

A background image showing a suburban town with multi-story apartment buildings, a park with young trees, and a paved walkway. The image is partially obscured by a blue diagonal overlay on the left side.

ProjectDox Case study

Apple Valley, MN

When community leaders in Apple Valley, Minnesota, sought out an electronic plan review system more than five years ago, they knew digitalization was important to keep up with the times. Prior to making the switch to electronic plan review, the City of about 55,000 citizens relied on a paper-based system, which involved the physical handling and storage of large sets of plans and led to disorganization, challenges with communication, and delays.

“There was a shift, and I think Apple Valley knew they also had to move toward a digital solution to stay current,” said Chris Andrejka, Building Inspector in the City of Apple Valley. The City of Apple Valley reviewed several electronic plan review solutions, ultimately selecting ProjectDox as their all-in-one software solution for managing and reviewing plans digitally.

ProjectDox Streamlines Communication and Workflows

Used by the planning, engineering, utilities, and natural resource departments, as well as by fire and inspections, ProjectDox supports the city in organizing, communicating, and speeding up the review process.

“ProjectDox allows us to streamline the communication between all these different departments,” said Andrejka.

Andrejka, who joined Apple Valley after they’d already implemented ProjectDox, had previously worked in communities that handled plan review on paper. “With ePlan review, it’s so much more streamlined. So much cleaner and more organized. You don’t have a desk full of giant plans,” he said. “It’s a step up for sure.”

With ProjectDox, Prioritization is Made Easy

With so many folks in different departments needing to review and approve plans, ProjectDox

streamlines Apple Valley's workflows and allows employees to prioritize with ease. "We can see our individual tasks and search whole projects. This makes all the information we need on each project visible, so we can see what's high priority, when it was created, and when it's due," he said. "It's good for us to have that timeline spelled out, and turnaround has definitely been improved since implementing ProjectDox," he adds.

Andrejka particularly likes the comment functions and how the solution helps him prioritize and stay organized. "You've got that little column off to the side where I can actually keep track of my comments and what I've done, which is great."

ProjectDox's Built-In Guardrails Ensure Accountability

ProjectDox's automated timestamping feature makes clear which party has had what document, and for how long, which has supported the City in enforcing review windows. "Timestamping has gotten us out of discussions with applicants who seem to sit on their plans for 2-3 months. We can say to them 'Look, you've had that since December, and we had it for only a total of two days,'" he said. "That keeps applicants on track. It helps the City to be able to point to actual dates of the document."

ProjectDox also enables Apple Valley to ensure all comments have been addressed before moving forward with plans, which ensures building safety and allows Apple Valley to collect the proper permit fees.

"ProjectDox doesn't allow you to stamp plans if they have an unresolved comment. Sometimes this is done as a way of moving the project forward and with the hope that you'll collect the fees later," said Lisa Pischke, a Building Inspections Division Specialist Permit Technologist.

"So, it's a very nice feature which forces applicants to fix issues and also prevents the City from trying to collect on what could be thousands of dollars in fees after they've already started the project," she added.

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Chris Andrejka, Building Inspector, the City of Apple Valley, MN

Alongside ProjectDox's intuitive interface and task control management features, Apple Valley has appreciated the customer service they've received: "Avolve has always been responsive. If we ever have an issue, they're always quick to respond and try to address whatever issue we're having," said Andrejka.

Contact Details

USA: +1 602-714-9774

Email: sales@avolvesoftware.com
