

Assessment of the Development Process – Technical Appendices

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

February 10, 2017

matrix 
consulting group

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A. BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

This best practices assessment was conducted to evaluate current practices within the City of Burlington. The assessment is designed to identify areas of strength as well as improvement opportunities in the City's planning, building, fire, engineering, and related functions in the areas of effectiveness, customer service, efficiency, and predictability.

This document represents one element of the assessment, a comparison of practices in the City of Burlington against an established set of "Best Management Practices" (BMPs), methods or techniques found to be effective, practical, efficient, and customer-friendly in regulating land use and construction in similar municipalities across the Country.

The BMPs were derived from the consultant's experience reviewing and working with permitting and land use agencies, as well as industry standards from research and professional organizations that promote efficient and effective practices in planning, land use, construction, and infrastructure development. The analysis includes the following:

- Statements of effective practices (BMPs).
- Identification of the strengths of Burlington's departments in following these practices.
- Identification of preliminary issues for further analysis prior to the development of specific recommendations.

In conducting the best practices assessment, we recognize that Burlington, like all cities, has a unique culture, unique legal and regulatory framework, and is bound by constraints on and competing demands for resources. In some cases, there are sound

reasons why the City's current approach differs from what typically constitutes a best practice. These factors will be taken into account in developing recommended reforms for the City.

2. KEY STRENGTHS

Although the Best Management Practices process is designed largely to identify improvement opportunities, it is also an opportunity to identify elements of the process that are working well. Below are some of these strengths:

- Stakeholders, including residents and community activists, have a strong interest in development activities in the City. The City makes extensive efforts in public outreach and provides many opportunities for public comment and input into the development process.
- All departments involved in the permitting process use a single software system to enter and track permit applications and issuance.
- Staff are readily accessible and available to answer questions either in person or by phone.
- Staff are very knowledgeable within their respective areas and are forthcoming in sharing their information and guidance with applicants and the public.
- Permit application information is available on-line.
- Planning and Zoning applications are tracked on-line.

3. KEY IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The comparison of the City's current practices to best management practices also identified some key issues. Some of the most notable are listed below:

- The process in Burlington, which can encompass planning, stormwater, engineering, building, trade permits, and fire permits, requires applicants to independently navigate the City's organization and work through several departments, as these functions are located in different areas and there is minimal cross training or coordination across departments.
- While departments have an opportunity to provide input before a zoning permit is submitted, there is no formal feedback loop that allows them to provide comments

and ensure these comments are addressed during review.

- The building permit process is organized as specialties (i.e. - building, electrical, plumbing) with little cross training across these functional areas. For an organization, the size of Burlington, this creates some challenges in assigning the appropriate level of resources to address varying workloads. Modifications to this approach and any specific recommendations will be dependent on the approach developed during final analysis and in conjunction with City staff.
- Applicants have to interact with many different individuals within the City even for relatively minor projects.
- Despite the use of a central software system, the permitting process remains heavily paper-based and technology is not effectively or fully utilized to simplify the process for applicants.
- The project close-out process is overseen by a department that has had no prior involvement in the review or issuance of permits for the project.

4. DETAILED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ASSESSMENT.

The following table presents best management practices used by the consultant, as well as the consultants’ determination of the City’s performance against each standard and the identification of key issues for evaluation.

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION		
1. There are City-wide and department specific goals, objectives, and performance measures for each phase of the development review and permitting process.	Individual departments provide guidelines regarding turnaround times, including same-day review for many building permits.	<p>Performance targets that identify expected turnaround times for plan review and inspection would improve accountability and predictability.</p> <p>The City should develop, publish, and report on performance targets and actual performance for all phases of the permitting process from pre-application through occupancy.</p> <p>Templates for performance reports will be developed as part of the assessment final report.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>2. There are clear points of accountability for performance across the Development Review and permitting process.</p>	<p>Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in all departments.</p>	<p>While responsibilities are clear within individual departments, there is no individual with the authority or responsibility for ensuring that the entire permitting process works smoothly.</p> <p>The City should create one or more clear points of accountability for the permitting process, focusing on timeliness, predictability, consistency, and customer service.</p>
<p>3. Customer satisfaction with each phase of the development process is assessed and monitored.</p>	<p>The City does not routinely monitor or measure customer satisfaction with the development review or permitting process.</p>	<p>Monitoring of customer satisfaction provides one measure to identify points of confusion, delay, or inconsistency within the permitting process.</p> <p>The City should routinely monitor customer satisfaction through either an online survey or satisfaction comment cards issued to all applicants upon issuance of a certificate of occupancy.</p> <p>This may be done on a department-by-department basis or city-wide; the results should be compiled to obtain a clear picture of the process's strengths and weaknesses from the applicant's standpoint.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>4. There are well-documented policies and procedures in place to govern the actions of all employees involved in development review.</p>	<p>Planning and Code Enforcement have written protocols in place.</p>	<p>Standardized policies and procedures provide clear documentation regarding how tasks are carried out within a department.</p> <p>All departments should have clearly developed Standard Operating Procedures for each position outlining, the roles of the position, how it relates to the overall permitting process, and how key tasks are carried out. When multiple employees are involved in similar or identical positions they should work on the SOPs as a team setting.</p>
<p>5. The relevant departments have backup plans and succession plans in place in the event of absence or departure of key staff.</p>	<p>There is some cross training within Planning.</p>	<p>No formal succession planning has been undertaken to ensure that backup plans are established for critical positions so that service to the public is not impacted by staff absences. SOPs for key processes should be developed to enable faster training of new employees.</p> <p>Department managers should meet to identify key positions and develop an agreed-upon strategy for backup and succession planning. Streamlined processes to hire new employees should be implemented.</p> <p>Where appropriate, cross-training of staff should be conducted upon acquisition of appropriate skills / licensure / certification.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>6. The City provides easy-to-understand and attractive guides to the planning, building permit, inspections, and close-out process.</p>	<p>The Planning department has clear and user-friendly guides available on-line and in the office.</p> <p>Building provides basic information flyers available in both the permitting center and online to provide guidance to applicants.</p> <p>DPW provides customers with a flow chart and other support material that illustrate how the building permitting process works and interacts.</p> <p>Most information regarding permit types, submittal requirements, and applicable codes is available on the City's web site.</p>	<p>Planning information is often provided orally and, according to interviews, the answers provided are not always consistent.</p> <p>Existing materials do not provide permit applicants with a clear understanding of the overall process, especially in cases that involve multiple departments or require additional permits or plans (e.g., stormwater, ROW).</p> <p>The project close-out process is not clearly described in any customer materials. As a result, customers may need to rely on conversations with staff and may not have a clear "big picture" understanding of how the process will work for their projects.</p> <p>The City should use on-line and written guides developed by other jurisdictions as a model to provide a clearer understanding of the entire process.</p>
<p>7. All staff involved in the development review and permitting process are available at a single, easy to access location. A "one-stop permitting" center has been implemented.</p>	<p>The City has not implemented a one-stop permitting approach to service delivery. In Burlington, most applicants must go to at least two locations (potentially three if fire and stormwater are involved) to obtain information from staff regarding the permitting process, submit their materials, pay, pick up permits, and request and obtain a final Certificate of Occupancy.</p> <p>In some cases, effective use of technology can overcome a single consolidated permitting operation. However, technology is not being utilized in a manner that would overcome the lack of a one-stop permitting center in the City of Burlington.</p>	<p>A single location for applicants to ask questions, submit permit applications, pick up permits, and conduct related business reduces confusion and saves time. It also improves communication across departments.</p> <p>The current use of technology is not sufficient to overcome the lack of a one-stop permitting center.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>8. The City reaches out to the business and development community through periodic communications.</p>	<p>Individual departments communicate with specific customers (e.g., tradespeople) on a periodic basis. For example, Building will send out information regarding code changes or updates.</p>	<p>There is currently limited systematic, organized outreach to developers, builders, and trades-people by Burlington staff to develop the applicants understanding of codes and regulations, inform them of upcoming changes, and to develop a partnership with key stakeholders. A semi-annual newsletter should be considered, supplemented by an annual training session.</p> <p>The City should seek input from business and development community to identify areas of need or concern related to planning and the permitting process.</p>
<p>9. The city reaches out to the public through periodic communications.</p>	<p>Most Planning approvals include numerous opportunities for public input.</p>	<p>Public outreach provides a mechanism to educate the public regarding key land use and development activities and issues.</p> <p>The Burlington Planning Office did publish regular reports on-line, but these appear to have stopped in 2012.</p> <p>Newsletters and other communications should be developed to address issues of key concern to the public related to development review and permitting activities within the City of Burlington.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
Planning and Zoning		
<p>10. Long range planning –The City maintains an up-to-date plan and reviews zoning regulations for consistency with the current plan.</p>	<p>The City's Master Plan was updated in 2014. Small area plans have been developed recently for several locations. Staff reviews submittals based on adopted plans and ordinances. Staff typically handle around 12 amendments to the zoning code per year.</p> <p>All planning materials appear on-line.</p>	<p>Already implemented.</p>
<p>11. The City's long term plans and zoning code are available on-line.</p>	<p>Plans, codes, and ordinances are located online.</p>	<p>Already implemented.</p>
<p>12. The City's policies/website clearly identify what applications can be approved administratively versus approval by Design Review Board/ Conservation Board, or other applicable Board.</p>	<p>The Planning and Zoning website provides extensive information regarding permits and requirements associated with them. This includes an overview of the entire permitting process, an explanation of when permits are required, and links to other departments.</p>	<p>Many questions regarding permit requirements still require input from a planner or other staff member through an in-person meeting or a phone call. The department should track and analyze questions most frequently asked by the public and use these to develop a new and updated set of FAQs to add to the web site.</p>
<p>13. The Planning department provides clear and comprehensive checklists identifying all items required to be submitted for each application type.</p>	<p>Checklist are available online and in person. Checklist have been individually created by application type.</p>	<p>Already implemented.</p>
<p>14. Planning application forms are available on-line and can be filled out electronically.</p>	<p>Application forms are available online.</p>	<p>All forms should be converted to fillable PDF format to allow applicants to complete them on their computers.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>15.Planning applications may be submitted electronically, may be viewed on-line once submitted, and are distributed electronically.</p>	<p>Information is provided electronically to board members. This information is also available online for the public.</p> <p>Informal pre-application meetings with planning staff are also allowed and encouraged for those applicants desiring to avail themselves of this opportunity.</p>	<p>The Planning and Zoning Department should consider allowing electronic submittal of applications and allow for on-line access to submitted site plans and related documents.</p> <p>In lieu of routing paper plans to reviewers and board members, staff should provide reviewers access to the electronic submittal through a shared folder, web page, or attachment in the permitting software.</p>
<p>16.The department offers a pre-application process for applicants to obtain input from various review department before preparing a complete submittal.</p>	<p>The Technical Review Meeting, serves as a pre-application meeting for major projects only. Formal follow up in form of a comment letter is provided to the potential applicant.</p>	<p>The City should consider incorporating pre-application meetings for all project types (required for major projects, at request of applicant for others) in cases where input will be required from multiple departments. All departments should be required to attend these meetings and provide feedback and input.</p>
<p>17.The department uses a case management approach to oversee the review of all planning applications.</p>	<p>Projects are assigned a project manager who ensures that standard conditions of approval from other departments are included in comment and decision letters.</p>	<p>In many cases, departments do not comment on specific applications after the pre-application meeting.</p> <p>The City should develop process flows and timelines for planning applications that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Routing of applications to all appropriate review agencies - Time for these agencies to review and comment on the application - A required response (either specific comments or a notice of no comment). <p>While this may extend the time-line associated issuance of initial comments for zoning permits, it would reduce the risk of issues arising later in the project.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>18. Processes and time-lines for review and approval of planning applications are established and clear.</p>	<p>General turn-around times are posted online and provided to applicant.</p>	<p>The applicant should be given a specific time-line at the time of submittal, including the anticipated dates of all public meetings associated with an application.</p>
<p>19. Review time periods have been adopted and are consistently met.</p>	<p>General timelines are provided to applicant, which are within the statutory 30-day minimum for administrative approvals.</p>	<p>The City should adopt formal administrative review time by permit type.</p> <p>Administrative approvals should be expanded to streamline the review timeframes for applicants and reduce the number and type of decisions delegated to the boards.</p>
<p>20. Planning has a process in place to prevent numerous resubmittals.</p>	<p>Permits are released with conditions or approval and pre-release conditions, which results in few resubmittals.</p>	<p>In some cases, issues identified by reviewers may not be addressed in the application as submitted to the board.</p> <p>Planners should provide a formal checklist of correction items and require that major items be addressed prior to approval or submittal to DRB.</p>
<p>21. Review comments reference applicable code and ordinance sections.</p>	<p>Comments reference specific adopted code and ordinances. In letters to boards, previous permit and application summaries are provided.</p>	<p>Already implemented.</p>
<p>22. A formal Development Review Committee is in place to oversee permit applications.</p>	<p>A Technical Review Committee is used as a pre-development meeting for large-scale projects, followed by a comment letter sent to the potential developer.</p>	<p>Departments often do not have an opportunity to comment on applications after they have been submitted.</p> <p>The role of the Technical Review Committee should be expanded ensure departments review and comment on individual applications.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>23. Staff reports to City Boards and Commissions are succinct but thorough and include staff recommendation.</p>	<p>Reports are thorough and reference applicable code sections with staff comments incorporated. They include photographs.</p>	<p>In some cases, the level of detail in the staff reports may be overwhelming and may encompass issues that are beyond the authority of the board.</p> <p>Reports should be as succinct as possible while addressing all actionable issues and focus on pertinent information within the domain of the relevant Board.</p> <p>Planning staff should develop protocols and outlines for staff reports to ensure compliance with this practice.</p>
<p>24. Project review/comment letters provide reference to checklist and/or code reference.</p>	<p>The applicant is given a copy of all staff letters prior to the board meeting.</p>	<p>Comment letters are in the form of an official staff report to appropriate board, not to the applicant.</p> <p>The City should consider providing the applicant with an opportunity to address comments prior to the board meeting to increase the chance of approval and reduce the number of conditions associated with approval.</p>
<p>25. Conditions of approval are issued with the permit, with corresponding code reference.</p>	<p>Conditions of approval are included from Zoning and Stormwater at the time of permit issuance.</p>	<p>Some conditions of approval appear to be based on personal preferences of Board members without a clear code or statutory basis.</p> <p>Code Enforcement staff responsible for project close-out indicated that many conditions are vague and difficult to verify.</p> <p>Conditions of approval should be based on adopted City codes and ordinances, and should be enforceable. Each condition should reference applicable adopted codes.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>26. A project manager is assigned to each project with the intent of coordinating efforts between all applicable departments.</p>	<p>Project manager is assigned to each application and is responsible for reaching out to other departments to act as facilitator for the applicant.</p>	<p>Already implemented.</p>
<p>27. All applicable development review comments (from all Departments) are incorporated into a single comment letter that is distributed to the applicant.</p>	<p>Comments are not always issued with consolidated comments from all departments at a single time.</p>	<p>A single set of comments should be issued to the applicant that outline issues / comments from all reviewing departments that must be addressed by the applicant.</p>
<p>28. Applicants can track their permit application on-line.</p>	<p>Applicants and the public can currently look up permit review status on-line.</p>	<p>The tracking should be expanded to include all phases of the project, including building permit review and inspections. In addition, appropriate review comments should be posted and available for on-line review.</p>
<p>29. Board members receive training in regard to their role approving projects.</p>	<p>Department conducts yearly training for DRB and DAB principally focused on new members.</p>	<p>In interviews, board members indicated a desire for more education and guidance regarding their scope of authority.</p> <p>Staff should work with the Board to identify training and policy development needs and put appropriate training and guidelines in place.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to providing APA membership to all members of these two boards or at a minimum a subscription to "The Commissioner" Newsletter.</p>
<p>30. Zoning and related development guides and frequently asked questions brochures are available.</p>	<p>Design Review Guides are available online for most zoning related permits.</p> <p>However, the information is sometimes vague and interpretation is inconsistent within the planning department.</p>	<p>Guides do not provide clear direction regarding what is and is not permitted and under what circumstances, especially for historic structures. The City should ensure that design requirements are clear, consistent, and easy to explain and implement.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
31. Fee schedule is published and regularly updated	The fee schedule is posted online and is current.	Already implemented.
32. Site plans for zoning permits are prepared by a certified surveyor so that the department can clearly determine whether any work is on or near a public Right of Way.	<p>Criteria for site plans is un-clear and in some cases hand-drawn or out dated site plans are submitted.</p> <p>Clear criteria have not been adopted on when a boundary survey is required by Planning staff.</p>	The City should develop clear criteria for when an A-2 or boundary survey may be required to ensure that work is within legal setbacks and not in the Right of Way.
BUILDING PERMITTING		
33. Inspection Services staff will meet with an applicant prior to submittal to review and identify key issues with the project.	Building official is available and encourages pre-meetings to discuss projects.	Many applicants do not take advantage of the pre-meeting opportunities. For large and complex projects, the City should consider making this meeting mandatory or implement other approaches to expand outreach to the applicant.
34. Applicants are given clear information about building permit requirements as well as requirements from other departments.	<p>Plan reviewers and inspectors are available during office hours to answer questions.</p> <p>The City's web site provides clear information regarding requirements, applicable codes and links to other departments for projects requiring multiple approvals.</p>	Additional information on the City's website supplemented potentially by the use of a permit technician position (available at the intake counter during all hours of operation) would provide a more comprehensive and consistent approach to providing information to the public.
35. Certified permit technicians take in applications and assess them for completeness before acceptance.	<p>The City does not utilize a certified permit technician position.</p> <p>Permit applications are taken in directly by reviewers during office hours or by customer service staff who have limited training regarding the permitting process.</p>	<p>If resource allocations can be acquired to fund a permit technician position, this will significantly increase the service to the public and address many of the customer service issues noted throughout the current process assessment.</p> <p>This approach would reduce workload for inspectors and allow applicants to obtain permitting information outside of inspectors' office hours.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>36. The department provides easy-to-understand and attractive guides to the building permit and inspection process.</p>	<p>On-line information is fairly comprehensive but should be reorganized to provide easier access by the public.</p>	<p>The current flow chart provides a very high level overview of the process. Additional information on the web site, while extensive, is not clear or intuitive for inexperienced applicants. In collaboration with other departments, a single development / permitting guide should be developed outlining the overall process and key submission requirements.</p>
<p>37. Simple permits (e.g., basic electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits and minor building alterations) can be issued on the spot with no review, subject to inspection.</p>	<p>All permits currently require review and many permits are issued same-day during department office hours.</p>	<p>All permits which do not require plan review should be available either on-line or over the counter.</p>
<p>38. Resubmittals and projects requiring minimal review (e.g., small residential projects) are given priority in the review queue.</p>	<p>The City is currently using this approach.</p>	<p>Already implemented.</p>
<p>39. Building permit applications that are not tied to a zoning permit are originated in Inspection Services and distributed to different review agencies by a single point of contact within the department; plans are reviewed concurrently by all agencies to reduce turnaround times.</p>	<p>Building applications are only reviewed and permitted after Zoning has approved the Zoning permit or determined that zoning is not required. If additional permits are required (fire, plumbing), they are obtained as “child” permits to the original building permit.</p>	<p>The current approach requires multiple permits from different agencies for a single project and it is not always easy for the customer to discern where to start the process or what departments must be involved.</p> <p>The City should implement combination building permits that are a single building permit with sign offs from multiple departments rather than the issuance of multiple permits.</p>
<p>40. Comments on building permits from different reviewers (engineering, zoning, Inspection Services) are consolidated before being provided to applicant.</p>	<p>This is not currently done.</p>	<p>This approach would simplify the permitting process for applicants but would require creation of a consolidated building permit approach.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
41. For re-submitted plans, reviewers focus on ensuring that comments have been addressed and do not identify issues that should have been brought up in initial review.	Currently using this approach.	n/a
42. First permit review is completed within 14 business days and 90% of permits are approved within 2 revision cycles.	Majority of permits are reviewed on the same day.	The DPW should systematically track and report on permit turnaround times. A model performance tracking report will be developed as part of the project's final report.
43. Review time objectives for plan checking are posted to the Department's web site.	Specific commitments for the conduct of reviews and issuance of permits should be posted on the City's website.	All permit applications should have a defined timeframe for staff review and comment. DPW's performance against these standards should be published on the Department's web site.
44. The division contracts out for services where required expertise is not available in-house.	DPW does not use outside contractors for plan review.	n/a
45. Customers are given an approximate time to expect their inspector.	Currently using an appointment-based system, which provides a higher level of service than is typically expected.	However, the current approach does require that the applicants speak directly to the inspector (or leave a message) to schedule the inspection. No online inspection capabilities exist.
46. Applicants can request inspections up to 5 pm on the day before; next day inspections should be available for 100 % of requests.	Currently, the time frame from inspection request to inspection completion is not tracked. Inspectors reported that the lead time for inspection completion can be several days or longer. Next day inspections are rare. There is no commitment to providing an inspection within a specified time period.	The City should adopt an inspection standard that delineates when (in business days) an inspection will be provided following request. A monthly report on performance against this standard should be developed.

