



ALL 4 BUSINESS INITIATIVE

Draft Action Plan

October 26, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year, in response to the current economic climate and input from the business leaders in the community, the City of Aurora launched the **All 4 Business Initiative** to enhance the environment for business growth within the City. This initiative examined all aspects of the city's overall development process and ways to improve the customer experience for the development and local business communities.

Aurora's All 4 Business Initiative will accomplish the following goals:

1. **Stellar Communities:** Continue to build high-quality communities.
2. **Strong Business Environment:** Enhance the environment for business and job growth.
3. **Superb Customer Experience:** Consistently provide a positive customer experience.
4. **Shared Success:** Partner to ensure processes are clear, user-friendly, predictable and timely.

PROCESS

About every decade, the City of Aurora examines and revises its development process in response to changing conditions and input from its customers. This **All 4 Business Initiative** is the most comprehensive undertaking of any of the previous examinations of the city's development process. Comments about the city's development process and quality of customer service were solicited from individuals representing a cross-section of Aurora's business and development community customers. There were 315 participants in this process: 118 in 11 meetings and interviews, and 197 through an online survey. Collectively, these 315 participants made 961 specific comments, including criticism, compliments and suggestions about the City of Aurora development process and their customer service experiences.

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

The City of Aurora staff team responsible for implementing the **All 4 Business Initiative** reviewed the nearly 1,000 participant comments and developed this recommended Draft Action Plan in response.

The Draft Action Plan serves as a comprehensive roadmap that redirects the city's development process to meet the goals listed above and addresses issues raised by customers who participated in the **All 4 Business Initiative**. This Draft Action Plan offers a more holistic approach to the city's involvement with development by establishing a structure that will allow for ongoing improvement. This will enable the city to proactively respond to the needs of its customers as real estate development and business conditions evolve.

The Plan targets three objectives-**Improve Customer Service Culture, Streamline the Development Process and Improve Access to and Quality of Information**-to respond to the **All 4 Business Initiative** participant comments, criticisms and suggestions and create a framework that allows the city to proactively adjust to changes in the business environment. Accompanying strategies and action items are designed to accomplish these three objectives. The Draft Action Plan presents a summary of customer comments as they relate to each objective, the intended results of each objective, strategies associated with the objectives and action items that will be pursued to implement each strategy. Proposed timelines are shown for each action item. *Short-term is up to six months, mid-term is up to 12 months and long-term is beyond 2012.*

OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE CULTURE

Our customers asked us to be better communicators with them and with each other. They also asked to be treated with respect and to be valued as an integral part of a team responsible for making Aurora a successful place to live, work and shop.

STRATEGY #1

Refine and maintain a clear, shared Vision, Mission and Values to reflect customer service as the cornerstone of the city's development process.

Result: Successful implementation will put practices in place system-wide that will train and encourage our staff to proactively find solutions when helping customers and allow for adjustments in policies and procedures based on customer feedback.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #1		Timeline
a	Establish an internal Development Team Steering Committee responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the initial implementation of Action Plan • Maintaining Vision, Mission and Values • Maintaining consistency in process • Measuring performance • Evaluation of customer feedback • Continuous process improvement 	Short-term, Ongoing
b	Publish and promote Vision, Mission & Values.	Short-term
c	Develop Training Programs for all Development Team staff to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Team Building • Development Process (across departments and disciplines) • Specialized training for Supervisors and Managers 	Mid-term
d	Establish methods for ongoing customer feedback, to include periodic surveys, follow-up phone calls, etc.	Mid-term, Ongoing
e	Revise and improve system of accountability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require each job category to exhibit their function in successfully meeting the customer service goals • Review and improve employee performance evaluation criteria 	Long-term

STRATEGY #2

Transform the organization from one of being a regulator to being a partner with our customers.

