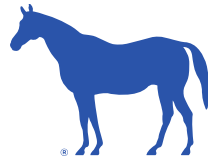


REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESS STUDY

General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee

Keith Horn, Commissioner, Department of Planning & Preservation

March 10, 2026



LEXINGTON

June 2023 Planning Process Study

- Evaluate the efficiency of the planning process.
- Examine whether the process serves applicants and the public.
- Consider developer concerns that approval requirements are too stringent, unclear, time-consuming, and costly.
- Consider citizen and interest group concerns that approval requirements should be more stringent.
- Review all aspects of the process - across divisions.
- Provide recommendations.

Action Taken Post-Study

- Urban Growth Management ZOTA
- Comprehensive ZOTA to address KRS 100.275/HB 443
- Implementation of HB 443 ZOTA
- New Senior Planner position to help implement HB 443

Urban Growth Management ZOTA (Comprehensive Plan)

- Improved the process by opening more options for development
 - Encourages and expands mixed-use and mixed-housing development
 - Reduce and eliminate need to apply for a variance (R-2 and R-4)
 - Increase opportunities for by-right residential development in B-1, B-3, and R-2 zones



HB 443

- The House Bill reduced uncertainty in the development process by requiring ministerial review of development and subdivision plans using objective standards.
- Since implementation, approvals generally occur within 30 days, shortening the process.
- Plans that comply with the regulations can move quickly through the approval and certification process.
- Where items are not fully compliant with the regulations, there may be delays in certification.

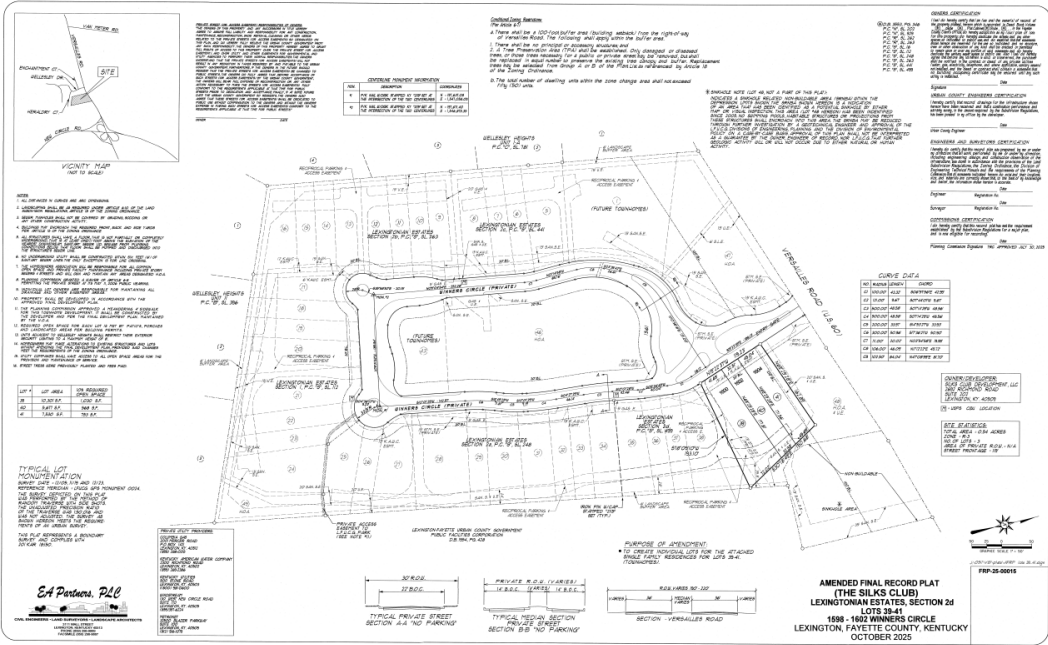
Planning Data (# of Days to Approval)

Pre HB 443

Final Record Plat	41
Major Development Plan	59

Post HB 443

Final Record Plat	27
Major Development Plan	32
Preliminary Subdivision Plan (Major)	76
Waivers	21



Planning Data (# of Days to Certification)

