Evaluation and Analysis of Madison's Development Review and Permitting Process

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Foreword

This report on the City of Madison's economic development review and permitting process is the product of a collaboration between the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the Mayor's Office and City of Madison's Department of Planning and Development. Our objective is to provide graduate students at La Follette the opportunity to improve their policy analysis skills while contributing to the capacity of the city government to effectively provide public services to the citizens of Madison.

The La Follette School offers a two-year graduate program leading to a master's degree in public affairs. Students study policy analysis and public management, and pursue a concentration in a public policy area of their choice. They spend the first year and a half taking courses that provided them with the tools needed to analyze public policies. The authors of this report are all enrolled in Public Affairs 869, Workshop in Program and Policy Analysis, Domestic Issues. Although acquiring a set of policy analysis skills is important, there is no substitute for doing policy analysis as a means of learning policy analysis. Public Affairs 869 provides graduate students that opportunity.

The students were assigned to one of four project teams. One team worked on this project for the City of Madison, while the other teams worked on projects for the Joint Legislative Council, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, and the Budget and Management Division of the City of Milwaukee. The topic of this report—an analysis of the City of Madison's development review and permitting process—grew out of a recommendation included in the 2004 report to the mayor by the City's Economic Development Commission.

The report by the Economic Development Commission highlighted complaints by developers and by individuals wanting to open new businesses in Madison that the city's development review and permitting process was cumbersome, overly lengthy, and, in some cases, too heavily influenced by the preferences of neighborhood associations. As a means of evaluating Madison's permitting process, the authors of this report conducted detailed case studies of development review and permitting procedures in eight American cities that are in important ways similar to Madison, and that have recently reformed their permitting processes. Based on what the authors learned from other cities' experiences, they make a number of recommendations for improving Madison's development review and permitting procedures.

This report does not provide the final word on the complex issues the authors address. The graduate student authors are, after all, relatively inexperienced policy analysts, and the topic they have addressed is large and complex. Nevertheless, much has been accomplished, and I trust that the students have learned a great deal, and that Mayor Cieslewicz and the staff of the Department of Planning and Development will profit from their analysis of the permitting process.

This report would not have been possible without the support, encouragement, advice, and guidance of Brad Murphy, the director of the Planning Unit in the Department of Planning and Development, and Katherine Naherny, principle planner and manager of the Office of Business Resources.

The report also benefited greatly from the active support of the staff of the La Follette School. Terry Shelton, the La Follette outreach director, along with Kari Reynolds, Elizabeth Hassemer, and Gregory Lynch, contributed logistic and practical support for the project. Karen Faster, La Follette publications director, edited the report and shouldered the task of producing the final bound document.

I am very grateful to Wilbur R. Voigt whose generous gift to the La Follette School supports the La Follette School policy analysis workshop projects. With his support, we are able to finance the production of the final reports, plus other expenses associated with the projects.

By involving La Follette students in one of the tough issues faced by city government in Madison, I hope the students not only have learned a great deal about doing policy analysis but have gained an appreciation of the complexities and challenges facing all local governments in Wisconsin and elsewhere. I also hope that this report will contribute to the work of the Department of Planning and Development and to the ongoing public discussions of city policies that will encourage and facilitate economic development in Madison.

Andrew Reschovsky
May 2, 2005

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all those who contributed significant time and effort to our analysis of Madison's development review and permitting processes, including Professor Andrew Reschovsky of the La Follette School of Public Affairs and Brad Murphy and Katherine Naherny of the City of Madison's Department of Planning and Development.

Many thanks, as well, to the planning and economic development professionals in the eight cities we reviewed who greatly contributed to this analysis. We are also grateful for the invaluable assistance of our editor, Karen Faster. Last, we thank our peer reviewers who contributed to the editing of this report.

Executive Summary

During a series of business forums held in the summer of 2004, developers, business owners, and other residents voiced concerns about Madison's development review and permitting process to city staff and Common Council members. The most common complaints were that Madison's process is slow compared to other cities, that frequent conflicts occur among city agencies and commissions and their enforcement of ordinances, and that neighborhood associations have too much power to veto development plans. Given our analysis of the development review and permitting process, we suggest that Madison consider expanding its electronic tracking system while exploring the option of project facilitators. We recommend this in conjunction with requesting more physical space to facilitate agency reviews, and, in light of changes to the Comprehensive Plan that details the City's land-use priorities and goals, an ordinance overhaul to ensure consistency.

In our examination of Madison's development review and permitting process, we look at three main concerns outlined by the Madison Economic Development Commission in a 2004 report:

(1) Madison's process is slow compared to other cities.
(2) Divergent ordinances lead to inter-agency conflicts.
(3) Public involvement, while valuable, is uncoordinated and thus costly.

Although Madison has recognized many of the potential problems and is taking steps to address them, the information gathered from our analysis of Madison's development-and-review process and from our case studies of other cities across the United States suggests that additional opportunities exist for streamlining Madison's processes.

The purpose of our case studies of other cities was to ascertain how they have dealt with concerns similar to those Madison is facing. From our analysis of the changes other cities have made, we learned five key lessons that the City of Madison might consider as it continues to improve its development review process. Successful development initiatives:

- focus on customer satisfaction, needs, and education as their first priority;
- facilitate coordinated public involvement and emphasize to customers the necessity of early action;
- place a high priority on fostering internal and external communication and coordination;
- are sustainable in the long-term and reflect the capacity of a city's budget; and
- facilitate continual improvement toward streamlining complex regulations.

Introduction

Madison is a center for business development and expansion, and consequently enjoys high rankings from organizations and media that measure cities' business viability or "business friendliness." According to *Forbes* magazine, the City of Madison was the number one city for businesses nationally in 2004 when considering the quality of the workforce, the cost of running a business, job and income growth, and "culture and leisure" (Badenhausen 2004).

"Business friendly" is a general term used to embody a city's positive relationship with the business community. There are many ways of identifying this attribute in cities. The most entrepreneurial cities might be those with many young businesses, large growth in small businesses, and job growth in general, or low risks as determined by bankruptcy rates (Entrepreneur and D&B 2003). Additionally, a city might be deemed business friendly because there are few regulations governing businesses (McQuillan 2004). Other criteria used include sources of funding, economic development incentives, diversity of industries, as well as quality of life indicators such as schools, housing, and commute times (Rosenwein 2000; Borden and Murphy 2000).

In this report, we use the term "business friendly" to describe a city that has a governing body committed to ensuring an efficient, effective, and equitable permitting process in a manner that supports housing and economic development goals in the context of the City's other important goals.

Despite Madison's high ranking in *Forbes*, some of the City's own businesses and residents have concerns about its business policies (Bugher et al. 2004). During a series of business forums held in the summer of 2004, city staff and Common Council members heard from several developers, business owners, and other concerned citizens who voiced concerns about Madison's development review and permitting process. The most common complaints heard in these forums were that Madison's process is slow compared to other cities, that frequent conflicts occur among city agencies and commissions in their enforcement of ordinances, and that neighborhood associations have too much power to veto development plans.[1]

In response to these concerns, Mayor Dave Cieslewicz committed himself to strengthening the ties between the business community and city government. Through the Healthy City Initiative, the mayor affirmed his commitment to help the City of Madison develop a business friendly environment. The mayor's initiative identifies Madison's processes for reviewing development and building projects as one potential area for improvement.

The goal of this report is to identify opportunities to improve Madison's development review and permitting process to better accommodate the needs of applicants without sacrificing Madison's commitment to the well-being of its residents. We acknowledge

[1] The specific substance of the comments made during the forums and the names of the individuals who made them are available in an appendix of the Economic Development Commission's Report to the Mayor (Bugher, et al., 2004).

that Madison must strike a balance between preserving the culture and values of the community and promoting economic development for the community's financial strength. At the heart of this balance is the relationship between the Department of Planning and Development and other city agencies, city commissions and neighborhood associations, and the business community.

The recommendations in this report are derived in part from an assessment of Madison's permitting process in which we highlight areas that slow or complicate the process and in part from a case study. In the case study, we look to other cities whose governing bodies have worked to increase efficiency in the permit application process to make interactions with the government easier for applicants. By surveying other cities' innovative permitting processes, we will attempt to explain why other cities have taken steps to change their permitting processes, what steps they took, and the outcomes associated with those changes.

Madison's Permitting Process

The term "permitting process" is a general way of describing the process by which someone gains approval from the City to build or demolish a structure. The amount of time it takes to complete this process depends largely upon the nature of the project and the type of customer applying for a permit. For the purpose of this analysis, projects will be described as either zoning-simple or zoning-complex. Additionally, applicants will be divided into those who go through the permitting process one time for a specific project and repeat users such as Madison-area developers.

Zoning-simple projects are those that are within the parameters of existing zoning ordinance – for example, if someone sought a permit to construct a restaurant in a building in an area that was already zoned for commercial use. Zoning-complex projects are those that are not within parameters of existing zoning ordinances. These can include: requests for zoning variances, zoning map amendments, conditional use permits, and planned unit/community development rezoning.

For some projects, applicants hope to change existing zoning through zoning map amendments; in others, they seeking special permission to use land in a way not permitted outright under existing zoning by utilizing zoning variances, conditional use permits, planned unit development, and planned community development projects.[2] Each of these projects varies slightly in the details of the process and the amount of time it takes to complete, but in general, a board or commission must approve all zoning-complex projects for them to be considered for building permits.

Zoning-simple projects do not include any conflicts with zoning ordinances and therefore do not need to go through a public hearing process for board or commission approval. In general, zoning-simple projects take much less time than do zoning-complex projects.

Whether the proposed project is zoning-simple or zoning-complex, the applicant's degree of familiarity with the permitting process directly affects the expediency of the process (Murphy 2005). Repeat applicants usually spend less time going through the application process because they have a sense of what is expected of them and how to achieve those expectations, especially during the pre-application phase of the project.

Essentially, four combinations of project and applicant types affect the time it takes between the initial contact with city staff and obtaining a permit:

(1) one-time applicants with zoning-simple projects,
(2) repeat applicants with zoning-simple projects,
(3) one-time applicants with zoning-complex projects, and
(4) repeat applicants with zoning-complex projects.

[2] See Appendix C for a more detailed description of zoning-complex projects.

Table 1: Relative Time Required for Customer and Project Type Combinations

Project Type	Applicant Type: One-time	Applicant Type: Repeat
Zoning-simple (1 – 75 days)	Faster	Fastest
Zoning-complex (120 – 360+ days)	Slowest	Slower

While streamlining possibilities likely exist for each combination, this analysis will primarily focus on the two slowest applicant and project type combinations: one-time and repeat applicants with zoning-complex projects.[3]

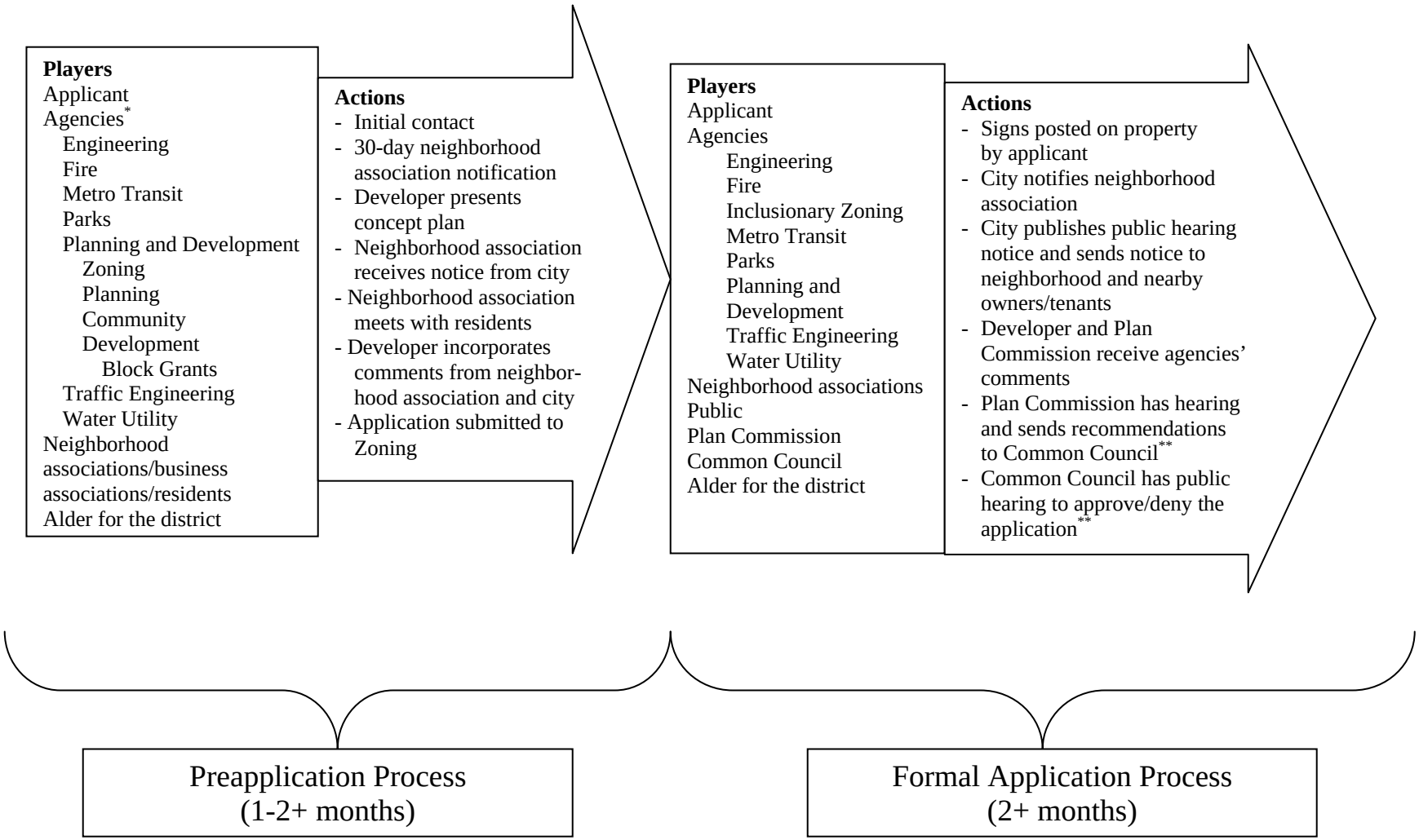
For these applicants, the permitting process consists of four stages:

(1) the pre-application stage, from initial contact with city staff to submittal of application to the City, usually about 60 to 120 days,
(2) the formal application stage, from application submittal to Common Council approval, usually about 60 days,
(3) plan sign-off, 30 to 60 days, or as few as 1 day for zoning-simple, and
(4) obtaining a building permit, seven to 14 days, or as little as one day for zoning-simple.

