

Quarterly Newsletter

DeKalb County Department of Planning & Sustainability

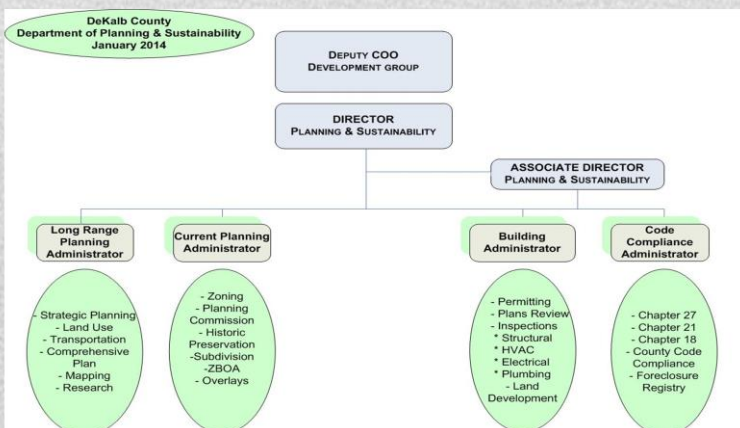
SPRING 2014

HOT!!!

Changes in the Department

- **New Associate Director** – Philip Etiwe
- **Long Range Planning Division** finalizing Comprehensive Transportation Plan (completion mid 2014).
- **Current Planning Division** adopting of new Zoning Code (expected Mid2014).
- **Development Services Division** overhauling the Permitting Process (expected mid-2014 and implementation completed by December 2014)
- **Code Enforcement Division** consolidating other inspectors into the code compliance division for a more robust service delivery.

Planning & Sustainability at a Glance



Great things!!! The Planning & Sustainability Department is in the midst of a “positive” transformation. Forget all you have heard about DeKalb County Planning and come visit the new Planning and Sustainability Department. There is “great” progress being made within each division. I am very



Andrew A. Baker, AICP - Director

proud of the hard work and the sincere spirit of improved/enhanced service delivery. The new draft mission statement developed by the leadership team is “*to strive daily to enhance the quality of life in partnership with the public through the delivery of efficient and effective services*”. As you read this newsletter, you will see that the Planning & Sustainability staff is working to achieve this mission. Individually each division plays a key role in the future of DeKalb County: Long Range Planning sets the vision, Current Planning establishes regulations, Development Services Division reviews plans and inspects the construction, while Code Enforcement ensures compliance. Together, the Planning & Sustainability Department works to make DeKalb County... a great place to call home.

DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability
330 W. Ponce De Leon Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030
404-371-2155 www.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning

4/15/2014

Current Planning News

Zoning Code Update...

We are making great strides towards adoption of the new Zoning Code. Since the October 2013 draft was published, the Board of Commissioners, County staff and the public have been busy reviewing and compiling comments and proposed changes. A Community Forum was held at the Porter Sanford facility in November. Staff had two community meetings in December with Good Growth DeKalb, the Druid Hills HOA, and others. Staff presented the ordinance at the Neighborhood Summit. The DeKalb County Law department did an extensive review of the document. The consultants, Pond and Company, were provided all the comments and a final draft was published in February 2014.

The draft can be reviewed using the Zoning Code Update link at www.dekalbcountyga.gov.

County staff has held 12 training sessions preparing for the transition. Staff has presented to the Planning and Economic Development committee, the Committee of the Whole, as well as had one-on-one meetings with individual commissioners. There have been several public hearings held before the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners. The next public hearing is May 27th, at 6:30 pm in the Maloof auditorium.



