all planning activities, including land use applications, and permitting associated with Planning, Building, Engineering, and Environmental Health. • Provides support to Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. • Works on special projects as required. • Establishes overall work priorities and policies of the Department. • Appointed by the Board of Supervisors.
Assistant Director of PBES	1.0	1.0	• Manages the day-to-day and administrative operations of the department. • Oversees Division Managers • Serves as the director of Environmental Health. • Acts as liaison with applicants and businesses. • Works on special projects as required. • Coordinates with HR on all recruitments. • Prepares departmental budget along with SSM.
Admin Secretary II	1.0	1.0	• Serves as the Clerk to the Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator. • Prepares and distributes Planning Commission packets to commissioners and uploads to the website. Typically distributed on the Wednesday before Wednesday meeting. • Publishes all required public notices & CEQA documents prepared by Planning Staff. • Oversees office assistants.
Senior System Support Analyst	1.0	1.0	• Responsible for maintaining PBES permitting software (Accela), GIS, and other software applications for the Department. • Supports all technological hardware systems for PBES. • Administers website for PBES.
Planning Division			
Planning Manager	0.0	1.0	• Oversees the Planning Division including current and advanced planning. • Oversees County's long-range planning efforts including development of the comprehensive plan and specific area studies. • Acts as Zoning Administrator.

Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Curr.	Auth.	
Supervising Planner Current Planning Conservation	2.0	2.0	• Supervises the day-to-day administration of the Planning Division • Provides day-to-day administrative function for division, that includes assigning tasks and projects to planners, and review staff reports for Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. • Prepare and review staff reports, CEQA documents, approval letters and other applications that go to public hearing or get administratively approved. • Assist in processing all planning related appeals and presents at Board of Supervisors. • Prepare CEQA documents for Public Works CIPs and other Departments as needed. • Conservation oversees the Wildlife Conservation Commission, related long range planning and other program development activities. • Assigns planner for code enforcement investigation as requested.
Principal Planner -Current Planning -Advance Planning	2.0	2.0	• Current Planning - Supervises planners in the planning division and processes larger or more complex projects. • Assigns building permits to all planning staff, including those not within division. • Processes use permits for winery development and industrial buildings, including minor and major modifications. • Provides input for administrative permits (signs, fences, occupancy) and viewshed permits. • The Advance Planning position is new to the Department, as new emphasis on long range planning efforts. • Responsible for preparation and oversight of long range and advanced planning efforts.
Planner III	3.0	5.0	• Process planning and zoning applications, with emphasis on larger scale projects. • Prepares environmental reviews for all assigned projects. • Reviews building permits for zoning compliance and provide comments or conditions for approval.

Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Curr.	Auth.	
Planner II	4.0	2.0	• Process planning and zoning applications, with emphasis on medium to large scale projects. • Reviews building permits for zoning compliance and provide comments or conditions for approval. • Prepares environmental reviews for all assigned projects. • Assist at public counter by processing permits and meeting with applicants and public. • Reviews, processes, and approves erosion control plans when required for vineyard properties. • Review land use applications for CEQA application or exemption, perform field inspections, and communicate with applicant. • Provides public assistance as required, with particular focus in erosion control, creek setbacks, and slope conditions. • Reviews lot line adjustment and certificates of compliance applications received from Public Works and prepares CEQA documents.
Planner I	2.0	2.0	• Variety of duties that include regular rotation at front counter, answering phones, intake planning permits. • Processes minor and very minor modifications, variances, viewshed, fence entries, and other general zoning administrator applications. • Prepares environmental reviews for all assigned projects. • Reviews building permits for zoning compliance.
GIS Coordinator	1.0	1.0	• Serves as GIS coordinator for PBES. • Maintains and updates PBES GIS Data Catalog, • Assists with graphic development. • Position classified as Planner III for paygrade, but does not perform traditional duties of a planner.
Planning - Engineering Division			
Engineering Manager	1.0	1.0	• Oversees the Engineering Division's review of land development, application of local, state and federal regulations. • Reviews and approve floodplain management permits as Napa County's Floodplain Administrator. • Oversees implementation of the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program and stormwater pollution prevention program as required by the State's Municipal General Permit. • Reviews permitting approvals as necessary, such as in cases with public improvements. • Reviews high-profile or particularly complex permits and support public works projects where permitting required. • Supports enforcement issues, such as grading and floodplain violations.

Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Curr.	Auth.	
Supervising Engineer	1.0	1.0	• Supervises the Engineering Division and permit processes that require engineering expertise. • Provides input on building permits, entitlements, environmental health, and tenant improvements. • Processes applications for floodplain management, grading, and road exception certification. • Reviews vineyard development erosion control plans for technical adequacy. • Provides customer service and counter support. • Inspect development project for adherence to approved plans and applicable codes and regulations.
Building Division			
Chief Building Official (or Designee – Inspector III)	1.0	1.0	• Oversees the Building Division including the building permit process and building inspection. • Oversees the building intake process and reviews building or permit applications that are problematic or require high-level review. • Manages strategic initiatives for the division, such as implementing process improvements or software needs. • Inspector III provides input for discretionary land use applications – to ensure future compliance with Building Code requirements.
Environmental Health Division			
Environmental Health Supervisor (Land Use)	1.0	1.0	• Supervises the land use team of the Environmental Health Division, including administrative permits and use permits that involve water systems, waste treatment or wastewater discharge. • Reviews and processes applications for wells and septic systems to ensure adequate site conditions. • Reviews septic plan checks and performs annual inspections. • Oversees the winery wastewater program and reporting system. • Coordinates comments from Consumer Protection with regards to food service programs.
Code Compliance Division			
Code Compliance / Process Improvement Manager	1.0	1.0	• Oversees and manages code enforcement activities for the County. • Oversees compliance officers and daily work activities. • Involved in resolving complex code compliance cases. • Had ancillary duties associated with process improvement programs and initiatives for the Department.
Code Compliance Supervisor	0.0	1.0	• Position is currently vacant. • Serves as first line supervisor for Code Enforcement staff.

(B)   OTHER DEPARTMENTS

The following departments and associated staff review planning applications for issues relevant to their operational areas. In some cases, (specified under staff member responsibilities) they may also issue permits specific to that department.

Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities (Permitting)
	Current	Authorized	
Fire Department			
Fire Marshal	1.0	1.0	• Reviews commercial development plans for fire access, water supply, and fire protection features. • Reviews special and temporary event permits, and compliance with applicable laws. • Provides comments for approval, as necessary.
Assistant Fire Marshal	1.0	1.0	• Reviews construction plans for access, addressing, fire separations, access and egress, emergency lighting, water supply, fire lines, hydrants, sprinklers, hood systems, road requirements, and fire pumps. • Enters requirements to the correction letter provided by PBES.
Public Works			
Traffic Engineer	1.0	1.0	• Reviews applicable land use applications and permits for compliance with adopted road, traffic issues and other adopted standards.
General Public Works	1.0	1.0	• Conducts legal parcel review on land use applications • Provides support reviews on groundwater issues • Lead on processing lot line adjustment and certificate of compliance applications.
County Counsel			
Attorney	1.0	1.0	• Reviews all use permits for compliance with adopted standards and ordinances, and CEQA procedures. • Coordinates with Planning when use permits are appealed to Board of Supervisors. • Provide support to Planning Commissioners on planning and land use related public hearings.

3. APPLICATIONS AND PERMITS

The table below lists the specific permits issued by the County, and indicates which divisions or departments are responsible for issuing and reviewing each of the permit types.

	PBES				Fire	Public Works
	Planning and Zoning	Engineering	Environ-mental Health	Building		
Administrative Permit (directional signage / cottage food / home occupation / firearms)	X		X Cottage Food			X Signs
Certificate of Non-Conformity	X	X	X	X	X	
Erosion Control Plan	X	X				X
Land Division / Mergers	X	X			X	X
Site Plan – Standard Approval	X	X	X	X	X	X
Site Plan – Modification	X	X	X	X	X	X
Surface Mining	X	X				
Telecommunications – Use Permits	X	X	X	X	X	X
Temporary Event	X		X		X	
Use Permit / Modifications	X	X	X	X	X	X
Zoning Map or Text Change	X					
Fence Entry Structure Permit	X	X			X	X
Sign Permit	X					X
Variance	X					
Viewshed Permit	X	X			X	
Williamson Contracts	X	X				
Encroachment Permits						X

4. LOCAL STATUTES AND ORDINANCES

The following table summarizes the key statutes, ordinances, and regulations enforced by the Planning Division and other applicable review divisions as part of the discretionary land use entitlement review and permitting process.

Statute, Ordinance, or Regulation (Local Only)	Department(s) Utilizing	Issues Regulated
Title 13 Water, Sewers, and Public Systems	Environmental Health	Wells, Sewer, and Storage Systems
Title 15 Article II – Building and Excavation	Engineering (Conservation Planning), Building, Public Works	Site work, erosion control, building codes
Title 16 – Environment	Planning, Environmental Health, Public Works, Engineering	Environmental law related to water, waste water, flooding, runoff, pollution.
Title 17 – Subdivisions	Planning, Building, Environmental Health, Public Works, Engineering	Division or merging of land.
Title 18 Zoning	Planning	Zoning, site development, conservation, signs, use & permitted uses
Title 12 Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places	Planning, Public Works	Conformance with codes regarding streets, sidewalks and public places, encroachments.

The above table does not include non-Code based requirements, such as the Local CEQA Guidelines, Road and Streets Standards, General Plan, County Policy Manual, or various Board of Supervisors memos. It should be noted that a variety of regional, state, and federal standards also apply to the discretionary land use entitlement process. Due to the large volume of individual regulations, these regulations will not be list as part of this document.

5. WORKLOAD

The Current Planning Section provided workload data for 2014-2016 by application type. The total number of applications has more than doubled since 2014 from 238 in 2014 to a total of 579 in 2016. The following chart shows the number of planning applications from 2014 to 2016.

Application Type	2014	2015	2016
Addressing	3	1	2
Administrative Permit	41	57	87
Appeal	0	3	14
CLN	7	3	4
Pre-Application Meeting	24	56	91
Site Plan	3	1	2
Telecom	18	10	21
Temporary Event	50	91	173

Application Type	2014	2015	2016
Use Permit - New	14	15	11
Use Permit - Modification (Minor)	32	50	79
Use Permit - Modification (Major)	8	13	22
Variance	10	8	17
Other	28	32	56
Total	**238**	**340**	**579**

The Conservation Section received and process approximately 40-50 Erosion Control Plans (ECPs) a year.

