

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: February 18, 2025

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Ana Kwong – Administrative Services Director
 Deborah Muchmore, Sebron Flenaugh - Consultant
Subject: Citywide Staffing Study 2025: There is no action to be taken on this item as this item is informational only. There is no fiscal impact with receipt of the informational report

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

This item is to provide an informational presentation to the City Council on the results of the Citywide Staffing Study 2025 report provided by Muchmore Than Consulting. There is no action to be taken as this item is informational only. There is no fiscal impact with receipt of the informational report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In the FY24-25 Adopted Budget, the City Council has allocated funding to update to the 2022 citywide staffing study originally developed by Regional Government Services Authority. On December 17, 2024, the City Council authorized Staff to proceed with this update. Subsequently, the study was assigned to Muchmore Than Consulting to review and update the previous recommendations, address current conditions, and make new recommendations based on collected information. The key take away is that although City departments have been working diligently and performing as highly as possible given their limited staffing and resources, in some key programs and functions of the City there is a need to consider changes to and additional staffing for future success. The report summarizes the study’s findings and is informational only, with no action.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

A staffing assessment study for city employees is important because it helps evaluate current staffing profiles and allocations, identify current and known future department and program staffing needs based on workload and performance objectives, and helps promote efficient operations by applying the information collected to the identified needs. As a best practice, cities routinely evaluate the work of departments and programs to determine appropriate staffing levels both within and across departments. Appropriate staffing impacts service delivery, employee engagement, and overall effectiveness. Co-location of services, fiscal constraints, and changes in how services are delivered affect decision regarding optimum staffing profiles. Particularly with increased employee turnover, combining of departments (Public Works and Engineering), redefining and titling the former Planning Department to the Community Development department, the current LAFCO application process regarding consolidation of the Sebastopol Volunteer Fire Department into the Gold Ridge Fire District, as well as the fact that the City’s previous staffing study was performed during a time when General Fund reserves were perceived to be sufficient for ongoing operations make it appropriate and prudent to review the staffing structures now. The information from the study provides data that can be used to formulate plans to address staffing issues and department operational and program service delivery needs as they exist today and in the known future, to increase the City’s ability to deliver projects and programs and retain a quality labor force.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The study encompassed the City’s current department structure including Administration, Administrative Services, Community Development, Building, Public Works, and Police. The Fire Department was not addressed in the 2025 study as it is currently being addressed through a consolidation process and is anticipated to be annexed in July 2025 into the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. The process was to review the recommendations made in

the Citywide Staffing Study 2022 considering the current fiscal environment, current department business needs, and City priorities and provide recommendations that address the conditions today.

The study includes prioritized recommendations by department related to fiscal sustainability based on the following criteria:

- Critical support needed immediately
- Important support to sustain and grow current programs and projects
- Future options for consideration that are nice to have or are dependent on other actions to occur (e.g., Fire Annexation or natural attrition)

To reiterate, this item is not to approve any changes in staffing or take any action, but to provide the Council and public an analysis of current and future staffing needs of the City as of what is known today. An analysis of each department presented in detail can be found in the attached 2025 Study. A presentation is also attached highlighting the study information by department.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The report summarizes the study’s findings which include the consultant’s recommendations and options. However, there is no fiscal impact on the budget with receipt of this informational report. It is recommended that this study be used as a tool as the Council moves into the upcoming FY budget or goals setting session as well as used for the new AB 2561 which requires that prior to the budget being adopted, a public hearing is required related to City vacancies. This bill requires a public agency to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts at a public hearing at least once per fiscal year. These materials will be used as part of that public hearing providing information to the Council and public. The public hearing is scheduled for a future City Council meeting tentatively in April 2025.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council receive the informational report. No formal motion is required.

OPTIONS:

Not Applicable

ATTACHMENTS:

Staffing Study Materials 2025
Presentation

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 2/13/25

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: 2/12/25

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services (Financial) Approval Date: 2/12/25

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes No N/A

Account Code (f applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: N/A

City Manager Approval:

Approval Date: ___2-14-2025_____



CITY OF SEBASTOPOL

CITY-WIDE STAFFING STUDY 2025



(707) 490-0564
P.O. Box 2318, Rohnert Park, CA 94928

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This updated report was completed by a team of collaborating professionals through Muchmore Than Consulting, LLC. Contributing team members are: Taissa Araujo E Mello, Sebron Flenaugh III, Deborah Muchmore, and Anthony Suber

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2024, the City engaged Muchmore Than Consulting, LLC (MTC) to update a 2022 City-Wide Staffing Study (2022 Study), performed by Regional Government Services Authority during a time when the City believed its reserves were sufficient and sustainable. The original study provided recommendations for City Department ideal staffing models based on conditions at the time and models found at similar entities. Since 2022, the City declared a fiscal emergency (2023) and took significant measures to reduce expenditure and increase revenue options and inflow. In 2024, three department heads were replaced following two retirements and one voluntary separation. As part of the transition in leadership, the Planning Department became the Community Development Department and Engineering was merged into Public Works. Considering the changed fiscal and operational conditions, in December 2024, City Council authorized and allocated funding to revise the staffing study based on current conditions. Also, the City Council has been in the process of consolidating the Fire Department with Gold Ridge Fire Protection District; therefore, this report does not address staffing assessment for the Fire Department as it is anticipated that the City will merge with Gold Ridge July 2025.

This report is based on, this point in time, reorganization of departments and services and staffing actions that have occurred since the 2022 Study and the City's current mission and core services. The recommendations and options of this report will may need to be part of discussions with City labor and receive approval or authorization from City Council. Once approved, it is a best practice to revisit these recommendations and any subsequent actions taken based on them periodically to incorporate and respond to any changes in goals, mission, and vision approved by the Council during the life of this study, as well as recommendations of concurrent studies related to department management assessments and classification and compensation structures.

Over a total of thirty-six (36) months, the 2022 Study called for the addition of 16 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs): 5 in the near-term (six months), 10 in the mid-term (up to 12 months), and 1 in the long-term (up to 36 months); separation of the roles of City Manager and City Attorney, annexation of the Fire Department; and the merger of engineering functions within the Public Works Department and building functions with planning functions.

Based on the recommendations from the 2022 study, the City Manager and City Attorney roles were separated in January of 2024, annexation of fire protection services is well underway, engineering functions have merged into Public Works, and there are plans to combine related functions into a newly organized Community Development Department. Additionally, the City added a Permit Planning Technician and one Police Officer allocation (position has been frozen, precluded from filling, since the fall of 2023.).

Overall, we found the Departments have been working diligently and serving in as highly performing a manner as possible considering the limited staffing and resources they have been allocated. To compensate for limited staffing, departments have sought support from within, creating a historical culture of individual intradepartmental silos and limited interdepartmental collaboration. The staffing models in almost every Department of the City, we found to be underfunded and understaffed at core service delivery levels and as of just recently are now appropriately funded and staffed at the management levels. This report provides a stepped approach to addressing these challenges organized into the following areas:

Critical: important to maintain service delivery or minimum staffing;

Important: needed to position the City for agility and flexibility in decision-making related to issues such as co-location of services or program or project delivery changes; and

Beneficial: Providing best practice options for future service enhancements and growth, or for changes that may be important but must wait on other factors such as attrition, a LAFCO process, or other activity.

Additionally, we found the limited interdepartmental collaboration has service delivery implications that can be felt by the City's customers and residents. In a conversation with Public Works regarding service improvements, I was provided the following example from a real experience and a resident's perspective that exemplifies the minimal collaboration that has historically existed between departments toward improving the experience of community members when accessing City services. A community member approaches Public Works to request

a new utility meter because they are installing or repairing a water line or lateral on their property. They have reviewed the website and have found little guidance on where to start. When they arrive or speak to Public Works, they find that, depending on other factors related to the improvement of their property they may need to make separate visits to or contact with planning, engineering, building, fire, public works, and city hall to set up utility billing to affect the installation. There is no single process or guidance to streamline the request.

In fact, for any resident or business owner planning a remodel, land improvement, or other construction project within the City, there are as many as three separate geographical locations to visit to obtain permitting for the projects. Building permits are issued out of the Fire Department, engineering and event permits are issued out of Public Works, and Planning Permits and Economic Development activities are issued and conducted out of Community Development. From a staffing perspective, this provides an opportunity to review efficient uses of resources and space.

The challenge is inherent throughout the City organization in almost every department due to the historically underfunded staffing models currently in place which we will discuss later by department. As previously mentioned, with the best of intentions, departments have looked inside themselves for solutions and relied upon their own department’s knowledge, strengthening the siloed experience across the City. These are only two of the many City service and operational issues that exist throughout the City. Empowering the City’s leaders and supervisor and providing sufficient administrative, technical, and organizational support to allow leaders space for quiet¹ thought is one of many steps the City can take toward resolving these types of issues. To effectively and sustainably change the current organizational culture of siloed activity will require focused effort from the City Manager and Assistant City Manager, policy support and delegated authority from City Council to limit discretionary work, authorize actions, and support and empower the City’s department heads, managers, and supervisors with the authority to act and respond differently than they have in the past.

Based on the above, given that this study is primarily about staffing levels and needs in the organization, achieving optimal staffing will rely on many factors and the needs of the organization include the needs of the human capital within it. Factors that can affect the resources to support staffing include how effective, engaged, and creative the people of the organization are in developing cultural behaviors, systems, and practices to maximize the use and benefit of resources, both human and material, reduce expenditures, and maximize revenue accumulation. Therefore, this report has brief cultural comments related to each department and what we heard from City and department leaders across the City as a whole. These are for the benefit of the departments and the organization and often require minimal or no action or funding from Council. They require support of Council for the space and time to engage in cultural improvement initiatives.

This study reflects recommended options based on staff feedback at a point in time. When the addition of new department heads and the filling of positions present the City with an influx new ideas and additional opportunities to effect change and strive for optimal operation adding to work already begun through the inflow of new leaders to improve the health of the culture. This study is a starting point from where we are today. The City may want to also consider revisiting structural changes made in response to this study in six and twelve months to assess how the new roles and structures are working. A list of recommendations can be viewed in the following table; an expanded version of the table can be found in Appendix B.

¹ Quiet thought - absent of distraction, noise, and interruptions is the time when our brain processes, synthesizes, and comes up with new ideas. Leadership is not only about action but also the moments of reflection. It is about allowing space in between the pace of each day to shape thoughts and reflections, solve problems, develop new concepts, and not just when we are sleeping. Sleep is for sleep. The rapid-fire, constantly moving, requiring response world we live in minimizes the importance of thinking time. Part of developing a strong sustainable organizational culture includes encouraging thinking time across our organization to help drive solution, innovation, and productivity; not inactivity and lack of productivity, these are different behaviors than quiet thought related to creating solutions.

