# AGENDA

**Finance and Economic Development Committee Meeting**
**Tuesday September 27, 2011**
**5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**
**City Hall South Conference Room**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of the June 30, 2011 Committee meeting minutes**
3. **Math in Focus-the Singapore Approach – 60 minutes**
4. **Building Division Performance Review-Matrix – 20 minutes**
5. **Committee Work Plan – 5 minutes**
6. **Committee member comments – 5 minutes**
7. **Future meetings**

# MINUTES – FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

June 30, 2011
North Conference Room
21630 11th Avenue South, Des Moines, WA

**Council Members**
Chair Carman Scott
Matt Pina
Melissa Musser

**City Staff**
Tony Piasecki – City Manager
Lorri Ericson – Assistant City Manager
Grant Fredricks – PBPW Director
Robert Ruth – Planning and Dev Svc Manager
Denise Lathrop – Planning Manager
Marion Yashino – Economic Dev. Mgr
Kathryn Kertzman – Seattle Southside

## 1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

## 2. Approval of the 5/5 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

## 3. Outlook for Tourism Development in SW King County

Kathryn Kertzman presented an Executive Summary about Seattle Southside and tourism in South King County. The presentation highlighted the effect of the recession on the tourism business and local hotels and the prognosis for recovery.

She advised that the Washington State Tourism would be closing. As a result the Washington Tourism Alliance, a not-for-profit, has been created. They are halfway through a strategic plan for the new organization and it appears to be well on its way to a successful organization.

She also gave an overview of the services offered by Seattle Southside, the results they have achieved and their plans for next year.

Chair Scott reported on her conversations with a hotel boutique developer and a local citizen who works in the hospitality industry in Redmond.

## 4. Committee Work Plan for second half of 2011

PBPW Director Fredricks shared with the council the 2011-2012 Work plan and timeline. He asked for council help prioritizing items in the plan and input on the timeline. Councilmember Pina asked that we add to two items to the workplan: a method to require landlords to keep their buildings in good repair and a method to address the need for an overlay zoning area for Wesley Homes and Highline Community College. Director Fredricks agreed to incorporate these two items.

## 5. Community Commercial Zoning Designation

Robert discussed the Community Commercial zoning along Pacific Highway and the letter from Food Services of America requesting zoning changes to restore the code for that area to the same zoning it was prior to any changes to the downtown area. The committee consensus was that this matter needed to come before the entire council.

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## 6. Committee Member Comments

We did not have time for additional comments.

## 7. Future meetings

Next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday July 26, 2011 at 5:00 pm.

Adjourned at 7:30 p.m.
Respectfully submitted by:
Lorri Ericson, Assistant City Manager

DRAFT

# The Case for *Math In Focus: The Singapore Approach*

I am writing this document on behalf of many parents and friends who have expressed interest in the Highline District Elementary Mathematics Curriculum. After a careful review of the candidate textbooks, it is our firm desire for the district to adopt ***Math In Focus: The Singapore Approach***. In the sections below I will outline the many reasons why we believe this is the **best choice for Highline**.

## Executive Summary:

**1.** ***Math In Focus*** provides a balanced approach to learning and is used successfully in a wide variety of school environments.

**2A.** Gildo Rey Elementary in Auburn, WA achieved a **20.3%** average increase in MSP scores during their first year of using ***Math In Focus***.

**2B.** Elementary Schools in Longview, WA achieved a **12.7%** yearly average increase by piloting ***Singapore Math***. The Board adopted ***Math In Focus*** district-wide for the 2011-2012 school year.

**2C.** Schmitz Park Elementary in West Seattle has used ***Singapore Math*** for 4 years to attain the third highest rating in Washington.

**2D.** Based on the successes of ***Math In Focus*** and the strength of the district math team, a first year increase in MSP pass rates of **10 to 15%** is realistically achievable.

**3.** Two districts who adopted ***EnVisionMATH*** in 2009 (Richland and Snoqualmie Valley) averaged a **4.9% drop** in MSP pass rates.

**4.** Four districts who adopted ***Math Expressions*** in 2009 (Bellevue, Enumclaw, Mercer Island, and Northshore) averaged a **3.2% drop** in MSP pass rates.

**5.** The strength of ***Math In Focus*** was easily identifiable among teachers and community members.

**6.** There are serious problems with ***EnVisions*** as detailed in a letter from a parent with firsthand experience.

**7.** Adoption of ***Math In Focus*** would build a strong bridge with parents/guardians and the entire community.

**8.** Why would we not expect what **Gildo Rey Elementary** has accomplished? Why would we forego the potential 10-15% gain for a 3-5% loss? ***Math In Focus*** is the right choice for Highline.

## 1. Origins of *Math In Focus: The Singapore Approach*

***Math in Focus*** is an American rendition of the time tested mathematics curriculum that has placed the country of Singapore in the number 3 spot of the 2007 TIMSS world rankings. The materials used in Singapore schools are published in English by Marshall Cavendish, Inc. It is taught as an ELL program in the country of Singapore, since English is not their native language.

The original Singapore curriculum has been used for many years in the US by homeschoolers and increasingly now by many school districts. Schools that have adopted Singapore Math range from the economically disadvantaged PS 132 in Brooklyn to the Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC where President Obama's daughters attend. A very informative segment on Singapore Math was featured recently on the Today Show which clearly illustrates its balanced approach to learning.

The ***Math In Focus*** program was first made available to a few early adopting districts in the Fall of 2009, but its first full year of open distribution to the US market was in the Fall of 2010. The primary difference between ***Math In Focus*** and the original Singapore materials is that the names and pictures of the characters used in story problems have been "Americanized". One of the early adopters in 2009 was **Gildo Rey Elementary** in Auburn, WA whose very promising results are discussed in the next section.

