



Planning & Community Development
Room 112
2 Park Drive South
Great Falls, MT 59401

September 16, 2019

Dear Community Development Partners,

As the summer season is coming to a close we felt it was time for a development review process improvement update and to provide notification of **new permit application requirements**.

In May of 2019, we implemented new permit application checklists. The new procedure surrounding these checklists is for Planning and Community Development Permit Technicians and Plans Examiners to work with permit applicants prior to permit application submission and check items that will be needed for any type of permits that may be needed and to eliminate any items or documents that will not be required for the specific project. Initially, we implemented the checklists as a “soft roll-out” in order to educate the development community and allow applicants to get used to the new form and process. **As of October 1, 2019, the completion and inclusion of the checklists along with the permit application will be mandatory.** As a reminder, there are two primary reasons for the checklists:

- **Greater Transparency-** Permit applicants will have a thorough understanding of what is required for each unique project that requires permits.
- **Process Efficiency-** Incomplete application packages unnecessarily stall permit review and approval. In many cases, plans that have been submitted and put in the queue for review have to be rejected because critical documents and information are missing.

Also beginning October 1, 2019, permit submittal packages that are deemed incomplete (missing information or documents that are specified on the checklist) will not be accepted and returned to the applicant by the Permit Technicians at the front counter. While having applications rejected may not be pleasant, our intent is to provide a greater level of transparency and make permit approval quicker for all of our community development partners.

Another process improvement is for each permit to be assigned a single point of City staff contact. Once an application has been submitted and deemed to be complete, a **Permit Coordinator** will be assigned to the project. It is the PC’s responsibility to route all documents to the appropriate review staff and to be a resource to the permit applicant should there be any questions related to the project whether it be permit status, process questions or any other information that may be helpful to the applicant. The Permit Coordinator will also ensure that the

project is moving through the process as efficiently as possible. **As of October 1, 2019, all resubmittals of revised plans and documents shall be routed through the assigned Permit Coordinator.** This is to ensure that all pertinent parties associated with a project will be fully aware of any submittals, resubmittals, project scope changes and permit status. Direct **communication** with Planning, Building, Fire, and Engineering or Environmental review staff is allowed and encouraged, however all **document and information submittal and/or resubmittal** shall be coordinated by and through the Permit Coordinator. The Permit Coordinator will be your best resource in securing a project permit as efficiently as possible.

In order for these improvements to be successful, we will need the help and cooperation of our development partners who will be submitting applications and plans for projects for review in Great Falls. Adherence to submittal and process requirements will help all applicants move their projects through the permit process as efficiently as possible. It is our intention to set the bar high and create a process that will set the example of how best to do business around the State of Montana.

We also continue to make progress in the configuration of our community development software that when implemented will significantly improve the level of service to our partners. Stay tuned for more on that.

Public Works Director Jim Rearden and myself will be providing a process improvement update to the City Commission at the **October 1, 2019** City Commission work session at 5:30 in the Gibson Room at the Civic Center. I would encourage any interested parties to attend and listen and participate by providing feedback during the public comment part of the agenda.

I sincerely appreciate your help and cooperation in this process. We understand that any time there is a change in process or procedure, there can be a certain level of confusion or anxiety. We will continually strive to be thoughtful, transparent and helpful in our relationships with our community development partners. If there are any questions or constructive suggestions related to any of these topics, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Craig Raymond
Director, Planning and Community Development
City of Great Falls