

Local Government Permitting

Best Practices (Appendices)

August 2008

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WASHINGTON STATE
**Governor's Office of
Regulatory Assistance**

Appendices

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Examples of Best Practices

1. Create Mutual Understanding

Example: Cowlitz County

Following a recommendation from an industry-sponsored process assessment, the Cowlitz County Board of County Commissioners chartered an Advisory Committee. The role of the Advisory Committee was to advise the Board and departmental leaders during a reorganization and redesign of its Department of Building & Planning (B&P). B&P conducts a number of services including: long-range planning; traditional building, fire prevention, planning, and environmental reviews; inspections and code enforcement; and environmental health for onsite septic, potable water, solid waste, and monitoring programs. Cowlitz County does not plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The Advisory Committee participants included contractors, developers, realtors, industry group representatives, a planning commission chairman, a commissioner, and the B&P director. It provided review and recommendations on several major decisions:

- Prioritizing issues.
- Selecting a process consultant to lead the improvements.
- Setting a level of service for the timeframe for issuing building permit decisions.

The Advisory Committee also formed a subcommittee to focus on updates to onsite septic codes and policies, a task made more difficult by the region's highly variable soils and topography. Staff experts and a broad segment of industry professionals worked with the subcommittee to resolve this contentious issue more effectively and efficiently.

The Advisory Committee also initiated regular get-togethers. Elected officials, department leaders and local industry groups meet on a routine basis to hear concerns, introduce ideas, collect feedback, and report on progress made with various issues.

One Advisory Committee member described the transformation as “night and day.”

For more information, contact:

[Mike Wojtowicz](#), Department of Building & Planning Director at (360) 577-3052 or [Axel Swanson](#), Commissioner, Cowlitz County BOCC at (360) 577-3020

2. Contact Stakeholders Early

Example: Snohomish County and Fish & Wildlife

Snohomish County and the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), Region 4 office, work together to coordinate permit review.

The process begins when an applicant's preliminary site plan and narrative are submitted to the County for a local Pre-Application conference. A County planner visits the site and prepares a letter indicating required approvals and key considerations marked on the site plan. The County planner meets with the applicant to discuss the results.

The applicant then contacts WDFW for an onsite review. The applicant provides WDFW with a copy of the County information. WDFW identifies design requirements that apply to the project and discusses any alternatives with the applicant.

The applicant incorporates both the County and WDFW findings into the final design before formally submitting an application to the County. An intake appointment is scheduled where a County technician screens the incoming application for completeness based on published checklists. The County planner who provided the Pre-Application guidance remains the project planner for the permitting review and acts as the case manager for the project. The applicant can track review progress online.

During the SEPA public comment period, WDFW is provided with the opportunity to submit comments to the County. As time and work load permit, WDFW verifies the design for consistency with the plan laid forth during the earlier site visit and consultation. WDFW submits comments to the County project planner within the SEPA comment period.

When the County review is complete, the County planner issues a SEPA determination. During the SEPA appeal period, the applicant formally applies for a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) from WDFW. Upon request, WDFW will route a draft HPA permit to the County planner and the applicant for review and comment. Any discrepancies can be corrected and the final HPA conditions may be referenced on the County permit.

Unless appealed, once the SEPA appeal period closes, the County permits can be issued. Thereafter, WDFW can complete their HPA review process. The applicant keeps a copy of both the HPA and the County permit onsite during construction. The applicant notifies WDFW before beginning work within an ordinary high-water mark.

For more information, contact:

[David Brock](#), WDFW Region 4 Habitat Program Manager, at (425) 775-1311 or Snohomish County Planning & Development Services at (425) 388-3311

3. Ensure Complete Applications

Example: Skagit County

Skagit County Department of Planning & Development Services (PDS) conducts building, planning, environmental, and most fire prevention reviews; inspections and code enforcement; long-range planning; and operation of a permit center. Environmental Health personnel dedicated to permitting are co-located with PDS. Public Works reviewers share the same building. The interdepartmental team works cohesively. The County plans under the Growth Management Act (GMA) with seven urban growth areas, countywide planning policies, and buildable lands inventories.

PDS conducted a process assessment in 2004. A primary recommendation from this analysis was to replace a long-standing practice of accepting applications in any form to one based on intake checklists. The process improvement started with residential building permits. The department goal was a 30 day median review. At that time, performance was at 49 days. In addition, 42% of applications required at least one revision which magnified department workload to intake, route and review each correction.

To develop the intake checklist, department experts reconciled how critical area identification, legal lot status, shorelines, stormwater, onsite septic design, and well log approval should be ordered. All of these items, to varying degrees, affect residential building permit review. After a number of meetings conducted over several months, the team decided what items were prerequisites, what items could be reviewed in parallel, and what elements of the application had to be verified at the counter. Team members included representatives from building, planning, environmental, fire, environmental health, public works, counter staff, technician reviewers and others.

The team proposed their draft checklist to a Permitting Advisory Committee (see Best Practice 1). The Committee reviewed the draft checklist and recommended adoption. The checklist was then presented to the Board of County Commissioners who concurred. The public was provided a two-month transition period during which applications were screened and discussed at intake but accepted if the applicant so chose. The checklist became mandatory on January 1, 2006.

Results from the permit tracking system indicated timelines improved dramatically after implementation of the intake checklists. Permit timelines trimmed 18 days and consistently remaining 37% faster (Figure 2), achieving the 30-day turnaround goal. In addition, timelines became more consistent from month to month, even over the busier summertime season. Permit volume and staffing level remained constant over the two-year period.

Another observed benefit of the intake checklists was that the number of corrections letters fell by 30%.

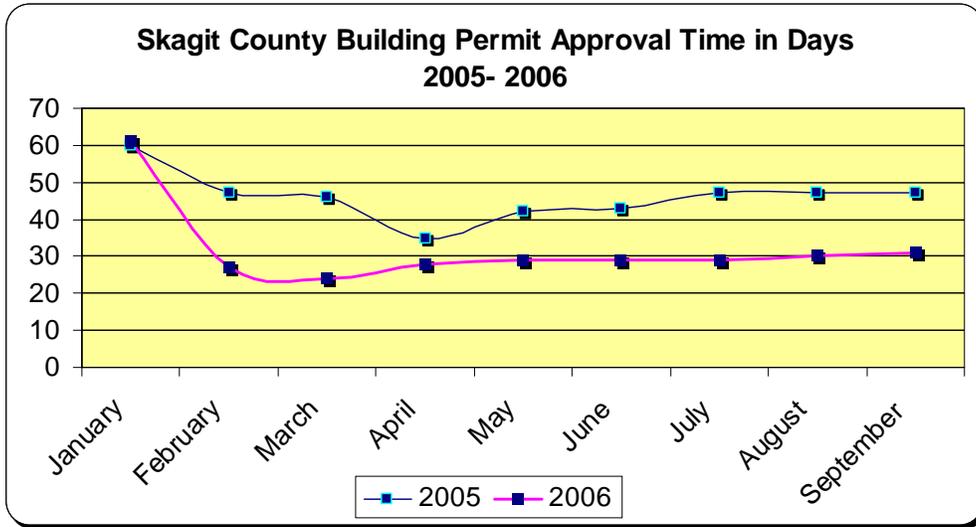


Figure 2 – Skagit County Residential Building Permit Timelines Before and After Intake Checklists

For more information, contact:

[Bill Dowe](#), Assistant Director of Skagit County PDS, at (360) 336-9410.

Skagit County Intake Checklist



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1800 Continental Place • Mount Vernon, WA 98273
 Inspections 360.336.9306 • Office 360.336.9410 • Fax 360.336.9416

Residential Building Permit Submittal Checklist

Approved before building permit application:

- Lot Certification**
 ___ Approved Lot Certification, previously recorded; **OR**,
 ___ Approved Lot Certification or RUE. PDS will submit it for recording; **OR**,
 ___ The lot has an existing residence. Lot cert is not required for accessory buildings.
- Critical Areas Review**
 ___ Completed staff report or Recorded **Protected Critical Area** site plan.

Submitted before or with a building permit application:

- Building Permit Application and Fees** Completed and signed.
- Water**
 ___ Drilled Well Evaluation Number _____; **OR**,
 ___ Community/Public Well, approved by County Health Department; **OR**,
 ___ Public Connection: Provide a letter of availability or a connection receipt. (PUD, LaConner and Anacortes only)
- Septic Design**
 ___ Septic Permit Number _____; **OR**,
 ___ Public Sewer: Provide letter of availability or a connection receipt.
- Site Plan 2 copies, 8 1/2 x 11"** (11 x 17", max)
 See the enclosed example. Plan **must** include all 12 items to be complete.
- Drainage Plan** For Projects that create **OVER 1,000 sq ft.** of new impervious surface. See the enclosed example. Provide **2 copies.**
- Access Permit Application**
 ___ Existing - Permit Number _____; **OR**,
 ___ Private Road (no permit required); **OR**,
 ___ State Road (permit from DOT); **OR**, ___ County Road (permit required).
- Address Application** Blue sign? _____
- Construction Plans: 2 Complete Sets and 1 Extra Floor Plan**
 Plans must be drawn to comply with the 2003 IBC or IRC, must be site and building specific and **MUST** include all of the following:
 - Foundation Plan
 - Roof Framing Plan
 - Cross-Section
 - Floor Plan
 - Floor Framing Plan
 - Elevations
- Manufactured Homes**
 ___ All: One copy of the floor plan.
 ___ New homes: Installation instructions (2 Sets).
 ___ Used: Model year of the home: _____. Homes older than 1977 require a Safety Inspection by the Department of Labor & Industries.
- Energy Code Compliance Worksheet**
 For heated buildings other than manufactured homes.
- Shoreline Information, for parcels within 200' of a shoreline**
 - Show the distance of the structure to the Ordinary High Water Mark. (OHWM)
 - Itemize site coverage within 200' of the OHWM. Details are on the attachment.
 - Show adjacent houses within 300' of side property lines. Indicate their distance to the OHWM. This can be done on a separate page if necessary.
 - Construction Plan Cross-Section must indicate the height of the structure above existing grade.

Application will expire 6 mo from this date:

Accepted by _____

Permit Number _____

Zoning / Setbacks _____

Flood Plain/Floodway _____

Shoreline _____

Fees at submittal form _____



Site Plan Requirement Checklist

Site plan must be prepared on 8 ½" x 11" *or* 11" x 17" paper.

***The first 7 requirements of the Drainage Plan may be met by utilizing a third copy of this site plan.**

- 1. **Title Block**
Indicate applicant's name, site address, Assessor's Tax Account # and Property ID # (P#) for the subject property.
- 2. **Scale**
Indicate map scale. Use any appropriate scale and note it on your site plan. Example - Scale: 1" = 40'
- 3. **North Arrow**
Show an arrow indicating the ↑ NORTH direction.
- 4. **Property Boundaries/Easements**
Show property lines and all easements (*utility, drainage, dike, access, railroad, etc.*). Indicate site dimensions and names of adjacent roads.
- 5. **Driveway**
Show entire length and width of driveway in feet. Indicate grade of driveway in percent (%) of slope. Turnouts are required every 300 feet. To create a turnout the road shall be widened to 20 feet in width for a distance of 30 feet in length to allow for vehicles to pull over and allow emergency vehicles to proceed.
- 6. **Building Footprint**
Show location, dimensions and setbacks of all existing and proposed buildings or structures. If this project includes an addition, please clearly show the addition different from the existing building. Identify each building by its use (*residence, garage, etc.*). Indicate roof overhang lines and any decks, porches or retaining walls.
- 7. **Impervious Surface**
Indicate the amount of **new** impervious area. Impervious areas include the square footage of new building roof area, parking area, patios and any new driveway.
- 8. **Setbacks**
Indicate the building setbacks from all property lines with a dashed line. Include shoreline setbacks when applicable.
- 9. **Well Location or Water Lines**
Indicate the drinking water supply (*existing and/or proposed, public or individual*). Show all private well(s), public water mains and water supply pipes to all buildings.
- 10. **On-Site Septic System Location or Sewer Lines**
Indicate method of sewage disposal: Private septic - show existing and proposed on-site sewage system(s). Include drainfield replacement area(s). (Tanks are required to be 50' and drainfields 100' from a well.) Public sewer - indicate location of sewer main and private pipes to building.
- 11. **Propane**
Show the location of the propane tank (if any).
- 12. **Slope**
Indicate slope (elevation change) of building site. Use contour lines or arrows to show direction and percent (%) of slope(s). Identify any erosion or landslide areas as well as any potential unstable slopes greater than 15%.
Percentage % of slope = Rise (drop in height) divided by Run (distance) multiplied by 100.

OTHER FEATURES TO INCLUDE ON YOUR SITE PLAN IF APPLICABLE:

- Shorelines**
For shoreline properties, show the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) and setbacks from OHWM to all structures, including neighbor's, within 300 feet from both side property lines.
- Dike District**
Show both measurements from the water ward side and the landward side of the dike and distance to project.

See Example

Example: City of Pasco

In response to a call from industry for more predictable and faster commercial building permit decisions and to further City economic development goals, the City of Pasco successfully accelerated their turnaround time for reviewing commercial building permits.

The City Manager consulted with development review departments and issued revised Administrative Order 76 (AO-76) in 2003. AO-76 established a blazing two-week level of service for commercial building permit decisions. The review team has consistently delivered this pace since. A two week review compares with an 11 week average in a sample of Washington Cities and Counties over the same period (Figure 3).¹

To hit 10 days, the review team had to understand their process and carefully control the quality of the submittal. At this pace, there is no time to supply missing information.

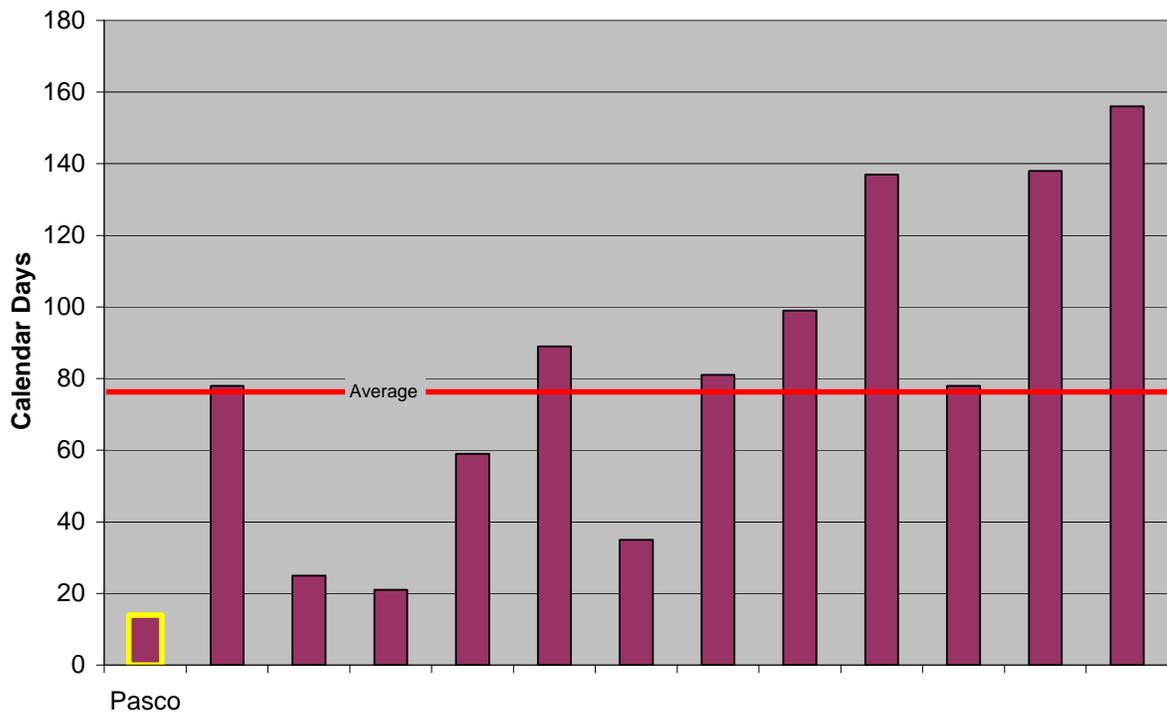


Figure 3 - New Commercial Building Permit Review Timeline Comparisons (2004-07)

The review team analyzed their process across specialties and arrived on specific application materials that would be needed. Further, they concluded that the applicant, the applicant's design team, and the assigned reviewers from each City department had to personally attend an intake meeting. This rigor allowed reviewers to ensure required materials were present and in acceptable form for efficient review. It allowed the team to ask any clarifying questions and reach agreement on any disputed improvement

¹ Data courtesy of The Latimore Company.

requirements or construction standards with all the signatories in the room. These requirements are all spelled out in AO-76.

