

Permits and Inspections Dept. 2017 Business Plan



Our Values

Champion Employees

Honest Communication

Accountability

Multicultural

People First

Superior Service



CITY OF SUGAR LAND

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BUSINESS PLANNING

The Business Planning Process

Business planning for Fiscal Year 2017 actually began at the start of Fiscal Year 2016. In November Departments create a draft of their business plan. Working with the Budget Office, Departments update the first draft of the plan for submission to the Executive Team in January. Updates are made according to feedback from the Executive Team and business plans are finalized by the end of February.

What is a Business Plan?

A SERVICE CONTRACT

A business plan...

- Illustrates in detail *what* services the City provides.
- Illustrates *how* the City provides those services.
- Service Commitments allow the City to hold itself accountable for maintaining high levels of service throughout the City.

A PLANNING DOCUMENT

A business plan is a comprehensive planning document developed annually by every Office and Department. A business plan...

- Illustrates the connection between operational services and activities, and long-term goals and objectives.
- Enables each Department to define their role and responsibilities within the greater context of the organization, ensuring cohesive growth across the organization.
- Reviews departmental strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats using the SWOT analysis technique, allowing Departments to consider both internal factors, like succession planning and funding allocations, and external factors, like demographic changes, when planning for the future.

A COMMUNICATION DOCUMENT

A business plan is a vehicle to communicate with the public. A business plan...

- Affords the City the opportunity to be open and transparent.
- Educate residents and the general public on how the City provides day-to-day services.

A WORK PLAN

A business plan is an operational document which can be leveraged by Departments for internal process improvement efforts. A business plan...

- Creates a road map for how service goals are met.
- Makes the connection between front line objective and organizational objectives.

A BUDGETING TOOL

A business plan is a tool to be used in the budgeting process. A business plan...

- Facilitates the submission of Key Issues.
- Allows Departments to submit for cost estimates ahead of the budget cycle
- Provides a space for strategic thinking before the budget process kicks off in the Spring.

CITY OF SUGAR LAND MISSION & PRIORITIES

To enhance the quality of life in the community by a commitment to excellence in the delivery of public service.

Mid-term Priorities

SAFEST CITY IN AMERICA: FEELING SAFE, RAPID RESPONSE

- Have a Rapid, Effective and Coordinated Response to an Emergency – Police, Fire, EMS, Public Works
- Maintain People Feeling Safe, Secure and Comfortable throughout the Community
- Maintain a Low Crime Rate in Sugar Land with a High Clearance Rate
- Develop Effective Public Safety Communications with Adequate Staffing and Using Appropriate Technology
- Improved All-Hazards and Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery through Better Coordination and Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Utilizing Technology to Contribute to a Safe Community

STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY: GROWING BUSINESS INVESTMENT

- Attract Targeted Businesses with Primary Jobs: National and International
- Growing Tax Base: Property Tax and Sales Tax Generators
- Develop Major Business Parks with Class A Office Environment: Tract II and Prison Property / Newland (300 Acres)
- Expand Tourism: Venues, Marketing and Number of Visitors
- Develop Three Destination Activity Centers – Major Community Focal Points and Regional Destinations: Brazos River Park Festival Site, TIRZ #4, Imperial Area
- Protect Strength of Current Economic Generators

RESPONSIBLE CITY GOVERNMENT: FINANCIALLY SOUND, EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

- Maintain a High Level of Citizen Satisfaction and Cost-Effective Delivery of City Services: Value for Tax Dollars
- Continue “Championship” Workforce: Professional, Well-Trained, Appropriately Compensated, Retention / Internal Promotional Opportunities
- Have City Employees Serve as the Primary Contact with Customers
- Maintain Financially Responsible Government Consistent with City’s Mission
- City of Sugar Land – a Leader in Customer Service and Superior Service
- City and Partners Operating Efficiently and as a Service Business

GREAT PLACE TO LIVE: DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT, MOBILITY, ENVIRONMENT

- Have Predictable, Compatible Development and Land Uses Consistent with Comprehensive Plan
- Maintain Adequate Infrastructure and Services to Support Growth and Sustain the Existing Community
- Revitalize / Redevelop Older Commercial Centers: Appearance and Business Vitality
- Improve Mobility within Sugar Land: Automobiles, Bicycles and Walking
- Strive for Land Uses that Build the Wealth of the City – Balancing Property Tax Value, Sales Tax Revenue & Primary Jobs

