

# PERMIT CENTERS

## DESCRIPTION

The Department of Community Development, better known as the Permit Centers, 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 Centers are staffed by representatives from Building Inspections, Planning, Public Utilities, and Public Works.

## 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.
- 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.

## FISCAL YEAR 2020 SUMMARY

### Annual Fiscal Plan

Description	FY18 Actual	FY19 Original	FY20 Approved	Change 19 to 20
Personnel	\$ 1,130,919	\$ 1,176,771	\$ 1,199,254	1.9%
Operation	12,633	25,353	21,489	(15.2%)
Capital	4,525	4,950	8,813	78.0%
Sub-Total	\$ 1,148,077	\$ 1,207,074	\$ 1,229,556	1.9%
Interdepartmental Billings	(271,582)	(276,047)	(287,990) *	4.3%
Total Budget	\$ 876,495	\$ 931,027	\$ 941,566	1.1%
Personnel Complement <sup>(1)</sup>	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.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY18	FY19	FY20	Change 19 to 20
<b>Workload Measures</b>				
Total Number of Inquiries	17,935	13,268	13,533	265
Permit Applications Received	4,004	5,160	5,263	103
Reviews Performed	8,724	9,213	9,397	184
Business Licenses Reviewed	2,942	2,655	2,708	53

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 issue. Staff is utilized from Building Inspections, Public Works, Public Utilities, and Planning. Funds to pay for staff serving these functions are in the Permits Centers’ 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 services furnished. Those reimbursements for FY2019-20 will be from the Public Works and Public Utilities departments. The sum of these offsets, totaling \$287,990, is shown as a negative amount in the Permit Centers’ budget.

The Permit Centers’ approved budget for FY2019-20 is increasing \$10,539, or 1.1 percent, from the prior year approved budget. This increase was driven solely by the personnel component and reflects revised salary estimates as well as rising health care costs.

The Permit Centers were 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 Centers, 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. 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 Centers 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, increased employee morale and contributed to a more comprehensive perspective of the Permit Centers’ processes and enhanced customer service.