

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE



We Are Columbia

BUILD COLUMBIA

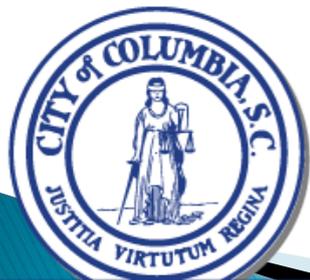
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Planning and Development Services

Recent Process Streamlining Efforts

- **Plat Approval for Existing Lots of Record**
 - Initiated a change in the process so that existing lots of record no longer require City approval
- **Resubmittal of Building Plans**
 - Launching a new process that will reduce review time of plans submitted with corrections



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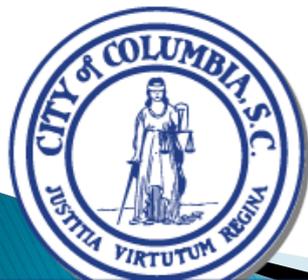
Business License

- **Implemented a new software processing system to improve the quality of customer service.**
 - Allows business license staff to create an individual workflow for new business license applicants at the time the application is submitted.
 - Ensure all approvals needed to issue a new business license are requested in a timely manner.
 - Allows business license staff to monitor approvals and ability to assist customers with each step in the approval process.
 - Ability to provide the status of an application in the work flow process in a timely manner.



Business License

- **Business License now requires verification of gross revenue at the time of renewal.**
 - Reduces the need to conduct onsite audits and requires less disruption to the daily business activities.
 - Ability to identify income reporting errors in a more timely manner; reducing the amount of penalty a business is assessed during an audit.



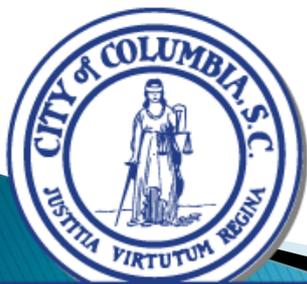
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Business License

- **Business license online license renewal software processing system is in the testing phase**
 - Allow businesses to submit renewal applications and pay business license fees online.
 - Reduction in the number of business owners that are required to come into the business license office.
 - Reduction in the wait time for customers during the business license renewal period.
- **Created a Deputy Business License Administration Position**
 - Increase management availability and to assist business owners with complex business license questions or issues.
 - Monitor business license process and develop ways to improve customer service.

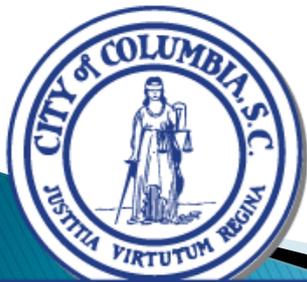


Economic Development

In the final stages of the selection process for the Business and Development Manager position.

This position will report directly to the Economic Development Director.

The Business and Development Manager will have a strong presence and working relationship with Planning and Development Services and all departments relative to doing business with the City.



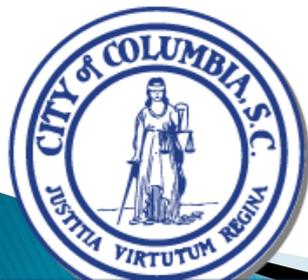
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Build Columbia: A Lean Government Approach

- The Build Columbia initiative seeks to improve operations via Lean methods and demonstrate how the benefits help the City of Columbia to achieve its strategic and financial vision.
- Lean is a philosophy that seeks the involvement of all workers in the elimination of waste and the adding of value.
- Takes a “customer service” perspective and seeks to optimize value for the services delivered to the public and the regulated community.
- Involves employees and external stakeholders in continual improvements and problem-solving activities.
 - Deploys a rapid continual improvement framework that emphasizes implementation rather than prolonged planning.
 - Seeks to reduce the complexity of processes.



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Build Columbia: A Lean Government Approach

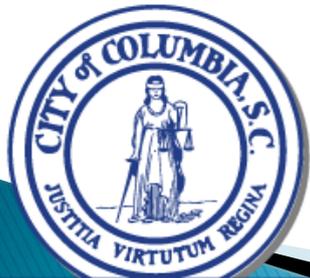
- Lean relies on analytical and visual controls to provide rapid feedback to improve real-time decision-making and problem-solving.
- By eliminating non-value added activities, staff can be re-directed to higher-priority activities.

Lean is one approach that the City will use to achieve efficiencies in operations and is already underway with 3 key areas:

Information
Technology
Software
Deployment

Building Permit
Process

Utility Cut Repairs
(Enhancing Coordination)



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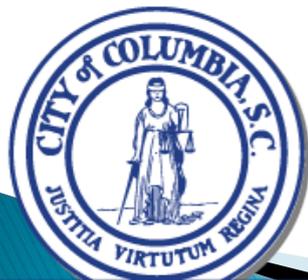
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Customer Care Center

The Customer Care Division has evolved and its primary focus is no longer limited to water and sewer services. The consolidated call center is designed to effectively utilize available resources to create a more consistent and high quality telephone experience for the public with improved levels of user satisfaction. Improving Customer Service requires a managerial commitment and collaboration with all city divisions.

