

## **Recent Changes to Public Records Act**

Recently the Tennessee General Assembly adopted wide-ranging changes to the Public Records laws which directly affect the manner in which the Community Development Department (Planning, Engineering, Codes Compliance, Building Codes, and Sewage Disposal Management) must process requests to view, or requests to obtain copies of public records.

All Tennessee citizens must provide proof of Tennessee citizenship prior to inspection or receiving copies of public records. In addition to proof of citizenship, to obtain copies of public records the Tennessee citizen must complete an Inspection/Duplication of Records Request form. For Tennessee citizens that request to inspect public records, Williamson County requests that an Inspection/Duplication of Records form be completed to assist the record custodian in fulfilling the public records inspection request. Copies of the Inspection/Duplication of Records Request form can be found at all counters within the Community Development Department.

Another outcome of the above noted changes was that fees for certain items were standardized. For instance, fees for black and white copies (8.5"/11", 8.5"/14", and 11"/17") were standardized at \$.15 per page. The fee for color copies was fixed at \$.50 per page. Oversize copies (larger than 11"/17") are \$2.00 per page. As noted above, any request for copies must be accompanied by the above noted form.

In an effort to at least partly mitigate the impact these changes might have, it has been determined that black and white copies up to six (6) will be provided at no charge. Black and white copy requests involving seven or more will be assessed at \$.15 per page.

This memorandum only addresses the highlights of these mandated changes. A full text can be found at [www.comptroller.state.tn.us/openrecords](http://www.comptroller.state.tn.us/openrecords). As a public agency, the Community Development Department is obligated to observe these regulations.

We anticipate that at least in the initial stages, some inconvenience will be visited upon our customers; however, every effort must be made to minimize that inconvenience wherever possible.