BUILDING COMMUNITY: DIVERSE CULTURES, LEISURE, ARTS

- Develop City Facilities and Venues that Support Community Arts, Events and Festivals
- Develop Residents’ Understanding of Civic Processes and Community Infrastructure
- Support Community Events and Festivals of Diverse Ages and Cultures
- Adapt to Sugar Land’s Changing Demographics
- Expand Arts throughout the Community

Want to know more about the long range vision for the City of Sugar Land? Check out [Vision 2025!](#)

DEPARTMENT OF PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS 2017 BUSINESS PLAN

Departmental Mission Statement

The Permits and Inspections Department is committed to the public's safety and enhances quality of life by providing plan review and other permit and inspection services that ensure code compliance in the development and redevelopment of buildings and their components.

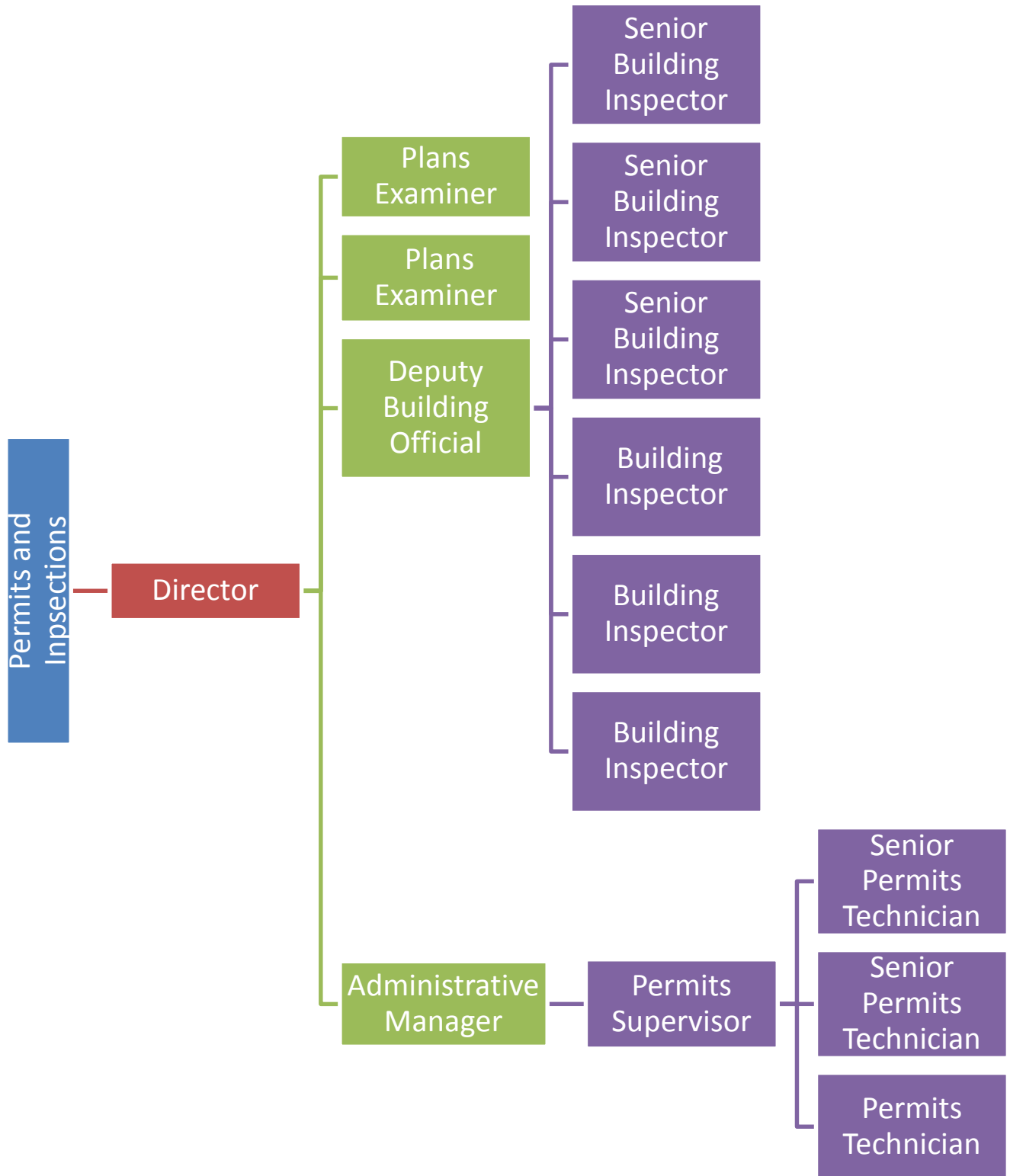
Executive Summary

