

FINAL REPORT

**MANAGEMENT STUDY AND ANALYSIS
WITH RECOMMENDATIONS**



**INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Basis for the Report

This Report on the results of a “Management Study & Analysis With Recommendations” was undertaken at the request of Mayor Thomas Menino and the Commissioner of Inspectional Services Department, Mr. Kevin Joyce. Discussion on the scope of the proposed study began in December, 2002 and continued into the first months of 2003. Once the details were agreed upon, authorization for work to be undertaken during FY 2003 was given through the issuance of a purchase order while the work planned for FY 2004 was further defined through a regular contract. Copies of the authorizing Purchase Order and the Standard Contract are included as Appendix I and II of this Report. As required by Boston City Purchasing Rules, the consultant submitted a resume of experience and education before the contract was awarded. This resume is reproduced as Appendix III.

2. General Scope of the Report

The management study contract authorizes the consultant to “provide management consultant services to the Administration & Finance Division of the Inspectional Services Department” and to “advise on all aspects of the operations at ISD including, but not limited to, budgeting, organizational restructuring, and operational analysis to determine methods for improving permitting process transparency.” Upon the consultant’s arrival in May, 2003, and after discussions with the consultant, the Mayor and the Commissioner, the latter issued a “Statement of ISD Consultancy,” dated May 14, 2003, which was circulated to all Division Heads in ISD. The consultant in a letter to the Boston Herald dated June 10, 2003 further amplified this; copies of these documents are included as Appendix IV and V of this Report.

3. Methodology Used in Preparing the Report

The initial work of the consultant included three visits to ISD in Boston during May, June and July and home office work for a total of 283 hours or the equivalent of just over 35 days. The basic focus was to examine the Department’s key service operations which was effected through over sixty interviews with ISD managers and operating personnel, selected clients, other Boston city departments and Commonwealth regulatory units, including the Department of Public Safety’s Building Inspections Division. ISD documents, covering annual budgets, monthly & annual reports of all divisions as well as external reports on ISD operations made during the last ten years were also reviewed. In addition, the consultant, with the cooperation of ISD front desk operations, began offering a “service questionnaire” to ISD clients to gauge reactions, criticism and recommendations on ISD services. A similar questionnaire was sent to selected clients who make frequent use of the ISD as a continuing effort to elicit commentary and

suggestions for improvement. Many of the suggestions from both of these outreach efforts have been included in the Report's recommendations.

4. Organization of the Report

In addition to this Introduction, the Report focuses on a series recommendations which the consultant believes will greatly increase the Department's ability to serve its clientele in the context of increased demand for ISD services against the backdrop of current and expected cuts in management and operational personnel. These recommendations are highlighted in the body of the Report with an **Executive Summary** to facilitate ease of reference and usage, particularly regarding implementation. Mindful of decreased funding available to ISD, now and in the near future, the recommendations are classified for implementation in five categories: a) savings, b) no cost, c)small cost, d) medium cost and e)large cost.

The next section, **Background**, provides a general prelude to ISD, giving elements of its most recent history, including trends on budgets, revenues, personnel, etc. Its relationship with other City Departments, Neighborhoods and State Government units is also included. Commentary on ISD as both a service organization and its vital importance as a facilitator of Boston's economic strength concludes this section. The consultant believes that this background, however short, is essential in understanding many of the recommendations summarized in the prior section and detailed in the section to follow.

In **Study & Analysis**, the Report gets specific in detailing the operation of each of the ISD components, which are defined in the Department's current chart of organization. While this section attempts to cover the major operating responsibilities of each of the four major functional areas and their subsidiary units, its detail is focused largely on those elements that contribute, directly and indirectly, to client service. This exposition, in turn, leads to the Recommendations, the key elements in the Report.

While the **General Recommendations** section grows out of the analysis made in the preceding section, effective implementation requires a Department-wide approach. The concerned areas include reporting, training, professional and operating coordination and regular sessions involving reviews of current operations and exchanges of information and viewpoints. This section also discusses the future possibility of having a central support staff operation that, with computerization, would consolidate in work assignments and work space the main support to front counter permitting, processing, permit issuance and cashier. The section concludes with a recommendation on how the adopted recommendations should be implemented, including the appointment by the Mayor of a seven person ISD Advisory Management Improvement Commission to review both the full implementation plan as presented by ISD management and its implementation over the course of the next two years.

Finally, the Report's **Conclusions** collect selected more general observations by the consultant about ISD, the needs involved in keeping the Department sensitive to its purposes while entering into an era where personnel and funds will be in short supply. It

also suggests that the Recommendations be thoroughly discussed in ISD so that those recommendations which are accepted will then be prioritized and a dated action plan be agreed upon for implementation of the Report.

5. Responsibility For The Report and its Recommendations

The consultant has received complete cooperation and access to information, documents and personnel through the ISD Commissioner. Current employees of the Department – and of other City Departments - have been extremely helpful in giving their time to gather requested data as well as offering frank opinions on ISD operations along with a number of important recommendations. This has also been true of former employees and of ISD clients who have been equally forthcoming. A listing of the people interviewed and those consulted is contained in Appendix X. The consultant is extremely appreciative and thankful for their willingness to help.

At the same time, the consultant bears the full burden of interpreting the data, of the analysis made and of the recommendations offered in the Report.

II EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of this Study & Analysis of the Inspectional Services Department, City of Boston, authorized by Purchase Order 202437, the contractor, William Sommers, visited ISD during May, June and July, 2003. The Study's main goal is "to help the Department of Inspectional Services raise its overall efficiency within current budgetary guidelines" The contractor interviewed a significant number of ISD employees, met with officers from other City Departments and also interviewed a selection of ISD clients. Questionnaires on ISD operations were sent to selected contractors and were made available at the Cashier's Unit for daily use. The results of these questionnaires have also been reviewed. In addition, the contractor reviewed budgets, revenue reports, departmental reports, Commissioner's Bulletins and previous studies of ISD. ISD operations were examined in detail.

As a result of this study, the contractor has made 43 recommendations summarized in what follows. The recommendations are listed numerically and also identify the office, unit or division involved. The recommendations are put in broad cost categories: savings, no cost, small cost, medium cost and large cost (See Chart 26). Depending on the recommendations chosen for implementation more detailed categorization will be forthcoming. As noted the recommendations are shown within the organizational unit where they apply. However, many of the recommendations will need the assistance of other units for implementation. Again, these will be worked out in more detail, once ISD decides on implementation and establishes priorities.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

1. REVIVE ISD INFORMATION BOOKLETS AND PROCESS CHECKLISTS:

As part of its outreach emphasis, the Commissioner's Office should revive the client information booklets. They will have to be updated and reprinted but the cost should be minimal and the resultant benefits will make this a very cost-effective action. The need for the checklists and their usage will be discussed more fully in the analysis of the building & zoning procedures within the **Inspector of Building's** domain.

2. UPDATE AND CODIFY THE COMMISSIONER'S BULLETINS: The Bulletins contain policy and procedure determinations over the last 15 years and are most relevant to ISD's operations. They should be updated, revised and re-issued as a printed manual for use by ISD middle management and also made available at a nominal price to ISD clients. The manual could be used for training purposes. Recommended also is the inclusion of a bulletin covering the procedures, processes and operations affecting the Front Counter. This proposal will also be examined during discussion of the Building Permit Division.

3. ESTABLISH COMMISSIONER'S QUARTERLY REVIEWS WITH

ISD's MIDDLE MANAGEMENT: The Commissioner should establish a regular, programmed quarterly review of progress, problems and with separate divisions and, where necessary, with separate individual sub-units. These meetings should be based on the newly revised reporting system where issues of client service, productivity and organization can be discussed.

4. ASSIGN AN EXPERIENCED ISD PROFESSIONAL TO THE COMMISSIONER'S STAFF: A currently operating division or unit head with demonstrated operational knowledge and problem-solving experience in ISD should be assigned to the Commissioner's Office to undertake assignments on a daily basis that will better assist the Commissioner. The position of Chief of Staff could then be eliminated and funds saved would be sufficient to restore at least one vitally needed position lost by the FY04 mandated personnel reduction.

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES & TRAINING

5. THE DIVISION SHOULD CONSIDER THE FORMATION OF AN ISD TRAINING COMMITTEE THAT WOULD MEET PERIODICALLY UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE PERSONNEL DIVISION, PRIORITIZE TRAINING NEEDS AND DESIGN AN IN-HOUSE PROGRAM TO MEET THESE NEEDS.

This Report mentions in-house, in-service training in much of its commentary and recommendations. The proposed committee should bring these together and a plan worked out for implementation. The training should be staffed by in-house expertise, should use the techniques of brain-storming, experience interchange and transference of information between units in the Department and between Departments. This training project should aim at least-cost training solutions.

6. REQUEST THAT “IT” REVIEW CURRENT ON-LINE SYSTEMS INVOLVING THE ISD PERSONNEL DIVISION TO DETERMINE ADD-ONS AND OTHER CONNECTIONS THAT WOULD SIMPLIFY THE DIVISION’S PAPER HANDLING: While the Division uses available software programs to process much of its paper-work, IT should assist in upgrading systems, adding new ones and working out computerized processes in order that more of the details can be computerized.

BOARD OF APPEALS

7. APPOINT A FULL TIME HEAD OF THE BOARD OF APPEALS STAFF: It is very important that the Board staff have a full time head to give daily direction and consistency to the Board’s operation. Various alternatives in selecting the head staff person are available: advertised recruitment, appointment from within the Department, temporary or full-time assignment. At a time when staff through the City – and ISD – are being reduced, certain of the suggested alternatives could achieve both objectives: staff minimums and full-time continuity.

Note: This position is currently being advertised for applications and interviews.

8. MOVE BOARD OF APPEALS STAFF & OPERATIONS FROM CITY HALL TO ISD LOCATION: This would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Board’s processing work since it is tied directly with the work of ISD’s plans/review unit on denials and implementation of resultant decisions by the Board. Moreover, staff back up and interchange would be greatly facilitated by having the Board’s staff in close working proximity to ISD and would make computerization and info tie-ins easier. Hearings could be held in the large hearing room on the 2nd Floor at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue through arrangements with the Board of Health and parking facilities for hearings could also be arranged through ISD. While this shift would disrupt the exchanges between city council members and constituents involved, more efficient and less costly operation may, in times of significant fiscal stress, take precedence. It should also be noted that shifting the Board to the ISD location, would free-up additional space for already overcrowded city offices.

Note: This move would also include shifting the meetings of the Board of Examiners to ISD where the Board’s support is already being supplied by ISD’s Building Division.

9. COMPUTERIZATION OF THE BOARD’S PROCESSES: The Board’s processes are too long on hand-work and too short on the application of the most minimal of computer technology. Log books, file systems and most paper-work should be committed to the computer and the exchange of information between ISD and the Board’s staff should be via electronic transfer. Much of this can be done on regular computer programs, e.g. excel. If the CD disk proposal for submission of development plans is implemented, a similar system would have to be installed with the Board’s staff for the transfer of plans and subsequent addition of approvals and conditions related to the Board’s decisions. (See Recommendations under Plan/Zoning Unit of Division of

Building Permits) In addition, the Board of Appeals staff should adopt a number system consistent with ISD's so that a closer interchange can eliminate search time and confusion resulting from an un-integrated reference system.

10. INSTALL SYSTEMATIC ARCHIVE SYSTEM FOR BOARD RECORDS:

The Board of Appeals records should be sent to Boston City Archives after 3 years to make more room available and thus increase efficiency. When records are needed from the archives, two sources would be available: a) referral to the archive deposit and b) referral to the ISD **Info-trieve** system to the building jackets containing prior decisions.

DIVISION OF BUDGET MANAGEMENT

11. REVISE THE MONTHLY COLLECTION REPORT SYSTEM: Based on the previous discussion, the Monthly Collection Report should be revised to reflect a more understandable association of revenues and permits issued, e.g. short forms, long forms, fire, occupancy and use, etc, and revenues gained from ordinary services, i.e. copying, microfilm, service charges, print outs, etc. Quarterly and annual summaries should also be included. A suggested revision is shown as Chart 10. The revision should, of course, be reviewed with Treasury and Accounting and would be consistent with the proposed recommendations – Point of Sales computerization - for the Cashier's Office. More comparative analysis of collections regarding current and prior year's should also be included.

12. TAKE LEAD ROLE IN THE PROPOSED REVISION OF ISD'S MONTHLY, QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL REPORTS: The details of the proposed revision are, as noted, contained in the recommendations discussed in Section V General Recommendations. However, Administration & Finance should take the lead in devising and implementing a more effective reporting system for both management usage and public information.

13. DEVISE A MORE COORDINATED, BOTTOMS-UP BUDGET PREPARATION PROCESS FOR THE UPCOMING FY05 BUDGET: The allocation of scarce resources in the FY05 budget should be carefully coordinated with ISD's middle-management under a goal-setting exercise that is based on more effective use of allotted resources. While the ISD Commissioner, in association with the ISD's budget personnel, especially the Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Finance, must make the final decisions, it is critical that thoughtful and realistic inputs be received from ISD's middle-management.

DIVISION OF CONSTITUENT SERVICES

14. WORK CLOSELY WITH THE ISD MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT TO IDENTIFY BETTER ORGANIZATION STRATEGY INCLUDING SUMMARY REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE HAD SUCCESS IN PROBLEM-SOLVING IN ORDER TO REPLICATE THE PROCESS: While Constituent Services follows, in general, a problem-solving process with its neighborhood groups, the

work being done should be reviewed and analyzed so that the best parts of the process can be generalized and spread to other users and clients for their benefit. A more regularized reporting system should also be tied to this.

15. DEVELOP A STANDARD, CONCISE AND USABLE QUESTIONNAIRE SYSTEM TO ELICIT FEEDBACK FROM ISD CLIENTS: ISD should adopt a feedback procedure that many companies and public organizations use, namely, a questionnaire on service that is a) available at the point of service or b) is mailed to selected users. The consultant has experimented with a questionnaire at the Front Desk whose result will be tabulated once 100 questionnaires are received. However, the questionnaire is too large and not handy for use - and should be redesigned. And another mail-in should be designed so that periodically lists of clients taken from the service units within the Department can be engage in mail feedback.

DIVISION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

16. MAKE AVAILABLE ALL ISD FORMS AND PROCESS INFORMATION ON CDs FOR SALE AT COST: While IT is going through the involved task of putting the three major building permit forms on-line, many clients who repeatedly use ISD forms have expressed interest in getting forms on CDs, along with a written guide to the submission process involved. The forms could be filled in at client offices and then submitted to ISD.

17. PROVIDE AN INTERNAL GUIDE TO CURRENT MAJOR COMPUTER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO ISD STAFF: ISD has a number of computer operating programs whose knowledge and use is not widespread. Some are networked and others are limited to certain specific uses. Concise information on these programs should be available in a small booklet in order a) to coordinate their use where possible and necessary, b) to inform middle-management and operators where various kinds of data can be found and c) to assist in identifying systems that should be more closely coordinated in usage, that should be modified to expand usage and others that should be eliminated.

18. MAINTAIN LIAISON WITH BRA, SEWER & WATER AND ASSESSING TO DETERMINE COORDINATED COMPUTER PROGRAM USAGE THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ISD UPGRADES: IT should identify information systems used by these Departments and ways they can be integrated for ISD usage. BRA, for example, has developed a GIS system with overlays that should replace or supplement the program now in use for parcel identification at Plans/Zoning. In addition, BRA often develops fair cost estimates of construction for projects under its review; these could be shared with ISD when these projects enter the regular permitting process. Similar applications used in Sewer & Water and Assessing, particularly the latter's parcel information on occupancy, could be of substantial use to ISD units by simplifying their cross checks and references on building, zoning and occupancy applications.

DIVISION OF PERMITS, PLANS/ZONING, CASHIER, DOCUMENTS

FRONT DESK

19. ESTABLISH AN ISD USER-FRIENDLY INTEGRATED FILE SHARING SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE A SHARED ISD DATA BASE INFORMATION SYSTEM: Although ISD is working with MIS to establish a coordinated set of bid proposals on computerization of ISD major work areas, it is important to emphasize that the action recommended here is crucial to improving client services at the point of immediate contact. Delays in permit processing, especially in the short form issuance, are often bound up in the extended periods of checking stand-alone data bases.

20. INCREASE CURRENT EFFORTS TO PUT MAJOR PERMITS ON LINE SO THAT THEY CAN BE FILLED OUT BY CLIENTS VIA WEBSITES OR AT ISD: The transfer of major permit forms to on-line usage is already undertaken by ISD's IT division with plumbing, electrical and mechanical. However, it should be noted that the short and long form transformations are critical to eliminating the typewriters, increasing efficiency and improving client services. It is also important that a pay system for credit cards or bank transfers be appended to the on-line permits so they can be emailed with credit-card and/or can be wired as bank transfers thus greatly facilitating the process.

21. DEVELOP A COMPLETE, CONCISE MANUAL OF PERMIT PROCESSING FOR FRONT DESK USAGE AND TRAINING: The development of this manual is most necessary in training other Front Desk staffers to learn how to operate the Front Desk; the manual would also be important in doing in-house training/information sessions. And the manual could be sold at cost to ISD clients so that both sides of the "counter" will be operating with the same set of procedures.

22. ISSUANCE OF COMMISSIONER'S BULLETIN SETTING OUT THE COMPLETE FEE SCHEDULE FOR ISD FOR GUIDANCE AND REFERENCE. Fees charged at ISD are based largely on the Boston City Fee Ordinance and, in some instances, on the Massachusetts Building Code. However, these references are difficult to track down and not easily available to most clients. By issuing a Commissioner's Bulletin, both ISD personnel and ISD clientele will be working with the same set of facts. In addition, the Bulletin should contain an outline of how to determine the "fair cost of construction" to ameliorate heated discussions over the basis for such determination.

CASHIER UNIT

23. THE CURRENT OUTMODED CASHIER OPERATION SHOULD, AS HIGH PRIORITY, BE REPLACED BY A MODERN "POINT OF SALES" SYSTEM: The proposed upgrade would have an immediate and positive effect on ISD clients, would provide automatic assignment of both permit number and fee calculation and could also, by direct data link, allow for the transfer of Front Counter permit data. It would also

produce quick and accurate monthly reports as well as quarterly summaries along with the annual report. If the proposed revision of the Collection Report, as recommended under Budget Management Division, Recommendation No. 1, is adopted, the Department would obtain basic financial and process data that could more easily be shared with other Departments and, most importantly, with the public through the proposed ISD Quarterly Activity Review.

Note: A similar proposal was presented by ISD to the Budget Director and the MIS Director through a July 23, 2003 Memorandum and discussed at a subsequent meeting on July 25, 2003. Unofficially the Report's consultant was told that the City Auditor has rejected the proposal because similar installations need to be undertaken in other Departments and should be done in concert and not independently. It is hoped that a more detailed presentation of the need may identify ISD's Cashier Unit as a model for future progress.

24. ISD AND THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE USE OF CREDIT CARDS AND ELECTRONIC BANK TRANSFERS FOR PAYMENT OF PERMIT FEES. Progress along these lines would greatly facilitate the work of the cashier and give clients viable alternatives for payment, especially for large projects where electronic bank transfer would be more efficient for ISD and the client. Additional study might be encouraged to identify the amount involved in "bounced checks" in contrast to outstanding credit card debt.

PLANS/ZONING

25. PUT THE CURRENT COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR THE LOGBOOK ON THE ISD WEBSITE LIMITED TO PERMIT STATUS INFORMATION. By doing this, ISD clients would be able through the use of their application number or address to find out the status of their filed application. This would also enable Plans/Zoning to indicate additional information needed so that the approval process could be completed. This should eventually reduce inquiries via the front counter and the phone and simplify the approval procedure.

26. MAKE IT AN OBLIGATION OF THE LONG FORM FILER THAT NECESSARY PLANS ACCOMPANYING THE APPLICATION MUST BE ON A CD, EXCEPT WHERE THE PLANS ARE 5 PAGES OR LESS. By implementing this requirement, ISD would, over the course of two or three years, greatly reduce, if not eliminate the problem of paper plans. It would enhance corrections by transferring them via email. This would also be applied to applications bound for the Board of Appeals as well. The problems of the architect's seal and locking the final approved CD are technical problems that can be solved. ISD plan examiners would have to be equipped with upgraded computers and 17 to 22 inch screens. The Board of Appeals would also need at least one set. This is undoubtedly the way building plan submissions will be handled in the future; it would be a giant step forward for Plans/Zoning at a time when more work needs to be done by fewer people.

Note: This proposal was submitted to the Budget Director and the MIS Director via letter dated July 23, 2003 and further discussed at a meeting on July 25, 2003. The program has been agreed to in general and details are being worked out.

27. INSTITUTE A FAST TRACK APPLICATION THAT WOULD APPLY TO ALL LONG TERM PERMITS WHICH MET THE REGULAR FAST TRACK REQUIREMENTS. Once this is implemented and the process becomes fixed it will relieve plan reviewers of perhaps 10 to 15% of their normal reviews. While start-up needs to be carefully arranged and a system of counter checking instituted, in time the process will service ISD clients and relieve the plan reviewers of a considerable burden which these submissions would otherwise entail.

Note: A Commissioner's Bulletin to extend the Fast Track has already been drafted for issuance in October, 2003.

28. PREPARE A SERIES OF CHECK LISTS THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED APPLICATION TYPES; ISD CLIENTS CAN USE THEM AS A GUIDE WHILE ISD COUNTER STAFF CAN REVIEW UPON THE CLIENT'S SUBMISSION. The check list will not solve all problems surrounding incomplete submissions or misreading of applicable codes but it will be helpful to a majority of ISD Plans/Zoning client and once in place may reduce substantially the need to make frequent requests for additional information.

29. WORKING WITH BUILDING INSPECTORS AND THE FRONT DESK, IDENTIFY LONG FORM APPLICATION TYPES THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED UNDER THE SHORT FORM RUBRIC. Suggestions have been made to include items such as above-ground pools, sheds under 50 square feet and fences, etc. be submitted as short forms providing basic plots plans. This might apply to small additions, doors, etc.

30. OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH BOSTON WATER & SEWER COMMISSION ON SPEEDING UP SEWER APPROVALS AND HOLD SIMILAR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FIRE MARSHALL'S OFFICE IN QUICKENING THE REVIEW PROCESS AND REDUCING OVERTIME FOR FIELD TESTS: The Commission staff have been very cooperative with ISD, especially in sharing their updated information on property ownership which has been of great help to ISD's legal section and to the building and front desk. However, clients interviewed have all remarked on the extended time for approvals from the Commission. Discussions with Commission staff revealed very competent technical staff who are undermanned. In addition, ISD believes it would be of great benefit if one Commission staff member could be available at ISD for two or three mornings per week to review less involved applications and to give assistance to ISD clients with larger plans involving additional complications. Such a move would set the tone for "one-stop permitting!" At the same time Plans/Zoning should initiate discussions between its review staff and Fire Marshal's staff to speed up the fire permitting approval process and reduce overtime in the required field tests.

DOCUMENTS

31. AFTER THE BUILDING JACKETS AND OTHER ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS ARE SHIFTED TO ARCHIVES IN DANVERS, THE ROOM SHOULD BE REMODELED FOR USE BY THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

Once the documents are removed and room becomes available, the document room personnel will continue their work in scanning documents. At the same time their system and the systems in place and being devised to serve the 5th Floor will need constant attention and service. By moving the IT staff to the 5th Floor and putting the document room personnel within IT, it will be able to run more efficiently and to blend in with IT's service function as needed. When the basic permit forms for electrical, plumbing, mechanical and building are electronically posted, the Data Entry Group from the Building Division can be absorbed by shifting the head of Data Entry to IT and reassigning the remaining personnel to assist at the Front Counter and at the Plans/Zoning counter. The proposed remodeling may also include part of the Front Desk in a way that will give greater public access to ISD's growing on-line permitting and its information data base.