## 2. Performance Results from 3 Schools Using Singapore Math

### 2A. Gildo Rey Elementary – Auburn, WA

The MSP results for Gildo Rey as compared to Auburn and Highline District averages are shown below.

**MSP/WASL Pass Rates:**

| School: | | Gildo Rey | | | Auburn | | | Highline | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Curriculum: | Evrydy | M in Fcs | | Evrydy | Evrydy | | Invstgns | Invstgns | |
| School Yr: | '08-09 | '09-10 | Diff | '08-09 | '09-10 | Diff | '08-09 | '09-10 | Diff |
| 3rd Grade: | 74.0% | 96.7% | 22.7% | 72.5% | 69.5% | -3.0% | 51.7% | 45.7% | -6.0% |
| 4th Grade: | 50.9% | 84.2% | 33.3% | 52.3% | 59.6% | 7.3% | 35.9% | 35.8% | -0.1% |
| 5th Grade: | 68.9% | 73.7% | 4.8% | 57.7% | 57.8% | 0.1% | 46.4% | 42.3% | -4.1% |
| **Average:** | **64.6%** | **84.9%** | **20.3%** | **60.8%** | **62.3%** | **1.5%** | **44.7%** | **41.3%** | **-3.4%** |

Note that the average first year increase for Gildo Rey using ***Math In Focus*** was 20.3% as compared to the Auburn average of 1.5%. Unfortunately Highline's pass rate dropped 3.4% to 41.3% and is now less than half that of Gildo Rey.

It is also interesting to compare the demographic data from Gildo Rey to that of the Highline District.

| Demographic Data | Gildo Rey | Highline |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (October 2009)** | | |
| Male | 56.30% | 52.40% |
| Female | 43.70% | 47.60% |
| **Race/Ethnicity (October 2009)** | | |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 2.90% | 1.80% |
| Asian | 7.20% | 15.50% |
| Pacific Islander | 2.90% | 4.00% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 10.20% | 19.50% |
| Black | 9.30% | 12.10% |
| Hispanic | 40.00% | 31.60% |
| White | 37.60% | 29.40% |
| **Special Programs** | | |
| Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2010) | 78.40% | 63.40% |
| Special Education (May 2010) | 14.60% | 13.10% |
| Transitional Bilingual (May 2010) | 33.80% | 21.30% |

Gildo Rey is very comparable to the Highline District in terms of demographics.

In my recent attempt to contact the school for further information on their impressive results, I have not yet received a return call.

## 2B. Longview School District – Longview, WA

The **Longview School District** has been piloting Singapore Math for 2 years now. Based on the results of this experience, the School Board recently adopted ***Math In Focus*** for the 2011-2012 school year. Since the pilot was performed for grades 1 and 2 only, there is no relevant MSP/WASL data to analyze. Instead, the district provided test results from recent Benchmark testing for 3 schools: **Mint Valley** (one year on Singapore), **Northlake** (two years on Singapore), and **Olympic** (still on Everyday Math).

**Longview 1st Grade:**

| School:<br>Curriculum: | Mint Valley<br>Singapore | Northlake<br>Singapore | Olympic<br>Everyday |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher Yrs on Crclm: | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Student Yrs on Crclm: | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Pct Meeting Std: | 83.0% | 89.3% | 72.9% |
| Pct Below Std: | 15.1% | 10.7% | 16.7% |
| Pct Well Below Std: | 1.9% | 0.0% | 10.4% |

**Longview 2nd Grade:**

| School: | Mint Valley | Northlake | Olympic |
|---|---|---|---|
| Curriculum: | Singapore | Singapore | Everyday |
| Teacher Yrs on Crclm: | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Student Yrs on Crclm: | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Pct Meeting Std: | N/A | 58.6% | 22.4% |
| Pct Below Std: | N/A | 24.1% | 51.7% |
| Pct Well Below Std: | N/A | 0.0% | 25.9% |

The test results show Northlake with significantly higher percentages of students meeting standard. Unfortunately the Mint Valley second grade results were not available.

To compute a rough average gain per year from using Singapore Math, I'll use the following logic:

In 1st Grade, Mint Valley had a 1 yr gain of 11.1% over Olympic.

In 1st Grade, Northlake had a 2 yr gain of 16.4% over Olympic, or 8.2% per year.

In 2nd Grade, Northlake had a 2 yr gain of 36.2% over Olympic, or 18.1% per year.

The average gain per year is **12.7%**. (11.1 + 8.2 + 8.2 + 18.1 + 18.1) / 5 = **12.7**

The demographic data for the three schools shows Northlake being the highest in ELL and Olympic highest in Special Ed.

| Demographic Data | Mint Vly | Northlake | Olympic |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender (October 2009)** | | | |
| Male | 50.80% | 52.40% | 46.30% |
| Female | 49.20% | 47.60% | 53.70% |
| **Race/Ethnicity (October 2009)** | | | |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 2.80% | 3.50% | 2.70% |
| Asian | 1.50% | 2.70% | 1.50% |
| Pacific Islander | 0.40% | 0.00% | 1.50% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2.00% | 2.70% | 3.00% |
| Black | 1.10% | 1.10% | 2.10% |
| Hispanic | 11.50% | 24.70% | 16.10% |
| White | 78.50% | 60.60% | 68.40% |
| **Special Programs** | | | |
| Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2010) | 65.50% | 64.70% | 69.10% |
| Special Education (May 2010) | 13.30% | 12.60% | 18.30% |
| Transitional Bilingual (May 2010) | 5.80% | 15.30% | 7.20% |

## 2C. Schmitz Park Elementary – West Seattle, WA

Schmitz Park Elementary is now in their 4th year of using Singapore Math (California Edition). Their math scores place them 3rd in the state (see Awards). The 2 schools ahead of them are "select" schools, i.e. like Aviation HS but at the elementary level. It is ironic that they are using a curriculum that OSPI rated as the lowest in the state (.365 alignment), yet the first thing you see when you walk in the front door is a letter from state officials congratulating them on their remarkable achievements.

