

EBOOK

Improve Community Development Efficiency With Modern Technology

Using code enforcement, permitting, planning, licensing, and fire and life safety software





Introduction

The Role of Community Development Software

Code enforcement, planning, permitting, licensing, and fire and life safety processes often require considerable paperwork, extensive organization, and collaboration across multiple stakeholders to ensure projects get completed safely and efficiently. Community development software lets you electronically create and manage applications, payments, inspections, and contractor credentials. It streamlines the zoning, building, and inspection process while providing residents and businesses with 24/7 digital self-service functionality that allows community members and businesses to apply for permits and licenses, submit complaints, upload documents, and more, all of which help to reduce the time spent from application to project completion.

Furthermore, integrated, yet independent modules for planning, permitting, licensing, inspection, & code enforcement work to reduce silos and centralize your processes for end-to-end management, prompting safe, efficient growth catered to your community's unique needs.





Here's How This eBook Will Help You

This eBook provides insight and actionable tips to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness to serve its residents better by taking advantage of purpose-driven technology.





1

Improving the Planning Process

The importance of planning and zoning software

Planning and zoning software lets you easily manage the intricacies of new subdivisions, plats, site plans, and other projects within your community. Without a digital solution, you may be experiencing repetitive work, communication mishaps across departments and stakeholders, or missing central data to make informed decisions.





How a Centralized Planning and Zoning Solution Can Improve Your Outcomes

Efficient planning processes start with streamlined application portals. With a dedicated, mobile responsive public portal, applicants can apply for permits and projects, make requests, upload and download documents, pay fees, make requests, and renew licenses — all in one place. And with a dedicated project management interface for your staff and for external contractors, you'll find dedicated tools and custom checklists to assist with site plans. You'll experience workflow automation and collaboration tools that automate the review and approval processes and route the applications to relevant departments for feedback and assessment, while fostering improved compliance across various stakeholders and departments. You can even create master projects that give you 360-degree views into various departments' work at any given record or location.

Within the platform, you can access a dashboard to track real-time metrics designed to keep projects moving swiftly and while hitting your KPI goals, such as number of open permit inspections, past due inspections, applications received online, and much more, as well as a workflow routing list and insights into project statuses, deadlines, and anything that may be holding up a project. Additionally, you can access an Agenda and Meetings feature within the software to further centralize your processes. External integrations are also key to project efficiency. Our ESRI ArcGIS integration enables the mapping of your projects and all of the associated data, as well as a rest endpoint that updates your data automatically.

Additionally, the solution integrates with Bluebeam REVU so that city staff can review building plans and communicate comments and markups to applicants. You also won't need to worry about payments or financials — the software integrates with CivicPlus® Pay & partner gateways to process credit card payments and can also provide transaction details to your ERP accounting software.

From a planning perspective, the software helps ensure compliance with local laws and land-use restrictions. With the addition of integrated permitting, licensing, and code enforcement modules, you can centralize data at the parcel level and gain insights into permits, code violations, past inspections, contractor information, adjacent property info, and more during the planning process, while routing tasks to the appropriate stakeholders. And with a unique, direct integration between Municode, powered by CivicPlus, Codes of Ordinances, eCode360, and ICC, code is instantly accessed and populated into letters and notices. The codes are embedded in each module's mobile inspection feature and within the Planning and Zoning Variances, allowing staff to save time and avoid costly errors.

Finally, by leveraging the data collected through planning and zoning software, local governments can generate reports, perform analysis, and gain valuable insights into trends, patterns, and their planning strategies' overall effectiveness and accuracy.



2

Streamline Your Code Enforcement and Public Safety Processes

The importance of efficient code enforcement for public safety and community well-being

A digital code enforcement solution lets local governments quickly process complaints and track violations from initial inspection and notice of violation through citation processing, court proceedings, and resolution. This effortless visibility makes tracking offenses easier and faster to address, which aids in compliance and community safety. Residents can submit concerns and violations online via mobile, simplifying the process to help enforce compliance with regulations while giving residents transparency and ownership over their community. Increasing effectiveness with a code enforcement solution enhances your staff's ability to process work, which helps execute code violations and concerns to ensure the community is safe.





