



PER I

Development Services

Spring 2005



News Briefs

New Office Hours for Downtown Development

Starting Tuesday, July 5, the Development Services Center, 1222 First Ave., will have new business hours. This is being done to establish consistency at all services for the convenience of our customers. On Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, business hours will be from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Wednesdays, all services will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to accommodate staff trainings in the early morning and to extend hours for the benefit of customers. On Fridays, business hours will remain the same, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. 🏠

New Location for Homeowners Saturday Service

Beginning Saturday, July 2, Homeowners Saturday Service will be held at the department's Ridgehaven Field Office in Kearny Mesa. Located at 9601 Ridgehaven Court, the field office offers ample free parking and easy freeway access. Also, did you know that inspectors are available at Homeowners Saturday Service in addition to plan review staff? During this convenient weekend time, homeowners can have their plans reviewed as well as ask any type of question of the inspectors. For an appointment, call (619) 446-5300. 🏠

Latest Web Page Update

Information Bulletins, those helpful free publications that provide fees, technical instruction, policies and/or procedures, have been available online, but listed only in order by bulletin number. A major new update provides a cross reference to the bulletins by subject, number and description, making it very easy to locate the bulletin you are seeking. The bulletins are found on our web page at www.sandiego.gov/development-services, by selecting "Info Bulletins" under the "Forms & Guidelines" heading. 🏠

Wi-Fi Hot Spot

Do you ever get tired of waiting around at City Council hearings for your project to be heard? You can make better use of that idle

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New director forges high standards for department



Director Gary Halbert reviews all customer satisfaction surveys weekly.

Gary Halbert is an old hand around the Development Services Department, but in his new role as director he is gaining much ground collaborating with staff on key initiatives.

Quality customer service is Halbert's top priority, and the area he has focused on even before being appointed director in November 2004. He has led the department in strategically working on a number of measures to improve services as recommended through outside reviews and staff recommendations.

"My goal has been to make City departments more efficient and to improve customer service," said City Manager Lamont Ewell. "The Development Services Department is making great strides in helping the community use the development and permitting process." Specific steps that Halbert has taken as part of his Customer Service Initiative include creating a department-wide Customer Service Committee made up of staff from all levels and disciplines; implementing a new customer survey process; developing an online guide to help customers navigate the permitting process; providing an ongoing structured Customer Service Dialogue with staff and customers; appointing a customer liaison; developing and implementing internal/external outreach efforts; implementing the first phase of customer on-line access to the

Project Tracking System to access project status and invoice payments; developing a Customer Bill of Rights; and moving forward with the City's Official City Zoning Map. Additionally, Halbert consolidated the department from five to three divisions in January. The new Customer Support and Information division is led by Marcela Escobar-Eck, Land Development Review is under Kelly Broughton and Building and Safety is run by Isam Hasenin, P.E., C.B.O.

Sound ambitious? A difficult task calls for hard work to make a difference. Improvements have already been seen in responses to customer "drop-in" surveys. "We have met with a number of citywide review committees and taken input from all stakeholders," said Development Services Director Gary Halbert. "We hope the community will find that we have made beneficial changes to improve services, review turnaround times, and consistency."

Halbert started with the department as a student engineer working on subdivision map review and engineering drawings. He soon became a licensed engineer and finished his bachelor's degree in Systems Science at UC San Diego. He then earned his master's degree in Public Administration at San Diego State University and became certified as a Professional Engineer. He worked in traffic operations, traffic forecasting, transportation demand management, transportation development, and developed the City's neighborhood traffic safety program.

In 1995, Halbert was appointed as Deputy Director of Engineering Services, which then grew to become the Land Development Review division. In 2001, he moved to the Planning Department as Chief Deputy

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THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

PERMIT PRESS
Spring 2005
Development Services Department



Gary Halbert, Director
(619) 446-5039
Assistant: Lysanda Bostic



Building and Safety
Isam Hasenin, P.E., C.B.O.,
Chief Building Official, Chief Deputy Director,
(619) 446-5406 -

Plan review and inspection for building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical and fire permits and approvals, construction inspections, enforcement of Municipal and model codes.



