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Case Study: the Impact of the Great Recession on City and County of Denver Development Services

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Jurisdiction background or brief description

The City and County of Denver Inspection Services is a division of Development Services, Inspection Services, Permitting Services and Zoning Services are each separate but simpatico divisions reporting to the Director of Development Services "A Mayor's Office Appointee" . The City and County of Denver's population in 2012 was approximately 670,000, with a metropolitan population of nearly 3 million. The City and County is the owner of the Denver International Airport and Development Services has authority regarding permitting and inspections for DIA which is the largest airport by land area in the country. The four busiest airports in the United States - Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta, Chicago O'Hare, Los Angeles International, and Dallas Fort Worth - could all fit into DIA's 53-square miles of land.

Impact of the 2008-2011 economic downturn

Inspection Services has reduced staff each year since 2007 from 95 FTE's to the current level of 71 (*NIS and BIS combined) some of the reductions were absorbed via internal consolidations, stream lining, and improved business practices others through attrition.. In 2007 Inspection Services "BIS" performed *163,795 inspections, and 2007 inspection activity levels are considered only slightly above average according to historical records dating back to the 1990's with some years recording over well 200,000 inspections. That same level of activity from 2007 today with available staff would require inspectors to perform in excess of 20 inspections per day, safe parameters established for Inspection Services based on various factors regarding our specific jurisdiction of total daily inspections per inspector is established as 16.

Lasting effects

A Robust Automation Solution and better alignment of business practices to those of the private sector are the key components to providing efficient, cost effective service delivery by Inspection Services for future years to come. How will we "Fill the Void" when we ramp back up to and beyond 2007 activity levels? There are three key elements already in progress and outlined in Development Services Strategic Plan that will allow us to maintain cost effective service delivery without increasing staff to 2007 levels (+25%) while also providing quantifiable results:

****Created Combination Inspector Classification(s): This was completed in June 2012**

Mobil Devices for Field Use: To be implemented Q4 2012

Telecommuting Program: Completed to be implemented 2013

The above three initiatives combined will allow for an additional 7-10 inspections per inspector per day. These enhancements will allow Inspection services to meet increased inspection demands of 23% to 40%.

*Inspection Services is comprised of two sections, Neighborhood Inspection Services (NIS) and Building Inspection Services

**We also created a comprehensive in house training program to ensure quality