

INSPECTION SERVICES

FUND NO. 017

ACCOUNT NO. 0805

DESCRIPTION

As a member of the Development Services Department, the Inspection Services Division is responsible for plan review and inspection of all construction, issuance of construction permits, and inspection of all public developments within the City of Merced. The Inspection Services Division ensures compliance with federal, state and local laws, as well as the municipal codes regulating the design, construction, material standards, intended use and occupancy, locations, and maintenance of structures. The objective is to provide minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property, and the public welfare, while providing the highest level of customer service possible. Inspection of possible violations of these laws and codes are also performed when requested by other agencies, other city departments, or when the general public files an inquiry. Inspection Services is also responsible for compliance with special architectural, landscaping, or sign conditions required by the City Council, state, local law or various City Commissions. Being part of Development Services One-Stop Shop Permit Processing Center has enhanced ability to provide customer service.

MISSION

Inspection Services' mission is to provide the highest level of service in meeting the customer's needs and maintaining standards to safeguard life, health, property, and the public welfare within the City of Merced.

GOALS

- ◇ Strive for the highest level of customer service.
- ◇ Increase usage and knowledge of the computer systems to aid in ability to utilize information and issue building permits.
- ◇ Maintain active involvement in technical and interpersonal training that will enhance Inspection Services staff's expertise.
- ◇ Maintain an open line of communication with other departments.
- ◇ Continue to review staffing to maintain quality of plan reviews and inspections performed.
- ◇ Create a "safe" work environment for "thinking out of the box".
- ◇ Provide an open environment for customer questions meeting or exceeding their expectations.

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OBJECTIVES

1. Update procedural manuals annually to insure all positions within Inspection Services are expressed accurately. (CORE)
2. Attain and /or review all applicable staff certifications as mandated by State regulations. (CORE)
3. Work with Information Services and the Technology Committee to develop an automated inspection request line. Customers may call in inspections either by voice actuation (IVR) or numeric input system into our HTE program
4. Work with Information Services and the Web Site Committee to develop the system by which we can issue over-the-counter permits through the Internet and City web site. (CORE)
5. Maintain a training schedule for Inspection Services personnel to provide updates on building, fire, plumbing, mechanical, electrical codes and City Standards to maintain consistent inspection procedures. (CORE)
6. Continue to seek technical/computer alternatives to enhance service to customers

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS/INDICATORS

Ongoing process to update procedural manual as technology change mandates.

Ongoing program. Will be evaluated on a quarterly basis by review of requirements and certifications obtained.

Gather information and submit to I.S. and Technology Committee in September 2004. Have full functioning model up and running by March 2005. Full implementation by June 2005.

Gather information for Web Site committee and I.S. and submit to them by December 2004. Have functioning model up and running by June 2005.

Review quarterly and create a yearly training schedule by September 2004

Ongoing process. Continuous evaluation.

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2004-2005 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

2003-2004 has been an extremely active year for the Inspection Services Department. Construction will continue the same growth pattern for the next several years. We have issued a record 2,565 building permits, along with almost 2,683 building permits applied for. We issued 941 single-family dwelling permits which set another record for SFD permits issued. We should, by the end of the fiscal year, issue building permits for 65 +/- multi family dwellings representing 550 + apartment units. We have performed 22,892 building inspections, which is a 35+% increase over last year. We have provided inspections for installations of infrastructure in 30+ subdivisions and their phases. Some major projects completed this year are Sky View Industrial Park, El Portal Plaza North (professional office), Merced Market Place (Lowe's, Linen & Things, Pier 1 Imports, Barnes & Noble, Applebee's) and Yosemite Investments Professional Office Complex representing approximately 650,000 + square feet of commercial space. We have broken ground on another major commercial project The Promenade.

In the past twelve months, we have completed the inspection of over fifteen million dollars of capital improvements. Some projects include Airport Pavement Rehabilitation, Applegate Zoo Restrooms, Rahilly Park Frontage & Playground Improvements, Water & Sewer Extensions to the U.C. Merced Campus site, Replace Water Services, and Fire Department Training Tower.

We are continuing to modify and improve on our plan review process. We are actively looking at technology to enhance our inspection procedure to aid us in being more proficient and productive.

During FY 03-04 Council approved an additional Building Inspector and two Plans Examiners. The Supervising Plans Examiner position was also created to enhance and improve the plan review process. The Department Head Request included one Engineering Technician, one Plans Examiner, and one Building Inspector, not included in the City Manager Recommendation at this time.