The success with this process led to similar refinements of the engineering civil plan approval process in 2007.

For more information, contact:

[Mitch Nickolds](#), Building Official and Inspection Services Manager, at (509) 545-3444 or [Gary Crutchfield](#), City Manager, at (509) 545-3404

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 76

May 9, 2003

TO: All Departments
FROM: Gary Crutchfield, City Manager
SUBJECT: Building Permit/Development Review Process

I. EFFECTIVE DATE:

Effective May 9, 2003 the following development review process shall be implemented by the Community Development Department in conjunction with other City departments for the purpose of creating the timely and coordinated application of all rules, regulations and standards applicable to certain developments within the City of Pasco. This Administrative Order shall replace Administrative Order No. 76 issued on February 18, 1999.

II. INTENT:

This process is established to ensure all proposed development, within the community is reviewed by the necessary city departments in a timely manner. Upon acceptance of a complete Building Permit Application package, City staff shall have 10 days to review and respond to the applicant and identify any concerns/problems. Staff shall identify all rules, regulations and standards with which the proposed development does not comply and, further, should record any modifications of the proposed development which would assist applicant in achieving full compliance with all applicable rules, regulations and standards.

III. APPLICABILITY:

- A. Any residential structure or groups of structures containing 3 or more dwelling units;
- B. Any commercial or industrial structure exceeding 1,000 square feet of gross floor area and any expansions of such structure (the term "commercial or industrial" shall include institutional, educational and public facilities);
- C. On-site and off-site parking lots;
- D. Mobile home parks and recreational vehicle parks;
- E. Storage tanks for hazardous/flammable liquids, whether above ground or below;
- F. Any development excepted below when the Inspection Services Manager deems it necessary.

IV. EXCEPTIONS:

- A. Single family dwellings, groups of single family dwellings and individual two-family dwellings;
- B. Individual factory assembled homes and accessory structures.

V. BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- A. Complete application form with permit data;
- B. Four (4) sets of construction drawings including project manuals if applicable and the following:
 - a. Exterior Elevations
 - b. Floor Plan
 - c. Foundation Plan
 - d. Details and Sections
 - e. Mechanical Plans
 - f. Electrical Plans
 - g. Plumbing System (may be shown on floor plan)
- C. Five (5) copies of site plan;
- D. Two (2) copies of drainage plan;
- E. One (1) environmental (SEPA) checklist when applicable (all commercial & industrial projects over 4,000 square feet and/or residential buildings containing three (3) or more units;
- F. Two (2) complete landscaping details;
- G. Two (2) additional exterior elevations showing front, sides and rear views of building, if applicable (all projects located in the I-182 Design Review Corridor and Sun Willows Business Park);
- H. Three (3) engineering documents /calculations, if applicable;
- I. Two (2) complete fire suppression and fire alarm system drawings and calculations, if applicable;
- J. Plan review fee (65% of construction permit fee, 100% for "fast track").

VI. BUILDING PERMIT DATA: (must include the following items)

- A. Name and phone number of contact person
- B. Proposed tenant if known
- C. Address of proposed development
- D. Square footage of each occupancy group
- E. Number of employees, if intended to use to establishing parking space requirements
- F. Type of construction
- G. Number of stories
- H. Complete State NREC form (Commercial Projects)

VII. SITE PLAN: (must be drawn to scale and include all of the following items)

- A. General location and street names
- B. Property legal description, parcel number(s) and approved City of Pasco vertical datum as stated in Section 6-6 of the Pasco Construction Standards
- C. Property lines, dimensions of the property and square footage
- D. Existing structure(s)
- E. Proposed structure(s)
- F. All uses of the property
- G. Location and dimensions of existing and proposed driveways
- H. Location and dimensions of all existing and proposed rights-of-way
- I. Location and dimension of all existing and proposed utilities and sizes of all existing and proposed backflow preventers
- J. Location and dimensions all existing and proposed curbs, gutters and sidewalks
- K. Landscaping details including location of all screened storage and refuse compounds and irrigation details with meter and backflow location and size
- L. All existing and proposed parking lot layout
- M. All existing and proposed fence location and height
- N. Sign location, height and square footage
- O. Fire hydrant locations
- P. Fire department access roads, if applicable
- Q. Fire department "lock-box" location, if applicable
- R. Fire department pumper port locations

VIII. DRAINAGE PLAN: (or drawings must be drawn to scale and include the following items)

- A. Dimensions of existing and proposed impervious surfaces
- B. Elevations and flow diagrams for each separately drained area
- C. Method of on-site water retention
- D. Storm water run-off calculations and 10 year storm drain analysis as published in the official Benton County Hydrology Manual for Phase I & II Volumes and 1-HR & 24-HR Volumes
- E. Provide three (3) sets of civil drawings for Engineer approval upon completion of required changes and/or revisions

IX. FAILURE TO PROCEED:

- A. The final statement of review and any approval of the application shall remain valid for 90 calendar days from the date issued by the Inspection Services Manager. Failure of the applicant to obtain a building permit within said 90 calendar days shall cause the approval to expire and become null and void.

X. **ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS:**

- A. No building permit shall be issued until such time as the Inspection Services Manager receives a signed copy of a letter from the applicant agreeing to make plan changes pursuant to the comment letter issued pursuant to Part XI-D of this Administrative Order.
- B. Building permits shall be valid for a period of six (6) months from the date of last inspection. Failure to call for an inspection within a six (6) month period shall cause the building permit to become null and void.

XI. **DRC REVIEW TIME FRAMES/SCOPE:** *(in working days)*

A. **DAY 1**

- 1. Complete application submitted to the Building Division, which assigns a project number consisting of the year and sequential number of projects submitted. (The completed, signed and dated application shall constitute acceptance of a complete application, providing the applicant the indisputable date of a vested right) Building Division shall log, record and route paper work to Building, Planning, Engineering and Fire.

B. **DAY 2 - DAY 6**

- 1. **Building Division** shall be responsible for the application of the Uniform Building Code (UBC), Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC), Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC) and the Uniform Fire Code (UFC) (Complete set of construction plans).
- 2. **Planning Division** shall be responsible for application of the SEPA regulations, municipal zoning regulations and site design principals and shall determine the amount of all necessary impact fees. (Site plan, Building Permit Data and SEPA checklist when applicable.)
- 3. **Engineering Division** shall determine the nature and extent of any required water or sewer improvements, review on-site drainage and review traffic studies with comments submitted to the Planning Division for inclusion in the SEPA review process. (Site plan and drainage plan.) The Engineering Division shall also review plans for adequacy of right-of-way and the need for curbs, gutters and sidewalks and shall determine the amount of all necessary water & sewer service fees.
- 4. **Fire Department** shall determine the adequacy of the proposed fire hydrant locations, lock-box locations and fire access roads. (Site plan and Building Data sheet.)

C. **DAY 7**

- 1. All comments from the Building, Planning, Engineering and Fire are submitted to the Building Division.

D. DAY 8 - DAY 10

1. Inspection Services Manager reviews all comments submitted and receives clarification on unresolved questions. The Inspection Services Manager prepares a draft of final statement in the form of a letter including a "marked" set of plans if necessary and submits these documents to the Director of Community & Economic Development for review and signature. The statement shall identify necessary changes/modifications prior to permit approval. If further clarification of comments is needed or if departmental comments are contradictory, the Director of Community & Economic Development shall schedule a meeting with relevant departments to resolve outstanding issues.

NOTE:

Time frames may be extended if SEPA and/or traffic study review requires additional time or if due to complexity, plans must be sent to ICBO for review.

* * * * *

4. Analyze Process, Performance, and Costs

Example: City of Kirkland

In 1998, the City of Kirkland adopted fiscal policies requiring comprehensive reviews of fees every three years. Each review determines the prior year's actual costs of service and the degree to which the fee structure recovered costs at the target levels established by the City Council.

Kirkland offers four recommendations for effective cost of service analysis.

1. First, tie analyses to a set of real numbers. Full, prior-year actuals work well. The organizational design of an agency affects this step. For example, Kirkland's Planning Department performs both current and long-range planning. The Fire & Building Department has responsibilities beyond development review and inspection. Cashiering for development applications is performed by the Finance & Administration Department. The development costs incurred by these three departments had to be separated out.
2. Second, conduct sanity checks. Kirkland recommends three tests.
 - Compare the total number of applications of each type to the derived costs and check for agreement.
 - Assemble a team of subject-matter experts from each department to look at the derived numbers to make sure they line up with intuition and experience.
 - Compare the full-cost-recovery hourly rate with the prevailing industry rate. They should be similar or the differences should be explainable.
3. Third, involve the finance department. This enjoins good accounting practices and promotes uniformity of overhead allocation across City departments.
4. Fourth, cost recovery analysis is "not an event, it's a process." It is a recurring endeavor that provides regular management data to department and City leaders. It promotes informed decisions to plan for and respond to business (development) cycles and to invest in any economic development initiatives.

Kirkland's actual cost recovery for 2007 was 73.87% against a target of 72%. This is an impressive result of less than 3% off forecast. They note it is unusual for market forces, the plan, and actual expenses to all align so closely in a dynamic system like permitting. Accuracy within 10% is acceptable, 50% is not.

For more information, contact:

[Tracey Dunlap](#), Director of Finance and Administration, at (425) 587-3101.

Example: Jefferson County

Jefferson County created a flowchart for their building permits. For more information see Figure 4 below or contact their Planning Manager, Stacie Hoskins at (360) 379-4463.

Permit Process Flowchart for Building Permits, Type I, SEPA exempt

Examples: Single Family Residence, Pole Building, Detached Garage, Shop, etc.
Version 1.0, 3/26/2007

→ = Progression

⋯ = Resubmittal

Text typed in **bold font** in flowchart are activities listed on the county website

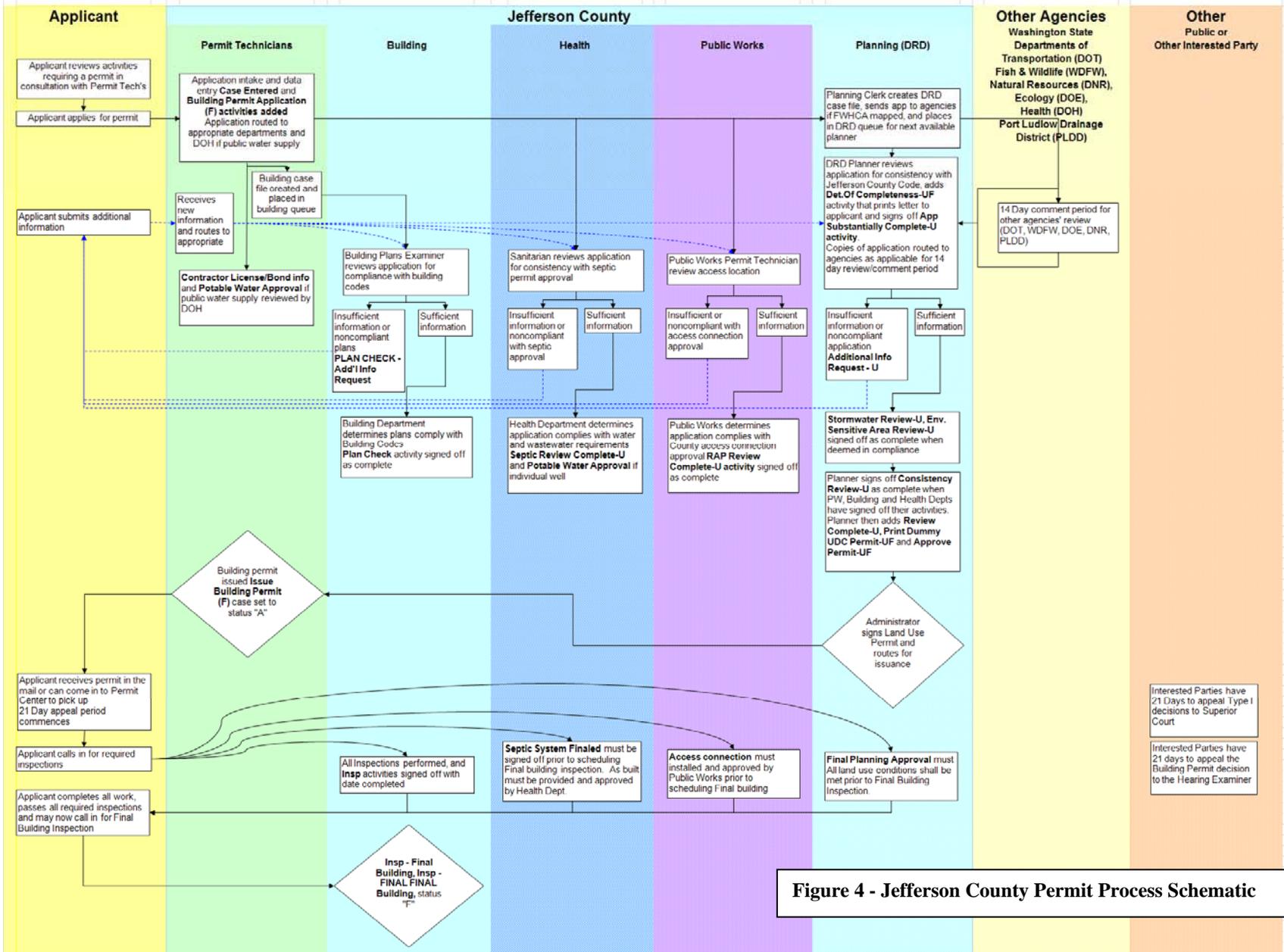


Figure 4 - Jefferson County Permit Process Schematic

5. Use Information Technology

Example: eCityGov Alliance

Ten years ago, a group of four Lake Washington area building officials concluded a more common and customer-focused building permit process across their neighboring cities would improve an applicant's permitting experience. Expertise in one city would apply in the next.

Initial work included the development of an extensive library of tip sheets to show applicants approved methods for decks, kitchens, garage separations, bathrooms, and other common projects that each city would accept. Another set was developed to help builders prepare for inspections. In 2001, nine cities formed the eCityGov Alliance, an interlocal agency. The initial work of the building officials became MyBuildingPermit.com (MBP.com), the first Alliance program. MBP.com went live in 2003 and now serves 15 cities and one county. The award-winning web portal was the first cross-boundary permitting service of its kind in the nation.

Today MyBuildingPermit.com (Figure 4) provides 24/7 online access to:

- Common construction tip sheets and inspection checklists.
- Regional training opportunities.
- Issuance of simple, over-the-counter permits.
- Permit status (all permit types).
- Inspection scheduling.

The eCityGov Alliance has expanded services to include seven, cross-boundary web portals. Membership has grown to include almost 40 cities, a county and several other agencies. Other services include:

- MyParksandRecreation.com, online activity registration and interactive park maps.
- WaGovBiz.net, a free vendor registration portal featuring six vendor rosters.
- NWmaps.net, a common set of maps and GIS resources.
- NWproperty.net, an economic development resource for prospective businesses.
- HSCconnect.net, private web portal used to coordinate services, grants, contracts and performance reporting between member cities and human service provider agencies.
- GovJobsToday.com (scheduled to launch in July 2008), an online job posting and electronic application service. A separate private portal allows members agencies to share job compensation and classification data.