Staff made several presentations at the Neighborhood Summit



Community members were able to offer comments to staff at the Community Forum at Porter Sanford

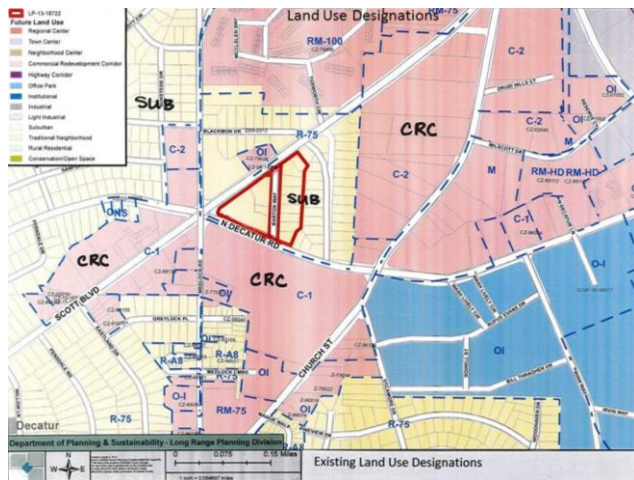


The Community Forum was held at the Porter Sanford facility

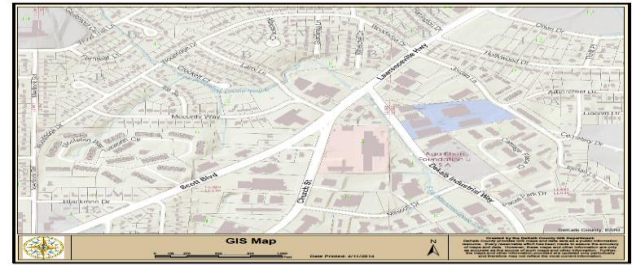


Major Zoning Case Approved

Starting in September of 2013 until Board of Commissioners approval in April, 2014, Staff guided three related applications through the public hearing process: a land use map amendment, a rezoning application, and a special land use permit for a three-and five-story, 307-unit mixed multifamily and townhome development at the corner of Church Street, North Decatur Road, and Medlock Road. Located in the Medline Livable Centers Initiative study area, the development is expected to have a major impact on the character of this intersection, the Scott Boulevard/ North Decatur Road commercial corridor, and the surrounding neighborhoods. Several public hearing deferrals allowed Fuqua Development to negotiate changes to the density of the development and the mix of land uses with neighborhood representatives, elected officials, and Staff.



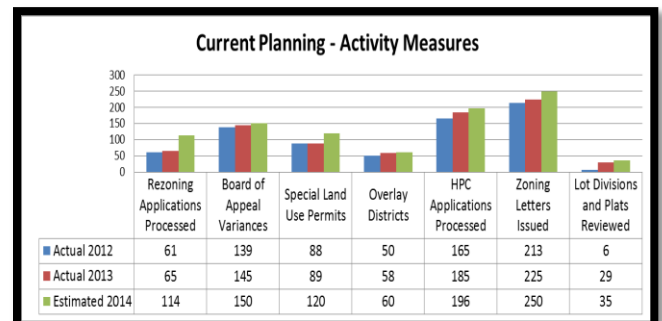
Transition to GIS (Internet) Maps



Our Numbers Continue to Rise

During the first quarter of 2014, Staff of the Current Planning Division reviewed and made recommendations on 81 zoning cases, including rezoning, special land use permit, and variance applications. In addition, Staff reviewed 15 historic preservation applications and 8 subdivision applications. As the local economy picks up, Staff review of building permit applications and design review for projects in overlay districts is expected to increase. As always, providing information to citizens and planning and development professionals was a primary service delivery category Current Planning staff responded to 921 phone and walk-in customer inquiries during the first quarter.

| Planning & Sustainability - Activity Measures | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| | Actual 2012 | Actual 2013 | Estimated 2014 |
| Rezoning Applications Processed | 61 | 65 | 114 |
| Board of Appeal Variances | 139 | 145 | 150 |
| Special Land Use Permits | 88 | 89 | 120 |
| Overlay Districts | 50 | 58 | 60 |
| HPC Applications Processed | 165 | 185 | 196 |
| Zoning Letters Issued | 213 | 225 | 250 |
| Lot Divisions and Plats Reviewed | 6 | 29 | 35 |

