



City of Carmel -by-the-Sea

Community Planning and Building Department

# Strategic Plan

June, 2019

***“Our mission is to preserve village character and natural resources while ensuring a safe built environment through ingenuity, forward-thinking and dedication to excellence”.***



**City of Carmel-by-the-Sea**  
**Community Planning & Building Department**

# **Strategic Plan**

June, 2019

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## Executive Summary

The City of Carmel's Community Planning and Building Department (CPB), in the fall of 2018, began the process of developing a departmental Strategic Plan. Over the course of nearly a year, department staff conducted 11 workshops at which this plan was developed.

Initially, the City's rich history, environment and demographics were reviewed to provide context to the Department's activities. Based on this information, Department staff drafted Values, Vision, and Mission Statements to guide the Department and inform plan development. The Department's values presented on page 20 describe the overarching Department culture and aspirations for service to the community. The Vision Statement, provided on page 21, provides the Department's long-term view of community development, and its role in guiding that development. Finally, the Mission Statement also provided on page 21 describes a more focused view of the Department's role in the community and how that role is fulfilled.

Next, staff conducted an analysis of the Departments' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) which helped guide the development of strategic goals and objectives.

Based on the information described above, staff identified 10 broad goals for achieving excellence in the Departments' services to the public. Objectives in support of these goals were also developed. These goals and objectives are provided beginning on page 23. Specific strategies for achieving these objectives will be identified, vetted and implemented by staff moving forward.

Finally, plan implementation and maintenance strategies were considered and are documented in the plan on page 26.

## Introduction

In a rapidly changing world, government agencies must be agile, flexible and foresightful in providing public services. Nowhere is this more important than in communities where concerns for historic and environmental resources must be balanced with the desire to evolve and prosper. Such is the case with the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea.

In 2018, the Carmel Planning and Building Department (CPB) initiated a strategic planning initiative intended to help frame the world in which the Department conducts its business. To learn from the City's past, acknowledge its present, and help prepare for meeting the unique demands of the future – all while ensuring efficient use of public resources, and competent and effective stewardship of the public's trust.

This plan presents the results of the department's efforts. It is the culmination of an intensive collaborative process between CPB staff members, based on their knowledge of the community and understanding of its values. It is informed by public process and input provided through numerous hearings and workshops conducted during development and maintenance of the City's General Plan.

It acknowledges the historic, cultural, and environmental concerns of the City's residents and businesses. It is evidence based - using data collected from local, state and federal sources to further describe the City's ecosystem. The planning process included an in-depth look at the evolution of the Departments' services and programs, including an analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).

The plan provides a resource for guiding the Department's continued evolution. It identifies the values, vision and mission of the Department. Further, it presents the Department's goals and objectives as identified by staff through the planning process, and presents a framework for systematic achievement of both. In that respect it is a policy document which provides guidance on program development and maintenance. While the plan does not provide detailed budgeting guidance, it does assist in identifying future budget considerations related to maintaining and/or improving levels of service to the public.

The CPB Strategic Plan is a living document. It will be evaluated and revised periodically to reflect changes in community priorities and the City ecosystem as reflected by City Council and City leadership direction.

## Community Profile

### **Historic Roots**

The long history of Carmel-by-the-Sea spans back to the 1700's when Spanish explorers and Catholic missionaries discovered the Carmel River valley and established the Carmel Mission on the City's south side. Following the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, the early inhabitants of Carmel, which included a number of the Bay Area's artistic elites, settled permanently in Carmel. By the date of incorporation in 1916 the village had grown to nearly 450 people including such well-known authors as Jack London, Mary Austin, Sinclair Lewis, and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Over the years, the City has continued to attract artists, writers, actors, entertainers and others. Clint Eastwood, Doris Day, John Madden, and Joan Fontaine, are former residents of the City, with Eastwood continuing ties to the Village to this day.

In many ways, Carmel's artistic, "bohemian" character lives on. The City continues to shun street addresses, parking meters, and traffic lights. Streets are narrow, and in some areas winding, and outside of the downtown business area, sidewalks are scarce. Pets are welcome in many businesses and accommodations, and the City maintains but does not enforce, an ordinance requiring a permit to wear high heels about town due to the ankle twisting hazard presented by the uneven walking surfaces of sidewalks and streets.

The City's unique architecture includes designs such as Hugh Comstock's iconic English cottage style, and buildings designed by such other renowned architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Charles Sumner Greene, and Henry Hill. The City recognizes the contributions of these designers through its Historic Resources List, which grants historic status to notable buildings, intending to protect their historic integrity. Listed buildings are afforded special consideration during repair or remodel construction consistent with the CA Historic Building Code and federal Department of the Interior guidelines.

### **Regional Setting**

The City of Carmel-by-the-Sea is located in northwest Monterey County on the shores of the Pacific Ocean's Carmel Bay. The City is bounded on the north by the densely wooded Pescadero Canyon, which separates the City from unincorporated Pebble Beach and the Del Monte Forest. Carmel Valley, in unincorporated Monterey County lies to the east and the mouth of the Carmel River, Point Lobos and unincorporated Carmel Highlands are to the south. Highway 1 provides the primary roadway link between Carmel-by-the-Sea, the surrounding area, and the rest of the world.

