

October 20, 2008



Overview of joint P&I software development by the City of Raleigh and Mecklenburg County

Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement and the City of Raleigh Development Services have often set the pace in North Carolina in improving permitting and inspections service delivery while maintaining a strong focus on enhanced public safety. As the two largest authorities in the state, Raleigh and Mecklenburg deal with similar challenges on a daily basis, ranging from a growing work load owed to strong local economies, to an ever increasing rate of change in construction technology.

These common interests are perhaps most pronounced in service delivery to customers, including the supporting technology. Consequently, Raleigh and Mecklenburg have been involved in a joint technology development program for the past three years. This atypical intergovernmental relationship benefits customers, staff and the Departments at large. Both jurisdictions have gained significantly from sharing the cost of computer program development, as well as sharing the valuable perspective of two innovative P&I agencies, ultimately leading to an improved service focus and greater efficiency in the permitting process.

Customers will benefit greatly from this joint technology development program as well, as displayed by the initial product of this effort, the Mecklenburg-Raleigh residential master plan reciprocal review program, **E-Plan-NC**. This initiative recognizes that residential home building in 2007 is performed more often by national corporations than local firms, consequently the same builders are constructing from the same master plans in both jurisdictions. This affords Raleigh and Mecklenburg the opportunity to create an electronic residential master plan reciprocal review program, eliminating needless duplication of residential reviews, where the same builders are constructing in both jurisdictions. The benefits from pooling plan review resources in such an effort are wide ranging, including saving staff hours and improving permit issuance service to customers. At the same time this initiative goes beyond customer service efficiency to address a key customer concern, advancing building code interpretation consistency beyond the local level to a more regional. Perhaps in the future, this improved code interpretation consistency can advance to even a state-wide basis.

E-Plan-NC and the Raleigh and Mecklenburg joint technology development program, are a classic win-win-win, with significant benefits to the customer (both direct and anonymous), both Departments and the tax paying citizens of both communities.