DIVISION OF BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES/INSPECTIONS

32. ESTABLISH A COMPUTERIZED REPORTING SYSTEM FOR THE BUILDING DIVISION THAT WILL ALSO INCLUDE FIELD REPORTING THROUGH THE USE OF UPGRADED HAND-HELD DEVICES.

MIS has indicated that it has a computerized reporting program that can be installed in ISD's divisions to assist in upgrading their reporting activity. If this program can be installed to accommodate hand-held devices, the Division's efficiency will be increased from 25 to 30%. Field reporting could then be done to two or three designated receiving computer installation in the Division's office. This would also quicken the response time, especially on applications waiting issuance based on the inspector's field evaluation.

33. ORGANIZE IN-HOUSE, LEAST-COST TRAINING AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS BY WHICH INSPECTION PERSONNEL CAN SHARE EXPERIENCE ON SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES IN INSPECTION, PLAN REVIEW AND FRONT COUNTER ACTIVITIES:

These programs should be formed, planned and scheduled in advance and should be based on surveyed need to give attention to specific related problems. In implementing the training reliance should be placed on in-house expertise with assistance from the City's training unit and from the State's Building Division.

34. ESTABLISH WITHIN THE DIVISION OF BUILDINGS AN ONGOING ASSIGNMENT FOR A MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE PROMOTED FROM THE DIVISION'S PERSONNEL TO SERVE THE MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS OF THE DIVISION:

A review of current personnel in the Division should make it possible to evaluate backgrounds and experience to select a

qualified person to service management and administrative needs for the Inspector of Buildings with commensurate authority and responsibility in this area.

35. WORK WITH MIS TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR DATA ENTRY STORAGE DATA ONCE THE DATA ENTRY UNIT AND ITS PERSONNEL ARE REORGANIZED AFTER THEIR ACTIVITY IS NO LONGER NEEDED: When the Data Entry unit is disbanded and personnel shifted as recommended previously, a computer program should be devised so that ISD personnel can continue to extract selected information from the 20 year trove of permit summaries stored in the MIS mainframe.

DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION & REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT

36. THE DIVISION SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN COORDINATING AN ISD ANALYSIS OF THE POSTIVE POTENTIAL OF DE-CRIMINALIZATION OF SELECTED REQUIREMENTS INVOLVING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTH THE BUILDING AND HOUSING CODES AND RELATED ENFORCING REGULATIONS: The rationale for such an analysis comes from ISD policy that compliance, not punishment, is the valued end product of enforcement. If de-criminalization of selected features of applicable codes, laws and regulations could be achieved, greater compliance through small fines might be achieved while reducing ISD's scarce funds spent on issuing "Show Cause" documents and maintaining hundreds of cases in litigation.

37. THE DIVISION, IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER ISD UNITS, SHOULD PERIODICALLY SELECT A WIDE SAMPLE OF CASES TO CHECK ON A) THE VALIDITY OF INITIAL VIOLATION AND TO EXAMINE B) "CLOSED CASES" TO BE CERTAIN THAT EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE WAS OBTAINED THROUGH CLOSING OUT THE CASE: With 2,030 "Show Cause" complaints and 2,105 litigated cases, it is important that ISD exhibit a discernable consistency in its enforcement patterns. This should be periodically tested by sampling initial cases to discern patterns that may indicate inconsistent enforcement. The 1,926 cases in FY03 were closed because legal officers, in cooperation with housing, building and other inspectors, believed that compliance in line with the original show cause compliant had been achieved. This follows ISD policy to achieve compliance. However, it is important that follow-up be instituted to examine the time, level and extent of compliance achieved in response to the original show-cause, to verify, in fact, that the compliance policy has been achieved in practice.

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DIVISION OF HEALTH INSPECTIONS & ENFORCEMENT

38. ESTABLISH A COMPUTERIZED REPORTING SYSTEM FOR THE HEALTH DIVISION THAT WILL ALSO INCLUDE FIELD REPORTING THROUGH THE USE OF UPGRADED HAND-HELD DEVICES. MIS has

indicated that it has a computerized reporting program that can be installed in ISD's divisions to assist in upgrading their reporting activity. If this program can be installed to accommodate hand-held devices, the Division's efficiency will be increased significantly. Field reporting could then be done via two or three designated receiving computer installation in the Division's office.

DIVISION OF HOUSING INSPECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

39. THE DIVISION SHOULD REVISE ITS MONTHLY AND ANNUAL REPORT SO THAT IT BECOMES A SIGNIFICANT MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR IDENTIFYING ACTIVITY, MEASURING PRODUCTIVITY AND MAKING CHANGES IN WORK FOCUS AND PRIORITIES AS NECESSARY: Improvements already underway within the Division should be validated through clear and consistent presentation. The Division might review the Health Division's monthly report as a general model that could be useful in the proposed re-design.

40. ESTABLISH A COMPUTERIZED REPORTING SYSTEM FOR THE HOUSING DIVISION THAT WILL ALSO INCLUDE FIELD REPORTING THROUGH THE USE OF UPGRADED HAND-HELD DEVICES. MIS has indicated that it has a computerized reporting program that can be installed in ISD's division to assist in upgrading their reporting activity. If this program can be installed to accommodate hand-held devices, the Division's efficiency will be significantly improved. Field reporting could then be done to two or three designated computer staff in the Division's office. This would also quicken the response time, especially on applications waiting issuance based on the inspector's field evaluation.

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTIONS & CODE ENFORCEMENT

41. DEVISE A COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE DIVISION THAT IDENTIFIES OVERALL GOALS, ASSIGNS PRIORITIES AND PERSONNEL WHILE INTEGRATING THIS WITH A PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY SCHEME THAT CAN BE FACTUALLY PRESENTED IN MONTHLY AND QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORTS: This is of vital importance and should lead to a better definition of objectives, work allocation and allocation of scarce resources – money and manpower – through the application of improved management. Of course, roadblocks involving legal and contractual requirements may be in place, influencing the outcome of this recommendation. But at a time when ISD's budget is limited and personnel constraints are pressing on all sides, it is important to face the issues and work out practical solutions that contribute to improvement of client services.

42. REQUEST THAT ISD'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION AND THE CITY'S MIS UNIT REVIEW CURRENT NEEDS FOR A UNIFIED COMPUTERIZED REPORTING AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR THE DIVISION: The Division has 37 persons working under its aegis, the largest single division in ISD. Excepting the Director and the support staff, this

comes to 30 field personnel who should be linked to their field work and their headquarters through a computerized system that would, if properly designed, raise efficiency and productivity significantly – and thus contribute to improved client service.

DIVISION OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

43. THE DIVISION SHOULD EXPLORE MORE INTERCHANGE WITH OTHER DIVISIONS ON THEIR METHODS OF WORK AND ON WAYS TO COOPERATE ON INTERRELATED INSPECTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS, E.G HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTIONS, BUILDINGS, ETC. Division personnel should take a more active part in seeking interchanges by using its data-base and computerized field service to support other ISD field services as time and assignments permit.

III INSPECTIONAL SERVICES OPERATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

1. Background

The Department of Inspectional Services (ISD) was authorized by the City Council of the City of Boston and approved by the Mayor on September 10, 1981. Subsequently the City Council repealed the establishment of the Department in 1985. However, a decision of the Massachusetts Appeals Court in 1987 held that the original ordinance was valid. A copy of the Ordinance is attached as Appendix VI. A list of the ISD Commissioners who have served since 1984 is included as Appendix VII.

The Department operated in the Boston City Hall on the 8th Floor until 1986 when it moved to its present location at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue where it now occupies the 4th and 5th floors. The move expanded the working and client service space of the Department; the change also expanded the storage and security of its basic documents found in nearly 100,000 building jackets. At the same time ISD's move made it possible to begin the systematic elimination of asbestos installed when the current Boston City Hall was constructed.

2. General Organizational Structure

The Department is currently organized according to the Chart of Organization shown as Chart 1. The Department operates under the administrative and management direction of a Commissioner appointed by the Mayor of Boston. In carrying out its functions, the Department is divided into three main operational areas: Administration & Finance, Inspector of Buildings and Field Services. Two of the functional areas are headed by a Deputy Commissioner. At the same time the Assistant Commissioner for Buildings is also the Inspector of Buildings consistent with the requirements and legal authority of the Massachusetts Building Code.

Within each of the three functional areas are located twelve divisions. - Administration and Finance (5), Inspector of Buildings (3) and Field Services (4). Operational details of each of the three areas and their sections or units will be presented in Part IV of this Study along with proposed recommendations for improving operational activity and managerial effectiveness which, in turn, should upgrade service given to ISD clients.

3. City, State and Neighborhood Interactions

Because of its extended function in the issuance of permits, ISD, by law and necessity, interacts with a large number of public, quasi-public and private organizations. While these relationships – and the main coordinating agencies - will be identified and briefly reviewed in this section, detailed descriptions of the most important of these relationships will be described in Part IV, especially in the focus on actions that enhance the Department's effectiveness in improving client services.

CITY DEPARTMENTS:

- 1. Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA):** ISD has a direct relation to BRA in application of the zoning code and the zoning map, coordination in review of large scale development applications which need initial approval of the BRA and eventual building and use permits; use of BRA's on-going development of the overall GIS system.
- 2. Assessing Department:** ISD and Assessing exchange information on building and use permits, which affect individual property values. The interchange and coordination of occupancy data is also a key interest of both Departments.
- 3. Water & Sewer Commission (BWSC):** The Commission reviews over 500 building applications per year for conformity with sewer/water regulations while the Commission's mapping data is important to ISD in determining the implications of proposed large scale building construction.
- 4. Boston Fire Department:** ISD maintains a very close permit approval connection with the BFD, having a plan reviewer specifically charged with fire safety approvals while BFD permitting is conducted in BFD offices adjacent to ISD fourth floor working areas.
- 5. Housing Court:** ISD has from 1500-2000 cases on housing, building, sanitation and emergency violations before the Court requiring daily appearances of ISD attorneys and inspectors.
- 6. Register of Deeds:** Building plans and especially the filing of land subdivision maps must go to the Registry. Thus ISD in enforcing the zoning and building codes, relies on the Registry's official documentation in order to approve zoning, subdivision and occupancy.
- 7. Treasury/Audit:** Treasury sets the rules and operating procedures for ISD's permit and fee collections and deposits; it also relates significantly to the use of credit card payments as well as potential bank transfers; Audit annually reviews the collection process, especially the cashier's operation, and reviews ISD's annual non-personnel expenditures.
- 8. Management Information Services (MIS):** ISD maintains close relations with MIS for its assistance in current and future development of an encompassing automated

permitting and data storage system; MIS provides a full time IT advisor and manages a half dozen systems used by ISD that are tied to the MIS main frame.

9. Budget Department: While obviously important in the annual review for resource allocation – operating budget, personnel levels and capital needs – Budget also requires specific reporting from ISD to measure its progress in program implementation. Budget also is involved in important policy decisions on personnel levels and capital improvements crucial to ISD’s current and future progress in upgrading client services.

10. Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS): ISD activities are closely linked to aspects of ONS concerns since much of zoning, building and housing regulations are visible and influential in the development of neighborhoods and in the lives of the people who live there.

11. Boston Police Department: With the current emphasis on emergency services, ISD works closely with the Police and Fire services where housing, and its occupants are at risk in fires, demolition, drug use, etc.

12. Public Works Department: ISD coordinates with PWD in approvals of garaging, sidewalk infringement during construction and in street names and street numbers whose correct assignment is crucial in permitting and record retrieval. Enforcement of environmental sanitation also involves close cooperation between ISD and Public Works on solid waste pick-up and disposal and related issues.

STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

1. Building Code Office, Department of Public Safety: Local implementation of the State Building Code is overseen by this State Agency as well as the training and certification of local inspectors. Consequently, ISD is deeply involved in these actions and activities.

2. State Department of Weights & Measures: Similar oversights and technical assistance is afforded by this Department to ISD and especially its Weights & Measures Unit.

3. State Department of Public Health: The Department sets standards for enforcement and application of State Statutes; it also provides technical support and training and is closely connected with the work of ISD’s Health Division.

PUBLIC AND QUASI PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS & ASSOCIATIONS

ISD maintains a continuing dialogue with Boston’s Neighborhood Associations through the Mayor’s Office as well as through the Commissioner’s Office, Division of Constituent Services, and the Division of Investigation & Regulatory Enforcement. The Inspector of Buildings – and the permit and review operations – have periodic contact with members of various professional and trade associations, including contractors and builder’s groups. The Boston Society of Architects, for example, has a Code Subcommittee that reviews permit process and building reviews. In addition, a number of groups with social objectives as exemplified by Habitat For Humanity and other non-profit organizations advocating affordable housing are also part of ISD’s clientele and with whom frequent meetings and discussions on particular issues occur.

4. Overall Comparative Data on ISD Operations: Budget, Personnel, Revenues

In reviewing ISD operations the Department's financial structure – budget and revenues - and the number and disposition of personnel – provides a good starting point. This becomes of particular concern in the present era when budget cutting and reduction in personnel is slowing becoming the operational norm. Recommendations to improve ISD's service response and increase its technical and operation efficiency are directly related to budget constraints and established personnel ceilings.

ISD, like all of the departments in the City of Boston, operates on a fiscal year, which begins on July 1st of the calendar year and ends on the last of day of June in the following calendar year. Budgeting, revenue collections and personnel assignments are all related, at least in their composition, to the fiscal year operation. In what follows, we shall examine ISD budgets, revenues and personnel spanning a six-year period – FY1998 to FY 2003 and in some cases using a five- year period

a. ISD Budgets Chart 2 summarizes ISD budgets for the six-year period but also contains the figures for the FY04 budget. Figures for FY 98-FY03 show actual expenditures. The FY 04 figures represent the approved budget for the current fiscal year. Variations in amounts among the seven “tab” items in FY98 – FY03 changes reflect changes in the organizational structure of ISD from six functional areas to four (See ISD Organization Chart 1). While “Code Enforcement” shows as a separate line item in FY 03 it has since been consolidated within the Environmental Inspections Division under “Field Services” for the FY04 budget.

The actual budgets for FY98-FY03 shows an increase of roughly 40% or an average increase of 6.6% per year. Most of this increase is reflected in the regularly negotiated wage increases and in added personnel. The approved FY 04 Budget, however, returns to a level some \$100,000 less than the FY03 Actual Budget and shows an increase of 30% over the FY98 budget which amounts to an annual average increase over seven years of 4.3%.

Chart 3 shows the capital expenditures allocated to ISD in the seven annual budgets from FY98 to FY04. The total expended is \$3,738,826 for two major items: new phone system and new digital-scanning system for storage of building jacket records. The unexpended balance of nearly \$ 8 million is no longer available. No new capital funds for ISD were allocated in FY04. The total funds allocated for the two items over seven budgets amounts to \$ 534,000 per year.

As would be expected in a largely hands-on operation, the average percentage of personnel expenditures over total budget is 82% with FY04 projections at 84%. While this is not excessive against the personnel percentages in other departments and in other cities for a “hands-on” operation, it does underline one important finding, namely, that ISD must increase employee productivity to substantially improve client services.

b. Personnel Numbers, FY98 – FY04 ISD personnel numbers for the period are shown on Chart 4. Arriving at correct personnel strength for any one year is difficult. Changes in assignment, resignations, retirements and new hires do not occur with uniformity or precision. To give some continuity in these figures, the data shown for FY98 to FY 2003 were taken from the last payroll in June of the specific fiscal year. The estimates given for FY 2004 were taken from the last payroll in August, 2003, in order to reflect personnel changes contemplated in the approved FY 04 budget. The numbers shown on the Chart do not include members of the Board of Appeals, the Board of Examiners, vacancies nor employees on workmen's compensation or inactive personnel. A series of footnotes are included to explain changes in assignments, re-organization or functional changes within various ISD units

While personnel numbers averaged 221 for the seven years, the FY04 numbers are closer to the FY 98 and 99 numbers while the intervening years – FY00 to FY03 – represented higher levels. A high point of 228 was reached in FY2000 with the establishment of Constituent Services, additional building inspectors and increases in the legal unit. With the merger of CORE into Housing and other reductions the FY01 figure was reduced to 219. FY02, with 241 employees, was unique since in that year the CODE ENFORCEMENT POLICE were absorbed and two new Divisions: Environmental Inspections and Special Operations were established. FY 2003 saw reductions from the higher levels of FY02 to achieve the 214 figure of the FY04 approved budget. The FY04 figure when viewed against the background of the FY00-03 years, makes it imperative that current operations aim at increasing ISD productivity and upgrading ISD client services.

c. ISD Revenue By Amount & Permits Issued: FY 98 – FY03 Revenue collection data shown on Chart 5 comes from the monthly reports originated in the ISD Cashier's Office after they were reviewed by the Budget Unit of the Division of Budget & Finance. These reports are also sent to the City's Treasury Department where totals are checked. However, the figures used here are those generated within ISD. The spreadsheet lists 42 separate accounts in its first column; the column after the tabs show control numbers used by ISD and Treasury to account for ISD's numerous activities. The problem arising from the use of these codes and the difficulty in identifying related figures, e.g. long form and short forms, is discussed in Part IV along with suggested changes in the report presentation.

The totals present a steady and gradual increase in revenues showing an increase of 34% in FY03 over revenues taken in FY98, with an average annual increase of 5.7%. FY01 was exceptional where revenue rose nearly 38% over FY02. While some of this was due to an increase in the building fees, most of the increase occurred in large, new construction (Item #1) and Issued permits (Item #18). The latter translates to proposed buildings that were charged the full fee only after getting approvals from BRA or Board of Appeals or both.

Permitting activity in FY02 and FY03 was strong in both numbers and revenue. For example, 9,048 "Short Forms" were issued in FY 03 with revenues of over 2 million

dollars, exceeded in numbers and revenue only in FY02; 6771 “long forms” applications were received in FY03 topped only by the 6867 received in FY00. Health, while issuing a small number of permits because of changed regulations, collected \$1,132,337 in revenues, exceeding all other years in the period covered by the spreadsheet. Plumbing’s FY03 activity exceeded that of any of the prior five years in both permits issued and revenues collected. The same situation occurred in Weights and Measures where its FY03 performance was well above the annual activity level of FY98 to FY02.

When the FY98-03 Revenues (Chart 5) are compared to the FY98-FY03 operating Budget Allocations (Chart 2) we find that total revenues exceeded total budget allocations by 75%, ranging from 33% in FY98 to 55% in FY03. If the average capital allocation of \$ 534,000 were added to the total budget amount for the 6-year period, the percentage by which revenues exceeded budget comes to 67%.

Two general conclusions may be drawn from this brief analysis. First, the volume of activity under ISD’s management responsibilities shows no decline but, in fact, has grown substantially in the last two or three years. Second, the reductions in staff and growing complications in administering the permit functions make it imperative that productivity be upgraded so that client services can be maintained and expanded. The details of these conclusions as applied to ISD will be more fully delineated in Part IV and were summarized in **Part II – Executive Summary**.

Although Chart 5 gives a complete picture of ISD Revenues, it should also be noted that Line 27 (Account No. 46) revenues is based on fees authorized by Boston City Ordinance and which are under the authority of the Chief of the Fire Department. Actual plan reviews are done by a qualified ISD plan reviewer whose salary and support is provided through the ISD budget. However, the funds collected under this Ordinance – \$ 256,000 in FY 03 – actually are deposited to the Fire Department’s Account.

Note: Two terms used in this section should be clarified: short form & long form. These referred to building permit applications. The **short-form** is an application in which there are no zoning, occupancy, egress or fire safety problems and where the work to be performed does not need accompanying plans. It is reviewed at the Front Desk on zoning, occupancy, street address, parcel number and violations and given to the Building Inspections Division to be certain that what is planned for construction fits the area and is soundly devised. In most cases the short form can, if all checks are positive, be issued the same day. In some cases it may take another day or two if the building inspector has to make a full field check.

The **long-form** is used for more involved construction where zoning, occupancy and building code problems may be involved; submission here usually involves a set of building plans, as well. Submissions are recorded in the Front Desk and then are sent to Plans/Zoning for review. In some cases, the applicant might have to go the Board of Appeals. These submissions take from one to two months, depending on the workload, careful plan review and whether or not the applicant must go to the Board of Appeals to correct a zoning or building code problem.

From these two forms comes another element. Since **short-forms** are usually issued the same day or within a day or two of application, they are usually counted as “issued permits.” However, the **long-forms** are thought of as “applications” since they may not be issued immediately or within one or two months. Thus the Front Counter calls the short forms “issued-permits” but Plans/Zoning referred to their immediate workload as “applications.”

5. ISD and the Service Concept

ISD is a department almost solely devoted to servicing a range of clientele whose requests are unrelenting, demanding and often contradictory. On the one hand the Department issues a whole range of permits from building, including plumbing, electrical and mechanical to occupancy to land/structure usage and zoning approvals and variances which are paralleled by a variety of permissions given for housing usage and rental, food establishments, weights and measures, environmental usage. The Department also works within an extended, not always consistent, legal framework that stems from both local ordinances and State laws.

But permitting is only part of the activity since the issuance of permits requires follow-up aimed at enforcing the law regarding the permissions received from the permits issued. At the same time, ISD enforcement is based on seeking compliance where punitive enforcement is the last resort for the recalcitrant.

In addition, citizen complaints coupled with complaints funneled through neighborhood associations makes up another facet of the service requirements facing ISD within its operational jurisdiction.

The details of ISD division and unit operations are more fully described in Part IV. However, an idea of the extent of ISD’s operational responsibilities can be outlined here. Chart 5, for example yields a total of 51,252 activity units (largely permits issued) in FY2003. To support these activities, the Department reported over 90,000 field inspections in FY2003 and just over 10,000 reviews of “long-form applications.” FY03 also saw the issuance 2,030 show-cause complaints on violations inspected by ISD personnel with 2,105 cases now pending in the housing court. As a result of these actions some 1900 cases were closed based on inspected compliance with previously issued show-cause complaints. The court cases are handled by one lawyer.

In all this activity three elements should be emphasized. **First**, ISD is involved in a complicated operation, focused on client services, mixing the often conflicting requirements of economic development (construction, restaurant and food business) with social and neighborhood purposes (housing, health, environment). Even in the best of times, ISD operations require a carefully balanced managerial coordination, an integrated, open work process and full use of information technology in the operation of these processes. **Second**, with budget cuts and personnel reductions quickly becoming “standard operation procedures” at the State and local government level, improvement of

client services puts greater pressure on achieving heightened managerial coordination and substantial upgrading of integrated process systems through computerization. Few, if any, alternatives exist. **Third**, the effectiveness of ISD operations depends in large part on its work force, their management and improvements in their productivity. Moreover, ISD's success in improving client service relates to how ISD's operations are perceived by its employees – and its clients. While ISD has, in the two decades of its existence as a full department, suffered through the slings and arrows of a host of problems, a core of important, valuable and dedicated people have worked hard to preserve ISD identity and to assure basic services for its clients. This effort should not go unnoticed nor should it be allowed to falter. ISD, in this respect, is not much different from many other organizations, public or private. In the last decade we have witnessed a growing exposure of once-heralded business operations whose greed has been seen to overwhelm their dedication to client services. This phenomenon, surprisingly, has also punctured the dedication of newspapers, large and small. Perhaps it is the right time – against the backdrop of reduced funding, personnel reductions and the demands of improved client services – to focus more on the actualities of service improvement than on the sometimes irrational search for scapegoats.

6. ISD As Economic Facilitator

ISD, through this Study, has emphasized the need to improve its management operations, organizational structure and paper-work processing system to upgrade client services. While this is very important for a variety of reasons, many of which have been noted in previous sections of this study, of equal importance is the parallel need to facilitate economic development represented by permitted construction: residential, business, industrial and commercial.

As noted in the preliminary examination and interpretation of Chart 5, the demand for construction permits has not shown any appreciable decline in Boston.

