



NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Planning Division

MEMO

To: A. Jerome Fletcher II, City Manager *ARF*

Thru: Jason Yarborough, ICMA-CM, Assistant City Manager

Thru: Juliana B. Bellia, Assistant City Manager

Thru: Monica Bramble, ULDC Project Manager

From: Alison Christie, AICP, Interim Planning & Zoning Division Manager

Subject: Unified Land Development Code Rewrite Timeline Update

Date: November 17, 2021

Planning Staff is requesting an extension of the ULDC Rewrite timeline due to increased workload and staffing constraints.

In calendar year 2020, Planning Staff processed and reviewed 272 projects. This includes all project types such as special event and temporary use permits, pre-applications, major site and development plans, plats, infrastructure/subdivision plans, development master plans, and more. So far in calendar year 2021, there is a total of 345 projects. This represents a 26.8% increase in the number of projects that staff has processed and reviewed, with over a month left in 2021.

In addition to the increase in the total number of projects, Staff has seen an increase in the number of complex petitions submitted. This includes two Village District Pattern Plan submittals, which are currently under review, in comparison to only one in 2020. This is also demonstrated in the increase in development master plans. Planning Staff reviewed four DMPs in 2020 and have processed and reviewed eight so far in 2021. This overall increase in total number and complexity of projects results in a dramatic increase in workload and thus time dedicated to these development approvals by Planning Technicians and Planners.

Planning Staff also spends a significant amount of time speaking with developers and other parties interested in developing in the City prior to their submittals. This time is not accounted for in the project totals above. Examples of this include coordinating and attending meetings with other City Departments and developers interested in the northeast quadrant of Toledo Blade and I-75 as well as researching proposed amendments to Developments of Regional Impact.

While the Division has been working diligently to manage this increase in workload, there has been a significant decrease in staff members. The Planning and Zoning Division Manager position has been vacant since May, with a Planner III currently filling this position as Interim Manager.

There are also two additional Planner vacancies and an Environmental Tech vacancy. These vacancies represent a third of the Division and almost half of the Planners. The Division is working with the City Manager's Office and Human Resources to obtain more staff through several different methods including a Request for Letters of Interest through the Engineering Library, temporary staffing agencies, third party reviewers, and filling vacant positions.

Development petitions submitted to the City have statutory and ULDC processing deadlines making this aspect of the workload a priority. If staff reviews for these petitions are delayed the City is at risk of litigation. The building and construction industry is booming post-COVID-19 pandemic, and it is to the benefit of the City to capitalize on this trend by continuing to process petitions rapidly.

In order to keep up with the current workload of development while understaffed, the ULDC Rewrite timeline cannot be met. Planning Staff is requesting an extension to October 2022 to alleviate some of these pressures on the Division. This extension request assumes additional staff will be starting in the next few weeks through the methods mentioned above. If additional staffing is not obtained in a timely manner, this timeline will need to be further amended.