



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

August 2012

## A New Era — A New Department

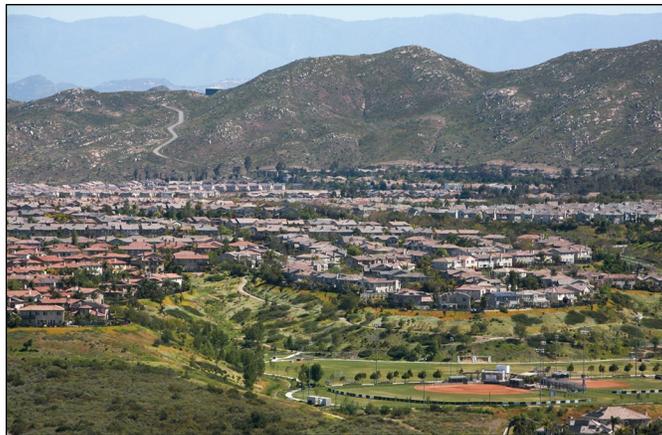
In today's world, businesses and government agencies, large and small, must continually evaluate and innovate their processes, their way of doing business, and their protocols for customer service. If they can't answer the basic questions of what is their purpose and how do they accomplish that, they aren't going to be in business very long.

The same applies with the County's land development process. There is a Chinese proverb that says "With change comes opportunity."

With the support of our County Board of Supervisors, a committee was formed comprised of government and building trades representatives. Business processes were thoroughly examined; recommendations for streamlining the process without sacrificing quality control, reducing costs and improving customer service were made; and a timeline was put into place.

The result is a new land-development department called Planning & Development Services (PDS), with new processes, a new way of doing business, and even a new home.

PDS will combine the land use processes that used to be divided among various County departments — planning and land use, public works, environmental health, and parks & recreation — all under one roof. This will create a seamless land use process that works efficiently, reduces customers' costs and maintains the highest quality



*Planning is a careful balance of efficient land use, developing and maintaining thriving communities and infrastructure, and protecting our environment and natural resources.*

review standards.

The Department of Plan-

**The NEW  
Department of Planning & Development Services**

ning and Land Use will close its doors, literally and figuratively Friday, September 21. The new Department of Plan-

ning & Development Services will open for business at its new location at the County Operations Center on Tuesday, September 25.

Here again, approach matters! We believe our role is to help our customers through the process, and not simply tell them

what they cannot do. With the new department, a new culture is born with the

emphasis on customer service and efficiency.

### NewsBriefs

WE ARE MOVING!  
OUR NEW OFFICES AND SERVICE COUNTERS WILL BE LOCATED AT 5510 OVERLAND AVENUE AT THE NEW COUNTY OPERATIONS COMPLEX IN KEARNY MESA, EFFECTIVE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25.

**FIND OUT MORE!**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING YOU.

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\*\*\*NEW DEPARTMENT\*\*\*NEW LOCATION\*\*\*NEW VISION\*\*\*

## Upcoming Dates

### Planning Commission Hearings:

- August 17
- September 28
- October 19

### Board of Supervisors Hearings:

- September 11 & 12
- September 25 & 26
- October 9 & 10
- October 30 & 31

## Service Hours

- Monday through Friday
- 8:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
  - 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## Upcoming Closures:

- Labor Day Holiday, Sept 3
- Moving Day, Sept 24

## Find us on the web at

[www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu)

Look for our *NEW* website in the next newsletter issue

## How to Contact Us:

Phone: 858-694-2960  
1-800-411-0017

## About this Newsletter

Each month the new Department of Planning & Development Services will produce a newsletter for our customers and stakeholders. It will present updates on what has been done, and what challenges lay ahead. It will highlight the key areas of our business protocols: Reducing Time and Costs; Assuring Quality, Consistency and Transparency; Centralizing Services; Modernizing Regulations; Embracing a New Culture; and Enhancing the Skills of Our Workforce.

The newsletter will be one communication tool we use to highlight just a few of the many activities that are taking place as part of the effort. But we'll also be out meeting with members of the community, customers, industry, and environmental stakeholders to share our plans. And, we will have a new website which you'll want to bookmark to check for other updates.

## Reducing Time & Cost

### FedEx Site Plan — A New Approach to Processing

Last month the County issued a Site Plan permit for the Otay Mesa FedEx Freight Center — what will eventually be a nearly 45,000 square-foot freight service center that will distribute hundreds of thousands of packages throughout the region.

As a result of improvements to the review process that we recently made for Site Plans in East Otay Mesa, we were able to reduce time and cost for this customer by completing the project in three months — about a quarter of the 14-month average; and it was done without sacrificing quality.