Department	Current Status of 2022 Study Suggestions	2025 Study Suggestions
City Administration <i>Office of City Manager</i> <i>Office of City Clerk</i>	<p>Completed: 4) Separate the Functions of the City Manager & City Attorney</p> <p>Not Completed: 1) Add 1.0 FTE support position for Assistant City Manager / City Clerk 2) Add 1.0 FTE Admin support position - coverage for City Hall counter 3) Add 1.0 FTE Analyst to the City Manager 5) Separate the functions of the Assistant City Manager and City Clerk</p>	<p>Critical: * New Administrative Technician (\$131,100) or Management Analyst- (\$159,110)</p> <p>Beneficial: * Separate Assistant City Manager & City Clerk (\$136,044) * Develop a plan to implement cross-training/Admin Positions</p>
Administrative Services	<p>Completed: Junior Accountant reclassified as Accountant/Analyst Utilize an intern for Special Projects</p> <p>Not Completed: Add 1.0 FTE Accounting Manager</p>	<p>Critical: * Adopt a job classification for Accounting Assistant III (\$0) * Add 1.0 FTE Accounting Technician II to the department allocation schedule (\$155,880) * Build two employment lists: Accountant, Accounting Technician (\$0, included in HR agreement) * Build Accounting Assistant III Employment List (\$0)</p>
Building Department	<p>Not Completed: Merge Building into Planning</p>	<p>Important: Merge Building into Planning</p> <p>Beneficial: Transfer .5 FTE Sr. Admin (\$0) Assistant to Planning and reclassify to Permit tech or Administrative Tech (\$0)</p>
Community Development Department <i>formerly Planning Department</i>	<p>Completed: Reclassify the Sr. Admin Assistant to a Planning Technician</p> <p>Not Completed: Reclassify the Associate Planner to Senior Planner Merge Building and Planning into one department</p>	<p>Critical: * Fill the 1.0 FTE Permit Tech position</p> <p>Important: * Transfer Building 0.5 FTE and Reclassify to Admin Tech(\$3,105)</p> <p>Beneficial: * Reclassify Permit Technician to a Permitting Coordinator Classification if Engineering Permits co-locate as well (\$10,350) * Develop an intradepartmental communication plan between Engineering Tech and Permit Coordinator to help review the permit application packets and advance applications (\$0)</p>
Public Works	<p>Completed: Add 1.0 FTE Permit Technician Retain the Part-time Administrative Assistant position Retitle Maintenance Classifications Reclassify PW Superintendent to Public Works Director/City Engineer Merge Public Works and Engineering</p> <p>Not Completed: Add 2.0 FTE Maintenance staff to address deferred mandated maintenance</p>	<p>Critical: * Approve class and comp recommendations to retitle Asst PW * Through attrition reclassify 2.0 FTE Maintenance Asst allocations to MW I (\$22,940), Add 1.0 FTE MW II (\$123,180)</p> <p>Important: * Add 1 MW II classifications (\$123,180)</p>
Police Department	<p>Completed: 1) Reclassify the Police Technician to Police Evidence Technician</p> <p>Not Completed: 2) Add 1.0 - 2.0 FTE Police Officers and 1.0 FTE Dispatcher 3) Add 1.0 FTE Management Analyst to support the Chief, Mgt Staff 4) Add 1.0 FTE Sergeant 5) Add a School Resource Officer at 0.5 or greater FTE</p>	<p>Critical: * Unfreeze 9th Police Officer</p> <p>Important: * Add 1.0 FTE Officer (\$126,364) * Add 1.0 FTE Sergeant (\$146,637) * Add 1.0 FTE Administrative Tech (\$131,100)</p>

About the City of Sebastopol

Sebastopol is a small semi-urban community nestled between west Sonoma County and Santa Rosa just along the Laguna de Santa Rosa wetlands and watershed. Rich in music, art, history, and agriculture, the City is located on an approximate 2 square miles with a population of just over 7,520 per the 2020 U.S. Census. Key products from the region have shifted from plum and apple orchards to wine and vineyards. Tourism, art, and tasting rooms are key attractions for the region. Recent development project permit applications suggest growth in transient occupancy taxes which can promote moderate increases in revenues.

The City is organized under California general law with a Council-Manager form of government and five Council-members elected at-large. The City Manager and City Clerk are appointed by the City Council and the balance of the employees appointed by the City Manager.

In 2024, the City obtained a review of its administrative cost allocation schedule which demonstrated a need for a significant change in how administrative costs were allocated between enterprise funds and the general fund. In the same year, the City Council received a presentation on the City's fiscal outlook by a nationally recognized expert on Local government finance. The outlook demonstrated a need to bring the City to financial sustainability.

Over the course of 2024, the City took measures to increase revenues and reduce costs in support of sustaining and potentially increasing General Fund reserves. Some of the measures taken included: administrative oversight of the Fire Department by a local district and steps toward complete annexation of Fire services into a local district; development of a new Cost Allocation Plan for the allocation of City overhead costs across funds; increases in water and sewer rates to help stabilize the enterprise funds; merging of engineering functions into public works; establishing a newly organized Community Development Department; placement of a successful tax measure on the November 2024 ballot; careful review of all expenditures; and reduction or freezing of unused or unfilled staff positions.

This report strives to provide options to assist the City in assessing staffing related to current and known future business needs. While the 2022 Study used similar entities as a reference point for many recommendations, this report does little reference comparison and is more about where the City is, has been, and desires to go in the future. The following pages describe each department, where they were, what has occurred since 2022, and tactical staffing options. This report does not line out specific workplans or logistics for the recommendations or options within. That work will best be completed as future decisions are made.

City Administration:

Offices of the City Manager and the City Clerk

Department Description

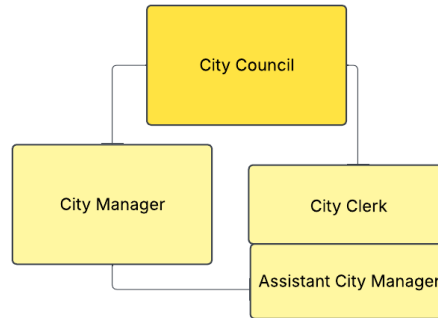
The Administration Department includes the offices of the City Manager and the City Clerk. The main functions of City Administration include administrative direction and oversight for all City government operations in accordance with policies set by the City Council, execution of City Council direction, the provision of sage counsel and information to the City Council, administration of the City's records management and risk management programs, official internal and external communications, and administration of legislative requirements related to elections, public meetings, public records, maintenance of the City's official seal, and direction and guidance for City departments, and special projects.

Background

The City Manager's Office consists of the City Manager and Assistant City Manager. The Assistant City Manager (ACM) also serves as the appointed City Clerk under City Council authority. Although it was created to be a part-time ACM and full-time City Clerk, the position has now become two full-time positions filled by one employee.

In 2022, the City Manager served dual roles as both the City Manager and as the City Attorney. The roles separated in January of 2024, following the retirement of the former City Manager and the appointment of the current City Manager. The addition of a 1.0 FTE support position for the City Clerk/Assistant City Manager and a 1.0 FTE administrative support position to provide coverage to the public counter in City Hall, both recommended by the 2022 Study, have not been fulfilled to date.

Current State



The City Manager serves as an “at will” contract employee. The Assistant City Manager and City Clerk roles continue to be filled by one individual, with the Assistant City Manager role reporting to the City Manager and the City Clerk role reporting to the City Council. The City Manager oversees all City departments, which currently are Public Works (including engineering), Police, Community Development, Administrative Services, Building, and the Fire Department, which is currently under administrative oversight through an interagency agreement with the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District. The Fire Department functions are expected to be annexed to the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District by July 2025. Therefore, as noted above, this 2025 study will not address Fire Department staffing needs.

Current Staffing Challenges

The dual role and reporting relationship of the Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, while seemingly mastered and seamless by the current incumbent, offer challenges and limitations related to workload, an inability to engage in uninterrupted strategic thought for forward planning, unintended conflicts, and separation of duties especially when considering succession planning and balancing loyalties between City Council and City Manager.

To compound the challenges mentioned above, it is difficult to know exactly where the duties of ACM/CC split, especially, for instance, when the incumbent is speaking with a council member or a community member. A City Clerk provides access to information and records, explains processes, accepts applications, supports election processes and candidates, referring Council and community members to City staff for additional information and support, whereas an Assistant City Manager typically acts on a broader spectrum of issues such as mediate differences, effect change in service delivery, address inconsistencies in services provided, hear and resolve complaints. The point at which opportunities arise to swap between the roles is fluid and ever-changing, making the split of the roles difficult to quantify (50:50, 60:40, 25:75). Therefore, we will label the ACM role as a “partial time” role as it was initially approved rather than a specific portion of an FTE. The unique quality of the staff member has made this position seamless but would recommend the separation of the positions as a future action.

Under the staffing profile of the two Offices, lower-level routine duties such as calendaring, scheduling, setting up and coordinating Zoom meetings, transcribing meeting minutes, running the logistics of public meetings, interfacing with the videographers for public meetings, scanning and posting materials and resolutions, preparing meeting packets, photocopying, scanning, creating, and labeling PDF files, and answering City calls for routine information are being performed by the highest-level employees of the City.

The City Manager and the Assistant City Manager/City Clerk along with other City Department Heads, (also some managers, and supervisors) described working tirelessly side-by-side with the rest of City staff to deliver core services and resolve day-to-day issues that arise. This leaves little time to address developing materials for mandated reporting and compliance; attending meetings; answering questions from the public, other City staff, government agencies, and the Council; training to maintain or improve skills; and preparing presentations and

staff reports for meetings. Based on interviews and our personal experience working with the City's leaders, we have learned that this work often occurs in the early morning, late in the evening, or on days off. There is no time or space for quiet thought¹ which is one necessary element to resolve, innovate, and arrive at solutions or improvements to organizational issues.

