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Sultan Permit Process Improvement

Thank you for this opportunity to assist the citizens of Sultan by working with the team to improve the City's permit process.

Based on knowledge of the City's permit process and our discussions over recent months, the following six tasks are recommended to improve the Sultan permit process.

A proposed schedule and budget follows the task descriptions.

Task 1 – Implement Best Practices for Workflow Management

The first step, establishes a baseline, restructures the review process, and organizes office workflow to promote predictability, efficiency and collaboration, drawing from the *Model Permit System* and other Latimore Company techniques and experience.

- Reset the permit process
 - Create a baseline of pending applications
 - Prioritize baseline applications and assign tasks accordingly.
- Implement workflow management best practices
 - Establish a consistent and effective standard review cycle
 - Set initial review cycle performance targets
 - Train reviewers how to use the Latimore Dashboard to manage accordingly
 - Coach the team on the use of this process for the initial four weeks.

First, we need to know what's in the hopper right now and how old each application is. A time-phased project review model was produced back in September to organize this information.

We will hold a kickoff meeting with department managers and Cyd to evaluate this information, establish near-term priorities, and introduce the Latimore Dashboard. We assign tasks accordingly and reconvene weekly for 4 weeks to monitor progress, sharpen expertise with the new tools, and reinforce the teamwork needed to operate predictably and efficiently.

Task 2 – Define What Constitutes a Complete Application

The second step establishes what an applicant needs to submit in order to fulfill his or her obligation under RCW 36.70B.070(2) and SMC 16.120.060 for a complete application.

- Develop an intake checklist for each application type
- Develop and train intake procedures for applying intake checklists
- Post the available city code, comprehensive and shoreline master plans, critical area maps, engineering standards, application forms, and other readily available pertinent data on the City's web site.

Figure 1 - Intake Checklist Excerpt

Our applicants and reviewers need to know what constitutes a complete application. We will develop intake checklists that prescribe what materials an applicant needs to provide and what must have already been decided, matched up with real-time intake procedures to verify what we receive. An example from nearby Skagit County is enclosed (Fig. 1)

Further, applicants need ready access to development codes, the new shoreline master and comprehensive plans, critical area maps, application forms, engineering standards and other data that the city has that applicants need to make informed design decisions while preparing these applications.

Task 3 – Integrate Code, Procedures, and Comp Plan

The third step aligns the City's code with the products of these tasks for incorporation concurrent with planned staff text amendments to implement the recently updated comprehensive plan.

- Develop procedural language collaboratively with department staff to implement these process improvements and align with comprehensive plan update text amendments.
- Assist the department, planning board, and council through the legislative process.

Some improvements are likely to require or benefit from code amendments. An example is SMC 16.120.060 that currently specifies application content requirements for development permits generally. Meanwhile, the recent comprehensive plan update also requires code amendments to implement. So, these will be reconciled, with code language formulated and integrated with Bob's Title 16 changes, and promoted in a batch through the City's legislative process.

This task can be expanded to assist with other Comprehensive Plan text amendments or other SMC improvements.

Task 4 – Assess the Capabilities of Springbrook[®]

The fourth step assesses what we can do with Springbrook[®] and recommends a course of action.

- Evaluate whether Springbrook[®] can help the department effectively manage land use actions, civil plans, construction permits, appeals and inspections, and link with the City's existing utility records in the system
- Identify any gaps in functionality
- Recommend how the City should proceed with this aspect of Springbrook[®] implementation.

As we define review procedures in Task 1, we will evaluate the ability of Springbrook[®] to:

- Incorporate this logic
- Provide the team and applicants with real-time status of each application
- Produce permit documents
- Record inspection results
- Integrate the Community Development module with the existing Utilities module.

Recommendations will be presented to the staff and Council.

Task 5 – Implement Springbrook[®]

The fifth step develops case templates in Springbrook[®] per the City's direction from Task 4.

- Create case templates
- Document user procedures to utilize the case templates.