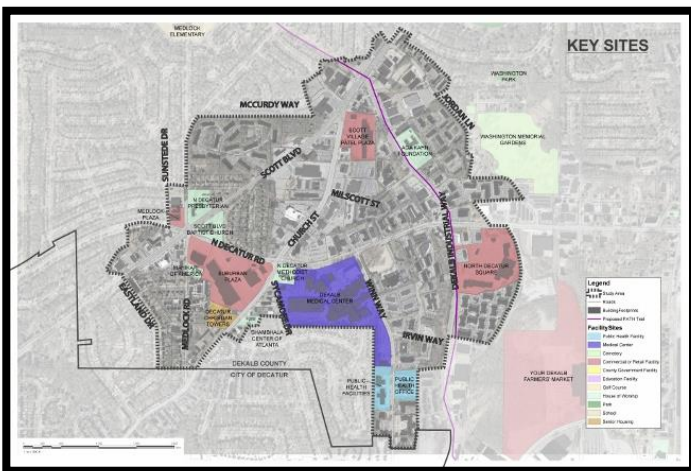


Long Range Planning News

Medline LCI

The DeKalb County Department of Planning and Sustainability is undertaking a study that will focus on improving land use and transportation connectivity in the Medline area. This project – the Medline Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study – will result in a master plan that brings various stakeholders together to form a unified vision for the ultimate enhancement of the Medline community. The County has partnered with Sizemore Group as consultants to facilitate the study process.

The study area for this LCI totals 520 acres and is framed by four major intersecting corridors: Church Street, Scott Boulevard/Lawrenceville Highway, North Decatur Road and DeKalb Industrial Way. General boundaries are defined by Jordan Lane to the north, Medlock Road to the west, Remington Lane to the south and DeKalb Industrial Way to the east. The DeKalb Medical Center, Patel Plaza and Suburban Plaza are all popular destinations located within the study area.



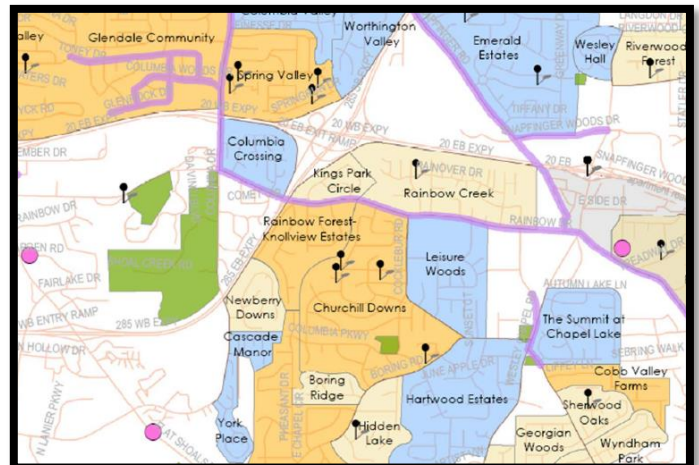
To date, numerous public meetings and a charrette at Patel Plaza have been held for public input. The final meeting will be held in May 2014, and final adoption of the study into the Comprehensive Plan is scheduled for June 2014. For more information on the project, please visit the project website at <https://sites.google.com/site/medlinelcistudy> or contact the DeKalb County Project Manager, Shawanna Qawiy at 404-371-9771 or SQawiy@dekalbcountyga.gov.

Churchill Downs – Neighborhood Asset Mapping

The Long Range Planning Division is initiating a neighborhood planning program. Neighborhoods often are not addressed as part of nodal or traditional community planning. The goal is to engage neighborhood residents and community organizations ‘where they live’. Areas of need are based on neighborhoods with no existing studies or programs. The purpose is to provide a neighborhood history, demographics, well defined boundaries, and quality of life scorecard.



The inaugural neighborhood is Churchill Downs. Their strong level of civic engagement netted them the opportunity to be the ‘guinea pig’ of sorts as staff begins and improves on effort that we seek to roll out countywide. So far, planning staff has facilitated several meetings and worksessions to develop a plan for the community. So far a draft plan and scorecard has been completed, the final is projected to be completed by June 2014. For more information, contact Brian Brewer at 371-9883.



The DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

The DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) will identify goals, needs, and investment priorities for the transportation system. The process for developing the plan will take into account technical analysis, public input, and financial constraints. The final transportation plan, when completed, will need to be adopted by County Commissioners and the County CEO. The plan will then be implemented by the affected departments of DeKalb County as well as any participating cities and transit agencies.