Land Development Review
Kelly Broughton, Chief Deputy Director
(619) 557-7983

Engineering review, landscape review, planning review, and environmental review.



Customer Support and Information
Marcela Escobar-Eck, Chief Deputy Director,
(619) 557-7998

Project management, plan processing, project submittal, records, MIS, miscellaneous permit issuance, zoning and sign information, budget, cashier services, and customer accounts.

Permit Press Editor: Cynthia Queen
(619) 446-5446
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“Community and Customer Liaison” Boosts Customer Service



Lynda Pfeifer

In response to customers, employees and the community, Development Services has made improving customer service one of its highest priorities. As a result, customers have seen many improvements in service over the past year, through implementation of suggestions from this feedback.

One of the suggestions heard loud and clear was the need for a customer advocate; someone who could assist customers in maneuvering through the development process, help them find information, and provide the human touch to the regulatory focus often involved in obtaining building permits.

In October 2004, the department hired Lynda Pfeifer, a Public Information Officer with extensive customer service experience. She previously worked in several other City departments and the private sector. Pfeifer was educated at the University of Missouri at Columbia and San Diego State University, and is an award-winning published photographer who is currently writing a book about pet-friendly places in San Diego.

Her first several months at Development Services were spent in training, learning the permitting process, sitting at the counters with staff

members, going out into the field with inspectors, and talking to customers about their experiences. Devoting this time to training helped her have a better understanding of what works well, what needs to be changed, and how we can better serve our customers.

“Taking the time to listen and observe has been so valuable in helping me understand the complexities of the development process and better serve both the customers and our staff,” Pfeifer said. “I see myself as a bridge to help everyone effectively and efficiently move through the development process.”

Pfeifer works out of the downtown Development Services Center, 1222 First Ave. Although she is often found in the lobbies assisting customers, her work involves all aspects of the department’s interface with customers. She meets customers in need in the permit center, and by referral from the department director, staff and the City Manager and City Council offices.

“Lynda has been a huge help in resolving customer issues that have escalated,” said Director Gary Halbert. “Her ability to assess the problems on both sides of the table and effectively communicate with people has been a major asset to improving our customer service. I have been very pleased with the positive letters and emails I have received from customers and staff regarding Lynda’s assistance.”

Pfeifer is here to assist customers who have not been able to get all the information they need, directs customers to department resources and materials and helps monitor customer wait times. She suggests options for resolving ongoing issues on particular projects, and provides mediation and facilitation

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Customer Service Statement

“We value and respect our customers. We are dedicated to providing you professional, caring, and timely service.”

New Director continued from Page 1

Director, earned his planning certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners, then returned to the Development Services Department in 2003 as Assistant Director. He served as Acting Director of DSD for five months before competing in a nationwide

search and being selected as Department Director. Halbert’s selection was met with great approval from staff.

“I have worked for the City for 25 years and have lived in Ocean Beach all my life,” Halbert said. “I love my community and feel like I can make a positive difference in the Development Services Department.” 🏡

Updates and Improvements Made to City Zoning Maps

Deadline for public input extended to June 30, 2005

The Development Services Department is in the process of updating city zoning maps, with the intention of publishing a new official city zoning map by early fall 2005.

Current zoning for the City of San Diego is not available in either digital or mapped format. The mapped information was last consistently maintained in the early 1980s, and since that time has required manual research by property owners and staff to verify the current zoning of any specific property. Zoning is the key to determining what uses are allowed in a property. The manual research process is time intensive and can result in errors and delay the development review process.

To improve this service, staff has conducted extensive research on zoning actions citywide and created a zoning action index to aid in zoning research. This index identifies all rezonings that have occurred for each lot in the city and provides a starting point for customers and staff to research the current zoning. This information has been used to create a draft official zoning map.

This updating process is currently in Phase 1, seeking public review and input to determine if the mapped zones are the accurate assigned zones. This process is not intended for changing zones, simply to identify all official zoning in the city at this time.

