

# CASE STUDY

Wild Rivers – Irvine, CA  
Citizen Applicant

Wild Rivers, a popular water park in Irvine, California, is planning to return with an all-new, state-of-the-art water park in a new location in Irvine after closing in 2011. Mike Riedel, President of Wild Rivers, shares his improved experience as an owner and applicant in the City of Irvine with extensive plan submittals and reviews under the City's use of goPost™ Public Portal and e-PlanREVIEW®.



## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Wild Rivers is a popular water park located in Irvine, California. Over the course of its 100-day season each year, the park draws an average of 400,000 visitors, with approximately 90% of them local to the area. The park originally opened for business in July 1986, but was forced to close in September 2011, when its lease with The Irvine Company was not renewed due to developer plans for high occupancy housing. Given the success and popularity of Wild Rivers, it was decided to rebuild and return in a new venue in Irvine. The up-and-coming waterpark will feature entirely new state-of-the-art attractions, built from the ground up. Ground-breaking is scheduled for May 2021, and the grand opening is scheduled for May 2022.

The return of the all-new waterpark is a very large undertaking that spans years, utilizing multiple contracted professionals for each aspect of the park, and requiring extensive plan sets and multiple reviews. The project began when the City of Irvine still performed plan intake and reviews with the traditional paper plan process. Mike Riedel, President of Wild Rivers, recounts a full day of printing and a cost of \$8,000 for the first round of plans, which had to be hand-carried to the City to submit.

Plans for such extensive projects can commonly consist of 1,000 sheets or more. Because multiple departments are involved in the reviews, multiple copies of the plans were required in order to provide each department with its own copy. In the case of the Wild Rivers project, submittals for the architectural review went through the

Traffic and Planning Departments, as well as the City Manager's office. Paper intake and plan reviews, recommendations, and resubmittals require additional printing, which would be charged to the applicant, as well.

Repeated printing and manual routing requirements tally up more than printing costs, however. The time required is a large factor. In terms of development, building, and construction, the common adage is that "time is money." The longer any stage takes, the longer it will be until the project is complete, opened, and producing income. From that perspective, plan reviews using the paper method were very costly.

## CITIZEN APPLICANT QUOTE

*"From a business perspective, the City of Irvine's digital systems for submittals, reviews, and resubmittals have been great. You do not need to trudge down to the City, carrying several copies of plans that could easily be 1000 pages each. Since all files are generated digitally, it saves both time and money for the businesses submitting plans. I was one of the businesses to be involved as the City's process transferred from printing and physically handing in submittals to submitting them electronically. Our first round of submittals, which occurred before the City's adoption of the electronic process cost us over \$8,000 and a full day to print for the CEQA submittal alone – not even the full construction drawings. You're not only saving money, but also time, since copies can be immediately forwarded electronically, as needed, with no extra time, printing cost, or heavy lifting required."*

- Mike Riedel, President of Wild Rivers



## APPLICANT SAVINGS ON INITIAL SUBMITTAL

- ✓ Full day of printing on large plan sets
- ✓ Over \$8000 in printing costs for the CEQA submittal alone

## SOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of technology in optimizing productivity and providing top-rated customer service, in 2020 the City of Irvine transitioned its intake and plan review processes to a digital model using e-PlanSoft's goPost™ Public Portal and e-PlanREVIEW®. The cloud-based solutions allow every step and stage of intake and review to be performed online. The improvements in terms of time and cost savings, as well as convenience have been immediate and significant for applicants, builders, and developers.

Riedel goes on to report that there were virtually no interruptions to the flow and progress of the plan reviews for the Wild Rivers project when the COVID-19 pandemic affected public office closures and distancing measures. Because reviewers were able to perform all review tasks remotely and concurrently in real-time, plans were reviewed efficiently, without the need for additional printing or in-person delivery back and forth. Riedel notes that excessive printing time and costs along with the need to interrupt the business day to transport and hand-carry the unwieldy plan sets have been virtually eliminated. Plans are now submitted to the City electronically, which has created significant improvements to the process for applicants. Additionally, the need for multiple copies no longer exists. All reviewers and project participants collaborate remotely in real-time, electronically, from any location. Plans are accessed anywhere, from any device with a secure internet connection, and participants receive notifications when a plan is ready for their tasks.

## RESULTS

Plan submittals, adjustments, and resubmittals have become easier to transmit and route. And communications have improved, as well. Comments and recommendations are easy to see and easy to understand, given e-PlanREVIEW's robust reporting and markup tools, and standardized comments library. Communications are also far less daunting and time-consuming. The applicant and reviewer can communicate via online call, in which any questions can be brought to light, and clarity about recommendations can be addressed quickly and efficiently.

Another benefit that became obvious is that the use of all digital plans has opened up the pool of contractors for projects. When working exclusively with paper plans, it was more efficient to work substantially with local contractors, from a purely time requirement perspective. Working in close proximity minimized the amount of time that was needed to ship and deliver the physical plan sets. With e-PlanREVIEW and goPost Public Portal, proximity restrictions are no longer a factor, as electronic plans are routed online, with no need for couriers or delivery services. Contractors for projects can be from anywhere geographically, including other states.

## CHALLENGES OVERCOME

- ✓ Time-consuming submittals
- ✓ Costly printing
- ✓ Inconvenient logistics
- ✓ Lengthy inefficient review cycle

## KEY BENEFITS

- ✓ Faster time to approval
- ✓ Remote collaboration
- ✓ Transparent process
- ✓ Ease of submittals and document transfer

## SOLUTIONS

- ✓ Online portal
- ✓ Convenient communications options
- ✓ Electronic reports
- ✓ Standardized comments and recommendations