# Fairfax County Process Innovation Team
## January 2019

**The following is a summary of improvements that have been made or are underway for each of the following development review processes, as of January 2019:**

- Commercial Building Plans/Permits
- Rezoning and Proffer Condition Amendments
- Residential Use Permits
- Site Plan/Bond Approval

## Commercial Building Plans/Permits

**Completed:**

- Fire Marshal Reviewer workload has been more evenly distributed among reviewers.
- The Technical Services Branch in the Building Division of LDS has taken over the Fast Track review process for tenant improvement plans with dedicated staff.

**Underway:**

- Restaurant Review Improvements
  - Benchmark surrounding jurisdictions' plan review process.
  - Develop a list of top 10 rejection items.
  - Determine when restaurants could be eligible for the Fast Track Program.
  - Pilot pre-submission meetings.
- Create an online applicants' express check-in line at the Permit Application Center to encourage more online applications.
- Benchmark fees with neighboring jurisdictions.

## Re-Zoning/Proffered Condition Amendments

**Underway:**

- Formal acceptance letters are currently being revised in the ZAPS system to add a stated expectation for staff assignment within one week (seven calendar days) of acceptance.
- Zoning Evaluation Staff are developing a way to track zoning cases and set timelines with applicants throughout the life of a project.

**Future:**

- Through a joint staff-industry work group improve the pre-application and acceptance process.
- Commission a staff working group to examine application types that may have flexibility within the state code to optimize staff resources and applicant time. For example, Comprehensive Sign Plans require a public hearing process (per the local Zoning

Ordinance).  Is it possible to process CSP applications administratively instead? This group would need to research each application type to determine flexibility, and identify alternative methods of processing the request, and determine the implementation plan to incorporate these changes (internal SOP, Zoning Ordinance amendment, etc.). As these issues are raised during the Zoning Modernization (zMOD) process, they are being discussed in that venue.

## Residential Use Permits (RUPs)

**Completed:**

- RUP requests have been extended to 4 p.m.

**Underway:**

- Site inspectors to recommend pre-RUP inspections to all customers.
- Develop a RUP webpage with process requirements and steps.

**Near Term:**

- Zoning staff will login/out Height Certifications in the database.

**Long Term:**

- Online RUP requests with PLUS.

## Site Plan and Bond Approval

**Underway:**

- Develop an SOP for inserts that clearly defines what is allowable and increase accountability. The electronic plans, or e-plans, initiative is developing an SOP that will supersede inserts.
- Allow customers to submit their bond estimate at the first submission of the plan, with a minimum expectation that the bond estimate be submitted by second submission.

**Near Term:**

- Expand staff presence in pre-submission meetings to include staff from the Customer Technical Support Center, specifically Facilities and Addressing Center (FAC) and Bonds and Agreements Center (BAC) staff.
- Establish clarity regarding the role and responsibility of Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) staff in pre-submission meetings, and the overall site plan process.

- Streetlights review should be incorporated into Site Development and Inspections Division (SDID) review - like geotechnical or stormwater reviews. This would increase accountability and lead to more predictable site plan review times.  More discussion needs to follow.
- Evaluate the County's relationship with ESI. Recently hired ESI staff has provided improved review to plans consistent with ESI contract, so staff feels this concern is addressed if current staff remains.  LDS conducts monthly coordination meetings with ESI.
- Allow customers to incorporate waivers/modification requests as well as studies and reports into first submission.
- Upon second submission, plans should be automatically reassigned to the first submission reviewer in SDID. Branch Chiefs would still be able to re-assign if the reviewer was no longer with the county or out of office.
- Clarify/define the need for the level of in depth review of the bond estimate as it is now being executed by BAC staff. Currently, they review beyond the checklist and beyond the scope of their expertise.
- Instead of requiring branch chief final signature on plans, have BAC staff move the plan for final log out.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of LDS/DPZ staff in the Site Plan/Bond Approval process. Look to other localities for alternatives.


**PLUS/Future**

- Long term, the new software, PLUS, will ensure that any associated plan approval expirations are accounted for.  To learn more about the PLUS project, see page two of the most recent issue of "Developing News" Fall 2018.)

In PLUS, the system will automatically assign plans at first submission based on district and workload that will no longer require heavy branch chief oversight. Currently, it takes roughly 72 hours to assign plans manually once logged in at SAC.


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