The following comments were provided by Benchmark Engineering, Inc. We discussed some on them during the PDox User's Group meeting. Responses for each have been written below:

1. **Comment Summary Print out – can the comments be consolidated and printed out?**

   Yes, all comments can be consolidated and printed out. There are several ways to do this as demonstrated during the user's group meeting. Feel free to contact HelpDPZPDox@howardcountymd.gov or the DLD project manager if you need additional assistance. The Brava Viewer application within PDox also has an extensive Help resource which has instructions on how to do this. Regarding consolidation of comments for all sheets, see number 2 below.

2. **Printing comments for each sheet is tedious and wastes paper.**

   We agree that printing comments for each sheet is tedious. As indicated during the meeting, we have acquired a software component called PDF Writer that will automate the printing of comments for multiple plan sheets. This should be up and running early next year.

3. **There are major delays in opening drawings/checklists and other documents. Is any effort being made to reduce these delays?**

   There are two answers to this. On our side, we are working on reconfiguring the PDox servers to better optimize performance. This includes moving the Pdox database to a cluster server environment and putting the job processor on a separate server from the database. This should solve major delays with processing and the need to re-boot the system. We have also noticed that the speed of opening drawings/checklists do vary by location. Your local internet bandwidth and connection speed does play a role. Slow connections and limited bandwidth from your internet service provider can have an impact. Also, individual computers may need to cleaned up using Disk Cleanup and Disk Defragmenter to increase speed.

4. **When going through the checklist the links to the fee sheet caused the program to lock up. Is this a common problem and has it been resolved.**

   This is not a common problem, but does occur from time to time. We are working on addressing this – the checklist sub-process is the largest and most complicated workflow and e-form component of the SDP process, and there may be ways to better optimize how this works. When you download the spreadsheet, first save it to your network before working on it.

5. **The supporting file downloads should be available through the help menu, not just the log in screen.**

   This is a good suggestion, and was also suggested by someone else during the meeting. We will work on adding the "View Help and Resources" web link to the menu inside PDox once logged in. In the mean time, it is possible to open up another login screen in a separate web browser to access. That is, you don't need to log out and log back in again, just open second login screen

6. **When going through the checklist there needs to be some indication on the sheets when they have been saved or when the checklist has been marked as completed. We have had several situations where we thought we had completed the checklist and had to go through the process a couple times before it was accepted.**

   We discussed this during the user's group meeting. We reiterated what each button at the bottom of the checklist e-forms do. Selecting "Save and Close" will save all the work completed in the current checklist e-form and leave that that task in your task list to access at a future time. Selecting "next page" will also save the information and then move onto the next checklist e-form.

   We also discussed what has been a point of confusion for many and that is this: At the very end of the checklist process, after the entire checklist has been filled out, there is an extra step that gives the user the opportunity to re-check the checklist and then hit complete. Until this is done, the final task will remain in your task list and the process will not move forward. We asked folks whether they wanted this extra step removed. Currently, we have received no feedback on this. So for now we will leave it. *The key to remember is that as long as there is a task in your task list, the SDP process will not move forward until that task is complete. As always, if there are any questions where things are, please free to contact HelpDPZPDox@ howardcountymd.gov or the DLD project manager.*

7. **When the project file email address is used no one is notified within the county that an email has been received. Either remove this as an option on the email list or cc coordinator when an email is received.**

   The project file e-mail address only sends e-mails to the project – the e-mail is sent into an incoming e-mail directory under the project that currently is only accessable to DPZ staff.

   Whenever you send an e-mail, make sure to also send it to the intake coordinator or DLD project manager (or whoever else you want to communicate with). The intake coordinator is known as the project owner in PDox whose name is listed on the main project screen for the particular SDP. In the recipient selection box scroll to the intake coordinator group, open it up, and select their name. The project manager's name can be found in the DLD group. It is always a good idea to also e-mail to the project to keep a record of the e-mail within the project.

