Land Use & Housing Technical Advisory Committee
Subcommittee Action Plan Recommendations
August 2000

DATE ISSUED: August 3, 2000   REPORT NO. 00-162

ATTENTION: Land Use and Housing Committee
                  Agenda of August 9, 2000

SUBJECT: Item 2 - Status Report and Action Plan for Technical Advisory Committee

REFERENCE: Manager's Report 00-50, dated March 10, 2000

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

On March 15, 2000, the Land Use and Housing Committee approved the appointment of a revised Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to investigate options to improve the performance and customer service in the land and building development review process. This committee convened in June 2000 and has since worked diligently to identify an action plan to improve the permitting process.

DISCUSSION

The TAC has organized itself into four subcommittees to deal with specific options and recommendations to improve permit processing. These committees are E-Permitting, Plan Submittal Templates, Self Certification, and Inspection Services. Each subcommittee has met to discuss options and formulate action items which have been summarized in Attachment 1.

E-Permitting - The focus of this subcommittee has been to explore opportunities to provide more information and services on-line through the City's website. These items fall into the following categories:

    Improve the design, functionality, and content of the existing website
    Provide on-line project information
    Provide on-line project services such as no plan permits and electronic plan checking

The Department has retained a consultant and will be working with Information Technology and Communications (IT&C) to redesign and implement improvements to the City's website for customers of the development process. Development is in the final phases of

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new project tracking software to replace legacy mainframe systems which have been in existence since the late 1980's. This software will be completed within the next six months with full implementation to occur six months thereafter and is being programmed to be Internet capable, which will allow more project data to be displayed on the website. The subcommittee is also working with IT&C to pilot a "low-tech" electronic plan check program which can be implemented with existing equipment and Internet access.

Plan Submittal Templates - Both the Zero Based Management Review Committee and the TAC have identified opportunities in the plan submittal process to reduce plan check times and resubmittals. A pilot program to utilize standardized "templates" to organize plan check information is being developed. These templates will be part of a Preferred Plan Check Program which provides incentives, in the form of reduced plan check turnaround times, for applicants that agree to follow the standardized templates. Also being investigated are the expansion of programs which handle smaller projects through Over-The-Counter (OTC) plan check and Homeowners Night.

Self Certification - The Department has implemented self-certification for the Master Plan Program and is finalizing implementation of similar programs for minor civil engineering permits and landscape plan check; projects will be subject to final approval in the inspection process. These programs will save both time and cost in the plan check process and place greater responsibility for compliance with the respective code on the design professional.

Inspection Services - A key theme in the inspection process is to improve communication of inspection results. This can be accomplished both through the use of technology and improving internal procedures for updating inspection status. Another area of focus is improving customer service by increasing the problem solving ability of inspectors at the job site. A Customer Service Policy is being developed Department-wide to emphasize the importance of responsiveness to the public.

The action plan includes a tentative schedule based upon initial discussions with each subcommittee on the scope of work of each item. The plan will be updated regularly to reflect the status of existing items as well as any new initiatives developed by the TAC.

Respectfully submitted,

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CHRISTIANSEN/SMH

Attachment: 1. Land Use & Housing Technical Advisory Committee
     Subcommittee Action Plan Recommendations