2018-2023

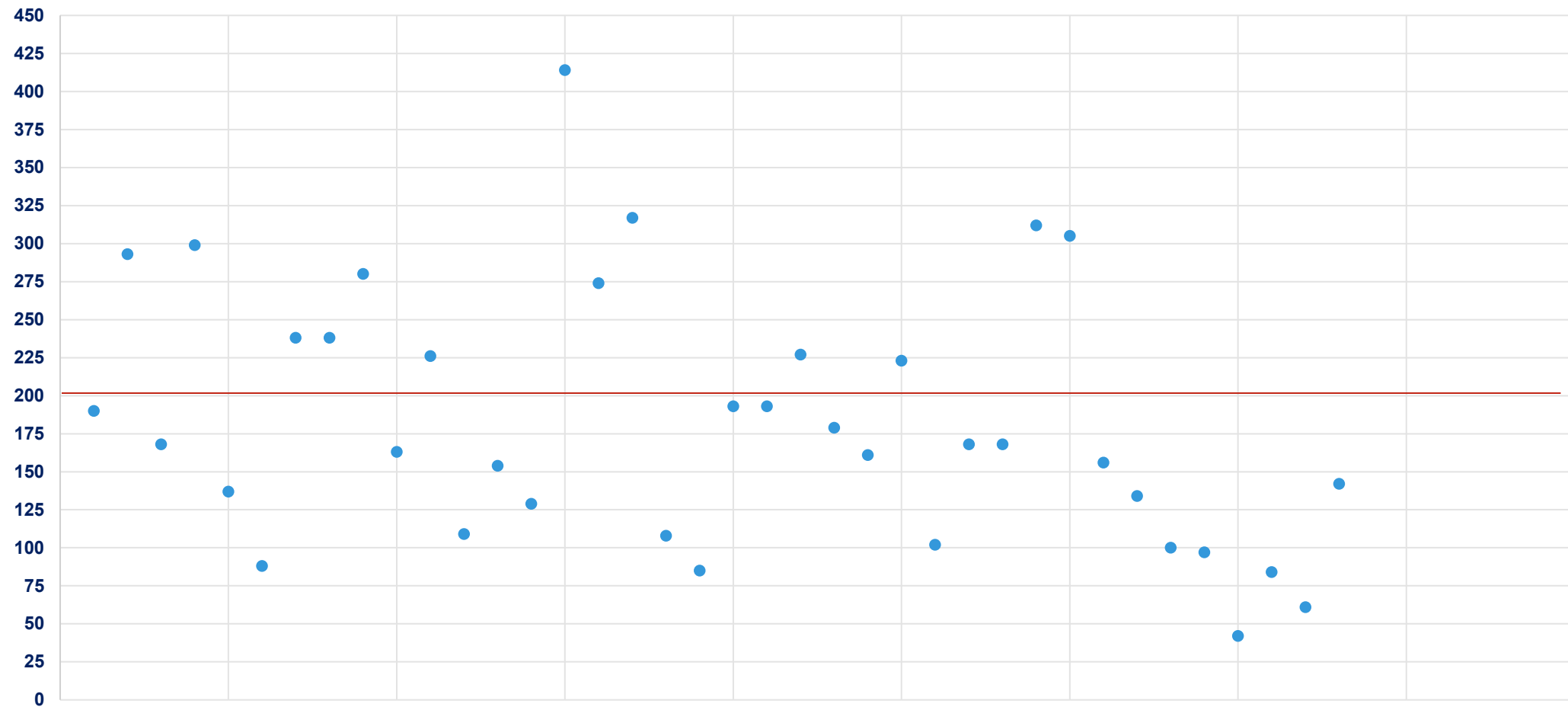
Final Record Plat	219
Major Development Plan	154
Minor Development Plan	57
Minor Subdivision Plat	50
Preliminary Subdivision Plan (Major)	304
Zone Change - (Map Amendment Request)	248

2024-2025

Final Record Plat	183
Major Development Plan	150
Minor Development Plan	54
Minor Subdivision Plat	34
Preliminary Subdivision Plan (Major)	228
Zone Change - (Map Amendment Request)	129

