

Manatee County, Florida

Manatee County Deploys Accela Building and Planning to Reduce Office Foot Traffic, Turnaround Times and Overall Expenses

Founded in 1855, the County of Manatee, Florida encompasses a total area of 893 square miles, in which 385,571 citizens live. The county's commitment to building and planning has led to strong economic growth within their community with over 3,500 inspections performed weekly. Manatee's current Accela users include Building and Development Services Department, Public Works, Utilities, Records, County Administration, Utilities, Fire Department, Health Department, Board of Education, ITSS, GIS and Property Appraisers.

Manatee County utilizes Accela Citizen Access to empower customers to apply for permits, planning applications and submit complaints online. They also use Accela technology to inspect building sites, result and close applications, and track and manage distinct types of records from building to code enforcement. Plus, the county uses Accela's solution internally to enter records, create reports, manage fees and communicate with customers.

An Agile Strategy for Changing Demands

Manatee County is committed to innovation and staying on top of ever-changing technology. To keep pace with evolving demands of citizens while also working to improve efficiencies, the county wanted to eliminate paper-based manual processes and move to the cloud. They saw the costs savings of removing onsite servers and the burden of maintenance costs that went along with them. As a result, they moved to deploy Accela's Building and Planning solutions to make this transformation happen.

Manatee County's Challenge

Prior to leveraging Accela's software, Manatee County was dependent on legacy systems that ranged in age from five to twenty years old, some of which were no longer supported. The county was in constant fear of a system outage—if something broke, it would leave them without the necessary technology to process the county's requests.

Manatee County utilized multiple legacy systems across a number of departments, including a homegrown solution for code enforcement. With so many point products it was difficult to deliver customers a seamless experience. In addition, there were many issues with maintaining and supporting disparate systems, which required significant resources.



Population

385,571

Challenge

Improve planning and permitting processes, while delivering a seamless user experience

Solution

- Accela Building
- Accela Planning
- Accela Citizen Access
- Accela Service Request
- Management

Results

Accepting at least 80% of permits online

Overall plan review times cut nearly in half

Plan reviews for single-family homes have gone from 7 to 3 days

Roughly \$250,000 annual savings from discontinuing legacy solutions and maintenance



Digital Transformation in Community Development and Regulation

Manual paper-based processes made life hard for the agency when processing applications and requests. Office foot traffic was high. In fact, prior to Accela Building and Planning going live, Manatee County had budgeted and approved a project to build an annex permitting office and allocated additional new hires to staff it.

How Manatee County Leveraged Accela to Eliminate Inefficiencies in Planning and Permitting Processes

When Manatee County deployed Accela they not only saw increased efficiencies and improved customer satisfaction, they no longer needed a new annex permitting office due to online submittals, eliminating the extra expense.

Government in the Cloud

The county is now accepting more than 80% of their permits online, resulting in lower wait times and a decrease in office foot traffic.

They have also significantly reduced permit turnaround times. According to Business Services Manager for the Building and Development Services Department, Glenna Campana, Manatee County has gained significant headway on turnaround times for plans reviewed for building permits. Their single-family homes have gone from 7 to 3 days since more than one reviewer can look at the same record simultaneously. Offering access to services outside normal business hours allows citizens and contractors to work with the county when it's convenient for them. The customer no longer has to go to the office. They can sit at their desktop at home or in an office, and submit their plans and applications online 24/7.

Success for the county is reflected in the number of monthly permitting, planning and zoning record transactions, so speeding the processes for these records and applications is key.

Manatee County estimates the cost for waiting on a customer face-to-face is roughly five times what it costs to interact with customers via Accela's technology. Through improved efficiencies, the county is empowering their citizens to submit, track, pay fees and manage requests without draining resources from agency staff. This saves the county time and money, while improving customer transparency and satisfaction.

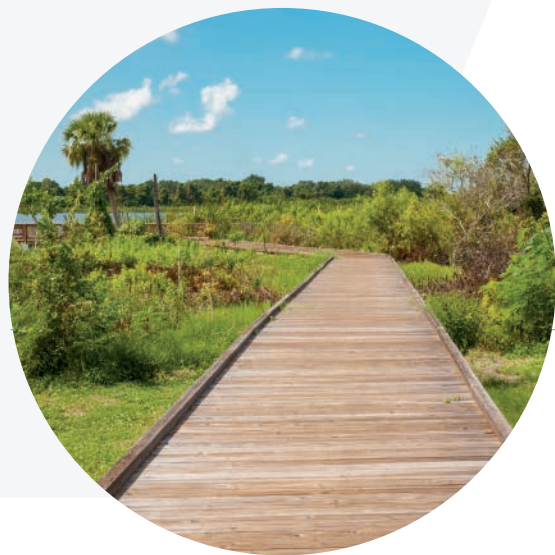
Quality Control

An unexpected benefit the county encountered after deploying Accela's solution was the quality control Manatee County now possessed.

“We are so busy in Manatee County and Accela is helping eliminate errors on plans and land development applications that are turned in. People are trying to get land use applications and building permits out the door as fast as they can. As a result, sometimes they don't spend the quality time they should. Accela makes it a lot easier and more efficient for us to do that quality control. “

John Barnott

Director of Building Development Services,
Manatee County, FL



Streamlining Processes to Reduce Expense

Cutting Agency Spend

The retirement of older systems has led to additional cost savings. Manatee County no longer has to send paper to their Records department for retention purposes, eliminating the need to pay for scanning documents. They have also seen annual costs savings of \$250,000 by discontinuing software and maintenance that was no longer needed due to the efficiencies Accela provides.

A Commitment to Success

A dedicated team with a commitment to success has made Manatee County an example among government agencies in the region. In fact, the Building Officials Association of the State of Florida has recognized Manatee County Building Department out of nearly 350 agencies across the state as the one to emulate and model.

About Accela

Accela provides market-leading SaaS solutions that empower governments worldwide to build thriving communities, grow businesses and protect citizens. From planning, building, licensing and permitting, to asset and service request management, finance, environmental health and more, Accela's offerings accelerate efficiency and transparency in governments of all sizes. Powered by Microsoft Azure, Accela's open and flexible technology helps agencies address specific needs today, while ensuring they are prepared for any emerging or complex challenge in the future. Accela's solutions serve more than 80 percent of America's largest cities. Accela is headquartered in San Ramon, California, with additional offices around the world.

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