Another parent and I visited the school last week to talk with some of the people instrumental in their success. We spoke with a 5th grade teacher, a 3-5th grade math specialist, and a 2nd grade teacher. Here are some of the key points we learned:

1) Average pass rates are higher than Lowell Elementary , which is home to the top 1 or 2% of Seattle elementary students.
2) Students gain a strong sense of "empowerment" from doing the problems.
3) They tend not to want to work in groups since they all feel capable.
4) Girls are performing at a higher level than the boys.
5) 75% of the 5th graders skip 6th grade math when they go to middle school.
6) Madison Middle School had to create an advanced program for Schmitz students.
7) Among the many successes, teachers are most proud of the Special Ed results.
8) 5 Special Ed students skipped 6th grade math and 2 attended the Math Olympiad.

Below are the MSP results and demographics for Schmitz Park Elementary.

| **Schmitz Park Demographic Data:** | | **2010 MSP:** | **Schmitz** | **Lowell** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender (October 2009)** | | 3rd Grade | 94.60% | 92.90% |
| Male | 48.5% | 4th Grade | 78.90% | 87.50% |
| Female | 51.5% | 5th Grade | 94.50% | 83.60% |
| **Race/Ethnicity (October 2009)** | | Average | 89.33% | 88.00% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 2.3% | | | |
| Asian | 9.0% | | | |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 9.0% | | | |
| Black | 2.5% | | | |
| Hispanic | 5.1% | | | |
| White | 81.1% | | | |
| **Special Programs** | | | | |
| Free or Reduced-Price Meals | 9.6% | | | |
| Special Education (May 2010) | 7.4% | | | |
| Transitional Bilingual (May 2010) | 0.0% | | | |

## 2D. Performance Expectations Summary

The New York Times reports that about 1,500 schools are using Singapore Math, and 120 districts have adopted ***Math In Focus***. There are many other success stories with Singapore Math that could be told, including a Title 1 school in Alhambra, CA with 60% ELL. In their first year after switching to Singapore in 2005, their pass rate increased by an average of 18% over grades 2-5.

Based on the Washington schools discussed above, it seems that a **first year increase** in pass rates of **10 to 15 percentage points** is a reasonable expectation for ***Math In Focus***. However, as has been discussed in nearly all of our meetings, it is not just a textbook that produces results; all of the ingredients from the 'Leave Nothing To Chance' document (professional development, frameworks, etc.) need to be present. With the talents, strengths, and abilities of our current district staff, I have every confidence that a highly successful adoption can and will be accomplished.

## 3. Performance Results from 2 Districts Using *EnVision*

***EnVisionMATH*** is a relatively new program, so MSP results for 2010 adopters such as Shoreline and Lake Washington are not available. The only data from Washington state comes from the Snoqualmie Valley ($4^{th}$-$5^{th}$ Grades) and Richland districts who adopted ***EnVisions*** in 2009.

**MSP/WASL Pass Rates:**

| School: | Snoq Vl | | | Richland | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Curriculum: | Growing | EnVsn | | Invstgns | EnVsn | |
| School Year: | '08-09 | 09-10 | Diff | '08-09 | 09-10 | Diff |
| 3rd Grade: | N/A | N/A | N/A | 71.6% | 69.4% | -2.2% |
| 4th Grade: | 70.0% | 68.1% | -1.9% | 53.8% | 56.6% | 2.8% |
| 5th Grade: | 78.1% | 68.3% | -9.8% | 68.2% | 55.9% | -12.3% |
| **Average:** | **74.1%** | **68.2%** | **-5.8%** | **64.5%** | **60.6%** | **-3.9%** |

Note that both districts struggled with the first year of ***EnVisions***, and showed an average **4.9% drop** in MSP scores.

For the record, the demographic data below shows that neither Richland nor Snoqualmie Valley are significantly disadvantaged by socio-economic factors.

| Demographic Data: | Snoq Vly | Richland |
|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity (October 2009)** | | |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 1.00% | 1.20% |
| Asian | 4.10% | 4.60% |
| Pacific Islander | 0.20% | 0.20% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 4.30% | 4.80% |
| Black | 0.90% | 2.60% |
| Hispanic | 3.90% | 8.80% |
| White | 86.60% | 80.70% |
| **Special Programs** | | |
| Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2010) | 13.10% | 30.00% |
| Special Education (May 2010) | 10.20% | 10.80% |
| Transitional Bilingual (May 2010) | 1.70% | 2.30% |

## 4. Performance Results From 4 Districts Using *Math Expressions*

Four districts adopted ***Math Expressions*** in 2009: Bellevue, Enumclaw, Mercer Island, and Northshore.