How Code Enforcement Software Can Help Streamline Processes Between Departments, Inspectors, and Residents

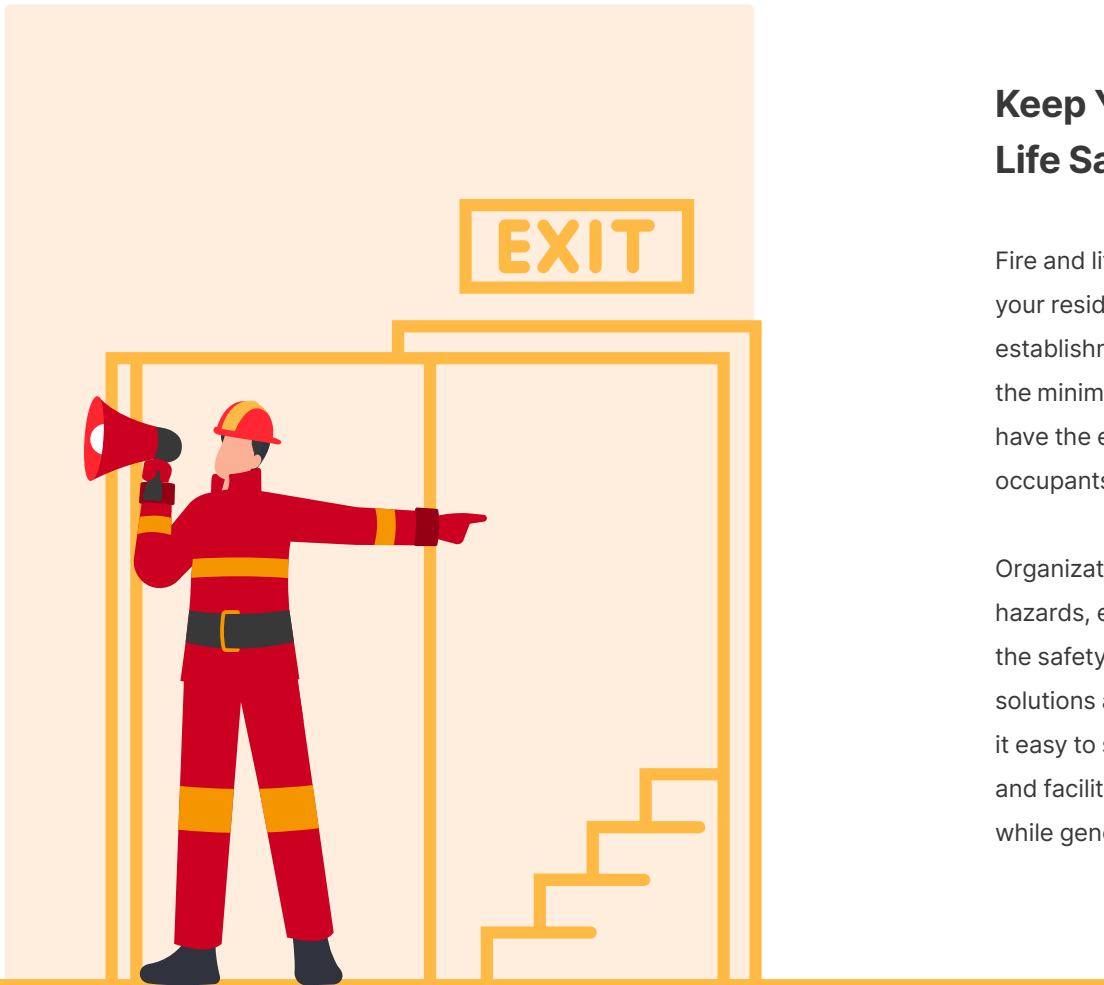
A code enforcement solution provides more convenient and structured communication. Your residents can submit complaints and violations online from a mobile device, which minimizes the communication barrier between the community and its local government. With this organized communication, responses are prompt, reporting is effortless, and concerns and infractions are arranged sensibly in the system, which helps make constructive dialogue possible.

Regarding departments and inspectors, consolidating your code enforcement work into one cohesive digital system that integrates with various applications increases staff productivity and simplifies handling complaints and violations. In addition to being equipped with inspection scheduling, reports and citations generations, fine collections, mobile and offline capabilities, and more, jobs can be automatically assigned and routed to the correct department and inspector, creating a seamless communication path that's more efficient.

Furthermore, the cutting-edge integration between your municipal code is a game changer. Let's say you want to create a code violation. You shouldn't have to go into Ecode360 or Municode by CivicPlus and copy and paste the codes to generate a document. Integrations with ICC and your codes of ordinances is designed to make citing reference material simple and easy.

Want to take it a step further? With integrated Community Development and 311 CRM software from CivicPlus, requests are entered into 311 CRM are passed directly to the Code Enforcement module for case management. When the status is updated in the module it is passed back to 311 CRM, updating the requestor with a custom status and message. This consolidated system saves time for staff and keeps residents informed in real time.