This is a multimodal plan that will identify transportation needs for transit, motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, trucks, trains, and airplanes. The plan will also touch on policies, funding, and development patterns affecting transportation in the study area. Because the focus of the plan is county-wide, not every intersection or crosswalk will be included, but rather, the plan will focus on roadways that are classified as collectors and above, all transit in the county, an overview of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure across the County, freight routes, and the DeKalb County Airport.

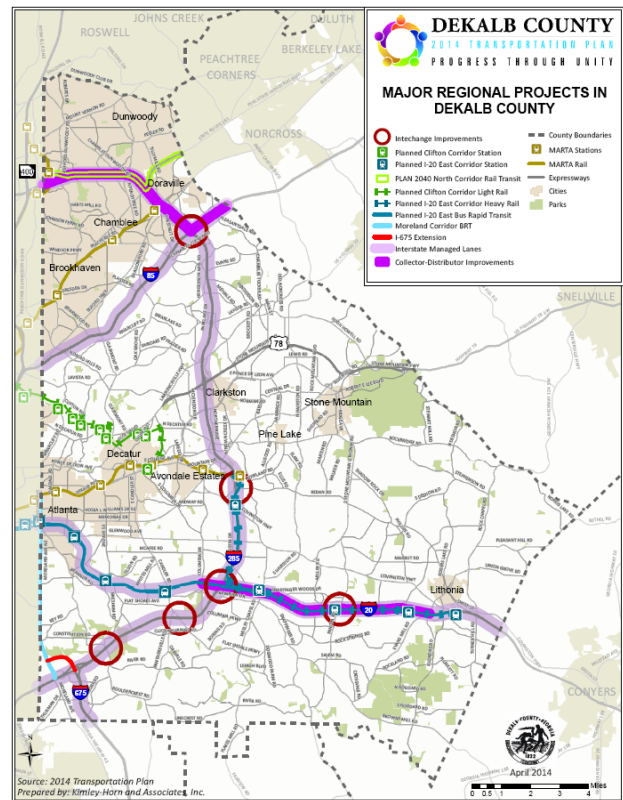
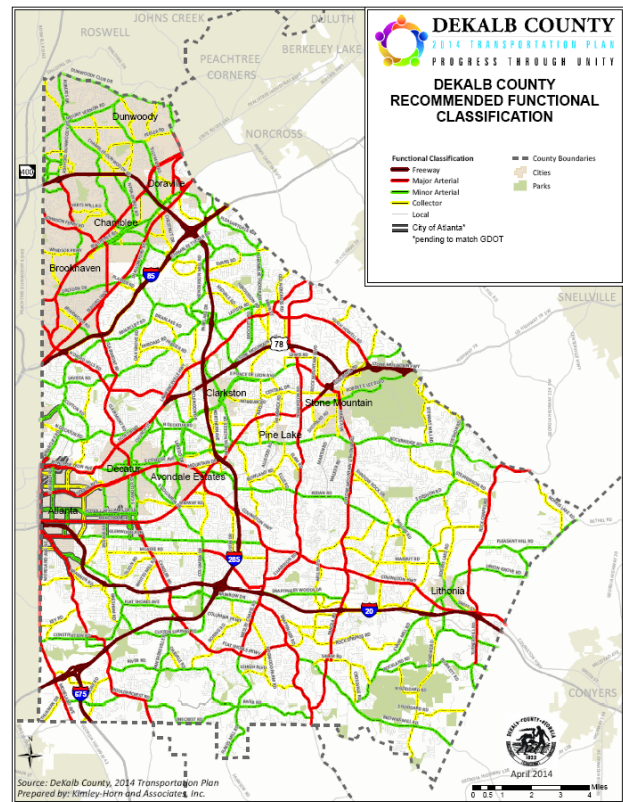
The CTP schedule is as follows:

- Public Meetings:
 - Kickoff meetings were held in February 2013
 - Needs Assessment – April 2013
- Assessment of Current and Future Transportation Needs – Through the end of August 2013
- Public Opinion Survey – September 2013
- Public Meetings: Recommendations – November 2013
- Recommendations Development Phase – May 2013 through Spring 2014
- Consideration, Comment, and Adoption by County Leadership – Spring 2014

Kimley Horn and Associates are consultants hired to write the plan. The development of the plan is being managed across multiple departments of DeKalb County but primarily the plan is the responsibility of the Department of Planning and Sustainability and Public Works Transportation Division. For more information, contact Sylvia Smith, Transportation Manager, at 404-371-2299.