The City encompasses approximately 1 square mile in area. The elevation ranges from sea level (at Carmel Beach) to 500 feet above sea level along the eastern City boundary. Vegetation generally consists of redwood, fir, and cypress, with coast live oak, eucalyptus, and other native and exotic plants in the lower canopy and undergrowth. <sup>1</sup>

Various species of wildlife inhabit the area especially in Pescadero Canyon and the Mission Trails Preserve. Deer, mountain lions, and a host of smaller species as well as a variety of birds, reptiles and insects are found throughout the City. The dunes area immediately adjacent to Carmel Beach is environmentally sensitive with rare native plant species and is a habitat for the threatened Northern California Legless Lizard.

### **Climate**

As a coastal city, Carmel-by-the-Sea's climate is marked by moderate temperatures and frequent fog. Seasonal rainfall occurs from November through April, while September and October are characterized by warmer weather known as "summer on the Central Coast". The average annual precipitation is 19", however higher and lower rainfall amounts are common. Winter temperatures range between 43 - 60 degrees Fahrenheit while summers range from 53 - 72 F. <sup>2</sup>

The City is subject to occasional winter storms coming from the Pacific Ocean. Such storms result in high winds and significant rainfall over short periods of time. The City's building code requires that buildings be constructed to resist wind gusts of up to 110 miles per hour. Recent storms have resulted in significant numbers of fallen trees, some of which damaged buildings and infrastructure.

### **Geology/Hydrogeology**

Soil types range from sand to bedrock often overlain by organic matter and topsoil. Soil types present limited earthquake liquefaction potential however numerous springs, and areas of high ground water complicate land development and building construction. The City's flood plain, as defined by the National Flood Insurance Program is limited to the beach area west of Scenic Road, which is subject to coastal flooding, erosion, and tsunami inundation. The Carmel River floodplain is located outside of the City limits in unincorporated Monterey County. <sup>3</sup>

Earthquakes are a common concern in California due to an extensive network of faults that lace the state. Major faults presenting a potential hazard to Carmel-by-the-Sea due to proximity include the San Andreas, Hatton Canyon, San Gregorio-Palo Colorado, Chupines, Navy and Cypress Point faults. Fortunately, while the Hatton Canyon and Cypress Point faults skirt the City's boundaries on the northeast and south, no known fault traces are mapped in the City limits simplifying seismic design considerations. <sup>4</sup>

## **Demographics**

The City's historic nature, scenic setting, proximity to popular events and attractions, and limited area impact its overall demographics and influence land use and construction activities. Land and home values are relatively high, making homes and commercial buildings expensive and creating an ongoing concern for affordable housing and sustainment of small businesses in the commercial core. Because of this, Carmel-by-the-Sea residents tend to be either long-time residents, or new property owners with significant financial resources. For many of the newcomers, their Carmel property is a second home used for recreational purposes sporadically throughout the year.

The City's population in 2015 was estimated at 3,747 residents, down from 4,081 in 2000 but higher than the 3,722 estimate of 2010. The median age of City residents as of 2015 was 59.2 years of age with 30% of the population between the ages of 50-64 years and 36% over the age of 65.<sup>5</sup>

While the City hosts diverse visitors from around the world, the resident population tends to be less diverse. Approximately 90% of the City's residents are White while the second highest ethnicity is Latino/Hispanic at 3.7% followed by Asian at 2.7%.<sup>6</sup>

The City's average household size is estimated at 1.79 people, with 61% of households having 2 persons, followed by single person households at 23.8%. These metrics tend to correspond with the age of the population. Households predominantly reside in detached single-family homes (82%), while 13% reside in multi-family dwellings (apartments/condominiums) and 5% occupy attached single-family dwellings (duplexes, townhomes).<sup>7</sup>

The median household income in 2016 was \$86,808 compared to the statewide figure of \$67,739. This represents an increase from \$65,647 in 2000. The estimated per-capita income in 2016 was \$65,105, up from \$48,362 in 2000.<sup>8</sup>

## **Economy**

The community takes great pride in its residential nature, which was reinforced in 1929 by the passage of Ordinance No. 96 which states:

*"The City of Carmel-by-the-Sea is hereby determined to be primarily, essentially, and predominantly a residential city wherein business and commerce have in the past, are now, and are proposed to be in the future, subordinated to its residential character; and that said determination is made having in mind the history and the development of said city, its growth and the causes thereof, and also its geographical and topographical aspects, together with its near proximity to the cities of Pacific Grove and Monterey, and*

*the businesses, industries, trades, callings and professions in existence and permissible therein.”*

While the City maintains its residential emphasis, the context of that emphasis has changed in recent years. Increasingly, homes have been purchased by out-of-town interests as second homes and income properties. It is estimated that over 31 percent of the housing stock in Carmel-by-the-Sea is vacant at any time due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.<sup>9</sup>

Tourism related uses are now the City’s primary economic driver. The Transient Occupancy Tax which is applied to overnight accommodations makes up 28% of the City’s revenue, equaling the amount received from property taxes. Sales taxes and charges for services make up 20% of revenue with all other sources combined contributing 31%<sup>10</sup>. Although the City is predominantly residential, data shows that revenues received from tourist related businesses are an important financial resource.

