

Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES)

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Project Management For Building Permits

• FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

**Visit the DDES Web site at
www.kingcounty.gov/permits
for more information**

King County DDES has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

DDES Customer
Information Bulletin #**53**

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

NOTE: *The information contained in this bulletin became effective on January 1, 2004.*

INTRODUCTION

The Project Manager Program is a component of the *DDES permit processing initiative* and seeks to provide customers with an enhanced level of customer service. This process responds to staff and customer recommendations that the permit process should stress predictability for the customer and accountability for DDES review staff. Project managers, billed at the department's hourly rate, offer enhanced communication between DDES and the applicant. The project manager also keeps the review process on target for a specific budget (fees paid by the customer) and review time frame. These efficiencies can save applicants money in the long run. As always, submitting a quality permit application is the most important thing customers can do to ensure that a permit review proceeds smoothly. Quality permit applications also ensure that fee quotes are not exceeded.

This bulletin explains components of the DDES project management process as they apply to residential and commercial building permits. Project managers are assigned projects with hourly fee components, requiring monitoring for accountability. The purpose of the project manager is to serve as a dependable, single point of contact and to facilitate communication between DDES and permit applicants. Additionally, project managers prepare fee quotes for the permit review process. They also are responsible for managing permit applications throughout the review process, and ensuring that review schedules remain in line with department and state performance standards. Finally, project managers monitor the hours billed at each review station and ensure, to the extent possible, that fee quotes are not exceeded.

RESIDENTIAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Which residential permits require a project manager?

Any residential permit application with hourly fees requiring monitoring for accountability requires a project manager. This is more precisely defined as a residential building proposal requiring complex drainage review, SEPA review, separate lot review or other critical areas review. Examples include projects requiring full drainage facilities, FEMA floodplain review and/or studies/analysis performed by consultants other than those on a DDES preferred consultants list.

When will I know if a project manager has been assigned to my application?

The first determination is made after completion of the field check. Following permit intake, a field check may be required if the proposal has significant site issues. After the field check, a letter is sent to the applicant that includes a fee quote and, if applicable, options for critical area consultants. If the fee quote contains hourly fees requiring monitoring for accountability, then a project manager will be assigned.

What if my project does not qualify for project management?

Less complex residential projects with site issues will be handled by the permit review coordinator who conducted permit intake. This permit review coordinator can be contacted to provide project status information and to answer questions on permit fees.

COMMERCIAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

What types of commercial projects require a project manager?

Essentially all commercial permit types, with the exception of sign, mechanical, and tenant improvement permits, require an assigned DDES project manager.

Commercial permits with a required pre-application meeting – project manager assignment process

Any commercial project proposing 5,000 or more square feet of developed area, or significant critical areas issues, triggers a mandatory pre-application meeting. Customers wishing to initiate the pre-application process for a project-managed commercial project must follow the steps outlined below. For additional detail, see Chapter 20.20.030 of the King County Code (KCC).

- Although pre-application meetings are mandatory for some permit types and designed to cover a wide range of permit review topics, customers may also schedule a limited pre-application meeting or voluntary pre-application meeting to address a specific topic(s) of their choice. For example, a customer may wish to find out how much or what portion of a lot is actually buildable before proceeding with detailed development plans. This is something that can be addressed through a limited pre-application meeting or a voluntary pre-application meeting. Because these meetings are limited in scope, limited pre-application meetings and voluntary pre-application meetings do not replace mandatory pre-application meetings, should the customer choose to proceed with the permitting process. A deposit is collected prior to the meeting. The actual cost of the meeting is dependent upon staff time for research, preparation and attendance at the meeting. **To schedule a limited, voluntary, or mandatory pre-application meeting for a commercial building permit, simply call 206-296-7245.**

- Mandatory pre-application meetings are designed to help customers prepare for the application and review process. Topics covered may include, but are not limited to: building and mechanical issues; fire issues; site issues; critical area issues; grading issues; SEPA issues and required fieldwork. The customer will receive detailed staff notes on all subjects covered. After the pre-application meeting is finished, the DDES project manager will develop a fee quote for the entire project's review (not including inspections fees and ancillary permits), again giving the customer the choice of whether or not to proceed with the permit application process. Customers are responsible for developing and submitting a complete, quality application packet based upon the information provided during the mandatory pre-application meeting.

