

**SULTAN PLANNING BOARD
AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

ITEM NO: D-1

DATE: January 19, 2009

SUBJECT: Update on Permit Streamlining Program

CONTACT PERSON: Robert Martin, Community Development Director

ISSUE: Presentation on status of Council-mandated permit streamlining and integration of permit intake into existing financial management system (Springbrook).

BACKGROUND:

The Council adopted goals for 2009 that included a significant direction to staff to pursue simplification/clarification of the land use permit process, and a determination of the adaptability of the city's main financial management program (Springbrook) to the task of taking in application fees for land use projects.

This project was directed and funded by the Council to provide better customer service, (ie. understandable applications, efficient application intake, on-line application tracking, faster permit review, and better records access) to individual citizens and developers doing business in the community. 2009 Community Development Department Goals are provided for reference as **Attachment A**.

Staff has pursued this project as a major effort throughout 2009.

DISCUSSION:

The project is essentially complete. The status of project components is as follows:

1. Filing System for staff and customer access to land use and related records: Complete
2. Digital permit tracking system for staff and customer on-line access to current project status: Complete
3. Development of application packets for each application type with customer assistance components such as sample site plans and project descriptions. Complete
4. Front counter application intake system based on project-specific checklists allowing immediate acceptance and issuance of certain application types, and certainty in resubmittal if required. Complete
5. Affirmative determination that Springbrook is capable of handling land use fee intake and direct entry of land use fees into financial management system. Complete
6. Using Springbrook Permit Module to take fees directly into the finance management computer system and to process the application through to completion. 90% Complete
7. Full integration and public access to new application packets in hard copy and on-line (City's website access) formats. 80% Complete, 100% by January 31, 2010.

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT APPLICATION:

Attachment A is the new application packet for Residential Buildings. This is shown as a "Type I" application. This means that it is reviewed and issued by staff without public notice, public hearings, or other higher levels of review.

The application packet includes a large amount of supporting information to address the fact that many individual property owners apply for their own residential building permit for additions, remodels, and even entire new homes. The information in this packet has been coordinated with Snohomish County Development Services (with whom we contract for structural plan review and inspection services) so that applicants are providing what the county needs in the first submittal. This system is working very well for the community in terms of cost and effective services.

Pages 1 through 11 of the application packet are included for the purpose of assisting the applicant in making a complete submittal.

Pages 12 through 15 are the checklist that the applicant can use to verify to themselves that they have included everything needed for a complete application. When each item is complete, the applicant checks the box next to that item in the "Applicant" column.

When brought to the front counter for submittal, the staff person will go through the checklist to verify completion, checking the boxes in the "Staff" column. When all items have two check marks, the application is complete and the staff person accepts the application. The Council and Board have heard several times from staff the importance of complete applications. Without this high standard of completeness, no other modifications of the system will result in effective permit streamlining.

Fees for the plan review phase of the project are collected and entered into the Springbrook financial and permit tracking system at the time of acceptance of the application. Coincident entry into the on-line tracking "Dashboard" system is made so that the applicant and staff can view progress through the county and city review systems.

While the structural plan is under review by the county, city staff will be completing review of the land use and utility components of the project. When the corrected plans are returned from the county, they are paired up with the city review in the file and the permit is ready to be issued.

FENCE PERMIT APPLICATION

Attachment B is the Fence Permit Application. This is also a "Type I" permit needing only staff review and permit approval.

The fence permit is much less complex than a Residential Structure application. The challenge is that the great majority of fence permits are issued to property owners instead of contractors. This means that it needs to be highly simplified in terms of language and ease of completion. The frequently asked questions provide information intended to help in this effort.

One of the new concepts included in the Type I, application approach is that the same permit application form can be used for many different types of Type I applications. Note on the top of page 5 of Attachment B that one or more Type I projects can be applied for on a single application. This simplifies the application issue for both customers and staff.

Fence Permits will typically be issued "over the counter" at the time of application intake.

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORIZATION

Attachment C is the new "Development Authorization". This is the companion to the "Type I" application with which applicants can apply for more than one project on a single application. With the Development Authorization, staff can issue permits for more than one project on the same permit instead of having to complete a separate permit form for several phases of the same project. The Development Authorization can be used to authorize a fence, a driveway cut, a retaining wall, and an accessory storage building all on the same permit.

SYSTEM DESIGN AND COMPUTER SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Staff has had major and truly excellent support in this effort from Mr. Kurt Latimore through his consulting firm, The Latimore Company. Kurt has been responsible for designing and implementing the computerized entry and tracking systems. He has also provided significant support in analysis and design of the “process flow” of the new permit application and review system.

Kurt has been asked to provide a presentation on the computer systems that were brought on-line at the end of 2009 in pursuit of this project. He will be demonstrating the current-status capabilities of the Dashboard tracking system, and the newly installed Springbrook permit tracking/financial management module.

ADDITIONAL TASKING

There are some work items in pursuit of additional computer permit system development that are needed that staff has discovered since the original contract with The Latimore Co. This is work that was not included in the scope of work. Staff will bring this item back to the Council at its January 28, 2010 meeting for consideration of scope of work and budget discussion.

Questions are welcome during the presentation.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Application Packet for Fence Permit

Attachment B: Application Packet for Single Family Residential project

Attachment C: Development Authorization Permit