The Permits & Inspection Department provides addressing, plan review, and permit and inspection services for citizens, property owners, businesses, contractors, and authorized agents. Those who intend to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure (including swimming pools) must obtain permit and inspection services. This also includes any electrical, gas, mechanical, irrigation or plumbing systems that is regulated by City Council-adopted International Building Codes and the National Electrical Code codes as amended by ordinance. These services are an uninfluenced source of quality control with the purpose of satisfying minimum building requirements.

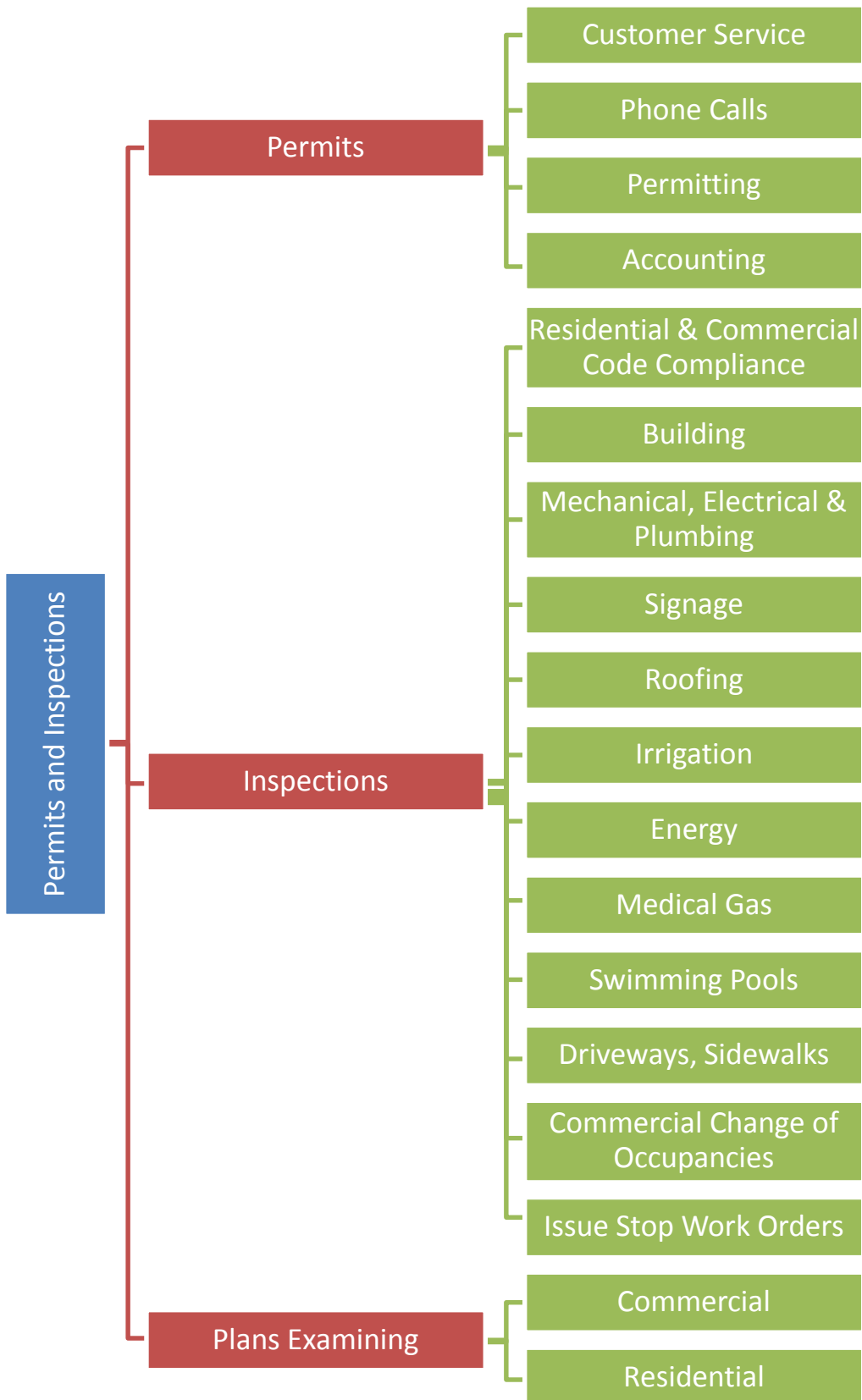
Minimum building requirements safeguard public health, safety and general welfare promoting structural strength means of egress in facilities, stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation, energy conservation, and safety. Minimum building requirements preserve life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment and provide safety to fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.