Result: A successful transformation will empower city staff to help customers devise effective and practical solutions for their development projects that both satisfy city code and help the customer complete their project.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #2		Timeline
a	Identify customer service point person in each division/department.	Short-term
b	Determine clear definition of "quality development" to use as framework to measure all projects. This will provide understanding and guidance for our customers and staff.	Mid-term
c	Establish a committee representing a broad spectrum of customers and staff to gather feedback and address development issues on an ongoing basis.	Mid-term
d	Create programs to build positive relationships and promote shared successes with our customers. These programs would reward and celebrate staff that exceeds customer expectations.	Long-term

STRATEGY #3

Create a customer-centered environment to enhance the customer experience.

Result: This new environment will be focused on better assisting our customers at all points throughout the process.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #3		Timeline
a	Establish consistent customer response protocols at all entry points across all departments (calls, emails, walk-ins).	Short-term
b	Evaluate the feasibility of one point of entry into the development process for all applicants.	Short-term
c	Create processes to evaluate customer experience with the City from the customer's perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff interaction• Physical setting• Technology interface	Short-term Ongoing
d	Develop a procedure, applied consistently throughout the process, to quickly handle customer concerns.	Mid-term
e	Examine opportunities for streamlining operations at all counters.	Long-term

STRATEGY #4

Develop a unified internal team approach to communication and problem-solving.

Result: This approach will help the city provide services more quickly and efficiently, reduce internal regulatory conflict, and re-direct the team's focus toward the end result of finishing projects.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #4		Timeline
a	Conduct regular internal project team meetings scheduled at various milestones throughout the process.	Short-term Underway
b	Develop a regular structure for internal information sharing, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs for cross-training staff such as job shadowing• Regular project case studies as training opportunities• Technology training	Long-term

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OBJECTIVE: STREAMLINE THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Our customers asked us to simplify and streamline our processes, and make our codes and requirements consistent yet flexible. They want a common sense approach in the application of our codes and requirements. They requested that fees be made easier to pay and correlate with the amount of work involved in our processing.

STRATEGY #1

Provide online submittals and processing.

Result: Making online processing available will alleviate deadline and processing delays, improve customer service, and save our customers time and money.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #1		Timeline
a	Implement online process for Planning Development Application submittal, fee payment, referral, review, and city approval.	Short-term, Underway
b	Execute online process for Civil Plan and Building Plan submittals, fee payment, referral, review and city approval. Include process to accept licensed professional electronic stamp.	Mid-term
c	Implement online Public Improvement permits and inspection scheduling.	Mid-term
d	Develop process for city inspectors to access approved plans electronically.	Long-term
e	Create electronic process to incorporate minor revisions into the record drawings.	Long-term

STRATEGY #2

Examine zoning, design and construction requirements, criteria and processing; modify as needed to ensure consistency and simplicity.

Result: Regular, comprehensive reviews of the city's design criteria, requirements and processes will ensure clarity and guarantee these regulations are having the intended effects on development.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #2		Timeline
a	Eliminate requirement for private street and parking lot pavement designs. Replace city inspections of commercial and industrial private parking lots with private certification of conformance.	Short-term, Underway
b	Review and revise Zoning Code in these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change appropriate Conditional Uses to Permitted Uses • Fence Code • Administrative approvals, procedures • Residential Design Standards • Lot Assembly • Sustainable Infill and Redevelopment Zone (SIR) • Review how standards are applied to infill sites 	Short-term to Long-term, Underway
c	Complete review and revision of all water and wastewater regulations.	Short-term
d	Eliminate requirement for final mylar documents, once digital submittal process is established.	Mid-term
e	Simplify site plan requirements by moving details such as the landscape plan and subdivision plat to later in the process.	Mid-term
f	Move engineering standards from city code to design manual to allow for more administrative decisions, to make updates available sooner.	Mid-term
g	Continue to refine codes and standards to minimize cost impacts.	Long-term, Ongoing
h	Evaluate the neighborhood referral process.	Long-term
i	Reorganize the Zoning Code to make it easier to read and use.	Long-term