6.   TIMELINES

Currently, the State of California requires that all discretionary land use planning applications be reviewed within 30 days from the time of submission to ensure completeness. However, Napa County has an informal internal target of 14 days for each reviewing entity to complete their review to ensure the County is in conformance with the State requirement.

In addition to the statutory timeline for processing each application, Napa County provided data in respect to the application turnaround times. Application turnaround time cover from time of application to the approval or denial of the application occurred. Turnaround times were determined by major application type and by calendar year. It is important to note that these timeframes are only approximate as there is some inconsistency in how data is captured and recorded in the Accela system.

Permit Type	2014	2015	2016
Telecom	180	274	54
Temporary Event	36	37	25
Use Permit - New	648	555	n/a
Use Permit - Modification (Minor)	89	148	73
Use Permit - Modification (Major)	429	497	379

A review of internal data showed that the average planning application is taking approximately one year to get to a completed application. Following achievement of a complete application, most applications are presented for a hearing before the Planning Commission within 90 days, inclusive of CEQA review (when required) which typically requires a 30-day period to process. This timeframe has been relatively consistent over the last three years.

Finally, the length associated with public wait times were provided. This data set included the average time for the public to wait before being acknowledged by staff, and then the total time the visitor spent in the Planning Division from check in to check out. Since the new check in system was established, those individuals who self-identified as the division they were visiting was Planning, the average time between check in and acknowledgement was 11 minutes and 39 seconds, and the average time associated with each visit was 44 minutes and 3 seconds.

7. PROCESS

All planning applications originate in the PBES permit center. The application review process is similar for most application types. The following process flow is an overview of the basic process by which plans are taken in, distributed, and reviewed.