Service activities are recorded electronically and are reported monthly and quarterly. Annual customer service surveys are also conducted to obtain feedback.

ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE



Functional Structure



PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Permits and Inspections Department is staffed by 15 full-time positions. Normal business hours are Monday thru Friday 8:00 to 5:00 with flexibility for customer needs and service demands. Permit fees collected prior to the issue of permits fund these services.

The Building Official sets departmental goals and strategies and provides organizational direction and control to accomplish those goals. The Building Official provides budget coordination, oversight and management to the permits and inspections department. Permits and Inspections provides plan review and permits and inspections of residential and commercial buildings based upon the regulatory authority of City Council adopted building codes.

PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS PROGRAM SERVICES AND SERVICE LEVELS

Service: Building Plan Review

The Building Plan Review service is composed of both Residential Building Plan Review and Commercial Building Plan Review.

Activity: Residential Building Plan Review

Residential Building Plan review offers a comprehensive review of private residential building construction plans that include verifying plans comply with building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, fuel gas, energy and other adopted codes.

Permit applications and plans are first submitted to the permit office. Plans are then routed to the plan examiners to verify designs are in compliance with codes and ordinances. Subsequent comments and meetings typically follow to ensure plans are compliant prior to approval. Permits are then issued. Approved plans and the permit are required at job sites to verify code compliant construction by inspection personnel. Residential and miscellaneous plans total over 100 per month, include new houses, swimming pools; home additions and remodeling and are reviewed within seven working days.

Activity: Commercial Building Plan Review

Commercial Building Plan review offers a comprehensive review of both public and private non-residential building construction plans that includes verifying plans comply with building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, fuel gas, energy and other adopted codes. Commercial plan review also extends beyond the City limits and into the limited purpose annexed areas of our extra territorial jurisdiction as well as by development agreements in other areas in our jurisdiction.

Permit applications and plans are first submitted to the permit office. Plans are then routed to the plan examiners to verify designs are in compliance with codes and ordinances. Subsequent comments and meetings typically follow to ensure plans are compliant prior to approval. Approved plans are then required at job sites to verify code compliant construction by inspection personnel.

Commercial plans total over 50 per month and include remodeling and interior build-outs that are minor in nature, where plans have less than 20 pages, are reviewed within five working days. Commercial plans including new ground-up, remodeling and additions that are complex, projects that are over ten thousand square feet, or plans that contain more than 20 pages, are reviewed within fourteen working days. Commercial as-built plans are electronically archived as permanent records.

Service: Building Inspections

Inspection services are provided for commercial and residential permitted projects Monday thru Friday from 7:30am to 4:30 pm by a staff of 3 Inspectors and 3 Senior Inspectors. The Senior Inspector's experience and credentials are utilized for large, complicated projects and challenging customer service calls as well as scheduling and routing daily inspections. On occasion the Plans Examiners, Deputy Building Official and Building Official support inspection services. Daily inspection requests can be unpredictable and this service needs to be met on a daily basis. The Building inspector may spend more time at one particular jobsite due to the size and complexity of the project. A new State requirement has been added that requires a Medical Gas endorsement be obtained to inspect medical gas, usually in a hospital or medical setting.

The Building Inspection service includes scheduled inspection requests of private permitted buildings and provides clearance for the release of every natural gas and electrical service in the City limits. Building Inspections are a mobile operation and are responsible for inspections that verify residential and commercial code compliance of building, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, signage, roofing, irrigation, energy, medical gas, swimming pools, driveways and sidewalks and changes of occupancy in commercial buildings along with certain repairs and miscellaneous projects that require permits.