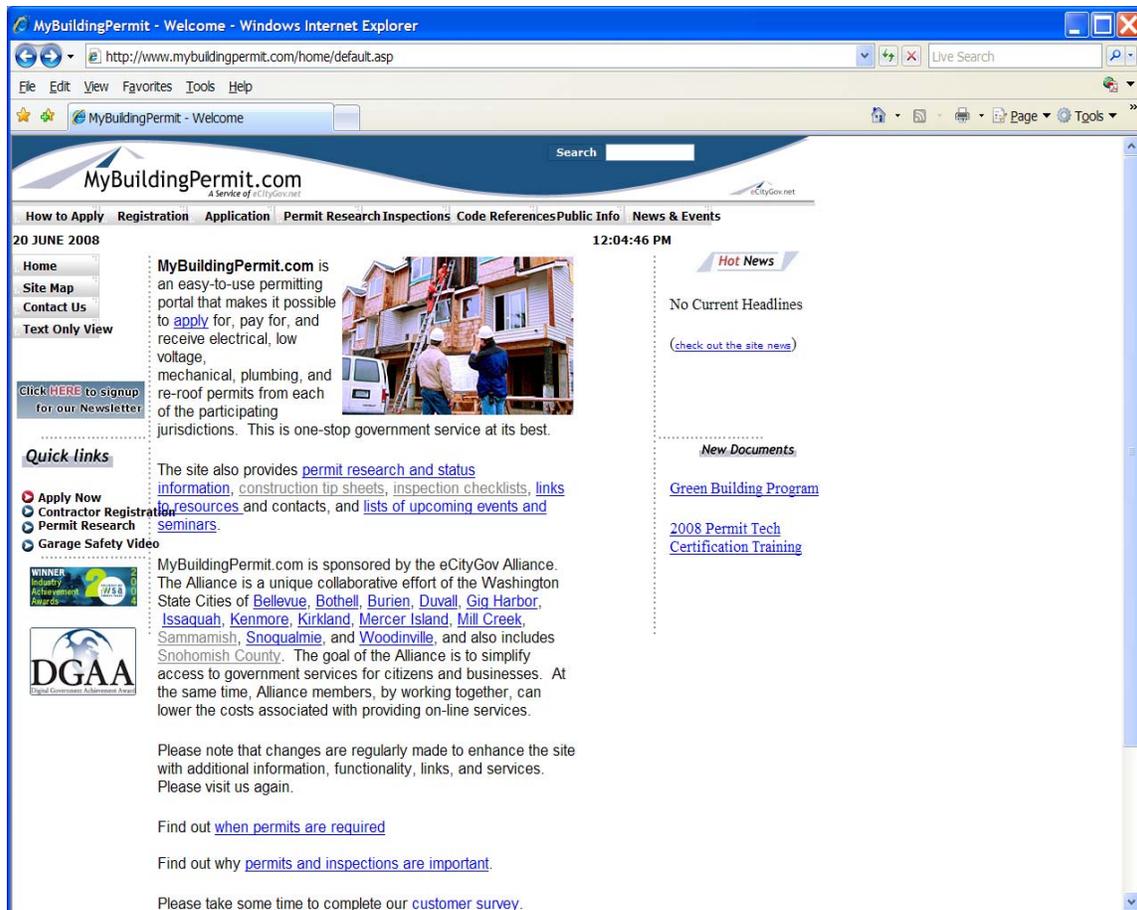


Figure 5 - MyBuildingPermit.Com Web Portal

For more information, contact:

[John Backman](#), eCityGov Alliance Executive Director, at (425) 452-7821.

Example: Online Access and GIS

Many departments add online access to their in-house or regional geographic information systems (GIS). GIS is a powerful tool that graphically depicts a parcel of land and any nearby critical areas, topography, zoning, roadways, aerial photos, and a host of other features (Figure 6). Some even indicate when special analyses like wetland or geotechnical reports are available. GIS gives applicants a preliminary indication of the environmental, land use, and other considerations a development project needs to reconcile. This reduces surprise during permit review and increases efficiency when the project designs incorporate these considerations at the beginning.

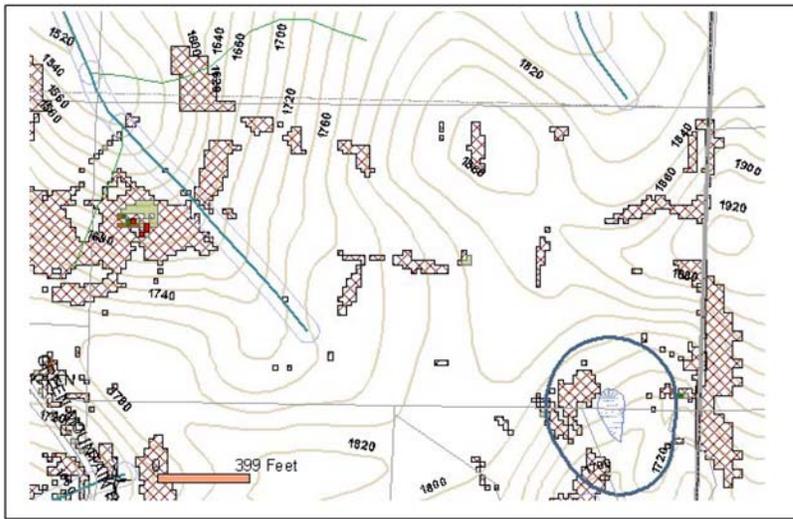


Figure 6 - GIS Example

Example: Permit Tracking Systems

Second Round of Local Government Grants for Permit Tracking Systems Now Open for Proposals

Local governments should quickly consider whether to apply for state grant money to help acquire or upgrade electronic permit tracking systems. A total of \$175,000 was available in each of the 2008 and 2009 state fiscal years. This year the application deadline is September 24, 2008 - 12:00 noon, Pacific Daylight Savings Time in Olympia, Washington. Grant funds awarded for State Fiscal Year 2008 must be expended by June 30, 2009. Last year's recipients and streamlining projects are described below.

Grant Applicants must meet the following minimum requirements.

- Be a local government agency located in a county with fewer than 350,000 residents;
- Be a local government agency responsible for issuing development permits; and
- Have local matching funds.

Legislators expect recipients to provide better information to applicants and improve internal and interagency communications. Technology improvements should support a more streamlined permit review process, benefiting local governments, applicants, and the public. Capacity for future upgrades to allow interagency connectivity and web-based communications must be part of the system plan.

The funded electronic permit tracking systems will also help local jurisdictions report on performance by tracking information such as permit turnaround times, the percent of applications that are considered complete on first submittal, the number of review cycles required, total processing fees or costs, and information about what other permits or approvals are required.

The Office of Financial Management is issuing the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) No. 09-400, Local Government Grants for Permit Tracking Systems.

The Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) No. 09-400 can be located at:

<http://ofm.wa.gov/contracts/procurement/postings.asp>

Questions regarding the RFGP must be directed to Jan McMullen, RFGP Coordinator at jan.mcmullen@ofm.wa.gov

Governor Gregoire announced \$175,000 in grants to support local government efforts to develop electronic permit tracking systems on November 20, 2007. The tracking systems will allow businesses and local leaders to find timely information about the status of land use and development projects in Washington.

“These grant will help local communities streamline permitting processes and give businesses the timely information they need to be successful. Having easy access to

reliable information about the status of permits allows businesses to secure financing and schedule construction more efficiently,” said Governor Gregoire.

The grants will fund the restructuring of the recipients’ information management systems. The reorganization process will upgrade permit tracking technologies to make it easier for applicants to find the status of land use and development permits; and expand local government’s ability to work with state and federal permit review systems.

The updated systems will also enable local jurisdictions to track useful pieces of data, such as the percentage of applications that are approved after only one submittal; the number of review cycles required for other applications; the total cost of processing; and the amount of time for permit to be approved from the time it is submitted.

Recipients include:

- Chelan County received \$35,000 for an electronic property and permit tracking system, potentially shared with any city in Chelan County.
- The City of Ferndale received \$10,000 for an automated system for a new Development Center allowing concurrent review, information exchange and fee management.
- The City of Longview received \$10,000 to extend the permit counter to the Internet, improving customer assistance and workflow and \$20,000 for a mobile inspections module.
- Okanogan County received \$25,000 for an integrated business portal to improve the effectiveness of regulation and review processes.
- City of Port Townsend received \$19,000 to add GIS layers and functionality to their permit tracking system and improves web usability.
- Walla Walla County received \$55,000 to purchase an electronic permit tracking system for permitting, information technology, and financial tasks in response to a sharp increase in building permits for homes, wineries, large agriculture buildings, golf courses, and subdivisions.

***Permit Tracking Systems in Use by Selected Cities and Counties
as of 8/18/2008***

Agency Name	Permit Tracking System
City of Kirkland	Advantage
City of Bellingham	Accela/Tidemark Advantage
City of Wenatchee	PTWin
Thurston County	Amanda
Walla Walla County	CRW
City of Lacey	Sungard Public Sector
Douglas County	Interlocking
City of Lynnwood	Permits Plus = Acella
City of Auburn	CRW
Benton County	MUNIS
Clark County	Accela TideMark
	Paladin Data Systems, Internally Developed
Kitsap County	
City of Pasco	Trakit from CRW
City of Bremerton	Paladin
City of Marysville	Accela Permits Plus
Whitman County	Soon to be New World Systems
City of Bellevue	CSDC Amanda
City of Battle Ground	Sungard HTE NaviLine
City of Sunnyside	Eden Inforum Gold v4.3 SQL
City of Walla Walla	Inforum Gold
City of Olympia	SunGard HTE
Spokane County	Home Grown (PLUS)
San Juan	In-house (MS-Access)
City of Ferndale	Black Bear Tracking System
City of Longview	Eden

* List provided by Association of County and City Information Systems (ACCIS)

6. Implement Systems for Staffing Flexibility

Example: King County List of Certified Consultants

<http://www.metrokc.gov/permits/info/consultants.aspx>

Preferred consultants

- [What is the preferred consultant program?](#)
- [Preferred consultant contact lists](#)
 - Civil Engineers
 - Geotechnical
 - Wetland
- [Consultant eligibility](#)
- [Apply to be a DDES preferred consultant](#)

What is the preferred consultant program?

The preferred consultant program offers permit applicants the option of choosing a consultant from lists DDES maintains of preferred consultants, individuals with a proven track record of high quality work in King County.

DDES developed the preferred consultant program in 2004 to make the permitting process more efficient and less costly, as quality permit application submittals can result in less permit review time and fee savings for customers.

Initially, preferred consultants were identified for critical areas review. In 2005, the program was expanded to cover site engineering and drainage review for single family homes.

Program now to include Civil Engineer - Short Plat consultants

In fall 2007, short plat applications are being added to the program. DDES will identify civil engineer preferred consultants for short plat, in addition to residential applications.

All preferred consultants in the program, by having met established criteria, give assurance to customers and DDES staff that the consultant will make a quality permit application submittal.

The program also benefits permit customers by providing easy access to a pool of proven consultants, while benefits to consultants are increased visibility and a marketable certification.

Permit applicants still have the option of choosing a private consultant who does not participate in the DDES preferred consultant program.

Lists of preferred consultants at DDES

The following lists provide the names and contact information of applicants who have met DDES preferred consultant criteria.

- [Preferred Civil Engineer Consultants list](#) (PDF*, 71KB)
- [Preferred Geotechnical Consultants list](#) (PDF*, 76KB)
- [Preferred Wetland Consultants list](#) (PDF*, 77KB)

Consultant eligibility

Civil engineer, wetland, geotechnical, and stream consultants become eligible for inclusion on the preferred consultant list by complying with specific criteria for three consecutive building projects. The criteria for each of these disciplines can be found at:

- [Preferred Civil Engineer Consultant criteria](#)
- [Preferred Geotechnical Consultant criteria](#)
- [Preferred Stream Consultant criteria](#)
- [Preferred Wetland Consultant criteria](#)

A consultant will be removed from the list if any of the criteria are not met during the course of any single project review. Only individual consultants are named on a preferred consultant list. No consulting firms will be listed.

Consultants do not have to be on a preferred consultant list in order to do work in King County.

Application process for DDES preferred consultants

Consultants looking to be listed as a DDES preferred consultant should review the [eligibility criteria](#) carefully. If you believe that you or someone in your firm meets the criteria:

- Complete the preferred consultant list application form, available in [PDF*](#) format (PDF, 87KB) or as a [fill-in Word document*](#) (DOC, 90KB).
- **Geotechnical, wetland, and stream consultant applicants, return completed forms to:**

Critical areas preferred consultants
ATTN: Betsy MacWhinney, Environmental Scientist
King County DDES
900 Oakesdale Avenue SW
Renton, WA 98057-5212.

Also reach Betsy by e-mail at Betsy.MacWhinney@kingcounty.gov or call 206-296-6793.

- **Civil engineer - residential consultant applicants, return completed forms to:**

Civil Engineer preferred consultants - residential building permits
ATTN: Gary Downing, Senior Engineer
King County DDES
900 Oakesdale Avenue SW
Renton, WA 98057-5212.

Also reach Gary by e-mail at Gary.Downing@kingcounty.gov or call 206-296-6737.

- **Civil engineer - short plat consultant applicants, return completed forms to:**

Civil Engineer preferred consultants - short plat applications
ATTN: Curt Foster, Senior Engineer
King County DDES
900 Oakesdale Avenue SW
Renton, WA 98057-5212.

Also reach Curt by e-mail at Curt.Foster@kingcounty.gov or call 206-296-7106.

Example: City of Kirkland

During periods of high market demand, the City of Kirkland offers a third-party review option. The applicant chooses third-party or standard level of service at submittal (Figure 7). Third-party offers three-week building and planning first-reviews versus seven weeks for standard processing. Fire and Public Works reviews remain in-house.

The City passes through the higher cost of outside plan review to the applicant with a 50% plan review fee premium for the building and planning portions.

Kirkland also utilizes third-party review for overflow situations. The City contracts its short plat reviews to an outside planner so staff can focus on more complex land use actions and code development. As these are at the City's election, no premiums are charged to the applicant.

Capitalizing on new process efficiencies, the City is adapting again to changing market needs by replacing its third-party program with a faster level of service standard review.

For more information, contact:

[Nancy Cox](#), Planning Department Development Review Manager, at (425) 587-3228



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Fire & Building Department 123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587-3600
www.ci.kirkland.wa.us www.MyBuildingPermit.com www.Kirklandpermits.net

AUTHORIZATION FOR THIRD PARTY REVIEW

Project Name: _____ Building Permit No: _____

Project Location: _____

Authorized By (print name): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: () _____ Fax: () _____ Email: _____

Owner/Agent: _____ Date: _____

I hereby authorize the City of Kirkland to send out the above referenced single family home permit application to third party consultants for Building and Planning review. I understand that the Third Party Review fees will be due at time of submittal and consist of The Building Third Party Review fee (calculated at 50% of the Building Permit fee) plus the minimum Third Party Planning Dept. review fee (4 hours review time) of \$320.00, and that these fees are in addition to normal plan review fees. The Public Works Department reviews all single family building permits with in-house city staff. Your expedited review fee does not pay for an expedited review by Public Works, but Public Works will attempt to complete initial review within 15 working days.

In return, I can expect that the typical turnaround time for initial Building & Planning review will be 15 working days. Second review will be approximately 10 working days (unless multiple permit application revisions are received on the same day; see Third Party Project Review sheet attached). When all departments have signed off, it will take an additional 3-4 working days for City personnel to process the permit before issuance.

Figure 7 - Kirkland Third-Party Review Authorization

Straw Poll Survey Form

Permitting Best Practices Straw Poll

1. Circle the perspective that most reflects your experience with permit processing:
 - Government
 - Business/Developer
 - Citizen

2. Indicate the size of the local jurisdiction you work with or have contact with most often.
 - Small
 - Medium
 - Large

3. Rate each of the following. Indicate how important you think each item is for efficient and effective permit processing at the local level. Use a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 indicates “not important at all” and 5 indicates “extremely important.”
 - a. ___ Online forms and instructions
 - b. ___ Online GIS maps
 - c. ___ Pre-submittal collaboration, generally
 - ___ Basic help at the front counter
 - ___ Pre-application site visits
 - ___ Pre-application conferences
 - d. ___ Early input from State and federal agencies
 - e. ___ Jurisdiction only accepts complete applications
 - f. ___ A single point of contact for permit review
 - g. ___ Credit card payment options
 - h. ___ Reports about average or typical turnaround times from the department
 - i. ___ Estimates of how much the permit process will cost
 - j. ___ Electronic permit tracking systems (viewable online)
 - k. ___ The “120-day clock”
 - l. ___ Consolidated notices of SEPA and land use applications and decisions
 - m. ___ Consolidated revision or correction letters from all departments/agencies
 - n. ___ Use of a Hearing Examiner system
 - o. ___ Clear and consistent development regulations

4. List other Best Practices for permit processing: _____

Please tell us how we can improve on our meeting format, facilities, or other practices

5. What did you like?

6. What would you change?

Straw Poll: Suggested Best Practices

Overall

1. Have knowledgeable people at the front counter. 2. Create a review team structure that serves customers (case-manager type system). 3. Get buy-in from ALL review depts. (planning, building, and engineering) that development review is a priority. 4. Establish max turnaround times and track performance of reviewers and report on this to community. 5. Create expedited processes for "easy" projects. 6. Pre-apps and "pre" pre-apps very effective in guiding developments - get right people in these meetings.

1. Online development regulations and comp plan. 2. Customer satisfaction surveys as tool. 3. Advanced permitting system software. 4. Regular customer service and permit-related training.