The combination of **short forms** issued and **long form** applications received during the last five years (FY 99 to FY03) have averaged 15,363 a year or 1,280 per month. FY03's total of 15,819 is higher than annual figures for each of the preceding 5 years, exceeding the yearly average by nearly 500.

Correlated with these figures is the annual issuance of related but subsidiary permits – foundation, plumbing, fire warning, sprinkler, gas and electric – averaging some 24,000 annually. 24,338 of these permits were issued in FY03, exceed only by FY00 (24,809) and FY 01 (25,513); at the same time the FY 03 issuances were 10% above the yearly average.

What is the actual annual value of construction permitted by ISD and how does that affect the Boston economy? Unfortunately, ISD does not keep data on the value of its building permits issued. The applicants enter the estimated cost of construction on the various long and short forms issued by ISD. However, once these are entered into the Data Entry file, the data becomes part of the TPX-IMS mainframe data storage system

and cannot easily be retrieved.

Nevertheless, ISD can estimate the value of building construction because the permit fee charged is roughly 1% of the estimated cost of construction. The electrical, plumbing, gas and mechanical permits are not subject to this approach since their fees are based on the number of connections, etc. Chart 6, however, does give an estimate of the value of building construction based on the permit charges for the six types of permits/activity that pay fees based on the estimated cost of construction. Thus value of construction rose from \$1,221,151,200 in FY 98 to \$ 1,661,946,987 in FY 03. The total for the six year period, based on the chart, is \$9,815,504,187 or TEN BILLION DOLLARS. While input-output economics is no longer in vogue, the value-added to the Boston economy, in addition to this base value, could be as much as 50%.

The strong performance of construction development in Boston over this period is supported by data based on the FW Dodge figures available through the Boston Federal Reserve Bank's monthly publication, "New England Economic Indicators." and its data website. Chart 7 presents a schedule of indices relating construction activity (combined residential and non-residential) in Boston with Massachusetts and New England for the six-year period of FY 98 – FY03. Using 1998 as the "base" year, Boston's construction activity shows an over all increase of 36% in the six year period: FY98-03 with FY01 yielding the largest single year growth of 47%. In contrast Massachusetts state-wide construction activity shows 0% growth comparing the base of FY98 to that of FY03. The State's biggest growth year, like that of Boston, was FY01 at 27%. Looking at the of New England Region, overall growth – 21% - was greater than Massachusetts but less than Boston's 36%. A notation showing the procedure used to obtain the indices is attached to Chart 7.

The conclusion is straight-forward and obvious: with Boston showing sustained growth in residential and non-residential building in an otherwise strained economy, ISD should adopt a practical policy to do every thing possible to improve its permit and approval process to help facilitate construction.

IV. STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF ISD ORGANIZATION

In this section, each of the general operating areas – Commissioner's Office, Administration and Finance, Inspector of Buildings and Field Services – will be examined based on the twelve divisions. (See Chart of Organization , Chart 1). In the case of the Building Permits, Zoning, Review and Licenses Division, the examination will include the Division's subunits. This has been done because of the crucial importance of these subunits in the flow of work regarding building permits and related permits and permissions.

A series of recommendations follow from each analysis. The recommendations have already been summarized in **II Executive Summary of Recommendations** under five categories: savings, no cost, small cost, modest, large cost. In addition, recommendations

that apply more generally to the whole Department will be discussed in **V General Recommendations.**

1. Office of the Commissioner

a. Employees: 5

b. Activities & Responsibilities: The Commissioner of ISD is the focus for major policy, management decisions, coordination and general & detailed oversight of the Department's daily operations. The 1981 Ordinance setting up the new ISD notes that the Department "...shall be under the charge of an Officer known as the Commissioner, appointed by the Mayor, who shall have the powers and the duties imposed upon him or her by law." When the Commissioner, by background or experience, does not qualify as the Inspector of Buildings under the State Building Code, the latter then is charged with the technical implementation of the Code. The Commissioner reports periodically to the Mayor and the City Council. The Office is also open to citizen and client complaints and works on problem-solving in the neighborhoods in coordination with other divisions, units and personnel within the Department. The Commissioner's office is also a focus for public information, press relations and general public relations. In addition, the Commissioner issues policy, procedure and implementing rules and regulations affecting Department operations known as "Commissioner's Bulletins."

To assist the Commissioner directly with the work of the Office are a Chief of Staff, a Principal Administrative Assistant, a Senior Administrative assistant and a principal clerk.

The Chief of Staff currently does legal work and is concerned with certain aspects of public relations, e.g. conducting the ISD cable information program. The Principal Administrative Assistant handles much of the public relations and newspaper contacts for the Department and works with the Commissioner on drafting, revising and updating operating rules and other implementing aspects of the Commissioner's Bulletin. The Senior Administrative Assistant keeps the Commissioner's records, appointments and coordinates requests, problem-solving process between the Commissioner, the Departments and Division Heads as well as with citizens, clients and City Hall Officials including the Mayor's Office and the offices of the City Council.

c. Commentary: The current Commissioner has emphasized the Department's need for outreach, particularly in the neighborhoods and in seeking solutions to complex problems involving abandoned and neglected structures. From this perspective the Constituent Services Unit in Administration & Finance and the recently established Investigative & Regulatory Enforcement Unit within the Inspector of Buildings area have been assigned more active responsibility. Emphasis on clearer working rules – and increased productivity – and upgrading of Commissioner's Bulletins is also in evidence. Formal and informal re-organizations and duty re-assignments have occurred to upgrade client service within the Department.

Emphasis has also been placed on coordinating press releases and public information through the Principal Administrative Assistant and, to a lesser extent, in the work of the Chief of State.

However, a noticeable lack of managerial and operational interaction with subordinates, with Division and Unit heads is apparent within the Office of the Commissioner. What is needed is the re-assignment of an experienced ISD professional from one of the operating divisions who has shown good management skills and may also be familiar with computerized operations to assist the Commissioner in these areas. The Chief of Staff position could then be eliminated and the funds saved might be sufficient to restore at least one professional, preferably in the Plans/Zoning Unit.

While the public outreach, communication and press relations are critical – and have been enhanced in focus and effect – an important need still exists for very basic information in most aspects of the Department’s operation, but particularly in the “Front Counter” functions where hundreds of clients appear daily to press for a variety of permissions. The Department needs to revive many of its informational and explanatory booklets to assist its client – many of whom are new to the process – with a series of fundamental explanations. As ISD meets the challenge of reduced personnel and operating budgets, it need to upgrade the low cost approaches to public information that will assist clients entering a very complicated and multi-faceted approval process.

d. Recommendations:

1. REVIVE ISD INFORMATION BOOKLETS AND PROCESS CHECKLISTS:

As part of its outreach emphasis, the Commissioner’s Office should revive the client information booklets. They will have to be updated and reprinted but the cost should be minimal and the resultant benefits will make this a very cost-effective action. The need for the checklists and their usage will be discussed more fully in the analysis of the building & zoning procedures within the **Inspector of Building’s** domain.

2. UPDATE AND CODIFY THE COMMISSIONER’S BULLETINS: The Bulletins contain policy and procedure determinations over the last 15 years and are most relevant to ISD’s operations. They should be updated, revised and re-issued as a printed manual for use by ISD middle management and also made available at a nominal price to ISD clients. The manual could be used for training purposes. Recommended also is the inclusion of a bulletin covering the procedures, processes and operations affecting the Front Counter. This proposal will also be examined during discussion of the Building Permit Division.

3. ESTABLISH COMMISSIONER’S QUARTERLY REVIEWS WITH

ISD’s MIDDLE MANAGEMENT: The Commissioner should establish a regular, programmed quarterly review of progress, problems and with separate divisions and,

where necessary, with separate individual sub-units. These meetings should be based on the newly revised reporting system where issues of client service, productivity and organization can be discussed.

4. ASSIGN AN EXPERIENCED ISD PROFESSIONAL TO THE COMMISSIONER'S STAFF: A currently operating division or unit head with demonstrated operational knowledge and problem-solving experience in ISD should be assigned to the Commissioner's Office to undertake assignments on a daily basis that will better assist the Commissioner. The position of Chief of Staff could then be eliminated and funds saved would be sufficient to restore at least one vitally needed position lost by the FY04 mandated personnel reduction.

Under the general functional area of **ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT** there are five divisions. The manager for this area is the Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Management who is also the head of the Budget Management Unit. Three of the five units are clearly staff units within the general purview of Administration & Management - Human Resources & Training, Budget & Management and Information Technology. A fourth unit - Constituent Services - is a complaint coordination, outreach and response unit that is handled more directly through the Office of the Commissioner. The fifth unit - Board of Zoning & Building Appeals - is a quasi-autonomous unit based on its hearing/decisional legal function. Though placed within ISD, the 1981 City Ordinance notes that like the Board of Examiners (Building Construction License) "neither shall be under the supervision or control" of ISD. However, budget and personnel support for their operation are provided through and by ISD. Board of Appeals is located in Boston City Hall where the Board of Examiners also meets.

1. Division of Human Services & Training

a. Employees: 2

b. Activities: This unit performs the personnel function for the Department including personnel records, time sheets, payroll oversight, overtime, grievances and training. The unit normally manages the Department's labor agreements but is currently without its Director so that the Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Management is performing policy functions.

This unit is linked to the City's personnel computer systems, although much of the detailed record keeping is done by hand. City-wide training opportunities are made available through this section while the details of the benefit program, including information and sign-up, are also managed through Human Services & Training in conjunction with the City's overall Human Services Department.

c. Commentary: The personnel division is consistent and responsive in its operation and processes considerable paper work as back-up information needed to support a variety of basic personnel actions. At the same time, the two person staff also works on related personnel needs, especially regarding training, based on the availability of training programs and facilities within the City and through the central personnel system. However, in a time of stringent budgets, it may be worthwhile to explore the possibility of developing more inter-Departmental, least-cost training

d. Recommendations:

1. THE DIVISION SHOULD CONSIDER THE FORMATION OF AN ISD TRAINING COMMITTEE THAT WOULD MEET PERIODICALLY UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE PERSONNEL DIVISION, PRIORITIZE TRAINING NEEDS AND DESIGN AN IN-HOUSE PROGRAM TO MEET THESE NEEDS:

This Report mentions in-house, in-service training in much of its commentary and recommendations. The proposed committee should bring these together and a plan worked out for implementation. The training should be staffed by in-house expertise, should use the techniques of brain-storming, experience interchange and transference of information between units in the Department and between Departments. This training project should aim at least-cost solutions.

2. REQUEST THAT "IT" REVIEW CURRENT ON-LINE SYSTEMS INVOLVING THE ISD PERSONNEL DIVISION TO DETERMINE ADD-ONS AND OTHER CONNECTIONS THAT WOULD SIMPLIFY THE DIVISION'S PAPER HANDLING:

While the Division uses available software programs to process much of its paper-work, IT should assist in upgrading systems, adding new ones and working out processes in order that more of the details can be computerized.

<p>2. Board of Appeals</p>

a. Employees: 4

b. Activities: The Board hears appeals filed by applicants whose permit proposal have been turned down by ISD's plan reviewers for either zoning or building reasons – or both. The Board is composed of seven members - and three alternates - appointed by the Mayor. Board members are paid an annual stipend for their work.

A summary of the Board's FY03 Annual Report is shown in Chart 8. In FY 03. The Board received 1,076 appeals of which 1,019 – or nearly 95% - were on zoning. Of the 1,433 cases placed on the FY03 agenda 1,401 were disposed of with a carry-over of 32 cases into FY04. Of the 1,400 cases before the Board, written decisions were made on 1,205 while 30 were withdrawn. The Board itself conducted 37 hearings, averaging 3 per month. The data collected does not, however, identify the pre-hearing notifications that are sent out to adjoining property owners nor does it reflect the workload involved in notifications required on post-hearing actions.

The four employees of the Board prepare all the necessary paper work, including legal notification of affected owners related to the appeal, for the Board; the staff also helps prepare the Board's decision and other post hearing notifications. Currently, the position of head of the Board of Appeals staff is vacant and is being handled part-time by the head of the Constituent Services Division.

c. Commentary: The workload of the staff is considerable. Since all its process-actions, particularly notification, are subject to legal review, the process is detailed and, in some cases, cumbersome. To offset the work load and the reduction in staff, the Board does use a computerized notification system that is tied into the parcel identification and ownership records of the Assessing Department. Board communications are done via email for agendas, meeting notification and related information. However, little else is computerized. The logbook, for example, could easily be transferred to Excel but is now done by hand. Summary reference of case material from prior appeals is on index cards while basic case records are kept in large metal files for ten years. This seems excessive and wasteful since current working cases rarely need references going back that far. Moreover, with ISD's new scan system – INFOTRIEVE - all Board decisions affecting filed long forms are copied into their respective jackets. These papers can now be retrieved, reviewed and copied on-line.

Interchange of plan details, refusal notice and accompanying documentation from ISD's plans/zoning unit is not always smooth, largely because the twice-weekly transfer of bulk paperwork from ISD to City Hall has its hazards. Moreover, while ISD uses a numbering system prefaced by the number of the current year, the Board uses a consecutive numbering system, which makes for difficulties in assignment and location of papers. Some clients have complained of losses and mix-ups in the transfer, which would be eliminated if the Board staff operated in the same building with ISD, and in easy proximity to the Plan/Zoning work area.

The absence of a full time head of the Board's staff also makes for processing difficulties. While the chief of the Constituent Services Unit acts as a part-time staff head, process, office operations are being unduly hampered.

d. Recommendations:

1. APPOINT A FULL TIME HEAD OF THE BOARD OF APPEALS STAFF:

It is very important that the Board staff have a full time head to give daily direction and consistency to the Board's operation. Various alternatives in selecting the head staff person are available: advertised recruitment, appointment from within the Department, temporary or full-time assignment. At a time when staff throughout the City – and ISD – are being reduced, certain of the suggested alternatives could achieve both objectives: staff minimums and full-time continuity.

Note: This position is currently being advertised.

2. MOVE BOARD OF APPEALS STAFF & OPERATIONS FROM CITY HALL TO ISD LOCATION: This would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Board's processing work since it is tied directly with the work of ISD's plans/review unit on denials and implementation of resultant decisions by the Board. Moreover, staff back-up and interchange would be greatly facilitated by having the Board's staff in close working proximity to ISD and would make computerization and info tie-ins easier. Hearings could be held in the large hearing room on the 2nd Floor at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue through arrangements with the Board of Health and parking facilities for hearings could also be arranged through ISD. While this shift would disrupt the exchanges between city council members and constituents involved, more efficient and less costly operation may, in times of significant fiscal stress, take precedence. It should also be noted that shifting the Board to the ISD location, would free-up additional space for already overcrowded city offices.

Note: This move would also include re-locating the meetings of the Board of Examiners to ISD where, in fact, the Board's support is already being supplied by ISD's Building Division/Plans & Zoning Unit.

3. COMPUTERIZATION OF THE BOARD'S PROCESSES: The Board's processes are too long on handwork and too short on the application of the most minimal of computer technology. Logbooks, file systems and most paper work should be committed to the computer and the exchange of information between ISD and the Board's staff should be via electronic transfer. Much of this can be done on regular computer programs, e.g. excel. If the CD disk proposal for submission of development plans is implemented, a similar system would have to be installed with the Board's staff for the transfer of plans and subsequent addition of approvals and conditions related to the Board's decisions. (See Recommendations under Plan/Zoning Unit of Division of Building Permits). In addition, the Board of Appeals staff should adopt a document number system consistent with ISD's so that with a closer interchange search time and confusion resulting from an un-integrated reference system would be eliminated.

4. INSTALL SYSTEMATIC ARCHIVE STORAGE SYSTEM FOR BOARD RECORDS: The Board of Appeals records should be sent to Boston City Archives after 3 years to make more room available and thus increase efficiency. When records are needed from the archives, two sources would be available: a) referral to the archive deposit and b) referral to the ISD **Info-trieve** system to the building jackets containing prior decisions.

3 Budget Management

a. Personnel: 4

b. Activities: This division is headed by the Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Management who is also charged, organizationally, with responsibility for the five divisions under the Administration & Finance functional area. The details of budget formation, expenditures, purchasing, contract implementation, and revenue review are

handled by a three person staff which also includes mail reception and dispersal. Budgeting and expenditures, including connections with relevant City departments – budgeting, accounting and treasury – are handled through standard computer programs. Formation of the Department’s annual budget submission is coordinated in this Division, following the City’s comprehensive program budget system. The Deputy Commissioner also receives monthly, quarterly and annual reports from ISD operating units with special emphasis given to reports on progress in achieving program budget goals as defined in the current year approved budget. The Deputy Commissioner, individually and with staff, works closely with the Office of Commissioner on issues involving finance, personnel and budget administration.

c. Commentary: The division functions well in regular responsibilities assigned to it. At the same time, there are certain functions that should be reviewed in order to make them pro-active and valuable in the overall management of the Department. First, is the reporting of revenue data which, in turn, is related to the Cashier’s Office. Recently, the City’s Auditor requested that the Cashier’s Office be put under the direct supervision of the Building Permit Division and that the Budget Management Office perform a regular audit function. While this is perhaps necessary in the abstraction of a “conflict of interest,” it does not address the real problems involved in revenue collection and reporting. Revenue collection – and its continuing difficulties in operation and reporting – is discussed, along with recommendations, under the Cashier’s Unit within the Building Permits Division.

On Revenue Reporting, the **Monthly Collection Report** is the key document, probably the most important management document produced within the Department since it gives details on revenues collected and also identifies the permits and other activity associated with the revenues produced. From the vantage of being a public document, however, it is difficult to use and interpret. Part of the difficulties stem from the fact that the ISD accounts used by the Treasury and appearing on the left side of the report are of value only to the inside accounting needs of the City; it is not arranged so that top management, middle-management and the public can easily understand what is happening. Only through patient inquiry will one find out, for example, that the “short forms” are actually termed “minor” under # 06 and that the “long forms” encompass 01, 02,03,32 and 34. Yet these numbers go to the heart of the building permit processing. Moreover, permit numbers and revenues are mixed with service fees for copying, printouts, microfilm, etc. Nor does the Cashier’s Office or the Budget Management Division provide an annual summary sheet and reliable yearly totals on revenues, permits and or activity numbers.

The division also manages the ISD reporting response to goal requirements set out in the FY03 budget; by producing ISD’S FY03 Management Information Report is shown as Chart 9. The Report identifies ISD’s progress in achieving the sixteen objectives based on program goals included in the approved FY03 budget; the data is gathered from responding division, collected and sent to the City Budget Office monthly followed by the full year’s report shown here. However, this does raise the question of the production and use of the more extensive monthly reports produced in ISD. While many of the reports contain important data, they are not formatted to provide information by which

trends can be identified and by which management decisions can be made. ISD needs to carefully review its reporting system so that it will contribute to ISD overall goal of client service improvement. This subject will be discussed further in **V General Recommendations**.

The Budget Management Division manages ISD's budget preparation process. As noted in Chart 2 shown in the discussion on the annual budget above, most of ISD's budget goes for personnel costs, from 80,6 % in FY98 to a proposed 84% in the FY04 budget.

Under current circumstances personnel numbers are not likely to be increased and may well be reduced. Consequently, the use of personnel and the distribution of regular operating funds becomes increasingly important in the preparation of future budgets. In doing this ISD should rely much more on middle management for a bottom-up development of the budget and should be encouraged to set out realistic and effective goals for the Department consistent with these pressing constrictions.

d. Recommendations:

1. REVISE THE MONTHLY COLLECTION REPORT SYSTEM: Based on the previous discussion, the Monthly Collection Report should be revised to reflect a more understandable association of revenues and permits issued, e.g. short forms, long forms, fire, occupancy and use, etc, and revenues gained from ordinary services, i.e. copying, microfilm, service charges, print outs, etc. Quarterly and annual summaries should also be included. A suggested revision is shown as Chart 10. The revision should, of course, be reviewed with Treasury and Accounting and would be consistent with the proposed recommendations – Point of Sales computerization - for the Cashier's Office. More comparative analysis of collections regarding current and prior year's should also be included.

2. TAKE LEAD ROLE IN THE PROPOSED REVISION OF ISD'S MONTHLY, QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL REPORTS: The details of the proposed revision are, as noted, contained in the recommendations discussed in Section V General Recommendations. However, Administration & Finance should take the lead in devising and implementing a more effective reporting system for both management usage. and public information.

3. DEVISE A MORE COORDINATED, BOTTOMS-UP BUDGET PREPARATION PROCESS FOR THE UPCOMING FY05 BUDGET: The allocation of scarce resources in the FY05 budget should be carefully coordinated with ISD's middle-management under a goal-setting exercise that is based on more effective use of allotted resources. While the ISD Commissioner, in association with the ISD's budget personnel, especially the Deputy Commissioner for Administration & Finance, must make the final decisions, it is critical that thoughtful and realistic inputs be received from ISD's middle management.

4. Constituent Services

a. Personnel: 7

b. Activity: This division performs a variety of service outreach actions and, particularly, coordinates responses to the Mayor's Office 24 hour service by following up with units within ISD on their complaint response. For example, in FY 2003 ISD received 3,480 cases from the Mayor's 24 Hour Service Office. The four largest case assignments involved Code Enforcement (940), Building (819), Housing (544) and Constituent Services (280). Constituent Services engages in a follow-up process to be certain that the cases are answered, resolved or, in cases where more time is needed to resolve issues, to document the problems and assist in their solution. In FY03 the Department was able to close 90% of the cases assigned by the Mayor's Office.

This unit also coordinates a variety of Neighborhood Meetings on both individual complaints where ISD units are involved – or should be involved - on wider issues. On the latter it is often necessary to extend the sphere of coordination in Neighborhood problem-solving to involve other City Departments. In this area, the unit maintains direct linkage with the Mayor's Department of Neighborhood Services. and accompanies the ISD Commissioners on his weekly problem-solving "walk through" in various areas where ISD services are needed. The Unit also works with other ISD units in case of fire disasters, in the restoration of services and assisting neighborhoods under zoning, building or abandoned house problems. The unit also does response surveys on ISD client services.

c. Commentary: Constituent Services provides a needed link between ISD and neighborhood focused on problem-solving where the issues are difficult of immediate solutions. While it works on the regularized complaint receipt-answer answer system, its most important service is in providing a forum where seemingly intransigent problems can be aired and where solutions can be built over time. Pressured with a panorama of complaints and showered with nearly insoluble problems, the unit works under great pressure. It would, however, be valuable if its reporting system were more organized and where possible to provide information on solutions for oft-repeated problems. Some attention should be paid, as well, to maintaining a consistent feedback from ISD clients, especially via the Front Counter and Cashier Unit where eventually a great many – though not all – of ISD clients come for service.

d. Recommendations:

1. WORK CLOSELY WITH THE ISD MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT TO IDENTIFY BETTER ORGANIZATION STRATEGY INCLUDING SUMMARY REPORTS OF ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE HAD SUCCESS IN PROBLEM-SOLVING IN ORDER TO REPLICATE THE PROCESS: While Constituent Services follows, in general, a problem-solving process with its neighborhood groups, the

work being done should be reviewed and analyzed so that the best parts of the process can be generalized and spread to other users and clients for their benefit. A more regularized reporting system should also be tied to this.

2. DEVELOP A STANDARD, CONCISE AND USABLE QUESTIONNAIRE SYSTEM TO ELICIT FEEDBACK FROM ISD CLIENTS: ISD should adopt a feedback procedure that many companies and public organizations use, namely, a questionnaire on service that is a) available at the point of service or b) is mailed to selected users. The consultant has experimented with a questionnaire at the Front Desk whose result will be tabulated once 100 questionnaires are received. However, the questionnaire is too large and not handy for use and should be redesigned. And another mail-in should be designed so that periodically lists of clients taken from the service units within the Department can be engaged in mail feedback.