Generalized Application Process

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Pre-Application     │
                    │  Meeting (Optional)  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Planning Application │
                    │     Submitted        │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Supervisor Assigns to│
                    │      Planner         │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Respective        │
                    │ Departments Review   │
                    │  Application for      │
                    │   Completeness       │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Review Comments     │
                    │   Developed /        │
                    │  Preparation of      │
                    │ Completeness Letter  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
  ┌───────────────────────┐   No  ┌─────────────────┐
  │ Returned To Applicant │◄──────│  Project Deemed │
  │ for modification,     │       │    Complete?    │
  │ Resubmitted           │       └─────────────────┘
  └───────────────────────┘              │ Yes
                                         ▼
                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                              │   CEQA Review        │
                              │  Initiated (when     │
                              │     required)        │
                              └─────────────────────┘
                                         │
                                         ▼
                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                              │ CEQA Determination   │
                              │     Completed        │
                              └─────────────────────┘
                                         │
                                         ▼
                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                              │   Final Project      │
                              │    Assessment        │
                              └─────────────────────┘
                                         │
                                         ▼
                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                              │   Public Hearing     │
                              │  Noticed (if required)│
                              └─────────────────────┘
                                         │
                                         ▼
                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                              │   Staff Report       │
                              │    Completed         │
                              └─────────────────────┘
```

Planning Commission Hearing or Administrative Approval

Approved — No — Appealed? — No — Application Processing Ends

Yes — Initiate Application for Building / Grading / Environmental Health

Yes — Appeals to Board of Supervisor

8.   PLANNING APPLICATION – APPROVAL AUTHORITY LEVELS.

The following table summarizes the approval authority for different types of planning applications and permits.   It highlights for each approval level (Director, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisor) who has final authority for approval of the application type.   For Planning Commission actions, the table highlights both those whether they have final action authority and those applications where they conduct a hearing and provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Authority Level	Application / Permit Type
Director	Very Minor Modifications Erosion Control Plan* Administrative Viewshed Telecommunication – Administrative & Modification Sign Permit Temporary Events Category 2B, Category 3, and Subsequent 4 Site Plan – Standard Approval Site Plan – Modification Home Occupation Hot Air Balloon Launching Site Firearms Fence Entry Structure Permit Temporary Trailer Small Wind Energy System Cottage Food Operation Addressing / Street Name Change
Zoning Administrator	Minor Modification Variance* Viewshed* Certificate of Non-Conformity Roads & Streets Standards Exception* Temporary Events – Category 4*
Planning Commission (Final Action)	Use Permit* Major Modification* Conservation Regulation Exception* Telecommunication – Use Permit* Surface Mining Land Division – Tentative* Comprehensive Sign Plan

Authority Level	Application / Permit Type
Planning Commission (Recommendation)	General Plan Text or Map Amendment* Municipal Code Amendments – Other* Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment* Zoning Map Amendment* Specific Plan Amendment – Napa Valley Business Park* Development Agreement*
Board of Supervisors	General Plan Text or Map Amendment Municipal Code Amendments – Other Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Zoning Map Amendment Specific Plan Amendment – Napa Valley Business Park Development Agreement Appeal Williamson Act Contract

* Note: Any companion action which is necessary to approve a permit and/or legislative action shall be processed concurrently with the final decision body.

9. TECHNOLOGY

The major software systems used for permitting-related activities are listed below.

Software	Department(s) Utilizing	Purpose / Utilization
Accela (Version 9)	All	Permit tracking and issuance
GIS (ArcGIS)	All	Primarily used by GIS Planner to update site plans, zoning, and use information for each parcel.
Agenda Net	All	Used to upload, manage, and distribute applicable public meeting agendas, staff reports, and applicable information related to public meetings. (e.g., Planning Commission, ALUC, Board of Supervisors, etc.)

APPENDIX B: CUSTOMER SURVEY AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

As part of the Matrix Consulting Group's organizational analysis for the Napa County Planning Division, the project team distributed an anonymous survey to the Division's customers and stakeholders in order to learn about their experiences and gauge their opinion on a number of topics related to the operations of the Division and potential improvement opportunities. This report summarizes the results of the survey. The survey asked 3 types of questions:

• **General questions:** At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to provide some information about the type and frequency of interactions that they have with the Division. These responses are used in this analysis to explore differences in responses between groups of respondents.

• **Multiple Choice Questions:** Respondents were presented with a number of multiple choice statements, where they indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with statements on a variety of topics related to their experience with the Division.

• **Open-ended response questions:** At the end of the survey, respondents were given space to provide opinions about the Division on topics such as its strengths and weaknesses, in their own words.

The survey was distributed through two separate methods. The first was a list of 562 email addresses of prior customers which was provided by the Division. These all received the survey, and 75 responses were gathered (a response rate of 13.3%). The second distribution method was a web link which provided access to the survey to anyone who received it. A total of 67 responses were received from the web link, although it is not possible to verify whether those responses come from customers or not because of the anonymous nature of the questionnaire. The results from these two separate methods of collection are presented side-by-side in this analysis.

In addition to conducting the anonymous customer survey, the project team also held a total of five stakeholder input meetings in Napa on June 21 and 22, 2017. The feedback received in the stakeholder meetings and phone calls will be discussed in the second section of this analysis.

1. ANONYMOUS ONLINE CUSTOMER SURVEY ANALYSIS

1. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

While a complete analysis can be found in the sections below, the following points summarize the key findings from the responses received to this survey:

Findings of Strengths

- Customers generally agree the customer service is a strong point for the Division. Friendly, respectful staff help customers feel valued.

- Staff are considered knowledgeable about the requirements for obtaining a winery permit.

- The Division's commitment to agricultural and environmental preservation is recognized and appreciated.

Findings of Potential Improvement Opportunities

- Respondents feel confused by the land use and permitting process from beginning to end – they find it unpredictable.

- The Division's website does not provide clarity on the permitting process.

- Inconsistency in the interpretation or application of land use regulations frustrate many customers.

- The timeline for application review is not clear to customers, and they are dissatisfied with the timeliness of application processing.

- Customers feel that initial reviews of applications are not comprehensive, and subsequent reviews still do not catch objections that may obstruct a project in the future.

- The land use application process is considered more difficult in Napa County than in neighboring jurisdictions.

2. RESPONSES TO GENERAL QUESTIONS

While responses to the survey were anonymous the project team asked respondents to indicate some information about their interactions with the Planning Division for comparison purposes. The tables below summarize their responses. Note that many of these questions allowed respondents to choose multiple responses, so the number of selections in many cases exceeds the total number of responses because some of those responses include multiple selections.

(1) Responses by Role.

The first question asked respondents what their role is in interacting with Napa County regarding land use processes. The following table shows the responses received.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN INTERACTING WITH THE COUNTY LAND USE PROCESS?					
Response	Email		Web Link		Total
Architect	8	89%	1	11%	9
Business Owner	26	68%	12	32%	38
Contractor/Builder	9	90%	1	10%	10
Engineer	7	88%	1	13%	8
Homeowner/Landowner	27	36%	51	67%	76
Legal Counsel	4	80%	1	20%	5
Property Developer	6	67%	3	33%	9
Realtor	0	0%	1	100%	1
Other	17	53%	15	47%	32
TOTAL	**72**	**53%**	**65**	**47%**	**137**

Those responding to the email distribution method identified themselves in a variety of roles. Those responding to the web link were more homogeneous, with 78% identifying as homeowners/landowners. "Other" respondents included a wide variety of responses with most responses either citizen / resident or neighbor.

(2) Responses by Location of Business.

The second question asked respondents to indicate where they typically conduct business. The table below shows their responses.

WHERE DO YOU TYPICALLY CONDUCT BUSINESS?					
Response	Email		Web Link		Total
Immediate Area (Napa and Sonoma County)	52	67%	26	33%	78
North Bay Area	13	76%	4	24%	17
South Bay Area	5	100%	0	0%	5
Sacramento Regional Area	4	100%	0	0%	4
State or National Practice	8	80%	2	20%	10
TOTAL	**64**	**67%**	**32**	**33%**	**96**

Email respondents answered this question in greater numbers than web link respondents. They claimed a more widespread business footprint, while more than 80% of web link responders listed the immediate area as their place of business.

(3)   Responses by Functional Exposure.

The third question asked respondents what types of development review and permitting functions they typically go to Napa County for. The responses are summarized below.

FOR WHAT FUNCTIONS DO YOU TYPICALLY INTERACT WITH NAPA COUNTY?					
Response	Email		Web Link		Total
Code Violations	18	55%	15	45%	33
Erosion Control Plan	23	53%	20	47%	43
Inspections	17	52%	16	48%	33
Land Use Permits (Non-Winery)	29	49%	30	51%	59
Land Use Permits (Winery-Related)	46	58%	34	43%	80
Williamson Act	5	56%	4	44%	9
Zoning Permits	15	60%	10	40%	25
Zoning Verification/due diligence	15	68%	7	32%	22
Other	9	47%	10	53%	19
TOTAL	**72**	**54%**	**61**	**46%**	**133**

Winery-related land use permits were the most common type of interaction for both email and web link respondents. Responses received in the "Other" category included

concerned citizens (7 responses), Building (4 responses), CEQA (3 responses), public participation (3 responses), and Temporary Events (2 responses).

(4) Responses by Project Type.

The fourth question asked respondents for what type of development-related projects they have typically interacted with Napa County. The following table shows their responses.

FOR WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS HAVE YOU INTERACTED WITH THE COUNTY?					
Response	Email		Web Link		Total
Agricultural	32	46%	38	54%	70
Commercial	12	44%	15	56%	27
Industrial	14	74%	5	26%	19
Single Family Residential	23	43%	31	57%	54
Wineries and Associated Uses	49	56%	38	44%	87
Other	9	64%	5	36%	14
TOTAL	**71**	**54%**	**61**	**46%**	**132**

Wineries were the most common project type for both email and web link survey participants, although agricultural uses were the next most common for email respondents and equally as common for those responding by web link.

(5) Responses by Frequency of Interaction.

The fifth question asked respondents how frequently they interact with Napa County's land use process. The table below shows the responses gathered.

HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU INTERACT WITH THE COUNTY LAND USE PROCESS?					
Response	Email		Web Link		Total
Several times per month	24	73%	9	27%	33
Several times per year	27	47%	30	53%	57
Once or twice per year	15	71%	6	29%	21
Less than once per year	6	27%	16	73%	22
TOTAL	**72**	**54%**	**61**	**46%**	**133**

Email respondents interact with the County more frequently, in general, than web link respondents. They were nearly 3 times as likely to select "several times per month" and less than half as likely to select "less than once per year".

(6) Responses by Timing of Most Recent Interaction.

The sixth question asked respondents when their most recent interaction with Napa County's land use processes was. The responses are shown in the following table.

WHEN DID YOU LAST INTERACT WITH THE COUNTY LAND USE PROCESS?					
Response	Email		Web Link		Total
Within the last 6 months	61	56%	48	44%	109
6-12 months ago	6	55%	5	45%	11
Over a year ago	5	42%	7	58%	12
TOTAL	**72**	**55%**	**60**	**45%**	**132**

83% of the survey respondents have interacted with the land use process within the last six months. This was especially true of those who took the survey via email.

The differences in these responses from these groups are used in the analysis below to draw comparisons in the differences between groups, where they are notable.

3. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

The second section of the survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with 20 statements about the Department. The response options were "strongly agree" (SA), "agree" (A), "disagree" (D), and "strongly disagree" (SD). Respondents could also choose "Not Applicable" or opt out of responding to the statement at all, in which case they were not counted among the respondents for that statement. For this reason, percentages may not add up to 100%, since a percentage of respondents may have chosen "Not Applicable". It should be noted that the higher the response rate, the darker the shading. The following sections show the responses to statements by topic.

(1) Respondents Believe Staff Are Accessible and Provide Good Service, but the Land Use Process is Too Unpredictable, Inefficient, and Time-Consuming.

The table below shows the responses received to questions about the overall land use process. A total of 59 email responses and 47 web link responses were received on this section.

OVERALL LAND USE PROCESS				
Statement	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
Email Respondents				
1. The land use process is predictable.	0%	21%	28%	49%
2. The amount of time taken to review and approve my application was acceptable.	0%	16%	31%	47%
3. The County meets its time commitments for processing my application.	0%	21%	30%	44%
