



Office of the City Auditor

*Committed to increasing government efficiency, effectiveness,
accountability and transparency.*

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

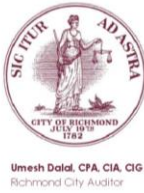
Report#: 2017-03



Issue Date: November 15, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	ii
Comprehensive List of Recommendations	iii
Background	2
What Works Well	6
What Needs Improvement	6
Land Use Administration Plan Review Process	7
Building Permit Plan Review Process	14
Management Responses.....	Appendix A



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the City Auditor

Executive Summary

November 15, 2016

Ms. Selena Cuffee-Glenn, Chief Administrative Officer

The City Auditor's Office has completed an audit of the City's Development Process. The Department of Planning and Development Review guides development in the City of Richmond.

The audit found that the City's process is consistent with the processes of the Counties of Chesterfield, Henrico, Arlington, and Fairfax, and the City of Virginia Beach. The following are the salient observations:

- According to the Code of Virginia, localities are required to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan. Code of Virginia §15.2-2230 requires that the comprehensive plan be reviewed by the local planning commission at least every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan. The City's adopted Master Plan has not been evaluated for a comprehensive update by City Council since 2001, however several amendments have been completed. The lack of a timely comprehensive update has resulted in some desirable developments not falling within the parameters established by the Master Plan. Management indicated that rapid reinvestment as mixed-uses are approved in certain areas of the City, such as Scott's Addition. The staff reports indicate that Scott's Addition is experiencing a surge of mixed-use developments. The area in and around Scott's Addition is considered to be a prime area for current and future developments. However, the Master Plan has not yet accounted for the new growth in the City.
- According to policies and procedures, once the development plans are submitted to City departments for review, feedback is expected within 21 days. Comments from all of the departments are consolidated and provided to the developer within 30 days. The auditors found that from 30 projects with a construction cost greater than \$500,000, thirteen (13) did not have a current file for review by land use administration. According to the Planning

and Review Director, files were not required. However, information was not provided to validate this assertion. For the remaining 17 projects reviewed, departmental time frames for plan review comments averaged from 18 to 50 days. A total of 48 comment letters from various departments were received after the 21 day deadline. In 13 of the 17 developments, the comprehensive comment letters were incomplete due to missing comments from multiple departments causing further delays. These delays contribute in delaying issuance of building permits to the developers.

- According to the supervisors, the plan reviewers in various departments have multiple job responsibilities outside of the plan review process, which may delay completion of plan reviews. Untimely delays in plan reviews by the departments may delay the completion of the projects and increase costs for the developers. The City also risks losing development prospects due to the perceived delay and dissatisfaction with the process.
- Permits and Inspections does not have an established timeline to issue permits. Without established timelines, the permits may not be reviewed in a timely manner, resulting in dissatisfied developers.
- Developers are not satisfied with the City's development process. They expressed the following concerns:
 - It takes an excessive amount of time to get permits approved and inspections completed;
 - There is a lack of communication between City departments;
 - The accountability and transparency among City departments related to the process are lacking;
 - The concerns brought to the attention of City staff are not appropriately addressed and resolved. As a result, many in the development community feel that there is little reason to voice their concerns;
 - The City doesn't have enough inspectors or plan reviewers to keep up with timelines;
 - Conflicting comments by the City departments are not resolved prior to providing the developer feedback; and
 - There is a lack of guidance for the overall development process.

The auditors received minimal positive feedback about the process from the developers. Although, the above feedback from developers was limited, Planning and Development appears to have an opportunity to improve the relationship with its core customer group.

The City Auditor's Office appreciates the cooperation of the Planning and Development personnel. The Department has concurred with 4 out of 6 recommendations made in this report. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Umesh Dalal

Umesh Dalal, CPA, CIA, CIG
City Auditor

cc: The Richmond City Audit Committee
The Richmond City Council
Mr. Lee Downey, DCAO of Economic/Community Development
Mr. Mark Olinger, Director, Planning and Development Review

