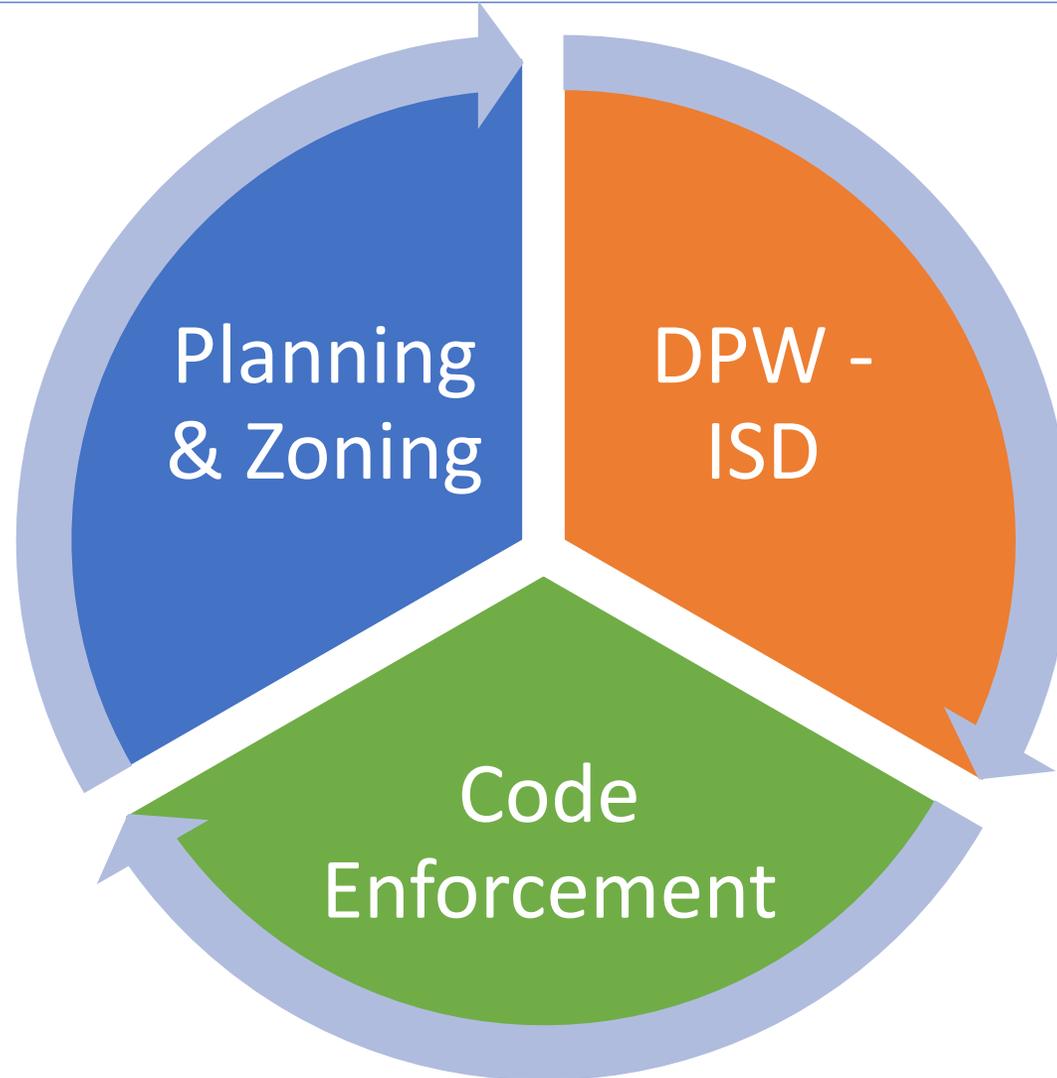


Development Permitting Process



Overview

While Individual departments have led a number of improvements to the permitting process over the past several years, the Council passed a resolution on Sept 22 2014 which initiated the current permit reform effort – previous efforts go back decades.

