

Cary, NC Intercity Visit Summary of Development Services February 14 – 15, 2013

CITY OF FRANKLIN CONTINGENT

Eric Stuckey	<i>City Administrator</i>
Vernon Gerth	<i>Assistant City Administrator - Community & Economic Development</i>
Chris Bridgewater	<i>Building and Neighborhood Services Department Director</i>
Doug Bornick	<i>Senior Building Inspector – Plans Examination</i>
Molly Pike	<i>Interim Zoning & Development Coordinator (Zoning Administrator)</i>
Catherine Powers	<i>Planning and Sustainability Department Director</i>
Micah Wood	<i>Current Planning Supervisor</i>
Paul Holzen	<i>Engineering Department Director</i>
Dan Allen	<i>Engineering Department - Assistant Director</i>
Andy King	<i>Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal</i>
Rick McPeak	<i>Assistant Director - Water Management Department</i>

BUILDING INSPECTION

- ~40% of permits are issued electronically.
- 12-18 inspections per day – same as Franklin, but Cary’s are primarily residential which typically require less time (effort) per inspection.
- A Point System is used to “estimate” the time (effort) of each inspection to assist supervisors with scheduling inspectors. (Contact Jeff Ulma for framework)
- Building Inspectors are generally assigned to the same geographical area of city for consistency.
- As a whole Cary Building Inspectors do not possess multiple ICC inspector certifications (unlike Franklin inspectors) which allow us to increase efficiency by not always having multiple inspectors visit a site.
- Upon final inspection and approval Building Permit applicants receive either a Certificate of Compliance (Non-habitable) or Certificate of Occupancy.
- Next day inspections (same as Franklin). Cary takes phone inspection requests for those who don’t have internet connections the cutoff time for next day service is 4 PM. Franklin cut-off for next day service is 2:00 PM.

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- Building Plan Review - A half day per week is set aside for plans examiners to meet with applicants and their design team (licensed engineers and architects) to review plans with the intent of completing the review and approving the plans within 1-4 hours. There is an extra fee for this service and is scheduled on a first request first scheduled basis. (There appears to be an opportunity for Franklin to offer this service on re-reviews since applicants already have options for reducing the initial review cycle)
- Cary requires a new Certificate of Occupancy when a change of tenant occurs whether or not structural type work is being performed. Necessary for insure buildings are in compliance with minimum codes and for capturing transportation (road impact) and, water & sanitary sewer fees which are based on the use and not meter size as in Franklin. Tracking of sanitary sewer and water capacity substantially increased. Careful analysis of fee model and future revenue required.
- Cary Inspections and Permits Department Team consist of 45 employees.
- Cary has implemented a version of 'One-Stop' where a reception area for all development applications, permits, and information submitted. There were 3 personnel who were accessible to the public, and each one specialized in a particular process (i.e. Planning, Engineering, Permitting and Inspections). Applications and questions were initially vetted with the receptionists and passed off to their colleagues in a portion of the building removed from the general public. The employees designated as Permit Techs also worked away from the public and had 1-3 days to complete their portion of the work before plan reviews were distributed to the team for review.
- Plan review status was available to the public via website on an individual reviewer basis which caused direct calls to reviewers inquiring about status of plans. Franklin reviews plans on a first-in, first-out basis and has established maximum levels of service in working days.
- Cary had a GIS map on the public website that showed development activity within the Township.
- The State of N.C. exerts more direct influence on the Building Code environment, and there is over-riding 'construction code' culture in that state. Also, the public seemed to be more supportive, in general, of the development regulatory environment.
- Cary provides a detailed guide provided for commercial building plan review submittal requirements.
- A dedicated plans examiner is assigned to handle 'counter' plan reviews for simple residential permits (Small Project One-hour Turn-around). These were basically decks, porches, additions under 500 square foot, and accessory buildings.
- Residential Plan Reviews for construction details are conducted unless the house plans are sealed by a design professional (see excerpt below)
 - Building plans for single-family detached homes that have an architect's or engineer's seal are not reviewed by the Plan Review Division. Instead, field inspectors check for compliance at the construction site, after the permit has been issued. This procedure also applies to residential additions and alterations such as decks, sun rooms and porches. Franklin does not have a residential plan review process.

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- Residential plans without the seal of a design professional licensed in North Carolina are reviewed by the Cary Plan Review Division. Building plats are reviewed for building setbacks, grading, etc.
- Inspection status and timing. Inspection status was available on their website. Excerpt from their website detailing how Cary handles calls about scheduling (these calls represent a significant amount of the workload of BNS personnel).

How can I find out who my inspector is the day of the inspection?

On the morning of your scheduled inspection, you may call (919) 469-4341 between 7 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. to get the name and phone number of your inspector. Then, simply call the inspector directly to find out when he or she expects to arrive. While we make every effort to accommodate everyone's busy schedules, we cannot guarantee specific times for inspections. Actual arrival times vary, depending upon work load and locations. You can also check online who is assigned to your inspection.

