

# Fairfax County Land Use and Development Services Strategic Assessment

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## Current State Assessment



Prepared for: Fairfax County

### **GARTNER CONSULTING**

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# Introduction

## Project Background

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- Fairfax is at a critical juncture as it addresses the land development challenges that may negatively impact economic development within the County.
- Long recognized as a leader of regulatory process execution, and historically in the vanguard of continuous improvement and innovation for land use planning and development, advancements by surrounding jurisdictions and other factors have driven the County to reassess its current mode of operations to respond to industry's desire for faster and more predictable service.
- A number of other challenges and market forces influence the County's approach to achieving future success. Urbanization, growing complexity of development, complexity of regulations and a large contingent of its workforce approaching retirement age are factors that must be carefully considered when developing the vision and path forward for the County.
- The County recognizes there are opportunities to enhance services and collaboration resulting in: a higher level of customer service, increased consistency in all areas of the land development review and inspection process, expanded economic development, and improved quality of life.
- To achieve this, the County sought an independent review of current procedures and processes, effectiveness and efficiencies to identify opportunities for improvement which can further customer service and improve operational execution.
- The County is looking for findings that detail the strengths and opportunities for improvement in its land use and development organizations, as well as information on problem areas and recommendations for identified improvements, including ideas from best practices used by other jurisdictions.
- This assessment is based upon interviews and document research that began in February, 2015. Concurrent with and beyond this assessment, Fairfax County has continued to modify its processes and service levels. Not all modifications have been reflected in this assessment.

*"Our vision is a community where businesses, residents, and employees of a variety of ages, abilities, and experiences want to live, work, play, learn, and thrive.\*"*

\* The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County

# Introduction

## Project Background (cont.)

- Gartner's strategic assessment is aimed at enabling Fairfax County to achieve economic success through implementation of its Strategic Plan, specifically Goal 3: Improve the Speed, Consistency, and Predictability of the Development Review Process.

**The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County**

People Places Employment Governance

2015

A Fairfax County, Virginia, publication  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/success](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/success)

**Goal 3:**  
**Improve the Speed, Consistency, and Predictability of the Development Review Process**

Building Plans Under Review

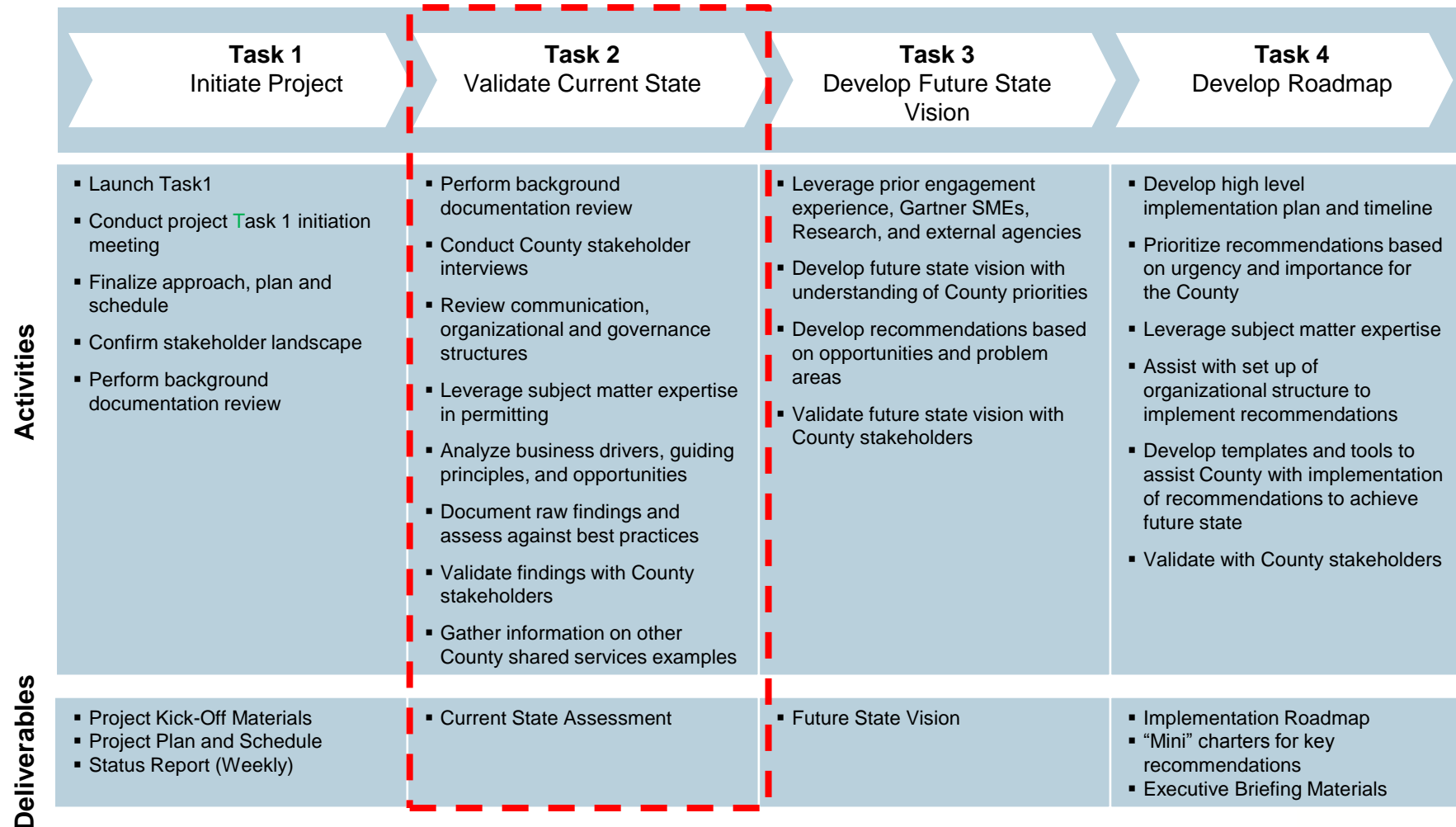
- Regulatory Processes
- Land Use Policies
- Organizational Capacity and Coordinated Leadership
- Communications

Foster and facilitate a dynamic land development and entitlement process. The process should provide a meaningful participatory role for county residents to ensure that the community's vision for growth, redevelopment and community reinvestment is realized. The process should recognize that time-to-market is crucial and the County should work internally and with its partners to ensure a timely and predictable review process that is agile enough to respond to market demand.

# Introduction

## Project Approach

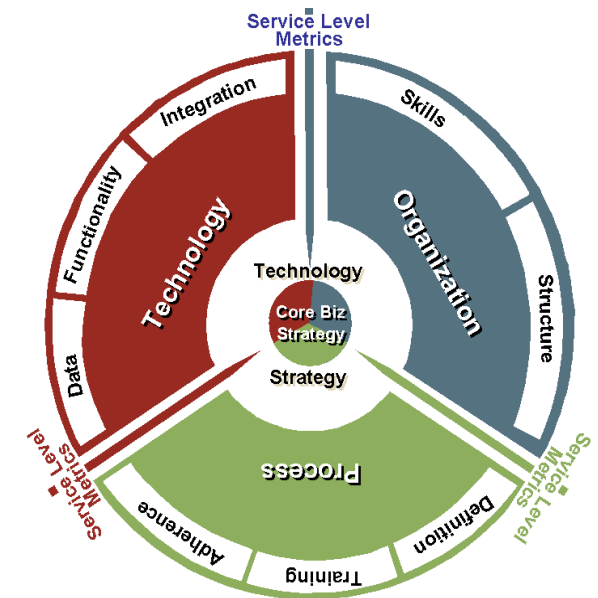
- The below graphic depicts the activities that contributed to the content in Gartner's Current State Assessment.



# Introduction

## Project Approach (cont.)

- Gartner's assessment employs its proven Technology, Operations, Process and Service Levels (TOPS) approach to provide a broad assessment of the current-state activities and performance of the County.
- The TOPS model ensures a holistic approach for reviewing critical functions and is comprised of a set of assessment activities that focus on the following pillars:
  - **Technology** – Technologies and tools used to deliver mission critical and IT services
  - **Organization** – Structure and skills; collaboration among stakeholders
  - **Processes** – Service delivery and management
  - **Service Levels** – Extent of service efficiency or inefficiency
- We present current state findings in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) format and validate the content through document reviews. This approach emphasizes interaction with key project stakeholders to quickly and collaboratively identify issues, risks and opportunities, while minimizing effort dedicated to documenting the current state in great detail. During this assessment, the County has continued to make operational improvements which may not be reflected in this study's current state findings.
- Through this analysis, Gartner developed primary themes that highlight the key challenges the County faces today. These themes were reviewed through County staff and industry workshops.











# Introduction

## Project Approach (cont.)

- Each TOPS area focuses on a different aspect of the County's land use and development operations.

 <div data-bbox="219 329 984 401" style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>Technology</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitting and Inspections applications</li> <li>• Plan review applications</li> <li>• Customer Self Service</li> <li>• GIS and Address Management</li> <li>• Reporting and Business Intelligence</li> <li>• Digitalization and Integration</li> <li>• Portals and Mobility Infrastructure</li> </ul>	 <div data-bbox="1156 329 1920 401" style="background-color: #4f81bd; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>Organization</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles, skills, training and certifications</li> <li>• Reporting structure, alignments and responsibilities</li> <li>• Decision rights, authorities, processes and committees</li> <li>• Role of the Citizens, Board, and Land Use Committees</li> </ul>
 <div data-bbox="219 808 984 879" style="background-color: #7cae00; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>Process</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of primary processes across the entire project lifecycle from Comprehensive Planning to bond release</li> <li>• Inter- and intra- agency coordination and communication</li> <li>• Role and management of policies and regulations</li> </ul>	 <div data-bbox="1156 808 1920 879" style="background-color: #808080; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>Service Levels</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer service culture and effectiveness</li> <li>• Service Level Agreements, metrics and customer expectations</li> <li>• Time to market</li> <li>• Fees aligned with services</li> </ul>

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

- While the County has many core Strengths to build upon and Opportunities for further improvement, there are several areas for improvement (Weaknesses); these are further described as Primary Themes in the subsequent slides.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fairfax is already a great place to live, work, and play that attracts new residents and businesses.</li><li>The County has a well managed government dedicated to improving development services.</li><li>There is a strong local development industry and collaboration with the County through a formal Steering Committee.</li><li>There is great developing County and industry partnership as evidenced by this effort and the Booster Shot.</li><li>Proffers are a great tool to mitigate the impact of development and meet specific community needs, which could not be so easily met with other tools like impact fees.</li><li>There is County staff at many levels of the organization with the right focus and approach who will be key to further improving the development process.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The regulatory review process has become adversarial and there is a culture of 'no.'</li><li>Complexities in regulations, processes, and the nature of development hamper delivery of services and make it difficult for customers to comply.</li><li>A fractured and siloed approach to regulatory review functions limit coordination and collaboration.</li><li>Based on industry and leadership feedback, along with outreach to other jurisdictions, time to market could be improved without sacrificing quality reviews.</li><li>Technology is aging and difficult to adapt to meet business needs.</li><li>There is a lack of metrics to measure, manage, and improve operations.</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leadership exists from inside and outside to make a positive change to support economic success.</li><li>The County has opportunities for redevelopment (e.g. Commercial Revitalization District, Tysons, Reston, Transit-Oriented Development) to drive growth.</li><li>Strategic technology improvements are planned and in-progress for replacing outdated legacy systems, integration across business silos, reporting and analytics and implementation of e-Plans.</li><li>There is potential for business realignment to better serve the needs of the citizens and industry.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There is increasing competition for development opportunities from other jurisdictions.</li><li>Developers' access to project financing is more constrained. Banks and other financial institutions are more risk adverse.</li><li>There may be a lack of available and experienced staff to implement recommendations.</li><li>Succession plan needs to be established to bridge retirements of experienced and knowledgeable staff to new staff.</li><li>As County land has become more developed, new projects today are often infill and have become increasingly complex requiring efficient operations to keep up with market demands.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

A number of primary themes were identified through current state analysis

- As a result of the current state analysis activities conducted by the Gartner team, seven primary themes rose to the surface that encapsulate the major issues and opportunities for the County as it relates to development services. These themes are presented in summary format. The themes will serve as a framework for recommendations and the development of the future state vision.
- For each theme, sample supporting evidence and implications are provided.

Primary Themes
1. The land development process has become increasingly adversarial over time
2. Cultural issues impair efficient customer service and effective service delivery
3. Fairfax County operates in silos, which limits ability to effectively communicate and coordinate with one another
4. Complexities and inconsistencies with land use and development policies and regulations hamper predictability and efficiency of service delivery
5. Variations throughout the process hamper predictability and efficiency of service delivery
6. Aging, non-integrated technology systems exacerbate process and customer service issues
7. Metrics do not fully measure quality and actual workload or priorities

# Executive Summary

## Theme 1: The land development process has become increasingly adversarial over time

- Some land use and development customers, ranging from home owners to large-scale developers, have described every phase of working with Fairfax County as challenging and feel that some County staff function as a barrier to progress, motivated to reject or deny requests as opposed to working with applicants to get applications into an approvable form. Similarly, some experienced land use and development customers often are not fully cooperative and intentionally do not put their best effort forward requiring repetitive effort and duplicative review by County staff to gain compliance with regulations and policies.

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
1. Applicants perceive that there are sometimes excessive toll gates regardless of project complexity and quality of application submission.*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There are multiple required plan review cycles for zoning application and site plan submissions extending the time it takes to get approval regardless of the quality of the submitted plan or complexity of the project.</li><li>Simple plan changes often go through lengthy review cycles. Complexity does not drive cycle time.</li><li>Expedited plans (e.g. Site Plan DPE process, Building Plan peer review process) are often not any faster (from start to finish) than plans submitted through the regular review process and go through the same rigor as plans submitted through the regular review process.</li><li>Inspection standards can be unclear. (e.g., Fire Marshal has failed inspections even though development has been constructed in accordance with approved plans.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reduces incentive for applicants to submit a high quality plan during the first review.</li><li>Creates opportunity for staff to fall back on subsequent reviews if there are circumstances that make it difficult to do an initial comprehensive review.</li><li>Simple plans that need to go through lengthy review cycles can lead to the perception that the County is intentionally holding on to the plans only to review them on the final due date, or just are not motivated to complete reviews.</li></ul>

\* It should be noted that as the County’s landscape has changed, the nature of the development has become more complex. Undeveloped and underdeveloped sites are the most challenging and require additional scrutiny.

# Executive Summary

## Theme 1: The land development process has become increasingly adversarial over time (cont.)

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
2. County personnel are perceived to be inflexible in their interpretation and application of regulations and policies rather than being solution oriented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Ordinances and codes are not consistently interpreted and applied.</li><li>▪ It is difficult to find a balance between driving economic success via development and ensuring public safety, health and welfare. There is a concern that accelerating the land use and development process can only be achieved at the cost of quality reviews, which would put the public at greater risk.</li><li>▪ The definition of “customer” varies based on stakeholder perspective. This variability has fostered inconsistent customer service philosophies resulting in different motivations and missions amongst stakeholders. (e.g., some stakeholders define the County’s customers as the citizens and would argue that the staff works only to serve them. Others define the County’s customer as the applicant that needs to be served while the citizens’ interests are protected.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Lengthens the review and approval time.</li><li>▪ Potentially creates more cases that need to be escalated to senior staff for resolution.</li><li>▪ Can lead to more conflicting comments between reviewing agencies that need to be escalated to senior staff for resolution. This can result in deferred hearings, delayed approvals, significant added expense and perhaps loss of opportunities.</li></ul>
3. Fairfax County seems to have an adversarial culture, both externally and internally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Customers have noted that the relationship with the County has evolved from a partnership a decade ago to adversarial today.</li><li>▪ The County is perceived to be motivated to find something wrong rather than to find a path forward.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Little regard for one another’s time, poor communication and increased inefficiency.</li><li>▪ Longer cycle times and overall time to market.</li><li>▪ An undesirable environment and organization with which to work.</li><li>▪ Potentially motivates developers and business to conduct development projects elsewhere.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

## Theme 1: The land development process has become increasingly adversarial over time (cont.)

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
4. Customers are not always cooperative and intentionally do not put forth their best effort to submit quality plans, compromise and reach common ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some members of the industry admit to submitting incomplete plans to get into the queue for review.</li><li>Some members of the industry admit to holding back commitments until the end of the review.</li><li>Some DPZ staff, LDS staff and SDID inspectors report that some members of the industry wait until items are identified as denial issues or are put on punch lists before they are fulfilled.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lengthens the review and approval time.</li><li>Decreases effectiveness of expedited processes.</li><li>Contributes to added workload, which slows down the process for all customers.</li><li>Perpetuates adversarial relationships between customers and County.</li><li>Potentially limits the overall quality of the development.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

## Theme 2: Cultural issues impair efficient customer service and effective service delivery

- The mindset and motivations of individuals and organizations varies throughout the County, which has resulted in mismanaged and misaligned expectations amongst stakeholders.

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
1. Customer perception that the County does not share sense of urgency and cognizance of, or concern for, financial impacts of delays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The County is perceived to be motivated to find something wrong rather than to find a path forward.</li><li>▪ Customers consistently voice concerns about lack of responsiveness and attitude.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Longer cycle times due to services not being aligned with customer needs.</li><li>▪ Potential lost revenue for customers as well as the County.</li></ul>
2. Some customers appear to be 'gaming' the system, ignoring County feedback and failing to meet their responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Customers feel that the County's bar for a satisfactory submission is always higher than what is submitted, regardless of completeness or quality of submission.</li><li>▪ Staff feel they are sometimes put in a position of designing a solution when customers demand recommendations for issue resolution. Customers are potentially overly demanding or unwilling to find their own solutions to comments provided.</li><li>▪ Site inspectors feel that many developers wait for the inspector's punch list and then complete only what's on that list to complete the project as opposed to taking responsibility to complete the project in accordance with the plan. Sometimes the items can be over 2 pages long.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Multiple review cycles that lengthen overall time to market.</li><li>▪ Misaligned expectations and motivations.</li><li>▪ Perpetuates adversarial relationships between customers and County.</li></ul>
3. Efforts to increase County collaboration have yielded mixed results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ There seems to be an adversarial relationship even between Fairfax County departments. Such strained relationships have resulted in little regard for one another's time, poor communications and increased inefficiency. There is potentially unclear guidance regarding resolving conflicting priorities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Building on collaboration successes will foster future interaction and coordination.</li><li>▪ Failure to fully execute County initiatives sets negative tone for the value of collaboration.</li></ul>



# Executive Summary

## Theme 2: Cultural issues impair efficient customer service and effective service delivery (cont.)

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
4. Staff are hesitant to make decisions and its easier to simply disapprove a review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff Coordinators in DPZ and Site Plan Reviewers in LDS are not equipped to maximize their effectiveness. They are perceived to be only a conduit of information rather than managers of the review process.</li><li>▪ Reviewers may avoid making decisions due to possible negative consequences for errors and judgment calls.</li><li>▪ Many unnecessary comments do not get filtered out before they are officially released.</li><li>▪ The County does not have a formal professional development program in place for many key roles (e.g., Staff Coordinators, Generalist Reviewers).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Customer perception that it is not ‘one’ County.</li><li>▪ Results in more escalation and slows down the approval process.</li><li>▪ Significant, measurable time is spent by staff training each other. Learning on the job under time-pressure results in staff focusing on areas in which they are comfortable. This could lead to disparate comments, or specific areas of focus, that depend on the strengths of the particular reviewer.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

**Theme 3:** Fairfax County operates in silos, which limits ability to effectively communicate and coordinate with one another

- Fairfax County land use and development activities are very segmented with roles functionally aligned and responsibilities decentralized, making coordination, communication and control difficult and inefficient.