Keep Your Community Safe With a Fire and Life Safety Solution

Fire and life safety inspections are vital for ensuring the safety of your residents and other occupants in and around the buildings and establishments in your community. Building fire and safety codes set the minimum requirements. Hence, facilities are structurally safe and have the equipment and protocols to protect the structure and its occupants from various threats and exposures.

Organization and productivity are essential in identifying potential hazards, ensuring code and regulation compliance, and maintaining the safety of publicly owned buildings. Fire and life safety inspection solutions allow municipalities to operate more efficiently by making it easy to schedule and conduct inspections, manage properties and facilities, and assign and collect fees, leading to internal growth while generating goodwill with your residents.



3

Improve the Permitting Process

Challenges faced with manual permitting processes

An outdated manual permitting process can create laborious and tedious work that wastes time and creates inertia within the department — determining who or what department should handle a request or finding permits and paperwork when needed. Lengthy and complex permit review and approval processes can significantly increase costs and safety concerns for your department and others involved.





How Permitting Software Can Decrease Processing Time and Improve Efficiency

Permitting software streamlines processes to allow your staff to respond to requests quicker while removing monotonous manual work. For example, a permitting solution will enable online application submittals and then staff can then review, inspect, and approve the permit in a few simple steps, giving you exactly what you need without time-consuming administrative interactions or manual procedures.

Once received, submissions are routed to the correct department or person, payments are obtained online, inspections are scheduled, and records are stored in one central digital location, simplifying document retrieval and assessment. Furthermore, inspectors can instantaneously upload photos and documents, cite codes, complete checklists, and print documents, while utilizing a KPI dashboard and various project management and routing tools to keep projects on track.

The requester has their own portal to track the submission to the end of the project. These automations reduce manual processing time enabling faster permit approvals, reduce administrative costs, and increase public satisfaction. Streamlined workflows and centralized data enhance collaboration, which also works to expedite the overall permitting process while reducing risk of error from oversight. Furthermore, with mobile online and offline functionality, information is accurate, current, and always accessible in real time.





4

Simplify Licensing and Renewals

The importance of licensing and renewals for community growth and regulatory compliance

Using a licensing and renewal solution helps ensure legal compliance within your community through its robust functionality, ease of use, and integration capabilities with other systems. This digital application allows for the online submission of business applications for 24/7 convenience, features enhanced tracking abilities for added visibility and control, and can automatically generate renewal licenses, notices and invoices, assign fees, and process payments, which aids in completing requests to ensure legal compliance while increasing revenue and efficiency. Licensing software also enables proper zoning enforcement for accurate planning and successful development.





How Licensing Software Can Simplify the Licensing and Renewal Process for Businesses and Residents, Reducing Manual Paperwork and Administrative Burden

Managing licenses and permits is demanding, especially if manual paper procedures or outdated programs are in place. These unsustainable systems create collaboration difficulties, require laborious data entry, and make finding paperwork seemingly impossible, creating inefficiencies, possible delays, and a loss of revenue.

With a business licensing solution, your records are located conveniently in a single location down to the parcel, building, and even suite level. Furthermore, online submission capabilities ensure you get all the initial information you need from the applicant, increasing productivity and giving your staff more time.