4. County staff were accessible and responsive if I had questions regarding my application.	14%	51%	19%	14%
5. County staff provided good customer service throughout the process.	12%	36%	38%	12%
6. The County did a good job coordinating input from different departments and divisions.	4%	28%	35%	30%
7. The County's technical requirements were consistent with the codes and ordinances that the County enforces.	4%	37%	25%	30%
Web Link Respondents				
1. The land use process is predictable.	11%	23%	34%	23%
2. The amount of time taken to review and approve my application was acceptable.	2%	11%	17%	37%
3. The County meets its time commitments for processing my application.	2%	9%	24%	29%
4. County staff were accessible and responsive if I had questions regarding my application.	2%	48%	20%	9%
5. County staff provided good customer service throughout the process.	4%	42%	24%	11%
6. The County did a good job coordinating input from different departments and divisions.	0%	24%	33%	22%
7. The County's technical requirements were consistent with the codes and ordinances that the County enforces.	0%	33%	27%	29%

As the table above shows, both email and web link respondents have issues with multiple aspects of the land use process – only statement #4 received more than 50%

agreement from either group. In general, however, the email respondents took issue with the predictability and timeliness of the process (Statements #1-3 each received at least 74% disagreement from this group) than web link respondents (no more than 57% disagreement for any of those 3 statements). While the land use process received mostly low marks across the board, County personnel receive more positive responses than negative ones when it came to customer service and the accessibility of staff.

Technical requirements consistent – *commercial and agricultural* agree less

- Statement #5 said, *"County staff provided good customer service throughout the process"*. Respondents who identified as homeowners or landowners tended to have more negative opinions on this statement (36% agreement, 51% disagreement) than the average survey participant (46% agreement, 35% disagreement).

- Statement #7 said, *"The County's technical requirements were consistent with the codes and ordinances that the County enforces"*. Respondents who identified as homeowners or landowners tended to agree less with this statement (24% agreement, 63% disagreement) than the average survey participant (33% agreement, 56% disagreement).

- Statement #7 said, *"The County's technical requirements were consistent with the codes and ordinances that the County enforces"*. This statement received mostly disagreement from participants in general (36% agreement, 55% disagreement), but especially from those involved with commercial projects (23% agreement, 64% disagreement) and agricultural projects (25% agreement, 67% disagreement).

(2)   Respondents, Particularly Those With Commercial Projects, Are Unhappy with the Lack of Clarity in the Application Preparation Process.

The following table shows responses received to statements about the process of preparing land use applications. A total of 57 email responses and 43 web link responses were received on this section.

PREPARATION OF APPLICATION				
Statement	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
Email Respondents				
8. I clearly understood what approvals / permits would be required for my project.	7%	48%	32%	11%
9. I clearly understood the timeline to review and process my application.	0%	32%	39%	29%
10. I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include in my application.	2%	50%	30%	18%
11. I clearly understood what fees would be required for my project.	4%	52%	29%	16%
12. Staff was helpful in explaining what I needed to do and how to accomplish it.	13%	34%	32%	20%
13. The County's website had the information I needed to prepare a complete application.	0%	24%	38%	35%
Web Link Respondents				
8. I clearly understood what approvals / permits would be required for my project.	2%	33%	21%	9%
9. I clearly understood the timeline to review and process my application.	5%	21%	21%	19%
10. I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include in my application.	2%	28%	21%	14%
11. I clearly understood what fees would be required for my project.	2%	28%	19%	12%
12. Staff was helpful in explaining what I needed to do and how to accomplish it.	2%	30%	16%	16%
13. The County's website had the information I needed to prepare a complete application.	5%	7%	26%	17%

Responses varied to statements in this section. The biggest concerns for both email and web link respondents had to do with a lack of clarity on the timeline for reviewing and processing applications, as well as a lack of resources available on the website. The permits and approvals required for a project, as well as the required fees, appear to be less of an issue – the statements for each of them received slightly more agreement than disagreement.

Web link respondents were much more likely to select "no opinion" on statements in this section, while a greater percentage of email respondents tended to indicate a level of agreement or disagreement.

While some statements got more agreement and others got more disagreement, the percentage of "strong disagreement" outweighed the percentage of "strong agreement" with all statements, suggesting a number of very dissatisfied customers and very few who have been delighted with the application preparation process. This was common across all multiple-choice sections.

- For every statement in this section, respondents identifying as homeowners or landowners offered less agreement than other types of respondents, suggesting that these survey participants have had a less pleasant experience with preparing their application than others. However, it should be noted that home and land owners may have less experience and / or knowledge of the process, thus resulting in lower agreement rates than those individuals who have more experience.

- Statement #9 said, *"I clearly understood the timeline to review and process my application"*. Respondents with commercial projects tended to agree even less with this statement (14% agreement, 57% disagreement) than the general level of disagreement among all respondents (29% agreement, 56% disagreement).

- Statement #10 said, *"I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include in my application"*. Respondents with commercial projects tended, again, to respond with less agreement to this statement (24% agreement, 48% disagreement) than the average participant (42% agreement, 42% disagreement).

(3)   Poor Communication, Incomplete or Unclear Reviews, and a Lack of Understanding of Next Steps Create Frustrations for Respondents, Particularly Homeowners and Landowners.

The table below summarizes the responses received to statements specifically about application review. A total of 56 email responses and 43 web link responses were received on this section.

REVIEW OF APPLICATION				
Statement	SA	A	D	SD
Email Respondents				
14. While my application was under review, I received prompt communication regarding the project status.	4%	18%	46%	29%
15. Staff dealt with me in a positive manner, clearly outlining the submittal and approval requirements.	9%	51%	20%	16%

REVIEW OF APPLICATION				
Statement	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
16. The County did a good job coordinating the review process with different departments and divisions.	4%	27%	42%	22%
17. The initial reviews of my application were complete and comprehensive.	4%	30%	34%	29%
18. Comments regarding outstanding issues were on time, clear and comprehensive.	4%	25%	36%	30%
19. After receiving my application review comments, I clearly understood what I needed to do to revise my application and gain approval.	5%	38%	38%	13%
20. 2nd (and subsequent) review letters refined comments presented in the first review letter, and did not introduce new concerns or requirements.	2%	27%	29%	25%
Web Link Respondents				
14. While my application was under review, I received prompt communication regarding the project status.	0%	9%	30%	16%
15. Staff dealt with me in a positive manner, clearly outlining the submittal and approval requirements.	5%	28%	19%	12%
16. The County did a good job coordinating the review process with different departments and divisions.	2%	16%	19%	14%
17. The initial reviews of my application were complete and comprehensive.	0%	24%	14%	14%
18. Comments regarding outstanding issues were on time, clear and comprehensive.	0%	17%	20%	17%
19. After receiving my application review comments, I clearly understood what I needed to do to revise my application and gain approval.	2%	24%	12%	12%
20. 2nd (and subsequent) review letters refined comments presented in the first review letter, and did not introduce new concerns or requirements.	0%	8%	18%	18%

Survey participants were generally dissatisfied with the application review process. All but one statement in this section received more disagreement than agreement from email respondents, and only two of the seven statements got more agreement than disagreement from web link respondents. The lack of prompt communication during the review timeframe, poor coordination with other departments and divisions, incomplete initial reviews, and unclear or incomplete comments were the biggest issues – each of these topics received more than 60% disagreement. One bright spot was the positive attitude from staff – it was the most agreed-upon statement in this section for both email and web link respondents.

As with the previous section, web link respondents were much more likely to select "no opinion" on statements in this section, while a greater percentage of email respondents tended to indicate a level of agreement or disagreement.

- Statement #15 said, *"Staff dealt with me in a positive manner, clearly outlining the submittal and approval requirements"*. Respondents identifying as homeowners and landowners tended to disagree with this statement (30% agreement, 43% disagreement), while the general response rate was more positive (48% agreement, 34% disagreement).

- Statement #17 said, *"The initial reviews of my application were complete and comprehensive"*. This statement received generally negative responses (30% agreement, 48% disagreement), but more so from homeowners/landowners (23% agreement, 45% disagreement) and contractors (22% agreement, 56% disagreement).

- Statement #19 said, *"After receiving my application review comments, I clearly understood what I needed to do to revise my application and gain approval"*. Responses were mostly negative to this statement (36% agreement, 39% disagreement), but especially from homeowners/landowners (21% agreement, 45% disagreement) and those with commercial projects (21% agreement, 42% disagreement).

- Statement #20 said, *"2nd (and subsequent) review letters refined comments presented in the first review letter, and did not introduce new concerns or requirements"*. Responses were mostly negative to this statement (20% agreement, 46% disagreement), but especially from homeowners/landowners (13% agreement, 42% disagreement).

(4) Email and Web Link Respondents Have Varying Opinions on Winery-Related Land Use Projects, while Engineers Have a Better Opinion About Some Aspects of the Process.

The fourth multiple choice section was presented only to respondents who indicated that their recent interaction with the County land use process involved a winery. The table below summarizes the responses to these winery-specific statements. A total of 60 responses were received.

WINERY-SPECIFIC STATEMENTS				
Statement	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
Email Respondents				
21. The process required for a winery use permit modification is straightforward.	0%	22%	32%	41%
22. The requirements associated with a winery use permit application are easy to find on the County's website.	0%	19%	33%	44%
23. It is easy to identify what level of review will be required for a proposed winery use permit modification.	0%	19%	44%	33%
24. Staff clearly identified the requirements for a winery use permit application.	0%	35%	32%	27%
25. The timeline associated with a winery use permit (or modification) was communicated to me.	0%	27%	27%	43%
26. The County did a good job coordinating review comments from different departments and divisions.	0%	32%	30%	30%
27. The process of identifying which winery ordinance is applicable to my property is straightforward.	0%	32%	41%	24%
28. The winery use permit process is predictable.	0%	19%	19%	58%
29. If applicable, the next steps after a winery use permit was issued, were clearly identified.	0%	41%	14%	27%
30. Staff were knowledgeable about the requirements for a winery use permit application.	3%	38%	32%	14%
31. Staff were knowledgeable about the requirements for a use permit modification application.	3%	32%	35%	19%
Web Link Respondents				
21. The process required for a winery use permit modification is straightforward.	8%	8%	46%	38%
22. The requirements associated with a winery use permit application are easy to find on the County's website.	0%	17%	42%	42%
23. It is easy to identify what level of review will be required for a proposed winery use permit modification.	0%	0%	42%	58%
24. Staff clearly identified the requirements for a winery use permit application.	0%	33%	33%	25%
25. The timeline associated with a winery use permit (or modification) was communicated to me.	0%	8%	42%	33%
26. The County did a good job coordinating review comments from different departments and divisions.	0%	8%	38%	31%
27. The process of identifying which winery ordinance is applicable to my property is straightforward.	0%	23%	38%	23%

WINERY-SPECIFIC STATEMENTS				
Statement	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
28. The winery use permit process is predictable.	8%	0%	42%	50%
29. If applicable, the next steps after a winery use permit was issued, were clearly identified.	0%	8%	42%	50%
30. Staff were knowledgeable about the requirements for a winery use permit application.	8%	58%	17%	8%
31. Staff were knowledgeable about the requirements for a use permit modification application.	0%	38%	23%	23%

The responses to statements in this section revealed significant customer frustration with the County's approach to winery-related projects. Nearly every statement received more disagreement than agreement, and no statement received more agreement than disagreement from both email and web link respondents. For email respondents, the biggest concerns are the unpredictability of the winery permit process, the difficulty of knowing what level of review will be required, and the inability to find helpful information on the website. Web link respondents provided even fewer agreeing responses than email respondents; their biggest issues were similar to email respondents, although they had more frustration with the lack of clarity of the timeline, coordination of permit review with other departments, and straightforwardness of the process overall.

• Statement #29 said, "If applicable, the next steps after a winery use permit was issued, were clearly identified." Email respondents were split on this statement (41% agreement, 41% disagreement), but web link respondents gave it only 8% agreement and 92% disagreement.

• Engineers tended to agree more than other respondent groups for four of the statements in this section. These were Statement #26 – The County did a good job coordinating review comments from different departments and divisions, Statement #29 – If applicable, the next steps after a winery use permit was issued, were clearly identified, Statement #30 – Staff were knowledgeable about the requirements for a winery use permit application, and Statement #31 – Staff were knowledgeable about the requirements for a use permit modification application.

(5) **Most Respondents Feel that Napa County's Land Use Process Is More Difficult than in Neighboring Jurisdictions.**

In the final multiple-choice question of the survey, respondents were asked whether the land use process in Napa County is easier, more difficult, or about the same as in other jurisdictions. The following table shows the responses received.