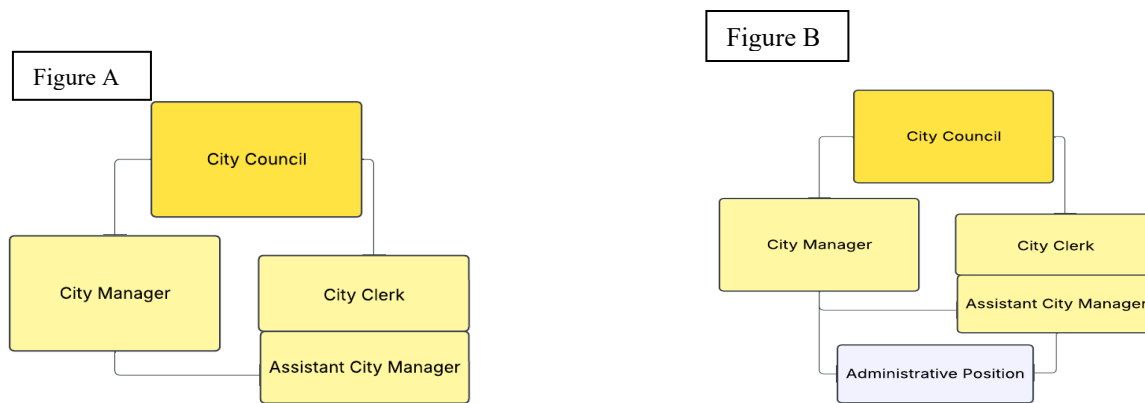
The absence of technical or analyst support for the roles leaves both the full-time City Manager and the part-time Assistant City Manager performing duties that could be delegated to a lower level staff member, if available, with little or no opportunity to quietly think, coach, or mentor staff; engage in strategic or creative thought. Providing technical or analyst support for City Clerk duties and analysis will allow the City Clerk and City Manager to spend more time working with other City leaders and staff to develop solutions, fulfill City visions and future goals, and take steps to change culture through the continued implementation of systems and processes, and breaking down deep-seated beliefs and entrenched behaviors that can sustain "the way it has always been" in deference to greater accountability and more efficient and effective methods of communication and collaboration.

Proposed Options

In the images below we compare the current staffing state of the Administration Department with proposed staffing states.

Current State Proposed near-term staffing state

Figure A shows the current state of staffing in Administration and Figure B proposed staffing that includes an administrative position in support of the Offices of the City Manager and City Clerk.



During conversations with the City Manager and the Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, the following staffing challenges were identified as roles and tasks that would be the most supportive and impactful of their respective offices.

- 1) backup to clerk public meetings; support for the transcription of meeting minutes and timely posting of notices, videos, and minutes;
- 2) timely and accurate processing of public records act requests;
- 3) support for analysis and monitoring of budgets and labor costing, or special projects;
- 4) support for calls, emails, and visitors into City Hall.

The most powerful analytical classification to support both the office of the City Manager and the City Clerk would be Management Analyst I/II at an estimated top monthly step cost with benefits of \$144,636 Level I and \$159,100 level II, with a modification to the proposed classification specification proposed by the Bryce Consulting in the Classification and Compensation Study adding a duty statement like the following, along with a corresponding knowledge and ability statement.

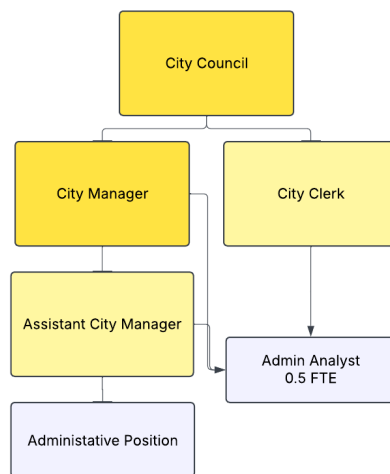
- *Provide City Clerk with support for functions related to staffing and running public meetings, the CA Public Meeting and Public Records acts, records retention and transparency, coordination, and related functions.*

Alternatively, the Classification of Administrative Technician at an estimated top monthly step cost with benefits of \$114,1265, if approved as proposed in the Bryce Consulting Classification and Compensation Study, would also provide some needed relief. It is broad and technical enough to support many of the duties of the City Clerk and provide much-needed support to the City Manager’s office as well.

Exercising administrative flexibility across departments. One sustainable concept for consideration was a recommendation that came out of discussions with the City Administration team is to cross train administrative employees to provide support across departments during times of leave or peak workload. Whether Management Analyst I/II or Administrative Technician, and once cross trained, either position could be utilized across departments for attending to public counters, calculating fees, taking notes at meetings, reconciling accounts, processing payroll, invoicing, receipting funds, grant tracking, drafting reports and creating schedules, tracking data, reporting, and supporting permitting. A table in Appendix C shows the relative strengths and costs of each proposed and existing classification. The annual numbers are based on salaries that include adjustments related to each classification’s market position, as reported in the recent classification and compensation study.

Should the current Assistant City Manager/City Clerk retire or leave the City for other reasons, it would be in the best interest of the City to separate the two positions. This allows for slightly different staffing options that are reflected in the two charts below. The below staffing profile has not had costing applied as market salaries will change between now and the time when such a structure is appropriate or needed.

Possible Future Staffing Configuration



Culture

City Administration, through the City Manager, has begun to introduce cultural change through requesting role clarity and the development of shared systems and practices, encouraging feedback, and imparting accountability in ownership of projects. This is one aspect of culture and is a step toward cultural change. Many of these changes have been directive due to the number and timeliness of things that needed to be accomplished and the newness of some of the City’s Department Heads. As time goes on, the hope is that the changes may shift toward greater delegation and collaborative process development.

Next Steps

- **Critical:** Approve the revised job classification specification of Administrative Technician as proposed in the recent classification and compensation study to allow use within any department of the City. (no cost)
- **Critical:** Add technical and analytical support to the Administration Department at the Management Analyst I/II or Administrative Technician level to relieve City Clerk who is performing two full-time positions and provide relief for analysis and lower level City Manager and Assistant City Manager duties.(\$131,100 or \$155,880 respectively)

- **Beneficial:** Develop a plan to implement cross-training of administrative staff to allow for use across multiple City functions, departments, and programs, allowing for better efficiency throughout the City.
- **Beneficial:** Upon attrition, separate the positions of Assistant City Manager and City Clerk. Cost will be that of a City Clerk’s annual salary at the time of attrition (Today \$136,044)

Administrative Services

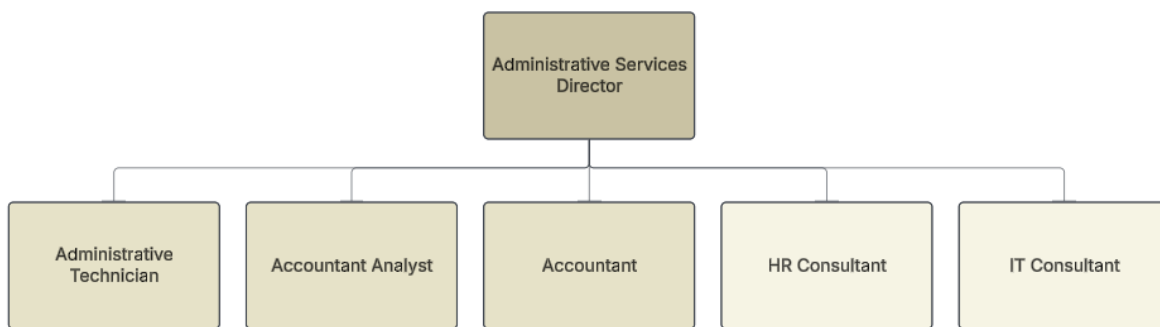
Department Description

The City’s Administrative Services Department includes Finance, Utility Billing, Business Licenses, Information Systems, Labor Relations, Risk Management for Workers Compensation, Employee Benefits Administration, and Human Resources. The Finance division is responsible for recording and maintaining the City’s financial records; preparing, recording, and reconciling the City’s funds and accounts; creating financial reports and statements in modified and full accrual methods depending on fund type; providing payroll services and administering the workers’ compensation and benefits programs; overseeing, recording, and tracking the City’s budget and comparing actuals to budgeted revenues and expenditures, financial support to departments, forecasting for future financial decisions; costing for labor negotiations; grant compliance and reporting; and managing the City’s Capital Projects Budget, utility accounts and business licenses including invoicing businesses and residents and starting and stopping services. In addition, the Administrative Services Director oversees third-party provider professional services agreements for Information Systems, Collective Bargaining Negotiations, and Human Resources services.

Background

Since 2018, the Department has worked toward a stable staffing structure that would sustainably encompass all aspects of the assigned functions. Prior to the 2022 Study, the Department utilized a Director, a Junior Accountant, an Office Assistant, and an Account Clerk. The 2022 Study recommended reclassifying the Junior Accountant to an Accounting Technician, adding an Accounting Manager, and utilizing an Intern for special projects. At that time, the City chose to recruit an Accounting Supervisor, which was later reclassified to an Accountant/Analyst.

Current State



Today, the department’s allocated and funded positions include 1.0 FTE Administrative Services Director, 1.0 FTE Accountant/Analyst, 1.0 FTE Accountant, and 1.0 FTE Administrative Technician. The Accountant position is currently vacant.

Current Staffing Challenges

Over the last several years, the Department has had challenges finding and retaining qualified accountants, often filling the role with temporary employees. The Accountant position is modeled around a 30-year employee who grew into the role and, in addition to administering and processing utility billing and business licenses, creates and administers allocation schedules, reconciles the City’s bank accounts, and continues to support the City after retirement in a part-time role. The role was open for recruitment four times in the last two years with no success

in obtaining a hire who successfully completed the probationary period and remained on staff. Based on the failed recruitments and retention challenges, the department has recently requested to either begin a new recruitment in the hopes of a renewed eligibility list or consideration for a program change to allow for the replacement of the accountant classification with two lower-level positions: a utility billing clerk and an accounting technician.

During conversations related to staffing the accountant role, Department staff theorized that the complex combination of duties, wearing multiple hats, and not only accounting but also administering the utility billing program made the pool of qualified applicants small and the acquisition and retention of qualified individuals very challenging. The utility billing program is especially complex due to the fact that the City has two types of utility meters, some measuring in cubic feet and others in gallons. The staff surmised that the City may need to share additional, more detailed information related to the role of the position with the next Accountant applicants to assist them in preparing for the realities of working on a small team where everyone must drop what they are doing and pull together to resolve urgent matters. Alternatively, the City could consider hiring an Accounting Technician and Utility Billing Clerk (Accounting Assistant I/II) who can begin to train to perform accountant work.

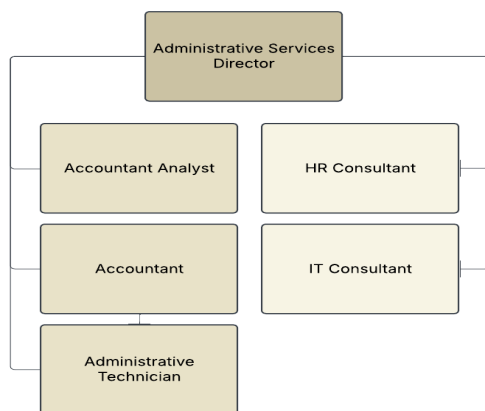
The Department has a stable core of competent employees in the Director, Accountant/Analyst, and Administrative Technician. Succession planning and successful placement in the Accountant role have been challenging. The long-term support of a 30-year veteran has been a saving grace to the Department for the workload. The vacancies in the Accounting role, when combined with the complexity of accounting for the various funds held by the City, water and sewer rate structures, enterprise and government accounting methods, Government Accounting Standards Board proclamations mandating reporting structures, timing, and methods which increase each year, the City’s operating and Capital Projects budgets, and the oversight of Information Systems and Human Resources, may contribute to staff overwhelm. Most municipalities use a third party service to administer business license billing and collections. These municipalities claim that while the initial set up is a little bumpy due to some of the uniqueness’s between municipal programs and rules, once resolved, revenues are significantly up and more than cover the costs of the service.