You may also go to the CTP project webpage for more information:

<http://www.dekalbtransportationplan2014.com/documents.htm>

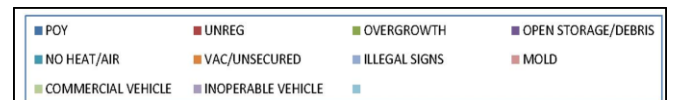
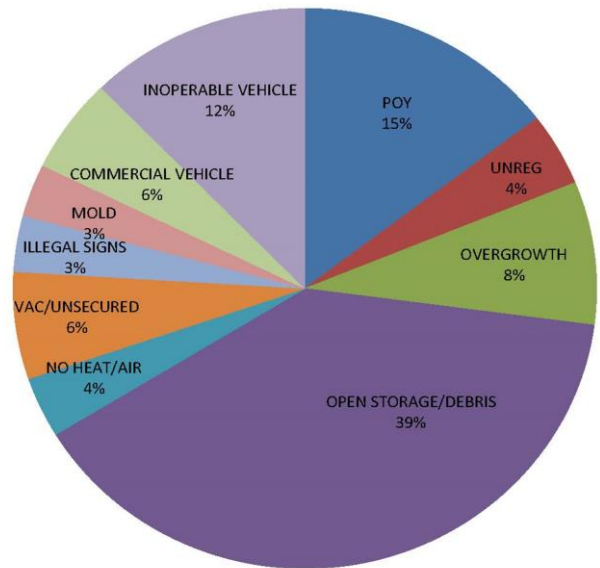


Code Compliance News

During the 1st Quarter of 2014 (January – March), the Code Compliance Division continued to see success in its efforts to maintain and improve the quality of life throughout the community through education, communication, and enforcement action.

Over the course of the quarter, the Division:

- Processed a total of one thousand eight hundred forty nine (**1849**) service requests. This total includes **all** proactive measures.
- Conducted a total of two thousand four hundred fifty eight (**2458**) inspections.
- Conducted a total of three thousand one hundred six (**3106**) re-inspections.
- Issued a total of nine hundred sixty (**960**) warning notices.
- Issued a total of one thousand three hundred sixty five (**1365**) court summons for non-compliance when violators did not respond to requests for compliance.
- A total of **\$140, 059** was collected in Recorder's Court.
- A total of **\$300** was suspended in Recorder's Court.
- A total of seven thousand eight hundred (**7800**) pounds and **3.9** tons of signs were removed from the county right-of-way.
- A total of four (**4**) commercial vehicle violations cited in residential districts.
- No street surveys conducted.
- A total of three (**3**) structures were demolished.
- The staff attended a total of six (**6**) Community and Neighborhood Association Meetings.



Foreclosure Registry News

As part of our efforts to stabilize neighborhoods, DeKalb County established the Foreclosure Registry. In 2013, the Registry had a total of 2,203 properties listed and had collected \$220,300 dollars. The funds are used to hire code compliance officers and staff to research, inspect, and monitor foreclosed properties. The Foreclosure Register Officers have inspected nearly 9,000 properties as of February 2014 and collected \$196,123.00 in fines.

The timeline to go-live with the automation of the Foreclosure Registry has been changed and the project is now scheduled to be completed in early June, 2014.