This is an example of what can happen when staff and applicant are motivated and focused on getting to a decision: clear

expectations were made up front with agreed upon schedule commitments; technical studies were provided at the time of project submittal; issues were resolved through working meetings; and a checklist on how the project complies with the specific plan was created. These



changes enabled the project to be processed quickly, resulting in only one iteration review.

Instead of this being a 'one-time' story, we will strive to make this the norm.

Kevin Kiernan, project

consultant for FedEx, stated it best when complimenting the County team: "I cannot thank you enough. You have given great guidance to the process. Everywhere I go, people that have been working with you or are hearing about our project are praising your ability and are truly excited about it."

This is terrific news because it provides a tangible example of how rethinking our approach can reduce time and cost for our customers.

For more information, please contact Jeff at 858-694-3765 or via e-mail at [Jeff.Murphy@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Jeff.Murphy@sdcounty.ca.gov).

**Enhancing the Skills of Our Workforce**

**Learning from the folks we impact**

To enhance the skills and approach of our workforce, one of the first trainings for Planning & Development staff will address the customer perspective for each business unit. Applicants, property owners, community partners and other stakeholders will discuss their perspective and experience in the land development proc-

ess. Some of the discussion will include how industry professionals obtain clients, what timelines they face, how and when they are paid for their services, their approach to analysis of project impacts, what do they see as common issues or hurdles and possible solutions, and what's important to them in dealing with the County.

By better understanding our customer perspectives, Planning & Development Services staff will be able to better serve them.

For more information, please contact Darren at (858) 694-3730 or [Darren.Gretler@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Darren.Gretler@sdcounty.ca.gov).

**Assuring Quality, Consistency and Transparency**

**| Classifieds |**

**Wanted:** Seven motivated individuals to assist with the implementation of a new County department. The new Department of Planning & Development Services will be supported by an external committee who will meet and report to the Board of Super-

visors on performance measure trends and process improvements. Do you own land in the unincorporated area? Are you a developer or consultant? Are you a planning or sponsor group representative? Or are you from the building/engineering industry or the environmental community? If you are interested in

providing the new department with constructive feedback and support to ensure we are the best we can be, while being consistent and transparent – [apply here](#) for the Land Development Performance Review Committee, or contact Megan at 619-531-5186 or [Megan.Jones@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Megan.Jones@sdcounty.ca.gov).

**Modernizing Regulations**

**The “Late Hit” Policy is now LUEG-wide**

A new policy has been developed that will help customers and staff define and establish steps when new issues are raised later in the permit process.

To minimize surprises and to provide a reasonable level of certainty to customers who are processing land development applications, it is important for project issues and requirements to be identified early in the review process.

When a project issue or requirement is missed during initial project review and caught during subsequent analysis, it is commonly referred to as a “second bite of the apple” or a late hit. This typically results in additional costs and schedule delays.



The policy, which applies

to all LUEG departments that have a role in the permit review process, identifies what qualifies as a late hit and details the steps that need to be taken. Staff and customers can view the policy at <http://sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu>

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Jeff at 858-694-3765 or via e-mail at [Jeff.Murphy@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Jeff.Murphy@sdcounty.ca.gov).

## Embracing a New Culture

### Alpine Town Center Projects — *a New Culture in Action*

County staff in the land development process are embracing a new culture focused on delivering high quality customer service and developing collaborative relationships between applicants, Community Planning/Sponsor Groups, project stakeholders and residents.

A recent example of the new culture in action was the Alpine Town Center projects that involved two Site Plan applications to allow a new mixed-use commercial and residential development located immediately east of the Alpine Boulevard/Arnold Way intersection. The two projects will feature approximately 17,000 square-foot of new office and retail

space and a detached two-story, four-unit apartment building that will offer residents a place to live, work and shop.

The projects required fast-tracked processing to ensure that utilities could be installed prior to completion of SDG&E's work to underground the Sunrise Powerlink beneath Alpine Boulevard. Instead of relying on the standard iterative review process and to expedite the permit process, County staff employed improved business practices focused on close collaboration and working meetings with the customer and Community Planning Group. Rather than telling the customer what they

couldn't do and waiting for the customer to resubmit plans to address comments, County staff actively helped the customer navigate the process and offered alternatives that would comply with regulations while still meeting project objectives.

The result was a high-quality project design that received approval a mere 10 weeks after the initiation of working meetings and improved customer/staff teamwork. The project was completed ahead of schedule and before critical deadlines for utility undergrounding. Most importantly, the project will revitalize the Alpine Town Center, benefiting the community and its residents.

## Centralizing Services

### New department...New location...New vision!

The new department of Planning & Development Services will open its doors Tuesday, Sept. 25. Creating Planning & Development Services is just one of the many actions our Board of Supervisors has taken to improve our land use process; and we look forward to serving our customers better and getting your feedback along the way.

Parking will be available next door in the structure at 5515 Overland Avenue.

