



**Notice of Policy and Procedural Changes within the Economic & Community  
Development Department – Effective 12/3/13**

December 13, 2013

To: Builders and Developers

Re: Notice of Policy and Procedural Changes within the Department of Economic and Community  
Development

From: Rick Horst, City Manager

Development activity within the City of Rocklin is robust and we welcome the increased interest in bringing quality projects to our community. City resources remain static however, presenting unique challenges and opportunities for revisiting the way we do business. We remain committed to our vision principle to see Rocklin as a community of neighborhoods; each unique and essential in preserving and promoting a diverse and welcoming community. It is our desire to foster collaborative efforts to ensure creative and thoughtful development that promotes quality of life and the prosperity of the Community. With this in mind, we are implementing policy and procedural changes that are intended to save both staff and applicants time throughout the development process.

These new policies focus on several critical areas in the developer/city interface when processing projects.

- Early review process (prior to formal application submittal)
- Overall application processing timeframe
- Planning, Building & Engineering plan review
- Electronic Plan Submittal
- “At-risk” plan checks

In reviewing the City’s development process, it was determined that a significant amount of staff time is spent on projects that are not fully prepared for city review, fail to follow the necessary steps to move the project forward in a timely manner or do not submit requested documentation needed for review. It is the City’s intent to focus our limited staff time and resources on projects with active and engaged applicants that provide timely responses to city requests for information and help develop creative solutions. Conversely, projects that fail to address staff requests for information or do not move forward in a timely manner will be given lower priority status. We believe that for most projects, this will be a benefit and will allow those projects to move forward in a timelier manner. We welcome your comments and feedback as we continue to improve our development review process.

For questions or feedback, please contact the Economic and Community Development Department at (916) 625-5100 or [planner@rocklin.ca.us](mailto:planner@rocklin.ca.us)

## EARLY PLANNING REVIEW PROCESS

Objective: Limit early review and focus on larger policy issues that can significantly affect project design, scope or objectives prior to submitting applications for entitlements. Encourage creative solutions and practical applications that take site specific characteristics into consideration.

Applies to: projects requiring interpretation of major policy issues such as significant zoning or general plan modifications, variance from applicable general development plan standards or substantial infrastructure needs. Projects that comply with zoning, general plan and other applicable standards will generally not require early review and can submit an application per the submittal guidelines as noted on the City's website at:

[www.rocklin.ca.us/depts/develop/planning/permits](http://www.rocklin.ca.us/depts/develop/planning/permits).

### New Process:

- Eliminates “Pre-application meetings” that often included lengthy discussions on site planning, design and other detailed issues and delayed the submittal of project applications.
- Creates a City staff “Quick Response Team” that provides preliminary screening to consider major policy issues prior to application submittal or investment in detailed plan designs.
- Limited to issues such as zoning, general plan compliance, project compatibility or other “big picture” policy questions.
  - Appropriateness of proposed land use or zoning concept, particularly if change from existing designation.
  - Relationship between the proposed project and existing city policies, goals or other surrounding projects.
  - Proposed creative solutions that may not necessarily adhere to current policies & standards, but address the unique characteristics of the project site and surrounding area.
  - Appropriateness of any special financing mechanisms or potential public/private partnerships.
- Detailed site planning, design & environmental issues will not be reviewed at this stage, but will be addressed as the project proceeds through the standard application review process.
- An applicant may request an early policy review by contacting the Economic & Community Development Department. Requests will be reviewed by the Economic & Community Development Director (Director).

### Benefits

- Reduces time before formal application submitted to City.
- Avoids detailed discussions of projects without benefit of all development reviewers.
- Encourages creative solutions and applications to site specific features and characteristics.

- Allows staff to focus on projects with committed applicants and reduces staff time answering “what if” questions or evaluating various minor design issues and options before an application is even submitted to the City.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINESS**

Objective: Focus staff resources on projects with complete applications that are ready to move forward and applicants that are active and responsive.

Applies to: All project applications submitted to the City requesting entitlements including those reviewed and approved by City Council, Planning Commission or at staff level.

New Process: Project entitlement applications that have not provided information in a timely manner as requested by staff will be subject to withdrawal. Project entitlements that require multiple completeness checks, referrals, or reviews before the Design Review Committee may be subject to additional charges.

