

2011 Work Plan

Planning and Economic Development Division

City of Bloomington, Minnesota

Services

The Planning Division provides a wide range of services grouped in three areas:

- Development Review Services
- Long Range Planning Services
- Customer Services

Development Review Services

The Planning Division's development review services include reviewing and processing development and land use applications. These reviews are regulated by several State mandates that require direct mail notices, newspaper notices, public hearings and action within set timelines.

1. Assist developers and applicants with understanding City development standards and application processes.
2. Enter application data into databases, process application fees, prepare case files and distribute applications to various Departments and agencies requiring review. Track mandated agency action dates.
3. Comply with public notice requirements. Prepare legal notices, gather addresses of all land owners required to be notified, send direct mail notices, and submit newspaper notices.
4. Visit application sites to review site conditions and relationships with surrounding land uses.
5. Review development applications for compliance with City Codes. Prepare and distribute agendas, staff reports, resolutions, ordinances, maps, correspondence and related documents for the public, the Development Review Committee, the Planning Commission, the City Council and any other impacted Advisory Commissions.
6. Communicate with members of the public who are interested in applications. Collect correspondence for decision makers.
7. Keep the public up to date regarding proposed development through website postings, E-subscribe e-mail notices, on-site sign installation and other methods.
8. Meet with applicants and neighbors to discuss concerns and negotiate improvements.
9. Communicate with impacted State agencies, Hennepin County, adjacent cities, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, Metropolitan Council and others as needed.

10. Attend Development Review Committee, Hearing Examiner, Planning Commission, City Council and other public meetings to provide background and answer questions on development applications and applicable City standards.
11. Approve or deny applications that can be processed administratively (for example, minor revisions to approved plans, certain final site and building plans, airport zoning permits and wireless antenna colocations).
12. Where mandated under State and/or Federal Law, prepare, coordinate and process required environmental review documents (i.e. Environmental Assessment Worksheets, Environmental Impact Statements, Alternative Urban Areawide Reviews).
13. Prepare approval and denial letters for applicants that document conditions of approval.
14. Review, track and process recreational vehicle approvals and screening waivers. Currently handled as a temporary process, which requires significant time for renewals.
15. Prepare case files for long term storage and microfilming.
16. Record resolutions with Hennepin County.
17. Perform site inspections to ensure compliance with approved plans. Multiple site inspections are often required to verify landscaping installation, to verify landscaping survival after one year (and bond release), to verify lighting materials prior to installation and to verify light level compliance after lighting installation and burn in.

Long Range Planning Services

The Planning Division performs long range planning in response to State mandates and City Council requests.

1. Prepare updates to the Comprehensive Plan as required under State Law. Review requirements; gather Council, advisory commission, business and resident input; prepare drafts; hold public hearings; prepare submittal materials for the Metropolitan Council; meet with Metropolitan Council reviewers and attend Metropolitan Council public hearings; prepare final formatted versions.
2. Prepare amendments to the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and other sections of the City Code as requested by the City Council. Research standards in other cities; prepare draft ordinance provisions; coordinate internal review; communicate with impacted parties; assemble focus groups as necessary; hold administrative and public hearings.
3. Prepare district and small area plans as requested by the City Council.
4. Rezone and reguide land as initiated by the City Council. Prepare ordinances and staff reports, notify impacted and surrounding landowners, hold administrative and public hearings, prepare Metropolitan Council applications for Guide Plan changes, update GIS zoning and guide plan maps.
5. Assist with the preparation of other types of long-range plans and projects (i.e. Alternative Transportation Plan, Strategic Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Regional Park Reserve Projects, Energy Projects).

6. Review the annual five-year Community Investment Program (CIP) for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan as required under State Law.

Customer Services

The Planning Division provides a wide variety of customer services for external and internal customers.