8. **Coordination of the money and signed plan submission. It was our understanding that no appointment was needed. However we have had situation where when dropping off there seemed to be a problem. Why can't the person submitting the plans fill out the receipt? All the information need it provided in the letter received from the county.**

   This was discussed at the user's group meeting. No appointment is necessary to pay plan fees to finalize the acceptance of a new SDP for processing. We do ask, however, that you first call Julia Boon, Jennifer Wellen, or JJ Hartner, to let them know you will be planning to come in to pay as they may be in a meeting at a certain time or otherwise occupied. Appointments for submitting original mylars are still required.

9. **If the system shuts down on the day of a submission will additional time be given to allow the submission to take place to accommodate the systems down time? Will this be address on a case by case basis?**

   Generally, this will be evaluated on a case by case basis. If government delay is the cause of the problem, related to the system temporarily not functioning, then extra time will be given.

10. **Many times engineering or other departments may have their comments available prior to the final issuance of the letter – can these comments be made available through the system prior to the final letter? It allows us to get a jump start on comments that may take more time to address.**

    No, comments will only be made available once a final decision on plan status is rendered by Chief of the Division of Land Development. A major function of the DLD project manager and DLD Chief is to coordinate all comments, work out any discrepancies, and review for appropriateness. Having comments available to consultants prior to this from individual agencies has potential to create confusion and inefficiencies.

11. **Once fees are paid how long does it typically take the system to update its status – example – we submitted fees on 12/2 and received a letter confirming acceptance on 12/4. As of 12/10 the system still indicates status as "Intake".**

    Once fees are paid, the DLD intake coordinator completes their task in ProjectDox indicating that fees have been paid. This starts the official plan review process and should be done the same day that the fees are paid. If it is not, please contact DLD. The above appears to be an isolated incident.

12. **What is the status of incorporating SCD fees into the DPZ submission acceptance letter along with the DPZ and DED fees?**

    Soil Conservation Fees will be collected by DLD during intake when the fees are paid. We have incorporated the SCD fee calculation worksheet into PDox.

13. **There needs to be some flexibility in the checklist to allow comments to be written. Sometimes items are not provided for a reason and we would like to be able to explain why on the checklist.**

    This has been a common request. We have incorporated a comment box at the bottom of each checklist e-form where comments can be written.

14. **There have been instances where the re-submission date on the ProjectDox email doesn't match the actual APFO deadline date.**

    We are looking into this and will address. We will need to create a custom time limit of 45 days in ProjectDox to make both dates coincide. In the meantime please follow the date on the DLD letter.

15. **Has the DED individual lot fee estimate been added for residential SDP's? Currently the DED cost estimate shown is for non-residential development.**

    This has been added to the Checklist.

16. **On the initial log-in page, there needs to be a place to add additional email addresses so that more people within the Engineering Company receives the ProjectDox correspondence (i.e. project managers, principals etc).**

    During the application process we request a single e-mail for the responsible consultant. A single e-mail is required as all tasks that need to be fulfilled go to one e-mail address. However, we can add more e-mail addresses to the "applicant group." These addresses can include more staff at your firm, the developer and/or the land owner. Once added to the applicant group they will have access to the project in PDox and be notified of any activity taking place. However, *tasks* must be completed by the initial applicant. The initial applicant can be changed once a project is started. Please contact the intake coordinator or DLD project manager if you want to change the e-mail address for the initial applicant or want to add additional e-mails to the applicant group.

The following comments were stated during the December 15th PDox User's Group meeting. Responses for each have been written below:

1. **Who will pay for lost external work from a system failure?**

   As stated during the meeting, we apologize for the recent server crash and lost information due to insufficient back-ups. There is not acceptable and we are working closely with the County's Department of Technology and Communication to resolve this so it won't happen again: 1) If the server were to fail again, system recover should not take more than 1 day, and 2) back-ups should be done daily at a minimum, not weekly as appeared to be the case.

   Please note that server errors are rare, but they can happen, and did this one time recently after six months of use.

   As indicated in the meeting, please contact DPZ to describe any particular issue relating to lost data/time associated with this recent problem. The more details we know the better we can address.

2. **How and where do consultants respond to markups/comments?**

   The best practice is to respond to markups with markups directly on the drawing itself next to the markup you are responding to using a consistent color for your change mark. Some had indicated that they would prefer to respond to comments in written format separate from the drawing. You have this option as well. If you choose to do this, then upload your comments to the Communication Received folder and let the DLD project manager know. The key is coordination and communication with the DLD project manager who can then communicate with other agencies on how you wish to proceed.