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
1. Fairfax County's Land Use and Development organization is structured functionally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Each phase of Land Use and/or Development is managed by a specific group dedicated to related activities. (e.g., Zoning managed by DPZ, Site managed by LDS, etc.)</li><li>▪ Reviews are conducted independently by Agency and comments are sent back to the applicant under separate covers. Attempts are made to coordinate centrally, but the central reviewer often does not have, will not use, and/or will not seek authority to resolve conflicts and drive behavior (e.g., Staff Coordinators and Generalist Reviewers often struggle to get timely review comments and feedback from reviewing agencies.)</li><li>▪ The customer service center is separated into two areas.</li><li>▪ There is no centralized authority for all land use and development activities. Participating departments can ultimately answer to different Deputy County Executives (e.g., FMO, Health Department).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ There is little cross-functional expertise, making coordination difficult.</li><li>▪ Difficult to manage projects as a team.</li><li>▪ Easy to say it is "not my job" and deflect responsibilities.</li></ul>
2. Processes are designed to be highly segmented and decentralized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Occurs in planning, zoning, site review and permitting.</li><li>▪ Conflicting priorities between agencies are not resolved by the County, but rather left to the customer to figure out, without an escalation process for resolution.</li><li>▪ While there is some internal coordination between County agencies, customers must still work/deal with seemingly independent organizations, rather than a designated project manager/coordinator.</li><li>▪ Conflicting comments between building plan reviewers and the Fire Marshal are left to the customer to resolve with little or no support from the County. There is no internal decision-making authority to resolve the conflict of such issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Can increase conflicting review comments and require escalation to resolve.</li><li>▪ Decentralization of the review process increases the complexity of coordination and consolidation of feedback to customers.</li><li>▪ Little to no accountability for uncooperative behavior.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

**Theme 3:** Fairfax County operates in silos, which limits ability to effectively communicate and coordinate with one another (cont.)

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
3. Technology platforms are siloed, without any true integrations across source systems to tie together the end-to-end process and establish the big picture for any project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff and customers often need to look in multiple places for information.</li><li>▪ Inconsistent or duplicated project and customer information.</li><li>▪ Some information is not publicly available to the applicant/customer; resulting in the need for phone calls to staff to determine status.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ No big picture and single source of information for any project.</li><li>▪ Lack of visibility into information and progress across functional areas.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

**Theme 4:** Complexities and inconsistencies with land use and development policies and regulations hamper predictability and efficiency of service delivery

- Over time, the County’s landscape and needs have evolved significantly but land use and development regulations and policies have not been adjusted substantially to accommodate such changes. As a result, land use and development mechanisms have been used differently than intended. Policies and regulations that were intended to be responsive to the evolving community have become cumbersome and challenging to navigate.

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
1. Customers find it difficult to understand and therefore comply with County regulations and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Zoning Ordinance was last written in 1978 with 449 amendments made. At that time, Fairfax County was focused on suburban development and growth. Since then, the County has transitioned to more urban development that is difficult to be governed by the same set of rules.</li><li>In some cases, regulations or policies have been created or amended to address a specific issue, sometimes without being able to fully understand and accommodate for the implications on future customers or development activity as the nature of development is continually changing.</li><li>Some policies may not be documented, or not available to the public and, as a result, require additional staff participation, and may be inconsistently applied.</li><li>Regulations and policies (Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Building Code, PFM, standard proffers) may not be consistent and many can be open for interpretation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Can create more interpretations which take time, and can also be difficult to apply consistently.</li><li>Short-term solutions can cause long-term issues.</li><li>Balancing consistency and responding to new conditions can be challenging.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

## Theme 4: Complexities and inconsistencies with land use and development policies and regulations hamper predictability and efficiency of service delivery (cont.)

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
2. Many Land Use and Development mechanisms (proffers, Comprehensive Plan, and expedited reviews) are not operating as intended, resulting in inconsistencies for the customer and County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proffers are voluntary, but a proffered commitment to develop in accordance with the proposed plan is expected with each rezoning application. The individual style and language differences in each proffer make it challenging to track, enforce and ensure completion of commitments.</li><li>Proffers have been used to make capital improvements not directly related to the impacts stemming from the proposed development.</li><li>Variability in how proffers are written and the lack of a uniform mechanism to track them make it difficult to determine how/when they are fulfilled.</li><li>Proffer language is often ambiguous, resulting in downstream delays due to a lengthy interpretation process. Such language can effectively counter the purpose of proffers by giving the applicant a way out of fulfilling commitments.</li><li>The Comprehensive Plan, while intended to be a guide, has evolved to be a site-specific regulatory document.</li><li>Some applicants indicate that there is no benefit to completing activities that were intended to result in expedited service (e.g. DPE and Peer Review).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Additional requirements at each step slow down review and approval and makes it difficult to focus on the more salient items.</li><li>Inconsistency in expedited services leads to overall customer perception that the County is not as responsive as it should be.</li></ul>
3. Citizens and elected officials have the ability to delay or even prevent the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Supervisors and citizen groups can drive activity and behavior that may not be consistent with existing process and regulations.</li><li>Citizens can influence zoning decisions that can contradict the Comprehensive Plan.</li><li>Hearing deferrals occur frequently, many times due to citizen groups such as Home Owner's Associations and Land Use Committees exerting their influence.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff and customers may spend significant time and money, only to be stopped for lack of public support.</li><li>Comprehensive Plan should be revisited in situations where citizens have stopped projects despite adherence to the plan.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

## Theme 5: Variations throughout the process hamper predictability and efficiency of service delivery

- While the overall process is defined, variation in how the process is implemented results in misaligned expectations amongst stakeholders, overall inefficiency, and unpredictability in timelines.

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
1. Districts have different approaches to the land use and development process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Districts have different requirements before a project is presented to the Board of Supervisors. Some Districts will require approval by the Land Use Committees (LUC), while some Districts do not even have LUC's.</li><li>Supervisors can fast-track certain projects deemed to be high-priority.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Variability in process introduces inefficiencies and impacts predictability.</li><li>When citizens are not engaged early in the process, they can later voice complaints about the project and derail the process.</li></ul>
2. Plan reviews are largely driven by personal experiences and knowledge which often lead to inconsistent comments and requirements. Similarly, the quality of submissions is based on the knowledge and experience of the design team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Individual reviewers may interpret regulations and policies differently.</li><li>Expectations of reviews are different between different agencies (e.g. lack of comment details, different comment formats).</li><li>Initial review comments sometimes seem incomplete, with additional comments, unrelated to initial comments, being provided after subsequent reviews, making it unclear whether a thorough review is conducted consistently.</li><li>Preferences for method --means to an end -- calculations are made differently and some are preferred by individual reviewers.</li><li>Lack of formal training leads to different interpretations and requirements during plan reviews.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Customers are unclear about the criteria for approval and have difficulty with project planning because of lack of predictability.</li></ul>



# Executive Summary

## Theme 5: Variations throughout the process hamper predictability and efficiency of service delivery (cont.)

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
3. The quality of the customer experience is dependent on the knowledge, experience and confidence of the County personnel assigned to the activity and the design team hired by the industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Less experienced staff are more risk-adverse leading to a conservative approach in review (i.e. longer review times and more likely to say 'no').</li><li>▪ The impending retirement of County personnel will leave a void of experienced personnel, with few training programs (with the exception of Building Plan Review and Inspection, BPRI, which has a defined training program) or knowledge transfer process in place to ensure continuity.</li><li>▪ Senior staff and/or specific staff involvement are often required to drive projects along.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Leads to longer review and approval cycles because of increase escalations.</li></ul>
4. Applications that are eligible for expedited service do not always get processed, reviewed and approved any faster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Many applications can be eligible for expedited service (e.g., Site Plan DPE process, Building Peer Review).</li><li>▪ DPE and Peer Reviewed plans are not always of significantly higher quality, often still needing additional review time and resulting in a lot of comments to address.</li><li>▪ In some cases (assembly spaces, most notably), the building Peer Review process still goes through the same level of staff review as non-peer reviewed plans.</li><li>▪ There is no requirement for a fire protection engineer to review a Peer-Reviewed Plan. Applicants are often surprised that their plans need significant revisions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Leads to customer perception that County is purposefully waiting until the last hour to turn around their comments.</li><li>▪ The requirements for expedited reviews are not set properly leading to a large volume of work that cannot be properly expedited.</li></ul>
5. Design team variation adds to staff workload.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Designers use their own preferred "standard" of display; reviewers must spend significant time locating information.</li><li>▪ Each project team has several "experts" who want to interface with staff and take up significant time repeating information. Agents for the applicants often attempt to coordinate issues with County staff in areas in which they are not professionally trained (e.g. architects certifying to areas outside their expertise).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Leads to increased review times because staff needs to search for details, and also increases chances that something will be missed.</li><li>▪ Staff has less time to review plans due to the time it takes to answer questions from multiple people working on the project.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

## Theme 6: Aging, non-integrated technology systems exacerbate process and customer service issues

- The County has done a commendable job of providing a variety of online services. However, the County’s aging systems are difficult to enhance to meet the business needs, resulting in many manual paper-based processes. The County is in the process of introducing electronic plan review, which should greatly improve communication and collaboration among plan reviewers.

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
1. Although the County has begun the ePlan pilot and budget planning for LDS and FIDO, most modernization efforts are department-specific, or process-specific, and rely on improvement to existing technologies. There is no County-wide strategic plan to guide the modernization efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ While the ePlan and Modernization funding requests describe business goals and a high level timeline, there does not appear to be a clear strategy laying out a roadmap to achieve full modernization.</li><li>▪ End-users are aware that modernization is coming, however, the modernization and process improvement efforts will need to evolve concurrently.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Without a clear roadmap, there is risk that the efforts will not fully meet the business needs.</li></ul>
2. While application status information is available to applicants real-time through the various public portals, challenges remain in communicating project progress and status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Customers do not receive automatic notifications for all status changes and must go to the portal frequently to look for updates.</li><li>▪ Customers have cited that they are not always sure whether the status on the portal is the most recent.</li><li>▪ Siloed systems cannot easily see a full project lifecycle as it progresses from entitlement through occupancy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Customers continue to call for status information, sometimes without bothering to check the portal first. This takes up staff time to field inquiries.</li></ul>
3. Customers may require help navigating the various systems utilized by the County, creating frustration and inefficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ End-users and customers have cited that the various systems could be more “user friendly.” The old systems are difficult to enhance for improvement of customer experience and usability, adding supportability risks and costs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Systems may not be utilized to their full capability.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

## Theme 6: Aging, non-integrated technology systems exacerbate process and customer service issues (cont.)

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
4. Customers/end-users seek a single portal or access point to understand process requirements, execute transactions, obtain status, and gather information on their projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inspectors often have to look in multiple systems and physical folders to find information, and sometimes find that information is not readily available.</li><li>Customers look up status through several different County portals.</li><li>Proffers are not adequately tracked and information is spread between ZAPS, PAWS, and FIDO.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff may not have the information needed to make informed timely decisions.</li><li>Increased risk that proffers are not adequately tracked and fulfilled.</li></ul>
5. Operational areas are not effectively automated or could benefit from improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Current technology systems are at end-of-life and it is difficult to enhance them to meet contemporary and evolving business needs.</li><li>General feeling from customers and end-users is that they are “getting by” with the current tools.</li><li>DPWES LDS would like to see more permits issued online.</li><li>GIS data is not sufficiently leveraged for permitting information and project processing/tracking.</li><li>Entitlement affidavit processing, managing Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor scheduling and public notices are manual.</li><li>Land Use and Development systems are supported by multiple agencies and lack a clear and cohesive management strategy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lack of capabilities in the key systems result in manual paper-based processes slowing down the process. There is greater risk of losing information and/or providing misinformation.</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

## Theme 7: Metrics do not fully measure quality and actual workload or priorities

- Minimal metrics are tracked and reported by the County. Metrics do not holistically measure what is most important to industry and do not measure total customer experience from the beginning of a project to the end.

Findings	Representative Evidence	Implications
1. Metrics to measure time it takes to complete work is not adequately or consistently defined and measured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The County primarily measures against State-mandated maximum timelines (e.g. 60 days for first submission of site plan review).</li><li>While there are no formal mechanisms to specifically capture or track end-to-end service delivery metrics, the County and industry are working jointly to better define and quantify key metrics.</li><li>Generally, metrics have been defined from staff's perspective instead of the customer's perspective, which often leads to metrics that aren't meaningful to the customers.</li><li>Development Review Process Work Plan has tracked reduction in first submission review times.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lack of metrics makes it difficult to identify bottlenecks, and measure improvements in the process.</li><li>There is less accountability without published metrics.</li></ul>
2. Metrics do not effectively capture measurements of quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There are no metrics that measure consistency of interpretations or application of policies and regulations in plan review and inspections.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lack of access to data and transparency makes it easier for bad actors to circumvent the policies and procedures.</li></ul>

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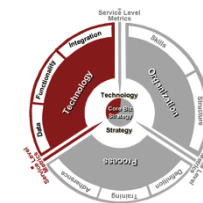
## Technology

### Current State Understanding

- Overview
- Primary Application Details
- DPZ Web Applications
- Organization
- Change Management Process
- Current Initiatives



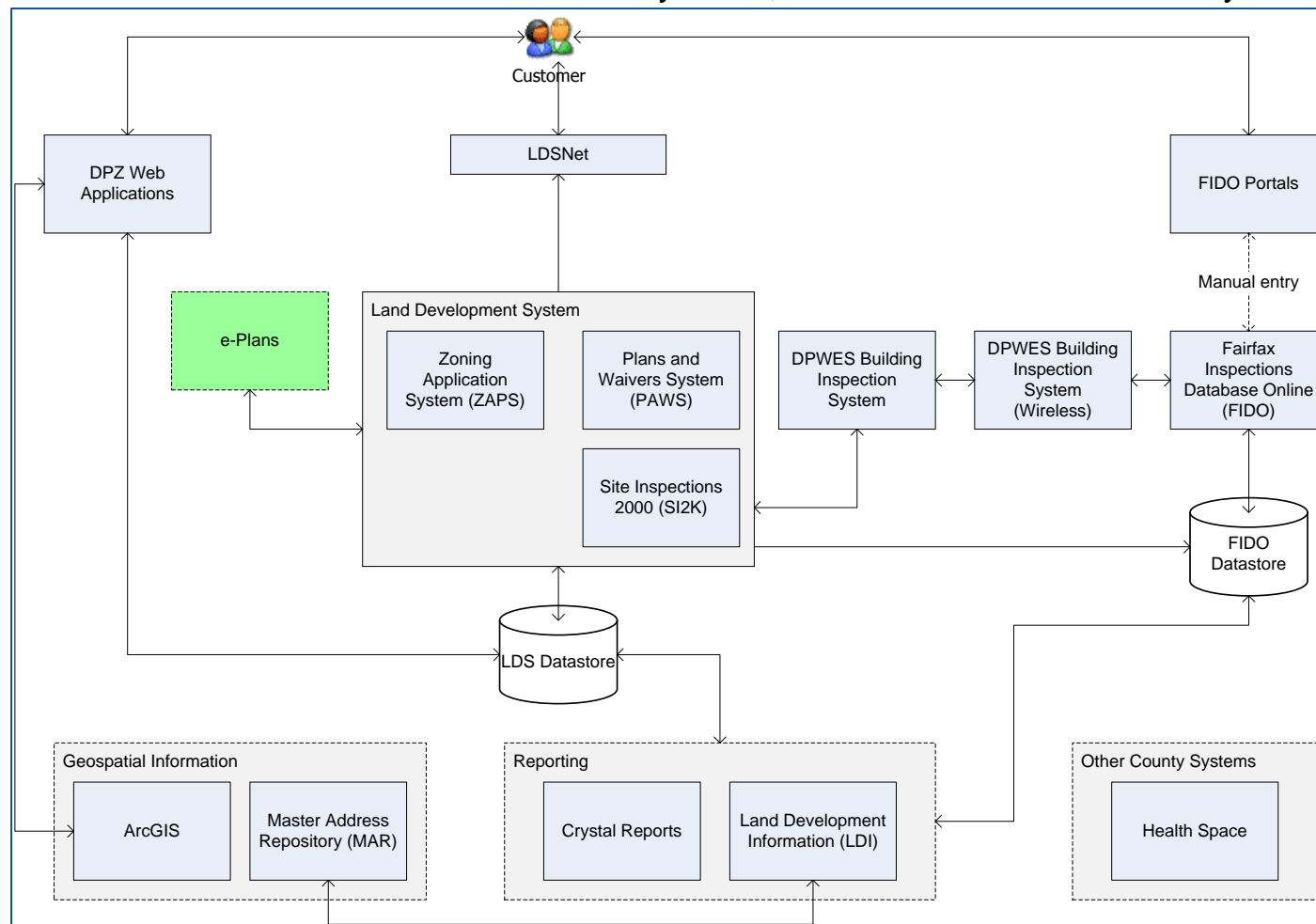




# Current State Understanding (Technology)

## Overview

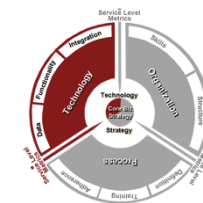
- This section will focus key business applications that support Land Use and Development operations. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all business systems, but those that are core to key business operations.



### Key:

Planned System

Current System

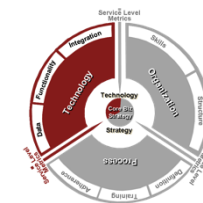


# Current State Understanding (Technology)

## Primary Application Details

- The table below provides additional details describing each primary business application identified in the diagram on the previous slide.

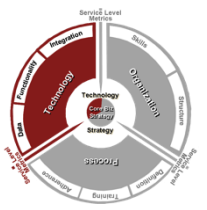
Name	Description	Primary Users (*)	Technology
ArcGIS	Enterprise GIS system to support analysis and decisions and provides zoning district and parcel information.	County-wide	ESRI ArcGIS
Crystal Reports	Reporting tool that access source systems LDS and FIDO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPZ</li> <li>DPWES LDS</li> </ul>	SAP
DPWES Building Inspection System	Buildings inspection system for DPWES.	DPWES LDS	SYCLO
DPWES Building Inspection System (Wireless)	Enables building inspectors in the field to receive assignments and conduct inspections. Has real-time integration with FIDO, the parent inspections permitting system of record.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire</li> <li>Health</li> <li>DCC</li> <li>DPZ</li> </ul>	ASP
DPZ Web Applications	Used by Staff to manage various DPZ business processes, these applications are further described two slides below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning</li> <li>DPZ</li> <li>Customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASP</li> <li>SQL Server</li> <li>MS SSRS/Crystal</li> </ul>
Fairfax Inspections Database Online (FIDO)	Core official system for inspections, permitting, licenses, plan review, zoning violations, complaints and cashing. Permitting and zoning violation system for the County. Allows placement of holds until requirements are met (e.g. proffers).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPWES LDS</li> <li>DPZ</li> <li>DCC</li> <li>Fire</li> <li>Health</li> </ul>	Hansen 7.7



# Current State Understanding (Technology)

## Primary Application Details (cont.)

Name	Description	Primary Users (*)	Technology
FIDO Portal	Real-time integration with FIDO; allows customers to submit building permit applications, schedule inspections and submit payment; can submit complaints and track status.	Customers	ASP
Land Development Information (LDI)	Custom data repository developed by DIT that consolidates information from LDS and FIDO, older information that wasn't originally converted into LDS and FIDO, and GIS information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPWES LDS</li> <li>• DPZ</li> </ul>	MarkLogic
LDSNet	Web portal to the Land Development System that allows customers to view PAWS and ZAPS information related to site plans, zoning applications, and impact studies.	Customers	ASP
Health Space	A State mandated Health database used to track all food facilities to include contact information, inspections, complaints and code violations.	Health	Lotus Notes
Master Address Repository (MAR)	Provides master addresses to County agency systems. The MAR repository is on the enterprise-wide ESRI GIS platform.	County agencies, including GIS	Oracle, ASP, VB, GIS
Plans and Waivers System (PAWS)	Component of Land Development System (LDS) that manages the County's site review process. It tracks projects, assignments, and deadlines. Tracks cash proffers, bonds and certain proffered conditions.	DPWES LDS Site Review	Powerbuilder

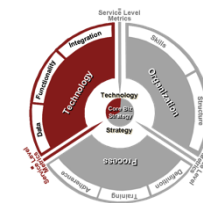


# Current State Understanding (Technology)

## Primary Application Details (cont.)

Name	Description	Primary Users (*)	Technology
Site Inspections 2000 (SI2K)	Component of Land Development System to support inspections to manage workload and allowing site inspectors to result inspections and capture violations. Also tracks developers bond obligations. Also holds proffer triggers that inspectors are supposed to look for.	DPWES LDS Site Review	Powerbuilder
Zoning Application System (ZAPS)	Component of Land Development System to support zoning plan reviews and approvals. Also contains access to recent interpretations of proffers and development conditions.	DPZ	Powerbuilder

\* See Appendix – Glossary for details on abbreviations



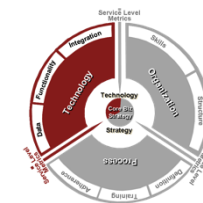
# Current State Understanding (Technology)

## DPZ Web Applications

▪ The table below provides additional details for the custom DPZ Web Applications.