Some conversations included discussing the title of the Accountant/Analyst role in the department regarding the fact that the title is not found in comparable entities, and it was, therefore, not possible to review salary based on market. It may also prove challenging to recruit for the position in the future should that become necessary. The Department is anticipating a management assessment soon, upon completion of that study and based on the current duties, the City may want to consider retitling the classification to match the current best practices in the market.

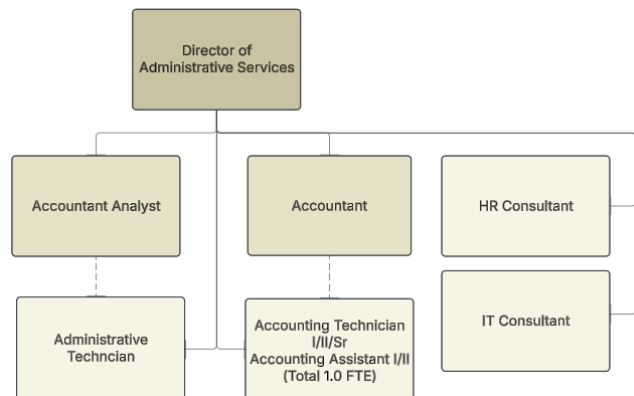
To address the staffing challenges and needs of the Department the following options are suggested.

Proposed Options

Current State



Proposed Options for Consideration



Add 1.0 FTE Accounting Technician I/II that could be underfilled by an Accounting Assistant depending on the

quality of the pool. In reviewing the finance and accounting structures of other Sonoma County municipalities, it appears that the City of Sebastopol is staffed at a leaner level than all except the City of Sonoma, which also has four positions (Finance Director, Accountant, 2 Accounting Technicians). All the rest have between five and seventeen positions depending on the size and number and size of water and wastewater treatment plants. Healdsburg also has an electrical utility.

Core finance staffing (the staff required to account for revenues and expenditures and develop financial statements) in comparative Sonoma County entities with utility billing functions ranges from 4 FTE to 6 FTE across Sonoma County municipalities. Entities surveyed were the cities of Sonoma, Cloverdale, Windsor, Petaluma, Healdsburg, and Calistoga.)

Each jurisdiction except Sonoma, with 4 FTE, has a second manager in the department either for finance, accounting, or finance and human resources. Each jurisdiction except Calistoga utilizes an accountant, and all jurisdictions use at least one Accounting Technician and Accounting Assistant. A table showing the breakdown of staffing at each of the agencies can be found in Appendix A.

According to the recent classification and compensation study, the Accountant position within Sebastopol is not significantly below the market average for the salary to be the only cause for the significant impediments to hiring that the Department has faced. Therefore, the work or the environment may be affecting the retention and success of the employees. In reviewing other Sonoma County municipalities, we found that all except County of Sonoma utilize a combination of Accounting Technician and Accounting Assistant in combination with an Accountant. Accounting Assistant I/II is a classification being used by all Sonoma County municipalities except Sonoma to support utility billing, customer service, invoicing, phones and will therefore be a marketable classification recognized by the workforce. The career path of Accounting Assistant I/II, Accounting Technician I/II/Sr to Accountant allows for training within the organization should external pools of qualified applicants wane. Therefore, an option whereby the City retains the Accountant allocation and adds one lower level allocation of Accounting Assistant in the near term provides GFOA or CSFMO training to a willing incumbent and upgrades that to Accounting Technician as the incumbent's abilities and skills increase in the future, would support the department's workload today and provide some opportunities for succession planning in the future. It is further recommended that we, at least temporarily, to allow the Director to focus time and efforts on reducing overwhelm for the team, stabilizing staffing, and developing strong, sustainable core skills at all levels of staff within the finance and accounting functions of the City.

Another area for future consideration is the amount of workload added to the Department by the oversight of key professional service vendor contracts such as: Information Technology, Human Resources, and Labor Negotiations. Some discussion was had while considering the 2025 Study update regarding the benefits of moving oversight for the functions of Information Technology and Human Resources services, both currently outsourced to consultants. However, after considerable discussion and thought, the functional elements involved in overseeing the work of the consultants align with the efforts already being capably managed by the Department to process payroll, administer benefits, and onboard employees, ensuring they have email addresses and access to systems.

In the future, the City may want to consider hiring employees to perform some or most human resources and information technology service duties, at least at the transactional level. Cities such as Calistoga, Cloverdale, Healdsburg, and Sonoma have each added 1.0 FTE position specifically for Human Resources at the management level to their approved staffing allocation. Furthermore, larger agencies like the City of Petaluma and the Town of Windsor have established Human Resources Departments within their approved staffing budgets. Adding a human resources or information systems technician or analyst to your personnel allocation table may serve the City well. The cost of salary and benefits may be somewhat offset through reductions in professional service contract costs.

Culture

The Administrative Services Department has struggled with identifying the right mix of FTEs and part-time employees to best serve the City as a whole. The constant changes born by responding to significant turnover at the executive levels, four failed recruitments in the Accountant position that have occurred over the last few years

have caused a degree of uncertainty regarding what will work in the best interest of the function and City. With the most recent adjustments and those recommended in this report, it is hopeful that the department will realize more stability and foundational strength that will ultimately lead to a functional alignment.

Next Steps

- **Critical:** Create a job classification specification of Accounting Assistant I/II and related specification and pay range at 10%-15% below Accounting Technician I/II (no cost to add to the class plan). (\$0)
- **Critical:** Add 1.0 FTE approved allocation of Accounting Technician II to the department to support the work of the Accountant and utility billing. This position may be filled by any Accounting Technician or Accounting Assistant eligibility list depending on the quality of the pool of applicants. (\$155,880)
- **Critical:** Build recruitment eligibility lists for Accountant, Accounting Technician I/II, and Accounting Assistant II (a class currently used by most Sonoma County municipalities to support utility billing). Fill positions at the most appropriate level based on recruitment pool strength to allow the Department to cease relying on part-time or temporary staff. Building Department (\$0 included in cost of HR Agreement)

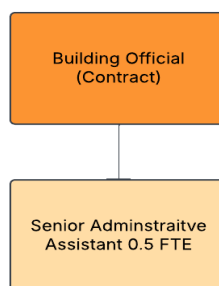
Department Description

The City’s Building Department is responsible for administering the City’s construction and reach codes related to new and existing development, and residential, commercial, and industrial alterations and repairs. Through the work of a consultant and 0.5 FTE Senior Administrative Assistant and coordination with the City’s Community Development and Public Works Departments, the department provides inspections and reviews construction plans, drawings, and specifications for compliance with state and local regulations.

Background

Before 2019, the City had a Building Official who also served as the City’s Building Department Director. When the previous Building Official retired, the City considered the best solution for its current needs and contracted with Phillips Seabrook Associates. Dave Phillips serves as the City’s Certified Building Official and Flood Plain Manager, and day-to-day building inspection services are performed by a staff member of the firm, Steve Brown. The Department’s services are co-located in the City’s Fire Department. The two departments shared a Senior Administrative Assistant who provides administrative support to both.

Current State



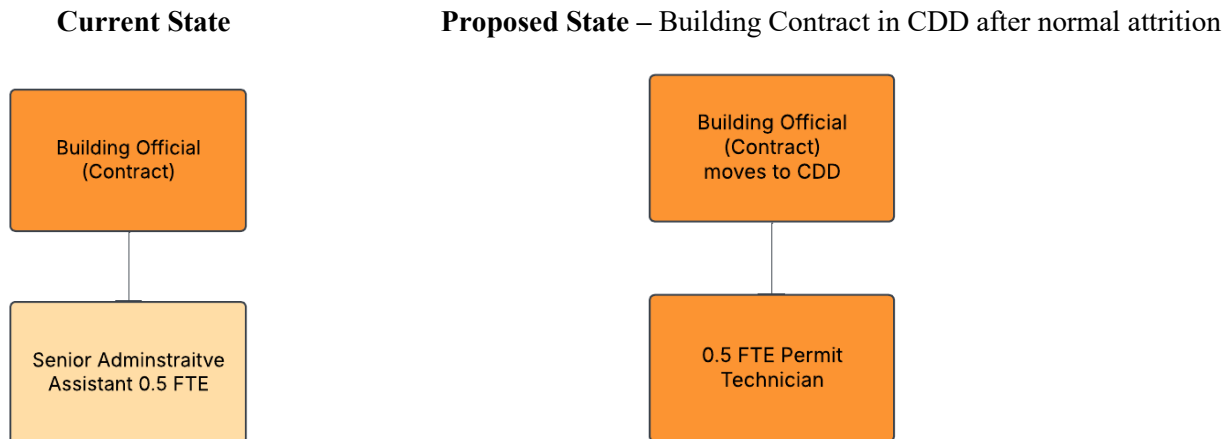
The City continues to be effectively served by a consultant serving as Building Official. The staff member performing building inspections spends four to eight hours a day performing and documenting inspections and responding to property owners. The contracted services continue to be supported by a 0.5 FTE Senior Administrative Assistant who is a City employee and is still located in the Fire Department.

Current Staffing Challenges

The department has faced no current staffing challenges other than the desire to relocate the team inside City Hall. This move poses challenges for space allocation and questions related to supervision for the 0.5 FTE Senior Administrative Assistant serving the Department. Moving the contract under the Community Development

Department and the location of support staff are two separate issues. Location is not something that is addressed in this report. This report suggests moving the contract for Building services under the Community Development Division, should the annexation of Fire be successful later this year.

Proposed Options



In all except one of the municipalities reviewed, the building function is housed with planning under either a Planning and Building Director or a Community Development Director.

The City’s Fire Department building is anticipated to become the property of the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District GRFPD upon LAFCO approval of the combined City-GRFPD annexation application and ratification by the GRFPD Board and the City of Sebastopol City Council. Therefore, the options that remain for the Building Department include: 1) remain a separate Department, 2) merge into the Community Development Department, or 3) merge into another Department. In line with other municipalities in the County, merging with Community Development seems the most sensible option. The synergies that allow streamlining of permitting and zoning ordinance compliance, neighborhood revitalization, and other community support services that make merging the building resources and services with planning can be valuable to the City and its residents. After natural attrition, and to further align the Community Development Department we suggest converting the Sr. Administrative Assistant to either a part-time Permit Technician under a Permit Coordinator or utilizing a journey-level administrative position. By moving the Building permitting services into Community Development, the City eliminates the need to staff a separate public counter for building permits and may experience some efficiencies in permitting that could allow for reallocation of some of the duties of the current .5 Sr. Administrative Assistant duties making them more appropriate for a Permit or Administrative Technician that can be used across departments at City Hall.

