



Mayor Eric Garcetti

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The Development Services Center: A New and Improved Public Counter

by David Weintraub - Associate Zoning Administrator and Jack Chiang - Senior City Planner

Compare the Planning Department public counter of five years ago to that of today and you will see a very different picture. Pressed with the challenges of a constant workload, yet diminishing resources, the Department sought to find efficiencies wherever possible to do more with less. One of those efficiencies was to expand the services offered at our public counters, and with that came a new name: the Development Services Center (DSC). Based on the "Blueprint 2010-2011," the policy document that outlined eight strategic changes for the Department, the DSC centralized all pre-application and post-determination services at the Metro and Valley public counters, and reallocated staff to handle the additional services. *(continued on p.2)*



Planners and customers review project applications across the counter at the Development Services Center at Figueroa Plaza.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICE CENTERS:

Metro Public Counter
201 N. Figueroa St., 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 482-7077

Valley Public Counter
6262 Van Nuys Blvd., 2nd Floor
Van Nuys, CA 91401
(818) 374-5050



Los Angeles
Department
of City Planning



The Development Services Center: A New and Improved Public Counter *(continued from p.1)*

The DSC today is now a versatile division of the Department that can manage an impressive range of functions and project types. Some of the services that have been added include:

- **Case Condition Clearance** – Whereas previously this function was scattered across various divisions of the Department, it is now centralized at the DSC, providing a single location for all post-determination matters.
- **Case Filing and Case Condition Clearing Appointment System** – The DSC's new appointment system for filing cases and clearing conditions has significantly cut wait times and is popular among the DSC's regular customers.
- **Wireless Telecommunication Facilities Program** – The DSC has dedicated staff assigned to accommodate our wireless telecommunication program. In close coordination with the Office of Zoning Administration, the program has reduced the number of cases headed to the Office of Zoning Administration by an average of 28% per year, which is a 77% reduction from when the program was first introduced in 2009.

In addition to the new services and consolidated functions mentioned above, which have changed the public's experience, the DSC is also striving to reduce wait times. Previously, all planning-related questions were funneled into a single line, where staff would field all types of questions. With the establishment of the **Development Services Case Management** office, and the introduction of the new **Planning Check-In** counter, the DSC can provide the appropriate level of attention and service based on the complexity and the nature of the question or project.

Planning Check-In

Up until the beginning of 2014, all planning-related inquiries were funneled to the Planning Express line at the DSC, often creating a customer bottleneck when complex issues arose. Now, with Planning Check-In, staff can screen an applicant's questions and route them appropriately. Very simple requests that can be addressed in less than a few minutes are handled at Planning Check-In, while more involved questions or cases are sent to either Planning Express, Case Filing, or Case Management as necessary. The DSC is very excited about the introduction of this new service that should further reduce wait times and increase the level of customer service that is provided to the public. *(continued on p.4)*



New efficiencies built into the Development Services Center at both the Downtown and Valley locations have helped reduce wait times and more quickly direct people to the correct staff.



A Message From the Director

This issue focuses on the public face of the Planning Department at our Development Services Center (DSC) and the range of services offered to residents, businesses and developers. The DSC is the point of entry for all land use entitlement questions and proposals for the entire City, so DSC planners must be ready for anything that comes their way.

The DSC's pre-application services in the Case Management Office are designed to facilitate a smooth entitlement process with early City input and guidance, while post-entitlement services ensure condition compliance and an easy transition to project construction. Associate Planner Maritza Przekop, featured in this issue, plays a critical role in the Case Management Office and has helped several catalytic projects reach permitting milestones and ultimately break ground.

With the economy in recovery, the DSC is experiencing high customer service demand; thus a number of specialized services have been added to better accommodate the influx. One is the Planning Check-In counter, which aims to better direct inquiries and reduce bottlenecks.

This issue also highlights the work of the Expedited Processing Section (EPS), which recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary. The EPS was designed with the customer in mind to accelerate the time for staff review. Numerous projects have benefited from this service and, in turn, have helped Los Angeles in its economic comeback and competitiveness with other cities.

Sincerely,

Michael J. LoGrande
Director of Planning

Expedited Processing Section: Celebrating Ten Years of Service

by Jae Kim - Senior City Planner and Heather Bleemers - City Planning Associate

The Planning Department's Expedited Processing Section (EPS) recently celebrated its 10th anniversary and continues to provide the public with a faster alternative for processing project-related entitlements. In the ten years of providing services to small businesses, large development companies, affordable housing corporations, and institutional users, the EPS has entitled over 66,000 housing units and improved the viability of thousands of businesses. Projects entitled



Both the adaptive reuse of the Eastern Columbia building into residences (left) and the construction of Evo, Downtown LA's first sustainable high-rise mixed-use development (right), benefited from expedited processing.

through the EPS are located throughout the City and range from small lot residential developments and restaurants seeking alcohol sales to high-rise mixed-use complexes and public charter schools. Some of the major development projects that have benefited from this process include Grand Avenue, Concerto, 8th & Grand, Evo, Park Fifth, Biscuit Company Lofts, W Hotel Hollywood, Metropolis, and Columbia Square.