- Matrix Consulting Group hired in February 2016
- Project team worked with the consultants to share information and ensure the recommendations were based on an understanding of State requirements, local ordinances, and our practices
 - Team included staff from DPW Inspection Services, Planning and Zoning, City Attorney, Fire Marshal, Water Resources, Burlington Electric, and I&T
- Historic Preservation review was performed by another firm, Calfee.
- Recommendations accepted by City Council last summer
- Mayor-appointed Permit Reform Advisory Committee started in Oct 2017

Project Goal

To develop an improved permitting process that is:

- Consistent, efficient, transparent, and predictable
- Ensures public health and safety
- Supports energy efficiency, and
- Encourages investment and reinvestment

Research and Information Gathering

- Interviews with all staff involved in the permitting process
- Reviews of data and sample reports regarding services, volume of work, and timeframes for delivery
- Public engagement process through June 2016, which included:
 - **Online public survey** that received 614 responses
 - **Three public forums**, which attracted over 40 attendees
 - **Five focus groups** targeted to specific segments (Real Estate Professionals, Architects, Contractors/Developers, Home Owners, and Business Owners)
 - In addition, many individuals spoke separately with the consultants or the CIO to share their challenges and ideas
- Comparison of Burlington's practices against 'best management practices' from other communities

Key Findings: Strengths of Current Process

- Staff are generally available on a walk-in basis to provide feedback and information to members of the public
- Educational materials are available online and at offices, including copies of codes and ordinances
- Informal pre-application meetings with planning staff are encouraged for applicants to discuss their project and gain input from staff
- Many building permits are issued same-day, and few require revisions and resubmissions by applicants. Trades staff assist applicants, many with little experience in the trades, with understanding the code requirements and achieving approval
- Trade inspections are scheduled for specific times

Key Findings: Opportunities for Improvement

- Separation of functions and locations create challenges for applicants
- Opportunities to further improve Interdepartmental cooperation exist
- There are many opportunities to streamline efforts and improve service levels
- A focus on “customer-centered” service should be a priority
- Technology utilization is not meeting the needs of staff or applicants
- Adopted codes and ordinances should be reviewed and updated regularly
- Additional training and educational materials are needed for staff and applicants
- Some additional staff and changes to existing staffing could greatly enhance service levels
- Current resources are insufficient to implement all recommendations in a timely manner

Recommendation Themes

- **Organizational Structure:** Enhancing organizational structure to encourage operational efficiency and accountability, and to improve the customer experience
- **Process:** Improving and streamlining processes to improve efficiency, decision-making, and service delivery
- **Customer Service:** Providing better education and materials and developing a culture focused on customer service to improve the customer experience
- **Technology:** Better utilizing technology to improve internal efficiencies and provide enhanced customer capabilities
- **Fees:** Ensuring fees charged cover all direct and indirect costs associated with permitting operations, allow for the ongoing support and enhancement of operations and technology, and are clear and predictable for applicants
- **Solar:** Minimize the difficulty and time of permitting solar projects to make solar energy more accessible and affordable

Key deliverables – Organization

Organizational Structure

- **Consider creation of a consolidated department responsible for all Zoning and Inspection Services activities (1, 2)**
 - *Arrange for P&Z, ISD and Code to offer combined, co-located office hours (3)*

Development Permitting Process

Now: 2 permits, in 3 steps, in 2 places...

