

Ongoing

Re-Engineering the Development Review Committee (DRC)

Through the Better, Faster, Cheaper (BFC) process, the Construction Plans (Level 2) Review process was evaluated and recommendations were made to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. Recommendations include ensuring that the necessary technical staff participate on the DRC, developing an ongoing training program for DRC members, and establishing a communications plan to increase the amount, frequency and quality of communication with our customers. Currently, an implementation team is carrying out these recommendations with implementation slated for March 2010.

Minor Platting Procedures and Commercial Plats

In January 2010, the Planning Commission will consider a text amendment to the LDC that will simplify the review and approval process for minor subdivision plats. Minor subdivisions plats are generally defined as those which do not require improvements such as roads or drainage and generally have fewer number of lots. This reduces the complexity and warrants a more simplified review, resulting in time and cost savings for both the customer and the County. Following that amendment, staff will present a proposal to clarify and simplify platting requirements for commercial subdivisions, which rarely include public infrastructure or improvements.

E-Plan

Polk County has purchased leading-edge software to allow the electronic submission of construction plans. This new initiative, entitled "E-Plan", will provide staff efficiencies and process improvements that will result in time and cost savings to our customers. Scheduled to "go live" on April 1, 2010, E-Plan will:

- Support implementation of an Expedited Review and Permit Process for select projects;
- Improve staff efficiencies and reduces the staff costs associated with review of development plans;
- Provide a substantial savings to the private sector due to the elimination of copy and delivery costs associated with the current process;
- Provide a "greener" alternative to the current process;
- Improve communication between the applicant/engineer and the staff reviewers; and
- Reduce the overall cost and time associated with development plan approvals.

Benefits of E-Plan

Private Sector — Annual Savings

- Reduce copy costs by more than \$200,000
- Reduce delivery costs by more than \$7,500

Greener Workplace — Annual Savings

- > 800 gallons of gas
- >14 tons of paper
- > 35 trees



Value-Added Development Review Process

An Initiative of the Polk County Board of County Commissioners

Polk County Commits to:

- "Add Value" to approved projects;
- Support Quality Growth Strategies;
- Reflect best customer service practices and innovations; and
- Minimize or reduce the time and cost associated with project approvals.



Completed Initiatives

Project Pilots and Citizen Advocates

In May 2009, the Growth Management Department announced a new initiative to assist citizens and applicants with development-related issues. Specifically, **Project Pilots** are available to assist those who are unfamiliar with the development review process, particularly homeowners and small business owners. They can help explain development regulations and incentives and can see the customers through the process from start to finish.

Citizen Advocates are available to assist citizens who have growth management-related questions, need information or guidance on the planning process, or need help with an unusual or complicated issue.

Public Notice Enhancements

In August 2009, Growth Management began using new public hearing notice signs that indicated all hearing dates on one sign, rather than a sign for each public hearing. This new method provides the public with all hearing dates so that they are aware of and can plan for all upcoming hearings at one time. In addition, the new posting signs reference the public hearing cases by an index number, making it easier for our customers to reference a case when calling the Growth Management Customer Service Desk.

In addition to the index system, Growth Management is evaluating other public notice methods that are cost effective for the County, as well as effective and meaningful ways of informing citizens about land use cases. Those measures will be presented in January 2010.

Expiration Date for Conditional Uses and Planned Development

On June 17, 2009, provisions were added to the Land Development Code that established a three-year expiration date for conditional use approvals, including Planned Developments. The three-year expiration period had previously been established through conditions of approval, which made it time consuming and costly to request an extension. Under the new provisions, project extensions can now be requested administratively, as a minor modification.

Concurrent Review of Development Applications

By concurrently reviewing development applications, cost and time savings will be realized by applicants and staff. More importantly, it allows decision-makers and affected stakeholders to have more information at public hearings. At least five applicants have submitted concurrent applications, including amendments to the Future Land Use Map, sub-district map changes, and conditional uses in 2009.

Expedited Review and Permitting Process

In December 2009, the County launched an Expedited Review and Permitting process as an incentive for existing and proposed businesses seeking to create additional and new jobs in Polk County. The process offers qualified projects, as determined in conjunction with the Central Florida Economic Development Council, accelerated development review and building permit issuance. These qualified projects could experience a 15-day turn around on submitted construction plans and a concurrent building plans review process.

Non-Residential Parking Lot Specs and Testing

On October 7, 2009, the BoCC approved a changes to the Land Development Code to clarify and reduce testing requirements for commercial parking lots and permit more flexible paving materials for parking areas, such as recycled asphalt and "Super Pave." This amendment was the result of the collaborative efforts of the Contractors' Roundtable.

Extension of Approved Plans

On June 17, 2009, the Land Development Code was amended to allow time extensions for specific development approvals that had been previously been approved by the Planning Commission or Board of County Commissioners (Level 3 and Level 4 projects). This measure was taken to reduce the impact of the current economic slow down and to prepare for the economic recovery. The amendment also acknowledged and mirrored legislation adopted by the Florida Legislature, known as the Community Renewal Act.

In addition to extending approvals for existing Level 3 and 4 projects, the amendment also extended existing construction plan (Level 2) approvals for two years. The amendment also established procedures for acquiring a one-year extension on future construction plan approvals.

For additional information on the Value-Added Development Review Process, contact:

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