**MSP/WASL Pass Rates:**

| School: | Bellevue | | | Enumclaw | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Curriculum: | Unkwn | Mth Exp | | Unkwn | Mth Exp | |
| School Year: | '08-09 | '09-10 | Diff | '08-09 | '09-10 | Diff |
| 3rd Grade: | 82.9% | 77.1% | -5.8% | 63.0% | 65.4% | 2.4% |
| 4th Grade: | 69.1% | 73.5% | 4.4% | 41.5% | 44.4% | 2.9% |
| 5th Grade: | 81.8% | 77.9% | -3.9% | 63.7% | 46.8% | -16.9% |
| **Average:** | **77.9%** | **76.2%** | **-1.8%** | **56.1%** | **52.2%** | **-3.9%** |

**MSP/WASL Pass Rates:**

| School: | Mercer Isl | | | Northshore | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Curriculum: | Unkwn | Mth Exp | | Unkwn | Mth Exp | |
| School Year: | '08-09 | '09-10 | Diff | '08-09 | '09-10 | Diff |
| 3rd Grade: | 89.2% | 85.0% | -4.2% | 78.1% | 76.7% | -1.4% |
| 4th Grade: | 86.8% | 86.0% | -0.8% | 70.4% | 69.9% | -0.5% |
| 5th Grade: | 91.0% | 84.7% | -6.3% | 79.3% | 70.6% | -8.7% |
| **Average:** | **89.0%** | **85.2%** | **-3.8%** | **75.9%** | **72.4%** | **-3.5%** |

The average **drop** in first year MSP scores for the 4 districts on ***Math Expressions*** was **3.2%.**

Demographic data appears below and is not similar to that of the Highline district.

| Demographic Data | Bellv | Enmclw | Mrcr Isl | Nrthshr |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity (October 2009)** | | | | |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 0.40% | 10.30% | 0.30% | 0.80% |
| Asian | 27.20% | 1.30% | 19.70% | 12.00% |
| Pacific Islander | 0.00% | 0.10% | 0.20% | 0.50% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 27.20% | 1.50% | 19.90% | 12.50% |
| Black | 3.00% | 0.80% | 1.20% | 2.00% |
| Hispanic | 9.00% | 7.80% | 2.10% | 8.70% |
| White | 51.20% | 78.60% | 73.30% | 71.70% |
| **Special Programs** | | | | |
| Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2010) | 20.60% | 28.90% | 2.70% | 15.40% |
| Special Education (May 2010) | 10.50% | 12.50% | 10.20% | 13.20% |
| Transitional Bilingual (May 2010) | 9.50% | 3.20% | 1.80% | 4.70% |

## 5. Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses

Parents have two over-riding concerns when it comes to elementary math:

**1. Our children must be educated in a manner where they learn and retain basic math skills to allow them to succeed at higher grade levels.**

**2. A curriculum must have materials that allow parents to actively aid and assist their child in learning math.**

In light of these concerns, I make the following observations on the strengths and weaknesses as identified by teachers and community members.

**5A.** Two independent groups listed the first strength of ***Math In Focus*** as its fundamental approach to teaching, i.e. using the **Concrete to Pictorial to Abstract** model. This issue, along with teaching to mastery, are the key components responsible for the success on test scores. Note that nowhere on the list of strengths for ***Math Expressions*** and ***EnVisions*** is there a similar comment.

**5B.** Note also that the two independent groups list ***Math In Focus*** as being both parent and teacher friendly. Supporting remarks include the clarity and ease of use of the materials. ***EnVisions*** lists strengths for ELL and online components, yet has a weakness of being "text heavy". ***Math Expressions*** has conflicting results when it comes to teacher friendliness. Also, the heavy emphasis on words is a "**deal-breaker**" when it comes to parent friendliness in a district with the ELL population of Highline.

**5C.** While there are numerous other important factors addressed such as alignment, assessments, etc., the final measure of success comes from student results. ***Math In Focus*** is the one curriculum that can best deliver the necessary results.

## 6. A Parent's Firsthand Experience with *EnVisions*

Below are the relevant portions of an email from a parent of a 5th grader in Richland who has had direct experience with the recent adoption of ***EnVisions***.

"Hi . . . ,

" . . . My son was in the 4th grade when we started using Envision. At home, we were struck with the poor quality of the homework problems. It's as if a completely different staff wrote the homework. This group of homework authors sometimes wrote unsolvable problems, made errors, were generally careless and not mathematical in their thought. We often sent our son's homework back to school with a sticky note to the teacher, saying things like "this problem involves a negative number, which 4th graders can't handle". The extension homework problems were often totally unrelated to the lesson, and not at all useful in building a mathematical foundation. They were often brain teasers, which I found very irritating. I know that many if not most of the kids didn't know their math facts and couldn't do basic computations fluently and accurately, so there was no time for time-eating, sometimes unsolvable and usually frustrating brain teasers. When our adoption committee reviewed Envision, we did not see the homework materials, so this issue was a surprise to me.

"About halfway into the year (or maybe it was around March), parents of the second graders started coming to me complaining about the way EnVision teaches subtraction. Kids and parents alike were struggling with it. They use a strange system of a visual tool they created (gotta come up with something original, after all) that I think was called "10 cards" or "10 spot cards" or something of the sort. It's positively awful. The parents were clueless. I struggled for quite some time to figure out what they were doing in the illustrations. I then compared it side-by-side with Singapore and the flaws in the Envision method were numerous and obvious.

" Third grade teachers complained about the need for rampant photocopying (and we all know how budget cuts have affected copying!) because there are no consumables for 3rd grade. 3rd graders are still slow writers, so recopying is arduous and slows the math learning.

"The DVD materials got rave reviews from the teachers. They liked how it was organized and friendly to them. I know the kids loved the Smartboard lessons. There is an online component which our son's teacher started to use but he later fizzled out on it. Not sure why.

" . . . That's my personal experience with Envision. Hope this helps."

The letter above explains clearly why ***EnVisions*** would be a poor choice for Highline. As a footnote, this parent has now removed her son from public school and is homeschooling with Singapore Math.

## 7. Building a Bridge with Parents/Guardians and Community

As an active member of the community, I converse and correspond with many other parents in the district. Most of these contacts know me as a person who is passionate about mathematics and the education of our students in that subject. What I hear from other parents, and what was evident on the Community Input document, is that ***Math In Focus*** is the clear favorite for district adoption.