ENGINEERING – SANITARY SEWER & WATER

- Cary commissions all Traffic Studies for proposed development projects – 90% paid by developer 10% paid by City (3-4 consultants are on the eligible list and selected based on the geographic area/location of the proposed project). A Traffic Study is required for:
 - Re-zonings – Traffic analysis based on most intensive use for the zoned district
 - Plan Development Districts (PDD) – Development Plans
 - Site Plans
 - Traffic Impact studies are valid for two (2) years with site and/or subdivision plans, three (3) years for rezoning, three (3) years for mixed use sketch plans and five (5) years for planned unit developments.
- Engineering Department Org Chart includes a Utility Division that focuses on infrastructure planning & review of current projects. Monitoring and insuring water pressures are meet minimum standards for serving various developments (i.e. water flows and pressures for suppression system) would be enhanced in Franklin.
- Years ago Cary invested heavily in sanitary sewer and water infrastructure to achieve adequate capacity – generally, capacity is no longer a concern for its service area.
 - State permit took 10 years to obtain
 - Development extends and pays for infrastructure as needed (same as Franklin)
- Sanitary Sewer & Water Fees based on SFU's (proposed use) not meter size. Franklin fees are based on meter size.
- Cary Engineering Department Team consists of 62 employees.

STORMWATER – FLOOD MITIGATION

- Stormwater Drainage (Existing Problem Resolution) Policy 35 & 146.
 - Funds budgeted via General Fund
- Stormwater Division includes:
 - 2 - Erosion Control Enforcement Officers

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- 3 - Construction Inspectors
- Supervisor & Plans Examiner
- Cary funds its own Hazard Mitigation Program to purchase and remove structures from the floodplain.
- Does not allow development within floodplain. (more details needed phone Jeff Ulma)
- 15% Evergreen Letter of Credit or Cash payment required for future Stormwater Maintenance of infrastructure. Ponds, Rain Gardens, etc.

PLANNING

- Rezoning Process generally takes 5-6 months. (same as Franklin)
- Development Plan (PDD) Process generally takes 3-4 months. (same as Franklin)
- Public Notices
 - State Law requires 100 feet
 - Town of Cary requires 400 feet – more is better
- Performance Securities
 - Letters of Credit and Cash are the only types accepted (per local ordinance)
- All prescribed (regulated) Buffer Encroachments approved by Council.
- Public Transportation Fee Credit – Process questionable. (Phone Jeff Ulma for additional details)
- Rezoning's begin with a Public Hearing before Council then are referred to Planning Commission and Staff before returning to the Council for a final decision.
- Staff does not make recommendations on rezoning's but does provide Council with a staff report.
- Cary lacks a vibrant downtown business district but the community does include:
 - Activity Centers - 36
 - Regional Centers - 4
 - Downtown revitalization underway but progress is slow
- Transfer of Development Rights are used but limited to sub-water sheds.
- Development Design Standards and Regulations for open space are easy to understand and include provisions for public art. Based on the multiple pieces of public art we observed, this requirement was a priority for the community.
- They make use of Conditional Use Permits
- Cary frequently uses Conditional use Permits & Owner Affidavits to “restrict” or limit the density and uses of property. (could this be contract zoning? Discuss with Shauna)

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- Cary Land Use Plan can be amended throughout the year.
- Utilizes a Department Review Team (similar to Franklin); however, their DRT meetings are held with the applicant in attendance.
- Cary Planning Department Team consists of 28 employees.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- CIP Project information available to bidders via Idt digitally.
- Change orders processed administratively – Cary Town Manager authority up to \$125,000? (Phone Jeff Ulma) much higher than Franklin \$25,000.
- Standard Professional Services Agreements and Construction Contracts do not require Legal Department review and approval.

TRANSPARENCY

- Emphasis on Transparency – Cary appears to be “town” oriented similar to Franklin placing an emphasis on transparency and customer service.
- Citizens have access to proposed developments via internet.
 - Citizens register to access project plans and can comment on projects via GIS & Idt link – (Franklin uses the Idt technology and could implement a similar process). This policy would likely reduce requests-for-information which is time-consuming.

GENERAL

- Cary employs a full-time Operations Analyst to assign unit costs to various development services. This is very useful in for communicating service levels and associated costs to employees, elected officials, and citizens.
- Cary utilizes Idt digital plan review for development approval and CIP project bidding but not building permitting – Franklin uses Idt for both development approval and non-residential building permitting but not for CIP project bidding.
- University of North Carolina Benchmarking Study – available on-line for benchmarking various development services.
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys – stickers are affixed/printed on permits, licenses, and receipts to direct citizens and customers to the Cary website and survey links. Franklin’s available on City website.
- A Community Citizen Survey is facilitated by Cary, bi-annually.
- Annual retreats are facilities with Staff & Aldermen. At times may include consultants.

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- About 20% of employees live within the City. (contact Jeff Ulma to inquire about subsidies or housing assistance program)
- Annual rate of growth in Cary approximately 3-4%.
- Cary land area is approximately 75% developed.
- Cary has an experienced senior development team. Team members generally possess 10 – 15 + years of tenure with the Town. We did not inquire about salary and benefits.
- Law Department
 - 2 staff members
 - Does not review engineering agreements unless unique
 - Not all ordinances reviewed, but most are
 - Cary appears to experience significant litigation – outside firms are typically used for these cases
- Paperless Meetings
 - Council meetings are paperless – agendas and supporting documentation available via the web.
 - Do not utilize agenda software. Agenda preparation is similar to Franklin via dedicated folder on shared drive.
 - Council members have docking stations on Dias and utilize laptops.