



DATE: September 16, 2019

TO: Mayor Chelminiak and City Councilmembers

FROM: Mike Brennan, Director, 452.4113
Development Services

SUBJECT: Development Services Paperless Initiative

On Friday September 6th, Development Services (DS) met the long sought-after goal of becoming 100% paperless, where the over 15,000 permits issued annually will now be submitted and processed in an electronic format. This occasion is the result of a multi-year effort, involving staff from Bellevue and surrounding jurisdictions working together to develop a regional solution. Completing this body of work provides great benefit to DS customers, gives staff further flexibility in working with our customers and provides new tools to support continued refinement and improvement of permitting processes. Examples of customer benefits include:

- Permit application availability 24/7 and no longer constrained to City Hall business hours.
- Permit status access at all times from any location.
- Significant financial savings in printing and transportation costs
- Significant paper and fuel savings providing an environmental benefit for our community
- More interactive review with city staff in an online format.

The story of how we got here is long, but a brief summary provides a look at the major milestones in the journey to becoming 100% paperless. In the early 2000's, the Building Officials from Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah and Redmond met and agreed to work together to align permit application processes which led to the creation of the eCityGov Alliance and the birth of MyBuildingPermit.com (MBP). This opened the door to allow DS to offer customers an electronic permitting process that was aligned with regional partners in the eCityGov Alliance. These early permit applications were mainly available for high volume, less complex permit types that did not required submittal of plans like water heater and furnace replacements, and minor plumbing and electrical improvements. The on-line permit process was enthusiastically received by customers which gave DS the incentive to continue to challenge the status quo and begin the almost 10-year quest towards a fully automated process – 100% paperless.

In 2014, the MBP coalition worked on process alignments and technology changes that provided the capability to add in more varied and technical permit types, including those that required the submittal of plans. The continuing positive feedback and support received from customers propelled efforts toward reaching the 100% paperless goal. During the years between 2014 and 2019, not only did DS staff continue the push for further technology upgrades to accommodate the goal of being 100% paperless, but were also managing through the longest and most robust development cycle in Bellevue's history.

As a result of ongoing investment in process refinements and technology upgrades, in March of this year, DS took the next major step and no longer accepted construction plans in paper format, requiring all construction permit submittals to occur online. Customers accepted the change and the transition was smooth. With the success of migrating all construction permits online, attention moved to the final phase - Land Use permits. More process changes and alignments occurred and on Friday, September 6, 2019 DS only accepted Land Use plans electronically, thus making all DS permits 100% paperless.

Development Services Staff will be available during the city council meeting on Monday September 16th to share additional details and respond to questions.