Of these stages, typically the pre-application and formal application elements take the most time. These are the stages that involve meetings with neighborhood alders, hearings before a board, and public notification. Figure 1 illustrates these first two steps in the development review process (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development, Planning Unit 2004).[4]

[3] Zoning-simple projects can take as little as one day or as many as 75, which suggests there may be ways to further categorize the project types.
[4] The development review and permitting process for zoning-simple projects differs from zoning-complex projects in that they are not required to go through the pre-application and formal application processes.

Figure 1: Generalized Diagram of Madison Permitting Process (Before Building Phase)



*Depending on the type of project, some other agencies are involved
**For some projects the Plan Commission has final approval authority

Stage One: The Pre-Application Process

The pre-application process is in place for the developer to make initial contact with other participants in the permit process. It is also in place to clarify and specify the plan to be submitted to the Zoning Office (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development, Planning Unit 2004). The main parties involved in the pre-application process are: the applicant, city staff (Zoning, Planning Unit, Engineering, Traffic Engineering, and the Fire Department), the alder, the neighborhood association, and other property owners or residents in the immediate area.

The length of time the pre-application process takes depends on factors such as how complete the plans are when the developer initially approaches the City, how well the plan fits with existing land use ordinances (zoning or special district requirements), and how well the plan fits with citywide and neighborhood plans. Another factor is how much time is spent effectively communicating with neighborhood residents and the alder to describe the plan's details and receive and incorporate their feedback. In general, how well the applicant understands what is expected at this stage also affects how long the pre-application process takes.

In some cases, the applicant makes contact with the neighborhood association and the alder before communicating with the Department of Planning and Development. If this is not the case, the applicant is encouraged to make early contact with the corresponding neighborhood association and alder after the initial meeting with staff members from Zoning and the Planning Unit. While city ordinances do not require the applicant to take this action, doing so will most likely expedite the process and reduce the chances of surprise objections on the part of area residents during the formal application process (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development, Planning Unit 2004). The applicant is also required to provide written notice to the neighborhood association and the alder 30 days before the formal submittal of the application (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development, 2004b). Although the neighborhood associations do not have formal authority in the actual approval of the permit, Madison strongly encourages their participation and gives weight to their comments and concerns in the final decision for approval (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004a). The applicant is encouraged to integrate the comments from neighbors and the City staff into the plan they formally submit.

Stage Two: The Formal Application Process

The applicant begins the formal application process by submitting the permit application to Zoning. The Planning Unit estimates the typical formal application process takes about two months but can take much longer depending upon the complexity and controversial nature of the project (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development, Planning Unit 2004). Once the application is submitted, it is routed to at least seven agencies for review.[5] These agency reviews occur concurrently by the agencies that Zoning or the Planning Unit considered relevant to the project. Once all comments have been received, they are distributed to the applicant, alder, and the Plan Commission. The Department of Planning and Development has begun to post these comments, the full

[5] They are Planning and Development, Engineering, Fire, Metro Transit, Parks, Traffic Engineering, and Water Utility.

application and relevant ordinances on the Internet prior to hearings, although this online project is not fully implemented.

All zoning-complex projects must gain approval or obtain a recommendation from the Plan Commission before gaining plan sign-off. The Common Council has final authority on projects that involve rezoning, annexation, and subdivision requests. The Plan Commission has final approval authority for conditional use permits and demolition permits (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development, Planning Unit 2004). Additionally, if the Plan Commission rejects an application, the Common Council becomes involved if an appeal is filed. The Landmarks and Urban Design commissions become involved if a project is in a historic district or urban design district, respectively

Once an application is submitted, city staff and the applicant are required to take numerous steps to inform residents of the proposed plan and their upcoming opportunity to comment on it at a public hearing. Within a week of the application's submission, the City notifies the involved neighborhood association of the submission. In compliance with city ordinance, Madison publishes notices for the public hearing in the newspaper two weeks in advance and sends similar notices to all who reside within 200 feet of the property at least 10 days before the Plan Commission's public hearing (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004b). Last, the applicant is obligated to post signs about the upcoming hearing on the property 30 days before conditional-use permit hearings and 60 days before rezoning permit hearings.

The Plan Commission makes a recommendation on the application after the public hearing based on comments from the various agencies, comments from the neighborhood association, and feedback from the applicant.[6] If the project is rejected, the applicant, adjoining property owners, or the alder may file an appeal with the Common Council.

Criticism of Madison's Permitting Process

The three biggest complaints business owners and developers have about Madison's permitting process are that it is slow compared to other cities, frequent conflicts occur among city agencies and commissions in their enforcement of ordinances, and neighborhood associations have too much power to veto development plans.[7] Although these comments are often made independently of one another, businesspeople and developers who make them are all concerned about the same thing: inefficiencies in the process that are costly to them.

Any additional time spent in the permitting process is not only money spent on the development of a project, but a delay on returns from that project. Development is even more costly when the plans are sent back for review late in the permitting process.

[6] This scenario excludes projects in historic or urban design districts. The Plan Commission decides on conditional uses and demolitions.

[7] At a series of business forums in 2004, the city heard a wide range of comments on topics related to doing business in Madison more generally. A large number of these comments focused more specifically on the development review and permitting processes. The three major themes we identify here were drawn from the comments made at those forums, the minutes of which are documented in Appendix A of the Economic Development Commission Report of 2004.

For example, when developers complain that neighborhood associations wield too much power, it seems unlikely they are disputing the rights of residents to help create the sort of neighborhood in which they want to live. Instead, developers are frustrated by the ability of neighborhoods to derail development plans by influencing decisions to send plans back for review at a point in the process when it is costly to the applicant because they have already invested a lot of time and resources.

Ultimately, the interests of the City and the business community would be best served by making the process faster and less costly for everyone involved while still upholding the values and priorities of the City as described by the City's comprehensive and master plans.[8] It seems there are three primary means by which this might be accomplished:

(1) making the approval process more efficient by addressing existing interagency conflicts resulting from ordinances conflicts and the time it takes to do plan reviews,

(2) making public involvement more efficient by encouraging neighbors and residents to stay informed on proposed plans and raise their objections early rather than late in the process when it is more costly to applicants, and

(3) making applicant involvement more efficient by finding ways to decrease the information costs associated with learning to navigate a complex process.

Evaluating the Criticism

The city has already recognized potential inefficiencies in each of these areas and is taking steps to remedy them. In spite of the City's efforts to improve its permitting process, members of the business and development communities continue to complain, which suggests to us that there may be additional room for improvement. We examine the efficiency of the plan review process and public involvement in permitting as well as the ease with which applicants navigate the system to ascertain whether criticisms are warranted that the process is excessively time consuming and costly.

Site-Plan-Review Efficiency

Two major areas within the plan review process can slow permitting:

(1) the time it takes agencies to review a project, and

(2) outdated ordinances.

Agencies often will review plans several times to ensure that ordinances are observed and that required changes are made. At minimum, plans will be reviewed informally during the pre-application process, the formal application process, and then a third time before plan sign-off. To expedite the agency review process, the Department of Planning and Development recently moved to an online plan sign-off following approval from the

[8] "Smart Growth" legislation passed in 1999 requires Wisconsin cities, villages, towns, counties, and regional planning commissions to develop "comprehensive plans" by January 1, 2010, with which any local programs and actions affecting land use must be consistent. For more information see "Some Key Points About Wisconsin's New 'Smart Growth' Legislation" by Brian Ohm at http://www.wisc.edu/urpl/people/ohm/projects/smartgrowthf/index.html. (Ohm 2005).

appropriate body. Under this new system, rather than routing the plan from one agency to another sequentially, each agency gets a copy at the same time. The software documents the date when each agency looked at the plan and whether it is still being reviewed or the review is complete. The agency can enter whether the plan was acceptable, and what, if any, comments its staff had. All of this information is available to the Department of Planning and Development, the reviewing agencies, the applicant, and neighborhood associations (Murphy 2005). This process allows applicants to know which agencies have not yet reviewed a project. It also allows applicants to see comments from the review staff as soon as they finish them, instead of having to wait for all staff to review the plan.

The review process can be slowed when one agency's review is based on an ordinance that conflicts with an ordinance that another agency uses for its review. The plan review is contingent upon authorization from various agencies not housed within the Department of Planning and Development. These can include the Fire Department's inspection unit, and Traffic Engineering, Water, and Engineering which is in the Department of Public Works and Traffic Engineering. The city's reliance on multiple agencies for reviewing projects under multiple ordinances creates the potential for interagency conflicts. The rules regarding who should have authority over specific issues when interagency conflicts occur are unclear, so changes to a plan made by one agency may conflict with those made by another. No one within the City has the authority to say which changes should prevail or how the decision should be made. The applicant, meanwhile, has no one person to whom she can refer to make the changes needed to be granted approval.

The Department of Planning and Development and the City of Madison are aware of this problem of interagency conflicts and the effects they can have on the overall expediency of the permitting process. In light of these conflicts between reviewing agencies, the mayor has formed a staff team to formulate recommendations on codes, ordinances, and procedures that have historically conflicted with one another. Presumably, this will provide guidance for resolving most conflicts between reviewing agencies and reduce confusion on the part of the applicant. This also removes some of the burden on Plan Commission and Common Council members to interpret the priorities of the reviewing agencies when the final recommendation is under their authority (Murphy 2005).

In addition to trying to resolve specific conflicts between agencies, the City is updating its Comprehensive Plan, which details land-use priorities and goals. This not only guides the Common Council, its boards and commissions, the Department of Planning and Development, and the agencies involved in the plan review process, but also provides guidance to people seeking to establish or expand their businesses in the City (City of Madison, Plan Commission 2004). Specifically, in a 2004 draft of the Comprehensive Plan, the City includes an objective that stresses the importance of the role of residents in land-use decisions and outlines what the City will do to promote their involvement. This helps applicants by illustrating the role that Madison hopes its citizens will play in the development process but could also complicate efforts to resolve zoning ordinance conflicts. Zoning ordinances are in place to help ensure implementation of Comprehensive Plan's goals. An overhaul of the Comprehensive Plan would seem to necessitate a correlating revision of the zoning ordinances presumably to eliminate some of the conflicts.

Public Involvement

Complaints by permit applicants about the length and complex nature of the review process indicate that improvements might be made in the area of ordinances and requirements (Faulkner, Sharpe, and Cogan 1987). While ordinance "adjustments" can often lead to the aforementioned problem of conflicting ordinances, they can be a way to adjust the development review and permitting process to changes in technology, policy, or public opinion. The Economic Development Commission Report to the Mayor documents complaints about how long the process can take: "regulations and delays…add to the cost of projects or doing business" (Madison Economic Development Commission 2004:4). This report does not mention specific regulations, but comments from a 2004 Best Practices Working Session suggest that uncoordinated input from neighbors and neighborhood associations can delay the process (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004a). One concern from developers regarding the formal application process was that "the public process is allowed to slow or stagnate in deference to 'neighborhood input,' even when opportunity for public input has [already] occurred" (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004a:8). This and other comments suggest that the formal application process might take longer in Madison than in other cities that do not have organized and involved neighborhoods.

The City of Madison *Development Guide* suggests that the average time to obtain development plan approval and a permit, if a formal neighborhood review is required, ranges between 74 and 101 days (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004b). The actual length of time for various processes was recorded during the two-year period between October 2002 and October 2004.[9] During this time zoning map amendments and planned urban developments took an average of 69 days from the date of the formal application submission to the approval by the Plan Commission or the Common Council. Conditional-use permits took an average of 40 days (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004c). The range for zoning map amendments and planned urban developments was 50 to 153 days. Conditional use permits ranged between 28 and 82 days. While we had little data that indicated how long these processes take, a general survey of development review and permitting processes of similar nature ranged between 50 and 130 days.[10] Most were between 90 and 110 days. For example, in 2003 in Eugene, Oregon, a conditional use permit took an average of 74 days to go from submission of a final application to the decision, whereas in Madison, the process averaged 40 days. In general, the City of Madison does not appear to take more time in the formal application process than other cities in our analysis.

These numbers do not account for the amount of time spent in the pre-application process. Based on comments from the Best Practices Working Session, neighborhoods, developers, and policy-makers all seem to think that the development review process goes more smoothly when applicants spend more time with the pre-application process.

[9] Outliers were removed from their analysis

[10] The departments with the shortest times typically involved little, if any, public notification and were bound to approving projects by a certain date or they would automatically be approved. Departments with longer times tend to require more public hearings.

Specifically, everyone seems to agree that when developers devote sufficient time and effort to discussing their plans with the neighborhoods before they formally submit an application, the more welcome the project will be in the community and the fewer delays the applicant will encounter later in the process (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004a).[11]

The neighborhood associations and neighbors do not have the final say in projects proposed in their areas, but the Plan Commission and the Common Council are made up of alders and citizens who are residents of Madison and have a relationship with neighborhood associations. Applicants assume that compliance with codes will give them the timely passage of their plan. When comments from neighbors come in late in the process, applicants can experience additional delays and costs as commissions give considerable weight to the concerns of neighbors. This form of representative government plays a critical role for neighborhood associations who are not otherwise formally granted authority in the final decision. However, confusion surrounding the role of neighborhood associations has led to frustration on the part of both developers and neighbors. Developers get frustrated because the lack of coordinated and informed communication of a plan within a neighborhood can result in comments coming in late from area residents. Neighborhood residents get frustrated because they feel that developers are not attentive enough to their visions for their neighborhoods.