5. Information Technology

a. Personnel: 4

b. Activity: The IT Unit provides overall support to regular office computer/printing operations and maintains the existing networks within ISD. The latter's IT inventory consists of 113 computers, 97 monitors, 25 printers, 5 scanners, 2 burners, 6 servers and 3 white boards. Over half of the computers/monitors are either in poor condition or are obsolete for current needs. Upgrading has not kept pace with current and future needs. However, ISD has begun a program to use re-conditioned computers where the need is mainly in word processing and uncomplicated usage of data collection.

This division is also tasked with the re-design of the permitting forms and the maintenance of the recently completed **Infotrieve** scanning and document storage system for ISD building jackets. Currently, IT has put into effect an electronic version of ISD's electrical permit and staff are now working on similar upgrades for Plumbing and Mechanical Permits and have a draft short form building permit application format that is expected to be on line soon.

To facilitate ISD's IT operations – as well as to assess, respond and upgrade basic IT needs – ISD has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the City's Management Information System Department (MIS). Under this agreement MIS has assigned one of its specialists to head the IT Division. ISD and MIS have also engaged in a working dialogue to design a full-scale computerized system that may serve ISD's needs while tying into to other City systems to coordinate information and increase efficiency in a number of areas.

c. Commentary: ISD's need for substantial computerization of its operations has long been recognized. In 1995 and then in 1998 extensive studies were made of these needs and implementations proposed. Summary references to these studies are shown as shown in Appendix VIII. The 1995 study and action plan did not meet ISD's needs either in design or in proposed operation while the 1998 approach focused on the detailing of all

of ISD's operating systems, showing both current and proposed changes to be implemented. But this too proved difficult to implement and was never realized. However, MIS is currently engaged in a dialogue with ISD personnel aimed at developing a bid document for the installation of a basic system to cover most, if not all, of the ISD procedures and processes, including information linkages to other City Departments. ISD recently made a series of proposals regarding this computerization proposal which is included as Appendix IX.

An important computerized innovation in ISD operations came in the last few years through the installation of **Infotrieve** by which over 100,000 documented-filled building jackets were scanned into an on-line system. This enables ISD employees and clients to view the jackets on-line for important documents, e.g. occupancy permits, building issuances and board of appeals decisions. It should also enable ISD to store the original documents in the Boston City Archives and thus free up valuable office space on the 5th floor for more efficient use.

However, the installation of **Infotrieve**, important and needed as it is, raises an equally important issue. The latter is an improvement in document **storage** but only peripherally is it an improvement in **process**. From the client's vantage, process, not storage, is the key to improving the ISD operational system, especially in the area of permit approvals, plan reviews, occupancy determination, etc. Moreover, the move to put basic permit application forms on-line, eg. the electrical permit, begins in a **storage** mode; when all the forms are only line, however, the expectation is that they will have cross-references and related features that will also improve **process**. This is also true of the field reporting systems respecting health, housing, environment and building inspections and is an issue that will be discussed in more detail in each of the affected operating units.

d. Recommendations: The recommendations regarding information technology and computerization will be advanced when discussing the specific needs of operating divisions. However, three more general recommendations are included here.

1. MAKE AVAILABLE ALL ISD FORMS AND PROCESS INFORMATION ON CDs FOR SALE AT COST: While IT is going through the involved task of putting the three major building permit forms on-line, many clients who repeatedly use ISD forms have expressed interest in getting forms on CDs, along with written guides to the submission process involved. The forms could be filled in at client offices and then submitted to ISD.

2. PROVIDE AN INTERNAL GUIDE TO CURRENT MAJOR COMPUTER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO ISD STAFF: ISD has a number of computer operating computer programs whose knowledge and use is not widespread. Some are networked and others are limited to certain specific uses. Concise information on these programs should be available in a small booklet in order a) to coordinate their use where possible and necessary, b) to inform middle-management and operators where various kinds of data can be found and c) to assist in identifying systems that should be more

closely coordinated in usage, that should be modified to expand usage and others that should be eliminated.

3. MAINTAIN LIAISON WITH BRA, SEWER & WATER AND ASSESSING TO DETERMINE COORDINATED COMPUTER PROGRAM USAGE THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ISD UPGRADES: IT should identify information systems used by these Departments and ways they can be integrated for ISD usage. BRA, for example, has developed a GIS system with overlays that should replace or supplement the program now in use for parcel identification at Plans/Zoning. Similar applications used in Sewer & Water and Assessing, particularly the latter's parcel information on occupancy, could be of substantial use to ISD units by simplifying their cross checks and references on building, zoning and occupancy applications.

The functional area encompassed under **INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS** is perhaps the most important operation involving daily public contact in permit application, issuance, inspection and enforcement. At the same time it is surrounded by a seemingly unending maze of intersecting – often conflicting – laws, ordinance, regulations, codes and operating procedures and processes that can make for difficulty, confusion and frustration among ISD employees and citizens alike. This functional grouping is headed by an **Assistant Commissioner** who also carries the important technical title – and authority – of the **Inspector of Buildings**, a position whose responsibilities and authority are set out in the Massachusetts State Building Code. Although the main emphasis, especially in the State Building Code, is on directing the technical side of building permissions, the management requirements, especially in ISD's large operation, is especially important; it is a role, however, that is somewhat overlooked by the necessary technical emphasis given by the State Building Code. The details of this important operational area are administered under three Divisions: a) Building Permits, & Zoning Reviews, b) Building, Electrical & Mechanical Inspections and c) Investigation & Regulatory Enforcement.

1. Building Permits & Zoning Reviews

This Division has four subsidiary units that will be viewed separately in order to give a better idea of the permitting process, its problems and the recommendations made for improvements.

1a. Front Counter & Occupancy Permit Administration

a. Personnel: 9

b. Activity: This unit handles all over-the-counter applications: short form, long form, amendments and use of premises. All the forms filed are checked against existing data base systems to determine correct address, parcel identification and land use, zoning

compliance, occupancy, verification of cost of construction and application of the permit fee. Once the long forms are intact, they are sent to the Plan/Zoning Unit for review and processing. In addition, the electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permit applications are checked for licenses, street address, occupancy and violations. The Front Counter is also responsible for the issuance of occupancy permits which requires a substantial determination of occupancy and occupancy history. Chart 11 shows the general process for the occupancy permit, accompanied by a procedures checklist. Noted is the fact that there still exists a backlog of temporary occupancy permits which this unit is pursuing in order to a) require issuance of permanent occupancy, b) to collect the full fee for occupancy and c) to determine violations that may have occurred in the use of the temporary permit.

Most of the Front Desk activity shows up in the monthly/annual Collection Report, particularly Items 1-6, 9, 11, 13-16 and 18 as delineated in Chart 5. In addition, Chart 12 shows the numbers of Short Forms issued by month for the five-year period FY 99 to 03.

c. Commentary: Two things are immediately evident in the work being done in this unit: First, all forms submitted save electrical, plumbing and gas, are **typed** by four, sometimes five, typists in this unit! If we take the figures for FY03, this would mean that 9,048 short forms, 6771 long forms plus 1274 amendments, 387 premise use and 1,457 use & occupancy - or a total of 18,937-were typed by ISD personnel. Permit typing persists at a time when computerization has taken over even the smallest corner grocery store! The current situation underscores the lack of emphasis – until very recently – of improving **process** so that ISD clients can be better served and in a timely manner.

Second, since ISD has a number of stand-alone data systems, permit verification on the nearly 19,000 applications noted above must go through three or four separate on-line systems before determinations can be made on the validity of the individual application; Recent efforts to put electrical permits on-line with Adobe-Acrobat(Cardiff), although an important improvement, has also increased verification time at the Front Desk because separate entries must be interchanged between six uncoordinated programs, i.e. fee calculation and license verification (Adobe), violation check (IMS), work description (Adobe), occupancy check (IMS), occupancy check (Infotrieve), permit update/print application (Adobe), Cashier (fee payment).

The Front Desk is serviced by two ISD employees who have worked in this capacity for many years and handle the complicated routine with relative ease. However, very little has been done to provide back-up and replacements to cover vacations, sickness and retirements. This is coupled with the absence of a clear, concise Manual of Front Desk Operation and appropriate in-service training.

d. Recommendations:

1. ESTABLISH AN ISD USER-FRIENDLY INTEGRATED FILE SHARING SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE A SHARED ISD DATA BASE INFORMATION SYSTEM: Although ISD is working with MIS to establish a coordinated set of bid

proposals on computerization of ISD major work areas, it is important to emphasize that the action recommended here is crucial to improving client services at the point of immediate contact. Delays in permit processing, especially in the short form issuance, are often bound up in the extended periods of checking stand-alone data bases. This also applies to the long-form, electrical and other permits.

2. INCREASE CURRENT EFFORTS TO PUT MAJOR PERMITS ON LINE SO THAT THEY CAN BE FILLED OUT BY CLIENTS VIA WEBSITES OR AT ISD:

The transfer of major permit forms to on-line usage is already undertaken by ISD's IT division with plumbing, electrical and mechanical. However, it should be noted that the short and long form transformation are critical to eliminating the typewriters, increasing efficiency and improving client services. It is also important that a pay system for credit cards or bank transfers be appended to the on-line permits so they can be emailed with credit card and/or wire bank transfers thus greatly facilitating the process.

3. DEVELOP A COMPLETE, CONCISE MANUAL OF PERMIT PROCESSING FOR FRONT DESK USAGE AND TRAINING:

The development of this Manual is most necessary in training other Front Counter staffers to learn how to operate the Front Desk; the Manual would also be important in doing in-house training /information sessions. Finally, the Manual could be sold at cost to ISD clients so that both sides of the "counter" will be operating with the same set of procedures.

4. ISSUANCE OF COMMISSIONER'S BULLETIN SETTING OUT THE COMPLETE FEE SCHEDULE FOR ISD FOR GUIDANCE AND REFERENCE.

Fees charged at ISD are based largely on the Boston City Fee Ordinance and, in some instances, on the Massachusetts Building Code. However, these references are difficult to track down and not easily available to most clients. By issuing a Commissioner's Bulletin, both ISD personnel and ISD clientele will be working with the same set of facts.

In addition, the Bulletin should contain an outline of how to determine the "fair cost of construction" using the RS Means Construction Cost Data system and thus give an authoritative basis for the Boston Law which emphasizes the use of "fair cost of construction" in determining construction values.

2. CASHIER UNIT

a. Personnel: 2

b. Activity: Although a small unit, the Cashier Unit is the Department's financial and permission-granting pivot through which all financial - and permitting - action must pass for final approval. The activity processed through the Cashier's Unit is shown on Chart 5, referred to earlier, covering the six years of FY98 to FY03. In the latter year the Cashier's Unit collected \$ 21, 805,652 based on issued permits, fees and service charges involving 51,491 permits or permit-related issuances as well as charges for 27,464 service units involving copy, maps and books service charges and microfilm copies (This latter figure is somewhat misleading since microfilming is counted by the sheet rather than by the unit building plan.) The Cashier Unit is operated by two employees;

vacations, sick leave and other absences are covered by employees – usually from the Front Counter or Plans/Zoning - who are familiar with the operation.

This activity depends on a dual accounting system: cash registers and a CPU excel spreadsheet. Cash received is entered as a transaction into one of two 15-year-old cash registers, which produce a paper roll journal. Permit fee payments are validated with a separate perforating machine. The paper roll journal information has to be validated separately in order to be entered into a spreadsheet for daily reconciliation and reporting. One cash register is shut down for reconciliation while the second cash register is activated for the next day's transaction.

c. Commentary: Few systems within ISD can match this outdated, error-prone, system; it is not only difficult to operate but takes a mental and physical toll on those operating the system. Merely to obtain payment verification of the cashier journal requires a laborious and frustrating search. The smallest corner grocery store or 7-11 outshines the system used here to process over \$21 million dollars and representing thousands of transactions during the year. This processing is done up-front for ISD clients who have paid their fees and are waiting for the cumbersome operation to respond. It is another case where improvements in **process** have been overlooked.

Another issue involving the Cashier's unit concerns the payment methods available to ISD clients. The Monthly Collection Reports identify three payment categories: cash, check and credit card. An analysis of the annual results for FY98 and FY03 are shown on Chart 13. The comparison shows slight decreases in both cash and checks collected while a rise in credit card charges. The latter rose from 7.7% of the total in FY1998 to 10.56% in FY03 while cash fell slightly from 3.37% in FY98 to 2.41% in FY03. Of course, the largest portion of payment mode is that of checks which in FY 03 was 87% of all collections, though it showed a slight decline from the highs of 89% in both FY98 and 02. The City of Boston has not encouraged the use of credit payments in recent years because of the requirements for a large cash reserve; at the same time it has not encouraged the use of bank transfers for permit payments even though the mechanism for the latter is apparently not an obstacle.

d. Recommendations:

1. THE CURRENT OUTMODED CASHIER OPERATION SHOULD, AS HIGH PRIORITY, BE REPLACED BY A MODERN "POINT OF SALES" SYSTEM:

The proposed upgrade would have an immediately positive effect on ISD clients, would provide automatic assignment of both permit number and fee calculation and could also, by direct data link, allow for the transfer of Front Counter permit data. It would also produce quick and accurate monthly reports as well as quarterly summaries along with the annual report. If the proposed revision of the Collection Report, as recommended under Budget Management Division, Recommendation No. 1, is adopted (See Chart 10) the Department would obtain basic financial and process data that could more easily be shared with other Departments and, most importantly, with the public through the proposed ISD Quarterly Activity Review.

Note: A similar proposal was presented by ISD to the Budget Director and the MIS Director through a July 23, 2003 Memorandum and discussed at a subsequent meeting on July 25, 2003. Unofficially the Report's consultant was told that the City Auditor has rejected the proposal because similar installations need to be undertaken in other Departments and should be done in concert and not independently.

2. ISD AND THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE USE OF CREDIT CARDS AND ELECTRONIC BANK TRANSFERS FOR PAYMENT OF PERMIT FEES. Progress along these lines would greatly facilitate the work of the cashier and give clients viable alternatives for payment, especially for large projects where electronic bank transfer would be more efficient for ISD and the client. Additional study might be encouraged to identify the amount involved in "bounced checks" in contrast to uncollected credit card debt.

3. PLANS AND ZONING REVIEW UNIT

a. Personnel: 9

b. Activity: This unit reviews the so-called long forms, which include buildings involving plans, zoning reviews, demolition, fast track commercial and housing applications, occupancy and use of premises. The long forms are logged and assigned by head of the Unit to the plan examiners for review. In some cases the plans have either insufficient information or are missing important sections and an information request is sent; the application is put on hold until the information is presented. Applications, as necessary, are reviewed for conformance with zoning and building regulations and are specially reviewed for compliance with fire safety regulations. Six plan reviewers, one senior administrative analyst, head clerk and principal clerk/typist staff the unit. The unit is directed by an Executive Assistant to the Commissioner who also oversees and coordinates activity at the Front Counter, the Cashier Unit and the Document Room.

Chart 14 summarizes the steps taken in the examination of the long form applications and their varied content and needs, including coordination with the Division of Building Inspections and the Board of Appeals. Chart 15 provides summary data on the applications received for the FY 99 to 03 by month and also supplements this with data giving the number of long form permits issued each year for the same period; it also identifies the average number issued per month. Chart 16 views selected activity by Plans/Zoning in FY 03 by month focusing on plan review, client service and the relationship based on refusals between Plans/Zoning and the Board of Appeals. Finally, Chart 17 presents an input-output-balance presentation for FY03. It begins with the Application Status, including applications received and those carried over from the two prior years. This is followed by a reckoning of dispositions once reviews were made, ending with the balance carried over to FY04.

While these charts give an overview of both the complexity of the application, review and approval process, they are also incomplete since the data does not always correlate

on the same issue. For example, Chart 17, items II/2 and 3 show a total of 1,719 refusals, including prior years carried over. However, Chart 16 4/c gives a total of 1,489 refused during the same period, a difference of 230. Part of this is explained by the possibility that in the 1,719 figures there is an overlap since some zoning refusals on the same application may also have involved building refusals as well. This is also true of plans reviewed since, in many cases, a number of plans may have been reviewed more than once as new information was added after the first or second review. As a measure of actual work the number of reviews undertaken would thus be different from the number of applications reviewed as individual applications.

Nevertheless, the data collected, including the process steps in Chart 14 does yield valuable information. In Chart 15, for example, the total long form applications brought to Plans/Zoning over the five period showed an average yearly number of 6,593 and an average monthly receipt of 549. Moreover, the variations between years were not great, though FY00 hit a high of 6867 while FY 2002 had a low of 6214. Long form applications issued averaged 5221 with only FY02 dropping below 5000, i.e. 4904.

The Plans/Zoning counter has kept a daily client log-in sheet where clients are asked to give the reasons for their visit to the counter. Chart 16 notes that 11,872 clients came to the client counter in 2003, averaging 989 per month with June having the highest monthly total of 1140. What did they come for? What were their concerns? Although the whole year has not been minutely analyzed, the counter log for June was carefully reviewed and Chart 18 is the result. Of the 1,140 entries, 754, or 66%, filled in the "Why Are You Here?" column. The largest number in any category – 150 – came to see or have a conference with the Plan Examiner, 134 wanted to know the status of their application, 132 came to pick up their permit and 127 had questions on zoning

The large number of zoning inquiries in June ,2003 reflects a substantial change in the zoning scene over the last decade. Two things have changed. First, zoning reviews have been given to the plan reviewers where once the zoning reviews were done by one or two persons who confined themselves solely to zoning review. Second, at that time there was one zoning code applicable to the whole city from which variances could be sought through the denial and appeal to the Board of Appeals. Currently there are at least ten different zoning scenarios depending in which neighborhood the application is made. As a consequence, zoning reviews take longer, interspersed with more questions and more guidance requested by clients coming to the Plans/Zoning counter.

c. Commentary: Plan review procedures are involved, deliberate and, in many respects, confusing. Noticeable is the conglomerate of rolled up building plans, stored in bins, shifted between designated bins as they move through the process. Chart 17 notes 8,849 applications awaited review and disposition at the beginning of FY03. After 5,659 were disposed of, the backlog for FY04 was just over 3,000. Of these numbers about 75% involved plans of some kind. Thus 3 – 4000 sets of plans could be in motion for some kind of action. These plans clog the storage and working space of the Plans/Zoning. As plans are retrieved for review, replaced or juggled to get at other plans, it is not surprising that plans are misplaced and momentarily lost when a client calls for them. Moreover,

reviewers, opening the plans to begin a review, must, at times, stop their work to answer questions at the counter or take care of clients who have come in to discuss problems. This makes it difficult for plan reviewers to concentrate fully on a review of difficult and intricate plans spread before them.

As noted in Chart 18, counter inquiries on permit status stand high on the questions asked. Until recently, these questions could only be answered by leafing through the hand-written logbook. However, the Plans/Zoning unit has now instituted a stand-alone computerized system to perform the logbook function so that status is available on any computer in the unit. This will also pay dividends once it is on the ISD Website enabling clients to bring up their permit status on the web, a nicety that many cities smaller than Boston already are enjoying.

Some clients have complained that no real checklist is available to guide them to be certain that their filed applications contain all the required information. This is important, particularly since staff has been reduced and every effort should be made to encourage clients to submit all the necessary information on their first “go-around.”

The fast-track now in use for commercial buildings and for priority housing has proved to be a valuable tool for both ISD and its clients. When the fast track for commercial occupancy was instituted there was a great need to allow tenants of large commercial buildings to fit out their space within an already approved building shell with as little interference as possible. While the need for commercial fast-track has been reduced in the current building scene, the fast-track could be expanded to cover most situations where the general fast track rules would apply.

Finally, ISD and the Fire Marshall’s Office have worked together in establishing a more coordinated approach to plan review and approvals regarding fire safety requirements. The Plan/Zoning Unit has, for example, one reviewer who specializes in fire safety reviews and who also has the necessary education and experience. Permits issued by the Fire Department can be applied for and submitted on the 4th Floor at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, one floor below the Plans/Zoning Unit – an important part of “one stop permitting.” At the same time a number of clients interviewed have complained of the long waits for review and approval plus, in some cases, the payment of overtime costs for site testing of fire systems and exit areas. Since ISD and the Fire Marshall’s office are both interested in balancing client services with basic building, zoning and fire safety requirements, it may be of value if both Departments worked with client’s to reduce time waits and overtime payments and thus mitigate the time lag without lowering standards.

d. Recommendations:

1. PUT THE CURRENT COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR THE LOGBOOK ON THE ISD WEBSITE LIMITED TO PERMIT STATUS INFORMATION. By doing this, ISD clients would be able through the use of their application number or address to find out the status of their filed application. This would also enable Plans/Zoning to indicate additional information needed so that the approval process could be completed. This should eventually reduce inquiries via the front counter and the phone and simplify the approval procedure.

2. MAKE IT AN OBLIGATION OF THE LONG FORM FILER THAT NECESSARY PLANS ACCOMPANYING THE APPLICATION MUST BE ON A CD, EXCEPT WHERE THE PLANS ARE 5 PAGES OR LESS. By implementing this requirement, ISD would, over the course of two or three years, greatly reduce, if not eliminate the problem of paper plans. It would enhance corrections by transferring them via email. This would also be applied to applications bound for the Board of Appeals as well. The problems of the architect's seal and locking the final approved CD are technical problems that can be solved. ISD plan examiners would have to be equipped with upgraded computers and 17 to 22 inch screens. The Board of Appeals would also need at least one set. This is undoubtedly the way building plan submissions will be handled in the future; it would be a giant step forward for Plans/Zoning at a time when more work needs to be done by fewer people.

Note: This proposal was submitted to the Budget Director and the MIS Director via letter dated July 23, 2003 and further discussed at a meeting on July 25, 2003. The proposal was accepted pending developing a specific process and safeguards.

3. INSITUTE A FAST TRACK APPLICATION THAT WOULD APPLY TO ALL LONG TERM PERMITS WHICH MET THE REGULAR FAST TRACK REQUIREMENTS. Once this is implemented and the process becomes fixed it will relieve plan reviewers of perhaps 10 to 15% of their normal reviews. While start-up needs to be carefully arranged and a system of counter checking instituted, in time the process will service ISD clients and relieve the plan reviewers of a considerable burden which these submissions would otherwise entail.

Note: A Commissioner's Bulletin to extend the Fast Track has already been drafted for issuance in October, 2003.

4. PREPARE A SERIES OF CHECK LISTS THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED APPLICATION TYPES; ISD CLIENTS CAN USE THEM AS A GUIDE WHILE ISD COUNTER STAFF CAN REVIEW UPON THE CLIENT'S SUBMISSION. The checklist will not solve all problems surrounding incomplete submissions or misreading of applicable codes but it will be helpful to a majority of ISD Plans/Zoning client and once in place may reduce substantially the need to make frequent request for additional information.

5. WORKING WITH BUILDING INSPECTORS AND THE FRONT DESK, IDENTIFY LONG FORM APPLICATION TYPES THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED UNDER THE SHORT FORM RUBRIC. Suggestions have been made to include items such as above-ground pools, sheds under 50 square feet and fences, etc. be submitted as short forms providing basic plots plans. This might apply to small additions, doors, etc.

6. OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH BOSTON WATER & SEWER COMMISSION ON SPEEDING UP SEWER APPROVALS AND HOLD SIMILAR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FIRE MARSHALL'S OFFICE IN QUICKENING THE REVIEW PROCESS AND REDUCING OVERTIME FOR FIELD TESTS: The Commission staff have been very cooperative with ISD, especially in sharing their updated information on property ownership which has been of great help to ISD's legal section and to the building and front desk. However, clients interviewed have all remarked on the extended time for approvals from the Commission. Discussions with Commission staff revealed very competent technical staff who are undermanned. In addition, ISD believes it would be of great benefit if one Commission staff member could be available at ISD for two or three mornings per week to review less involved applications and to give assistance to ISD clients with larger plans involving additional complications. Such a move would set the tone for "one-stop permitting!" At the same time Plans/Zoning should initiate discussions between its review staff and Fire Marshal's staff to speed up the fire permitting approval process and reduce overtime in the required field tests

4. Document Room

a. Personnel: 5

b. Activity: This unit maintains the original building permits and related permits in the building jackets identified by street address covering the City of Boston. Under a newly installed **INFO-TRIEVE SYSTEM** all the documents in the 100,000 building jackets have been scanned into a computerized information system. As new documents are produced these are scanned daily into their respective jackets. The original documents are then stored temporarily in the Document Room, indexed and eventually sent to the Boston City Archives. In addition, finalized building plans are sent out to be copied on CDs, which are then scanned into the appropriate on-line "jackets." Currently, ISD clients are able to request original building jackets to examine hard-copy documents. However, plans have been made to move the original jackets to Boston City Archive storage in Danvers. ISD clients can then obtain original documents by applying through ISD to the Danver archive location but will have to pay a fee set by the Boston Archive contractor for their retrieval. The Document room also maintains close contact with the Assessor's Office in coordinating parcel and street number information.

c. Commentary: Once the original documents are moved from the Document Room to Boston Archive storage in Danvers, space will become available on the 5th floor. Moreover, as the electrical, mechanical and gas permits are put on line and the approved permits, the short and long form building permit records will follow their predecessors.

When this happens the Data Entry Unit within Building Inspection Division and its three person staff will no longer be needed in their current assignments.

d. Recommendations:

1. AFTER THE BUILDING JACKETS AND OTHER ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS ARE SHIFTED TO ARCHIVES IN DANVERS, THE ROOM SHOULD BE REMODELED FOR USE BY THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

Once the documents are removed and room becomes available, the document room personnel will continue their work in scanning documents. At the same time their system and the systems in place and being devised to serve the 5th Floor will need constant attention and service. By moving the IT staff to the 5th Floor and putting the document room personnel within IT, it will be able to run more efficiently and to blend in with IT's service function as needed. When the basic permit forms for electrical, plumbing, mechanical and building are electronically posted, the Data Entry Group from the Building Division can be absorbed by shifting the head of Data Entry to IT and reassigning the remaining personnel to assist at the Front Counter and at the Plans/Zoning counter. The proposed remodeling may also include part of the Front Desk in a way that will give greater public access to ISD's growing on-line permitting and its information database.

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The two other Divisions under the Inspector of Buildings will be treated as two divisions in their entirety in what follows.

<p>1. Building, Electrical, Gas and Mechanical Inspections Division</p>
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a. Personnel: 49, consisting of Inspector of Buildings, Director of Buildings & Structures; 6 Building Support Staff; 3 Data Entry; Chief Building Inspector, 21 Building Inspectors; Supervisor of Electrical Inspections, 7 Wire Inspectors; Director of Plumbing, 7 Plumbing/Gas-fitting Inspectors

b. Activity: The Division's primary function is to make field inspections on work in progress based on issued permits for buildings, including structure, electrical, gas and mechanical elements. Field inspections are, as a secondary focus, made to uncover work that is being done, either without a permit when a permit is needed, and to be certain that permitted work does not exceed the limits of the permit granted and the plans on file. Enforcement is based on the applicable portions of the Boston Zoning Code, State Building Code, the State Fire Code and the State Codes involving electrical, plumbing and mechanical requirements. Division inspectors also make preliminary reviews and inspections prior to the granting of permits to be certain that information submitted on the application is consistent with field conditions. In larger constructions where the work is undertaken based on professional affidavits, the Inspector will examine progress, sign-

offs on the building construction log and engage in discussions with architects and engineers involved to be certain that the approved plan are being implemented correctly. Building inspectors are also concerned with fire escapes, certificates of occupancy and certificates of inspection for restaurants, nightclubs, etc. Inspectors also handle frequent over the counter questions in the ISD Office as well at site meetings.

Chart 19 summarizes the Building Inspectors activity for FY03 by month, showing that over 12,000 permits were approved by field inspections before being issued while over 19,000 permits were signed off as completed. In the same period 2800 violations were issued, 555 show cause citations written and over 1,200 violations were closed out once compliance was received. During the same period, just over 2000 complaints were received while 1300 were answered, leaving a backlog carried over to FY04 of approximately 700. In addition, permits for 283 fire escapes, 1,401 occupancies and 4,483 certificates of inspection were issued. To effect this work building inspectors made, according to their annual report, nearly 60,000 separate field inspections.

During FY 03 electrical inspectors approved the issuance of 10,378 permits while plumbing and gas inspectors approved 5,898 and 5,536 permits respectively.

The Division's six person support staff, keep records and reports of inspector's activities, process complaints, perform follow-up and schedule meetings for the Inspector of Buildings, other staff and inspectors with clients – in the office and in the field.

The Division also has a three person Data Entry Team tasked to enter summary data on every short and long form and on gas and mechanical permits where work is completed as well as phone and counter complaints. These are entered into an existing IMS program within the City's mainframe computer. Currently, electrical permits are entered into INFO-TRIEVE upon issuance and are updated when completed. Within the next three to six months all these permits will be on-line: all issue permits will be scanned to INFO-TRIEVE and deposited electronically in the appropriate building jacket. Recommendations on the re-organization of the Data Entry unit were advanced in the previous discussion on The Document Room.

c. Commentary

Building's field inspection operations have been greatly helped by the addition of wireless phones by which the center can call inspectors in the field and vice versa. This has certainly increased inspectional effectiveness. However, because there is little or no reliance on computerized field reporting, the latter has not shown parallel improvement. All inspectors must come back and have the support staff type up their hand-written field notes. But the inspectors' productivity would increase substantially by using hand-held reporting units that feed back to a data base, a practice that has become the standard for nearly all field operations: meter reading, delivery vehicles and many police and fire operations. At a time when budgets are being cut and personnel reduced, increasing operational efficiency, particularly in fieldwork, is essential.

In contrast to prior years, ISD's current building inspection staff have, on the whole, been with the Building Division a relatively short time. Of the 23 inspectors (including the Chief Building Inspectors) , 6 have less than 5 years service and 8 have between five and ten years service. Thus nearly half of the building inspectors have less than 10 years with the Division. This bespeaks of a younger, perhaps more energetic staff. At the same time, learning the technical ins-and-outs of code enforcement in a City with large variations in the size, complexity and construction applications is no small task. Consequently, ISD, and the Building Inspections Division, should focus on small group training, interactive sessions with plan examiners, front desk managers and others in the Department to enhance understanding and coordination. The Department might also work more closely with the State Division of Buildings in devising appropriate and practical training sessions.

Finally, one must emphasize the relationship in a large building division between technical competency and managerial effectiveness. Technical competency is, of course, of first importance since knowledge of the details of building construction is the basis upon which plans and permits must be reviewed; that same competency should also guide field inspections to be certain that what is being built will survive. Here the Division is in reasonably good shape. Interviews with many clients indicate that technical performance is not wanting.

But management becomes a very important factor in this operation because the permitting volume is great, the index of intricacy is high and the process, of necessity, involves people who represent the spectrum of human activity and opinion. And here the Division is wanting. It might be well to consider an in-house solution by which the Inspector of Buildings, the Director of Buildings and the Chief Building Inspector would delegate managerial tasks to someone who understands the technical side of the work but is equally versed in management skills as well as the details of computer-drive operations.

The status of the Data Entry Unit within this Division should be discussed. As noted above – and in the previous discussion on **The Document Room** – Data Entry personnel should be transferred as suggested. However, there is another problem. For nearly 20 years Data Entry has stored summaries of long, short, electrical and mechanical permits in the TPX-IMS program connected to the MIS mainframe. The storage represents a very large assembly of background data, which should be available as needed. ISD should coordinate with MIS to develop a standard program that will enable ISD to directly access key data from this remarkable cache of data.

We need also to reference an important independent Board which is closely connected to building construction. **The Boston Board of Examiners**, an independent board whose three members are appointed by the Mayor for an indefinite term, has a direct relationship with ISD since its main job is to issue building licenses for the City of Boston. The Board issues four major construction licenses and one major license for demolition and within each of these five division there are five categories. In addition it issues seven miscellaneous licenses, thirteen classes in Fire Prevention and another

thirteen licenses on fire protection and five prevention systems. Applicants must file a detailed application with eight references after which they are interviewed by the Board. All licenses are issued for one year duration. In FY03 the Board issued over 2700 licenses.

The Board is supported by ISD which has recently provided a computerized photo unit that will eventually replace the older licenses with photo licenses; the system will also provide on-line listing of active licensees. In FY 03 license issuance added \$84,000 to ISD revenues.

While the Board is an independent entity, it is, nevertheless suggested that a) the Board make the lists of licensed contractors available on the web, b) coordinate the on-line listing with the Front Desk in order to make license identification and confirmation easier when permit applications are submitted; c) publish on a quarterly basis the lists of those who hold Boston licenses issued by the Board so that the public may be aware of who are licensed.

d. Recommendations :

1. ESTABLISH A COMPUTERIZED REPORTING SYSTEM FOR THE BUILDING DIVISION THAT WILL ALSO INCLUDE FIELD REPORTING THROUGH THE USE OF UPGRADED HAND-HELD DEVICES.

MIS has indicated that it has a computerized reporting program that can be installed in ISD's divisions to assist in upgrading their reporting activity. If this program can be installed to accommodate hand-held devices, the Division's efficiency will be increased by from 25 to 30%. Field reporting could then be done to two or three designated receiving computer installation in the Division's office. This would also quicken the response time, especially on applications waiting issuance based on the inspector's field evaluation.

2. ORGANIZE IN-HOUSE TRAINING AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS BY WHICH INSPECTION PERSONNEL CAN SHARE EXPERIENCE ON SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES IN INSPECTION, PLAN REVIEW AND FRONT COUNTER ACTIVITIES:

These programs should be formed, planned and scheduled in advance and should be based on surveyed need to give attention to specific related problems. In implementing the training reliance should be placed on in-house expertise with assistance from the City's training unit and from the State's Building Division.

3. ESTABLISH WITHIN THE DIVISION OF BUILDINGS AN ONGOING ASSIGNMENT FOR A MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE PROMOTED FROM THE DIVISION'S PERSONNEL TO SERVE THE MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS OF THE DIVISION:

A review of current personnel in the Division should make it possible to evaluate backgrounds and experience to select a qualified person to service management and administrative needs for the Inspector of Building with commensurate authority and responsibility in this area.

4. WORK WITH MIS TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR DATA ENTRY STORAGE DATA ONCE THE DATA ENTRY UNIT AND ITS PERSONNEL ARE REORGANIZED AFTER THEIR ACTIVITY IS NO LONGER NEEDED: When the Data Entry unit is disbanded and personnel shifted as recommended previously, a permanent computer program should be devised – and made available to the IT Division - to extract selected information from the 20 year trove of permit summaries stored in the MIS mainframe.

2. Division of Investigation and Regulatory Enforcement

a. Personnel: 13, including 5 legal assistants

b. Activity: This Division was re-constituted in FY 02 to coordinate regular enforcement and pursue emergency enforcements where building and residents are involved. Under its new mandate, the Division a) provides legal support to all ISD enforcement efforts, b) gives around-the-clock emergency service in severe cases where life safety, housing and building structures and neighborhoods are under immediate strain and c) provides emergency response in cooperation with the Fire, Police and Medical services when conditions warrant. In order to provide quick relief to citizens threatened by un-repaired, untended and deteriorating building structures, the Division has instituted a “property lien procedure” in cooperation with the Boston Housing Court.

This Division provides an important and generally effective response to critical needs in the enforcement of laws, codes, ordinance and regulations assigned to ISD for enforcement. It is of particular value in active physical and legal response to the lingering problems of structural deterioration and vagrant, illegal uses of private – and public – property.

Of critical importance in maintaining a coordinated, integrated approach, the Division includes in its field staff, personnel reassigned from Buildings, Housing, Health and Code Enforcement. The Division also maintains close relations with City emergency services, e.g. police, fire and medical.

Chart 20 gives a glimpse of the Division’s legal activity where, in FY03, over 2,000 “Show Cause” violations were issued with 2,105 pending before the Housing Court as actual violations. The Division also closed 1,926 cases before the court. This latter figure emphasizes ISD’s policy that compliance, not convictions, is the aim of its enforcement efforts, except, of course, where there is no other course.

In addition, the Division opened special operation cases by which efforts are being made to lien and, eventually, to condemn certain properties that have become both a hazard in the neighborhood – and where the owner has initiated no corrective action.

c. Commentary: While this Division has maintained a dedicated and responsive work ethic, two comments might be of value. First, the Division should examine, along with

other affected staff in ISD, the possibility of introducing “de-criminalization” of selected violations, especially those involved in Housing and Building enforcement. Weights and Measures, via an amendment to the State Law, has obtained good results with the decriminalization of certain enforcement procedures. If this could be done for selected Housing and Building violations, compliance might be increased while costs involved in show-cause actions and litigation could be reduced. Second, the volume of closed cases, in so far as they reflect compliance with the original “show-cause” actions are commendable. At the same time it is important to follow-up on selected closures to be certain that actual compliance has occurred and the results have, in effect, justified the closures.

NOTE: The data shown under “Cases in Litigation” and Closed Cases” are not exact input-output figures since both figures included cases from prior years which are undifferentiated.

d. Recommendations:

1. THE DIVISION SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN COORDINATING AN ISD ANALYSIS OF THE POSTIVE POTENTIAL OF DE-CRIMINALIZATION OF SELECTED REQUIREMENTS INVOLVING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOTH THE BUILDING AND HOUSING CODES AND RELATED ENFORCING REGULATIONS:

The rationale for such an analysis come from ISD policy that compliance, not punishment, is the valued end product of enforcement. If de-criminalization of selected features of applicable codes, laws and regulations could be achieved, greater compliance through directly levied fines might be achieved while reducing costs for issuing “Show Cause” documents and maintaining hundreds of cases in litigation.

2. THE DIVISION, IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER ISD UNITS, SHOULD PERIODICALLY SELECT A WIDE SAMPLE OF CASES TO CHECK ON A) THE VALIDITY OF INITIAL VIOLATION AND TO EXAMINE B) “CLOSED CASES” TO BE CERTAIN THAT EFFECTIVE COMPLIANCE WAS OBTAINED THROUGH CLOSING OUT THE CASE:

With 2,030 “Show Cause” complaints and 2,105 litigated cases, it is important that ISD exhibit a discernable consistency in its enforcement patterns. This should be periodically tested by sampling initial cases to discern patterns that may indicate inconsistent enforcement. The 1,926 cases in FY03 were closed because legal officers, in cooperation with housing, building and other inspectors, believed that compliance in line with the original show cause compliant had been achieved. This follows ISD policy to achieve compliance. However, it is important that follow-up be instituted to examine the time, level and extent of compliance achieved in response to the original show-cause, to verify, in fact, that the compliance policy has been achieved in practice.

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The last of ISD's three functional areas is that of **FIELD SERVICES** coordinated by a Deputy Commissioner consisting of four divisions: Health Inspections & Enforcement, Housing Inspections and Enforcement, Environmental Inspections & Code Enforcement & Policing and Weights and Measures Inspections & Enforcement.

1. Health Inspections & Enforcement

a. Personnel: 25, including Assistant Commissioner for Health & Environment, Director of Health Division, 3 principal health inspectors, 18 health inspectors and 2 support staff. An additional health inspector has been assigned to the Division of Investigation and Regulatory Enforcement.

b. Activity: The Health Division inspects and enforces sanitary and health requirements for food service and retail establishments as well as hospitals, nursing homes, caterers and day care centers; the inspectors also review health aspects of mobile food, funeral homes, recreation camps, swimming pools, public baths and massage establishments and also permits and inspects the sale and consumption facilities for frozen desserts. Division personnel hold hearings on violations, have the authority to close establishments for repeated and uncorrected violations; food managers are also certified to practice by Division inspectors.

Chart 21 shows the detail of the Health Division's work in FY03 against the operating goals set in the FY03 budget. Increased workloads with existing personnel have made it difficult to complete the budget goal of 8,000 total inspections; however, all inspections in high risk were completed as expected while level one risks in both medium and low risk levels were also completed according to plan. Overall the Division completed 14,987 inspections missing the prior year performance by 331 or a drop of only 2%. At the same time health inspectors averaged 4.6 inspections per day, exceeding the budget goal and kept pace with the productivity of the prior year. In FY 03, Health Division activities earned \$ 1,136,191 for ISD, the highest total of the six-year period reported in Chart 5.

c. Commentary: The Health Division is well organized, efficiently managed and does its assigned work with professional skill and concern befitting its significant responsibilities in supervising the health requirement for hundreds of food establishments in a large metropolitan city. Increased requirements under an ever widening public health structure accompanied by diminished inspectional resources has been somewhat offset by the application of "risk categories." The latter have led to a scheme of priority actions, an essential management tool to correlate increased responsibilities with diminished resources.

While the Division has made the effort to put its permit forms and instruction on-line to assist the numerous clients it serves, the fact is that it lacks both an operational data-base, and, like other ISD division with inspectional responsibilities, does not have a computerized reporting system that allows field input on inspections. Rather its technical

personnel revert to pencil and paper to input their reports and to take other paper-driven action in discharging their responsibility.

d. Recommendations:

1. ESTABLISH A COMPUTERIZED REPORTING SYSTEM FOR THE HEALTH DIVISION THAT WILL ALSO INCLUDE FIELD REPORTING THROUGH THE USE OF UPGRADED HAND-HELD DEVICES. MIS has indicated that it has a computerized reporting program that can be installed in ISD's divisions to assist in upgrading their reporting activity. If this program can be installed to accommodate hand-held devices, the Division's efficiency will increase significantly. Field reporting could then be done via two or three designated receiving computer installation in the Division's office.

Note: Work on this has already begun in cooperation with MIS, IT and the Health Division.

2. Division of Housing Inspections & Enforcement

a. Personnel: **34**, including Housing Division Director, 3 Assistant Directors, 2 Principal Housing Inspectors, 24 Housing Inspectors and 4 support staff.

b. Activity: The Housing Division's role is to ensure the availability of clean, safe living conditions as required by the State Sanitary Code and by applicable City ordinances. In carrying out this role Housing personnel undertook 12,225 inspections in FY03, ranging from no heat, no access, deterioration in basic services, lead paint, security complaints, emergencies and pre-rental. The Division also issued over 3,000 show cause papers and undertook court-required inspections to determine whether original complaints had instigated compliance. The Division's FY 03 Summary Data Report containing much of this information is shown in Chart 22.

Important changes have been made in the Division's work in recent years. The office is open seven days a week with middle managers rotating on the weekends, especially used for client appointments on Saturday and Sunday. Although some computerization was initiated in 1995 and 1997, very little remains. However, mini-data base formats have been set up for pre-rentals, no-heat emergencies, emergency needs and security inspections for seniors. A tracking system for Housing complaints by ward is in operation. The complaint covers construction, emergency, lead paint and becomes both a service record as well as a performance/productivity measure, providing it is sustained and used consistently for these ends.

More is being done on social out-reach to assist people within the context of the Housing Division's responsibility. The Division, for example, assists in providing security for the elderly, holding hearings and inspections and re-inspections every 3 years on housing

security. On Saturdays workshops are scheduled to discuss housing enforcement problems where tenants and landlords are urged to participate and solve problems.

Greater emphasis is being put on in-service training of middle management, inspectors and support staff. The training is focused on the technical side of inspection and enforcement but also emphasize the way cases are handled underlining problem-solving for the people involved.

c. Commentary: The Housing Division is turning the corner in developing an improved client service operation. The out-reach effort is more in evidence and a better management style seems to be emerging. With limited resources, however, the Division will have to get better control of the details of its operation and set out key priorities that can be sustained in the future. Moreover, a better reporting format needs to be designed that will yield clearly presented performance data that is consistent and reliable; it should also identify work being done, work to be accomplished and point-up difficulties so that middle managers can determine changes in direction and purpose that will, in turn, increase productivity and improve services. But this division, like Buildings and Health, shows a similar lack of a computerized reporting system that can be activated in the field and coordinated in the office.

The Division should also review recommendations made to the Division of Investigation & Regulatory Enforcement (See Recommendation No. 1 for this Division previously) on possible action to de-criminalize selected violations now being enforced by Department's inspectional teams. Since data shows that the Housing Division sources the largest piece of legal enforcement work - 53% of Show Cause, 54% in Litigation, 64% of Closed Cases - positive results from a de-criminalization procedure could have a significant effect on the Division's current legal workload.

d. Recommendations:

1. THE DIVISION SHOULD REVISE ITS MONTHLY AND ANNUAL REPORT SO THAT IT BECOMES A SIGNIFICANT MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR IDENTIFYING ACTIVITY, MEASURING PRODUCTIVITY AND MAKING CHANGES IN WORK FOCUS AND PRIORITIES AS NECESSARY:

Improvements already underway within the Division should be validated through clear and consistent presentation. The Division might review the Health Division's monthly report as a general model that could be useful in the proposed re-design.

2. ESTABLISH A COMPUTERIZED REPORTING SYSTEM FOR THE HOUSING DIVISION THAT WILL ALSO INCLUDE FIELD REPORTING THROUGH THE USE OF UPGRADED HAND-HELD DEVICES.

MIS has indicated that it has a computerized reporting program that can be installed in ISD's division to assist in upgrading their reporting activity. If this program can be installed to accommodate hand-held devices, the Division's efficiency will be significantly improved. Field reporting could then be done to two or three designated receiving computer

installation in the Division's office. This would also quicken the response time, especially on applications waiting issuance based on the inspector's field evaluation.

3. DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENT INSPECTIONS & CODE ENFORCEMENT POLICING

a. Personnel: 37, including Division Director, Principal Health Inspector, 2 Code Enforcement Inspectors, 15 Code Enforcement Officers, 6 Support Staff. **Note:** This Division came into being in FY 02, consisting mainly of the previously designated Rodent Control Unit; it was further augmented when the City Division of Code Enforcement was shifted to ISD and incorporated within this division. Its activity description reflects the resulting amalgam.

b. Activity: The Division is responsible for the abatement & prevention of rodent infestation, implementation of the City's Site Cleanliness Ordinance (July 1, 2000), boarding & securing of abandoned properties and coordination of vacant lot maintenance program. In addition, the regular duties of the Code Enforcement Police continued, namely, preserving the City's cleanliness and environmental safety by enforcing ordinances governing litter, trash storage, dumping, snow removal, abandoned vehicles, illegal vending and disposal of medical and industrial waste.

Chart 23 summarizes activities on site cleanliness, showing that over 5,000 applications and complaints were received, the most significant element being 3,130 applications (59%) required under the Site Cleanliness Ordinance. This met the budget performance goal of 3,000. All of these were issued in FY03 and 378 construction applications were also approved. 373 violations were issued with an additional 140 Show Cause notices and the conduct of 155 administrative hearings, largely regarding violations on site cleanliness. The data reported apparently includes rodent control activities.

The Division, in coordination with the Code Enforcement Police, conducted a series of Site Cleanliness Compliance Sweeps. In action through Dudley Square, West Roxbury and Mattapan, for example, 143 new Site Cleanliness Licenses were issued. Another 204 licenses were added after a compliance sweep in Back Bay. Rodent control was also pursued in areas such as St. Cryprian' Street as well as the annual alley-baiting program in Back Bay

The Division has instituted a series of in-house training sessions for its inspectors, including one with Residex, Inc. and an outreach program on "Know Your Neighborhood."

Chart 24 provides a statistical summary of FY03 activities of the Code Enforcement Police Unit. Personnel wrote 30,015 tickets and held, in conjunction with these tickets, 3,884 hearings. They also received 6,691 complaints and handled 1,551 abandoned vehicles. Their monthly work unit averaged 3,512 units with an average of 135 units per working day. This, of course, is very significant activity but one would like to know

about actions taken as a result of the complaints received, the relationship between the hearings and the tickets written and finally the disposition of the abandoned vehicles.

d. **Commentary:** This Division plays an important role in maintaining the “clean city” concept, involving a whole range of activities, which, in their effort –or absence – are immediately visible. But the Division has not yet achieved complete integration of the varied client services it has been given to administer. Noted, too, is the fact that the FY04 ISD Budget carries a separate program page for Code Enforcement (Program 5) which repeats the same program description used for Field Services (Program 4).