Templates typically contain:

- Required input data fields (i.e. applicant name, contractor, parcel numbers, etc.)
- Required review and inspection steps and dependencies
- Required approvals (i.e. planning, public works, building, etc.)
- Fees per the adopted City fee schedules
- Receipt, permit, and certificate documentation.

This step customizes generic “off the shelf” Springbrook[®] case templates, the City's fee tables, and to produce paper records. This step utilizes and presumes effectiveness of the customization tools provided by Springbrook[®] as characterized in their product literature.¹

User procedures would also be developed so staff knows how to correctly and consistently use these templates and know how to relate the digital process to paper file management.

¹ http://www.sprbrk.com/products/cis_building_permits.html

Task 6 – Review Checklists

PCD Single Family Residential Review Checklist Reset Form

Permit Number: 08-123456 Parcel Number: 1482059208

Site Address: 845 5th Ave N Applicant Name: Bob Jones

Date: Sep 18, 2008 Zone: R5 7.2 Lot Size: 7,220

Houghton Low Density Zone? SEPA? SMP? Part of a SP? Survey? Type of Development: SFR

Parcel Data File

Advantage

GIS Records: Possible steep slope, SW corner

Site Visit

Historic or Not Yet Platted?: NA

Legal Description

Parking stalls

Driveway

Critical & Sensitive Areas: Require geotechnical assessment

Rockeries, Retaining Walls & Fences

Required Yards & Setbacks			Tree Management & Landscaping	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Front	N	20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tree Plan	Integrated Development Plan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sides	EW	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Route to Forester and Stamp	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rear	S	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Footprint Agrees with Tree Plan	

FAR, ABE and Lot Coverage

This sixth step develops review checklists. A review checklist is a reference that lists the typical items each reviewer is to check for in a set of plans. It adds the next level of depth to the procedures in Task 1. At left is an excerpt from a City of Kirkland example (Fig. 2).

Common items include:

- Use, setbacks, architectural treatments, environmental impacts, etc., for planning
- Cross connects, side sewers, hydrants, road sections and profiles, etc., for public works
- Framing details, floor plans, energy code, life safety, foundations, etc., for building.

Figure 2 - Review Checklist Illustration

Review checklists are an effective tool for improving review consistency and quality, particularly in the highly multitasking and interruption prone environment of our City offices. They also preserve specialty-level practices as personnel change over time. Checklists can be departmental in scope or organized by reviewing specialty, depending on how the team best operates.

Schedule

We would begin right away which would reset the permit process, allow the City to decide its Springbrook[®] strategy, and strengthen the City's permit process adding predictability, efficiency and collaboration to make the very most of the 2009 development season.

ID	Task Name	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
1	Reset Process & Redesign Workflow							
2	Intake Checklists and Process							
3	Code Assistance							
4	Springbrook [®] Recommendation							
5	Springbrook [®] Implementation							
6	Review Checklists							

Budget

The Latimore Company proposes the following budget for these six tasks. Approximately one day per week would be in City Hall collaborating closely with the team. Some materials would be developed at The Latimore Company office.

Task	Description	Cost
1	Reset Process & Redesign Workflow	\$ 6,000
2	Intake Checklists and Process	\$ 8,000
3	Code Assistance (SMC 16.120)	\$ 2,500
4	Springbrook© Recommendation	\$ 1,500
	Subtotal	\$ 18,000
5	Springbrook© Implementation	\$ 20,000
6	Review Checklists	\$ 11,000
	Total	\$ 49,000

The City can move forward with all or a portion of the six tasks from the outset, adding remaining tasks individually or in combination.

Tasks 1-4 should occur together.

Task 3 can be expanded if the City wishes to expand the scope of SMC improvements.

Thank you

Thank you again for this opportunity to serve the citizens of the Great City of Sultan by working together with you to improve the City's permit process. We are ready to begin.

Regards,



Kurt Latimore, Member
The Latimore Company, LLC