What would the successful adoption of ***Math In Focus*** mean to parents/guardians and the community?

- It would be welcome news to those who have said, "I don't know how to help my kids with their homework."
- It would provide the next wave of elementary students a solid foundation to succeed in middle school and on into high school.
- It would mean that the district has not only listened to, but has also acted upon the input and desires of the community.
- It would send a positive message of community partnership to bond and levy voters who feel the severe pinch of economic conditions.
- It would likely mean that MSP scores next year would increase 10% or more.
- It would mean that the community has a truly world class math program.
- It would attract families to the community who understand the significant advantages of such a solid math program.
- And finally, it would build a strong bridge with parents/guardians and the community to work together on future challenges and opportunities within the district.

## 8a. Conclusion

The evidence presented here is both clear and compelling. A decision to adopt ***Math Expressions*** or ***EnVisions*** would mean foregoing the likely potential of a 10 to 15% increase in pass rates and instead be faced with a first year drop of 3 to 5%. In a district that has been struggling with math scores for years, it would be a travesty for students and parents alike. If Gildo Rey Elementary can accomplish what it has, is there any reason for parents to expect less of Highline? Clearly, if we are serious about "leaving nothing to chance", the right choice for Highline is ***Math In Focus***.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Hewett

May 17, 2011

## OSPI Pass Rates for 2010-11

| Grade Level | WA | HSD | Des Moines | Midway | North Hill | Parkside |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3rd Grade | 61.50% | 48.50% | 52.40% | 57.10% | 61.60% | 55.00% |
| 4th Grade | 59.30% | 45.80% | 68.10% | 26.60% | 58.80% | 61.40% |
| 5th Grade | 61.20% | 52.20% | 58.20% | 36.10% | 65.90% | 54.10% |
| 6th Grade | 58.80% | 55.80% | 63.90% | 55.20% | 53.50% | 71.40% |
| Average | 60.20% | 50.58% | 60.65% | 43.75% | 59.95% | 60.48% |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

# Math In Focus

Highline School Board Meeting

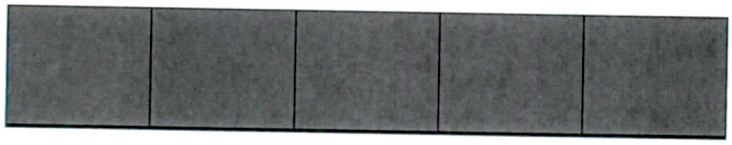
May 25, 2011

## Sample Problem

Mary went shopping. She spent 2/5 of her money on a handbag. Then she bought a belt for $20. She had $25 leftover.

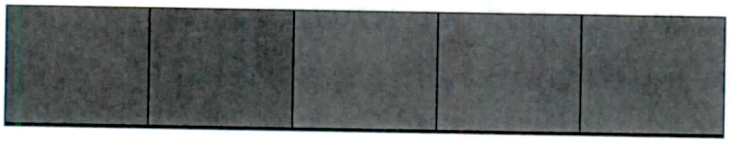
How much money did she start with?

Mary spent 2/5 on a handbag and $20 for a belt. She had $25 left. How much did she start with?



Mary spent 2/5 on a handbag and $20 for a belt. She had $25 left. How much did she start with?

| Handbag |



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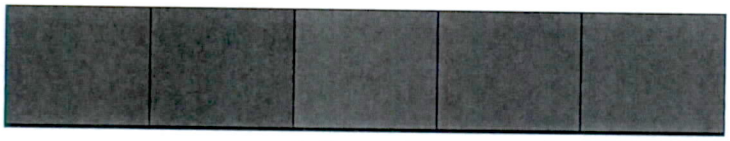
| Handbag | Belt | Leftover |



| $20 | $25 |

| $20 + $25 = $45 |

Mary spent 2/5 on a handbag and $20 for a belt. She had $25 left. How much did she start with?

| Handbag | Belt | Leftover |

| $20 | $25 |

| $20 + $25 = $45 |

$45 / 3 = $15

Mary spent 2/5 on a handbag and $20 for a belt. She had $25 left. How much did she start with?

| Handbag | Belt | Leftover |

| $20 | $25 |

| $20 + $25 = $45 |

$45 / 3 = $15

Mary spent 2/5 on a handbag and $20 for a belt. She had $25 left. How much did she start with?

| Handbag | Belt | Leftover |

| $20 | $25 |

| $20 + $25 = $45 |

$45 / 3 = $15

Mary spent 2/5 on a handbag and $20 for a belt. She had $25 left. How much did she start with?

Answer:
$15 x 5 = $75

$45 / 3 = $15

Mary spent 2/5 on a handbag and $20 for a belt. She had $25 left. How much did she start with?

Traditional Algebra:

M = (2/5)M + 20 + 25
M – (2/5)M = 20 + 25
(3/5)M = 20 + 25
(3/5)M = 45
M = (5/3) x 45
M = 5 x 15
M = 75

# Matrix Study of Building Division
# Staff-Ranked Top 10 Recommendations

### 1. Permit Technician

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.18 | The City should implement a permit technician position, in lieu of one of the administrative staff positions, on the front counter to assist the public and review applications as received. Incomplete applications (i.e. – those unable to be reviewed) should be rejected and not accepted. |
| 5.18 | The permit technician should be trained to perform simple zoning clearances on building permit applications to streamline the process. |

### 2. On Line Permitting

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.21(4) | The City should expand the use of technology to enable applicants for trade permits to complete a permit application via the Internet involving all of what is now an over-the-counter transaction. |