Presumably, with some research into the various codes and ordinances relevant to a specific parcel of land, an applicant would be able to submit a development plan capable of winning approval from the Plan Commission and Common Council, but zoning ordinances do not tell the developer anything about the preferences of neighborhood residents. An applicant often turns to neighborhood associations for direction regarding area development preferences, but if the there is no neighborhood association, or if the association is not coordinated in conveying their preferences and disseminating proposed plans to residents, it becomes more difficult for any one entity to speak on behalf of the neighborhood. Without a coordinated and informed effort to disseminate project information, a plan can make it as far as the Plan Commission before it draws significant criticism from neighborhoods, at which time it might be sent back for revisions based on comments from neighbors. This becomes costly for the applicant, who may have already invested a lot of time and resources in the project. Additionally, it may be frustrating if the applicant feels as though he or she went through the required steps to try to understand the development preferences of the neighborhood early in the process, only to find out that not all neighbors had an opportunity to comment on the project. The issues appear to be one of disseminating the most recent information on a project as thoroughly as possible to all affected neighbors and relying upon their level of organization to provide unified input regarding projects.

[11] Developers commented that "[n]eighborhood meeting[s] can flush out issues early;" neighborhood associations added that "[i]t's good when developers meet with neighborhood groups early in their planning for a project;" and policy-makers concurred and explained that with early notification and discussion "Neighborhood Associations get 'invested' in the project" (City of Madison Department of Planning and Development 2004a:5).

To address the absence of neighborhood organizations or neighborhood plans, the Department of Planning and Development and the City have taken steps to help neighborhoods form associations and coordinate a consensus and conveyance of their development goals by providing information and training. The Department of Planning and Development provides training on a case-by-case basis on how to organize area residents and develop neighborhood plans. The department also hosts annual conferences and round tables for neighborhood associations on specific development topics. Additionally, agency provides grants for leadership development and capital improvements (Murphy 2005). One of the benefits of a well-organized neighborhood association is that it provides a mechanism through which people hoping to develop there can communicate efficiently with residents and better understand the priorities of the neighborhood.

To make sure that the most recent comments and plans are available to all interested parties, the City is beginning to use an online system called the Legistar Legislative Information Center. This center provides anyone with an Internet connection access to the plans, including the actual application with pictures and all comments, as well as project relevant ordinances. Overall, the Department of Planning and Development is using educational tools and online technology to help neighborhoods convey their concerns to potential developers.

Applicant Understanding

In considering the initial contact an applicant might have with planning and zoning staff, it is to be expected that zoning-complex projects would require a greater time commitment on the part of both planning staff and applicant than zoning-simple projects. First-time applicants also require more guidance than applicants who have gone through the permitting process before. Whether the project is zoning-simple or zoning-complex, the question becomes how the Department of Planning and Development can help first-time applicants understand what is expected of them in the “most efficient manner” — the least amount of time for planning staff to ensure the applicant understands the permitting process.

There are two parts to understanding the permitting process: learning the requirements for obtaining a permit and learning how to meet those requirements in a timely fashion without sacrificing community priorities. An applicant must begin by discerning what type of project he or she has (zoning amendment, conditional use, etc.); he or she must then learn what to do given the type of project, as well as which documents are needed and how to present the plans. The applicant must find out who to contact regarding the project, as well as how and when to contact those people. In addition, applicants must determine which ordinances apply to their projects, what those ordinances mean, and how to comply with them. This information could be presented to an applicant in printed or electronic format, which might reduce the amount of time staff members spend explaining the process but increase the amount of time the applicant has to spend deciphering the process. Conversely, staff could dedicate a lot of time to walking applicants through the process, which may reduce the amount of time a first-time applicant spends learning the process but would require a lot of time

on the part of zoning and planning staff. Given the desire to minimize the time required by each party, the ideal situation would be one in which first-time applicants can easily and quickly determine the requirements for their projects by acquiring only relevant information and then consulting with staff as needed.

To facilitate an applicant's understanding of the permit requirements, the Department of Planning and Development has published guidelines for the various permitting situations in the *Development Guide: Land Use and Construction Approval Processes*. First-time applicants who physically go to the department's office receive this document. The *Development Guide* provides clear flowcharts and thorough descriptions of the processes, information about where to get help, and which agencies and boards review different types of plans. Without the assistance of planning and zoning staff, applicants need to look through many different sections to figure out which kinds of projects they have and which permits they might have to obtain.

By providing information about the details of the permitting process in the *Development Guide*, the Department of Planning and Development is educating applicants on how to go through the permitting process. To further facilitate the learning process, the department is developing a *Best Practices Guide* with tips on how to expedite the permitting process. Written for developers, neighborhood associations, and policy-makers, the *Best Practices Guide* is intended to augment the existing *Development Guide* by filling in any gaps regarding projects that need Common Council and Plan Commission approval. In addition, it will provide tips for each group on how to make the entire process efficient while ensuring that all voices are heard. It explains each group's role in the permitting process, general criteria for planning staff review, tips for communicating a plan to the City, tips for contacting the neighborhood and alder, suggestions about other potentially interested parties, and guidance about how the project may evolve given recommendations by city staff. For neighborhood associations and residents, it gives tips on how to organize and how to communicate neighborhood concerns. In general, the goal with respect to the neighborhood associations is to make sure they are ready to participate by having a method by which they handle new development, get updates regarding the most recent project plans, disseminate information about new developments to residents for feedback, and understand the standards by which city staff will review projects (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development, Planning Unit 2004). The *Best Practices Guide* will help stakeholders in the permitting process understand their role and the roles of other groups, and it will stress the need for each group to understand and respect the concerns of each of the other.

Much of the information in the *Development* and the *Best Practices* guides is available online in the form of downloadable documents. Applicants who do not know what they seek or are unfamiliar with terminology may have great difficulty determining which documents they need or how the Department of Planning and Development would categorize their projects. Even with the *Development Guide*, applicants would still need to determine which ordinances apply to the properties they wish to develop.

To provide applicants with guidance about the preferences and priorities of the neighborhoods in which they hope to build, the Department of Planning and Development posts neighborhood plans on its web site. These plans include design priorities, growth preferences, and contact information for the neighborhoods. Easy access to this information means that applicants can research the area in which they hope to build early on, perhaps even before they approach the department with their plans. This may save them time and money if they develop their original plans with the goals of the neighborhoods in mind, thereby reducing the likelihood of having to make changes due to conflicting priorities.

Applicants and staff share the responsibility of making sure applicants understand the development review and permitting process. Zoning and planning staff are primarily responsible for explaining the permitting process and working with applicants to identify needed approvals and to lay out the process and timeline. The Office of Business Resources, which is part of the Department of Planning and Development, assumes some of this burden by acting as a guide of sorts to help a small subset of the applicants navigate the permitting process (Murphy 2005). One of the functions of the staff is to explain the permitting process, and on the Office of Business Resources web site, potential applicants can determine which approvals are required, how much time they take, and which reviewing boards will be involved, given the applicant's business needs. The Office of Business Resources is not usually the first point of contact for business applicants, nor is it intended to be. It has only two full-time and one half-time staff. While it could expand its efforts to be a first point of contact, this would provide assistance to only the subset of applicants starting or expanding their businesses.

Despite these efforts to provide informational materials and city staff services to assist applicants in understanding the process, city staff members still dedicate a substantial amount of time to walking applicants through the process. Reasons for this may be that the printed material is dense, confusing, or difficult to access. The city is attempting to provide applicants with consistent information while reducing staff time spent on explaining the development and reviewing process; however, neither party is satisfied.

Summary of Key Findings Regarding Criticism of Madison's Development Review and Permitting Process

In considering the criticism that the City of Madison's plan review and permitting process has received, we examined three ways in which the overall efficiency of the permitting process might be reduced:

(1) the plan review process,
(2) public involvement, and
(3) facilitation of better understanding of the permitting process on the part of the applicant.

After carefully examining each of these areas, it seems clear that Madison has recognized many of the potential problems and is taking steps to address them. Nonetheless, constant changes in legislation, technology, and land-use demands warrant constant changes to the development review and permitting processes. Criticism acts as a touchstone for change. In response, the city has changed the plan review process, involved the public more efficiently, and improved methods through which potential applicants learn about the process. Opportunities for streamlining the process still exist. Madison has been recognized by some surveys as a good place to do business and presumably wants to maintain, if not improve, that reputation. Our analysis of the criticism suggests a number of potential areas of improvement:

- While it is unclear if the development review and permitting process actually takes longer in Madison than in other similar cities, the pre-application and final application plan reviews could be completed more quickly if the Department of Planning and Development implemented a fully automated system for plan sign-off.
- While the mayor's staff team is addressing problems of conflicting ordinances, upcoming changes in the Comprehensive Plan might make some zoning ordinances inconsistent with city goals. Additionally, the Department of Planning and Development has not yet addressed the issue of how it will deal with new ordinance conflicts as they arise as part of ongoing adjustments to reflect changes in policy, technology, and public opinion.
- Coordinating the valuable input of the neighborhood associations and residents continues to be an obstacle.
- The complexities of the development review and permitting process take a lot of effort to understand. This increases the time it takes applicants to understand what is required of them and may affect how many times a plan is sent back for revisions.

Given the criticism and the potential areas of improvement, we turn to our case study of cities that have undergone innovative changes to streamline their permitting processes.

Looking Toward Innovation: What Have Other Cities Done to Streamline Their Permitting Processes?

The second component of this report is a comparison of different cities' permitting processes. To identify cities comparable to Madison, we reviewed lists of peer cities identified as business friendly in national rankings. This search yielded 40 cities from which we selected eight to be the subjects of our case study. These eight have, in the last five to 10 years, implemented innovative approaches to their permitting processes, and their political or economic environments are similar to Madison's. The eight cities are:

- Austin, Texas
- Cincinnati, Ohio
- Eugene, Oregon
- Kansas City, Missouri
- Orlando, Florida
- Portland, Oregon
- San Diego, California
- St. Paul, Minnesota

The primary criterion for selecting these eight cities was that, collectively, they represent a range of diverse and innovative permitting processes. The secondary criteria included comparability to Madison with respect to factors such as population size, population growth rate, education level, and per capita income. Also, most of the cities have large universities located within their city limits and have active neighborhood associations. By noting specifically how these cities approach improving their relationships between their city governments and business communities, we consider whether actions they took would be applicable and effective if tried in Madison. Table 2 summarizes selected characteristics of the eight cities and Madison.

For each city, we attempted to ascertain:

(1) the time it takes for a project to be approved or rejected, based on whether the project needs administrative approval or board or commission approval;

(2) physical and organizational methods used to guide customers through the permitting process;

(3) the number of agencies and board and commissions involved in the process;

(4) the amount of time (consultant and staff) and money the cities have invested in technology to streamline the process; and

(5) ways in which the process is tailored to specific groups of customers (e.g., first-time business owners versus professional developers or small versus large businesses).

Table 2: Case Study Cities' General Selection Demographics

City	Government Structure	Population[1]	Population Growth Rate Since 1990[2]	Percent of Population with Bachelors Degree[1]	Square Miles[2]	Median Age[1]	Per Capita Income in 2000[1] (2000 dollars)
Austin, Texas	Mayor & City Manager	656,562	41%	40.4	252	30	$ 24,163
Cincinnati, Ohio	Mayor & City Manager	331,285	-9%	26.6	78	32	$ 19,962
Eugene, Oregon	City Manager	137,893	21%	37.3	41	33	$ 21,315
Kansas City, Missouri	City Manager	441,545	2%	25.7	314	34	$ 20,753
Madison, Wisconsin	**Mayor**	**208,054**	**9%**	**48.2**	**69**	**31**	**$ 23,498**
Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota	Mayor	669,769	5%	37.4	108	31	$ 22,685
Orlando, Florida	Mayor	185,951	13%	28.2	94	33	$ 21,216
Portland, Oregon	Mayor	529,121	21%	32.6	134	35	$ 22,643
San Diego, California	Mayor & City Manager	1,250,000	10%	35.0	324	32	$ 23,609

Sources:
1. 2000 U.S. Census
2.US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

We were also interested in the role and authority of neighborhood associations in the permit approval process. If neighborhood associations had a significant role in the development review process, we wanted to know if they had objective guidelines by which to make comments. We found detailed information about the economic development departments and planning commissions such as department size, budget, and the agencies with which the planning department works when approving plans for building permits. For cities that use project managers, we were also interested in the role and expertise of the project manager, her or his education level, and her or his authority to sign off on projects. We used this information to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each city's approval process to Madison's specific needs. Appendix A lists the questions we used when interviewing planning department staff from each city.

We faced a number of limitations in conducting this case study. First and foremost, this case study was performed with very limited resources. As mentioned earlier, the cities we selected do not necessarily constitute a representative sample of all the possible innovative streamlining techniques a city could implement. Our research team had only about five weeks to gather what information we could about these cities by phone, through electronic mail communication, from web sites, and from information collected by the American Planning Association Research Department; we were unable to conduct site visits. Because of the amount of time allotted to perform this analysis, we cannot be sure that the people we interviewed from each city were the best candidates to interview. Ideally, we would have liked to speak with several people from each city, but in most cases, resource limitations constrained us to interviewing only one person per city. Given these limitations, we are unable to perform detailed estimates of cost or performance outcomes, but we are able to describe relative expenses and outcomes that Madison could expect if it implemented any of these strategies.

Practices of Cities with Innovative Processes

The following section highlights the ways in which eight selected cities have changed their application processes in light of three main objectives:

(1) increasing site plan review efficiency;
(2) facilitating coordinated communications between the city and stakeholders; and
(3) addressing the customer's needs for education and information about the development process.

This section showcases improvements cities have made to their development review processes. To summarize each innovative action, we note examples of cities that have implemented the specific measure ("city examples"), categories of costs critical to making such a change ("cost categories"), and ways in which cities measure success ("sample success indicators").

Table 3: Streamlining Options Used by Cities in Case Study

	One-stop shop	Automated tracking system	Project facilitators/ on-call planner	Team consultation/ interdisciplinary team	Early public notice	Coordinated public involvement with the city	Continuous review of ordinances and process	Early assistance with pre-application process	education programs
Austin, Texas	✓							✓	
Cincinnati, Ohio	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Eugene, Oregon	✓						✓		
Kansas City, Missouri	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓
Orlando, Florida	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	
Portland, Oregon	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
St. Paul, Minnesota	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	
San Diego, California	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Madison, Wisconsin		✓					✓		

Site Plan Review Efficiency

One-Stop Shop

City examples*:* Austin, Cincinnati, Eugene, Kansas City, Orlando, Portland, St. Paul, and San Diego

Cost categories*:* Capital costs, personnel costs, and transitional costs

Sample success indicators*:* Number of walk-in customers served, number of applications filed/ reviewed, permits issued, customer wait time (in minutes), fees received (in dollars), turn-around time for legal liaison requests (in hours), customer satisfaction (by survey), internal staff satisfaction (by survey), and number of development process web site page reviews.