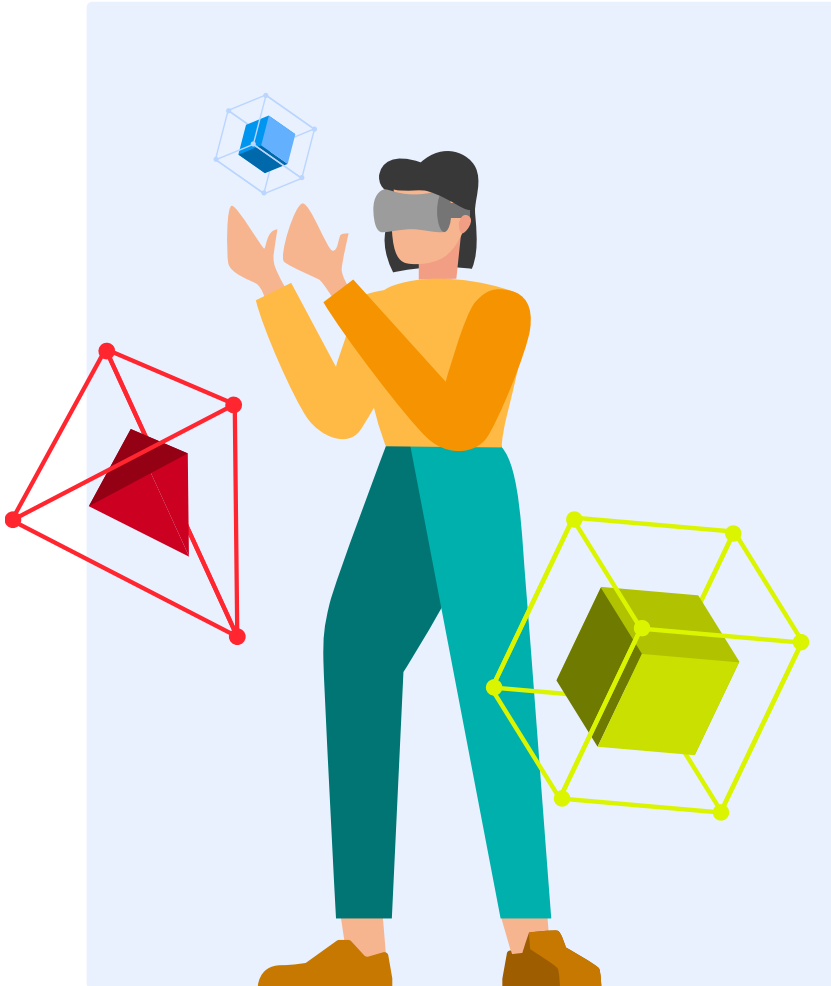
5

Enhanced Data and Analytics

The importance of data-driven decision making for land management

Data-driven decision-making is essential to providing residents with appropriate structures and services. By leveraging data collected through code enforcement, permitting, and licensing software, local governments can generate reports, perform analysis, and gain valuable insights into trends, patterns, and the overall effectiveness of their strategies.





Future-Proof Your Land Management processes By Embracing Technology

Communities nationwide are experiencing increased growth and demands for technology solutions. Leveraging technology is critical to prepare for successful expansion and accommodating new and existing residents. The ubiquitous presence of smartphones and apps means that local governments must communicate with residents in a way that fits their lifestyles. It's easier to reach people with technology, primarily through mobile devices. An upsurge in housing and commercial needs can put unprecedented pressure on your community development team, and being proactive with a fully integrated and efficient digital workflow will help eliminate the burden while keeping up with the increased rates of permit applications and inspection requests.

How To Choose the Software To Meet Your Current and Future Needs

If you revamp your current software and it doesn't fit your needs, or it's too complex for everyone to use, your operations will suffer. Doing it right the first time will keep your staff happy and give your residents trust and confidence in your administration.



Some Factors To Consider When Choosing Code Enforcement, Permitting, and Licensing Software



Mobile functionality

Staff members can use mobile devices to schedule inspections, input data, and send information remotely and in real-time to various departments to optimize inspection time and productivity. Mobile functions need to be available online and offline.



Internal integrations

Choose a vendor that can integrate your planning, zoning, code enforcement, permitting, licensing, and fire and life safety processes. Additionally, does your vendor offer website design or hosting, 311 CRM, or other civic engagement solutions that can speak to your community development software? Having more than one vendor or disparate solutions can cause roadblocks or limit the advantages of having a centralized data repository and communications hub.



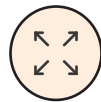
External integrations

Ensure your solution can integrate efficiently with the GIS rest endpoint so your data automatically updates. Ensure your product can integrate with Municode and IIC codes and third-party payment options, as well as electronic plan review software.



Ease-of-use

Adoption by multiple stakeholders is vital to optimizing outcomes, so deploying software that is cloud-based, modern, & easy-to-use is key.



Scalability

Select a scalable solution, such as one that offers integrated, yet independent modules, that can grow with your community's needs



Customer support

Ensure the company values are known for superior customer service and that they have dedicated implementation teams to tailor your project to your needs.



Best Practices for Implementing and Integrating Software Into Existing Systems and Workflows

Local governments work hard, and implementing new software is intimidating. So, when choosing a solution, select a company that can act as a partner and not just a seller. This type of partnership provides proven customer service and experience in local government that can help determine your specific needs and establish updated processes that integrate with any current solutions you may have.

Appropriate planning is also crucial when implementing new software. Performing a needs assessment and mapping your current process will help you integrate effectively. Additionally, having a good implementation plan will ensure no operational disruptions. Creating contingency plans for existing procedures and ensuring you don't overextend your staff and resources will help with proper execution.





Conclusion

The increased emergence of technology in local government helps municipalities keep up with the needs of its residents, and making your community a better place requires seamless communication with residents. Providing digital tools and mobile capabilities for people to collaborate with local governments helps to understand the proper needs of the community. Improving infrastructure and digitizing processes makes employees' lives easier by lightening their workload and increasing productivity. With growing communities and increasing digital demands of residents, adopting a digital land management plan is vital in fostering long-term growth and success.

