

**Task Force Charge:** Using the existing staff work on process improvements as a starting point, the task force will review and assess the current legislative review process for improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, quality and adequate public participation.

**Task Force Membership:**

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**Scope of Review:** To focus on improving the legislative review process, but not to alter policy regarding the scope of legislative reviews, with consideration of the following issues:

- Public input process
- Timeliness of review
- Quality of review
- Quality of approved plans
- Complexity of review
- Thoroughness of review
- Ease of the review process
- Efficiency of the review process
- Review processes in Rural Areas vs. Development Areas
- Resources necessary to implement any proposed changes
- Consideration of changes to current development fees

**Major Tasks:**

- Review and evaluate staff's initial set of recommendations
- Identify new possibilities for process and public participation improvements
- Solicit community input via a survey of citizens, development community and staff
- Evaluate current process for plan review
- Draft list of potential recommendations
- Prioritize recommendations based on those that would have the most positive impact and those that could be implemented most quickly
- Develop preliminary action plans for priority recommendations

**Recommendations:**

Committee recommendations are presented in the following three categories:

1. New actions that were identified as higher priority
2. Actions already planned or underway
3. Other ideas

**(1) New actions that were identified as higher priority**

Priority	Action Steps/Timeline/Staff Resources Required
<p><b>2 Phase ZMA Process</b></p> <p><i>2 phase ZMA process will avoid need for detailed submissions until “big picture” issues have been answered, reducing cost to applicants and review time required and improving the ultimate quality of the project while maintaining appropriate public input</i></p>	<p>The first phase of the two step process would start by defining the issues related to the proposal. These issues would include, but not be limited to, the developers concept for the parcel, the citizen input/concerns, the county staff assessment of: the Comprehensive Plan’s goal for the parcel, how the project does or does not fit into the context of the surrounding neighborhood, the infrastructure deficiencies (either existing or caused by the proposal), etc. Next, the process would focus on developing and ranking design parameters that, if implemented correctly, would address the goals and mitigate the concerns. The first phase would conclude with the establishment of “findings” by the Planning Commission that, if the project implemented the design parameters, it would be generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the surrounding neighborhood. A record of comments would be available to the applicant and would serve as a basis for the site design in Phase 2.</p> <p>The PC’s “findings” would not insure the ultimate approval of the application and the project would not go to the Board at this stage, but a copy of the findings would be sent to the Board for their review and information.”</p> <p>Phase 2 – the second phase consists of a detailed review to meet all requirements and policies of the County</p> <p>A related staff recommendation is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the 100-plus item list to see if some/all requirements should be included in an ordinance.</p> <p><i>Community Development staff anticipates this effort can be completed in 2007 and any ordinance changes would follow this. In the short-term, development and implementation of this process requires additional staff work, but this process is intended to quickly recover that investment.</i></p>
<p><b>Improve ARB/PC/Board coordination, clarify role of ARB</b></p> <p><i>Clarify the sequential review process to alleviate confusion for staff, applicants, planning commission and board of supervisors and clarify the extent of review from the PC and ARB expected by the Board, prior to BOS review.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current applicable ARB ordinances with the Board to clarify code guidance on the role of the ARB</li> <li>• Explain the current practice as to ARB involvement in Planning Commission processes</li> <li>• Determine whether the Board wants to amend the ordinance to reflect current practice or to use existing ordinance guidelines for ARB involvement – the committee recommends that the existing guidelines be used to refine the ARB role to its original purpose</li> <li>• Communicate guidance to the Planning Commission and ARB members regarding the BOS guidance, and provide training to clarify appropriate roles and functions</li> <li>• Prepare staff to assist ARB members to stay within the designated review and decision-making roles</li> <li>• Provide the following sequence in flow chart form as a guide for staff and applicant: Comp Plan amendments review step 1- PC, Step 2 - BOS,</li> </ul>