Many cities have created one-stop shops to remedy confusing inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the development review process. A one-stop shop brings representatives from participating agencies to one central location so that an entire development project, from start to finish, can be managed in a single location. The advantage of having a one-stop shop is its capacity to provide a more uniform and consistent process across the entire development path. Additionally, a one-stop-shop fosters efficiency, as it prevents the customer from having to fill out various applications in multiple locations throughout the development process. This physical change in the development process emphasizes an important goal: serving the customer.

To consolidate the process of land development permitting and assistance, Austin created a one-stop shop. Prior to implementing new systems, Austin's process sent customers to several locations for permits and reviews. One agency's review could adversely affect the decisions made at other agencies (Wilkinson 2005). Within the one-stop shop, Austin implemented a permit center to issue permits for builders, developers, and property owners, thereby shortening the time allocated for the permitting process before beginning development activity.

Cincinnati implemented its Business Development and Permit Center in 2004. It is a single point of contact service for homeowners, developers, architects, small business owners, construction personnel, and others involved in the development and building permit process. In this case, the mayor responded to community concerns about an inefficient permitting process by commissioning a report from Cincinnati's Economic Development Task Force (Briggs 2005). Implementing the center was one of nine task force recommendations.

Automated Tracking System

City examples:	Cincinnati, Kansas City, Orlando, Portland, St. Paul, and San Diego
Cost categories:	Technology costs (software acquisition, periodic upgrades, and possible system upgrades to accommodate software) and transitional costs
Sample success indicators:	Number of applications filed/reviewed, number of permits issued, customer wait time (in minutes), fees received (in dollars), customer satisfaction (by online survey), internal staff satisfaction (by survey), and number of automated tracking system web site page reviews.

A second approach to improving the efficiency of the site-plan review process is to create a fully automated application process that increases the speed and accuracy of real-time information for staff and the customer, enables customers to retrieve information electronically, and reduces manual staff effort. To this end, an automated project tracking system includes applicant information and project location; project description, scope,

and budget; designated staff members and interested party names for public notices; project schedule and documents; and information concerning various project issues.

In July 1999, Portland began using new permit tracking software called Tracking Review and Construction System, which processes permit applications from start to finish, allowing coordination among all seven city bureaus. Additionally, TRACS allows application details and project status to be electronically available to customers (Phillips 2005).

Cincinnati is in the process of implementing a fully automated system for site-plan review that allows for electronic plan submission. They hope that this new system will eliminate 90 percent of the interaction between customers and planning staff, which would clearly improve the efficiency of the development review process for both city staff and applicants.

Project Facilitators

City examples: St. Paul and San Diego

Cost categories: Personnel costs

Sample success indicators: Number of projects receiving assistance, customer satisfaction (by survey), and internal satisfaction (by survey)

Project facilitators have proven to be a key factor in providing customers with smooth and efficient development review and permitting processes. Project facilitators are city staff, often within the city's planning or permitting departments, who act as liaisons between the customers and city staff. Facilitators have a thorough understanding of each agency's requirements and authority. In most cases, a facilitator will work with a customer from the pre-application process through the end of the project. St. Paul's Department of Licensing, Inspection and Environmental Protection employs project facilitators whose primary responsibilities are to help customers get building permits, licenses, and anything else needed to complete their building projects. These facilitators can answer basic questions about development and licensing in St. Paul, and when complex questions or problems arise, facilitators foster communication between customers and the appropriate agencies or specialized inspectors.

Team consultation

City examples: Kansas City, Orlando, Portland, and San Diego

Cost categories: Personnel costs (hours of time expended by current staff)

Sample success indicators: Number of projects receiving assistance, customer satisfaction (by survey), and internal satisfaction (by survey)

Team consultation that involves representatives from each agency with authority in the planning and permitting processes is another way to provide assistance to developers and facilitate a smooth and efficient process. A developer meets with these representatives for a pre-determined period of time to discuss project plans in any stage, from pre-application to formal application. This enables the agency representatives to consult with the developer and each other during that meeting.

Kansas City has implemented a team consultation approach. The city created a Business Development and Assistance Team made up of representatives from all involved city departments to provide customers with as much preliminary information about the development of the specific site and project as possible. The team convenes on Thursdays from 10 a.m. until noon to meet with a maximum of two customers. Meetings with customers are limited to one hour each.[12] By assigning a weekly two-hour time slot for agencies to come together and consult with applicants, Kansas City's Business Assistance Team has provided informal cross-agency training. The teams have also provided contacts to staff members in each agency (Pajor 2005).

Public Involvement

Earlier public notice

City examples: Portland

Cost categories No significant costs.

Sample success indicators: Stakeholder satisfaction (by survey), and internal satisfaction (by survey)

Earlier public notice gives residents, neighborhood associations and other public groups, which are often run by volunteers, a more reasonable amount of time to learn about a project and respond in a coordinated fashion. This coordinated response is often more valuable to developers and other customers of the planning and permitting processes, and consequently facilitates a more efficient process.

Portland now requires earlier public notice and involvement in its review process. Any project complex enough to require a zoning variance requires a public comment period of at least 47 days before city staff can make any decisions on the project.[13] This is designed to complement Blueprint 2000, by requiring more pre-application conferences and a neighborhood contact. The focus is not necessarily on increased public involvement but on more effective public involvement. Portland also implemented the Customer Service and Public Information Program in July 2003 (Phillips 2005). The program is designed to expand the Bureau of Development Services' customer service efforts. A team from this bureau meets with neighborhood and business groups to determine what kinds of information are most wanted and needed.

[12] City of Kansas City, Missouri, web site, http://www.kcmo.org, accessed 14 March 2005.
[13] Web site for Bureau of Development Services, Portland, Oregon, http://www.portlandonline.com/bds/index.cfm?c=36359, accessed April 23, 2005.

Coordinated neighborhood involvement

City examples: Cincinnati, Portland, and St. Paul

Cost categories: Personnel costs (staffing for neighborhood coordination through city staff or through a grant program to pay for outside staff) and transitional costs

Sample success indicators: Stakeholder satisfaction (by survey), internal satisfaction (by survey), length of pre-application (in days)

Many of the cities examined in this report acknowledged complaints from planning and permitting process customers about inefficiency and lack of coordination of public input. Cities have responded to these concerns with efforts to facilitate coordinated communication between customers and public groups such as neighborhood associations. Coordinated communication efforts often take the form of geographically focused zones or districts that represent a group of neighborhood and business associations. In some cases, these representative organizations hire a full- or part-time staff person to facilitate communication between the city and the organization's constituency. In other cases, a city staff person is designated to facilitate communication.

In the late 1990s, Cincinnati divided the city into six zones and assigned a planning department representative, a city housing representative, and a member of the business community to each zone. The representatives from each zone were charged with involving members of the community in development and planning decisions.

St. Paul facilitates communication between the public and the city's Department of Planning and Economic Development by organizing the city into 19 districts (Lynch 2005). These geographically focused districts represent the interests of city residents and neighborhoods by providing feedback on development projects in their respective areas. In addition, the Department of Planning and Economic Development's staff structure is geographically focused with a southwest team and a northeast team (Filice 2005).

Customer Education

Reviewing Processes and Requirements

City examples: Cincinnati, Eugene, Orlando, and Portland

Cost categories: Personnel costs (ongoing review led by staff)

Sample success indicators: Customer satisfaction (by survey), internal satisfaction by survey), length of process (measured in days)

From a business perspective, especially for first-time developers and small business owners, the development process can be complex and overwhelming. To address customer needs for guidance through the process, some cities have made customer

education a primary agency goal. Three common approaches to sharpening the learning curve include: city-sponsored educational programs for customers, early assistance programs, and staff efforts to simplify or streamline regulatory requirements.

St. Paul implemented several measures to create an accessible and less confusing development process. Specifically, the city created a Business Resource Center hotline customers can call to get information on required permits and process steps for a particular project (Young 2005). The city also implemented a project facilitator structure where facilitators work as liaisons between the customer and staff members directly involved with their projects. In this case, the project facilitator structure serves as an educational tool, as the customer has a contact for information and a direct source for feedback.

Early assistance initiatives

City examples:	Austin, Portland, Kansas City, Orlando, St. Paul, and San Diego
Cost categories:	Personnel costs (cursory or in-depth consultation by staff on a one-on-one or group basis)
Sample success indicators:	Customer satisfaction (by survey), internal satisfaction (by survey), length of pre-application process (measured in days)

San Diego caters to first-time users through early assistance programs that give applicants an in-depth understanding of the process. Early assistance programs provide imperative information to the customer, such as project feasibility, cost, and the development schedule. In addition to keeping the customer informed, early assistance initiatives improve predictability and turnaround time for the customer and staff. Furthermore, San Diego has a uniform application intake process that includes a quantitative check of a project to make sure applications meet predetermined minimum standards for review, contain sufficient information to initiate the formal review process and to get to a decision point, and to enable a high quality review. Although the uniform application intake process is mainly geared toward facilitating a consistent process for all projects and customers, the measure also ensures that the customer is adequately informed about regulatory requirements.

Education programs

City examples:	Kansas City and Portland
Cost categories:	Personnel costs (staff time to coordinate education programs)
Sample success indicators:	Number of people in attendance, customer satisfaction (by survey)

Portland implemented a Lunch and Learn Program to educate developers, small business owners, and other customers about the city's permitting and planning process. Customers

join City Development Services staff members for lunch to learn the latest information and requirements to keep development projects on track.

Portland also created a two-track permit program tailored to meet the needs of the applicant, based on level of experience and familiarity with Portland building codes. Track one offers assistance to applicants who want extra help navigating through the permit process. First-time applicants and those who have little experience with Portland's building codes, such as small business owners, will be required to use this track, but any applicant may choose this level of assistance (Phillips 2005).

Finally, Portland has aimed for continual improvements in streamlining its permit process and regulatory requirements. Beginning in 2002, Portland's Bureau of Development Services and Bureau of Planning implemented the Regulatory Improvement Plan. Together, the two departments worked with stakeholders and community groups to develop work plans to improve existing regulations. As a result of this effort, the city modified outdated regulations, clarify code language, and review codes to determine if they are creating regulatory barriers. The main goal for these initiatives was to ease the degree of difficulty for customers striving to complete development projects.

Lessons Learned

This section has outlined nine innovative approaches other cities have taken to making their development review processes more efficient. Cities use one or more of these approaches to address problems similar to those Madison faces. We can learn five key lessons from analyzing the successful changes cities have made.

Lesson One: Successful initiatives focus on customer satisfaction, needs, and education as their first priority. "Customer satisfaction is now the focal point of the bureau. [Our] bureau continues to better align its goals with the goals of the customer," says Jackie Phillips of Portland's Bureau of Development Services. Interviewees in several cities echoed Phillips' focus on customer satisfaction. Interviewees noted that their definition of "customers" included applicants and other stakeholders, such as neighborhood associations and internal staff.

Lesson Two: Successful initiatives facilitate coordinated public involvement and emphasize to customers the necessity of early action. Coordinated public involvement and early action on the parts of the applicant and public groups who provide feedback are key to ensuring an equitable and efficient development process. Neighborhood associations, for example, have a right to provide feedback to applicants who are planning changes in the associations' respective neighborhoods. Developers, for example, benefit from receiving this feedback early in the process and in a consistent manner. Initiatives that provide a vehicle for consistent public input and strongly encourage process applicants to engage the community early in the process are likely to be more efficient.

Lesson Three: Successful initiatives place a high priority on fostering internal and external communication and coordination. Communication within and among agencies involved in the development process is critical to an efficient process. Thus, any successful initiative a city implements likely includes an element of improvement on communication.

Lesson Four: Successful initiatives are sustainable in the long-term and reflect the capacity of a city's budget. Interviewees from some cities indicated that initiatives had to be pared down in response to city budget cuts. For an initiative to be successful, it must be sensitive to a city's fiscal climate and long-term projections.

Lesson Five: Successful initiatives facilitate continual improvement toward streamlining complex regulations. Nearly all of the cities interviewed in this report emphasized the importance of continuous review and periodic overhaul of process requirements and related ordinances.

Given the nine innovative approaches and five key lessons about making effective changes to the development process, Madison has the opportunity to implement one or a combination of these alternatives with consideration to current fiscal and political constraints.

Summary of Key Findings

The following section relates the concerns from Madison's developers and business owners to potential options we found from the other cities we researched. Previously, we outlined four primary concerns with Madison's development review process:

(1) the process seems relatively slow,
(2) divergent ordinances lead to inter-agency conflict,
(3) comments from neighborhood associations and residents can be uncoordinated, and
(4) new applicants may find it difficult to understand the process.

We then used information gathered from other cities to estimate the level of initial investment it would take for Madison to implement our proposed options.

Concern #1: Madison has a Relatively Slow Development Review Process

One area of Madison's development review and permitting process that could be improved is in speeding up the process in the pre- and formal application stages. This conclusion is based on the fact that other cities have used techniques that Madison has not to speed up the process. This conclusion is not based on raw data suggesting Madison's process is slow. From our case studies, we identified three ways in which the City might expedite the plan review process:

(1) concurrent plan review and automated comment compilation through the use of appropriate software,
(2) the use of project facilitators, and
(3) implementation of a one-stop shop for the development review and permitting process.

The goal of these policies is to reduce the amount of time it takes to review plans and provide comments to applicants.

Proposed Option #1: Implement Automated Tracking Systems

Automated tracking systems allow for the concurrent review of plans by the various reviewing agencies. While there is little data to illustrate average time reduction resulting from the use of automated tracking systems, we consider this a viable option for Madison.

Ultimately, the most efficient development review process would be automated from start to finish. Madison has automated tracking systems in place to review most of the process concurrently. However, a comprehensive automated tracking process would save additional time. Another benefit of this policy is that an applicant could begin to make changes immediately after an agency is finished reviewing an application and has electronically posted its comments. This response is especially valuable early in the process when making changes is less costly.

