

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA REQUEST**

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Carl Smith, Director of Community Development 

DATE: July 23, 2012

RE: Department of Community Development (DCD) Improvement Program

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

As a result of the recession of 2008, DCD experienced a steep reduction in staff (from 25 full time staff prior to the recession down to 14 at present). This staff reduction led to difficulty in DCD's ability to keep up with its workload, resulting in a significant backlog of work and longer processing times, which caused complaints from applicants. To correct this situation, DCD has initiated a program of improvements intended to provide better services to support land use development and the economy of Jefferson County.

ANALYSIS:

DCD's challenge is to find ways to manage its workload with its existing staff and budgetary resources. To address this challenge, DCD has initiated a program of improvements to reduce the backlog of permit applications and provide on-going timely permitting by implementing measures to streamline application processing without sacrificing quality; and establishment of better customer service protocols to improve DCD's communication, input and partnership with the community. At the time of this report, the backlog of development applications needing action from DCD or the Department of Environmental Health stands at 187. To remove the backlog, this program will include directing nearly all staff to work on existing permit applications or other improvement strategies during certain times each week. Because this program will redirect most staff away from existing work, it is likely to have some impact on current work priorities for the time duration needed to remove the backlog, estimated at 9-12 months. Every attempt will be made to limit such impacts. This program will result in improved services that benefit the development community, construction related jobs and the economy of Jefferson County. Maintaining these benefits over the long term will also rely on adequate staffing and budgetary resources for DCD. Included with this agenda request is a summary list of the "DCD Improvements Goals and Strategies", dated July 17, 2012.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No direct impact from the proposed action

RECOMMENDATION:

Comments and suggestions by the Board are encouraged. No formal Board action is requested.

REVIEWED BY:


Philip Morley, County Administrator


Date

DCD Improvements Goals and Strategies
7/17/12

<p>Goal 1. Eliminate the backlog of land use applications waiting for DCD processing and implement strategies to stay current on new applications. Strategies:</p>	<p>Start-Complete</p>
<p>1.1 Concentrated effort by staff on a dedicated day each week on prioritized projects to eliminate the backlog of applications needing DCD action.</p> <p>1.2 Develop criteria for fast-tracking simple applications with minimal issues/impacts.</p> <p>1.3 Identify and implement more "over-the-counter" permits.</p> <p>1.4 Establish and track new performance indicators, including processing time (ex:120-day clock for major applications. __days for building permits).</p> <p>1.5 Develop checklists and flowcharts to guide and standardize processing steps.</p> <p>1.6 Speed and shorten processing time by streamlining DCD review procedures & forms for greater efficiency. Work concurrently with Dept of Health to speed processing of applications with septic or other Dept of Health requirements.</p> <p>1.7 Evaluate the need for meetings (make them as efficient and brief as possible).</p>	<p>7/20-12/31/12</p>
<p>Goal 2. Improve customer service, including increased opportunities to connect with the community. Strategies:</p>	
<p>2.1 Increase the back-up capability for the Permit Technician position.</p> <p>2.2 Implement new or improved customer service protocols to maintain communication and coordination with applicants including regular personal contact by staff, web, print media and customer feedback forms.</p> <p>2.3 Update DCD's mission statement and display it prominently.</p> <p>2.4 Provide regular opportunities to seek input by the development community and other community groups and individuals.</p> <p>2.5 Provide regular outreach opportunities to hear from the public and to inform and assist the public (workshops, news articles, speaking engagements).</p> <p>2.6 Provide regular performance indicator reporting to track improvement progress, including on web, print media & annual report.</p>	<p>7/20-12/31/12</p>
<p>Goal 3. Sustain the improvements with structural changes so that DCD can better manage its workload for the long-term benefit of the Community and staff. Strategies:</p>	
<p>3.1 Identify and revise codes to simplify regulatory requirements.</p> <p>3.2 Design and implement a major overhaul of the DCD's website for greater usability.</p> <p>3.3 Allow on-line payment and permit applications and some permits.</p> <p>3.4 Prepare ordinance to terminate old permit applications with no activity for years.</p> <p>3.5 Revise and update the annual DCD workplan to set realistic expectations.</p>	<p>1/1/13-12/31/13</p>

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Philip Morley, County Administrator

FROM: Jared Keefer, Director of Environmental Health and Water Quality

DATE: July 23, 2012

SUBJECT: Agenda Item – Presentation on Environmental Health Permit Operation Improvement Plan

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Improvement opportunities exist in the current system of Environmental Health and the Department of Community Development permit operations. Due to recent financial downturn and increased staff workload these changes were postponed until now. The primary focus area for Environmental Health is in processing building permit on-site wastewater disposal reviews. Identified opportunities are: untimeliness of processing, lack of communication of application status and miscommunication of application requirements. The resultant effects of these opportunities are: lack of case status coordination, mixed messages to clients, applicant and staff frustrations and staff pressure to fast-track certain applications in response to client complaints. Ultimately, these effects result in lack of consistency as well as further complication and delay of the overall process.

ANALYSIS/STRATEGIC GOALS/PRO'S and CON'S:

In order to address these opportunities, a number of improvements will be made in operations to streamline the workflow, workload and communication. The resultant improvements will: 1) Establish metrics by which efficiency and improvements can be measured. 2) Reallocate Environmental Health staff workload to optimize resources. 3) Further leverage existing IT resources to improve communication between departments and clients. 4) Partner with DCD in their planned improvement program to both improve communication and response times for building permit on-site wastewater disposal reviews.

FISCAL IMPACT/COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

No direct fiscal impact from the proposed action.00000c

RECOMMENDATION:

Comments and suggestions by the Board are encouraged. No formal Board action is requested.

REVIEWED BY:


Philip Morley, County Administrator


Date