Name	Description	Used By (*)
Second Kitchen	Database that stores all requests for the installation of a second kitchen in single family residential units.	ZPRB
Special Exception, Special Permits and Variances	Database that stores select data related to historic applications for Special Exceptions, Special Permits and Variance Applications. This database includes applications approved prior to the implementation of LDS.	ZPRB, ZAD, ZED
Planner of the Day	Tracking system that captures all the phone calls and walk-in customers that contact Planning and Zoning Evaluation Divisions.	PD, ZED
Noise Calculator	Application that calculates the noise level impact in residential development coming from streets and major highways.	ZAD
Mail Log	Application used to track Mail Log for the Zoning Administration Division.	PD, ZAD, Zoning Inspection, Administration
Litigation	Application used to track all the code violations cases in the court system.	DCC, County Attorney's Office
Lorton	Application tracks land use activities related to the Lorton Site.	PD
Zoning Ordinance Interpretation	The Zoning Ordinance Interpretation database contains information regarding interpretations of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as some relating to the Noise Ordinance, State Code or other governing documents.	DPZ Staff

\* See Appendix – Glossary for details on abbreviations



# Current State Understanding (Technology)

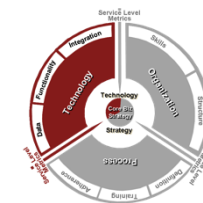
## DPZ Web Applications (cont.)

- The table below provides additional details for the custom DPZ Web Applications.

Name	Description	Used By (*)
Church	System tracks development applications from Places of Worship in Fairfax County.	ZED
Appeals	The BZA Appeals database contains basic information about appeals filed with the Board of Zoning Appeals relating to zoning determinations.	ZAD
Action Assignment	Application tracks administrative determinations from ZED, including interpretations of proffers and conditions, additional time requests and the like.	ZED
2232	System tracks 2232 applications. The County's 2232 Review Process applies to public areas, buildings or structures and to public utility or public service corporation facilities, whether publicly or privately owned. Enlargements, changes of use, and other significant changes to public areas also may be subject to these provisions. Facilities generally not reviewed under this process include facilities owned, operated and used for the sole benefit of the State or federal government, railroad facilities, water main extensions which are sixteen inches or less in diameter, electrical transmission lines which are reviewed by the State Corporation Commission, and normal service extensions of public utilities and Public Service Corporation.	PD

\* See Appendix – Glossary for details on abbreviations



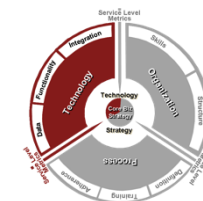


# Current State Understanding (Technology) Organization

- Land Use and Development business systems are supported by three organizations:

DPZ IT	DPWES LDS IT	DIT LDS
Primarily focuses on support of DPZ systems	Primarily focuses on support of DPWES LDS systems	Provides centralized IT services for all County agencies. DIT LDS branch provides centralized support for all land use and development systems with particular focus on systems that span multiple agencies.

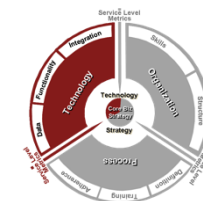
- The three groups collaborate through a defined change management process described on the next slide.



## Current State Understanding (Technology)

### Change Management Process

- Small to mid size changes are typically handled by agency IT teams (i.e. DPWES LDS IT team, DPZ IT).
- For large change requests, the DIT Architectural Review Board will review and prioritize. The Board consists of managers and leads from DIT.
- There is also the PAWS change management committee that meets once per month to prioritize PAWS requests. Most of the change requests are implemented by DIT. There is a large backlog of change requests.
- The FIDO Core team meets a few times a year; DIT reconciles priorities of all groups. Also there are meetings with individual agencies weekly, or at least several times per month.
  - Users can submit change requests directly to DIT. Most are routine daily changes. However, for larger changes, DIT and business groups will discuss the need.
- The Change Management policy is documented and maintained by DIT. Balancing needs for security with ease of use and willingness to adapt can be a challenge.



# Current State Understanding (Technology)

## Current Initiatives

- The table below provides details for the current initiatives and their proposed phases and/or timeframes.

Initiative	Description	Proposed Phases/Timeframe
e-Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The e-Plan program will bring electronic plan review capabilities to entitlement, site and building review processes by implementing Avolve ProjectDox software.</li> <li>▪ The program is currently being piloted with DPZ and DPWES LDS</li> <li>▪ The DPWES pilot includes one process from site review and one from building review. This pilot is currently in the development stage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phase 1 – focuses on plan acceptance; first release expected in next couple months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Customers will be able to initiate rezoning applications via the DPZ Web Application Form, submit plans and receive review comments electronically, and pay application fees online.</li> <li>– There is an integration between ProjectDox and the LDS and FIDO systems to create a project, obtain the zoning application number, site plan and building plan numbers and update LDSNet and the FIDO Web Portal.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Phase 2 – focuses on the internal staff review process, communication of issues to the applicant, and distribution of staff reports. Anticipates expanding to more plan types.</li> <li>▪ Phase 3 – focuses on process from public hearings to case closeout</li> </ul>
Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DPZ, DPWES LDS, and DIT have begun planning the modernization initiative to replace LDS and FIDO.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FY2016 – Hire contractor to develop a land use system requirements/RFI to document land requirements, and identify available COTS packages.</li> <li>▪ FY2017 – Select and purchasing an Enterprise COTS Land Use system in FY2018.</li> <li>▪ FY2018, 2019 – Complete system design and implementation activities for 5 major land use agencies.</li> </ul>



## Technology

### Current State Findings – SWOT Analysis





## Current State Findings (Technology)

### SWOT Analysis – Strengths

#### Strengths

- Generally, the industry feels that checking status in the various systems helps them keep apprised of status of their applications.
- County systems provide real-time status updates that customers can view through public portals.
- Core processes have some level of workflow tracking and data capture.
- GIS and Address information are centralized County-wide.
- County has experience with multi-agency coordination through the FIDO system.

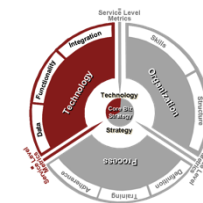


# Current State Findings (Technology)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses

### Weaknesses

- End users (both internal and external) feel that they are just “getting by” with the current systems.
- Aging and non-integrated systems make it difficult to get the end-to-end picture of a project, and cannot fully meet business needs.
  - Siloed systems cannot easily see a full project lifecycle as it progresses from entitlement through occupancy and bond release.
  - Separate databases (e.g. MS Access, MS SQL, Excel) are often used to produce productivity reports.
  - It is difficult to make changes to LDS and FIDO.
  - There is no GIS from the various processing systems.
- Many processes are not supported by systems:
  - Entitlement affidavit processing, managing Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors’ scheduling, and public notices are manual. LDS does provide functionality to manage scheduling, but the functionality is not being fully utilized.
  - Buildings inspectors need to get information from multiple sources: FIDO, LDS, Access databases, file rooms.
  - Plan review comments are manually coordinated.
  - Comprehensive Plan amendments and Zoning Ordinance amendments are not automated.
- Proffer Management:
  - PAWS has limitations with the length of dollar amounts that can be entered (e.g. for cash proffers). There is currently a work around to use a remark field.
  - There is no single source to track all proffers which sometimes leads to difficulty ascertaining fulfillment.



## Current State Findings (Technology)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- **Site Inspections**
  - Inspectors are using laptops in the field and connectivity is an issue. Connectivity issues are related to cumbersome back-end integration between obsolete systems and inconsistent carrier network coverage.
  - All violations are captured in SI2K and inspectors would like to be able to print in the field, but printing does not work consistently.
  - Contractors do not have online access to their violations.
  - SI2K is not integrated with PAWS. It is a separate database of projects.
- **FIDO**
  - System does not automatically notify customers/users of status changes.
  - Customers can see real-time status online, but it lacks a depth of information.
  - User experience is an issue.
  - When inspectors are out in the field, they use SYCLO and often cannot access the information they need which is in FIDO.
  - Sometimes FIDO permits are not tied to the correct address and then there is no way to get the needed information.
  - Connectivity in the field is an issue and inspector access often times out.
  - Current FIDO system is no longer supported by the COTS vendor.
- **Data and Analysis:**
  - Through the subdivision process, the history and relationship of parcels to related data can be lost.
  - There are system challenges with properly identifying people and linking people to projects (e.g. homeowners vs. other roles).
  - FIDO lacks the data/capability to support the creation of lead and lag indicators.



## Current State Findings (Technology)

### SWOT Analysis – Opportunities

#### Opportunities

- Improve business area coordination of changes and e-Plan / Modernization activities.
- IT Modernization efforts will depend on, and benefit from, organizational and process improvement initiatives.
- IT Modernization is an opportunity to provide enhanced customer services online, provide better support for processes and reduce reliance on paper, improve collaboration and transparency, and develop a data analytics strategy supported by accurate metrics for continuous improvement. Additionally, there is opportunity to further leverage geospatial information by incorporating graphic display (e.g. maps) of land use and development information into customer and staff user interfaces, and also implement automated business logic that uses geospatial data.
- e-Plan provides an opportunity to increase collaboration among reviewers and conduct reviews concurrently, and also make it easier to collaborate with customers by providing comments online and allowing them to respond online.
- County and the industry have an opportunity to partner during development of new system to ensure that customer needs will be met.
- Business units have requested functional enhancements while waiting for the full Modernization:
  - Accept credit card payments at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows
  - More customer services online
  - Electronic notarization/signatures



# Current State Findings (Technology)

## SWOT Analysis – Threats



### Threats

- LDS/FIDO modernization planning needs to consider integration of e-Plans. There are a couple areas in particular that need careful planning:
  - The e-Plan program contains ProjectDox customizations to manage workflow, fee calculation, routing, and notification, which is often functionality performed by a permitting system. Modernization planning will need to consider the best strategy to incorporate these e-Plan capabilities when implementing a full permitting system.
  - E-Plan will be integrated with portions of LDS and FIDO. Modernization planning will need to consider the strategy for integration with the new permitting system.
- A clear, County-wide strategic roadmap for e-Plan and Modernization will need to be developed concurrently with this effort to adequately meet business needs and expectations.

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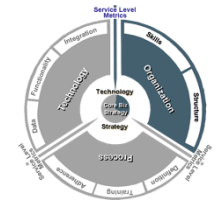
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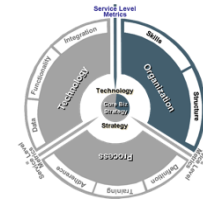


## Organization

### Current State Understanding

- Overview
- Time Study





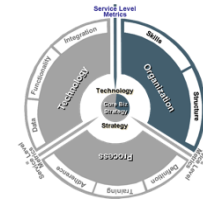
# Current State Understanding (Organization)

## Overview

- Many agencies have a role in regulating Fairfax County’s land use and development; the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) and the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) are primarily responsible for its management.
- The Department of Planning and Zoning is responsible for regulating land use matters and support County decision makers on land use, development review and zoning issues. The Department consists of three divisions whose major responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Zoning Administration Division (ZAD)	Zoning Evaluation Division (ZED)	Planning Division (PD)
Manages the Zoning Ordinance and performs zoning ordinance interpretations; manages zoning permit review to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance; conducts field inspections to ensure compliance with Zoning and Noise Ordinances.	Accepts and reviews all zoning applications; manages the comprehensive evaluation and negotiations with applicants of Rezoning and Special Exception, and Special Permit and Variance applications, including the coordination of all internal and external relevant agencies; evaluates and issues proffer interpretations and substantial conformance determinations; provides the Clerk to the Board function for the Board of Zoning Appeals.	Manages all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan, provides Comprehensive Plan interpretations when necessary and reviews zoning applications for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan; conducts public facility planning and review; conducts environmental and historic preservation planning.

- The Fairfax County Land Development Services (LDS), within the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services is responsible for ensuring that all development in Fairfax County meets the standards of all applicable codes. Services provided and programs managed by LDS include, but are not limited to:
  - Site Code Research and Development
  - Site Plan Review and Status
  - Building Plan Review and Status
  - Permits and Special Exceptions
  - Commercial and Residential Site Inspections
  - Bonds and Agreements
  - Stormwater Management Ordinance

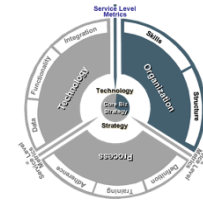


# Current State Understanding (Organization)

## Overview (cont.)

- Fairfax County has an elected Board of Supervisors consisting of nine members elected by District, plus a Chairman elected at-large. The Board establishes County government policy, passes resolutions and ordinances, approves the budget, sets local tax rates, approves land use plans and makes appointments to various positions. These actions are taken in open meetings, which residents are encouraged to attend.
  - The Board is the deciding authority for Rezoning and Special Exceptions and almost always agrees with the recommendation of the Planning Commission.
  - The Supervisor for the District within which the rezoning or special exception is proposed will usually meet with applicants before or early in the process to understand the project's objectives and communicate concerns and potential issues.
  - As elected officials representing the citizens of Fairfax County, the Board has significant power and influence in land use and development. The Board of Supervisors can authorize expedited review of projects, modify or waive fees, and ultimately approve/disapprove land use proposals that are not permitted by-right.
- Fairfax County also has a Planning Commission that advises the Board of Supervisors with recommendations on land use policies and plans, according to state statute. Like the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission conducts public hearings to review land use proposals. Planning Commissioners are appointed by their respective District Supervisors, and three members appointed by the Board Chairman.
  - In most cases, the Planning Commission's recommendation is advisory, but for certain application types, their decision is binding, unless appealed, or unless the Board of Supervisors asks to review it. For those applications that the Planning Commission is not the deciding authority, it wields significant power and influence in land use and development as a final tollgate for an application before it reaches the Board.
- In addition to DPZ and LDS, several Fairfax Agencies and Divisions review land use and development applications and plans, including, but not limited to:
 

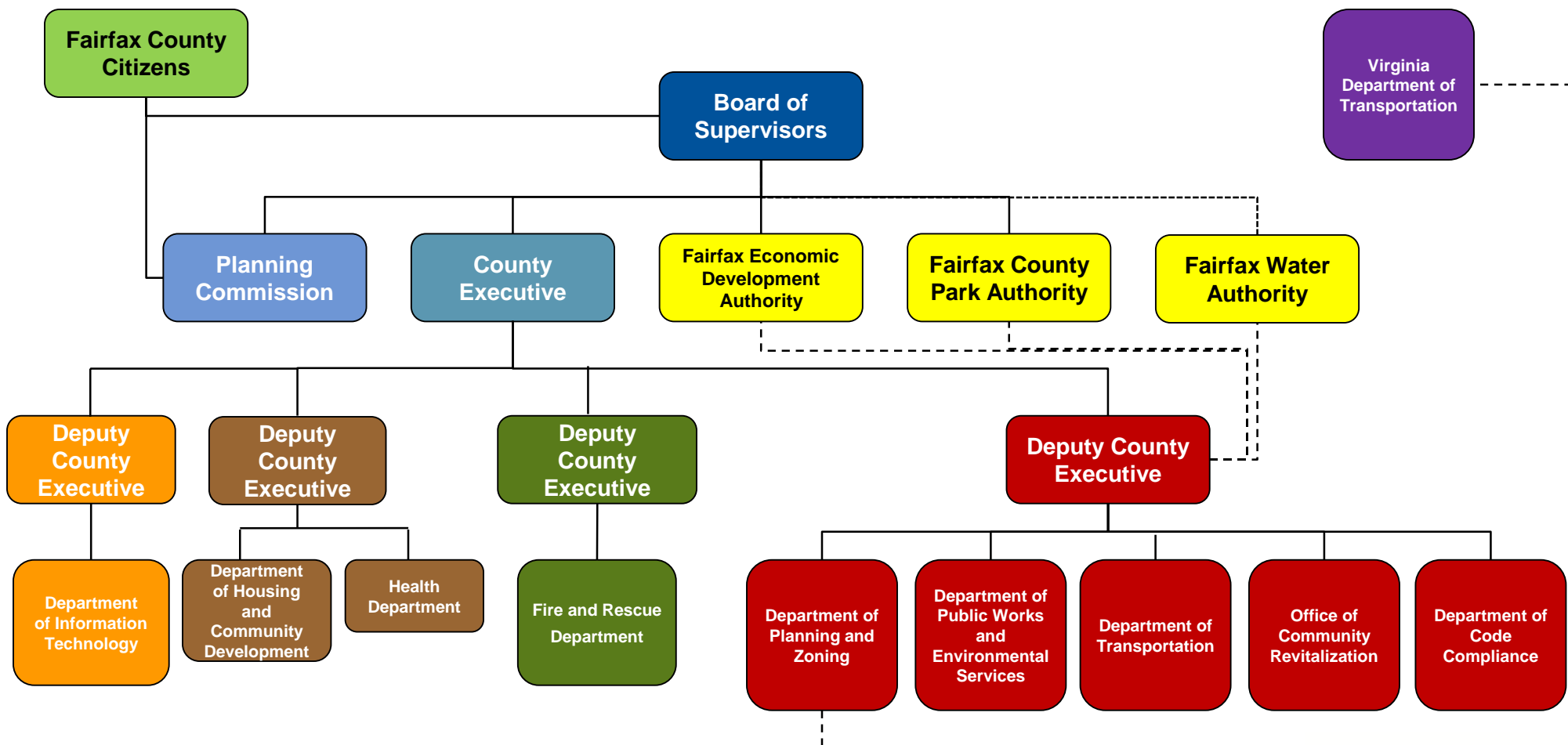
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Department of Fire and Rescue (Fire Marshal's Office)</li> <li>– Fairfax County Department of Transportation</li> <li>– Virginia Department of Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Urban Forest Management Division</li> <li>– Fairfax County Department of Health</li> <li>– Fairfax Water Authority</li> <li>– Stormwater Management</li> <li>– Park Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fairfax County Public Schools</li> <li>– Office of Community Revitalization</li> <li>– Department of Housing and Community Development</li> </ul>
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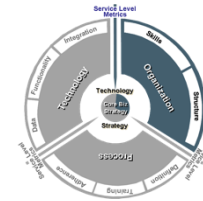


# Current State Understanding (Organization)

## Overview (cont.)

- Below represents an organizational view of the different executives, departments and groups that play a role in supporting Fairfax County's land use and development.



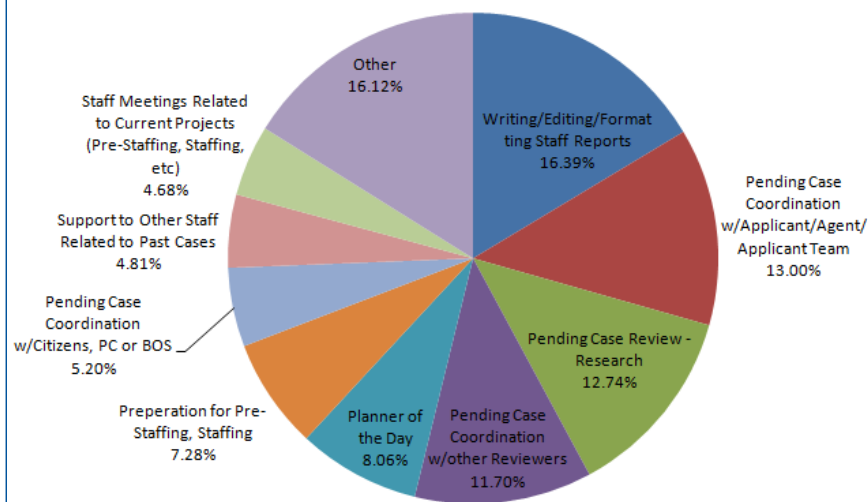


# Current State Understanding (Organization)

## Time Study

- As part of this assessment, the County sent surveys to various County land development agencies' staff to get a better understanding of the breakdown of work in various roles. The subsequent slides summarize the survey results.
- County Zoning staff perform a large variety of activities that appear to be well-balanced among all the various tasks. Site Review staff are able to spend the majority of the time working on their assigned plan reviews (~62%) and significant time is spent collaborating with other reviewers, and providing customer service.

