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SAN FRANCISCO — Isam Hasenin, Director of the Department of Building Inspection (DBI), today announced the unanimous approval by the Building Inspection Commission of the Final Report on the Department’s Business Process Reengineering (BPR) — a comprehensive review of the entire building development review, permitting and inspections process for the City and County.

The primary goal of this highly detailed review over the past four-five months, Hasenin pointed out, was to analyze the existing permitting and inspection process city-wide; understand its strengths and weaknesses; and make recommendations that when implemented will create a streamlined, efficient review and approvals process that delivers high quality, predictable and responsive customer services.

Fundamental to our success in achieving this goal, he added, is fulfilling the Mayor’s direction for all departments to reinvigorate efforts to make city government more responsive to San Franciscans’ needs. By generating new ways to do business that improve the delivery of municipal services, as recommended in our just-completed BPR review, we need to strengthen and enhance cooperation among all City review agencies by creating a common platform for the review and inspection process.

Thanks to the hard work of the many talented and dedicated BPR participants, we have an excellent roadmap to guide the implementation of major improvements in the way we do business that will create a simpler, easier-to-navigate and predictable permit process, Hasenin said. We be working closely with the Mayor’s Office, the Board of Supervisors, and with City Departments and their respective Commissions to prioritize BPR recommendations in a timeline for action over the next 24 months.

Nearly 200 key recommendations were approved by the BPR Steering Committee — all generated by nearly 200 participants who served tirelessly on four subcommittees that addressed Plan Review and Permit Issuance, Inspections, Automation and Performance Measures. Participants included DBI expert staff, staff from other City Departments with permit review authority (Planning, Fire, Public Works, SFPUC, Redevelopment, Health, Mayor’s Office of Disabilities, and others), as well as labor unions, industry representatives, community organizations and individual customers.

Key recommendations include:

- Develop a city-wide automated permit tracking system to track the entire development, review, permit, and inspection process, and integrate databases from all departments involved in permit reviews and permitting process.
- Expand over-the-counter review services.
- Implement parallel plan review process for all projects.
- Identify/eliminate redundant, unnecessary reviews, approvals, and regulations.
BIC Approves BPR Recommendations

- Develop, publish, and implement plan review and inspection turnaround times and establish other core performance measurements for other services to improve predictability of the process for the customer and provide the baseline for ongoing streamlining initiatives.
- Eliminate duplicate inspections by defining inspection responsibilities for each City department.
- Centralize and automate inspection scheduling for all disciplines to provide uniform time, hours and methods of inspections.
- Expand web-based and online services, and maximize the applications of automation technologies.
- Create a new Permit Technician classification, and/or retrain those in existing classifications to obtain skills to streamline the permit review process.
- Launch a pilot project to test electronic plan submittal and plan review.

Business Process Reengineering is a long-established management analytical tool used to effect substantial improvements in large organizations with complex processes. It is employed to provide fundamental rethinking and redesign of business processes in order to achieve dramatic improvements in quality, timeliness and responsiveness in the delivery of professional services.

“DBI has a highly professional, competent and technically savvy staff,” Hasenin said. “These proposed BPR recommendations provide all City permit reviewing and inspection departments with a detailed roadmap that will lead to a significantly improved and streamlined process city-wide—a roadmap that will enable us to deliver excellent services fairly and more efficiently to all customers. We’re on our way to becoming more customer-responsive, less bureaucratic, and measurably more efficient, transparent and effective,” he added.

DBI oversees the effective, efficient, fair and safe enforcement of City building, housing, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, and disability access codes for San Francisco’s more than 150,000 buildings. Please visit www.sfgov.org/dbi for more detailed information (the Final BPR Report will be posted on the web site by Monday, December 24th).

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