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>47. Inspectors conduct between 15 and 25 inspections per day.</p>		<p>Information is currently not tracked; inspectors are also responsible for plan review, reducing availability for inspection. The use of a single inspector for both plan review and inspections is not inconsistent with Best Practices but does mean that the workload analysis must address both. Additionally, this approach limits staff's ability to be available in the office for permit intake to only 2 hours per day. Alternative approaches including a dedicated intake position from 10 to 5 will be evaluated.</p>
<p>48. An automated voice-activated inspection request system should be utilized to receive and schedule inspections and should be integrated with the permitting system.</p>	<p>Builders can contact inspectors and schedule inspections at a mutually convenient time.</p>	<p>Currently if the inspector is unavailable the inspection cannot be scheduled. A more automated process (i.e. – online inspection request) would eliminate the need to personally contact the inspector and streamline the inspection request and scheduling process.</p>
<p>49. Combination inspectors are used to reduce the need for duplicate inspections at a single project.</p>	<p>Some efforts have been made to implement cross-training of inspectors within the limitations imposed by the State of Vermont. Currently electrical, plumbing, mechanical inspections must be conducted only by licensed trade's personnel.</p>	<p>Consideration should be given to training the licensed trades personnel to perform additional inspections, within the imposed State limitations, to enhance the service levels provided to the public and enable the City to better manage workloads.</p>
<p>50. The department charges a re-inspection fee to encourage builders to make sure work is complete and ready to inspect at time of inspection.</p>	<p>Not currently using this approach.</p>	<p>Reinspection fees should be consistently imposed after a set number of failed inspections.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
PUBLIC WORKS		
<p>51. For projects submitted through Planning but requiring engineering review, all engineering submittal requirements are available in Planning and communicated by the Planning staff at time of submittal.</p>	<p>Engineering participates in pre-application meetings.</p>	<p>Applicants are directed to reach out to Engineering if separate engineering permits will be required. Each department has its own processes and authority.</p>
<p>52. Cycle time objectives for plan checking are clearly established.</p>	<p>Engineering staff receive copies of applications submitted to planning but there is no formal mechanism to ensure that Engineering issues are addressed prior to issuance of a zoning permit.</p> <p>Stormwater does provide conditions of approval to Zoning when zoning permit is issued.</p>	<p>Plan review timeframes should be clearly established.</p>
<p>53. Applicant attends a pre-construction meeting where construction requirements are clearly communicated.</p>	<p>Planning and zoning permit process includes a trigger if stormwater, engineering or erosion control plans will be required and ensures that these plans are in place prior to construction.</p>	<p>Pre-construction meetings should be required to discuss construction requirements for all new commercial projects.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
PROJECT CLOSE-OUT		
<p>54. UCO process is transparent and clearly understandable to applicants.</p>	<p>While the City has made information available to applicants regarding the process, and inform them at time of permit issuance - the process is not fully clear or understood by customers.</p>	<p>The City has an extensive backlog of open permits that have not been closed out. There is limited follow-up by the City on open permits. Information on-line is confusing and requires working with a new division.</p> <p>The City should implement a notification process on open permits where no action (inspection request, permit extension) has occurred within a defined time period. Consideration should be given to issuance of UCO following final inspection without further request.</p>
<p>55. Final inspections prior to close-out are scheduled efficiently.</p>	<p>There is no established time-line for inspections following request for unified certificate of occupancy (UCO).</p>	<p>A streamlined process should be implemented that enables a final inspection to be scheduled upon request without submittal of additional documentation.</p>
<p>56. The City uses information available in-house to review work completed against approved plans and conditions of approval.</p>	<p>The applicant is required to provide an additional copy of all zoning approvals and conditions of approval when requesting a UCO even though the City already has copies of these documents in their files.</p>	<p>Automation of this process should be implemented to streamline the process and assist the applicant.</p>
<p>57. The staff who inspect a project for final approval are the same staff who issued or approved permits associated with the project.</p>	<p>Code enforcement staff are primarily responsible for inspecting projects.</p> <p>In most cases, they have no information on the history of the projects or the conditions associated with approvals.</p>	<p>Consideration should be given to having Planning and zoning staff conducting inspections and signing off on UCO.</p>
<p>58. Applicants should be able to request Certificates of Occupancy by phone or on-line.</p>	<p>UCO requests currently must be made in person.</p>	<p>Customers should be able to request the UCO inspections online or via phone systems 24 hours per day.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>59. The City has a clear and efficient process to ensure that all projects receive a Certificate of Occupancy at completion.</p>	<p>UCO application is available on-line.</p> <p>The Planning Department issues an email reminder to all applicants of open zoning permits that are nearing their expiration.</p>	<p>The City uses a system of escalating fees to encourage applicants to receive Certificates of Occupancy.</p> <p>According to interviews with Code Enforcement, this approach frequently causes applicants to abandon efforts to receive a UCO if they fail an initial inspection.</p> <p>Analysis will be conducted on whether this approach is achieving the desired result and whether greater outreach on open permits should be undertaken.</p> <p>Email notifications should be issued to all open permits.</p>
TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION		
<p>60. Applicable data layers are digitized.</p>	<p>Currently using this approach.</p> <p>The City is in the process of developing a layer that would allow staff and applicants to identify historic structures using the GIS.</p>	<p>Easy identification of historic structures is important to improve predictability of the permitting process.</p> <p>Because of grey areas in the definition of a historic structure there is no layer that designates historic.</p> <p>Many layers of data available are out of date and not applicable.</p>
<p>61. Development staff has access to applicable GIS layers.</p>	<p>Currently using this approach although staff training and expertise varies within the City.</p>	<p>Currently in place.</p>
<p>62. Site plans/as-builts are submitted and stored digitally.</p>	<p>As-built plans are typically required at the conclusion of a project.</p>	<p>The City should implement a process that ensures all required as-builts are received and properly stored for future use.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
<p>63. A single system is used to track planning, inspection services and engineering, information so that there is a consolidated source of data on activities by address.</p>	<p>Permit tracking system is used by all departments to track applications and approvals across departments.</p>	<p>Permit tracking system should be capable of storing (or linking) all applicable applications, as-builts, building plans, and other project data.</p> <p>The number of permits required should be streamlined to provide a single permit for a project that is signed off on by all reviewing departments. The issuance of multiple permits for a single project is adding complexity and potential confusion into the process.</p>
<p>64. An automated permit information system is utilized to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept and issue permits. • Accept payments for permits. • Provide clear information regarding approvals by different agencies. • Manage the processing time for sign-offs. • Facilitate customer service through access to the internet. 	<p>Automated system is used for permit tracking, including tracking of timelines.</p>	<p>The City should offer on-line applications for simple building permits, to include payment and receipt of permits without the need to go to DPW in person.</p> <p>Plan review comments for planning and other permits should be available on-line.</p> <p>Copies of site plans should be available on-line.</p> <p>Inspection results should be available on-line.</p> <p>These improvements will be dependent upon the selection of new technology</p>
<p>65. Planning and Building applications can be submitted electronically.</p>		<p>The City should allow for on-line applications, including attached site plans, building plans, and related materials.</p>
<p>66. Inspectors can enter information in the field via tablet and have it instantly available and viewable on-line.</p>	<p>The City is in the process of developing and implementing this functionality.</p>	<p>Inspection results should be visible to applicants on-line in real time.</p>

Best Management Practice	Current Process	Issue / Potential Recommendation
67. Building and Code Enforcement inspectors have remote access to documents at city hall to expedite the inspection process.	The City is in the process of developing and implementing this functionality.	Inspectors should have access to all prior permit and inspection history while in the field.
68. Historical information on properties, including code enforcement, permitting, zoning, land use, flood, and related issues is available on-line.	Some of this information is available online – though not easily accessible.	Permitting software should interface with GIS so that land use information is readily available to the public and staff or use in developing and processing applications.
69. Current property information is available on-line.	Basic information regarding a property is available on-line.	The City should expand the amount of information regarding properties that is available online including current and prior permit information, inspection results, and similar information.

Best practices were analyzed for the Solar Permitting process as well. Burlington is in the process of attaining certification as a solar-ready city through the Department of Energy SolSmart Program. Currently, there are three possible “solar ready” tiers including Bronze, Silver, and Gold status. Burlington desires to achieve gold-level status. SolSmart best management practices are included in the following best practices section for Solar Permitting. It should be noted that the best practices that are specific to “gold-level” status are identified with an asterisk*.

Best Management Practice	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
70. Solar permitting checklist is available online. *	Checklist is provided for submittal online through Burlington Electric webpage.	Provide a dedicated solar permitting webpage with fillable PDF checklist.
71. Streamline permitting process for small solar systems, 3 days or less. *	Building and electrical inspector generally approve permits day of submittal. Currently the City is scheduling a single inspection visit that includes the building inspector, electrical inspector and BED to inspect and energize after one visit.	Permitting for solar should be consolidated from two permits (electrical plus building) to one, with only one reviewer and one inspection if appropriate State approvals can be achieved.
72. Online permitting process is allowed for solar systems.	Building and electrical permits may be submitted electronically, including solar permitting.	On-line applications are through e-mail and do not allow for on-line payment or electronic signatures. Expand online permitting submission for other departments outside of Building.
73. Zoning restrictions are updated to provide proactive solar installation. *	Solar and renewable energy sources are addressed in City Ordinances. Section 12.1.2 addresses zoning variances related to Renewable Energy Resource Structures.	Provide specific details to Zoning restrictions for Solar and alternative energy resources on a Solar specific webpage.
74. Allow solar by-right and as an accessory use in all major zoning districts. *	Permitted by right for most zoning designations.	Clarify zoning and historic area restrictions and process and make information readily available on website.
75. Inspection staff is cross-trained to provide permitting and inspection of Solar systems. *		This approach should be adopted.
76. City has adopted Solar Ready Construction Guidelines.		Develop and adopt Solar Ready Construction Guidelines.

B. STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The Matrix Consulting Group is conducting a study of the development review and permitting function in the city of Burlington, Vermont. As part of this study, the consultants conducted a survey of prior applicants and other stakeholders with an interest in the city's development review and permitting process to gain an understanding of their perspective.

1. SURVEY DISTRIBUTION.

The survey was distributed online via email and website link during June 2016. Invitations for the survey were sent via email and posted on the City's website. Printed copies of the survey were also available at the intake counters at the Planning Department and Public Works / Inspection Services Division. A total of 614 responses were collected, a solid response rate for a city of Burlington's size. Information from this survey will be one source used to inform the consultants' recommendations for reforms to the City's permitting functions.

2. RESPONDENT BACKGROUND.

The survey was anonymous. However, the consultant asked respondents to provide some information about themselves for analysis purposes. The tables below outline the responses of survey participants to these questions.

What is your primary role in interacting with the City of Burlington regarding development review and permitting?	Response Percent	Response Count
Burlington Homeowner	51.0%	313
Landlord / Property Owner	17.6%	108
Other (please specify)	9.8%	60
Builder / General Contractor	6.8%	42
Business Owner	6.0%	37
Architect	3.1%	19
Contractor for specific trades (for example, electrical, plumbing, sprinkler)	2.9%	18
Developer	2.0%	12
Engineer	0.7%	4
Contractor for solar installations	0.2%	1

51% of the respondents were homeowners and an additional 17% of the respondents were landlord or property owners. As such, it is important to note that these individuals have much different needs (and sometimes a different level of expertise in the process) than commercial applicants or design professionals.

Where do you conduct business? (if you chose homeowner above, please skip this question). You may choose more than one response if applicable.	Response Percent	Response Count
Only in Burlington	38.7%	144
Within the State / Region	49.7%	185
Other parts of the Country	11.6%	43

As shown above, of those responding, 38.7% conduct business only within the City of Burlington and an additional 49.7% conduct work within the State and Region.

In the following table, respondents were asked to indicate which functions within the of Burlington they routinely interact with in their work. Please note that respondents were able to choose more than one area, so percentages add up to more than 100%.

In what development review and permitting functions do you primarily interact with the City of Burlington (check all that apply)	Response Percent	Response Count
Administrative Planning and Zoning Approvals (no public hearing required)	69.5%	396
Building Permit Inspections	63.3%	361
Building Permit Plan Review	58.2%	332
Applications requiring Development Review Board Review / Approval	37.9%	216
Sub-trades Inspections	14.4%	82
Sub-trades Plan Review	6.5%	37
Other (please specify)	8.9%	51

As shown, the most frequent interactions of respondents are with administrative planning and zoning approvals (69.5%), building permit inspections (63.3%), building permit plan review (58.2%), and development review board review / approval (37.9%).

Next respondents were asked how frequently they interact with the City. Responses are shown below.

How frequently do you interact with the City of Burlington development review and permitting process:	Several times per month	Several times per year	Once or twice a year	Less than once a year
Planning and Zoning	4.76%	19.58%	25.22%	50.44%
Building	5.34%	19.34%	22.10%	53.22%

The vast majority of respondents (over 75%) are interacting with the City once or twice a year or less. This is not surprising given the number of respondents who were homeowners – but this is important to note as the needs of this group often differ significantly from those of the other stakeholders who participated in the survey.

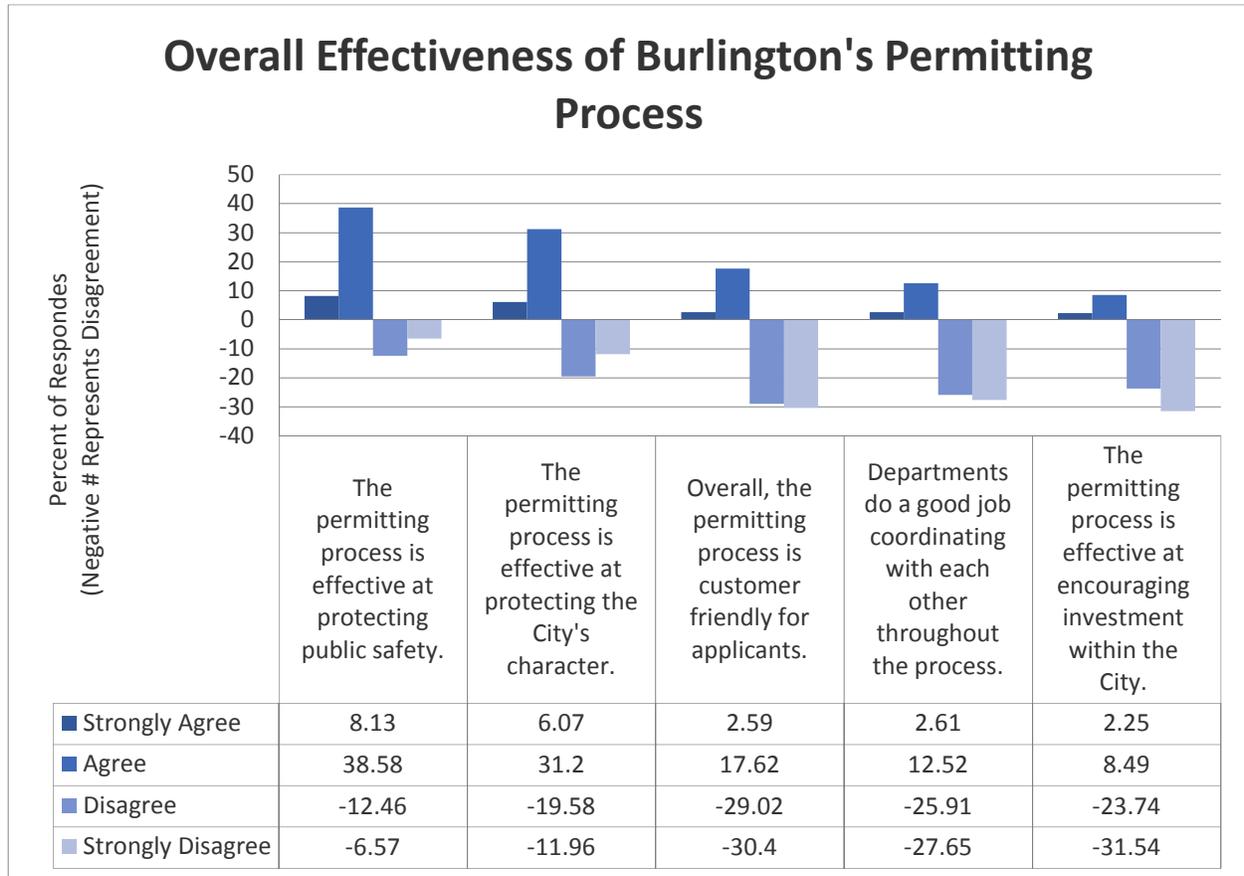
Finally, respondents were asked when their last interaction was with the City of Burlington’s development review or permitting process.

When was your most recent interaction with the City of Burlington development review and permitting process?	Response Percent	Response Count
Over a year ago	27.1%	160
6-12 months ago	25.2%	149
Within the last 6 months	47.7%	282

As the table shows, almost three-quarters of the respondents (73.9%) have interacted with the City in the last year. This is beneficial as it means that the information being shared by the respondents is based upon recent interactions rather than historical interactions. As such, this provides an understanding of current stakeholder perceptions of the existing processes and staff.

3. OVERALL PERMITTING FINDINGS.

The survey asked applicants for overall feedback regarding the permitting process. The response options were “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. Respondents could also choose “N/A”.



In summary questions, feedback was positive regarding the effectiveness of permitting in protecting public safety and the city's character but less positive (over 50% indicating disagreement) regarding the process itself, coordination among departments, and its impact on economic development.