   Responding to markups with markups will be discussed further and demonstrated at the next user's group meeting. We have found that the majority of consultants prefer to do this and find it clearer, easier, and more efficient than responding with written comments in a separate document.

3. **Consultant's clients want to see comments from DPZ. How can they do this?**

   There are two ways to do this. First, all DPZ and SRC agency markups/comments can be automatically assembled and printed out or PDF'd. These can then be e-mailed/sent to your clients. Please see items 1 and 2 in our response to comments from Benchmark Engineering on Page 1 for further details on this.

   Second, we can add more e-mail addresses to the applicant group. These addresses can include more staff at your firm, the developer and/or the land owner. Once added to the applicant group they will have access to the project in PDox and be notified of any activity taking place. They can view markups/comments as well. Please contact the intake coordinator or DLD project manager if you want to add additional e-mails to the applicant group.

4. How do consultants publish their comments?

This was demonstrated during the user's group meeting. Please see items 1 and 2 in our response to comments from Benchmark Engineering on Page 1 for further details on this.

5. Should consultants respond to comments from each agency?

Yes. This is a best practice. You always can always communicate with the DLD project manager as well, to discern the extent and methodology of how these responses are to be addressed. The role of the DLD project manager is to work with you and the other SRC agencies to coordinate and resolve issues.

6. Consultants cannot see the e-mails they send through PDox.

Be sure to cc or select yourself when sending any e-mail through PDox and you will then receive a copy. You can always contact the intake coordinator of DLD project manager to get copies of e-mails that you sent as well in case you forget to do this. We will also ask Avolve, the software developer, whether the system can be set to automatically cc the sender.

7. In the event of system failure will consultants get extra time for review or to complete their task?

Generally, this will be evaluated on a case by case basis. If government delay is the cause of the problem, related to the system temporarily not functioning, then extra time will be given.

8. Suggestion: When you log into ProjectDox, can the link to the initial application be there rather than having to go to the DPZ website?

We think this can be accomplished. We will consult with the PDox software developer and add this functionality.

9. On the checklist, can you add comments?

Yes, we have amended the checklist so it now includes comment boxes on the bottom of each section where specific comments can be added.

10. Can a description be added to the sections on the SDP checklist?

Yes, that is a good suggestion as that will make it clearer as to where you are in the checklist questionnaire process. This will be added in addition to the Roman Numerals.

11. How do consultants allow two separate people to review items? Like a traffic study.

At any time during the review, a Simple Review can be conducted. This can be launched by the person doing the review. It basically invites anyone else to conduct a review where they can add markups and make comments in a comment box to allow collaboration between the two reviewers. Please contact us if you would like assistance on how to do this.

Additionally, any number of people can be granted access to the project by including them in the Applicant Group. Once in the Applicant Group, the can see the files and corresponding markup and respond to them. In case you would like to include an additional engineer to the Applicant Group, please contact the DLD project manager or Intake Coordinator of the project.

12. Why are drawing files getting corrupted?

ProjectDox cannot corrupt files, as it only reads files and converts them to a proprietary format that works in the Brava viewer. The original file remains intact. In some cases the files do not convert properly and need to be re-uploaded. At the user's group meeting we went over the upload process. Upload details can also be found on the View Help and Resources link at the bottom of the PDox login screen.

We recommend that you bind your Xref's to the drawing file before uploading. If you do this you will not have to upload the Xref's however you will have to upload raster (image) files.

13. Do user's have a problem with print viewing vs. computer viewing? That is, what ends up being on the mylar at the end may look different than what is reviewed on PDox – line weights, special fonts, etc.

This is a valid point and the reviewer and the consultant will need to learn where this occurs and provide remedies. For example, if this is the case, then the PDox Development Team can upload special fonts or line types to PDox, so they are no longer an issue. The reviewer also has an option to turn on and off layers in PDox, which can certainly help facilitate better and more thorough reviews. It is ultimately the DLD project manager's responsibility to make sure the final signed mylar has been reviewed properly and completely.

