



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Gregory I. Guernsey, AICP, Director
Planning and Development Review Department

DATE: March 25, 2013

SUBJECT: Update - Residential Review Backlog

This is a bi-weekly update on the current backlog of Residential Review applications and strategies to streamline the process and improve the delivery of services.

Residential Review Backlog

See updated comparison data regarding backlog below:

	Pending Residential Review Applications	Awaiting Initial Review	Reviews Completed and Awaiting Corrections by Applicant
February 6, 2013	619	481	138
February 20, 2013	586	425	161
March 6, 2013	600	416	185
March 20, 2013	606	342	206

The following table provides a breakdown of the outstanding Residential Review applications pending a first review and illustrates the estimated time required to clear the backlog with the current staffing levels.

Reporting Data from March 20, 2013:

Review Type	Number of Outstanding (initial reviews only)	Average Time Required for Initial Review	Total Hours Needed to Clear Backlog	Approximate Days to Clear Backlog (Avg. 20 Days per Month)
Senior Level Review	219	3 hours each	657	65.7 (3.3 months) 0.04% decrease in time since last reporting period
Junior Level Review	123	1.5 hours each	184.5	20.5 days (1.03 months) 34.6% decrease in time since last reporting period

Staffing

Of the four new planning positions approved by Council February 12, one new Planner Senior position has been filled and interviews will continue until all positions are filled.

Beginning March 25, the triage team of 10 staff members from within the department will be temporarily reassigned on a full-time (short-term) basis for training to perform both senior- and junior-level reviews. Training will take up to four weeks. After training has been completed, it is anticipated the reviews will be performed within approximately two weeks.

Temporary Applicant Certification Process

This program continues and weekly participation has been steady. Currently, staff performs initial reviews submitted for this program within 1 – 5 business days. Any participation in this program alleviates the backlog – to date, more than 10% of the original backlog has been pulled and approved through this program. The increase in cases approved is summarized below:

Reporting Date	Plans Screened	Plans Eligible for Program	Plans Approved
February 6	191	100 (52%)	16 (16%)
February 20	78	58 (74%)	18 (31%)
March 6	42	38 (90%)	33(87%)
March 20	40	40(100%)	39(98%)
Totals to Date	351	236	106

Organizational and Process Efficiencies

On March 15, the expired permit policy was altered slightly to allow applicants an opportunity to resolve expired permits at a later date, and not at the time of the submittal of a new project. Previously, the policy prohibited new applications from being filed (without immediately filing an application to permit work for expired permits) if expired permits existed for an address.

This modified process will help alleviate the backlog and will afford additional time to applicants to resolve expired permits, while allowing processing of the new application to be initiated and completed.

Electronic Enhancements

The Planning and Development Review Department (PDR) deployed a manual version of the texting notification on March 11 in the Permit Center. An automated texting feature was implemented March 18 but was unsuccessful due to technical difficulties. Communications and Technology Management (CTM) has not diagnosed the problem but will continue testing to diagnose, resolve, and restart the system. Until such time, the manual version will be utilized. This system has been very well received by the public as an added convenience and improvement.

PDR and CTM are finalizing the requirements for online self-assignment of trade permits this week. The start date for this has been moved to mid-May. Trade contractors with escrow accounts will be able to attach a permit to their account and pay the fees online from their escrow account. It is expected this will reduce the volume of faxes processed in the Permit Center up to 80%. PDR IT staff is working to resolve the technical problems with the RightFax solution so it can be used for the remaining fax applications.

Customer Service Initiatives

Within the next few weeks, PDR will be reviewing the existing automated attendant options and scripts for inbound calls to PDR. The goal is to enhance, where feasible, the customer service experience with options that guide customers to the best resource.

PDR is scheduled to install TVs in three PDR waiting areas. These TV systems will display customized educational programming about PDR services, requirements and frequently asked questions.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 974-2387 or Don Birkner, Assistant Director, at 974-1952.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager