



Request For County Board of Supervisors Action

MEETING DATE: October 18, 2016

DEPARTMENT: Planning & Building

FROM: Greg Plucker

SUBJECT: Planning and Building Department Organizational and Operational Initiatives

Review, discuss, and provide any desired direction for future organizational and operational initiatives initially identified for the Planning and Building Department to enhance how the Department performs its functions and deliveries its services and approve the transfer of the Environmental Health Division to the Planning and Building Department and the Custodial Services Unit and Building & Grounds Maintenance Division to the County Administrative Office.

Detailed Description/Background of Request

Background

On August 15, 2016, I started as the Director of Planning and Building Services for Colusa County. Since then, I have spent quite some time reviewing and discussing the operations of the Department with department staff and customers (other County staff members and Department's applicants). This purpose of this Board agenda item is to introduce to the Board a number of initiatives that have been identified to enhance how the Department performs its functions and delivers its services.

Discussion

From the first day in the office I recognized that the Planning and Building staff deeply care about their jobs and take great pride in serving their customers (citizens, developers, and contractors). When I discussed with them the concept of developing a series of initiatives aimed at improving customer service and stream lining permit processes, they enthusiastically embraced this idea.

The initial list identified herein is not presented in any particular order of priority. It is also important to note that this is not a static list. An overall arching philosophy and expectation that I have for the Department is that we continually strive to improve how we do business and serve our customers. As such, the below list represents the first of what is expected to be a continually evolving list of initiatives designed to improve the delivery of Department services:

I. Organizational Changes

The Planning and Building Department not only performs planning and building services for the County but it also includes maintenance and janitorial services for other County departments. The County's former Interim Administrative Officer, Bob Muszar, had developed a series of organizational recommendations prior to his departure. One of the recommendations was to reorganize the County's maintenance and janitorial functions under the County Administrative Office. This recommendation was based on the internal support nature of these functions and the desire to place these functions with the County's other internal support functions (such as purchasing and procurement and information technology for examples). As the Board is aware, with the retirement of the former Planning and Building Director earlier this year, the management of the maintenance and janitorial staff was assumed by the County Administrative Officer. This initiative would formally place the maintenance and janitorial functions in the County Administrative Office.

Another reorganization effort that has been also discussed in the past is the transfer of the environmental health functions of the County to the Planning and Building Department. All three functions (planning, building, and environmental health) are highly interrelated in the permitting of development projects. In addition, in code enforcement actions there are many times where a complaint will involve all three departments. Placing all three functions under a single community development department will assist in the coordination of the County's development review and approval process, as well as code enforcement efforts. The ultimate goal is to house all three functions together in a single physical location to create a one-stop permitting center. Staff has identified a strategy where this can happen in the mid-term (approximately two years) when the County Counsel's office is able to relocate to the Farm Credit Bank building. Until then, the Environmental Health staff can relocate to the east wing of the Colusa Library. This temporary relocation would have the benefit of moving the Environmental Health staff closer to the Planning and Building staff. In addition, during this transitional time, the Department's director would divide his time and physical presence at both the Planning and Building and Environmental Health offices. An important goal during this time is to work on departmental coordination efforts so that when all three functions (planning, building, and environmental health) are located at single location, thereby creating the one-stop permit center, the internal coordinated processes will have been developed, tested, and fully implemented.

With respect to the implementation of these organizational changes, assuming the Board's concurrence, staff will target a January 1, 2017 date for the physical move and department change. Depending on the Board's preference with renaming the Planning and Building Department to the Community Development Department to recognize the integration of the environmental health functions, there are several sections of the County Code that would also have to be amended to recognize the new functions and department structure. Attachment #1 shows the existing and changed departmental organizational

charts.

II. Code Enforcement

Nearly two years ago the County embarked on a code enforcement County Code update effort. This effort was focused on utilizing the existing code mandated misdemeanor and nuisance abatement processes. Upon review of this previous effort, staff has identified additional administrative code enforcement processes that are more flexible and require less staff resources to implement than the existing provisions. In general, administrative processes allow for the implementation of enforcement processes that include the ability of a responsible party to voluntarily abate the code violation. Failing voluntary compliance, the hearing process utilizes a hearing board/officer in lieu of processing a criminal complaint through the court system.