14. The system costs consultants time and money to respond now instead of a written response. All their staff do not have access.

It is clearly not the intent of PDox to make things more costly, time-consuming and difficult. However, with anything new there may be a time of adjustment and learning. The PDox Development Team will take all suggestions to make the process easier and more efficient for end users. We learned during the user's group meeting that in some cases it was more time consuming because consultants were working with CAD files created prior to the implementation of PDox and are then needing to adjust the files (layers, etc) to fit the system. This can no doubt take some extra time. It was acknowledged during that conversation that for new projects consultants will develop new CAD files with the PDox requirements in mind and thus it will be easier and quicker moving forward. For these interim CAD files we have and will continue to except PDFs if that makes it easier. Ultimately, we prefer DWG files given the layering and model space advantages of that format.

Regarding all staff not having access, please contact the DLD Project Manager or the Intake Coordinator. We can add anyone in your firm to the applicant group so they can have access to the project. Note, however, that only one e-mail can be used to complete tasks. Another option is to use a single company e-mail that more than one person can access and be able to perform tasks with.

15. **Paper comments provided a back-up to see that all comments were addressed. With markups it is now more confusing.**

    As demonstrated during the user's group meeting, comments can be arranged in paper form and printed out. Please see number 4 on Page 6 above.

16. **What are the County's plans for storage? For example, to access past traffic studies.**

    This is a good question raised by Traffic Engineering in the County's Department of Public Works. Should they print out traffic studies to put on a shelf as they may need to access in the future? For now nothing is being deleted from PDox. So you can always go back to the plan and see all documents and drawings. The County's Department of Technology and Communication is currently developing a new electronic document management and storage system for the County. The Police Department will be the first to use this and other departments will follow. Once DPZ is linked to this system, then rules will be created where all older PDox plans will be archived into this new system. Plans and all associated documents can then be accessed from that new system. At that point, we may choose to delete from PDox, but that process has not been finalized.

17. **For consultants responding to change marks, can they respond within the initial change mark comment itself rather than creating a separate new response change mark?**

    This is an excellent suggestion. The Brava viewer in PDox does not currently allow this in an easy way. We will contact the vendor and suggest this modification to their software. In the meantime, however, you can open a reviewer's markup and save it as your response markup. After saving it, you can edit the change marks and include the text of your response.

18. **Can we add the name of the project in addition to the project number to the e-mails received as well as on the task list in PDox.**

    Another excellent suggestion. The Development Team will work on adding the project name to both e-mails and the task list.

19. **If plans are appealed, how will they be shown to the Board of Appeals?**

    At this point, the Board of Appeals will want to review everything in paper so DPZ will prepare that material for the hearing. The same is the case with the Planning Board. It may be in the near future, materials are reviewed electronically during the hearing. DPZ would like to move in this direction.

20. **How does the public view plans and reviews. What will you do when citizens want to see SDP's in PDox.**

    We do have a computer with a large screen monitor at our front counter where the public can view plans and markups once a decision has been rendered. Reviewing materials are set up to be completely analogous to reviewing paper plan files.

21. Why can't a PDF or DWF be submitted?

We prefer that DWG files be submitted given the layering and model space advantages. However, as indicated during the user's group meeting we will accept DWF and PDF files. As indicated earlier, these options may be valuable for consultants who already have CAD files created not designed or geared towards PDox requirements.

22. Consultants used to get comments from Engineering and get a jump start on addressing these comments. Do they have to wait for the official comments in PDox?

Yes. This is a best practice and in accordance with DPZ regulations.

23. What about the status of Water and Sewer Plans. When will they be able to submit in PDox.

The Development Team will be working on designing and implementing the final plan and water and sewer plan processes as the next two processes. Timing of when this will be complete is still to be established. The current priority is to work on fixes/upgrades to the SDP process. A more precise timeframe will be communicated early this year.

24. Can the Help Resources link be on the project task list screen as well as the initial log in page?

Yes, we will add the link there as well. Note, in the mean time you can always open a separate browser to access the Help Resources link – that is, you do not necessarily need to log out of PDox to access this.

25. Can the PDox SDP application be placed on the PDox login page rather than just on DPZ's web site.

We will work on doing this as well.