Turnaround targets for each type of application; permit teams (planning, building, engineering) contact that stays with application through each phase of project development;

1. What level of detail is needed to complete a pre-plat, BSP, etc., project application from intake to hearing. 2. Performance targets -- follow-through

We owe the public a coordinated approach to permitting not an approach that is fragmented by department or agency lines. Creating that outcome requires cities, counties, and the state to work together to create a coordinated, predictable, and timely set of processes and regulations. We should maximize available technology to align service delivery, improve communication between state and local government, and improve our efficiency. We use a wide range of systems and processes to accomplish the same work -- enforcing development regulations and issuing permits..... why? We should explore opportunities ailing the technologies we use and how we use them.

Customer Service

Our house burned down Sept. 26 07. When a building inspector appeared at my rental two weeks ago and stated that I had no "demolition permit", I wept. My builder had attempted to purchase one but was told to get it when "you apply for a rebuilding permit." The new house will NOT look anything like the former one, build in 1992: no cedar siding, no cedar decking. The restrictions are impossible for me to comprehend. All I want is my old home back! Why is this so impossible?

1. Local gov'ts should have service standards that are accepted by all departments that review project apps. - commitment to quick turnaround 2. Organize review structure around the customer (w/excellent permit center staffing and one point of contact who also coordinates reviews/timing of multiple departments) 3. Streamline the overall review process by allowing full civil plan review at the same time as the land use entitlement process, as the City of Vancouver has done (with their 90-day process)

Based on a city's population, the state should establish or recommend a minimum number of permit review staff be available for permit intake and review (building plans examiner, permit technician, engineering plans examiner, SEPA reviewer, planner). Nothing sours a citizen on government process more than when staff is not easily accessible or available to assist in the permit process due to non-funding of permit review staff. Also, each city should establish one highly placed manager to oversee the entire permit review process, who has the power to

mediate review issues between departments in the best interest of the review process. Timely permit review and approval is the most important component. Much time is spent waiting for state review and concurrence on SEPA, Shorelines etc, plus many jurisdictions are very slow to process even the most simple permits.

Reinforce the concept of "Service to the Public" to government employees. All too often "public servants" fail to consider the additional cost in time and money they impose on a project because lack of motivation, professionalism, and in some cases, incompetence and indifference. Jurisdictional codes need to be concise and consistent across the board without built in ambiguities which leave project proponents in quandaries as to which of conflicting text is applicable to a particular project. And, resolving ambiguities should not take months to accomplish. Code enforcement personnel should know the code better than project proponents, but in most circumstances, this is not the case. An entire book could be written about the frustration of dealing with what appears to be incompetence on the part of governmental agencies and its employees.

Build Mutual Understanding

Input/Oversight of Stakeholder Advisory Committees.

Education and outreach to the public on the important of these regulations.

Engage Reviewers and Stakeholders Early

To be effective pre-application conferences must clarify all application information requirements and detail the process (including timelines) through which the application, once submitted will be reviewed and acted upon. Agency contact persons must be identified and their contact information provided. Project proponents must be warned of potential red flags and the persons/agencies to contact for working out problems. This comment applies to persons seeking land use decisions such as a rezone, comp plan change, subdivision, short subdivision, conditional or special use permit, expansion of a legal nonconforming use, shoreline substantial development permit, etc.

Ensure Complete Applications

Requiring complete applications has been the biggest improvement to the system.

Quality submittals from private consultants with thorough, accurate and complete information.

A clear definition for what a complete application is essential.

Public information sheets or examples on-line of what constitutes a good application that is likely to be found complete would help citizens and applicants know what the standard should be for most applications. Various permit processes require different timelines, which can be confusing to the applicant and public. A development or permit assistance guide that explains how various permit actions are processed is a good way to make the process less intimidating. Counter complete applications are a must if we want to reduce the time wasted on gathering the information we need to review the project. While I hate the red tape of bureaucracy, I also think government share the blame with the applicants or developers of projects.

Applicants should understand that the quality of the information they provide with permit applications is directly related to the efficiency in which we can review and approve their permits. Hiring the cheapest architect or engineer often ends up costing the applicant more due to multiple revision cycles and lost time. Also, filing complete applications would be

helpful for all involved.

Coordinate application intake with other city departments and reject incomplete applications at the front counter.

We have implemented a "Fast Track" Permit process in both the planning and building divisions of our office. We stress a commitment between the developer and our department. If they come in prepared, we will get them through the process quickly and efficiently. Our process has cut down on the number of incomplete applications which has sped up permit processing timelines. Our office saves times and the developers, through clear handouts, applications, and submittal conferences, know exactly what they need to do to get through the process.

Requirement of a visual aid to help in conveying ideas, traffic patterns, parking layouts, etc. to help expedite the process and also allow for no confusion in the planning / permitting stage.
Make the submittal requirements consistent for all jurisdictions

I believe that it makes sense to let a developer start a project has turned in items needed to start. If there are a couple of requirements that still need completed no CO until they are complete but at least the project will move forward.

Analyze Process, Performance, and Costs

Reduce or eliminate the number of permits required and the review process therefore when regulations are clearly spelled out.

Minimize the number of forms whenever possible.

Offer faster review times as time equals money in most cases.

Projects that have impacts that would have significance to the state should have a fast-track process similar to the EFESC.

Use Information Technology

Electronic plan review is emerging technology that jurisdictions should be planning for and which could be promoted/coordinated on a wider scale with support from the State. The use of a permit coordinator who coordinates permitting across disciplines and serves as something of an ombudsman for the applicant has proven to be effective in providing one-point-of-contact service in our jurisdiction. Assuring that all State and County departments who share construction regulation authority, and their regulations, are consistent with the State Building Code, are coordinated between State/Co. offices and local permitting authorities, and are clearly conveyed to applicants and other regulators. Having the State reviewers refer applicants to local jurisdictions when applications are received, notice local regulators of receipt of applications and assure that proper permits are secured prior to approval would also be helpful. We've found that assuring all permits issued through a jurisdiction are tracked through a common permit tracking system goes a long way in facilitating cross-department communication and coordination and provides applicants a means to track their project (both in person and via web access) from land use review through certificate of occupancy.

The ability to apply for permit review online, including the application fee, through a process that will not allow final application submittal until all requirements have been met is a very powerful tool.

Implement Systems for Staffing Flexibility

Hire outside consultants to meet reviewer deadlines or to hurry or speed the process. Early feedback especially to speed up the process.

Hire personnel with some construction background and with some common sense.

Single Point of Contact

One stop shop.

One stop shopping vs. health - planning - public works – SEPA.

One stop, consistency across jurisdictions, accountable.

A "project manager" system where the lead agency maintains a mirror image of a single point of contact and clearing house for review status would be great. That sort of arrangement can help combat the disconnected review that can sometimes take place.

A single point of contact for permit review depends on the size of jurisdiction.

Smaller Jurisdictions

Development demand sets the stage for many permitting best practices. Certain components are critical where the rate of development is high and do not apply in jurisdictions where limited to no development is taking place.

Do NOT try to make a "one-size fits all" Local Government Permitting system. Local governments come in population sizes of millions to several hundred. What may be a "best" practice for Seattle or King County will surely be too expensive and over-kill for small jurisdictions.

First, I want to comment on the way in which the survey questions above have been phrased. I have a hard time commenting on what I think is important as opposed to what I know is financially possible. In an ideal world, the answers would be easy. In reality, our county cannot afford the implementation and maintenance of a GIS system, (from which all or many blessings would flow). To accomplish GIS, other services or staff would likely have to be reduced. So I have not commented upon those questions. We cannot afford a single point of contact for all applicants, but we can and do set up special meetings that function as a single point of contact when it is beneficial... There are four ideas we use here that may benefit other small jurisdictions: An "OK-Club meeting, zoning-inquiry form and database, sending an "informal transmittal" to the Board of County Commissioners prior to formal transmittal of documents about which they make final decision (such as zoning amendments, etc.), and guides that assist people through the permit process. The OK-Club meeting is the poor man's (poor agency's) single point of contact. We set this on a weekly schedule and reserve a conference room space. When by appointment such a meeting is deemed to be useful, we bring together with the potential applicant the following: staff from planning, building, environmental health, and if relevant, engineering. We often get a synergistic response as a result, and we accomplish in one meeting what otherwise would have taken four separate office visits, and possibly repeat visits. The zoning inquiry form is just an internal document that summarizes what a potential applicant wants, and the county response. It is filed by name and section, township and range, and provides for consistency over time as well as

documenting with copies of the wetlands, flood hazard and other relevant maps or information. It provides for an efficient means of reviewing past research for a very specific site or parcel of property. Once some kind of zoning permit is issued, that ZI form is moved to that zoning permit file. The informal transmittal process to the Board of County Commissioners is our method to convey Planning Commission documents and recommendations to our Board. It enables Board members to have time to read through the documents prior to the formal presentation, which always raises the expectation of immediate action. Prior to our use of this procedure, there were awkward times for the Board and staff. With this, our Board has had time to read the documents and, as appropriate, can schedule time for action or for a public hearing, and so forth. We have also prepared specific one or two-page guides to give to people who seek information about permits. Seventeen years ago, a multi-page narrative was created and printed for all of the various permits, and we still use it. We have, however, developed guides that are step-by-step recommendations for specific processes, and we provide as few or as many of them as are necessary for a project. Topics covered include guides for "Building and placing a home...", "Site plan," "Wetlands," and so forth. We plan to create more such single-purpose guides so that we can ultimately discontinue the narrative multi-page information packet.

Other

As we saw from the session in Tacoma, agreement to what constitutes a "best practice" will be difficult to nail down. Case in point, many provided an optional, accelerated review process and at least one city did not offer this service. Which of the variations or approaches is the "best practice"? Even if a best practice could be clearly defined, implementation is still the prerogative of each agency. Local expertise, capacity, system capabilities and organization norms will affect the outcome of the improvement effort. How would best business practices be identified and normalized for replication across multiple agencies and permitting systems? What is the expected outcome and how would success be determined?

I'd like to see the ORA assemble a report of "who has done what" in the interest of efficiency. Getting people to respond would likely be the hardest part, unless consultants like Kurt Latimore are asked instead. In fact, Kurt's jurisdiction assessments might be the basis for cataloging the improvement efforts.

Both the cities of Renton and Mount Vernon have adopted similar permit processes and both are very successful with permit review time lines.

Since regulations overlap each other (such as shorelines and critical areas or zoning codes and critical areas) and their timelines sometimes differ, it still seems cumbersome to try and work an applicant through the process and be procedurally correct on all sides.

Get the water rights issue out of DOE hands....

Yes. If jurisdictions could make "policy" decisions regarding interpretation of regulations it would be extremely beneficial. Washington State is SO HIGHLY REGULATED, employees are not empowered to interpret and therefore issues are routinely put on the back burner "for someone else to make a decision," unfortunately "someone else" usually errs on the side of strict code compliance. A vicious circle is created, continued frustration, which creates huge time delays to say nothing of the expense.

