

CONCEPT REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS

BACKGROUND

In early February of 2018, the Current Planning Division sent out emails to approximately 200 customers who had participated in a Concept Review meeting in 2016 or 2017. Each customer was asked to complete a satisfaction survey through Survey Monkey on their experience.

A response rate of nearly 30% was achieved with 57 surveys returned!

Respondents generally found the Concept Review process valuable, yet many indicated that there is room for improvement and some respondents were clearly dissatisfied with some aspect of our services. This information, complimentary, critical or otherwise, is valuable. With this feedback, the Current Planning Division has made improvements to our Concept Review process. And, we are initiating a more extensive review of the range of pre-application services offered by the Development Services Department. Information about our recent improvements and longer-range efforts are provided following the tabulated **Survey Results** and compiled **Customer Comments** below.

Concept Review meetings provide a free service designed to assist developers, business owners and others in determining the feasibility of their development idea and to identify the processes needed to acquire City approval. These meetings address a wide range of projects, from major subdivisions to modest building expansions, but it is important to note that the Concept Review process is not geared to Building Permit customers. Rather, Concept Review meetings focus on issues relating to zoning and subdivision requirements, including site planning, transportation, stormwater and utility provision.

SURVEY RESULTS*

**note that many respondents did not answer each survey question*

Question 1: Was the CR process helpful:

- 36 yes
- 14 Somewhat
- 5 No

Question 2: Were the written comments understandable and useful

- 26 Yes
- 7 Somewhat
- 1 No

Question 3: Did the Concept Review provide a clear map for future steps

- 22 Yes
- 9 Somewhat
- 3 No

Question 4: Rate Staff helpfulness

- 18 Very Satisfied
- 13 Satisfied
- 3 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied

Question 5: Rate Staff Knowledge

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- 17 Very Satisfied
- 13 Satisfied
- 2 Dissatisfied
- 1 Very Dissatisfied

Question 6: Rate Staff Preparedness

- 18 Very Satisfied
- 13 Satisfied
- 3 Dissatisfied
- 0 Very Dissatisfied

Question 7: Rate the overall process

- 15 Satisfied
- 11 Satisfied
- 3 Dissatisfied
- 2 Very Dissatisfied

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

As part of the Concept Review Survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide written feedback to each of the survey questions. Below are the verbatim written comments provided in response to the survey questions.

Did the concept review process assist you with your development proposal?

- *Need more information regarding previous development on same site.*
- *It did help and we appreciated the help we have received since the CRT on specific questions we've had on our project.*
- *The CR provides applicants with upfront information on project feasibility and schedule.*
- *Forever study nothing ever happens.*
- *Several items that were covered turned out to be incomplete or were completely wrong.*
- *We were unaware of the Concept Review Process before we purchased our new location. Also, the building was on the market less than a week and had another offer. There was no time to start with a concept review.*
- *It was discouraging but helpful.*
- *Everybody was very helpful and informative, especially Emily Tarintini.*
- *Staff organized and informed (ref) my project.*

Were the written comments easy to understand and useful?

- *We think so, though in the past we've found out that there were more to some of the comments than what it first appeared. For this CRT, we understood that all the notes and*

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feedback we received were starting points for further investigation on our part, and not the final answer. We've since been delving further into several areas as a result of the CRT.

- *Incomplete and incorrect.*
- *We had to go back several times for clarification.*

Did the Concept Review provide a clear map for future steps?

- *Organization seemed lacking for new construction.*
- *Need clarification on form for submission.*
- *The approval processes and applications required is helpful.*
- *At the time of the CRT, we didn't know much about how we'd use this space, we just wanted to know if there were any inherent risks/costs to the building and property. The CRT addressed this, but as to the finer points of the project, we are still investigating potential hang ups.*
- *Been waiting 17 years. New people say another decade. Give me a break.*
- *After permits were issued, additional requirements were imposed.*

How could the Concept Review process be improved?

