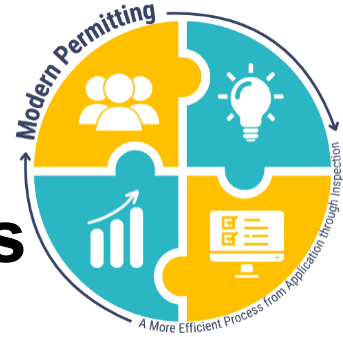# Modern Permitting First Quarter 2025 Updates

An interdepartmental team was formed in 2024 to evaluate the City's permit process and to identify how to make improvements and streamline it. This evaluation included customer and stakeholder engagement to receive feedback and improvement ideas. After completing the evaluation of the permit process last fall, the team transitioned immediately to implementation and is focusing on the following key areas:

- Improved permit structure
- Improved customer permitting experience
- Improved staff permitting process
- Clear customer communication

The Permitting Process Improvement Team will be implementing large and small process improvements over the next couple of years.

Accomplishments

Since late 2024, the following actions have been accomplished:

- Launched distinctive branding and messaging: **"Modern Permitting: A More Efficient Process from Application Through Inspection"** using the logo above. This branding and the Modern Permitting Initiative will assist in communicating with customers as improvements are made over the coming months and years.
- Formalized an internal **governance structure** for the permitting function of the City, for which permitting and development-related topics can be brought forward and resolved through the Development Review Team.
- Updated the **customer survey** that is sent out to applicants upon completion of their permit. Survey results will be regularly monitored and reported with the Strategic Performance Measures.
- Held a Data Consistency Workshop to improve staff data entry consistency. This will help us understand what we are doing well and how we can improve.
- **Eliminated cash payments** in the Permit Center, removing risk and streamlining payment processing. Cash payments can still be received by the Clerk's Office in rare instances customers have no other option.
- Established **target review timelines** and will continue to monitor and adapt as needed. These timelines also establish a "fast lane" for simpler permits so they do not get stuck behind complex permits.
- Presented updates to the Developer Stakeholder Group and published an overview of our efforts in Currents Newsletter.

- Submitted the first annual report on permit timelines to Department of Commerce. This first report is now required under SB 5290 and included data for 2024. See below for more information on permit timelines.

Upcoming Improvements

- On May 5th the Permit Center will **move to an electronic-only** permit process, no longer accepting paper applications. Accommodations will be made for customers that are unable to provide electronic materials but they will be converted to electronic. The paper process will be eliminated. We estimate it takes Permit Services staff approximately **50% less time** to process an electronic permit application.
- We are reviewing opportunities to **consolidate the current permit structure** by eliminating/consolidating the number of permit types, reviews, and exploring how to better have a consolidated project review with multiple sub-permits.
- Exploring options to **improve the permit intake process**, including assessing potential needs for technology improvements to the online permit portal.
- Updates to permit application forms and submittal checklists to more **clearly communicate with customers**.

Strategic Performance Measures

In early 2025, the City adopted permit review timelines into the Development Code that align with new standards amended by the State Legislature. Permit review targets are as follows:

- 65 calendar days: Administrative decisions (building permits, tree removals)
- 100 calendar days: Administrative decisions requiring public notice (subdivisions 9 lots or fewer, conditional use permits, projects requiring environmental review)
- 170 calendar days: Decisions requiring a public hearing (subdivisions 10 lots or more)

It's important to note the review times start after an application is determined complete and includes only those days the City is reviewing the application. The clock pauses when additional information or corrections to plans are requested. The clock resumes once the requested information is provided to the City.

2024 Permit Review Times

Below is a summary of the review times for applications approved in 2024. **73% of applications approved during 2024 are within the target timeline**.

PERMIT TYPE	PERMIT COUNT	AVERAGE DAYS	MEDIAN DAYS	TARGET DAYS	APPROVED WITHIN TARGET
Single-Family Complex	92	109	82	65	43%
Single-Family Simple	161	32	22	65	83%
Clearing & Grading	3	45	31	65	67%
Commercial	51	72	60	65	57%