### **Built Environment**

Carmel-by-the-Sea’s built environment consists of a mix of residential and small commercial development. The City has intentionally limited the introduction of industrial, institutional, large assembly, and similar high-impact types of uses. The majority of buildings of all uses were constructed prior to 2010, with several dating back to the Villages establishment in the early 1900’s.

The majority of housing stock consists of single-family residences located in the single family (R-1) residential zoning district. Multi-family developments are scattered throughout the multi-family (R-4) and commercial districts, and represent the second largest segment of the housing stock. The City’s General Plan Housing Element (2015) states “opportunities for development of housing, including infill development, conversion of commercial uses to residential, and addition of new residential uses above existing commercial space will be actively identified and pursued.”<sup>11</sup>

The 2015 Housing Element update found 59 undeveloped parcels with potential for development of 74 new dwelling units. An additional 32 parcels in the commercial zoning districts were found to be underutilized, mixed-use sites capable of providing up to 78 additional dwelling units. In accordance with the General Plan Housing Element, these units would provide housing for lower and moderate-income households. An additional 3 parcels in the multi-family zoning district were also found suitable for multi-family development offering potential for 12 additional dwelling units.<sup>12</sup>

Land and construction costs in the City are elevated due to high demand, lack of vacant land, and a shortage of water for development. In 2015, the cost of a vacant 0.09-acre R-1 lot was in the \$500,000 range. Construction costs, which can comprise up to 50% or more of home value are also fairly high.<sup>13</sup> A construction cost valuation study completed in 2017 found that the average cost of construction for a single-family home of typical wood-framed construction was \$406.53 per square foot compared to the national average of \$113.85.<sup>14</sup> This cost variation was determined to be related to high-end amenities, complex designs, and higher transportation costs for materials.

Water availability affects potential development with few sites having water credits sufficient to accommodate construction of additional residential units. The City works with the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District and California American Water to address water needs at the parcel level.<sup>15</sup> Aging water infrastructure also limits the available fire flow affecting required fire suppression system expense as well as fire protection capabilities.

Many long-time residents remain in the City; however, attrition has resulted in opportunities for new landowners to enter the market. While some new owners do become permanent residents, in many cases these new owners purchase properties as second homes, investment properties, or high-end rentals rather than as primary residences. The General Plan identifies that around 31% of housing stock sits vacant due to seasonal, recreational, and occasional use. Another 2.6 % is vacant and for rent, while 2% is vacant and for sale.<sup>16</sup>

### **Regulatory environment**

Development in the City takes place in a complex regulatory environment consisting of requirements imposed by Federal, State, regional and local regulations. At the Federal level, FCC regulations impact the City's control over communications infrastructure development, including cell phone sites while the National Flood Insurance Program limits development of land within the City's mapped flood plain.

At the State level, the City's location adjacent to the Pacific Ocean and Carmel Bay presents a host of environmental concerns. These are addressed through regulations imposed by the California Coastal Commission, and the State Water Board's Area of Special Biological Significance. In addition, State regulations related to building codes, wildfire protection, affordable housing, sidewalk vending, energy conservation, solar energy systems, and accessibility of buildings and facilities all impact the cost of development as well as CPB staff time and resources.

Regional regulations also affect development activities. Sewer and wastewater system infrastructure outside of the building envelope are regulated by both the City enforced CA Plumbing Code and the Carmel Area Wastewater Districts policies and regulations.

Potable water usage is regulated by both the City's plumbing code requirements - which include water use restrictions passed down from the State through the CA Green Building Standards Code –and requirements imposed by the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District.

Stormwater/runoff water quality requirements are imposed by the City's environmental compliance program and the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency. Air quality, which includes dust from construction sites as well as airborne hazardous waste (i.e. friable asbestos), is regulated by the Monterey Bay Air Resources District; and solid waste disposal, including hazardous waste, is regulated by the Monterey Regional Waste Management District in cooperation with the City through its waste management franchise agreement.

At the local level, the Carmel Municipal Code provides regulations related to planning, zoning, land use, and building codes. Development and application of these regulations is informed by citizen-based boards and commissions including the City's Planning Commission, Forest and Beach Commission, Historic Resources Board, and Building Code Board of Appeals.

Finally, while not regulatory bodies, several community support groups also inform the City's development regulations. These include among others the: Friends of the Carmel Forest, Friends of the Mission Trail Nature Preserve, and the Carmel Residents Association.

## Department Overview

The Community Planning and Building Department (CPB) consists of the Planning, Building, and Code Compliance Divisions and is responsible for ensuring a healthy, safe and durable built environment while preserving village character and fostering a vibrant community that supports economic well-being and a high quality of life for its residents and visitors.

### **Planning Division**

The Planning Division processes development permit applications, provides land-use and code information, maintains the General Plan, prepares long-range planning documents, and ensures that capital programs, zoning, and other activities in the City are consistent with the goals and policies of the city's planning regulations. The Planning Division provides staff support to the City Council, Planning Commission, and the Historic Resources Board. The Planning Division focuses on preserving the unique character of the City through maintenance of its planning documents and careful review of development permit applications. During 2018 the Division's four technical staff, (which includes the Department director) processed 449 planning permit applications.

