



# PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (DSEM)

ALIGNING BOARD PRIORITIES WITH OPTIMIZED RESOURCES

PEOPLE FOCUSED. PERFORMANCE DRIVEN.

## Mission & Goal Statements

**DSEM:** To support the development of a sustainable community and its built environment, while protecting and preserving our natural resources to maintain the quality of life for all citizens, while building positive relationships through exceptional customer service.

**Development Services:** Guide and support the development of sustainable communities through the adopted policies of the Comprehensive Plan and development of standards of the Land Development Code, while ensuring and promoting the quality of life for all citizens of Leon County.

**Building Plans Review and Inspection:** Ensure that built environments are safe, accessible and energy efficient through compliance with all applicable construction codes, plans review, inspections, the use of automated technologies and continuing staff development.

**Environmental Services:** Provide high quality technical and scientific permitting and review services to the public and to disseminate environmental information to the public and government agencies in support of environmental protection efforts.

**Permit and Code Services:** Administer, centralize, coordinate, and facilitate licensing code compliance, citizen review boards, and growth and environmental management services to residents, property owners and land development professionals served by DSEM, in order to achieve compliance with adopted ordinances and policies.

## Contact Us

(850) 606-1300  
www.leonpermits.org

## PERMITTING, INSPECTION, DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

### Development Services Division

- Reduced staff's site and development plan review and approval process time by up to 50%, while enhancing customer service, through:
  - » Two-track review, which allows applicants to select either: Concept Approval, with abbreviated submittal requirements and applicant approval assurances required to market the project and secure financing; or Final Design Approval, which compresses the review timeframe by providing concurrent review of the project's site plan and environmental management permit.
  - » The Project Manager model, which provides a primary contact for particular projects, empowered to advocate for the project, and resolve or elevate issues to the Department Director for resolution.
- Amended the Land Development Code to allow community gardens on County-owned facilities, which promotes sustainable practices and responsible stewardship of community resources.
- Assigned and/or verified approximately 2,100 street addresses, part of the County's ongoing effort to provide a reliable and consistent system of assigning addresses for buildings and properties, which is essential for public health and safety.
- Approved two Planned Unit Development (PUD) applications which, as a result of input from neighboring residents, include design aspects to mitigate neighborhood concerns and environmental constraints.

### Building Plans Review and Inspection Division

- Continued to ensure building safety within unincorporated Leon County: performed 13,977 building, electrical, plumbing and



### Did You Know

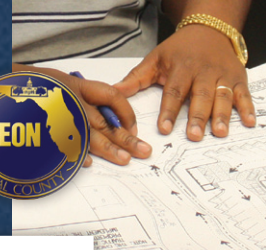
Leon County accepts and reviews many types of plan submittals electronically. Applicants may submit digital plans or electronic files in lieu of paper copies.

mechanical inspections; completed 6,658 plan reviews; and issued 3,328 building permits.

- In partnership with other County offices, created a FEMA Letter of Map Revision for a portion of the Timber Lake Subdivision, which provided homeowners relief from certain requirements of FEMA flood insurance, and continued work to achieve a Community Rating Service classification within the National Flood Insurance Program, which will reduce flood insurance rates for unincorporated County residents who currently have flood insurance, demonstrating team work and the highest standards of public services.

### Environmental Services Division

- Adopted the Minimum Countywide Environmental Regulations Ordinance as a result of a process that began in November 2010, when Leon County voters approved an amendment to the County's Charter on environmental regulations, which was proposed by a Citizens Charter Review Committee. City and County employees worked in the spirit of cooperation, with a citizens committee, to develop the new Ordinance, which helps protect our environmental assets while supporting economic development.
- Continued to update 100-year floodplain data in the Tallahassee-Leon County Geographic Information System (GIS), based on analysis received during the development review process, which provides valuable information and expedites future development reviews for areas surrounding the newly-documented floodplain areas.



## ALIGNING BOARD PRIORITIES WITH OPTIMIZED RESOURCES

# Cooperation brings better environmental standards

### Strategic Initiatives/Support Highlights

#### Economy

- Waived DSEM permit review fees for veterans with a 100% service connected disability, for manufactured home set-up, or constructing a new or altering an existing single family dwelling.
- Suspended fees for extensions to development orders and building permits for 2012.

#### Environment

- Leon County and the City adopted the Minimum Countywide Environmental Regulations Ordinance.
- Developed natural habitat management plan guidelines to expedite the Environmental Impact Analysis for environmental permits.