PERMIT TYPE	PERMIT COUNT	AVERAGE DAYS	MEDIAN DAYS	TARGET DAYS	APPROVED WITHIN TARGET
Commercial Mech & Plumbing	55	45	31	65	82%
Demolition	42	174	92	65	31%
Mech & Plumbing Online	856	2	2	65	100%
Misc Structure	8	70	64	65	50%
Mixed Use	1	232	232	65	0%
Multifamily	7	120	47	65	57%
Residential Foundation (online)	2	8	8	65	100%
Residential Remodel (online)	12	37	34	65	92%
Residential Reroof (online)	5	6	3	65	100%
ROW Franchise Utility	276	17	15	65	99%
ROW Site	2	21	21	65	100%
ROW Use	190	68	4	65	86%
Side Sewer Repair	105	2	1	65	100%
Signs	17	126	61	65	53%
Site Development	22	216	240	65	13%
Townhouse	23	271	280	65	0%
Tree Removal	46	30	25	65	89%
Wastewater	189	268	160	65	41%
Wireless Telecommunication Facility	3	37	26	65	100%
Administrative Design Review	17	110	52	65	71%
Engineering Deviation	14	44	29	65	86%
Preliminary Short Subdivision	7	200	155	100	43%
Final Short Subdivision	3	36	27	65	100%
Preliminary Formal Subdivision	2	341	341	170	0%
Final Formal Subdivision	0	0	0	65	n/a
Lot Line Adjustment	1	20	20	65	100%
Lot Merger	6	199	64	65	50%
Code Interpretation	10	86	69	65	50%
Noise Variance	6	20	25	65	100%

PERMIT TYPE	PERMIT COUNT	AVERAGE DAYS	MEDIAN DAYS	TARGET DAYS	APPROVED WITHIN TARGET
Shoreline Exemption	5	7	8	65	100%
Temporary Use Permit	2	26	6	65	100%
Zoning Verification Letter	11	26	28	65	100%

2025 Q1 Permit Review Times

Below is a summary of the review times for applications approved in the first quarter of 2025. **73% of applications approved during the first quarter are within the target timeline**, consistent with the data for 2024.

PERMIT TYPE	PERMIT COUNT	AVERAGE DAYS	MEDIAN DAYS	TARGET DAYS	APPROVED WITHIN TARGET
Single-Family Complex	24	81	50	65	63%
Single-Family Simple	16	33	28	65	75%
Clearing & Grading	2	29	29	65	100%
Commercial	12	73	70	65	50%
Commercial Mech & Plumbing	4	7	7	65	100%
Demolition	16	88	74	65	44%
Mech & Plumbing Online	196	2	1	65	100%
Misc Structure	4	39	31	65	100%
Mixed Use	2	315	316	65	0%
Multifamily	2	203	203	65	50%
Residential Foundation (online)	1	8	8	65	100%
Residential Remodel (online)	15	21	19	65	100%
Residential Reroof (online)	6	8	7	65	100%
ROW Franchise Utility	33	15	10	65	99%
ROW Site	4	285	288	65	0%
ROW Use	34	145	5	65	71%
Side Sewer Repair	25	1	0	65	100%
Signs	6	53	50	65	66%
Site Development	14	299	325	65	0%
Townhouse	11	395	392	65	0%
Tree Removal	18	13	12	65	100%
Wastewater	47	391	236	65	15%

PERMIT TYPE	PERMIT COUNT	AVERAGE DAYS	MEDIAN DAYS	TARGET DAYS	APPROVED WITHIN TARGET
Wireless Telecommunication Facility	1	30	30	65	100%
Administrative Design Review	3	54	48	65	66%
Engineering Deviation	n/a	n/a	n/a	65	n/a
Preliminary Short Subdivision	1	85	85	100	100%
Final Short Subdivision	1	10	10	65	100%
Preliminary Formal Subdivision	n/a	n/a	n/a	170	n/a
Final Formal Subdivision	n/a	n/a	n/a	65	n/a
Lot Line Adjustment	1	59	59	65	100%
Lot Merger	3	190	28	65	34%
Code Interpretation	1	60	60	65	100%
Noise Variance	n/a	n/a	n/a	65	n/a
Shoreline Exemption	n/a	n/a	n/a	65	n/a
Temporary Use Permit	n/a	n/a	n/a	65	n/a
Zoning Verification Letter	n/a	n/a	n/a	65	n/a

Annual Report to State Department of Commerce

In 2023, the State Legislature amended the timelines for permit review for many cities and counties (adopted in SB 5290). The amendments require annual reporting of permit review timelines for certain types of housing developments. For Shoreline, these are typically housing developments in the form of townhomes and apartments. The summary below is a small subset of the total 2024 permit review timelines above:

Summary Report Table						
Permit Type	Total number of decisions	Number of permits reviewed under a consolidated process	Number of permits reviewed separately	Average calendar days to process (with pauses)	Average calendar days of review (without pauses)	Number of decisions exceeding the deadline
Preliminary Subdivision	2	0	2	625	339	2
Final Subdivision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Binding Site Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multifamily Housing Permit	27	8	19	659	279	19
Construction Permit	39	35	4	542	258	0
Total	68	43	25	637	280	21

Permits issued in 2024 exceeded the new state timeframes. While not ideal, this initial reporting period for 2024 was not required to meet the new timelines. Regardless, as part of our Modern Permitting initiative the City is committed to streamlining and improving the permit review process, including review timelines. We are focusing on an improved permit structure, improved staff

permitting process, improved customer permitting experience, and clear customer communication. Thank you for your continued feedback as we continue to work toward improving our processes.