



**2017 Board Annual Retreat**  
**County Commissioner's Topic of Interest**  
**Submitted by: Vice Chairman Puckett**

**Topic of Interest: Fast Track Coordinator** - Explore the creation of a Fast Track Coordinator: an employee(s) that handle obstacles or situations that require special intervention that a single point person with a "go to the head of the class" pass could give assistance. I would like staff opinion on what level of investment etc. would be the likely point where such advanced assistance would be warranted.

**Response:**

LUESA staff are continuously exploring opportunities to better and more completely serve the customer. With regard to the fast-track coordinator, the need for such a position(s) will likely be met by changes that are currently underway or on the horizon, as Code Enforcement's organizational structure migrates to a project-based service delivery model, as opposed to trade- and function-based model.

This restructuring, which is occurring in phases, will eventually integrate the current silos of plan review and inspections on larger projects, and will have a team of individuals assigned to the project its duration. There will also be a primary contact for the project on Code Enforcement's staff for proactively planning projects or resolving concerns.

Recent examples of these kinds of overhauls include the Hybrid Collaborative Delivery Team, where one team of code officials stays with a customer throughout the life of the project. Code Enforcement is currently implementing changes to service delivery for mega-multifamily projects that will have a similar outcome. With a team of code officials clustered around a project, the issue of who to contact when there's a question or concern becomes more clear.

**In other words, the changes described above will be tantamount to the creation of a fast-track coordinator.**

For your background, below are some other recent or upcoming customer-centric improvements that we believe also improve the customer experience:

Most of Code Enforcement's plan review lead times are on-target with Building Development Commission's (BDC) goals. The longest lead times are for 5-8 hour reviews (large projects) in electrical, mechanical and plumbing, and even those wait times (16 workdays for electrical and 20 for mechanical/plumbing in November 2016) only slightly exceed the BDC's 10-14 workday turnaround goal.

While the addition of difficult-to-find electrical, mechanical and plumbing reviewers may help decrease these lead times, it is the position of LUESA leadership that the need for a fast-track coordinator position

is not urgent at this time, particularly considering many of the would-be duties of such a position are already being performed by other staff, as described below:

- The **Customer Service Center (CSC)** opened in December 2015, with LUESA's relocation to its Suttle Avenue facility. The CSC is designed specifically to help customers who are struggling, or who are new to the community or the construction process and may not know where to begin. Two staff and the manager act as customer advocates on projects that are experiencing persistent difficulty. Four staff help novice and infrequent customers that need help getting oriented to the process.
  - Since February 2016, staff has assisted 950-1,550 walk-in customers per month.
  - An additional 70-100 calls per day are answered by CSC staff.
- **Project managers and code enforcement managers** take the baton from CSC staff when the customer is struggling with a particularly difficult issue steeped in building code technicalities.
- Plan review staff are working on a pilot program that would trigger **increased one-on-one help for customers when a project enters its third plan review cycle**. While plan submission oversight is traditionally the role of the customer's architect or engineer, projects that enter the third plan review cycle have a tendency to breed dissatisfaction with the code enforcement authority on the part of the owner, so this would be an additional support to maintaining a strong relationship between Code Enforcement and the customer. The technology that would support this program is not yet in place due to County IT constraints, but staff are manually implementing a version of this pilot that includes outreach to the customer after the second failed plan review cycle and requires a preliminary meeting prior to the beginning of the third plan review cycle to perform a brand of quality control prior to the third submission.
- For more than a year, Code Enforcement has been overhauling its inspections processes to provide a greater focus on multifamily customers, who have shown a recent tendency to need additional attention, and on a particularly tight schedule. **The Mega-Multifamily Team** was created to focus on large projects and mid- to high-rise multifamily projects. In 2017, the team's scope will be expanded for the third time, to include plan reviewers with specialized mega and multifamily plan review expertise. Thus far, the experience has provided greater consistency and increased individualized customer attention, and we expect that trend to continue after the expansion.
- The **OpenCounter** permitting wizard for small businesses will launch in January 2017. This online tool asks small business owners who are considering opening or relocating to Charlotte a series of questions about the business and provides a checklist of general considerations for permitting from both the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. While not an all-inclusive list, it does provide small business customers with a valuable starting point for navigating the construction/renovation process.
- New counter and conference space in the Suttle Avenue lobby allows customers who need **technical assistance to receive it in person**, and staff provide technical assistance to 250-300 walk-in residential customers per month, and 400-600 commercial walk-in customers per month.