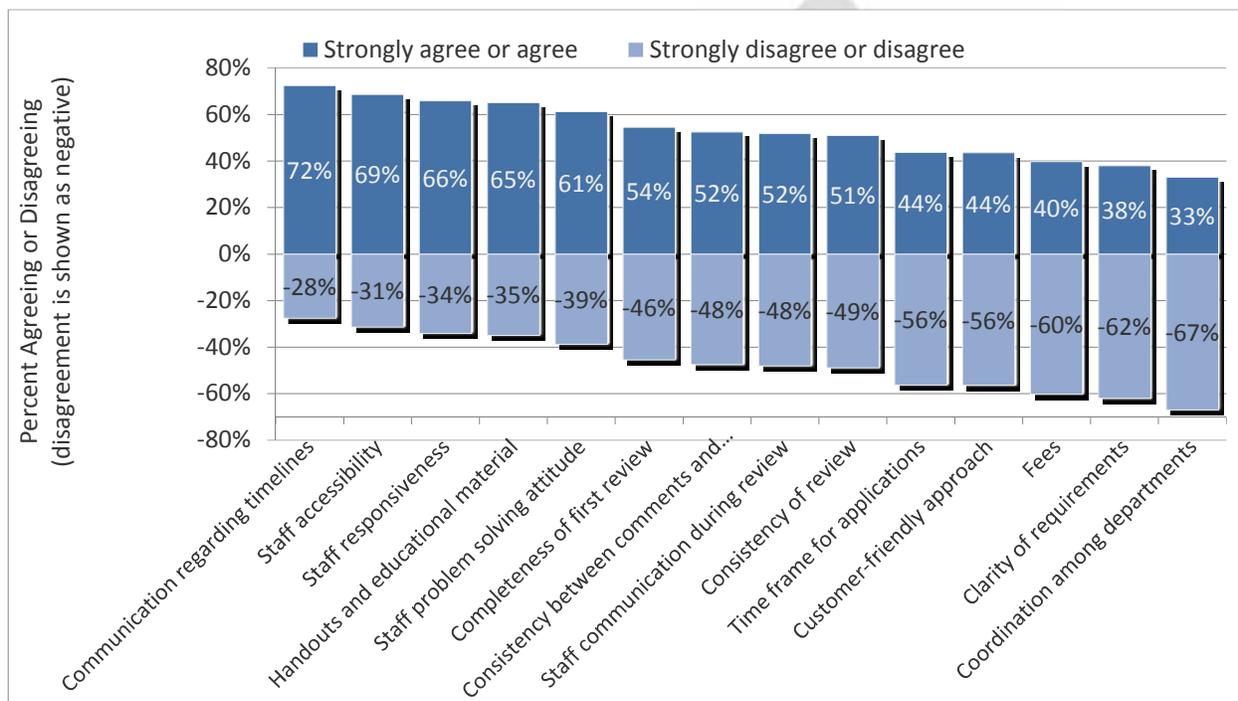
4. PLANNING AND ZONING PROCESS

The survey asked 15 questions regarding interactions with the Planning and Zoning department. Questions and responses are shown below:

Please respond to the following questions regarding the planning and zoning review process and your interactions with planning and zoning staff

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The approval process is customer-friendly.	4.62%	24.70%	23.90%	28.31%	16.06%
2. Planning staff are able to provide clear and consistent answers regarding the City of Burlington's requirements and processes.	6.83%	32.73%	19.68%	26.51%	11.45%
3. The City's submittal and design requirements are clear and understandable.	2.62%	23.79%	26.41%	31.45%	11.69%
4. While my project is under review, I receive prompt communication regarding the project status.	4.85%	27.07%	26.48%	20.40%	8.48%
5. Planning staff use a positive approach of "here's how to get your application approved", rather than a punitive approach of "you can't do it that way".	5.84%	30.58%	22.94%	19.92%	13.88%
6. If my project required approvals from other departments or agencies, City staff are helpful in coordinating this process.	2.83%	15.59%	27.94%	25.51%	11.74%
7. Staff clearly communicate to me the time required to process my application and met time commitments.	6.71%	41.87%	26.42%	11.59%	6.91%
8. The initial review and analysis of my application is complete; future problems do not surface that should have been caught during the initial review.	5.73%	30.06%	26.58%	14.31%	8.38%
9. Planning staff are readily accessible when I need help or an explanation regarding an application.	7.74%	36.66%	26.48%	15.89%	7.13%
10. The amount of time taken to review and approve an application is acceptable.	4.46%	26.17%	25.35%	26.57%	12.78%
11. Staff are consistent in applying the City's ordinances to my application and plans.	5.30%	26.88%	30.75%	14.05%	12.83%
12. The staff comments received from plan reviews are based upon adopted regulations or codes.	4.92%	28.69%	35.04%	10.25%	5.12%
14. The fees charged for planning applications are reasonable.	2.85%	25.41%	29.88%	26.22%	10.37%
15. The City provides quality information and handouts at the office and on-line regarding the planning process.	5.12%	32.99%	35.45%	13.52%	6.97%

The chart below shows responses to each question from the Planning and Zoning section of the survey sorted from most positive to least positive. Feedback was most positive regarding staff communication, accessibility, and responsiveness. Feedback was most negative regarding fees, clarity of requirements, and coordination among departments.



Respondents were also given an opportunity to provide general comments regarding their experience with the Planning and Zoning Department. The survey collected nearly 100 responses to this question, although many addressed issues beyond Planning and Zoning. Of the comments, 22 provided positive feedback and the remainder outlined a concern or recommendation for improvement. The key themes and issues from the narrative comments include the following:

-) Both positive and negative comments were received regarding the helpfulness and courteousness of staff,
-) Customer Service provided is not consistent across all applicants. Many feel that information provided is not complete, concise or usable.

-) Technology being utilized is lacking especially in online access to information, historic property designations, and status of applications.
-) Staff are passionate about their jobs and enforcing the adopted regulations,
-) Greater access to online status of applications and communication regarding projects,
-) Fees are excessive and inappropriately applied:
 - o On small projects, fees can be a large percentage of overall project cost.
 - o It appears counterproductive to not impose a fee for a zoning permit when replacing like for like (i.e. – vinyl for vinyl) but to impose one when upgrading to a better product (i.e. – eliminating vinyl).
 - o Fees are one reason some people don’t acquire permits.
-) Historic determination is neither consistently applied nor based upon objective facts. This is the major issue impacting the City.
-) Costs to comply with historic materials guidelines are prohibitive and result in some people either not making repairs or making them without a permit.
-) Not enough support is provided to homeowners regarding the process, alternatives, and options.
-) Staff interpretations of the ordinances and regulations have become increasing strict.
-) There is not a consistent interpretation between staff and the review board.
-) Coordination with other departments should be improved.
-) The codes and regulations do not necessarily fit the needs of the community and are not consistently applied.

5. PUBLIC HEARING AND BOARD REVIEW PROCESS

The survey next asked eight questions about the public process associated with planning permits and approvals. Note that the following table excludes all respondents who chose n/a). Of those respondents who answered this question, the response percentages are shown below:

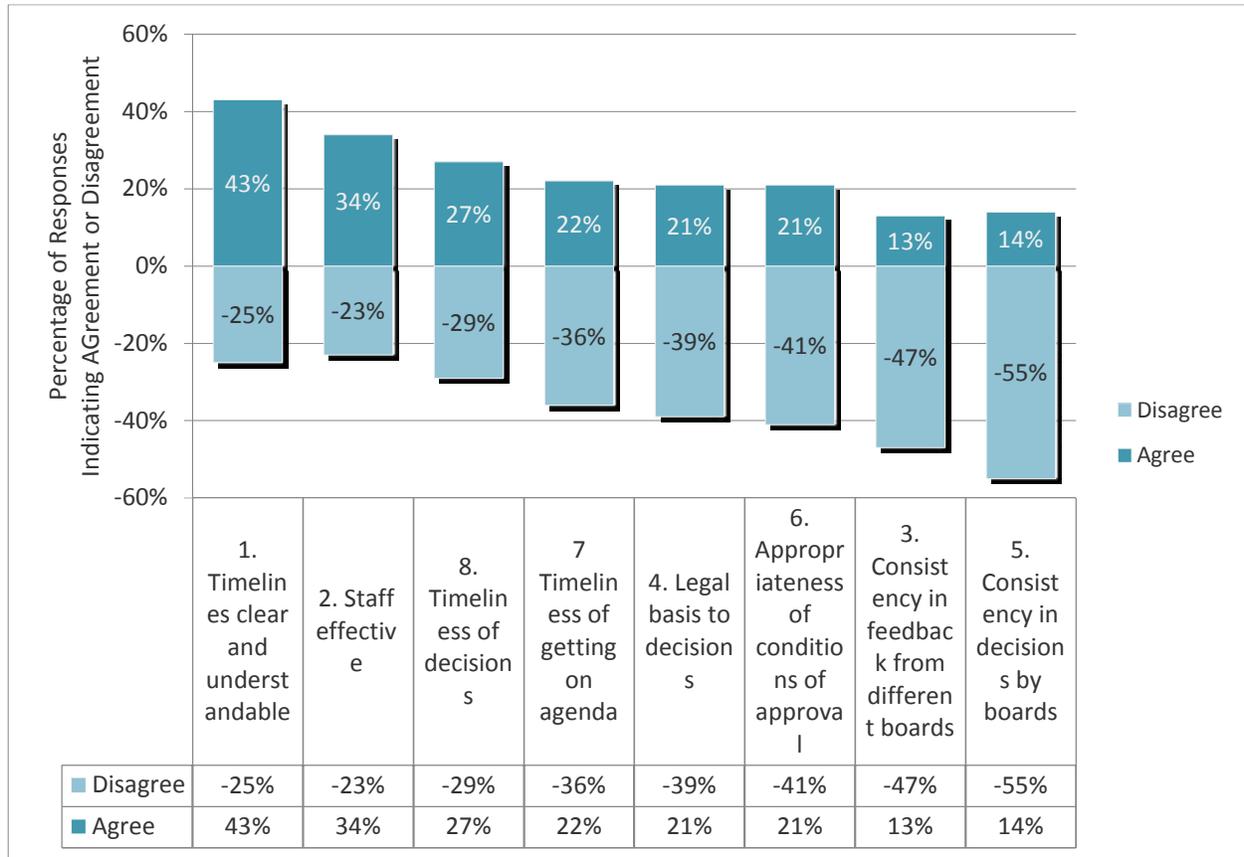
Please respond to the following questions regarding the Development Review Board process (for projects that require public hearing and/or board review).					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The public hearing process and timelines are clear and understandable.	2.78%	22.04%	19.03%	9.51%	4.87%
2. Staff are effective in helping my project through the public hearing process.	2.30%	15.90%	23.04%	8.76%	3.46%
3. Feedback and recommendations from different boards and commissions are consistent with each other.	1.16%	5.81%	22.09%	19.77%	6.51%

Please respond to the following questions regarding the Development Review Board process (for projects that require public hearing and/or board review).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. The legal and policy basis of the boards' and commissions' decisions and findings are clearly communicated.	1.62%	9.95%	21.53%	13.89%	7.64%
5. Decisions made by the boards and commissions are consistent from project to project.	1.40%	6.05%	17.21%	18.14%	11.63%
6. Conditions of approval from boards and commissions are clear, reasonable, and straightforward to implement.	1.63%	10.26%	20.75%	14.69%	8.39%
7. The process for getting on the Development Review schedule or agenda is timely.	1.62%	10.21%	22.51%	13.92%	5.10%
8. The Development Review Board makes decisions in a timely manner.	1.86%	12.82%	24.01%	10.96%	4.90%

The following chart shows overall agreement and disagreement for each statement. In revising this chart the following points should be noted:

-) Only the statements regarding timelines being clear and understandable and staff being effective at moving applications through the public hearing process received more positive responses than negative.
-) The other statements all received more negative responses than positive responses as follows:
 - o 55% disagreed and 14% agreed that there is consistency between projects in the decisions issued by boards and commission.
 - o 47% disagreed and 13% agreed that there is consistency between the boards and commissions on decisions.
 - o 41% disagree and 21% agreed that conditions imposed are clear, reasonable, and straightforward to implement.
 - o 39% disagreed and 21% agreed that there is a clear communication regarding the legal and policy basis for board / commission decisions.
 - o 36% disagreed and 22% agreed that the process for getting on the Development Review Board agenda is timely.
 - o 29% disagreed and 27% agreed that the Development Review Board makes timely decisions.



Respondents were also given an opportunity to provide general comments regarding their experience with the board review process. The key themes and issues raised in these comments included the following:

-) Ordinances and regulations make it difficult to ensure consistent decisions by the Board on different projects; however, the Board does as well as it can with the existing codes / ordinances.
-) Important part of the process and should remain.
-) Timeliness of getting on the agenda can be problematic and excessive.
-) The process is not fully understood and is daunting to the average resident.
-) It is unclear when applications are sent for review versus handled administratively.

6. BUILDING PERMITTING PROCESS

The survey asked 16 questions regarding the Building permitting process, including the process for issuing trade permits. Responses are shown in the table below.

Please respond to the following questions regarding the building permitting process (building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits).					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The permit approval process is predictable and customer-friendly.	5.4%	26.1%	23.0%	32.0%	13.4%
2. The department provides clear information regarding what information I need to include with my permit application.	6.1%	40.0%	24.7%	21.8%	7.4%
3. While my permit application is under review, I receive prompt communication regarding the project status.	5.3%	23.3%	36.4%	23.3%	11.7%
4. Plan reviewers use a positive approach of "here's how to get your application approved", rather than a punitive approach of "you can't do it that way".	5.4%	28.7%	29.2%	23.9%	12.9%
5. Staff clearly communicate the time required to process my application.	6.7%	38.9%	30.0%	16.6%	7.8%
6. The City meets its commitments for processing time of applications.	7.2%	35.2%	33.8%	17.5%	6.4%
7. The initial review and analysis is complete; future problems do not surface that should have been caught during the initial review.	6.2%	31.7%	28.2%	24.0%	10.0%
8. Staff are readily accessible when I need help or an explanation regarding an application.	6.0%	29.2%	25.6%	22.9%	16.3%
9. For projects that require trades permits (mechanical, plumbing, electrical), staff do a good job coordinating the review process.	5.3%	24.5%	34.0%	22.0%	14.2%

Please respond to the following questions regarding the building permitting process (building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits).					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. For projects that require fire detection or suppression permits, staff do a good job coordinating the review process.	4.5%	20.5%	43.2%	18.6%	13.2%
11. The amount of time taken to review and approve an application is acceptable.	7.6%	30.4%	35.0%	19.0%	8.1%
12. Staff are consistent in applying the state and local code requirements to my application and plans.	6.6%	31.5%	32.4%	16.8%	12.7%
13. The fees charged for building, electric, mechanical and fire permits are reasonable.	4.3%	24.5%	35.3%	21.7%	14.1%
14. It is easily to determine total building and inspection fees for a project in advance of submittal.	4.0%	24.9%	33.3%	23.7%	14.1%
15. The City's ordinances, regulations and processes on permitting activities are clear and easily understood.	3.7%	16.5%	22.9%	37.1%	19.7%

The bar chart below sorts the statements from most positive to least positive results. As shown, the following four items were viewed most favorably by respondent:

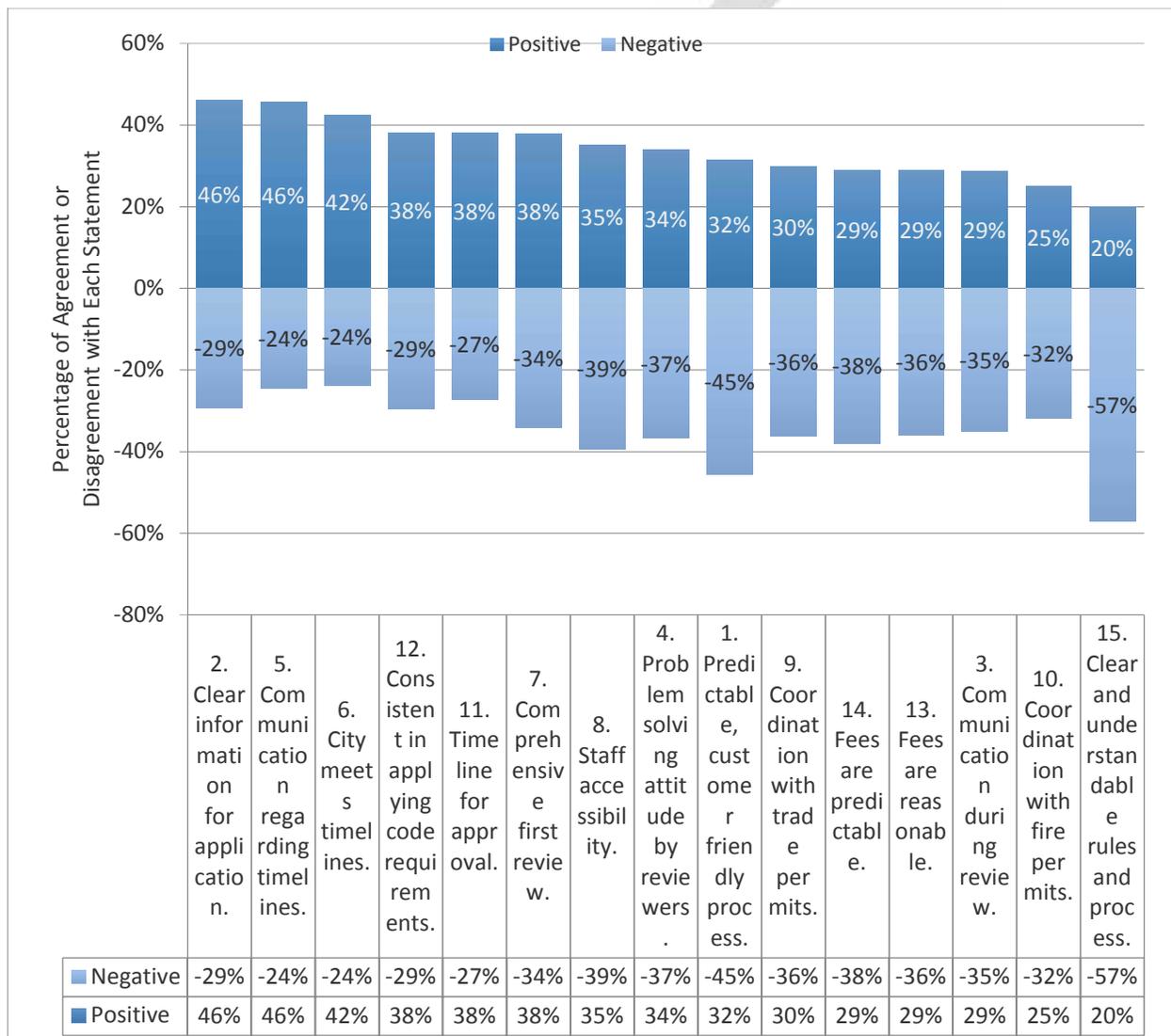
-) Clarity of information for applicants regarding what needs to be submitted (46% agreement / 29% disagreement),
-) Staff clearly communicates the time required to process applications (46% agreement / 24% disagreement)
-) The City meets time commitments for processing applications (42% agreement / 24% disagreement); and
-) Staff are consistent in applying state and local codes (28% agreement and 29% disagreement).

The four areas with the greatest level of disagreement included:

-) The City's ordinances, regulations and processes on permitting activities are clear and easily understood (57% disagree versus 20% agree),

- J The permit approval process is predictable and customer-friendly (45% disagree versus 32% agree),
- J Staff are readily accessible when I need help or an explanation regarding an application (45% disagree versus 29% agree), and
- J It is easy to determine total building and inspection fees for a project in advance of submittal (39% disagree versus 35% agree).

The level of agreement for each statement is shown in the following chart.



Over 120 survey respondents provided additional comments regarding the building permit process although some of the comments addressed other aspects of the permitting

process. There were fifteen comments that were positive or mostly positive. The remaining provided either negative feedback or a suggestion for an improvement.

The following were the key themes or issues raised:

-) The addition of emailed applications has simplified the process.
-) Comments regarding staff customer service were inconsistent and ranged from positive to negative – some depending on the specific individual who provided service.
-) Timeliness of trade inspections should be enhanced.
-) Time to get an UCO is excessive.
-) Standards are not clearly outlined and inspectors have excessive discretion with little recourse for the applicant.
-) It's sometimes difficult to understand when a permit is required and from which department.
-) Inspectors are not consistent in applying the codes.
-) Access to staff, especially inspectors, is difficult by phone and email.
-) Permit center hours are not convenient nor sufficient.
-) Fees are too expensive and not related to project size and cost.
-) Having building located separate from Planning and Zoning and other departments is inconvenient.
-) Staffing resources may be insufficient to meet workload demands.