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

#		PAGE
1	The Planning and Development Director and the Planning Commission need to review the current Comprehensive Master Plan and propose necessary updates for City Council approval and adoption.	10
2	The CAO needs to mandate compliance with established standards and processes by all departments involved in the Land Use Administration and Building Permits & Inspections plan review processes.	16
3	The Planning and Development Director needs to ensure completeness of all project application files.	16
4	The Planning and Development Director needs to establish periodic informational sessions with the Development Community to educate them on the City's processes and requirements.	17
5	The Planning and Development Director needs to conduct periodic surveys of the developers to gauge customer satisfaction and consider their feedback in process improvements.	17
6	The Planning and Development Director needs to explore the benefits of adopting the practices listed in this section, document findings, and implement the practices found helpful.	20

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY

The City Auditor's Office has completed an audit of the City's Development Process in the Department of Planning and Development Review (Planning and Development). This audit focused on the review of completed projects during FY2015 with an estimated building permit construction cost greater than \$500,000. The selected projects were reviewed from initiation to completion. This audit evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of the development process through the following tasks:

- To validate if developments align with the City's Master Plan;
- To determine if developments followed the standard process as outlined by Planning and Development;
- To verify efficiency of coordination, documentation, communication, and timeliness of the development processing among all applicable City departments;
- To validate the ease of the development process for contractors; and
- To benchmark the City's development process with other Virginia localities.

The audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards promulgated by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that the auditors plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for their findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. The auditors believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for their findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

Methodology

The auditors performed the following procedures to complete this audit:

- Interviewed selected departments' staff to determine the process for accepting and reviewing development applications;
- Reviewed project files;
- Identified and reviewed better practices relating to the development process;
- Surveyed selected localities to gain an understanding of their development process;
- Observed the functionality of the new Land Management System (EnerGov) being implemented; and
- Performed other tests, as deemed necessary.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

City management is responsible for ensuring resources are managed properly and used in compliance with laws and regulations; programs are achieving their objectives; and services are being provided efficiently, effectively, and economically.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Planning and Development guides development in the City of Richmond. The Department oversees:

- Building and trades permitting, and inspections;
- Compliance with the Virginia Property Maintenance Code;

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

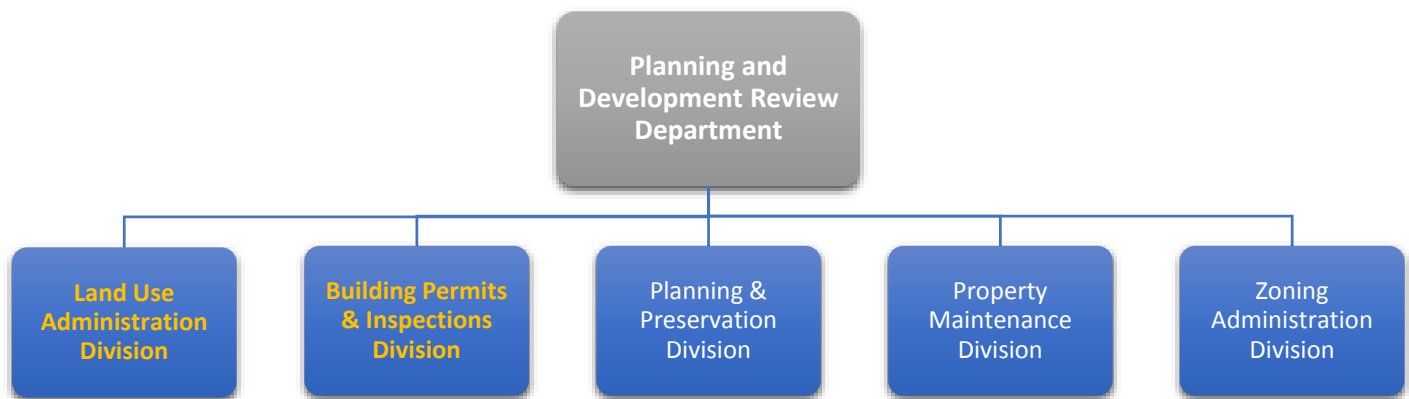
Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

- Current and long-range planning;
- Enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance; and
- Historic preservation.