1. Respond to requests for information on City standards. Twenty or more calls and counter visits per day from commercial and residential property representatives is typical. Common inquiries relate to fences, sheds, garages, additions and concerns about possible violations on the resident's property or by their neighbors.
2. Review, process and approve all sign permit applications for permanent signs and all uniform sign designs.
3. Provide demographic information for internal and external customers. Prepare challenge applications to annual Metropolitan Council population estimates which determine Bloomington's per capita-based State Aids and Fiscal Disparities distributions. Serve as liaison on U.S. Census Bureau activities. Assist the School District in demographic analysis. Assist with redistricting after each decennial census. Provide detailed data to the public and to other City Departments to support grant applications and other needs.
4. Maintain a user-friendly website with information on proposed development, Planning Commission agendas, long range planning projects, permit levels, demographics, zoning and comprehensive plan status.
5. Coordinate the City's wireless leases. Administer existing leases. Negotiate new wireless leases. At the end of 2010, twelve wireless leases are in place with projected 2011 revenue over \$354,000.
6. Provide support services to the Planning Commission and Hearing Examiner. Manage communications and commissioner training, provide new member orientations, take minutes at all meetings, track annual attendance figures, set up meeting rooms.
7. Prepare "zoning letters" that provide documentation on zoning and conformity issues as required by lenders and buyers, typically at the time of sale or refinancing--50 to 70 zoning letters per year is typical.
8. Prepare brochures, handouts, schedules and forms to educate the public on standards and procedures.
9. Assist with the City's Wildlife Management Program. Coordinate deer removal.
10. Maintain E-Subscribe and Ask the City information resources.
11. Maintain official copies of Bloomington's Zoning, Guide Plan and Height Limits maps.
12. Prepare and track development forecasts citywide using a GIS tool.
13. Make presentations to community organizations. Presentations are requested by groups such as the Chamber of Commerce (they currently ask for a monthly development update), the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), the National Association of Industrial and Office Property Owners (NAIOP),

Bloomington public school classes, university classes, the League of Women Voters, and senior organizations.

14. Review development proposals and mandated environmental reviews for development in adjacent cities. Coordinate City comments. Prepare comment letters on behalf of the City.
15. Review Metropolitan Council, Mn/DOT, Metropolitan Airports Commission, Hennepin County and other agency plans. Prepare comment letters that advocate City interests.
16. Assist the Environmental Health Division and Legal Department in responding to resident complaints and in processing enforcement actions.
17. Assist the Assessing Division in its assessment analyses.
18. Provide assistance as needed for various multi-jurisdictional groups (for example, joint airport zoning boards, I-494 Commuter Services, etc.).
19. Assist in the preparation of City grant applications.

2010 in Review

Development Review in 2010

- Development applications were slow in the first half of 2010 but accelerated significantly in the second half, with several large projects.
- Given recent City Code amendments, many Code-complying applications that previously required City Council approval were approved by staff. These administrative approvals shortened the time to construction for applicants, reduced staff time requirements for preparing staff reports and attending hearings, and shortened City Council and Planning Commission agendas. The approach is also gaining the attention of other metro area cities as a success story in streamlining development.
- 2010 was a busy year for wireless antenna applications. Eighteen applications were received – all colocations. All eighteen were approved administratively.
- Notable development applications reviewed in 2010 include:
 - Penn American
 - Phase I (234 apartment units, 14,091 sq. ft. retail)
 - Phase II (38,859 sq. ft. retail/restaurant, 69,000 sq. ft. office)
 - Founder's Ridge/Presbyterian Homes
 - Phase I (106 units senior housing)
 - Phases II-IV (134 units senior housing)
 - Radisson Blu Hotel at MOA (501 rooms)
 - Pulte Homes Subdivision (41 single family lots)
 - Polar Fab Addition (98,000 sq. ft.)
 - Normandale College – Kopp Student Center Addition (23,400 sq. ft.) Planning Commission Approval
 - Normandale College – APC Classroom Addition (76,000 sq. ft.) Planning Commission Level Review
 - Office Building – Cattle Company Site (37,000 sq. ft.)