The implementation of these administrative processes would allow a set of enforcement tools to be developed so that for any given code enforcement complaint the enforcement process can be aligned with the severity of the alleged violation. In this manner, the initial focus of the code enforcement effort is to obtain voluntary compliance. Should this prove to be unsuccessful, then more severe code enforcement processes can be implemented.

At this juncture staff is introducing the concept of administrative code enforcement processes. With the Board's acceptance of this general concept, staff would subsequently bring back to the Board a more detailed agenda report to allow additional consideration of the administrative enforcement processes.

III. Customer Improvement Initiatives

1. Building Permit and Inspection Services: Because the Department has one inspector/plan check staff member, when he is out for the office (due to vacation, being sick, etc...) the County's plan check and building inspection services stop. Staff is exploring contracting with other jurisdictions and/or third party plan check/inspection services to maintain service levels during these times.
2. Plan Check Processing and Routing: The routing of building permits to other agencies requires applicants to visit multiple departments/agencies throughout the County before an applicant can obtain their building permit. Staff is evaluating the existing process to see if there any options available to simplify the process.
3. Web Site Enhancements: In order to enhance access to information to the Department's customers, an effort is underway to review the available information on the Department's website. This includes identifying typically asked questions and placing these questions and answers on a FAQ web-page. In addition, staff is exploring the possibility of creating a

webpage widget that allows an estimate of building permits fees to be calculated directly from the webpage.

4. Customer Service Survey: In order to make sure that the Department maximizes our strengths and minimizes our weaknesses, it is important to receive feedback directly from our customers. While the Department's website does have an on-line survey, the response has been very minimal. In order to increase customer feedback, we are reviewing the possibility of mailing customer service surveys directly to our customers. This would include planning and building applicants and other County staff that use the services of the maintenance and custodial staff.
5. Permit Tracking: The Planning and Building Department currently does not have a computerized application processing and tracking system; this is future enhancement that the Department would like to implement when funding is available. However, Department staff has been very resourceful in developing tracking systems for planning and building applications utilizing existing software. The current systems are being reviewed to determine what enhancements are necessary to ensure that information about the types, volume, and the timing of processing building and planning applications is readily available. In addition, Department staff is also currently developing a tracking system for code enforcement complaints. The end goal is to produce a series of reports that details the status of each planning and building project or code enforcement complaint.
6. Cross Training: The Department is small and some of the departmental responsibilities have become staff dependent. The Department is undertaking an internal review to determine what additional opportunities are available to cross train Department staff to ensure that we can maintain all departmental functions no matter what staff is present in the office.

III. Zoning Ordinance/County Code

1. Updates: Subsequent to the adoption of the County's Zoning Ordinance update, Department staff has been maintaining a list of items where the updated zoning provisions need to be amended to address sections of the County Code that are out-of-date and not compliant with State law or internally inconsistent. This effort would result in a series of ordinance amendments (over time) to address these issues.
2. Zoning Ordinance Implementation: There are number of new processes envisioned by the updated zoning ordinance that have not been developed. For example, the updated zoning ordinance regulations streamline the permit process through the use of Administrative Permits and Minor Use Permits approved at the staff level. However, the processes and forms for these permits have not been developed. Staff

has begun developing the necessary forms to allow these permits to be applied for and issued over the counter to reduce processing times.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board consider the above list of organizational and operational initiatives, ask any clarifying questions, and provide staff with any appropriate direction. As noted earlier, this is the first report of what is planned to be regular reporting to the Board on the efforts to enhance the performance of the planning and building (and environment health) functions of the County. Staff also recommends that the Board approve the transfer of the Environmental Health Division to the Planning and Building Department and the Custodial Services Unit and Building & Grounds Maintenance Division to the County Administrative Office.

