

***BIC Regular
Meeting of
April 17, 2024***

Agenda Item 7



Department of Building Inspection Five Year Strategic Plan

April 17, 2024

DBI Strategic Planning

In October 2023, DBI initiated a process to update our strategic plan with Capital Partnerships, a well-regarded consultancy experienced in working with many San Francisco and Bay Area government agencies.

The planning process began with Capital Partnerships conducting research into our operations, interviewing stakeholders, and analyzing our most recent strategic plan, reform initiatives and operational improvements. We also jointly conducted employee and customer surveys for additional insight and understanding.

Capital Partnerships used this information to produce a SWOT assessment (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) detailing where our recent efforts had been successful and identifying additional opportunities and challenges.

In January, DBI's executive team began meeting with Capital Partnerships to develop our strategic plan.

The plan is now complete and we are moving into implementation.

Strategic Planning Team

Dir. Patrick O'Riordan

Asst. Dir. Christine Gasparac

Dep. Dir. Inspections Matt Greene

Dep. Dir. Permits Neville Pereira

Dep. Dir. Admin. Alex Koskinen

Comms. Dir. Patrick Hannan

Capital Partnerships Dave Schwartz

Strategic Planning Definitions



Mission Defines organizational purpose (reason for existence)

Vision Aspirational picture of what mission success

Goals How we will achieve our vision

Strategies How we will achieve our goals

Tactics How we will implement our strategies

DBI Strategic Plan – Mission & Vision



The Department of Building Inspection protects our community by ensuring code-compliant construction, building safety, resilience, and habitability, and by supporting economic development in San Francisco.



Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff will provide professional, effective customer service using clear processes and consistent standards to build trust, provide accountability, and safeguard the public.

DBI Strategic Plan – Core Values

Core Values	DBI Commitments
Customer Focus	Be a customer-centric organization that provides timely, efficient, predictable, and consistent services to our customers; effectively communicates with them; and responds to their information needs.
Professionalism	Leverage our highly qualified and knowledgeable staff to deliver high quality services with competence and skill.
Integrity	Adhere to our ethical obligation to the public and protect the integrity of our services.
Supportive Work Environment	Maintain a desirable workplace that encourages organization-wide communication and collaboration, empowerment of our managers & supervisors, and professional development and training of personnel at all levels of our department.
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging	Foster a culture of respect, inclusion and belonging and promote diversity and equity at all levels of the organization.
Transparency & Accountability	Be a data-driven organization that establishes and utilizes relevant metrics and measures our performance; communicate the results (favorable or unfavorable) to internal and external stakeholders.

DBI Strategic Plan – Recent Accomplishments

Category	DBI Accomplishments (from SWOT assessment)
Leadership and management changes	New departmental leadership and management committed to organizational change and improvement in all the areas addressed in this strategic plan.
Ethical reforms	Nearly complete implementation of the Department’s reforms initiative and maintaining and augmenting Department controls.
Building inspections	Implementation of quality control/quality assurance programs to effectively address internal control weaknesses that enabled past scandals to happen.
Permitting process improvements	Implementation of numerous initiatives to provide more timely permitting through electronic plan review, improvements to plan review assignments, tracking tools, and other initiatives.

DBI Strategic Plan – Goals & Strategies

Goals	Strategy
Ensure building safety and resilience	Oversee code-compliant building design, construction and habitability to modify, preserve and expand the functionality of San Francisco’s built environment.
Improve building permitting	Collaborate with other City departments to identify and implement means to improve building permitting using consistent standards, transparent processes, performance benchmarks, good customer service, and clear feedback while ensuring full compliance with the building codes.
Enhance inspections processes	Improve internal processes to validate code compliance and conduct enforcement.

DBI Strategic Plan – Goals & Strategies

Goals	Strategy
Increase public trust	Maintain and expand the department’s reforms initiative and compliance programs to ensure the integrity of the department’s services. Complete the compliance audit and perform additional audits as necessary.
Cultivate a highly effective workforce	Build a culture of trust, expertise and continuity through hiring, training, succession planning, coaching, and communications.
Produce sufficient revenue to fund optimal operations	Develop a plan to fully recover costs and identify key areas for investment in personnel and technology.

Goal: Ensure building safety and resilience

STRATEGY: Oversee code-compliant building design, construction and habitability to modify, preserve and expand the functionality of San Francisco's built environment.

TACTICS

1. Standardize core building safety compliance processes and oversight.
 - A. Develop or update existing plan review, inspections, code enforcement and records management operating policies and procedures to provide clear guidelines to staff on work expectations, protocols and accountability measures.
 - B. Train staff on how to use the operating policies and procedures to ensure consistency.
 - C. Conduct data-based oversight to ensure plan review, inspections and code enforcement are using new or updated operating policies and procedures to ensure clear and timely compliance analysis and response.
2. Sustain and enhance emergency preparation, training and response planning.
 - A. With the City's Department of Emergency Management, expand DBI's Disaster Coordination Unit capabilities and planning to identify, train and prepare responsible disaster response staff for an emergency.
 - B. Efficiently administer citywide resilience and safety programs and effectively communicate with property owners on their obligations under the programs, including the Façade Inspection program, the Soft-Story program, and emerging requirements such as the Concrete Building program.
 - C. Collaborate with the Office of Resilience & Capital Planning (City Administrator's Office) on development and implementation of the Concrete Building Safety Program and other earthquake safety initiatives.

Goal: Improve building permitting

STRATEGY: Collaborate with other City departments to identify and implement means to improve building permitting using consistent standards, transparent processes, performance benchmarks, good customer service and clear feedback while ensuring full compliance with the building codes.