### **Building Safety Division**

The primary purpose of the Building Safety Division is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, and durability of the built environment through the permitting and inspection process. The Building Division reviews construction plans for compliance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 24 – The California Building Standards Code as adopted in the City's Municipal Code. This body of codes provides requirements relating to structural, architectural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, energy conservation, environmental protection, storm drainage, and grading work. The Division also collects all legally prescribed fees; and issues permits for approved projects. The City's building official is responsible for performing plan reviews on all proposed construction projects in the City. Department records show that during 2018, the building official performed plan reviews related to 634 building permit applications.

Inspections are completed throughout the construction phase of projects to ensure they are built in accordance with approved plans and all relevant codes. The Division's building inspector provides required periodic inspections of permitted construction projects as well as site-based environmental Best Management Practices (BMP's), related to compliance with Area of Special Biological Significance regulations in coordination with the City's environmental compliance manager. During 2018, the building inspector performed over 1,800 periodic building inspections as well as numerous inspections of environmental BMP's throughout the year.

### **Code Compliance Division**

The Code Compliance Division ensures compliance with City regulations. This function includes resolving code violations, public outreach and working with the community on various issues. The Code Compliance Division works closely with the Planning and Building Safety Divisions, and assists with upholding planning and building permit conditions. It also enforces city regulations related to short-term rentals, unpermitted encroachments, and construction work occurring without required permits. Finally, the Code Compliance Division provides support to the Police, Public Works, and Community Activities departments. During 2018, the Division initiated a total of 344 code enforcement cases.

While the City does not have a “housing officer” per se, the Code Compliance Division is responsible under the Municipal Code for enforcement of the International Property Maintenance Code, which prescribes requirements for maintenance of buildings, and property within the City. The General Plan posits that the age of housing stock often indicates housing conditions, finding that housing over 30 years old may need repairs based on the lifetime of materials; and housing over 50 years old is likely to need major repairs or reconstruction. Census estimates indicate that 79% of housing units in the City were built before 1980 and 64% before 1960<sup>17</sup>. These findings indicate that the need for code enforcement actions to address property maintenance issues may well increase as the building stock ages.

### **Co-Agency Responsibilities**

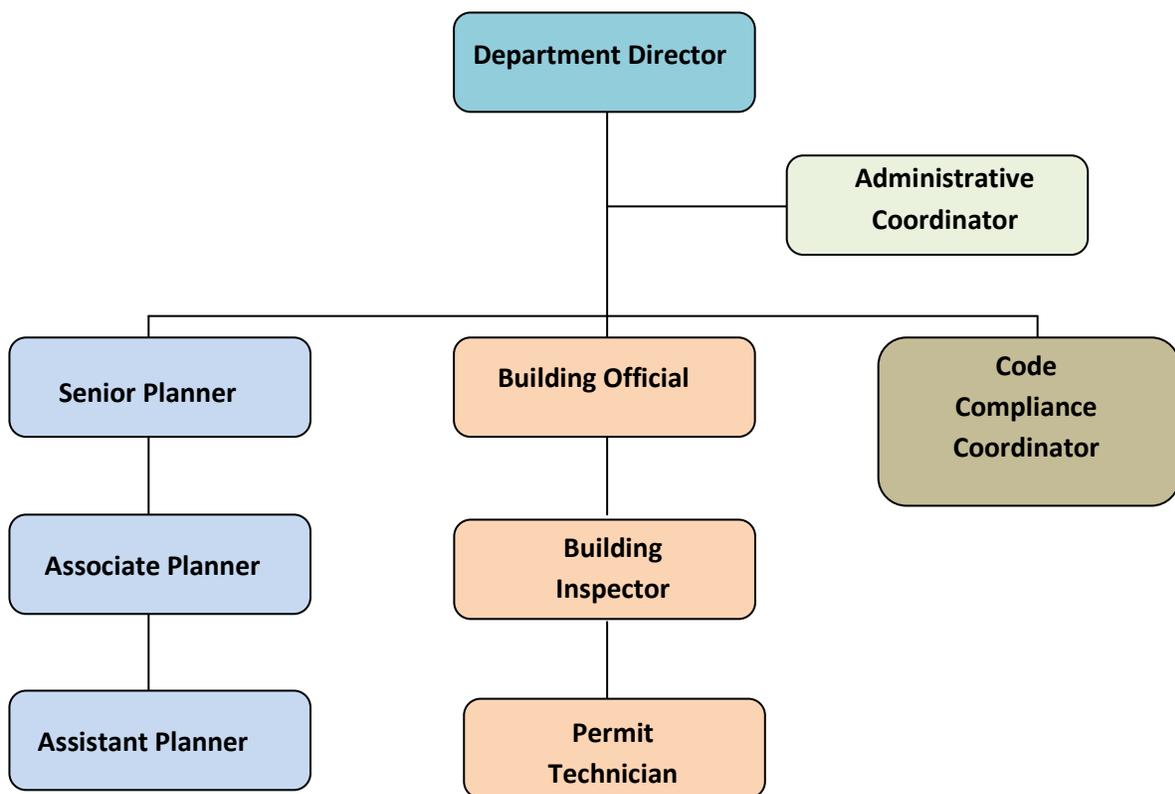
The Department also cooperates with other City departments in their permitting processes. The CPB counter serves as the application gateway for encroachment and tree permits issued under the authority of the Public Works Department; issues permits approved by Public Works staff; and tracks those permits through their lifetime. The Department collaborates with the Public Works Department on vetting design proposals for City facilities prior to the bidding process, and supports Public Works and Police Department staff in responding to significant emergency events such as severe, damaging storms, earthquakes, and structure fires.