APPLICATION

Zoning Permit

(Planning & Zoning in City Hall)

PERMIT

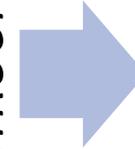


APPLICATION

Trades Permits

(DPW-ISD on Pine Street)

CONSTRUCTION

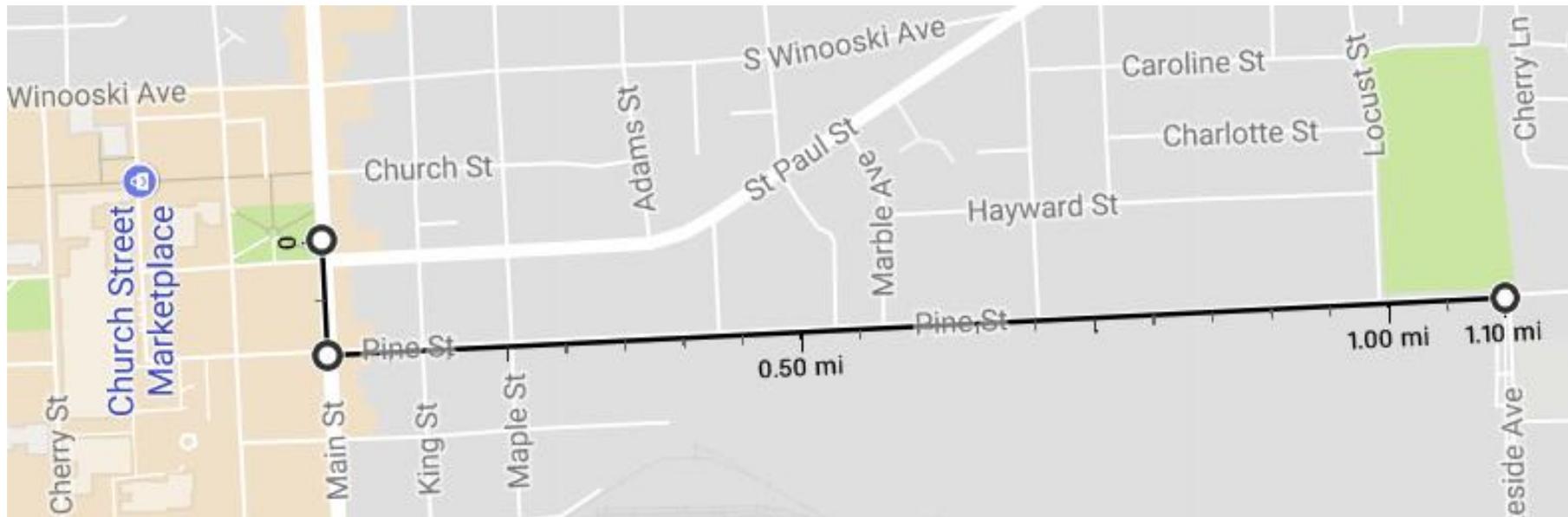


APPLICATION

Certificate of Occupancy

(Code Enforcement on Pine Street)