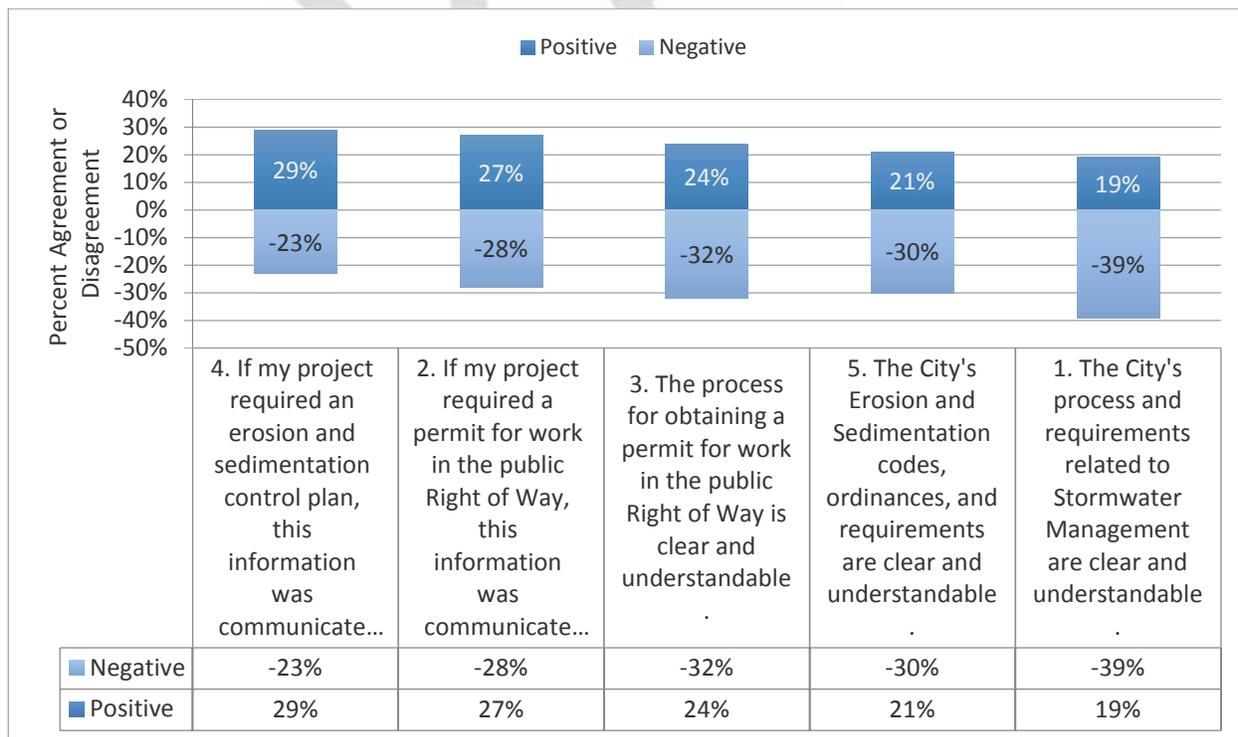
7. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

Some permits and projects require additional permits or approvals, such as stormwater plans or excavation permits. The survey asked five questions related to these and the results are shown in the following table:

Please respond to the following questions regarding additional approvals required as part of your project.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The City's process and requirements related to Stormwater Management are clear and understandable.	3.8%	15.1%	41.6%	31.4%	8.1%
2. If my project required a permit for work in the public Right of Way, this information was communicated to me clearly and at the appropriate time in the permitting process.	5.1%	22.1%	44.9%	18.4%	9.6%
3. The process for obtaining a permit for work in the public Right of Way is clear and understandable.	4.3%	19.6%	44.2%	21.7%	10.1%
4. If my project required an erosion and sedimentation control plan, this information was communicated to me clearly and at the appropriate time in the permitting process.	7.8%	21.3%	48.2%	16.3%	6.4%
5. The City's Erosion and Sedimentation codes, ordinances, and requirements are clear and understandable.	5.8%	14.8%	49.0%	21.3%	9.0%

The table below shows the percentage of positive and negative responses to questions regarding other requirements, from most positive to least positive.



As shown, the most positive responses were related to communication to applicants when either a stormwater (29% agreed) or right-of-way permit (27% agreed) was required. However, the level of disagreement was higher than agreement in four of the five statements presented. The highest level of disagreement was related to the clarify and understandability of specific requirements: stormwater (39% disagreed), right of way (32% disagreed) and erosion and sedimentation (30% disagreed).

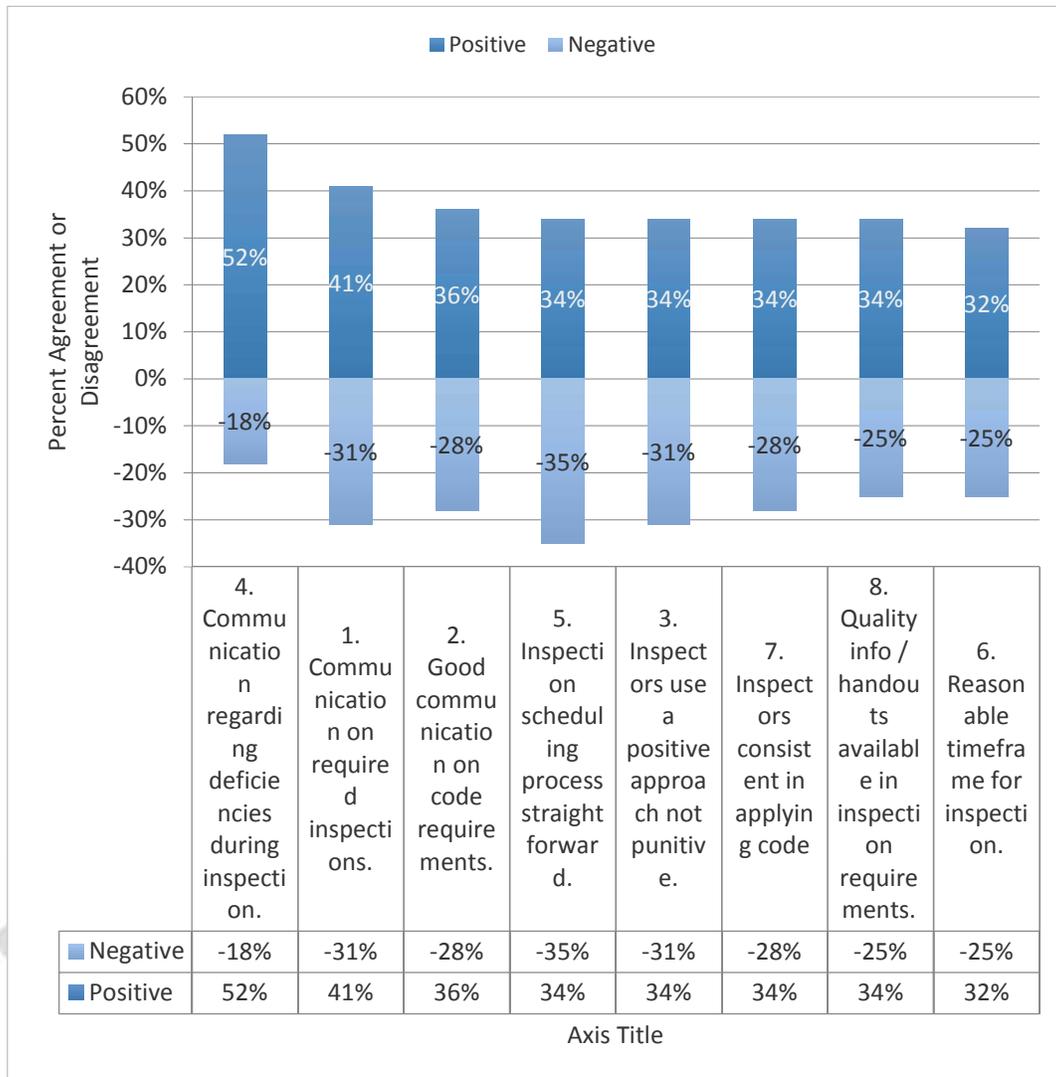
8. INSPECTION PROCESS.

The survey asked eight questions regarding the City’s inspections process. Results are provided in the chart below:

Please respond to the following questions regarding the inspections process (while projects are under construction).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The City does a good job communicating what inspections are required and when they must be conducted.	6.2%	34.9%	28.2%	21.4%	9.4%
2. Inspectors do a good job communicating the code requirements associated with construction.	6.0%	30.4%	36.0%	19.8%	8.9%
3. Inspectors use a positive approach of "here's how to get your work approved", rather than a punitive approach of "you can't do it that way".	6.3%	27.5%	35.0%	19.0%	12.1%
4. If deficiencies are identified during an inspection, staff are clear about what needs to be done to rectify the situation.	7.0%	44.9%	29.9%	11.3%	7.0%
5. The inspections scheduling process is straightforward.	6.4%	27.2%	30.9%	22.9%	12.5%
6. The time frame for obtaining an inspection is reasonable.	4.9%	27.4%	34.7%	20.4%	12.8%
7. Inspectors are consistent in applying the building code to my projects.	8.2%	25.9%	37.7%	17.7%	10.4%
8. The City provides quality information and handouts at the office and on-line regarding inspection requirements and processes.	4.7%	29.2%	40.6%	14.8%	10.7%

The responses of those who had a positive or negative opinion of the inspections process are depicted below, sorted from most to least positive:



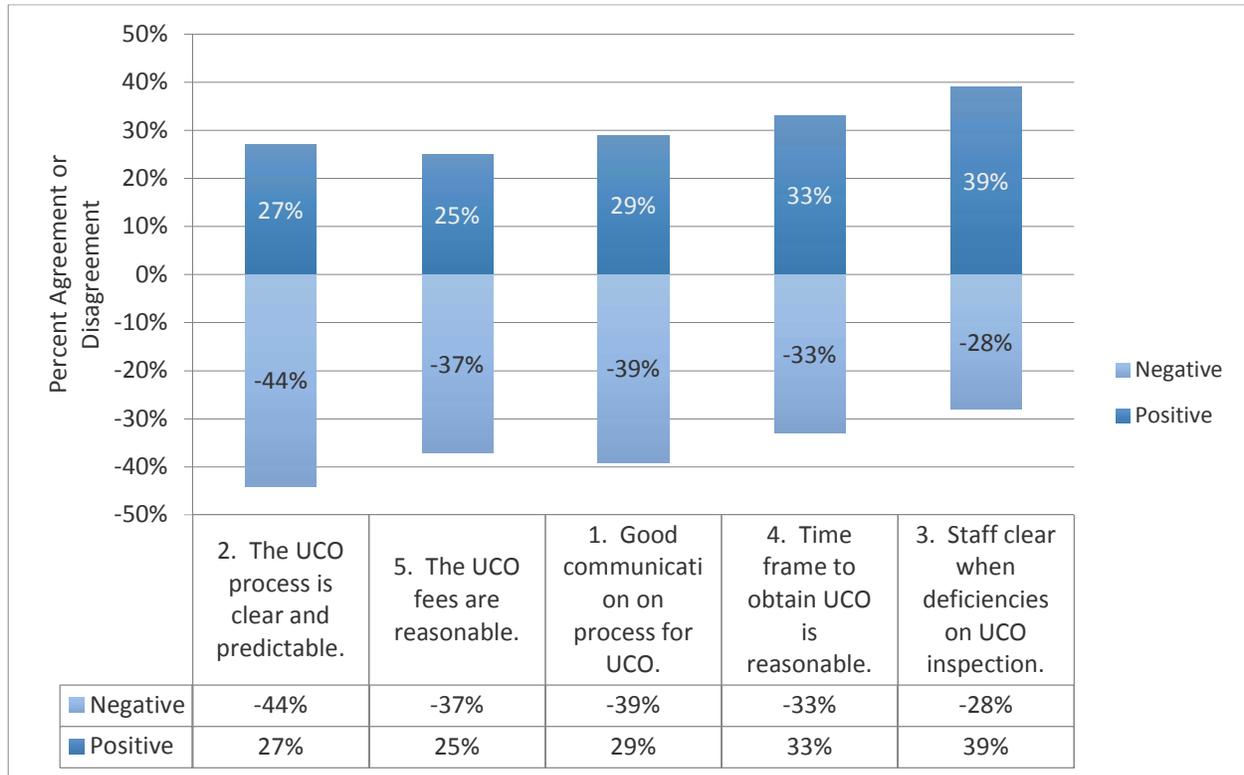
Respondents noted the greatest level of agreement with staff communication regarding deficiencies during the inspection process (52% agreed), communication on required inspections (41% agreed) and communication regarding code requirements (36% agreed and 31% disagreed). The greatest levels of disagreement were related to inspection scheduling processes (35% disagreed it was straightforward), inspectors exhibiting a positive approach during inspections (31% disagreed – though 34% agreed).

9. UNIFIED CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY PROCESS.

The survey asked five questions regarding the process to acquire a unified certificate of occupancy. The table below provides responses for all statements:

Please respond to the following questions regarding the project close-out process (required to receive a Unified Certificate of Occupancy)					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The City does a good job at communicating the process for obtaining a Unified Certificate of Occupancy.	4.1%	24.8%	31.7%	24.4%	14.9%
2. The process of obtaining a Unified Certificate of Occupancy is clear and predictable.	3.2%	23.5%	29.4%	27.7%	16.1%
3. If deficiencies are identified during an inspection, staff are clear about what needs to be done to rectify the situation so that I can obtain the Unified Certificate of Occupancy.	4.8%	34.2%	33.1%	17.1%	10.8%
4. The time frame for obtaining a Unified Certificate of Occupancy is reasonable.	5.7%	27.2%	34.6%	20.5%	12.1%
5. The fees associated with the Unified Certificate of Occupancy are reasonable.	4.1%	21.4%	38.0%	23.1%	13.6%

Of those who expressed either a positive or negative opinion regarding the questions, the responses tended to be negative. The bar chart below shows the statements related to the certificate of occupancy process from least to most positive.



Overall, respondents expressed the greatest level of agreement that staff were clear regarding deficiencies that must be correct on UCO Inspection (39% agreement) and that the time frame for obtaining a UCO is reasonable (33% agreement). The greatest level of disagreement, related to the clarify and predictability of the UCO process (44% disagreed) and the presence of good communication regarding the UCO process (30% disagreed).

10. PERMITTING PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS.

The survey asked several questions regarding ways to improve the permitting process. The first question provided several options for changes. The following table sort the options based upon the level of agreement.

Suggested reform	Helpful or very helpful	Unhelpful or very unhelpful
Co-locate departments or review agencies at a single location	99%	1%
Expand online capabilities to allow for application and payment for permits online	98%	2%
Allow some planning and zoning permits that currently require Board approval to be approved administratively	91%	9%
Combine building and electrical/mechanical permits under a single reviewer or inspector	90%	10%
Reduce some planning and zoning requirements (please specify below)	86%	14%
Reduce some building permit requirements (please specify below)	85%	15%

Additional open-ended questions regarding recommendations for change were also included in the survey and are summarized in the following section.

11. POSITIVE ELEMENTS OF THE PROCESS.

The survey asked for positive feedback regarding the city’s development review and permitting process. Respondents listed over 450 comments regarding positive aspects of the process – while many comments were not directly related to positive elements of the process, there was good and thoughtful input received. The most common themes included:

-) Accessibility of staff,
-) Process includes appropriate levels of public input and engagement,
-) Commitment to historic preservation and maintaining character of Burlington,
-) Friendly, knowledgeable, and dedicated staff, and
-) Focus on safety of housing / buildings.

12. GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT.

Finally, the survey asked respondents to provide input regarding the city's greatest opportunities for improvement. Respondents listed hundreds of comments regarding opportunities to improve the process – while many comments did not provide specific improvement opportunities there was a significant amount of thoughtful input received.

The most common themes included:

-) Codes need to be updated,
-) Inconsistent application of codes and regulations to projects,
-) Process is too complex especially for smaller projects.
 - o Need for more over-the-counter or online permits.
 - o Online applications.
-) Need to co-locate development review and permitting functions.
-) Use of technology needs to be expanded:
 - o Online services for review and payment,
 - o Online access to application / permit status.
-) Easier inspection scheduling and faster turnaround times for inspections.
-) Modifications to requirements related to historic properties:
 - o Especially related to window and door replacements.
-) Improve customer service.
-) Reduce the number of permits required per project.
-) Increase administrative approvals by Planning and Zoning staff.
-) Increase communication and coordination between departments.
-) Revamp the fee structure for greater simplicity and make estimating permit costs easier.

-) Simplify permitting process for routine maintenance items related to historic properties.

13. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The response to the survey was high, demonstrating a strong interest in the City of Burlington's development review and permitting operations. Many respondents indicated support for the city's goals in ensuring appropriate, safe development and protecting resources, including historic. Several also noted concern that changes in permitting could undermine the function's goals, including protecting the unique character of the city. However, much of the feedback regarding the city's overall process and requirements also demonstrated room for improvement.

Common themes expressed included:

- Difficulty obtaining approval for small projects or minor changes, especially "in kind" replacement of windows, siding, doors, and other architectural elements.
- Frustration with the need to go to two or more locations to apply for and receive permits.
- Lack of coordination among different departments in the permitting process.
- Inconsistency in decision-making and in information provided by staff.
- Lack of clarity regarding both process and requirements from project conception through close-out.

All of the comments received will be considered during the development of recommendations for the permit reform project. While the consultant's observations and analysis may not coincide with all issues raised through this survey, it is important for the City to understand and respond to the perceptions of customers if long-lasting and accepted improvements are going to be implemented. Perception creates a reality and

failure to understand and address these perceptions will make it more difficult to change the public's view of service delivery.

14. SUMMARY OF CUSTOMER / STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK AND INPUT.

In addition to the stakeholder survey, the consultant reached out to prior clients, members of the development community, and homeowners for input by conducting a series of focus groups and public meetings. The consultant conducting stakeholder focus group meetings, public forums, and individual interviews with members of the community to further gather input regarding the customer's perceptions of the adequacy of the existing processes and the services provided by City staff involved in the development review and permitting process.

The customers of the City of Burlington development review and permitting process who provided feedback to the consultant were comprised of developers, general contractors, architects, consultants, business owners, owner/builders, and citizens. All meetings were conducted on a confidential basis to obtain as much candid feedback as possible, with no City staff in attendance. Overall, the consultant conducted five focus groups and three public forums with participation from over 40 individuals. In addition, another eight individuals, who were unable to attend the scheduled meetings, scheduled personal meetings or conference calls with the consultant to provide their input.

Customers discussed a number of service related issues from the use of technology, information availability and communications, historic designation and preservation, to the Department's customer service philosophy. The following sections summarize the participant's perceptions regarding a variety of topics and issues.

(1) Participants Identified a Number of Positive Aspects of the Process and Services Provided by Staff.

Participants were asked to identify areas where they felt the City of Burlington staff was doing a good job and areas of the process they felt were done well. While comments in this section will note positive areas in the process, it does not mean that all participants uniformly agreed about these statements or they were generally present throughout all Departments.

- **Permit Information Availability.** Participants indicated that basic information on what projects require permits is readily accessible online and also available in person. Also, participants felt that checklists were also readily available based on permit application type, and that staff was available to effectively answer question on application submittal requirements.
- **Permit Fee Structure.** As a whole, the group felt that permit fees were not burdensome, and were typically consistent with fees and charges utilized by other communities.
- **Staff Knowledge is High.** Generally, participants thought that staff knowledge and expertise in their respective fields was high.

The consultant asked participants about the level of customer service provided in each area within the development review and permitting process from the front counter to plan / permit review to inspections. The focus groups were asked to comment on the timeliness and consistency of the process, effectiveness of the process, and overall perceptions of customer service. The identified issues and challenges are discussed in the next section. It is important to note that the vast majority of participants in these meetings were actively involved in development activity – rather than being homeowners who are involved less frequently in the process. This may result in different issues being identified in this summary than are contained in the stakeholder survey summary.

(2) Participants Identified Several Issues and Challenges Regarding the Development Review and Permitting Process.

The focus group participants identified a number of problem issues and areas requiring improvement related to the effectiveness and efficiency of the permitting and inspection process in the City of Burlington. Some of these issues differ based on focus group, however, there were themes repeated among many of the participants. The following sections identify those areas most commonly identified as problem areas requiring improvement to enhance the services provided.

(a) Stakeholders and Community Members Identified the Lack of Customer Service Focus as the Most Pressing Issue.

Many of the individuals who participated in the focus groups and public forums expressed their frustration with customer service related issues. These issues can be summarized for the following areas.

- **Lack of Availability of Zoning Staff.** A number of participants interviewed felt that some staff kept them at arm's length or would avoid the customer and utilized an enforcement approach rather than accommodating efforts to reach solutions. It appeared to them that protecting the historic character, health, safety, and welfare of the public means that they should not collaborate, comment, or assist and that they should only react to what they are given, and not be helpful in providing solutions to project completion. Of bigger concern to the participants in the interviews and focus groups was the lack of feedback before an official application was submitted by Zoning.