Culture

This move helps to continue the progression towards intradepartmental collaboration, promoting greater service options at a single location within City Hall for residents and allowing the City’s permitting staff to serve residents for both planning and building needs at one time.

Next Steps

- **Important:** Merge Building into the Community Development Department
- **Important:** Determine the role of 0.5 FTE support for the Building Official
- **Beneficial:** Upon natural attrition, reclassify the role to .5 FTE Permit Technician or Administrative Technician (no added cost)
- **Important:** Integrate services with the permit service in the Community Development Department and develop processes and programs to integrate Fire Inspection with the City’s annexed services and enforcement with the Police Department or within the Community Development Department

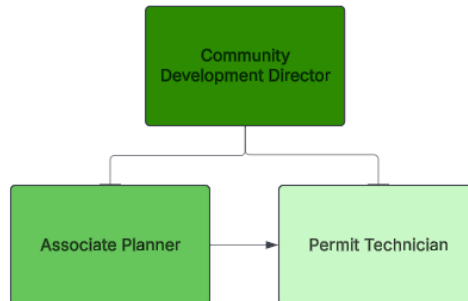
Department Description

The City's former Planning Department was retitled to the Community Development Department in 2024, and the City's economic development functions, formerly managed by Administration, were merged within the Department. The Department is responsible for all current and forward planning and permitting activities for the City, including maintaining the City's zoning codes and performing updates to the General Plan, which includes the City's Housing Element. The Department also oversees and administers the Economic Development activities for the City.

Background

Historically, the City has separate Planning and Building Departments. Code Enforcement inspections were completed by the Fire Chief and Building consultant, enforcement and citation activities by the Police Department, and Economic Development activities were functions of Administration through the Office of the City Manager. In 2019, the City's Planning Department consisted of a Planning Director and an Assistant Planner. Prior to the 2022 study, the Assistant Planner was reclassified to Associate Planner, and the 2022 study recommended the addition of a Planning Permit Technician, reclassification of the Associate Planner to a Senior Planner, and the merger of planning and building into a single department, the Community Development Department. Today we have a vibrant Community Development Department (CDD) with Planning and Economic Development services merged under one director. Ideally, the co-location of services to improve oversight and community access will continue with the eventual location of the Building under CDD.

Current State



A typical Community Development Department at most comparable entities includes Planning and Building or Development activities and sometimes Code Enforcement. Some Community Development Departments collocate with Engineering to provide cohesive, one-stop services for residents for all forms of permitting. The City's Community Development Department consists of a Director, an Associate Planner, and a vacant Planning Permit Technician classification. It provides current and forward or long-range planning, as well as economic development services for the City and community.

The 2022 Study mentioned that the department had also assumed 'non-traditional' planning roles such as park planning projects and staffing the Public Art Committee. If these are still located within the department, they may be additional considerations when allocating staffing.

The Planning Permit Technician position was filled, and the incumbent provided service to the Planning Department and served as the City's first contact for visitors at the public counter in City Hall. The Planning Permit Technician position is currently vacant, which provides a unique opportunity to review the role of permitting across the City in light of the new department title and potential functions.

With the Planning Technician role vacant, the department relies on the Director and Associate Planner who normally must spend their time reviewing drawings, sketches, blueprints, and plan documents for permit

applications, assessing fees, processing variance requests, amending portions of the City's codes and General Plan, and leaving the office to make project site visits and meet with developers, contractors, residents, business owners, and architects. Remaining in City Hall to greet visitors reduces their productivity and effectiveness and reduces service to permit applications and the advancement of forward planning projects such as plan updates.

The 2022 Study recommended the consolidation of the Departments of Building and Planning and the reclassification of the Associate Planner to Senior Planner, both of which were not completed. However, a Community Development Department has been established, and there are still plans to co-locate Building into the new Community Development Department.

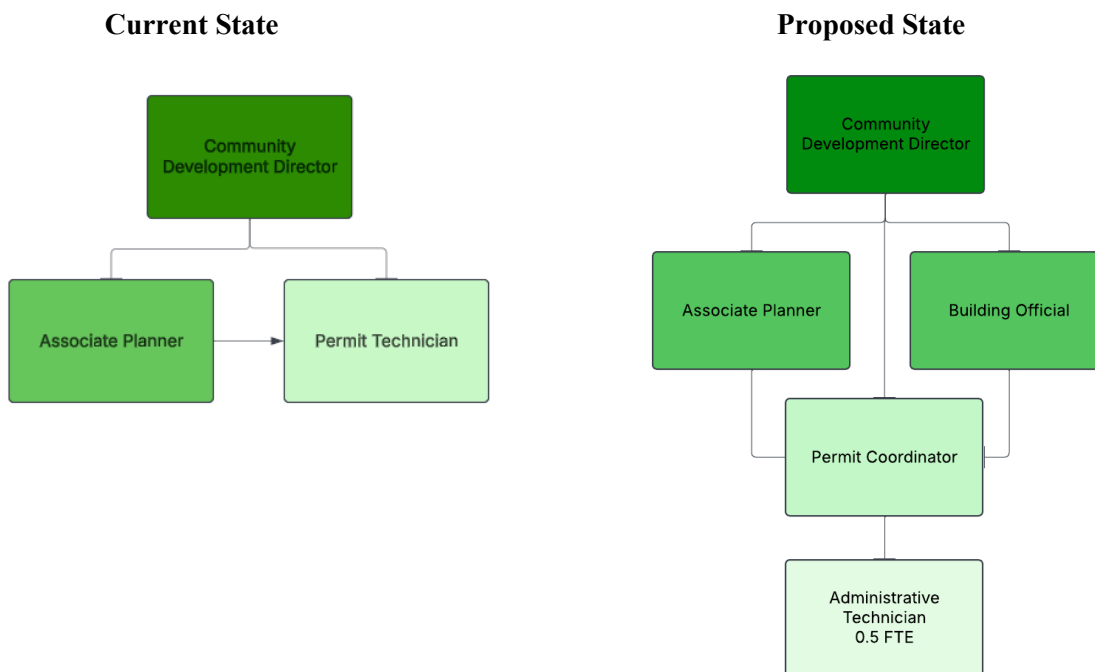
Current Staffing Challenges

The vacancy in the Planning Permit Technician position provides a unique opportunity to rethink the community services offered by the City and economies that may be availed and it also becomes part of a staffing challenge limiting the work that can be completed by the two higher-level positions when they are responding to calls, emails, and visitors seeking permitting services, requesting information, or lodging complaints. Another consideration that adds to the staffing challenge is the limited space in City Hall and the fact that the single public counter also serves City Administration and the Finance Department for utility billing.

Building permitting is performed by a .5 FTE housed in the Fire Department, and Engineering and Event Permitting is performed by a management analyst and part-time administrative assistant in Public Works. This separation of permitting duties at multiple locations can promote confusion and add to inefficiencies of services if the processes are not clearly defined and communicated across City departments and for the public.

The lack of support at the customer-facing level of the Department adds strain to a new Director and experienced Associate Planner related to streamlining permitting and advancing projects. The constant shuffling of projects is required to meet deadlines. Additionally, when staff are on leave, a backlog occurs or grows as there is no one to perform the absent employee's duties.

Proposed Options



Creating a general Permit Technician or Permitting Coordinator to accept permit applications for all three functions, complete over-the-counter permitting (trees, signs, and events), and then work with Building, Engineering, and Planning for technical support and permitting on more complex permit applications may be beneficial to residents, other Community Development staff, and the City Departments.

As time goes on and more functions are co-located under the umbrella of Community Development, add a classification of Permit Coordinator, ideally filled from within by the Permit Technician, and support the role with a part-time admin or permitting support role to cover building, planning, event, and possibly support for engineering permits, creating a one-stop permitting center for the public. In the case of engineering permits, the Engineering Technician could meet with the Permit Coordinator at least once weekly to help review the permit application packets and advance applications.

Revisiting the structure in six months to see how the new roles and structure are working is also advisable.

Culture

The Community Development Department is newly established with a Director who joined the City in January 2025, a vacant permitting position, and a key longer term employee, the Associate Planner. The Department has an opportunity to leverage fresh perspectives with the tried and true practices to assess, retain current, and establish new systems and processes, contributing to cultural change already begun throughout the organization.

Next Steps

- **Critical:** In the short term, fill the Permit Technician classification
- **Important:** Transfer 0.5 FTE Sr. Admin Assistant and reclassify to Permit Technician or Administrative Technician.
- **Beneficial:** In the longer term, develop a Permit Coordinator classification to oversee permitting for multiple service functions

Public Works

Department Description

The Public Works Department is responsible for overseeing the distribution and treatment of drinking water and the collection of wastewater from City residences and businesses; stormwater collection throughout the City; building and facility maintenance; the repair and maintenance of City streets, trees, parks, pool, and landscapes; the cleanup of trash and vandalism; special event set-up and tear-down; camp and clean-up for matters related to the unhoused; and some conservation and waste reduction programs.

Background

At the time of the 2022 study, the Public Works Department was led by a Public Works Superintendent who was not an engineer. Engineering was a separate department led by an engineering manager. Upon the retirement of the Engineering Director, the City contracted with a consultant to provide engineering services. The Consultant worked with the management analyst in Public Works to provide permitting and plan check services. In 2024, when the Public Works Superintendent gave notice of his impending retirement, the City moved to create a classification of Public Works Director/City Engineer and recruit for the position.

The City has historically had separate Public Works and Engineering Departments. The 2022 staffing study recommended a combined Public Works Department that included the engineering functions of the City. In January of 2025, engineering functions were incorporated into the Public Works Department, and a Public Works Director/City Engineer began work on January 13, 2025, to oversee the combined functions.

