4. Analytical Problem Solving Approach

It is important that those who recommend policy, operational, and other improvements in city government use an analytical problem solving approach. This pertains not only to boards, committees, and commission, but to staff people, executives and others who wish to improve municipal services. As resources dwindle, systems become more complex, and the public becomes more and more accustomed to the world's highly competitive consumer oriented economy; therefore, all municipalities and city governments must adapt. In order to determine priorities, to select the best forms of service and the best methods of providing those services, an analytical approach needs to be taken prior to advocacy and mobilization of support. A shorthand approach includes:

- What is the problem we are trying to solve and if we probe deeper, is the problem a symptom or is there really a deeper problem?
- What general approaches could be used to solve the problem? Avoid single solution answers.
- Of the possible approaches to take, which one is the best and why?
- How will the selected approach or solution work? What personnel, financial, and other resources are necessary to make it work? Where will these come from: if there are insufficient resources, what other equally valued programs or activities should be reduced or eliminated to free up the resources needed?
- Have all the people involved in implementing the project had input and do they agree?
- Does the project meet legal requirements and has the City's budget indicated that the financial part of the proposal is, in fact, feasible and manageable?
- Can the project be proven to work by putting it on a standard schedule for implementation?

If each project or recommendation brought to the City Commission were thoroughly tested against these criteria, or something like them, much wasted time and effort would be avoided and the City Commission would be much more likely to approve recommendations rather than sending them back for laborious staff analysis.