

CITY COUNCIL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

**MUNICIPAL BUILDING CONFERENCE ROOM
201 WEST GRAY**

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2018

8:30 A.M.

- 1. DISCUSSION REGARDING AN EVALUATION OF PERMITTING AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES.**



TO: Council Oversight Committee

THRU: Steve Lewis, City Manager

FROM: Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator

DATE: June 7, 2018

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Permitting and Private Development Processes

At the June 14th Council Oversight Committee meeting, staff will be presenting additional information and details for discussion and direction regarding engaging the services of third-party firm to evaluate City of Norman permitting and private development processes.

Background

During the August 2017 Council Retreat, the City Council identified a review of City business development processes as a short term goal (1-2 years) to be completed. Additionally, the recently released, draft *Economic Development Strategic Plan* conducted by the Norman Economic Development Coalition (NEDC) recommended the City pursue an evaluation of city processes to identify specific process improvements, assess departmental/division processes and performance, benchmark against peer communities, assess staffing levels, and recommend process approvals.

Staff has also researched similar studies conducted in other communities and have spoken with third-party firms that conduct these studies to better understand the scope and deliverables for a similar study of City of Norman development processes.

Analysis Elements

In discussions with third-party firms and research of similar evaluations/analyses, staff has found that the scope and elements of these analyses can vary. In some cases, cities may elect to evaluate all approval areas associated with the development process, including zoning, platting, plan review, permitting, inspections and other property development processes. Some cities choose to be more targeted in their scope, focusing only on building permit permitting and plan reviews or on zoning, platting and land development processes.

In reviewing results of the draft *Economic Development Strategic Plan*, along with past Council and building/development community discussions and concerns that have been expressed, staff recommends initially targeting an analysis that focuses on building permit plan review and trades inspections.

Scope of Analysis

Although the scope of these evaluations can vary based upon client preference, studies generally include the following elements:

- Stakeholder Surveys and Focus Groups to Better Understand Current Issues

- Meetings/Discussion with Staff to Discuss Improvements, Processes, etc.
- Assessment of Current Performance Targets
- Maps Outlining Processes
- Benchmarking with Other Communities
- Performance Reports – detailing performance of divisions in reaching performance targets (goals)
- Suggested Improvements for Operations and Staffing
- Development of Actionable Recommendations, with Costs, Feasibility, Etc.

More specifically, an evaluation focusing on building permits plan review and trade inspections would also include the following elements, focused on specific process elements related to:

- Examination of current division day-to-day workflow
- Review of processes managed by division
- Use of technology in day-to-day workflow
- Individual interviews with employees within the division
- Review of current documents related to day-to-day processes (organizational charts, work plans, policies, workload statistics)
- Staffing levels
- Recommendations for customer service improvements

Evaluation Cost and Timeline

Based on staff research and discussion with firms conducting similar evaluations, studies can range from \$30,000- \$50,000 based on the extent of the scope of work and services needed for the evaluation. Studies typically take 4-6 months to complete, depending on extent of the requested services.

Potential Next Steps

Given the time frame for completion of the study (4-6 months) and emphasis placed on conducting an analysis by the City Council and *Economic Development Strategic Plan*, staff suggests preparing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the scope of work and services outlined earlier in the memo to evaluate firms to conduct the analysis. After selection of a firm, staff could potentially bring a contract for services to the Council for approval later in 2018.

Following approval of the contract, staff would begin work with the selected consultant to conduct the evaluation of building permit and trades inspection processes. Given the potential 4-6 month timeline for completion, Council could potentially receive a completed evaluation report in late 2018 or early 2019. Currently, funding has been allocated in the proposed FYE 2019 General Fund Operating Budget for this analysis.

Staff will be presenting information regarding the proposed analysis for further Committee discussion/questions at the June 14th meeting.