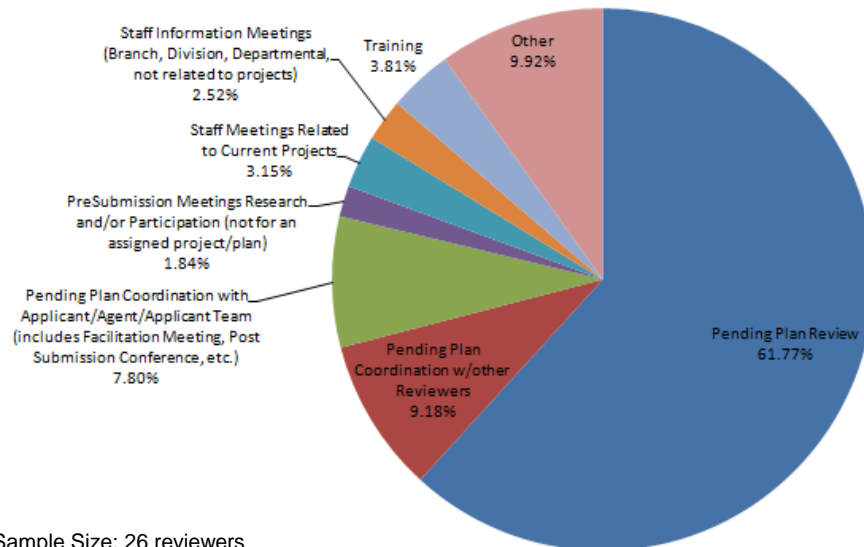
**Zoning - Daily Time Allocation**



Sample Size: 10 reviewers

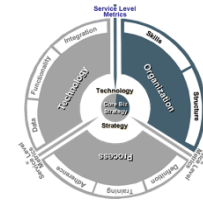
"Other" includes public hearings, training, site visits, pre-application meetings, staff information meetings, proffer interpretation processing, support to past cases, and community meetings.

**Site Review - Daily Time Allocation**



Sample Size: 26 reviewers

"Other" includes provide customer service to walk-in customers, administrative tasks, supporting public hearings, various collaboration (e.g. emails) and research activities.

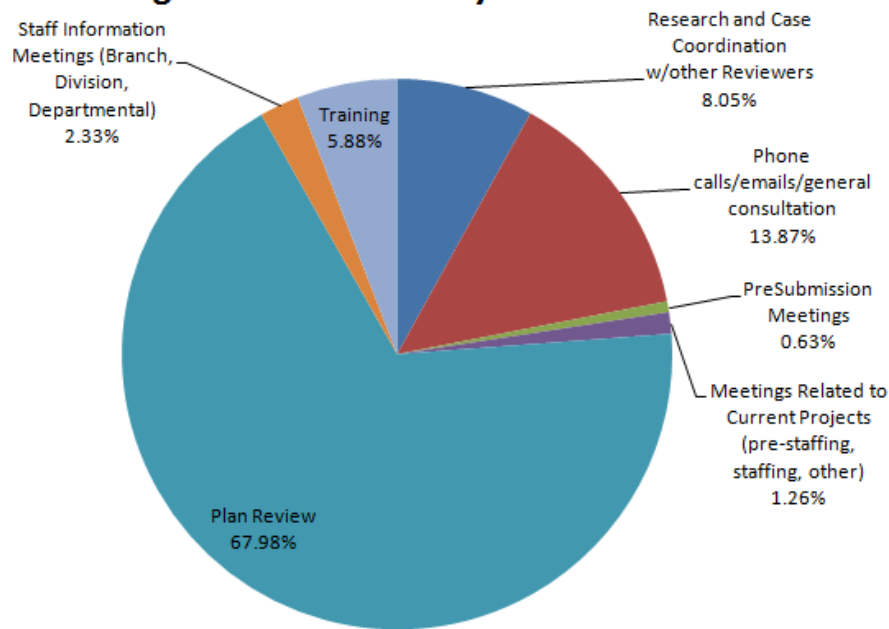


## Current State Understanding (Organization)

### Time Study (cont.)

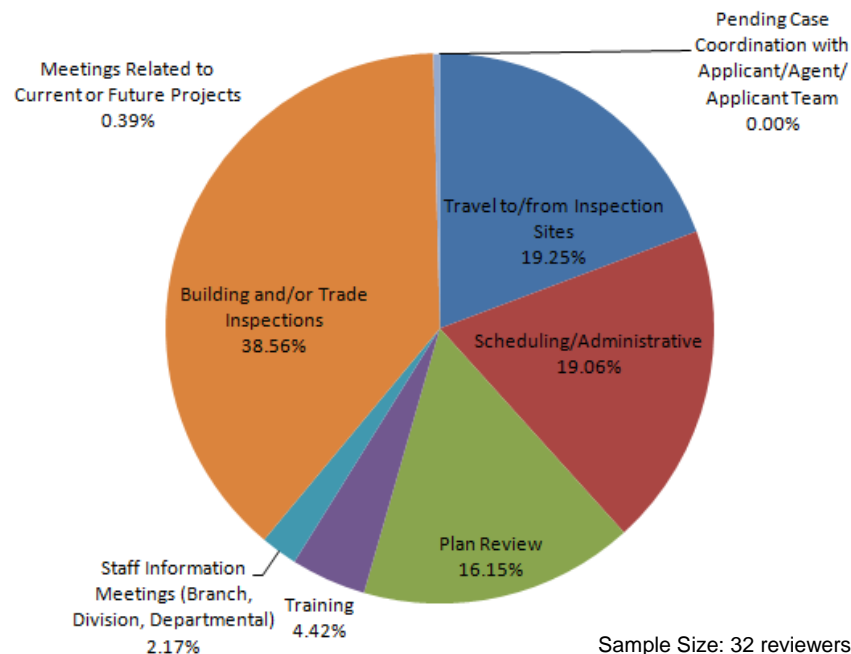
- Building Plan Reviewers are able to spend the majority of time focused on plan reviews (~68%) and significant time is spent providing customer service (14%) through phone calls and emails.
- Building Inspectors spend a majority of time performing inspections (~39%), but also spend a significant amount of time review related plans (~16%). There may be opportunity to stream line their scheduling and administrative tasks which are taking ~19% of their time.

**Building Plan Review - Daily Time Allocation**



Sample Size: 17 reviewers

**Building Inspection - Daily Time Allocation**



Sample Size: 32 reviewers

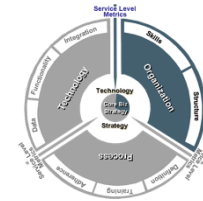




## Organization

### Current State Findings – SWOT Analysis



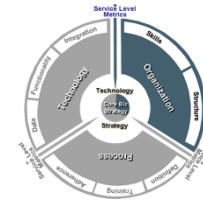


## Current State Findings (Organization)

### SWOT Analysis – Strengths

#### Strengths

- Within all the departments and divisions that regulate land use and development in the County, there are very experienced and knowledgeable personnel.
- While the County process is generally perceived by customers as adversarial, there are some individuals and Departments that are considered to be problem-solvers who are motivated to facilitate development.
- Fairfax County's favorable benefits package, specifically its pension, has been identified as attractive for recruiting.
- Within DPZ, pre-staffing and staffing meetings offer an opportunity for all reviewers to come together to discuss plans, identify issues/concerns and consolidate comments.
- Senior staff is available to help resolve issues that arise during plan reviews.
- The County citizens' interests are represented via elected and appointed representatives (i.e., Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, respectively) and via land use committees, whose members may be appointed or self-selected, depending on the district). Direct citizen involvement is also encouraged during community meetings and public hearings.
- DPZ and LDS each provide designated Customer Service centers for in-person interaction and support to property owners, applicants and/or their representatives.

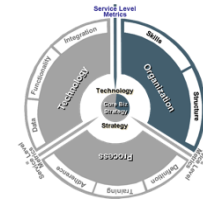


## Current State Findings (Organization)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses

#### Weaknesses

- The definition of “customer” varies. This variability has fostered inconsistent customer service philosophies resulting in different motivations across the organization.
  - Some define the County’s customers as the citizens and would argue that the staff works only to serve them.
  - Others define the County’s customer as the applicant, while the citizens’ best interests are protected.
- Different agencies and divisions within Fairfax County have different missions that may be not align with serving applicants as the “customer” (e.g., the Fire Marshal’s Office is fairly unwavering in the interpretation and adherence to code so as to ensure the safety of the public, building occupants and firefighters who may respond to emergencies at the premises).
  - The variability in mission between County organizations and resistance to compromise can result in conflicting priorities that may put plan reviews in a deadlock.
  - Urban Forestry has been described as ‘over-reaching’ with comments and appears to have added many regulations that can be difficult to follow. Customers cite projects with multiple pages of Urban Forestry related comments.
- Fairfax County seems to have an adversarial culture, both externally and internally.
  - Some customers have noted that the relationship with the County has evolved from a partnership a decade ago to adversarial today. The County is perceived to be motivated to find something wrong rather than to working cooperatively to find a path forward.
  - There seems to be an adversarial relationship even between some Fairfax County departments. Such strained relationships have resulted in little regard for one another’s time, poor communications and increased inefficiency.

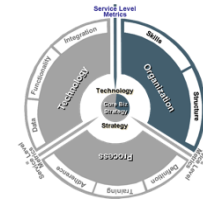


## Current State Findings (Organization)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Knowledge and responsibilities are siloed with little cross-functional expertise amongst County staff. County staff are usually knowledgeable about their respective domains, but it would be a challenge to identify anyone with a good understanding of the overall customer experience with regard to the intricacies of each land use and development process, with the exception of the Ombudsman.
- Opportunities for growth and professional development are not consistently provided across all regulatory organizations, which likely limits motivation to maximize individual performance.
  - There may not be a clear career path for some positions.
  - Raises have been inconsistent for many years or not given at all for budgetary reasons.
- Fairfax County does not have a formal training program in place for professional development of some of its resources. Training can be inconsistent, as DPWES and DCC have more organized routine training than DPZ.
- Staff Coordinators in DPZ and Site Plan Reviewers in LDS are not equipped to maximize their effectiveness. They are perceived to be only a conduit of information rather than managers of the review process. In general:
  - Generalist reviewers must rely on specialists in certain subject areas, limiting their ability to respond to inquiries and resolve issues.
  - They are either not empowered, or do not feel empowered, to make decisions to drive the process or resolve issues.
  - They have little or no authority over other personnel to drive behavior, obtain comments from contributing agencies (e.g. FCDOT), and resolve conflicts.
  - They may avoid making decisions due to the potential backlash for errors and judgment calls, and perceived lack of support from management in responding to the backlash.

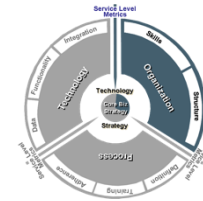


## Current State Findings (Organization)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- While Senior staff is available to help resolve issues, their involvement usually comes later in the process. Issues are rarely resolved at the lowest level possible.
- Generally, staff reports that workloads are not being managed effectively and some staff feel overburdened. Potential reasons include:
  - Some divisions are simply understaffed for the amount of work they do.
  - Staff expertise and capabilities vary, resulting in the most capable/knowledgeable doing more work while less capable/knowledgeable do less or vice versa. (This can be a major concern as compensation is not performance-based and can be perceived as unfair).
  - Some leadership is ineffective at managing workload, assessing ability and motivating/training lower-producing staff.

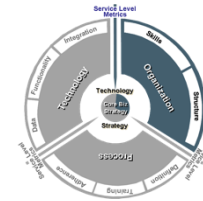


## Current State Findings (Organization)

### SWOT Analysis – Opportunities

#### Opportunities

- There is opportunity to create a more streamlined Customer Service Center. Currently, in-person customer service facilities are located in the same building, and in some cases on the same floor but their functions are siloed by Department (DPZ and LDS). Customers must interact with each group independently and do not have a consistent experience when dealing with both.
- Fairfax County should clearly define who the customer is as well as identify key stakeholders groups.
- The County should adopt a consistent “customer-friendly” approach to customer service. There can be a balance between providing customer service to applicants while ensuring the citizens’ best interests and safety are protected.
- Fairfax County should provide training in developing soft skills for County staff who interact with customers and citizens.
- Fairfax should implement a “One Fairfax” mindset and model. While silos are ideally eliminated, the public should, at least, not be aware they exist. Consider organizational consolidation for better alignment with service delivery (e.g. DPZ and LDS Customer Service centers, etc.)
- There are opportunities to clarify decision making authority (e.g. FMO and Building Code officials), but also to share responsibility (e.g. restaurant inspections between Health and FMO).
- Fairfax County should instill a mindset of being problem solvers as well as regulators.
- As large waves of aging staff depart the organization due to retirement, Fairfax County might consider new incentives for retaining young talent, especially considering that younger staff is more likely to turn over.
- The County should enhance formal professional development programs and advancement opportunities, as money is not the only motivator for staff retention.

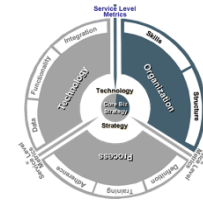


## Current State Findings (Organization)

### SWOT Analysis – Opportunities (cont.)

#### Opportunities (cont.)

- The County should consider joint training opportunities for the public and private sector. Joint training will foster cooperative relationships and will ensure that all parties are equally trained.
- Fairfax County might consider training the workforce to be more dynamic, rather than specialized, to support more efficient resource management and make job functions more appealing.
- Fairfax County can improve inter-agency relationships to foster improved communication and collaboration.
- The role of the DPZ Staff Coordinator can be redefined to better manage the review process. Fairfax County should consider employing specific training to broaden Coordinator knowledge base and potentially empower Coordinators with more responsibility and authority.
- On the customer project team, consider establishing a single point of contact to coordinate with owners, customer project team members in all roles, and County staff.
- The County Time Survey indicated that the Building Inspectors may be spending ~19% of their time on scheduling and other administrative tasks. There may be an opportunity to streamline the scheduling process.



## Current State Findings (Organization)

### SWOT Analysis – Threats

#### Threats

- Many of the most knowledgeable and experienced County employees are nearing retirement, leaving behind a younger, less experienced core of personnel.
- Industry staff is often young and inexperienced. The expectation that County staff can/will train applicants may be unrealistic.
- Performance-based compensation may not be a feasible option for motivating employees.
- Individual philosophies on customer service may be a high hurdle to overcome in establishing a consistent customer service culture.



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## Process: Land Use

### Current State Understanding

- Zoning Process

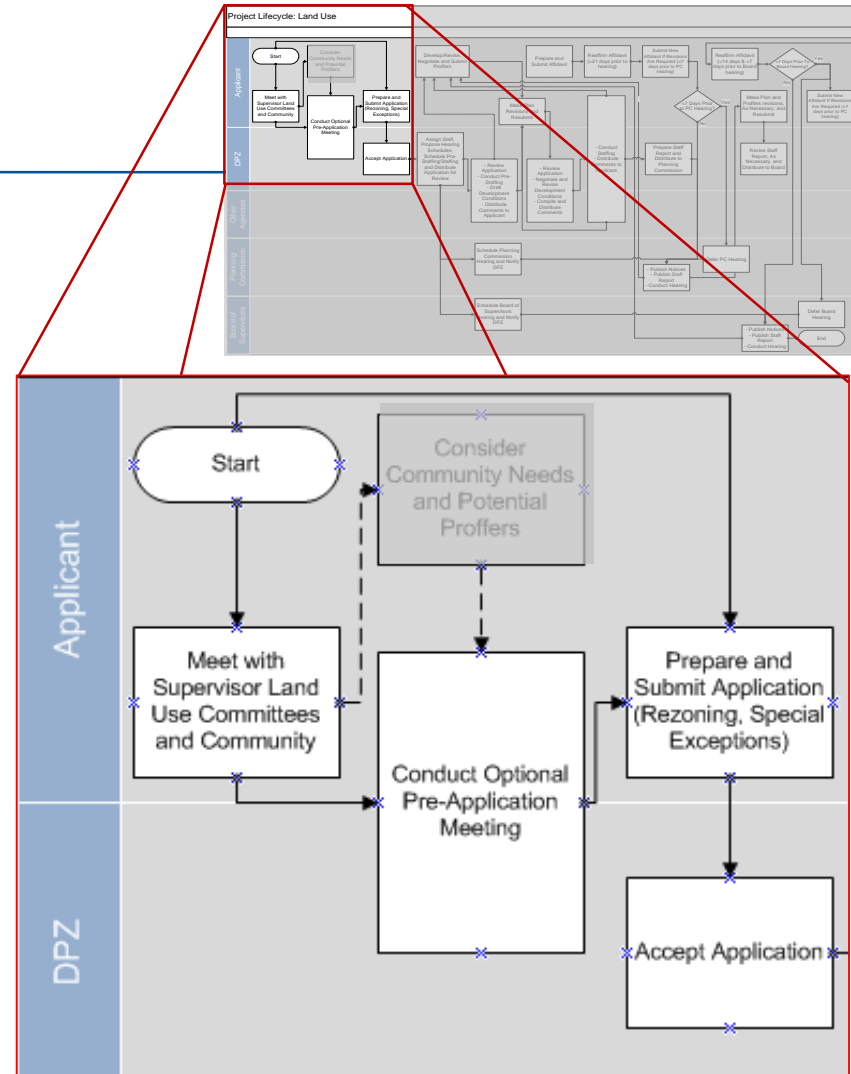




## Current State Understanding (Process: Land Use)

### Zoning Process (cont.)

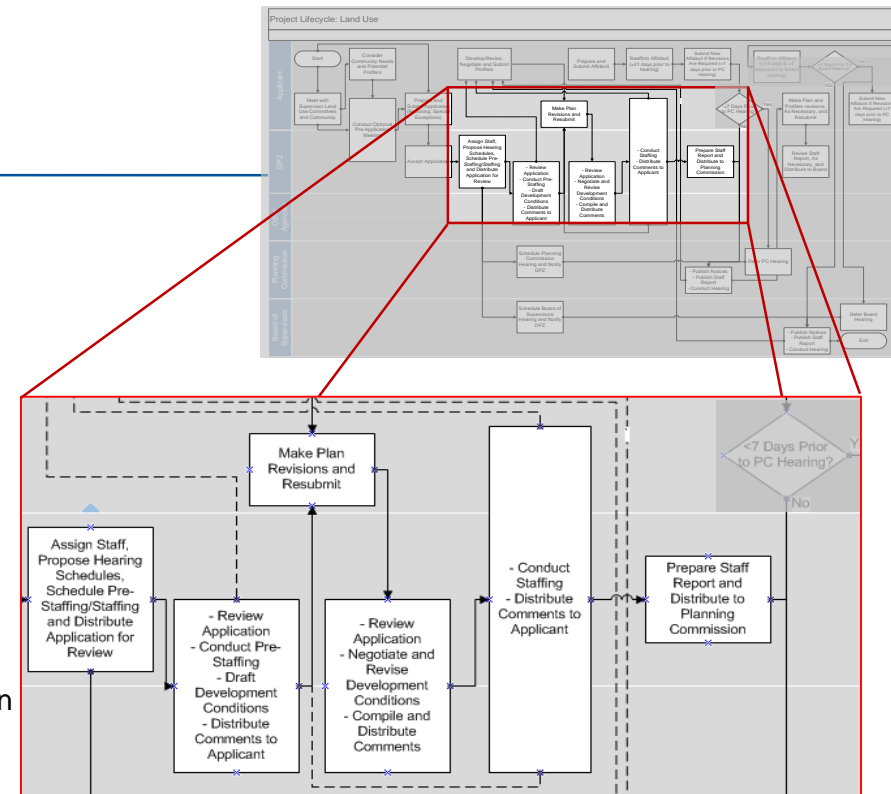
- Prior to preparing and submitting a zoning application and plans, most developers work with neighboring citizens, District Supervisor and Land Use Committees, where appropriate, to explain their project and respond to community questions/concerns, and manage expectations.
  - Some District Land Use Committees and citizen groups are more formally engaged in the process than others, requiring detailed reviews of proposed development plans.
  - In some districts, Supervisors will meet applicants to discuss land use objectives only after application acceptance.
- Fairfax County offers optional consultative pre-application support for prospective applicants to identify potential issues prior to formal submission of an application. The pre-application process is not consistently managed but considered valuable.
  - While a pre-application questionnaire is to be completed to initiate the service, Zoning staff also responds to phone calls and emails.
  - Pre-application requires coordination with other agencies and can take time to schedule and research. Typically, Branch Chiefs handle pre-applications.
  - Pre-application activities are not captured in a way that can consistently be referenced by staff working on downstream reviews.
- Applicants prepare application packages and submit them to Zoning to be reviewed for completeness and accepted.
  - Zoning Staff works with applicants to ensure packages are complete prior to accepting payment, sometimes resulting in several cycles.
  - Some customers have indicated a long duration between initial submittal and application acceptance.
  - Some applicants do not diligently respond to comments, resulting in delays.
- Once accepted, Zoning staff processes payments and enters application package manually into ZAPS.



# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Use)

## Zoning Process (cont.)

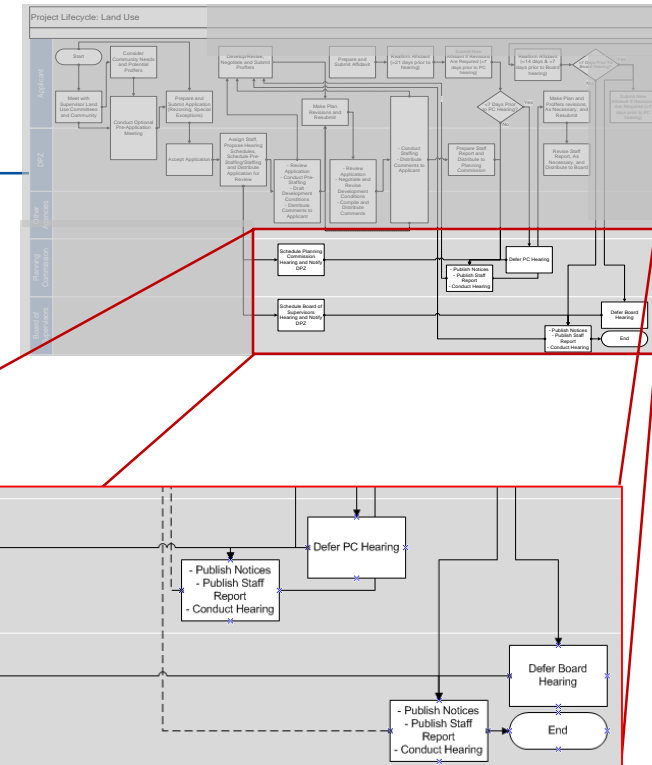
- Upon application acceptance, a Branch Chief conducts a preliminary, cursory complexity review of the application package, assigns a Staff Coordinator, proposes hearing dates and schedules Pre-Staffing and Staffing meetings.
  - Application packages are distributed manually to required reviewing agencies.
  - Distribution timeframes are inconsistent and often are delayed.
  - Review schedules are sometimes unrealistic due to complexity of plans.
  - Pre-Staffing and Staffing are scheduled back from confirmed hearing dates.
- Zoning and Agency Reviews are conducted independently.
  - Truncated review cycles due to delayed distribution, combined with complex plans and sometimes unrealistic schedules, results in significant challenges to complete reviews in a timely manner.
  - Long lead-time items (e.g., traffic studies, noise impact studies) are not always initiated by the applicant in a timely manner, extending the overall review cycle.
- The Coordinator conducts a Pre-Staffing meeting with Zoning Branch Chiefs and relevant reviewers where the application is presented, questions are raised, development conditions are drafted, and comments are collected for dissemination to the applicant.
  - Pre-Staffing is very effective when ample time is allocated and participants are fully engaged.
  - Upon completion of Pre-Staffing, the Coordinator meets with the applicant within five business days to review plans and provide comments. Staff Coordinators often simply relay comments to applicants without sufficiently determining and/or resolving contradictions or conflicts. Coordinators are not always familiar with the reviewers' comments and cannot elaborate or clarify for the applicant.
- Applicants will update plans as necessary and resubmit for Staffing, which is conducted approximately 8 weeks prior to hearing. During Staffing, changes since Pre-Staffing, resolutions to identified issues and additional comments are discussed. Development conditions may be negotiated and revised.
  - Senior Staffing is conducted if issues arise that cannot be resolved during Staffing or if issues are identified which may have broad-reaching or policy implications.
  - A Post-Staffing meeting with applicants occurs within 5 business days to discuss Staff comments.
- Draft Staff Reports are due approximately 4 weeks prior to the scheduled public hearing.
  - Applicants are encouraged to make final submission two weeks prior to Draft Staff Report Due Date (6 weeks prior to hearing). While this final submission should only consist of minor changes, applicants effectively have two weeks to make such corrections and resubmit.
  - Coordinators often receive comments from reviewers or updated plans from applicants after deadlines, resulting in rushed/ delayed Staff Reports. Citizens sometimes feel uninformed as they may not have adequate time to review prior to public hearings. Some District Land Use Committee representatives expressed a desire for more input from staff during their review process.



# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Use)

## Zoning Process (cont.)

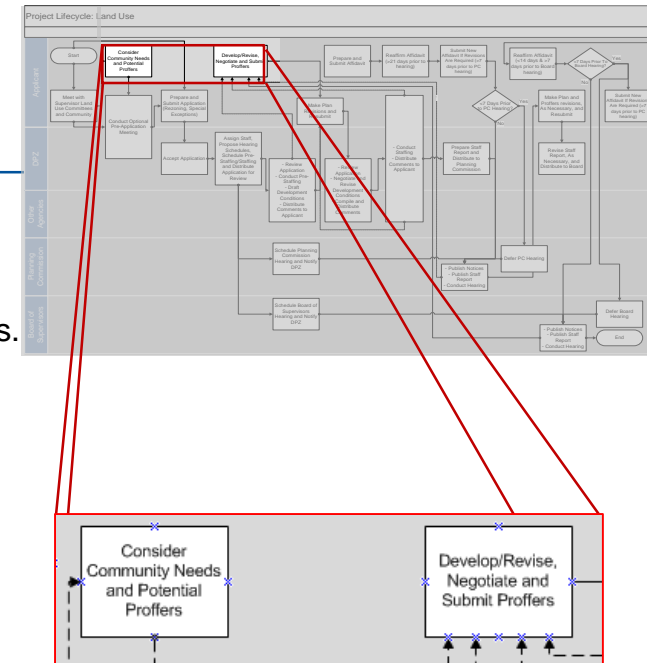
- Upon completion of an initial cursory review of a submitted application, a Zoning Branch Chief will propose hearing dates for the Planning Commission and for Board of Supervisors, if an expedited Board date is set.
  - The clerks to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors review their respective hearing Agendas, schedule the land use hearing (as can be reasonably accommodated) and communicate the scheduled hearing date to the Branch Chief.
- Once all Staff reviews are complete, the Staff Report is published and affidavits have been reaffirmed in accordance with regulation and policy, the respective hearings are held.
  - Almost all Staff Reports that are presented to the Planning Commission have a recommendation for approval as issues have been resolved through multiple review and resubmission cycles.
  - Typically, Planning Commission hearings will be deferred by the applicant if issues are not resolved and a Staff Report would be unfavorable.
- Hearings or hearing decisions are deferred for many reasons, including but not limited to:
  - Issues identified during Staff and Agency reviews remain outstanding and the applicant wants a favorable recommendation.
  - Staff Reports are not published with sufficient time for review by Planning Commissioners, Supervisors or citizens. It should be noted that while the timing of publication may be an issue, it does not mean that the report was not published on schedule, but that the time allotted between publication and the public hearing may be inadequate to provide for the public interest that may be sparked by the report.
  - Affidavits are not reaffirmed by applicants per policy and regulations.
  - Land Use Committee/local residents have not had the opportunity to complete their review.
  - County officials (Planning Commissioner, Supervisor, Staff representative) cannot be in attendance.
  - Staff defers due to administrative issues (e.g. affidavit issues, legal notice problems, or filing issues that affect legal advertisement).
  - Applicant may defer to address outstanding issues.
- Deferring a hearing is simple and can be initiated by the Planning Commissioner, Supervisor or applicant. Deferrals initiated by the County may be done unilaterally with little or no input from the applicant. The industry indicated that they may be subject to deferrals where Staff will strongly recommend to an applicant that a deferral occur in order to address unresolved issues that would lead to a Staff denial recommendation.



# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Use)

## Zoning Process (cont.)

- Proffers are voluntarily offered and drafted by applicants and are valuable to Fairfax County as they ensure impacts resulting from land use and development are mitigated. It has been used as a tool to capture and meet specific needs of the community. They provide real, tangible benefits that might not be so easily achieved with other mechanisms like impact fees.
- While a proffer statement is voluntary, all applicants are expected to submit proffers in support of their application (e.g. proffer to develop in accordance with the plan, etc.) to mitigate impacts or implement policies that are not otherwise regulatory.
- Issues that proffers typically address include:
  - Layout of the proposed features of the site; commitment to develop in accordance with the approved plan
  - Proposed environmental protection
  - Noise mitigation measures to be employed
  - Tree preservation
  - Buffering, landscaping, urban design features, architectural elements, and other similar design elements
  - Use of the property
  - Commitments to address transportation impacts
  - Commitments to address public facility impacts
  - Dedication of land for public purpose
  - Use limitations
  - Affordable housing, etc.)
- While proffers are submitted to and formally accepted by the Board of Supervisors, discussions and negotiations regarding proffers occur at virtually every stage of the Rezoning process.
  - Applicants will often meet with the community and/or Supervisor prior to application and with staff during plan reviews to ensure concerns related to the proposed development are identified and addressed. However, proffers are not written until after the applicant has met with staff and received comments. Proffers are included in applications only after the first submission.
- The timing of proffers can create a challenge to all stakeholders.
  - Some applicants are reluctant or unwilling to volunteer commitments early in the process before they know the full extent of the issues that might arise in the future. This can result in delays in the approval process as negotiations continue to find an acceptable agreement.
  - Other applicants submit proffers without knowing the full implications of their commitments, later discovering that the conditions they agreed to cannot reasonably be met. This leads to potential downstream delays due to proffer interpretations and amendments.
- Because proffer language is voluntary, variations in language may be unintentionally ambiguous, making the proffer statement difficult or impossible to enforce, resulting in downstream delays. Such language can effectively counter the purpose of the proffers making the proffer difficult track or enforce, or result in the applicant filing a new application to change the conditions.

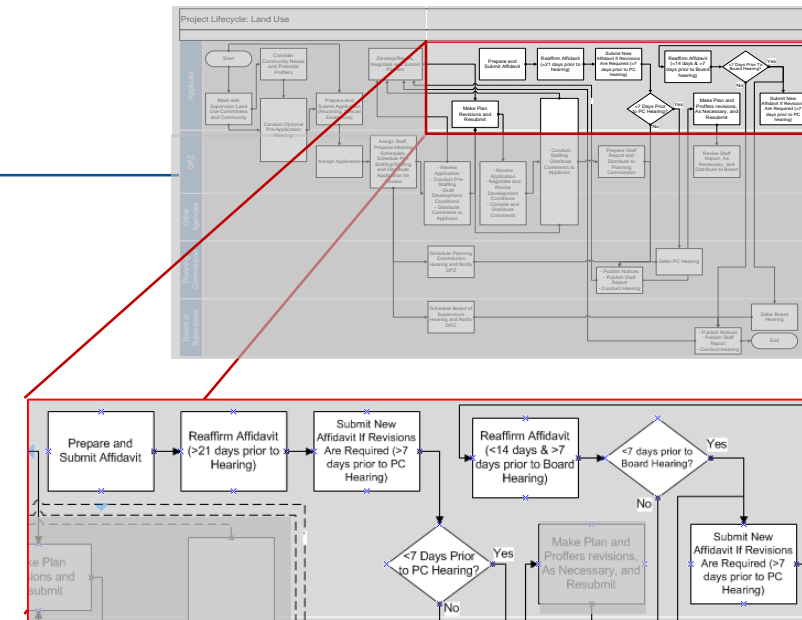




# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Use)

## Zoning Process (cont.)

- Per Virginia statute, each member of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and the Board of Zoning Appeals must make a full public disclosure of any business or financial relationship that the member has or has had with an applicant, title owner, contract purchaser, or lessee of the land or their agents within twelve months prior to a public hearing.
- Affidavit requirements and templates are perceived to be complex and are not written in plain language, often resulting in errors and necessary revisions.
- The County Attorney's Office is the review and approval authority for affidavits.
- In preparing and submitting affidavits, it is unclear what level of corporate ownership is legally necessary for disclosure to be satisfactory.
  - In some cases, 6-7 layers of ownership have been necessary. It has been suggested that >10% ownership interest is sufficient.
  - It can be a challenge for applicants that are large entities (e.g., private equity funds, partnerships) with many investors or ownership interests.
  - Blind trusts are not exempt from the County's affidavit requirements.
- All campaign contributions must be disclosed.
- Affidavits with many disclosures can be unwieldy and take Supervisors' Land Use Aides longer to review, potentially causing delays.
- While requirements are clearly outlined and available online, affidavit reaffirmation is perceived as complex and poses a significant challenge to applicants, resulting in a large number of hearing deferrals.
  - There are strict timeframes for affidavit reaffirmation or resubmission that differ based on the type of hearing. Failure to reaffirm the affidavit within the mandated timeframes results in a deferral.







## Process: Land Use

### Current State Findings – SWOT Analysis



# Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

## SWOT Analysis – Strengths



### Strengths

- Detailed online resources are available to customers to help them navigate the Zoning process, including (but not limited to) a documented “Zoning” process, application and affidavit requirements, the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.
- Pre-application consultative services are offered by the County to support customers and improve the quality of zoning application packages, however, a pre-application meeting is not required by the Zoning Ordinance.
- The use of Staff Coordinators to serve as a single point of contact for customers and to shepherd the review process is well intentioned and can be effective.
- Inter-agency collaboration can be effective if all appropriate parties participate and are actively engaged.
- While all agencies provide their respective review comments, some present them more formally and offer direction and/or potential resolution methods. Urban Forest Management was identified as an agency that provides clear comments in the form of memoranda.
- Citizens have a strong voice in the land use process via Land Use Committees, representation by their elected and appointed officials and participation in public hearings.
- The Ombudsman is an effective resource in supporting non-profits and places of worship through the land use and development processes.



## Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses

#### Weaknesses

- The documented Zoning process flow it is not comprehensive nor detailed enough to describe the complete end-to-end processes and potential customer/County interactions. Furthermore, regulations and policies are almost universally perceived as overly complex and outdated, which do not provide adequate guidance for the evolution of the County.
- Pre-application support is offered as an optional service for customers but is not consistently managed. Outcomes are not formally documented and may not be shared with downstream participants. Pre-application activity is not tied to application acceptance or compliance reviews.
- The Acceptance process can be lengthy but is trending toward improvement. Submitted applications are reviewed for completeness prior to formal acceptance. Acceptance is carefully scrutinized to support improved downstream reviews and ensure payments are calculated accurately. These are important steps, but customers complain about the time it takes to formally accept an application.
- Pre-Staffing and Staffing dates are scheduled based on preliminary cursory review by Branch Chiefs. Hearing dates are proposed to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and await finalization before formally scheduled. Scheduling in this manner drives behavior to hit a milestone (and effectively work back from that date) rather than with the goal of compressing cycle time and speeding up the process. The scheduling process was identified as cumbersome by staff and industry.
- Staff indicated that the timetable allotted for the review of anything but the simplest of cases may be unrealistic and unachievable.



## Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Hearing dates are often used as motivation for staff and applicants. Deferrals, though, are simple and can be granted for virtually any reason (e.g., delayed staff reports, scheduling conflicts for hearing attendees, etc.) Some stakeholders have indicated that deferrals are overused with little regard for the applicant.
- Reviews often must be conducted by multiple agencies. Distribution, review and coordination is challenging and time consuming. Resubmissions and subsequent reviews are not always completed before the scheduled hearing dates, resulting in deferrals.
- Some Staff Coordinators do not effectively manage the review process, but rather serve as a conduit for plans, comments, questions and feedback to/from customers and reviewing parties. Some Staff Coordinators do not actively resolve conflicting comments or priorities posed by independent reviews. Some Coordinators do not seem to have a complete understanding of the project or review comments as they relate to other Agencies (particularly as they relate to increasingly technical issues like soils, stormwater, or green buildings), and often cannot provide sufficient explanation of issues they are communicating to the customer. They are the single point of contact but are not fully equipped to be effective in this capacity.
- Often, review comments are not prioritized nor de-conflicted before being presented to customers. There is no formal mechanism to identify and resolve specific conflicts, with the expectation that such issues will be resolved in Staffing by senior staff.



## Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Staff feels they are sometimes put in a position of designing a solution when customers demand recommendations for issue resolution. It is unclear whether:
  - Customers are overly demanding and unwilling to find their own solutions to the comments provided.
  - Review comments are created without considering the implications or feasibility of potential solutions, leaving the applicant unsure how to proceed.
- Clear communications between agencies is a challenge and can be improved. Often reviewing agencies are unclear of project objectives.
- There is a perception by customers that there is an increasing level of scrutiny between pre-Staffing and Staffing. Comments during the first review do not seem to be as thorough, with more detailed comments being received after Staffing or Senior Staffing.
  - This has potentially led to experienced customers “gaming” the process by initially submitting lesser quality plans (to start the clock), and improving them for the subsequent submission, leading to more detailed comments on changes made.
  - Some applicants indicate that they have received additional requests during the second review, although they felt they had adequately addressed the first set of comments and the modifications that were made did not “cause” the new comments.
- Review of a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) can be a lengthy endeavor (up to 45 days for initial review and can be extended up to 120 days if resubmittals are necessary) and has many times resulted in a delayed hearing if applicants did not initiate it early enough. It is unclear why applicants do not initiate a TIA in a timely manner (e.g., uncertainty of requirement for TIA, duration of TIA or both). Similarly the delay in the submission of waivers results in uncertainty for staff during review.

# Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)



### Weaknesses (cont.)

#### ■ Proffers:

- The use of proffers seems to have strayed from the original intent. While intended to be voluntary to mitigate impacts of the proposed land use and development, they are influenced by many parties and may not be tied to specific impacts.
- In many cases, proffers are used to reinforce regulations, often restating ordinance and code. If the underlying regulation changes, proffers are out of date and inconsistent.
- Some proffers are presented by applicants to overcome approval challenges at Zoning without understanding the full implications of their commitments, later discovering that the conditions they agreed to cannot reasonably be met. This leads to potential downstream delays due to proffer interpretations and amendments.
- The intent of the certain proffers is not always clearly stated, potentially causing downstream interpretation issues.
- In some cases, proffers are being used to give the community a means by which its specific desires are fulfilled or concerns addressed. Some citizens may not understand that proffers are intended to mitigate development impacts.

#### ■ Affidavits:

- 80-90% of initial affidavit submissions need revision, likely due to the complexity and formal legal language (rather than plain language) of the affidavit templates and requirements.
- Some disclosure requirements seem unreasonable and it is unclear how many layers of ownership are truly necessary to determine relationship between a Supervisor and applicant or other party of interest.
- Re-affirmation requirements are cumbersome, inflexible and in some cases impractical. Roles and responsibilities for the affidavit process are unclear and getting help can be challenging for applicants.

## Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)



#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Applicants push to know the “denial” issues early in the process. This suggests that they may only respond to the recommendations that, if not implemented, will result in the application being denied.
- Applicants often don’t meet submission deadlines, forcing staff to work harder to regain time in order to keep the public hearing dates.
- Inconsistency in format, adherence to individual language result in plans which are difficult to read, and proffers which are difficult to track and confirm fulfillment.

# Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

## SWOT Analysis – Opportunities



### Opportunities

- Pre-application consultation seems to improve the quality of submissions and improve the likelihood of application acceptance. Consider formalizing pre-application process with dedicated resources and documentation for continuity and to facilitate downstream activities and reviews.
- Consider scheduling hearings only after a review is conducted by which one can better estimate the complexity and incorporate Staff availability, workload, and estimated length of review cycles into scheduling decisions. This may reduce the number of deferrals.
- Train Staff Coordinators to be more familiar with all aspects of plan review and then expand responsibilities to include resolving competing priorities or inter-agency conflicts and truly manage the review cycle.
- Consider leveraging the Ombudsman concept (or coordinator) more broadly in the land use and development lifecycle to support customers in navigating the process (e.g. a coordinator is used effectively in Tysons).
- Consider rewriting the Zoning Ordinance to simplify and modernize it so it is appropriate for the current landscape of the County and adaptable for future growth.
- Revisit affidavit submission and reaffirmation process to potentially rewrite statute or modify process and requirements within existing legal boundaries.
- Continue and expand use of a more integrated, interdisciplinary team approach to entitlement review process similar to what is used in Tysons and Reston.



# Current State Findings (Process: Land Use)

## SWOT Analysis – Threats



### Threats

- Since proffers currently provide citizens an avenue by which they can satisfy some community needs, imposing limitations on proffers in the future may encounter significant political resistance.
- Specificity and inflexibility of proffers creates a development plan that is unable to respond to more quickly evolving technologies and construction methods and market demands.
- The financial risk associated with the length of time to market and proffer requirements is creating a potential barrier for future development. The lack of readily available equity and more stringent lending requirements make it harder to finance projects with significant risk. Developers may be forced to choose jurisdictions with less risk.