COMPARISON OF PROCESS TO OTHER JURISDICTIONS		
Response	**Count**	**Percentage**
Easier	5	6%
About the same	25	31%
More difficult	50	63%
Total	**80**	**100%**

As the table shows, most respondents said that the process in Napa County is more difficult than in other jurisdictions. The neighboring land use processes that they most commonly identified as easier were Sonoma County, Solano County, Sacramento County, and the City of Napa.

> **4.** **OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS**

The final section of the survey asked respondents to provide input in their own words. The following headers show their opinions on the Department's strengths and improvement opportunities.

(1) **Respondents Believe Customer Service, Agricultural/Environmental Preservation, and Enforcement of Regulations Are the Division's Greatest Strengths.**

The first open-ended question asked respondents what they felt that greatest strengths of the land use process are. A total of 104 responses were received for this question. The table below shows the most prevalent themes in the responses gathered.

STRENGTHS OF LAND USE PROCESS	
Response	**Count**
Customer Service	18
Agricultural Preservation	10
Staff Availability	7

STRENGTHS OF LAND USE PROCESS	
Response	**Count**
Environmental Protection	6
Consistency of Rulings/Enforcement	5
Knowledgeable Staff	5
Quality Personnel	5
Citizen Input	4
Elected Leadership	4
Strong Regulations	4
Quality of General Plan	3
Integrity of Staff	3
Strong Regulations	3
Clear Communication	3

- Customer service was the greatest strength identified by respondents from both the email distribution and the web link (and staff availability was the 3rd strength for email respondents). This aligns with earlier sections of the survey, where statements regarding customer service, staff availability, and the attitude of County employees received more agreement than most other statements.

- The County's efforts toward agricultural and environmental preservation combined for 16 responses, among the most common themes.

- Strong regulations and the knowledge/integrity/overall quality of personnel were other commonly identified strengths across all respondent groups.

The responses to this question show that customer service is a bright spot for the County, and that customers of various groups recognize the effort and high level of service provided by staff. Customers also appreciate efforts to protect agricultural uses and the environment, as well as consistent enforcement of the general plan and zoning regulations/code.

(2) **Some Respondents Want the Land Use Process to Be More User-Friendly, While Others Want It to Reduce Community and Environmental Impact.**

The second open-ended question asked respondents what they saw as the greatest opportunities for improvement with the land use process. A total of 185 responses were received. The table below shows the most prevalent themes in the responses received.

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN PROCESS	
Response	**Count**
Timeliness	20
Consistency of Rulings/Enforcement	14
Enforce Code More Stringently	11
Empower Line Staff	8
Environmental Protection	8
Clarity of Process	7
Constrain Enforcement to Code	7
Enforce Code More Stringently	6
Cost	6
Customer Service	4
Elected Leadership	4
Responsiveness	4
Streamline Applications	4
Communication	3
Traffic control	3
Timeliness	4
Citizen Input	3
Clarity of Process	3
Elected Leadership	3
Reduce Influence of Lobbying	3
Limit Development	3
Staffing	3

• Timeliness was the most common concern – several responses dealt with a desire for faster turnaround times and more streamlined review processes.

• Consistency in interpreting zoning regulations and applying the code was a major concern for respondents.

• Respondents listed clarifying the land use process and empowering line staff to make approvals as key improvement opportunities, consideration for project impacts, more stringent enforcement of regulations and environmental protections above a faster, and more streamlined process.

There were many more responses to this question than the first open-ended question, showing that respondents are full of ideas and suggestions for improving the

land use process. The top responses from each participant group show a divergence in priorities. Those who responded to the email distribution method tended to focus on making the process more user-friendly – a faster, cheaper, easier-to-understand process with consistent reviews by staff who are empowered to make decisions at the line level and limit their objections to what is written in the code. Those responding to the web link also want a consistent process, but one that considers all aspects of projects' impact, enforces the code tightly, and protects the environment.

The responses to this survey were useful for gaining an understanding of customer opinions about a variety of topics. The most urgent concerns became clear, sentiments about the impact of the land use process were expressed, and the differences between various groups of respondents helped identify pain points in the Division's operations. The opinions and issues found in these survey results are useful for the project team's analysis going forward.

2. STAKEHOLDER MEETING AND INTERVIEW FEEDBACK

The second way that stakeholders and the public could provide input for this study was to attend one of five meetings with the project team on June 21 and 22, 2017 at the Napa County Administration Building. Additionally, the project team also spoke with a number of individuals who could not attend these meeting by phone, and also received feedback via email. The five in-person stakeholder meetings had a total of 24 individuals in attendance. In addition, the project team spoke with a total of 17 stakeholders via phone interview.

1. Key Strengths of the Planning Division Focused on Customer Service, Knowledge of Staff, and Accessibility of Department Personnel.

Similar to the responses received in the anonymous survey and presented previously, the feedback received in respect to strengths of the Planning Division and current processes focused on the following themes:

- Strong customer service skills.
- Knowledge of staff of the process (Planning, Building, Environmental)
- Colocation and accessibility of all PBES personnel.

Based on the feedback receiving in discussion with stakeholder and community members it was clear that both type of respondents felt that these strengths were prevalent throughout the Planning Division and the PBES Department as a whole.

2.   Stakeholders and Community Members Both Have Concerns About Guiding Policies That the County Has Adopted. The Perception Is That Adopted Policies Are Not Being Followed or Enforced, or Are Irrelevant to the Current Economic Trends of Napa County.

During discussions with the majority of individuals who participated in the stakeholder meetings and interviews, the participants discussed many issues related to current adopted policies. The primary concerns stemmed from the belief that the adopted policies (e.g. Napa County General Plan), contradict current land use and development trends in Napa County. Stakeholders referenced many scenarios where either the Planning Commission of Board of Supervisors (during the appeal process), appeared to be creating or implementing policies on the fly versus applying previously adopted guidelines or standards. A reoccurring term that was referenced by many individuals was "cumulative impact". It was clear that "cumulative impacts" was focused on the larger picture that all use permits when considered in aggregate have a much greater impact than when looked at individually. There was apprehension that adopted policy does not go far enough to address the cumulative impact of all use permits. Many examples focused on traffic congestion, water resource availability, effects of pollution, quality of life, etc. These themes permeated many of the discussions and was a strong underlying tone of participants. Much discussion was had on the discrepancies between adopted policies and what was happening on a day-to-day basis in respect to land use.

3.   Desired Areas of Improvement Focused on Consistency in the Application of Adopted Regulations, Application Checklist, and Communication from Napa County to the Applicant, Stakeholders, and Community in General.

Several areas of improvement that were discussed by a large majority of those individuals involved in the stakeholder discussion process, focused on the desire of consistency throughout the land use and permitting process. Areas that received the greatest amount of dialogue included:

•   Application requirement consistency between individual staff.

•   Consistent interpretation for required documentation and / or adopted codes, regulations, and ordinances. (e.g. contradiction in adopted Fire Code and Engineering standards for road widths)

•   Notification process for use permits, especially for adjacent property owners and surrounding community.

•   Enforcement of adopted regulations, ordinances, and use permit requirements.

•   Communication between Napa County and Applicant, Stakeholders (e.g. adjacent property owners), and Community.

Depending on the role of the person who was discussing these issues, there were multiple viewpoints on each of the points listed above. For those individuals who were previous customers of the Planning Division, there was great concern about the consistency of the required documentation for their respective applications. Several stories were shared in regard to one staff member would require a specific document, study, etc. while another staff member may require significantly less documentation or completely different study. There was a clear desire to have a standardized checklist of the required documentation for each application type, with an emphasis of only requiring additional documents outside of the standardized checklist in extreme circumstances.

In conjunction with stability for required documentation as part of the of the application process, individuals desired consistency in the interpretation of adopted codes, ordinances, design standards, etc. There were many stakeholders who shared discontent about the lack of consistency in the interpretation of adopted regulations. Especially between individual staff or between different departments or divisions. There was a strong desire for more consistency in the interpretation of adopted ordinances. Consistency in code interpretation is typically driven by the enforcement of the guiding land use policies, such as those discussed in the previous subsection.

Many of the community members expressed negative thoughts about the notification process, especially for use permit applications. These concerns were present regardless if the application was for a new or modified use permit. A strong desired exist for increased notification of a use permit for the nearby community and property owners. It was obvious that many individuals were pleased with the fact that the County recently extended official notification boundary to 1,000 feet from the applicant's parcel, but desired to have a larger notification area outside of the immediate vicinity of the applicant's parcel. Many community members discussed their displeasure of only being notified of a use permit via the public notice hearing in the local newspaper, typically only a few days or week before the public hearing.

Finally, there was much concern about compliance and enforcement of adopted use permits. Much of the discussion focused on better enforcement of adopted codes and regulations, and the perception that those individuals who were not in compliance were not reprimanded harshly enough. Dialogue focusing on compliance and enforcement was typically received from those individuals who self-identified as concerned citizens or neighbors. Discussion was focused on many of their neighbors not being in compliance with their respective use permit, and even though a violation occurred, the violation was eventually permitted, with minimal penalty.

Overall, the stakeholders desired increased consistency in many areas related to the land use process. Areas of concerns were sprinkled throughout the entire review and permitting process and were expressed by a majority of those individuals in attendance (or in individual interviews) at the stakeholder meetings. Many of these areas will be investigated in greater detail by the project team as part of this study.

4.   **STAKEHOLDERS FELT THAT CHARGING APPLICANTS FOR STAFF TIME SPENT ON APPLICATION REVIEW WAS INEFFICIENT AND INCREASED THE COST OF THE APPLICATION.**

A topic that was presented by multiple stakeholders were in relation to the practice of Planning staff to bill for the time spent on reviewing the application. The main concern was that applicant were being charged for time not actually spent on the review of the applicant. Also, there was a concern that there was no incentive for staff to review the application submittal in a timely manner and to prevent undue delay in the processing. Stakeholders provided several examples where some staff spent significantly more time on reviewing application than their colleagues. The practice of charging time an application was a major concern of the stakeholders and several individuals voiced their desire to go transition to a sliding scale for application review fees.

5.   **STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARY**

The project team felt that there was a strong turnout for the stakeholder meetings and subsequent phone interviews. A total of 41 individuals provided verbal feedback in respect to the current processes and policies of the Planning Division. A wide range of topics were discussed, including some notable strengths of the Planning Division. Many of the concerns presented focused on consistency in the enforcement of adopted rules and regulations related to the land use process, and the cumulative impacts of all use permits. The perceptions and concerns presented here will be investigated by the project team to determine validity of these concerns and will discussed in the Best Management Practices Assessment and ultimately in the final report.

APPENDIX C: EMPLOYEE SURVEY ANALYSIS

As part of the Matrix Consulting Group's assessment of the planning review and permitting process for Napa County, the project team distributed an anonymous survey to employees involved in the process, including Planning, Building and Environmental Services (PBES) staff as well as related Departments such as Fire, County Counsel, and Public Works. The survey was designed to gauge employees' opinions on a number of topics related to the operation of the planning and permitting process and potential improvement opportunities. This report summarizes the results of the survey. The survey asked 3 types of questions:

- **General questions:** At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to provide some information about their Department and role in the planning or permitting process. These responses are used in this analysis to explore differences in responses between groups of respondents.

- **Multiple Choice Questions:** Respondents were presented with a number of multiple choice statements, where they indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with statements on a variety of topics related to the Department.

- **Open-ended response questions:** After each section, respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments. At the end of the survey, staff were given space to provide opinions about the Department's strengths and weaknesses in their own words.

The link to the online survey was distributed in June 2017 via email to 75 staff involved in the planning review and permitting process. A total of 35 employees responded to the survey (a response rate of 46.7%), in varying degrees of completion. The following section presents a summary of key findings from the survey.

1.   SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

