

Regulatory Reform and Efficiencies Workshop

Community Feedback and **Development Management Team - Course of Action**

March 7, 2012

The Development Management Team (DMT), a middle management group including Planning, Inspections, Fire, Stormwater, Transportation Services and Public Utilities, met to outline a work plan for 2012 based on suggestions gathered at the Regulatory Reform and Efficiencies Workshop, held in November of 2011. The group's objective is to determine which suggestions will have the greatest positive impact on our development system without negatively impacting other processes. Below is a list of action items and responses to community feedback. Three initiatives have already been put in place since January 3, 2012, addressed in items 1, 2, 5 and 6.

1. **Improve consistency throughout plan review (comments) and inspection processes.**

- Ensure consistency between reviews/approvals/inspections.
- ***Improve communication between groups through the use of regular staff meetings. Managers will conduct quality control of review comments and field issues.***
- Create transparency during express review process.
 - Coordinators should check-in with client during the review to apprise them of progress.
- ***Development Services Customer Service Center Express Coordinators will develop a protocol for check-ins with client and reviewers before and during the review to apprise them of progress. Revised express review process will become effective on 03/15/12.***
- Customers receive new comments on 2nd and 3rd reviews that were not mentioned in the first review.
 - Comments/staff interpretation should require a code reference.
- ***The DMT initiated that a code reference be provided in staff comments beginning 01/03/12. Managers will follow up on a random basis to see that code references are being applied to all plan comments. Managers will also look for any possible omissions in the first review cycle.***
Staff managers would appreciate notification from applicants when new comments are identified in 2nd and 3rd review cycles to determine specific reasons for their occurrence and to prepare an adequate solution.
- Applicant should be afforded the opportunity to review an Administrative Action or preliminary Certified Action, prepared by staff.
- ***No action taken. These are staff decisions based on code regulations and policy. If applicant has a concern regarding a staff decision, the appeal process should be followed.***
- Tree and Sign ordinances need some flexible interpretation and clarification.
- ***The proposed UDO contains recommendations to allow for more flexibility within the tree conservation ordinance.***

2. **Improve plan intake.**

- Improve gate keeping.
 - Provide clarity regarding the items needed for intake before and during the intake process.

- Need consistency among intake staff.
- Need central location to obtain information on intake.
- *The Development Services Customer Service Center Manager will form a committee to review development related applications and checklists on an annual basis to make improvements and updates. The implementation of the Unified Development Ordinance will require a complete review of current applications and checklists.*
- Provide a feedback loop to ensure owners are included.
- *After a preliminary project has completed the third review cycle and requires another review, the City will stop the review process and call the owner and consultant in for a face-to-face meeting. Effective 01/03/12, this applies to preliminary plan approval only where a team lead can oversee this.*
- Revise application to improve and clarify the intake process.
- *The Development Management Team members will continue to monitor staff for consistency. The revised walk thru process effective date is to be determined.*

3. Improve communication to clients.

- Communicate new requirements.
 - Ensure that the information is easily accessible via the web.
- *DMT Managers to involve Communications Team early in the process to ensure that information is released to client(s) in a timely manner. Information will be published through various communication tools: website, flyers wrapped around plans, posters, direct email, direct text messages, Social Media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter).*
- Simplify the Development Fee Schedule.
 - Document is too complex.
- *The current information system (IRIS) does not provide comprehensive and reliable data to undertake a comprehensive time & motion study (cost analysis). Following the implementation of the new Land Management System, and a reliable period of having accurate "time & motion" data, a comprehensive cost analysis could be undertaken by a consultant, should the Council direct the administration. Further, a comprehensive policy has not been established by the Council in regard to cost-recovery and the percentages desired for all services provided across the Planning & Development enterprise. Should the Council provide such a policy, a consultant could work on structuring a new comprehensive and simplified fee structure based on policy directives provided.*
- Publish staff chart of chain of command so it's clear who to contact for specific issues.
- *Communications Team will publish staff chart of Senior Management on 03/15/12.*
- *The Communications Team will also develop an additional flow chart identifying the roles of DMT members. Publication date to be determined.*

4. Improve use of technology.

- Put plans online; Implement electronic signatures; Digital submittals
- *The Business Solutions group is working with IT to submit an RFP for new land management software. The RFP for a comprehensive Land Management System, including an Electronic Plan Management (EPM) system, has been completed and will be released in early March 2012. Projected timeline for implementation is 24 months.*

- Put water lines on IMAPS.
- *Water lines will not be placed on IMAPS. This poses a potential security concern for the City of Raleigh.*
- Fix website.
 - Create a drop-down menu for forms.
 - Create a separate website just for developers.
- *The Communications Team will work with IT Web Services staff to improve information access on the web. The DSCSC Manager is auditing development related content for accuracy and ease of use.*

