

PERMIT CENTER

Description

The Department of Community Development, better known as the Permit Center, is a convenient “one-stop shop” for residents seeking community development services including permits and applications. The Department has two locations referred to as the Permit Center-East and the Permit Center-West. The Permit Center-East has been in service since 1989. Due to the success of the eastern location, services were expanded to a western location that opened in April 2001. The Permit Center is staffed by representatives from Building Inspections, Planning, Public Utilities, and Public Works.

- To assist the public with questions concerning the agendas and processes of the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.
- To provide a streamlined development review process at a convenient location.
- To accurately track, monitor, and administer the costs of providing these services in order to provide them in a cost efficient manner.

Objectives

- To consistently provide quality services to all citizens and customers in a professional, accurate, and efficient manner.
- To assist the public, including private citizens, builders, developers, and engineers, with their permitting and licensing needs.
- To provide information to the public concerning the requirements and regulations related to zoning and subdivisions of property, building construction, and other aspects of the development process.

Budget Highlights

The one-stop convenience at both the East and West locations simplifies the process for obtaining permits for the customer and improves overall service levels. Services provided include the processing of building permits and answering inquiries regarding code regulations, zoning, water/sewer availability, as well as road and drainage issues.

Staff is utilized from Building Inspections, Public Works, Public Utilities, and Planning. Funds to pay for staff serving these functions are in the Permit Center’s budget and complement. Four staff members included in the complement have their personnel expenditures reimbursed, via interdepartmental transfer, by the appropriate department related to the

Annual Fiscal Plan

<u>Description</u>	<u>FY17 Actual</u>	<u>FY18 Original</u>	<u>FY19 Approved</u>	<u>Change 18 to 19</u>
Personnel	\$ 1,141,191	\$ 1,147,761	\$ 1,176,771	2.5%
Operation	17,202	25,353	25,353	0.0%
Capital	3,587	4,950	4,950	0.0%
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 1,161,980</u>	<u>\$ 1,178,064</u>	<u>\$ 1,207,074</u>	<u>2.5%</u>
Interdepartmental Billings	(268,648)	(269,298)	(276,047) *	2.5%
Total Budget	<u>\$ 893,332</u>	<u>\$ 908,766</u>	<u>\$ 931,027</u>	<u>2.4%</u>
Personnel Complement ⁽¹⁾	16	16	16	0

*Reflects the reimbursement of four positions (2 Public Works; 2 Public Utilities) assigned to the Permit Center, which are reflected in the Permit Centers' personnel complement.

Permit Center (cont'd)

Performance Measures				
	FY17	FY18	FY19	Change 18 to 19
Workload Measures				
Total Number of Inquiries	15,556	16,776	18,898	2,122
Permit Applications Received	5,214	5,760	6,174	414
Reviews Performed	9,178	10,832	9,767	(1,065)
Business Licenses Reviewed	3,029	2,519	2,754	235

services furnished. Those reimbursements for FY2018-19 will be from the Public Works and Public Utilities departments. The sum of these reimbursements, totaling \$276,047, is shown as a negative amount in the Permit Center's budget.

The Permit Center's budget for FY2018-19 is increasing \$22,261, or 2.4 percent from the prior year approved budget. This increase was driven solely by the personnel component and reflects revised salary estimates and a salary increase for FY2018-19 as well as rising health care costs.

The Permit Center was designed to make it more convenient to process and approve a permit at a central location. Technology was one of the driving forces to accomplish this process through the use of the Geographic Information System (GIS) and the Tidemark software system. Now, when a resident or builder enters the Permit Center, they can leave with an approved permit for additions, decks, and accessory structures in one hour or less. Customers can also have copies of maps within fifteen minutes. The department continues to evaluate areas to improve operational efficiencies as an ongoing effort toward continual service improvement. For example,

the department has implemented new management practices to make the staff more flexible in responding to citizens' request for assistance. In addition, regular staff rotations have continued between the East and West Permit Centers, allowing junior staff the opportunity to experience a wider variety of public service environments, hone and exercise leadership skills and practice supervisory techniques. Also, the department continues to work closely with cooperating agencies through consultation with their counterparts to ensure that customer assistance is being provided consistent with established policies, regulations and interpretation.

In an effort to increase employee engagement and job satisfaction, a policy was established allowing technicians to shadow employees in other departments whose missions align with the overall objectives of the Permit Center, and are of personal and professional interest to the technicians. This effort has broadened the scope of technicians' understanding of services delivered by cooperating agencies, increasing employee morale and contributing to a more comprehensive perspective of the Permit Center's processes and enhanced customer service.