Prior Board Action

None.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source

None.

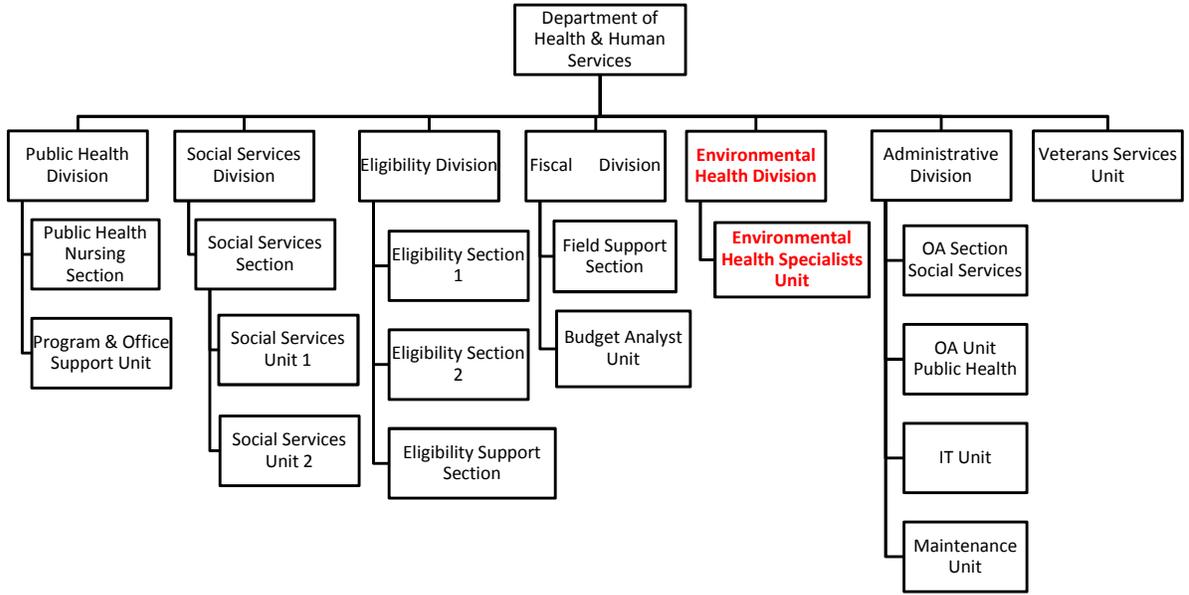
Action for the Clerk

None.

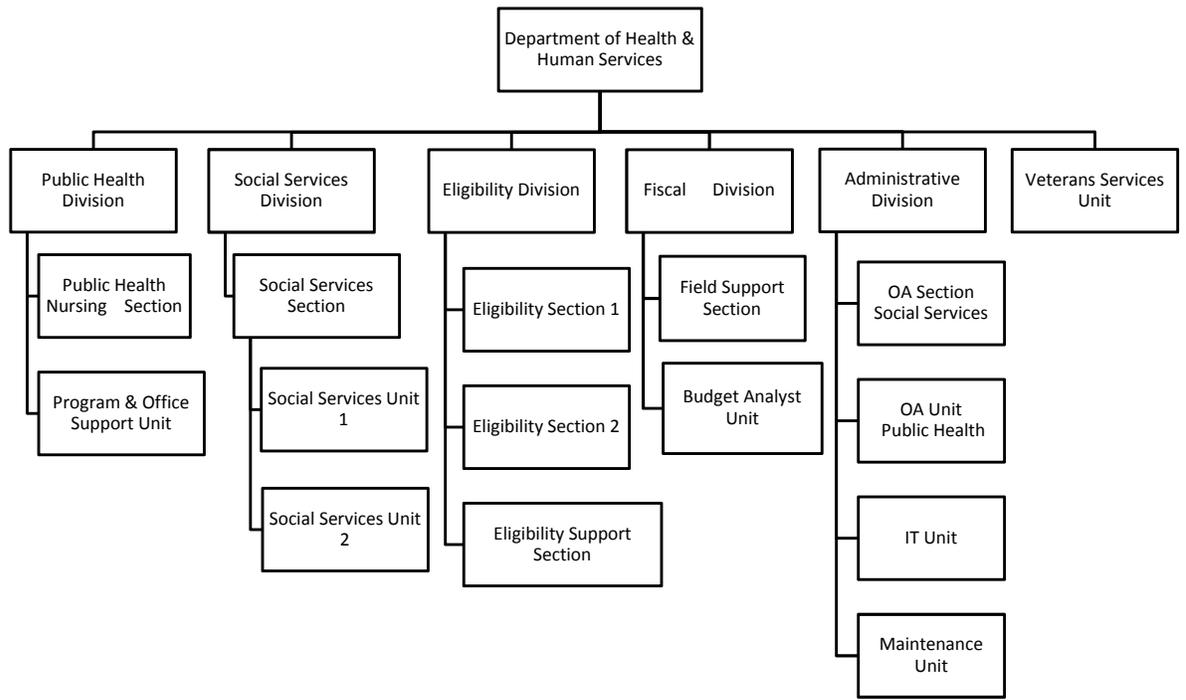
ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment No 1 Existing and Changed Organization Charts (PDF)
- Maint Cust reorg memo (DOC)