In an effort to ensure that we have received input from all interested parties, the deadline for Phase 1 has been extended to June 30, 2005.

To view the draft zoning map and check zoning, please go to the Development Services web site at www.sandiego.gov and select Development Services from the "Business" heading. You will see an icon on the Development Services front page called "Draft Official Zoning Map." Click on this icon and follow the instructions for reviewing the map.

Zoning designations shown on the map reflect the current designations in the Land Development Code. Because many property owners purchased property many years ago under old zoning designations that have changed several times, staff has also prepared a table that shows past zoning designations and their current status and title.

All city planning groups have received copies of the draft map and are providing input. Members of the public are encouraged to do the same. Using the web application, individual property owners can enter their property address and obtain what the City believes is their current zoning. Questions can be asked via email at DSD-OZMProject@SanDiego.gov or phone at (619) 687-5986.

For zoning disputes, staff will provide a reference to the ordinance that was relied upon to determine the current zoning. The property owner or member of the public will have the opportunity to submit evidence that supports the zone they believe applies to the property being questioned. Evidence should consist of Council-approved rezoning ordinances, approved zoning drawings (B, C, or D sheets), or evidence regarding conditions that were applied to zoning actions. Staff will review and respond to all evidence submitted through this Phase 1 process. All evidence should be submitted for Phase 1 review no later than June 30, 2005.

Following the public review, Phase 2 will include staff responses to public evidence submitted and final public review of the zoning map. Phase 2 will begin July 1, 2005. Phase 3 will be the public hearing and adoption process, expected to begin in August. 🏠

Confirm that your property is listed with the correct zone by visiting our web page at www.sandiego.gov/development-services and selecting the "Zoning Map Update" icon. Select the grid where your property is located to view the corresponding map.

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Development Services Department Customer Service Awards

The Development Services Department kicked off the year with an event to honor some of the many Customer Service stars who assist customers each day.



Photos by: Lynda Pfeifer

The Patience Award – for having the utmost patience with customers and co-workers.

Honorable Mention: Evelyn Vaughan, Darcell Carter, and Cora Roxas
Third Place: Connie Diaz and Rick Ellrott
Second Place: Sandra Teasley
First Place: Natasha Colona

Fiasco Recovery Award – for the person who can take lemons and turn them into lemonade.

Honorable Mention: Brian Bishop, John Moth, and Gary Halbert
Third Place: Bob Giaccaglia
Second Place: Denise Jenkins
First Place: Rosa Garcia

Don't Shoot the Messenger Award – for the staff member who delivers bad news kindly, with explanation, and offers solutions.

Honorable Mention: Tamara Hildebrandt and Bob Giaccaglia
Third Place: Martin Montessoro
Second Place: Shaneisha Burton
First Place: Ginger Wall and Darcell Carter

Always Cheerful Award – given for those who keep us smiling.

Honorable Mention: Chandra Jones and Yoshie Howser
Third Place: Renee La Tour
Second Place: Pearl Adams
First Place: Raquel Herrera

Rhino Hide Award – given to the person who is on the front lines of customer service, maintaining composure under pressure – thick-skinned

Honorable Mention: Dana Turner, Chiquita Williams, and Marcela Escobar-Eck
Third Place: John Sylvester
Second Place: Davida McDaniel
First Place: Curtis Brown and Wade Smith

Marathon Award – for the staff member who goes the extra mile

Honorable Mention: Emma Cortez, Bill Teachworth, Nancy Martinez, Bryan Hudson, Rosa Garcia, Georgia Sparkman
Third Place: Jama Vega
Second Place: Sandra Huff
First Place: Timberlin Robinson

Team Player Award – the person you can count on, always does what's best for the whole group.

Honorable Mention: Jim Lett and Maribel Martinez
Third Place: Pete Fischer, Ros Fowler, Morris Dye
Second Place: Rick Ellrott
First Place: Cindy Delino

MacGyver Award – based on the hit 1980s TV adventure show in which the hero, Angus MacGyver, used science and his wits to solve most any problem with duct tape and paper clips.

