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# SALT LAKE CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

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**DATE:** April 21, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Refinement of the City's Development Review and Permitting Processes  
(One-Stop-Shop)

**STAFF REPORT BY:** Sylvia Jones, Policy Analyst

**ADMINISTRATIVE DEPT.  
AND CONTACT PERSON:** Department of Community Development, Building Services  
and Licensing Division – Orion Goff, Director

**CC:**

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## KEY ELEMENTS:

1. In response to a recommendation by the Administration and authorization from the City Council, the Department of Community Development hired a consultant to analyze the City's development review and permitting processes. As part of this process, feedback was solicited from local developers, contractors and customers.
2. Based on the consultant's study, the following issues pose a challenge to development customers using the City's system:
  - a. There is no single point of contact City during the review and approval process.
  - b. There are differences between the City's plan review process and the private development community's plan review process.
  - c. Customers must contact multiple divisions/departments at multiple locations, and the status of a project at a given moment in time is uncertain.
  - d. Multiple sets of plans are required for the review process which causes confusion and increases project costs.
  - e. Divisions reviewing the plans do not share information; therefore, comments regarding the project are not shared or coordinated.
  - f. Comments from preliminary plan reviews are often inadequate or incomplete due to lack of basic initial information and lack of shared data.
3. The following goals have been identified to assist in the refinement of the current review process:
  - a. Provide predictable plan review timeframes and results to all customers.
  - b. Meet deadlines and resolve interdepartmental disagreements quickly.
  - c. Create processes which allow flexibility for complex as well as simple projects.
  - d. Coordinate all development review through a single point of contact.
  - e. Review proposed changes with all departments and interested parties prior to adopting changes to regulations and ordinances relating to development.
4. Short term action items identified by the Division focus on making the flow of information and review process more transparent to customers. The Division has created a new plan review process called *The*

*Coordinated Plans Review Team*, to simplify the review process and provide a single point of contact. (Please refer to the flowchart in the Administration's transmittal entitled, 'Coordinated Plan Review Process', which outlines the new process.

5. The Division will also develop an employee training program, including efforts to cross-train staff amongst the reviewing agencies. Building Services and Licensing staff indicated that any costs associated with training will be handled within their existing budget.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS/POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION:**

1. In response to recommendations from the consultant, the Division will pursue the creation of a citywide database in order to share information and plan review comments. The creation of the database will necessitate the purchase of computer software which will allow for timely updates, internet access for customers, and multiple report formats for development tracking. Commercial software estimates are being sought. The Division may also consider an in-house cost estimate provided by IMS.

It is Council staff's understanding that this item will not appear in the Mayor's Recommended Budget, but may come to the Council during a FY 2006-07 budget opening as a one-time expense. *The Council may wish to ask how long it may take to create an in-house program and how soon the program could be implemented, once it is created. The Council may also wish to ask about the time available for City staff to complete the task without negatively impacting other priorities given that the national standards indicate that the City staffing level in IMS is below average.*

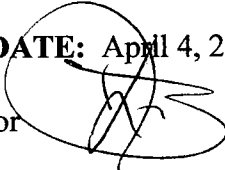
2. To assist with the implementation of a one-stop-shop for permitting, the Administration's transmittal indicates that the Division will be requesting 1 FTE, Development Project Coordinator and 1 FTE, Office Facilitator. It is Council staff's understanding that the Mayor's Recommended Budget will also include a request for 1 FTE, Fire Inspection Plan Reviewer and 1 FTE, Building Inspector II.
3. The Administration's transmittal indicates that Division will also request funds to reconfigure Room 215 to accommodate a one-stop-shop approach. It is Council staff's understanding that the remodel has been approved by the Building Conservancy Committee.