COMPLETION



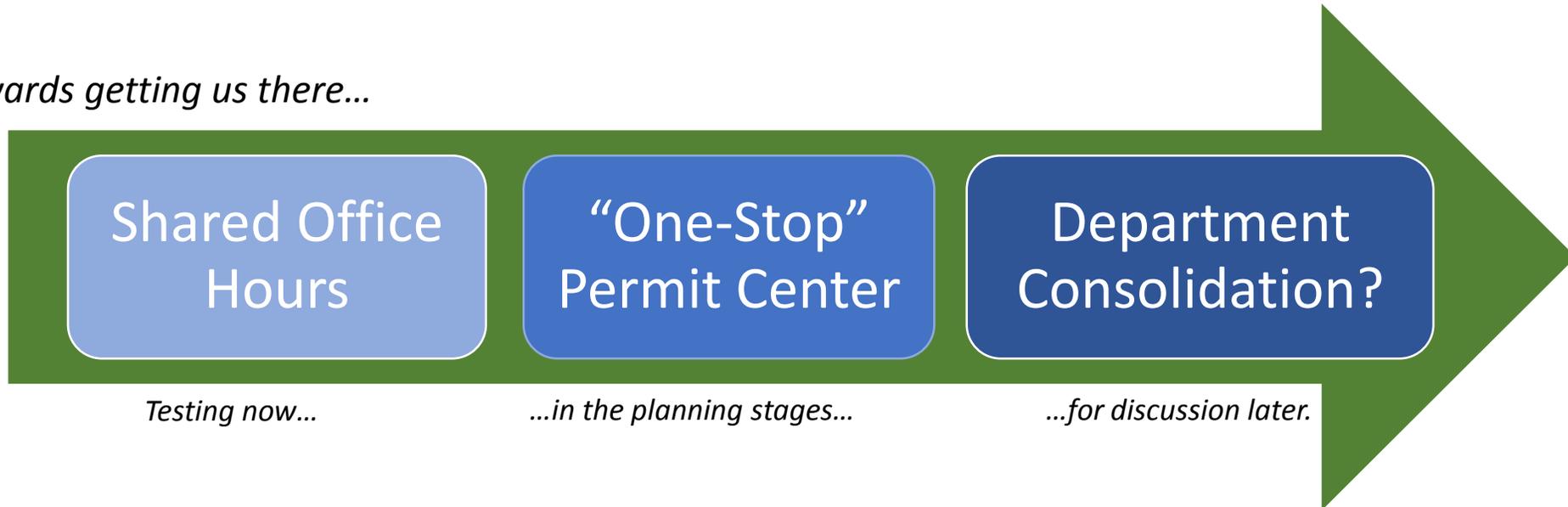
Development Permitting Process - Goal

... in the future, one permit in one place as part of a single continuous process,

APPLICATION



Steps towards getting us there...



Key deliverables – Process

Process

- *Develop a plan to improve the Technical Review Committee's (TRC) process (12, 13)*
- **Begin streamlining duplicative permits (15)**
- **Develop a process for regular review of codes and ordinances to ensure currency (53)**
- *Develop a plan for issuing the UCO upon completion of all inspections (17, 18)*
- Zoning
 - **Hire a planning technician at Planning & Zoning (5)**
 - *Develop a plan to transition responsibility for UCO inspections from Code to P&Z (19, 20)*
 - **Propose changes to increase the threshold for administrative review (14)**
 - **Research and propose an alternative to the N/A determination (11)**
- ISD
 - **Research and implement improvements to trades inspection scheduling (23)**
 - **Explore the value of adopting the International Residential Code (29)**
 - Hire a permit technician to provide improved service to applicants at ISD (4)
 - Implement a specified time standard for trades inspections (24) and contract or hire staff to support the additional workload, if necessary (25)
 - **Explore offering over the counter permits to streamline the customer experience (16)**

Key deliverables – Customer Service

Customer Service

- *Ensure regular customer service trainings for staff (9) to further **enhance customer-focused culture (8)***
- ***Develop a plan for performing an annual customer survey (33)***
- ***Make all forms available online as fillable PDFs (36)***
- ***Catalog and post online all interpretations and determinations (10, 37)***
- ***Develop process metrics and a proposal to regularly report performance to the public (6, 7)***
- ***More proactively notify customers of open permits to ensure permits are not left for future problems (22) evaluate the benefit of cleaning up aged permits (21)***
- Create a development guide (34) and process matrix (35) to provide customers with an easy-to-use guide to the permitting process

Key deliverables – Technology & Fees

Technology

- ***Provide the ability for inspectors to complete data input from the field (27)***
- Identify and implement the most appropriate and cost-effective permitting application through a formal RFP, and provide staffing to support ongoing maintenance of the application (39, 40)
- Provide an online portal to allow applicants to submit applications, track progress, and schedule inspections online (26)
- ***Explore and develop a proposal to address the need to improve GIS accuracy (41)***

Fees

- Begin an evaluation of fees to ensure they cover all direct and indirect costs (28)
- Ensure fees charged support the procurement and ongoing support of technology necessary to support staff activities and increased customer functionality (42)