Concerns were also presented in regard to the requirement to receive a Zoning permit for Non-applicability before a Building permit may be issued. Stakeholders did reference that the use of the Technical Review Committee has been a good starting point to provide feedback during the pre-application phase for larger projects, but did note that the lack of participation from all applicable departments was a concern. This results in issues that must be resolved during the plan review after submittal, instead of addressing before submission.

- **Issues with Consistency or Clarity in the Application of Codes and Regulations.** A vast majority of the participants noted that the codes and regulations are either unclear on the requirements that must be met for an approval

or appear to be inconsistently applied by the City. This area was the third-most common issue raised during the focus group and public meetings.

- **Inconsistency in Inspection Scheduling.** Stakeholders and community members expressed concerns about the complications of scheduling building related inspections. It was noted in multiple interviews about the lack of staff returning phone calls, and emails during the inspection scheduling process. It was noted that voicemail inboxes were full for certain staff members. Also, the issue was raised that due to the lack of cross training of inspectors, that when an inspector is out of the office for extended periods (vacation, training, sick leave, etc.), that no inspections were scheduled or conducted for that specific trade or that they do not know who to contact as back-up. This results in a backlog of inspections when the inspector returns, or the inspection not being completed, and thus the permit may not be closed out in a timely manner. Stakeholders and community members expressed frustration with the inability of process and timeliness of scheduling inspectors and selected inspector follow-up.
- **Issues with Multiple Fees Required Throughout Process.** While most of the stakeholders and community members did not have issue with the current permitting fee amounts, many did have issues with the total number of separate fees that must be paid throughout the review, permitting, inspection, and closeout process. During multiple interviews, frustration was shared with team in regard with having to pay fees during each step of the process, and the lack of ability to take certain payment types. Stakeholders expressed the desire to pay one upfront fee at the beginning instead of being “hit” with fees throughout the process.

In summary, issues presented in this section are related to lack of customer friendly staff attitudes, professionalism, multiple fees assessed, and going between department locations. This results in applicants being frustrated with the process and with City staff.

(c) Inability to Submit Applications Online and Maximize Use of Technology.

Participants felt that the review and permitting process may be made easier if the application could be submitted online and generally if technology were more fully utilized. Many desired to ability to submit online versus in person due to the ease of online submission and the limited hours for building permit submittal. Individuals felt that online

submission would allow for increased staff efficiencies. Participants also indicated the desire to pay online with various forms of payment.

Finally, many expressed the desire for expanded access to information online related to application / permit status and the ability to request or schedule inspections without contacting staff directly.

(3) Participants Identified a Number of Recommended Improvements Regarding the Process.

The consultant asked the participants what are the most significant and important changes that should be made in the development review and permitting process. Some felt strongly about the need for colocation of all development and permitting operations, stronger coordination and communication between departments, simplification of the process, and clear guidance on historical designation. Ideas for improvement included the following:

- **Colocation of Development Review and Permitting Operations.** Participants indicated the desire to have all departments co-located to reduce the need for applicants to go between multiple locations in order to obtain all applicable permits.
- **Stronger Coordination and Communication Between Departments.** Some felt that the current communication and trust between departments could be dramatically improved. Participants expressed their frustration with the non-applicable zoning permit (Green Z) requirement **being imposed** before a building permit may be issued. Participants indicated the desire for increased communication between departments and accountability for information received. Several participants provided their own experience in regard to departments sending them back in forth to obtain a permit, that the department indicated that the other department would issue. Participants discussed the desire to have better communication between departments and their respective responsibilities.
- **Streamline the Process.** It was felt that the development review and permitting process was complicated. Participants discussed the complexity of the process and the large number of steps from permitting to close out, and confusion of the overall process. The ability to easily access information related to submittal requirements, when or which permits were required, and where to start the process were noted as issues that make it difficult to interact with the City. The participants felt that the number of permits should be reduced to simplify the process. It was also mentioned that next steps in the process was not always fully explained and this created future

issues in appropriately complying with City requirements especially when multiple departments are involved.

- **Adopt Historical Designation Criteria.** Most participants indicated that they did not know if their property or project had historical significance until they applied for a permit. Some were frustrated with the process to determine if their structure was historic and found the determination to be subjective and not fact based. Participants desired for the creation of specific guidelines for historical determination and allowed materials.

Overall, the stakeholder and public forum interviews provided the consultant with an extensive background into the perceptions of the customers of the development review and permitting process, and their perceptions regarding the service levels and approaches, and insight into changes that the community felt would assist in improving the level of service provided by the City. While some participants noted their own experiences and frustrations, most felt that staff was trying to preserve the character of the City of Burlington.

C. COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment compares permitting operations in the City of Burlington with those of other municipalities. The purpose of this exercise is to identify policies and practices that may be applicable to Burlington that may enhance efficiency and customer service.

The review focused on the following elements:

- How different functions associated with permitting (planning review, building review, inspections, and certificate of occupancy) are organized.
- How cities coordinate planning and building permit review, including with outside departments (fire, engineering, stormwater).
- The permit tracking technology used and whether the technology includes on-line and mobile functionality.
- Required thresholds for requiring planning or zoning permits, and for requiring Development Review Board or other board review.
- Timelines for review.
- The Certificate of Occupancy process, including whether there is a separate Zoning Certificate of Occupancy process.

2. SELECTED COMMUNITIES

While each city is unique, the consultants sought comparable communities in terms of size and built environment. All selected communities included historic preservation districts and are located in New England.

It is important to note that Vermont is unique in that the state's adopted building codes apply only to "public" buildings, which do not include single family residential structures. Within Vermont, Burlington is unique in that applies these regulations to residential structures as well. Therefore, while the comparison did include two

communities within Vermont, other states may provide a better model for comparison.

	Population (2010)	Land Area (square miles)	Urban %	Median Household Income	Other Characteristics
Burlington	42,417	15.1	100%	\$43,323	Major university Historic districts
Bennington, Vermont	15,737	14.27	-	\$35,044	Small college Historic district
Brattleboro, Vermont	12,005	32.63	-	\$47,027	Historic district
Concord, New Hampshire	42,514	67.5	92%	\$54,182	Capital city Historic district
Middletown, Connecticut	47,043	42.3	96%	\$58,676	College Historic district
Portland, Maine	66,666	52.6	96%	\$40,806	Capital city Historic district

2. SUMMARY FINDINGS

The table on the following page provides a high-level summary of each municipality's organization, technology, and processes.

CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

Technical Appendices for the Final Report on the Development Process Assessment

	Organization	Technology	Planning Process	Building Permit Process	Certificate of Occupancy Process
Burlington	Separate planning departments, building division (under DPW), and fire department. Code enforcement department is in charge of Zoning Certificate of Occupancy process.	Amanda software system. On-line capabilities: status look-up, submittal of some building permits by e-mail.	Technical Review Committee offers optional pre-application meetings. Submitted plans may be routed to other departments, but there is no formal feedback loop after project is submitted.	Building permit application occurs after zoning approval and waiting period. Building permit may trigger additional permits (electrical, mechanical, fire suppression)	Applicant must request CO from Code Enforcement and provide copies of all materials.
Bennington, Vermont	Single department: "Planning, Permits & Code Enforcement" includes planning director, zoning administrator, and building inspectors.	"Nemrc" permit tracking software. No on-line functionality; no mobile capabilities.	DRB required for most new commercial, subdivisions, changes to the exterior of buildings located within Design Review Districts, variances and appeals. No formal process for routing projects to other departments.	Single zoning/building permit application is used for projects not requiring DRB. Bennington does not issue permits or inspect electrical, mechanical, or plumbing systems. This work must be inspected (but not permitted) by the state.	Zoning administrator and building inspector conduct inspections jointly and then a combined certificate of occupancy for zoning and building is issued.
Brattleboro, Vermont	Planning Services Department. Building permits are issued and work inspected by the state.	Access database is used to track planning permits.	No zoning permit required if project does not alter exterior dimensions. Small accessory structure, lot line adjustments, and minor site plan changes may be approved administratively. All other projects require DRB approval. Projects in the downtown historic district subject to review by Design Review Committee, which is advisory to the DRB.	N/A – state process following (including for SF projects).	Zoning administrator inspects projects and determines compliance with zoning permit or DRB approval and conditions.

CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
Technical Appendices for the Final Report on the Development Process Assessment

	Organization	Technology	Planning Process	Building Permit Process	Certificate of Occupancy Process
Concord, New Hampshire	Single community development department encompasses three divisions: building and code, engineering, and planning.	Currently in transition. Have Access-based in-house developed tracking software. Applicants can look up permit status on-line.	<p>Zoning administrator signs off on building permits for “by right” projects. No separate planning or zoning permit is required.</p> <p>Planning board looks at all subdivision, site plan, design review, and DUP applications.</p> <p>Architectural design review is required for exterior building modifications within “performance districts” as well as major site plan applications, major site plan applications.</p> <p>Standing Development Team meetings are held weekly to look at pre-applications, as well as planning applications that have been submitted.</p>	<p>Zoning administrator reviews building permits.</p> <p>Separate electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits are required (with associated inspections).</p> <p>Building department will route application to fire, health, engineering, or planning if necessary.</p>	Permitting software is used to track sign offs for CO. Any department involved in project review/approval must also sign off at the project end before a CO is issued.

CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
Technical Appendices for the Final Report on the Development Process Assessment

	Organization	Technology	Planning Process	Building Permit Process	Certificate of Occupancy Process
Middletown, Connecticut	<p>Planning and Zoning Department does all zoning review and planning approvals.</p> <p>Building department is a division of Public Works.</p>	<p>In-house developed software system. Allows for on-line submittal but no on-line permits. Applicant can go on-line to look up permit review status.</p>	<p>Alterations that don't change the footprint or use do not require any zoning review and may go straight to Building.</p> <p>Zoning administrator reviews and approves residential projects as long as all code requirements are met.</p> <p>Administrative site plan for proposals that add under 5,000 sf of new construction and under 10 parking spaces.</p> <p>All other projects require Commission review.</p> <p>Projects in historic district with exterior changes visible from the Right of Way must be reviewed by the Design Review and Preservation Board.</p>	<p>All projects that involve exterior changes require zoning sign-off before submitting for building permit.</p> <p>Inspectors are certified to review and inspect for compliance with structural, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing code requirements.</p>	<p>Any department involved in review of a project signs off on the Certificate of Occupancy.</p>

	Organization	Technology	Planning Process	Building Permit Process	Certificate of Occupancy Process
Portland, Maine	<p>Combined Department of Permitting and Inspections includes a zoning administrator, building inspectors, business licensing, and code enforcement.</p> <p>Separate Planning and Urban Development department oversees planning approvals.</p>	<p>Using e-Plan software for electronic distribution and review of plans. Plans may be submitted electronically, including all attachments. Applicants can check review status and look up comments on-line.</p>	<p>“By right” projects (those that comply with current zoning standards) are signed off on by the zoning administrator as part of the building permit process.</p> <p>Permits that require no new buildings and where additions are under 500 sf may be approved administratively.</p> <p>Uses a multi-disciplinary team approach to application review. Planners work with a team from multiple departments, which meets weekly to look at applications. City also offers pre-application meetings at no cost with the same group.</p>	<p>Zoning administrator within the department reviews applications and will sign off if no planning review is required.</p>	<p>All departments involved in approval of the project are part of the CO sign off process. Planner ensures that all conditions of approval have been met and project matches what was approved. Engineering and fire need to approve if they were involved in review. CO is not issued until all sign-offs have been received.</p>

Organization:

There is significant variation in how permitting functions are organized, among these communities and nationally. Portland, Maine has a Department of Permitting and Inspections which encompasses most permitting functions, and a separate planning department. Portland's Permitting and Inspections department includes a zoning administrator who can review and sign off on permit applications, or refer them to Planning if a separate entitlement permit is required.

Bennington, Vermont and Concord, New Hampshire have single department responsible for all planning and building approvals. These municipalities also issue combined zoning/building permits for projects that are "by right" and comply with current zoning code. The most significant difference is that these communities do not issue trade permits nor conduct the related inspections. Middletown, Connecticut's structure is similar to that of Burlington, with separate Planning and Building divisions.

Technology

All of the municipalities surveyed (with the exception of Portland) are using in-house developed or systems that serve primarily as databases for tracking permit approvals. There is some limited on-line functionality for looking up permit status and in some cases for submitting permit applications. Portland has implemented on-line permitting, as well as electronic distribution of plans to all reviewers. None of the communities were using tablets in the field to enter inspection results.

Planning and Zoning Process:

All of the municipalities surveyed allowed the Building department to take in some applications for projects with no zoning review. The projects typically were those with no

change of use and no exterior footprint change. (Projects in a historic review or design review district were an exception if the work would be visible from a public right of way.)

In addition, a zoning administrator or planner is usually able to sign off on a building permit application if the project complies with current zoning requirements (e.g., setbacks, lot coverage, building height, etc.); no separate planning permit is required. In contrast, in Burlington virtually all projects require a zoning permit or approval prior to application for a building permit. The threshold for administrative versus board review for planning permits varied significantly; there was no common theme to the approach taken by the different communities.

All municipalities surveyed had historic districts requiring architectural or design review. While the specific design standards vary widely, all had very clear criteria for determining whether a project or property required this review. Burlington's criteria for determining what triggers a historic review are more ambiguous, making it difficult for an applicant to determine whether historic review will be involved.

Building Permit Process:

The Building Permitting Process is consistent among those cities that issue building permits. (Brattleboro's permits are issued by the state.) The primary distinction between Burlington's approach and those of comparable cities, as described above, is that zoning review for minor projects is part of the building permit approval process, not a separate process.

All communities surveyed require separate electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits, with the exception of Bennington. In Bennington, the State of Vermont has jurisdiction over electrical, mechanical and plumbing work. The State, in lieu of a permit,

requires a notification of the work and an inspection upon completion. As the state oversees all building permits in Brattleboro, the same process is followed - building permit applications are reviewed by the state, but there is no review of electrical, mechanical, or plumbing work – the work is done based on a notice from the contractor and subject to inspection.

Certificate of Occupancy Process:

The most notable difference between Burlington and the communities surveyed involved the process associated with certificates of occupancy. In Burlington, a Building Certificate of Occupancy is issued when construction is complete, but the Zoning Certificate of Occupancy is a separate process assigned to Code Enforcement. The applicant must submit copies of all approvals, conditions of approval, and site plans to Code Enforcement and schedule a separate inspection to determine whether conditions were met and the project was built according to the approved plans. The inspector is a Code Enforcement employee and not someone involved in the original review and approval of the project.

In all surveyed municipalities, a planner or zoning administrator conducts inspections associated with the zoning sign off. Any approvals required as part of the project (Right of Way, Public Works, Fire, and Building) are required at the conclusion of a project, at which point a consolidated CO is issued.

While some communities charge a nominal Certificate of Occupancy fee, none (except Burlington) impose a penalty if the CO is not obtained in a timely manner. Instead, these cases are treated as zoning violations and managed through the municipality's violations process.

3. DETAILED FINDINGS

BENNINGTON, VERMONT	
Overall	
Organization	<p>Single department: “Planning, Permits & Code Enforcement” includes planning director, zoning administrator, clerk, and building inspectors.</p> <p>Projects that can be approved administratively by the zoning administrator and require a building permit are combined using a single zoning/building permit application and combined process.</p>
Software	<p>NEMRC permit tracking software.</p> <p>No on-line functionality; no mobile capabilities.</p>
Planning	
Admin vs. board	<p>Permits for single family and two-family residential properties on existing lots that comply with the Land Use and Development Regulations may be issued by the Administrative Officer without the review and approval of the Development Review Board. If these projects also require a building permit, they take in a combined zoning/building permit, which is signed off on first by zoning and then by building, and then issued.</p> <p>The approval of the Development Review Board is required for most new commercial (including multi-family residential) development, most subdivisions (including Planned Residential Developments and Planned Unit Developments), changes to the exterior of buildings located within Design Review Districts, all variances (requests to waive certain requirements of the regulations) and for all appeals of the Administrative Officer’s decisions.</p>
Review process	<p>There is no formal process for involving other departments. The planner will reach out to the highway department or water department if it appears that additional approvals are required.</p>
Time lines	<p>There are no formal time lines but zoning approvals are typically 1 day to 1 week.</p> <p>DRB projects are presented to the board within a month – the exact time-line depends on when the project was submitted.</p>
Building	
Cross-training	<p>They issue a combined building and zoning permit for many projects.</p> <p>Bennington does not issue permits or inspect electrical, mechanical, or plumbing systems. Separate approvals must be received by the state for this work. (Note: the state does not require permits for “trade” work but does require a notice of the work and that all work be inspected.)</p>
Admin staff	<p>Administrative staff member is not technically a permit tech, but she answers questions regarding permit requirements, takes in permits, routes them, and issues them.</p>
Time lines	<p>Goal is to turn around building permits (with zoning approval) within a week.</p> <p>No formal guidelines.</p>
Certificate of Occupancy	
Roles	<p>Zoning administrator and building inspector conduct inspections jointly and then a combined certificate of occupancy for zoning and building is issued.</p>

BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT	
Overall	
Organization	<p>Planning Services Department.</p> <p>Building permits are issued by the state.</p>
Software	Access database.
Planning	
Admin vs. board	<p>No zoning permit required: maintenance and repair, alteration or modification but not changing exterior dimensions unless change of use or number of dwelling units. Home occupations don't require a permit. Patio, terrace, or unroofed structure if conforming.</p> <p>Small accessory structures, lot line adjustments, some minor site plan changes may be approved administratively.</p> <p>Applications that require Development Review Board approval include waiver of dimensional standards, conditional use permits, subdivisions, major or minor site plan reviews.</p>
Review process	<p>Anything that requires site plan review is sent to police, fire, and public works. Comments are included in the report. DRB is very clear that they are independent from the town – they will take the PW, etc. into consideration but won't necessarily integrate.</p> <p>Downtown historic district. There are specific design standards. Design review committee will review any alterations or new construction in the four historic districts. They are advisory to the DRB.</p>
Time lines	Application submitted by the 4 th Friday in the month will be heard at the following month's DRB meeting (typically 3 rd Monday).
Building	
Cross-training	Not applicable
Admin staff	Not applicable
Time lines	Not applicable
Certificate of Occupancy	
Roles	<p>Because the State issues building permits they are not involved in the building CO process.</p> <p>For a zoning certificate of occupancy, the applicant contacts the zoning administrator who inspects the project. If work is not complete, he may issue a temporary, for example for landscaping that may need to wait for change of seasons.</p> <p>If applicant fails to get a ZCO, they will issue a violation and use their violations process.</p>

PORTLAND, MAINE	
Overall	
Organization	<p>The Department of Permitting and Inspections serves as a one-stop permitting, licensing, and inspections shop.</p> <p>The department includes a zoning administrator who reviews all applications and determines whether a separate entitlement (planning) permit is required.</p> <p>If a planning permit is required, these are issued by the separate department of Planning and Urban Development.</p>
Software	<p>All, applications can be submitted electronically, with attached building plans, site plans, and all attachments.</p> <p>Plans are routed electronically to different reviewing departments. Applicants can check review status on-line.</p>
Planning	
Admin vs. board	<p>“By right” projects (projects that meet current zoning standards) are signed off on as part of the building permitting process and do not require a separate zoning permit.</p> <p>Historic approval required for a property located within the historic district for any alteration or improvement that will be visible from a public way.</p> <p>Projects that require no new buildings where additions are under 500 square feet, with no curb cut, utility, or storm water impacts may be approved administratively.</p>
Review process	<p>The department uses a multi-disciplinary team approach to the application review process The Economic Development Division, Public Services, Inspections, Fire, Parks and Recreation, Corporation Counsel, and Traffic all provide input into development proposals.</p> <p>All review agencies prepare written comments on site plans or formally sign off on the plans indicating no comments.</p>
Time lines	<p>Time-lines vary from 1-7 days for administrative approvals. Staff review for permits requiring Board review typically takes 2 weeks; each department is required to participate in the review process.</p>
Building	
Cross-training	<p>Separate reviewers and inspectors for building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing.</p>
Admin staff	<p>Administrative staff take in permits and route them as required. Not technically permit techs.</p>
Time lines	<p>No official time-lines. Depends on work-load.</p>
Certificate of Occupancy	
Roles	<p>CO is issued by the building department. If the project involved a Development Review permit, the planner inspects the project and signs off before the CO can be issued.</p>

