



Highlights

Why We Did This Audit

We initiated this audit of the City Planning and Development Department's Land Development Division plan review process because during interviews for our arterial street impact fee audit a developer complained that plan reviews took too long.

Our audit focused on the timeliness of the Land Development Division's plan reviews.

Background

The Land Development Division is responsible for reviewing and approving public infrastructure construction plans related to private development. Developers are required to submit plans containing work related to streets, stormwater management and conveyance systems, sanitary sewers, street lights, street signals, and site disturbance greater than one acre.

Plan reviewers consider impacts to public infrastructure and determine infrastructure improvements and modifications needed in order to ensure that public infrastructure adequately serves the proposed project. If the reviewer determines the plan to be in general compliance, the reviewer approves the plan. If the plan is not in general compliance, the plan reviewer provides review comments to the developer's engineer for revision.

Click [here](#) to view the full report.

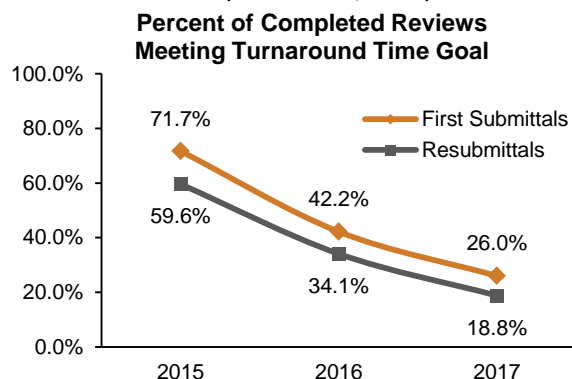
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PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Timeliness of Land Development Plan Reviews Could Be Improved

What We Found

The timeliness of both first submittal and resubmittal plan reviews has declined since fiscal year 2015. In fiscal year 2015, about 72 percent of the first submittal reviews met the turnaround time goal of 20 business days for first submittals. In fiscal year 2017, the percent of the first submittal reviews meeting the turnaround time goal dropped to 26 percent. The percentage of resubmittal reviews meeting the turnaround time goal of 10 business days has declined from 60 percent in fiscal year 2015 to 19 percent in fiscal year 2017.



Multiple factors contributed to plan review delays, including a thirty percent increase in the number of plan reviews, staff shortages, and inefficiencies in the outside contractor review process. In addition, delays in intake reviews, plans requiring multiple reviews, plan reviewers not returning deficient plans immediately to developers' engineers, reviewers performing clerical tasks, and outdated information in GIS could adversely impact plan review timeliness.

The current turnaround time goals for plan reviews may not be realistic given the increase in the number of plans submitted and the current staffing level. The turnaround time goal was established about twenty years ago and this audit has identified multiple factors that contribute to plan review delays. Plan review delays could lead to construction delays and cost developers time and money. Developers frustrated by the delays could decide to construct their development outside the city, resulting in lost tax revenue for the city.

What We Recommend

We make recommendations intended to improve the timeliness of land development plan reviews, including:

- Identifying and communicating recurring issues with submitted plans to developers and their design engineers.
- Immediately returning deficient plans to design engineers.
- Reducing reviewers' time performing clerical tasks.
- Updating stormwater line GIS information.
- Reevaluating turnaround time goals.

Management agreed with all of the recommendations.