The Department consists of five divisions:



Note: the divisions highlighted in yellow were subject of this audit

The Land Use Administration Division provides analysis and guidance to property owners and developers on existing and proposed developments within the City. The Division reviews any special approvals for development plans in accordance with the City's Zoning Ordinance. Land Use Administration reviews a variety of project types with varying scopes of work, which determines the process to follow in order to move through the land use approval process. The scope of the project determines which Land Use Administration application is necessary. The various processes are described below:

Conditional Use Permits: A specific use is listed as permitted within a zoning district. It must be reviewed by City Council to determine if the requirements and criteria specified in the ordinance are met.

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

Community Unit Plan: The City Charter specifically authorizes the use of this process for the development of sites containing 10 or more acres in a way that does not comply with underlying zoning, subject to the approval of an ordinance, which outlines the general character and density of the proposed development.

Rezoning: This involves changing the zoning designation applicable to particular properties. Once rezoned, a property may be used pursuant to the regulations applicable in the district without any further restrictions.

Conditional Rezoning: This involves the changing of the zoning designation applicable to particular properties subject to certain proffered conditions that are more restrictive than the underlying zoning designation.

Special Use Permit: The City of Richmond's version of the special use permit process may authorize any use at any location subject to specified conditions.

Plan of Development (POD): A Plan of Development is a site plan and architectural plans that are required to be filed for certain land uses as specified in the City's Zoning Ordinance and must be approved by the Director of Planning and Development Review prior to the issuance of any Building Permit or a Land Disturbing Permit.

Subdivision: Application is required from anyone who wants to divide, subdivide, or re-subdivide a parcel of land within the corporate limits of the city for the purpose of transferring ownership of any one or more of such parcels, or for the purpose of the erection of buildings or other structures on any one, or more, of such parcels.

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

The Bureau of Permits and Inspections (Permits and Inspections) reviews construction documents for development projects upon submittal of the necessary permit applications. Permits and Inspections reviews development plans to ensure compliance with the State Building Code prior to issuing permits. During FY2015, Planning and Development issued 11,336 permits with a total estimated cost of work of \$659 million.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT WORKS WELL

City Process is Comparable to Other Localities

Auditors benchmarked with five Virginia localities to evaluate the development process for efficiencies. Auditors benchmarked with the Counties of Chesterfield, Henrico, Arlington, and Fairfax, and the City of Virginia Beach. The auditors inquired about the following activities related to the development process:

- Criteria used for projects to be presented to the Planning Commission;
- Prioritization of projects;
- Review of projects for compliance with the Master Plan; and
- Review and resolution of comments from various departments within the locality.

Overall, it was determined that the practices in place within the City are consistent with the processes of other Virginia localities.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Internal Controls

According to the Government Auditing Standards, internal control, in the broadest sense, encompasses the agency's plan, policies, procedures, methods, and processes adopted by management to meet its mission, goals, and objectives. Internal control includes the processes for planning, organizing, directing, and

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

controlling program operations. It also includes systems for measuring, reporting, and monitoring program performance. An effective control structure is one that provides reasonable assurance regarding:

- Efficiency and effectiveness of operations;
- Accurate financial reporting; and
- Compliance with laws and regulations.

The Planning and Development Review Department provided policies and procedures related to the plan review process. Based on the audit test work, the auditors concluded that internal controls within the development process need improvements as discussed subsequently throughout this report.

The audit observations are separately discussed for the following two plan review processes:

1. Land Use Administration plan review process for projects that require special legislative approvals for waivers from the Zoning Ordinance requirements and/or projects that require administrative approvals in accordance with the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.
2. Building Permit plan review process for building code compliance.

LAND USE ADMINISTRATION PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

Not All Approved Development Plans Comply with the Master Plan

According to the Code of Virginia, localities are required to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan. According to §15.2-2223 of the State Code, “The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.” In addition, Code of Virginia §15.2-2230 requires that the comprehensive plan be reviewed by the local planning commission at least every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the Plan.

The adopted Master Plan has not been evaluated for a comprehensive update by City Council since 2001, however several amendments have been completed. Some of the amendments to the Master Plan included updates for the following areas:

- Downtown Plan (2009)
- Riverfront Plan (2012)
- Hull Street Corridor Revitalization Plan (2013)
- VUU/Chamberlayne Plan (2016)

The lack of a timely comprehensive update has resulted in some desirable developments not falling within the parameters established by the Master Plan. Some of the Land Use applications did not comply with the currently adopted

Master Plan. In order to get approval, these developments must successfully satisfy the following requirements:

- Compliance review with the Master Plan;
- Recommendation from the Planning Commission; and
- Approval by City Council.