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## Process: Land Development

### Current State Understanding

- Overview
- Site Review
- Site Review DPE Process
- Site Inspections
- Building Review
- Building Inspections
- Close-Out

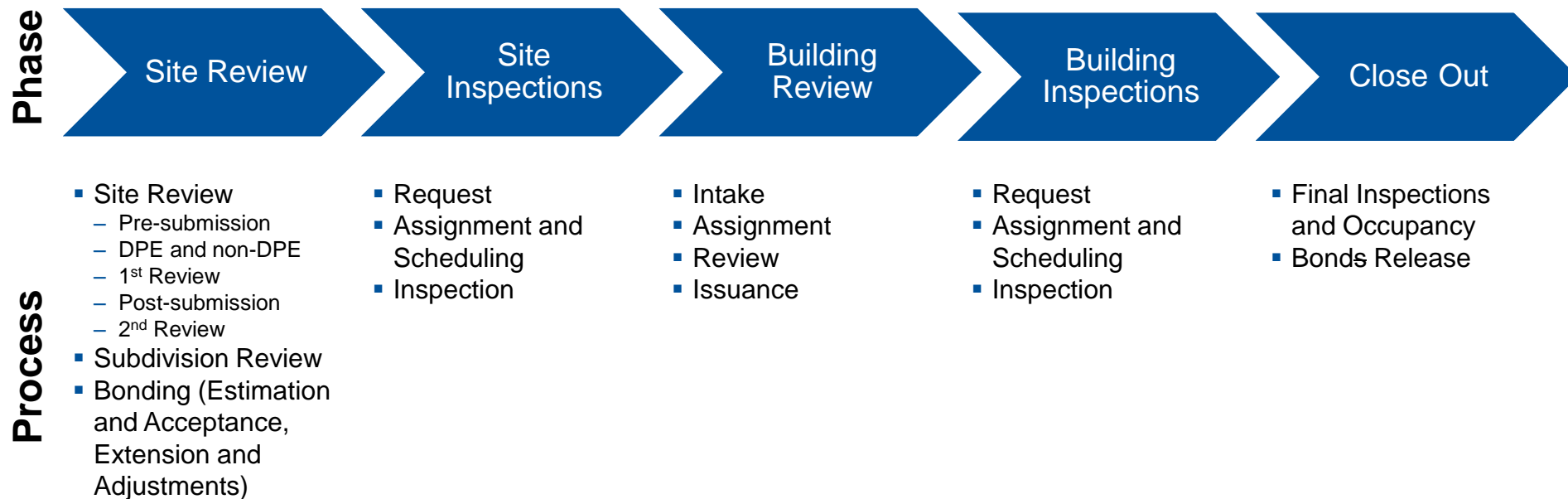




# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Overview

- This section will focus on the Land Development phases shown below.
- The processes listed below for each phase is described in the subsequent slides.



# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Site Review



- Site and subdivision plans are reviewed by Site Development and Inspection Division (SDID). Outside Agencies are also involved in the review and include Virginia Department of Transportation, Fire Marshal, Fairfax Water, Fairfax County Park Authority, Health Department, Capital Facilities (Street Lights), Urban Forest Management, Wastewater Planning and Monitoring.
- The Site Plan Review Process in subsequent slides provides an overview of the Designated Plan Examiner (DPE) process to illustrate the touch-points between stakeholders involved.
- Site Plan review process also includes:
  - Residential Site Plan review
  - Non-DPE review is the same as the DPE process except the DPE does not review the submissions and the Site Development Inspections Division (SDID) is responsible for all outside agency review coordination.
  - The applicant must have the grading plan approved by SDID.
  - Depending on the complexity of the project the applicant may be required to provide several specialist studies including:
    - Stormwater – required when there may be an impact to a protected watershed
    - Geotechnical – required when proposed grading or construction may adversely impact adjacent properties and in areas characterized as having questionable soils.
    - Transportation – required when there is an impact to roadways and traffic patterns.
  - Applicants may obtain waivers in place of these studies. A majority of such waivers are transportation related (FCDOT).
- Subdivision Plans where public improvements are necessary:
  - These plans follow a similar flow as shown in the DPE process; plans can be submitted through the DPE process and go to the Site and Addressing Center (SAC) first for distribution to SDID and other outside review agencies.
  - Additionally, any projects that disturb soil are subject to erosion and soil control regulations and inspections.
  - Once plan is approved, the applicant must obtain a land disturbance permit.
  - PAWS is the system of record for Site Plan processes.

# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Site Review (cont.)



### ■ Bonds:

#### – Estimation and Acceptance

- Bonds are required to ensure completion of items of public interest (e.g. sidewalks, streets, stormwater management facilities, etc).
- Bonds are not required for projects that are subdivided by metes and bounds, for which no subdivision plan is reviewed (all resulting lots must be 5 acres or greater), and Single Family in-fill lots, although conservation escrows are often collected to ensure project completion.
- Generally bond estimation occurs after 2<sup>nd</sup> plan submission since plans are much more complete.
- Bond estimates are based on the Unit Price Schedule (UPS). Schedule changes are made based on yearly release of Construction Price Index.
- UPS provides itemized costs of elements.
- Bond Committee (LDS, County Attorney, Office of Finance) meets weekly to review and approve Bond packages.
- SDID Branch Chiefs are notified of bond acceptance to allow approval of plans.
- Proffered improvements must also be bonded.

#### – Extension and Adjustments:

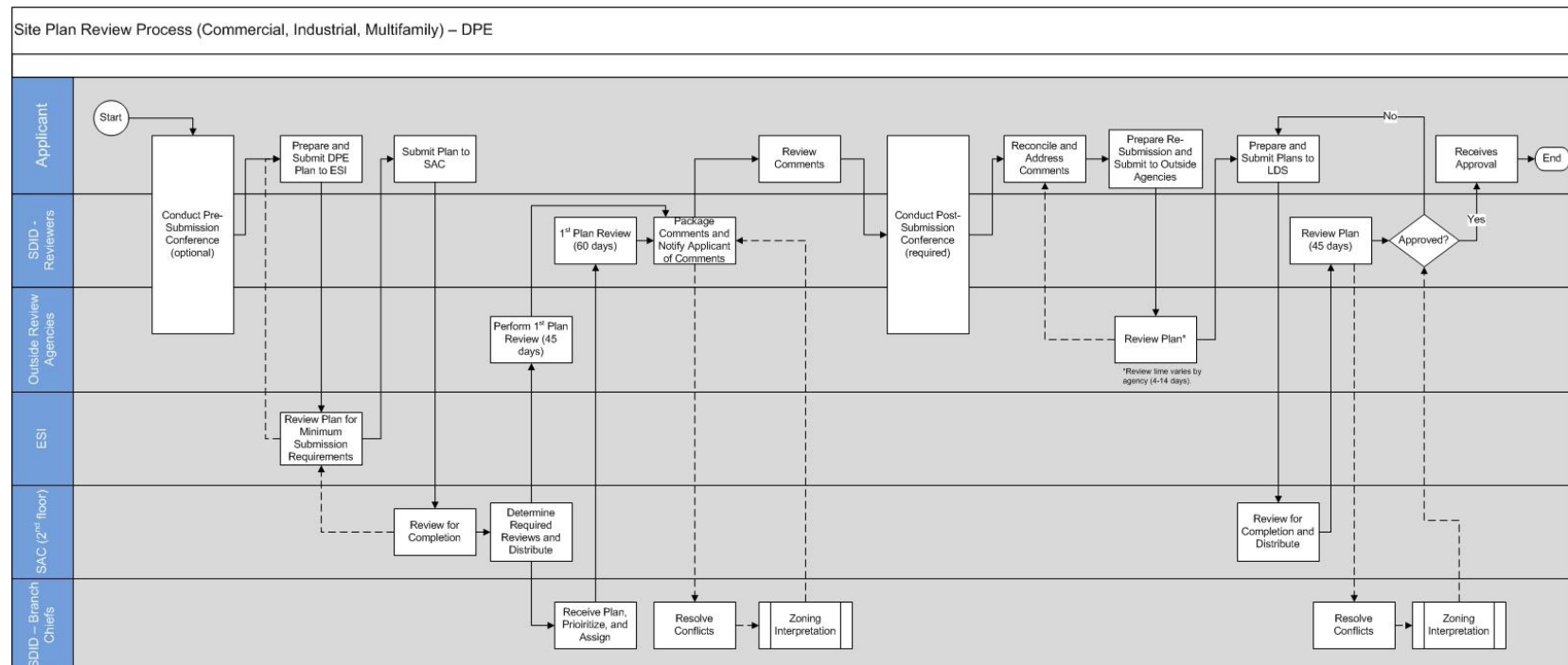
- Applicants can also file for extensions. If filing an extension for a bond agreement, the bond amount might need to be adjusted to account for the latest cost indices.
- Applicants can also file for bond reduction as work is completed for specific bonded improvements. The maximum allowable reduction is 90%. SDID inspectors and bond committee are responsible for approving the reduction. It is a fairly extensive process and the applicant must pay fees. Developers will do this periodically to reduce bonds on several items at once. In some cases, several improvements may be inter-related and all must be inspected before reducing bonds on any one of the improvements. In order to file for a reduction, a minimum of 30% of the bonded improvements must be completed.

# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Site Review DPE Process



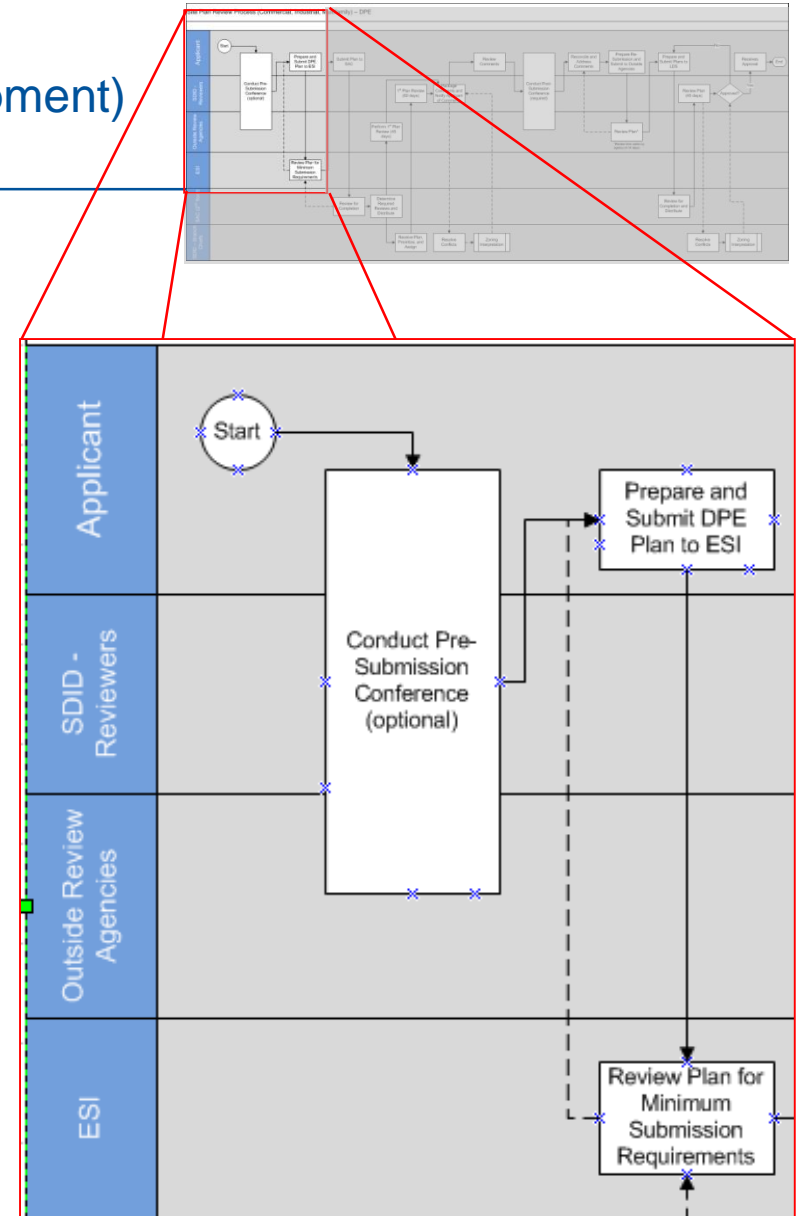
- Stakeholder interviews have identified significant operational concerns with the Site Review process, and with the DPE process in particular. For this reason, the DPE process is illustrated in greater detail below to verify the understanding of the current state process. DPE plans may only be submitted by engineers who have completed DPE certification and whose firm is a member of the Engineers and Surveyors Institute (ESI). ESI is a public/private partnership between industry and the County. The DPE process and the non-DPE process are similar except that the DPE process begins with a “completeness review” by ESI members and an ESI staff engineer. The completeness review attempts to ensure that quality plans are submitted. As a result of the ESI review, and because the ESI member firms are trained and contractually obligated with ESI to ensure that their plans are complete, DPE plans are afforded a quicker review process for second submission, typically 30 days or less. Additionally, engineers who submit DPE plans are empowered to secure outside agency approvals for their plans prior to second submission, while non-DPE plans are circulated to outside agencies as part of the second submission. Review times for non-DPE second submission plans is approximately 45 days. It is expected that DPE plans will be approved after the second submission, while non-DPE plans may require a third or subsequent submission.



## Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

### Site Review DPE Process (cont.)

- Applicants can request an optional pre-submission conference to discuss project requirements and expectations with SDID and Outside Agency reviewers. The applicant is expected to bring as much detail as possible for this initial review.
  - Industry and Staff have stated that the pre-submission conferences have been helpful to in setting expectations. Attendance of reviewing agencies has improved since the Booster Shot.
- After the pre-submission conference, the applicant prepares the plan to make final updates and adjustments to address early feedback received during the pre-submission conference.
- Once plans are finished, the DPE reviews the plan (DPE and applicant may be the same person) and makes corrections as necessary.
- The applicant submits the DPE plan to ESI to review for compliance with minimum submission requirements.
- Once minimum submission requirements are met the ESI submits the plan to the County Site & Addressing Center (SAC).
  - Staff indicates that the quality of DPE submissions is not better than non-DPE submissions.

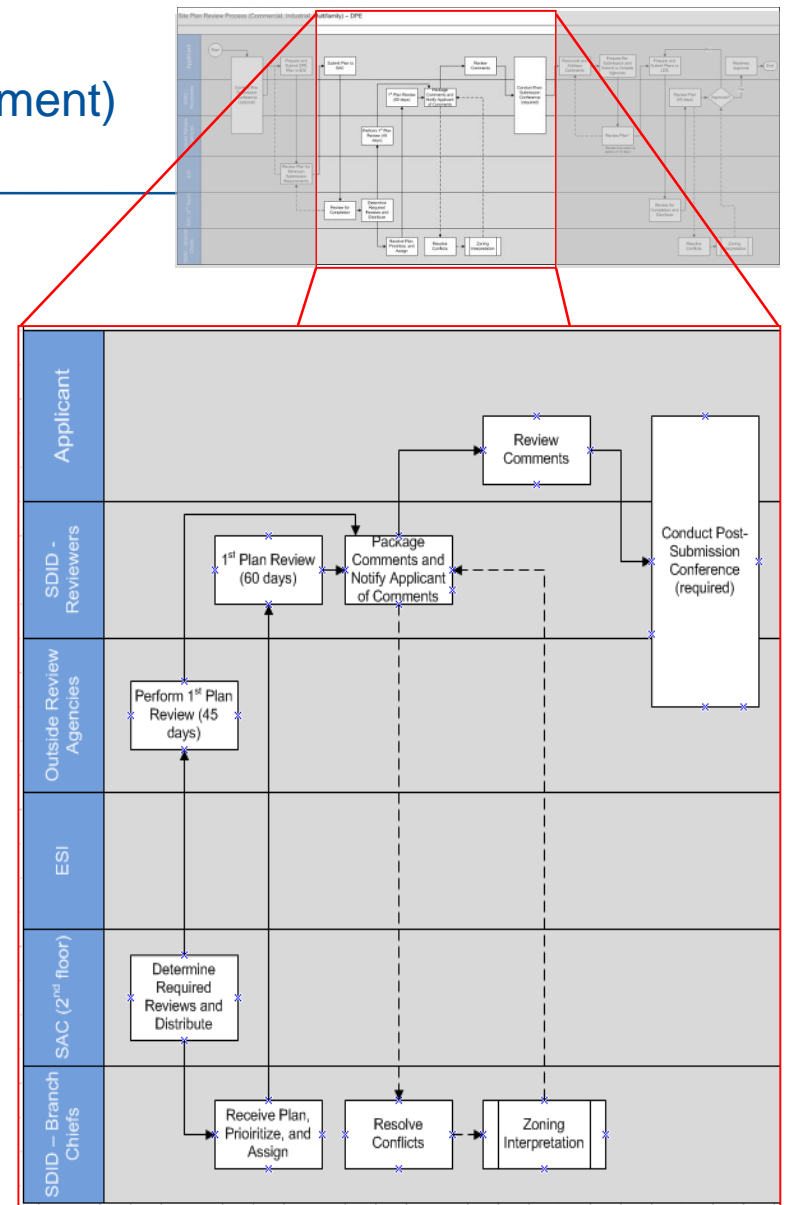




# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Site Review DPE Process (cont.)

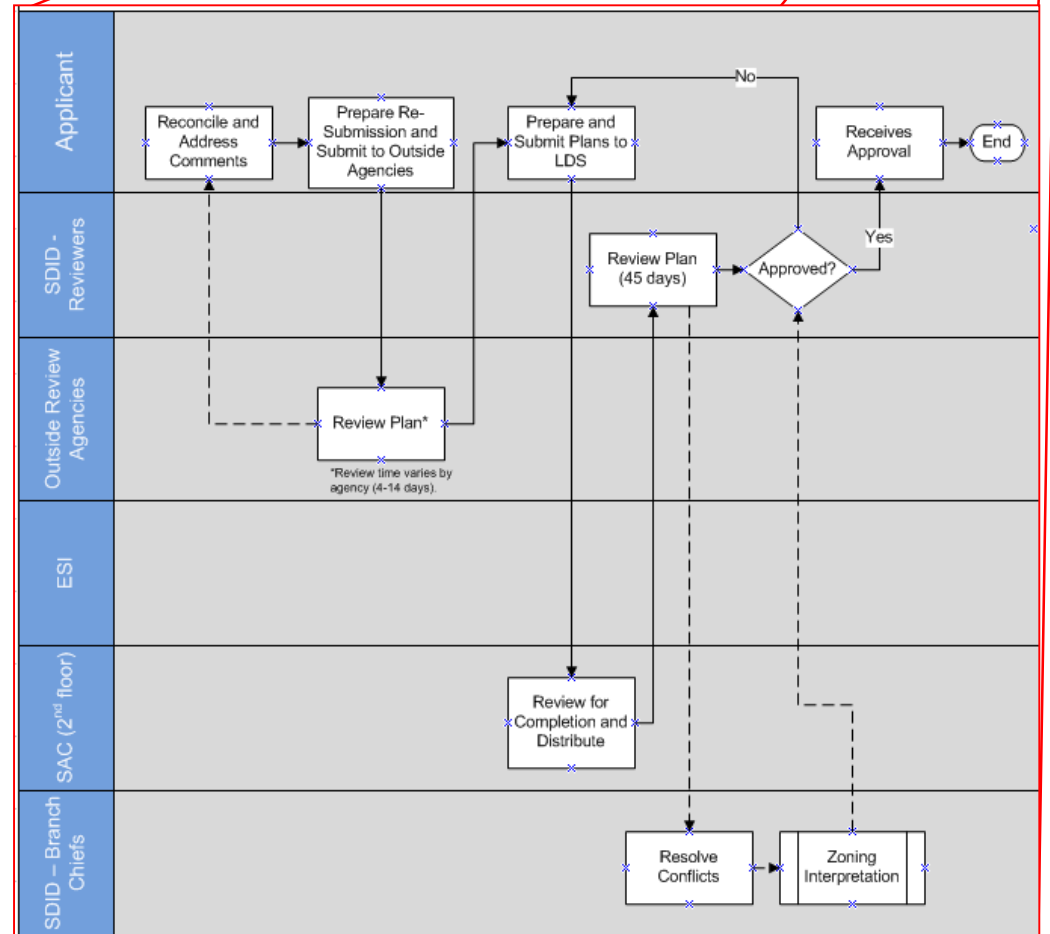
- Upon receipt of plans, SAC staff verify completion of the application package and make an initial determination of the outside parties that need to be involved in review. SAC forwards the plans to the SDID Branch Chiefs for SDID assignment, and also to the appropriate Outside Review Agencies.
  - It is fairly common that SDID reviewers need to distribute to additional Outside Review agencies despite SAC's initial review and distribution.
- SDID Branch Chiefs assign the plans to SDID reviewers based on geographic location of the project, type of project, complexity, and/or availability of Staff.
- SDID Staff have 60 days (total turn around time) to complete the first review.
- Outside Review Agencies have 45 days to complete their first review and provide comments to the SDID reviewer.
  - Outside Review agencies are often late with their reviews, but SDID reviewers have no authority to enforce timelines.
- The SDID reviewer receives all comments and distributes comments to applicant for resolution.
  - Quality of comments varies and sometimes it can be difficult for applicants to understand the comments.
  - Reviewers do not coordinate resolutions, leaving the applicant to resolve comments with outside agencies.
- In some cases when the comments conflict, the review may be escalated to the Branch Chiefs to de-conflict. Additionally, in some cases it may not be clear how to interpret the Zoning Ordinance or proffers or development conditions associated with the approval, which may lead to further escalation to the Division Director and possibly a formal zoning interpretation request with DPZ.
- The applicant reviews the comments and attends a required post-submission conference to discuss comments with all reviewers.



## Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

### Site Review DPE Process (cont.)

- After the post-submission conference, the applicant addresses all comments and re-submits to Outside Review Agencies for approval.
  - The Applicant is responsible for managing the workflow and must work with individual reviewing agencies. In some cases where conflicts exist, it is difficult for the applicant to resolve by working with agencies individually.
  - In the Non-DPE process, SDID takes on the responsibility to resolve issues with the outside agencies.
- Once all Outside Agencies have approved the plan, the applicant submits the plan to SAC along with the approval letters.
- SAC distributes the plan to SDID reviewers to perform subsequent reviews within 45 days.
- As with the first review, conflicts and zoning interpretations may be escalated to Branch Chiefs (and also the Division Director from there).
- Once approved, the Applicant is notified.
  - Industry finds that the DPE process is not any faster than the non-DPE process.



# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Site Inspections



- There are a few key steps as part of the Site Inspection process - Request, Assignment & Scheduling and Inspection.
- For Request:
  - Pre-construction meeting is conducted once it is assigned to an inspector:
    - SDID inspector is responsible for setting up the meeting per PFM guidelines.
    - VDOT and other external agencies attend the meeting.
    - During the meeting plans are reviewed and requirements/expectations are discussed.
    - This is identified as the “start” of bond release in order to set the expectation that bond release is being diligently pursued.
  - Commercial and residential site inspections can only be requested by phone/email, but these are the minority of inspections (~10%).
  - Majority of inspections (~90%) are periodic comprised mainly of sediment and erosion (~33% of periodic inspections) to meet State stormwater obligations delegated to the County, and also for VDOT, bond release, and final inspections for occupancy. Inspectors stop by almost every day because they are assigned geographically. However it also depends on how active the projects are; for defaulted projects the inspector may only drive by once per week or less. Approximately 10% of inspections are related to Residential and non-Residential Use Inspections, which are necessary for final occupancy.
  - Inspections may also be driven by citizen complaints.
- For Assignment and Scheduling:
  - All SDID inspectors are cross-trained and can handle all site-related trades.
  - SDID inspectors also conduct a 6-month check-up on-site starting from the day of pre-construction meeting to discuss status of items for bond release.
- For Inspection:
  - Inspectors will download/print any necessary documents/information to conduct inspections.
  - Inspectors also maintain a file folder or information relevant to the site, such as submitted geotech reports. Bond and Agreements also keeps a file of documentation necessary for bond release.
  - Inspection results and violations are captured in SI2K. Inspectors may issue notice of violations on-site.
  - Inspectors also enter proffer triggers into SI2K and check off proffers in SI2K after inspection. Inspectors also go into PAWS to update proffers.

# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Building Review



### ■ Intake

- Applicant often meets with senior staff prior to submitting the building plan (e.g. complex projects like Tysons, schools, etc).
- Applicant submits application, plans (Mech, Elec, Plumb - MEP and Site), and supporting documentation to the Customer and Technical Service Center (CTSC).
  - Applicants can submit the application (but not plans) on FIDO online.
- CTSC verifies application package is complete and verifies contractor licensing.
- Applicant pays full or partial filing fees to CTSC by paper tender or credit card.
- CTSC distributes to DPZ, LDS building reviewers, Wastewater Monitoring, Health Department, Fire Marshal's Office.
- Applicant also submits applications for trade permits, if required.
- Some applicants submit incomplete plans in order to “get in line”. Lower quality/incomplete submissions further delay the process for all involved and lead to distrust between the reviewer and the applicant.

### ■ Assignment

- Application types:
  - Commercial:
    - Review plans for commercial, mixed use, high-rise residential, and townhouses.
    - Walk-through<sup>1</sup> (a.k.a Fast-Track) (<4500 sq ft, no structural work, and not food related); currently reviewing a proposal to modify these requirements (e.g. increase limit to 9k sq ft, but split and run each through as walk-through); should take no more than 30 min per trade.
    - Type 2-8: based on complexity of work description (type 8 is a new building; further details on next slide).
  - Residential:
    - Reviews plans for single family homes and also offers walk-throughs for simple projects
- Supervisor reviews the work description to assess scope of work and assign the type.
- Assignments are made based on reviewer experience (e.g. a reviewer may be more experienced with high rises so focuses on those reviews).

1. Only done on Tues, Wed, Thurs except single trades which are done all days.

# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Building Review (cont.) – Application Types



- The County processes a variety of Residential and Commercial permits. A list of permit types is available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bldgpermits/Webpermit.aspx>.
- The follow table provides further details the plan classes reviewed by building review:

Plan Class	New Construction	Alterations	Group	Area (SF)	Stories
01		•	All Groups (walk-thru)	$\leq 4,500^1$ commercial $\leq 1,000$ residential	NA
02		•	All Groups (except A, I, R-4)	$\leq 20,000$	NA
03		•	A, I, R-4	$\geq 4,500^1$	NA
			All Groups	$> 20,000$	NA
04	•	•	R-3, R-5	NA	NA
05	•		R-1, R-2	NA	$\leq 2$
			F, M, S	$\leq 20,000$	$\leq 2$
06	•		R-1, R-2	NA	$> 2$ $< \text{high rise}^2$
07	•		B	$\leq 20,000$	$\leq 4$
			M	$> 20,000$ $\leq 100,000$	$> 2$
			F, S	$> 20,000$	$> 2$
08	•		A, E, H, I, R-4	$\leq 25,000$	$\leq 2$
			B	$\leq 57,000$	$> 4$ $< \text{high rise}^2$
09	•		B	$> 57,000$	High rise <sup>2</sup>
			R-1, R-2	NA	High rise <sup>2</sup>
10	•		A, E, H, I	$> 25,000$	$> 2$
			M	$> 100,000$	NA

# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Building Review (cont.)



### ■ Review

- Commercial:
  - Building reviews cannot start until the site plan is also provided. The site plan does not need to be approved for the building review to begin, but the permit cannot be approved until the site plan is also approved.
  - Trades review sequentially with Buildings reviewing first, then Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP).
- Residential:
  - Reviewers can review concurrently with site review.
  - Residential plans are often reviewed in front of the customers.
  - Reviews are performed by a single reviewer for all trades.
- External:
  - Reviews may be performed by Wastewater Monitoring, Health Department, Fire Marshal's Office.
  - Fire reviews and approves after all other reviewers have completed their reviews.
- Proffers:
  - Applicant's engineer must provide a proffer compliance narrative on the site plan stating how proffers are met; Reviewers look at these letters.
  - For residential, proffers can also go with the subdivision Master Files. Reviewers must check these proffers.
  - In practice, familiarity with the proffers and their sense of responsibility for enforcing them varies, by inspector.
- Applicants can use a peer review process where a County certified 3<sup>rd</sup> party reviews the plans prior to submission to LDS for expedited processing.
- After review applicant pays balance of filing fees, and plumbing fixture unit fees, if necessary.

### ■ Issuance

- LDS approves application and MEP plans, and verifies site plan is approved, and issues site and building permits.
- Trade permit is issued if necessary.

# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Building Inspections



### ■ Request

- Customers call to schedule inspections by speaking to staff, using the IVR system, or on FIDO online.
- LDS Commercial inspections are able to be scheduled for the following day.
- Customers may also need to request inspections from FMO (fuel storage and fire protection systems) and Health (to inspect wells and septic systems, commercial pools)

### ■ Assignment and Scheduling

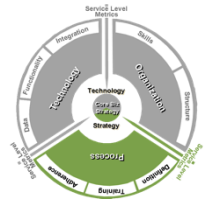
- Inspections are assigned by the system to inspectors geographically. Supervisors may move assignments depending on workload, absences, etc.
- Commercial:
  - Inspections assigned by type:
    - Master inspector inspects condos and commercial up to 4500 sq ft
    - Larger projects go to Critical Structures Section
  - Call takers answering the phones for building inspections office will pass inspection requests to inspectors.
  - Commercial inspectors may need to call customers for information in order to determine the priority of the inspection.
  - Commercial goal is 8-10 inspections per day per inspector
- Residential:
  - Residential inspectors also figure out their daily schedule spending 25-45 min each morning to get organized for the day.
  - Residential has two shifts and handle 12-18 inspections per day per inspector.
  - Residential inspections are allotted a 2 hour window.

### ■ Inspection

- When preparing for inspections, inspectors will pull up the permits to review the scope of work.
- In the field, inspectors will typically access FIDO to find notes from other inspectors or call back to the office to have information pulled.
- Inspectors capture inspection results and violations in SYCLO system.

# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Close-Out



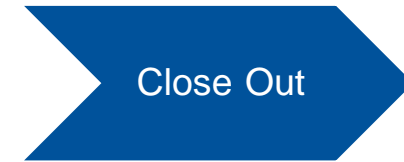
### Final Inspections and Occupancy:

- Performed once developer completes all public improvements and obtains approvals and acceptances from:
  - Water
  - Sewer
  - Forestry
- Once required approvals and acceptance are complete, SDID inspectors conduct a final inspection (walk-through).
  - Inspector completes final inspection checklist and provides punch list of incomplete items if necessary.
  - The land under the streets is dedicated to the County as part of the site review process. Streets are dedicated to the County prior to construction but are maintained by the developer until the streets are accepted for maintenance by VDOT.
- Post construction, SDID and VDOT conduct a joint inspection where the applicant, VDOT inspector, and SDID inspector are all present.
- After building inspections are passed, Site inspectors perform a final inspection prior to issuance of occupancy permit.



# Current State Understanding (Process: Land Development)

## Close-Out (cont.)



### ■ Bonds:

#### – Release:

- If the project passes final SDID inspection, the inspector prepares a document called the “Letter 18” and bond release package for processing by the Bond and Agreements Center.
  - Bonds may be held for a period of time to ensure developers successfully complete the public improvements, and that the improvements function as intended (e.g. stormwater facilities). The County may also hold the conservation escrow for one year after the bond is released to make sure the newly planted trees don’t die.
- SDID and Bond and Agreements Center (BAC) finalize the Letter 18 and bond release package, and emails the District Supervisor, County agencies, and Home Owners Associations as appropriate of the impending bond release. Recipients of the letter have seven days to respond. The District Supervisor is contacted to determine whether he or she is aware of unresolved issues which need to be addressed prior to bond release.
- The release process starts when BAC receives the original Letter 18 and W-9 signed by the developer/applicant and then has 30 days to release per State code.
- Bonds can be reduced (up to 90% for developers in good standing) as work progresses.
- Bond release request triggers the final walk-through to verify everything is completed.

#### – Default:

- After 3 or 4 extensions, a default conference with the Bond Committee is conducted to determine whether another extension can be granted based on criteria within the PFM, whether actual progress being made and what is left to do. The committee also takes into consideration the requested length of the new bond period and monies on hand.
- Capital Facilities finishes projects that have been abandoned by the developer and bonding company.
  - Uncompleted projects are sent to the Capital Facilities Division of DPWES for completion as funding allows with priority given public health, safety, and welfare.
- The County Attorney takes legal action to acquire the bond proceeds.



## Process: Land Development

### Current State Findings – SWOT Analysis





## Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

### SWOT Analysis – Strengths

#### Strengths

- Resources to navigate the Land Development process are available to customers online, including, but not limited to: documented process flows, application and inspection requirements, PFM and Building Codes.
- Substantial and useful process/requirement information is available to customers on Fairfax land use and development sites.
- Site Plan review pre-submission meetings have been helpful to customers and after Booster Shot implementation (Jan 1, 2015) there has been better agency attendance.
- The Site Plan pre-construction meeting is effective in communicating expectations and requirements among all stakeholders.
- Staff manages the hand-offs and coordination between each of the phases (e.g. building permits do not get issued until site plan is approved).
- Building Plan review offers faster service for simpler projects (e.g. walk-throughs).
- For single family residential projects a lot of customers have found that the building plan peer review process is faster and there are fewer comments from the County.
- LDS is able to accommodate next day building inspections.
- Customers report they have adequate visibility into the current status of project. They can obtain some of this information online, but also frequently call staff to obtain updates.

# Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses



### Weaknesses

- Plans and supporting documents are managed by paper.
- Submitted site plans are often low quality:
  - Submissions that have been checked by ESI often still have many errors that should have been caught and plans are sent back to applicant for correction prior to sending to the County for review.
  - Industry plans are often poor quality upon 1st submission.
- Development projects in Fairfax have gotten more complex as the land has become developed. Projects typically deal with challenges such as steep slopes, problem soils, Resource Protection Areas, drainage issues, all of which complicate the design and review process and can invoke other parties such as the Geotechnical Review Board, Stormwater, Wetlands Board, Engineering Standards Review Committee (ESRC), etc.
- Quality of site review process is inconsistent:
  - In the 1<sup>st</sup> submission review, the applicant does not always receive comments from all reviewing parties.
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> submission, most of the time, will take up to the 60 days (or more) regardless of complexity of the plans.
  - Outside review agencies are often late with their reviews.
  - The applicant will often receive new comments on the 2<sup>nd</sup> submission.
  - There is an inconsistent level of response from reviewing agencies (e.g. VDOT often doesn't respond to inquiries) and target deadlines are frequently missed.
  - Comment quality varies depending on the knowledge and experience of reviewer.
  - DPE subsequent submissions have not result in substantially faster review than non-DPE subsequent submissions, although the trend is improving.

# Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)



### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Quality of site review reviews and site review process is inconsistent (cont.):
  - Customers indicate that they hand deliver plans to specific reviewing agencies rather than wait for distribution because they feel it is faster to do so.
- Site review process has inefficiencies:
  - SAC does the initial distribution of receive plans, but often SDID will need to include additional reviewing parties that were missed.
  - Applicants typically are responsible for reconciling conflicts with review agencies.
  - Post-submission conferences are often scheduled 3-4 weeks out (target is 5 days).
  - Attendance at post-submission meetings is inconsistent (e.g. VDOT doesn't usually attend, FMO has said it would become a priority, Urban Forestry's attendance is sporadic).
- Conflicts and interpretations are typically escalated. Different reviewers have different thresholds for substantial conformance and some are more willing to make decisions than others. Items that are not in strict conformance with the development plan, or about which a reviewer is unsure, often go to Zoning Evaluation Division for interpretation which developers try to avoid due in part to the length of the process.
- Developers may attempt to negotiate out of certain proffer commitments due to design constraints or ambiguity in the proffer statement. There is little flexibility under the minor modifications provision in the Zoning Ordinance, and often a developer's only recourse to change a plan or proffer is to restart the entire zoning process.
- Site reviewers are frequently asked to handle various customer inquiries throughout the day that interrupts plan review time.

# Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)



### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Training of new reviewers varies greatly depending on the branch and the availability of resources.
- Reassignment/promotion of staff results in new/different comments from different reviewers.
- FMO does not review site plans until all other reviews are complete.
- Bond:
  - The industry feels bond requirements are too high (e.g. a \$1 million project may require a \$3 million bond) while the County believes bond amounts are inadequate and typically do not have enough proceeds to complete default projects.
  - UPS has become bloated over time and is now ~55 pages. This is currently being redesigned and shortened.
  - Bond package submission quality is an issue.
- Site Inspection:
  - Although the inspector enters proffer triggers into SI2K, some proffers may still be missed and not inspected for.
  - Inspectors may not thoroughly review proffers.
  - Some customers will wait for a deficiency list and address only the items specifically identified as deficient which places significant pressure on the site inspector to ensure that nothing is missed.

## Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

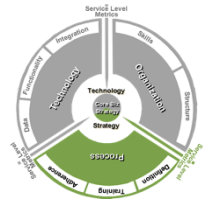


### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Commercial walk-throughs:
  - Commercial walk-throughs were identified by staff to be an issue and described as “clogging the system.”
  - Plan reviewers are being used to do their “punch list.”
  - Architect stamps are being used liberally and in some cases the person stamping isn’t really qualified to do the stamping (e.g. structural person stamping for plumbing and electrical as well).
  - 90% fail on first submission primarily due to complexity of work and often take 5-7 cycles to approve.
- Residential reviewers often receive plans of very poor quality (e.g. a deck review can be 5-6 cycles). Most of the time, these are plans done by the homeowners. The County cannot design plans for the customer.
- Peer review:
  - Peer reviewers seem to have a different set of review criteria from County staff reviewers.
  - The peer review process does not seem to lead to faster plan approvals.
- There seems to be inconsistent reviewer criteria among building review staff (e.g. submission of calculations will be accepted in one review, but may not be accepted in subsequent reviews).
- Subsequent review cycles may be handled by different review staff leading to additional inconsistencies.
- Time spent responding to customers delays plan review.

## Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)



### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Residential reviewers often spend a great deal of time talking with the homeowners. While this is good customer service, the homeowner can also become a middle man between the reviewer and architect making it more difficult for reviewer to get the precise information that is needed.
- It is often difficult for the residential plan reviewer to get the required information they need regarding the project from the homeowner and their professionals due to the applicant's lack of understanding of the process and requirements.
- Commercial reviewers often get questions from stakeholders involved in the project about topics for which they are not necessarily responsible (for example design professionals often ask architectural questions).
- Customers are not always forthcoming with information. In some cases, when staff asks for information, applicants may provide only minimal details unless prompted for more specifics.



## Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

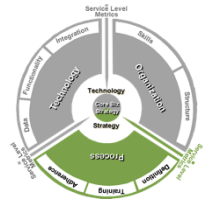


#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- The scope of work described in the permits is often too vague and the inspector sends the customer back to CTSC to have the scope appropriately detailed.
- There needs to be better assignment and prioritization of inspections:
  - There have been situations where an inspector goes to the site and finds out that another inspector was already there.
  - There needs to be more experienced staff to gauge complexity and time of inspection when assigning and scheduling.
- Residential inspectors indicate that they spend more time trying to help people build houses than inspect them.
- In some cases, it does not seem the inspection findings are based on code or plan. Inspectors often do not cite chapter and verse for failing inspections. In certain cases, there appears to be a tendency for some inspectors (e.g. FMO) to fail inspections even if it matches an approved plan.
- When different code versions are released, inspectors will often try to enforce the new code even though the permit was approved under the old code (e.g. 2009 vs 2012 versions).
- There is lack of communication between plan reviewer and inspector. When the inspector notes a discrepancy with the plan, it is the developers' responsibility to call back to the office to talk to the building plan reviewer to set up a meeting to get resolution, but this can take weeks.

## Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)



### Weaknesses (cont.)

- Some bonds can remain because the developer does not always know the requirements to release bonds. Then when they do start the release process, it has been many years and the final inspection identifies a lot of punch list items that need to be fixed.
- Lack of developer urgency to complete a project results in a loop of improvement/deterioration/improvement during which time other aspects of the project deteriorate, resulting in new punch list items.
- Paper based / email based processes in some cases approval letters and other documentation (e.g. soil reports) may be missing and needs to be sent multiple times.
- VDOT acceptance can take months, although this should improve with the newly implemented joint inspection process.

# Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

## SWOT Analysis – Opportunities



### Opportunities

- The Building Peer Review process is well-intentioned and has the potential to speed-up the review process. However, the resulting plans after these reviews need to be higher quality, and there also needs to be greater trust between County staff and the third party reviewers.
- Review agency attendance at pre-submission meetings is improving (e.g. FMO), but only high-level guidance is given and often the agency representative avoids answering specific questions. There is opportunity to catch and prevent mistakes up-front to save time in the long-run.
- There can be more focus on service delivery from a customer perspective. For example, consider providing a faster process through Site Review for simple projects.
- Improve inter and intra agency communication by promoting and rewarding collaboration (e.g. building plan reviewer and inspector; SDID and VDOT, etc).
- Seek increased customer accountability for requirements (e.g. plan quality).
- Plan reviewer/inspector pairings to promote increased collaboration to help with disagreements in interpretation.
- The sequential nature of processes results in a longer than necessary timeline. Further, the sequential nature sometimes leads to “another bite at the apple” creating more unpredictability. There is an opportunity to review processes and conduct more activities concurrently.
- Capital Facilities Branch of DPWES (CAP) finishes defaulted projects subject to available funding. CAP cost schedules are not high enough to cover construction costs should a developer default (primarily because developers have economies of scale and can construct for lower cost). There may be an opportunity to modify the process to account for actual costs that would be incurred by CAP which would provide resources to complete more defaulted projects, sooner. The current process results in defaulted projects languishing until another source of funding is identified. Such delays often result in further deterioration.