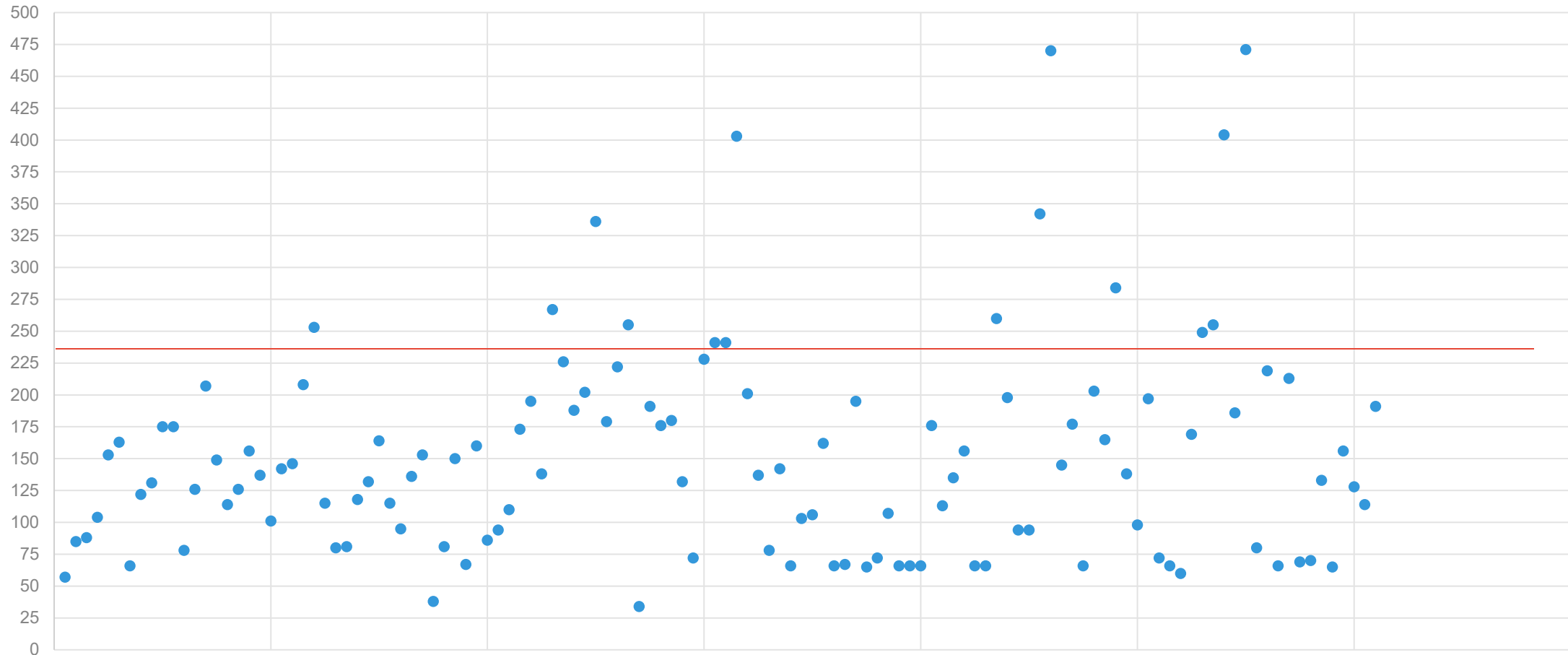
Outlier Impact

Final Record Plat - Days to Certification 2024-2025



Outlier Impact

Major Development Plans – Days to Certification 2024-2025

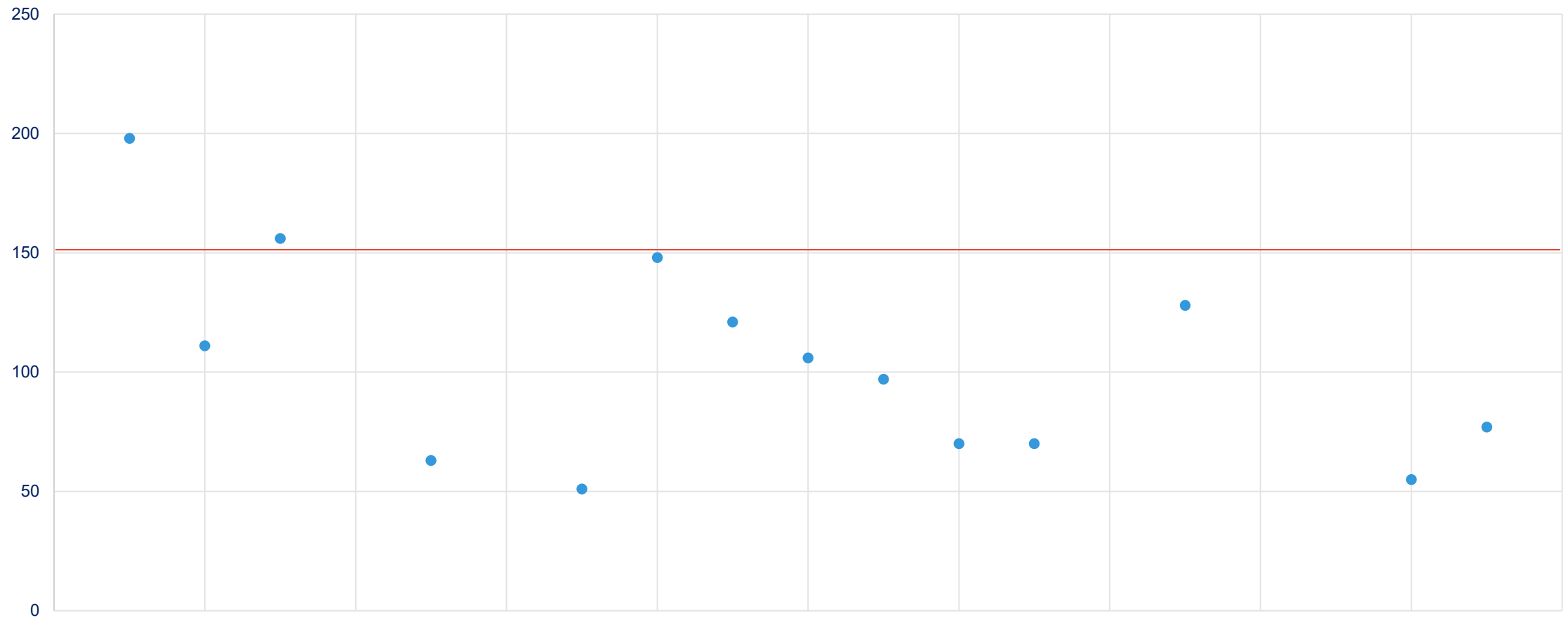


Planning Data (# of Days) Since HB 443

Major Development Plan (certification)	104
Waivers (approval)	21

Outlier Impact

Major Development Plans – Post-HB443 Certification



10 Recommendations from the Study

- Section 5 of the report included recommendations related to the approval process for land use and development in Lexington.
- The recommendations highlighted the following strengths: the Comprehensive Plan, use of sound planning philosophies, quality regulations (i.e. Multi-Family Design Standards), and a robust public engagement process.
- Recommendations were based upon examination of the existing approval process, input from stakeholders, and research into “peer communities.”

#1 Return Future Land Use Map to Comprehensive Plan

#2 Limit Placebuilder Use

- Eliminating the Future Land Use Map allows infill flexibility and speeds redevelopment and expanding options generally for development.
- The Urban Growth Master Plan provides clarity and sets expectations for both land use and policy in Urban Growth Areas.
- Placebuilder is used for zone changes only.
- We have expanded the use of small area plans:
 - Blue Sky Small Area Plan
 - Downtown Area Master Plan
 - Winchester Road Corridor Study

3 Streamline Process for Infill

4 Reduce Workload of PC Committees

8 Tighten Certification to lock in Requirements

- HB 443 addressed these recommendations by:
 - Removing subjectivity
 - Introducing objective standards
 - Reducing Planning Commission Subdivision Committee review to only waivers
- All final sign-offs are now quantifiable and specific.
- If applicant complies with the regulations, TRC approves the Plan, new issues cannot be raised by staff, and all regulations are objective.

