

Developer Roundtable – Customer Journey Feedback Themes

June 27, 2024

Theme	Subtheme	Feedback (exact phrase from Roundtable Mtg)
Communication	Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper management is responsive. This should filter down. • Some staff are very responsive • Some planners don't listen to voicemail or email can take weeks • Planners must acknowledge you received communication and tell customer response time • Should be transparent on response times from a live person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No progress w/ respect to developer meetings. Is there follow through? Transparency • People @ lower level are not responsive. A quick "no" is ok. • No response to email/phone inquiries results in no info for client • Response Time - Not timely • Need to have nimble staff responsiveness to discuss time-sensitive projects (pre-app entitlement, TIs); willing to pay for fast-tracked process like STAR • Budget allocation for staffing to support faster permit processing • No one can get a hold of staff
	Process Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Changes are not communicated well/current info not available • San Diego does this well, website not updated frequently has outdated info • Communicate changes better • How does the City communicate new ordinances to dev't community? Need to have proactive communication during the process for feedback and after approval. Design and budget implications.
	Public Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is confusing has too much info
	Interactive Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking + Face is key • Have Meeting to review project comments is positive. Simplifies Process. • Zoom Meetings - Turn on cameras, better interactions • Actual Conversations are better than e-mail conversations - result: big returns • Technological communications diminishes human interactions impact on collaboration • More collaborative solutions with city staff, person to person better than email
Collaboration	Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff needs to be trained on proactive problem solving more management oversight on this. • Staff need to be proactive in trying to resolve issues instead of going over + over again • What is the plan to move forward after meeting? • Reluctant to challenge reviewer • Focus on big picture vs minutes/perparel issues • Perfection is not achievable - 90% ok if critical items are addressed • Decision making to be less rigid - move consideration to intent (collaboration) • Address critical path issues as priority to keep projects moving

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good when PM engages applicant about issues for timely resolution and problem solving; meetings w/ applicant team encouraged for collaborative resolution • Some codes are up to interpretation and there is not process for a meeting to discuss it • There is no problem solving. If Plan checker doesn't understand, they make you prove it meets code, even if it's clear on the plans. • Inspectors saying things that are not correct about "oh why didn't you do this or that?" Job is to review project as built to plans and code, not question why • No sense of urgency on some projects i.e. affordable housing
	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power for decision making not within department w/ responsibility for decision • City Staff seem hesitant to make decision on their own - less confidence • Empower decision at lowest possible level with focus on health/life/safety
	Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time to respond • Timeliness is a problem with some planners • Review times seem to be ok • Affordable Housing projects have worked well - can this be modeled as process? • Inspection Scheduling/Timeliness • Application submittal lead time too long** • Need flexibility to reschedule submittal appt • Need certainty for permit cost and timelines* • Existing approx. review timelines are helpful, but would be better if they're more realistic and definitive • Timing – Reviewers are not being held accountable to deadlines and responding • Communication for timelines and schedules • Super important for developers to know where they're at in the schedule • Plan checkers need accountability to respond on time • Commit to deadlines
	Questions and Point of Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't overuse technology. Provide a phone number for quick questions. • Good to have a SPOC like the dev't facilitation officer • Need more pre-application communication availability • Planning PM is helpful once they're identified as the single point of contact • Post entitlement: Need SPOC. Better if all comments are received at the same time. Different reviewers have different communication styles • There is no singular Project Manager to help unify the process. • Entitlements have a PM to talk to. Post-Entitlement, there's no one • Break down projects - big, small, commercial, residential, etc and assign PMs to each • The City needs a Gatekeeper or main point of contact for all comments
	Customer Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems are developed for internal use. Customer experience must be considered. • Remote work creates scheduling challenges. Emphasize customer needs. • Should consider personality conflicts when assigning staff • Should champion the customer + hold them accountable

Internal Coordination	Department Review and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depts need to be on same floor. Needs one-stop shop • Criteria for approval not universal across all staff • Applicant receives comments from each group, but they do not know if they should be expecting any more comments, so they are not sure when to start revisions. • Inner-dept communication needed with application. Sometimes there are conflicting comments. • It's not transparent which departments review the plans • Conflicting comments • Offer a meeting with all depts • Permit Center should understand all that's needed to issue a permit - if something is left off should remind or understand other departments requirements to at least respond to them
	Other Dept Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAO is too involved delays • Stormwater process is challenging. 2-3 page comment memos every time • CAO Should not be involved with every project review; Remove CAO from most reviews. Let planner do their jobs • There is a lack of a personal relationship to staff in DOT, ESD, Fire
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire + PW provide construction level comments @ entitlement • Want city comments in a word doc to facilitate response (or excel) • Initial Review: Return to "30-day" comment letters, not the current 45-day. • Less Commentary as review cycles progress - comment related to public works • Comments on issues that are out of scope • Plan checker should comment based on how code isn't met. Not opinions or general statements • They get back comments but with no other input like if additional comments are forthcoming
Process	Application Materials / Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should provide examples • More concise submittal requirements could help with this. • CEQA: Create standardized Impacts methodology for construction and traffic for noise and air quality reports • Inaccurate vicinity maps • Checklists may not be applicable to scope of project • Application for plan check is really a building permit application, which is confusing if no GC is on board yet
	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much technical info required early in process • Intake Process has been improved + is pretty good now • Need to simplify + streamline process • Stormwater should be conceptual at planning phase • Do rolling submittal for more technical submittals • SB35: It defeats the purpose of the statute when the typical SB35 project takes 6 months to complete (according to staff) • CEQA: Allow categorical exemptions without having to do all the technical reports to prove

		<p>the project is exempt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEQA: Revise thresholds of significance, i.e. take worse threshold from 12 months to 24 months • File naming convention is complex • Post entitlement: File naming convention is complex; wouldn't be notified of wrong naming convention until months later • Positive experience with hearing prep process. • No constructive criticism; understands why hiccups or last-minute things may come up and it's just part of the public hearing and public review processes. • Why do customers have to inform the city that they have paid the fees? Can this be automated? • Why does permit issuance take so long after all other departments have signed off? • Can we automate permit issuance?
	Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City does not use ePlans consistently. There are glitches. • Have to respond to comments twice in ePlans + response letter. • Assigning tasks in ePlans is difficult • Prefers self-help technology rather than asking staff • Microfiche files need to be available online for self-help • SJPermits is clunky; interface needs to be more streamlined • SJePlans portal is easy to use* • Digital plan process is great; better than paper plans • ProjectDOX - not good to do what it needs to do • ACCELA WORKS • The customer checks sjpermits and sometimes there are review processes in there that have no bearing on the permit and they have to correct it. • The technology makes things worse - email is better • They do not understand why they have to decide who the project needs to be routed to • PDox is less collaborative, cumbersome, and clunky than having in-person meetings • Not everyone at the City knows how to use PDox correctly, makes it confusing • Staff doesn't resolve the issues in the Review Comments when they are resolved on the plans • Is there some way to automate payments without the applicant having to notify the city?
Roundtable	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roundtable is good • Developers may be able to assist with external roadblocks - if known • Training process - joint training between applicant and reviewers
Not Sure	Not sure what the comment means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not automated • Complete and schedule notifications