The Land Use Administration Division planners review the submitted applications and compare them against the Master Plan to make recommendations. The recommendations are reviewed during the bi-monthly public Planning Commission meetings. A staff report is prepared by the Planners outlining the specific details of the project and how the Master Plan applies.

Auditors reviewed 10 applications that required a Special Use or Rezoning permit. Four of those projects were not in alignment with the Master Plan's allocation for industrial use. However, management indicated that rapid reinvestment as mixed-uses are approved in certain areas of the City, such as Scott's Addition. The staff reports indicate that Scott's Addition is experiencing a surge of mixed-use developments. The area in and around Scott's Addition is considered to be a prime area for current and future developments. However, the Master Plan has not yet accounted for the new growth in the City. In these instances, staff reports are sent to the Planning Commission and outline how the projects differ from the Master Plan. The Planning Commission then makes a recommendation to the City Council for final approval or rejection. This practice has resulted in projects being approved outside the intended uses of the current Master Plan and could potentially be outside of the current strategies and direction of developments within the City. However, not considering a surge of growth may discourage investment in the City, which is not desirable. Ideally, the City's Master Plan should be reviewed and

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

updated to take advantage of new development opportunities due to changing circumstances.

The Planning and Development Director is responsible for providing staff services to create and adopt a master plan. The Code of Virginia §15.2-2230 requires a review of the comprehensive plan by the planning commission every five years to determine if the plan needs any amendments. The last formal update to the City's Master Plan was in 2001, however several amendments as identified above have been made. The Planning Commission minutes reflect discussion of the need for the updating of the Master Plan in their bi-weekly meetings held with the development staff and community.

Recommendation:

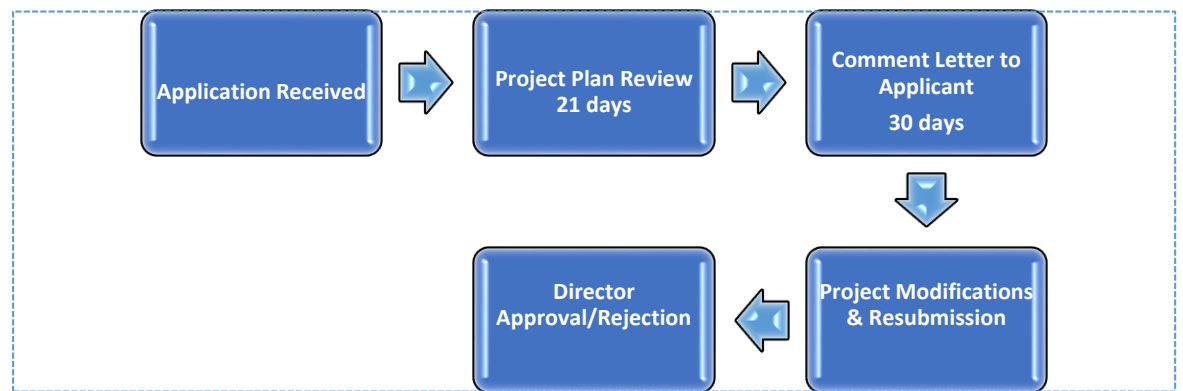
- 1. The Planning and Development Director and the Planning Commission need to review the current Comprehensive Master Plan and propose necessary updates for City Council approval and adoption.**

The Land Use Administration Review Process Needs Improvement

The Land Use application review process depends upon special approvals for the development's compliance with the existing zoning ordinance. The department follows two separate procedures as described in the diagrams below:

