



**BPR STAFFING REPORT
FEBRUARY 27, 2008**

A. INTRODUCTION

Beginning in May 2007, San Francisco's Department of Building Inspection (DBI), under the direction of Mayor Gavin Newsom and the Building Inspection Commission (BIC), embarked on an ambitious Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) initiative to review the entire building development review and permitting process for the City and County of San Francisco. The primary goal was to analyze the existing permitting and inspection process city-wide; understand its strengths and weaknesses; and design a new streamlined process that would be more efficient and focused on delivering high quality, timely services to our citizens.

Following an intensive six-month examination by nearly 200 participants who represented customers, stakeholders, union representatives and city-wide permit review and inspections' staff, the Final BPR Report was approved by the Mayor and by the BIC and in December 2007. That report's more than 188 BPR recommendations delivered the clear message that DBI's customers want **higher quality, consistent and predictable levels of services – including more aggressive turnaround times on the entire spectrum of development projects; reduced customer wait-times; tighter and higher quality project intake standards; expanded Over-The-Counter services; timely and expanded access to supervisory staff, including Guaranteed Second Opinion; continuous staff training to stay abreast of the latest codes, as well as to improve consistency and uniformity among staff; expanded use of technology and automation tools to provide higher levels of service.**

Key BPR 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.
- 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 to 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.

While **Automation** needs are not included in this report, almost all BPR recommendations require enhancements and improvements in our current systems. We are considering options available to the Department and will provide in the near future a **separate project-based needs and cost-estimate report to cover targeted automation priorities deemed essential to the successful implementation of the BPR recommendations.**

The BPR Staffing Report that follows is a critical component of San Francisco's BPR Implementation Plan. The report cites specific BPR recommendations as they pertain to Permit Services, Plan Review Services, Inspection Services, Customer Services and Performance Measures – focusing on existing staffing and service levels, and BPR-recommended higher service levels. DBI's executive staff proposes the following increases in specific staffing to meet growing demands by DBI customers to achieve the BPR recommendations and performance measures.

We are accelerating our efforts to move beyond the BPR recommendations and into the implementation phase. Having documented and mapped in step-by-step detail San Francisco's development review process, and produced the "roadmap" required to fulfill our commitment to provide **better, faster and more satisfying customer service levels**, the additional staffing requested in this report is critical to the successful implementation of the BPR recommendations.

B. PLAN REVIEW SERVICES – Building Plan Review

a. Summary of Positions Requested

- Three – 5207 Associate Engineers
- Three – 5241 Engineers

b. Relevant BPR Recommendations

- PR-2a: Provide more frequent regularly scheduled in-house training to improve knowledge base of all staff and improve consistency of interpretations. These trainings should be hands-on and job specific.
- PR-4: Provide more quality control throughout review process.
- PR-5: Maintain adequate staffing levels at all public counters to meet customer demands, including full time hours.
- PR-10c: Provide consistency in code interpretations.

c. Relevant BPR Performance Measures

- 10 business-day turnaround time for 90% of small projects.
- 20 business-day turnaround time for 90% of medium projects.
- Turnaround time to be determined on a case-by-case basis for large projects.

d. Justification for New Positions

- Based on the historical data and staffing levels, Plan Review Services has been reviewing plans with the following average turnaround times:
 - 20 business days for small projects
 - 2 to 3 months for medium projects
 - 4 to 6 months for large projects
- Additional training and code discussion time to improve consistency of code interpretations would reduce the plan review availability of all plans examiners.
- Additional supervisory quality assurance for all projects (over-the-counter and submitted) would remove supervisors from plan review production.
- Increased availability of supervisory staff to provide second opinions would remove supervisors from plan review production.
- Increased staffing at the Over-The-Counter (OTC) plan review stations is required to ensure timely service and reasonable wait times and programs such as OTC Plan Review by Appointment.

To implement the above recommendations, including the more aggressive turnaround times, the Department proposes the addition of six engineers.