Honorable Mention: Jim Myers and Patrick Hooper
Third Place: Ed Childs
Second Place: Martin Montessoro and Gary Britton
First Place: Larry Lewis

The Wizard Award – for the staff member who performs magic

Honorable Mention: Jim Lett and Marcela Escobar-Eck
Third Place: Juan Alvarez and Donna D'Orsi
Second Place: Marques Laurence
First Place: Lynda Pfeifer

Innovator Award – for the person who brings new ideas and tries new things

Honorable Mention: Isam Hasenin, Cynthia Queen, and Gary Geiler
Third Place: Leslie Goossens
Second Place: Larry Baker
First Place: Nadia Rodriguez-Williams

Rookie of the Year

Honorable Mention: Rick Rhoads, Gary Halbert, Cory Wilkinson, Bill Holt, Rosa Moore, Carlos Hernandez, Ryan Huxley, Robert Gray
Third Place: Brenda Sylvester (TIE), Lanny Rumalean, Polonia Majas
Second Place: Dolores Gonzales, Sandra Tarbor
First Place: Ryan Hay

MVP Award – for our most valuable player

Honorable Mention: Rick Rhoads, Gary Halbert, Sherrie Hatchet, Pearl Adams, Mohammad Sammak, and Stacey Harris
Third Place: Jama Vega
Second Place: Rosa Garcia
Third Place: Elif Cetin

Passionate about Customer Service Award

Honorable Mention: Rick Rhoads, Stacey Harris, John Anderson, and Cynthia Queen
Third Place: Jama Vega
Second Place: David Field
First Place: Justy Kozachenko

Write-in candidates
Honorable Mention: "CEQA Queen" - Eileen Lower
Third Place: "Take No Whine Before Its Time" - John Moth
Second Place: "Unsung Heroes" - Yoshie Howser and Donna Trask
First Place: "Always Helpful" - George Sparkman

Public Right of Way Pilot Program Underway

Through a new pilot program, merchants with ground-level storefronts in North Park, Little Italy, Adams Avenue and Ocean Beach business districts are now able to use the sidewalks in front of their businesses to place A-frame signs, limited displays of merchandise, and outdoor cafés without railings. The Public Right of Way Enhancement/Use Program (PROW) is a two-year pilot program designed to provide a lively experience for pedestrians and diners and give merchants more leeway to expand their businesses and enhance their income.

During a public hearing in September 2003 the City of San Diego Planning Commission unanimously approved the program. One significant issue that the adopted program addressed is the disabled community's concern that encroachment onto the sidewalk is dangerous for them. The San Diego Subcommittee for Reducing Architectural Barriers (SCRAB), the watchdog for the disabled community, unanimously approved and supports the new pilot program because special



attention in drafting the program was given to the needs of the disabled. The Planning Commission will review the results of PROW's implementation annually. If it is successful, the program could become permanent and applicable in other commercial districts.

PROW is governed by a 24-page booklet that contains display guidelines and technical illustrations. (See a copy of the PROW Guidelines at <http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/pdf/prowordinance.pdf>) Merchants who follow the required

regulations will not have to obtain a sidewalk café or other discretionary permit. The pilot program will be administered by the Business Improvement Districts (BID) for a modest fee and will be enforced by the City's Code Compliance Department.

An application for permission to use the sidewalk must be submitted to the BID and have their approval. A scale drawing of the proposed use should be submitted with the application. Businesses need to provide evidence of one million dollars of liability insurance naming the City and others as additional insured. Participating merchants will also need to attend a free training demonstration to learn how to comply with the regulations.

Questions about PROW should be directed to Ron Halbritter, Development Services Department Small Business Liaison at (619) 446-5211. 🏠

Unreinforced Masonry Buildings Must Comply With the Mandatory Provisions of the Ordinance by January 1, 2006

By: Mehdi Shadyab, P.E.