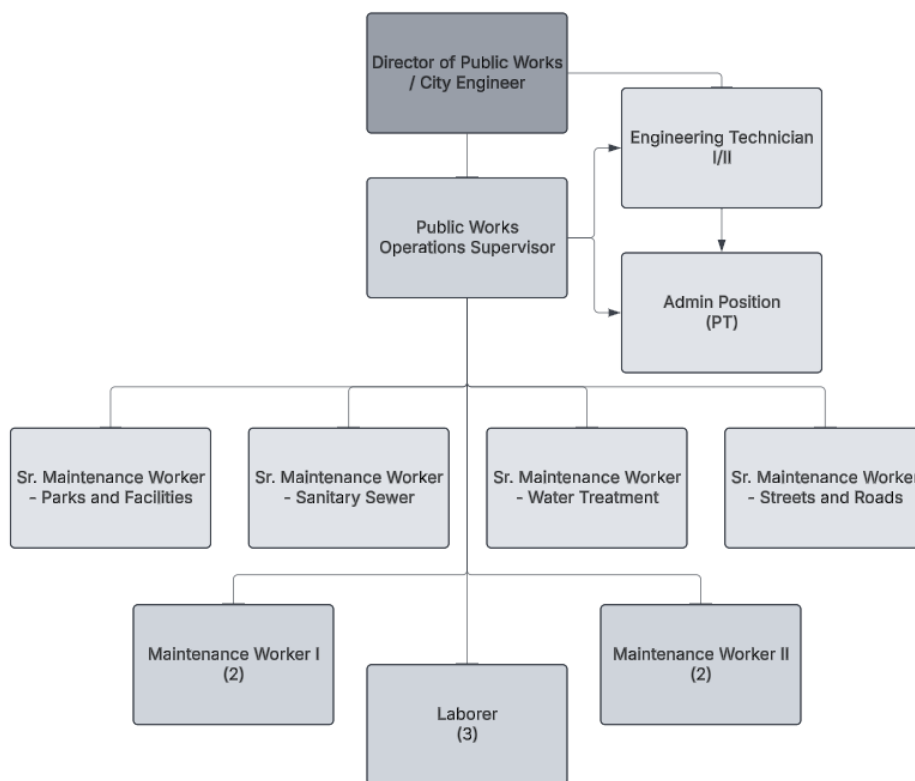
The 2022 Study recommended near-term changes to the Department including adding a Permit Technician (occurred but now reclassified to Engineering Technician), retaining the Administrative Assistant (this was done), retitling of maintenance classifications (occurred in 2023 and further recommendations have been made by the recent class and comp study), and adding 2.0 FTE maintenance staff positions (not completed).

Current Staffing Challenges

In budget discussions and through conversations with Department staff, the City has expressed a backlog of

deferred maintenance and infrastructure projects that must be completed to hold asset depreciation at bay for the City’s much-needed public assets. Already aging sewer and water systems and the condition of City parks are strained by needed repairs and upgrades. In conversations with Public Works staff, we heard how simply maintaining the day-to-day activities to keep the parks, pools, facilities, and utilities open and running takes up every moment of the current staff’s time. When large projects come up (e.g., paving or infrastructure replacement, the rest of the City projects are shut down to allow sufficient bodies to perform the large project timely, safely, and compliantly.) Additionally, the department mentioned that they are not able to schedule routine maintenance for facilities with the current staffing model and are only addressing crises as they occur. Working through deferred maintenance lists and issues occurs on a crisis-by-crisis basis as matters become critical or significantly more urgent. In the 2022 study, and in discussions related to this 2025 Study, Public Works staff asked for two more maintenance workers and, in conversations related to this study, an upgrade to the Laborer positions from Laborer to a level of the Maintenance Worker classification. Staff hopes to address the need for improved street maintenance and equipment replacement and address some deferred maintenance and repairs through additional staff resources. Another staffing area of concern mentioned by staff over the last few months is the need for qualified on-call staff who are certified in water and wastewater to respond to calls who can open a water valve or work on a sanitary sewer system.

Current State



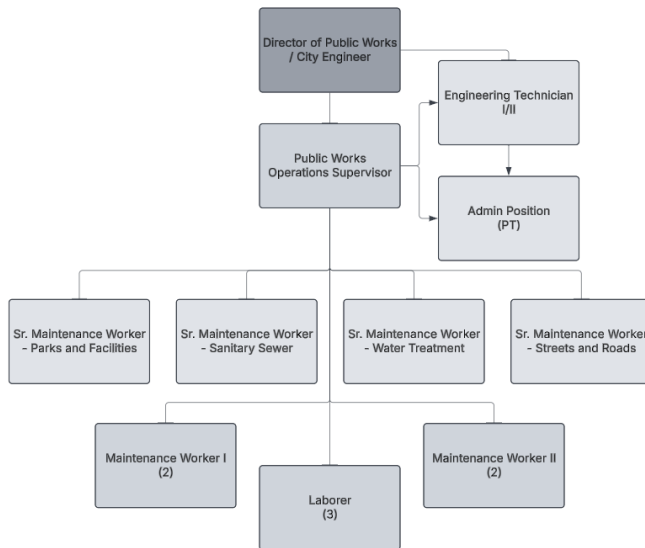
The current classification and compensation study recently conducted addressed the titles of the four Senior Maintenance Worker positions in the City. The recommendation is to combine the three roles under one job classification, specifying duties and requirements for each assignment. We support this recommendation and have incorporated it into the proposed options in this report. We further recommend utilizing a pool of Maintenance Worker Assistants and Maintenance Worker I’s and II’s that are assigned to the day’s work through a system of work orders and not dedicated teams of individuals to provide more flexibility to the Department. Currently, the department has relatively dedicated teams of one, two, or three on a crew under a Senior Maintenance Worker. This is functionally effective and allows teams to become comfortable working with each other, but can leave other work crews, duties, and areas short of sufficient support and may not utilize all workers at their peak capacity.

Another area of mention was that Laborers are not qualified to rotate on call due to the certifications required to

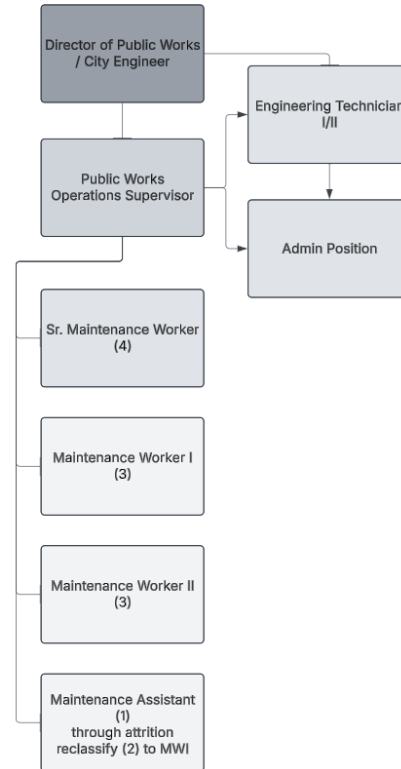
work with the pool and water and wastewater systems. Laborer is also an outdated classification for a municipality. The recent classification and compensation study retitles the Laborers as Maintenance Assistants. Agenda Item Number: 8

Proposed Options

Current State



Proposed State



Implementing a single Senior Maintenance Worker classification and minimum qualifications and certifications by assignment while retaining the bargained certification pay incentive to create opportunities and encouragement for cross-training will improve succession planning at the lead level in the organization.

Adding 2.0 FTE Maintenance Workers at the I and II levels and having the flexibility to assign crew members at the appropriate class level to the days or weeks work orders will increase agility and flexibility for staffing across functional areas of the organization and allow for planned focus on deferred and preventative maintenance, repairs, and replacements that eventually may reduce the number of crises that must be attended to and the amount of deferred infrastructure, facility, and equipment currently in the City.

The cost of adding 2.0 FTE Maintenance worker is approximately \$261,288 (\$137,520 MWII and \$123,768 MWI at top monthly pay and family health care.) Additionally, we recommend accepting the recent class and comp recommendation to retitle Laborer to Maintenance Assistant. Furthermore, because the classification has limited ability to assist with maintenance projects due to skill level and the body of lower-level work is limited to parks and custodial and the higher level body of repair and maintenance work for facilities and utilities is constant, we recommend the City consider reclassifying 2.0 FTE Maintenance Assistance to Maintenance Worker I. This would cost the City \$45,880 annually (\$22,940 per reclassification) and provide priceless benefits in the ability of the Department to reduce deferred maintenance, repair, and replacement projects and minimize critical failures.

We further recommend City staff consider having the admin position or engineering technician meet at City Hall one or two half-days a week or at some other schedule that is appropriate to work with the permitting desk on coordinating engineering permit applications, which may help to streamline the application process and increase communication for scheduling inspections and installations across departments.

Revisiting the structure in six months to see how the new roles and structure are working is also advisable.

The Public Works Department recently hired a new Director of Public Works and Engineering who joined the City in January 2025. This, along with the recommended position adjustment of the Assistant Superintendent of Public Works to Public Works Operations Supervisor, presents opportunity to leverage fresh perspectives with the tried and true practices to assess, retain current, and establish new systems and processes, contributing to cultural change already begun throughout the organization.. These changes, along with the consideration of added positions from the recent class and compensation study, will create space to rebuild preventative elements into the culture.

Next Steps

- **Important:** Implement the recommendations in the class and comp study to retitle Asst PW Director to PW Operations Supervisor and Retitle and revise all Senior Maintenance Worker classifications for consistency, and Retitle the Laborer classifications to Maintenance Assistant
- **Important:** Add two allocations of Maintenance Worker I/II
- **Critical:** Reclassify 2 FTE Maintenance Assistants to Maintenance Worker I

Police Department

Department Description

The Police Department provides a full complement of public safety services to the community. The department is organized into three divisions – Administration, Operations, and Support Services. The Police Department is responsible for public safety, code enforcement, parking enforcement, animal control, dispatch, general assistance calls, investigations, collection of evidence, chain of custody, secure administration of the evidence room, community information, public safety education, and engagement.

Background

Police department staffing has remained effectively unchanged since 2017. While an additional officer position was added, it has been frozen and never filled, leaving the department with 8 (not 9) Police Officers. Additionally, while the Department was authorized to bring on per diem Dispatchers to cover unfilled shifts, ideally reducing overtime and fatigue, per diem employees typically do not want to work on night, evening, and holiday shifts, which are of the greatest demand. Minimum staffing remains unchanged at 2.0 FTE for patrol and 1.0 FTE for dispatch. Shortfalls in staffing due to leaves, vacancies, injuries, and required training require a need to mandate overtime to fill vacant shifts in both patrol and dispatch. Mandating overtime contributes to staff fatigue, malaise, burnout, and impedes quality community services, can affect the safety of personnel, and increases potential injuries and illnesses.

The Police Department is the only city department other than the Office of the City Manager and City Clerk that has never been afforded administrative support for the Chief or Captain.

Police patrol and dispatch employees serve all members of our community, including the most vulnerable, who may be struggling with addictions, mental health, or other health issues or are unhoused, abused, or abandoned. They also support our businesses and schools with support for growing youth.

The 2022 Study recommended the Department reclassify the Police Technician to Police Evidence Technician (completed), Add 2.0 FTE Police Officers and 1.0 FTE Dispatcher (mid-term, not completed), add 1.0 FTE Management Analyst, 1.0 FTE Sergeant, and a School Resource Officer.