### 3. On Line Inquiry

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.21(5) | The City should utilize PermitTrax to provide the capacity for the public and for applicants to access data in Permits Plus through the Internet. |

### 4. Web Posting of Standard Conditions of Approval

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.5 | The conditions of approval utilized by all of the divisions and departments in the review of discretionary and administrative permits should be documented and posted to the Department's website. |

### 5. Web Posting of Code Interpretations

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.17 | The ~~Building Division~~Department should document official building inspection and other development code interpretations and publish them on the Department's website. |

### 6. "How To" Guide

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.1(b) | The City should develop a comprehensive "How to Manual" or "Development Guide" for use by the public and publish this document to the website. |

### 7. Improved Communications and Annual Surveys

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.1(a) | A significant increase in the dialogue between the City and the Construction Services Industry must be adopted including quarterly training and meetings, newsletters, and frequent outreach for input. |
| 5.1(a) | An annual and ongoing customer satisfaction survey should be conducted by the City. |

### 8. Plan Review Targets and Reporting

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.8 | The Building Division should establish formal plan review targets for each type of permit application that differentiate based upon type and size of project. |
| 5.4 | Monthly performance reports outlining the percentage of plan reviews and inspections completed within established time frames should be developed, distributed to key administrative and elected officials, and posted to the internet. The report should be broken down by functional review area (i.e. – Building Permits – Residential, Small Commercial, Large Commercial, over the counter permits, etc.). This information should incorporate all components of the integrated review and approval process including Planning and Engineering functions. |

### 9. Training

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.2 | A quarterly development review training session should be implemented for all staff directly involved in Development Review. |
| 5.2 | The specific training topics for each meeting should be developed by staff but could include topics such as: customer service training, review of inter-departmental issues, more in-depth discussion of the role of a specific department, etc. |
| 5.3 | The City through the City Manager and the Planning, Building & Public Works Director should provide training to all staff regarding the "focus" of the Department on providing high-quality services in a timely manner. |
| 5.10 | At least quarterly, formal meetings should be conducted with the plans review and inspection staff to identify issues that have arisen in the last quarter, discuss options for resolution, and ensure a consistent approach to service provision. |

### 10. Permit Fee Management

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.20 | The City should consider reserving some portion of permit fees on larger projects to support workload in future years. |

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the management review of the Building Division for the City of Des Moines, Washington conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group.

## A. PROJECT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES.

The purpose of the study was to provide assistance to the City in reviewing existing development review practices, policies, procedures, and resources with a focus on developing recommendations to improve the overall services, including customer service, provided by the City to the customers of the Building Division.

In conducting this engagement with the City of Des Moines the project team undertook the following steps.

- Detailed interviews with all staff of the Building Division and selected other staff that routinely interact or coordinate services provided by the Division. In addition, an employee survey was conducted to gather additional input and insight from City staff.
- Conducted data collection to gather relevant information regarding the services provided, the volume of work staff has to manage, and the time frames in which the work is completed;
- Conducted numerous interviews with representatives of the Development Community to fully understand their perceptions of the levels of service provided by the City of Des Moines and to gather their input regarding major areas of opportunity for improvement.
- Performed a best management practices assessment comparing the City's operational practices to key development review best management practices.

These activities enabled the project team to analyze the current performance of duties, the duties assigned and allocated to staff, and the opportunities for improvement

in the customer service arena. The analysis conducted led to the recommendations that are contained in the later chapters of this report.

## B. OVERALL SUMMARY.

The City of Des Moines is providing in-house a comprehensive building permitting functions consistent with many best practices within the industry. In reading this report and the listing of recommendations that follow, there are some key points that the reader should be cognizant of as they impact not only the service approach and level provided, but also places recommendations into context. In general, the Building Division is providing both a comprehensive suite of services to their customers, and a high level of technical expertise. This is a strong base from which to move to the next level in addressing and implementing the recommendations within the report, and addressing those areas where perception and reality may not be in alignment.

The background point to keep in mind as reading this report include the following:

- The Building Division is a relatively small operation with only a total of six (6) employees providing all required services. This number includes the Building Official and the administrative support personnel.

- With only three (3) staff dedicated to plan review and inspection activities, it is important to maximize their use and streamline processes so that they are able to devote as much time as possible to actual service provision.

- The listing of recommendations is intended to be a multi-year plan for guiding changes and improvements in the process. With limited staffing, it would not be possible to implement all changes at once – and even if staffing permitted, these should be phased in over time.

- During the conduct of this study, the Building Department reduced headcount from seven (7) to six (6) employees. This reduction occurred in the Building Inspector classification.

- Also during the conduct of this study, the Department was in the process of replacing its old antiquated legacy permitting system with a new software solution; namely, PermitTrax. This new system has greatly expanded capacity

and functionality that was not present in the prior version. There are several recommendations regarding technology utilization within the report, that were not feasible under the old system and staff are planning to implement with the new software. These recommendations are provided to guide implementation and support the efforts underway.

- In addition to serving as the Permit Center, the Building Division front counter staff also serve as the main "reception" area and customer service function for City Hall handling all visitors and general phone calls. This task may consume up to 20% of the time of these individuals and adds an additional level of public interaction and workload not present in most other permit centers.

- The feedback received from prior customers was utilized to develop a comprehensive understanding of the "perception" they held regarding service levels and customer service. While not all perceptions are reality, they do need to be addressed, and the perception changed, in order for the City's Building Division to be viewed as a well-functioning operation. In many cases, this requires additional communication and outreach rather than a change in actual operating practice.