While the time lag is understandable regarding the former Division of Code Enforcement, integration of the other services should have been accomplished by now. The difficulties are underlined in the absence of a complete, clear and coordinated activity report since major elements of the Division’s work, e.g. rodent control, are not specifically identified in the overall report. It may be, of course, that site cleanliness has received top priority but the rodent problem, for example, has not gone away and elements of the Division are undoubtedly working on responding to that never-ending problem. However, clues to managerial effectiveness often are given in the clarity and the inclusiveness of the unit’s activity reports.

d. Recommendations :

1. DEVISE A COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE DIVISION THAT IDENTIFIES OVERALL GOALS, ASSIGNS PRIORITIES AND PERSONNEL WHILE INTEGRATING THIS WITH A PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY SCHEME THAT CAN BE FACTUALLY PRESENTED IN MONTHLY AND QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORTS: This is of vital importance and should lead to a better definition of objectives, work allocation and allocation of scarce resources – money and manpower – through the application of improved management. Of course, roadblocks involving legal and contractual requirements may be in place, influencing the outcome of this recommendation. But at a time when ISD’s budget is limited and personnel constraints are pressing on all sides, it is important to face the issues and work out practical solutions that contribute to improvement of client services.

Note: The Division is currently revising its reports to include rodent control activity.

2. REQUEST THAT ISD’S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION AND THE CITY’S MIS UNIT REVIEW CURRENT NEEDS FOR A UNIFIED COMPUTERIZED REPORTING AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR THE DIVISION: The Division has 37 persons working under its aegis, the largest single division in ISD. Excepting the Director and the support staff, this comes to 30 field personnel who should be linked to their fieldwork and their headquarters through a computerized system that would, if properly designed, raise efficiency and productivity significantly – and thus contribute to improved client service.

4. Division of Weights and Measures

a. Personnel: 8, including Division Director, 6 Deputy Sealers, 1 Support Staff

b. Activity: This Division operates under the State Law on Weights and Measures which requires annual inspection and testing of all commercial weighing and measuring devices in the City of Boston. The Division also inspects stores using three or more scanners every two years and enforces laws and regulations related to item and unit pricing, net weight, home heating oil and dispensing of motor fuel. The detail of this activity for FY03 is shown in Chart. The Division's field work is divided into **Annual Inspections** (10,820) and **On Demand Inspections** (763) for a total of 11,583 "place" inspections. Under "On Demand Inspections" Division inspectors examined 17,876 items.

The Division prepares a fiscal year report for ISD but also prepares a calendar year report for Massachusetts Department of Weights and Measures as required by law. However, all Massachusetts municipalities as well as the Commonwealth are on a fiscal year cycle. It is also noted that in ISD FY04 Approved Budget, the program details of this division have been omitted from Program 4. However, the FY04 Budget Goals require that 200 businesses will be "inspected for price verification."

c. Commentary: The Division of Weights and Measures is the only ISD operating unit that has a complete database and inputs its daily field inspections data directly into its database. All its clients are in the Data Base and thus notices, reminders and legal citations can be generated from the Data Base for instant mailing and where feasible can use email communications with clients who are on-line. It presents a model for each of the field divisions on developing a computerized reporting system with a fully operative database.

With its computerized system, a well-organized inspectional system and an effective management system, the Division works well. The only drawback is, in some respects, built upon its successful operation, namely, that the Division appears to operate somewhat independently of ISD in general.

d. Recommendations:

1. THE DIVISION SHOULD EXPLORE MORE INTERCHANGE WITH OTHER DIVISIONS ON THEIR METHODS OF WORK AND ON WAYS TO COOPERATE ON INTERRELATED INSPECTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS, E.G HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTIONS, BUILDINGS, ETC. Division personnel should take a more active part in seeking interchanges by using its database and computerized field service to support other ISD field services as time and assignments permit.

V. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Reviewed in this section are five general recommendations. Three generalize on details which have been included in the Report's analysis of specific divisions or units within ISD, namely, 1) computerization, 2) activity reporting and 3) training. The fourth is a recommendation to be undertaken in the future when, and if, many of the recommendations are implemented. The fifth recommendation focuses on the implementation of the Report.

1. Computerization. While the Department has a number of systems in use, it does not yet have an integrated, practical and manageable system that will tie together most, if not all, of its activities in ways that will increase productivity and improve client services. This has been recognized but prior efforts – particularly the studies and proposals in the late 1990s – were either not workable or too large, complicated and costly for implementation. The recent establishment of the INFOTRIEVE system is important and significant in its effect on the storage and retrieval of documents from storage and has already shown its usefulness in many ways. But the accent here is on **storage** and not on **process** . And it is improvement in the latter that will, eventually, increase productivity and provide an upgrade in client service.

As noted in the discussion on the FRONT COUNTER, nearly 19,000 permit applications are typed up annually as prelude to client presentation for processing, a system that is hard to defend in this world of computer-driven service activity. Moreover, ISD processed over \$21 million dollars in revenue in FY03, including building permits that represent over **One-and-one-half Billion Dollars** in construction value. Yet all this is processed through a two-person Cashier Unit that operates an outmoded, gerry-built system that is kept going only by the dedication of a half dozen people from the Cashier Unit, Front Counter and Plans/Zoning.

Added to this is the fact that ISD daily fields from 120 to 135 inspectors who do inspections, write condition reports and violations – all by hand. None of these inspectors has the technical back-up to send their reports electronically to the divisional centers but must come back to ISD offices and then write out their reports. Only one Division – Weights and Measures – has a sufficient data base to be able to handle nearly all its responses, notifications and reports through a computerized system.

MIS is aware of these problems and is working with ISD to solve some of them. It is also working on a potential RFP for the installation of a complete system. However, funds are scarce and, in the face of so many needs within the City, this may not have the priority to put it through. It may be both ISD and MIS might have to settled for an “in-place” system designed for operations like Inspectional Services.

2. Reporting: Concise, accurate and focused activity reporting is important to ISD, which is made up of a variety of similar operations that, however, differ greatly in application and implementation. Moreover, reports have many objects. In ISD, for example, reports respond to a) budget managers who want to measure progress in achieving program goals, b) to middle-management who want to know whether the division or unit is completing its work and that is employees are shouldering the work

load; c) to managers who want to know what is happening and what problems are developing and what is being done to respond. Report should also give the public periodic reviews on what is being done, what has been achieved and what are the problems. And in this era of reductions in both funds and people, reporting is key to assessing priorities within these very real limits.

While ISD responds on time to the goal demands of the Budget Department, its monthly or annual reports are not organized to respond to b) and c). Nor does ISD give the public a scheduled and periodic update on its work, e.g. a quarterly update. Some of this material does hit the ISD website but its value and usage is problematical.

What needs to be done – and what has been recommended in the body of the Report – is the development of a monthly and quarterly report that is concise, factual and highlights areas for middle management and top level managers for action. It may be possible to devise a format into which key data from each Division can be integrated into a kind of “operational barometer” for wider and more productive usage. This could then be brought together into a **Quarterly Update** available to the public.

3. Training: ISD, like many departments, needs regular training for updates on technical phases of work, service orientation, improved management and, particularly, a consistent sharing of information, process elements and problem-solving between units and divisions; its personnel also need to engage in a continuing dialogue with other City Departments along the same lines. Since little or no funding is provided for training, ISD should focus on least-cost avenues of training: in-house instructors, periodic exchanges between in-house staff supplemented by support discussions with other departments with which it has operational ties.

One recommendation is to form a Training Program Committee supported by Administration & Management’s Division of Human Resources & Training. Representatives of the Divisions would staff the Committee and its first order of business would be to survey and define a least-cost training program as a continuing enterprise within the Department.

4) Central Process and Support Group: This proposal revolves around a longer range suggestion on centralizing that portion of ISD’s support staff who assist technical & administrative personnel directly involved in the permitting, inspection and regulatory activities that form the bulk of ISD operations .

Currently each ISD activity is supported by assigned staff who perform typing, filing, record keeping, processing of a variety of documents, meetings, etc. as a foundation for the particular activity. In some cases support staff serve more than one activity. If some of the Report’s basic recommendations come to fruition, particularly those encouraging establishment of an integrated, computerized system, then it may be possible to centralize in both location and work, a significant portion of the ISD support staff on a more or less input-output basis. This would require a skillful organizational scheme and the

assignment of one or two capable office managers. But the results would be significant in raising productivity and decreasing time-in-process.

5) **Implementing the Report's Recommendations:**

- a) The Mayor of Boston, together with the ISD Commissioner should make the Report public and generally endorse its recommendations;
- b) The Mayor should then appoint a seven person ISD Advisory Management Improvement Commission whose role is to advise the Mayor and the Commissioner on strategies of implementation based on the action plan submitted by the Commissioner and to periodically review progress and report their findings to the Mayor and the Commissioner.
- c) The members of the Advisory Commission should be appointed for a term of two years and include a representative of the Boston Society of Architects, a representative of Boston contractors and builders, a representative of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, a representative of the Greater Boston Legal Services, a representative of neighborhood groups, a representative of affordable housing groups and a public representative.
- d) The Commissioner will brief the Commission on the Report and the Recommendations and, working with his staff, propose an action plan for implementation to be discussed with the Advisory Commission to receive its input.
- e) Once the Action Plan is agreed upon, the Commissioner will arrange to give briefings to ISD employees and to assign implementation roles to Deputy Commissioners and to middle managers.
- f) The Commissioner and his staff should meet regularly with the Advisory Commission to brief them on progress and obstacles and to receive the Commission's input and suggestions. The Advisory Commission should report quarterly to the Mayor on progress.
- g.) The Commissioner's immediate staff will serve as secretariat to the Commission.

VI CONCLUSIONS

Most of the Report's conclusions are contained in the **Background** analysis and particularly in the **Commentary** given for each of ISD's divisions and units reviewed in Part IV. The conclusions are implicit in the recommendations and justification included as part of the **Executive Summary of Recommendations** in Part II. It is thus not necessary to belabor these points any further. However, a few observations may be worthwhile.

The Inspectional Services Department is a key department within the City of Boston, especially in its unique and necessary client services and in its role as facilitator of economic development focused on construction values. But the Department also operates at the nexus of conflicts. One person wants to quickly expand his/her home into a two family dwelling in a one family zone. It needs to be done quickly. However, the neighbors don't want this and protest. From one viewpoint, the process is slow and cumbersome; from another it is much too fast! This condition is exacerbated in an unending parade of similar – and larger – contentions. Previous reports on ISD have suggested possible re-organization in separate Departments. But this will not solve anything; it will only make the system so autarkic that the cure will become the disease. More integration and more emphasis on achieving a semblance of “one-stop permitting” should, on the contrary, be one of the longer-range goals for ISD.

While there is often much criticism of the time it takes to get a permit, particularly the long form, beset as it is with a host of required reviews, including occupancy, multiple zoning applications and an enlarged concern over fire safety and security, one encounters the human – and thus everlasting – problem of mutual misunderstanding. Better management focus, more transparent processing and increased productivity will help to mitigate this condition. Efforts to do so are encapsulated in the Report's Recommendations. But there are limits on what can be accomplished. As the Report has repeatedly underlined, the absence of computerized integrated systems poses formidable problems in achieving these laudatory ends.

However, the Recommendations in this Report, being both specific and substantive, will, if adopted, go a long way to improve ISD's performance, increase its productivity and substantially upgrade service given to its many, various – and often impatient – clients.

LIST OF CHARTS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT OF THE REPORT

- 1. Departmental Organization Chart**
- 2. ISD Operating Budgets, FY98-FY04**
- 3. ISD Capital Budget Allocations: FY98 – FY04**
- 4. Personnel Numbers, FY98-FY04, with footnote explanation**
- 5. Departmental Revenue by Dollars & Unit Numbers, FY98-FY03**
- 6. Estimated Cost of Construction (Buildings), City of Boston,
FY98 – FY03**
- 7. Construction Index Comparisons for New England, Massachusetts
and Boston, FY98 – FY03**
- 8. Board of Appeals: Activity Summary, FY03**
- 9. ISD Management Information Report, FY03**
- 10. Recommended Redesign of ISD Monthly Collection Report**
- 11. Occupancy Permit Process with Checklist**
- 12. Short Form Permits Issued in FY03**
- 13. Comparison of Payment Categories, FY98/FY03**
- 14. Long Form Procedure in Plans/Zoning**
- 15. Applications Received by Plans/Zoning, FY99-03**
- 16. Plans/Zoning: Selected Activity Summary, FY03**
- 17. Plans/Zoning: Input-Output Summary, FY03**
- 18. Plans/Zoning: Analysis of Counter Log, June 2003**
- 19. Building & Structure: Activity Summary, FY03**
- 20. Investigation & Regulatory Enforcement: Legal Activity
Statistics, FY03**
- 21. Health Division: Activity Summary, FY03**
- 22. Housing Division: Activity Summary, FY03**
- 23. Environmental Services: Activity Summary, FY03**
- 24. Code Enforcement Police: Activity Summary, FY03**
- 25. Weights & Measures: Activity Summary, FY03**
- 26. Recommendations: By Unit, Number & General Cost Category**



Thomas M. Menino
Mayor

Kevin J. Joyce
Commissioner

BOSTON INSPECTORIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

FY04 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CHART 1

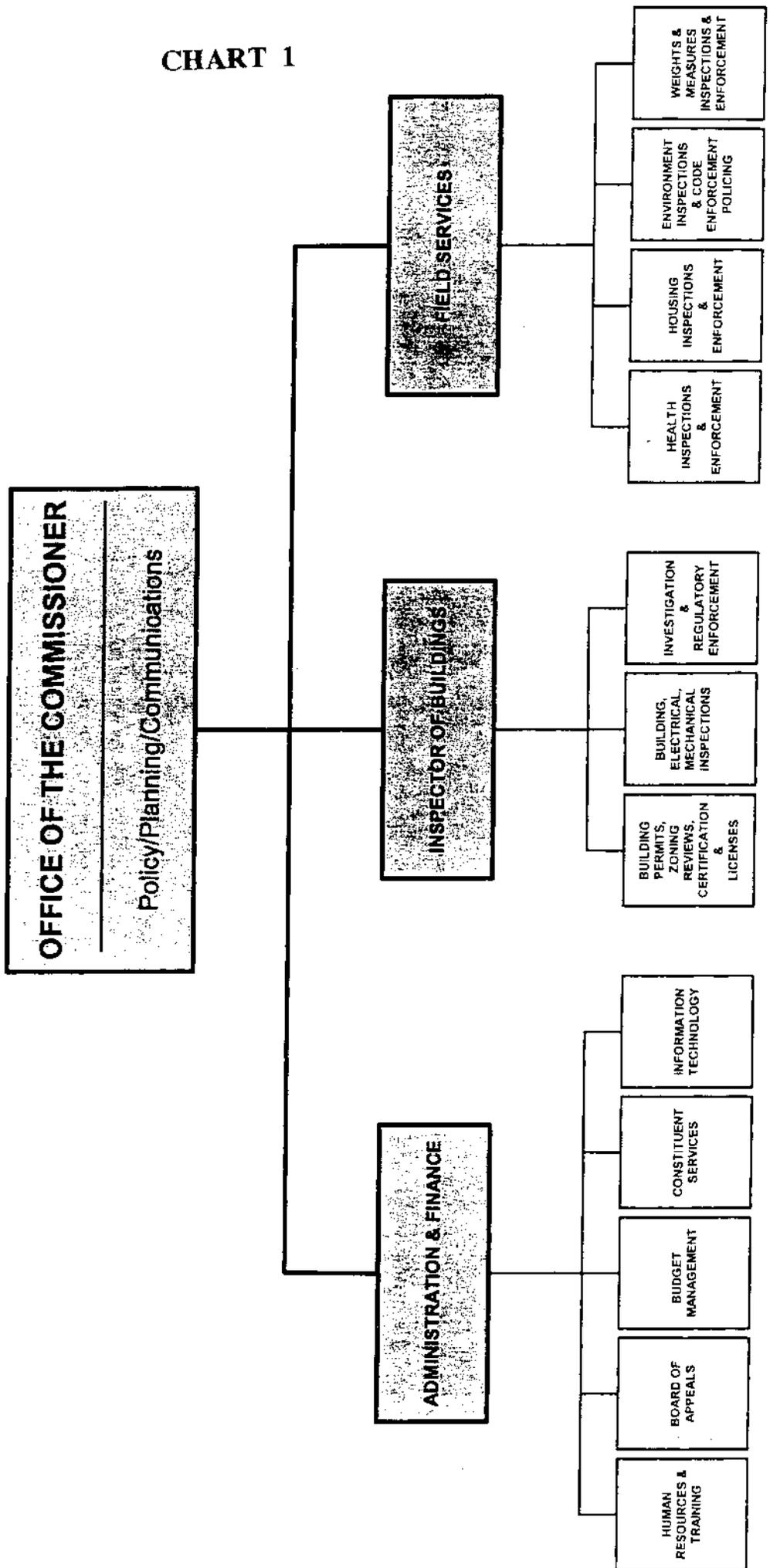


CHART 2

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston
Operating Budget FY '98 - FY '04

	FY '98 Actual	FY '99 Actual	FY '00 Actual	FY '01 Actual	FY '02 Actual	FY '03 Actual	FY '04 Budget
Operating Budget							
1. Commissioner's Office	134,607	155,667	2,153,658	2,051,395	1,463,517	1,886,546	490,452
2. Administration & Finance	1,464,906	1,578,848	4,854,233	1,172,829	1,227,865	1,437,689	2,063,131
3. Buildings & Structures	3,417,000	3,771,220	1,196,250	4,683,571	4,779,316	4,928,148	4,804,449
4. Community Operations	4,364,982	4,858,740	0	0	0	0	0
5. Government Services	673,032	778,349	0	0	0	0	0
6. Field Services	0	0	3,066,409	4,816,233	5,481,001	4,905,490	5,720,071
7. Code Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	926,084	0
Total	10,054,527	11,142,824	11,270,550	12,724,028	12,951,699	14,083,957	13,081,103
Selecte Indicators							
1. Personnel Services	8,102,462	9,112,372	9,602,599	10,191,223	10,290,186	11,286,400	11,000,181
2. Non Personnel	1,952,065	2,030,452	1,669,951	2,532,804	2,661,514	2,797,557	2,080,922
3. Total	10,054,527	11,142,824	11,272,550	12,724,027	12,951,700	14,083,957	13,081,103
4. 1 √ 3 = %	80.60%	81.10%	85.20%	80.10%	79.40%	80.10%	84%

CHART 3

Inspectional Services Department
 Capital Expenditures FY98 - FY04

Project	Project Name	Scope	Expenditure	Remaining Balance (Unspent)	Total Budget
1	Telecommunications Infrastructure	Install a new phone system to respond to increased demand for services and improve customer access.	\$ 303,795 \$	56,205 \$	360,000
2	Automated Permit & Inspection System	Complete conversion of paper records systems to digital format.	\$ 3,435,031 \$	7,938,469 \$	11,373,500
			\$ 3,738,826 \$	7,994,674 \$	11,733,500

**Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston
Personnel Assignments by Numbers FY '98 - FY '04**

	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
I. Commissioner's Office							
1)	27	4	6	5	6	5	5
II. Administration & Finance							
A) Budget & Personnel	1	6	6	6	9	6	6
B) Information Technology	0	3	3	3	3	3	3
C) Constituent Services	0	0	3	6	7	7	7
D) Board of Appeals	7	5	6	6	5	4	4
III. Inspector of Buildings							
A) Permit Process	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Front Desk	0	8	7	7	6	7	7
- Cashier	0	2	2	7	2	2	2
- Document Room	0	4	4	4	5	4	4
- Special Enforcement	0	4	6	5	5	2	2
- Data Entry	0	5	5	5	5	4	4
- Planning & Zoning	24	13	13	14	12	13	11
B) Building Inspections	53	29	32	30	30	27	25
C) Electrical Insp.	0	10	12	10	10	8	8
D) Plumbing/ Mechanical	0	9	9	8	8	8	8
E) Special Operations	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
F) Legal	0	9	13	8	9	9	9
IV. Field Services							
A) Health Insp/ Enf.	20	28	28	27	26	26	26
B) Housing Insp/ Enf.	32	34	35	35	36	36	34
C) Core/ Project Pride	9	10	10	8	0	0	0
D) Environmental Insp.	18	18	18	18	18	19	18
E) Code Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	23	19
F) Weights & Measures	9	11	10	9	9	8	8
Total	212	212	228	219	241	222	214

**FOOTNOTES TO ACCOMPANY
CHART 4:PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS
FY 98 TO FY 04**

Data used in this presentation – FT98 to FY03 – are taken from the last payroll in June of the fiscal year for which data are presented. Figures for FY04 are from August, 2003 payroll records and reflect personnel reductions mandated by the approved FY 04 City Budget. However, the numbers do not include members of the Board of Appeals, The Board of Examiners, vacancies nor employees on workmen's compensation and inactive personnel.

1. FY 98 includes personnel, budget, board of appeal, legal and related.
2. FY 98 includes one administrator here.
3. FY98 includes data entry, document room and related
4. FY98 includes plan/zoning, cashier function, front counter.
5. FY 98 includes building, electrical, plumbing/mechanical and legal
6. FY98 to FY 2001 is mainly Rodent Control
7. During FY01 the cashier's operation was put under administrative authority of Plans/Zoning. However, personnel figures are shown here to maintain continuity of assignments.
8. During FY 2002 Project Pride was placed within Housing Inspections
Some personnel were assigned to other related activities
9. During FY2002 a Special Operations Unit within the Building Division
was created which also included ISD legal operations
10. During FY 2002 Rodent Control was integrated within a new ISD
Division of Environmental Inspection and Enforcement
11. The Division of Code Enforcement was transferred to ISD under the overall
administrative direction of the Division of Environmental Inspection.