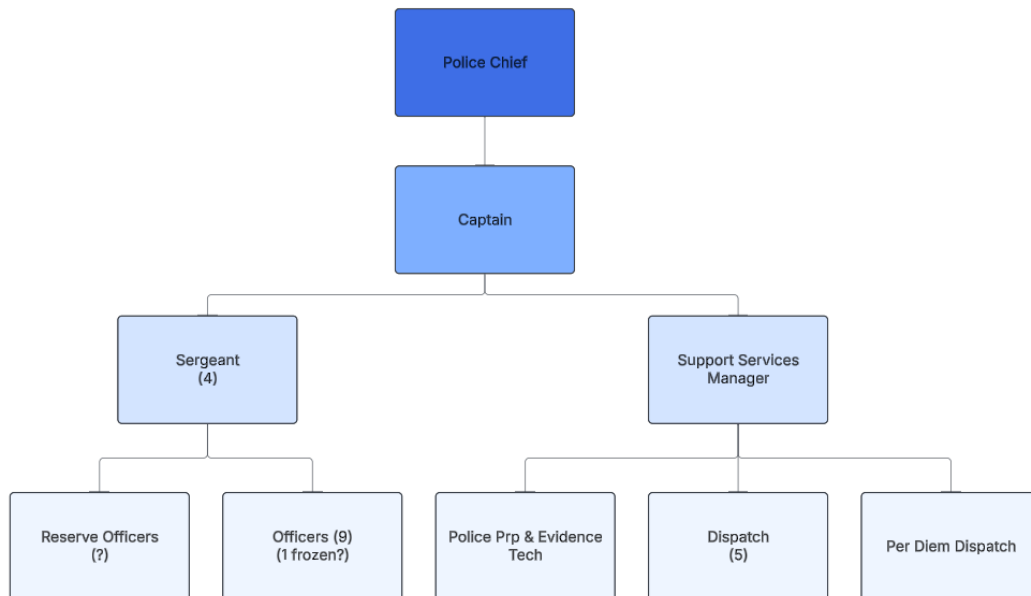
Current Staffing Challenges

With the retirement of Chief Ron Nelson in December of 2024, the Police Department will soon have a new Chief of Police. Recently, the Department lost qualified Police Officers to neighboring cities paying higher salaries, and the Department has at least one other officer in the background check for a neighboring city. This has necessitated constant recruitment efforts. The recruitment efforts combined with lengthy testing, peace

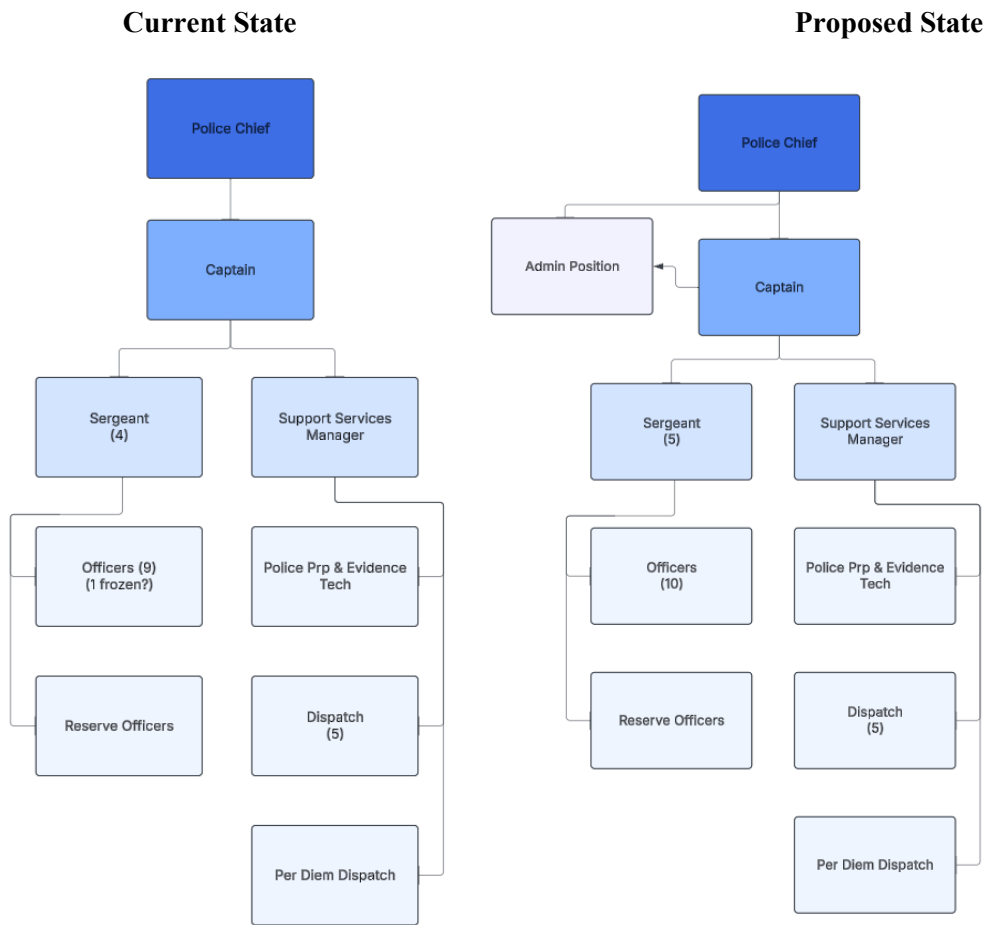
officer background, and field training protocols mean each new officer has approximately 18 months from recruitment to serving on their own with the department, which translates into a cost of up to \$25,000 per officer to recruit.

The Police Records and Support Services Supervisor became vacant on 12/3/2024, and as every vacancy is an opportunity to review department operational needs to see if how services are delivered has changed or if other needs have arisen, staff met with the Department and learned about new Department needs. Staff then met and conferred with the labor organization regarding the position. The current classification was developed in 2022, and the supervision of dispatch personnel was removed from its oversight at that time. The Department expressed an immediate need for oversight and supervision of personnel performing dispatch, records, and property and evidence section work. Currently, the Captain is performing oversight of patrol and all support services, including dispatch, records, and property and evidence which is not sustainable. Staffing is lean due to recent voluntary separations by employees who found higher-paying work in neighboring communities. Reasonable span of control and proper and effective supervision and support can enhance the experience and, thereby, the retention of staff in the department. Recombining the role of supervision of communications/dispatch with the Police Administrator role of the Records and Support Services Supervisor and retitling the role of to Police Support Services Manager to more clearly encompass all support services, provides needed oversight, support, and supervision for the communications/dispatch, records, communications, and property and evidence sections of the department.

Current State



Today, the number of filled police officer classifications is down to six positions, lower than minimum staffing. To fully cover the 24-hour, 7-day-a-week schedules with an ideal minimum staffing of one officer and one Sergeant, the department requires 8 officers and one or two additional positions to cover injuries, illnesses, and vacations. Additionally, the Department’s Support Services Manager position is vacant, causing the Captain and Chief to oversee dispatch, parking enforcement, property and evidence, and all Public Records Act requests and requests for court documents and information with no additional administrative support for the Chief or Captain to make copies, draft, edit, and proof



The lack of administrative support for Police command positions means that the highest-paid officials in the Department are pulled away from community and public safety priorities to perform the lowest level of work. Currently, the Department has two officers in background and another closely behind to fill two current vacancies, and one position in background for another agency and anticipated to vacate. This should fill the eight current allocations. One Police Officer allocation is currently frozen. We recommend the City consider unfreezing that allocation and adding another officer allocation, a sergeant allocation to cover leaves and injuries, and provide and coordinate training, and an administrative position to support the Chief, Captain, and Support Services Supervisor.

The cost of adding one Police Officer (\$126,364), one Sergeant (\$147,637), and one Administrative Technician (\$114,125) is anticipated to be just under \$390,000. Some of the costs should be offset by reduced mandated overtime.

The lack of adequate supervision over dispatch by a qualified dispatch manager means that there is no coverage, relief, or point of escalation for the solo dispatch operator in the Department. This creates a very stressful situation for dispatch and could have an effect on service delivery or call response times. Elevating the position to support both the Support Services Division and the Dispatch operations provided needed oversight, training, and support for the Police Community Services and Evidence Technician and Dispatchers. The cost of upgrading this position is approximately (\$13,284).

The Police Department will have a new Police Chief who will be joining the City in February 2025. This a great opportunity to build on the existing culture for success. This, along with the consideration of suggestions by the recent class and compensation study, will solidify and improve the existing team alignment, allowing cohesive and collaborative efforts to sustain and grow while continuing to develop and build on the current department culture. These adjustments will positively contribute to the overall success of the Police function.

Next Steps

- **Critical:** Unfreeze 1.0 FTE Police Officer, recruit for and fill
- **Critical:** Reclassify the Records and Support Service Supervisor to Support Service Manager and approve related specification and range (cost approx. \$13,284/year.)
- **Important:** Add 1.0 FTE Police Officer, Sergeant, and a new classification of Administrative Technician
- **Important:** Recruit for and fill the added positions

Overall City Culture

Organizational culture is a complex topic, even for small organizations. While this study offers some thoughts on the topic, it is primarily about staffing levels and needs in the organization. We have mentioned in the study the following cultural elements that are already either being addressed by the City Manager or Department Heads or will begin to be addressed by implementation of elements of the recent class and comp study or this staffing study:

- the development of shared systems and practices, encouraging feedback, and imparting accountability in ownership of projects
- using creative and market responsive recruitment and retention strategies to improve department stability
- Transferring or co-locating positions and services to increase intradepartmental collaboration focused on improved internal and external communication and service delivery
- leverage fresh perspectives with the tried and true practices to assess, retain current, and establish new systems and processes, contributing to cultural change already begun throughout the organization
- implementing classification and compensation changes to solidify and improve the existing team alignment, allowing cohesive and collaborative efforts to sustain and grow while continuing to develop and build on the current department culture

And while changes in leadership among Department Heads create opportunities for cultural change, they alone are insufficient to promote substantive change. Organizational cultures are affected by and made up of many things, including, among many other things, an organization’s practices and view on values, leadership, communication, recognition, professional development, the organization’s physical environment, hiring and onboarding practices, individual and collective wellbeing, how the organization exercises acceptance and inclusion, accessibility to programs and services, social connection, and systems and processes.

