

Planning Department Enhancements:

Our goal was to create a development process that was clear, predictable, consistent, transparent and fair. Clear regulations and clear in their implementation, predictable in that each application will be evaluated to the same way, consistently apply the regulations the same way in every case, transparent to everyone through clear communication prior, during and after development and a fair process for everyone involved. We realize that everyone is not always satisfied or happy with outcomes, but we hope they will understand the process and will take advantage of opportunities to participate in the process.

All Major Subdivisions, Village Subdivisions and Multiple Occupancy Permits (MOP) now requires a mandatory pre-application meeting with staff and a community meeting with the neighboring property owners. Attendees to the pre-application meeting are applicants, engineers, architects, surveyors and whomever is involved in the application. The City staff will include planning, public works, building inspection and utilities. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss procedural issues, land use requirements, required approvals and information regarding public infrastructure impacts and required improvements. The applicant should come away from this meeting with a clear understanding of necessary steps to gain approval. After the pre-application meeting and before a formal application is submitted to the City, a community meeting is required to be held by the applicant. This meeting is conducted by the applicant. The target audience is adjoining property owners and neighbors. The purpose of this meeting is to solicit input in the design and development of a proposed project prior to formal engineered plans being drawn. Engaging the community early in the process allows the developer an opportunity to address concerns and engage in dialogue with the neighbors well ahead of a formal public hearing. We believe this early dialogue will be an asset to the developer, neighbors and the City.

The Planning Department has refined their review process to include an internal Development Review Meeting with key staff i.e. Public Works, Utilities, Building Inspections, Economic and Community Affairs etc. During this internal review meeting development applications are scrutinized through a group review process where all aspects of the project are discussed and reviewed. The result of this meeting is a comment letter sent to applicants where any deficiencies, comments

or concerns are raised by staff. A full DRC meeting is then held where the City staff (internal DRC) discuss comments and corrections with the applicant (this meeting is an open meeting). If the comments are satisfactorily addressed the development application is placed on the Planning Commission agenda. This process is designed to communicate development deficiencies to the developer clearly, timely with an opportunity to discuss comments with the DRC prior to a Planning Commission meeting.

The City has also strengthened procedures post construction. The Building Department thoroughly examines construction plans and conducts inspection at every phase of construction. We have now included a “close out” procedure where parking, land scaping, lighting etc. for newly developed sites are evaluated to ensure that all requirement and conditions are met.

The City has also slightly extended the Central Business District (CBD) boundaries to take in additional areas that have urban characteristics or that are suitable for urban uses. In addition, the height and number of habitable stories also slightly increased inside the CBD. The goal of this change is creating additional investment and redevelopment underutilized properties downtown. This has resulted in 4 mixed use/retail projects that are currently in the development stages downtown.

Planning is now a collaborative approach among staff. This has resulted in several development projects which developers enter into costs share agreements to upgrade off site City infrastructure while developing property. Projects have included drainage and utilities.

We have also expanded our GIS capabilities. These increased capabilities are at the employee level and the available products for citizens. The City now has an online map viewer where property information such as zoning, overlay zones and key public facilities are searchable and printable to the public through the City website. This is routinely used by citizens, real estate professionals, appraisers, engineers etc. Our goal was to make as much information available to the public without the need to call or come by an office.