To implement an automated tracking system, the city would need to invest in a software program designed for development review. The American Planning Association estimates that permit-tracking systems cost anywhere from $50,000 to $250,000 (Bain 1999). Madison would need to update the system periodically and employ technical staff to implement and maintain the new system. The goal would be to combine elements of Madison's development review and permitting process that are already electronic and automated.

Proposed Option #2: Make Use of Project Facilitators

Project facilitators can speed up the plan review process if they hold reviewers accountable for making timely decisions. A staff person inside the development review process would have a better idea about who to contact to make sure plans are reviewed in a timely fashion. Also, having one person with whom applicants can consult may make it easier for applicants to follow up on the progress of their applications.

Ideally, project facilitators might be responsible for 15 to 20 projects at a time, and for those projects, they would serve as the liaison between the applicant and the planning department.[14] They would only be assigned to zoning-complex projects. If the planning department processes about 150 zoning-complex projects per year, and assuming that these projects take an average of four months to complete, in each third of the year, the Department of Planning and Development may process about 50 projects (assuming the projects are distributed evenly throughout the year). Assuming that project facilitators were responsible for 15 to 20 projects at a time, the Department of Planning and Development would need three or four project facilitators, whose salaries could be reasonably expected to average about $50,000.[15] Given these assumptions, the department could expect to pay between $150,000 and $200,000 in project facilitator salaries, not including benefits. This is not necessarily an addition to existing salary expenditures as some planners could be reassigned as project facilitators.

Another way in which project facilitators could improve the efficiency of the development review and permitting process would be to grant them authority to sign off on certain types of projects. Making this change could reduce the time applicants spend in the first two stages of the review process for moderately complicated projects. This would also require the City to determine which types of projects would qualify for quick sign-off, make corresponding changes in ordinances to reflect the new authority of project facilitators in these situations, and possibly create some kind of appeals structure.

[14] This estimate is based on project manager case loads for Arapahoe County Planning Department in Colorado which was not included in the case study but was known to use project facilitators. Caseloads depend largely upon the state of the economy, but 15 to 20 was considered ideal. The assumption was that project facilitators (or in Arapahoe County, project managers) would have time to work on long-range projects such as long-term planning, thus avoiding 'potential burn out' (Kendrick 2005). For a position description, see Appendix D.

[15] This estimate comes from St. Paul, where average salaries for project facilitators are estimated to be about $50,000 (the pay range is between $42,000 and $63,000).

Proposed Option #3: Implement a One-Stop Shop

From our case studies, we learned that one important benefit of creating a one-stop shop is the ease with which people from different agencies can work with one another. Cities that implement one-stop shops cite reduction of project review time as a goal. For example, Austin's objective was "to create a faster, friendlier development process and maintain compliance," and included a specific goal of reducing permit cycle times from 160 days to 128 days.[16]

Although a one-stop shop structure may help to speed up the review process, a significant investment may be needed to implement a one-stop shop. It requires enough space to relocate all personnel, or at the very least a representative from each agency, into one building, a software system for record-keeping and to coordinate the agencies, and staff re-organization and training on the new software. Additionally, a project manager or facilitator would most likely need to be hired to manage and oversee the new operation. These changes, if implemented, would inevitably result in significant costs for the City, but the return on the investment may be substantial. If Madison were to create a one-stop shop, it seems likely that renting an existing, centrally located space would be much less expensive than building a new building. Renting space in Madison might cost between $18.50 and $20.00 per square foot.[17] Build-out expenses for space configuration and wiring could cost as much as $21.00 per square foot, and actual moving expenses may cost about $1.25 per square foot. The move would likely take between one and two days, during which time the Department of Planning and Development may experience lost work hours. If the new facility occupied 4,000 square feet, a move might cost about $90,000 in moving and build out expenses and likely one lost work day if half of the office could continue to work while the other half was being moved. Annual rent for the new facility is estimated to cost $78,000.[18]

[16] Austin, Texas, New Service Delivery Model Presentation, http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/development/new_process.htm. Accessed April 26, 2005.

[17] This estimate is based on rent paid for state owned buildings and may differ from those paid for city owned buildings.

[18] All moving cost estimates come from an interview with Jennifer Ondrejka, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities, whose office moved in 2004.

Concern #2: Divergent Ordinances Lead to Inter-Agency Conflict

A second concern is that divergent ordinances lead to inter-agency conflict. Although Mayor Dave Cieslewicz has appointed a staff team to address the problem of conflicting ordinances, the City of Madison may want to consider strategies to prevent conflicts between ordinances in the future. For instance, as Madison finishes updating its Comprehensive Plan, some zoning ordinances may conflict with the new planning goals of the City. If those conflicts are not identified and eliminated as soon as the updates are completed, they will likely cause conflicts between reviewing agencies.

Proposed Option: Dedicate Staff to Ordinance Updates

To prevent ordinances from causing inter-agency conflicts, the City might consider appointing a standing committee of city staff to maintain consistency among city goals and ordinances. Currently, a city staff committee meets twice monthly to review ordinances and suggest improvements. These efforts are insufficient, because this continuous review is not thorough, and staff members need more time to make substantive changes.

Concern #3: Lack of Coordinated Public Involvement

A third issue our report identified is the lack of coordinated public involvement in the permitting and planning processes. Currently, Madison has more than 120 neighborhood associations that are responsible for representing the interests of residents in planning and community enhancement.[19] These organizations serve an important purpose as they represent the community in the type of neighborhood-based planning Madison's Department of Planning and Development has traditionally used. While neighborhood associations do not have final authority over approvals, the associations rely on alders and the Plan Commission to represent them regarding an applicant's development proposal. The applicant has the ability to move a project forward by making sure he or she is compliant with ordinances and codes but has less ability to present his or her project to a neighborhood association or community group and expect a consistent formal response. The informal lines of communication between neighborhood associations and alders and between neighborhood associations and developers can delay the pre-application process, and this inefficient communication process is a source of frustration for all involved parties.

The cities researched in this report addressed this inefficient process by facilitating communication among neighborhood associations, applicants, and city officials and staff in three different ways:

(1) creating represented neighborhood involvement,
(2) making their automated tracking systems available to the public, and
(3) requiring earlier public notification.

[19] City of Madison web site: http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/planning/ndp/index.html. Accessed on April 18, 2005.

Proposed Option #1: Create Represented Neighborhood Involvement
St. Paul encourages neighborhood involvement by providing geographically focused representation. The city is divided into 19 districts, and each district represents several neighborhoods. Each district has a board of directors made up of neighborhood representatives. These districts provide a structured means by which residents can draft a district plan and provide feedback on proposed development projects. This structured feedback, along with proactive work on the part of districts, helps applicants present developments plan consistent with community priorities and values (Lynch 2005).

This proposed solution fits in the medium initial investment range projects that don't require large initial investments on building or renovating buildings, implementing new technology, or large-scale personnel costs. This proposed solution could be implemented in a number of different ways. Districts in St. Paul receive grants from the city to pay for a part-time staff person, office space, and meeting expenses (Lynch 2005). City capacity funding for these districts is integral to this option's success; Cincinnati applied this option in the form of Cincinnati Neighborhood Action Strategy teams but was unsuccessful because it was underfunded (Briggs 2005).

Proposed Option #2: Make Automated Tracking System Available to Public
Other cities use an automated tracking system to facilitate communication among stakeholders. Cities achieve a higher level of accountability and clarity when all stakeholders can see the progress of a development project. By using the automated tracking system, neighborhood association representatives and other interested parties can access information about a project and read city staff comments and decisions. They can then respond by contacting the planning department or applicant.

A web-based automated tracking system would be expensive. System requirements can be demanding and may require significant technology upgrades. The software itself is also expensive and implies a commitment to upgrades. Web design and maintenance and software training may require a substantial initial investment, but after the system is up and running, it should require a relatively small amount of maintenance.

Proposed Option #3: Require Earlier Public Notification
To facilitate public involvement, some cities have employed earlier public notification at the pre-application process stage. When cities increase the time that neighborhood associations, which are often volunteer-run, have to review an applicant's project, public feedback is often more constructive and community-supported.

This is a low-cost option for increasing public involvement that may have a low return because giving residents more time to review a project does not ensure higher quality community organizing or earlier public participation in the process. This option might have some initial cost in terms of staff time for implementing the extended pre-application process and informing potential applicants of the change.

Concern #4: Lack of understanding of application process for small business and first-time users

The final issue to be addressed is the applicant's lack of understanding of the development process. The application process and the regulatory requirements involved in Madison's development process are often perceived as complex and confusing to customers. The complexity of the process is a complaint of small business owners and first-time developers who are unfamiliar with the process or do not have adequate time or resources to devote to learning about the process. As a result, many applicants become frustrated.

Our research indicates that Madison's planning department is not alone in its need to find new ways to facilitate understanding of its development review process among business owners and developers. Based on the changes made in the other cities cited in our analysis, Madison could consider several options for dealing with this issue. Other cities have taken four types of approaches to this problem: (1) implementing a one-stop shop, (2) expanding existing educational programs and tools, (3) using project facilitators, and (4) creating a system of team consultation.

Proposed Option #1: Implement a One-Stop Shop

With representatives of various agencies housed in one centralized location, a one-stop shop provides a way in which customers have easy access to resources needed throughout each step of development. A one-stop shop is an avenue for better understanding because it offers a convenient means of obtaining direct information from staff members involved in the process.[20]

Proposed Option #2: Enhance Educational Programs and Tools

Madison's Department of Planning and Development could expand upon its existing educational programs. Enhanced educational programs can foster improved customer understanding of the regulatory requirements and steps of the development procedure. Although Madison already has a Business Resource Center in place where two full-time staff members are available to answer development questions, some of the cities in our research take their educational programs a step further.

For example, Madison could use Portland's Lunch and Learn Program as a model for an enhanced educational program. The Lunch and Learn Program is designed to provide training and assistance to the business community involved in development. These bi-monthly lunches serve as a way for Portland's planning staff to keep the community up-to-date with the latest information and requirements.

[20] For a discussion of the investments required to implement a one-stop shop, please see Proposed Option #3 under Concern #1.

Another advantage of enhanced educational services is that they can provide a direct line of communication between the planning department and its customers. For instance, St. Paul's planning department offers a hotline to the community that customers can call to ask planning staff members questions specifically related to their projects and development needs (Young 2005).

Finally, Madison could implement a system like Portland's permit tracking system that groups applicants into two different groups: first-time and longtime developers. First-time customers are placed in Track One and are given additional training and assistance to help them complete the process. If Madison were to implement a lunch-and-learn program, program costs would be low, consisting of city staff time spent with applicants. On the other hand, if the Planning Department decided to implement a permit tracking system, an investment in new technology and software would be needed.

Proposed Option #3: Make Use of Project Facilitators

Project facilitators are also an effective option for improving customer understanding of the development process. Project facilitators are assigned to specific projects, and they provide customers with a contact person who is knowledgeable about the steps and requirements of development. This means that one of the major roles of a project facilitator is to provide educational assistance to their designated customers. In terms of investments needed, adequate resources would be required to hire employees or train existing employees.

Proposed Option #4: Facilitate Team Consultation

Another approach, team consultation, provides a forum in which applicants can receive quality feedback from all reviewing agencies at any stage of the application process. Team consultation involves representatives from all the agencies that participate in reviewing an application. In Kansas City's planning department, for example, every representative sets aside two hours per week to meet with applicants, allowing one hour of consultation on each of two projects (Pajor 2005). Team consultation also helps staff become familiar with the needs and concerns of other agencies. Madison would need to consider the personnel costs associated with two hours each week for a large number of agency representatives when estimating costs for this alternative.

Analysis of Key Findings

The Department of Planning and Development and the City of Madison could address the concerns highlighted in this analysis in many ways. The last section described which types of streamlining options might be appropriate for each of the four areas of concern. The best option for the Department of Planning and Development may not be a single streamlining technique, but rather a combination of techniques. Factors to consider when evaluating an option for streamlining are how well the option addresses the issues highlighted in the analysis of Madison's current system, financial barriers, physical barriers, and political feasibility. This analysis focuses on how well the streamlining options address Madison's issues and physical barriers as factors, and gives a general consideration of expense. While we cannot explicitly include costs in our analysis, we do consider relative costs of the various options. We leave consideration of political feasibility to those who may be more familiar with the political climate of the Department of Planning and Development as a unit within city government.

Table 4 summarizes which streamlining options address each of Madison's concerns. Options toward the top generally involve a higher investment than those toward the bottom.

Table 4
Considering the Options in Light of Concerns about Madison's Permitting Process

	Concerns addressed			
	Speed of review process	**Conflicting ordinances**	**Uncoordinated neighborhood involvement**	**Understanding of application process**
One-stop shop	X		X	X
Project facilitator/automated tracking system	X		X	X
Automated tracking system	X		X	
Facilitated communication			X	X
Project facilitator	X			X
Ordinance overhaul		X		
Team consultation				X
Education programs				X
Earlier notification			X	

It is now clear that there are various ways to address each of Madison's concerns. The relatively low investment option would be to implement earlier notification to address issues of coordinated neighborhood involvement and restructure staff to provide team consultations. Given existing facilities, it is important to note that there is a great deal of competition for limited meeting space. Without the space for team consultation, this option will either be more expensive or less comfortable. Another issue is the political feasibility of requiring earlier notification. In general, this would require that applicants spend more time developing a plan in the early stages so that neighborhoods can be informed earlier than they are now. While earlier notification may address the concerns about coordinated neighborhood involvement, it might also increase frustration about how much it costs to do business in Madison.

The city could address each of Madison's concerns by implementing a combination of team consultation and facilitated communication. Again, the concern about space might limit the effectiveness of team consultation.

Both options place much of the burden on City staff. One of the objectives of streamlining techniques is that it makes the process more efficient for the applicant and staff. The more expensive options might achieve this objective more effectively.

The most comprehensive way to address all of Madison's highlighted concerns while at the same time balancing the workload between applicants and staff would be a combination of a one-stop shop with an ordinance overhaul or the combination of a project facilitator position with an automated tracking system and an ordinance overhaul.[21] Either of these options would improve the efficiency of the permitting process for city staff and applicants.