#### Quality of Life

- Developed a one-stop application process for temporary uses/structures, temporary construction staging areas, and temporary special events permits, in partnership with the City's Fire Department, Leon County Sheriff, Leon County Emergency Medical Services, and the Leon County Health Department.

#### Governance

- Enabled the public to electronically file legal documents related to development review and permitting. Over 185 legal documents have been remotely recorded since implemented.
- Exempted vested single family lots, for new homes and additions, from having to provide closed basin volume control standards onsite, which expedites single family permitting for lots legally established before the Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

Support for economic development. Protecting the environment. Engaging the community. County and city cooperation.

**Vincent S. Long and Anita Favors Thompson**  
My View

A proposed ordinance on countywide environmental regulations will go before the city and county commissions this week to help accomplish all those objectives. As the county administrator and city manager responsible for the ordinance's ultimate implementation, we believe this is a story worth telling.

The new environmental ordinance is designed to help protect our environmental assets while supporting economic development. The city and county have been partners in the development of this new ordinance. There has been a healthy exchange of ideas and the necessary give-and-take to arrive at what is in the best interest of the entire community.

Both of our staffs worked in the spirit of cooperation, and we are extremely proud of their efforts — with leadership from David McDevitt of the county's Development Support and Environmental Management Department and Karen Jumon-

ville of the city's Growth Management Department. Critically important was the leadership and direction from the city and county commissions and the spirit of cooperation that these seated commissions brought to the table. And, perhaps, most important of all was the support and engagement of the community.

The official process began with the approval in November 2010 by Leon County voters of an amendment to the county's charter on environmental regulations. That amendment was proposed by a Citizens Review Committee, which represented a diverse cross section of

our community, following many hours of testimony and input from the public. To assist in the development of the environmental ordinance, another citizens committee was created. It consisted of individuals selected for their extensive knowledge of county and city environmental regulations. Through their efforts, issues were vetted and improvements were made to the proposed ordinance.

One of the issues the committee tackled was balancing environmental protection and development. Though they might seem at odds on the surface, these concepts are not mutually exclu-

sive. The establishment of countywide environmental standards helps simplify the compliance review process associated with development proposals by reducing the overall time it takes for review and approval.

The expression "water knows no political boundary" drove a significant portion of the initial efforts. The community's environmental resources and natural systems, especially surface water systems, cross political boundaries and, therefore, should be consistently and uniformly protected and preserved regardless of



**Long** **Thompson**

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**  
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*A joint County/City My View article published in the Tallahassee Democrat*

- Continued to protect the community's natural features: reviewed and approved 40 Natural Features Inventories, 80 site plans, 32 operating permits, 382 single-family permits, 202 operating permit renewals, and 73 environmental permits. Also provided customer service to over 1,500 clients and performed more than 7,000 environmental inspections.
- Approved the environmental permit to widen Capital Circle SW from Tennessee St. to Orange Ave. Several flood-prone properties with development rights were acquired and protected through conservation easements, in mitigation for crossing Gum Swamp.
- Finalized the Park Place PUD Concept Plan, which involved complex stormwater calculations to minimize downstream flooding and wetland disturbances with onsite mitigation, and completed environmental permitting for the Governor's Charter School Academy PUD and the first phase of the Summerfield PUD.
- Permitted the master stormwater facility for the undeveloped commercial property at the interchange of I-10 and Hwy. 90 East, and permitted a bridge over the floodway on the same property.
- Worked with the Science Advisory Committee and incorporated citizen engagement to review and develop recommendations on the "Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal and Management Options Report".

#### Permit & Code Services Division

- Expansion of simulated gambling facilities in Leon County was a growing community concern which led to the Board adopting an ordinance in 2011 to regulate and limit the number of such facilities. In 2012, 17 Simulated Gambling Devices Permits were issued.
- Development support through customer service is critical. During the year, more than 10,000 walk-in customers were assisted, over 32,000 phone calls were answered, and over 200 online Citizens Connect Service Requests were responded to. Additionally, 1,708 contractor licensing customers were supported over the phone or in person.
- Responded to 3,320 code compliance calls from citizens, reporting issues such as public nuisances, junk, illegal dumping, or illegally removing trees or filling wetlands, resulting in 877 site inspections, and the presentation of 115 cases before the Code Enforcement Board for resolution.