IDENTIFYING REGULATORY BARRIERS
AND ASSEMBLING STAKEHOLDERS TO STREAMLINE

ABOUT THIS TOOL

Jurisdictions of all sizes and regions within the nation that have successfully improved the quality of their codes administration and enforcement programs share in common the above two factors – they identified and addressed regulatory barriers within their community and they did so with the aid and support of an active body of stakeholder groups representing the construction industry, community organizations and elected officials. This tool identifies several resources both on the Alliance website and in state and local governments that your community can access to understand how best to identify whether or not your program needs streamlining and how to identify and assemble the key stakeholder groups to help you improve your codes administration and enforcement processes.
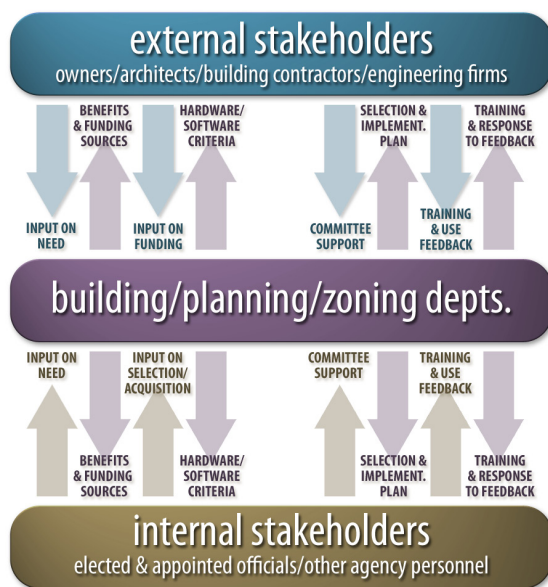
BENEFITS OF USING

The horror stories of jurisdictions whose building codes administration and enforcement programs became an impediment to both economic competitiveness and public safety are replete with examples of the inability of a jurisdiction to identify areas in need of improvement and then assemble and marshal the active support of key stakeholder groups for such change. Successful efforts have: kept or attracted new employers; reduced the regulatory portion of housing costs and assured that buildings in that community are more resistant to damage associated with both man-made and natural disasters.

SAVINGS TO GOVERNMENT

Identifying and then assembling and empowering key stakeholders to take actions that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of building codes administration and enforcement processes have enabled communities to reduce the regulatory portion of construction costs by between 60 – 70 percent. Those efforts also have strengthened public support for effective enforcement of up-to-date building codes, including the levying of surcharges on construction permits to cover the costs of acquiring and maintaining information technology.

SAVINGS TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

The elimination of regulatory barriers and enhancing of effective codes enforcement through IT has helped communities restart their economies by enabling them to bring buildings and new jobs on line faster, made housing more affordable and helped communities improve business continuity in the wake of disasters.

BACKGROUND ON THIS TOOL

The Alliance has assembled in its Guides, conferences, webinars, website contact information lists, a broad range of useful tools that give communities access to actions that they can take to both identify and remove regulatory impediments to effective codes administration and enforcement.

Five streamlining tools (two of which are described in greater detail in this Toolkit) in particular are useful to State and local government identification of regulatory barriers and assembling and empowering stakeholders. The 83- page HUD "Guide to More Effective and Efficient Building Regulatory Processes Through Information Technology" contains in Chapters 1 & 2 detailed descriptions of how to identify whether or not you have regulatory barriers in your community that impede both public safety and economic competitiveness. Chapter 3 of that same publication identifies who key stakeholders in your community are likely to be and actions that your community can take to effectively gain their active participation and support for undertaking regulatory streamlining.

In addition the Alliance's White Papers and PowerPoint presentations, "From Paper to Digits" and "Guide to Benefits of Streamlining & IT to Disaster Preparedness, Response & Recovery," describe actions you can take to identify and build both internal and external stakeholders support for making these needed improvements in your community.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION AND JURISDICTION CONTACTS

Salem, Oregon in early 2001 was faced with growing pressure from its construction industry and citizens to increase both the availability of affordable housing and speed up the building application, inspection and plan review processes. Moreover, there was considerable resistance by local developers to undertake projects in what was seen as an overly bureaucratic and at times adversarial regulatory process. A new building official came on board and reached out to both external (the development and construction community) and the internal (elected officials and building department staff) to create a new atmosphere of trust and public service. By forming and sustaining stakeholder work groups, Salem turned around its program, streamlined administrative and enforcement practices and began adding information technology to improve program effectiveness and efficiency. By 2008, a Salem "Statesman Journal" editorial credited in part the "renaissance taking place in the city's core," with the streamlining of regulatory processes and changes in staff attitudes and efficiencies, something which the city building department has been able to sustain throughout the severe recession.

Contact: Tom Phillips, Building Official, City of Salem, OR. Phone: 503-540-2474; email: tphillips@cityofsalem.net

BACKGROUND ON THIS TOOL

Working with community groups, the construction and business community, elected officials and building department personnel communities are successfully turning around regulatory systems that became ineffective and inefficient. Alliance tools covered in this sheet provide guidance on how to access success stories and gain advice for undertaking successful effort in your jurisdiction.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ALLIANCE AND A COPY OF THIS TOOL: Visit the Alliance's website at: **www.natlpartnerstreamline.org** and click on "Toolkit." On the "Toolkit" page, click on Identifying Barriers and Assembling Stakeholders.