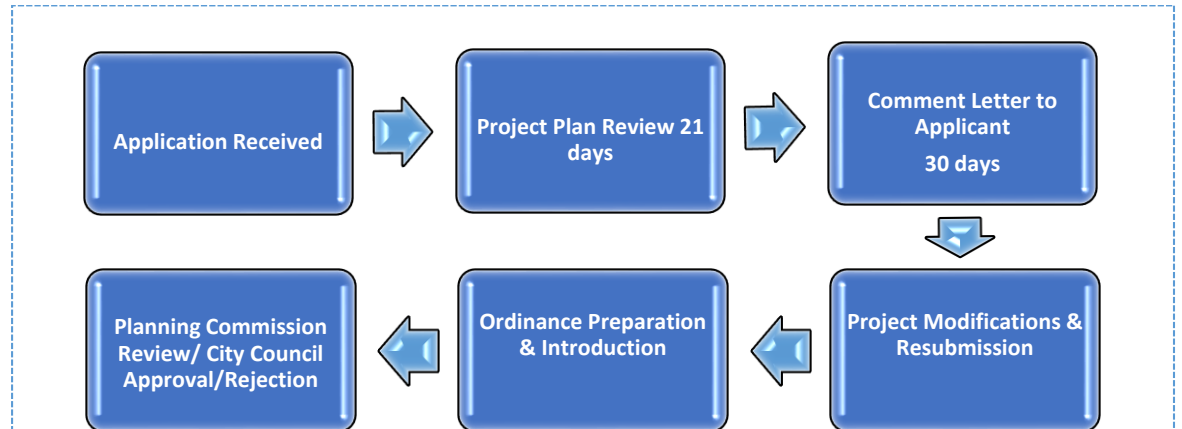
Land Use Administration Process Overview for Proposed Developments that are seeking administrative approvals in accordance with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance

Overall process is administered by Land Use Administration planners:



Land Use Administration Process Overview for Proposed Developments that are seeking legislative approvals for relief from the Zoning Ordinance

Overall process is administered by Land Use Administration planners:



According to policies and procedures, once the development plans are submitted to City departments for review, feedback is expected within 21 days. Comments from all of the departments are consolidated and provided to the developer within 30 days.

The auditors obtained a listing from Planning and Development of all Certificates of Occupancy issued in FY2015 with a construction cost greater than \$500,000. A total of 30 addresses meeting this criteria were provided by Planning and Development. From these projects, 13 did not have a current file for review by land use administration.

For the remaining 17 projects reviewed, Departmental time frames for plan review comments averaged from 18 to 50 days. A total of 48 comment letters from various departments were received after the 21 day deadline. The number of department

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

review comments related to each project varies based on the scope of the project. The comprehensive comment letters to the developers were sent out on average 40 days after the application date, which is higher than the established timeline of 30 days. In 13 of the 17 developments, the comprehensive comment letters were incomplete due to missing comments from multiple departments causing further delays.

Auditors also observed that most of the Land Use Administration files were incomplete, unorganized, and lacked consistency. Planning and Development requires a Special Use Permit checklist to be completed to ensure the completeness of the file. However, the auditors found that staff do not comply with this requirement, which prevents them from assuring completeness of the files.

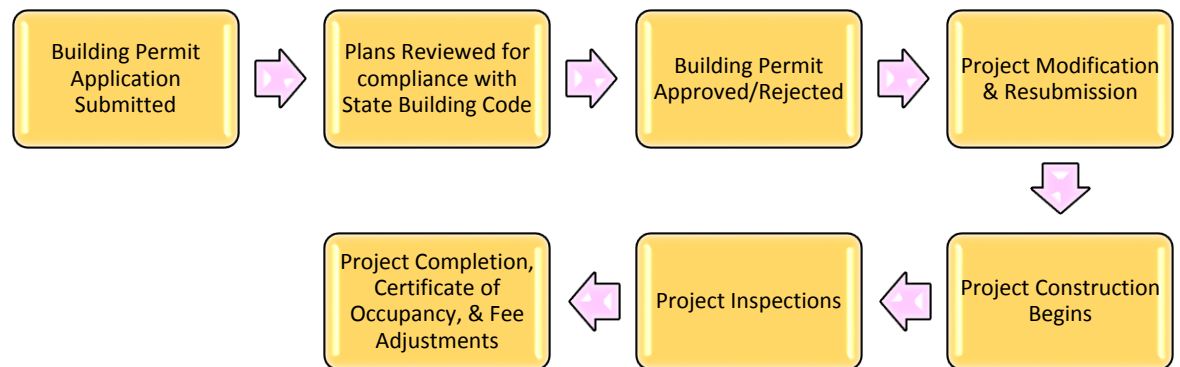
According to management, their ability to complete the plan review in a timely manner depends on the complexity and completeness of the plans, resources available, and other priorities. According to the supervisors, the plan reviewers in various departments have multiple job responsibilities outside of the plan review process. Untimely plan review by the departments may delay the completion of the projects and increase costs for the developers. The City also risks losing development prospects due to the perceived delay and dissatisfaction with the process.