Straw Poll Findings by Sector and Organizational Size

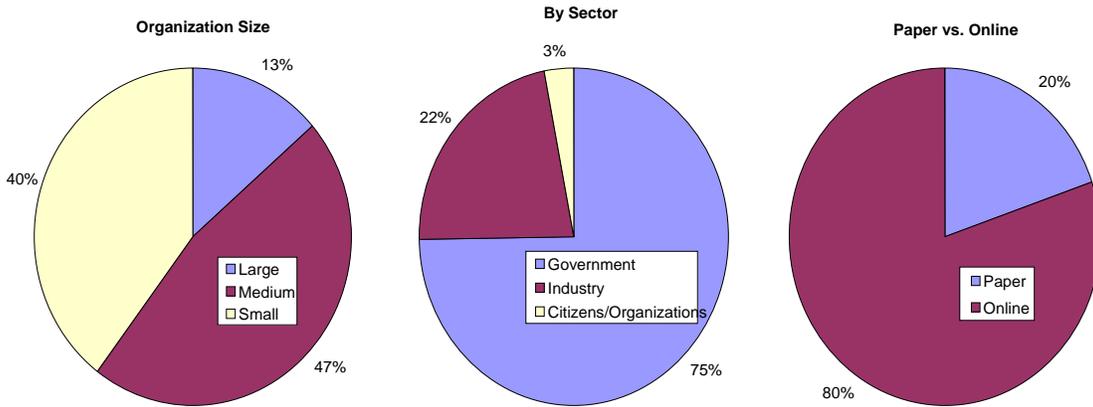


Figure 8 - Straw Poll Demographics

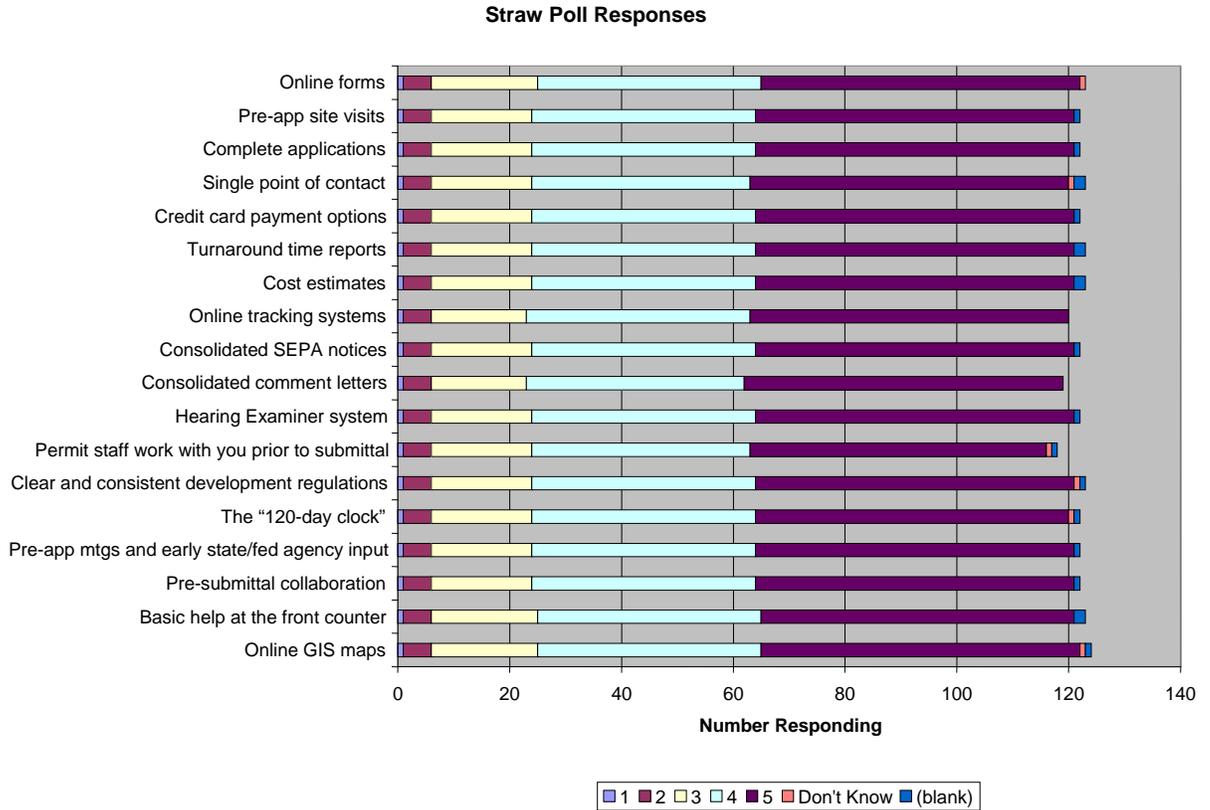


Figure 9 – Results from All Straw Poll Respondents

1=Not important at all
 5=Extremely important

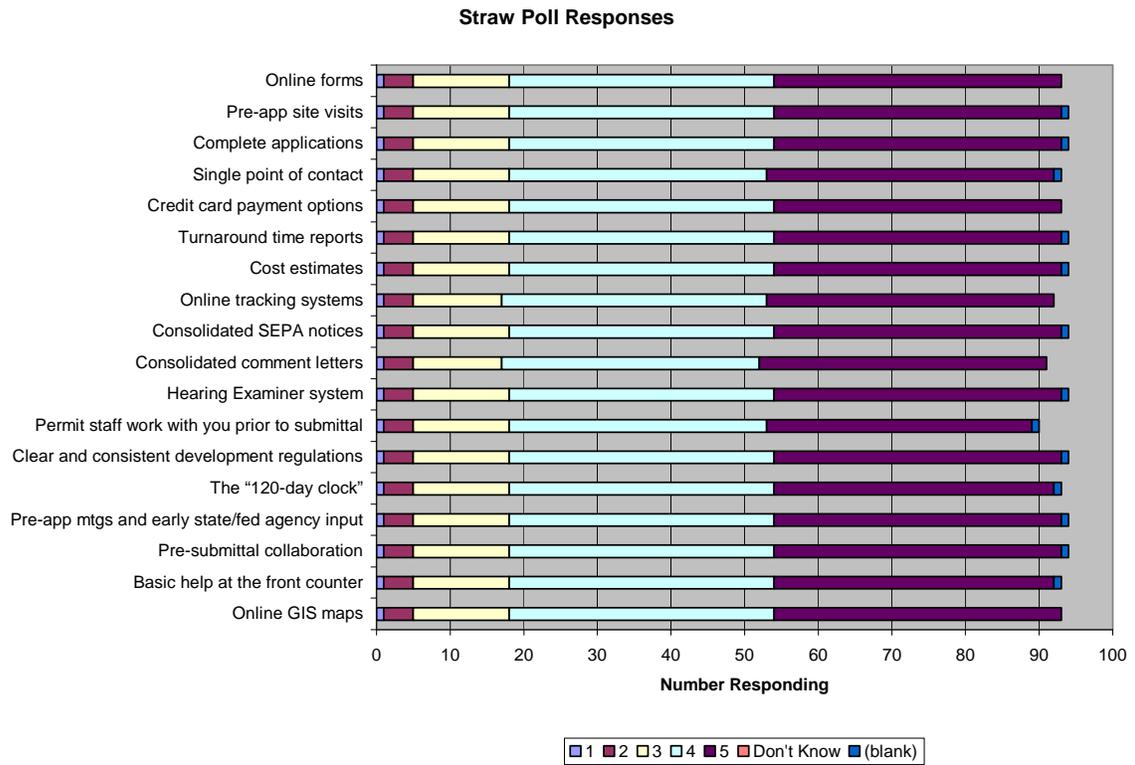


Figure 10 - Government Respondents

Straw Poll Responses

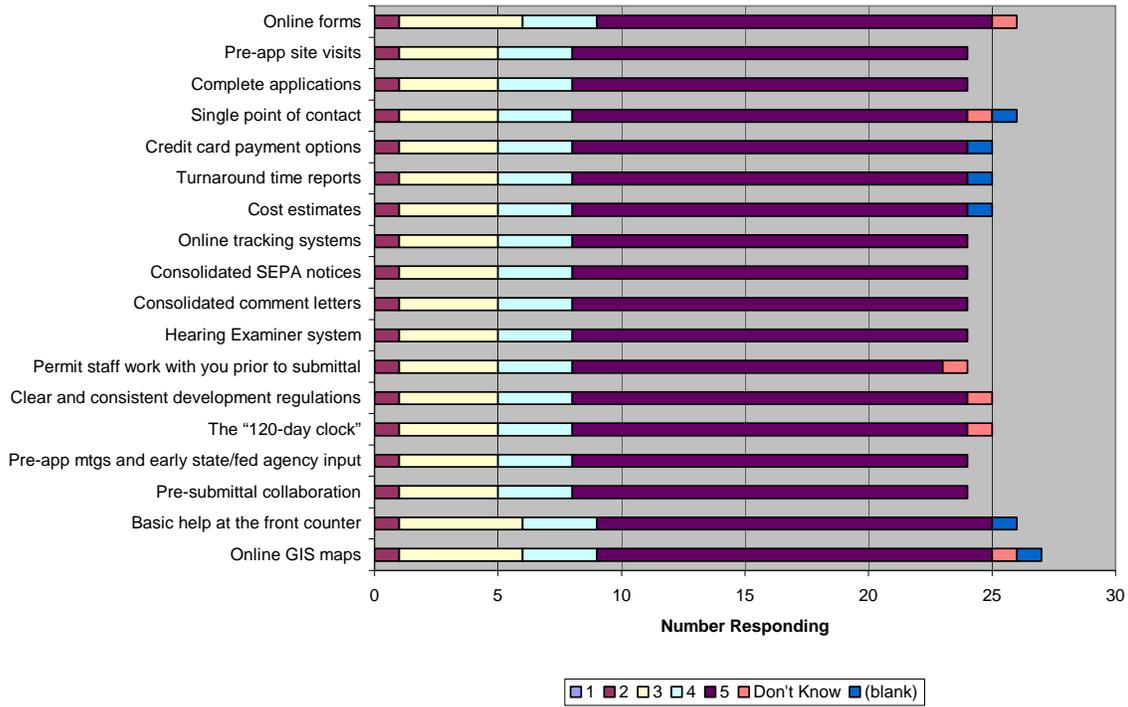


Figure 11 - Industry Respondents

Straw Poll Responses

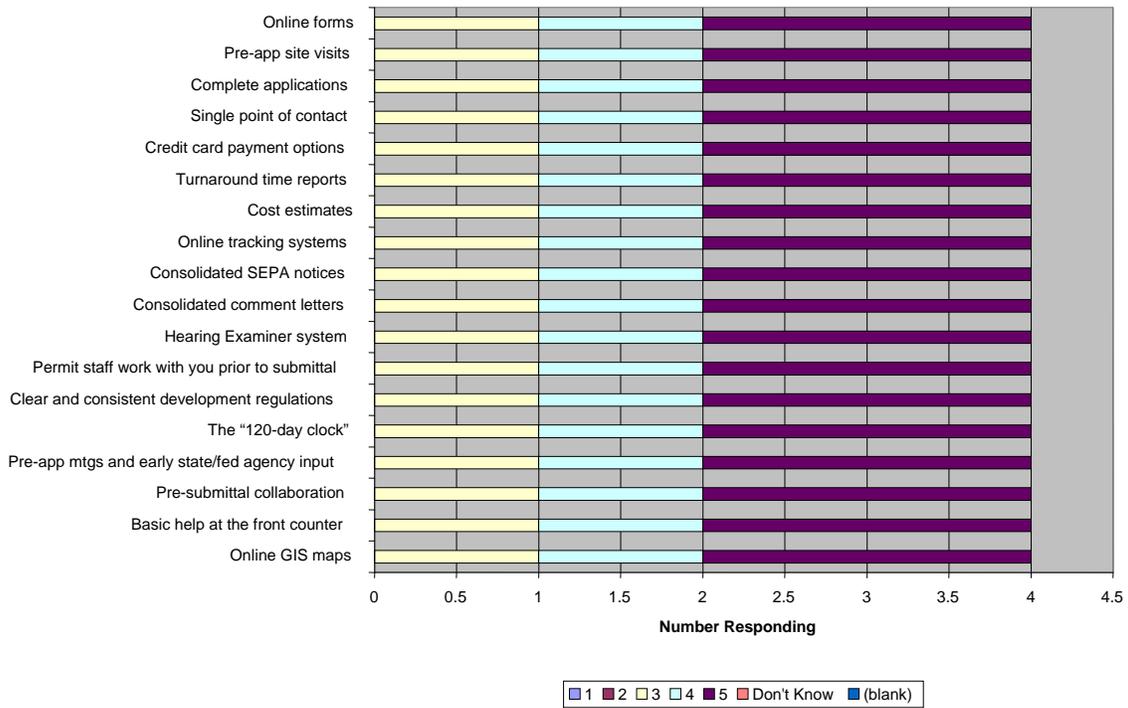


Figure 12 - Citizen and Community Group Responses

Straw Poll Responses

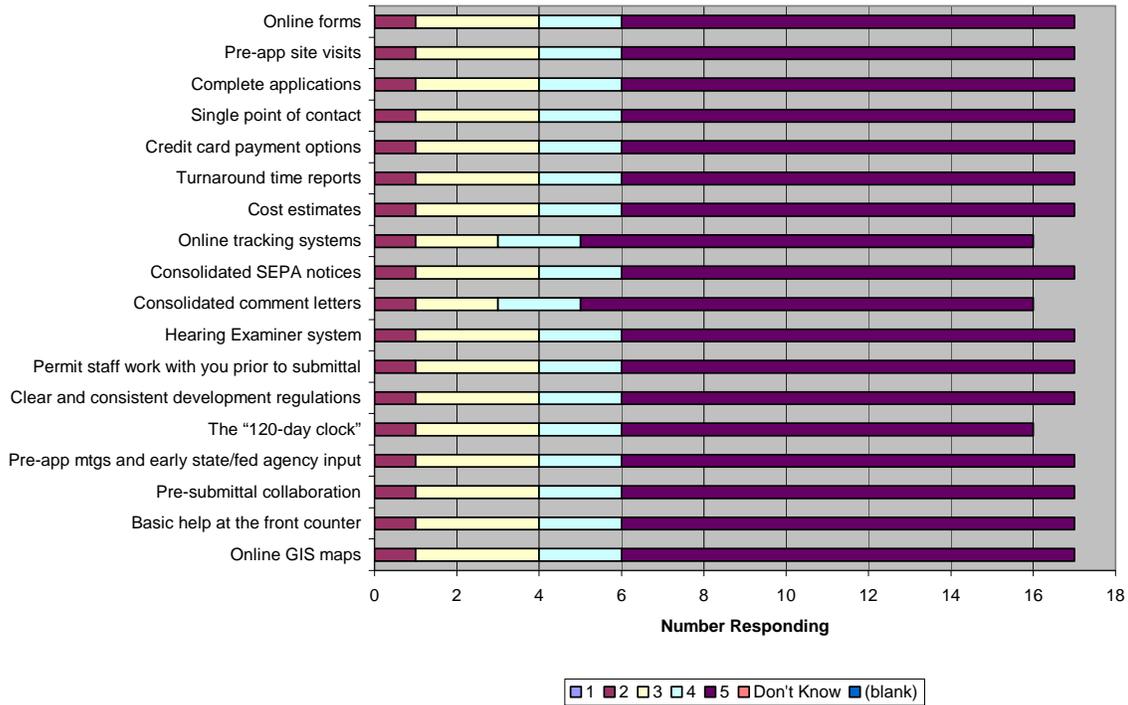


Figure 13 - Respondents from Large Organizations

Straw Poll Responses

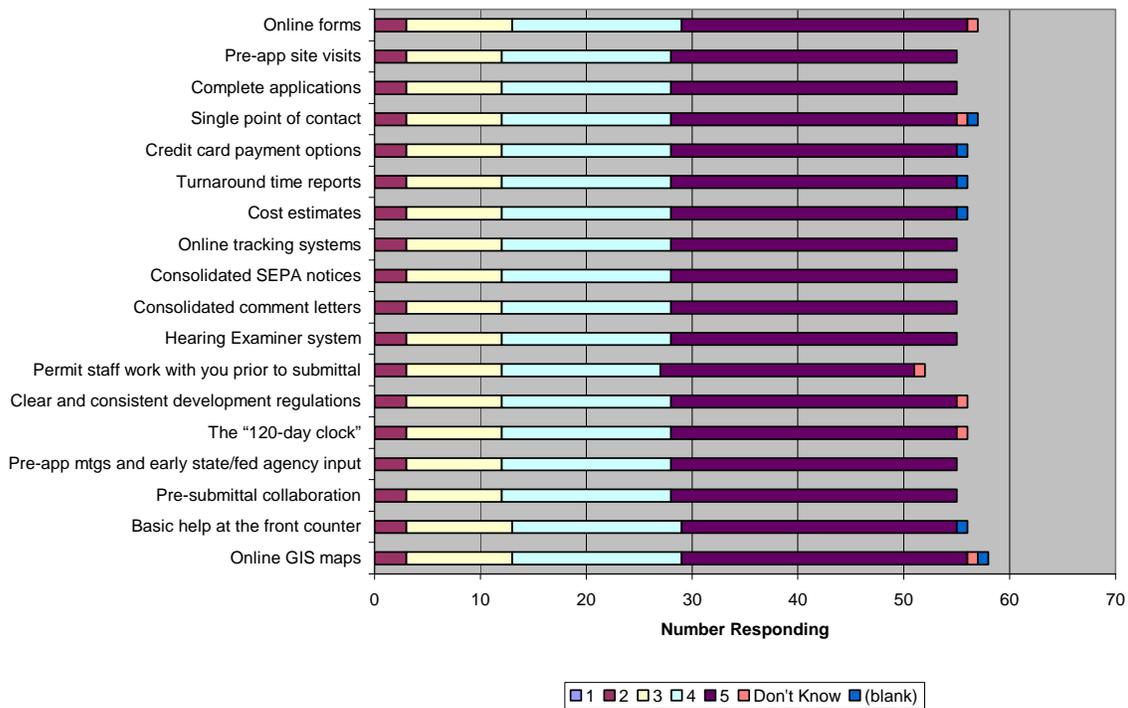


Figure 14 - Respondents from Medium Sized Organizations

Straw Poll Responses

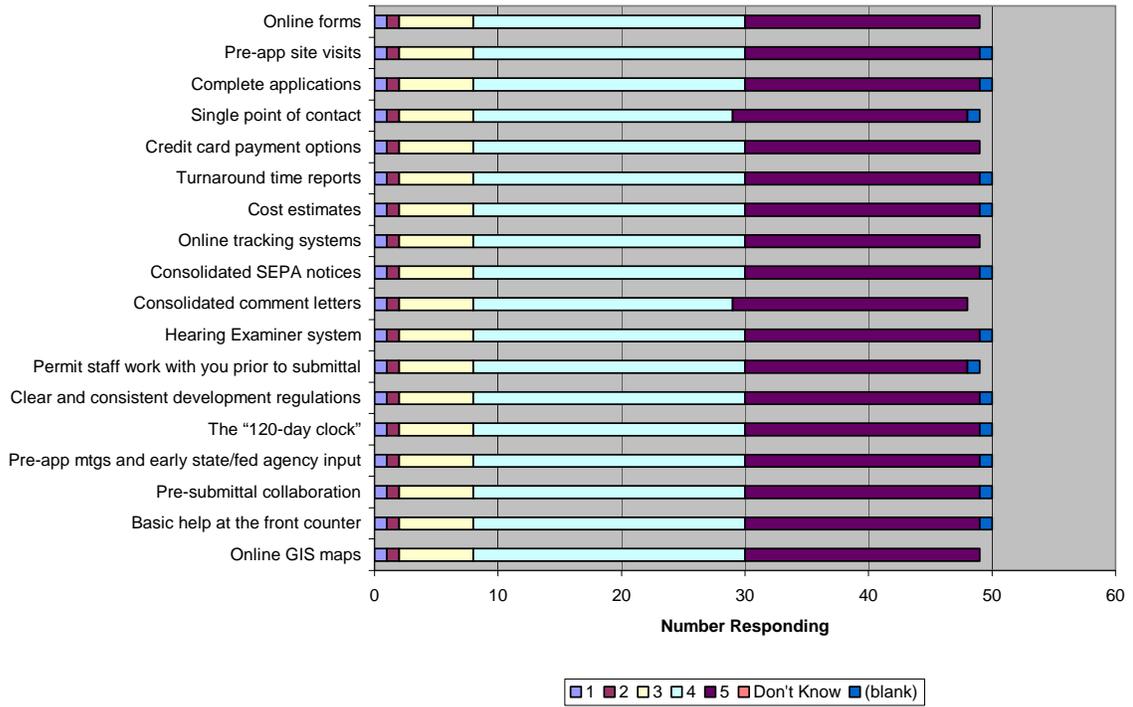


Figure 15 - Respondents from Small Organizations

Outreach Session Notes

The following are a compilation of ORA staff notes from the six outreach sessions.

Industry Sessions

I. Kennewick: Home Builders Association

March 27

Attendance: Home Builder Members, Real Estate Agents (6 total)

General Comments:

- Assumed everyone (all Tri-Cities jurisdictions and Counties) already had to complete a checklist. Why is this considered a new best practice?
- Checklists work but a consistent format is lacking. No consistency between jurisdictions and among various checklists makes it difficult for applicants to know which to follow.
- *Two Issues:* Control and money. (Applicants feel jurisdictions care about control and how much money they can get from a developer.)
- One negative about cities collaborating and sharing ideas is that you can't paint everything with the same brush. There are differences between jurisdictions that need to be taken into account. Can't assume what you are doing over there will work well over here.
- *Suggestion:* develop a checklist for property owners or prospective purchasers to look at even before they research the property. Need good ways to get information out to property owners so they don't invest in something that is not allowed.

Is Permit Processing Better or Worse Now?

- Process takes a lot longer than they used to (5-10 year process sometimes for land use approvals).
- Why do I need a business license from Kennewick and Richland when I already have one from the State? How many licenses do we really need?
- For the most part getting a building permit only takes around ten days (*Local level permitting in Tri-Cities seems to be working*).
- It would help if there were more liaisons at the local level like ORA. Single point of contact is a good idea.
- It seems you can't do anything without a permit. Previously permits not needed to move dirt – now needed and at an additional cost.
- Engineering review is getting worse as far as requiring longer turn around times
- West side of the state dictates the East side. Example: stormwater on East side is not such a factor yet East side is forced to adhere to something that has more importance on the West side of the State. Specifically: Why are silt fences needed on flat ground on the East side?