## Current State Findings (Process: Land Development)

### SWOT Analysis – Threats

#### Threats

- As the County has become more developed and more projects are infill, it has led to a variety of complexities dealing with neighborhood issues, including inadequate infrastructure and public resources, like stormwater drainage among others. It is critical for the County to operate efficiently in order to promote development in such an environment. These development concerns must be balanced against the land owner's right to develop property. If it is not cost-effective, or unprofitable, development will not occur.
- The County needs to standardize or at least define mission statements and address cultural differences between agencies to achieve effective service delivery.
- Failure to address customers “taking advantage” of system by waiting for rejection for specific things to be fixed (e.g. plan review, inspections) further threatens the County's ability to achieve effective service delivery.
- While striving to provide high customer satisfaction, County staff may become too reactionary which interrupts work and results in a lot of hand holding. The industry should be held accountable for submitting higher quality plans, responding to County comments and completing projects in accordance with approved plans.

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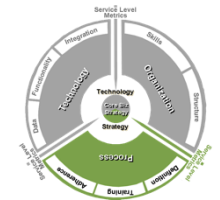
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## Process: Policy and Regulation Management

### Current State Understanding

- Overview





# Current State Understanding (Process: Policy and Regulation Management)

## Overview

- Several policies and regulation govern Land Use and Development processes.

Policy/ Regulation	Description	Applicable to Process Phase
Comprehensive Plan	Mandated by the Virginia Code as a long-range vision for the County’s land use. It serves to promote public health, safety, welfare; manage growth, change, renewal; ensure high quality of life; and balance diverse community goals. It is comprised of four geographic areas detailed by a Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Transportation Plan Map, and Trails Plan Map. It is administered by Fairfax County DPZ.*	Entitlement
Zoning Ordinance	Regulates zoning in the County. It serves to promote public health, safety and general welfare of the public and to implement the adopted Comprehensive Plan. It is administered by Fairfax County DPZ, and with respect to site plans, LDS.	Entitlement Site
Noise Ordinance	The noise ordinance is used to manage noise due to daily living by allowing certain levels of noise during the day and minimizing noise at night. It is administered by Fairfax County DPZ.	Site
Subdivision Ordinance	Regulates subdivision in the County to ensure that neighborhoods are properly designed. LDS administers the Subdivision Ordinance.	Site
Stormwater Ordinance	Mandated by the State Code, it regulates the design and construction adequate facilities to control the quantity and quality of runoff from development.	Site
Public Facilities Manual (PFM)	Governs design of public facilities serving as a technical manual to implement the requirements of the Subdivision and Zoning ordinances and other chapters of the Fairfax County Code. Administered by the Site Code Research and Development Branch.*	Site Building
Building Code	The County is required to enforce the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and the Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). These codes are administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and reference the 2012 Internal Codes published by the International Code Council.*	Building

\* Descriptions obtained from Fairfax County land development websites.

# Current State Understanding (Process: Policy and Regulation Management)

## Overview (cont.)



- The Comprehensive Plan is maintained by the DPZ Planning Division using the “Fairfax Forward” process. The process:
  - Provides a new approach to Comprehensive Plan Review and community engagement based on a multi-year planning work program. It replaces the previous Area Plan Review (APR) process.
  - Anyone can submit a proposal for the work program, however submitters are encouraged to discuss with the District Supervisor and the Long Range Planning Division prior to submission.
    - Submissions will be accepted through Jan 2016, and all proposals will be reviewed starting Feb 2016 for additions and adjustments to the adopted work program.
- The Zoning Ordinance is amended through the Zoning Ordinance Amendment Work Program administered by the DPZ Zoning Administration Division.
  - The Work Program consists of a Priority 1 and Priority 2 list of amendments which originate from the Board, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, citizens, and industry representatives and staff.
  - The Priority 1 list contains the amendment requests that are to be addressed over the next twelve months. The 2015 Priority 1 Work Program was adopted July 1, 2015.
  - The Priority 2 list consists of those amendment requests that will be reviewed for future Priority 1 consideration.
- The PFM is subject to periodic revisions by the Board of Supervisors. The Board appointed Engineering Standards Review Committee (ESRC) provides recommendations on PFM amendments.
- The Zoning Ordinance, Stormwater Ordinance, PFM, and proffers are all subject to interpretations.
- The Building Code is adopted statewide and is not subject to local interpretation.





## Process: Policy and Regulation Management

### Current State Findings – SWOT Analysis





# Current State Findings (Process: Policy and Regulation Management)

## SWOT Analysis – Strengths

### Strengths

- The County has taken the initiative to improve the Comprehensive Plan review process through the Fairfax Forward approach.
- Processes are in place to amend and adapt policies and regulations to meet development needs.
- Building Codes are based off international standards published by the International Code Council.
- Zoning Ordinance interpretations are formally tracked in a database.
- Some customers have stated that building code interpretations developed over time to clarify the grey areas may be a reason building review seems to be a straightforward process.
- Proffers can provide an effective mechanism to mitigate impact of development and also meet specific needs of the community. Some developers have stated that the proffer system effectively allows them to respond to specific community concerns and provides flexibility for negotiations so that both sides win. Proffers enable real, tangible benefits to the community, which might not be as easily accomplished with other mechanisms such as impact fees.



# Current State Findings (Process: Policy and Regulation Management)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses

### Weaknesses

- The Comprehensive Plan is very specific and sometimes is viewed as a “regulation” rather than a guide to making land use decisions. In some cases it restates the Zoning Ordinance. Per stakeholder interviews, approximately 20% of amendments are probably too detailed for a Comprehensive Plan.
- Employment and population forecasting for long-range planning purposes are conducted by different groups making it difficult to coordinate.
- The Zoning Ordinance was last written in 1978 with approximately 449 amendments made. At that time, Fairfax County was focused on suburban development and growth. Since then, the County has transitioned to more urban development that is difficult to implement with the same set of rules.
- Proffers:
  - The use of proffers seems to have strayed from the original intent. Intended to be voluntary to mitigate impacts of the proposed land use and development, proffers are influenced by many parties and may not be tied to specific impacts. Conversely, proffers reduce the cost of development on the County, which enables the County to maintain moderate property tax rates.
  - In many cases, proffers are used to reinforce regulations, often restating ordinance and code. If the underlying regulation changes, proffers are out of date and inconsistent.
  - Some proffers are presented by applicants to address approval challenges during entitlement. In some instances, applicants may not understanding the full implications of their commitments, later discovering that they cannot reasonably be met. This leads to potential downstream delays due to proffer interpretations and amendments.
  - Despite best efforts of all parties, the intent of some proffers is not always clearly written, potentially causing downstream interpretation issues. Often this results from late-stage negotiations with resident groups.



## Current State Findings (Process: Policy and Regulation Management)

### SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)

#### Weaknesses (cont.)

- The PFM is often treated as regulation rather than guidance.
- The Building Code has not adapted to more complex urban development creating situations where interpretation is subject to individual judgment.
- In some cases, regulations or policies have been created or amended to address a specific issue, causing unintended consequences on future customers or development activity as the nature of development is continually changing.
- Some policies (e.g. interpretations) may not be documented, or not available to the public. As a result, additional staff participation may be required that duplicates prior effort and policies may be inconsistently applied.
- Regulations and policies (Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Building Code, PFM, standard proffers) may not be consistent and many can be open for inconsistent interpretation.
- Proffers have increasingly incorporated design related preferences (e.g. “Williamsburg style architecture” and “muted tones” which may be difficult to define or enforce, or may outlive their original intent.
- Industry asserts that almost every development plan requires at least two proffer interpretations to get through site plan review.



# Current State Findings (Process: Policy and Regulation Management)

## SWOT Analysis – Opportunities

### Opportunities

- Consider rewriting the Zoning Ordinance to simplify and modernize it so it is appropriate for the current landscape of the County and adaptable for future growth.
- Fairfax Forward is an opportunity to streamline the process, educate the public, and ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is used as intended for long-range planning and a guide for land use.
- Although the Building Code is administered by the State, the County can take the initiative to work with the State to drive changes to the Building Code to make it more suitable to modern urban development.
- A new Stormwater Ordinance was recently adopted, however, there is an opportunity to simplify the stormwater regulations currently being re-written and this is an opportunity to better manage stormwater and protect the watershed while enabling responsible development.
- The current staff led process for preparing amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, PFM, and other codes and ordinances is resource intensive and very lengthy limiting the number of amendments that can be processed in any given year.
- The Zoning Ordinance Amendment Annual Work Program is adopted annually by the Board of Supervisors after recommendation by the Planning Commission, providing little opportunity for staff-initiated “quick fixes.”
- Contract resources including facilitators and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) might improve throughput of amendments.



# Current State Findings (Process: Policy and Regulation Management)

## SWOT Analysis – Threats

### Threats

- Time to market is the overriding concern of the industry. Specificity of the Comprehensive Plan (which is supposed to be a guide) and the strict adherence to a proffered development plan (extremely limited flexibility in proffer interpretations) means that there is limited agility to respond to changes in market.
- Since proffers currently provide an avenue by which developers can satisfy some community needs, imposing limitations on proffers in the future may encounter significant political resistance.
- The nature of issues is now more complex – infill, redevelopment, environmental issues, etc. – the policies and regulations should not stifle development, and also the process needs to be agile to accommodate changing development methods/needs.
- Land Use Committees have concerns that they will have less of a voice with the Fairfax Forward process.

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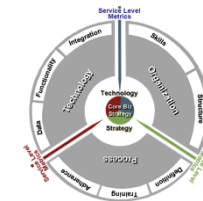
## Service Levels

### Current State Understanding

- Entitlements
- Site Plan Review
- Build Plan Review







# Current State Understanding

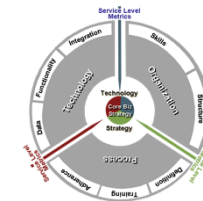
## Service Levels: Entitlements

- State Legislation mandates reviews to be completed 12 months from acceptance (unless amended or extended by mutual agreement or other) for the following types of cases:

Case Type	FY 2015 Number of Actions	Average Action Time (Acceptance to BOS Decision)	FY 2016 Number of Actions (as of 9/20/15)	Average Action Time (as of 9/20/15)
Rezoning Applications (RZ/DPA/PRC)	27	14.7 months	5	11.6 months
Proffer Condition Amendment (PCA)	15	9.9 months	8	7.9 months
Special Exception / Amendment	68	7.9 months	9	7 months

Source: County provided metrics in September 2015.

- Additionally, State Legislation mandates Special Permit/Amendment be completed 90 days from acceptance (unless extended by mutual agreement or other).
- There were 87 such cases acted upon by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) in FY 2015, and it took an average of 3.8 months to complete a case.



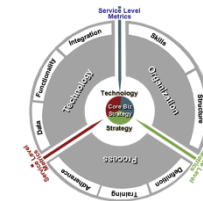
## Current State Understanding

### Service Levels: Entitlements (cont.)

- The following cases do not have State Legislation mandated timelines, but their FY 2015 actual processing times are noted below:

ZED FY 2015 INFORMATION		
Milestone Measure	Number of Applications	Average Time Frame
Application Acceptance – Board of Supervisor applications	195	44 days
Application Acceptance – Board of Zoning Appeals applications	261	71 days
Proffer Interpretation	116	41% reviewed within 30 days
Comprehensive Sign Plan/Amendment Acceptance to PC Action	9	4.7 months
Parking Reduction	~5 requests over 4 years	9-13 mo
Zoning Compliance Letter	339	24 days
Clerks Letter – Files Received from Coordinator	75	17 days
Clerks Letter – Letter Received	75	19 days

Source: County provided metrics September 2015.



# Current State Understanding

## Service Levels: Site Plan Review

- Below are the Site Plan Review current processing times (June- August 2015):

Plan Type	Average Review Time (Days)
Major (SP, SD, PI), First Submission	61
Major (SP, SD, PI), DPE Subsequent Submissions	23*
Major (SP, SD, PI), Non-DPE Subsequent Submissions	57
Infill Lot Grading Plan (INF, Non-bonded Single Family)	26

\*For DPE subsequent submissions, the applicant is responsible for obtain outside agency approval.

Source: [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/sitedevelopment/site\\_review\\_times.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/sitedevelopment/site_review_times.htm)

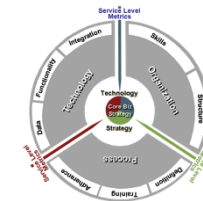
### **Glossary**

SP=Site Plan

SD=Subdivision Plan

PI=Public Improvement Plan

- Fire Marshal's Office is currently processing 77 plans (as of September 15, 2015) with work day lags up to 20 days depending on type of plan.



## Current State Understanding

### Service Levels: Building Plan Review

- Below are the Building Plan Review current processing times (verified September, 2015):

Plan Type	Backlog (time from submission to assignment to a reviewer)	Review Time (time from assignment to completion of full review)	Total estimated time for first set of reviews
New single family dwellings (R# plans)	1 - 2 weeks	2 weeks	3 - 4 weeks
Additions to single family dwellings (R# plans)	1 - 2 weeks	1 week	2 - 3 weeks
Tenant Layouts (Q# plans - non walk-thru)	4 weeks	4 - 5 weeks	8 - 9 weeks
New commercial buildings and additions (Q# plans)	4 weeks	5 - 7 weeks	9 - 11 weeks
Retaining walls and similar structures	2 weeks	1 week	3 weeks

• [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/construction/bpr\\_times.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/construction/bpr_times.htm)

- Plans submitted through the expedited peer review process can reduce times by 2-4 weeks.



## Service Levels

### Current State Findings – SWOT Analysis



# Current State Findings (Service Levels)

## SWOT Analysis – Strengths



### Strengths

- Several entitlement case types are processed within the State Legislation mandated timeline.
- The County and industry are collaborating to establish meaningful metrics (e.g. review times).
- Through the Development Work Program, the County has been able to significantly reduce review times since 2013.
- From a customer service perspective, the County is open to dialogue with the customers, and provides avenues to help customers through the process:
  - Steering committee with County and industry members has been effective in creating open dialogue.
  - High customer satisfaction with direct interaction with senior staff and specific staff.
  - Staff spend a significant portion of time answering calls and helping customers.
  - County has established formal customer service roles such as Planner of the Day, Engineer of the Day, and the Ombudsman.
  - DPZ and LDS each provide designated Customer Service facilities for in-person interaction and support with property owners, applicants and/or their representatives.

# Current State Findings (Service Levels)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses



### Weaknesses

- The definition of “customer” varies by individual. This variability has fostered inconsistent customer service philosophies resulting in different motivations across the organization.
  - Some define the County’s customers as the citizens and would argue that the Staff works only to serve them.
  - Others define the County’s customer as the applicant, while the citizens’ best interests are protected.
- Different Agencies and Divisions within Fairfax County have different missions that may be not align with serving applicants as the “customer” (e.g. the Fire Marshal’s Office is fairly unwavering in the interpretation and adherence to code so as to ensure the safety of public, building occupants and firefighters who may respond to emergencies at the premises). The variability in mission between County agencies and resistance to compromise can result in conflicting priorities that may put plan reviews in a deadlock.
  - This may lead to a perception that individual reviewers can have too much influence or may not be motivated to find solutions.
- Industry has cited that they do not feel like there is an “advocate” for them on the County side looking out for their projects.
- Customer service is decentralized.
  - In-person customer service facilities are located on the same floor but their functions are siloed by Department (DPZ and DPWES LDS). Customers must interact with each group independently and do not have a consistent experience when dealing with both.
  - Customers are expected to call multiple departments/contacts depending on what they need. While this can be effective for customers that are familiar with the system, per staff it is not uncommon for some customers to be routed around on the phone to different staff before getting to the correct staff member that can help them with their problem.

# Current State Findings (Service Levels)

## SWOT Analysis – Weaknesses (cont.)



### Weaknesses (cont.)

- “Problem-solving” attitude is not typical in the County.
  - Customers are often responsible for de-conflicting agency comments.
  - Reviewers can be unwilling to compromise and find alternative solutions.
- Metrics do not measure the total time it actually takes to get full approval or total time to market, or the quality of work performed
- Metrics typically are not developed from the customer’s perspective.
- The overall process is deemed by industry to be too lengthy to meet market demands, which may be leading the industry to attempt to shorten timelines by turning around plans as fast as possible at the cost of quality, and scheduling for inspections but not being able to complete the work in time.
- The County should work with Industry to jointly craft proffers that are clearly written, that are clear in intent, are able to be implemented and enforced. There needs to be greater flexibility in proffers to allow for site constraints/final engineering, changes in technology and changes in market.
- Reviewers stated that they feel like industry does what they are specifically told to do – they address comments, fulfill punch lists, respond to denial issues. The industry says staff is not “cooperative” but staff may feel pushed into the regulatory role because the many applicants are not putting forth the effort to produce quality plans.



# Current State Findings (Service Levels)

## SWOT Analysis – Opportunities



### Opportunities

- Creating a unified Customer Service Center would improve the in-person customer experience.
- Fairfax County should clearly define who the customer is for each type of service as well as identify key stakeholders groups. Services can be better aligned with specific customer groups and expectations.
- The County should revisit premium services and fees to align with customer priorities to increase stakeholder accountability.
- The County should adopt a consistent “customer “friendly” approach to customer service. There can be a balance between providing customer service to applicants while ensuring the citizens’ best interests and safety are protected.
- Consider training/developing soft skills for County staff who interact with customers and citizens.
- Consider leveraging project managers more broadly as a coordinator in the land use and development lifecycle to support customers in navigating the process. The concept is used effectively in Tysons.
- Define metrics that align with industry standards and ensure that new systems can properly capture and measure the data.
- Consider co-location of functions to increase face-to-face collaboration/human interaction.
- The Industry should-conduct ‘self-policing’ and track offenders bucking the system.

# Current State Findings (Service Levels)

## SWOT Analysis – Opportunities (cont.)



### Opportunities (cont.)

- Improved service levels with reduced time to market will enable businesses and the County to maximize revenue. All customers – from large developers to small businesses and homeowners – are impacted financially when review and approvals are delayed.
- Fees could be based on the level of service (i.e. pay more for expedited reviews).

# Current State Findings (Service Levels)

## SWOT Analysis – Threats



### Threats

- Individual philosophies on customer service may be a high hurdle to overcome in establishing a consistent customer service culture.
- Failure to address customers “taking advantage” of system by waiting for rejection for specific things to be fixed (e.g. plan review, inspections).
- While striving to provide high customer satisfaction, County staff may become too reactive which interrupts work and results in a lot of “hand holding”. The industry should be held accountable for doing better.
- Failing to address the specific differences in customer types and trying to treat them all in the same manner.
- Continued affirmation that “going around the process” is the best way to achieve desired outcomes.
- Long hiring cycles failing to keep up with demand and impacting customer service/perceptions.
- Comparative experiences in other jurisdictions “fueling the fire” of dissatisfaction.

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# APPENDIX

## Glossary

Abbreviation	Full Name
ASP	Active Server Page
BAC	Bonds and Agreements Center
BZA	Board of Zoning Appeals
CAP	Capital Facilities Branch of DPWES
CTSC	Customer and Technical Service Center
DCC	Department of Code Compliance
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DPA	Development Plan Amendment
DPE	Designated Plan Examiner
DPWES	Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
DPWES LDS	Department of Public Works and Environmental Services – Land Development Services
DPZ	Department of Planning and Zoning
ESI	Engineers and Surveyors Institute
ESRC	Engineering Standards Review Committee
FCDOT	Fairfax County Department of Transportation
FIDO	Fairfax Inspections Database Online
FMO	Fire Marshal's Office

# APPENDIX

## Glossary (cont.)

Abbreviation	Full Name
GIS	Geographic Information System
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
LDI	Land Development Information
LDS	Land Development System
LUC	Land Use Committee
MAR	Master Address Repository
MEP	Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing
MS SSRS	Microsoft SQL Server Report Services
PAWS	Plans and Waivers System
PD	Planning Division
PFM	Public Facilities Manual
SAC	Site Addressing Center
SDID	Site Development Inspections Division
SI2K	Site Inspections 2000
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TIA	Traffic Impact Analysis
TOPS	Technology, Operations, Process, and Service Levels

# APPENDIX

## Glossary

Abbreviation	Full Name
UPS	Unit Price Schedule
VB	Visual Basic
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
ZAD	Zoning Administration Division
ZAPS	Zoning Application System
ZED	Zoning Evaluation Division
ZPRB	Zoning Permits Review Branch

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