DeKalb Foreclosure Registrations

| Month/ Year | Foreclosure Sale Date | Number of Registrations | Fees Collected |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2010 | | 528 | \$92,400.00 |
| 2011 | | 4793 | \$838,775.00 |
| 2012 | | 2973 | \$520,275.00 |
| January 2013 | January 1, 2013 | 299 | \$29,900.00 |
| February 2013 | February 5, 2013 | 121 | \$12,100.00 |
| March 2013 | March 5, 2013 | 241 | \$24,100.00 |
| April 2013 | April 2, 2013 | 249 | \$24,900.00 |
| May 2013 | May 7, 2013 | 162 | \$16,200.00 |
| June 2013 | June 5, 2013 | 159 | \$15,900.00 |
| July 2013 | July 2, 2013 | 234 | \$23,400.00 |
| August 2013 | August 6, 2013 | 161 | \$16,100.00 |
| September 2013 | September 3, 2013 | 135 | \$13,500.00 |
| October 2013 | October 1, 2013 | 182 | \$18,200.00 |
| November 2013 | November 5, 2013 | 139 | \$13,900.00 |
| December 2013 | December 3, 2013 | 121 | \$12,100.00 |
| January 2014 | January 7, 2014 | 90 | \$9,000.00 |
| February 2014 | February 4, 2014 | 80 | \$8,000.00 |
| TOTAL | | 10667 | \$1,688,750.00 |

Code Compliance Efforts

| Month/ Year | Registered Foreclosure Inspections | Warning Notices Issued | Citations Issued | Fines Collected |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| January 2013 | 412 | 68 | 109 | \$ - |
| February 2013 | 360 | 56 | 52 | \$ 20,100.00 |
| March 2013 | 210 | 30 | 61 | \$ 29,200.00 |
| April 2013 | 657 | 111 | 57 | \$ 15,750.00 |
| May 2013 | 523 | 135 | 14 | \$ 3,450.00 |
| June 2013 | 569 | 224 | 26 | \$ 12,000.00 |
| July 2013 | 485 | 147 | 36 | \$ 16,500.00 |
| August 2013 | 386 | 196 | 54 | \$ 8,700.00 |
| September 2013 | 223 | 90 | 0 | \$ - |
| October 2013 | 566 | 156 | 13 | \$ 19,000.00 |
| November 2013 | 601 | 126 | 26 | \$ 15,000.00 |
| December 2013 | 641 | 113 | 25 | \$ - |
| 2013 TOTAL* | 5633 | 1452 | 473 | \$ 139,700.00 |
| January 2014 | 440 | 83 | 31 | \$ 5,000.00 |
| February 2014 | 358 | 50 | 28 | \$ 4,000.00 |
| March 2014 | 415 | 24 | 56 | \$ 2,250.00 |
| TOTAL | 6488 | 1559 | 560 | \$ 146,950.00 |

*Efforts completed by two code officers

Vacant Property Registry

DeKalb County Board of Commissioners established a *Vacant Property Registry* as a means to protect neighborhoods from

becoming blighted through the lack of adequate maintenance and security of properties that are vacant.

Improperly maintained and unsecure vacant properties can become a hazard to the health and safety of anyone who may come on or near the property and can adversely affect the aesthetic and economic attributes of communities. Difficulties often arise in locating the person responsible for maintenance of vacant properties. DeKalb County finds that there is a substantial need directly related to the public health, safety and welfare to comprehensively address these concerns through the adoption the Vacant Property Registry Ordinance.

Residents, homeowner organizations, civic, and community groups and industry leaders were invited to attend a series of public information meetings in January to obtain information about the ordinance requirements and its impact on neighborhoods.

The Vacant Property Registry is in the testing phase of development and is scheduled to launch on May 1, 2014 with the capability to register and pay the registration fee online.

- The Vacant Property Registration system will allow all registrants to create and self-manage accounts and pay registration fees on-line.
- Monthly, Code Compliance Officers dedicated to the Vacant Property Registry will receive a list of property owners that failed to register, pay the registration fee, list a local property agent, or report a change in registry information.
- A failure to register, pay the registration fee, list a local property agent, or report a change in registry information will result in an automatic citation.
- Code Compliance will inspect registered properties/ issue warning notices and/or court summons as warranted.