Implicit in the option of a one-stop shop is an upgraded, more sophisticated application intake process in addition to an electronic internal review process. The critical difference between the previous two options is the physical space required along with the initial financial investment. We assume a one-stop shop would require a higher initial investment due to the acquisition of a new or remodeled facility. One-stop shops also provide a space where employees from the various agencies work along side each other to collaborate on projects. This is easier when the agencies are physically in the same space. Finally, the acquisition of a new space would create the opportunity to design a space that is not only functional but welcoming to applicants.

The basic question is whether City of Madison staff can achieve the same cohesiveness of a one-stop shop without being in the same physical space. Upgrading the intake process and the internal review process and having a project facilitator to bridge the gap would mitigate the need for everyone to be in the same place. Without quantifying the value added of having the space associated with a one-stop shop, we recommend the City begin with incremental steps. The Department of Planning and Development has already begun to implement an automated tracking system. By expanding that system, the

[21] There are other combinations of streamlining options that at least address each of the areas mentioned. A cost-benefit analysis could ascertain which streamlining process produces the largest impact per unit cost.

department could decrease the time it takes to review plans by eliminating repetitive work; facilitate neighborhood coordination by making up-to-date plans and comments readily available to neighbors, neighborhood associations, and alders; and facilitate the understanding of the process by applicants through web-based applications. Therefore, we suggest the City consider expanding its electronic tracking system while exploring the option of project facilitators. We recommend this in conjunction with requesting more space to facilitate agency reviews, and, in light of changes to the Comprehensive Plan, an ordinance overhaul to ensure consistency.

Further, we recommend the City consider requesting a cost-benefit analysis of the value added associated with acquiring space and creating a one-stop shop. Essentially, a one-stop shop is a way of selling economic development, but it is unclear what the returns on such an investment might look like. Considering this is in addition to project facilitators and an automated tracking system, adopting these two options first would set the City up to implement a one-stop shop if the results of further analysis suggested the investment were worth the cost.

Suggestions for Further Research

In the process of gathering information to review Madison's development process and the processes of other cities, we came across several issues that we chose not to include in this report. While these issues warrant further examination, they are outside the scope of our review. First, the City might pursue the idea of creating a process that includes a classification between zoning-simple and zoning-complex. This middle classification could include types of applications that consistently get approved but that require closer consideration than zoning-simple projects. In these cases, a hearing examiner (probably from the planning department staff) could review specific types of applications and make recommendations without involving the Plan Commission.

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Appendix A: Research Protocol

Research Questions

Neighborhood associations:

- What is role of neighborhood association
- Do neighborhoods have plans? (neighborhood plans)
- Are neighborhoods involved in the planning process?
  Do neighborhoods have any authority in the planning process?
- Is there any training for the neighborhoods?
- What is the role of a business within a neighborhood association? (included, not included, leadership, feedback role, etc.)

Process change:

- How long ago was the process changed??
- What was impetus for change?
- Details about transition
- Costs associated with the change?
- How long did the process of change take?
- What were the outcomes? Quantitative and qualitative
- Internal and external satisfaction associated with the process change
- How much time was cut out of approval process? What is current time expectation?

City

- Does economic development dept. or planning commission have a mission or stated goals?
- Does city have project manager? If so, what is there level of education, authority, level of pay, area of expertise
- Size of budget
- Size of planning department
- What other agencies does the planning department deal with in making changes/approving
- Unanticipated issues/results: Current issues city is facing (w/ regard to economic development
- Is process different for different projects? (Is system tailored to different types of projects?)
- Who is the conflict resolution person if there are conflicts between developers/businesses/city?

Businesses' Perception:

- Is there a resource for businesses?
- Ombudsman, or advocate for businesses—and who hires them
- Business perception of process change (as clients, do they perceive the process to be easier/more efficient now?)

Appendix B: Case Studies

Austin, Texas	
Note:	Austin began changing its processes in fiscal year 2003-04 and expects to have everything in place by end of fiscal year 2004-05. They have performance measures in place, but only a few data collected so far.
Sources of information:	http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/development/geninfo2.htm#DAC http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/development/default.htm http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/04-05/downloads/20040826.pdf Austin Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department (512) 974-2378 Steve Wilkinson, planner, (512) 974-2657 Tammie Williamson, assistant director of Department of Watershed Protection and Development Review, (Theresa Stark, assistant), (512)-974-2339
Demographic information:	Population: 656,562 Population growth rate since 1990: 41 percent Percentage of population with bachelor' degree: 40.4 percent Square miles: 252 Median age: 30 Per-capita income in 2000: $24,163
Change #1:	**One-stop shop:** One-stop shop consolidates process of land development permitting and assistance into a single location. This creates more efficient development process for community. It operates under Department of Watershed Protection and Development Review.
Change #2:	**Development assistance center:** The center evaluates development proposals for potential applicants and concerned residents on behalf of the community to ensure that development is designed and built in accordance with city rules and regulations. It operates under the Department of Watershed Protection and Development Review.
Change #3:	**Permit center:** The center issues permits for builders, developers, and property owners so they can begin their projects. It operates under Department of Watershed Protection and Development Review.
Impetus for change:	"Neighborhood associations and customers were voicing concern and frustration … Before … customers had to go to several different places to get different permits and reviews. What one department said could adversely affect what the other department [would] say, but it [was] hard to find out that information." —Tammie Williamson, assistant director, Department of Watershed Protection and Development Review
Transitional costs:	Costs include $3 million to $4 million for software called "Amanda"; and more than $1 million for building renovations
Operating costs:	*Fiscal year 2004-05* Budget for one-stop shop: $16,960,831; Budget for development assistance center: $1,305,435; Budget for permit center: $314,710

Performance measures:	**One-stop shop support**[22] *Citywide one-stop shop support* as a percent of program: 2004 calendar year average 4.19 percent, measured quarterly, fiscal year 2004-05 recommended 4.8 percent *Number of development process web/site page views*: 2004 calendar year average 536,777 views, measured monthly, based on October, November, and December data. Fiscal year 2004-05 goal: 500,000 views per month. *One-stop shop staff satisfaction* (in percentage): no data available, measured monthly; 80 percent recommended for fiscal year 2004-05. *Turnaround time* in hours for legal liaison to requests: no data available, measured monthly; 48 hours recommended for fiscal year 2004-05. **Development Assistance Center** *Average customer wait time* in minutes for 2004 calendar year: 11.34 minutes, based on data recorded for October, November, December. Fifteen minutes recommended for fiscal year 2004-2005. *Customer satisfaction:* no data, no description of how this is measured quarterly. For fiscal year 2004-05, 60 recommended with no unit of measurement given. *Average number of customers served:* 1390.34 people average for 2004 calendar year, based on data recorded for October, November, and December. "Baseline" recommended for fiscal year 2004-05, with no further description. *Activity cost per number of customers served:* 2004 calendar year average is $54.06 (in U.S. dollars), measured quarterly. "Baseline" recommended for fiscal year 2004-05, with no further description. **Permit Center** *Cost per permit issued:* 2004 calendar year average was $8.67 (in U.S. dollars), measured quarterly. "Baseline" recommended for fiscal year 2004-05, with no further description. *Number of permits issued:* 2004 calendar year average was 5922.5 permits, measured monthly, based on data recorded for October and November. "Baseline" recommended for fiscal year 2004-05, with no further description. *Customer wait time:* 2004 calendar year average was 13.34 minutes, measured monthly, based on October, November, and December data; 30 minutes Recommended for fiscal year 2004-05. *Number of walk-in customers served:* 2004 calendar year average was 1,369 people, measured monthly and based on October, November, and December data. "Baseline" recommended for fiscal year 2004-05, with no further description.

[22] For this study we only picked three of the categories of performance indicators that are relevant, but other categories are easily accessible.

Cincinnati, Ohio	
Sources of information:	http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/ http://cagis.hamilton-co.org/opal/#Membership http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/bldginsp/downloads/bldginsp_eps9741.pdf--detailed http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/bldginsp/pages/-6533-/ Scott Stiles, interim manager, Business Development and Permit Center, scott.stiles@cincinnati-oh.gov Steve Briggs, planner, Steve.briggs@cincinnati-oh.gov
Demographic information:	Population: 331,285 Population growth rate since 1990: -9 percent Percent of population with bachelor's degree: 26.6 percent Square miles: 78 Median age: 32 Per-capita income in 2000: $19,962
Change #1:	**Coordinated public involvement** 1970s Community Activity Teams had plans that involved a set of projects. In the late 1990s, they developed Cincinnati Neighborhood Action Strategy teams. "These were doomed to fail from the outset; communities loved it but there was no funding for it. Planning became the lead department: teams were supposed to choose a leader based on problems that came up. They were looking to the planning department to be the leader. The people who were supposed to deal with the issue didn't, and (the process)… turned into a demoralizing … session. We had some successes, but overall it was a good idea that was not implemented correctly, and was doomed to fail." — Steve Briggs, city of Cincinnati planner
Change #2:	**Business development and permit center** Implemented in 2004, the business development and permit center is a single point-of-contact service for homeowners, developers, architects, small business owners, construction personnel, and others involved in the development and building permit process.
Change #3: (to be implemented)	**Streamlined Permit and Approval Process** Phase one is devoted to evaluating existing permit process, with focus on gathering information and understanding process. Phase two involves re-engineering the process and focuses on empowerment through input and attitude change. The third phase involves engaging city employees and customers to streamline and rationalize the process. The objective of the third phase is to conduct a summit to unveil results and recommendations.

Change #4: (in process)	**One-stop development center** The center will maximize web-based technology, building upon a system for electronic plan submission. New guidelines for departmental use were established in June 2003. Goals of center are to eliminate 90 percent of current customer/departmental interaction, and to incorporate Hamilton County's development into this process to the maximum possible and appropriate degree, on site and via technology.
Impetus for change:	Development community voiced concern about the inefficiency of the permitting and planning processes. Mayor commissioned a report from economic development task force, which made nine recommendations in April 23, 2003 report. Two recommendations addressed creation of one-stop development center.
Transitional costs:	N/A.
Operating costs:	Office of the City Manager: $2,119,720 total operating budget Department of Community Development and Planning: $15,050,620 total operating budget Department of Buildings and Inspections: $5,291,920 total operating budget
Performance measures:	**Business development and permit center** These statistics measure transactions between April 26 and Sept. 30, 2004. *Applications filed:* 3,526 *Permits issued:* 3,161; average of 27 per day *Walk-through permits issued:* 2,028 *Customer wait time:* same-day permits, 43 minutes or less; goal is 90 minutes or less *Total of fees received through September 2004:* $3,483,278 *Total of fees received through September 2003:* $3,034,647

Eugene, Oregon	
Sources of Information:	http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/pdd/Index.htm Marcia Miller, building and services permit manager (541)682-5086
Demographic Information:	Population: 137,893 Population growth rate since 1990: 21 percent Percent of population with bachelor's degree: 37.3 percent Square miles: 41 Median age: 33 Per-capita income in 2000: $21,315
Change #1:	**One-stop-shop** Since 1985, Eugene's construction permit process has begun at the permit and information center, which houses several regulatory and permitting functions in a *single, centralized location* to assist customers through the city's development review processes. Technical staff from the Planning and Development Department, Building and Permit Services, Public Works, and the Fire Department are available to explain the permit processes; to handle plan submittal and pickup; and to issue special permits. The center provides building permits and inspections, land-use permits, technical construction information, interpretation of building and land-use codes, fire prevention inspections, and sign and zoning regulation information and permits.
Change #2:	**Constructing Solutions project** In 1997, Eugene restructured its Planning and Development Department to provide customers with faster service and to help decrease timelines for initial plans review and permit approval. The department split into three divisions: (1) Building and Permit Services; (2) Development; and (3) Planning.
Change #3:	**Continual improvement** Since 1997, Eugene has made a consistent commitment to continuously reviewing, updating, and improving its processes. 2002 City Business Interactions Task Team. Members from the chamber of commerce composed a "miniplan" for addressing various concerns from the business community. Components of the miniplan include: *Code review:* State codes and building codes are under continuous review to streamline processes. *Streamlined review:* Simpler regulations meet customer needs. *Process analysis:* Consultant analyzed planning process in May 2003 and made recommendations. Planning Division is committed to implement consultant's recommendations. *Reduced permit turnover time:* Constant goal to meet established targets

	for the planning/development process. Staff accountable to meet specified targets; targets were established for 12 permits and all review stops. Major goal- to reduce permit turnover time.
Impetus for change:	In general, problems with efficiency and concerns from business community about complex, inconsistent, and confusing development and permit process. "Turnaround time for permits and other development applications. Review times were unacceptable and a major overhaul was needed." 1997 Constructing Solutions project was implemented to increase efficiency and reduce turnaround time. Major budget cuts and reductions in staff forced planning and development services to find ways in becoming more efficient.
Transitional costs:	Budget is determined by service profiles, an internal document that tracks annual performance measures.
Operating costs:	For the most part, permit fees covered costs of new programs and changes made to the development system. In recent months, planning division has taken in more revenue than its expenditures.
Performance measures:	Reviewed on a monthly basis. *Applications received:* Measured by number of applications; categories include new commercial, commercial additions and alterations, new residential and residential additions and alterations. *Permits issued:* Measured by number of days until first review and number of permits. Categories include those above and "over-the-counter and other." *Value of Permits Issued*: Measured in dollars. *Percentage of customers served within 15 minutes*: categories include building, land use, planning, public works, and reception. *Holdovers:* Measured in number of permits. Categories include building/mechanical, electrical, and plumbing. *Financial information*: Measured in revenue and expense.