CHART 5

Departmental Revenues by Dollars and by Permits Issued FY 98 - FY 03
 Department - City of Boston
 and by Permits Issued FY 98 - FY 03

No.	Type of Activity	FY 1998		FY 1999		FY 2000		FY 2001		FY 2002		FY 2003	
		Dollars	Permits										
1	ERECT	1,870,680.00	344	1,859,758.50	359	1,630,298.10	504	7,102,477.27	543	3,657,315.01	441	1,996,560.15	537
2	ALTERATION	6,866,641.80	4276	4,944,751.51	4363	6,339,538.00	4338	6,847,886.64	4181	4,867,970.54	3966	6,453,298.08	4044
3	AMEND	279,927.91	742	309,443.17	864	413,655.17	711	239,902.06	560	213,961.06	497	477,819.02	589
4	PREMISE	17,860.02	348	20,613.10	395	20,007.01	376	21,570.00	412	19,157.01	368	19,930.03	387
5	FOUNDATION	900.00	8	1,000.01	11	2,200.01	23	1,600.00	16	50,800.00	9	2,100.00	41
6	MINOR	1,337,876.31	7244	1,497,836.22	8056	2,120,288.90	8658	2,202,081.36	8679	2,172,466.96	9407	2,098,158.45	9048
7	BOA/BLDGS	11,100.01	57	6,350.22	54	10,150.00	61	11,800.00	57	9,650.00	47	17,890.01	112
8	BOAZONING	166,060.01	686	161,800.00	738	163,750.00	771	227,350.00	936	204,950.03	878	231,490.15	1042
9	EGRESS	663,414.00	863	667,878.80	784	662,840.85	728	727,004.66	586	684,414.40	482	764,953.72	490
10	FIRE ESCAPE	37,400.00	661	21,700.00	620	40,200.00	765	19,530.00	318	13,150.00	204	18,300.00	335
11	PLUMBING	287,279.67	4826	300,599.80	5338	334,666.29	5328	302,786.78	5633	316,669.31	5495	356,135.61	5898
12	FIRE WARNING SYSTEM	15,140.38	1738	23,901.33	1939	15,523.00	1749	14,450.03	1697	17,082.20	1693	13,424.40	1582
13	SPRINKLER	119,166.02	942	138,353.12	1163	126,213.19	1065	151,548.65	947	124,137.06	819	161,085.04	906
14	GAS	143,276.78	4281	245,415.76	4859	182,092.78	4832	164,594.07	5469	176,559.49	5353	194,848.87	5536
15	ELECTRICAL	665,943.50	9530	744,649.54	10505	786,766.63	11812	848,497.07	11751	801,179.50	10922	823,297.60	10378
16	UPGRADE	1,722,478.91	979	1,961,755.30	752	1,712,812.50	696	2,266,305.09	736	1,645,576.97	719	2,818,321.17	685
17	NO-FEE LF	1.54	188	1.61	157	1.36	136	0.61	60	1.40	140	304.15	16
18	ISSUED	133,807.00	70	2,163,307.20	2008	3,801,073.70	1739	5,054,311.72	2584	4,499,286.64	350	2,774,812.80	414
19	RENT EQUITY					14,950.00	490	86,875.03	2832	84,950.01	2740	0.00	0
20	BD OF EXAMINERS					8,480.00	1					84,250.00	2724
21	MULTI-FAMILY							160.00	5	0.00	0	0.00	0
22	WELDING	6,715.50	16	971.00	6							0.00	0
23	COMPLIANCE/FAÇADE	8,460.00	48	17,200.00	85	1,900.00	21	200.00	2	0.00	0	200.00	2
24	USE & OCCUPANCY	303,068.08	1812	312,236.66	1655	257,838.26	1652	361,491.75	1588	323,936.04	1541	332,646.29	1457
25	WEIGHTS & MEASURES	157,305.00	246	150,713.00	219	271,820.00	256	159,905.00	241	157,620.00	244	243,984.00	259
26	HEALTH	1,023,062.35	5511	1,086,967.70	6666	1,056,074.90	6323	1,062,710.60	5670	1,123,866.60	1503	1,136,190.85	1282
27	BFD-PLAN REVIEW	190,704.40	892	216,740.00	766	253,682.30	796	280,549.50	804	196,678.00	607	256,241.40	727
28	PRE-RENTAL	82,200.00	1644	77,650.00	1446	72,200.00	1293	62,300.01	1249	55,850.00	1014	76,496.02	1421
29	GARAGE	10,058.01	46	6,270.05	40	42,960.00	48	21,444.00	20	47,577.01	43	12,433.00	21
30	FLAMMABLES	29,827.64	97	20,649.16	88	34,123.13	87	11,790.52	42	17,619.17	80	10,546.29	49
31	PARKING LOT											14,323.00	11
32	POOLS	4,600.00	40	3,200.00	32	4,325.00	39	2,200.00	19	4,000.00	34	7,619.00	44
33	COPIES	6,766.06	763	9,478.30	815	9,686.04	1057	9,207.71	1164	8,348.07	968	4,873.45	2462
34	MICROFILM	30,207.90	30762	48,073.52	30083	62,533.62	36024	72,673.50	34547	98,250.78	6274	124,693.76	24356
35	MAPS & BOOKS	147.90	143		189	819.60	189	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
37	PRINTOUTS	2,016.25	16	3,955.00	29	27,275.00	13	1,522.00	13	173.00	10	436.75	25
38	VIOLATION FEE					27,996.00	6	45,540.52	22	96,213.27	25	8,220.00	8
39	PERMIT EXTENSIONS	32,201.38	359	46,700.17	495	62,800.13	641	101,300.11	1012	128,390.64	1333	123,200.83	1306
40	REDEPOSIT	55,742.30	149	38,190.96	162	33,194.23	181	51,946.30	172	84,318.48	200	68,514.73	237
41	SERVICE CHARGE	3,873.51	147	3,950.00	158	3,900.00	156	4,400.00	167	5,120.00	195	4,875.00	188
42	SITE CLEANLINESS					15,025.00	5	66,100.04	1820	57,446.08	1532	72,675.60	336
TOTAL		16,285,910.14	80,474	17,112,060.51	85,500	20,623,670.70	93,570	28,405,922.60	96,554	21,964,687.73	60,133	21,805,652.22	78,955

CHART 6

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Estimated Cost of Construction FY '98 - FY '03

	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
I. Cost of Permits						
Erect (1)	1,870,680	1,859,759	1,630,298	7,102,477	3,657,315	1,996,560
Alteration (2)	6,866,642	4,944,752	6,339,538	6,647,887	4,867,970	6,453,298
Amend (3)	279,928	309,443	413,655	239,902	213,961	477,819
Minor (6)	1,337,876	1,497,836	2,120,289	2,202,081	2,172,467	2,098,158
Upgrade (32)	1,722,499	1,961,755	1,712,813	2,266,305	1,645,577	2,818,821
Issued (34)	133,867	2,163,307	3,801,074	5,054,312	4,499,287	2,774,813
Total	12,211,512	12,736,852	16,017,667	23,512,964	17,056,577	16,619,470
II. Est Construction Cost	1,221,151,200	1,273,885,200	1,601,766,700	2,351,296,400	1,705,657,700	1,661,946,987

Note: The estimated fair cost of constructions is calculated for this chart as follows. The Cost of Permits (fees) are based on 1% of the fair cost of construction figure entered into the individual building permit application. However, spot checks indicate that the latter figure, based on the current RS Means Cost Construction Data is usually undervalued by a range of from 50% to 75%. In addition, the cost of construction for electrical, plumbing and mechanicals is not included since permit fees for the latter are based on connections and related work items rather than on the fair cost of construction. Thus the figures included in Line II above are based on a very conservative estimate.

CHART 7

Comparison of Massachusetts and New England Construction Activity with City of Boston, FY98-FY03

Fiscal Year	New England Construction Index	Comparison Prior Year	Comparison FY03/FY98 %	Mass. Construction Index	Comparison % Prior Year	Comparison FY03/FY98 %	Boston Construction Index	Comparison % Prior Year	Comparison FY03/FY98 %
FY98 (base year)	317			360			12211512		
FY99	340	7%		357	-1%		12736852	23%	
FY00	388	14%		428	20%		16017667	26%	
FY01	392	1%		438	27%		23503964	47%	
FY02	379	-4.0%		384	-12%		17056577	-27%	
FY03	385	1.5%	21%	361	-6%	0%	16619470	-5%	36%

Note on Data Development For Chart 7

The object of this exercise was to compare changes in construction values – residential plus non-residential – over the last six years (FY98 to FY03) between Boston, Massachusetts and the New England region. The only immediate and available information on this comes from the Boston Federal Reserve Bank's publication, "New England Economic Indicators" and updated data on its website.

While there are data on New England and Massachusetts, "Indicators" does not carry data on Boston. Moreover, the information is given, not in figures, but as indices using 1980 as the base year. The "Indicator" information for construction is divided between Residential and Non-Residential but Boston's Inspectional Services Department keeps figures on total construction only – residential plus non-residential. Boston runs on a July to June fiscal year while the "Indicator's" figures are for the calendar year.

Using the "Indicators" website we extracted the FW Dodge indices for residential and non-residential for the six years, month by month; they were also taken to fit the fiscal years indicated. We then added up the monthly figures for each year in each of the two categories – residential and non-residential – and divided by 12 to get the average for each year in each category. We then added the average figures for residential and non-residential and got a "composite" index figure. Thus, for example, the figure 317 shown in FY98 under the New England Construction Index, is the average of two figures: residential (264) and non-residential (370). These two figures, in turn, were the result of totaling all the indices for the 12 months under residential and non-residential respectively and then dividing by twelve.

For Boston we used the figures reported for each year as the total of all construction fees received. The fees are based on a percentage of the reported total cost of construction. These figures do not include the construction value of electrical, gas, or mechanical permit fees paid since fees in this case are charged on connection and not on construction cost.

Using, FY98 and its figures as the base year, we compared each year to the previous year and got a "growth" or "decline" percentage. We then compared the last year FY03 to the base year to identify the change over 6 years.

Although this is obviously a very crude way to make the intended comparisons, some sense of validity seems to occur in FY02 which has the highest indices of the six year period for all three areas: Boston, Massachusetts and New England. And, consistently, the indices fell in FY02 for all three areas, but at different rates.

CHART 8

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Board of Appeals: FY 03 Activity Summary by Month

	July 02	Aug 02	Sept 02	Oct 02	Nov 02	Dec 02	Jan 03	Feb 03	Mar 03	Apr 03	May 03	Jun 03	TOTALS
1) Appeals Received													
A) Zoning	72	89	89	79	65	71	84	70	65	83	127	125	1019
B) Building	2	3	4	6	2	9	5	3	5	7	8	3	57
Total	74	92	93	85	67	80	89	73	70	90	135	128	1076
2) Hearings Held	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	37
3) Cases on Agenda	145	131	137	121	129	89	119	78	137	127	113	107	1433
4) Actions Taken:													
A) Approved	92	78	80	74	93	51	72	39	79	60	66	56	840
B) Denied	11	6	8	5	8	8	6	7	0	13	7	8	87
C) Denied w/o Prejudice	15	10	5	12	9	10	12	7	18	15	6	15	134
D) Postponed	19	25	32	25	15	19	18	22	28	16	17	17	253
E) Extensions	5	3	4	5	2	0	7	2	2	0	1	4	43
F) Other	1	9	2	0	1	1	3	1	1	12	7	6	44
Total	143	131	131	121	128	89	118	78	126	117	113	106	1401
5) Decisions:													
A) Processed	91	129	99	100	150	71	84	68	87	131	71	124	1205
B) Withdrawn	5	3	0	4	4	5	2	2	0	0	0	8	30
Total	96	132	99	100	154	76	86	70	87	131	79	125	1,235

Mission: The mission of the Inspectional Services Department is to serve the public by protecting the health, safety and environmental stability of Boston's business and residential communities. To this end, the Department consistently and fairly administers public health, safety, land use and environmental regulations throughout the City of Boston. The Department will continue to use its resources to promote the quality of life in Boston, through enforcement and providing public information, education and emergency services.

Objective 1: To process and transmit Board of Appeal Decisions within 15 working days of signature by full Board.

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
Pct. of decisions processed within 15 work days of signature	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Decisions recorded at ISD within 15 work days of signature</i>		91	129	99	100	150	71	84	68	87	131	71	124	1205
<i>Decisions signed</i>		91	129	99	100	150	71	84	68	87	131	71	124	1205

Objective 2: To provide a Zoning Determination within seven work days of receipt of a complete application for the construction, renovation or improvement of both residential & commercial projects.

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
Pct. of complete applications processed within 7 days of receipt	80%	100%	82%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	81%
<i># complete applications reviewed</i>		318	707	721	711	580	616	793	527	745	847	851	978	8394
<i># Zoning Determinations within 7 days</i>		318	580	576	568	464	492	634	421	596	677	680	782	6788

Explanatory Factors:

Objective 3: To maintain a 1:1 ratio of Building, Electrical, and Mechanical (BE&M) inspections performed to BE&M permits issued.

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
Ratio of Inspections to permits	1.1	1.05	1.16	1.2	1	0.95	1.2	1.13	0.97	1.05	0.89	0.87	0.7	1.01
<i>Number of BE&M inspections performed</i>		3535	3870	3763	3792	2988	3329	3656	2591	3205	3176	3396	2614	39915
<i>Number of BE&M applications/permits issued</i>		3365	3333	3148	3787	3134	2699	3241	2661	3049	3549	3887	3724	39577

Explanatory Factors:

**Inspectional Services Department
FY03 Management Information Report**

June 30, 2003

Objective 4: To respond to housing "no heat" complaints within twenty-four hours

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
Pct of housing "no heat" complaints resolved	90%			100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
# of housing "no heat" complaints	0	0	4	4	81	91	122	491	155	43	42	15	6	1050
# complaints responded to within 24 hours	0	0	4	4	81	91	122	491	155	43	42	15	6	1050

Objective 5: To conduct 1500 pre-rental inspections annually.

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
Number of pre-rental inspections	1500	108	142	90	237	226	149	140	182	71	81	75	143	1644

Explanatory Factors:

Objective 6: To inspect all High Risk Food Establishments three times annually.

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
Pct. of high risk food establishments inspected three times during FY03	100%													
First round inspections completed	26	42	46	195	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	309
Second round inspections completed	0	0	0	2	12	36	42	42	217	0	0	0	0	309
Third round inspections completed	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	12	26	145	120	309
Total high risk food establishments	309	309	309	309	309	309	309	309	309	309	309	309	309	309

Explanatory Factors:

**Inspectional Services Department
FY03 Management Information Report**

June 30, 2003

Objective 7: To have 200 private lots cleaned by owners at no cost to the City

PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
200	8	10	11	3	3	0	2	2	2	3	5	9	58

of vacant lots cleaned by owners

Explanatory Factors:

Objective 8: To issue 3000 Site Cleanliness Licenses annually.

PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
3000	174	262	390	173	149	160	193	150	283	414	418	400	3166

Site Cleanliness Licenses issued

Explanatory Factors:

Objective 9: To inspect 200 businesses annually for Price Verification compliance.

PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
200	9	19	15	2	2	20	25	15	36	13	5	12	173

businesses inspected

Explanatory Factors:

Objective 10: To respond to constituent non-emergency requests for information within forty-eight hours.

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
# of constituent non-emergency requests received		343	346	378	310	268	369	406	421	393	428	452	432	4546
# of requests responded to within 48 hours.		343	346	378	310	268	369	406	421	393	428	452	432	4546

Explanatory Factors:

Objective 11: To file Petitions for Appointment of a Receivership and conduct Condemnation Hearings requiring the renovation of abandoned properties

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
# of Petitions filed in Court for Appointment of a Receivership	10	4	0	0	3	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	6	20
# of Condemnation Hearings Held	50	13	8	19	29	16	6	28	14	21	22	33	11	220

Explanatory Factors:

Objective 12: To conduct a minimum of 20 Breathe Easy At Home Outreach Meetings annually

	PLOS	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
# of Breathe Easy At Home meetings conducted	20	1	2	3	3	1	3	4	3	4	2	3	2	31

Objective 13: To conduct compliance inspections annually for 80 Auto Body and Repair Shops within the City of Boston

PLOS 90%

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
# of Auto Body and Repair Shops inspected	18	17	14	5	19	15	18	9	12	16	13	14	170

Objective 14: To conduct 15 Hazard Awareness Inspections annually of Adandoned Buildings(Commercial or Mixed-Use) Citywide

PLOS 80%

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
# of abandoned buildings inspected	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	9

Objective 15: To conduct 40 Public Safety Hearings annually for all private and public Elderly Housing Developments throughout the City

PLOS 90%

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
# of Public Safety hearings held	2	2	2	0	1	5	0	2	2	2	3	0	21

Objective 16: To board and secure all reported condemned or abandoned buildings within 24 hours of notification

PLOS 100%

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	FY Totals
# condemned/abandoned buildings reported	6	9	8	15	5	7	6	6	7	7	10	6	92
# condemned/abandoned buildings boarded	6	9	8	15	5	7	6	6	7	7	10	6	92

CHART 10

Proposed Re-Design Cashier Collection Report			Date Issued _____
			Month & Year _____
Sequence No.	Account No.	Item Description	# Items
			Funds Collected
I. Permits			
A. Buildings and Construction			
1	1	NEW BUILDINGS	
2	2	ALTERATION/EXISTING BUILDINGS	
3	3	AMENDMENT TO ORIG. PERMIT	
4	6	"SHORT FORM" CONSTRUCTION	
5	32	UPGRADING ORIG. PERMIT	
6	33	PUBLIC BUILDING - NO FEE	
7	34	FULL PERMIT ISSUED	
B. Occupancy, Egress, Use of Premises			
8	4	USE OF PREMISES	
9	10	EGRESS/CERTIFICATE OF INSPECTION	
10	40	USE & OCCUPANCY	
C. Electrical, Plumbing, Gas			
11	14	PLUMBING	
12	17	GAS/MECHANICAL	
13	19	ELECTRICAL	
D. Fire Safety			
14	11	FIRE ESCAPE INSPECTION	
15	15	FIRE ALARM SYSTEM	
16	16	SPRINKLER SYSTEM	
17	46	FIRE SAFETY/INSULATION	
18	63	STORAGE OF FLAMMABLES	
E. Miscellaneous Construction			
19	5	FOUNDATIONS	
20	39	BUILDING FAÇADE	
21	62	GARAGE	
22	66	SWIMMING POOLS	
F. Board of Appeals			
23	8	BUILDING REFUSAL	
24	9	ZONING REFUSAL	
G. Other			
25	35	BD OF EXAMINERS: BUILDER'S LICENSE	
26	37	MULTI-FAMILY USE INSPECTION	
27	43	WEIGHTS & MEASURES PERMITS	
28	44	HEALTH DIVISION PERMITS	
29	61	PRE-RENTAL INSPECTION/HOUSING	
30	73	PERMIT EXTENSIONS	
31	74	CDS OF APPROVED PLANS	
32	76	SITE CLEANLINESS	
			SUBTOTAL
II. Fees, Fines, Charges			
33	64	PARKING LOT CHARGES	
34	67	COPIES OF DOCUMENTS	
35	69	MICROFILM COPIES/PLANS	
36	70	FINES: ENFORCEMENT POLICE	
37	71	PRINTOUTS OF DOCUMENTS	
38	72	VIOLATION FEE: BUILDING	
39	75	GENERAL SERVICE CHARGE	
			SUBTOTAL
			TOTAL

CHART 11

Inspectional Services Department – City of Boston. Certificate of Occupancy Process.

1. Applicant fills out and submits the Guidelines/CO checklist with the requirements checked off.
2. Applicant completes and submits the **Application for Use and Occupancy**.
3. Applicant completes submits the **Voucher – Fees – Certificate of Use and Occupancy** form.
4. Applicant signs and submits **Final Cost Breakdown** letter/form.
5. Applicant reconciles construction cost.
6. C/O staff updates original long-form construction cost and permit fee.
7. C/O staff completes certificate sheet and assigns a log number for Cashier tracking.
8. C/O staff directs applicant to cashier fee payment and return of the **Voucher Fee** receipt.
9. C/O staff completes **Transmittal Request** to Buildings/Structures chief for distribution.
10. C/O staff fax copies of **Application for Use and Occupancy** to BFD.
11. ISD/BFD inspectors return reports to C/O staff for processing.
12. C/O staff forwards completed **Certificate of Occupancy** head of Plans/Zoning and then to Inspector of Buildings for approval/sign-off.
13. Applicant picks up issued Certificate of Occupancy.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY PROCESS

1. When to apply for a Certificate of Occupancy: There are four general situations when you must apply for a Certificate of Occupancy, namely:

- You are engaging in new construction
- You are doing major renovations affecting Egress, enlarging capacity, fire protection, etc.
- Where there is no Certificate of Occupancy in the building jacket records for the address

2 . In filing for an application the following requirements apply in conjunction with the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy:

A. Long Form Work:

- ___ Requires building permit card with final sign-off
- ___ Final cost breakdown (typed) and divided between Items: construction, electrical, mechanical, etc.
- ___ Upgrade original long form final construction cost/fees
- ___ Affidavits if applicable (over \$1 million job)
- ___ Reports – Fire alarm, sprinkler (NFPA 23) and/or smoke certificate

B. Short Form Work:

- ___ Requires building permit with final sign-off
- ___ Final cost breakdown – typed.
- ___ Copy of most recent long form that gives legal use of the property & upgrade original short form permit
- ___ If there is no Certificate of Occupancy, you must apply now
- ___ If there is an existing Certificate of Occupancy already, you do not need to re-apply on a short form permit

C. Existing Long Form with No Work:

- ___ Obtain copy of the most recent long form from the Document Room.

D. Temporary Certificate:

- ___ Requires either Long or Short Form
- ___ Copy of Building Permit Sign-Off
- ___ Cost Breakdown for that part of the work plan completed
- ___ Letter address to the INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS requesting Temporary Certificate of Occupancy
- ___ When no full Certificate of Occupancy exists for the building

3. All applicants must complete the APPLICATION FOR USE & OCCUPANCY and VOUCHER – FEES forms.

4. Please note: All “Final Cost Breakdowns” are based upon the “fair cost of construction” and this must be attested to by signature. This is legally enforceable.

CHART 12

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Short Form Permits Issued by Fiscal Year FY 1999-2003

	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	AVG./MO.
JULY	835	757	780	862	913	829
AUGUST	705	903	872	916	876	854
SEPTEMBER	774	780	811	751	818	787
OCTOBER	700	711	939	1023	919	858
NOVEMBER	570	651	678	707	648	651
DECEMBER	605	607	506	519	537	555
JANUARY	420	476	542	556	514	502
FEBRUARY	486	497	490	494	456	485
MARCH	634	736	533	671	613	637
APRIL	742	793	751	913	809	802
MAY	725	830	859	1113	968	899
JUNE	861	917	918	882	977	911
TOTAL:	8057	8658	8679	9407	9048	8770
AVG./MONTH:	671	722	723	784	754	731

CHART 13

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Comparison of Payment Categories FY '98 - FY '03

Payment Category	FY 1998		FY 2003	
	\$	% of Total	\$	% of Total
Cash	548,835	3.37%	525,750	2.41%
Checks	14,483,060	88.93%	18,976,486	87.03%
Charge	1,254,015	7.70%	2,303,412	10.56%
Total	16,285,910		21,805,652	

CHART 14

Inspectional Services Department – City of Boston Long-Form Procedure

- 1) Examiners' daily reports are collected each morning, and all information on the reports is transferred to Log Book.
- 2) Applicants dropping off information are requested to fill out a Drop-Off Form at the counter. (Color of these forms changes each month so that Examiners can easily distinguish approximate time of drop-off.)
- 3) This information is logged daily into a book, matched up with appropriate application and given to a designated plan examiner.
- 4) After Cashiers balance for previous day, Long Forms, Amendments and Use of Premise application are collected from cage, copied for data entry and sorted.
- 5) All synopsis copies are taken down to Inspectors' area and put in appropriate bins by ward number.
- 6) Each synopsis requiring an occupancy inspection (addresses having no record of legal occupancy) have a Field Form attached for Inspector's completion.
- 7) Long Forms are sorted as follows:
 - a) Demolition (under Art. 85) applications go directly to a designated plan examiner along with synopsis.
 - b) Fast Housing and No Occupancy applications are put directly into computer as well as Long Forms under Commercial Fast Track.
 - c) Fast Track plans, affidavits and Long Forms are kept together.
 - d) As they come in, briefs are brought down to be signed by a Building Supervisor.
 - e) Affidavits are stapled together and put in appropriate file.
 - f) A green Fast Track form is attached to file to let examiner know file has been processed, and entire file is put into bin.
- 8) Occupancy Long Forms are put into separate files to be further processed when Inspectors' Field Reports come in.
 - a) Those Long Forms legalizing addresses as one family are stamped with Occupancy Committee stamp and immediately brought to the Director of Buildings & Structures in the Building Division for sign-off.

