



## Lunch | Learn Link

**April 28 | Online Permit and Development Reviews**

### Questions and Answers

**Question for City of Troy: Do you have a scanner to scan in 24 by 36 inch plans? How do you handle those electronically if the applicant does not have them?**

*The City of Troy has a scanner that can scan plans of those size.*

**Is Livingston County working with you on issuing building permits. Have you tried to work with them to create a more paperless process between zoning and the county building departments?**

*We have had discussions on that topic and I look forward to working with the Livingston County Building Department in the future on this topic.*

**Question for City of Ann Arbor: Did the City's Treasurer Department set up and pick the Chase Payment method?**

*Yes, the City of Ann Arbor's Finance Department set up Chase as a payment system for the entire City sometime ago.*

**Question for City of Ann Arbor: Have any of your inspectors come across issues with landlords or tenants doing a "video chat" for inspections?**

*The City of Ann Arbor has five rental inspectors that have had success with video chatting with landlords and agents. There have been some connection issues that expand the inspection timing, but we have been able to get a few done.*

**Question for City of Ann Arbor: Does Ann Arbor have written guidelines for these types of video inspections, or are you leaving it up to individual inspectors?**

*The City of Ann Arbor is leaving it up to the inspector and contractor, based on the work and what has to be reviewed. The City wants the inspector to feel comfortable with what they are seeing.*



**Does anyone use BSA? We are getting online permit submittal set up now - Building first, Planning, Zoning, Engineering for Zoning Permits next.**

*The City of Rochester replied: The Building Clerk, Building Official, & I are going to go through the BS&A Planning, Zoning, Engineering training to get a better handle on the Site Plan Reviews in addition to the permit process.*

**Question for the City of Troy: What module do you use to track reviews in BS&A? What software do you use for the "Planning portal"?**

*Building Department Module, Projects. The platform required to host the application is ArcGIS Online, It's a commonly used platform to host GIS data and apps in the cloud. One benefit of subscribing to ArcGIS Online, a user has access to dozens of pre-created configurable applications to aid in presenting an agency's datasets. This particular app that the City of Troy uses for Planning Projects is one of several that is designed around providing localized information based on a search or mouse click. One benefit of the configurable applications hosted on ArcGIS Online, is that you can easily monitor the usage and help gauge the effectiveness of your public application.*

*Another community went through Oakland County to create our Development Tracker (similar to Troy's Planning Portal) and it's through ArcGIS.*

**What challenges do you see moving into a 100% paperless model and what have you already overcome? Best practices?**

*Mindset is the biggest hurdle.*

*Going paperless makes storage, retrieval, and sharing easier. For example, we can now email agenda item submittals to interested parties.*

*Over time it is very costly to use paper. Multiple submittals and sheets. Staff time spent copying and delivering packets.*

**Are the tenants and landlords welcome to the idea of video chat? They are not always welcome when we show up. :-)**

*They've been pretty open to the process. With the University of Michigan also going remote, a number of properties are vacant and more easily available for inspection.*

**Is there a list of towns that use the BS&A PZE module?**



Here is [BS&A Software website](#) for more information.

**I'm curious how measurements are working with the digital copies! Do you have to have specialized software, or is the "measure" feature on a regular pdf sufficient?**

*The software programs that I worked with allowed me to set/calibrate the scale so that I could take measurements on the PDF.*

*For measuring, Adobe Acrobat Pro DC has a measuring tool, which is explained here: <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/grids-guides-measurements-pdfs.html>. With the Measuring Tool open, right click on the page and select "Change Scale Ratio and Precision" and select the scale of the sheet. Before measuring, make sure the page size in Adobe is the same as the sheet (for example, 36.00 x 24.00). Take some test measurements to ensure the scale is correct. If the page size in Adobe is not the same as the sheet, I recommend asking the applicant to resubmit the PDF sheets in the proper sheet size and scale. Otherwise, you can try to resize it by creating a new PDF with the proper size (Go to File, select Print, select Adobe PDF as the printer, and select the proper page size under Page Setup or Properties before you Print to a new PDF).*

*There are scaling features in the Blue Beam software we use for plan review, but the Adobe measure feature for pdf has also been sufficient for staff who are not using Blue Beam.*

**Does the final approved site plan live in BS&A or whatever program is used? Do the departments have hard copy files too?**

*Canton Township uses CityView, which is a permitting and inspection software very similar to BS&A. Therefore, CityView is also a database program that we use to store PDFs of approved site plans. The Planning Division also retains one hard copy of the site plan in the files. However, when customers ask to see a copy of an approved site plan, they usually prefer to receive the PDF because it allows for a faster turnaround time and saves them a trip to the Township Hall.*

*In Ann Arbor, the final approved plans are stored in the permitting software as an attachment accessible to the public. Before COVID we were collecting 2 sets of paper plans for staff review; currently, we are not collecting paper plans, everything is digital.*

*Troy continues to require 2 sets of hard copy plans.*