BUILDING PERMIT PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

The Building Permit Plan Review Process Needs Improvement

Building permits are completed for projects entering the construction phase of the development process. Several different types of permits may be required and are reviewed for compliance with the applicable standards. The process is described in the diagram below:

Building Permits & Inspections Process Overview



Permits and Inspections does not have an established timeline to issue permits. Without established timelines, the permits may not be reviewed in a timely manner, resulting in dissatisfied developers.

The auditors reviewed the timelines associated with the Building Permit Plan Review for the same projects considered for the Land Use Administration review process. The auditors found the following:

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

- The average time from building permit application to issuance was 82 days for 27 of 30 permits reviewed. In the three remaining instances, the time frame was greater than 400 days. According to management, the delays on these three projects were due to untimely responses from the developers and the length of time for the City bidding process related to a capital project. The Department's policies and procedures did not address time frames for issuing building permits. Without proper policies, staff will not have guidance about time frames and cannot be held accountable for completing work in a timely manner.
- The developers are expected to notify the City 30 days prior to expected completion of work in order to get a Certificate of Occupancy. The Certificates of Occupancy were issued on an average of 28 days for 27 of the 30 permits selected. In three instances the time for this process was over 300 days. For these three instances, the following management assertions could not be verified due to lack of supporting documentation:
 - The contractors failed to complete all of the requirements;
 - The contractors received the final building inspection, but failed to request the final zoning and other approvals necessary to receive the Certificate of Occupancy.

Currently, Planning and Development does not have a process in place to flag and follow-up with the developers after an extended period of time has lapsed succeeding the permit application review. According to Permits and Inspections personnel, reviews can be held up due to inadequate plans being submitted, plan revisions, complicated project plans, and resource constraints in Planning and Development.

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

The auditors reviewed the building permit application procedures in Arlington and Norfolk. The review time guidelines published for those Virginia localities ranged from 10 to 21 days for commercial plan review and 5 to 14 days for residential plan review. The auditor did not have the benefit of reviewing actual data from these localities.

Recommendations:

2. The CAO needs to mandate compliance with established standards and processes by all departments involved in the Land Use Administration and Building Permits & Inspections plan review processes.
3. The Planning and Development Director needs to ensure completeness of all project application files.

Developers are not satisfied with the Development Review Process

The auditors received feedback from 11 developers who expressed the following concerns:

- It takes an excessive amount of time to get permits approved and inspections completed;
- There is a lack of communication between City departments;
- The accountability and transparency among City departments related to the process are lacking;
- The concerns brought to the attention of City staff are not appropriately addressed and resolved. As a result, many in the development community feel that there is little reason to voice their concerns;
- The City doesn't have enough inspectors or plan reviewers to keep up with timelines;

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

- Conflicting comments by the City departments are not resolved prior to providing the developer feedback; and
- There is a lack of guidance for the overall development process.

The auditors received minimal positive feedback about the process from the developers. Based on the above limited number of responses, it appears that developers' concerns need to be addressed to improve customer service. Some of the developers were pleased with the availability of helpful information about the process and knowledge of the staff involved.

Although, the above feedback from developers was limited, Planning and Development appears to have an opportunity to improve the relationship with their core customer group. The department does not conduct customer satisfaction surveys to learn about the development community's concerns. In addition, the department does not hold informational sessions with the development community to better understand their needs and educate them on the City's development process. The staff also attempts to attend local associations in the development community to improve networking. According to management, their participation has been limited due to funding cuts. The lack of a positive working relationship and the perception of the development community could result in the loss of developments to nearby localities reducing the tax dollars coming into the City.

Recommendations:

4. The Planning and Development Director needs to establish periodic informational sessions with the Development Community to educate them on the City's processes and requirements.