Development Services News

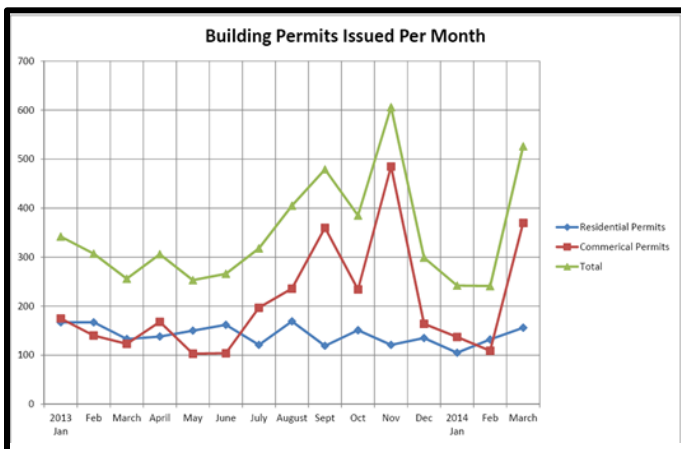
Permitting and development services are vital to expanding the economic base of DeKalb County. In response to the less than stellar performance of our Development Services Division, the County has hired Matrix Consulting Group to overhaul the permitting process. Matrix has met with an external stakeholder Group from the development community, an Internal Project Team composed of staff and managers from permitting and business license operations, and a Steering Committee consisting of the COO and other high level county management to provide support for implementation. The guiding principles are:

- Business friendly approach
- Predictability
- Fair Treatment of all customers
- Accurate and accessible information to customers
- Timely and accurate processing of submittals
- Reasonable and fair costs for customers
- Competent staff,
- Comprehensive but understanding regulations, and
- Leveraging technology to simply processing and reduce paperwork.

A key product will be the creation of a comprehensive east to ready a “How to Develop in DeKalb County” guide.

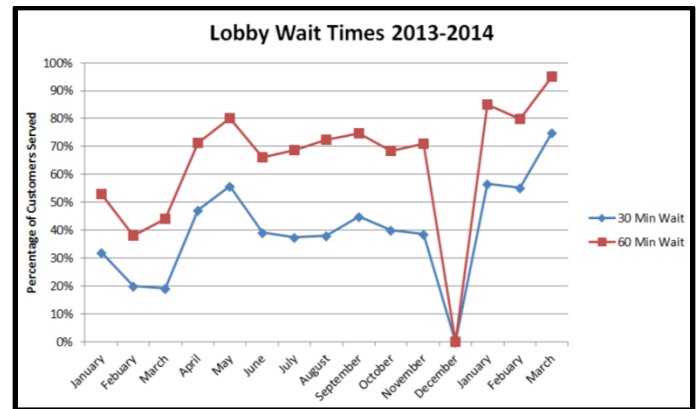
Permits Are Up!

For the first Quarter of 2014, the number of permits issued are up significantly with 1009 building permits issued vs 903 issued the same time period last year. This is an increase of nearly 12%!



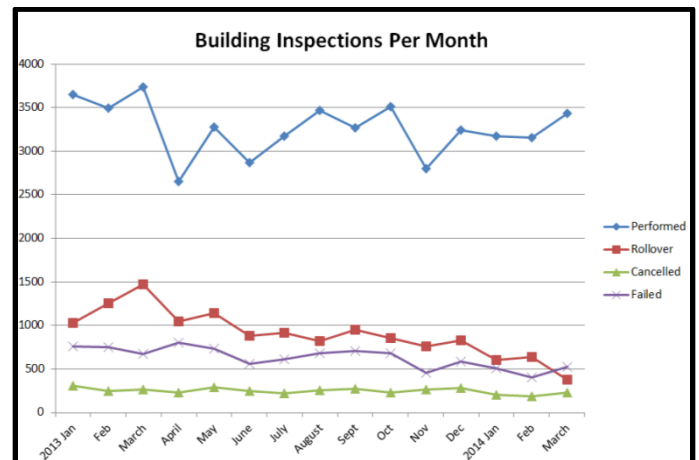
Wait Times Down!

Customer Wait times for the same time frames have decreased significantly as well! 87% of our customers were served within 60 minutes up from merely 45% for the same period last year. Everyone’s hard work to get the customers taken care of as quickly as possible is really paying off!



Get Your Inspections Here!

The inspectors have made significant strides in reducing rollovers and taking care of our customers! For the first quarter the percentage of roll-over inspections was down to 17% from 38% for the same time last year. This is a reduction of over 50%! In March the percentage of Rollovers was down to 11%, this is the lowest percentage since May 2009!!!