What Works?

- No major permit process problems at the local level in the Tri-Cities area from the Homebuilders prospective.
- Benton County is one of the better jurisdictions to work with because of their enterprise fund, board of adjustments, and collaborative work environment.

What Doesn't Work?

- What takes so long for Federal and State agencies to issue a permit?
- Lack of consistency between jurisdictions.
- Lack of checklists.
- Ordinances passed without public comment.
- Lack of coordination within agency. Example: a well driller who purchased land, obtained permits to make improvements, made improvements, and then told use was not allowed in that zone.
- Different timeframes for HPA (45 days), 401 (1 year), and Corp 404.
- General fund should not be supported through building permits and fees.

What are Examples of Best Practices?

- Certain jurisdictions have a single point of contact (Example: Richland).
- Like the role of technology in permitting process. Very handy not to have to drive ten miles to see if something was accepted.
- Jurisdictions have to be honest with builder. If local jurisdictions work with builder, the process would be easier.
- Building and development benefits the City as a whole and shouldn't be dictated by planner.
- Enterprise fund is an important way for building/planning departments to control resources and generate funds for needed improvements. For example: Benton County bought new permit tracking software.
- Board of Adjustments is really important.
- Like on-line inspection request process and on-line permit tracking.

II. Vancouver: Industry

April 3

Attendance: Planner from firm focused on engineering and landscape architecture, Civil Engineer, Biologist, Representative from BIA of Clark County, Earthwork engineer/rock moving/crushing (5 total)

Issues:

- Stuck in the “rigmarole” of differing rules among multiple agencies such as the Corp, Ecology, and Local.
- *Criticism of case manager.* Need protocols in place for how this should be done. Need a good case manager or the system doesn't help.

- *Concern regarding staff capacity and expertise.* When you have teams doing different types of work or serving different regions, need all the teams to have good expertise.

What Works Well?

- Expedited review works well. For example: City of Vancouver has expedited process where they skip preliminary submittal (which means skipping preliminary engineering review).
 - ✓ Need to be confident with your site plan and have good communication with City for this to work.
 - ✓ Only one extra meeting involved.
 - ✓ The process moves from 120 to 90 days.
 - ✓ There is a small surcharge.
 - ✓ Engineering and land use works well, but transportation division slows things down a bit because of short staffing.
- Note: If you have a letter from Columbia River Economic Development Council you can get expedited review from Clark County
- Updated Web Site. Example: Clark County has updated information on their web site and is very thorough with regard to codes. County has good GIS, all development codes, fee schedules, construction details, and road standards.
- There should be code publication standards. All jurisdictions should have the same standard for organization of their codes.
- Online codes should be kept current or there should be a way to find out if changes have been made. Web users are left in the dark.
 - ✓ Recommendation: Use Clark County web site as a model and include information on changes or updates.
- City of Battle Ground. Even minus a pre-application meeting, they will listen up front.
- Ecology seems to hit their timeline goals on CAO, but NPDES permits take too long.
- Ecology seems to be thinking more outside the box. Corps is getting there.
- 90% of people you work with at State are fine to work with: it's just the 10%...
- Overall departments seem to be okay in meeting deadlines, but sometimes it changes if you have a very complicated project or a very restrictive reviewer.

Recommendations:

- JARPA. Design JARPA to promote faster review which includes checklist responses, summaries, and any other details that can be attached.
- Post-project close out form/meeting that involves agency and private side may be good.

- Clark County lets you go through class to get certification of technical permit familiarity, so when you submit an application you can verify you have certification and it speeds up process.
- Submitting electronic copy rather than paper speeds up process.
- To speed up review processes, hire an outside consultant just to get applicant through the pre-submittal process. (Hire consultants that know the local area).
- Better mechanisms to deal with fees. A uniform approach for all fee ordinances?
 - ✓ Allow monthly billing for big clients.
 - ✓ Credit card payment.
 - ✓ Set rules at state level for what costs can and cannot be included in a permit fee.
 - ✓ Provide standards for how to calculate cost of service.
- State should do a better job of determining costs to local government for new rules and regulations.

III. Tacoma: Master Builders Association

April 8

Attendance: Ecology, Shoreline Property Owners and Contractors Assoc (SPOCA), Soundbuilt Homes, Master Builders Association of Pierce County (6 total).

What Works and What Does Not?

- Permit processes driven by people, situation, and to a degree, political climate.
- SPOCA wants to see consistency in Shoreline updates with Ecology's guidelines.
 - ✓ Concern about process and consistency.
 - ✓ Training, management and oversight are needed to make this work.
- Builders see a lack of consistency. Developers get conflicting information depending on who they speak with.
 - ✓ Frustration about receiving two different answers regarding a required application process from two different staff members.
 - ✓ Application requirements seem to change on a regular basis throughout local jurisdictions.
 - ✓ Example: One County changes requirements frequently, such as fees, but not all staff in the department are aware.
- **Keeping staff up to date and educated on new requirements is a must.**
- Developers want to know what they need to do so they can move forward.
- Developers want to give feedback but do not want to burn bridges or ruin relationships.
- Pierce County is very inclusive of the public but as a result, land use codes vary for each different community or neighborhood.
 - ✓ Difficult for staff and applicants to know all these regulations.
- One local City used to be gold standard for permitting but less satisfaction today from development community because:
 - ✓ Code changes (more complex codes) and staff turnover make it difficult to get consistent answers in a timely fashion.

- ✓ Permit time and decision making are now taking longer.
- Pierce County has gotten better as a result of a recent audit. Many of the Best Practices listed from the Tri-cities and Vancouver sessions (on Kurt's slides) are being addressed by Pierce County.
- City of Kent - organized; consistent, good model in general.
 - ✓ BUT - plan review not always easy; many comments and often convoluted.
 - ✓ Planners want lots of information and field inspectors do not read the information planners demand.
- Neighboring jurisdictions ask for different levels of information.
- Too much seems left up to personal opinion.
- There are 11 jurisdictions on Lake Washington and they all have different regulations.
- A corruption of information when conditions are detached from the science they are based on.
 - ✓ Example: For shoreline development, is shade good or bad? Tree planting required along shoreline yet docks must be grated or covered boathouses not allowed.
- Fees: They vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction for same work.
 - ✓ 100% fee based systems for running whole planning department not working well.
 - ✓ Some funding should come from the general fund.
 - ✓ Drop in applications causes layoffs.
 - ✓ Jurisdictions must decide whether/how to keep staff onboard in down markets.
 - ✓ Being able to use third party contractors to handle reviews would be helpful so jurisdictions would not need to hire so many staff when market is hot.
 - ✓ Guidance from state on how to calculate fees (what costs can be included) would be helpful.
- A concern expressed by some participants was that a "no" from agencies means job security for agency staff.
- Building code updates occurring every three years has negative impacts on builders.
 - ✓ Financial impact to builders.
 - ✓ Localities sometimes get a rush of applicants seeking to vest before new code take effect.
 - ✓ Training costs for jurisdictions and builders, plus confusion and inconsistencies while people learn codes.
 - ✓ Production/construction schedules impeded.
- Need good, single source for information of where to go when codes change.
- Pierce County keeps their process as digital as possible and it is efficient.
- Costs incurred by builder ultimately get passed on to consumer.
- Permit costs associated with a base plan now are high.
- Jurisdictions require different information for base plans.
- Pierce County is doing some e-permitting and Maple Valley is considering it as well.
- Streamlining and making everything consistent would be very helpful.

Local Government Sessions

I. Pasco

March 27

Problematic Areas?

- There is often confusion from the start of the process as to what is realistic on a given site (and thus what an applicant's project scope and budget ought to be).
- Chelan has found that even before a pre-application they would like a drawing and briefing on what applicant's idea/project.
- Applicants new to the system or one-time applicants do not know how much they need to plan for even before meeting the planning department.
- A frequent applicant comment: Why are you telling me I can't do this/that with my property? But local jurisdiction cannot change the rules.
- Big builders and frequent applicants often go straight to the "gray areas" of the code and try to push the boundaries on what is allowed.
- Regulations are new/"greek" to some applicants.
- Issues include growth vs. no growth and which stakeholders are involved (e.g. Tribal concerns vs. homebuilders, University vs. property owners) and newcomers from west side versus long term residents.
- Non-GMA localities rely on SEPA since it is the only real authority to use for growth related issues.
- Combining SEPA with the land-use application (per 1995 regulatory reform legislation) put a huge kink in their system as it changed their process; slowed down SEPA process.
 - ✓ SEPA is now not the first process. Is combined with land use application.
 - ✓ Previously, SEPA process relied on a very general description of the intended use. There was no need to provide site plan or detail on what was proposed. This worked better (faster, easier, and cheaper for applicants).
- Small Cities and Counties have a hard time keeping up with regulatory reform requirements.
- In Chelan, a SEPA exempt building permit that requires an HPA has created problems. WDFW can't accept HPA application unless building permit (usually with SEPA) was given, but County can't provide a building permit unless HPA done.
- Some builders hesitant to submit preliminary information at pre-application conferences. Proprietary information vs. public information. Once it's in writing in the hands of a local jurisdiction, it becomes public. If spoken, it's private. Some local departments let participants take away their materials from a pre-application meeting.
- Commercial/industrial businesses may know they have problems with site they are going to develop, but don't always disclose the problem.

Interagency Issues:

- Do not hear from State agencies on SEPA comments or get a blanket comment that does not have any specific comments about project.

- Late commenting State or Federal agency can really affect a project proponent who has done everything on time.
 - ✓ Suggested remedy from participants: Move forward and let agency appeal if they're late.
 - ✓ Local department heads or elected officials can make it clear that local agencies must respond on time. Harder with State agencies.

What Works?

- Intake checklists. If not complete reject application before you take it in.
- Stevens County uses “Fast track” where applicant sits down and meets with planner they will work with. Planner will look over application and decide if complete or not. Helps build connection to applicant and make sure everything is complete.
- Pasco case study/example: Pasco uses intake for commercial permits where they have all people involved in review in same room with applicant. They have removed front counter, which helps expedite the process in the long run.
 - ✓ No exceptions: if applicant doesn't have all information they will be turned away.
 - ✓ Developer has to bring engineer to meetings or will be turned away.
 - ✓ Everyone involved in process for permit is in same room so no one can say so and so told me this, because now that same person is in the room for rebuttal.
 - ✓ Pay extra and get two day turnaround on foundation permits.
 - ✓ 10 day normal turn around.
 - ✓ Software used to help identify building code issues and complete plan review. This information then provides subsequent building permits.
 - ✓ *Problem:* Customer service criticisms with no front counter.
 - ✓ *Problem:* Dedicating enough staff to come to these pre-application planning meetings.

Tracking Methods in Use at Various Jurisdictions:

- Flowcharts (done by hand)
- Electronic tracking software
- Access database
- Paper tracking
- *Problem:* Sometimes tracking doesn't do the job you want it to do, leading to signals being crossed between an engineer and planner.
- *Problem:* In some offices, it takes longer to figure out the planning software than just to create an easier paper trail to follow.
- Pasco uses program called “*TrakIt.*” Required everyone to learn software so everyone on same page.
- *Problem:* Requiring everyone to learn same software is easy for a City to do, but there are multiple jurisdictions in the county and they all use different systems. It

would be great to get everyone to agree across multiple jurisdictions to use the same tracking system.

- *Problem:* Tracking systems must connect to other City and County departments or they are not very useful.
- *Problem:* New administration comes in and may want things to change so technology may change at local level every 2-4 years.

II. Vancouver

April 3

Problems:

- Environmental mitigation too expensive and adds too little value; e.g., Westfield Mine \$350,000 wetland mitigation created by cooling water for “ditch.”
- State needs to look at a way of “fast-tracking” permits for big projects like energy or runways. (EFSEC process may not be best approach. Concerned it lacks tight coordination and in-house expertise).
- Lack of consistency between State and local permitting agencies.
- Need a team of experts among State officials who can really expedite processes for energy projects and other special projects.
- Certain Counties may have major industrial development or transportation projects that would have great benefits to State and local, but will get caught up in the permit process
- SEPA-GMA integration has never really worked.
- Rare for most jurisdictions to use SEPA for mitigation because most have adopted updated development regulations.
- A few jurisdictions still use SEPA in place of regulations, especially for impact fees.
- Local jurisdictions get boilerplate comments from State agencies.
- If you are a GMA County and have critical ordinances and have done zoning, why should you have to do SEPA? It’s like going through SEPA twice.
- Should raise exemption levels for SEPA when local regulations already account for environmental impacts. BUT need good local regulations; consistency.
- *Suggestion:* Allow non-GMA Cities and Counties to impose impact fees.
- No political will in some jurisdictions to deal with certain aspects, such as aesthetics, in development regulations. Use SEPA instead on a project by project basis.
- Exclude projects from SEPA if a permitted use in the zone and if development standards address impacts. Example: Planned Action in Comprehensive Plan and Zoning. Another example that should not require SEPA: Any use in an urban area that generates 10 or fewer peak hour trips. Do traffic study but no SEPA.
- Federal and State regulations are passed on to local jurisdictions to implement but no Federal or State funds provided. Costs to locals so high as to be unreasonable. Example: an agricultural building shouldn’t be inspected – but it needed a \$6,000 permit fee.

Water:

- Huge issue for local jurisdictions *is how water is regulated*. Example: Chehalis basin is closed basin, but in-stream flows are increasing. Why have a moratorium placed on water?
- A County may have something that works for how they use/adjudicate water and shouldn't have to adhere to State recommendations.
- Non-GMA Counties don't have to subscribe to 5,000 gallon day limit.
- Ecology won't allow you to hold water rights. The water rights "expire."
- Some developers will use gymnastics and stretch water rights in every direction.
- Regulations on water quality for discharge too stringent. Impossible to meet standards even with technology we have.
- Stormwater: Huge burden on municipalities to fund and implement stormwater regulations.
 - ✓ Stormwater regulations make development process tedious, expensive, unreasonable timelines, and showstopper for small developments with ugly detention ponds that take up space that could be used for development.
- Cost of regulatory requirements for stormwater may not have a lot of value to City's plan.
- Well regulations, drinking water standards, and water rights are too complicated. Municipal Water Law too complicated.

GMA

- Wish for a GMA-Light that allowed some things, like impact fees but did not require really expensive comprehensive planning.
- Need less restrictive model ordinances (Critical areas, impact fees, etc).
- BUT - Model ordinances not wanted. Hearings Boards latch on to them and if your jurisdiction doesn't have equivalent standards, you are penalized. Should be more menu style where smaller jurisdictions can pick a different model to use that may be more fitting to their own area.

What Works Well?

- Assign a case manager that covers the land use process AND the engineering/building permit phase. In most jurisdictions, once an application passes through land use, the case manager is not as present and timelines get fuzzy. (OR - Use different case managers for engineering, but still use them).
- Permit tracking software works, but very expensive.
- Skamania County is trying to streamline things and have one point of contact as a planner.
- Seattle has list of certified applicants/developers.

What Is Not Working?

- Community development is sometimes funded solely by fees, which becomes fundamental problem.

- ✓ Need a way to fund the whole process, including planning and code enforcement, which are not tied directly to the cost of reviewing and issuing permits.
- ✓ Some people, such as farmers, can't afford high permit fees (\$6000 cost for a barn permit cited).
- ✓ State needs to look at issue of fees. Pass a fee bill that describes how cost of services should be calculated; what fees may be expended on.
- Some local governments use development fees for their general budget funding.
- Kelso re-doing fee schedule because some fees are very high while others are too low.
- *Problems:* Many Counties do not have standardized file retention system. Digital imaging would be useful but is too expensive.
- *Suggestion:* Don't make jurisdictions readopt the International Building Code every three years.

Grant Money from ORA for Local Jurisdictions Electronic Permit Tracking

- Grants are good.
- Love the idea of software used for permitting, but expensive.
- Lewis County has consulted out for software that works very well (integrated operations for building inspectors).
- Industry is pushing for their software product in the codes.
- *Suggestion:* MRSC or ORA could develop list of what jurisdictions are using what software and explain why/how it is working. Post this list to web site.

III. Tacoma

April 9

What Works and What Does Not?