Commercial permits without a required pre-application meeting – project manager assignment process

There are several types of commercial projects that do not require a pre-application meeting, but do require a project manager. Examples include cell towers, change-of-use permits, and commercial additions. The project manager assignment process is as follows:

- For these types of permits, a project manager is notified once an intake appointment is requested (customers can request an appointment by calling 206-296-6797). The intake appointment will not be able to be scheduled until a project manager has provided the applicant with a fee quote.
- The project manager then contacts the permit applicant to discuss the Scoping Meeting submittal requirements. The project manager can meet with the applicant on an as-needed basis to discuss the proposal. The project manager will provide the customer with a fee quote for the project permit review (not including inspections fees and ancillary permits).
- Based on the information provided by the project manager, the customer can decide whether or not to proceed with the intake process. If the customer chooses to proceed, then he/she will schedule an appointment to submit the required application materials.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR BUILDING PERMITS, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Which building permits require a project manager?

A: Complex commercial or residential permits with hourly fees requiring monitoring for accountability. Also, commercial projects proposing 5,000 or more square feet of development. Projects requiring commercial site development permits, mixed use developments, or any project requiring multiple concurrent permits also will have an assigned DDES project manager.

Residential permit application with hourly fees requiring monitoring for accountability requires a project manager. This is more precisely defined as a residential building proposal requiring complex drainage review, SEPA review, separate lot review or other consultant critical areas review. Examples include projects requiring full drainage facilities, FEMA floodplain review and/or studies/analysis performed by consultants other than those on a DDES preferred consultants list.

Q: What is the role of the project manager?

A: The purpose of the project manager is to serve as a dependable, single point of contact and facilitate communication between DDES and permit applicants. Project managers also provide fee quotes for the permit review process. In addition, project managers are responsible for monitoring permit applications through the review process, ensuring that review schedules remain in line with department and state performance standards.

Q: Will the project manager make sure I can build my project?

A: The project manager is not an advocate for your project, and cannot design it for you. The project manager will make sure you are fully informed on what is happening with your permit application, and also the applicable King County requirements.

For example, your proposed project may have conflicts with environmental, critical area, fire regulations, height limits or other regulations, laws or applicable codes. The project manager will answer your questions about the process in a timely fashion. He or she will ensure that issues are promptly and clearly communicated as identified.

Q: When is a project manager assigned?

A: For complex commercial projects, a project manager will be assigned during the pre-application process. For commercial projects that do not require a pre-application meeting, a project manager will be assigned at the time of the preparation of the fee quote.

For complex residential projects, the project manager is assigned after completion of the field check.

In either case, you will be promptly contacted with the name and contact information for the project manager assigned to your project.

Q: Does having a project manager affect the cost of my permit?

A: Project manager time will be billed on an hourly basis at the department's current hourly rate. For more information about fees and to find the current DDES hourly rate, see the DDES Web site at www.kingcounty.gov/permits or call DDES at 206-296-6600. The total amount of time spent on your permit may vary from week to week, based on the level of management required. However, improvements in communication and project monitoring can actually save review time and fees, as well as construction costs. As noted earlier, submitting a quality permit application is the most important action customers can take to minimize billable time charged to a project's review.

Q: If I have a project manager, does that mean the review of my permit is prioritized or expedited?

A: Having a project manager assigned does not mean that the permit review has been prioritized or expedited. However, a project manager will do their best to keep the reviews on the schedule established for the permit. One of the project manager's top responsibilities is monitoring the review timeline for compliance with State and County performance standards.

Q: Who's the project manager working for, the County or me?

A: The project manager, while working for King County, is specifically assigned to your permit to ensure that your project's review proceeds in a timely and predictable fashion. The project manager works as a direct interface between you and King County staff. The project manager will not always give the answer you want – King County's codes and regulations do limit specific types of development under specific conditions. The project manager will, however, provide you with enhanced customer service. DDES is committed to making the permit process as smooth and predictable as possible for our customers in unincorporated King County.

Other bulletins and telephone numbers that may be helpful

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 8	Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permits
Bulletin 13	Fire System Permits
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 18A	Zoning Code: Permitted Use Tables
Bulletin 21	Critical Areas Review
Bulletin 26	SEPA Process
Bulletin 28	Clearing and Grading Permits
Bulletin 40	Financial Guarantees
Bulletin 42	Laws and Rules Governing Building and Development

These and other DDES bulletins are available via the department Web site at www.kingcounty.gov/permits.

206-296-6600	DDES customer service and permit center
206-296-6797	DDES building permit appointment desk
206-296-7245	DDES building permit pre-application meeting appointments (limited, voluntary, mandatory)



Be sure to visit our Web site at:
www.kingcounty.gov/permits

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.