Note on Certification

- Once a plan is approved, it enters the certification phase.
- In this phase, applicants must resolve any outstanding issues so that they comply with appropriate manuals and objective standards. Examples include:
 - Width of dumpster enclosures
 - Open Space requirements
 - Public Safety access management
 - Utilities
- Delays may occur at this stage when outstanding items not meeting requirements are not quickly resolved by the applicant.

#5 Videoconference and Record Meetings

#6 Change Time for Planning Commission Meetings

- All Planning Commission and Technical Review Committee meetings are now available on LexTV.
- There are various challenges related to changing the time for Planning Commission meetings:
 - Limited physical space
 - Staffing
 - Meeting frequency

#7 Accela Effectiveness

- Planning Staff generates a weekly report showing all applications and their status (BOA and Planning Commission).
- The Accela team has expanded email notification for the Technical Review Committee.
- Additional notification possibilities are being examined.
- The effectiveness of Accela should continue to be examined for usefulness to all users.

9 Ex-Parte Communication

- The Law Department has long advised that decision makers should not have communication with involved parties outside of the public hearing.

#10 Establish a Development Liaison Position

- The report recommends this position be located outside of the Department of Planning and Preservation.
- Proposed duties include:
 - Education about the development process
 - Assist applicants in the application process
 - Shepherd applications through the process
 - Monitoring the status of each project in the process
 - Keep the development community informed on changes to regulations

Questions?



LEXINGTON