- A permit tracking system with online access and performance measurement capability would help with streamlining. Some cities are being asked to report on whether changes to their permitting process are making a difference (i.e. amount of time to permit). Manual tracking is difficult and takes many hours of a permit technician's time because it is done on paper, (data extraction is the main time issue). One jurisdiction tracked total processing time first, but that did not work well because there is a variation in process time depending on the complexity of the project. Applicants also sometimes do not respond in a timely manner which holds up the process and extends total processing time.
 - ✓ The cost of tracking is a huge barrier to the process, especially in small Cities or Counties. Not everyone has the resources to purchase electronic permit tracking software.
 - ✓ There may be other metrics to measure performance (i.e. public involvement, critical areas protected).

- Aside from performance tracking, being able to pull out information that measures where people tend to need assistance would be good. A report spelling out the projects, people involved, and status (including timelines and priorities) is helping them identify the areas where the system bogs down for the applicant, potentially based on confusion or lack of understanding.
 - ✓ Some Cities focus their educational efforts on the common themes discovered from the correction letters they send to applicants.
- Case managers and a single point of contact are important. The need to actively manage and oversee timelines and the substance of what's creating issues.
- Everyone must be involved and agree to monitor their timelines. The project manager for each individual project has the ultimate responsibility for monitoring timelines.
- Staffing levels make a huge difference. If understaffed, single point of contact is not possible (small Cities may have only 1 or 2 people to begin with).
- One City tracks applicants that have trouble with bond forfeiture. They are required to provide more cash up front if history not favorable.
- Unfunded mandates also cause big problems. There are unfunded mandates at the State and Federal level (i.e. flood issues). Many times local governments do not know what is required and whether it is funded until there is a disaster situation.
- Organizational structure can affect the process, but there is no "right" structure.
 - ✓ Buy-in is critical. Leadership is critical in getting buy-in.
- If people "counter complete" their applications, i.e., do enough review at the counter to verify that the application is complete, time is saved. Through checklists, applications can be "counter completed" the same day they come in.
- Even a complete application may need additional information to be submitted if something is discovered during the review process.
- Up front time spent with the applicant also helps ensure the application is complete. If time is spent up front, the applicant has all the information needed prior to submittal.
 - ✓ For one jurisdiction, the goal is that 90% of customers are served in 20 minutes – applications are reviewed quickly for completeness and when completed, they can be submitted and processed later.
- Some jurisdictions have a preferred consultants list.
 - ✓ Applicant gets immediate intake (thus shorter permitting time) if they use a consultant from the list.
 - ✓ The program has made a difference in King County and they are working to expand the program. (King County has this information on their website).
 - ✓ Consistently prepared applicants. In some jurisdictions these applicants get to schedule an intake examination rather than going through the initial steps usually required.

- ✓ Criteria for a preferred consultant: One city mentioned 3 completed applications with no major “problems or issues.” Another mentioned 80% of applications are complete and meet standards.
- Some jurisdictions use peer review for engineering or stream and wetland habitat review.
 - ✓ Pros: calculation checks, checking for completeness which saves time.
 - ✓ Cons: policy decisions still need to be done by the staff and the peer reviewer is not involved. There has also been push-back from the union and staff regarding overtime.
 - ✓ Peer review is paid for by the applicant. The peer reviewer must also defend the process they used.
 - ✓ This process is only used in overflow situations.
 - ✓ In some cases, peer reviewers have as long as they want to complete their review because the permitting clock is not on when application is with the peer reviewer.
- One jurisdiction mentioned that, when overflow occurs (i.e., projects get backlogged), they have workload and contracting discussions with the union. If consultants are used, one benefit is no required staff overtime.
- Peer review and contract consultants get paid in various ways: flat fee, hourly, a percentage of the permit fee.
- One downside of contracting out is that the work still needs to be checked when it comes back in.
- One jurisdiction provides an expedited review option that can be used if the applicant contracts with a preferred contractor for outside review before submitting the application to the local jurisdiction. If it is peer reviewed prior to submittal, the local review takes one week after the application is submitted.
- Contracting out does not take care of all the review requirements, especially for other departments, such as water, utilities, or septic.
 - ✓ Some jurisdictions have decided not to offer expedited or contracting out services because all of the functional pieces (fire, planning, and public works) are not able or willing to participate.
- Developers want consistency and knowledge of the timeline.
- Jurisdictions are all working on the processes on the Best Practices list. The ability to share is great, but if a consistent application process with consistent forms and steps for all jurisdictions (or all neighboring jurisdictions) was available that would be very helpful.
- There is huge power in the consistency of approach in local government. Getting this consistency at the state level would also be helpful. Consistent forms, processes, standards.

- One piece that is important to include in the report is an explanation of the basic resources needed to improve the process (i.e. sufficient staff, performance measures).
 - ✓ E-city.gov alliance has been working on this issue. One problem is land use codes; everyone has a different view of what they want their community to look like.
 - ✓ Budget incentives or grants will be needed from the state to help local jurisdictions improve.
- Standardized permits may be very difficult or not work because of the differences in the way local governments want their communities to look.
- Coordination of regional efforts is also important.
- Encouraging multi-jurisdictional efforts will help. ORA should continue to encourage multi-jurisdictional efforts.
- Setting up a discussion board or other multi-agency multi-jurisdictional group would also be helpful. This would be an opportunity where local governments could share. Pick a small topic first and create a group to work on it.
- Fees and funding are an issue. More and more local jurisdictions are moving to make their planning and building departments fee-based. There is a need for help in determining appropriate fees and funding structures.
- The report being produced should help give local governments a chance to see what others are doing and what best practices would work in their particular jurisdiction. (Support for discussion group or other ongoing communication.)
- Agreement that a depository of best practices that local governments could look at would be helpful.
- *Suggestion:* Help local jurisdictions measure how meaningful the various best practices are; which ones provide the highest value and lowest cost.
- Regulations still overlap each other (local, State, and Federal). There are sometimes up to three submittals needed for the same basic permit. It is hard for local governments to be consistent with the State or Federal government because the processes occur at different times and with different material.

Outreach Sessions: If you could change one thing about permitting?

Industry Sessions

I. Kennewick: Home Builders Association

- Reduce regulations around development. Too many layers of regulations.
- Stormwater regulations are overkill in eastern Washington. Need more flexibility about appropriate BMPs.
- One size does not fit all. Just because one jurisdiction needs something doesn't mean another does, too. Example: Something in King County doesn't necessarily apply to Pierce County.
- Broader theme: more flexibility as long as you have same result. Focus on Performance not on restrictive standards.
- PE stamp should have more value. Even though a project is designed by an engineer, it can be subsequently denied by local authority even though an engineer has stamped the plan and has his/her credibility on the line.
- Sometimes non-engineers review plan and deny it based on some sort of engineering problem.
- Local authority goes through different engineers often so you get different perspectives with some inconsistency.
- To speed up review, just accept engineered plans rather than doing review.

II. Vancouver: Industry

- Seems like some code standards are arbitrary and pulled out of the air.
 - ✓ Example: 5,000 sq ft building requires 15 parking spaces. Where do these numbers really come from? A 50,000 sq. foot building needs a semi-truck bay even though no use in that building would use a semi-truck except for moving.
 - ✓ *Recommendation:* More communication with people in the field, industry, end users when developing codes because they are the people who operate the businesses and who know the real impacts.
- Need someone who is willing to listen and work with you. A culture of helping is better than a culture of regulating or fighting.
- Main focus: Developers/Applicants need a level of predictability, accountability, and punctuality.
- Need some level of public access to permit tracking information. Need to know once you submit an application that something is happening.
- Multiple correction cycles can be a problem.
 - ✓ Get something with minimal red marks at first submittal then you do edits and resubmit again and it comes back with red marks everywhere. Implies they didn't read it the first time.

- Let's have one level of professional review.
- Dueling engineers not useful. Why won't a city just accept a PE stamp without reviewing the submittal?
- No uniform CAO rules across the state. There are multiple jurisdictions with different rules so no consistency.
 - ✓ One jurisdiction may have 100 foot wetland buffer while another jurisdiction with same wetland may have 300 foot buffer.
- Varying opinions expressed regarding Ecology timelines. Some participants indicated good response regarding CAO issues. Others said slow especially regarding NPDES General Construction permits and Water Rights Transfers.
- Dissatisfaction with some agency turnaround times.
- Trust that all reviewers have adequate skills and interests is an issue during agency review between Corps, Ecology, and Local.
- Frustration because sometimes it seems an agency is involved when applicant did not think they needed to be.
 - ✓ *Perceptions:* Some agencies are late with comments and their opinion changes as the project progresses. In addition, agency staff will not listen to professional opinion from another agency.
- Applicants would like a realistic mechanism for private sector feedback on agency personnel and their different personalities. Applicants concerned about creating ill will if they complain.
- Concern about whether staff conducts site visits. Paper plans do not always convey full picture.
- Joint site visits, with all agencies, a really good idea.
- Consistency is a huge issue.
- Need effective leaders. If leaders think outside the box, then staff will follow.
- Approval of projects that protect environment AND promote community growth should be goal.
- New stormwater requirements are very onerous and unrealistic. Ecology asks for more than what is required in local codes.
- Too many layers of regulation. New requirements from State or Federal level are burdensome, on top of existing mandates.
- Smaller jurisdictions have trouble training their staff on new mandates.
- Desire for a five year moratorium on any new mandates so local government can catch up.
- Local governments need money to meet requirements.
- Developers wish reviewers would call them (or meet with them) before sending letters so they could explain or respond or point out things on the plans.
- Developers wish planners understood the financials; development costs, financing, implications of delay.

- Local agencies seem to have more flexibility than State and Federal agencies; lack of flexibility detracts from ultimate goals of good development.
- Would like to see more deference to Local decisions.

III. Tacoma: Master Builders Association

- Make plan review electronic.
- Permitting system needs to be less complex.
 - ✓ There are too many regulations to comply with (SMA, GMA, Critical Areas, etc.).
- One person should be able to tell you what you need to do to meet all requirements and the answer should remain consistent.
- Leave more time between statute or ordinance updates.
- Local, State and Federal permitting processes should run concurrently and be consistent.
- Provide timeline of all permit processes and be able to clearly see what is holding up the permitting process.
- Take a look at the whole process and figure out where the dependencies are, and then make sure they make sense. There are certain dependencies that are built into when a permit decision can be made.
- A process flow diagram would be very helpful.
- Consistency is the key. Having one person really focus on consistency between local jurisdictions could help.
- Sharing scientific studies and assessments would help. Need a publicly accessible system so the studies can be located and shared.
- The biggest issue is inconsistency in answers from the planners and engineers.
- Inconsistency causes delays.
- Applicants want requirements to add value, not just bureaucracy.
- One-time applicants (Mom and Pop) need help from local jurisdictions.

Local Government Sessions

I. Pasco

- Shoreline regulations should have same notice and appeal provisions as other regulations.
- Critical areas and shoreline regulations should be combined into one set of regulations, not two since they overlap. (Make shoreline regulations part of CAO regulations.)
- Educate applicants about big picture issues like water supply, UGA services, stormwater requirements.
- Streamline and realign local, State, and Federal processes so planners don't have to deal with four different files/permits/processes (only one).

- Educate developers so they realize planners aren't against them, but trying to get things resolved appropriately.
- Go back to doing SEPA as a stand-alone process up front (before other applications are submitted).
- Annual developer symposium put on by the City that would advise developers on new or changed regulations. Developers put up walls and this might help to diminish these walls developers build.

II. Vancouver

- State should fast track important projects e.g., energy, essential public facilities.
- Have traveling experts to help with big projects that rely on State and Federal comments but are permitted by local planners with limited experience and time.
- Not accepting building plan submittals for complicated projects until final site plans are approved would save confusion and time because no last minute changes would be required. BUT:
 - ✓ *Criticism:* Builders often are willing to take a risk about last minute changes, in order to have their plans ready to issue when final site plan is approved. This is especially true when there are many projects already in line ahead of a proposed development.
- Separate review teams according to the level of applicant expertise.
- Eliminate duplicative State and local requirements (SEPA and NPDES construction general permits). If you have adopted adequate development regulations, just give all authority to local government. Locals will adhere to laws and know they will get sued if don't abide.
- Standardize transportation road and street development standards across all jurisdictions in a County.
 - ✓ Add flexibility to use low impact design.
 - ✓ State can provide support for low impact design.
- Pull water rights and water management out of Ecology and put in agency that is more geared toward local government.
- Uniform standards for residential fire sprinklers.
- There would be more attention paid to the back-end systems and requirements for running a planning and building department: How to develop reliable costs of service and fee systems, track and manage paper and electronic files, develop and manage impact fees, purchase and implement electronic permit tracking systems, measure and report performance, etc.

III. Tacoma

- This kind of forum on a regular basis would be helpful.
- Interested to see a blogging group so jurisdictions could keep in touch when they are not meeting.

- Regulatory writing – write regulations in plain English so customers can read and understand them. (ORA mentioned the Governor’s Plain Talk initiative <http://www.accountability.wa.gov/plaintalk/default.asp>.)
- Standard operating procedures that each jurisdiction can use in an attempt to reduce repetition of effort. (These procedures could be suggested by the State, but with local government ability to tailor to fit their jurisdiction.)
- Different (neighboring) jurisdictions should get together to interview pools of consultants to reduce costs.
- Components of SEPA, Shoreline, HPA permits that do not add value should be exempted at the State and Federal level.
- Push for qualified local program effort for jurisdictions that want to work with State on stormwater general permits (NPDES).
- Establish a collaborative group through ORA to look for consistency in permitting.
- Inexperienced developers – develop criteria to teach them to develop a good application.
- Communication is key. Setting standards, creating checklists and standard operating procedures to educate the public on what will speed up the permitting process are good and are always ongoing.
 - ✓ Better communication and public outreach would be good for applicants.
 - ✓ Federal and State outreach efforts are not even close to the level of the City and County outreach efforts.
 - ✓ There is a massive confusion over who has jurisdiction on what permit, who to deal with first, what does each agency needs, etc.
- Meet with users to see what will make everyone successful. Incomplete applications are the biggest killer of timelines. Checklists and questionnaires are helpful in getting complete applications.
- Complete applications and the more information provided up front, the better.
- Interagency agreements are a hassle and the biggest issue in an emergency response is the liability issue. State needs to take the lead on interagency agreements when needed for emergency response. A solution to the liability issue is critical to local jurisdictions ability to respond in emergencies.
- All state regulations need to be plain talked.
- Local jurisdictions that can implement to state standards should not have their applicants subjected to the state permitting process.
 - ✓ Exemptions should be available.
 - ✓ Also, Washington does a very poor job of complying with the International Building Code Initiative. Some of the ordinances are also so convoluted, that they cannot be enforced.
- A standardized, required way to fund local development review process would also be helpful. Everyone is competing for the same dollars, and this does not necessarily promote economic development.
- Adequate staffing is a problem. If there were a Service Pool of technical specialists at the County, then small Cities could use/buy their services as needed.
- Empowering the applicant with information also helps with the permitting process.

- Provide post-application review to see what worked and what did not, separating process from regulation would be a good way to make improvements.
- Permit processing: if regulations continue to get more complex, simplification is not possible.
- More clarity about the type of public information and pre-application services that can be provided is needed.
- Providing matching funds to smaller jurisdictions would be helpful.
- Increased collaboration among government agencies and the private sector.
- More information about how local jurisdictions are serving the public at large.
- Put more value and emphasis on general public education about what permitting agencies do.
- Consistency in regulation and process.
- Is there a way to track the cost of regulations?
- Define the term: “sufficient for continued processing?”
- Find a way to keep core staff even in the face of layoffs because of the downturn in the economy.
- Create a technology road map so we can capture our future. Getting back end systems to the next level for digital planning will require an effort that no individual jurisdiction can afford. Making this even more difficult is the interfaces among jurisdictions. This cannot be done individually. Regional efforts? State support?

Straw Poll Results: What would you change?

Note: Some multi-point comments were divided and inserted into different groups.

1. Create Mutual Understanding

Build Agency Cooperation:

1. Faster comment turnaround from some agencies. 2. Would like a "can-do" attitude to supplant a prevalent "can't-do" attitude. 3. More deference to local decision-makers.

Provide as much certainty in the process as possible.

Accountability to the public for costs of permit fees & permit review times and process. Cut red tape, not allow any one person to hold up the process

State agencies providing timely responses to reviews of studies and project permits

Early and accurate comment letters from all agencies including local, state and federal jurisdictions. And those agencies standing behind the comments they make. Would like to see permit timelines applied to the Dept. of Ecology, especially for review and approval of mitigation banks

Realism and accountability. Some state agencies have stepped so far beyond local accountability that even municipal government has a difficult time dealing with them. Zealots have no place being regulators.

Good Understanding:

I personally feel that you should be able to give a reason for the regulations in your code. Often I think that agencies way over regulate simple processes and cannot determine the need for the regulation. To cut processing times and costs, departments should look at cutting out certain processes such as requiring a public hearing for certain things that could be done administratively. I could go on but I do believe that as agencies we have a responsibility to be as efficient as possible.