- CVS Lyndale (12,900 sq. ft. retail)
- Minnesota Work Force Center Addition – 9056 Penn (3,600 sq. ft.)
- Friendship Village – Fitness Center Addition (19,000 sq. ft.)
- White Castle (3,000 sq. ft. restaurant)
- Warehouse Addition (10701 Hampshire, 18,000 sq. ft.) Planning Commission Approval
- Best Western Restaurant Addition (2,500 sq. ft.) Staff Approval
- Feldman Nissan Addition (1,400 sq. ft.) Staff Approval
- Christ the King Lutheran Addition (1,070 sq. ft.) Staff Approval
- Multiple variance applications
- Development applications receiving zoning approval in previous years, but constructed in 2010 included:
 - Applewood Pointe Southtown (103 unit senior housing)
 - Nine Mile Creek Senior Living (93 unit senior housing)
 - Wealshire Phase I (56 bed memory care)
 - Nissan Dealership (41,000 sq. ft.)
 - Richfield-Bloomington Credit Union (16,800 sq. ft.)
 - Polar Fab Addition (9,000 sq. ft. industrial)
 - Mt. Hope and Oak Grove Churches – Verizon Bell Towers

Long Range Planning in 2010

- City initiated rezonings in 2010:
 - Clean-Up Rezonings
 - C-4 Rezonings
 - CB to B-2 Rezonings
 - Ziegler Lyndale Rezoning
- City Code Amendments in 2010:
 - Height Standards
 - CX-2 District Rewrite
 - College Campus Sign Standards
 - Animal/Agriculture Standards – Assisted Environmental Health
 - Subdivision Regulations Rewrite
 - 2010 Miscellaneous Issues Ordinance
 - Residential Districts and Standards – began work in 2010, will be completed in 2011
- District planning projects in 2010:
 - South Loop District Plan and District Energy Study
 - Penn American District Plan
- Other long range projects in 2010:
 - Hyland Bush Anderson Regional Park Reserve Master Plan Update
- Long range planning services were substantially reduced in 2010 given that:
 - a long range Planner position has been vacant since the fall of 2009;
 - the long range Senior Planner has been serving as the Acting Planning Manager since June of 2010; and
 - the only remaining long range Planner was on leave for part of 2010.

Customer Service in 2010

- 2010 was also a busy year for new wireless leases. Four new leases were signed, raising projected 2011 annual revenue to over \$354,000. The Planning Division coordinates City wireless leasing, including serving as the City's point of contact; negotiating terms, drafting and processing new leases; and administering the 12 existing leases. While it is becoming a significant revenue source, the time required to manage the lease agreements is also significant.
- The Planning Division worked closely with the Census Bureau on the 2010 Census that took place in April. Bloomington was in the top 20 cities with over 50,000 residents in the U.S. for mail response rate. A high response rate resulted in lower follow up costs for the Census Bureau.
- This fall, new agenda packet procedures for the Planning Commission were adopted. Staff time savings were realized by combining two packets per meeting into one and by better utilizing the City's website to reduce the need for printed materials.

Staff Size

Three Planning Division staff positions remain unfilled:

- A Planner position vacated in the fall of 2008;
- A Planner position vacated in the fall of 2009; and
- A Senior Planner position vacated in the spring of 2010 when a Senior Planner was appointed Acting Planning Manager.

Planning Division Staffing Level (at start of year)					
Position	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Planning Manager	1	1	1	1	0
Senior Planner	2	2	2	2	2
Planner	6	6	5	4	4
Support Staff	2	2	2	2	2
Total	11	11	10	9	8

Observations

- The vacant positions have been manageable to date given slower than normal development activity levels and flexibility to defer long range planning projects. Development activity increased significantly in the second half of 2010 and has placed more strain on staff resources.
- Of the eight remaining Planning Division staff members, three are eligible for retirement.

2011 Projects

Development Review Services

- The number of development applications received in a given year is heavily influenced by economic conditions.
- In the first half of 2010, the number of development applications was well below normal. In the second half of 2010, the number of development applications picked up considerably, approaching normal levels over the past 10 years for Bloomington.

Customer Services

- The various customer services provided by the Planning Division have been less a function of economic conditions. Even in slow economic times, lenders need zoning letters, new businesses apply for sign permits, customers request demographic information. Some customer services increase in slow times, notably the Planning assistance requested by the Environmental Health and Assessing Divisions.
- 2011 is anticipated to be another busy year for wireless lease amendments and administration. As providers shift from 3G to 4G service, they desire amendments and upgrades.
- 2010 Census data will start to be available in the spring of 2011. That will generate numerous requests for new demographic information and analysis. It also triggers the mandatory redistricting of City Council districts.
- 2011 projects will include continued Normandale Lake District Plan implementation (pedestrian bridge), Hyland Bush Anderson Regional Park Plan implementation, assistance on the proposed Intercity Regional Trail Master Plan and participation in the MSP environmental assessment.