EXISTING

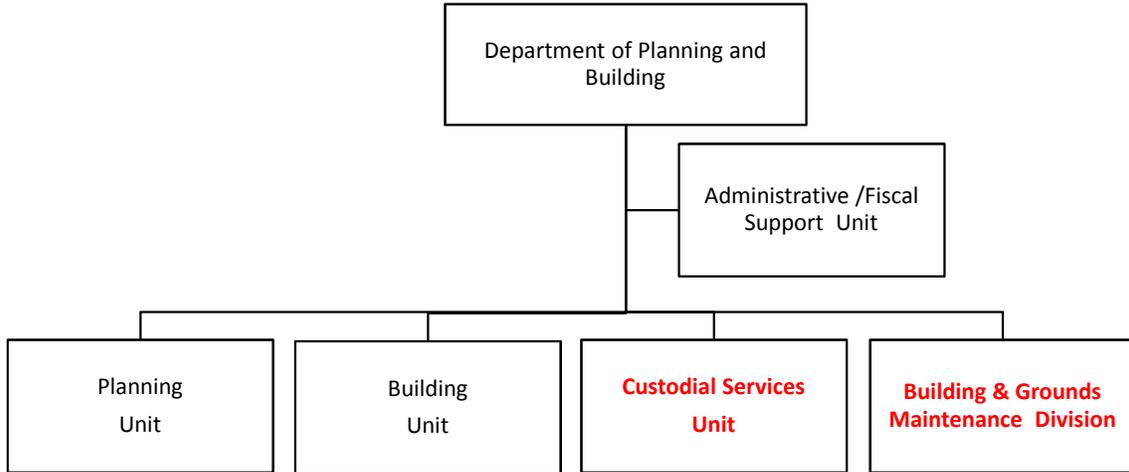


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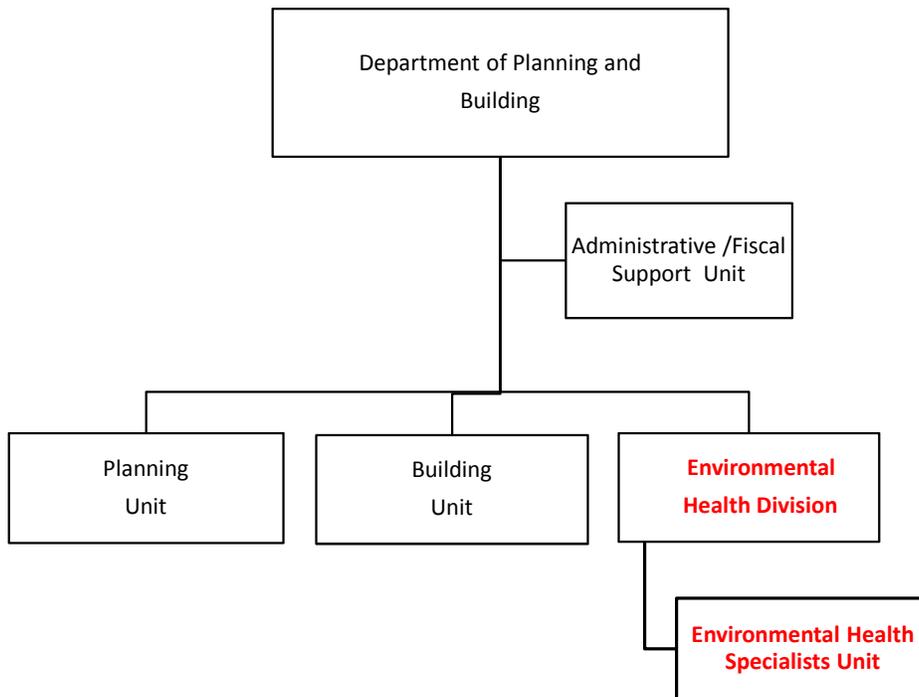


DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

EXISTING

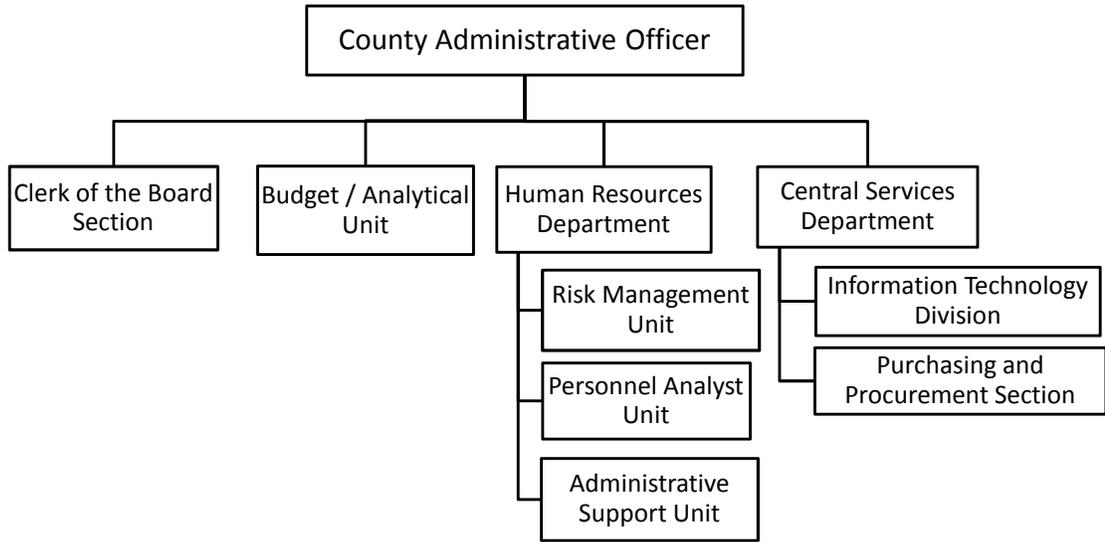


PROPOSED

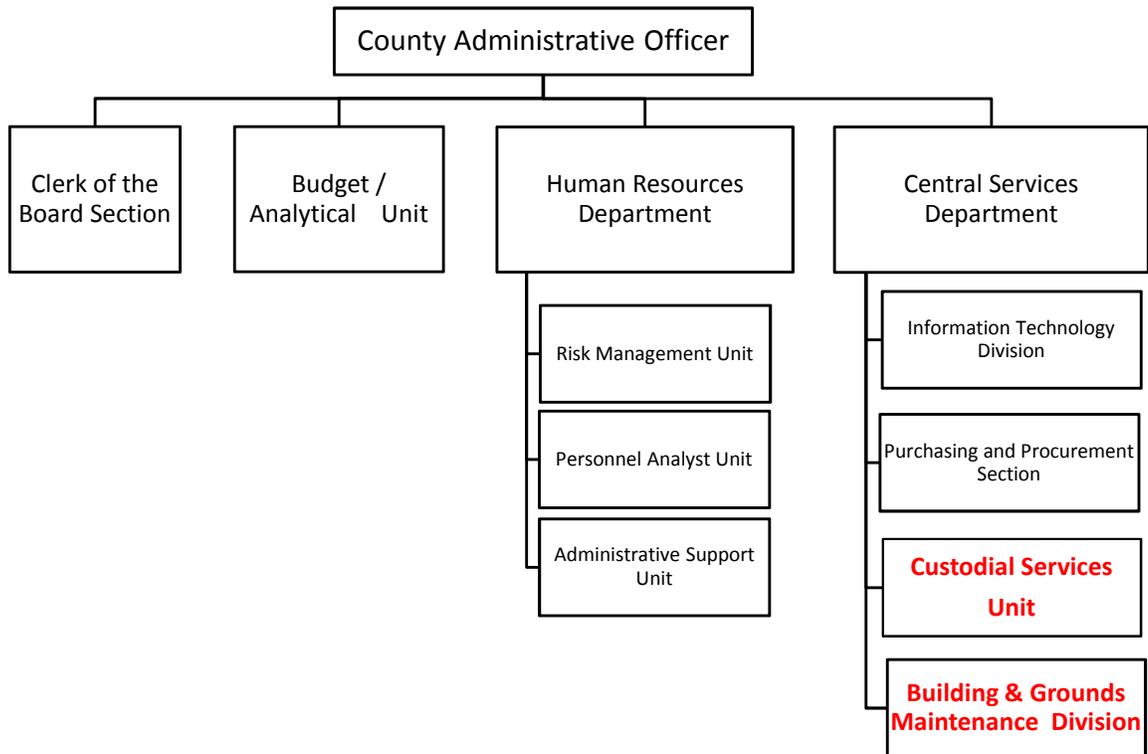


COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

EXISTING



PROPOSED



Attachment: Attachment No 1 Existing and Changed Organization Charts (3229 : Planning and Building Department Initiatives)



**COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

CLERK OF THE BOARD

MEMORANDUM

Wendy G. Tyler,
CAO/Clerk of the Board

TO: Members in Session

Ann Nordyke
Chief Deputy
Clerk of the Board

FROM: Wendy Tyler

Patricia Rodriguez,
Deputy
Clerk of the Board

DATE: October 18, 2016

SUBJECT: Reorganization of Planning and Building Department

SUPERVISORS

Kim Dolbow
Vann, District I,

John D. Loudon,
District II

Mark D. Marshall,
District III

Gary J. Evans,
District IV

Denise J. Carter,
District V, Chair
for 2016

As a supplement to Director Plucker’s information regarding the reassignment of the Maintenance and Janitorial functions from the Planning/Building Department to the Office of the County Administrator, I wish to express my wholehearted support for this action. Bringing this additional internal service function under a single department head will provide a more cohesive approach to the work we do in providing support to all County departments. Further, the reassignment of these divisions will provide Director Plucker and his staff with capacity to assume management of the Environmental Health Division.

There is sufficient staff capacity and competency within the Administrative Office to handle the increased workload. A January effective date for this transition will allow my staff to be trained on the work order system, and learn the other routine clerical functions such as ordering, timestudy input, etc. The CAO Budget Analyst will become the primary fiscal contact for the maintenance and janitorial division and will work with maintenance staff to develop budgetary project estimates and appropriate scopes of work. Clerk of the Board staff will process work orders, and Purchasing/Procurement will handle all ordering, development of RFP/RFB and contract documents.

I join Director Plucker in his request that the Board approve the reorganization of Maintenance, Custodial and Environmental Health Divisions.

Attachment: Maint Cust reorg memo (3229 : Planning and Building Department Initiatives)