MEET THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Our team is here to make your dealings with DeKalb as seamless as possible. Please do not hesitate to let our management team know how we can assist you. Customer Service is our Priority.

Luz Borrero, Chief Operating Officer – Development

Andrew Baker, Director – Planning & Sustainability

Philip Etiwe
Associate Director



Email: petiwe@dekalbcountyga.gov

Office: 404-371-2607

Responsible for administration of the Development Services Division and Code Compliance Division. Assisting the county in moving toward a one-stop-shop for all permitting services and consolidation of code compliance officers into one major enforcement team.

William King
Building Development Administrator



Email: williamking@dekalbcountyga.gov

Office: 404-371-2312

Responsible for ensuring new development complies with state and local building regulations. Activities include review of construction plans, building and trade permit applications, and inspections of development activities and issuance of certificates of occupancy.

Marcus Kellum
Code Compliance Administrator



Email: mkellum@dekalbcountyga.gov

Office: 404-687-3711

Manages the technical and administrative activities of the Code Compliance Division by overseeing the inspection of existing structures, receiving and acting on citizen complaints and obtaining compliance in accordance with the County's Codes and Ordinances. Determines resource needs, program goals and initiatives, and develops organizational plans. Maintains existing codes and ordinances and develops recommendations. Oversees and manages code related court hearings and procedures. Identifies and prioritizes issues and strategies to utilize the County's NSP funds on neighborhood preservation.

Marian Eisenberg
Current Planning Administrator



Email: meisenberg@dekalbcountyga.gov

Office: 404-371-4922

Responsible for interpretation of the Zoning Code for DeKalb County and providing staff support to the Community Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Preservation Commission, and Board of Commissioners. Activities include rezonings, special land use permits, variances, new subdivision approvals, certificates of appropriateness, posting of properties and notification to the public.

Cedric Hudson
Long Range Planning Administrator



Email: chudson@dekalbcountyga.gov

Office: 404-371-2789

Responsible for developing the blueprint for future growth and development in DeKalb County. Activities include adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, demographic profiles, transportation planning, small area studies (LCIs), neighborhood plans, and overlays.

Contact us:

WEBSITE: www.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning
 EMAIL: plandev@dekalbcountyga.gov

| | | |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY MAIN: | 404-371-2155 | FAX: 404-371-4556 |
| DIRECTOR'S OFFICE | 404-371-2173 | |
| ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE | 404-371-2607 | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MAIN: | 404-371-4915 | FAX: 404-371-2778 |
| PERMITS | | |
| PLANS REVIEW | | |
| ZONING | | |
| INSPECTIONS | | |
| LAND DEVELOPMENT | | |

| | | |
|---|--------------|-------------------|
| CODE COMPLIANCE MAIN: | 404-687-3700 | FAX: 404-687-3844 |
| FORECLOSURE REGISTRY | | |
| VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRY | | |
| NEIGHBORHOOD AMBASSADOR PROGRAM | | |
| INTERIOR CODE COMPLIANCE PROGRAM | | |
| EMAIL: codeenforce@dekalbcountyga.gov | | |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| LONG RANGE PLANNING MAIN | 404-371-2155 | FAX: 404-371-4556 |
| TRANSPORTATION PLANNING | | |
| COMPREHENSIVE PLAN | | |
| DATA ANALYSIS / GIS | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| CURRENT PLANNING MAIN | 404-371-2155 | FAX: 404-371-4556 |
| ZONING | | |
| HISTORIC PRESERVATION | | |
| ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS | | |
| PLANNING COMMISSION | | |
| COMMUNITY COUNCIL | | |

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE RECOGNITION WINNERS!

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| LONG RANGE PLANNING | BRIAN BREWER – Sr. Planning Technician |
| CURRENT PLANNING | DAVID CULLISON – Sr. Planner |
| CODE COMPLIANCE | JAMES ADAMS – Sr. Code Compliance Officer |
| DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | CELESTE MAPP - Sr. Office Assistant |

(Winners will be recognized by the Director at the Quarterly Department-Wide Meeting)