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

5. The Planning and Development Director needs to conduct periodic surveys of the developers to gauge customer satisfaction and consider their feedback in process improvements.

Opportunity to Improve Current Practices

The auditors researched development practices using the following sources that can help Richmond improve its processes:

- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA);
- American Planning Association (APA);
- Smart Growth Principles;
- Institute of Local Governments (ILG); and
- Other Regional Planning Agencies.

The table below depicts some of the practices identified and possibilities of improvement in the City's process:

Practice	Used by Richmond?	Comments
Concurrent Review of Applications by departments	Yes	Process is not efficient. The existing timeframes for submitting plan review comments is not enforced.
Required pre-application meetings	No	Presently pre-application meetings are available upon request. Having a pre-development structured meeting for complex projects may improve communication with the developers and better compliance with the City's requirements.
Requirement for Formal Meeting of Technical Plan Review Team	No	A formal meeting of City plan reviewers from the various departments could eliminate plan review inefficiencies and conflicts. This can also improve the relationship with the developers.

Richmond City Auditor's Report# 2017-03

Department of Planning and Development Review

Development Process Audit

November 2016

Multi-tiered application and review process	No	The City of Virginia Beach segregates developments by type such as commercial vs. various types of residential. Due to different requirements for various types of developments, a more streamlined process could improve efficiencies. Projects are not tiered or prioritized within the City. They are handled on a first come first serve basis. This approach may be delaying relatively smaller projects if their application follows more complex developments.
Electronic filing, tracking, and commenting	No	Project files were maintained as hard copy documents. Project files are also loaded into an electronic repository for reviewing departments' use. However, this information has not been used consistently. Planning and Development implemented a land management software program, EnerGov, in May 2016, which when fully deployed is expected to electronically file and store documents related to each individual project.

The City could improve the process by implementing some of the above practices. In the future, EnerGov is expected to have a public access portal. The following are the expected benefits of EnerGov:

- Automation and integration of plan review processes relating to the planning, permitting, and inspections;
- Improved handling of citizen requests and work order management;
- Capabilities include electronic plan submission, payment processing, the ability to check application status, and electronic inspections requests;
- Reduction in time spent on administrative functions;
- Increase transparency and accuracy of processes;
- Minimizes administrative errors;
- Allows simultaneous circulation of files; and
- Reports information to stakeholders.

Conclusion:

The use of practices included in the table above and capabilities of the new system may improve the current processes and provide better customer service. All of the above practices have the potential of reducing the time required for issuing building permits. Currently, Planning and Development uses the "First-Come First-Served" method. This practice means that simpler plans that can be reviewed quickly for the issuance of permits may have to wait longer if a more complex plan is submitted prior to the simpler plan. A tiered review process can eliminate this issue. In addition, for more complex plans, improved concurrent reviews, pre-application meetings, and technical plan review meetings can assure complete and efficient processing including proper and timely communication to the developers. Expediency in processing plans and issuance of permits may reduce developers' costs. Overall improved services may enable the City to attract more development projects to Richmond.

Recommendation:

6. The Planning and Development Director needs to explore the benefits of adopting the practices listed in this section, document findings, and implement the practices found helpful.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE FORM