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE	
Overall	
Organization	Single community development department encompasses three divisions: building and code services, engineering services, and planning.
Software	Currently in transition. In-house developed software.
Planning	
Admin vs. board	<p>Administrative review consists of sign-off of building permits; no separate zoning permit is required.</p> <p>Planning Board looks at all Subdivision, Site Plan, Design Review, and Conditional Use Permit applications.</p> <p>Architectural Design Review is a requirement for the following applications and/or permits: Major Site Plan applications; Cluster Subdivisions; Exterior building modifications within performance districts; Signs (if required by Zoning Ordinance); Manufactured housing parks requiring Conditional Use Permits; Wireless telecommunication towers.</p>
Review process	<p>Pre-application: the city offers Development Assistance meetings, which provide an opportunity to sit down with city staff from multiple departments prior to filing an application. These meetings are optional and at no cost.</p> <p>City has a Development Team who review all projects. This includes representatives from Building, Fire, Police, Engineering, and Planning.</p>
Time lines	Anticipated time line from acceptance to hearing is 1 month. Plans received by the 3 rd Wednesday of the month will be heard at the meeting the following month (also on the 3 rd Wednesday).
Building	
Cross-training	<p>If project complies with zoning and isn't part of a subdivision or a major site plan, only a building permit is required. (Zoning administrator determines whether above criteria are met). Separate building, electrical, mechanical permits and inspections.</p> <p>If plan needs to be reviewed by fire, health, engineering, planning it is routed to them.</p> <p>Separate electrical, mechanical, plumbing permits, mechanical permits.</p> <p>Engineering department issues separate permits.</p>
Admin staff	<p>Admin staff do intake of the permit.</p> <p>Some basic trade permits can be issued by the administrative staff.</p>
Time lines	<p>Time lines are flexible. Depends upon the size of the project, time of the year, volume of work. Minor residential permit is issued next day; major commercial project may take several weeks.</p> <p>Most trade permits are same day.</p>
Certificate of Occupancy	
Roles	<p>CO process is coordinated through the tracking system. When a permit is set up, the system will identify the required people to sign off to release the permit, then the people to release the CO. At the end of the job all departments (planning, engineering, fire, building, etc.) must have signed off.</p> <p>No fee; part of the building permit process.</p>

MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT	
Overall	
Organization	Separate Planning and Zoning department. Building division is a division of Public Works. Departments are co-located and work closely together.
Software	In-house developed software system. Does allow for on-line submittal but no on-line payments. Required documents can be submitted on-line with the application. Applicant can go on-line to look up permit review status.
Planning	
Admin vs. board	<p><u>Projects that can be reviewed by Building with no zoning review:</u> Alterations which do not change the size of the footprint or use of a building or structure or the site or, if served by well and septic, add additional bedrooms - shall be approved by the Building Inspector without an actual site plan being presented.</p> <p><u>Projects that must be reviewed by Zoning but do not require a formal review process:</u> Single and two family detached dwellings or any addition or accessory uses thereto which meet all Code requirements.</p> <p><u>Administrative site plan review:</u> Proposals which add under 5,000 square feet of new construction and 10 or fewer new parking spaces shall be considered for site plan approval by the Commission.</p> <p><u>All others:</u> Commission review.</p> <p>If the project is in a historic district and there are exterior changes that would be visible from the Right of Way, it must go to the Design Review and Preservation Board.</p>
Review process	Projects are taken in and routed to other departments (fire, police, engineering, etc.). Other departments are required to provide comments or indicate that they have no comments/corrections. Plans are typically revised at least once based on review comments before going to the board.
Time lines	Staff review may take up to 30 days.
Building	
Cross-training	<p>Planning and zoning will sign off on an application unless a separate zoning approval is required. Anything that meets current zoning requirements (setbacks, use, lot coverage, etc.) is signed off on by the zoning administrator prior to submitting for building inspection.</p> <p>The two inspectors are cross-certified and cross-trained so that either one can review and inspect for structural, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing. In practice, one has greater expertise in electrical and mechanical and will do the more complex reviews, but either can do a rough inspection.</p>
Admin staff	Administrative staff are not certified permit techs but they do intake, ensure that all required documents (license, insurance) are attached, and route plans as required to other departments.
Time lines	Technically 30 days by law. Actual timelines vary.
Certificate of Occupancy	
Roles	Certificate of occupancy must be signed off by anyone who was involved in approving the project. This may include: planning, fire, engineering, and building. Building is the final signatory at which point the CO can be issued.

D. PERMITTING SOFTWARE FUNCTIONALITY REQUIREMENTS

When developing the functionality requirements document for inclusion in the RFP, the City should require the responding vendor to indicate a response for each requirement that indicates if the permitting system provides that functionality. The following table shows a typical approach:

Response	Description	Explanation
Y	Yes, Available	A feature that is a standard item currently included in the solution (off the shelf) as proposed or YES to the question.
A	Alternate	A requirement that can be satisfied by a pre-defined general purpose field, a user field within the data base, by another vendor's existing package or with the process definition. For each question answered by an alternate method, describe the proposed solution to address the question.
I	In Development	A feature that is currently in development or will be developed at no additional cost.
N	Not Available	A feature that is not available and is not scheduled for development at this time or NO to the question.

A. System Design and Documentation

The following table shows common functionality questions that should be asked of vendors. The following table provides a base document that can be more fully tailored by the City of Burlington as the RFP is developed.

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
A.1		Is the proposed software compatible with the City of Burlington's targeted hardware, network, and database standards?
A.2		Does the vendor plan to propose hardware, network, or database solutions that would require the City of Burlington to adopt additional standards? Please summarize recommendations here.
A.3		Is the system compatible with the full range of desktop and laptop machines utilized by the City of Burlington? Please provide specifications for a "minimum" user workstation and for a "recommended" user workstation. Does the Windows Server Operating System require a particular Service Pack?
A.4		Please attach comments providing information on system development tools: a. Which language or 4th GL(s) are used? b. Does the system make use of any other software tools? c. Are any other software products required or recommended?
A.5		Was the system designed with sufficient editing, coding, and validation routines to guarantee that data entry errors are avoided and data entry consistency is enforced?
A.6		Do all modules have a similar "look and feel" in terms of navigation, use etc.?

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
A.7		Is the system written with a <i>Windows</i> style GUI? (Will the system be easy to navigate for those users who are familiar with the <i>Windows</i> environment?)
A.8		Is it a “native” application for <i>latest Windows operating system</i> ?
A.9		Can all users be logged on at all times? (Please indicate if there are any procedures or processes that would require users to log off on a day-to-day basis.) Can users log into the MS Network & access the program via shares to the Microsoft Server?
A.10		What does the system do if two or more users open and attempt to update the same record in a table?
A.11		Does the system provide security that allows for multiple user configurations? (For example, one user may be able to ADD, CHANGE, and DELETE records on a particular screen, and another user may only be able to QUERY that particular screen.) Please attach here any relevant information about the security features of the system.
A.12		Can one security profile be copied so that a system administrator could easily create an additional, but slightly modified security profile (cloning)?
A.13		If the licensing for this system is based on the number of concurrent users at a particular time, please explain what messages are given to the user when the maximum number of concurrent users is exceeded.
A.14		If additional programs are utilized, such as additional reports using Crystal Reports, can those programs be added to the system menus or toolbars by the system administrator?
A.15		Please describe the types of documentation (both hardcopy and online) that are included with the software.
A.16		Does the system use pick-lists, drop-down boxes, or other easy-to-use options to assist users in correctly entering data?
A.17		When users are entering text to describe conditions, making note of application deficiencies, etc., does the system provide word processing functionality so that the entire text of letters, etc. is visible to all users? (Or do you integrate with word processing packages?) Can the font, pitch, etc. be changed or is it strictly text-based? Please describe.
A.18		When users are entering text, does the system have word-wrap features like a traditional word processor? (i.e. Microsoft Word)
A.19		Are users able to “cut and paste” text both from and to word processing packages?
A.20		Are users able to associate scanned images of maps or other items with permits, parcels, etc.? If so, please list all entities (permits, parcels, projects, etc.) to which the user may attach scanned images; explain how the user becomes aware that such images exist; and list all supported file types.
A.21		Do users have the ability to export selected data items to a variety of file formats (i.e. Word, Excel, Access)? If so, please list supported file formats. With which Office and Access versions is the software compatible? Is the system compatible with the most recent version of Microsoft suite programs?

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
A.22		<p>The system shall generate a variety of documents that will be issued to the City of Burlington customers. Will City of Burlington have the option of utilizing pre-printed forms, or does the system have sufficient graphics capability to provide appealing documents including:</p> <p>A variety of permit designs; Inspection “cards” (left on site); Certificates of Occupancy; and Notices of Application, Complete Application, and Decision</p> <p>Can the system import graphics from Microsoft Publisher? Please describe the capabilities offered in the base package. Please describe any cost issues with regard to programming time, etc. in your cost summary section.</p>
A.23		Does the system accommodate both formatted and unformatted address information (street address, lot, block, parcel ID, tax account number and land-use zone, zip code, etc.)?
A.24		Does the system have user modifiable, rule based, table driven values?
A.25		Does the system have variable system administrator modifiable levels of security?
A.26		Can the system function as the City’s land use/parcel/address/owner database with the ability to look up all data relating to the address/parcel instantly and easily?
A.27		Can the system have the ability to add multiple address dependent identifiers such as central business districts, neighborhoods, etc.?
A.28		Is the system capable of providing reminders of necessary actions such as turn-around documents, plan check due dates, bond release dates?
A.29		Can the system keep track and links to all permits and documents generated on a parcel and/or project level?
A.30		Can the system ensure data integrity during input and post processing? If so, how?
A.31		Does the system have the capability to create ad-hoc reports and add recurring reports to the software?
A.32		Does the system have the capability to retrieve all data related to an address (e.g., licenses, permits, plans, code issues, docs, images, etc.)?
A.33		Can the system track the applicant and the multiple types of applications required for development through the entire planning, building permit and engineering permit process from initial application through final inspection or completion, and maintain all related information (e.g. plan review, conditions, code inspection, maintenance requirements, etc.)?
A.34		Can the system look up partial names or do wildcard searches?
A.35		Does the system provide on-line, context sensitive help provided for each field on the screen?
A.36		Does the system have the capacity to use the escape key throughout the program to cancel or abort a process and return to user menu, rather than exit the operating system?
A.37		Does the system have the capacity to automatically auto-fill the data entry form based upon previous entries made on prior applications?
A.38		Is the system capable of allowing multiple sessions to be open at the same time and switch with a mouse or keystroke between sessions?

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
A.39		Is the system capable of a user defined report writer with the ability to select a range of permits for inclusion in the report, select specific fields for reporting, and criteria for field selection?
A.40		Is the system capable of generating reports on issued permits, expired permits, permits set to expire within 30 days, status of plan checks, status of inspections, detailed reports for State and county, and summary of receipts sorted and subtotaled by permit or an account number?
A.41		Is the system capable of generating reports by area or address, permit type, fees collected, and average turnaround times?
A.42		Is the system capable of generating an activity report which lists permits where no action has been taken within a given time interval?
A.43		Does the system include a calendar and a related “suspense” or “tickler” file, listing work to be completed and on hold?
A.44		Does the system allow the user to direct printouts to HP LaserJet printers on a <i>Windows</i> network? (If additional or dedicated printers are recommended, please summarize recommendations here but do not include costs.) Does the system allow direct output to a TCP/IP address across Microsoft Network?

B. Permit Application, Plan Check, & Permit Issuance

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
B.1		Does the system capture the following fields of information? (see below):
B.1.1		Applicant Name and Address
B.1.2		Project Name and Address
B.1.3		Type of Application (land development, variance, building, alteration, etc.)
B.1.4		Type of Use (residential, commercial, etc.)
B.1.5		Type of Permit
B.1.6		Date Submitted
B.1.7		Date Reviewed / Approved or Declined
B.1.8		Target Date
B.1.9		Ready Date
B.1.10		Date Picked Up
B.1.11		Valuation
B.1.12		Contractor ID
B.1.13		Final Inspection Date
B.1.14		C.O. Date
B.1.15		Parcel Number and City
B.1.16		Owner Information (name, address, phone)
B.1.17		Architect Information
B.1.18		Engineer Information
B.1.19		Contact Person (name, address, phone, fax)
B.1.20		Fire Sprinklers Required (yes, no)
B.1.21		Fire Alarm Required (yes, no)
B.1.22		Building Footprint Area

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Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
B.1.23		Gross Floor Area
B.1.24		Building Height in feet and stories
B.1.25		Setbacks
B.1.26		Sensitive areas (ecosystem management areas)
B.1.27		Hazardous Materials (yes, no)
B.1.28		Flood Zone (yes, no)
B.2		Are all of these items from the question B..1 validated in user-accessible tables? (see below)
B.2.1		Type of Application
B.2.2		Type of Use
B.2.3		Type of Permit
B.2.4		Contractor (table would include contractor address, phone, etc.)
B.2.5		Parcel (table should contain extensive information)
B.2.6		Construction Type
B.2.7		Occupancy Group
B.3		Please describe the methods of numbering permits that are supported in the system - the numbering methods must vary by type of permit.
B.4		Based on the type of permit, does the system automatically determine which departments need to review the permit? Please describe.
B.5		Does the user have the ability to “re-route” plans to appropriate departments so that revisions created by one department are sure to be reviewed by other departments?
B.6		Does the system have the ability to add fields of information to screens that can be tailored for each type of permit?
B.7		If the answer to the above question is yes, does this apply to all of the screens in the system?
B.8		Can the user utilize these custom fields (described in questions above) and incorporate them onto printed permits and other reports?
B.8.1		Can the user-defined fields be utilized for reporting, sorting, or selecting records based upon user choice?
B.9		How can a user and an applicant identify the status of a permit? (Is the permit in an application phase, plan check phase, has it been issued, etc.)?
B.10		Explain the routing features of your system. Explain at a minimum the capabilities of your system as it pertains to the features below.
B.10.1		Can plan check schedules target turnarounds for every step and activity in the permit process and create a list of plan checks due, work to be completed and on hold, for a given period?
B.10.2		For permits which require review by multiple departments, does the software have “routing” features that allow users to determine the review status of a permit by multiple reviewers?
B.10.3		Does your system have integrated e-mail notification for each successive plan checker/inspector as part of the user defined routing and approval?
5.3.10.4		Does your system generate a tracking number to monitor the status of an application/project, and related plans from project submittal, until an approval or permit has been issued (using the same number through the entire process)?
B.10.5		Can the system identify and track the appropriate steps for environmental and planning project processing?

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Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
B.11		Can the system record the approval/denial of an application, with all conditions of approval, within the "Development Review" process?
B.12		Can the system track compliance of all conditions of approval, link the permit to the actual Word document, note environmental mitigation measures and responsible department?
B.13		Does the system include a mailing list generator to print mailing labels of property owners and/or residents located within a specified (default) or variable radius of a parcel or group of parcels (typically 300' or 500' radius)?
B.14		Can the user add to the approval/routing list if additional approvals are necessary?
B.15		If applicants are asked to submit three or more copies of plans, does the routing software above track the status of all three or more sets of plans?
B.16		Does the system have the ability to automatically add users to routing processes based on information on the permit?
B.17		Does the system have the ability to track the review activity and comments made by employees, including the complete text of letters sent to applicants?
B.18		If the answer to the above question is yes, do the users have unlimited space to make comments about a permit application?
B.19		Are the users able to place "holds" or post "notices" or otherwise stop a permit from being issued until the applicant complies with specific condition(s)? Does this system flag these permits? Please describe system features related to this issue if appropriate.
B.20		Does the system have the ability to accumulate comments from all reviewers and issue one letter, which consolidates all comments?
B.21		Is the system able to calculate the calendar days it takes to issue a permit on the part of City of Burlington staff (the system subtracts time determined to be caused by applicant delays, etc.)? Can the system calculate these times per each reviewing department?
B.22		If the answer to the above question is yes, is the system capable of removing weekends and holidays from the above calculation?
B.23		Can the system automatically calculate "target" dates for permit issuance based on type of project?
B.24		Can the system automatically calculate "target" dates for permit issuance based on workload at time of application?
B.25		Is the address for a permit automatically associated with a parcel? (Does the associated owner information display? Does the city the property is located in display?)
B.26		Is the address for a permit associated with a tenant in a building? (Does the associated tenant/occupant information display?)
B.27		Does the system have the ability to provide a list of all of the permits (or land use actions, or Certificates of Occupancy) at a specific address with the status of each of those permits?
B.28		Does the system allow the user to search on a range of addresses to identify current projects in an area?
B.29		Does the system provide a summary review function for individuals wanting to know the status of projects or applications?
B.30		If the answer to the above question is yes, please identify the "search" fields the user is able to use to quickly locate projects or applications? (e.g. permit number, project address, project name, application date range, etc.)

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Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
B.31		Does the system support permits that do not have associated fees?
B.32		Does the system have the ability to record a final approval for a permit to be issued, and does that final “issuance” of the permit have some associated security features so that the permit may not thereafter be modified by most users? Please describe if necessary.
B.33		Does the system have the ability to record scanned images of signatures and “sign” (apply authorized signatures to) permits electronically?
B.34		Does the system allow users to rapidly intake all appropriate information and immediately issue “over the counter” permits?
B.35		The City of Burlington may wish to issue “combination permits” so that applicants receive one physical permit for any combination of Building, Mechanical, and Plumbing permits. Does the system support the ability to combine permit types and manage associated fees?
B.36		Does the system have the ability to track projects that are not associated with a parcel number? If yes, describe features provided (i.e. time, materials, resource allocation, project status, percent completion, notable events for progress, etc.)
B.37		Describe the system’s reporting ability. Can reports be generated that quantify by: the types of permits, square footages, flood zones, valuation, number of dwelling units, mobile homes, etc. Can reports use date ranges?
B.38		Does the system verify reviews and clearances required prior to issuing a permit?
B.39		Does the system track cash or performance bonds that are posted to ensure that the proper work is completed?
B.40		Is the system capable of issuing a permit for a range of addresses or parcels?
B.41		Does the system indicate the type of applicant – contractor, owner, or agent?
B.42		Can the system reconcile voided permits within the core system and with the cash management system?
B.43		Does the system have a contractor/engineer/architect validation feature?
B.44		Can the system capture all pertinent project information including permit and zoning information and building characteristics (e.g. use groups, construction type, dwelling units, assessment data, size, roof structure, etc.), land use information of property (e.g. service stations)?
B.45		Can the system lock financial records for fees collected once the permit is issued to provide an audit trail?
B.46		Can the system group permits as a project or as a group of permits to be paid for at one time? Be able to pay for a selected group at one time? Give a total fee due for that selected group?
B.47		Can the system accommodate revisions, supplemental permits linked to the original permit (new plan review, calculate additional fees as required, and record the new status of the project with all conditions of the original permit carried forward to the supplemental permit(s))?
B.48		Can the system not allow Final/Temporary Release/Occupancy until all fees are paid and all conditions/clearances are removed?
B.49		Can the system allow for fee modification and provide an audit trail of all financial transactions?
B.50		Can the system provide access to permit records via Internet?

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
B.51		Is the system capable of verifying validity of address during the data entry process (allowing only valid street spellings and valid street addresses to be input)?
B.52		Can the system provide a tie to the State's Contractors License data for checking status of the contractor's state license?
B.53		Can the system provide a tie to the State's Architects and Engineers licensing data for checking status of the architect or engineer license?
B.54		Does the system allow an unlimited number of permits and permit types?
B.55		Is the system capable of using an existing permit as a template for creating a new permit, change and delete permits, for all permit types?