A typical new single family home will have approximately 30 inspections from start to finish. Each phase of construction is inspected before the project can move forward and components are concealed. Large commercial projects often request phased inspections allowing for partial approvals and phased covers. This assists with a projects progress. Basic Inspections include:

Activity: Foundation Inspection

Prior to a foundation make up inspection, a form survey must be provided. This can be accomplished at the job site and at the time of an inspection request. The survey must be prepared by a State of Texas registered surveyor.

Activity: Wood Framing

A building frame inspection may be scheduled concurrently with plumbing, electrical and mechanical rough-ins/covers or after those inspections are complete. A building frame will not be approved unless all trade inspections are approved.

Activity: Structural Steel

Structural steel framing may be inspected by the City of Sugar Land and must meet the special inspections criteria of the current adopted code, and the approved building plans. Inspection reports must be provided verifying that required bolting, welding and other elements of construction are in compliance with code and the approved City of Sugar Land building plans.

Activity: Final Inspection

A building final inspection may be scheduled concurrently with plumbing, electrical and mechanical finals or after those finals are complete. A building final will not be approved unless all trade inspections are approved. Gas, water and electricity must be operational.

*Commercial building final inspections do not permit occupancy in and by itself. Commercial projects require approvals from one or more of the following: Fire, Public Works, Engineering and Planning. A Certificate of Occupancy is required for occupancy for all commercial buildings.

*An approved residential building final inspection (single family) allows a resident to occupy a home; and infrastructure inspection groups are notified for a final check of responsibilities. Residential construction is required to obtain a certificate of occupancy.

Plumbing:

Activity: Sewer/Ground

A sewer/ground inspection can be scheduled together or separately and will include but may not be limited to inspection of the sewer/ground piping, cleanouts, sleeve drain lines and water piping installation within a foundation for compliance with adopted codes. The water service line will be inspected for the minimum 12" depth and of a code approved material. Per City Ordinance, a minimum 4" Schedule 40 PVC sanitary sewer is required for residential construction, and a minimum 6" SDR 26 or equal sanitary sewer is required for commercial construction. The workmanship will also be inspected for compliance.

Activity: Top Out

A top out inspection may include a water and air test like the ground inspection. Shield plates, notching & boring of wood frame construction, slope of drain, waste and vent piping, gas piping and all venting through the roof shall be inspected for compliance with adopted code requirements. Water heater installations must comply with code and manufacturers specifications. The workmanship will also be inspected for compliance.

Activity: Gas Turn On (GTO)

A gas turn on inspection will include verifying that all piping and valves are installed and capped to prevent accidental release of gas. Gas pressure will be tested with an approved calibrated gauge for code approved testing pressure. Equipment venting will be inspected for proper installation. Gas piping will be evaluated for proper workmanship in attic space.

Activity: Plumbing Final

A plumbing final inspection will include but not be limited to inspection of vents through roof installations, hose bib back flow, installation of water meter box(s), sanitary sewer cleanouts, plumbing fixture installations via a water test for leaks, water lines subject to freeze damage for proper insulation, A/C condensation lines for proper connection to an active trap, access panels for bath tubs (where applicable), water valves & gas valves for accessibility and operability and approved back flow devices for water supply (where applicable).

Mechanical (HVAC):

Activity: Cover/Rough In

A mechanical cover/rough in inspection will include but not be limited to inspection of flue pipe installations, return air, condensate drains, insulation support and protection of refrigerant lines, dryer vents, exhaust fans and mechanical equipment installations. The workmanship will also be inspected for compliance.

Activity: HVAC Final

An HVAC final inspection will include but not be limited to inspection of the operation of units with instruction manual available, access and working clearance, disconnects, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, fan control shutdowns for commercial projects, equipment vents and proper equipment labeling. The workmanship will also be inspected for compliance.

Electrical:

Activity: Temporary Power Pole

A temporary power pole inspection will include verifying the address is visible and legible, the pole/equipment is properly supported and there is correct circuit, wiring, protection and burial depth. The workmanship will also be inspected for compliance.

Activity: Cover/Rough In

A cover/rough in inspection will include but not be limited to protection of wiring, receptacle spacing, circuitry, wire sizing (**12-2 minimum per City Ordinance**), grounding, bonding, box fill, wiring methods, attic lighting, clothes closet lighting, notching and boring of wood frame construction, de-ratings particularly for bundling wiring, di-oxidizer for aluminum wiring, disconnects and general use receptacles particularly for HVAC equipment. The workmanship will also be inspected for compliance.