TACTICS

1. Collaborate with the SF Permit Center to define roles and responsibilities.
2. Establish an interdepartmental continuous improvement task force to identify and recommend process changes that will reduce permitting times and implement new policy and regulatory mandates. Set time reduction targets to be achieved by the task force's work.
3. Work with other City departments to develop and implement a new topology to improve the addressing process.
4. "Standardize post-entitlement review requirements and develop & measure against performance benchmarks for the permitting processes to reduce subjectivity in construction permitting." (CA Housing Community and Development required action 4.1)
5. Deploy permit guide software to determine electronic routing (per G-20) of plans by multiple departments for various types of housing and commercial building projects.
6. Systemically review, coordinate and consolidate codes, Administrative Bulletins and Information Sheets to more closely align with state codes.
7. In collaboration with Inspection Services and City Planning, develop a detailed project management plan for replacing the Permit Tracking System and integrating the replacement system with legacy systems of DBI and other applicable City departments.

Goal: Enhance inspections processes

STRATEGY: Improve internal processes to validate code compliance and conduct enforcement.

TACTICS

1. Analyze existing and develop new protocols to conduct field inspections and establish an effective code enforcement process.
 - A. Reevaluate the Director's Hearing process for efficacy.
2. Develop new processes and systems for ongoing enforcement and database maintenance for mandated regulatory programs such as vacant buildings, soft story, accessible business entrance, facades and private school seismic reports.
3. Improve metrics to evaluate field inspections, housing inspections and code enforcement divisional and staff performance.
4. Increase manager, inspector and support staff training for employee development, customer service, conflict resolution, and performance/behavior evaluations.
5. Establish new internal performance metrics and increase transparency around the efficacy of the grant programs for community based organizations.
6. Develop a plan for staffing internal quality control audits.

Goal: Increase public trust

STRATEGY: Maintain and expand the department's reforms initiative and compliance programs to ensure the integrity of the department's services. Complete the compliance audit and perform additional audits as necessary.

TACTICS

1. Model and maintain the highest ethical standards. Empower all employees to support and uphold our values.
2. Complete and maintain the department's reforms initiatives and associated department controls. Augment and implement additional reforms as part of the department's continuous improvement.
3. Conduct an annual risk assessment and set up staff trainings on conflict-of-interest, Form 700s and other compliance topics to ensure that staff understand rules governing public integrity.
4. Institutionalize quality assurance / quality control processes for inspections and permit services.
5. Complete the ongoing compliance audit and conduct ad hoc audits as necessary.
6. Support the compliance function through regular meetings with senior staff, timely review of key documents and inquiries, and as needed development of tracking technology.

Goal: Cultivate a highly effective workforce

STRATEGY: Build a culture of trust, expertise and continuity through hiring, training, succession planning, coaching, and communications.

TACTICS

1. Identify and deploy best practices for recruiting top-tier job candidates, including video and online advertising.
2. Standardize onboarding and training of new employees, including a group orientation meeting.
3. Develop and promote clear career advancement paths in every division.
4. Standardize staff development planning and performance evaluation; prioritize business and people management training for middle managers.
5. Develop an organization-wide, rolling succession plan for anticipated “mission critical” retirements during the next three years.
6. Develop a template for more collaboration between DBI divisions, including conducting regular, organization-wide managers meeting and cross divisional training.
7. Implement a consistent internal communications program.
 - A. Develop videos for the Director to provide all DBI employees with periodic updates on implementation of strategies and initiatives; post videos on the DBI intranet.
 - B. Conduct two annual all-staff meetings for Deputy Directors to (a) explain how DBI strategies and initiative affect employees in their respective divisions and (b) solicit feedback on what is working, what is not working, and/or suggested operational or administrative improvements.
 - C. Produce at least two monthly communications from the Director to staff to foster a positive workplace culture, promote inclusion and belonging and keep staff informed of initiatives and improvements.

Goal: Produce sufficient revenue to fund optimal operations

STRATEGY: Develop a plan to fully recover costs and identify key areas for investment in personnel and technology.

TACTICS

1. Identify additional revenue opportunities beyond those analyzed by the 2023 fee study and develop a business plan to fulfill spending targets identified below.
 - A. Staffing levels required to meet operational targets.
 - B. Additional technology investments to increase efficiency in permitting, inspections, code enforcement, and records management.
 - C. Additional customer-facing technology and staffing opportunities to produce a better customer experience and more self-service.
2. Develop a fee structure, a fee model and a policy for annual adjustments.
3. Develop and institutionalize a policy for reserve funds.
4. Establish effective, efficient administrative and financial management practices. Identify and implement process improvements to increase efficiency and oversight.

Strategic Action Plan Implementation

1. Utilize Microsoft Project to develop/document initiatives with well-defined tasks, assigned responsibilities, milestones, and target completion dates.
2. Form DBI cross-divisional, multi-disciplinary teams to prepare and implement detailed action plans to accomplish the eight strategic plan goals/outcomes.
3. Develop/document specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-specific objectives for each strategic plan initiative.
4. Establish protocols for strategic action teams to periodically report their progress to DBI leadership and the Building Inspection Commission.
5. Establish a communications program to convey accomplishment of strategic plan goals and outcomes to both internal and external stakeholders.

Strategic Action Plan – Immediate Next Steps

1. Present plan to DBI staff at May 1 All-Hands meeting.
2. Host initial kickoff meetings with cross-divisional work teams.
3. Develop work plans and deliverables.
4. Begin implementation.
5. Work team leaders provide bi-weekly updates to DBI's executive leadership.