As described earlier, the Department cooperates with the environmental compliance manager on inspection and enforcement of environmental BMP’s during construction. In addition, the building inspector provides inspections of private stormwater management systems constructed under a plumbing permit from the City during their installation.

Finally, the Department coordinates the intake and issuance of tree permits for the city forester, tracking and archiving such permits through the Departments permit tracking system. In 2018, records indicate that the department processed 193 encroachment permits and 168 tree permits for the Public Works Department.

**Department Staffing**

Adequate staffing is critical in order to implement the strategies, goals and objectives discussed in this plan. The CPB is currently funded for 9 full-time positions including: Department Director, Building Official, Senior Planner, Associate Planner, Assistant Planner, Building Inspector, Permit Technician, Administrative Coordinator, and Code Compliance Coordinator. The chart below depicts the department’s current organization.



## Department History

Planning and building services have long been among the programs offered by the City. The following timeline describes the evolution of the department over time.

**1916** – The City of Carmel-by-the-Sea is incorporated under state law.

**1918** – Building permit authority is adopted under Ordinance 22.

**1946** – The Planning Commission is established.

**1957** – First General Plan adopted.

**1961** – General Plan updated with addition of a Central District Plan.

**1973** – General Plan updated by the addition of conservation, seismic safety, and open space elements.

**2000** – General Plan workshop conducted identifying the following issues to be addressed through planning efforts.

- Existing residential and commercial zoning district boundaries and basic purposes should be identified in the Coastal Plan and preserved
- Existing patterns of land use and community character should be identified and strengthened with respect to commercial design, residential design, historic preservation and civic design
- Limited beach parking for tourists can be a problem, particularly when it is concentrated (such as at Del Mar parking lot) or when it conflicts with adjacent residences. Parking policies should balance potential impacts on the residential character of the community with the potentially limitless demand for parking spaces
- The urbanized forest is an important contributor to community character and should be protected and maintained. Policy responses to Pine Pitch Canker, oak diseases, development pressure, and changing species mix and sensitive habitats are needed
- The City's unique roadway design is a significant feature of Carmel's character and interacts with the urbanized forest. Many of the City's roads also function as part of the storm drainage system. These aesthetic and functional aspects of the City's streets should be documented and policies should be provided to guide future roadway repairs and reconstructions
- Beach facilities for public use at Carmel Beach are limited but important. Restrooms, benches, stairways, and trash receptacles are provided for public

use with restrooms being the most difficult to site. Policy direction on beach facilities, including restrooms, is needed and should balance public needs, aesthetics and private property interests

- Policies for construction at the beach, along Scenic Road and on North San Antonio must be included to guide future public improvements for aesthetics, safety and maintenance
- Policies on coastal views must balance public and private interests consistent with preservation of community character

**2002** – Local Coastal Program and Land Use Plan certified by the State.

With the 2002 certification of the Local Coastal Program the City assumed responsibility for complying with the overriding policies of the State's coastal act. Coastal act policies applicable to the City include:

- Protect, maintain and where feasible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and man-made resources
- Protect special communities and neighborhoods, and retain their unique characteristics
- Assure orderly, balanced utilization and conservation of coastal zone resources, taking into account the social and economic needs of the people of the state.
- Maximize public access to and along the coast and maximize public recreational opportunities in the coastal zone consistent with sound resource conservation principles and constitutionally and Coastal Act protected rights of private property owners
- Assure priority for coastal-dependent and coastal-related development over other development on the coast
- Encourage state and local initiative and cooperation in preparing procedures to implement coordinated planning and development for mutually beneficial uses, including educational uses, in the coastal zone

## Department Services

The environment and character of Carmel-by-the-Sea adds a high level of complexity to development and construction projects. The Department provides a wide variety of services intended to help citizens navigate the regulatory process and complete approved projects successfully, timely, and safely.