While a complete analysis can be found in the sections below, the following points summarize the key findings from the responses received to this survey:

Findings of Strengths

- Respondents felt that they are accessible to applicants and able to provide information regarding applications at any stage of the land use process. They also indicated that customer service is the clear driving force behind the land use process.

- Employees stated that their fellow staff are committed to doing quality work and that there is good teamwork and communication between various Departments and Divisions.

- Respondents stated that they have materials, equipment, and tools necessary to perform the functions of their job. This tied for highest rate of agreement on the survey. This question did not directly reference technological solutions, however, which did not score as positively.

- Employees felt that they know what is expected of them at work, and that generally their Division is well run and works efficiently.

- Broadly, the topic areas of customer service, communication, coordination, teamwork, and management were rated relatively well. Details regarding these topic areas will be further discussed in the analysis that follows.

Findings of Potential Improvement Opportunities

- Respondents indicated that applications submitted by applicants are not sufficiently complete and incomplete applications are often accepted. Statements regarding completeness of applications scored the lowest levels of agreement on the survey.

- Employees did not feel that the land use process is efficient or well-run, and similarly do not feel that the process is straightforward or easy to navigate for customers. They also indicated that information regarding the land use process is not easily accessible to customers.

- Employees did not believe that codes and ordinances associated with land use and permit review are interpreted or applied consistently, and do not feel that decisions regarding interpretations are consistent from applicant-to-applicant.

- Respondents felt that there is insufficient technical skills training and that there is not a strong emphasis on training.

2. DEPARTMENT ASSIGNMENT AND ROLE

While responses to the survey were anonymous, the project team asked respondents to indicate some information about their position for comparison purposes. Respondents were asked to indicate which Department / Division they currently work in, which is presented in the following table.

DEPARTMENT ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONDENTS		
Response	**Count**	**% of Respondents**
Building	8	23%
Code Enforcement	3	9%
Engineering	4	11%
Environmental Health	7	20%
Planning	10	29%
Other	3	9%
TOTAL	**35**	**100%**

Respondents were also asked to indicate the primary responsibility of their role, such as management, administrative, inspection, etc. A summary is presented in the following table.

DEPARTMENT ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONDENTS		
Response	**Count**	**% of Respondents**
Administrative / Clerical	2	6%
Inspection	7	20%
Plan Review	2	6%
Permit Processing	10	29%
Enforcement	4	11%
Managerial / Supervisory	10	29%
TOTAL	**35**	**100%**

The differences in responses from these groups are used in the analysis below to draw comparisons between groups, where they are notable.

3. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

The first section of the survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with 36 statements about the planning review process. The response options were "strongly agree" (SA), "agree" (A), "disagree" (D), and "strongly disagree" (SD). Respondents could also choose "neutral", indicating that they did not feel agreement nor disagreement with the statement. Respondents were told that if the statement did not apply to their position, they could opt out of responding to the statement at all, in which case they were not counted among the respondents for that statement. For this reason, percentages presented in the following tables may not add up to 100%, since a percentage of respondents may have opted out.

The following sections analyze the responses to statements in the survey. Statements do not appear sequentially based on their numbering on the survey, but are rather grouped by topic area.

(1) Respondents Felt That There is Good Communication and Coordination, but Did Not Feel Actively Engaged by Management to Solve Problems.

The questions presented in this section concern inter-office communication and collaborative problem solving. Employees responded with generally mid-range levels of agreement to questions regarding communication, coordination, and teamwork. The table below summarizes responses to six questions on this topic.

COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, AND TEAMWORK				
#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
18	There is good coordination between my division and other departments / divisions that are involved in the land use process.	9%	49%	14%	3%
25	There is good teamwork and communication between the different divisions and / or departments.	29%	40%	3%	0%
31	Everyone is encouraged to solve problems together regarding the land entitlement process.	17%	31%	11%	0%
32	Managers actively involve the staff in working together to solve problems.	11%	26%	26%	3%
34	There is free and open communication between all levels of employees involved in the planning review and permitting process about the work they are performing.	14%	34%	14%	6%
36	It is relatively easy for me to find information about other projects on which I am not working.	9%	40%	20%	3%

The responses to statements in this section show that the employees felt positively about coordination, teamwork, and communication. There were interesting responses regarding problem solving, however, in that most staff agreed that they are "encouraged to solve problems together" but split between agreement and disagreement regarding "managers actively involve" staff to solve problems.

• Statement #25, that there is good teamwork and communication between departments and divisions, received 59% agreement including 29% strongly agree. Only 3% of respondents disagreed with none strongly disagreeing.

• Statement #18, that there is good coordination between Departments and Divisions involved in land use received 56% agreement. Among respondents who indicated the Division they work in, all responded positively on average[1] except for Building, which responded with slight disagreement.

• Interestingly, Statements #31 and #32 ask similar questions but one received significantly higher agreement (#31 got 48% agreement while #32 got 37% agreement). Potential explanations may include that, employees feel particularly encouraged to "solve problems together" on the land entitlement process specifically, or that staff generally feel encouraged to solve problems together but do not feel that "managers actively involve" them in solving problems.

(2) **Staff Do Not Feel That Applications Submitted are Sufficiently Complete, and Do Not Feel that Decisions Are Consistent Across Applications.**

The following table shows employees' responses to statements about the completeness of applications and the consistent applications of codes and ordinances.

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS AND INTERPRETATON CONSISTENCY					
#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
6	Land use review, and the interpretation of codes and ordinances associated with permit review, is undertaken in a consistent manner by staff.	6%	29%	23%	9%
12	Most of the time, the applications submitted by applicants are complete and adequate to allow prompt and complete action by staff.	0%	6%	49%	20%

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[1] The average of responses was calculated by assigning a value from -2 to 2 for each response (strongly disagree is -2 through strongly agree is 2). By averaging all responses, a positive value indicates that, on average, respondents agree; a negative value indicates that, on average, respondents disagree.

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS AND INTERPRETATON CONSISTENCY					
#	**Statement**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
13	Most of the time, only completed planning applications are accepted for processing and review.	0%	14%	37%	14%
15	Overall, decisions regarding interpretations in my division / department are made consistently, with little variation from applicant to applicant.	9%	20%	14%	17%

As can be seen preceding table many of the responses to these statements tended towards Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Staff did not feel that interpretations were particularly consistent, and especially did not feel that applications submitted by customers are sufficiently complete to be fully processed.

- Statement #6 concerned consistent application of codes and ordinances in land use and permit review. While this statement received a near-even split between agree and disagree among all staff, staff in Planning actually indicated a positive average to this question (50% agreement to 20% disagreement[2]).

- Statement #12 and #13, which concern application completeness, received some of the lowest rates of agreement in the whole survey. Only 6% of respondents agreed with Statement #12 while 69% disagreed. "Disagree" responses were consistent among respondents, with all Divisions and all job functions – including managerial – indicating an average response of disagree. This is a clear area for improvement in the process.

- Statement #15 did not specify a particular process, rather asking only about consistency of "interpretations in my division / department". Responses were mixed. Building and Planning disagreed on average, while Code Enforcement and Environmental Health agreed on average. Averaging all responses with weights between -2 and 2: Building -0.6, Planning -0.7, Code Enforcement 0.7, and Environmental Health 0.7.

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[2] Throughout this analysis, when by-Division rates of agreement are presented, the "agrees" and "disagrees" do not total to 100%. This is due to the number of "neutral" and "N/A" responses.

(3)   Staff Believe That Customer Service is Important, but Do Not Think That Information Regarding Land Use Processes is Straightforward or Easily Accessible for Applicants.

The table below shows responses from employees to statements that concern the accessibility of information about the land use process and aspects of customer service.

ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE					
#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	The land use processes in the County are fairly straightforward and simple for the customer to navigate.	3%	20%	40%	0%
8	The County makes it easy to obtain complete, accurate information about all aspects of the land use process.	0%	23%	23%	3%
9	The County's land use procedures ensure that applicants are advised of all application requirements and standards early in the process.	6%	29%	17%	9%
10	Applicants have easy access to staff in the land use process to obtain information about their application and approval requirements.	20%	40%	6%	0%
14	Customer service is a clear and driving force in the land use process.	26%	37%	3%	0%

Staff responded positively when asked about aspects of customer service, such as being accessible to customers and if customer service is a driving force in the land use process. Conversely, they did not feel that it was easy for customers to navigate the process (40% disagreement) or that is was easy to get information about the process (26% disagreement). The inaccessibility of information may be a possible explanation for the results of the previous section, which indicated that staff are often receiving incomplete applications.

•   Statement #9 asked if applicants are advised of application requirements early in the process. Staff in Planning indicated agreement with this statement, with 50% agreeing and 10% disagreeing, while staff in Building and Code Enforcement tended to disagree.

•   Statements #10 and 14 concern customer service and received very high levels of agreement. However, while staff may be easily accessible to customers.

•   Statements #1 and #8 indicate that processes are complex and adequate information is not easily available. Handling questions, corrections, and assistance with staff time after an application is submitted is much more expensive than providing adequate information early in the process.

(4)   Staff Have Generally Positive Feelings About Their Workplace Environment and Opportunities for Professional Development

The table below shows responses received to statements about training, management, staff quality, opportunity for professional development, and positive encouragement.

MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
11	I receive sufficient formal ongoing training in the technical skills required to fulfill my role in the land use process. We have a strong emphasis on training.	3%	20%	17%	9%
16	Overall, my division is efficient and well-run in terms of the services it delivers.	17%	43%	9%	0%
19	I know what is expected of me at work.	34%	46%	9%	0%
21	My co-workers are committed to doing quality work.	40%	37%	3%	3%
22	I have opportunities to learn and grow.	17%	43%	9%	6%
23	My opinions seem to count.	17%	46%	11%	6%
24	Someone at work encourages my professional development.	17%	37%	23%	3%
26	When mistakes are made, managers and supervisors focus on correcting the mistake with a learning approach rather than on placing blame.	11%	31%	11%	9%
27	I am empowered to act within the scope of my expertise, training, and experience.	14%	57%	9%	6%
33	I receive enough recognition and appreciation for the quality of my work.	14%	34%	14%	11%

Statements in this area received generally high rates of agreement, indicating that staff feel positively towards their co-workers and work environment. This is an important strength, although there are some areas that could be improved.

•   Statement #22 asked about whether co-workers are committed to "quality work" and tied for the highest rate of agreement on the survey, with 77% agreement.

•   Respondents indicated agreement with Statement #27, which asked about empowerment to act within their professional expertise. This statement received 71% agreement and is an important result indicating that staff are trusted to act within their scope of authority.

•   Statement #11 asked about "sufficient formal ongoing training" in technical skills. This statement received 23% agreement to 26% disagreement. Staff in Building and in Planning indicated an average negative response to this statement, while staff in other Divisions indicated a mild positive response. This is an area of improvement for the County.

•   Statements #24, #26, and #33 were statements related to professional growth, learning approaches, and positive recognition within the organization. While all three statements received overall agreement, they also each had 20% or greater rates of disagreement as well. These closely related statements may be an area to target with a professional development and/or a mentor program.

(5)   Responses Were Mixed Regarding Management of Processes, but Respondents Did Feel That Management was Open to Change.

The statements presented in the following table are related to the plan review and permit process. Specifically, they ask about ability to meet goals, process efficiency, management of the process, and openness to process changes.

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
	PROCESSES AND PROCESS CHANGE				
2	I am able to consistently meet the County's goals for plan review or permit timelines for the processing of planning applications or permits.	11%	26%	20%	0%
3	My division is effectively managed as it regards the planning review and permitting processes.	11%	40%	14%	3%
5	My division has clear, well-documented policies and procedures to guide my involvement in the land use process.	14%	17%	11%	6%