It is also important to note that this study only focused on the building permitting functions (plan review, processing, and inspection) of the development review process. The building permitting function is only one component of the overall development review process – other critical areas include the Planning Department (for land entitlement issues), and Engineering (infrastructure review). This is specifically important to note because not all customers when expressing concerns about services received make the necessary distinction about where issues or concerns with the City arise – they often focus on the Building Division since this is the typically the final entity they deal with in the overall process and the one that issues the certificate of occupancy.

The best practices utilized in this report in evaluating the operations of the Building Division were derived from a variety of sources including the firm's experience conducting hundreds of similar studies for other municipal organizations throughout the

United States, recommendations of professional associations, and model practices employed by progressive municipal organizations. They have been modified to ensure compatibility with the regulatory environment present in Washington State and the City of Des Moines and, where necessary, for a smaller building permitting operation.

## C. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table summarizes the recommendations contained in the report.

**Summary of Recommendations**

| Section | Recommendation | Priority | Cost / (Saving) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.1(a) | A significant increase in the dialogue between the City and the Construction Services Industry must be adopted including quarterly training and meetings, newsletters, and frequent outreach for input. | High | n/a |
| 5.1(a) | An annual and ongoing customer satisfaction survey should be conducted by the City. | High | n/a |
| 5.1(a) | The City should institute an email newsletter to increase the level of dialogue with customers that is focused on educating applicants regarding changing policies and procedures, providing educational information regarding code compliance, and discussing available training sessions. | High | n/a |
| 5.1(b) | The City should develop a comprehensive "How to Manual" or "Development Guide" for use by the public and publish this document to the website. | High | n/a |
| 5.1(b) | The guide should include copies of checklists for each phase of the development process, as well as copies of all standard conditions of approval for each department. | High | n/a |
| 5.1(c) | Post common plan check corrections on the City's website to provide guidance to architects and design professionals on the development requirements in the City of Des Moines. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.1(d) | The Building Division should develop a comprehensive manual of code interpretations as developed locally. The manual should be utilized for internal staff training and be posted to the website for use by the development/construction communities. | Medium | n/a |

| Section | Recommendation | Priority | Cost / (Saving) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.2 | A quarterly development review training session should be implemented for all staff directly involved in Development Review. | High | n/a |
| 5.2 | The specific training topics for each meeting should be developed by staff but could include topics such as: customer service training, review of inter-departmental issues, more in-depth discussion of the role of a specific department, etc. | High | n/a |
| 5.2 | A training needs assessment should be conducted for all staff involved in development review. Individual employee training plans should be developed that focus on maintenance of existing certifications / licenses and then expansion of skills. | High | n/a |
| 5.3 | The City through the City Manager and the Planning, Building & Public Works Director should provide training to all staff regarding the "focus" of the Department on providing high-quality services in a timely manner. | High | n/a |
| 5.4 | Monthly performance reports outlining the percentage of plan reviews and inspections completed within established time frames should be developed, distributed to key administrative and elected officials, and posted to the internet. The report should be broken down by functional review area (i.e. – Building Permits – Residential, Small Commercial, Large Commercial, over the counter permits, etc.). This information should incorporate all components of the integrated review and approval process including Planning and Engineering functions. | High | n/a |
| 5.5 | The conditions of approval utilized by all of the divisions and departments in the review of discretionary and administrative permits should be documented and posted to the Department's website. | High | n/a |
| 5.6 | Staff comments regarding submissions should be limited to adopted Building Codes or City Council policies and procedures and should provide specific guidance on the change necessary for compliance. | High | n/a |
| 5.7 | The City should require all applicants to submit a checklist showing all corrections made in reference to comments received on all resubmittals. | High | n/a |

| Section | Recommendation | Priority | Cost / (Saving) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.7 | The City should consider the consistent implementation of resubmittal fee for all applications that require more than two reviews beyond the original review. Application fees should be set at a level that incorporates two reviews within the base fee. | High | n/a |
| 5.8 | The Building Division should establish formal plan review targets for each type of permit application that differentiate based upon type and size of project. | High | n/a |
| 5.8 | The Department should develop a contingency plan that includes the use of external resources or overtime, when they are unable to complete workload within required timeframes. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.9 | The City should develop a handout containing a matrix of who to contract for various issues to assist applicants in appropriately resolving issues. | High | n/a |
| 5.9 | Specific individuals (Chief Building Official) should be designated as the ombudspersons for the receipt, review and resolution of all complaints regarding service levels related to code compliance and enforcement issues within their specific areas of responsibility. | High | n/a |
| 5.10 | The Chief Building Official should coordinate weekly training of plan review and inspection staff and be responsible for the ongoing quality of the in-house coordination. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.10 | The Division must assure that training occurs for each plan check and inspection discipline at least one hour weekly. All employees should be assigned as presenters on a rotating basis. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.10 | The City should conduct at least semi-annual training sessions that involve all participants in the development review process (fire, engineering, planning, building, etc.). | Medium | n/a |
| 5.10 | At least quarterly, formal meetings should be conducted with the plans review and inspection staff to identify issues that have arisen in the last quarter, discuss options for resolution, and ensure a consistent approach to service provision. | Medium | n/a |