Each year a large number of buildings in the City are remodeled, repaired or reconstructed, and a lesser number are newly constructed on previously vacant land. In many cases, such projects require extensive CPB review and numerous inspections by both Planning and Building Safety Division staff. As an example, during 2018 the Department:

Received:

- 449 Planning permit applications
- 634 Building permit applications
- 168 Tree permit applications
- 193 Encroachment permit applications

Conducted:

- 1,842 building inspections
- 344 code compliance actions

To implement the many regulatory requirements, the Department issues a variety of approvals and permits before development activities may proceed. Permit types administered by the Planning Division under Title 17 of the Municipal Code include the following:

- Track 1 Design Review/Study
- Track 2 Design Review/Study
- Preliminary Site Assessment
- Use Permit
- Variance
- Coastal Development Permit
- Annexation
- Environmental Review
- Historic evaluation/determination
- Sign
- Lot Line Adjustments

- Business License Review

Permit types administered by the Building Safety Division under Title 15 of the Municipal Code include the following:

- Building
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Mechanical
- Grading
- Fire Code Construction
- Fire Code Operational
- Business License Review

Permit types coordinated by the Department for the Public Works Department under Title 12 of the Municipal Code include the following:

- Temporary Encroachment
- Permanent Encroachment
- Tree Pruning/Removal
- Stormwater

Department staff also spends considerable time consulting with citizens on project and non-project specific development standards and code requirements. Citizens frequently visit the counter to request project and code compliance guidance; to obtain permit application forms and submittal requirements; and to discuss proposed projects and code related actions before the Planning Commission and/or City Council.

To increase the community's understanding of the City's development standards and to expedite permit processing by improving the quality and completeness of applications, the Department conducts public awareness, information and education activities.

Among these are:

- Facilitating Commission and Board meetings;
- Maintaining a robust web site easing public access to information and project resources;
- Distribution of policy and guidance documents clarifying code requirements and interpretations;
- Hosting workshops and seminars on City development processes, technical code requirements, etc.

## Department Infrastructure

The Department's offices are centralized in a portion of City Hall which itself is housed in a historic church. The centralized location allows the public to contact all staff involved in their project in a single trip, and enables staff to collaborate "on-the-fly" when questions arise that involve multiple staff members' expertise.

With the exception of the Director, staff shares office space, with three planning staff in one room, two building staff in another smaller office, and counter staff, code enforcement, and a small conference room occupying the common area with "room dividers" created by banks of file cabinets archiving the development history of the City.

In some ways, the small space is a mixed blessing. The close proximity of staff members is a boon to facilitating timely communications and collaboration between staff members who only need to walk a few feet – or in some cases turn around in their chair – to collaborate with colleagues.

On the other hand, the current staff fully occupies the space available, limiting options for future Department expansion. Meanwhile, the growing need for records storage has outgrown the space available resulting in the archiving of documents in the attic area of a City facility (Vista Lobos) located some 10 blocks from the Department's offices. The Department is currently considering options for resolving record storage concerns which include both digitizing records, and purging of files which have reached the end of their required retention life.

Information technology resources continue to be a growing need as the Department adapts its service delivery systems to meet the demands of the digital world. IT services are provided by the City's Information Technology Manager with the assistance of part-time contract help. Each staff member is provided with a:

- Personal computer with network and internet access
- Desk phone with direct phone line via a recently installed Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) system
- City cell phones are provided to the director, building official, building inspector, and code compliance officer, and planning staff shares a phone for use in the field
- The building inspector is provided with a mobile device (currently a cell-enabled iPad) which allows for field access to the City's permit processing system and internet resources.

The Department utilizes a growing number of software programs to manage information. IWORQ, a web-based subscription service is used to manage permit and code enforcement activities. While the program has limits, the Department continues to work with the software provider to develop solutions to the City's permit tracking needs. Most recently, the Department has incorporated system modules to implement an electronic permit application process, and is considering adding fire permit tracking capability in the near future.

In addition, the Department in 2018 began limited testing of Bluebeam plan review software to assist in conducting reviews of digital plans received through the electronic permit (e-Permit) program. The trial found the program is a useful tool and providing all staff with plan review responsibilities access to the program is being considered.

## Department Culture

Just as the community and its development services needs have evolved over time, so too has the Community Planning and Building Department. Department staffing schemes have ranged from a single paid staffer supplemented by contract consultants to today's full-time, professional, nine person staff, which continues to be supplemented by specialized consulting services related to historic preservation and building volume analysis.

While the City has experienced organizational and leadership challenges in the recent past, the current leadership has successfully promoted teamwork and collaboration throughout the organization. Within the CPB, staff works closely together as projects make their way through the review and approval process. In addition, staff regularly collaborates on process and procedure improvements during monthly staff meetings and during normal interactions throughout the workday. Recent staff additions have brought new ideas and expertise to the department, which continue to contribute to the Departments' evolution.

This Strategic Plan provides a unique example of the Department's teamwork and collaborative culture in action. Over a period of nearly a year, staff conducted research and collaborated in internal workshops to develop the information and directions contained in this plan, and will continue to collaborate on methods of achieving the strategic goals and objectives identified herein.

## Values, Vision, and Mission

### **Department Values**

Through the strategic planning process, Department staff identified the following departmental values:

- A focus on accountability, responsibility, public stewardship and education
- Support transparency through open and effective communication.
- Achieve excellence through collaboration, teamwork, and continuous improvement
- Treat all customers with respect, empathy and care
- Emphasize high-quality services and products
- Demonstrate leadership and integrity in all that we do

### **Department Vision**

Through the strategic planning process, the Department also formulated the following vision statement to frame the overall strategic discussion.

*“Carmel-by-the-Sea preserves its historic traditions, Village charm, and natural environment while promoting a vibrant, healthy and cohesive community through effective communication and collaboration; delivery of efficient, high-quality services; retention of a knowledgeable and dedicated staff; and exercising fiscal responsibility and thoughtful stewardship of the public's trust.”*

### **Department Mission**

The Department also formulated the following mission statement that builds upon the Department's values and vision.

