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Director, Mecklenburg County Land Use & Environmental Services

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OnSchedule (large commercial) plan review

- Number of projects reviewed | 2,744 | 3,417 |
- First review pass rate (all trades) | 74.0% | 82.1% |
- Second review pass rate (all trades) | 81.3% | 87.5% |

CTAC (small commercial) plan review

- Number of projects reviewed | 1,224 | 1,144 |
- First review pass rate | 77.8% | 72.0% |

Notes: Most large commercial projects are reviewed in our OnSchedule plan review stream, and most small commercial projects are reviewed in our Commercial Technical Assistance Center (CTAC) plan review stream. "Staff interpret increasing pass rates as an indicator of design professionals who are well-versed in the code, Code Enforcement staff who are being communicative with customers, and strong, collaborative relationships with our customers."

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On behalf of the staff at Mecklenburg County Code Enforcement, I am pleased to present our annual report for FY18. At Code Enforcement, we always stay focused on our mission – ensuring the safety of people who live, work and visit buildings in Mecklenburg County by ensuring those buildings comply with North Carolina Building Code.

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The changes don’t stop there – last fiscal year saw the sunset of the rehab code, and the change to the newest version of the electrical code, with the other trades close behind. This is an adjustment for staff and customers alike, but we have put great effort into making sure that we educate our customers as we learn more and step through those changes together.

And speaking of focus on our customers, make sure you read about our latest class of Code Heroes. I look forward every year to the opportunity to salute a few of our customers who are going above and beyond, and we recognized three outstanding customers this year.

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BUILDING DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Building Development Commission is an advisory board that makes recommendations to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners and Code Enforcement staff on development-related ordinances, budget, service delivery, fees, division performance, and public opinion.

FY2018 MEMBERS

Jonathan Bahr
Chair
Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

Glenn Berry
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Benjamin Simpson
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INSPECTIONS

Inspectors check work as it is being completed in the field to ensure that it conforms with approved drawings and meets all code requirements. Inspections has overhauled its services this year to focus around keeping the same inspectors throughout a project when possible, to foster stronger customer relationships.

County staff completed nearly 325,000 inspections in FY 18 (see page 9 for more).

Inspections also houses the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal's office, which performs fire investigations and plan review for every part of Mecklenburg County outside the Charlotte city limits.
Code Enforcement’s core functions are permitting, plan review, and inspections. The majority of staff and resources are dedicated to those functions, along with support staff who manage the technological, administrative, and financial functions of the agency. Our processes are virtually paperless, and customers do most of their business through our online portals. Code Enforcement’s mandate is to ensure life safety by requiring building code compliance. Here’s how that happens in Mecklenburg County:

PERMITTING & PLAN REVIEW

Under North Carolina law, most commercial and residential construction requires a permit. This includes all new construction, but could also include renovations, repairs, demolitions, upfits, changeouts or upgrades. Our staff issued more than 101,000 permits in FY 2018 (see page 8 for details). These permits cover building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing trades, and some special work. Usually, plan review is required in advance.

Our plan review services center around the project’s needs — residential, small commercial, large commercial, projects that utilize alternative delivery methods, and mega/multi-family projects.
RESPONDING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

In December 2017, Mecklenburg County’s servers came under attack. Rather than give in to the demands of the perpetrators, County Manager Dena DiOrio led county staff in working to restore our systems on our own, while still providing services to our community.

For Code Enforcement, which conducts almost all plan review and tracks all permits and inspections through our online customer portals, this was a daunting task. Our staff set up an ad hoc paper process for plan review and permitting and set up call centers to perform the inspections scheduling work normally done by our software. With the flexibility and understanding of our customers, we were able to continue to provide services until our systems were restored.

We have never been prouder to partner with the people of Mecklenburg County in building a safe and thriving community.

A TIME FOR CHANGE

FY18 saw the beginning of a series of code changes in North Carolina — the electrical code changed and the rehab code sunsettled, ceding way to the N.C. Existing Building Code. As FY18 wrapped up, the building, plumbing and mechanical codes were about to change in the state for the first time in six years. Throughout these transitions, we focused on education and increased awareness for our customers.

THANKING OUR HEROES

Every year, Code Enforcement takes the opportunity to select just a few of our many customers who dedicate themselves to code-compliant, sustainable building and development. Our 2018 Code Heroes are as follows:

- Little Diversified Architectural Consulting — for sustained commitment to pursuing code compliance in design decisions
- McCormick Custom Construction — for sustained commitment to code-compliant building and inspection readiness
- Meritage Homes: Mirabella Team — for commitment to inspection readiness and code compliance in the Mirabella communities
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BECOMING A HEAVY HITTER

Here at Code Enforcement, we talk a lot about buildings, but we don’t typically spend a lot of time talking about our building. We were proud of the work we did to renovate our Suttle Avenue headquarters, and make a more pleasant, more efficient space for our customers, but this year, that work was honored with a Charlotte Business Journal 2017 Heavy Hitters Commercial Real Estate Award for outstanding build-out project.

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