	<p>ZTAs - review step -1 PC, step 2 - BOS  ZMAs - Assuming 2 part zoning review (part 1 focused on lan use, part 2 focused on design elements) review part 1 - PC, review part 2 if in an entrance corridor- ARB, PC, BOS  SPs- PC, ARB, BOS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish policy for extent of review - visibility and extent of information required for ARB review, extent of information required for PC and BOS review.</li> <li>• Establish staff led training sessions for ARB, PC and BOS clarify legal roles and help to establish policy.</li> </ul> <p><i>Community Development staff, with assistance from the County Attorney, can facilitate the review with the Board over the next six months. Scheduling the remaining tasks will depend on the outcome of that review.</i></p>
<p><b>Detailed process documentation focused on creating consistent review</b></p> <p><i>Documentation on review process for ZMAs, SPs, SDPs, and SUBs will be used by staff for performing reviews and available to applicants and the public to understand process. Also, need to include the complete list of (104) issues considered with applications and the process for proffer review.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process flow diagrams and review process are in place for subdivisions (SUBs) and site plans (SDPs) . These can be placed on the web as part of the one-stop web page update.</li> <li>• Process maps and documentation for ZMAs and SPs will be finalized after completion of the 2 phase process. Anticipate 2nd half of 2007.</li> <li>• All process maps and other documentation will be reviewed on a regular basis and changed when processes are revised</li> <li>• This effort will result in standards, methods and checklists that will insure consistency in expectations on the part of applicants, citizens and staff.</li> </ul> <p><i>This reflects an ongoing effort for Community Development staff.</i></p>
<p><b>Establish staff authority for waivers and modifications in the development areas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt standards that allow staff to have clearly defined discretion and authority on the following items that would have a significant impact on streamlining the approval process:</li> <li>• Private roads</li> <li>• Critical slopes</li> <li>• Buffers</li> </ul> <p><i>This task would require ordinance changes which would require some staff support as an upfront part of the process. The level of staff effort would depend on what review process was decided upon by the Board re: the ordinance changes.</i></p>
<p><b>Develop a Proffer Policy to include elements beyond a cash amount</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify appropriate staff to develop the policy</li> <li>• Review successful proffer policy models from other jurisdictions</li> <li>• Strive to avoid creating undefined mandates as new regulations are adopted</li> <li>• Determine proper process for adopting the policy if it is determined to be a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, move as quickly through that process as possible with support of the Planning Commission</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Community Development staff anticipates that incorporating a proffer policy into the Comprehensive Plan will take a year for development and implementation.</i></p>
<p><b>One-stop webpage devoted to staying informed about county development</b></p> <p><i>Creation of a new webpage on the county website that brings all elements of the online county development information together in one place</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine what elements are important to include on new webpage and develop prioritized content list – use task force survey results and input from CDD staff (staff identified electronic staff reports and electronic copies of plans and other project material as priorities)</li> <li>• Assess existing website content to determine what desired material already exists in some form or location</li> <li>• Assess CountyView as to its usefulness in serving desired functions</li> <li>• Identify gaps in material</li> <li>• Create links or new content to address gaps in highest priority areas of interest to citizens</li> <li>• Create an interactive page for neighborhood contact information including up-to-date email addresses to allow neighborhood representatives to post current information</li> <li>• Design one-stop webpage with input from citizens</li> <li>• Test new webpage with selected focus groups</li> <li>• Publicize availability of new page</li> <li>• Continue process with next level of priority areas</li> </ul> <p><i>Due to evolving nature of internet technology, staff anticipates that this will be an ongoing task, but estimates that the first level of priority improvements could be made to the website within 6 months. This work will be incorporated into existing ongoing improvement efforts.</i></p> <p><i>This will involve staff from the Community Relations Office, primarily the web content manager and the Community Relations Manager, and various Community Development staff in organizing existing information. Implementation can be accomplished as a part of regular work tasks over the next 6 months.</i></p>
<p><b>Create a comprehensive guide to the development process for citizen use</b></p> <p><i>“How to Understand and Get Involved with County Development Processes”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review task force survey results and determine priority items that should be included in a comprehensive guide</li> <li>• Review existing materials, printed and on the website, to see what the county already has developed regarding those items</li> <li>• Work concurrently with the website effort to coordinate preparation of any additional materials</li> <li>• Create printed (and DVD versions on demand) of the guide that is appropriate for mass dissemination and that links up with the website</li> <li>• Get feedback on the material from citizens prior to releasing, and make any necessary improvements</li> <li>• Publicize availability of new materials</li> </ul> <p><i>Many of these actions are similar to the website enhancement priority and should occur on a parallel track. Staff would estimate that an initial DVD could be released within 6 months, and then would need to be updated on a regular basis.</i></p>