For an additional fee paid for by the applicant, the EPS allows select cases to be taken out of the regular "queue" and processed at an accelerated rate, resulting in a 30 to 50 percent time savings for the applicant. Each project is handled in a streamlined manner from "cradle to grave" by a project manager, providing a single point of contact and enhanced customer service. The program is primarily served out of Downtown City Hall with a satellite office located in the Marvin Braude Building in Van Nuys.

The Expedited Processing Section was established in 2003 by the Mayor and City Council as a voluntary program that was envisioned as a "full-cost recovery" program. It began with a focus on housing projects to address the City's housing shortage by implementing a number of new tools such as the Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, the Density Bonus Ordinance, and Residential Accessory Services (RAS) mixed-use zones. The EPS has since expanded its services to include a wider range of development projects.



A new restaurant in the historic Farmers Market utilized EPS services.

In June 2006, the Planning Department was awarded a Planning Implementation Award for its Expedited Processing Program from the Los Angeles Section of the American Planning Association (APA). The EPS works to further the City's objectives to promote development that enhances the built environment and creates a sense of place through smart growth, as set forth in the City's General Plan Framework. Additionally the EPS is an important component of the City's strategy to establish and maintain a streamlined development review process to assure the City's competitiveness within the Southern California region. ♣

Maritza Przekop City Planning Associate

As Case Manager at the Development Services Center Citywide Case Management Unit, Maritza Przekop currently manages a large volume of projects at different stages in the entitlement/permitting process. Maritza joined the Department of City Planning eight years ago and since has been utilizing her multiple areas of expertise – including architecture, urban design, transportation planning, entitlements and community affairs – to help architects and developers visualize the opportunities that lie in the City's long range vision for each individual project. An architect by training, her passion lies in achieving a higher standard of design for our city, and thus the Citywide Design Guidelines and Walkability Checklist are sure topics of discussion as part of an applicant's initial consultations with Maritza. In 2013 she was responsible for the implementation of several major projects, including One Santa Fe, Wilshire Grand, Grand Avenue (Parcel M), 10000 Santa Monica, Metropolis, Columbia Square and Howard Hughes.

In addition to her work in Case Management, Maritza also serves as chair of the EWAC (Employee Workplace Advisory Committee) and has taken the lead in coordinating Planning Day, an annual day of off-site training and site tours for Department staff. She enjoys the challenges and rewards of organizing these events and the collaborative spirit that is shared across the department as everyone learns about and discovers the great City of Los Angeles. ♣



The Development Services Center: A New and Improved Public Counter *(continued from p.2)*

Development Services Case Management

The heart of the City's new approach to processing complex development projects is the establishment of the Development Services Case Management office. The office, which opened in mid-2011, helps customers navigate projects through the City's development review process. It is comprised of dedicated Case Managers representing five key departments: Planning; Building & Safety; Bureau of Engineering; Water & Power; and Transportation. These departments oversee the City's major review processes: entitlements, permitting, public/offsite improvements, and utility design. For the first time, Case Managers from each of the five departments have been co-located in a single office on the 10th floor of Figueroa Plaza.

Case Managers from these key departments – with the necessary skills and authority to act – are available to create a more efficient, accountable, and collaborative working environment. This results in a more tailored and comprehensive review of each development proposal in the pre-application stage, saving both time and money. Case Managers represent their respective departments but act as one City team. ♣



OUR MISSION

To create and implement plans, policies and programs that realize a vision of Los Angeles as a collection of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods, each with a distinct sense of place, based on a foundation of mobility, economic vitality and improved quality of life for all residents.

Directory of Development Services

Figueroa Plaza

201 N Figueroa St, Los Angeles

4th Floor

- Planning Check-In
- Planning Express Counter (*including Wireless Telecom Facilities Program, Condition Clearance, Permit Clearances, Subdivision, etc.*)
- Planning Case Filing
- Public Counters for other City Departments, including Building & Safety

10th Floor

- Citywide Case Management

City Hall

200 N Spring St, Los Angeles

5th Floor

- Automated Records
- Central Publications Unit

6th Floor

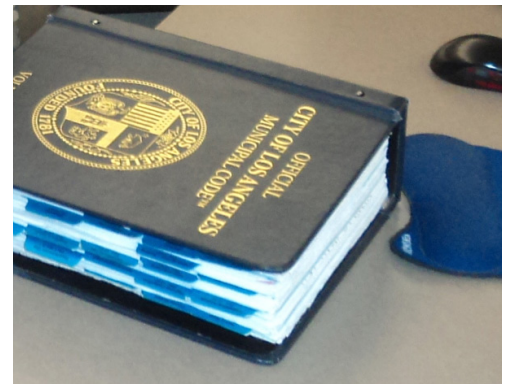
- Metro Neighborhood Projects Section
- Historic Preservation Overlay Zones Unit

7th Floor

- Expedited Processing Section
- Major Projects Sections
- Subdivisions Section
- Office of Zoning Administration

8th Floor

- Map Services



Marvin Braude Building

6262 Van Nuys Blvd, Van Nuys

2nd Floor

- Planning Express Counter (*including Condition Clearance, Permit Clearances, Subdivision, etc.*)
- Planning Case Filing
- Public Counters for other City Departments, including Building & Safety

3rd Floor

- Expedited Processing Section
- Subdivisions Section
- Office of Zoning Administration

4th Floor

- Valley Neighborhood Projects Section