

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Polk County, Florida, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, green spaces, and a river in the foreground. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue diagonal overlay on the left side.

DigEplan[™] Case study Polk County, FL

Polk County, Florida is one of the fastest growing counties in the country. To manage development and help the county meet their goals, Polk needs streamlined, user-friendly, and cost-effective technologies to efficiently run operations. When their previous solution became too costly, they looked for a new electronic plan review solution that would meet the state's stringent plan review requirements.

DigEplan was the clear winner when it came to Polk County's non-negotiables

Polk County's previous electronic plan solution raised their prices over the course of the pandemic, and they never came back down. "Our IT director was trying to negotiate a new deal, but we couldn't make it work," said Benjamin Dunn, Building Division Director of Polk County.

Facing a costly submission-based pricing model, Polk County began to look elsewhere for a solution that would meet their non-negotiable needs. As a county in Florida, Polk is subject to the state's strict digital signature regulations, which require authentication of every engineer's signature with a third-party certificate authority.

"Third party verification was really a must for us. It was not something we were willing to negotiate on," explained Carmen Nieves, Permit Services and Technology Supervisor. Another non-negotiable was automatic batch stamping.

"We didn't want our staff to have to go into every page and stamp each one manually," Carmen added. "DigEplan was the only solution we reviewed that offered both functionalities."

On top of checking the boxes on Polk County's must-haves, DigEplan also wowed decision makers with their high level of service and commitment to getting it done.

From the moment we did the demo with DigEplan, it was just a great relationship. We had that comfort level that, for me, has always been one of the most important of any potential partnership. When you're able to reach out to someone and they're responsive and want to work with you to find solutions — that's a huge selling point.

Benjamin Dunn, Building Division Director, Polk County.

Implementation was fast, and DigEplan, flexible

Once Polk County made the decision to go with DigEplan, they moved swiftly to implement. Partnering with TruePoint Solutions, DigEplan was up and running within two months.

While the process was smooth, the rapid implementation timeline left little room for error, and DigEplan and TruePoint were quick to create solutions, add development, and workarounds to ensure Polk County had what they needed.

When DigEplan went live, some certificate authorities were having issues submitting or getting approved — which meant Polk County was on the hook to manually verify engineer seals. “But TruePoint and DigEplan worked with us, and even allotted some staff members to take over the manual verification [so we didn't have to],” Benjamin said.

“They didn't have to do that for us, and they didn't charge us for it,” Benjamin said. “It was something they did to make us happy, which is just one example of how everything felt good to be working with them.”

DigEplan also developed new features and functionality to make sure the solution fit Polk's needs.

With their old solution, Polk County wasn't able to see the applicant view, which made troubleshooting with applicants cumbersome and time-consuming.

Carmen and her team would have to either log in as the applicant or add themselves as a contact in the applicant's account to be able to walk them through the process.

“Now we're able to see the public submission view without having to do these extra steps. It's a huge help because we can see what the applicant is doing in real-time, even though we're on our side,” Carmen said. “And that's something DigEplan created for us.”

With DigEplan, there are no surprises. “It's really simple from a budgetary standpoint: You know what your budget's going to be with it, and if you need to add licenses, you know what your costs are going to be,” Benjamin said.

“DigEplan was very close to what we were getting with our previous ePlan review, for a much better cost,” he added. “It just made a lot of sense for us.”

For Polk County, it was the combination of easy-to-use features and functionality, the right price point, and top-notch customer service that has made DigEplan a win.

“The team at DigEplan always provides us with an option or a solution, that's one thing I really like,” said Benjamin. “We really felt like they were an extension of the team,” he added.

Polk County has been so pleased with DigEplan that they've recommended the platform to several other jurisdictions, from California to Oregon.

“We would recommend DigEplan and we already have,” Benjamin said. “We don't plan on going anywhere,” he added.

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