	<p><i>This will involve staff from the Community Relations Office, primarily the web content manager and the Community Relations Manager, and can be accomplished as a part of regular work tasks within the six month period. It is anticipated this DVD will need to be updated as new ordinance requirements are added.</i></p>
<p><b>Expand the contact area around projects to include more than adjoining owners, include more comprehensive info in the letter</b></p> <p><i>Newly defined contact radius for notification letters and a more descriptive letter to be sent as the initial notification- directives for exceeding minimum legally required standards to be outlined in the form of an administrative policy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish appropriate contact radius</li> <li>• Review existing contact letter</li> <li>• Determine appropriate new letter content including contact info and county resources –include citizen input</li> <li>• Revise letter, implement new contact radius</li> <li>• Solicit feedback from notified residents after certain time period to assess effectiveness</li> </ul> <p><i>Staff estimates that this priority could be implemented within 6 weeks. Longer term, Community Development staff anticipates this will increase the staff resources needed to be spent with citizens in answering questions and facilitating input.</i></p>
<p><b>Create easily accessible space at COB for project information</b></p> <p><i>Public information/ visual displays on critical projects</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use terminal in new CDD lobby to share project info with the public</li> <li>• For those projects that have significant public interest, prepare visual display for citizens to view – determine what project info will be displayed</li> <li>• Identify best possible space for new display area</li> <li>• Publicize availability of new display area</li> </ul> <p><i>Staff estimates that this priority could be implemented within 6 weeks in the new Community Development space on the first floor of the COB.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation will involve staff from the Community Relations Office to assist with publicizing the new display area; this can be accomplished as a part of regular work tasks within the six week period. Longer term, it is anticipated this will increase Community Development’s workload as information will need to be regularly updated and staff will need to be available to address questions and concerns raised by the information. .</i></p>
<p><b>Examples of proffer and code of development language for applicants on Web</b></p> <p><i>Model Code of Development and Proffers available to applicants, which reduce the need for changes and resubmissions of documents. Also, need to provide examples of good CDs and proffers and standard conditions used with certain SPs (e.g. Churches, Home Occupations)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafts of both documents have been prepared by staff and are being internally reviewed.</li> <li>• After internal review, will circulate to interested parties.</li> <li>• Anticipate documents could be finalized and put on web site by mid-2007.</li> <li>• Staff will review uses to establish conditions and eliminate special use permit categories where possible, i.e. mobile homes</li> </ul> <p><i>Community Development staff notes that standardized language is hard to develop due to evolving nature of proffers and desire of applicants to negotiate certain items – examples of these items can be made available as “models”, but an acknowledgment should be made that these are ever-evolving documents based on the most recent approvals. As such, it is anticipated that staff will need to dedicate ongoing time to this task.</i></p>

<p><b>Approval letters explaining remaining process through occupancy</b></p> <p><i>Approval letters will outline steps necessary before buildings can be occupied or uses are allowed.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff has already started and can easily expand current letters to provide more detailed descriptions of remaining processes.</li> <li>• Will implement into process upon approval by Board.</li> </ul> <p><i>Community Development staff has already started this effort and it can be expanded without significant workload increases</i></p>
<p><b>Outlines of staff reports with outstanding issues (provide advance notice and interaction)</b></p> <p><i>There should be no surprises for applicants in a staff report. Any issue should have been raised in advance of the staff report, with the opportunity to resolve misunderstandings or mistakes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff is working on possible steps to address this issue and bring major areas of concern to the attention of the applicant in a timely way that allows them to be responded to, recognizing the obvious need to stop the interaction with the applicant at some point and prepare a final report</li> <li>• Staff reports are finalized and made available to the public and the applicant one week before the item is before the Planning Commission, so there should not be any complete surprises</li> </ul> <p><i>Community Development staff notes this will be difficult to resolve without building additional time into the process schedule. The current schedule has no downtime between the resubmission deadline for materials and the deadline for completion of a staff report. Thus, if new issues are raised as a result of plan changes, there is no time in the schedule for staff and the applicant to discuss these issues.</i></p>

