



## Streamlining Development In Montgomery County

### Steps Towards Streamlining

Effective February 1 2012, Montgomery County has consolidated construction inspections currently being done by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) and Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services (MCFRS). Inspection of fire alarm systems and fire protections systems was transferred from MCFRS to DPS. This ensures the entire process for these permits is now housed in one department with inspection scheduling times reduced from two weeks to 24 hours.

Effective December 2011 Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) began signing off on building permits prior to scheduling a forest conservation preconstruction meeting if the only outstanding issue was scheduling a preconstruction meeting. Builders are still responsible for meeting all appropriate Planning Board conditions before building permit signoff. Builders still need to schedule a forest conservation preconstruction meeting and implement all necessary tree protections, prior to any land disturbing activity occurring. While construction cannot *begin* without a forest conservation preconstruction meeting, this improvement decreases the time for building permit issuance, enables loan closings and project mobilization.

The County Council introduced ZTA 12-04 Site Plans – Surety at the request of the Planning Board on February 14, 2012. This ZTA will allow developers to provide additional forms of surety to insure the completion of site plan elements; and clarify the language to state that the surety being required by the Planning Board covers only certain certified site plan elements.

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) is in the process of revamping its technology and has restructured its Development Services Group (DSG) within the Engineering and Construction Team to streamline its processes. The objectives are to increase WSSC efficiency and to offer an improved service to our stakeholders.

Some recent and upcoming changes include:

- 1) Implementation of the WSSC Electronic Plan Review Submittal that will contribute to efficiency, documentation improvements, and reductions in the overall carbon footprint from WSSC approved projects;
- 2) Implementation of new water and sewer modeling software, which includes ongoing GIS data scrubbing; this new technology is being used effectively by DSG;
- 3) Assigning water/sewer projects to one project manager so that applicants have one point of contact, and consolidating hydraulic and design review functions under this project manager;



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- 4) Planning for a web-based Enterprise Permitting System implementation is underway, which will lead to the ability for applicants to get their permits without visiting the WSSC Permit Services counter along with leaving an auditable trail of financial information; and
- 5) WSSC is also close to performing Preliminary Plan electronic reviews with Montgomery County Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Overall WSSC is well underway with the restructuring efforts and expect to see continual leaps forward as the new systems mature and the new web-based permitting system is implemented. As the systems are developed and implemented, we expect turn-around times that currently are as long as 120 days to be reduced to approximately 30 days from the time of submission on most projects. Our customers will continue to see service improvements from WSSC DSG for permitting and installation of reliable water and sewer service.