*“Our mission is to preserve village character and natural resources while ensuring a safe built environment through ingenuity, forward-thinking and dedication to excellence”.*

## **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

In formulating this plan, staff began by conducting an analysis of the Departments' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis). The analysis consisted of a “sticky note” exercise that collected staff's random thoughts on the departments SWOT. Results were then collated and condensed over two workshops resulting in the following statements reflecting the results of the analysis.

### **Strengths**

- The Department exercises excellent and efficient internal and external communications.
- The Department provides knowledgeable, experienced, and professional internal and external customer service.
- The Department's environment encourages teamwork, collaboration, supportive relationships, and high-quality work both internally and externally.
- The Department has established processes and procedures and provides resources that help customers navigate them.
- The Department staff focuses on problem solving rather than problem creation.

## **Weaknesses**

- Complicated, outdated processes focusing on granular details of projects increase staff review time, delay permit approvals, and decrease customer satisfaction.
- While a process for improvement is underway, the use of IT resources to improve services and document management is constrained by funding limitations.
- Lack of street addresses complicates address verification, emergency response, and parcel delivery.
- Inefficient and outdated document management schemes consume staff and customer time, congest the office environment, and result in lost/misfiled documents.

## **Opportunities**

- Increase transparency and community outreach, information and education through proactive use of mainstream and social media resources, the City web site, newsletters, workshops and other live-action community and customer oriented events.
- Utilize IT and GIS resources, customer surveys, and direct customer contact to develop data and analytics to better justify, design and evaluate department programs and services.
- Consider the use of incentives to reward customers for being accurate, timely, and thorough in navigating the permit and construction processes.
- Encourage increased use of City web resources by customers to improve permit submittals and expedite the permit process.

## **Threats**

- Economic fluctuations can have adverse impacts on department finances, service levels, and staffing needs.
- Unfunded State and regional mandates add additional burdens on staff time and resources and may conflict with the village culture.
- Lack of continuity planning, staff turnover, limited written SOP's, and limited staff cross-training leaves the permitting process timelines vulnerable to extended staff absences due to vacations or emergencies.
- Unanticipated work (project revisions, emergency regulations, etc.) interrupt workflow and constrict staff time for planned projects.

## Summary of Goals and Objectives

### **Goals / Objectives**

***Goal 1. Ensure that development regulations are kept current and responsive to community needs.***

**Objectives:**

1. Review development regulations at least annually to ensure internal consistency and compliance with State and Federal regulations.
2. Conduct periodic community surveys and workshops to assess community needs and encourage engagement in the code development process.
3. Periodically update zoning and building codes and the general plan to address local issues and needs.

***Goal 2. Provide timely review and services in accordance with established Department performance measures.***

**Objectives:**

1. Provide response or approval within 2 weeks of receipt of new applications, 1 week for back-check responses.
2. Ensure all applications are complete prior to acceptance at the counter.
3. Establish procedures to streamline permit decisions.
4. Establish clear, transparent timelines for actions by applicants and review authorities to distribute widely to customers.

***Goal 3. Be responsive to customer needs and questions in a timely, proactive manner.***

**Objectives:**

1. Respond to customers within 1 business day, even if answers are not immediately available.
2. Encourage customers to make appointments to consult with staff.
3. Promote proactive outreach around sensitive topics.
4. Establish an email for general planning and building questions.
5. Treat customers with respect and empathy.

***Goal 4. Develop data collection, analysis and record keeping capabilities critical to making informed decisions.***

**Objectives:**

1. Coordinate permit software and e-permitting with the new web site.

2. Explore using email to notify citizens of current projects/situations.
3. Continue to obtain data and develop GIS capability related to land-use issues.
4. Integrate and effectively use IT systems (IWORQ, Laserfiche, Google suite, Survey Monkey, GIS, etc.) to collect and manage data.

***Goal 5. Enhance the Department's expertise and level-of-service through continuing staff education and professional development.***

**Objectives:**

1. Provide training opportunities to staff to obtain and maintain certifications, and expand knowledge base.
2. Support memberships in professional organizations.
3. Cross train between divisions on regulatory requirements.
4. Provide staff with annual opportunities to attend code related and professional development events and classes.

***Goal 6. Effectively disseminate accurate information to the public, policy makers, and partners utilizing all practical and available means.***

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure all handouts/guidelines are up-to-date and included on the web site.
2. Provide a robust FAQ resource for each division.
3. Educate the public on how to access available information.
4. Conduct periodic workshops to provide customers with accurate, timely information.

***Goal 7. Improve Department operations through effective use of current technology and systems.***

**Objectives:**

1. Obtain a computer for the counter to enable staff to access the City's computer network and print documents from the counter.
2. Monitor changes in technology and system needs and incorporate new technology as appropriate within resource limitations.
3. Improve e-permitting by implementing on-line payment procedure and enhancing on-line inspection scheduling.
4. Digitize property files and plan archives to reduce storage space and improve access to information.
5. Provide all staff members with access to software (GIS, Bluebeam, IWORQ, etc.) adopted for use by the department.