Activity: Temporary Cut-in (TCI)

A temporary cut-in inspection will include but not be limited to service entrance conductor sizing, main breaker sizing, grounding and bonding. An electrical underground/overhead inspection may be required before or during a temporary cut-in inspection.

Activity: Final

A final inspection will include but not be limited to electrical work being complete and testable, main panel properly labeled, smoke detector tests, continuity, clothes closet lighting clearances, hydro tub circuit test and exterior weather proofing. The workmanship will also be inspected for compliance.

Swimming Pool:

Activity: Inspections

Pool inspections will include but not be limited to inspecting the layout of the excavation site for compliance approved plans. Other pool inspections will include a structural steel inspection, pool deck, electrical bonding, gas turn on inspection and a final inspection.

Sign:

Activity: Inspections

Sign inspections will depend on the type of sign being installed. A monument sign will require a location inspection that will verify the sign is located correctly per the approved plans and the structural makeup is per the approved plans. Monument and wall signs will both require a final inspection to verify compliance with the approved plans.

Inspections are recorded and resulted in the field electronically and are available for review by stake holders via internet or telephone. Inspections are electronically archived as permanent records.

Building inspections services are crucial to maintaining and enhancing the Building and Fire Departments Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings which ultimately impact insurance rates for homeowners. Stringent building code compliance gives the ISO confidence knowing that construction in Sugar Land is of acceptable structural quality and meets fire protection requirements.

Service: Permits and Customer Service

Permitting and Customer services are provided by a staff of five which includes one permit technician, two senior permit technicians, a permits supervisor, and an administrative manager. Assistance is provided by building inspectors, plans examiners, the deputy building official and the building official.

Permits are issued from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday thru Friday to walk-in customers, by email and by facsimile. Customers have the payment option of establishing an escrow account. Future technology advances may allow online permit processing.

Activity: Customer Service

Process incoming site plans as well as related documents then route to Planning and Engineering Departments for their review typically while on the phone. Accept permits submitted via courier and process both new and renewal Contractor Registration forms. Update contractor license information and Certificate of Liability Insurance information typically while on the phone. Verify through submitted documents and via State websites typically while on the phone. Answer questions and consult with Homeowners and Contractors regarding permitting process via phone, email and in person. Update, add and correct addresses in the system for permitting. Add all addresses not currently in the system.

Receive and process Certificate of Occupancy Applications which includes verifying with various departments. Process Solicitor Applications typically while on the phone (considerable multi-tasking) per multi-step process. Issue Clements Parking passes at a cubicle that is open to the public. Receive, route, track and complete approval process for Fire Extinguishing, Alarm & Access Control permits in coordination with the Fire Marshal's Office. Open department mail daily, and route mail to the appropriate department that is not for Permits & Inspections. File all Building Permits and supporting documentation in storage room file cabinets, separated by commercial & residential, and then filed by building permit number. Compile monthly building permit data for Permits & Inspections Department, Fort Bend Central Appraisal District, various State Agencies and other departments as needed. Maintain supply of applications for lobby racks, office supplies and receive packages for department from the front

desk. Notify Centerpoint of electrical & gas releases when approved by the Building inspectors after an approved inspection.

Activity: Phone Calls

Answer incoming calls to Permits & Inspections Department Main Number, transfer calls to appropriate Building and Planning personnel regarding projects, transfer calls to outside departments that are not related to Permits & Inspections and receive calls from Building Inspectors and contact them for questions and clarifications. Call contact for permits once approved and ready to be issued. Contact other City Departments with questions relating to permits. Return customer calls which requires technical building knowledge to appropriately answer the customer's questions.

Activity: Permitting

During the work week we receive, process and issue applications via fax, email & walk-ins. We also email and fax processed permits that are submitted by email and fax. During this time we also receive, process and issue Foundation Repair Permit Applications Daily work includes sending requested Escrow statements to contractors, as requested, scheduling inspections, correcting inspection errors and issuing penalty fees when necessary.

Activity: Accounting

Accounting tasks are performed daily during the work week at 4:30pm and must be complete by 10am the following morning.

Performance Measures

Service Area	Commitments
Permits	Provide responsive customer service and efficient permit issuance
Inspections	Efficiently inspect projects to verify regulatory compliance
Plans	Review plans in a timely and thorough manner in order to protect public safety