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Quality and Productivity Commission
29th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
Champions of Change: Together We Make a Difference

2015 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: ELECTRONIC PLAN CHECK SUBMITTAL/TRACKING SYSTEMS

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: MARCH 1, 2012
 (Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2014)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 Los Angeles County Department of Public Works annually receives more than 17,000
 2 submittals for development services plan and map review. Submittals range from only a
 3 few pages to hundreds of pages, some of which include large scale maps. This
 4 presents a great cost to the developers and designers and is unfriendly to the
 5 environment due to the amount of paper used to print the documents and the
 6 associated travel to the public counters for submission. If questions arose during the
 7 plan review, in-person meetings with the developer, designer, and/or engineer would
 8 frequently be needed, requiring all involved parties to travel to the same central location
 9 to resolve the issue. With the development of an electronic plan checking process,
 10 Public Works is now able to receive plan submittals online, host internet meetings,
 11 perform plan checks electronically and take payments online. These abilities have
 12 allowed us to reduce the use of paper for each submittal, reduce the number of vehicle
 13 trip, made to Public Works' offices and reduce the overall project review time. In
 14 addition, digitally scanning hard copy reference files reduced storage space needs as
 15 well as offsite storage costs.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 370,500	\$200,000	\$	\$570,500	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Department of Public Works 900 S. Fremont Ave. Alhambra, CA 91803	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-458-4900
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PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Anthony Nyivih, Assistant Deputy Director Hector Bordas, Assistant Deputy Director	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-458-4900 626-458-6385 EMAIL anyivih@dpw.lacounty.gov hbordas@dpw.lacounty.gov
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PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> Kimberly Y. Lyman <i>Kimberly Y. Lyman</i>	DATE 7/9/15	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-458-5975 EMAIL klyman@dpw.lacounty.gov
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DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Gail Farber <i>Gail Farber</i>	DATE 7/14/15	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-458-4002
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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made. Use Arial 12 point font

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (Public Works) is responsible for the engineering review of all new subdivision developments, building plan review and permitting within the Los Angeles County, unincorporated areas, as well as some new and redevelopment projects within certain cities. Additionally, Public Works is responsible for reviewing and recording all subdivision maps for these developments.

As a result of these responsibilities, more than 17,000 submittals are received at our public counters each year. Each one of these submittals can be anywhere from a few pages to over one hundred pages with each submittal requiring at least two copies. During the review process of these plans, questions often arise that require additional meetings with the designing engineers and/or developers. The engineers and developers must either travel to the Public Works' headquarters or field office building or the reviewing engineer must travel to the field to meet and resolve the issue. With reviewing and making comments for submittals on paper there is often a large time lapse between reviewing the project, picking up the hard copy comments, and eventual returning of the revised plans for another review. Applicants incur significant costs due to documentation reproduction travel time, and overall review delays. Public Works also had to allocate floor space to store those hard copy files.

Public Works developed and implemented electronic plan checking and tracking systems for its development services Divisions. Online web portals that allow plans and maps to be uploaded and submitted for online review were also created. Utilizing these systems, submittals no longer need to be printed and brought to a Public Works' public counter. After the plans and/or reports are created on the computer, they can be saved as electronic files and uploaded to the online submittal page.

Once the submittal has been accepted, the specific project reviewer is able to view and comment directly on the electronic file using a "pdf" editing program called Bluebeam Revu. The plans with comments are then emailed directly to the engineer for revisions. If problems or major questions arise during the plan check process that require a meeting, reviewers and engineers/developers are able to set up internet meetings by using www.gotomeetings.com. The plans can be viewed by everyone participating in the meeting for discussion purposes. Since the plans are digital, valuable floor space does not need to be allocated to store the paper files. In addition, payment for the plan review is also accepted online, further reducing the number of vehicle trips required by the applicants and decreasing greenhouse emissions.

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The ability to comment digitally and transmit plan reviews electronically to the engineers has had multiple benefits. Since the comments are typed on a computer, a more consistent and legible review is produced. Documents are transmitted to the engineers immediately after a Public Works plan checker completes a review, decreasing the time between comment and the return of revised plans. Since there is less lag time between a plan checker commenting on a project and the engineer receiving the revised plans, the plan checker is able to have a clearer recollection of the project when asked questions and the turnaround and approval times are quicker. Quicker turnaround times and standardized review equate to less total number of submittals for projects and fewer, if any, physical trips, less paper waste, and better customer service. This is particularly valuable to applicants that are located out of the Los Angeles basin area where travel times are prohibitive and the use of expediting companies is costly.

The project was initially implemented in March 2012, with phasing of the acceptance of online payments and scanning of existing paper files into the electronic system. The initial development of the project took approximately 9 months with the use of in-house programmers, however, additional enhancement of the software occurs as needed. Presentations to cities and developers held to launch the service and to answer questions about the system were well received.

The electronic plan checking system has been a welcomed change within the development community and it has been extremely well received by the applicants, developers, and engineers that interact with Public Works. Public Works has seen an increase in the quality of customer service and a large reduction in document storage needs, while the applicants have benefited financially by reducing paper use, printing costs, driving time and gasoline consumption.

Since Public Works' has implemented electronic plan reviews, physical documents no longer need to be printed and brought to public counters in order for permit reviews and approvals. Previously, a single project may have resulted in thousands of sheets of paper plans, and supplemental material. Removing this waste is not only environmental sustainable but also saves the engineers and developers money. Another benefit of providing electronic plan check services is the reduction of vehicle trips needed to visit the Public Works' headquarters building or other offices.

Another noticeable benefit to digitalization of Public Works' files is the immense reduction in paper and storage space required. With so many new plans being

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS): Use Arial 12 point font

submitted each year, and so many existing files needing to be retained, digitalization and stored on a computer server at a separate location has completely overhauled the storage process. What used to take a quarter of the work space can now be stored on a computer server at a separate location within Public Works' headquarters.

Estimated annual applicant cost avoidance for trip costs and reproduction costs depends on the project type but can range from \$310 - \$1,400 per project. Approximately 75% of Land Development projects are currently submitted electronically for an annual cost avoidance by the applicants of approximately \$262,000. Building and Safety projects average approximately 8% of submittals electronically, with an additional \$68,000 in annual cost avoidance by the applicants. In addition, Public Works has avoided \$40,000 in offsite storage costs. These numbers are anticipated to rise as more applicants become aware of the systems and are more comfortable with it. Online document submittal has reduced Public Works' document storage space requirements by approximately 2,500 square feet at its headquarters facility and another 2,500 square feet at its field offices for an estimated annual cost saving of \$200,000.

The Public Works' Development Services Electronic Plan Check and Tracking Systems were developed with the County of Los Angeles Strategic Plan in mind. The systems follow the County Mission and Values by providing effective and caring service that was approached with a can-do attitude and customer orientation. Public Works' Development Services Electronic Plan Check and Tracking Systems have enriched the lives of Los Angeles County residents by enhancing the effectiveness of the Development Community services provided. In addition, it has an added benefit of minimizing some of the environmental impacts that facilitating business within the County of Los Angeles generates.

The new systems have also been integrated across several Public Works divisions providing a means to track comments from other divisions and to deliver reports and plans to those divisions electronically for their review. It is anticipated that this will expand in the coming months to increase the integration by providing plan check tracking services to these divisions as well.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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