ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCE THRU E-PLAN PROCESSES

WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW

— Examples from 3 Jurisdictions You Can Contact:

• Osceola County Florida: Receives plans & reviews, tracks and stores them electronically to reduce travel time for clients, time delays from misplaced plans and speed disaster recovery.
  Contact: Jose Ramos, Technical Resource Administrator, jram@osceola.org

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WHAT ARE YOUR JURISDICTION’S NEXT STEPS?

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• Prepare to apply I.T. to plan submittal, review, tracking and/or storage
  – Identify and work with stakeholders
  – Identify current barriers and actions that need to be taken
  – Identify funding sources
  – Where necessary, re-engineer business process
  – Conduct research on products and vendors
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Maricopa County, AZ is among a growing number of jurisdictions doing ePlan review.

Electronic plan review hardware and software are reducing the amount of time it takes to review plans by as much as 50% and increasing code compliance within their communities.
THE PROBLEM OF TOO MUCH PAPER – LOST PLANS, LOST TIME, LOST COMPETITIVENESS

To be effective and efficient, government and its regulatory processes need to reduce the amount of uncertainty to the users of their services, be they architects, engineers, contractors, homeowners or building officials themselves. While significant strides have been made throughout the nation to reduce the uncertainty in the building permit process through web-based permit application and tracking systems, until recently very little of the uncertainty has been removed from the building plan submittal and review process.

Walk into most building departments across the nation and you will find a room (or rooms) with rows upon rows of architectural plans awaiting distribution for review in that department and/or for dissemination to plan reviewers in other agencies within the jurisdiction, agencies such as: the fire marshal, boiler or elevator inspection agencies, zoning and land use department or the historic preservation or architectural accessibility boards.

Two major impediments to effective and timely review of building plans have been the tendency of architectural firms, contractors and engineers to submit incomplete plans, forcing a costly delay while more complete plans are resubmitted, and internal delays such as misplaced plans within the building department for completed plans to be reviewed. Mother Nature adds its own spin to the problem of paper plans. Many building departments in Florida, Louisiana and throughout the Gulf region lost all of their paper building plans when hurricanes like Andrew, Charley, and Katrina tore the roofs off or flooded the building department either blowing away or totally soaking and ruining all of the paper plans. The loss of those plans significantly slowed down the reconstruction process and, in some cases, resulted in buildings being in place today with no approved building designs in the possession of either the building owner or the jurisdiction where it was constructed.

IF YOU AREN’T ACCEPTING AND REVIEWING PLANS ELECTRONICALLY
WHAT ARE YOU MISSING?

To address the above problems, building departments including those listed at the end of this brochure, are beginning to receive, review, track and store building plans electronically for the following reasons:

1. Increased speed and ease of submission & accuracy of review
2. Reduced confusion as to what changes have been made, by whom and when
3. Reduced number of and shorter resubmission cycle(s)
4. Provide a tool to measure productivity of staff and ability to do plan review remotely
5. Facilitate mutual aid & speed disaster response and recovery
6. Increase revenues to the jurisdiction by getting buildings on tax record faster

GREEN BENEFITS FROM ePLAN

ePlan Submission, Review, Tracking and Storage is a “Green” Initiative

- ePlan technology solutions go beyond addressing process and time management challenges, they also provide significant advantages with regard to environmental conservation.

- Consider that in most every instance of a construction project, multiple sets of paper plans are required for review, fossil fuel vehicles are used to deliver plan-sets and, normally, plan-sets must be submitted and distributed multiple times during the approval process.

- It has been calculated that, by using ePlan technology, a jurisdiction issuing 3500 permits annually would save up to
  - 312,000 miles driven and 20,800 gallons of gas
  - 457,600 lbs. carbon monoxide emitted
  - $57,200 in fuel costs
  - 12,480 hours of drive-time
  - 192,000 lbs. of paper used (239 trees)
  - approximately 12,000 lbs. of paper requiring storage

Access to ePlan technology also enables telecommuting for some jurisdictional personnel as well as reduced travel for field inspection teams, which can also increase energy and environmental conservation.*

ENERGY CONSERVATION

The heating, cooling and lighting of buildings consume 45% of the energy produced in this nation. As energy costs continue to rise and more and more jurisdictions sign on to support the National Green Building movement, the effective and efficient enforcement of the provisions of energy codes for both new and existing buildings takes on added importance to communities.

Electronic plan review software including the U.S. Department of Energy’s REScheck and COMcheck tools are helping a growing number of jurisdictions reduce energy consumption for consumers by enabling their building officials to more readily assure compliance with the provisions of their energy code.

- Based on averages derived from current gas prices, conventional paper product specifications, and current trip mileage to jurisdictional offices. Savings will vary.
ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND DISASTER RESILIENCE THRU E-PLAN PROCESSES

October 26, 2007
Dear Governor, Legislator, Mayor, County Commissioner:

In this age of growing demands for more effective and efficient government, greater disaster resiliency for our communities and enhanced economic competitiveness in the global economy, each of our states, counties and cities need access to tools and best practices to enable their jurisdiction to build “faster, better, safer and at less cost.”

The Alliance at FIATECH wishes to thank its Steering Committee and Alliance partners, at the National Governors Association, Emergency Management Association, and National Association of State Chief Information Officers for their assistance in completing this project.

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The benefits of this technology include:

- Enabling multiple regulatory agencies to conduct parallel plan reviews
- Reducing frequency of plans being lost or misplaced within departments
- Providing the basis for electronic delivery of as-built plans to first responders

This Guide to Enhance Public Safety & Economic Competitiveness Through Using Information Technology in Building Department Plan Submittal, Review, Tracking and Storage,* provides information to your jurisdiction about the cost savings and improved public safety being achieved by other communities that adopt and apply information technology (I.T.) to the design, submission, review, tracking and storage of building and land use plans. Applying I.T. to these processes is reducing the amount of time it takes to do plan reviews up to 50% and increasing compliance with the life safety and structural integrity provisions of current building codes and standards.

www.natlpartnerstreamline.org

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Robert Wible, Alliance Director at FIATECH
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