Kansas City, Missouri	
Sources of Information:	http://www.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/plnpres/home?opendocument http://www.kcmo.org/manager/bdgt05/citydev.pdf http://www.kcmo.org/neigh.nsf/web/neightype?opendocument John Pajor, planner, (816) 513-2856 Renea Nash, department manager, Renea_Nash@kcmo.org
Note:	"Right now they are going through changes. Things are being pared down severely. In the early 1990s the planning manager at that time, Bob Collins, called for an updated master plan for the city. Somewhere in the process, he became the city manager. The big emphasis was on maximum citizen involvement. That was one revolution. In the last [administration] there's been another revolution of people trying to do more with less. Since then our city manager and director of planning left, and the new city manager was all about paring things down and tightening things up. That person just yesterday just announced that we have a new planning director and economic development director. We're still in for more changes." —John Pajor, planner, Kansas City
Demographic Information:	Population: 441,545 Population growth rate since 1990: 2 percent Percent of population with bachelor's degree: 25.7 percent Square miles: 314 Median age: 34 Per-capita income in 2000: $20,753
Change #1:	**Business Development and Assistance Tea** The development assistance team is made up of representatives from all city departments involved in the development process. It provides customers with as much preliminary information about the development of the specific site and project as possible. The team meets Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon, and meetings are limited to one hour. "Planning professionals got cross-system training by sitting across the table from other professionals. Now I know who to call with questions about fire and code requirements and other things." —John Pajor, planner, Kansas City
Change #2:	**Economic Development Corporation** The Economic Development Corporation provides responsible, innovative, and professional assistance to the business community so that Kansas City's economic development industry can be maintained and strengthened.

Change #3:	**Automated tracking system** Kiva Net, a web-based permit tracking system, allows users to view the status of permits in the process of being reviewed.
Impetus for change:	"Our current mayor (in second term now) was working with more money, and there was recognition that neighborhoods were important and needed services. There was a request for money at a neighborhood level." —John Pajor, planner, Kansas City
Transitional costs:	N/A.
Operating costs:	**Fiscal year 2004** Department of City Development: $12,618,938 Development Management/Economic Growth: $842,659 Economic Development and Business Assistance/Economic Growth: $5,350,841 Economic Development Corporation/Economic Growth: $908,496
Performance measures:	**Activity: Development Management** *Outcome:* economic growth *Performance measures:* Number of CPC applications reviewed: Actual 2002-03=797, adopted 2003-04=550, estimated 2004-05=860 **Activity: Economic Development and Business Assistance** *Outcome*: economic growth *Performance measures:* Development proposals drafted and contracts reviewed: actual 2002-03=15, adopted 2003-04=20, estimated 2004-05=20 **Activity: Economic Development Corporation** *Outcome:* economic growth *Performance measures:* Number of projects approved/closed: actual 2002-03=169, adopted 2003-04=150, estimated 2004-05=200

Orlando, Florida	
Sources of information:	http://www.cityoforlando.net/planning/default.htm Dean Grandin, planning division manager, (407) 246-2120
Demographic Information:	Population: 185,951 Population growth rate since 1990: 13 percent Percent population with bachelor's degree: 28.2 percent Square miles: 94 Median age: 33 Per-capita income in 2000: $21,216
Change #1:	**Continual Improvement** Routine changes made every four to five years to refine system constantly. Improved system for code enforcement.
Change #2:	**Formation of business development team**
Change #3:	**Structural changes to planning division** Now includes Economic Development Department. Planning, Code, and Housing departments were made into separate divisions; in upcoming months, planning and code departments will be realigned into one department under the planning division.
Change #4:	**One-stop shop** In 1997-98 a one-stop-shop for permits was implemented. A planner is on call to answers specific questions concerning permit issues.
Change #5:	**Automated web-based permit and development tracking system** Automated system called Tide Mark let's customers track process of permit application process.
Impetus for change:	**City financial conditions** Budget and staff cuts caused need for operational efficiency and consolidation within the planning division. **Market conditions** Major business and population growth during last five years created need to accommodate increased business activity and demands. **Need for better strategic planning**
Transitional costs:	Changes that have taken place during last four to five years have led purely to savings. According to planning division manager Dean Grandin, costs were not significant.
Operating costs:	Fiscal year 2004-05 Department of Economic Development: $12,528,443
Performance measures:	**Within Economic Development Department Permitting Services Division** *Percent of all [zoning-simple] permits issued within two calendar days:* Fiscal year 2003-04 was 86 percent; 90 percent proposed for fiscal year 2004-05. *Average number of days to complete a construction plan review:* Fiscal year 2003-04 was six days; six days proposed for fiscal year 2004-05.

Portland, Oregon	
Sources of information:	Jackie Phillips, Bureau of Development Services: Public Service Information, (503) 823-7300 *Plans Examiner*, a bi-monthly publication to inform the building, design and construction community about development procedures, policies, procedures and events affecting their work with the city of Portland. http://www.portlandonline.com/bds/index.cfm?c=30388
Demographic information:	Population: 529,121 Population growth rate since 1990: 21 percent Percent of population with bachelor's degree: 32.6 percent Square miles: 134 Median age: 35 Per-capita income in 2000: $22,643
Change #1:	**Early assistance and public involvement** Blueprint 2000 grew out of a pilot program in late 1990s, and beginning stages of implementation began in 1997. The program was designed to facilitate process management in all aspects of development review. The final goal was to create a "seamless process for all types of development." Blueprint 2000 is made up of "six building blocks" that focus on the details of entry point, early assistance, technical review and inspection, and enforcement. **Earlier public notice and involvement in the review process** This complements Blueprint 2000, with more required pre-application conferences and a neighborhood contact requirement. The focus is not necessarily on increased public involvement, but on more effective public involvement.
Change #2:	**Automated Tracking System** Permit tracking software customized for Blueprint 2000 (called Tracking, Review and Construction System, TRACS) processes permit applications from start to finish; allows coordination among all seven bureaus involved in permit process as application details and status are electronically available. Implemented July 1999.
Change #3:	**Continuous process review** Development codes are rewritten and complex permits redesigned and simplified to be more user-friendly.

Change #4:	**Restructuring** The Office of Planning and Development Review was formed in March 1999 by combining the bureaus of Buildings and Planning. Merger fostered interagency agreements and linked development review functions of other bureaus.
Change #5:	**Regulatory Improvement Workplan** Two-year plan started in 2002. The Bureau of Development Services implemented a regulatory process and service improvement part of the plan, while the Bureau of Planning coordinated a regulatory code improvement list. Both bureaus met regularly with community members and stakeholders to develop workplans. The bureaus formed the Strategic Development Opportunity Team, which included the mayor's office and various city bureaus involved in the planning process. The focus of project was on the Land Division Monitoring and Impact Assessment Initiative. **Regulatory Improvement Request Database** Database was implemented so customers could submit regulatory improvement requests online.
Change #6:	**Further Changes since Blueprint 2000 and Regulatory Improvement Workplan** *Customer Service and Public Information Program* began July 2003 to expand Bureau of Development Services customer service efforts. Bureau team meets with neighborhood and business groups to determine information that is most wanted and needed. *Customer Assistance Programs:* "Get Legal" program helps customers who need to legalize work done without a permit. For a fee, team helps customer develop plans and file necessary appeals to get process on track. *Facility Permit Program:* To ease routine inspections for repairs or minor tenant improvements, the facility permit program links inspectors with customers who have large or multiple facilities. *Lunch and Learn Program:* On the second Friday of each month, developers, small business owners, and other customers can join development services staff members for lunch to learn the latest information and requirements to keep development projects on track. *Multi-Track Permit program:* A two-track permit program tailored to applicant, based on level of experience and familiarity with Portland building codes. Track One helps applicants who want extra help navigating the permit process. First-time applicants and those who have little experience with Portland's building codes are required to use this track, but any applicant may choose this level of assistance. The turnaround goal for permit applications for Track One is 15 working days from a completed application to the first review and five days for

	rechecks. Track Two is for veteran builders. It moves more quickly. Applicants in Two Track system have demonstrated their ability to submit complete and accurate documents, and to understand and implement Portland's building codes and other requirements with limited assistance. The turnaround goal for Track Two is to issue permits within 10 working days from the date a complete application is submitted.
Impetus for change:	Customers were continuously unsatisfied with planning process and complex regulations; complaints included inconsistencies among departments, unorganized system for documentation, inefficient and untimely process, complex permit system that was not user friendly, and need for an overall plan for process management for each step of the development process.
Transitional costs:	N/A.
Operating costs:	Fiscal year 2004-05 community development: $60,567,687
Performance measures:	*General accomplishments:* updated regulations, clarified code language and reviewed codes to determine if they foster desirable results or creating regulatory barriers. *Specific accomplishments:* These include • early plan review and early land-use review for large projects; • specialized project teams assigned to specific groups of customers; • ongoing process to resolve development review delays; • specified appeals process for all development bureaus; • tracking of obsolete and overly prescriptive regulations for regulatory improvement; • appointment of small-business liaison; • speedier process for correcting zoning map errors; • consistent method to assess impact of regulations; • increased neighborhood involvement; • numerous amendments to the zoning code including the land division regulations. Changes made under Blueprint 2000, Regulatory Improvement Workplan, multi-track permitting, and formation of customer assistance programs have placed customer and customer needs at center of operations within the development process. Customer satisfaction is now the focal point of the Bureau of Development Services, and the bureau continues to better align its goals with the goals of the customer.

St. Paul, Minnesota	
Sources of information:	http://www.stpaulbusiness.org/ http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/business/ www.saintpaulchamber.com http://www.stpaulbusiness.org/partners.html#stpbusiness Business Resource Center, (651) 266-6600 Department of Planning and Economic Development (651) 266-6700 Amy Filice, deputy director, Department of Planning and Economic Development Department of Planning and Economic Development, business@ci.stpaul.mn.us Sheila Lynch, executive director of Capitol River Council (District 17)
Demographic information:	Population: 287,151 Population growth rate since 1990: 5.2 percent Percent of population with bachelor's degree: 32 percent Square miles: 52.8 Median age: 31 Per-capita income in 2000: $20,216
Change #1:	**Geographically focused teams** Department of Planning and Economic Development has a northeast team and a southwest team to address specific needs of these two areas of St. Paul.
Change #2:	**Business Resource Center** The Business Assistance Center is a hotline anyone can call to get information on required permits and process steps for a specific project.
Change #3:	**Automated Permit-Tracking System** Entraprise is an automated permit tracking and purchasing system available to the public.
Change #4:	**Project facilitators** Project facilitators with the Department of License, Inspection and Environmental Protection provide assistance in obtaining permits or city licenses for building projects, businesses, or anything else customers may need while building in St. Paul. Project facilitators can answer basic questions about zoning, building inspections, business licenses, and other requirements, or direct customers to the specialized inspector for more specific questions.
Impetus for change:	Developers/customers were getting frustrated with inefficient system.

Transitional costs:	
Operating costs:	Fiscal year 2004 Department of Planning and Economic Development: $20,682,190 Department of License, Inspection and Environmental Protection: $10,738,791
Performance measures:	**Department of License, Inspection and Environmental Protection, 2004** *Same-day inspection:* Provided same day inspections to keep projects moving to benefit contractors, residents, and general public. *Online permits:* Completed more than 5,000 online permits saving five to 20 minutes of Department of License, Inspection and Environmental Protection staff time and 10 to 30 minutes in customer time per permit. **2005 Priorities** *Better facilitation:* improve the project facilitation process in the Department of License, Inspection and Environmental Protection by eliminating inefficiencies and designating additional project facilitator resources. *Improve processors:* Work with the Department of Planning and Economic Development to better integrate the two departments' processes on development projects. *Online permits:* continue to increase the number of building permits completed online. **Department of Planning and Economic Development** Department of Planning and Economic Development had accomplishments and priorities related to the geographic teams, but none listed specific to the business resource center

San Diego, California	
Sources of information:	http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/index.shtml "Process 2000: Re-Engineering the Land Development Process to Improve Customer Service."
Demographic Information:	Population: 1,223,499 Population growth rate since 1990: 10.2 percent Percent population with bachelor's degree: 35 percent Square miles: 342.5 Median age: 32.5 Per capita income in 2000: $23,609
Overview of changes:	**Process 2000** Re-engineered entire processing system for new development projects; program does not serve as a "band-aid," meaning that it is not a short-term fix to long-term problems. It grew out of a 1994 pilot program. Systemwide implementation of "Process 2000" began in 1995. The focus of Process 2000 for San Diego's Development Services Department has five key components: *Single point of entry:* Designed to quickly and easily help customers access information to decide if they want to enter the system. Single point of entry diverts false starts and embraces customer needs while improving predictability. *Early assistance:* Educates the customer about project feasibility, cost, and schedule. Early assistance helps to improve predictability and turnaround time for customer. *Uniform application intake:* Involves a quantitative check of project to make sure applications meet predetermined minimum standards for review. Uniform application intake also ensures that applications contain sufficient information to initiate formal review process in order to get project to a decision point and enable a high quality review. The process is uniform for all projects and all customers. *Project management and multi-disciplinary teams:* Teams facilitate timely review of project by resolving issues or conflicts. This helps project move forward. Project manager and team review projects to see that they meet all codes and regulations. *Technology:* Increases speed and accuracy of real-time information, while enabling customer access and reducing manual staff effort.
Change #1:	**Restructuring** Development Services Department now accountable for entire development process and implementation of Process 2000 system changes. Change in organizational structure of department involved a collaboration of more than seven city departments. Review team with one mission includes experts from multiple "disciplines." The customer defines project. Integrated system is more flexible.

Change #2:	**One-stop shop** Single point of entry into development process is part of Development Services Department located on third floor of City Operations Building.
Change #3:	**Automated Tracking System** One common, single-tracking computer system now offers accurate and real-time access to information regarding status of project, permit requirements, forms, policy changes, etc.
Change #4:	**Early assistance program** City provides early assistance with documented city discussions, agreements, and commitments.
Change #5:	**Project facilitator** Project manager in place and has decision-making authority.
Impetus for Change:	Concerns included inconsistencies in process from one development group to the next, lack of overall management of entire review process, no single point of contact (i.e. multiple departments, involving 350 employees and multiple automation services), it was easy to become "lost" in the system, addition of many new regulations and rules for development process made 1980s regulatory environment highly complex, economic recession of 1990s created pressure for streamlined process to attract business, lack of project data (i.e. paperwork unorganized among departments), slow turnaround time, lack of clear method to reach decisions, duplications and information voids, and overall, bad customer relations; considered "business unfriendly".
Transitional costs:	In September 1995, Development Services began collecting a 5 percent system improvement charge applied to permits as approved by the city council in 1996 budget process. Charges sunset in four years or when city collects $3.5 million, whichever comes first. System charge will primarily fund automated mapping and tracking technology.
Operating costs:	FY2004 Department of Development Services: $56,464,355
Performance measures:	**Process 2000 Customer Feedback** In April 1996, one year after Process 2000 began, a survey found that overall, customers felt process was timelier, more predictable, and more coordinated than the "old system." The survey indicated that o 90 percent found services to be more coordinated. o 60 percent found development process to be more predictable. o 70 percent found development process to be timelier. o 20 percent found development process to be less timely. **Quicker turnaround time** In second year, average turnaround time for projects continued to be reduced by more than 50 percent as compared to the "old system."