| Section | Recommendation | Priority | Cost / (Saving) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.11 | The City of Des Moines should develop a program to encourage and reward staff for achieving the ability to perform multiple trade inspections. The City should implement a classification and salary schedule that encourages and rewards employees for attaining additional trade certifications beyond those required to hold the position. | High | Varies. |
| 5.11 | The City of Des Moines should formalize the utilization and deployment of more cross-trained building inspectors to better manage and adjust to changing workloads. | High | n/a |
| 5.12 | The scheduling of inspections for Building Inspectors should be modified to enable additional efficiencies by having PermitTrax directly assign requested inspections to the appropriate inspector. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.12 | The cut-off time for inspections should be modified from 2:00 p.m. the day before the requested inspections to 6:00 a.m. day off the requested inspection. | High | n/a |
| 5.13 | The Division should continue monitoring inspection services timeframes and staffing levels adjusted when less than 95% of inspections are completed within one day of request or when overtime utilization to conduct routine inspections becomes regular and ongoing. | Low | n/a |
| 5.14 | Initiate a policy that inspectors do not re-open a construction element previously approved by another building inspector without prior discussion with the Building Official. This policy should discourage surprises or changes to previous field job approvals by building inspectors. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.14 | Initiate a policy whereby inspectors do not take issue in public with a plan check approval. If an inspector questions a plan check approval or is concerned about an omission or discrepancy, the building inspector should review it with the plans examiner and if a problem is identified, have the Plans Examiner contact the contractor's architect for a change. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.15 | Inspection checklists should be developed and utilized by Building Inspectors to increase consistency. Completed checklists should become a component of the project file. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.15 | Inspection checklists should be posted to the City's website for use by customers. | Medium | n/a |

| Section | Recommendation | Priority | Cost / (Saving) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.16 | The Building Official should periodically ride along with each building inspector – at least one-half day every three months. Additionally, the Lead Inspector should conduct periodic job inspections to evaluate inspector's performance. | High | n/a |
| 5.17 | The Building Division should document official building inspection code interpretations and publish them on the Department's website. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.18 | Checklists should be utilized during the intake process to ensure submitted applications are complete. Incomplete applications should not be accepted. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.18 | Checklists utilized should be made available on the City's website for use by the public in self-evaluating their own applications in advance. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.18 | The City should implement a permit technician position, in lieu of one of the administrative staff positions, on the front counter to assist the public and review applications as received. Incomplete applications (i.e. – those unable to be reviewed) should be rejected and not accepted. | High | $10,000 |
| 5.18 | The permit technician should be trained to perform simple zoning clearances on building permit applications to streamline the process. | High | n/a |
| 5.19 | The City should implement an "expedited" plan review process that for an additional fee (to cover the cost of overtime) provides an expedited review for qualifying applicants. | High | n/a |
| 5.20 | The City should adopt a formal cost recovery policy outlining the targeted level of revenues for the building permit function that will be covered by fees. The City should adopt a formal cost recovery policy outlining the targeted level of revenues for the development review function that will be covered by fees. | Medium | n/a |
| 5.20 | The City should conduct a formal fee study to ensure that fees are based upon actual costs to process applicants and are established at a level sufficient to meet adopted cost recovery goals. The expected cost of this study would be $20,000 to $25,000. | Medium | $25,000 |
| 5.20 | The City should consider reserving some portion of permit fees on larger projects to support workload in future years. | High | n/a |

| Section | Recommendation | Priority | Cost / (Saving) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5.21(2) | The City of Des Moines should fully implement the comprehensive software package for the Development Review Process and all Departments involved in the Development Review process should be required to utilize the selected system for scheduling, processing, and reporting on work activities. PermitTrax is implemented and contains the modules and functionality to address this and the following recommendations of section 5.21. | High | n/a |
| 5.21(2) | The City should continue its use of PermitTrax to cover the entire development review process. | High | n/a |
| 5.21(3) | All of the departments and divisions should continue to utilize the automated permit information system for all aspects of the development review process. | High | n/a |
| 5.21(3) | Modules, applications and reports should continue to be developed within the automated permit information system to support the work of these departments and divisions. | High | n/a |
| 5.21(3) | The City must ensure all staff are fully trained in the utilization of the PermitTrax software in order for its benefits to be achieved. | High | Unknown |
| 5.21(4) | The City should expand the use of technology to enable applicants for trade permits to complete a permit application via the Internet involving all of what is now an over-the-counter transaction. | High | n/a |
| 5.21(5) | The City should utilize PermitTrax to provide the capacity for the public and for applicants to access data in Permits Plus through the Internet. | High | n/a |

The detailed recommendations and background information on each of these recommendations is contained in later sections of this report.

# Planning, Building, Development Services & Economic Development

# 2011-2012 Work Plan

## Council Strategic Objectives

- Physical development of DMCBP
- Adopt and Implement Economic Development Strategy
- Adopt changes to Marina District Zoning & Development Regulations (July 2011)
- Determine light rail alignment (S 200th - S 272nd St)
- Encourage and facilitate city- wide economic development
- Review and update development regulations

## Strategies with Significant Council Involvement

1. Economic Development Plan
2. Marina District Economic Development Strategy
3. DMCBP Master Plan & 2nd Development Agreement
4. Commercial Lands Initiative

## Plus Other Strategies with Some Council Involvement

A. Artemis Hotel Design Review and Permitting

B. PSE Design Review & Permitting

C. SeaMar Development Agreement

D. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Ordinance

E. New Land Use & Building Permitting System

6. SEPA Infill Exemption & Parking Code Exemption Ordinances
7. Comprehensive Plan Amendments/SEIS
8. Planned Unit Development Code Ordinance
9. Pacific Highway South (216th-272nd) Land Use and Environmental Review
10. Highline Community College Master Planning
11. FEMA Floodplain Management Ordinance
12. Wesley Homes Zoning

F. Performance Audit of Building Division

G. Waterview Crossing Development Agreement Amendments

# Performance Measures

- New business/investment in City
- New jobs
- Annual growth in commercial property tax valuation
- Streamlined development review & permitting process
  - Time/cost savings for City/customer
  - Improved customer satisfaction
- Provisions for the siting of electric vehicle infrastructure
- Comp Plan that supports better land use and economic development
- Light rail alignment that support City economic development

Revised 7/19/11
(underlined items are changes from 5/31/11)