

Local Area Business Team

Recommendations for service delivery improvements

May 28, 2015

The Development Center serves as the primary portal into the City for development projects. It was initiated to better serve the development community through eliminating the need for home owners, business owners, developers, design professionals, and contractors (the development community) to connect individually with all of the varied City agencies that are involved with the many and varied development approval processes.

Since its inception, the inter-departmental communications have continuously improved. This has improved, then, the delivery of services to the development community.

The goal now is to look for additional ways in which the City can provide an even greater level of service in reduced time with reduced resources. Below are recommendations for improvements to that end.

Department of Public Works

- 1) Maintain and enhance lines of communication and cooperation between the Development Center and the Department of Public Works to facilitate broader understanding of the role DPW plays in the development entitlement process thereby expanding the capability of Development Center staff to provide accurate and complete information and services to the development community limiting the need for applicants to visit two locations.
- 2) Storm Water Management (SWM) plan reviews conducted at the Development Center. The daily side-by-side review of projects involving both SWM and Plumbing plans provides a cross training opportunity between the two disciplines.
- 3) Develop strategies by which simple DPW permits (driveway, ROW occupancy, etc.) can be reviewed and approved immediately without sending applications to multiple sections. Identify key concerns relative to these permit types. Using technology and existing data (micro station) enables the Development Center to review conditions to address the key concerns and approve a majority of these permits immediately with appropriate conditions of approval.
- 4) Develop strategies for review of building plans for infrastructure concerns without physically routing plans to the DPW. Similar to above, identify key concerns relative to these reviews currently conducted by DPW staff. Using technology and existing data (micro station) enables the Development Center to review site conditions to address the key concerns and approve a majority of these projects immediately.

Health Department

- 1) Create 1.0 FTE Consumer Environmental Health (CEH) Coordinator and reclassify 1.0 FTE Environmental Health Specialist to CEH Coordinator to generate the necessary capacity to have a Health Department representative on staff full time in the Development Center. By having a Health Department representative on staff at the Development Center and having the Development Center serve as the point of intake for commercial construction projects requiring Health Department approval assures better integration and communication between departments during the development process and enable real time communication when issues arise. By utilizing a rotation rather than single individual to

staff the Development Center operators will be able to have the same CEH Coordinator who approved their plans perform their inspection to assure continuity in the development process while at the same time assuring a CEH Coordinator remains available at the Development Center during business hours.

- 2) In addition to performing plan reviews, construction inspections and pre-operational inspections, CEH Coordinators staffing the Development Center shall serve as community/businesses project navigators for establishments regulated by Health, serve on multi-disciplinary/multi-departmental committees to review and refine the licensing and development process and will be available to present at community meetings or trainings regarding opening a business in Milwaukee. .

Licensing Division

- 1) Presence of the License Division at the Development Center to provide consultation to customers. Applications for licenses could then be made simultaneously with Certificate of Occupancy applications when required. Potential advantages are enhanced coordination between the two applications and eliminating the need for the applicant to visit two locations.
- 2) Conditional permits could be considered to allow new construction, additions, and alterations to buildings to proceed at the applicant risk. Currently, these construction permits would normally be withheld pending license approval. Similar to the Conditional Permit process for projects pending BOZA or CPC approval, Conditional Permits would require License Division and Aldermanic approval.

Department of City Development

- 1) Evaluate the City of Milwaukee's current contractor bonding and insurance requirements for small City government contracts. The existing bonding requirements, which sometimes require bonds larger than the loss that would be incurred should the contractor fail to perform, can discourage emerging businesses from bidding on City work.
- 2) Establish an interactive "Milwaukee Business 211" web site that has comprehensive information about local and state business regulation; business assistance resources, and local organizations that provide support to small businesses. This will require staffing and vendor support.
- 3) Establish a single online City of Milwaukee business customer survey, to be used by all City departments that engage with businesses. A team of department representatives, including a representative from ITMD, should work together to develop the survey content and choose an appropriate online platform to host the survey.
- 4) Establish a business customer assistance team, consisting of a representative from each City department that engages with business and chaired by a staff person from the Dept. of City Development. The DCD staff person would require an allocation on a new position. Members of the team would have the following responsibilities:
 - a. Serve as an internal point of contact for customers who need assistance across departmental lines.

- b. Provide training to businesses and technical assistance providers (WWBIC, BizStarts, etc.), Business Improvement District directors, and others who assist entrepreneurs, to help them understand City regulations and processes.
 - c. Develop easy-to-follow “roadmaps” that describe local regulations that apply to common business types (restaurant, tavern, day care, etc.). Such roadmaps would be posted on the City’s web site and be used in training activities.
- 5) Adjust the sales procedures for City-owned commercial buildings. Except for high-value or prominent buildings, simply list buildings for sale, rather than using a Request for Proposal process. Accept and evaluate offers to purchase as they are submitted. Provide an option period (60 or 90 days) for buyer due diligence and response to City requests for additional information. For sales that cannot close at the end of the option period, terminate the offer and re-market the property.
- 6) Create a landscape pattern book that shows acceptable landscaping for permit applicants that need Board of Zoning Appeals approval. For any applicant that agrees to landscape in accordance with a design in the pattern book, eliminate the requirement that the applicant submit a landscaping plan to BOZA.

Other

- 1) Recommendations of the Zoning workgroup
- 2) Recommendations of the Licensing workgroup