



CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

July 6, 2011

Re: Plan Review Process Changes – Effective January 1, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

In October 2010 the City of Columbia's Public Works Department combined the Protective Inspection Division and the Development Section of the Engineering Division to form the Building and Site Development (BSD) Division. This division was created in part to better assist the design community navigate the plan review process. Since that time representatives of the Fire, Health, Planning, Public Works, and Water & Light Departments have been meeting on a bi-weekly basis, during their regularly scheduled Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting, to develop process changes that improve communication and reduce confusion, both internally and externally. It is the opinion of this group that the documents attached and changes highlighted below will not only streamline the process but improve the efficiency of the actual plan review itself. This will result in quicker turn around times and reduced frustration with the plan review process.

Staff has created a commercial development plan review document intended to guide a design professional unfamiliar with the City of Columbia through the plan review process. This document covers the timeframes associated with plan review, the responsibilities of each department/division, and the steps in the plan review process. The most notable changes to the process include the designation of a project coordinator to serve as a singular point of contact, both internally and externally, for the entire project and an Initial Screening Process (ISP) to ensure that the required items are provided upfront to start the review.

The project coordinator will compile all City comments, ensure those comments are not contradictory, and develop one comment letter for distribution to the design professional and developer. The design professional will no longer be required to call four departments and up to seven individual divisions for a status update on their plan submittal.

The ISP will benefit the developer, design professional, and plan review staff by reducing review time. If the information necessary for plan review is omitted or insufficient, a response from the City is generated within two days instead of waiting the full review period to find out if the review could be completed. To accomplish this staff has created an ISP checklist and comment form for City staff to use to check plans into the system. Each department/division will complete a "quick check" of submitted plans on a daily basis to determine if the major items necessary to complete an accurate review are

included with the submittal. If so, the plans will be distributed for detailed review. If not, the developer and design professional will be provided a list of the items needed via e-mail and the plans will be held until those items are received and re-reviewed as part of the ISP. Staff will still use the same review time goals, ten (10) working days for first submittals following acceptance through the ISP with subsequent submittals having a five (5) working day review time goal.

Staff is also working on a request for proposal to bring a trial version of electronic plan review to the City of Columbia in 2012. More information regarding this, including a request for volunteers, will be forthcoming as the project moves forward.

We are confident that these changes will have a positive effect on the plan review process. As with any new process, your patience is appreciated as we implement this new system. Questions about any of these changes should be directed to Shane Creech of my staff at (573) 874-7250.

Sincerely,



John D. Glascock, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Enclosures

Cc: David A. Nichols, P.E., Assistant Director
Shane S. Creech, P.E., Building and Site Development Manager