Adopted by City Council on Nov. 9, 1992, the "Earthquake Hazard Reduction In Existing Buildings" ordinance established a program for mitigation of seismic hazards associated with buildings containing Unreinforced Masonry (URM) bearing walls. The provisions of the URM Regulations apply to buildings which were constructed or were under construction before March 24, 1939, having at least one URM Bearing Wall. (SDMC, Section 145.0402). The list of Noticed Unreinforced Masonry Buildings is published to aid architects, engineers, contractors, building owners

and City staff in identifying the URM buildings. As part of the City of San Diego's efforts to promote public safety and outreach, the Development Services Department has posted this list on the City's web page.

In general, the ordinance requires that the building owner shall, within five years after being noticed by the department, remove, stabilize or



brace any parapets and other external hazards. The date by which the URM building owners are required to comply with the mandatory provisions of the URM Regulations is January 1, 2006. Additional seismic strengthening may be required based upon triggering mechanisms associated with remodeling, renovation or change of occupancy.

The City of San Diego URM Regulations may be found at <http://clerkdoc.sannet.gov/legtrain/mc/MuniCodeChapter14/Ch14art05Division04>. For more information about the City of San Diego Unreinforced Masonry Program including the list of Noticed URM buildings, please visit the City's web site at www.sandiego.gov/development-services or contact the department URM Program Coordinator, at (619) 446-5400. 🏠

Small Business Liaison Provides Early Assistance



Ron Halbritter

Small business owners know the many challenges in opening a new business, remodeling or expanding. To help address those issues in the early stages, Development Services has a Small Business Liaison to help lead the way. Ron Halbritter has 15 years of permitting experience in the department and has been helping small business owners for over a year, with great results.

Numerous positive comments have been heard about Halbritter's role at the City's Small Business Advisory Board meetings, noting the benefit to small business owners. Creation of this role in Development Services has been a major step toward building a successful partnership with the small business community.

How does it work? Small business owners are encouraged to call Halbritter at (619) 446-5211, before signing a lease, committing to a site or making a major business decision involving development permits. Halbritter will go over the various requirements with the customer, identify potential issues and means for resolution, and lay out the key steps in the process. Halbritter can also provide referral information to other government agencies dealing with small businesses.

Additionally, Halbritter attends numerous meetings related to small business, including those put on by the Business Improvement Districts and the Small Business Advisory Board. He is available to make presentations to groups about small business permitting topics, and to provide tours of the Development Services Center.

Small business is a big deal to us, and Development Services is committed to assisting small businesses through the permitting process. 🏡

Community and Customer Liaison continued from Page 2

when requested at customer-staff meetings. She also manages the review of the in-house customer surveys, which provide a gauge for the effort to improve customer service, and tracks customer service trends and resolution of complaints. 🏡

News Briefs Continued

time by bringing your laptop and staying connected during the hearing. The City of San Diego's Cable TV Office has provided an out-of-city network Wi-Fi Broadband Hot Spot in the Council Chambers so that people attending hearings can connect to the Internet via wireless technology. 🏡

City Council Hearings on the Web

More kudos to the City of San Diego's Cable TV Office for providing web-streaming videos of all City Council hearings from May 10, 2004, to the present. This is in addition to being able to view live hearings on Mondays and Tuesdays. This is especially helpful to those who wish to review action taken on development projects heard before Council. To access this state-of-the-art feature, go to the City's web page at www.sandiego.gov, and click on the icon on the right side "City TV 24, Click here for live streaming video." The City TV web streaming will pop up and you can select "Archives," providing the complete menu of Council videos by date. Once you have selected a particular Council hearing, you can view the entire meeting, or skip through by agenda item. 🏡

Planning Commission

The City of San Diego Planning Commission meets on Thursdays in the City Council Chambers at 202 C Street, 12th floor, downtown. Most information pertaining to these public hearings can be accessed via the Development Services web page at www.sandiego.gov, select Development Services from the Business heading. On the DSD page, see the "I want to..." section in the upper left corner. The second item is "view information about the Planning Commission." By selecting this link you can access information about the Commission, agenda, reports, minutes and other resources. Planning Commission hearings can also be viewed online via web streaming at the same address listed in the brief about City Council hearings above. The archives and minutes are also available, and the archived hearings can be viewed by item, which is extremely helpful for reviewing specific projects. 🏡