17	The land use process in this County is an efficient, well-run process.	6%	11%	29%	9%
28	Managers / Supervisors in my division / department are receptive to new ideas and employee suggestions for improvements in the review and permitting process.	14%	43%	9%	6%
29	To continuously improve our process, I am encouraged to question the way we do things in this County and to offer constructive suggestions.	14%	37%	23%	6%
30	This County encourages practical risk-taking and supports positive efforts in improving the development review and permitting process.	9%	20%	20%	9%
35	I am encouraged to explore creative ways to resolve permitting service delivery issues.	9%	26%	17%	0%

Statements in this area received mixed responses, with some closely splitting among agrees and disagrees. The takeaway from this section appears to be that while management is generally positive and open to change, the plan review and permit process is itself inefficient, making it difficult to meet goals.

- Statement #2 asked if respondents were able to meet the County's goals for plan review and permit timelines. Majority of respondents indicated agree (37%) but a significant proportion indicated disagree (20%). Among planning staff, 30% agreed and 30% disagreed.

- Statement #3 and #28 asked if management is effective and if managers/supervisors are receptive to new ideas. Both of these statements received positive responses with over 50% agreement.

- Statement #5 asked if there are well documented policies and procedures regarding the land use process. Responses to this question were mixed, and among responses from Planning staff, more disagreed than agreed (20% agree to 30% disagree).

- Statement #17 asked if the land use process is efficient and well-run, and received more disagree responses than agree responses.

- While the statement above indicates that staff do not feel the process is efficient, Statements #28, #29, #30, and #35 asked about various aspects of openness to change and ability to apply creative problem-solving to the process.

(6)   Respondents Indicated an Area for Improvement in Information Technology Systems.

The following table shows response rates to statements about technology and equipment needs.

TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT					
#	**Statement**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
4	My division has an efficient records management and document management system.	9%	29%	29%	3%

7	I am able to effectively utilize permit information systems and technology to track turnaround time for permits, record comments, corrections for permits and conditions of approval, and track other aspects of permitting.	14%	23%	17%	6%
20	I have the materials, equipment, and tools I need to do my work right.	23%	63%	0%	0%

As can be seen in the table above, there is a distinct difference in responses regarding general equipment and tools versus information technology needs.

- Statements #4 and #7 asked about document management systems and permit information systems. Both statements got more agreement than disagreement, but had significant rates of disagreement. This is an area for improvement for the County.

- Statement #20 was about having the necessary materials and equipment. This statement received overwhelming majority agreement (86% agreement) with no employees indicating disagreement.

4.   WORKLOAD

In order to gauge workload, the survey asked employees to rate their workload with a series of four choices that were offered in varying levels of workload intensity. The table below summarizes the choices and the response rate to each.

SELF-ASSESSED WORKLOAD		
Response	**Count**	**Percent**
I am always busy and can never catch up.	14	40.0%
I am often busy but can generally keep up.	17	48.6%
I have the right balance of work and time available.	1	2.9%
I could easily handle more work given the available time.	1	2.9%
Did not answer	2	5.7%
TOTAL	**35**	**100.0%**

When staff in an organization are optimally utilized, answers to this question will average between the "often busy" and "right balance" categories. As can be seen in the table, staff indicate very high levels of utilization, averaging between "often busy" and

"always busy." This may result in staff having very little proactive time to work on special projects or process improvements.

The project team also analyzed workload rates by Division. The table below provides a key for values used to calculate workloads. Each statement from "always busy" to "easily handle more" is assigned a value from zero to three, as shown in the table.

VALUES FOR WORKLOAD RESPONSES	
Response	**Value**
I am always busy and can never catch up.	3
I am often busy but can generally keep up.	2
I have the right balance of work and time available.	1
I could easily handle more work given the available time.	0

These values were analyzed by Division. The following table shows averages among respondents in each Division.

WORKLOAD BY DEPARTMENT/DIVISION	
Response	**Weighted Average**
Building	2.0
Code Enforcement	2.3
Engineering	2.5
Environmental Health	2.3
Planning	2.7
Other	2.0
TOTAL	**35**

As can be seen in the table, all respondents reported a self-assessed workload at "often busy" and above, and no Division averaged below this point. Particularly high self-assessed workloads were indicated in Planning, averaging closest to "always busy"; and Engineering, averaging between "often busy" and "always busy". This indicates that staff in these Divisions may have particularly low levels of proactive time to actively pursue new projects or process improvements.

4.   OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The final section of the survey asked respondents to provide input in their own words. There were between 10 and 20 responses for each question, but for most

questions, the responses fell into similar areas. For purposes of clarity, the project team has sorted responses and grouped them into thematic areas. Where applicable and appropriate, additional details are provided in the text that follows each table.

(1)   Respondents Had Suggestions for Improving the Quality of Applications Submitted.

The first open-ended question asked respondents how the County could improve the quality of land use applications that are submitted. The table below summarizes ideas or areas for improvement that were mentioned more than once.

What do you think the County could do to improve the quality of the land use applications that are submitted?	
Improvement	**Count**
Improve consistency regarding complete / incomplete applications; reject incomplete applications	6
Provide clear and concise checklists	2
Update application forms	2
Provide guidelines explaining how to prepare technical / special studies (traffic, noise, runoff, soil loss, biological etc.)	2

The responses given to this question align with the responses to the multiple-choice section, which found high disagreement with the statement regarding completeness of applications. As will be seen in the following sections, in multiple sections staff brought up the idea that the Department needs to be more comfortable saying "no" and rejecting applications when they are not adequate.

(2)   Employees Suggested Improvements to the Application Process.

The open-ended section also asked employees how to improve the application process. The table below summarizes ideas or areas for improvement that were mentioned more than once.

What do you think the County could do to improve the land use process?	
Improvement	**Count**
Apply code consistently and don't help applicants avoid requirements	3
Say "no" when appropriate	2

Improve document retrieval process and implement electronic document management	2
Improve procedures and guidance documents (both staff and public)	2
Provide more training and technical training	2

The first two concepts in the table above are closely related: staff felt that the County must be less obliging to customers who try to avoid application requirements and also be willing to say "no" to applicants when appropriate. Staff also mentioned electronic document management, guidance documents for staff and the public, and increased ability to attend trainings (particularly relevant technical training).

(3) Respondents Highlighted Requirements That May be Unnecessary.

Respondents suggested a number of different areas in which permit requirements may be unnecessary, or where they could potentially be combined. No specific idea was mentioned more than once, so the table below presents all responses that were germane to the question.

Are there any permits or requirements that you feel do not add value to the process and should be eliminated entirely or combined with another permit or process?
Improvement
Temporary trailer permits could be included in building permits
Fence permits could be included in building permits
Applicability of Very Minor Modification Use Permits is vague
Eliminate the use of Certificates of Legal Nonconformity
Stop providing permit / application cost estimates
Eliminate required pre-applications meetings
Eliminate temporary event permits

One distinction that was made was regarding pre-application meetings. In multiple areas staff indicated that these meetings could be very useful and should be encouraged. However, they felt that explicitly requiring them was unnecessary. Some respondents pointed out that they have to accept applications even if a meeting is not held, so the requirement is somewhat toothless.

(4)   Respondents Pointed Out a Number of Strengths in the Process.

It is important to recognize the strengths within the Department, so the final open-ended question asked staff to identify what they felt works well in the process.

What do you think works well regarding Napa County's land use processes?	
Strength	**Count**
Access to staff from all Departments and Divisions	4
Customer service	3
Staff knowledge and collaboration	2
Pre-Application Meetings	2
The CEQA process related to Erosion Control Plans and Conservation	1
Support of administrative and clerical staff	1
Openness to change / improvement	1
Detailed review process	1

Many employees pointed out the benefit of having staff from each Department and Division available in the same place. Many also credited having a multi-functional front desk area in making the process easy for applicants. Customer service, staff expertise, and pre-application meetings also received more than one response, while more specific comments were also mentioned.

The responses to this survey allowed the project team to develop a firm grasp of staff opinions on a number of topics. The strengths and weaknesses of the planning review process have been outlined, employee opinions about the Department's services clarified, and ideas for improvement suggested. The opinions and issues found in these survey results will inform the project team's future analysis.

APPENDIX D: BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT

This best practice assessment evaluates current practices within Napa County's Planning and Land Use application and review process. The assessment is designed to identify areas of strength as well as improvement opportunities in the County's Planning Division, and other divisions tasked with reviewing planning and land use applications.

To assess operational strengths and improvement opportunities in Napa County, the project team developed a set of performance measures which we call "best management practices" (BMPs), methods or techniques found to be effective, practical, efficient, and customer-friendly in regulating land use in similar municipalities across the Country. The BMPs were derived from the project team's experience reviewing and working with permitting and land use agencies, as well as industry standards from research and professional organizations that promote efficient and effective practices in planning, land use, construction, and infrastructure development.

BMPs are then compared with practices in Napa County to identify areas of strength and potential areas for improvement or reform.

The analysis includes the following:

•   Statements of effective practices (BMPs).

•   Identification of the strengths of Napa County's operations in following these practices.

•   Identification of preliminary issues for further analysis prior to the development of specific recommendations.

The BMP analysis is one of several tools that will be used to identify recommended reforms. Following completion of this analysis, it will be used along with information obtained from stakeholder surveys and feedback from the County to develop a final set

of recommendations. The recommendations will include a list of action items and will characterize each in terms of urgency (how soon the reform should be implemented), a priority (how important the reform is to improving overall services), and estimated costs (if any).

1. KEY STRENGTHS

Although the Best Management Practices process is designed largely to identify improvement opportunities, it is also an opportunity to identify elements of the process that are working well. Below are some of these strengths:

- All land use and development related staff are collocated at the Napa County Administration Building and under the same management. All in-person inquiries and applications are submitted at this one location.

- All affected departments / divisions participate in a weekly review meeting discuss comments and concerns.

- The County's website has an extensive amount of information about planning applications. Including checklist that are attached to each specific application type.

- Planning staff are cross trained, but specialize in specific application types.

- Planners serve as a project manager on applications that are assigned to them.

- Conservation planners have recently reorganized to work under the same division as current planners.

- The design of the plan review storage area, allows for staff to review the same plan set, and is designed in a way that allows for informal discussion with other reviewers.

- PBES is in the process of digitizing all hard copy files and uploading to a digital platform that PBES staff can access.

- Utilizes a Current Project page to summarize all active planning projects.

2. KEY IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The comparison of the County's current practices to best management practices

also identified several areas where improvements could be made. Some of the most

notable opportunities for improvement are listed below:

- The technology in place lacks important features that could significantly streamline the process for applicants as well as staff. These include on-line permitting, on-line access to review comments and inspection results, and digital submission of plans. a mobile inspections module so that inspection results could be entered in the field. In addition, the permitting system is not readily available to those reviewers outside of PBES. *It should be noted that the Building Division has begun to allow some minor permits to be submitted and issued via an online portal, with the intent to grow the number of permits that may be submitted through digital submission.*

- Clarifying directive aimed at the acceptance of applications that are deemed to be complete. Consider having application checklist at the permit center, or to require a checklist as part of the submittal, to ensure that both the applicant and staff have verified all required documentation.

- Up until early this year, Planning did not have a staff member dedicated to performing long term planning functions. Long term planning was an ancillary duty, which limited long term planning efforts. Dedicated adequate staffing resources for long range planning efforts.

- Pre-application meetings are required as part of some applications processes, but attendance by all Departments is limited. Consider revisions to the pre-application process in order to provide comprehensive information to the potential applicant.

3.   DETAILED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ASSESSMENT.

The following table presents the list of best management practices used by the