Appendix C:
Details of Zoning-Complex Projects in Madison

Zoning variances are typically for projects that are permitted under existing zoning but that are incapable of meeting set-back requirements.[23] Applicants seek zoning map amendments for projects that are not within existing zoning ordinances but that applicants believes are within the goals of the city's Master Plan. In this case, the applicant hopes to permanently change the zoning of that property. An example of a zoning map amendment might be a case in which the growth of the city has increased the demand for housing but surrounding land is zoned for agriculture. An applicant may seek to change the zoning from agriculture to residential or mixed-use to allow for construction of dwelling units to meet the growing demand for housing.

Another zoning-complex application is that for a conditional use permit. Each zoning district is divided into to use types, permitted, and conditional. Permitted use are those uses allowed given zoning ordinances, conditional uses are "not permitted outright but may be allowed if certain standards and conditions are met and the Plan Commission grants approval" (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004b:9) These conditions are in place to make the new project compatible with existing structures of the neighborhood (see City Ordinance 28.12(10)).

Like conditional use permits, planned unit and planned community development projects do not fit into existing zoning ordinances. What makes planned unit and planned community developments different is that they involved projects that "do not fit into the existing zoning district" (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004b:19). Zoning requirements must be determined on a project-by-project basis as a part of the permitting process. (City of Madison, Department of Planning and Development 2004b).

[23] Setbacks describe how far elements of a project (specifically structures) must be from property lines.

Appendix D: Planner II/Project Manager Position Description for Arapahoe County, Colorado

ARAPAHOE COUNTY POSITION DESCRIPTION

TITLE Planner II	**GRADE B5**
DEPARTMENT Building & Planning Services	**DIVISION Planning**
JOB CODE BPL5 EXEMPT/NON-EXEMPT Exempt	**DATE 08/21/1996**

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES:

Plan, lead, analyze, review, prepare, negotiate and comment in the processing applications and presents to decision making boards at a public hearing; lead and participate in complex current planning and long range planning assignments, participating in the daily activities, coordinate, organize, prepare, direct and present planning projects; consult with developers and landowners regarding land use policies and applications; interpret and enforce the County's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Regulations, and related local and state regulations. Research, analyze, and compile data; resolve complaints in an efficient and timely manner and monitor effectiveness of procedures and estimate time, materials, and equipment required for job assignments.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED:

Receives general direction as needed from the Director for work regarding policies and goals of the department. Work is assigned as areas of responsibility and is reviewed periodically upon completion.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:

As assigned to lead and/or train colleagues and other personnel.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:

This is a professional position and is distinguished from other planning positions by experience, salary, absence of direct supervision and ability to work independently.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:

The following duty statements are illustrative of the essential functions of the job and do not include other non essential or marginal duties that may be required. The County reserves the right to modify or change the duties or essential functions of this job at any time.

Recommend and assist in the implementation of goals and objectives; implement approved policies and procedures.

Organize, prepare, and present Planning projects/proposals.

Lead, participate, negotiate and plan complex current planning assignments including planning, directing, and participating in daily activities dealing with public assistance.

Assess and determine the methods, techniques, and procedures in planning projects.

Leads development applications review function that includes overseeing the collection, analyses, and interpretation of information surrounding properties involved in application for development.

Conducts feasibility and compatibility analysis covering various land use proposals.

Facilitates neighborhood workshops.

Advises the applicants regarding public hearing processes, duties, public meeting outcomes, and requirements needed to seek approvals.

Oversees the preparation of maps, charts, diagrams and other graphic materials for the Planning Commission, Board of County Commissioners, neighborhood, and citizen groups.

Draft local land regulation that meet and/or exceed the enabling legislation.

Represent county on regional boards/committees as may be assigned.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of standard planning theories, principles, and practices.

Knowledge of applicable federal, state, and county adopted codes governing the planning and zoning functions of the department. Ability to interpret, adopt and apply same, specifically with regards to long range planning.

Knowledge of and ability to maintain complete computer literacy involving the use of internal/external planning and design data-bases/software.

Ability to design and draft planning proposals and recommendations.

Ability to perform technical research and fact finding studies necessary to develop long range planning proposals.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with superiors, subordinates, fellow workers, developers, county boards and officials and the general public; ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, with same.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

Baccalaureate Degree in Planning, Geography, Public Administration or a closely related field, a Master's Degree may substitute for one year of the required experience and 3-5 years of increasingly responsible experience in rural and/or urban planning in the public or private sector, including project management and team leadership;

- OR -

Any equivalent combinations of education and experience that satisfy the requirements of the job.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

Possession of or the ability to obtain a Colorado class "C" driver's license.

COMPLEXITY/RESPONSIBILITY:

Individual will be required to analyze, lead, negotiate, interpret, determine, present, judge, understand, review, comment, moderate and monitor, facilitate a variety of complex issues, theories, principles, and regulations.

SCOPE OF INTERPERSONAL CONTACTS:

Contacts are with superiors, developers, fellow workers, boards, commissions, citizen groups and the general public on matters of an often highly critical nature.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Generally limited to a standard office environment but may necessitate some exposure to weather conditions as a result of field site inspections and attendance of public hearings, neighborhood meetings and other similar functions held both during the day and at night.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

The following are some of the physical demands commonly associated with this position.

Spends 70% of the time sitting, 15% walking, and 15% standing while in the field or office.

Occasionally lifts or carries up to 20 lbs. when moving books or recording equipment.

Occasionally climbs while operating in the office or field.

Oral and auditory capacity enabling interpersonal communication as well as communication through automated devices such as the telephone. Oral and auditory capacity to present and participate during public hearings and meetings.

Eye, hand, and finger coordination enabling the safe operation of office and field machinery.

Visual capacity including depth perception, color vision, and peripheral vision enabling completion of field inspections and operation of machinery.

Occasionally: Activity exists less than 1/3 of the time.
Frequently: Activity exists between 1/3 and 2/3 of the time.
Constantly: Activity exists more than 2/3 of the time.

Appendix E: Project Facilitator I
Position Description for St. Paul, Minnesota

Saint Paul, Minnesota
Project Facilitator I Job Description

Description of Work

General Duties

Performs responsible technical work in monitoring the progress of complex projects; coordinating to ease administrative problems; providing information to applicants and interest groups on various aspects of licensing, permits, and development; develops alternatives to aid in resolving disputes; performs other duties as required.

Supervision Received

Receives moderate supervision on the majority of projects, but may receive more detailed supervision on the more complex and highly visible projects.

Supervision Exercised

Provides technical guidance to front desk personnel in LIEP on difficult questions. May act as a project leader as assigned.

Typical Duties Performed

The listed examples may not include all the duties performed by all positions in this class.

- Identifies or is assigned applications and development projects that have neighborhood visibility and impact and/or some impact on the entire City.
- Reviews initial applications, establishes tentative schedules, identifies potential administrative delays and potential areas of conflict among interest groups.
- Meets with applicant/developer and with interest groups and discusses legal requirements, potential delays, and objections that may occur during the administration processes.
- Assists in correctly completing required City documents for application.
- Meets with neighborhood groups, special interest groups, business groups, etc. and explains proposed projects, discusses relevant laws, explores possible impact on the community.
- Explains and assists with avenues of legal recourse.

- Tracks progress of projects and takes action as necessary to eliminate unnecessary administrative delays while maintaining the integrity of the review and approval process.
- Facilitates meeting schedules, coordinates actions of LIEP officials and officials in other departments (notably PED and Public Works).
- Devises innovative solutions, compromises, etc. when delays or opposition arises in the approval process, seeking alternatives that protect legitimate interests and ensure the integrity of the review and approval process.
- Routinely communicates with elected officials regarding projects, problems encountered, potential or actual community opposition, opposition from special interest groups, and potential solutions.
- May coordinate with appropriate State agencies on issues such as pollution that may affect the approval process.
- Manages multiple projects with conflicting priorities and allocates time to produce best results.
- Conducts research; analyzes and evaluates information; coordinates with subject matter experts; prepares reports and other documents.
- Routinely communicates with district council staff, Council members and staff, and department heads to anticipate potential problems by maintaining awareness of community and interest group concerns.

Competencies

- Considerable knowledge of City codes related to licenses, permits, and development projects.
- Considerable knowledge of the administrative processes of the various divisions of LIEP.
- Considerable knowledge of the administrative processes of other departments that impact licensing, permits, and development.
- Considerable knowledge of the priorities of the administration.
- Considerable knowledge of the staff in various departments to contact when a project runs into administrative delays.
- Knowledge of researching technical and legal information related to licensing, permits, and development.
- Some knowledge of relevant State legislation.
- Considerable skill in successfully handling conflict situations.

- Considerable skill in negotiating to arrive at acceptable and legal solutions.
- Considerable ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing to a wide variety of audiences.
- Considerable ability to develop creative alternatives to resolve problems.
- Considerable ability to learn a new set of codes accurately and quickly.
- Considerable ability to manage a complex administrative process.
- Ability to prepare and present reports that deal with data, analysis, legal terminology, recommendations, etc.
- Ability to grasp the relationship between law and technology and to apply these to particular situations.
- Ability to manage multiple projects with conflicting priorities.
- Ability to analyze licenses and applications to assist applicants who may be unfamiliar with City procedures.

Requirements

One of the following:

1. Four years of experience in the City of Saint Paul dealing with issues such as licensing (other than animal licensing), building and permit issue, or development which requires a high level of contact with business and public officials, involves some interpretation of City Code, and involves dealing with people who are under stress.

2. A journeyperson level in a trade and three years of experience as an inspector in an urban setting with a population of 50,000 or more.

3. Project manager in construction or development projects which has required a high degree of contact with business managers, public groups, and public officials, and which involved interpretation of codes in an urban setting with a population of 50,000 or more for a period of four years.

4. Bachelor's degree and three years experience in a responsible position in a public inspection function in an urban setting with a population of 50,000 or more.

5. A housing or building code certification from a technical or vocational college and three years of experience in a responsible position in a public inspection function in an urban setting with a population of 50,000 or more.

Appendix F: Project Facilitator II Position Description for St. Paul, Minnesota

Saint Paul, Minnesota
Project Facilitator II Job Description

Description of Work

General Duties

Performs responsible technical and professional work monitoring the progress of very complex or highly visible projects, coordinating to ease administrative problems, developing possible solutions when the project has reached an apparent impasse, and effectively dealing with a wide variety of interest groups and public agencies; performs other duties as required.

Supervision Received

Receives general supervision on all assigned projects.

Supervision Exercised

Provides technical guidance to front desk personnel in LIEP and to Project Facilitator Is, and acts as project team leader.

Typical Duties Performed

The listed examples may not include all the duties performed by all positions in this class.

- Identifies or is assigned applications and development projects including all Class III licenses that have high visibility and/or high impact on the City.
- Reviews initial documentation, establishes tentative schedules, identifies potential areas of conflict among interest groups and identifies potential administrative delays.
- Meets with applicant/developer and special interest groups and discusses legal requirements, potential delays, and objections that may occur during the review process.
- Assists in correctly completing required City documents, scheduling hearings, etc.
- Meets with neighborhood groups, special interest groups, business groups, etc. and explains proposed projects, discusses relevant laws, explores possible impact on the community.
- Explains and assists with avenues of legal recourse.

- Tracks the progress of projects and takes action as necessary to eliminate unnecessary administrative delay while maintaining the integrity of the review and approval process.
- Facilitates meetings, schedules and coordinates the actions of LIEP officials and the actions of officials of other departments in the City as well as working with State and other officials.
- Devises innovative solutions, compromises, etc. when delays or opposition arise in the approval process, seeking alternatives that protect the legitimate interests of all and ensure the integrity of the review and approval process.
- Manages multiple projects with conflicting priorities and allocates time to produce best results.
- Conducts research; analyzes and evaluates information; coordinates with subject matter experts; prepares reports and other documents.
- Routinely communicates with district councils, special interest groups, Council members and staff, and department officials to anticipate problems by maintaining awareness of community and interest group concerns.

Competencies

- Considerable knowledge of City Codes related to licenses, permits and development applications.
- Considerable knowledge of the administrative processes of the various divisions of LIEP.
- Considerable knowledge of the administrative procedures of other departments that impact licensing, permits, and development.
- Considerable knowledge of the administrative processes in related State and federal agencies.
- Considerable knowledge of the priorities of the administration.
- Considerable knowledge of the staff of LIEP and of various departments to contact when a project runs into administrative delays.
- Knowledge of researching technical and legal information related to licensing, permits and development.
- Knowledge of relevant State legislation.
- Considerable skill in effectively handling conflict situations.
- Considerable skill in negotiation to arrive at acceptable and legal solutions.

- Considerable ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing to a wide variety of audiences.
- Considerable ability to develop creative alternatives to resolve problems.
- Considerable ability to learn a new set of codes accurately and quickly.
- Considerable ability to manage a complex administrative process.
- Ability to prepare and present reports that deal with data, analysis,
- Legal terminology, recommendations, etc.
- Ability to grasp the relationship between law and technology and to apply to the particular situation.
- Ability to manage multiple projects with conflicting priorities.
- Ability to analyze licenses and applications to assist applicants who may be unfamiliar with City procedures.

Requirements

One of the following:

1. Four years experience in the City of Saint Paul as a Project Facilitator I.

2. Four years experience in the title of senior or lead inspector in the City of Saint Paul.

3. Six years experience as a project manager in major construction and/or development projects which has required a high level of contact with business and public officials and which has involved controversial projects in an urban environment of 50,000 or more.

4.A bachelors' degree and three years experience as a Project Facilitator I or equivalent.

5. A housing or building code certification from a technical college and three years experience as a Project Facilitator I or equivalent.