APPENDIX A

2017-03 Development Process

#	RECOMMENDATION	CONCUR Y/N	ACTION STEPS
1	The Planning and Development Director and the Planning Commission need to review the current Comprehensive Master Plan and propose necessary updates for City Council approval and adoption.	Y	<i>The Department of Planning & Development Review has begun the process of drafting an update to the Master Plan. The details as of now are: 2016. Q3: Planning the Process & Data Collection; Q4: Data Collection & Initial Community Engagement 2017. Q1: Data Collection & Community Engagement Continued; Q2: Community Visioning; Q3, Q4: Goal Setting & Strategy Development 2018. Q1, Q2: Document Development; Q3: Public Review; Q4: Document Finalization 2019. Q1: Document Adoption</i>
	TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON		TARGET DATE
	Director		31-Mar-19
	IF IN PROGRESS, EXPLAIN ANY DELAYS		IF IMPLEMENTED, DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION
#	RECOMMENDATION	CONCUR Y/N	ACTION STEPS
2	The CAO needs to mandate compliance with established standards and processes by all departments involved in the Land Use Administration and Building Permits & Inspections plan review processes.	Y	<i>Monthly meetings of City staff (PDR, DPW, DPU) charged with plan review will be conducted to establish benchmarks and standards to assure that all City agencies are working efficiently to establish and manage uniform plan review turnaround times for permit applications.</i>
	TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON		TARGET DATE
	CAO		31-Mar-17
	IF IN PROGRESS, EXPLAIN ANY DELAYS		IF IMPLEMENTED, DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION
#	RECOMMENDATION	CONCUR Y/N	ACTION STEPS
3	The Planning and Development Director needs to ensure completeness of all project application files.	N	<i>The Department believes that our files are correct and in order. The reason that there were no "land use" files on thirteen (13) of the sample files is that in those specific instances files were not required.</i> <i>Auditor's Comment: The auditor's observation is not related to the 13 files referred to above. The auditor found that most of the files reviewed did not have proper organization and it was difficult to find required documentation readily.</i>
	TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON		TARGET DATE
	Director		
	IF IN PROGRESS, EXPLAIN ANY DELAYS		IF IMPLEMENTED, DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE FORM

APPENDIX A

2017-03 Development Process

#	RECOMMENDATION	CONCUR Y/N	ACTION STEPS
4	The Planning and Development Director needs to establish periodic informational sessions with the Development Community to educate them on the City's processes and requirements.	Y	<i>Planning & Development Review staff involved in the permit review process will meet with the development community to keep them up-to-date on City processes and requirements. We will continue to involve them in the development of any new and/or revised policies and programs that are also brought forward. Currently several Department staff members (in Land Use Administration, the new construction section of the Bureau of Permits and Inspections, and others) meet several times a year with private sector professional societies and the development community regarding planning, building code, and permitting issues.</i>
#REF!	TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON		TARGET DATE
#REF!	Director		30-Jun-17
#REF!	IF IN PROGRESS, EXPLAIN ANY DELAYS		IF IMPLEMENTED, DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION
#REF!			
#	RECOMMENDATION	CONCUR Y/N	ACTION STEPS
5	The Planning and Development Director needs to conduct periodic surveys of the developers to gauge customer satisfaction and consider their feedback in process improvements.	Y	<i>Customer surveys will be developed, reviewed, and distributed so the development community can provide feedback on our customer service and processes. The Department will also work with the larger development community to gauge satisfaction with any system improvements and to engage them in process improvements. Assistance in drafting the surveys may be required.</i>
#REF!	TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON		TARGET DATE
#REF!	Director		30-Jun-17
#REF!	IF IN PROGRESS, EXPLAIN ANY DELAYS		IF IMPLEMENTED, DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION
#REF!			

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE FORM

APPENDIX A

2017-03 Development Process

#	RECOMMENDATION	CONCUR Y/N	ACTION STEPS
6	The Planning and Development Director needs to explore the benefits of adopting the practices listed in this section, document findings, and implement the practices found helpful.	N	<p><i>We are fully committed to improving services to our customers and are looking at ways to improve our review and approval processes. However, EnerGov has put the City in a very different position than many other Virginia communities. Its full effect on City permit and plan review operations is not yet known. We need a year of full implementation (6 months in now) before we can begin to assess its effects on our land use management process and more fully utilize its advanced functionality. Some elements have not launched, but are scheduled to in 2017. Examples of what we are doing now include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Applications are segregated by type and complexity of review now; allowing larger more complex projects to be in a different review cycle than smaller projects.</i> <i>2. The Building Commissioner facilitates bi-monthly meetings with other Central VA officials to assure that compliance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code is uniformly applied within our region.</i> <i>3. Residential Building Plan Reviewers within Central VA hold similar meetings.</i> <p><i>Auditor's Comment: There are several advantages of adopting best practices that are not used by Richmond. The recommended best practices are expected to improve efficiency and customer service. Using these practices may alleviate some of the complaints by the developer community. In addition, only one of the five recommended best practices depend upon EnerGov.</i></p>
	TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON		TARGET DATE
	IF IN PROGRESS, EXPLAIN ANY DELAYS		IF IMPLEMENTED, DETAILS OF IMPLEMENTATION