- Applicants will be notified in writing if an application is not being processed in a timely manner. Processing of an application is considered untimely if applicant does not respond within thirty (30) days to staff requests for information, payment of fees or other items necessary to move the project forward to the appropriate reviewing body.
- Requests for extension of the 30 days response period may only be granted per written agreement between the Director and the applicant.
- Applicants will be notified in writing of this determination and the applicant will have ten (10) days from the date of the letter to provide all the information requested, withdraw the application or appeal the determination. If there is no response from the applicant within ten (10) days, the application will be automatically withdrawn.
- If the applicant chooses to appeal the decision of the Director, appeals shall be submitted in accordance with Section 17.86 of the City’s Municipal Code. Appeals must be submitted within the ten (10) day period. Appeals shall be heard by the Planning Commission.
- An application that is withdrawn may not be resubmitted for a period of ninety (90) days. The Director shall have the discretion to modify resubmittal dates based upon the specific circumstances of the project applicant and the best interest of the City.
- Applicants will be notified in writing of projects that are subject to a “Project Processing Overrun” charge. This charge applies to projects requiring multiple completeness checks, referrals, or reviews before the Design Review Committee. Charges are based on hourly staff rates for work above and beyond the standard processing timeframes by which application fees are set.

#### Benefits

- Project applications that are complete and have provided all the necessary information will be processed in a timely manner.
- Staff has more time to focus on active and complete applications when no longer having to monitor and track project applications that do not submit all necessary information.

### **PLANNING, BUILDING & ENGINEERING PLAN REVIEW**

Objective: Reduce the amount of time projects are in planning, building and engineering plan check.

Applies to: All projects the have applied for a building or improvement plans permit.

New Process: Applicants failing to address staff plan check comments will be given lower priority status.

- The first three rounds of plan check comments will be reviewed and prioritized as has been past practice. After three rounds, if plans fail to address staff plan check comments, the plans may be subject to the following;
  - Additional fees for subsequent reviews based on time and materials; and/or,
  - Applications will be moved to the end of the project plan check queue.
- There is flexibility in applying the plan review process. It is understood that projects that are large or complex in nature may require more than three rounds of comments, but it is expected that the applicant shall address all plan check comments.
- All changes or revisions made to plans shall be called out through clouding, deltas or notes as appropriate. Applicants are required to address individual plan check comments through written correspondence, with references to the appropriate page or notes as needed. City plan check comments are available in electronic format to assist with preparing responses.

#### Benefits

- Applicants that address all plan check comments and resubmit plans and documentation as requested will typically require no more than three rounds of plan check and will obtain the necessary approvals on a more timely basis.
- Applicants addressing plan check comments have priority over plans submitted for fourth, fifth or more rounds of staff review.

### **ELECTRONIC PLAN AND BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL**

Objective: Facilitate plan and building plan set submittal and reduce applicant costs.

Applies to: All projects submitting building or improvement plans permit.

New Process: Electronic plan submittal is now available and is strongly encouraged.

- A building permit application can be submitted to the City electronically at <http://www.rocklin.ca.us/digitalforms>. The application will need to include all the required building permit application forms and a plan check deposit (please visit <http://www.rocklin.ca.us/BPDeposit> for the deposit schedule).
- Once the application and deposit has been received, the applicant will receive, by e-mail, an ePlan invitation to upload the plans and supporting documents onto the City of Rocklin's FTP site. The invitation will include a link to the FTP site, the password, and instructions.

Benefits

- Plans submitted electronically pay no additional record fees. Hard copy plans are charged a \$3 per page record fee.
- Plans can be submitted at applicant's convenience. Staff time or courier expenses to deliver plans are eliminated and there are no reproduction costs.

#### **"AT RISK" PLAN CHECKS**

**Early Plan Submittal**: Generally, projects must receive all required approvals from the appropriate hearing bodies (i.e., Planning Commission, City Council) prior to submitting building or improvement plans to the City for review. In exceptional circumstances, it may be determined that it is in the best interest of the City and the developer to allow plan submittal prior to the project receiving all necessary approvals. Requests for early building and/or improvement plan submittals require approval by the Economic & Community Development Director. Early plan submittals will be subject to additional requirements including written acknowledgement that the applicant accepts full responsibility and risk of loss due to changes resulting from final approvals.

**"Foundation Only" Permit**: Generally, only complete plan sets will be accepted by the City for plan review. In exceptional circumstances, Foundation Only Permits may be issued for projects that have received all required approvals from the appropriate hearing bodies. Requests require approval by the Economic & Community Development Director or designee. Foundation Only submittals will be subject to additional requirements including written acknowledgement that the applicant accepts full responsibility and risk of loss due to any required changes after plan check of full building and improvement plans.

Thank you for your cooperation in adhering to these new policies and procedures. For additional information or links to forms mentioned above, please visit the city's website at [www.rocklin.ca.us/ecd](http://www.rocklin.ca.us/ecd). For questions or feedback, please contact the Economic & Community Development Department at (916) 625-5100 or [planner@rocklin.ca.us](mailto:planner@rocklin.ca.us)