**(2) Actions already planned or underway**

Some of the items discussed by the task force were already planned for or underway in some form as the group was meeting. The task force wanted to reaffirm the County's commitment to these actions and in some cases they provided specific direction regarding individual action items as outlined on the following chart.

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Committee Comment/Direction</b>
Alternative Engineering Review	Pilot program underway	<i>The committee has recommended six month updates over the two year pilot period, with the first update scheduled for April, 2007</i>
Counter Planner/ Person to answer simple questions	Position created, staffed	<i>Committee supported the staffing of this position</i>
Organize the Planning Department around the concept of "area planners"	Has been implemented in Crozet, additional area planners will be proposed for funding as the master plan schedule progresses	<i>Committee was supportive of this initiative</i>
CountyView Web to serve as "project diary", electronic access to project maps, plans, etc.	Public application of CountyView Web to be launched soon, currently being tested by selected users	<i>Ensure that the program is user-friendly and accessible to the average citizen</i>
Support hiring of a Community Engagement Specialist	Position approved by BOS, hiring planned for late April, 2007	<i>Incorporate appropriate communication responsibilities into the job description</i>
Create easily accessible display space at COB for project information	Display area has been designated in new Community Development office space	<i>Provide public information/ visual displays on critical projects</i>

### **(3) Other Priorities**

In addition to the higher priority items, the task force identified a number of other actions that they felt would be significant improvements to the development review process. While these actions did not receive the highest endorsement by the task force, it was recommended that these items should be kept on record and addressed by staff as they are able.

There was agreement among task force members that the item related to increasing awareness of Amail was a particularly important action and they strongly supported efforts by staff to continue focusing on using Amail as a communication tool.

<b>Actions</b>
<p><b>Change submission dates for rezonings and special permits</b>  <i>A schedule of submission dates is annually generated and can be easily modified starting in 2008. Before next year's schedule is developed, staff will seek input from the Planning Commission and community on factors they consider important for these dates.</i></p>
<p><b>Engineer Exchange</b>  <i>While staff is ready and willing to implement a program which trains outside engineers as reviewers, those engineering firms would need to be willing to fund the positions. It</i></p>

*is noted there is no assurance that a trained engineer would continue working for the firm that subsidized the participation or that the engineer would continue to work in this area.*

**Guides to correct terminology – “plug-ins”**

*Staff has already compiled and published a glossary of terms and a “Planning 101” on the departmental web site. This will be revised and expanded as customers identify additional subject matter.*

**Early letter to applicants with timetables, etc.**

*Staff has started this effort and will expand the content as applicants indicate an interest in additional materials.*

**Sample reports and examples of good applications on Web site**

*Staff is currently developing these materials and plans to publish this later this year.*

**Outsourcing / Private Contractors**

*This will be discussed with the Board as part of a broader fee study now under way. Use of contractors will significantly increase the cost of reviews and the Board will need to agree to either pass this cost through to applicants or increase Community Development’s funding.*

**Campaign to increase awareness of and use of AMail**

*The committee felt that Amail was a useful public information tool and recommended a continued aggressive marketing campaign to get people to sign up for the service.*

**Better coordination with neighborhood assoc/ homeowner groups**

*The committee believes that neighborhood based information is often very effective and recommended that every effort be made to share appropriate information with neighborhood groups.*

**Provide Citizen Planning Academies on a regular basis**

*Citizen Planning Academies that have been held in conjunction with master plan activities have been helpful in communicating general growth management and land use information to the public. The committee recommends that more academies be conducted for the general public to share that information as much as possible.*