5. **Improve current review processes.**

- Implement a once a week intake of preliminary plans.
 - Affects time frame – is this necessary for re-submittals?
- *There is currently no delay for preliminary plans based on a specific submittal date. No action identified for this recommendation.*
- Expand pony express review requirements.
- *In progress- DMT Managers are looking into the possibility of modifying the procedures (applications and web content) needed to implement this change. Change analysis is being conducted.*
- Create a true “express review” process.
- *Effective 03/15/12, the Express Review Process will undergo a re-write and Development Services will adopt a new process. The new process will be called a Coordinated Team Review.*
- *Express Permitting Review: This process is intended for clients that have met all pre-requisite and submittal requirements needed to conduct a full and complete review. Permits will be issued at the conclusion of the review, if all code requirements have been met.*
- *Coordinated Team Review: This process is intended for clients that desire a face-to-face review with all trades but anticipate additional review cycles as a stop after due diligence or before permits will be issued. The pre-requisites and submittal requirements will be less stringent than those of Express Permitting. Date of implementation to be announced.*
- *Full process descriptions will be available on the website effective 03/15/12. For additional information contact: Stephanie Currier, DSCSC Manager, 919-516-2233.*
- Create an express option for each process.
 - Have the option for face-to-face reviews for the entire process.
- *No action has been identified for this recommendation.*
- Overlap approval process.
 - Provide the option to run parallel reviews.
 - Submit plans simultaneously.
- *This is currently being tried through an after-hours pilot.*

- Combine construction drawings and site review.
 - This is similar to express face to face model.
- *Effective 01/03/12, the Raleigh Fire and Urban Forestry plan review staff were required to review and sign off on Infrastructure Construction Plans. This process change is designed to eliminate costly changes that may be required to the built environment. The blue line review will continue to have a 10 day benchmark but mylar review will increase by two days making the new benchmark 12 days.*
 - Providing:*
 - *Full understanding of fire requirements and regulations at the Infrastructure Construction Plan process*
 - *Better understanding of all trade requirements and how they interact with each other*
 - *The utilities/site engineer and the fire protection engineer/contractor will reflect the same design for the infrastructure*
 - *Two more sets of plans will be required for a total of six (6) sets of plans*
 - *Tree conservation areas will need to be shown on the plan sheets (if previously recorded, they will need to note the book of maps and page number reference)*
 - On Going:*
 - *Current revisions to combine construction drawings and site review are underway. Preliminary meetings have occurred with local engineers. This is anticipated to be refined by the fall of 2012.*

6. Enhance overall customer service experience.

- Improve City Attorney time-line.
 - This process is disconnected from the Development process.
 - Both sides should be accountable.
 - Establish time frame requirements.
- *At this time, DMT staff has not conducted analysis on the concerns raised with the time-line with the City Attorney's office. Timelines for review of stormwater covenants and city code covenants have improved since they have been removed from the City Attorney's office; However, the review of sidewalk, slope, cross access and transit easements still remain with the Attorney's office.*
- Improve staff responsiveness to improve approval time.
- *DMT Managers receive benchmark information for each project deadline. Deadlines were set during the last round of efficiency evaluations with the Development Services Advisory Committee.*
- Customer service attitude – project advocacy
 - Cultural issue – should be one of partnership, but feels adversarial
- *DMT Managers are committed to this improvement. A training class is currently being developed to assist managers and staff with this issue. Training to be implemented in the spring of 2012.*
- Create alerts for repeated unresolved issues (unaddressed comments).

- *DMT Managers have implemented alerts for clients to address plans submitted for the 3rd round of review (for preliminary plan process only). This became effective on 01/01/2012.*

7. Adjust process for economic changes.

- Entitlement letter
 - Guaranteed approval before fees are required
 - Economic impact on City of Raleigh review process
 - City process versus lending environment
- *Staff has dealt with economic constraints on a case by case basis. No particular pattern has occurred to assist us with composing a standardized process.*

- Tie fee payment to service.
 - Pay when product is delivered.
 - Improve overall timing of fee payments.
- *Fee collection structure was evaluated and no changes were recommended at this time.*

8. Improve reliability of current services.

- Experienced staff should be in attendance at pre-submittals and due diligence meetings.
 - Information provided during these sessions needs to be reliable.
 - Bring the right people (who can make decisions) to the table.
- *Analysis showed inconsistency in scheduling causing staff to be unprepared. DSCSC Manager will implement standard scheduling procedures to ensure review staff has adequate preparation time and information. Results will be reviewed in three months. Implementation of checklists will help to determine if skill level varies to the extent that it impairs the quality of work from staff.*
- Refine Due Diligence Session and pre-submittal process.
 - Increase frequency and extend time slots.
 - Not enough availability for DDS and pre-submittal.
 - Improve scheduling and availability (lead time).
- *Two additional slots are being added for a total of 6 slots per week. Reconsideration is currently being given to these processes. The Due diligence sessions have proved to be beneficial for customers and staff; however, the use of the pre-submittal has provided different results. As a fee service, the pre-submittal has proven to provide an unacceptable level of service and this is attributed to the fact that the plans submitted are schematic and do not provide sufficient detail for review staff to generate valuable comments to the customers. Also, the development community has not progressed to a point in their project timeline where this level of detail can be provided. The recommendation of the management staff is to revisit these two processes and revise the Due Diligence process to allow conceptual plan and general layout review and direct a more detailed site review to the newly developed process called Coordinated Team Review. This would replace the fee service of the pre-submittal for site review. Building pre-submittal will remain unchanged as this process is regularly used by our customers. A formalized process will be provided in late March for implementation (i.e. April, 2012).*