

V. PLANNING, BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

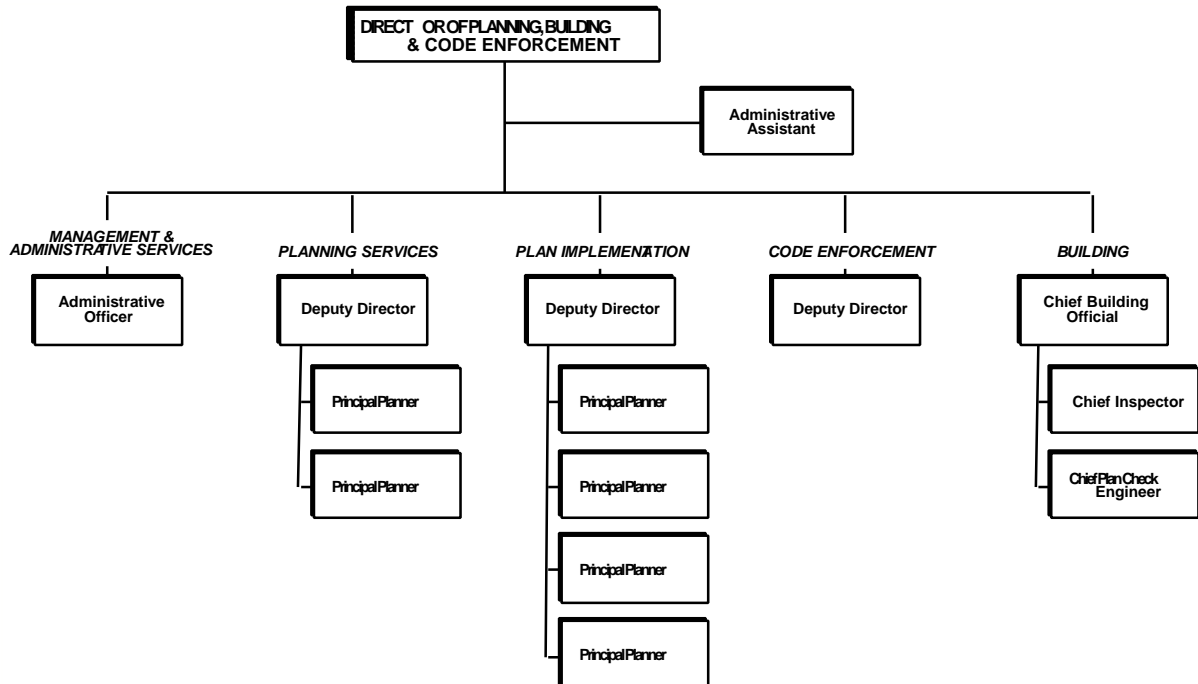
The Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department (PBCE) is a key department in the City’s permitting and development functions. The Planning Division is the central processing and control function for discretionary permits while the Building Division is the central processing and control function for building permits. The Planning and Building Divisions are each analyzed in separate chapters of this report. The Code Enforcement function was not a part of this study.

The relation of PBCE to the other City development and permitting functions is discussed in Chapter IV. In the course of this study several organizational issues have been raised in relation to PBCE, as discussed below.

A. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

The department is currently organized in five divisions, all reporting to the Director as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4
PBCE Organization**



As can be seen on the organization chart, the planning functions are split into two divisions, one primarily dealing with permits (Plan Implementation) and the other

primarily dealing with planning (Planning Services). Some have suggested that these two units be merged and headed by a “Planning Director”. This would be the more traditional way to organize for a department with these functions. However, normally planning issues require considerable attention of the department director and, thus, a rationale can be made to have more planning units report directly to the director.

The reason some have suggested merging the two functions is that, historically, there has evidently been a divide and lack of coordination between Planning Services and Plan Implementation. This is a classic issue that is found in almost every planning function in the country, i.e. the relations between so-called long range planning and permitting. We agree that these two functions must operate in concert. However, we see no reason why this can’t be accomplished under the current structure as well as in a merged structure. The Director should be fully capable of making this coordination work.

In the final analysis, this organizational structure should mostly relate to the style and desires of the Director as well as personal skills and relations of the Deputies. As such, we see no reason to take a position on this question. However, should a decision be made to merge these two functions, we would not support creating another layer in the organization. In that instance, we would recommend eliminating the Planning Division’s two Deputy Director positions and having all Principal Planners report directly to the Planning Director.

B. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

A number of people have indicated that they believe this large department needs an assistant director. We are generally not a fan of assistant director positions, as they can tend to add a layer to the organization that works against contemporary ideas of flattening organizations. However, as with other department organizational issues, we feel the Director should have great flexibility as to how he wishes to organize the department.

There is one primary argument for assistant director positions. In large governmental organizations that are particularly politically sensitive, the director may not have sufficient time to handle both external relations and internal management. In these situations it is not unusual that the director focuses on external issues and the assistant director focuses on internal management. PBCE is a large organization that is politically sensitive, but it may or may not require this level of management. This is likely an issue for the recently appointed Director to consider as the organization evolves.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

It has been suggested that the Administrative Officer position be set at the same salary levels as the Deputy Director positions. This issue relates to how the Director wishes to use this position and personnel issues, which are outside the scope of this study. We would suggest the following:

- ✍ The historic view in many organizations is that all positions on the same line or level in an organization should be at the same salary level. This is an old fashioned way to think about organizations. In a contemporary organization it could be possible that the Administrative Officer, Deputy Directors and Chief Building Official were all at different salary levels, depending on both internal and external equity issues.
- ✍ We have seen organizations where the Administrative Officer is at comparable salary levels with Deputies. This can be appropriate depending on the functions and expectations of the Director.

D. CODE ENFORCEMENT

Code Enforcement is a separate division of the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department. They have building inspectors assigned from the Building Division who work within their function and inspect properties that require building permits for improvements or to legalize them when violations are found by the Code Enforcement Officers. The Building Division performs required Plan Check.

The Code Enforcement function does not currently work with the AMANDA computer system recently implemented in Building and Planning. It would improve operations and communications if they could directly access the permit system and be able to “flag” addresses where they are working to alert Permit Specialists and Counter Planners when they receive permit applications.

33. Recommendation: Have the Code Enforcement Division use the AMANDA Computer system to work on the same data base as the rest of the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department.