

The title "ProjectDox Case study Minneapolis City of Lakes" is set against a dark blue background with a white sailboat icon. The background of the entire top half of the page is a high-angle photograph of the Minneapolis skyline, showing various skyscrapers and a bridge over a river.

# ProjectDox

Case study

# Minneapolis

City of Lakes

**Minneapolis, the largest city in Minnesota with nearly half a million residents, has been leveraging ProjectDox for several years. The jurisdiction utilizes ProjectDox across various city departments, spanning areas such as land use, development, health, and fire services. Avolve's ProjectDox has not only helped them provide a better citizen experience but has catalyzed efficiencies across City Hall.**

## **Minneapolis Sought a Digital Solution for Enhanced Efficiency**

In 2016, the City of Minneapolis made the switch from paper to electronic plan review. Melissa Stover, the IT Manager of Enterprise Land Management at the City of Minneapolis, explained, "The city recognized that paper processes wouldn't be sustainable forever and that it was time to embrace digital solutions."

Prior to making the switch, Minneapolis followed a cumbersome 'check-out' system for paper plan sets. "There was a book, and you would check out plans and check them back in," Stover said. When specific plan sets were needed, "you'd have to go to the book, see who had the plans, and then go over to that person's desk." But this created visibility issues: plans weren't always where they should be,

and "reviewers didn't always know whose hands the review was in or whose turn it was," Stover said.

At the same time, applicants had started to request digital processes more regularly, and printing plotters were becoming more expensive — especially given that multiple sets were needed for each revision. The need for transparency in project timelines, project management, and compliance with statutory requirements were also driving factors. "With the statutory requirements, it would be an automatic approval if we did not meet the review timeframe," Stover noted.

## **ProjectDox Proves Best Fit**

When Minneapolis put out an RFP (request for proposal), Avolve's ProjectDox was considered the

best fit and Minneapolis integrated the solution in 2016. The customer service from Avolve was excellent throughout the integration but very attentive at critical stages to overcome any challenges with the permitting integrations.

**“We went live with 9.1 right as COVID shut offices down, which really encouraged adoption,” Stover said, noting that “I don’t want to say business as usual, but business was able to still sort of pull along, which was great.”**

Since reconfiguring their permitting system and the ProjectDox integration to improve functionality, the City of Minneapolis has adopted ProjectDox across much of City Hall.

Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is the most extensive user, overseeing land use, zoning preservation, long-range planning, and more. Regulatory Services relies on ProjectDox for housing code enforcement, while Fire Inspection Services (FIS) uses it for reviewing and approving plans related to fire safety measures. “We also use ProjectDox for health plans, which is particularly relevant to restaurants that need to submit these plans,” Stover said.

**“ProjectDox has really been a tool to improve operations across the City of Minneapolis.”**

*Melissa Stover, IT Manager, Enterprise Land Management, City of Minneapolis*

### **ProjectDox Streamlines Processes and Workflows Across Minneapolis**

Thanks to the enormous visibility ProjectDox has brought to the city, Minneapolis has been able to identify inefficiencies in review processes and improve them. “When it came to reporting, once we had the volume to run metrics, we did see a lot of inefficiencies in our old processes,” Stover said.

Stover explained the hard data helped the city to ask hard questions. “When we started looking at the time delays, we began to ask: why is one department taking 20 days when everyone else is done in three?” Stover said. “We realized,

for example, that a department may have only had two people instead of five; or their reviews were far more technical, whereas for other departments it was more of an at-a-glance approval,” she said.

**The insight conferred by ProjectDox allowed Minneapolis to reduce review cycles and improve communications with applicants, ultimately enhancing the citizen experience and customer satisfaction.**

From the applicant’s perspective, features like the ability to export plans, without granting access to the system, have been immensely beneficial. “The ability to export the documents was genius,” Stover said

“Applicants are often architects who don’t necessarily have all of the information needed to answer questions or satisfy requests,” she added. “Previously, they had to spend a lot of time gathering information. With ProjectDox, they’re able to share it with others who may be better equipped to answer the questions or remedy any corrections before it’s approved.”

### **With ProjectDox, Minneapolis Gets “Best-in-Class Workflows”**

ProjectDox has also brought helpful standardizations to the City of Minneapolis from an IT perspective. Stover mentioned that the IT team appreciates the fact that users have the autonomy to change their passwords without needing to create a ticket with IT.

And rather than needing to manage a host of customizations tailored to each department, Stover expressed that IT team “really appreciate(s) that Avolve provides best-in-class workflows in place of customizations. She added that “each group often thinks they’re unique, but ProjectDox works really well and that way we’re able to have one single standard, and reporting isn’t all over the place.”

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