- **Extended Call Center Hours 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.**
 - Extended call center hours provide citizens the ability to contact staff during a time that is most convenient
 - Creation of a centralized call center accessed through one easily recognizable number **803-545-3300**
 - Simpler access for routine and general inquiry calls
 - Simpler access for non-emergency calls



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Customer Care Center

- **Improving Service Level Response Time**
 - Customer Care has developed authentic commitments for improving service level response times. Service Level refers to the time it takes to receive and respond to a customer's inquiry or concern.
- **The following Service Levels are being evaluated:**
 - Response time for responding to fax requests/inquiries
 - Response time for responding to email requests/inquiries
 - Response time for responding to mail requests/inquiries
 - Average time an in-bound call holds in queue before answered



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Customer Care Center

- **Additional Customer Care Staff**
 - Additional staff was added to support the extended call center hours, goal of enhancing services, data quality and the customer experience. Additional staff was also added to support the new hours of operation.
 - Account Analyst
 - Customer Service Representative
 - Call Center hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.



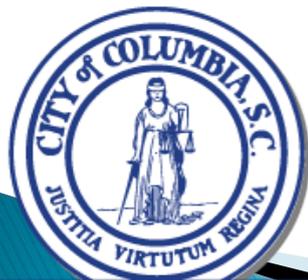
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Water Revenue Audit

- Request For Proposal (RFP) Process Underway
- Enhance Business Processes
- Review and analyze billing data to:
 - Confirm proper rate structure is used for all customers
 - Field verify to ensure all customers currently receiving services are being billed accordingly



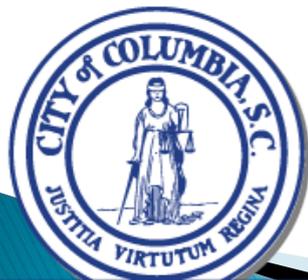
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Parking

- **Credit Card Capable Meters**
 - An RFP has been released for single head meters capable of taking credit cards, SmartCards, tokens and coins.
 - A 60-day pilot project will be conducted using both multi-bay equipment (as now exists in the Cannon Garage at Sumter and Taylor) and single head meters to evaluate their use.



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Parking

- **Main Street Timed Parking Pilot Project**
 - Response to merchant requests for free but timed parking on Main Street.
 - City staff will engage City Center Partnership to help in communicating with merchants about the upcoming pilot project.
 - Data will be gathered before and during the pilot project to evaluate the impact of the change.
 - Begin pilot early November.
 - Meters which require a customer to push a button for a free hour will be tested at four meters on Washington Street next to Washington Square.



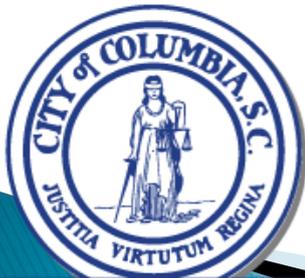
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The Customer Experience

- The City Manager is proud to announce the launch of her initiative centered around improving the customer experience for citizens and visitors.
- **A series of workshops will explore:**
 - What providing an exceptional customer experience to the citizens means.
 - Create actionable promises to our citizens and employees.
 - Participants will increase their knowledge of all the touchpoints that shape the customer experience. We will incorporate the “Build Columbia” approach when creating these actionable promises/steps.



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The Customer Experience

- As a result of these workshops, participants will create action items for each department that will show how employees can start to use the “We are Columbia” slogan and “Build Columbia” framework to influence the touchpoints (place, people, process, programs) in respective departments.
- Participants will be made up of a cross section of employees that represent different departments. There will be a mix of supervisors and front line employees who will be charged with running, growing and transforming the City. There will also be a mix of new hires and more experienced staff to ensure optimum collaboration and idea sharing.
- There will be a champion designated to spearhead this initiative and a steering committee will be created to ensure the actionable items become realities.



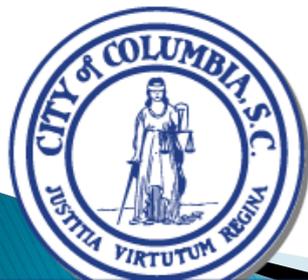
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Launch of New City Website

- The new format for the City of Columbia's website focuses on making the site more user friendly.
- The website is a major marketing tool for showcasing our city, so the new design is more visually and aesthetically pleasing, while also providing pertinent information.
- The development of the site was a collaborative effort and input was received from all city departments during the development process.
- Staff in each department/office will have direct access and the autonomy to make immediate updates to their information in order to keep the site current.



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