C. Fee Tracking

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
C.1		Does the system have an integrated fee calculation and collection module that allows the users to review and amend fees at permit application time?
C.2		Does the system have the ability to calculate a Plan Review fee and collect that fee at permit application time?
C.3		Does the system have the ability to subtract the Plan Review fee from the overall permit fee and collect the balance when the permit is picked up?
C.4		Does the system support the following fee type calculations?
C.4.1		Flat fee based on permit type?
C.4.2		Varying fee based on valuation constructed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat fee for dollar range in valuation (or other measurement) (e.g. \$200 fee for first thousand dollars of valuation) • Additional fee for additional increments (e.g. \$30 for each additional hundred dollars)
C.4.3		Unit fees based on number of a variety of plumbing and mechanical appliances (e.g. \$4.00 for each sink, \$12.00 for each shower, etc.)
C.4.4		Ability to add a variety of fees that may be appropriate depending on the type of work involved.
C.5		Does the system support the following types of fee adjustments after the permit is issued? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refunds - Adjustments - Revision fees - Re-inspection fees
C.6		Is the system able to record the associated receipt number and revenue account number with each fee transaction?
C.7		Is the system able to track a fee that will become due when a future activity occurs? (e.g., a Certificate of Occupancy fee due before a final inspection can be scheduled or before a Certificate of Occupancy can be issued?)
C.8		Does the system support up to a 24-position account code?
C.9		Are all changes to fee items logged?
C.10		Does the system have a way to deal with/search for NSF checks from a contractor?
C.11		Does the system generate an audit trail for all transactions using standard accounting practices, particularly financial transactions?
C.12		Does the system track payments, generate receipts, and link to a cash register?
C.12		Can the system generate cash management reports and standard monthly financial reports?

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
C.13		Can the system perform Internet e-commerce including payment of fees using credit or debit cards, submittal of permit applications, e-mail communication?

D. Inspection Scheduling and Tracking

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
D.1		Does the system permit an unlimited number of inspections relative to a permit?
D.2		Are the inspection types entered in a predefined table for data entry consistency?
D.3		For each type of permit, does the system keep track of a list of expected inspections?
D.4		If the answer to the above question is yes, do users have the ability to add additional inspections?
D.5		Does the system have the ability to create a checklist of “required” inspections and prohibit the approval of a Final inspection until all other required inspections are completed?
D.6		Can the checklist of required inspections be created during the review process?
D.7		Are inspection requests separated by organizational unit (department, division)?
D.8		Does the system keep track of the appropriate order of inspections so that inspections can be coordinated among departments when the sequence is important?
D.9		Does the system support inspection times for departments that make appointments for individual inspections?
D.10		Do inspectors have the ability to enter the results of inspections?
D.11		Do inspectors have the ability to enter extensive comments about the inspection? Describe.
D.12		Does the system automatically update the permit status to “final” once all of the necessary final inspections have been approved?
D.13		Can the system generate Certificates of Occupancy, Certificates of Completion, and other final approval documents?
D.14		Does the system have the ability to automatically generate a letter to the permit contact person when there have been no inspections on a permit for more than 120 days?
D.15		Can the system prevent scheduling inspections until re-inspect fees or investigation fees have been paid?
D.16		Does the system have a way of “disallowing” a final inspection approval until all appropriate pre-development conditions are met?
D.17		Can the system block inspections based on approval of ordered inspections?
D.18		Does the system have the ability to incorporate a list of “alerts” or “notes” onto the daily inspection listings so that the inspectors can be notified of particular issues with regard to a development? (An example might be that when a ‘footings’ inspection is requested, that the inspector would be notified that a utility easement exists on the property).

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
D.19		If the answer to the above question is yes, does the system have the ability to automate “notes” for the inspectors based on rules in the system?
D.20		The Building and Code Enforcement Department schedules inspection appointments, usually in 30-minute increments? Can the system: Generate a daily inspection schedule for each inspector based on type of inspection, location of inspection, or other criteria? Cancel inspections? Schedule certain more complex inspections for more than standard inspection appointment length? Conduct route scheduling for inspectors?
D.21		Does the system support remote data entry? (i.e.; IVRS, Scanned results, Internet, etc.). Describe.
D.22		Can the system generate inspection schedules that can be used to create a workload report by date and by type of inspection?

E. Certificate of Occupancy Issuance and Tracking

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
E.1		Does the system have the ability to generate a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) and record the following items for a C of O?
E.1.1		Certificate of Occupancy Number
E.1.2		Date Issued
E.1.3		Code Year
E.1.4		Permit Number
E.1.5		Project Number
E.1.6		Building Address
E.1.7		Occupancy Type
E.1.8		Construction Type
E.1.9		Sprinklers Installed (yes, no)
E.1.10		Fire Alarm Installed (yes, no)
E.1.11		Indicator that additions can be built as large as lot size allows (unlimited areas), (yes, no)
E.1.12		Fire Zone
E.1.13		Land Use Zone
E.1.14		Building Owner (name, address, phone)
E.1.15		Approval spaces for signatures
E.1.15		Square footage (multiple entries allowed for mixed occupancy)
E.1.16		Parcel number
E.2		Does the system have the ability to “route” a C of O to appropriate departments or users for their approval?
E.3		Can the above routing be generated automatically when the applicant calls for a final inspection on a new building?
E.4		Can the final approvals (indicated by a signature now) for each approving department be associated with a scanned image of the signature, which would print on the official C of O document? (Do you have appropriate security features so that once all parties “approve” the C of O that it is “locked”?)
E.5		Does the C of O have some sort of a status code (e.g., Being Routed, Issued, Revoked, Superseded, etc.)?

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
E.6		Does the system provide a “search” screen that would easily indicate and display other C of O’s that may have been issued for the same building or group of buildings?
E.7		Does the system have the ability to send reminders to users who have not approved or “signed” C of O’s after a specified period of time?
E.8		Is the system able to cross-reference the C of O with the associated parcel and any subsequent changes to that parcel number so that the C of O can be located by searching on either parcel number?
E.9		Can the system generate copies of the C of O and pre-addressed envelopes for mailing to owner, lender, and other designated parties?

F. Land (Parcel), Building, Occupancy Tracking

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
F.1		Does the system have the ability to track the following items related to a parcel of land?
F.1.1		Parcel Number
F.1.2		Section, Township and Range
F.1.3		Quarter section
F.1.4		In / Out of City of Burlington
F.1.5		Current Land Value
F.1.6		Current Improvement Value
F.1.7		Taxpayer Name
F.1.8		Taxpayer Mailing Address
F.1.9		Site Address
F.1.10		Lot Size
F.1.11		Gross Living / Floor / Rental Floor Area
F.1.12		Building Footprint Area
F.1.13		Total Impervious Surface
F.1.14		Local Zoning Code
F.1.15		Local Use Code
F.1.16		Comprehensive Plan neighborhoods
F.1.17		Place Name (or business name)
F.1.18		Date last updated from County / Last update from Permits
F.1.19		On site retention / detention facilities.
F.2		Can the system store history of any updates to these fields?
F.3		Can the system accommodate and track multiple local use codes and place names on a parcel?
F.4		Can the system automatically update fields listed in question F.1 above, from other “sub-systems”, e.g. Gross Living Area and Building Footprint Area from computer assisted mass appraisal information system?
F.5		Is the system capable of storing a complete legal description? (If not, then how many characters of an abbreviated legal description can be stored?)
F.6		Does the system have a separate feature for tracking buildings on a particular parcel? How is each building identified? What if one building crosses multiple parcels? What if there are multiple buildings on one parcel? Please describe these relationships and how the information is organized, accessed, and how it relates to permits issued.

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
F.7		Does the system have a separate feature for tracking occupancies within a given building? Please describe these relationships, and if applicable, describe how the occupancy information ties to permits and/or business licenses.
F.8		How does the system structure addresses for parcels, buildings, and occupancies? What search features are available? Are these addresses all stored in a master table? What sorts of retrieval options are available to users? Please describe.
F.9		Can the system establish a protocol for addressing standards to prevent input of incorrect addresses and legal descriptions?
F.10		Does the system provide security for address fields so that only a limited number of users can change addresses?
F.11		Are addresses entered in a standard format so that duplicate addresses are avoided? Please describe the address format and editing rules.
F.12		If a user attempts to make an entry with an invalid address, does the user have the ability to continue the application process? Does the system provide users with a list of addresses that match the address table?
F.13		Does the system have the ability to record easements or fire lanes or other encumbrances associated with a particular property or development?
F.14		Does the system keep a history record of prior zoning codes and comprehensive plan codes on a particular property? If yes, can this be a separate function? Is there a limit on the record length?
F.15		Can the system accommodate multiple zones on an individual parcel, divided perhaps by building?
F.16		Does the system have the ability to create and update this database?
F.17		Does the system have the ability to import and view digital plans and maps?

G. Bond / Trust Accounting

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
G.1		Does the system have the ability to record the following types of information for a bond?
G.1.1		Parcel Number
G.1.2		Permit Number
G.1.3		Project Name
G.1.4		Bonding Agency
G.1.5		Bond Type (code)
G.1.6		Bond Amount
G.1.7		Date Posted
G.1.8		Date Expires
G.1.9		Date Accepted
G.1.10		Date Released
G.1.11		Bond Number
G.1.12		Contact name, address, phone and fax
G.1.13		Receipt Number
G.1.14		Comments (unlimited text)
G.1.15		Inspector.
G.2		Does the system support the ability to locate existing bonds by the following?

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
G.2.1		Project Name
G.2.2		Parcel Number
G.2.3		Bond Number
G.2.4		Treasurer's Receipt Number
G.2.5		Contact Name
G.3		Does the system have the ability to release bonds/deposits upon completion of the inspection process by notifying appropriate staff?
G.4		Can the system notify staff of a pending bond release?
G.5		Does the system have trust account ability?
G.6		Are periodic reports available?
G.7		Can one contractor have more than one trust account?
G.8		Can bond or trust accounting be related to a specific Activity, Project or Development?
G.9		Can multiple bonds or trust accounts be related to a single Activity, Project or Development?
G.10		At any time during the collection fee process, can trusts or bonds be created?
G.11		Can funds be transferred between trust accounts?

H. Integration with Other Systems, Technologies

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
H.1		<p><u>Facsimile and E-mail:</u> Assuming that the user has the ability to generate faxes from the desktop, does the system provide the ability to automatically send a report to another agency based on definable criteria?</p> <p>(One example: On the first day of each month, send the "Monthly List of Completed Permits" for the previous month to a particular agency via fax.)</p> <p>What about ability to use e-mail to send reports?</p>
H.2		<p><u>Facsimile and E-mail:</u> If the answer to the question above is yes, does the ability to automatically route reports via fax also apply to reports that may be created by in-house staff? Can you fax via a networked, shared fax machine?</p> <p>Any cost estimates or other comments with regard to integration with fax or e-mail services? Cost details would be in the Cost Summary section of your response.</p>

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
H.3		<p><u>Financial System</u> Does the system fully integrate with the SunGard Public Sector (formerly HTE) financial system?</p> <p>Please describe any integration or interaction your system offers with the above SunGard Public Sector (formerly HTE) financial system. Please identify the local governments in which you have integrated your system with the SunGard Public Sector (formerly HTE) financial system.</p> <p>Please describe the types of features that would be available to the users if such integration were implemented.</p> <p>Provide program specifications and requirements.</p>
H.4		<p><u>Cashiering:</u> Does the system have the ability to associate different types of fees with different account numbers and generate a daily summary of fees collected by account number?</p>
H.5		<p><u>Cashiering:</u> Does the system have the ability to link to a cashiering system or the ability to transmit a file via E-mail, network, or other data storage media for upload of cashiering data?</p>
H.6		<p><u>G.I.S.</u></p> <p>Please describe any integration or interaction your system offers with G.I.S. systems. Please describe the major G.I.S. software systems that integrate well with your software?</p> <p>Please describe the types of features that would be available to the users if such integration were implemented.</p> <p>Provide program specifications and requirements. Describe integration with Access driven multiple databases.</p>
H.7		<p><u>I.V.R. (Interactive Voice Response)</u></p> <p>Does the system have the ability to provide “touch-tone” access to users and to the public?</p> <p>If so, please describe the types of features that would be available to users if such integration were implemented.</p> <p>In the Cost Summary section, please provide a preliminary cost to achieve this integration.</p>
H.8		<p><u>Document Imaging</u></p> <p>Please describe any integration or features you offer to customers regarding imaging, photos, maps, electronic documents, etc.</p> <p>Please provide costing information in the Cost Summary section of your response.</p>

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
H.9		<p><u>Scanned Plans</u></p> <p>Does the system have the ability to accept sets of plans entered through large scanners or via disk? Do you see this technology being used to the extent that plan review could take place online, including the ability to make corrections online?</p> <p>Please describe the abilities of the system with regard to automated plan review as you see them today and address any future developments you see on the horizon.</p> <p>Provide costing information in the Cost Summary section of your response.</p>
H.10		<p><u>Electronic Mail</u></p> <p>What email systems will your system integrate with for automatic distribution of email notifications?</p>
H.11		<p><u>Internet Access</u></p> <p>Describe system capabilities for accessing permit information, applying for permits and scheduling inspections through the internet? List any reference sites.</p> <p>Provide costing information in the Cost Summary section of your response</p>
H.12		<p><u>Hand-held devices/Laptop computers</u></p> <p>Does the system provide the appropriate capabilities to allow users to operate in the field with either hand-held devices or with laptop computers?</p> <p>Please outline any features that you offer if these technologies are utilized.</p> <p>Provide costing information in the Cost Summary section of your response.</p>

I. Reports

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
I.1		<p>Please provide a listing of reports that are packaged with the system. Describe the different “families” of reports that come with the system and provide samples of the reports.</p>
I.2		<p>Please describe any features within the base system that assist users in developing custom reports. Does the vendor provide help with customization of “canned” reports?</p>
I.3		<p>Will staff be able to customize reports or will custom reports be developed by the vendor from information City of Burlington provides? Is there ad hoc reporting capability?</p>

J. Upcoming Releases

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
J.1		Please describe how updates and revisions to your software are distributed. (On a regular basis? Only if bugs are identified that impact our site? etc.) Can you automatically update via an Internet connection? If you can, what is the notification process to the user before the update is installed.
J.2		Please describe how your company determines which features to include in releases and revisions.
J.3		If City of Burlington signs an ongoing maintenance agreement, will City of Burlington be charged additional fees for updates and revisions?
J.4		If the City of Burlington signs an ongoing maintenance agreement with your company, will City of Burlington be charged additional fees for major releases of the software?
J.5		Please attach comments describing planned development efforts going on at this time. Please include estimated availability dates if possible.
J.6		Is there an easy conversion process from Access to Microsoft SQL, Oracle, Informix, etc., as City of Burlington needs grow beyond Access? Does the vendor provide support for this “upgrade”?

K. System Functionality (Essential Features)

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
K.1		The public and some staff will not regularly use the system. Does the system provide features designed to help the casual user navigate through screens (without assistance) such as the point and describe feature commonly found in Microsoft Windows based programs? What other features are available to guide the novice user?
K.2		How does the user get from one screen to the next?
K.3		Is the system compatible with Access database? If not please explain what is required to make the existing database work with the tracking system.
K.4		Is the system able to update the GIS system automatically or will the system have to read updates sent by the GIS staff?
K.5		Is the system able to provide protection for the integrity and accuracy of the database? Is historical information logged in the onsite, user database regarding updates, who made them, when they occurred, etc.?
K.6		Can the system provide a link with the cashiering system? Is it able to track deposit account totals for bonds?
K.7		Does the system have a project management module for engineering and long range planning activities not related to parcels?
K.8		Can conditions be attached to properties that would prevent issuance of permits until conditions of approval have been met?
K.9		Can the system manage large mailings including labels for development permit notices?
K.10		Will the system be capable of “linking” with other local governing authorities in order for information to be read by them? If so, please briefly describe.
K.11		What type of warranty do you provide? Please describe in detail.

L. User Based Modifications

Requirement	Response	The Proposed Solution:
L.1		Can the user create new permits/cases without assistance from the Vendor?
L.2		Can the user make changes to the permits/cases without changing programming codes?
L.3		Can the user create new or change existing document templates without assistance from the vendor?
L.4		Can the user create new or change existing calendars for scheduling and managing actions and events within City of Burlington?
L.5		Can a permit be 'erased', voided out of the system as if it and any associated records never existed.

D. DEVELOPMENT GUIDE EXAMPLES

Examples from other communities of approaches in providing a development guide or manual are accessible through the following links:

On-line Guides:

Raleigh, NC:

<http://www.raleighnc.gov/business/content/PlanDev/Articles/DevServ/DSGuide.html>

San Diego, CA

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/devprocess>

Printed Guides:

Portland, OR

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/index.cfm?a=93126>

Concord, MA

http://www.concordnet.org/pages/ConcordMA_Planning/ConcordFinalMay312016.pdf

Cedar Park, Texas

<http://www.cedarparktexas.gov/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=189>

F. CODE INTERPRETATION TEMPLATE

A. Building Code Template.

Interpretation No.:	Date Issued:	Effective Date:
Subject:	Issued By:	Code Reference:

TITLE: THIS SHOULD BE A SHORT TITLE FOR THIS INTERPRETATION.

ISSUE: THIS SECTION SHOULD SUMMARIZE THE ISSUE BEING ADDRESSED BY THE CODE INTERPRETATION.

CODE SECTION: THIS SECTION SHOULD OUTLINE THE RELEVANT CODES BY TITLE AND NUMBER AND INCLUDE ACTUAL CODE LANGUAGE.

INTERPRETATION: THIS SECTION SHOULD OUTLINE THE ACTUAL INTERPRETATION THAT HAS BEEN MADE AND HOW IT WILL BE ENFORCED BY THE CITY AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE. WHERE APPLICABLE, THE USE OF CHARTS AND GRAPHS SHOULD BE INCORPORATED FOR MAXIMUM CLARITY.

STAFF CONTACT: THIS SECTION SHOULD PROVIDE A CONTACT PERSON, INCLUDING EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER, FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS.

CODE INTERPRETATION MANUAL: A complete copy of the City's building code interpretation manual can be found at the following location: [*insert web link here*]. All individuals are encouraged to review the online manual for the most recent interpretations.

This Code Interpretation contains important information for applicants conducting business within the City of Burlington. This document outlines a formal interpretation of the building code made by the City. All development and construction activity conducted should comply with this interpretation, where applicable.

B. Planning Code Template.

Interpretation No.:	Date Issued:	Effective Date:
Subject:	Issued By:	Code Reference:

TITLE: *THIS SHOULD BE A SHORT TITLE FOR THIS INTERPRETATION.*

ISSUE: *THIS SECTION SHOULD SUMMARIZE THE ISSUE BEING ADDRESSED BY THE CODE INTERPRETATION.*

CODE SECTION: *THIS SECTION SHOULD OUTLINE THE RELEVANT CODES BY TITLE AND NUMBER AND INCLUDE ACTUAL CODE LANGUAGE.*

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STAFF CONTACT: *THIS SECTION SHOULD PROVIDE A CONTACT PERSON, INCLUDING EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER, FOR FURTHER QUESTIONS.*

CODE INTERPRETATION MANUAL: A complete copy of the City's zoning code interpretation manual can be found at the following location: *[insert web link here]*. All individuals are encouraged to review the online manual for the most recent interpretations.

This Code Interpretation contains important information for applicants conducting business within the City of Burlington. This document outlines a formal interpretation of the Planning and Development code made by the City. All development and construction activity conducted should comply with this interpretation, where applicable.

G. SAMPLE COST RECOVERY POLICY

The following cost recovery policy has not been developed specifically for the City of Burlington, Vermont. It is provided as an example of a cost recovery policy developed by another public entity and is provided to further support and demonstrate the concept outlined in the recommendations contained within the main report.