- *Building Department has never participated. Fire always has to cover them. The idea that small business has to be for HW34 expansion and roundabouts and other infrastructure improvements is killing projects. The adjacent lots are not large enough to absorb those costs. The city needs a better plan to cover those costs. Transportation needs data to support their assumptions, assumptions that don't align with city code. Building department is creating new code that doesn't exist in the city code, or international building code. Our building department has the strictest code interpretations ever encountered, which hurts small business.*
- *Definite guidelines for new construction on paper. It seemed like new rules were occurring all the time.*
- *Ensure that comments are correct. Meeting the planning team was great, getting insight into city requirements and steps was very helpful; however, two significant points in the review were found to be incorrect.*
- *The Concept Review Process is one of the most effective tools that is provided by the City of Loveland to assist with the development process. If you are a church or landowner; as an example, the process gives you access to the entire development review team at one meeting at which not only provides you with valuable information relating to your project, but also introduces you to Loveland expectations, processes and contacts for future reference that you can not get anywhere else.*
- *You're doing great work; keep it up.*
- *I'm not sure, but there seems to be a need for multiple meetings. The first CRT would be to help us understand if the space/project are compatible on a macro level (building zoning and use, parking, water, waste, and basic fire concerns). However, if there aren't any 'show stoppers' at that level, it takes a much deeper dive. We (the project owners) need to begin to form more coherent plans for the space. Once these plans are conceptualized, it seems like...*

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- *Ensure the applicant receives comments from all departments. This is especially important, if said department is unavailable at the time of the CR.*
- *Do not sugar coat the process to the property owner and then shock them later with comments that make the development impractical and cost prohibitive after they have spent thousands of dollars in design fees.*
- *If anything ever happens on 402 it will already be a little too late, 2 lanes will not be enough by the time it is built. 34 needs another lane already. While you have the space build twice as big so we will have room for doubling Loveland on the South side. Anything less will be just another Loveland disappointment. Just like HP buildings, Rialto, Pulliam, Fairgrounds, Centerra, Catalyst, Cabellas, 1-25 and 402 vacant city owned land, Downtown. Get out of development business you suck at it. Look around cranes building everywhere but Loveland. First one to my house with half a million can have it.*
- *A way I could know what to prepare for.*
- *When a new type of construction/building is proposed study and be prepared or have a follow up meeting.*
- *Business owners need to know that Concept Review is available.*
- *Adding building department to the staff review was a great addition from the developer stand-point to be able to discuss building code and occupancy as these relate to the project.*
- *Too many hoops, too much bureaucracy...which leads to permit fees which are too high. We're a small business trying to create jobs and growth. We pay above average salaries in Loveland, yet business property taxes as well as the permit fees to actually expand make it very difficult.*
- *While I appreciated the opportunity to meet with staff members, I feel that their time could have been better used elsewhere when the scope of work is deemed limited. I attended once concept review that revealed some important comments to address prior to resubmitting, but I think meeting with just the assigned planner or discussing comments over the phone/email could have been just as appropriate since my scope was minimal. Another concept review I attended ultimately recommended just moving forward with a building permit so it felt like the other departments didn't really need to be present and again this could have just been relayed over the phone/email. Otherwise, I think it's nice that all the departments supply comments up front and that the concept review is free.*
- *One of the reviewers was on her phone the entire time. I felt like she could have cared less about what I was asking. I believe I called her on it as a professional.*

HOW WE ARE RESPONDING

Improvements Underway:

- Better tailoring our verbal and written comments--we recognize that applicants have varying levels of experience and need assistance in differing ways. One size does not fit all.
- Better coordination with the Building Division--Building staff are participating when issues call for their input.

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- Less rigidity--we are working to provide a simpler and friendlier meeting format that is more comfortable for less experienced applicants.
- Collated Notes--at the beginning of the meeting, a packet of comments are provided, eliminating the confusing practice of handing out multiple pieces of loose papers. The following day, a copy of the notes are sent by email to the applicant's team.

Longer Term Effort

- Review of neighboring communities. How do they handle their pre-application services, ranging from walk in customers to more formalized pre-application meetings. We are hoping to "borrow" some good ideas.
- Addressing the "One Size Doesn't Fit All" concept. We are looking to provide a spectrum of pre-application services that give customers the answers they need within the timeframe they need them. For example, it might be more effective for an applicant to arrange a quick meeting with one or two staff members rather than entering a 2 or 3 week queue for a concept review meeting.
- Involve the Building Division. We will involve all review offices in developing an integrated range of pre-application services. Many customers come to us with questions and projects that involve multiple and overlapping processes. We will work to sort out the issues and provide clear answers.
- Listening to Customers. As we move forward, we will keep working to get feedback from customers like you and tailor our processes to meet customer needs. Let us know what is working and what is not.