In the introduction, we explained that while the staffing study is primarily about staffing levels and the needs of the organization, achieving optimal staffing will rely on many factors and that the needs of the organization include the needs of the human capital within it. Therefore, we present areas of culture functional leaders mentioned they would like to participate in improving as part of the staffing study interviews. These areas are presented in no particular order.:

- Functional silos
- Poor teamwork across departments
- Limited information, access, and training as a new employee
- Lack of accountability
- Unrealistic expectations
- Absence of work/life balance
- Blurred boundaries
- Dysfunctional - where teams get mired in pettiness or personal grievances, losing time and revenue
- High turnover
- No space for strategic forethought
- A lack of structured alignment
- A lack of direction and prioritization
- Clearly defined roles and duties
- A culture of blame
- A lack of understanding of purpose
- Reactive versus collaborative, sometimes adversarial
- Poor or no communication

The brief cultural elements in this report, along with a cohesive system of cultural change practices may begin to shift the some of these cultural elements. Through the support of the City Council and City manager and working together, increased interdepartmental collaboration, delegation, empowerment, open and honest communications, commitment, and building vulnerable trust, the City can address and improve many if not all of the elements mentioned above.

When funding and time allows, Muchmore Than Consulting (MTC) recommends the City issue an RFP for leadership sessions off and on-site to help develop a shared language among City staff around culture and accountability, develop employee leaders and bench strength, and further explore engagement, commitment, productive conflict, and peer-to-peer accountability. To be effective, the work will need to be replicated throughout the organization, supported by the City Council and by supervisors and managers, incorporated into daily routines and mannerisms, and revisited periodically.

Appendix A

Table of staffing allocation by City

Table of staffing allocation by City

City	Utilities	Total FTE	Staffing in Admin Services or Finance
Calistoga	Water, Wastewater (2 treatment plants)	7 FTE	1 FTE Administrative Services Director, 1 FTE Deputy Finance Director, 4 FTE Administrative Services Technicians, and 1 FTE Senior Accounting Assistant
Sonoma	Water	4 FTE	1 FTE Finance Director, 1 Accountant, 2 Accounting Technicians
Windsor	Water, Wastewater (Treatment Plant)	5 FTE (plant has its own finance)	Positions are split between their General and Enterprise Funds but essentially there is 1.0 FTE Admin Serv Dir, 1.0 FTE Finance and Accounting Manager, 1.0 FTE Accountant, 1.0 FTE Management Analyst, and .5 FTE Accounting Tech, .5 FTE Accounting Assistant
Petaluma	Water (treatment plant)	17 FTE	Deputy CM – Dir of Finance, 1 FTE Asst Dir of Finance, 1 Sr. Accountant, 2 Accountant, 1 Finance Analyst, 1 Mgt Analyst, 6 Acctg Asst, 1 Acctg Tech, 1 Finance and Acctg Mgr, 1 Revenue Mgr, 1 Office Asst (enterprise fund)
Healdsburg	Electric, water, wastewater, drainage (treatment plants)	10 FTE	1 Finance Director, 1 Finance Manager, 1 Accounting Manager, 1 Accountant, 1 Payroll Technician, 1 Accounting Technician, 1 Sr. Accounting Assistant, 3 Accounting Assistant II
Cloverdale	Water, sewer (water treatment plant)	6 FTE	1 Finance Director, 1 Finance and HR Manager, 1 City Treasurer, 1 Accounting Technician, 1 Accounting Assistant II, 1 Office Specialist.

Appendix B

Table of Recommendations by Department

Department	2022 Study Suggestions	Current Status of 2022 Study Suggestions	2025 Study Suggestions
City Administration <i>Office of City Manager</i> <i>Office of City Clerk</i>	1) Add a 1.0 FTE support position for the City Clerk/Assistant City Manager 2) Add a 1.0 FTE administrative support position to provide coverage to the public counter in City Hall 3) Add a 1.0 FTE Analyst to the City Manager's Office 4) Separate the functions of the City Manager and City Attorney 5) Separate the functions of the Assistant City Manager and City Clerk	Completed: 4) Separate the Functions of the City Manager & City Attorney Not Completed: 1) Add 1.0 FTE support position for Assistant City Manager / City Clerk 2) Add 1.0 FTE Admin support position - coverage for City Hall counter 3) Add 1.0 FTE Analyst to the City Manager 5) Separate the functions of the Assistant City Manager and City Clerk	Critical: * 1.0 FTE Either New Administrative Technician (\$131,100) or Management Analyst- (\$153,110) Beneficial: * Separate Assistant City Manager & City Clerk (\$136,044) * Develop a plan to implement cross-training/Admin Positions
Administrative Services	1) Reclassify the Junior Accountant position as Accounting Technician 2) Add a 1.0 FTE Accounting Manager 3) Utilize an Intern for special projects	Completed: Junior Accountant reclassified as Accountant/Analyst Utilize an intern for Special Projects Not Completed: Add 1.0 FTE Accounting Manager	Critical: * Adopt a job classification for Accounting Assistant III (\$0) * Add 1.0 FTE Accounting Technician II to the department allocation schedule (\$155,880) * Develop two employment lists: Accountant, Accounting Technician (\$0, included in HR agreement) Important: * Develop Accounting Assistant III Employment List (\$0)
Building Department	Merge to Planning	Not Completed: Merge Building into Planning	Important: Merge Building into Community Development Beneficial: Transfer .5 FTE Sr. Admin (\$0) Assistant to Planning and reclassify to Permit tech or Administrative Tech (\$0)
Community Development Department <i>formerly Planning Department</i>	1) Reclassify the Senior Administrative Assistant to a Planning Technician 2) Reclassify the Associate Planner to a Senior Planner - retain both classifications, filling only one classification title at a time (allows training and career development opportunities) 3) Merge Building and Planning into one department	Completed: Reclassify the Sr. Admin Assistant to a Planning Technician Not Completed: Reclassify the Associate Planner to Senior Planner Merge Building and Planning into one department	Critical: * Fill the 1.0 FTE Permit Tech position Important: * Transfer Building 0.5 FTE and Reclassify to Admin Tech(\$3,105) Beneficial: * Reclassify Permit Technician to a Permitting Coordinator Classification if Engineering Permits co-locate as well (\$10,350) * Develop an intradepartmental communication plan between Engineering Tech and Permit Coordinator to help review the permit application packets and advance applications (\$0)
Public Works	1) Add a 1.0 FTE Permit Technician 2) Retain the part-time Administrative Assistant 3) Retitle Maintenance classification titles 4) Add 2.0 FTE maintenance staff to address deferred mandated maintenance 5) Reclassify Public Works Superintendent to Public Works Director and City Engineer, merge Public Works and Engineering	Completed: Add 1.0 FTE Permit Technician Retain the Part-time Administrative Assistant position Retitle Maintenance Classifications Reclassify PW Superintendent to Public Works Director/City Engineer Merge Public Works and Engineering Not Completed: Add 2.0 FTE Maintenance staff to address deferred mandated maintenance	Critical: * Approve class and comp recommendations to retitle Asst PW * Through attrition reclassify 2.0 FTE Maintenance Asst allocations to MW I (\$22,340), Add 1.0 FTE MW II (\$123,180) Important: * Add 1MW II classifications (\$123,180)
Police Department	1) Reclassify the Police Technician to Police Evidence Technician 2) Add 1.0 - 2.0 FTE Police Officers and 1.0 FTE Dispatcher 3) Add 1.0 FTE Management Analyst to support the Chief and other management staff 4) Add a 1.0 FTE Sergeant 5) Add a School Resource Officer at 0.5 or greater FTE	Completed: 1) Reclassify the Police Technician to Police Evidence Technician Not Completed: 2) Add 1.0 - 2.0 FTE Police Officers and 1.0 FTE Dispatcher 3) Add 1.0 FTE Management Analyst to support the Chief, Mgt Staff 4) Add 1.0 FTE Sergeant 5) Add a School Resource Officer at 0.5 or greater FTE	Critical: * Unfreeze 9th Police Officer Important: * Add 1.0 FTE Officer (\$126,364) * Add 1.0 FTE Sergeant (\$146,637) * Add 1.0 FTE Administrative Tech (\$131,100)

Table of Administrative Classifications for City Administration

Class Title	Approx. Total Annual Comp	Relative Skill Sets
Administrative Technician	\$114,126	Para-professional (interpret, analyze, determine compliance, accept info and materials, prepare and post documentation); assist professional staff; clerk meetings, process notices, and permits, perform utility billing and transactional HR functions/payroll entry, administer projects; invoice, create receipts; prepare, implement, recommend procedural modifications.
Management Analyst I	\$144,636	Professional level (assist budget preparation, monitor budget daily, prepare grant proposals, monitor active grants, respond to public and staff complaints or info requests, highly responsible analytical support, participate and assist community events, city staff meetings and training, volunteer activities, liaison to outside agencies, prepare and administer contracts, prepare and present staff reports, office management, receive and prepare research
Management Analyst II	\$159,100	Advanced Professional level – independently and with greater autonomy and complexity (assist budget preparation, monitor budget daily, prepare grant proposals, monitor active grants, respond to public and staff complaints or info requests, provide highly responsible analytical support, participate and assist community events, city staff meetings, and training, prepare and administer contracts, volunteer activities, liaison to outside agencies, prepare and present staff reports, office management, receive and prepare research



Citywide Staffing Study 2025

Sebastopol City Council
February 18, 2025
Item 8

Agenda

- What, Why, How
- Department Highlights
- Takeaways

What, Why, How

- 2022 Staffing Study –
 - 16 new FTEs,
 - over 36 mos

What happened
2022 - 2025?
1 FTE was added

- 2025 Staffing Study –
 - 3 positions now
 - 4 positions later

City Administration Recommendations

Critical:

*1.0 FTE Analyst or Technician to provide back up support for public meetings and analysis.

Beneficial:

* Separate Assistant City Manager & City Clerk upon natural attrition *
Develop a plan to implement cross-training/Admin Positions

Administrative Services Recommendations

Critical:

- *Add 1.0 FTE Accounting Technician II to the department allocation schedule
- *Adopt a job classification for Accounting Assistant I/II
- *Develop two employment lists: Accountant, Accounting Technician
- *Develop an Accounting Assistant I/II Employment List

Community Development Recommendations

Includes Building

Critical:

- *Fill the 1.0 FTE Permit Tech position

Important:

- *Transfer Building 0.5 FTE and Reclassify to Admin Tech
- *Merge Building services into Community Development

Beneficial:

- *Reclassify Permit Technician to a Permitting Coordinator Classification if Engineering Permits co-locate as well
- *Develop an intradepartmental communication plan between Engineering Tech and Permit Coordinator to help review the permit application packets and advance applications

Public Works / Engineering Recommendations

Critical:

- *Approve class and comp recommendations to retitle Asst PW
- *Through attrition reclassify 2.0 FTE Maintenance Assistant allocations to Maintenance Worker I
- *Add 1.0 FTE Maintenance Worker II

Important:

- *Add 1 Maintenance Worker II classification
- *Collaborate with the Community Development Department for permitting

Police Department Recommendations

Critical:

- *Unfreeze 9th Police Officer

Important:

- *Add 1.0 FTE Officer

- *Add 1.0 FTE Sergeant

- * Add 1.0 FTE Administrative Technician

Thank
you