Action Items to Implement Strategy #2 (Continued)		Timeline
j	Review requirements, check for consistency across departments and revise all design criteria manuals as necessary, every three years, except as noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the International Building Code • All other adopted building codes • 2010 Roadway Specifications • 2010 Storm Drainage Criteria • Utilities Specifications • Lawn and Irrigation Permitting • Rules and Regulations Regarding Stormwater (Quality) Discharge for Construction Activities • Parks and Open Space Dedication and Development Criteria Manual (annually) 	Ongoing

STRATEGY #3

One size does not fit all. Therefore, tailor requirements for special types of projects to include small businesses, existing buildings, infill/redevelopment, and smaller scale projects.

Result: This approach will allow for flexibility and creative solutions to better serve our customers' individual needs.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #3		Timeline
a	Simplify, reduce or eliminate requirements and processes for projects that meet certain criteria.	Short-term
b	Provide specialized staff attention for customers who require additional expertise.	Short-term
c	Evaluate potential expedited permit process for smaller-scale projects.	Mid-term
d	Reevaluate routing process for building permits.	Mid-term
e	Review possible process incentives for projects that meet city objectives.	Long-term

STRATEGY #4

Establish a cost-of-service fee structure that does not inhibit business and offers appropriate timing and ease of payments.

Result: Timing of fee payments will be more closely aligned with the developer's planning, development and construction financing timeline and processes. The feasibility of a fast track processing option and alternative methods for fee payments will be determined.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #4		Timeline
a	Evaluate options to fast track an application via payment of a higher fee.	Mid-term
b	Develop timeline of city fees to more closely match development community financial processes.	Long-term
c	Review possible financial incentives for projects that meet city objectives.	Long-term
d	Analyze all application, review and permit fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct cost of service analysis once digital process is established • Examine potential for consolidation within and across departments • Calibrate to match scale and unique characteristics of projects 	Long-term

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OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE ACCESS TO & QUALITY OF INFORMATION

Our customers indicated a desire for better access to quality information and improved reporting of project specific information

STRATEGY #1

Improve and expand the availability and quality of online information.

Result: These enhancements will improve the customer's ability to make decisions, create better submittals, insert greater transparency in our processes, and allow our customers every opportunity to bring their projects to a successful completion.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #1		Timeline
a	Revise city website to be customer-centric. Include consolidated information related to the development process.	Short-term, Ongoing
b	Post sales and use tax requirements online.	Short-term
c	Provide specific project-related status online.	Mid-term
d	Create online business tools, such as interactive fee calculators and calendars, for project planning purposes.	Long-term

STRATEGY #2

Enhance methods of customer communication and education throughout process.

Result: Presenting information consistently about the requirements and process in a variety of ways will help the customer better understand and navigate the process.

Action Items to Implement Strategy #2		Timeline
a	Redesign <i>City of Aurora Development Handbook</i> to simplify presentation of information and reflect any necessary updates for process changes.	Short-term
b	Establish regular review and update cycle for all materials, to match timing of code and design criteria revisions.	Short-term, Ongoing
c	Conduct internal deliberation and consistency meetings to provide consistent message to customers throughout the process.	Short-term to Mid-term
d	Create plan for public outreach to market information and programs available to assist customers.	Short-term, Ongoing
e	Simplify all plan review comments.	Short-term, Underway
f	Inform taxpayers about their rights and obligations under the sales and use tax requirements.	Short-term
g	Improve communication to customers seeking contractor's licenses regarding the requirement to also obtain a business license, at no additional charge.	Short-term
h	Establish protocol for automatic updates and reminders at project milestones throughout process.	Mid-term
i	Explain the rationale for development review, permit and impact fees.	Mid-term
j	Provide information to customers in a variety of attractive and user-friendly formats, including written and audio/visual materials.	Long-term
k	Offer customers educational opportunities through training classes.	Long-term

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