A. LOUIS ZUNGUZE  
DIRECTOR  
  
BRENT B. WILDE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**SALT LAKE CITY CORPORATION**  
DEPT. OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

ROSS C. "ROCKY" ANDERSON  
MAYOR

**CITY COUNCIL TRANSMITTAL**

**TO:** Ross C. "Rocky" Anderson, Mayor *RC* **DATE:** April 4, 2006  
**FROM:** Louis Zunguze, Community Development Director   
**RE:** Refinement of the City's Development Review and Permitting Processes  
**STAFF CONTACTS:** Orion Goff, Building Services & Licensing Director, at 535-6681 or orion.goff@slcgov.com  
**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council schedule a briefing on the proposed revisions to the current plan review and permitting processes  
**DOCUMENT TYPE:** Briefing  
**BUDGET IMPACT:** Funds have been requested as part of the Department of Community Development budget for FY06-07

**DISCUSSION:**

**Issue Origin:** The City Council and Administration directed the Department of Community Development to analyze the City's development review and permitting processes and recommend reforms. In conjunction with a consultant, the Building Services & Licensing Division (BSL) conducted a thorough analysis of current preliminary and core plan review processes. A flowchart of the current process is provided in Attachment A. Feedback from developers, contractors, and other customers was solicited and incorporated in the Division's analysis.

**Analysis:** Review of the current plan review and permitting processes identified key issues that challenge customers as they progress with development in Salt Lake City. The issues identified are:

- No coordinated single point of contact for the development review and permitting of a project
- No one person or agency responsible for the overall approval of a project
- No way to track a project through the multi-Departmental review and permitting process
- Phases of the City's development review processes do not closely align with the phases of the development community's development and design process

- Permitting and review processes require customers to contact multiple Divisions/ Departments in several locations; no one group or person seems to know the status of a project at any given.
- Multiple sets of plans are required for reviews and to obtain permits, which increases project expense.
- Reviewing entities within the City are confused about others' comments and review status.
- Comments from preliminary plan reviews are often inadequate or incomplete, in part because Building Plan Review is not part of the Design Review Team (DRT) process.

In response to the Division's analysis of the review and permitting processes, five main principles for reform were identified:

- Predictability
- Accountability
- Flexibility
- Efficiency
- Transparency

Specific goals to address these needs have been identified and a strategic action plan formulated. Goals for City development review and permitting reform are as follows:

- Provide reasonably predictable timeframes and results to all parties.
- Be accountable for meeting established timeframes and resolving interdepartmental disagreements expeditiously.
- Create processes with enough flexibility to address the needs of small, simple projects as well as larger, more complex developments.
- Coordinate all development-review related work through a single point of contact.
- Review all proposed changes to development-review related ordinances and regulations with all involved City Departments and interested stakeholders prior to adoption.

**Discussion:** In order to accomplish the goals outlined above, a plan for both immediate and long-term action has been outlined. Short term actions focus on resolving concerns with the flow of information throughout reviewing Departments/Divisions, making the review and permitting process more transparent to customers, and improving customer satisfaction. A new plan review process, called the Coordinated Plans Review Team, has been developed which will greatly simplify the City's process for customers by providing a single point of contact for review and permitting plan submittals. A flowchart outlining the new process is provided in Attachment B.

Equally important is the creation of a Citywide database to share interdepartmental plan review comments; this step, however, will necessarily take a longer period of time to implement since computer software will have to be purchased in order to provide the necessary services of real-time updates, internet access for customers, and multiple report formats for development tracking.

**Recommendation:** The Administration recommends implementing the following to address the immediate needs to improve review and permitting processes:

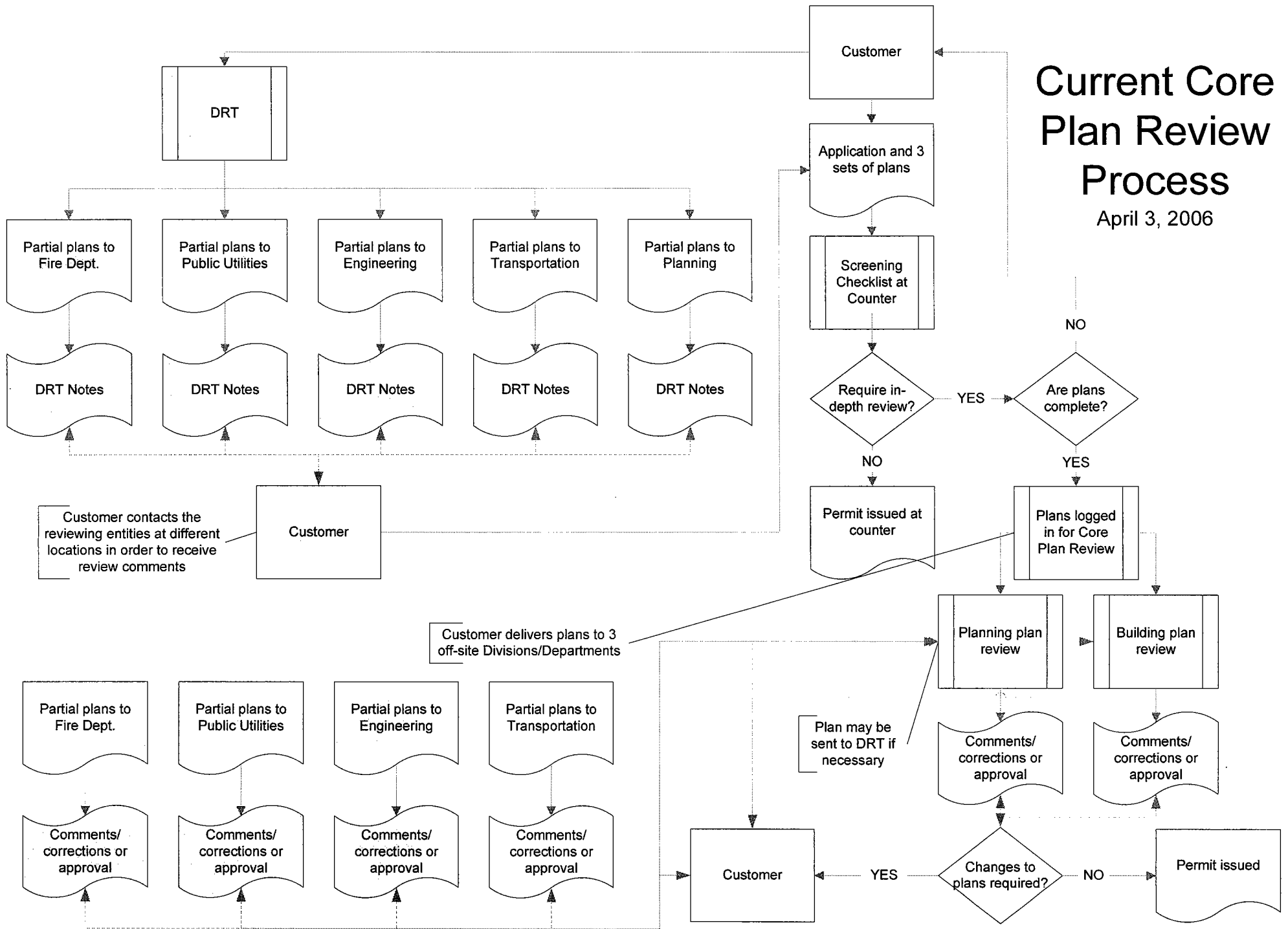
- Streamline current review processes
- Compile existing review requirements into a single document available to the public in electronic and hardcopy formats
- Develop an employee training program which includes cross-training between reviewing agencies' staffs
- Hire a Project Coordinator and Office Facilitator to track and process plan reviews across disciplines
- Reconfigure the space in Room 215 to accommodate a One-Stop-Shop approach to review and permitting processes
- Begin research into the best solution for the long term goal of a Citywide database for plan review comments

Please note that the resources necessary to hire the additional personnel and to reconfigure the space in the BSL office are included in the Community Development Department's requested budget for fiscal year 2006-2007.

**Attachment A:  
Current Core Review Process**

# Current Core Plan Review Process

April 3, 2006



**Attachment B:  
Proposed Coordinated  
Plan Review Process**



# Coordinated Plan Review Process

March 20, 2006

