

**CITY OF PEORIA, ARIZONA
STAFF REPORT**

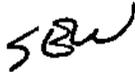
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Date Prepared: August 9, 2010

Council Meeting Date: August 17, 2010

TO: Carl Swenson, City Manager

THROUGH: Susan J. Daluddung, Deputy City Manager 

FROM: Scott Whyte, Economic Development Services Director 

SUBJECT: Development Forum

SUMMARY:

On July 28, 2010, the Economic Development Services (EDS) Department hosted a Development Forum that included Engineers, Architects, Contractors and Business Owners. The goal of the forum was to solicit feedback from our customers about our processes and the service they were being provided. City staff attending was primarily from EDS, but several members from Fire, Engineering and Planning and Community Development were also in attendance.

Invitations were extended to approximately 1,100 individuals/firms that we have done business with since January, 2010 (flyers were mailed, handed-out and faxed). The names were drawn from both new projects and ongoing projects that had not yet completed by that date.

The forum began with Scott Whyte speaking to the group about the changes to our organizational structure within the department and the Economic Development Implementation Strategy (EDIS) that will go before the Council in September. Dennis Marks followed by addressing the group about the City's goal to improve our development process and the direct correlation to the EDIS plan for the Department. He set the stage for the discussions to follow and emphasized the need for staying on focus and identifying ways that the development processes could be improved.

After introductions, the group was free to attend sessions covering three different topics: Plan Review, Inspections and Permitting. Each session was well attended and conversations were lively. Staff representing those areas were available to cover each topic and discuss any issues or concerns and answer questions. The most prevalent comments were regarding improved technology for the review process, specifically electronic plan reviews and facilitated services, such as over the counter permit reviews and issuance. It was stated that many other jurisdictions (County and Cities) already provide these services and the customers felt this was an asset that Peoria should consider.

Overall, the forum was well received and many attendees stated that they looked forward to additional meetings in the future to provide feedback on our process. Some of the suggestions were even related to the forum layout and agenda. Staff perceives the overall reaction of the participants to be indicative of the beginnings of a true partnership between the City and our customers on how we do business.

Comment cards were handed to each attendee to give them an opportunity to provide feedback on the forum and ask any additional questions. Below are some of the comments we received:

"Provide over the counter fire system permits for Tenant Improvements"

"Have forums specific to a certain industry" (i.e. separate residential and commercial groups)

"Return emails and voicemails as soon as possible"

"Staff is always responsive and proactive"

"Plan reviews are tough, but fair"