

August 2, 2005

The Honorable Judge Anderson
Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Charles Foley, Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Board of Supervisors' Response to FY 2004-05 County Grand Jury Report titled:
"An Ounce of Prevention" Toward a More Transparent and Responsive Planning
and Development Process**

Dear Judge Anderson:

During its regular meeting on August 2, 2005, the Board of Supervisors adopted the responses (Attached) of the Planning and Development Department as its responses to Findings and Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the 2004-05 Grand Jury Report— "An Ounce of Prevention" Toward a More Transparent and Responsive Planning and Development Process.

Sincerely,

Susan Rose
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attachment

C: **Ron Cortez, Deputy County Executive Officer**
Terri Maus-Nisich, Assistant County Executive Officer
Dianne Meester, Assistant Director, Planning and Development

July 15, 2005

The Honorable Judge Anderson
Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Charles Foley, Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Response to 2004-05 Grand Jury Report:
An Ounce of Prevention—Toward A More Transparent and Responsive Planning and
Development Process

Dear Judge Anderson and Mr. Foley:

The Grand Jury requested Planning and Development respond to Findings and
Recommendations 1-4 of the above referenced report. The following is the department's
response, which is due on July 15, 2005.

**Grand Jury Finding 1: Mission Statements, when available, were often outdated and
did not list customer satisfaction as a primary goal.**

Response to Finding 1: Agree in part. The department agrees that customer satisfaction is
not an explicit part of the department's mission statement. Disagree in part. The Santa Barbara
County Planning and Development Department's mission statement is available in the
department's strategic plan, which is updated annually, in the County budget document, and on
the department's website.

**Grand Jury Recommendation 1: Planning departments should have mission statements
specific to their department. These mission statements should have customer satisfaction
as a primary goal.**

Response to Recommendation 1: The recommendation has been implemented. The
department's updated mission statement is attached. The revised mission statement is on the
website and will be incorporated into the next update of the department's strategic plan and the
FY 2006-07 budget document.

Grand Jury Finding 2: Planning departments did not have basic customer satisfaction procedures in place.

Response to Finding 2: Agree in part. Santa Barbara County Planning and Development has a suggestion and feedback process, but this process can be improved.

Grand Jury Recommendation 2: To increase customer satisfaction, each planning department should publicly post the agency's mission statement, post timelines and mitigating factors, provide easy access to all relevant forms with adequate explanations as to their use, post a list of key personnel involved in completing an application, and clearly define the complaint process. In addition, handouts should be provided to each customer explaining the application and complaint process.

Response to Recommendation 2: This recommendation has been implemented. The information requested in this recommendation is posted on the department's website and is available at the public counter.

Grand Jury Finding 3: Notification of changes to land and property use in most jurisdictions was limited to mandated State *minimum* requirement to owners only, and within 300 feet from the borders of the property site.

Response to Finding 3: Agree.

Grand Jury Recommendation 3: Notification of land use changes should include the owner *and occupants* within at least 500 feet of the border of the property site.

Response to Recommendation 3: The recommendation requires further analysis. This is a policy decision for the Board of Supervisors. The department will bring this policy issue to the Board of Supervisors in the context of planned process improvements to the ministerial permit and appeal process, expected to be before the Board of Supervisors in October 2005.

Grand Jury Finding 4: The complaint process in most jurisdictions was not designed for quantifiable analysis and could not be used to find strong and weak points in the planning process.

Response to Finding 4: Agree.

Grand Jury Recommendation 4: Planning agencies should track all complaints and conduct random quantifiable surveys of 10% of the customers who have used their services. (See Appendix A for an example of a possible customer satisfaction survey.) Agencies should use the results of these surveys to make the planning process more customer friendly. The results should be added on a quarterly basis to the department website for public viewing. (See Appendix B for an example of how to display the results of the customer satisfaction surveys.)

Response to Recommendation 4: The recommendation has been implemented in part. See the attached revised customer satisfaction survey which the department will begin using immediately. The results of the surveys will be used to monitor and adjust the operations of the department, monitor and adjust the operations of the department. The results will be posted on the department's website regularly.

Thank you for your thoughtful observations, findings and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Dianne L. Meester, Assistant Director
Planning and Development Department

Attachments