- b) These long forms are put with the others to be assigned by Susan Rice.
- c) After assignment, all applications are put into computer, matched with plans, and put into Examiner's bin.
- d) A printout is then made for Log Book
- 9) Briefs are collected daily and filed numerically. Briefs with field reports are put to one side, and corresponding jackets are pulled from the Document Room.
- 10) A legalizing occupancy form is filled out for the Occupancy Committee.
- 11) Brief is matched with original Long Form, and file brought to Director of Buildings & Structures for review by the committee.
- 12) After their completion and return to Plans/Zoning, applications are assigned to an Examiner for review. This is done weekly.
- 13) Every Tuesday (by 8:30) and Thursday (by 10:30) appeals are taken from the Cashier's Office, matched with file and sent to Board of Appeal.
- 14) As files come back from board, documentation is made on each file and given to assigned Examiner for processing.
- 15) All information is then put into Log Book.
- 16) There are five telephone lines to be answered and calls screened. Personnel do not answer zoning questions, but give status reports on applications as well as answer procedural questions.
- 17) There are four sets of bins: Incoming, Additional Information, Approved and Refused. When time allows, all applications inactive for two years are abandoned.
- 18) As clients come in, they are asked to sign in and they are taken care of as efficiently as possible.
- 19) As permits are issued, the file is brought to the main Front Counter.
- 20) Permits are checked for violations and fees, types up permit card, and gives entire package to Cashier who then collects any monies and issues permit card.
- 21) Each issued permit is then entered into the Cashier's log book.
- 22) Plans/Zoning take the Cashier's log book daily and update the Plans/Zoning log book.

CHART 15

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Applications to Plan/Zoning by Fiscal Year FY 1999-2003

	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	AVG./MO.
JULY	598	593	536	529	622	576
AUGUST	597	653	597	663	575	617
SEPTEMBER	555	544	539	452	575	533
OCTOBER	611	520	695	549	585	592
NOVEMBER	481	554	541	519	534	526
DECEMBER	490	530	457	339	456	454
JANUARY	397	413	438	446	490	437
FEBRUARY	490	467	506	444	389	459
MARCH	566	655	426	514	529	538
APRIL	576	567	566	571	734	603
MAY	537	662	632	692	595	624
JUNE	674	709	607	496	687	635
TOTAL:	6572	6867	6540	6214	6771	6593
AVG./MONTH:	548	572	545	518	564	549
ISSUED/YEAR	5362	5386	5284	4904	5170	5221
AVG./MONTH:	447	449	440	409	431	435

CHART 16

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Plans/Zoning Unit: Selected FY 03 Activity by Month

	July 02	Aug 02	Sept 02	Oct 02	Nov 02	Dec 02	Jan 03	Feb 03	Mar 03	Apr 03	May 03	Jun 03	TOTALS	Average
1) Plan Reviews														
A) Building & Zoning	919	966	903	783	669	709	879	543	777	908	902	1044	10002	834
B) B.F.D. Reviews	108	114	75	89	75	133	160	88	109	153	162	134	1400	117
C) Total Reviews	1027	1080	978	872	744	842	1039	631	886	1061	1064	1178	11402	950
2) Client Service														
A) Counter	1044	972	1008	884	912	876	1008	780	1092	1272	784	1140	11872	989
B) Zoning Clinic	24	18	21	31	21	15	22	20	20	21	26	22	261	22
C) Total Served	1068	990	1029	1015	933	891	1030	800	1112	1293	810	1162	12133	1011
3) Client Service/Day/Month	52	49	50	49	48	44	50	41	55	67	36	54	595	50
4) Plans Refused: Zoning/Bldg.														
A) Refused: Zoning	45	90	71	82	78	84	114	59	113	154	147	129	1166	97
B) Refused: Buildings	5	28	19	15	24	26	36	11	30	30	54	45	323	27
C) Total Refused	50	118	90	97	102	110	150	70	143	184	201	174	1489	124
5) Board of Appeals														
A) Zoning Appeals	76	86	87	82	69	73	87	71	65	85	128	150	1059	88
B) Building Appeals	3	3	4	6	10	8	4	4	4	10	8	4	68	6
C) Total Appeals Sent	79	89	91	88	78	81	91	75	69	95	136	154	1127	94
D) BIA Decisions Returned	64	92	97	136	93	100	82	73	86	132	64	125	1144	95

CHART 17

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Input-Output Summary of Plans/Zoning Applications

I. Application Status

1) Total Received in FY2003	6771	
2) Total Carried Over (FY2001 & FY2003)	2078	
Total Applications		8849

II. Disposition After Review

1) Approved in FY2003	3368	
2) Refused - Zoning	1345	
3) Refused - Building	374	
4) Abandoned	572	
Total 1-4		5659

III. Remaining as Balance for FY04 3190

CHART 18

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Analysis of "Counter Log," Plan/Zoning, June 2003

I. Building Permits

1) Meeting with Plan Examiner	150
2) Status of Application	134
3) Pick up Permit	132
4) Zoning Questions*	127
5) Drop off Plans, Changes	79
6) Applications	20
7) Abandon Permits	4
Subtotal	646

II. Other Permits

1) CO, CI, Egress	11
2) Driveway, Curb Cuts	9
3) Open Air Parking License	7
4) Deck Applications	4
5) Foundation Permits	3
6) Sign Permit	1
7) Summer Camp Constr. Permit	1
Subtotal	36

III. Other Requests

1) General Questions	63
2) Property Line Dispute	2
3) Street Address	1
4) Sec Bldg File	1
5) Abatement Order	1
6) Sign Postings	1
7) Lot Mergers	1
8) Sprinklers	1
9) BFD letter	1
Subtotal	72

SUMMARY TOTALS

I. Building Permits	646
II. Other Permits	36
III. Other Requests	72

Grand Total **754**

CHART 19

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Activity Report: Building and Structures - FY 03

	Jul 02	Aug 02	Sep 02	Oct 02	Nov 02	Dec 02	Jan 03	Feb 03	Mar 03	Apr 03	May 03	Jun 03	TOTALS
I. Building Permits													
A. Issued	231	256	291	272	196	220	346	183	3028	3124	3312	938	12397
B. Completed	2127	1145	1350	2261	1682	1831	1361	1654	1162	2903	1407	651	19534
II. Other Permits													
A. Fire Escapes	18	22	47	36	14	17	11	15	16	41	18	28	283
B. Certificate of Occupancy	118	123	140	147	154	111	133	104	98	133	18	122	1401
C. Certificate of Inspection	230	110	540	490	649	1056	211	216	223	237	225	297	4484
III. Violations													
A. Issued	218	228	228	382	203	135	185	208	241	208	284	280	2800
B. Show Cause	67	49	49	73	0	79	0	74	0	67	97	0	555
C. Closed Out	160	56	56	239	97	118	16	14	52	319	107	4	1238
IV. Complaints													
A. Received	305	186	260	286	155	92	219	133	128	167	84	35	2050
B. Answered	166	140	153	166	99	107	126	14	30	165	112	35	1313
V. Field Inspections	4872	5414	5373	5563	4898	4835	5389	3588	4851	5071	5308	4592	59734
VI. Documentation													
A. Data Entered	4123	3741	0	2848	2735	0	0	0	3605	3124	2764	2977	25717
B. Docs. Scanned & Indexed	5676	0	0	3158	0	0	2537	0	3065	3574	3532	2738	24280

CHART 20

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston Enforcement Statistics For FY 03

	Number of Actions	% of Total
Show Cause		
Housing	1,605	52.50%
Building	490	24.10%
Emergency	357	17.60%
Sanitation	113	5.60%
Receivership	3	0.10%
Pre-Injunction	0	0
Other	2	0.10%
Total	2,030	
Cases in Litigation		
Housing	1,127	53.50%
Building	505	24.00%
Emergency	356	17.00%
Sanitation	96	4.50%
Receivership	12	0.60%
Other	9	0.40%
Total	2,105	
Closed Cases		
Housing	1,044	54.20%
Building	512	26.60%
Emergency	305	15.80%
Sanitation	63	3.30%
Other	2	0.10%
Total	1,926	
Opened Special Operations Cases		
RCVER - Condemned	219	94.00%
Other	14	6.00%
Total	233	

CHART 21

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT – CITY OF BOSTON

HEALTH DIVISION ACTIVITY – FY 2003 BY MONTH AND BY YEAR TOTAL

2002-2003	Health Division YTD													YTD	PYTD	
	Goal	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun			
Health																
Inspections																
A. Risk Levels																
High Risk1	309	26	42	46	195	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	310	256	
High Risk2	309	0	0	0	2	12	36	42	217	0	0	0	0	309	256	
High Risk3	309	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	12	26	145	120	309	256	
Medium Risk1	3150	285	692	458	435	405	314	197	158	150	105	85	49	3243	3360	
Medium Risk2	3160	0	3	9	16	32	71	119	276	442	397	221	192	1778	2044	
Medium Risk3		0	0	0	0	2	0	4	4	9	26	44	54	143	154	
Low Risk1	803	30	104	92	84	94	121	78	53	61	40	43	28	818	742	
Low Risk2		0	0	0	0	2	12	5	22	21	17	32	24	135	102	
Total	8030	341	741	605	732	547	554	447	734	685	611	581	467	7045	7170	
B. Establishments																
Food Service	2647	268	514	420	632	372	330	301	516	488	415	417	360	4933	5072	
Food Retail	1265	62	190	151	148	137	189	120	144	147	127	120	85	1620	1641	
Hospitals	21	1	1	0	3	2	2	0	7	0	5	4	6	31	21	
Nursing Homes	39	1	3	5	5	2	6	0	13	3	7	5	0	50	59	
Caterer	82	4	1	8	17	3	5	7	15	1	8	3	4	76	82	
Day Care	208	6	32	21	27	31	22	19	39	46	49	32	12	335	295	
Total	4252	341	741	605	732	547	554	447	734	685	611	581	467	7045	7170	
Mobile Food	239	18	48	10	1	1	1	1	6	7	32	19	21	165	249	
Funeral Homes	50	3	0	1	0	0	40	8	3	0	1	1	1	58	69	
Rec. Camps	122	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	111	118	
Swimming Pools	137	37	25	0	2	12	34	20	5	4	3	7	38	187	130	
Baths	74	2	2	0	5	12	56	13	1	0	0	4	1	96	105	
Massage Estab.	81	2	2	0	0	3	54	14	1	1	1	2	4	84	91	
Total	703	172	77	11	8	28	185	66	16	12	38	33	65	701	752	
C. Compliance		568	659	709	684	594	600	615	746	616	622	581	485	7479	7396	
D. Total Inspections		1081	1477	1325	1424	1169	1269	1118	1496	1178	1271	1162	1017	14987	15318	
E. Misc Inspections		141	149	117	92	103	90	84	92	100	139	31	99	1237	1666	
F. Haymarket Insp.	69	0	0	6	6	5	3	12	8	7	8	9	7	70	270	
New Permits Issued		13	38	19	20	24	30	69	21	23	32	38	29	344	266	
Temp. Permits		146	207	178	75	69	12	187	45	153	337	107	60	1666	1641	
Condemnations		6	5	4	0	2	4	2	1	2	3	6	2	37	42	
Closures		9	7	8	10	7	6	6	10	12	5	5	6	91	92	
Misc/Fee/Stops		41	52	39	39	26	41	88	79	74	200	31	38	748	958	

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT - CITY OF BOSTON

HEALTH DIVISION ACTIVITY - FY 2003 BY MONTH AND BY YEAR TOTAL (continued)

2002-2003		Health Division YTD													
Health	Goal	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	YTD	PYTD
G. Frozen Desserts															
Reports In		109	102	104	100	97	89	89	91	82	93	91	87	1134	1117
Reports Approved		100	92	96	87	92	87	85	87	79	89	91	92	1077	1077
TSOP Action to be Taken		9	10	8	13	5	2	2	4	3	4	0	5	65	40
Reports Not In		81	85	83	79	53	62	62	60	57	62	61	72	817	909
Not Open		13	13	15	12	52	50	50	50	61	60	49	38	463	420
New Business		0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	8	33
De-Activated		0	0	0	3	0	4	1	2	0	0	0	4	14	13
New Base #		203	204												
H. HACCP Inspections															
		0	4	3	3	4	5	12	4	3	4	7	3	52	48
J. Complaints															
Received		95	122	83	75	83	35	56	66	56	65	64	84	884	970
Inspected		95	122	83	75	83	35	56	66	56	65	64	84	884	970
Food Alerts		30	30	11	18	15	28	23	13	12	10	12	11	213	187
Inspected		30	30	11	18	15	28	23	13	12	10	12	11	213	187
K. Inspection Averages															
Per Inspector Per Day		4.3	4.8	4.7	4.6	5	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.63333	4.5
L. Verifications															
Field		10	15	14	13	15	12	15	13	12	17	13	14	163	170
Phone		50	40	50	40	50	50	40	40	50	40	40	40	530	365
Satisfactory		60	55	64	53	65	62	55	53	62	57	53	54	693	532
Unsatisfactory		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M. Certified Managers															
	2407	2092	2113	2150	2151	2245	2245	2286	2286	2325	2342	2370	2407	100%	n/a
N. Hearings Held															
		4	12	5	6	20	9	7	7	13	6	3	11	103	n/a
Off-Hour Inspections															
Fees Received - \$						10	4	10	7	18	9	9	12	79	n/a
						2,000	800	3000	1600	4000	2400	2200	2400	18,400	n/a

CHART 22

BOSTON INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT HOUSING INSPECTION DIVISION STATISTICS



FY03

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	TOTALS
A. REQUESTS													
GENERAL REQ (#1)	483	478	394	523	456	428	612	541	429	348	397	277	5366
CAUSE FOR ACTION (#15)	307	246	265	317	319	288	407	350	293	228	250	176	3446
NO CAUSE (#9)	173	128	127	182	113	139	192	179	130	112	138	106	1719
EMERGENCIES													1234
RECEIVED													987
INSPECTED													
PRE-RENTALS													
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	118	142	93	317	220	88		82	88	81	95		1635
CERTIFICATES APPROVED	91	176		184	50	120		67	60	8	74		1224
NO HEAT	N/A	N/A											1070
TOTAL INITIAL INSPECTIONS													9305
B. COMPLIANCE INSPECTIONS													
REINSPECTED (#2)	584	510	567	691	616	637	558	581	842	653	607	555	7401
CLOSED (#12)	147	167	166	242	174	257	183	234	270	184	173	140	2337
SWORN OUT (#13)	154	187	159	188	160	145	165	148	199	175	145	140	1965
NO ANSWER (#9)	198	194	200	255	216	224	163	183	269	224	211	186	2523
OTHER (#18)	100	75	92	93	74	61	85	79	106	80	69	61	975
REFERRALS (#14)	18	10	10	13	8	2	8	8	4	4	5	3	93
COURT REINSP													
INSPECTED (#3)	449	431	423	431	395	300	362	372	385	466	432	378	4824
NOLLE PROS (#16)	103	93	91	102	90	83	83	103	107	104	94	92	1145
WORK IN PROGRESS (#17)	205	152	234	210	233	163	206	215	174	218	192	192	2394
NO ACCESS (#9)	116	128	102	110	81	54	66	41	77	92	104	78	1049
OTHER (18)	55	86	41	62	15	13	11	12	24	42	17	16	394
COURT APPEARANCE	20	13	14	16	13	8	17	16	12	21	27	9	186
TOTAL COMPLIANCE INSPECTIONS													12225
D. HOUSING LEGALS													
# WRITTEN (#15)	271	222	235	280	261	222	312	299	258	201	218	198	2977
# SERVED (#10)	244	231	238	294	247	245	259	233	279	199	228	225	2922
NO SERVICE (#11)	4	11	9	14	4	14	3	13	6	7	23	10	118
E. BUILDING LEGALS													
# RECEIVED	128	129	165	181	128	126	92	114	205	165	114	114	1661
# SERVED (#10)	117	114	153	175	124	125	84	110	183	151	134	109	1579
NO SERVICE (#11)	9	14	12	6	3	1	8	4	16	10	5	4	92
TOTAL LEGALS SERVED													4501
I. ADMINISTRATION													
HEARINGS	11	31	11	2	13	8		5	4	6	21	7	119
REQUEST OF RECORDS	11	17		23	35	18		30	7	6	5	30	182
BREATHE EASY INSPECTION								0	7	6	3	0	16
BREATHE EASY MEETINGS		2	4	2	1	3		3	4	2	3	2	26
LEAD DETERMINATION								1	2	4	4	2	39
CONDEMN/ABANDONED		9	1	29	16	6		14	21	22	33	11	162
PUBLIC SAFETY HEARINGS		2	1		1	5		2	2	2	3	0	18
BLDGS BOARDED		9		29	16	6		0	0	0	0	0	60

CHART 23

Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston

Division of Environmental Services

	July '02	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan '03	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Totals
Applications/ Complaints													
Construction	59	39	58	58	89	77	77	60	49	51	51	33	701
Site Cleanliness	174	262	390	173	148	161	161	150	283	414	414	400	3,130
Renewals 1)	(135)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(116)	(119)	(119)	(102)	(149)	(210)	(210)	(193)	(1,353)
Complaints	94	140	311	151	121	71	55	73	90	92	92	172	1,468
Total	327	441	759	382	358	309	293	283	422	557	557	605	5,299
Actions Taken													
Construction Approved	27	20	11	11	87	33	33	10	25	41	41	39	378
Site Cleanliness Approved	174	262	390	173	148	161	161	150	283	414	414	400	3,130
Violations Issued	53	60	76	39	17	14	14	26	16	16	16	26	373
Violations Closed	28	89	75	15	8	20	27	51	34	7	7	13	374
Cases Sworn/ Legal	4	24	0	0	6	23	0	33	16	16	9	9	140
Administrative Hearings	7	0	36	18	12	25	19	6	5	8	12	7	155
Total	293	455	588	256	278	276	254	276	379	502	499	494	4,550

1) Included in "Site Cleanliness" Totals

Chart 24
Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston
Code Enforcement Police Unit Activity Report by Month, FY 2003

Month	Complaints	Tickets Written	Hearings	Abandoned Vehicles	Monthly Total	Daily Average
July	471	2929	240	61	3701	123
August	563	3016	240	81	3900	130
September	520	3458	240	152	4370	156
October	563	3411	266	95	4335	161
November	364	2563	120	159	3206	191
December	458	3318	120	122	4018	139
January	526	2862	186	172	3746	139
February	782	1674	294	156	2906	116
March	600	1667	603	76	2946	105
April	598	1885	603	72	3158	117
May	588	1776	481	154	2999	115
June	658	1456	491	251	2856	124
Totals	6691	30015	3884	1551	42141	
Monthly Average	558	2501	324	129	3512	
Daily Average						135

CHART 25

WEIGHTS & MEASURES		Goal	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	YTD total	YTD % of goal
FY03																
I ANNUAL INSPECTIONS																
A. Measurement:																
Small Scales (0-100#)	3230	239	184	138	82	170	14	775	352	332	149	115	2915	90.2%		
Medium Scales (100-5000#)	800	120	90	94	7	66	286	25	36	18	20	25	54	841	105.1%	
Large Scales (5000# & Up)	155	0	15	17	1	33	53	1	1	17	1	2	6	147	94.8%	
Taxi Metering (Time/Distance)	2500	64	54	248	1649	63	50	79	38	111	430	923	291	4000	160.0%	
Total	6885	423	343	497	1739	332	403	880	440	478	803	1099	466	7903	114.8%	
B. Volumetric:																
Devices Sealed		423	343	497	1739	332	403	880	440	478	803	1099	466	7903		
Devices Not Sealed		8	10	10	3	3	5	19	6	6	32	6	5	113		
Devices Condemned		13	8	36	133	9	14	12	9	16	13	97	25	385		
Total Measurement Inspections		444	361	543	1875	344	422	911	455	500	848	1202	496	8401		
C. Volumetric:																
Gasoline meters	2300	365	274	439	284	131	0	0	0	26	84	155	130	1888	82.1%	
Vehicle Tank Meters	140	0	22	43	47	8	16	14	11	5	4	0	0	170	121.4%	
Bulk Meters	150	9	20	27	0	7	25	0	18	21	0	1	34	162	108.0%	
Oil/Grease Meters	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7.7%	
Total	2588	0	316	509	331	146	41	14	29	52	88	156	164	2221	71.3%	
D. Miscellaneous																
Devices sealed		374	316	509	331	146	41	14	29	52	88	156	164	2220		
Devices not sealed		12	13	5	4	5	0	0	0	1	0	7	5	52		
Devices condemned		27	9	9	2	0	2	0	1	2	0	2	0	54		
Total Volumetric Inspections		413	338	523	337	151	43	14	30	55	88	165	169	2326		
E. Miscellaneous																
Weights (each set)																
Adairdupois	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	50.0%
Metric	110	0	0	0	1	0	0	53	36	0	1	0	0	91	82.7%	
Total Miscellaneous Inspections	114	0	0	1	1	0	0	53	36	1	1	0	0	93	81.6%	
II ON DEMAND INSPECTIONS																
A. Enforcement:																
Re-inspections(taxis)	1,500	0	0	24	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	3.4%
Re-inspections(gasoline meters)	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Re-inspections(scales)	350	245	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	245	70.0%	
Oil delivery inspections	150	2	0	0	0	7	63	73	24	10	0	0	0	179	119.3%	
Octane inspections (places visited)	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Octane samples analyzed	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Octane samples correct		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	

ON DEMAND INSPECTIONS cont.	Goal	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	YTD	1300%	
															total	of goal
B. Compliance:																
Unit price inspections																
# Businesses inspected	30	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	14	6	3	2	28	93.3%	
# Items inspected	3000	0	0	79	0	0	37	0	0	1400	450	300	200	2466	82.2%	
# correct		0	0	60	0	0	22	0	0	1179	403	285	191	2140		
# Incorrect		0	0	19	0	0	15	0	0	221	47	15	9	326		
Price verification																
# businesses inspected	200	9	19	15	2	2	20	25	15	36	13	5	12	173	86.5%	
# items inspected	15,000	750	1500	900	200	200	1400	1160	890	2360	850	450	670	11330	75.5%	
# correct		736	1460	882	190	193	1388	1127	867	2271	820	431	649	11014		
# overcharges		9	17	14	5	1	11	16	10	55	23	13	16	190		
# undercharges		5	23	4	5	6	1	17	13	33	7	6	5	125		
# total errors		14	40	18	10	7	12	33	23	89	30	19	21	316		
percent over		1.2%	1.1%	1.6%	2.5%	0.5%	0.8%	1.4%	1.1%	2.3%	2.7%	2.9%	2.4%			
percent under		0.7%	1.5%	0.4%	2.5%	0.3%	0.7%	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%	0.8%	1.3%	0.7%			
percent total error	2%	1.9%	2.6%	2.0%	5.0%	3.5%	1.5%	2.9%	2.6%	3.7%	3.5%	4.2%	3.1%			
Net weight package inspections-random																
# businesses inspected	75	28	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	50.7%	
# items inspected	3750	1600	235	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1935	51.6%	
# correct		1574	235	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1899		
# overcharges (underweight)		26	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36		
accuracy	98%	2%	100.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%			
Net weight package inspections-audit																
# businesses inspected	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	9	3	18	0	0	49	196.0%	
# items inspected	2500	0	0	0	0	0	0	770	340	150	885	0	0	2145	85.8%	
# over		0	0	0	0	0	0	45	22	10	39	0	0	116		
# under		0	0	0	0	0	0	36	3	2	43	0	0	84		
total errors		0	0	0	0	0	0	81	25	12	82	0	0	200		

CHART 26

**Inspectional Services Department - City of Boston
Recommendations by ISD Unit, Number and General Cost Category**

	Savings	No Cost	Small Cost (under \$5000)	Medium Cost (\$5,000-\$10,000)	Large Cost (over \$10,000)
Office of Commissioner	4	3	1, 2		
Administration and Finance					
• Human Resources and Training		5	6		
• Board of Appeals		7	8, 10	9	
• Budget Management		11, 12, 13			
• Constituent Services		14, 15			
• Information Technology	16	17, 18			
Inspector of Buildings					
• Front Desk	19	22	21, 20		
• Cashier's Office		24			23
• Plans/Zoning		27, 28, 29, 30		25	26
• Documents				31	
• Buildings and Structures		33, 34, 35		32	
• Investigation & Regul. Enforcement		36, 37			
Field Services					
• Health Division				38	
• Housing Inspection Division		39		40	
• Environmental/Code Enforcement		41, 42			
• Weights and Measures		43			
Total recommendations (43):	3	25	7	6	2