Long Range Planning

- The amount of staff time available for long range planning is a function of:
 - Staffing levels and
 - The amount of staff time required for development review and customer services, which takes priority over long range planning.
- Based on historical norms, staff believes that the staff level required for the development review and customer services functions in a normal year is eight staff members. The current Planning Division staffing level is eight, leaving no capacity for long range planning if development review and customer service is normal.
- Assuming 2011 is a slow year for development applications, staff estimates that approximately 1,500 staff hours may be available for long range planning projects. Little to no staff time would be available for long range planning if 2011 has a normal number of development applications.
- Based on having 1,500 staff hours available in 2011 (a slow development year), priorities for long-range planning projects in 2011 are listed below.

2011 Long Range Planning Priorities	
Project	Time Required (Hours)
South Loop District Plan. Project in process. 2011 tasks include plan completion, adoption, publishing and beginning implementation.	600
Penn American District Plan. Project in process. 2011 tasks include plan completion, adoption, publishing and beginning implementation.	300
Update Subdivision Regulations. Largely complete at the end of 2010. Public hearings in 2011.	40
Update Residential Zoning Districts and Standards. Project underway. Updates 1950s-era residential standards as well as standards for nonresidential uses in residential districts.	400
2011 Miscellaneous Issues Ordinance. Includes numerous small scale Code amendments and fee changes, thereby substantially reducing the overhead of each amendment.	120
Subtotal	1,460

2012 and Beyond - Potential Future Long Range Planning Projects	
Project	Time Required (Hours)
Rezone Penn American District. Rezone land as recommended by the Penn American District Plan.	100
Rezone South Loop District. Rezone land as recommended by the South Loop District Plan.	100
Update Comprehensive Plan. Complete amendments necessitated by the South Loop District Plan, the Penn American District Plan and an update of the Sanitary Sewer and Water Plans. Pursue required Metropolitan Council approvals.	160
Update Industrial Districts. Update 1950s-era industrial districts and standards.	500
Rezone Remaining I-494 Corridor. Apply new commercial districts along the I-494 corridor outside of the district planning areas.	200
Create Airport Noise Insulation Standards. Currently handled via conditions of approval. Standards are needed to provide consistency and improved developer awareness of noise insulation requirements.	140
Create Restaurant Standards. Restaurants are conditional uses in most districts, yet have no standards. Standards are currently applied through conditions of approval.	100
Create Environmental Review Standards. Clarify in the City Code what environmental reviews are required at what time. While environmental review standards are set through State law, they interface with various City processes. That interface should be codified to ensure consistency.	100
Update Legal Sections. Update sections that address various legal issues including enforcement, moratoria, overall purpose, authority, applicability, rules of construction, and zoning district map sections.	80
Create Temporary Structure Standards. Minimal standards are in place today for temporary structures such as construction trailers, portable on demand storage, construction debris dumpsters and portable toilets, which can cause confusion and inconsistency.	160

<p>Create Special Event Standards. Currently, many special events are regulated by policy. Standards should be established to clarify requirements and approval processes for various types of special events.</p>	225
<p>Reorganize All Remaining Sections of Chapter 19 within Chapter 21. To create improved organization, the Zoning Ordinance Update Project has been placing newly created sections in Chapter 21 of the City Code. Over time Chapter 21 has grown while Chapter 19 has shrunk. There are several sections of Chapter 19 that are not in need of significant revision. These sections will need to be moved and reorganized into Chapter 21. Minor changes may be made at that time. Although this subproject will have little impact on regulations, it will be time consuming (for example, revising all cross references). This subproject should occur near the end of the overall Zoning Ordinance Update to minimize the need for cross reference changes.</p>	360
<p>Solid Waste Collection Study. Evaluate the options available for community solid waste collection.</p>	260