



American Planning Association
Pennsylvania Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

Improving the Local Development Permitting Process

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Local Government Symposium

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Background

Local Permitting Reform Study

PA State Planning Board (PA DCED)

2013

Report–Local Permitting of Development

County Planning Directors Association of PA

2017

Background

2,560 municipalities in PA

2,414 (94%) have subdivision and land development ordinance in effect

1,566 municipal SALDOs

848 municipalities covered under
48 county SALDOs

Background

2,560 municipalities in PA

1,738 (68%) have zoning in effect

1,601 municipal zoning ordinances

137 municipalities covered under

12 county zoning ordinances

The Problem

Process is complex

- Preliminary and final development plans
- Zoning conditional use or special exception approvals
- Zoning variance and rezoning requests
- Municipal and county reviews

Process can be time consuming

- A year plus
- Survey responders said reducing time was the highest priority fix.

The Problem

Process can be unpredictable

- Over 1,500 separate and different SALDOs and zoning ordinances
- Stories of changing interpretations and requests moving through the process

Inadequate capacity

- Deficient applications
- Lack of time and expertise for review

Lack of integration and coordination

- Multiple permits and approvals needed from local, state & federal governments

Recommendations – MPC amendment

ONE SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW

- One “substantive” review of design and engineering details
- One public input opportunity
- One decision by elected officials
- Followed by staff “ministerial” review of final plans

CONSOLIDATED REVIEW

- One review process with one “record hearing” to cover all SALDO and zoning approvals for a development application

Recommendations

MULTIMUNICIPAL COOPERATION

- Single, joint process
- More consistent and predictable
- More capacity
- Can be done by intergovernmental agreement

STATE/LOCAL MULTI- AGENCY REVIEW

- Pro-active coordination of state and local permitting agencies
- Team-oriented review and problem-solving
- Convened by county or DCED Governor's Action Team

Recommendations

STATE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Promote practices to streamline and innovate local development review
- Promote:
 - Specific plans
 - Tiered reviews
 - Hearing officers
 - Express lane reviews

Questions?

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