project team, as well as their determination of the County's operations against each

standard, whether a strength or an opportunity for improvement:

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Management and Administration		
1. The county has goals, objectives, and performance measures for permitting activities.	The County has adopted high level performance goals for all Departments including PBES.	Actively monitor performance goals and review compliance on a quarterly basis.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
2. For permits that require review by more than one division, each reviewer has interim performance measures that they must meet.	Permitting review time is mandated by the state. For minor applications, the internal goal is 14-day review period, which is half the state requirement of 30 days.	Review of the permitting data indicates that some applications are not reviewed within the 30-day timeframe. However, this may be a result of the application not being complete when first submitted. Planning should strive to meet the 30-day review period for all complete applications.
3. Managers routinely review performance (speed, efficiency) of the permitting process.	Individual staff in all departments are expected to meet established deadlines.	No process in place for ensuring that reviews are completed in time.
4. Managers and staff have access to clear and accurate reports showing current workload, timelines, and other measures of performance.	The permitting software is capable of monitoring timeliness of reviews and performance.	More comprehensive performance reports are needed to track current permit activity as well as to examine actual performance in greater detail.
5. There are well-documented policies and procedures in place to govern the actions of employees.		Create a desk manual for each employee classification that may be used to guide them on their duties, along with relevant information on the process for land use applications, etc.
6. The department has backup plans and succession plans in place in the event of absence or departure of key staff.	Planning staff are cross trained to provide back up on most project types.	Due to the complexity of most projects, a formal succession plan should be developed for project management and how to properly hand off applications when staff's extended absences are expected.
Customer Interaction and Information		
7. Customer satisfaction related to the planning process is regularly monitored.	The County periodically deploys customer service surveys.	Incorporate feedback in a face to face manner. Including meeting with stakeholders on a regular basis.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
8. The county provides easy-to-understand and attractive guides to the planning and land use process. The county web site includes a virtual "one stop shop" that provides an overview of all planning and land use application and permitting requirements.	The County has a wide array of information related to the planning and permitting process for all activities of PBES. Links to applications and a fee schedule are found on the PBES webpage.	The web site can be somewhat overwhelming to navigate due to the extent of information available. Some re-design including over-view pages describing the complete process would help applicants navigate the material. Applications should be in a fillable PDF format. Employees indicated on the Employee Survey that they did not feel information was easily accessible.
9. All planning staff are available at a single, easy to access location.	The County has a consolidated Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department that is collocated. Additionally, they have implemented a permit center that allows for a consolidated permit submission area. Also, this permit center is utilized for customers to come in and discuss projects with all applicable divisions.	
10. Fee scheduled is published and regularly updated	Fee schedule is published on the PBES website.	Fee schedule is dated July 2016. Should update to include 2017.
11. The county reaches out to the business and development community through periodic communications.	The County has begun to implement several communication approaches to meeting with applicable customer groups.	Provide continuous communication with applicable trade groups. Examples may include a monthly or quarterly meeting with frequent customers or trade groups. This would provide dialogue between the County and these respective individuals.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
12. The county regularly obtains input from the business and development community on issues related to planning and land use application and permitting process.	Recently utilized a steering committee of local engineers, etc. when adopting new road design standards.	Meet with the development community on a regular basis (e.g. monthly or quarterly) to have open discussion about improvement opportunities or as a way to discuss pending changes to policy and process.
13. The county's policies/ website clearly identify what applications can be approved administratively versus approval by the Planning Commission.	There is no clear indication what is approved administratively versus public hearing. Some applications (e.g. temporary event permit) that include a flow chart and timeline for the application.	Create a link that shows which applications are approved administratively, administrative public hearing, or planning commission. Application forms may be linked from this webpage.
14. The county provides clear and comprehensive checklists identifying all items required to be submitted for each application type.	Applications include a checklist.	Incorporate into the checklist a place for the applicant and staff to sign off that the application submittal includes that items.
15. Planning application forms are available on-line and can be filled out electronically.	Applications are available online.	Convert to fillable PDF format so that applications may be completed electronically.
16. Submittal deadlines and public hearing meeting dates are published online.	.	Develop an application submittal deadline that provides guidance to when an application is submittal and the first possible date it may go to a public hearing.
17. The county's long-term plans and land development code are available on-line.	Documents are online.	Documents were found by searching through the County's website, but not readily accessible under PBES Forms and Documents. Update the Forms and Documents webpage to include all current and adopted plans, codes, ordinances, design standards, etc.
18. The county regularly updates the land development code, general plan, and ordinances relevant to planning and land use.	The last General Plan update was in 2009.	Update the General Plan to provide staff with policy guidance. Additionally, it was discussed in stakeholder meetings that many of the adopted ordinances had not been recently updated.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Processes		
19. Permitting intake staff are certified permit technicians.		Planning intake staff are Planners. Consider the use of permit technicians who are certified to intake all PBES applications including Planning applications.
20. Permit technicians review applications for completeness at time of submittal.	Planners review all planning application for completeness at time of submittal, but conflicts were noted in staff interviews and in the employee survey as to stated policy on acceptance of incomplete applications.	Establish a policy that clearly states that only completed applications will be accepted. Consider transitioning to permit techs (similar to Building Division) to review all applications for completeness at time of submittal. The Employee Survey indicates that staff feel that incomplete applications are often accepted.
21. The department uses a case management approach to oversee the review of all planning applications. This approach includes use of a project manager who coordinates reviews with all applicable departments.	The planner assigned to the project serves as the project manager for the project. The planner coordinates the distribution of the application to all review divisions and is responsible for compiling and sending all review comments to applicant.	
23. Preapplication meetings are held for major projects.	Preapplication meetings are available for those individuals who wish to participate and are required on some applications.	Attendance was noted as being sporadic by staff. All divisions should be required to have personnel in attendance at all preapplication meetings.
24. A formal Development Review Committee is responsible for ensuring that plans address all county requirements.	All staff participate in a review committee on a weekly basis. New applications are distributed at this time to all relevant divisions, and some application / project discussion occurs at this meeting.	Utilize these meetings to review applications / projects only. This will result in more meaningful discussion after projects have been reviewed. Additionally, set an agenda a minimum of three days before so all staff will know what projects will be discussed. Ideally, projects should be discussed the week prior to review comments being due.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
25. All review comments are incorporated into a single comment letter and distributed to applicant by project manager.	Typically, all review comments are provided to the applicant by the Project Manager, as provided by the individual plan reviewers.	Project manager should review all comments received to ensure no inconsistencies or conflicts and provide a single comment document to the applicant.
26. Plans are reviewed concurrently to avoid delays.	Currently using this approach for all planning applications.	
27. Resubmittals and projects requiring minimal review (e.g., small residential projects) are given priority in the review queue.	Staff noted that minor resubmittals were typically reviewed quicker that new submittals, but was dependent on staff member.	Adopt resubmittal review timelines that promote the expedition of minor reviews.
28. For re-submitted plans, reviewers focus on ensuring that comments have been addressed, not issues that should have been brought up in initial review.		Many stakeholders indicated that new issues are presented after the initial review. Managers / supervisors should spot-check review sheets to ensure that initial reviews are comprehensive and that no new issues are being identified late in the process.
29. Staff reports to the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors are thorough and include staff recommendation.	Staff reports are thorough and comprehensive.	
30. Properties are posted with signage indicating the owner has applied for a rezoning, use permit, etc.	PBES has drafted verbiage related to posting properties for Use Permits, but no formal adoption has occurred.	Post properties with signage at the time of application to inform community that an application has been filed with the County for a potential change.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION		
31. Applicants can apply, pay for, and receive permits, some instantly, using an on-line portal.	The County has recently implemented an online platform for submission of some simple building permits with the expectation of expanding this to most application types.	On-line permitting would significantly reduce traffic and delays in the permit center and eliminate the need for some applicants to travel to the permitting counter to submit applications. Applications that may be submitted online should continue to expand an include most planning and land use applications. For more complex permits, applicants should be able to submit, attach drawings, files, affidavits, and other required attachments for review and acceptance by staff. Applicants should also be able to submit revised plans and documents using the on-line portal.
32. Applicants and county staff can look up status of a permit, including comments from reviewers, on-line or using the software.	PBES staff have access to the permitting system to research status of application.	Implement an applicant portal to allow for self-initiated application status check. Additional functions may include automatically generated emails that email the application at specific intervals in the process. This functionality would improve communication among staff and between reviewers and customers.
33. Permit tracking software is used to manage the permit intake, review, and issuance process as well as related inspections.	All PBES divisions utilize the same permitting software to track the application.	Transitioning to digital submittals should allow the incorporation of the associated application files being attached to the digital application file in the permitting software. All relevant project information (including plans, documentation, etc.) should be stored in the permitting system.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
34. All plan review comments are entered into the system and available to other reviewers, permit techs, and applicants (via the front end).	Some review comments may be shared on the plan set themselves as a master plan set is utilized for review.	Comments should be entered directly into the permitting software and all reviewers should have access to comments to provide more consistent review comments.
35. The permitting system electronically routes applications to all reviewers, who can also electronically approve, disapprove, and provide comments.	Currently, all paper plan sets are collocated in the plan review area, where staff have access to the same set of plans for review. Staff are able to see markups by other reviewers on these plan sets.	Electronic routing may improve communication and streamline the review process. It would significantly reduce the amount of paper files that are accepted and subsequently stored in the plan review area.
36. The department has an IT strategic plan that includes a schedule and funding to expand permitting and GIS software functionality. Permitting IT initiatives are coordinated across departments.		A strategic permitting software plan should be developed that includes user training after new software updates are released and implemented.
37. Permitting software includes a link between permitting activities and historic parcel planning and land use information.	PBES is in the process of digitizing all paper files in PBES.	Link digitized parcel or address files to permitting software for ease of retrieval of historic information.
38. The county is moving towards a paperless system for all stages of permitting and development review.	PBES is currently digitizing all paper files.	Moving to electronic plan submission and review would allow for increased application sharing and review.
39. Final approved plans are submitted in PDF format and attached to the permit record in the permitting software.		Utilize digital formats (PDF and CAD) for final approved plans. However, some software limitations may be a challenge when incorporating Conditions of Approval on final plans.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
40. The permitting system generates clear, user friendly reports on permitting activity which can be posted to the internet.	The system generates summary reports. However, staff must format reports in order to be posted for public review.	Publish a monthly summary report and post on website and release to appropriate development related organization within the Napa County region.
41. Development staff has access to applicable GIS layers.	Currently, some staff have limited access to GIS layers.	Allow for greater use of GIS by all applicable PBES divisions.
42. Members of the public can look up zoning information, flood zones, and other pertinent information using Web GIS.	The public readily has access to relevant land use GIS layers through the Napa County GIS website.	Link the GIS portal on the PBES webpage.