COST RECOVERY BACKGROUND, METHODOLOGY AND POLICY

A. User Fee Cost Recovery Levels

In setting user fees and cost recovery levels, the following factors should be considered:

1. **Community-Wide Versus Special Benefit.** The level of user fee cost recovery should consider the *community-wide* versus *special service* nature of the program or activity. The use of general-purpose revenues is appropriate for community-wide services, while user fees are appropriate for services that are of special benefit to easily identified individuals or groups (such as customers seeking land development or building permits).
2. **Service Recipient Versus Service Driver.** After considering community-wide versus special benefit of the service, the concept of *service recipient* versus *service driver* should also be considered. For example, it could be argued that the applicant is not the beneficiary of the County's development review efforts: the community is the primary beneficiary. However, the applicant is the *driver* of development review costs, and as such, cost recovery from the applicant is appropriate.
3. **Feasibility of Collection and Recovery.** Although it may be determined that a high level of cost recovery may be appropriate for specific services, it may be impractical or too costly to establish a system to identify and charge the user. Accordingly, the feasibility of assessing and collecting charges should also be considered in developing user fees, especially if significant program costs are intended to be financed from that source.

B. Factors Favoring Full Cost Recovery Levels

The use of service charges as a major source of funding service levels is especially appropriate under the following circumstances:

1. Virtually all benefits of the service accrue to the applicant – the County is not a primary beneficiary of the activity being performed.

3. For equity or demand management purposes, it is intended that there be a direct relationship between the amount paid and the level and cost of the service received.
3. The service is regulatory in nature and voluntary compliance is not expected to be the primary method of detecting failure to meet regulatory requirements. Building permit, plan checks and subdivision review fees for large projects would fall into this category.

C. General Concepts Regarding the Implementation of Fees for Service.

The following general concepts will be used in developing and implementing service fee charges:

1. Revenues received from the fees imposed should not exceed the reasonable cost of providing the service.
2. Cost recovery goals should be based on the total cost of delivering the service, including direct costs, departmental administration costs, and organization-wide support costs such as accounting, personnel, data processing, vehicle maintenance and insurance.
3. The method of assessing and collecting fees should be as simple as possible in order to reduce the administrative cost of collection.
4. Rate structures should be sensitive to the "market" for similar services as well as to smaller, infrequent users of the service.
5. A unified approach should be used in determining cost recovery levels for various programs based on the factors discussed above.

D. Development Review Programs

The following cost recovery policies apply to the development review programs:

1. Services provided under this category include:
 - a. Planning reviews directly related to specific projects or permits.
 - b. Building and safety (building permits, structural plan checks, inspections).
 - c. Engineering (public improvement plan checks, inspections, subdivision requirements, encroachments).
 - d. Fire plan check.
2. The costs associated with review and inspection of these projects should be considered an element of the cost of development. As such, the County's cost recovery goal should be 100%.

3. However, in charging full cost recovery levels, the County needs to clearly establish and articulate standards for its performance in reviewing developer applications to ensure that there is “value for cost.”

Fees will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that they keep pace with changes in the cost-of-living as well as changes in methods or levels of service delivery.

In implementing this goal, a comprehensive analysis of County costs and fees should be made at least every five years to ensure that fees charged for specific services are in line with the cost of providing the service. Fees may be adjusted during this interim period based on supplemental analysis whenever there have been significant changes in the method, level or cost of service delivery. It is also appropriate to make interim adjustments based upon cost of living adjustments as needed.

E. Comparability with Other Communities

1. In setting user fees, the County will consider fees charged by other agencies in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. They reflect the "market" for these fees and can assist in assessing the reasonableness of DeKalb County fees.
 - b. If prudently analyzed, they can serve as a benchmark for how cost-effectively DeKalb County provides its services.
2. However, fee surveys should never be the sole or primary criteria in setting County fees as there are many factors that affect how and why other communities have set their fees at their levels. For example:
 - a. What level of cost recovery is their fee intended to achieve compared with our cost recovery objectives?
 - b. What costs have been considered in computing the fees?
 - c. When was the last time that their fees were comprehensively evaluated?
 - d. What level of service do they provide compared with our service or performance standards?
 - e. Is their rate structure significantly different than ours and what is it intended to achieve?
3. These can be very difficult questions to address in fairly evaluating fees among different communities. As such, the comparability of our fees to other communities should be one factor among many that is considered in setting County fees.

F. POLICY RECOMMENDATION.

Based upon the forgoing factors, the County of DeKalb adopts the following policy statements related to the Development Fund:

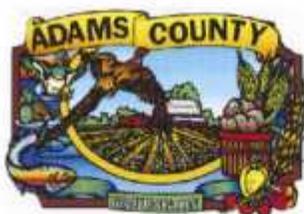
- 1) The full cost of permitting activities, including reasonable indirect and administrative costs, should be borne by the service recipients (i.e. – customers, applicants) who are receiving the service.
- 2) Where ever practical, individual fees will be established at a level sufficient to cover the actual cost of providing that service. In limited cases, specific fees may be set at a level below full cost recovery if a determination is made that it is beneficial to do so for one of the following reasons:
 - a. Setting the fee at a level necessary to achieve full cost recovery would result in a competitive disadvantage with surrounding local governments, or
 - b. Where the County’s desire to ensure an activity is appropriately tracked / permitted, outweighs the desire to cover full costs of service to promote other County goals and objectives.

In both of these cases, fees may be established at a rate lower than that which would result in full cost recovery.

H. SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The following are representative examples of job descriptions utilized by other public sector entities for permit and planning technician positions. A specific job description for the City of Burlington should be developed based upon the classification system in place within the City; however, these sample provide common experience and educational requirements for these types of positions. Additionally, they delineate the types of duties typically performed by these positions.

We are recommending that the City of Burlington require ICC certification as a Permit Technician for the position recommended.



**ADAMS COUNTY
BUILDING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT**
509-488-9441
509-488-4155. FAX
425 E. Main St. Suite 200. OTHELLO WASHINGTON 99344

**POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
PERMIT TECHNICIAN**

The Adams County Building & Planning Department is accepting applications for a full time 40 hour per week Permit Technician. Persons in this position are responsible for accepting, reviewing, routing, and issuing permit applications related to the Building and Planning Department. Permit Technician's work closely with building inspector(s) and planner(s) acting as the primary contact for the department under the supervision of the department director. Essential duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to secretarial duties, answering questions, directing more technical questions to appropriate staff, recording communications, permits, expenditures and revenue and attending occasional evening meetings. Required knowledge and abilities include but are not limited to; municipal codes, regulations, policies and procedures, interpreting maps, blue prints and legal descriptions which are an integral to the permitting process.

Minimum qualifications; a high school diploma, Certified Permit Technician by ICBO or two (2) years' experience as a Permit Technician, valid Washington State driver's license. (Adams County may consider other work experience that is closely aligned with required knowledge as meeting required certification). Refer to the official job description for the specific duties, responsibilities, knowledge and other abilities including the positions minimum and desirable qualifications. Beginning salary is Range 8, \$12.95 - \$14.79, DOQ. Adams County Planning Department is located in the Adams County Services Building, 425 E. Main St. Othello, Washington. Applications are available at the Planning office and on line at www.co.adams.wa.us and will be accepted until the position is filled. If you have any questions, contact the Adams County Planning and Building office at (509) 488-9441 ext. 1. Adams County is an equal opportunity employer.

**ADAMS COUNTY
SUMMARY JOB DESCRIPTION**

Position: Permit Technician
Department: Building and Planning
Annual Hours: 2080

Position Number: 305
Classification: Union
Range 8

1.0 MAJOR FUNCTION AND PURPOSE

Person in this position is responsible for accepting, reviewing, routing, and issuing permit applications for the Building and Planning Department. Person is responsible for a multi application process, issuance and compliance review.

2.0 SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Person in this position is given significant discretion, within the scope of policy and regulations, in the routine performance of their duties. Supervision and guidance are received from the Building and Planning Director.

3.0 SUPERVISION EXERCISED

This is a non-supervisory position.

4.0 SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Receives, reviews, routes and issues permit applications for the Building and Planning Department for zoning, clearing and grading, building, plumbing, signs, mechanical, and other special permits.
- Acts as a primary contact for the department answering questions related to the department directing more technical questions to appropriate county staff; tracks and answers questions related to the status of permit applications; contacts applicant(s) when permit is ready for issuance; and, communicates with personnel from other departments regarding the status of permits.
- Calculates, collects, and provides receipts for fees.
- Processes and tracks expenditures and revenue for the budget as assigned.
- Prepares and enters technical data into automated permit program.
- Informs or instructs customers with regard to public records; distributes customer oriented informational literature; and, develops and maintains manuals and packets.
- Performs other tasks as directed.

5.0 REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of municipal codes, rules, regulations, policies and procedures.
- Knowledge of manual and computerized record keeping systems and related office equipment.
- Ability to read and interpret maps, blueprints and legal descriptions.
- Ability to analyze, interpret and accurately review construction and improvement applications and submittals.
- Ability to read, interpret, apply and explain codes, rules, regulations, policies and procedures.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other staff, agencies, and the general public.
- Ability to meet schedule and time lines.
- Ability to communicate effectively using tact, patience and courtesy.
- Ability to use a computer, calculator, and other office equipment standard to areas of assignment and to adapt to new and/or modified equipment which may be acquired.

6.0 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- High school Diploma.
- Certified Permit Technician by ICBO or two (2) years experience as a Permit Technician (Adams County may consider other work experience that is closely aligned with required knowledge as meeting required certification).
- Valid Washington State Driver's License.

7.0 DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS AND ABILITIES

- Demonstrated knowledge of permit procedures and ability to explain the reasoning and logic behind County Code.
- Ability to implement and maintain sound organizational practices.
- Familiarity with tools, equipment, and techniques commonly used in the performance of related tasks.
- Ability to maintain a high level of accuracy, completeness, and efficiency in the preparation of reports.
- Independent and self motivated to complete required deadlines while simultaneously completing other tasks.
- Understands the need for maintaining confidentiality.
- Effective written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to speak and understand Spanish.

8.0 WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Duties are performed in a busy office environment with frequent interruptions. Travel may be required to job locations in all types of weather conditions.

This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.¹

¹Created and adopted Resolution No. R-012-2014 on March 31, 2014.



City of Commerce

SENIOR PERMIT TECHNICIAN

Department: **Community Development** Class Code: **3505**
Revised Date: **August 2009** FLSA Status: **Non-Exempt**

GENERAL PURPOSE: Under general supervision, provides assistance to the general public in the technical review of all construction permit applications for the Community Development Department.

PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

*The following duties **ARE NOT** intended to serve as a comprehensive list of all duties performed by all employees in this classification, only a representative summary of the primary duties and responsibilities. Incumbent(s) may not be required to perform all duties listed and may be required to perform additional, position-specific duties.*

- Answers inquiries and assists the public and developers with Community Development Department construction project issues and permits; provides advice, assistance and information within scope of authority.
- Explains the requirements of building and safety codes, zoning, health, environmental and other local and regional ordinances to applicants, contractors, and the general public.
- Examines plans, technical documents, blue prints and specifications to verify completeness and accuracy of data; collects fees and coordinates the scheduling of technical and procedural inspections and approvals by City departments and regional agencies.
- Reviews plans for commercial, industrial and residential construction projects and assists applicants to obtain various required City approvals; assists in determining which permits are required, and provides applications, information and agency referrals required by the category and complexity of the project.
- Assists Community Development Department staff; provides technical review services, reviews moderately difficult mathematical calculations, and researches complex interdepartmental and enforcement issues, utilizing knowledge of City programs, policies and procedures.
- Issues and processes permits; schedules appointments with building and safety inspectors.
- Creates customer and permit files for various documents; enters application data into computer and manual filing systems; compiles and maintains accurate and detailed records.
- Performs cashier duties; receives cash and checks, issues receipts, balances cash drawer, corrects errors, and prepares daily reports.
- Maintains the absolute confidentiality of all records and information.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

Permit Technician, Senior is the experienced level of the job series; incumbent reviews technical plans, processes permit applications, and coordinates with other departments, utilizing knowledge of City programs, policies and procedures.

Permit Technician Senior

JOB DESCRIPTION
Permit Technician Senior

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Education and Experience:

Associate's Degree in Planning, Engineering, Construction Trades or a related field; AND four year's Community Development Department experience.

Required Licenses or Certifications:

- Must possess a valid California Driver's License; International Code Council (ICC) or International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) certification as Permit Technician is preferred.

Required Knowledge of:

- City policies and procedures.
- Uniform Building Code, safety regulations, and related City, county, state and Federal laws and regulations.
- Methods and practices of building construction.
- Property descriptions, zoning concepts, and application permitting processes and procedures.
- Business and personal computers, and specialized software applications.
- Record keeping and file maintenance principles and procedures.

Required Skill in:

- Interpreting and applying permitting rules and regulations, and City codes, policies and procedures.
- Interpreting legal records, technical documents and map specifications.
- Reading and interpreting architectural drawings, blueprints and building plans.
- Effectively resolving customer service issues according to policies and procedures.
- Making arithmetic calculations quickly and accurately.
- Maintaining accurate and interrelated technical records.
- Establishing and maintaining cooperative working relationships with co-workers and the public.
- Effective verbal and written communication.

Physical Demands / Work Environment:

- Work is performed in a standard office environment.

Permit Technician Senior

PERMIT TECHNICIAN

General Statement of Duties

Performs specialized customer service and administrative work to support the permits and development review work of the Building Codes and Planning Departments.

Distinguishing Features of the Class

An employee in this class provides a variety of administrative and record-keeping duties in support of the inspections and permitting process for the Town. The employee provides information to developers, contractors and homeowners regarding the permit and development review process; answers inquiries about zoning, variances, CAMA and FEMA regulations, and other planning issues and codes; tracks permits and inspections status; schedules inspections and provides general administrative support to department staff. Tasks include departmental reception, data entry, establishing computer and paper records, report compilation, preparation of correspondence, and support for several advisory and regulatory boards. Clerical, and recordkeeping duties are considered at the journey level and require tact and discretion in handling a variety of program areas. Work requires considerable knowledge of regulations and procedures, ability to interpret and apply regulations, and public contact and conflict resolution skills. Work is performed under regular supervision of the Director and is evaluated through observation, conferences and the quality and effectiveness of the work completed.

Duties and Responsibilities

Essential Duties and Tasks

Provides general and detailed information to developers, contractors and citizens regarding the permitting and development review processes; interprets and applies regulations to specific situations; calculates fees; issues permits; schedules inspections; tracks permits and inspections.

Answers questions regarding licenses, zoning ordinances, variances, and other planning issues; interprets and assists the public with zoning and flood maps.

Serves as secretary to the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment and other groups; attends meetings to take minutes; prepares advertisements to comply with legal requirements; assists the Director in taking follow-up actions following meetings.

Uses maps to determine flood zone elevations on specific property; advises individuals with development issues on applicable zoning and land use regulations.

Compiles, collects, prints, and records a variety of data and records for analysis of trends and preparation of reports; creates reports and data bases; maintains databases of building permits, zoning permits, CAMA permits, various monthly data.

Serves as certified Local Permit Officer for CAMA; prepares permits and provides CAMA information for the public.

Types correspondence, memoranda, notes, reports or other materials; reviews work for compliance with instructions, spelling, punctuation and basic grammar; proofreads final proof of materials.

Processes staff mail; maintains inventory of supplies and equipment.

Additional Job Duties

Performs related duties as assigned.

Permit Technician
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Recruitment and Selection Guidelines

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Considerable knowledge of building permit and construction process, development review processes for the Town, FEMA and CAMA regulations and requirements and other related laws, ordinances, codes, policies and procedures.

Considerable knowledge of office practices and procedures including office technology involving spreadsheets, data bases, GIS, and word processing.

Considerable knowledge and ability to use correct grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

Skill in collaborative conflict resolution and customer contact.

Ability to read and interpret maps and plans.

Attention to detail.

Ability to plan and organize administrative support activities, files and tasks and to perform word processing and data entry with required speed and accuracy.

Ability to communicate effectively in person and by telephone.

Ability to interpret and apply codes and regulations and give information and instructions on departmental programs based on inquiries.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with department and other town staff, builders, developers, and the general public.

Ability to gather and compile materials from a variety of sources.

Ability to maintain records and files and to gather and compile data from a variety of sources.

Physical Requirements

Must be able to physically perform the basic life operational support functions of stooping, reaching, pushing, pulling, lifting, fingering, talking, hearing, and repetitive motions.

Must be able to perform sedentary work exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects.

Must possess the visual acuity to compile and compute data and statistics, operate a computer terminal, proofread materials and do extensive reading.

Desirable Education and Experience

Graduation from a community college in secretarial science or related field and considerable experience in administrative support work involving extensive public contact; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Prefer previous experience with construction or development issues.

Special Requirement

Ability to obtain notary public certification within six months of employment.

Atlantic Beach
2006

Permit Technician

| Print |



The City of Maricopa is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and encourages both prospective and current employees to discuss potential accommodations with the employer.

Management's vision is "to be open, responsive and accountable while serving the public with integrity."

Job Description

The following duties are normal for this position. The omission of specific statements of the duties does not exclude them from the classification if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment for this position. Other duties may be required, assigned, and expected commensurate with the administrative needs of a newly incorporated city.

General Purpose

Assists the management team and performs a variety of clerical and advisory functions. Processes and tracks building permits. Provides customer assistance by answering telephones, electronic messages, and providing help and support to customer counter and performs data entry for various reports. Acts under supervision as assigned by the Director of Development Services.

Essential Duties:

Essential Duties are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills. They are intended to be accurate summaries of what the job classification involves and what is required to perform it. Employees are responsible for all other duties as assigned.

- Processes building permits by logging permits in the database, routing them to proper departments for review, and issuing permits to customer.
- Receives and reviews applications, plans, and other construction documents; determines sufficiency of submittals; advises applicants on requirements for complete submittals; participates in post submittal project review.
- Assists with various administrative tasks by scheduling and resulting inspections, scheduling meetings, filing permits and applications, performing data entry and assisting customers at the counter and over the telephones.
- Researches records and provides customers with specialized site-specific property information such as approved building permits, finalized building plans, certificate of occupancies, contractor's affidavits, special inspections certificates, zoning, site and plot plans.
- Provides coordination support with building, on-site engineering, fire, and planning inspectors to maintain project continuity.

- Assists management in resolving minor permit and inspection problems.
- Assists in the interpretation, application, and maintenance of the policies and procedures for the Development Services "One Stop Shop".
- Assists planning, public works, engineering and transportation staff on a frequent basis; Provides support to other departments as necessary.
- Other duties as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications

Familiarity with the principles, practices and techniques of building permit processing or any other work which requires knowledge of a specific vocational, administrative, or technical nature. Minimum of two (2) years' experience in the private development or municipal permitting process, including utilization of permitting software and geographic information system (GIS). Strong technical computer skills required.

Special Qualifications:

- Certification as an ICC Permit Technician within one (1) year of hire date

Preferred Qualifications:

- Permit Technician Certification
- Bi-lingual oral and written communication

Any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience, which provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for this job, may be substituted for evaluation at the discretion of city management.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Skills required:

- Work with codes and ordinances relating to current building safety and permitting
- Operation of personal computer including job-related software applications that apply to the work performed

Performance Aptitudes

Physical Ability: Tasks require the ability to exert light physical effort including, but not limited to, lifting, carrying, pushing and/or pulling, etc. of objects and materials of light weight (generally 25 pounds and less). Tasks may involve extended periods of time in seated position and at a keyboard or workstation.

Project Management: Tasks require the ability to schedule, coordinate, and manage various projects of varying degrees of difficulty, size and complexity.

Equipment, Machinery, Tools and Materials: Tasks require the ability to operate, maneuver, and/or control the actions of equipment, machinery, tools, and/or materials, commensurate with duties of the position.

Social and Interpersonal Communication Skills: Position requires professional social and interpersonal communication skills,

I. EXPEDITED PERMITTING

The City of Austin, Texas has undertaken extensive efforts to provide a more streamlined permitting process and to provide expedited permitting as an added service. Additional details about their effort can be found at:

<http://austintexas.gov/expeditedpermitting>

San Diego has adopted expedited permitting processes, as one approach to supporting to support the development of affordable housing. Additional details on their program can be found at:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/news/archive/ah>

Similarly, San Diego County has utilized expedited permitting to support affordable housing developments as a matter of policy. Details are available at:

<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/cob/docs/policy/A-68.pdf>

Expedited solar permitting programs are more common in California. One example of this program includes:

<http://www.cityofamericancanyon.org/city-departments/community-development/building-division/expedited-solar-photovoltaic>