



Executive Briefing Memo

Date: February 21, 2008

Department/Division/Project: Department of Community Development – Permitting Services

Department/Division Overview:

Permitting Services, through a permitting, plan review and inspections process ensures that all buildings and their associated site work are built in accordance with the Uniform Statewide Building Code and its referenced standards as well as certain City of Richmond ordinances. The issues involved in this program range from structural capacity of buildings, fire protection systems, sanitary facilities and electrical safety to handicapped accessibility, energy conservation and storm water control. These programs require coordination with other work groups in Community Development such as Zoning, Historic Preservation and Land Use as well other city agencies such as Public Works, Public Utilities, Fire Department and the Richmond District Health Department.

Community Development – Permitting has 55 authorized permanent positions of which 11 are vacant:

- 25 Inspectors
- 2 Engineer II (inspections)
- 3 Inspection Supervisors
- 1 Engineer III (inspections)
- 1 Engineer III (site engineering)
- 3 Plans Examiners
- 7 Engineer II (plan review)
- 1 Operations Manager (plan review)
- 3 Drafting Technician II (permit and plan intake)
- 2 Senior Customer Service Representatives (cashier and data entry)
- 2 Senior Customer Service Representatives (engineering services)
- 1 Customer Service Representative II
- 2 Office Specialists
- 1 Administrative Project Analyst (permits/administration)
- 1 Building Commissioner

Managers Responsible for Data Reported:

Art Dahlberg

Pat Murphy

Janet Currie

Measures and Data Reported

This is the initial presentation by Community Development – Permitting to the RichmondWorks panel. Permitting staff will present an overview of the department, including organizational structure, descriptions of services provided, challenges to the department, performance measures and critical issues.

RichmondWorks staff recommends that the International City/County Manager Association (ICMA) measures for permitting be tracked by Community Development and reported through RichmondWorks as appropriate. Collecting and reporting data on these measures, particularly the “core” measures, will augment the RichmondWorks effort by allowing benchmarking of permitting services performance against a number of localities across the country.

The measures proposed by Community Development are sufficient for the purposes of managing the permitting effort and reporting to RichmondWorks. Certain measures need to be clarified, and as in all cases, the current measures and targets can be expected to evolve over time.

RichmondWorks will continue discussions with Community Development on the refinement of measures, with an emphasis upon qualitative measures. Brief descriptions and comments on the measures proposed by Permitting appear below:

Workload Indicators

- Total number of permits issued
- Number of building permits issued
- Value of construction
- Fees collected
- Number of inspections conducted
- Number of residential and commercial plan reviews conducted

These workload measures provide a useful overview of the activities of the Bureau of Permits and inspections. In addition, the data on the number of building permits issued and the value of construction are useful measures for assessing the overall economic vitality of the City as well as the economic development efforts of the City.

Qualitative Measures

- Percent of inspections completed on date requested, FY 08. Target: 90%
- Percent of permits issued within seven days, FY 2005 – 2008. Target: 70%
- Percent of permits issued within 30 days, FY 2005 – 2008. Target: 90%
- Percent of time alteration permits are reviewed within 10 days of permit submission. Target: 90% (New measure)
- Percent of time new building permits are reviewed within 20 days of permit submission. Target: 90% (New measure)

It is noted that since FY 2005, the percent of permits issued within seven days has declined from 86% to 68%, while the percent of permits issued within 30 days has declined from 95% to 86%.

In their initial meeting, Permitting will focus upon the steps being taken improve performance on the timely review of plans, issuance of permits and completion of inspections. Permitting will also provide an update on steps taken to address the issues identified by the Mayor's Task Force on Community Infrastructure – Permitting & Inspections Subcommittee.

Other Issues

It is noted that Permitting has cited a number of constraints and issues in common with Code Enforcement. They include vehicle availability, outdated technology, DIT support and inadequate workspace in City Hall.

Questions and Follow-up Issues