Small Business Seminar

A free seminar, "The ABCs to Starting, Growing and Financing Your Small Business," will be held Wednesday, July 20, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m., at the City Heights Weingart Branch Library, 3795 Fairmount Ave. Topics will include approaches to business ownership, planning and starting a business, business plan development; market research, marketing, funding and financing sources. The seminar is presented by the City of San Diego, Community and Economic Development Department and the Small Business Development & International Trade Center. Seating is limited and RSVP is required to attend. Please RSVP by calling the City of San Diego, Office of Small Business at 619-533-4256. 🏡

Winter Storm Damage Recovery

The City of San Diego is working with property owners who may have sustained property site or structure damage as a result of the December 27, 2004 - January 11, 2005, and February 12 - February 24, 2005, winter storms disaster. Assistance is available in meeting restoration permit requirements and ensuring compliance with environmental regulations. Action taken at the April 19, 2005, City Council meeting provides some relief for the recovery process. For approved sites, certain fees can be waived, and the permitting process can be expedited for restoration of damaged property sites and building structures. A summary of related information can be found on the City's web page at www.sandiego.gov. Select the "City of San Diego Storm Recovery" icon from the right side of the web page. Included within that section is the complete City Manager's Report regarding the fee waiver, found under the heading "Reporting Storm Damage and Permitting Repairs." Select "2005 Storm Induced Emergency Restoration Projects," and the City Manager's Report is the first item on that page. 🏡



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HOW TO CONTACT US

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL INFORMATION AND SERVICES

General Information,

Technical Assistance 446-5000
Appointment Scheduling 446-5300

During high-volume periods, your call may be answered by an automated service. This service will tell you how long the wait is and give you the option of leaving your phone number, to be called back in the order your call was received.

For projects currently in the permitting process, please call the contact phone number listed on your invoice.

We encourage you to make an appointment for services by calling 446-5300. You can "walk in" and wait for many services, but please be advised that appointments take priority. The following services require appointments: permits for single-family room additions, master plans and plan re-checks (call your reviewer directly, as listed on your correction sheet).

Information Numbers for Specific Services

Addressing Coordinator (619) 446-5411
Bond Release (619) 446-5333
Building Code Review (619) 446-5134
Certificate of Occupancy (858) 492-5070
Disabled Access Regulations (619) 446-5134
Engineering Permit Issuance (619) 446-5460
Engineering Project Close-Out (619) 446-5333
Engineering Project Status (619) 236-6840
Fire Access/Subdivision Review (619) 446-5440
Fire Prevention New Construction (619) 446-5440

Plan Check

Hazardous Materials Plan Check (619) 446-5440
Homeowners Saturday Service (619) 446-5000

Inspections

To schedule an appointment for:
New Construction, Relocation, Removal, Demolition (858) 581-7111
Inspection Information (858) 492-5070
Engineering Field Inspections (619) 627-3200
Land Development Review (619) 446-5460
Master Plans (619) 446-5184
Right-of-Way Permits (619) 446-5460
Seismic/Geologic Hazards (619) 446-5400
Solid Waste Local Enforcement Agency (619) 533-3688

Structural Plan Review (619) 446-5134
Plan Pick-Up (619) 446-5179
Publications (619) 446-5200
Records Information (619) 446-5200
Time Extension for Engineering Permits and Subdivision Improvements (619) 446-5333
Traffic Control Plan Check (619) 446-5150

Useful Numbers in Other City of San Diego Departments

Business Tax/License (619) 615-1500
City Directory Information (619) 236-5555
City Information "Just Call" (619) 615-6111
Code Enforcement (619) 236-5500
Facilities Financing (619) 533-3670
Long Range Planning (619) 236-6479

Small Business Early Assistance

The City of San Diego Development Services Department wants your small business to succeed and recognizes the challenges you face as an entrepreneur. Before you sign a lease, purchase property or expand your business, contact Small Business Liaison Ron Halbritter at (619) 446-5211. Ron has extensive experience with the permitting process and will help get you off to the right start. Give Ron a call before your proceed!