***Goal 8. Ensure continuity of operations through documentation of Department processes, procedures, and policies.***

**Objectives:**

1. Create and maintain a department policy, code interpretation and procedure manual.
2. Increase inter- and intra-division cross training of CPB staff.
3. Create step-by-step guidance documents for permitting and review of application submittals.
4. Develop a Department resilience plan identifying lines of succession, alternate work sites, and contingencies for extended loss of power, computers, etc.

***Goal 9. Actively collaborate with regulatory partners to coordinate regulations when appropriate.***

**Objectives:**

1. Keep open communications with partner agencies and colleagues.
2. Conduct/attend annual workshops with partner agencies to coordinate code development and compliance efforts.
3. Proactively contact other agencies involved in approving projects at the beginning of the application review process to improve coordination.

***Goal 10. Support economic development through balanced, thoughtful application of City planning and building regulations.***

**Objectives:**

1. Consider economic development opportunities in zoning code updates.
2. Explore the possibility of creating an economic development element in the General Plan.
3. Be accessible to potential new businesses needing information on zoning and building code regulations affecting their proposal.
4. Collaborate with property owners and the Chamber of Commerce on efforts to support local businesses.

## Plan Implementation/Maintenance

This plan will be implemented over time by the CPB staff in coordination with regulatory partners and the community when appropriate. While the plan offers goals and objectives for improving Department operations and service delivery to the public, it does not provide system-level recommendations on how to achieve the objectives.

Strategies for meeting objectives will be developed and considered by Department staff on an ongoing basis. Staff will utilize email and face-to-face communications internally to collaborate on proposed strategies directly related to the goals and objectives in this plan. Proposals will be considered during monthly Department staff meetings with approved strategies implemented as resources allow. Strategies that affect other City Departments (IT, Finance, Public Works, Administration) or regulatory partners (CAWD, MPRWMD, MBARD) will be presented to the affected agencies for their consideration and input prior to implementation. Collaboration will be promoted through networking with partners and subject matter experts, including utilization of working groups or committees as appropriate to the subject.

While not all objectives will require additional resources, it is important to recognize that fully attaining the Department's strategic goals and objectives as outlined in this plan will likely require funding, time, space, technology, and people. Resources required will be considered by the Department while vetting strategies for plan implementation. Where additional resources are needed which result in financial impacts to the City, those resources will be identified and pursued through the City's budgeting process. The general fund, user fees, and grant funding will be considered when financial resources are required to achieve a specific strategy and/or objective.

To assure that the plan remains relevant, it will be maintained by Department staff on an on-going basis. A progress review will be conducted annually in conjunction with a monthly staff meeting as identified by the Department director. Annual reviews will identify progress on achieving goals and objectives, evaluate the success of implemented strategies, and allow new information to refine goals, objectives and strategies.

A thorough update of the plan will be conducted every three years. Plan update cycles will include collecting input from the public, and internal and external regulatory partners, as well as from City leadership. The Department director is designated as the point person for managing implementation and maintenance procedures.

## Conclusion

This plan was developed through a highly collaborative process involving CPB Department staff, and includes best management practice benchmarks. It is informed by the City's General Plan. It confirms important community values and describes the regulatory environment in which the CPB and City of Carmel-by-the-Sea exist. It describes the Department's values, vision and mission as defined by the Department's own personnel. Through the goals and objectives contained within, it provides a roadmap to guide the Department as it continues evolving to meet the unique needs of the future while protecting the City's history, culture and environment while preserving the public's trust.

## Footnotes

1. City of Carmel General Plan, Introduction, Purpose and Organization. Page I-11. City of Carmel-by-the Sea, CA (2003)
2. City of Carmel General Plan, Introduction, Purpose and Organization. Page I-11. City of Carmel-by-the Sea, CA (2003)
3. National Flood Insurance Program, Panel 316, Map # 06053C0316H, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Washington D.C. (2017)
4. City of Carmel General Plan, Environmental Safety Element. Page 8-7. City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA (2009)
5. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element. Page A-2. City of Carmel –by-the-Sea, CA (2015)
6. City-Data.com, Carmel by the Sea Demographic Data (2016). Downloaded 3/14/19 from <http://www.city-data.com/city/Carmel-California.html>
7. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element. Page A-4. City of Carmel –by-the-Sea, CA (2015)
8. City-Data.com, Carmel by the Sea Demographic Data (2016). Downloaded 3/14/19 from <http://www.city-data.com/city/Carmel-California.html>
9. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element. Page A-8. City of Carmel –by-the-Sea, CA (2015)
10. City of Carmel Adopted Budget (2018-19). City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel, CA (2018)
11. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element, Page A-8. City of Carmel –by-the-Sea, CA (2015)
12. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element, Page 2-3. City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA (2015)
13. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element, Page B-25. City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA (2015)
14. Square Foot Construction Costs for Carmel-by-the-Sea. Carmel Building Safety Division. Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA, (2017)
15. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element, Page B-22. City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA (2015)

16. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element, Page A-8. City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA (2015)
17. City of Carmel General Plan, Housing Element, Page A-8. City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA (2015)