C. PERMIT SERVICES

a. Summary of Positions Requested

- One – 6333 Senior Building Inspector
- One – 5241 Engineer
- Two – 1408 Principal Clerks
- One – 1842 Management Assistant

b. Relevant BPR Recommendations

- PR-2: Initial staff contact should be familiar with the whole process – identify needs for permit and give consistent answers.
- PR-2a: Provide more frequent regularly scheduled in-house training to improve knowledge base of all staff and improve consistency of interpretations. These trainings should be hands-on and job specific.
- PR-4: Provide more quality control throughout the review process.
- PR-5: Maintain adequate staffing levels at all Public Counters to meet customer demands, including full time hours.
- PR-10a: Make Parallel plan check process available for all projects.
- PR-10b: Within the parallel plan review process, provide multi-agency approach to notify customers of general information, pre-application conferences, plan review and plan check comments.
- PR-11: Give technical staff the authority to route/assign applications. This requires better initial screening with more technical expertise.
- PR-12c: Provide permit application submittal guidelines and checklists, including clear written process for permit application and review.
- PR-13: Improve the process with more up-front screening.
- IS-14: Intake and Over-The-Counter plan review staff to have discretion to eliminate old complaints so long as these actions are discussed with other divisions involved prior to complaint elimination.

c. Relevant BPR Performance Measures

- PM-9: To distribute all submitted drawings to next review station within one business day for 90% of all projects.

d. Justification for New Positions

- Based on current staffing levels, Permit Services provides the following levels of service:
 - Current wait time for counter service averages 40 minutes to an hour.
 - Permit guidelines and checklists from all plan review disciplines do not exist.
 - Parallel plan checking is not available for all projects.
 - Drawings are routed to the next review station within two to three business days.
 - Plan Check comments are provided by individual plan reviewer.
- On-going training of staff is needed to reduce waiting times at the counters and ensure that the public is provided with consistent and reliable service.

- Additional supervisory quality assurance for all projects and maintenance of guidelines and checklists would remove supervisors from front-line counter assignments.
- The Senior Building Inspector and Engineer will assist the intake staff in ensuring that projects submitted for review meet minimum intake standards which will improve the quality of the reviews, the time it takes to perform the reviews, and reduce the number of rechecks.

To implement the above recommendations, including reducing customer wait times at the counter and consistency of plan submittals, the Department proposes the addition of three clerical positions, one building inspector, and one engineer.

D. INSPECTION SERVICES – Building Inspection Division

a. Summary of Positions Requested

- Three – 6331 Building Inspectors
- One – 6333 Senior Building Inspector
- One – 1426 Senior Clerk Typist
- One – 1842 Management Assistant

b. Relevant BPR Recommendations

- IS-6: Assign an inspector at inspection counter and Help Desk from 7:30 to 5:00 PM to answer technical questions, requests for information, etc. for all disciplines.
- PR-10c: Provide consistency in code interpretations.

c. Relevant BPR Performance Measures

- IS-7: Building Inspection Division provide an inspection turnaround time of two business days.

d. Justification for New Positions

- With current staffing levels, fluctuations in workload and other demands on inspector's time, building inspection turnaround times are on an average at three to four business days.
- Ratio of inspection staff to supervisor including proposed staff increase would be approximately seven to one, which limits their availability to answer technical and code questions, address issues with field inspectors, provide second opinions and consistency in code interpretations, and provide quality customer service.

To implement the above recommendations, including more aggressive turnaround times, support to field inspectors and quality customer service, the Department proposes the addition of three building inspectors, one senior building inspector, and two clerical positions.

E. INSPECTION SERVICES – Plumbing Inspection Division

a. Summary of Positions Requested

- Two – 6242 Plumbing Inspectors
- One – 6246 Senior Plumbing Inspector

b. Relevant BPR Recommendations

- IS-6: Assign an inspector at inspection counter and Help Desk from 7:30 to 5:00 PM to answer technical questions, requests for information, etc. for all disciplines.
- PR-10c: Provide consistency in code interpretations.
- IS-24 recommends Plumbing Inspectors to inspect heating ducts, flues and vents.

c. Relevant BPR Performance Measures

- IS-7: All inspection turnaround times to be no more than two business days from when the inspection request was received.

d. Justification for New Positions

- With current staffing levels, fluctuations in workload and other demands on inspector's time, plumbing inspection turnaround times are on an average at three to four business days.
- Ratio of inspection staff to supervisor including proposed staff increase would be approximately six to one, which limits their availability to answer technical and code questions, address issues with field inspectors, provide second opinions and consistency in code interpretations, and provide quality customer service.

To implement the above recommendations, including more aggressive turnaround times, support to field inspectors and quality customer service, the Department proposes the addition of two plumbing inspectors and one senior plumbing inspector.

