

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain range with snow-capped peaks, a calm lake reflecting the mountains, and a few houses in the distance. The image is partially covered by a large blue diagonal overlay on the left side.

DigEplan[™] Case study Douglas County

Douglas County Community Development knew they would eventually need an electronic plan review solution but were not ready when they implemented Accela in 2018. Now in a position to streamline and digitalize plan review processes for staff, DigEplan was chosen because of its ease of use and deep integration with Accela.

With a population in the region of 46,000, Douglas County, Nevada, has been slowly updating their Planning, Engineering, and Building department processes over the last three years. Accela was implemented in 2018 to support permitting processes, yet the county continued to use paper for plan review.

“Plan review is a major part of what we do in all departments. This has always been a manual process with applicants bringing in a set of plans. These are reviewed by our front counter technicians, before being reviewed by plan reviewers in each department,” explains Ann Damian, Accela Project Manager for Douglas County.

“The problem with plan review being conducted manually, was that the plans went back and forth with corrections and revisions, often four or five times.

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Sometimes things are missed in this process because of the multitude of paper that comes across our department. It got to the point where it made more sense to do digital plan review,” added Ann.

Integrated Plan Review

“Central to our search for a plan review system, was a system that would streamline our processes and be simple to use. We looked at a number of solutions but chose DigEplan because of the compatibility with Accela. We realized that we could get a lot more out of how we used Accela and part of that was the DigEplan integration,” said Ann.

“We liked how DigEplan and Accela worked seamlessly, no toggling back and forth between systems, and everything was recorded on one record.”

With implementation undertaken by Accela and DigEplan partner, TruePoint Solutions, Douglas County was impressed by the dedication from the company in getting staff trained. Ann praised TruePoint's assistance: "The support by the TruePoint team has been awesome. From training on how to use the system for our departments, to quickly adding things in when we have required additional help, TruePoint has helped us to maximize the benefits of DigEplan.

"DigEplan has eliminated much of the paper processes, but we are not fully there yet. We have been taking baby steps to support our staff, some of which have been using paper documentation for 15-20 years. Although the change initially seemed scary, they are building confidence with digital plan review. Staff find DigEplan very easy to do a review and coordinate with our applicants better," explained Ann.

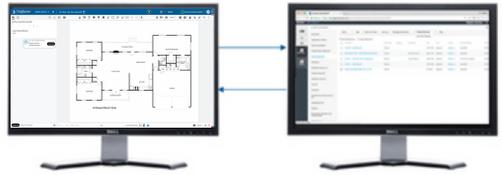
Building Department Processes Enhanced

The Building department at Douglas County are the current daily users of DigEplan, with the Engineering department slowly coming onboard. "We started with Building first, as their need was greater, but our Engineering staff are looking forward to using this product very soon," said Ann.

"For us, DigEplan provides an ease of use. It is right there, available on the record in Accela. There is no going back and forth to a different program, moving things over, or copying and pasting. It is so easy to have the program incorporated within our permitting software.

"All our stamps are stored in DigEplan and if we need to add something, it has been easy to do. The system is intuitive to work with and our staff have found it incredibly easy to learn," added Ann.

"Our interim building official is ecstatic about DigEplan. He says it is so quick and just easy to use, it's a no brainer."



Douglas County continues to expand DigEplan across its departments, as well as look at how to improve external processes using DigEplan. "Our Building department have reached out to a couple of contractors to show them the product and they absolutely love it. It could help us enhance collaboration and the flow of plans.

"We are taking baby steps, as we have a lot of development work happening in the county. We are currently reviewing our plan review standards for large commercial contractors, whose plans involve hundreds of pages," explained Ann.

"DigEplan alongside Accela provides us with the ease of use and streamlined approach we were seeking for our electronic plan review processes. We looked at a variety of solutions, but DigEplan was the one that delivered on integration to Accela and cost, which was a huge determination as funds are tight due to Covid. The most important thing is staff are happy and they are welcoming it, so that's a big step in the right direction," concluded Ann.

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