

# Adding Value to Mission

How product management empowers the City of San Rafael to best serve our community



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# Public service as product

While the work of government is commonly referred to as service – embodied in the terms ‘public service’ and ‘public servant’ – it’s the government-as-a-product mindset that is driving the future of truly innovative and effective civic organizations.

# Product management

How to create something people:

- Don't dread
- Want to use
- Love using
- Seek out over other options

# Four questions

Product management is concerned with asking – and providing good answers to – these four questions:

- What is the problem we're solving (and why does it matter?)
- What will our impact be?
- How are we doing it?
- Is our solution good?



# Product management

“Product management is focused on delivering a product a user wants or needs. Focus areas include user research, design thinking, iterative development, and delivering minimum viable products quickly. Success for a product manager is delivering a product that users love – and use to complete tasks (or in the private sector – a product customers will pay for)!”

*(Source: U.S. Digital Service)*



# Project management

“Project management is focused on managing to a plan. Focus areas include managing schedule, budget, risk, policy compliance and reporting status to stakeholders. Success for a project manager is delivering a defined scope of work on-time and on-budget.”

*(Source: U.S. Digital Service)*

# San Rafael product examples

- Pay a parking ticket
- Get your street swept
- Sign a trespass letter
- Get a building permit
- Attend a public meeting
- Get a public record
- Register for a class
- Buy a swim pass
- Report a pothole
- Get a business license
- Borrow a book
- Get information about...
- Buy a parking pass
- *And many, many more!*



## Value add

“We must always keep a focus on the value we are delivering to the public. I want to do my best for the American citizens we serve, and learning more about product management has helped me develop strategies to do that.”

*Jennifer Malcolm*  
*U.S. Department of the Interior*





# How it Works



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# Product framing

- Problem statement
- Vision
- User types
- User scenarios
- Metrics
- What we are *not* trying to do



# Example: Street Sweeping Information

## Problem statement

When cars are parked on the street we can't sweep the street properly, which can lead to clogged storm drains and environmental violations. People need to know when to move their cars so we can sweep the streets.

# Example: Street Sweeping Information

## Vision

People have information about the days and times their street will be swept. They move their cars so the sweeper can properly sweep the streets. No flooding issues occur from clogged storm drains during storm season.

# Example: Street Sweeping Information

## User Types

- Homeowners
- Tenants (leases, rentals, etc.)
- Housesitters
- Businesses
- City staff

# Example: Street Sweeping Information

## User scenarios

You recently purchased a home in San Rafael. You've set-up an account with Marin Sanitary to have your garbage collected and that causes you to wonder about when your street is swept? You get on the internet, search for "street sweeping in San Rafael", and quickly find a map which shows the City's sweeper routes, schedule, and times. You now know that the street sweeper will be in your neighborhood every other Tuesday between 4 a.m. - 7 a.m.



# Example: Street Sweeping Information

## User scenarios

You live in an apartment and park your car on the street. The sweeper typically sweeps on your street at 7 a.m. but you don't normally leave for work until 7:45 a.m. If only you could remember, you'd wake up and leave a little earlier on those days. You sign up for push-notifications that remind you the night before so you can set your alarm.

# Example: Street Sweeping Information

## Metrics

- # of views of the map
- Engagement on social media promotions (likes, clicks, thanks, views)
- “Was this map helpful? Yes or No” when closing the browser window
- Reduction in number of cars blocking the sweeper
- #of people who sign up for notifications



# Example: Street Sweeping Information

## What we're not trying to do

We won't try to ...	Because ...
Determine the routes and the street sweeping schedule	Public Works creates the routes and schedule based on their staffing levels and equipment. We can provide Public Works with user feedback about the routes and schedules.
Sweep the streets	Public Works manages that service. We are helping provide information about the service.

# Lessons learned

- Solve the right problem (keep asking why)
  - “People need to know when to move their cars, so the sweeper can sweep the streets”
- Separate products to manage scope
  - Sweeping streets vs. providing information about routes and schedules

# Building on our principles



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- Put the user, or customer, at the center of how we design our services and create an exceptional experience.
- Practice openness, a commitment to learning, and seek to solve the root problem.



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# Building on our principles



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DIGITAL SERVICE &  
OPEN GOVERNMENT

*Make City services easy to use, and work for everyone.*



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# Building on our principles

“Traditionally, government has been very good at declaring success at the end of a project even if ‘success’ just means ‘done.’ **Instead, we need to get better at iterating and improving the product as we go along so that ‘success’ means measurably adding value to our mission.**

*Jim Schutz*  
*City Manager*



# Next Steps

- Create a playbook with templates, examples, and guidance on how to apply this to our work
- Build into the training curriculum of the Learning Lab
- Apply it to all Digital projects and initiatives

# Learn more

- Web: [employees.cityofsanrafael.org/product](https://employees.cityofsanrafael.org/product)
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