F. INSPECTION SERVICES – Electrical Inspection Division

a. Summary of Positions Requested

- Two – 6248 Electrical Inspectors
- One – 6249 Senior Electrical Inspector

b. Relevant BPR Recommendations

- IS-6: Assign an inspector at inspection counter and Help Desk from 7:30 to 5:00 PM to answer technical questions, requests for information, etc. for all disciplines.
- PR-10c: Provide consistency in code interpretations.

c. Relevant BPR Performance Measures

- IS-7: All inspection turnaround times to be no more than two business days from when the inspection request was received.

d. Justification for New Positions

- With current staffing levels, fluctuations in workload and other demands on inspector's time, electrical inspection turnaround times are on an average at three to four business days.
- Ratio of inspection staff to supervisor including proposed staff increase would be approximately seven to one, which limits their availability to answer technical and code questions, address issues with field inspectors, provide second opinions and consistency in code interpretations, and provide quality customer service.

To implement the above recommendations, including more aggressive turnaround times, support to field inspectors and quality customer service, the Department proposes the addition of two electrical inspectors and one senior electrical inspector.

G. INSPECTION SERVICES – Special Inspection Division

a. Summary of Positions Requested

- One – 6333 Senior Building Inspector
- Four – 6331 Building Inspector
- One – 5241 Civil Engineer
- One – 1842 Management Assistant

b. Relevant BPR Recommendations

- IS-47: "... separate inspection unit where special inspections are audited and special inspectors are certified".

c. Justification for New Positions

The Department of Building Inspection's Special Inspection Division is a **new** division established to perform duties and functions as mandated by the requirements of the 2007 San Francisco Building Code (SFBC) Chapter 17 and the BPR recommendations noted above. In the past, special inspections reports (daily field reports, laboratory test reports, etc.) were compiled by clerical staff during the construction of a project and reviewed by engineering staff (in Plan Review Services) at the end of the project just before final inspection. This program did not allow for field audits, adequate sequencing of required special inspection submittals or timely review of such submittals. With the complexity of construction projects (performance-based design, new technologies, new materials, etc.) today and in the future, the importance of a high quality special inspection is paramount to ensure that building projects are constructed in substantial conformance with the approved construction documents.

Some of the duties assigned to this new division include, review of special inspector qualifications, timely review of daily field reports and laboratory test reports, review of non-conformance issues, timely review of engineering letters and reports, and field audits. To implement a quality special inspection program, the Department proposes the addition of one senior building inspector, four building inspectors, one engineer, and one clerical position.

H. CUSTOMER SERVICE DIVISION

a. Summary of Positions Requested

- Two – 1406 Senior Clerks

b. Relevant BPR Recommendations

- PR-23: Station 1 - Registration: Provide initial check-in station to identify needs of the customer with general information and registration functions. General screening personnel must be familiar with entire process to determine customer needs, answer general questions, direct customer to person who can answer more specific questions, permit application, plan review, inspection, etc. If permit related, then route customer to next station. General Information Counter functions; customer may choose one of two options:
 - PR-23a: Option 1: First station is to be used by all customers for all agency matters – to be called the Registration Counter – one central station for all needs.
 - PR-23b: Option 2: Would allow frequent customers to use a self check-in process at a kiosk in lieu of the registration counter above.
 - PR-23c: Both options would be connected to a newly installed automated customer tracking system to track all customers (permits, inspections, complaints, records, etc). Enable customer priority in the queue for next day if process not completed the same day.
 - PR-23d: Total time for interacting with customer not to exceed 60 seconds.
- PR-7: Install automatic customer tracking system to provide comprehensive routing and screening, inquires/questions from the public, etc.
- PR-20a: DBI Records – Retain separate cash transactions, due to location of service at Permit Center. Retain five business days turnaround.
- IS-31: Expand outreach programs to educate homeowners using handouts, mailings and online access.
- IS-31a: Include San Francisco Customer Service Center “311” to help respond to quick questions.

c. Justification for New Positions

The BPR recommendations emphasize fast and efficient customer service when the Public requests information or requests documents. The BPR recommendation is for Registration Staff to respond and direct customers to the appropriate stations within 60 seconds, whether by phone or in person. To enable the Customer Service Division to reach the 60 second goal, the Department proposes the addition of two clerical positions.

I. CONCLUSION

The Department's management and staff are fully committed to implementing the important service improvements identified in the BPR recommendations as quickly as possible. These 32 positions are critical in order to achieve the higher levels of service anticipated in the BPR. These positions requested in this report will enable the Department to successfully implement the BPR recommendations and fulfill our commitment to provide high quality, consistent and predictable services throughout the Department.