



Development-Ready Communities

2nd in a series of 4 Briefs geared towards creating an *effective and efficient* approach to development

Great communities need to put their best foot forward to attract the kind of economic development that maintains or improves their quality of life. Up-to-date plan review services and development-related ordinances that incorporate state-of-the-art practices will send the message to prospective developers that the community values development and is therefore a sound investment. **This issue focuses on Implementing the Vision**

Master Plans create the vision; it is the “**next steps**” that make them relevant and successful. These next steps should include an up-to-date zoning ordinance, creative incentives, and an efficient and effective site plan review process that moves the community vision forward day-by-day.

Zoning Ordinance. Create a zoning ordinance that is well-organized and easy to understand; include graphics that illustrate zoning regulations

- Reflect the updated master plan through appropriate regulations
- Incorporate flexible zoning regulations that can accommodate growth and reflect trends in development; examples include mixed-use districts, planned unit developments, zoning overlay districts, and conditional zoning
- Include development standards that encourage quality development
- Consider zoning ordinance definitions and regulations that are similar to neighboring communities where appropriate
- Examine the zoning map to identify critical properties that must be rezoned to achieve the vision

Incentive Tools for Development. Assess where economic development is needed and develop incentive tools that encourage that development; examples include brownfield redevelopment authorities, downtown development authorities, business improvement districts, etc.

Site Plan Review Process. Create a clear, concise, predictable review process that may include the following, as appropriate for the community:

- Pre-application meetings for new development prior to application for site plan review to discuss issues related to development; give the applicant an opportunity to resolve issues prior to a public meeting
- A procedures manual that outlines the site plan review process and includes:
 - Contact information for staff
 - Meeting dates
 - Timeline for review/Workflow chart
 - Checklist of required items
 - List of Frequently Asked Questions
 - Regulations appropriate for type of development
- One contact point for applicants to get answers to questions about the review process
- Communications with the applicant via email, telephone and/or website on the status of the application
- A guide that facilitates efficient communication between staff/consultants/outside agencies
- Provisions for administrative approvals for certain developments and expansions
- A planning commission subcommittee to review site plan applications and raise issues for applicant prior to planning commission meeting; subcommittee may grant approval for certain types of development
- Standardized staff reports for review bodies; draft conditions should be prepared ahead of meetings when possible

Using these tools, the community can create an efficient environment for development review that generates the type of quality land use changes desired by the community—where and how it is envisioned.

Focus on...
DEVELOPMENT-READY COMMUNITIES