

LA City Planning Modernizes Development Application Process

CHALLENGE

Developers, homeowners, and citizens in Los Angeles looking to break ground on any new development must submit an application first. LA City Planning's development application process was paper-based and relied heavily on in-person interaction with city planners.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent contact restrictions challenged the LA City Planning Office to make applying for a new construction project more efficient and user friendly.

The planning office set forth the following goals and objectives:

- Enable citizens to initiate the process, file paperwork, and engage with the office online.
- Establish process standards and governance.
- Enable LA City Planning staff to facilitate business remotely.
- Streamline case review work to enable employees to handle more cases.
- Deliver the project within a limited time frame and budget.
- Make it easy and intuitive for staff to build and manage new processes with minimal IT involvement.

SOLUTION

LA City Planning turned to government IT consultancy [Novinzio](#) and workflow automation provider [SimpliGov](#) to digitize and integrate the entire development application process with the following goals:

Novinzio leveraged SimpliGov's form designer, no-code workflow automation, and SimpliSign electronic signature solution to create modern processes for both developers and LA City planning staff.

Developer Process

1. Developers complete a Department of City Planning Application form (DCP 7771) online using any web-enabled device.
2. Application data integrates with LA City Planning's geographical information system (GIS) and mapping system.
3. Applicants upload associated documents (plans, maps, images, etc.) into a repository linked to development entitlement cases.
4. A PDF version of the DCP 7771 is generated, filled in automatically, and delivered to the applicant for electronic signature.
5. Applicants are presented with clearly marked fields indicating required additional information and documents, if necessary.
6. Email notifications advise applicants on the next steps required.

LA City Planning Staff Process

1. The Development Services Center (DSC) staff reviews and validates each DCP 7771 application against a dynamic primary checklist.
2. Simpligov logic presents the fields and documents developers must modify/correct with each step.
3. Upon DCP 7771 form approval, a case and case number are officially created inside the city's Planning Case Tracking System (PCTS).
4. DSC staff collaborates within the SimpliGov system to capture all details that may be required during formal review of each case.

RESULTS

- Applicants no longer need to appear in person at one of the LA City Planning offices.
- Routine paperwork is filed automatically.
- Applicants and DSC staff collaborate more efficiently.
- Digitized and archived cases are easily retrievable and auditable.
- SimpliGov's architecture facilitated integration with existing IT systems, allowing the solution to be **implemented within weeks**.
- Novinzio's domain expertise and SimpliGov's intuitive forms enabled planners to design and adapt forms and processes to the offices' unique needs.