More clear and easy to understand/apply land development regulations. A true "de-regulation" effort to streamline the land use review process may be unavoidable at some point because of the layers and layers of regulations that seemingly add little or no value to the economic cycle of land development.

Consistency and predictability. Provide clear and precise information and all required information on a consistent basis. Be predictable - for example, when the jurisdiction says 1-2 week turnaround and then takes 1-2 months.

For personnel to understand - understand their job and management have everyone on the same page

4. Analyze Process, Performance, and Costs

Local or Agency Initiated Changes

Tighter collaboration and service delivery. It feels like the state behaves as a separate entity with a different set of goals apart from local governments. This creates a different experience for applicants and unpredictable outcomes, particularly with the timing of permit issuance, local vs. state.

Uniform construction and land use applications, terminology, requirements, and processing time.

GMA consistency use of current comprehensive plans as the guide for development as well as for infrastructure

Permitting should be more straight forward and cheaper in City/UGA Jurisdictions
In many cases permitting is easier and less costly in Counties. This is not consistent with of GMA

For jurisdictions to have the freedom to implement "common sense" solutions to problems.

Inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional Collaboration Reduce Redundancy, Improve Collaboration

In the years since RCW 36.70B was passed, I feel that we have drifted away from some of its initial principles, such as the 120 day clock or consolidating our reviews. And, it still seems that local and state agencies do not work well together if a project needs permits from both the local and a state agency(ies). This seems especially true when environmental review is involved.

A cooperative effort between development service agencies to develop a strategic roadmap in the following areas: More seamless customer support for application readiness Administrative process and code interpretation consistency Technical architecture vision/standardization to accept digital applications and plan submittals and the for exchange of development review data between reviewing agencies.

Variable processes for permits based on complexity and what there is to gain. Many permits could involve much less "processing" when the risk to the environment or goal of the regulations is clearly not being jeopardized by the application. For instance, if a wetland permit is required in the buffer of a wetland the best available science for that permit should be sufficient for a shoreline substantial development permit only requiring one permit not more. JARPA does not negate the need for a permit, just consolidates the comments. Really only a paper shuffle for the HPA, Shoreline and potentially the Corp permit when the Wetland development permit is the most restrictive.

Consistent processes and procedures between cities and counties. Consistent development regulations as well.

Improving consistency between jurisdictions is a worthwhile broad goal. Getting there is a matter of sharing best practices (benchmarking). Because permitting runs across several disciplines (planning, public works, building and related codes, and fire safety, I'd encourage the State to take a lead in facilitating this cross-discipline benchmarking by coordinating periodic benchmarking meetings and serving as a resource for information on permitting BMP's.

There are still times when a project involves more than one agency with jurisdiction. I have long advocated a change in state law where different state agencies could authorize one agency to represent them. I see this similar to the SEPA lead-agency process. In this way, instead of having several agencies imposing different and conflicting requirements on a project, there would be one agency responsible. Our wetlands ordinance has such language deferring to another agency with jurisdiction. It may be possible for this to work for F&W HPA, DOE, DNR and Army Corps of Engineers permits as well as county wetlands and shorelines, when there is overlap of wetlands, shorelines, fish and wildlife habitat, and forestry requirements. While it is true that different agencies have different expertise, it seems that the reluctance to pursue this concept is more due to protecting turf than to works towards cooperation.

Explore options to eliminate redundancy between local and state regulations (environmental with ecology, building codes with Dept. of Health, and DSHS

Consolidate review of applications by agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands and water courses.

Quicker review and approval. Clear concise regulations. Right now, most cities are in the process of developing their own unique critical areas ordinance in accordance with best management practices. It would make MUCH MORE SENSE if the State/Legislature adopted the formal standards that all jurisdictions would be required to follow rather than allowing for variations from city to city which can easily be challenged by third parties. Wetland setbacks in Hoquiam should be the same as in Olympia.

Legislative Initiated Changes

SEPA

Increase SEPA Categorical Exemption thresholds in urban areas, or allow projects to be exempt from SEPA in urban areas when local development regulations cover all areas of impact.

Allow GMA planning communities to opt out of permit related SEPA. Eliminate overlap in jurisdiction between WFWD and DOE regarding streams, wetlands, and shorelines. Eliminate overlap in jurisdiction between ACOE and NMFS (I know you don't have control over the Fed's.).

Elimination of SEPA review in urban growth areas that have 1) Adopted current critical area regulations, 2) Adopted impact fees, 3) Have current development codes, and 4) Adopted its Comprehensive Plan using the combined SEPA/GMA EIS process. This could be accomplished by expanding the current SEPA exemption in RCW 43.21C.229.

Integrated Permit Review

A state wide task force to consolidate and integrate regulations into a common law. Faith would be good at this. A lot of confusion is created as multiple layers of regulations exist with applicants and reviewers having difficulty in making timely accurate code calls.

The same processing requirements and timelines and notice requirements for all state mandated permit processes - currently, each state mandated permit type requires a different process and notice requirements.

Less prescriptive regulations. What's the use of requiring professional licensing if designers are stifled by regulations that disallow creative solutions to problems that do not fit nicely into a prescribed format? Place the burden of liability back on to the designers, not the jurisdictions; that's what they are willing to accept as professionals. I would like to see a standard permit review process statewide. It would make doing business in Washington much simpler.

Get DOE and the USACE out of the review process.

Vesting

Develop WAC's that only establish vesting for development applications when a "letter of completeness" has been sent by the reviewing agency.

Clarification of vesting for planning permits. Apparently, vesting provisions were established (by the legislators and/or courts) for subdivisions and conditional use permits, but other permits enter a gray area when new land use provisions are enacted during permit processing

5. Use Information Technology

Posting of land use permit review processes on county and city websites to include the SEPA review process. Note: it seems that when the state legislature attempts to solve a permit process issue the "law of unintended consequences" kicks in and the solution's adverse impacts may exceed the solutions benefits.

Enhanced, even incentivized cooperation between government and private companies to a collaboratively address technological innovations/solutions to permit processing.

Funding for electronic plan submittal/review software and hardware.

6. Implement Systems for Staffing Flexibility

I would like individuals such as me to be assigned as an advisor to assist him through the permit process. This would have saved me countless sleepless nights, tears and frustrations, and a building inspector's insensitive remarks.

Large project team consisting of upper level officials, working together to facilitate permitting projects rather than regulate.

Speed up the review process. Offer an option to pay for outside consultants or overtime to speed up the process.

ORA Outreach Comments

Liked the discussion of improvement attempts.

Bigger meeting space. Liked hearing the problems and solutions expressed by other cities and counties.

More background on what you're going to talk about.

Other

The job of Permit Technician should be recognized and compensated on a state level in the same way that inspection staff is recognized and compensated. Permit Technicians are no longer 'support staff' and should be recognized for their technical expertise, records management and research skills, contribution to the permit review process, and their protection of the public's health, safety and welfare. They play an integral part in the permit process but continue to meet opposition from Human Resources Departments when it comes to being professionally recognized and compensated.

I would not allow any unfunded mandates from the state or feds!

A standard state permit and license system for roofing contractors

Informational Interviews with Local Jurisdictions: Snohomish County

Background

The Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance (ORA) conducted a series of informational interviews in Snohomish County during fall of 2007 as a prelude to its broader statewide outreach in the Best Practices for Local Government Permitting project.

The interviews were largely focused on the main ORA mandate of coordinating and improving the review process for multi-agency permitting involving local, state and federal agencies. A number of questions focused on identifying best practices for local government permitting as directed by recent changes to the ORA enabling statute, RCW Chapter 43.42.

Results

The questions and comments related to local government permitting from the Snohomish County interviews are presented in the table below. Comments have been consolidated and grouped into themes. The frequency of answers indicated on the tables represents the number of times the issue or idea was mentioned by a local jurisdiction during an interview.

These comments parallel the comments ORA heard in its outreach sessions during spring 2008 and have been incorporated into the report and recommendations completed by ORA and The Latimore Company (*Local Government Permitting Best Practices*, August 2008).

Ideas and comments from the Snohomish County interviews that go beyond local government permitting and speak toward improving multi-agency project review are not presented directly in this summary. However, ORA continues work on a range of projects to make system-wide improvements related to local, state and federal interactions on environmental permitting.

Interview Method

A total of 37 representatives from 17 cities participated in the interviews. Twelve interviews were completed in-person and five were conducted by telephone. All interviews were conducted by the same ORA staff member. Directors of the local Land Use Planning and Development Departments were contacted to schedule the interviews. Attendance at the interviews was left to the discretion of each jurisdiction. In some cases, the interviews included only the Director. In other cases, additional staff members were included. In one case, the consulting company hired by a city to complete permit reviews was interviewed.

Snohomish County was selected as an initial trial for the best practices outreach because it is the third most populous county in the state and one of the fastest growing. It has a

diverse mix of large and small communities. The County has also been successful in streamlining and simplifying its local permitting process. In addition, the County has demonstrated a commitment to government accountability and improvement through a range of innovative and collaborative customer service programs.

Thank You

The cities participating in the Snohomish interviews contributed a significant amount of time and effort. Their contribution is greatly appreciated.

ORA would like to thank and recognize the following cities for their participation: Arlington, Bothell, Darrington, Everett, Gold Bar, Granite Falls, Index, Lake Stevens, Lynnwood, Marysville, Mill Creek, Monroe, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo, Snohomish, Stanwood, and Sultan. ORA would also like to thank HBA Design Group for participating as well in their capacity as permit reviewer for a local jurisdiction.

Interview Questions and Comments

Acronyms:

Corps – U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

ESA – Endangered Species Act

ECY – Washington Department of Ecology

CAO – Critical Areas Ordinance

SEPA – State Environmental Policy Act

Question: What are you doing now that helps you receive complete applications, minimize turn-around time, and streamline the process?	
Comment	Frequency of Answer
Information Provided to Applicant	
Almost no one submits a complete application the first time. Most applicants are overwhelmed by all the paperwork.	1
Connect the dots with all the regulations. For example – farm application drains to ditch, ditch drains to tributary, tributary drains to stream, stream drains to river and results in fish kill.	1
If applicant knows the process, it helps.	1
Provide educational materials such as pamphlets and fact sheets.	1
Provide educational material and forms on web site.	1
Establishing general time frames for all types of permit reviews.	1
Develop comprehensive checklists for permit applications.	2
User’s Manual for City Permits explains permits and process in an easy to use format.	1
Wetlands in the city are delineated, mapped, and available to applicants.	1
City shares all technical information and reports with applicants. Examples: geo-tech reports, wetland delineations, previous reports.	1
Provide SEPA information for local conditions, such as plants and animals in the area, so that applicant does not leave this portion of the form blank. Reduces back and forth between applicant and agency for those conditions that are the same throughout the city limits.	1
Recommend applicant hire an experienced consultant familiar with local	4

area for those issues that require technical expertise.	
Steps in the Review Process	
Corps review of some steps can be done in advance of local permit submittal. For example, ESA and 404b(1) process can be done in advance.	1
If a Corps permits is required, City recommends applicant start with Corps. If denied, then state and local can not permit either. Same with ECY. City recommends applicant work with state before submitting local permits.	1
For larger projects, Corps review is so long that projects often get “tweaked” during review. This leads to a loop between Shoreline permits and Corps permit since the Shoreline permit is completed before Corps review.	1
Nuances in how applicant describes project can make a big difference in determining permits. Need to talk with applicant before they submit an application. The difference in what an applicant submits on paper and how they describe the project in person or on site can be huge.	1
Free information meeting before Pre-Application meeting. Applicant schedules meeting in advance. Staff from all departments set aside time every week for meeting with public.	1
Require or recommend a pre-application meeting.	9
Free pre-application meeting.	3
Confusion with pre-application meetings. Important to clarify they provide guidance, not final decisions. Ordinances and codes reviewed after application submittal provide the final determination.	1
Civil engineering Pre-Application meeting just to review drawings and plans. Reduces the number of back and forth comments regarding engineering documents.	1
Pre-Application meeting for projects that will have permits denied. Sometimes one of the benefits of a Pre-Application meeting is to let applicant know that the project as proposed will not be issued permits. This saves the applicant time, money, and frustration.	1
Letter of summation after Pre-Application meeting to help applicant understand what will be required for permit submittal.	1
Site visit conducted early in process. May reveal new or unforeseen issues or may eliminate non-issues.	2
Review application package at time it is submitted to ensure it is complete.	2
Application packet routed to all city departments for review.	1
Weekly problem solving meeting with staff from all city departments. A list of projects for discussion is generated each week.	2
City has a natural resources “generalist” on staff who can do a variety of tasks including steep slopes, wetlands, streams, habitat issues, planting plans, fisheries, and forest practices. Results usually less expensive and faster than using a consultant.	1
On-call consultant for City regarding CAO issues such as wetland	5

delineations. Offers independent opinion. Provides a specialist to City when needed and applicant is provided with objective, credible opinion. Applicant provides deposit for consultant fees. Review time can often be done quicker.	
Consultant hired for permit review of larger, more complex projects or when work load requires.	1
Consults hired for routine permit review. Part of the initial plat fees, impact fees, and sub-planning fees are charged at time of permit application. This pays for consultant review of application. Time tracked by consultant and costs passed through to applicant.	4
Experienced Hearing Examiner familiar with process and people.	3
Schedule tentative date with Hearing Examiner at the beginning of the review process. Helps staff plan toward hearing date and reduces down time.	1
Hearing Examiner scheduled every week. Less pressure on timeline if you miss a week vs. once a month option.	1
Hearing Examiner scheduled as needed (approximately 1 per month).	1
For permits involving wetlands, staff makes decision but still summarizes for Planning Commission to keep them informed.	1
Grading permit is one of the last local permits issued. City will issue after applicant has obtained state and federal permits.	1
CAO permits are “approved” which indicates they meet City codes but are conditioned on obtaining state and federal permits. “Approved” permits are valid for 2 years with a 1 year extension. Permit is “issued” when state and federal permits are complete.	1
Organizational Improvements	
One-stop permitting. One location for all permits. Technicians work with applicants to provide a single point of contact for land use, engineering, and building permits.	3
Project teams stay with project all the way through project. Team includes a planner, engineer, and building specialist.	1
Work with applicant one-on-one.	2
Staff accessible to applicant. Plan on staff talking with applicant and communication back and forth during permit review.	2
Train all employees in customer service. Trained to look at issues from customer perspective.	1
Agency has commitment to help more people through system.	1
Pro-active rather than re-active.	1
Department Directors – Public Works, Fire Marshal, Planning, and Building – meet regularly to discuss issues and process. Building Director given authority to oversee overall permit process and implement changes if needed.	1
City integrated the following divisions: Planning, Engineering, Building, Traffic, and Fire.	2
Staff involved in permit review are all located in same building.	1
Finding and hiring the right people can be half the battle. Good	1

consultants usually lead to good results. Refers to both applicant's consultants as well as consultant who work for City.	
Adopted a downtown plan with will help expedite permit review in that area.	1
SEPA planned action process used for larger projects.	1
Custom design computer tracking system for permits.	2
Constantly reevaluating what we do and how to improve our process.	1
Invite builders and developers to visit the permit center and tell us what is working and what isn't working.	1
Completed several permit process reviews with outside consultants to help reduce redundancy and eliminate unnecessary steps.	1
Follow suggestions found in the Model Permit Report by EDC Permit Streamlining Committee, December 2002. http://www.snoedc.org/about-us/archived-projects	1
Question: What additional tools or strategies do you need?	
Comment	Frequency of Answer
Email is a great tool but has increased the volume of correspondence. Emails still need to be printed and included in the file. This has increased our staff filing time.	1
The City is looking to add more on-line services and on-line permitting.	1
The 90 day review time is very difficult for small communities to meet especially with a staff of 5 people who also have a number of other responsibilities. Consultants work well but are not involved in the day to day running of the City so there is usually a learning curve and more back and forth. Most applicants understand and will extend review time if need be, but sometimes projects are forced to go to the Planning Commission and Council before there has been adequate staff review.	1
Permit Timelines. Our City tried to track permit timelines and determine critical path for each process but it didn't work well. Timelines don't account for system delays unique to each process. When the applicant causes delay, for example. With timelines, people tend to focus on the dates but not the "why."	1
Difficult to be predictable with permitting in small jurisdictions since every project is unique.	1
Mitigation monitoring and maintenance. Bonds are preferred as part of permit conditions in order to ensure follow through on commitments. Even required for agencies since in the past, some have not met long term commitments.	1