

City of San Antonio – 2005 ICMA Annual Award Nomination

Program Excellence Award – **Innovations in Local Government Management**

Descriptive Narrative: **ONE STOP CENTER/DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**



**Scope:**

The City of San Antonio Development Services Department (DSD) strives to make buildings safe and neighborhoods sustainable in partnership with the development community. DSD has 214 full time employees, processes approximately 110,000 permits per year and performs approximately 230,000 inspections per year.

Approximately 8,000+ residential plans and 3,000+ commercial plans are reviewed per year. In order to more efficiently serve the development community, in 2000, the City Manager worked with the San Antonio Real Estate Council to begin looking at the process for serving development customers. The concept of designing a building to serve contractors and developers all in one location evolved to become the Development and Business Services Center completed in 2003. The purpose of the Center is to provide a convenient, single source of information and assistance to private sector entities that are expanding, developing, or relocating their businesses.

In April 2003, the One Stop center opened to offer customers the services of Development Services, Public Works, Fire Marshall, Economic Development, Health Department, Historical Review, San Antonio Water Systems, City Public Service, Bexar County Assumed Names Division and Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. The facility is a model development project with amenities such as air conditioner condensate reuse system for irrigation, extensive landscaping, energy efficient systems and materials, solar power, lighting controls, security system, acequia markers and recycled materials. The site has adequate parking to accommodate customer and employee parking requirements.

The One Stop Center provides permits, licensing, plan intake, review and approval of plans for new commercial and residential structures, registration of business names, application for alcoholic license, neighborhood planning opportunities, zoning, fire marshal inspections, public works, infrastructure inspections, platting, small business counseling, health department inspections, City Public Service information, San Antonio Water Systems information, and many other services. Various training courses are offered for the economic and development community at the One Stop.

**Measurable Results:**

Average number of customers served per day is approximately 200, over 1,000-phone calls per day. Approximately 80% of customers wait for service less than 30 minutes, this year Development Services is striving for 100% of customers to wait less than 30 minutes. Approximately 60 commercial development plans and 120 residential development plans are submitted for review for a building permit every month. Before

moving into the Development Services Center, there was no formal tracking system in place to determine the number of customers served. However, all comments regarding the Center and the One Stop Counter are extremely positive. Customers enjoy coming to one location to receive services instead of making numerous trips to a variety of locations.

Through the use of the internet, DSD issues trade permits. Over the past year approximately 35% of permits issued are now issued over the internet.

**Lessons Learned:**

Development Services moved into the new building and embarked on a new permitting computer system on the same date in April 2003. In retrospect, the move and installation of new software should not happen at the same time. Customers and staff needed more time to be able to get used to the new surroundings. The new computer system compounded problems with staff by needing to learn the new system. Addressing and the need for data cleansing prior to migration into the new computer system became an evident issue. Physical addresses had to be validated by the GIS system in order to issue permits. In April 2003, there was an addressing error rate of over 20%. Today, the error rate is less than 1%.