

# Status Report addressing Concerns identified by the Mayor's Development Task Force

## I. Process and Procedure Improvements

### A. Fee Fatigue – complicated fee schedule, fee are too high

#### 1. Actions Taken

- a. FY16/17 Budget includes allowance to conduct a fee study to verify if our fees are in line with industry standard and to compose a more user friendly schedule.

#### 2. Next Steps

- a. Contract consultant to perform fee study
- b. Develop online fee estimating tool
- c. Develop easy to use fee schedule

**B. Payment Process:** The Perception is that collecting a payment is the only reason for meeting with the facilitator during application. Task force requested online payments and the ability to drop off applications. Time spent with the facilitator is valuable for collection of missing information and ensures application will be processed in a timely manner. Facilitators will work with the customer who is in front of them and delay working on applications that came in the mail or were dropped off.

#### 1. Actions Taken

- a. Water Department now accepts credit card payments as requested.
- b. Online payments are available; approximately 8% of our total transactions are accepted through the portal. We often refer customers to this system.

#### 2. Next Steps

- a. Allow minimum payment or deposit to initiate review

### C. Wasted Time in Line

#### 1. Actions Taken

- a. Developed Lobby Management-queuing system using an iPad
- b. Drop-off Station and "Transmittal Form" for simple transactional pieces that do not require time with a permit facilitator.

#### 2. Next Steps

- a. Implement appointment based submittals
- b. Provide computer/kiosk in lobby for online submittals
- c. Set up user training sessions, enabling customers to use the on line system more frequently

### D. Timeliness of Review

#### 1. Actions Taken

- a. VPN access given to the Division of Air Quality; approvals in 1-2 days

- b. Working on system reconfiguration that will specify review deadlines, allow better performance management & reporting
- c. Making more permit types available online to reduce plan review workload
  - i. "Repair-Replacement" Building Permit
  - ii. Temporary Signs & Banners
  - iii. Sign Face Change

2. Next Steps

- a. Clearly define for staff how to prioritize resubmittals and amendments
- b. Provide VPN access to MSD staff
- c. Automate management reports and/or task reminders

**E. Digital Submittal**

1. Actions Taken As we move toward a master permit number and digital review we are attempting to build the foundation for digital review. We are aligning our processes with digital format. Example: Currently an applicant may receive a separate comment letter from each discipline (Fire Prevention, Building Safety, Addressing, Zoning) in the proposed model the comments will be synthesized into one document mirroring digital review process.

2. Next Steps.

- a. Contract implementation and training
- b. Purchase requisite hardware and software
- c. Accela System upgrade to version 8.0 will eliminate requirement for Silverlight and make the system assessable to more users.

**F. Permit System** DSD dedicated an employee to working on the system over the last year; work included closing expired records and implementing a variety of system enhancements. The primary goal has been to configure a master permit and layout the foundation for digital submittal. Additional enhancements include increasing the number of online permits and automations including email notifications. DSD has also added a temporary position to assist in cleaning up expired records. IT Services recently dedicated an employee for Accela support and will continue to provide additional resources and efforts as needed.

**G. Staffing**

i. **Turnover rate has decreased**, trouble filling positions where above average experience level is needed. No additional Full Time Employees have been added.

ii. **Closed on Fridays/Can't get TCO on Friday**

1. Actions Taken

- a. Office hours were changed to Monday - Friday 8:30 -5:00

2. Next Steps

- a. Increase coverage; a good number of staff continue to work 4 days a week creating inconsistency with are ability to provide adequate staffing at key hours of the day. Note: A normal work week is defined as 37.5 hours yet we are open 42.5 hours. Consideration will be given to defining specific hours for certain types of services.

**iii. No one answers the phones**

1. Actions Taken

- a. Set up a phone tree to direct phone calls to appropriate staff. The phone tree works but the results are not satisfactory, phone calls still go unanswered.
- b. We have added a temporary Office Assistant to help answer phones, connect the customer with the right information or staff member, and manage the inspection request line; removing this burden from the permit facilitation staff.

2. Next Steps

- a. Determine if full time employee is necessary for this role

**II. Education & Communication Initiatives**

- A. Early Assistance Program
- B. Interactive Assistance Tools
  - i. TRC Mapper
  - ii. Restaurant Start-Up Guide
  - iii. Start-Up-In-a-Day
- C. Improve Website, access to information including checklists, applications, guides or handouts
- D. Increased continuing education budget
- E. Re-build continuing education program

**III. Culture & Customer Service Philosophy**

- A. Converting "no" to "yes" & use Common Sense in decision making
  - i. Define expectations for staff - doesn't need to be a perfect kick as long as it is between the goal posts
  - ii. Allow staff to specialize in preferred focus areas - build confidence; become experts
- B. Loss of institutional knowledge
- C. Loss of relationships; rebuild relationships with community between new staff and local contractors and design professionals. We haven't done a good job of introducing our management team to the public - put a face with a name so they know who they can turn to if needed.