

THE PLANS Examiner

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Activity keeps permits and applications healthy

During the past month or more, the Office of Planning and Development Review has been searching its files for permits and residential permit applications which have had no activity for at least 180 days. Then to determine whether to close the files, OPDR is mailing letters to the affected applicants and new single-family permit holders.

Customers who applied for permits more than six months ago, but have not acted on their applications for several months must contact OPDR within 30 days of the letter date to request an extension or cancel their application and get back their plans. Fees can't be refunded in most cases because the application has already been processed and the initial plan review has been done. "Some of the inactive applications in our system are more than three years old, others are as recent as last September," says Greg Carlson, Development Services supervisor.

"We have already sent out 204 letters, of those, 93 applications were cancelled, two had permits issued and 25 received extensions. And we still have more than 300 letters to mail."

For new single-family residence combination permits, issued but inactive for six months or more, the permit holder must request an inspection or apply for an extension within 30 days of the letter date. "Our goal is to get most, if not all, the inspections completed and approved and the permits finalled," says Mark Fetters, Administrative supervisor. "So far, we've sent letters to nearly 100 residential permit holders." Once an inspection is done and approved, the permit holder has an additional six months to complete work. If a residential permit is cancelled due to lack of response, the permit holder may

reactivate it within six months by paying half the original permit fee.

Letters to commercial permit holders have yet to go out. The options outlined in the letter will be similar to those for new single family permits.

Portland City Code, Title 24, requires inspections to be completed at least once every six months or a permit automatically expires. Notification is not required. "We've had a busy couple of years and so much has happened in just the past eight months," Carlson explained. "We want to make sure that customers have a chance to let us know their intentions before we cancel an application or permit that has been inactive for quite a while."

The Office of Planning and Development Review works with the community and other bureaus to preserve and shape safe, vital and well planned urban environments.



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Noise variance needed

If you're planning to work longer to take advantage of the extra light, you may need to notify the neighbors and get a noise variance from the City. Get a noise variance if you'll be working before 7:00 a.m., after 6:00 p.m. or on Sundays; or if noise levels will exceed 85 dB. Plan ahead. The application is simple, but the process takes about 10 days.

When you apply, give your reason for requesting a variance, your planned work schedule, the type of equipment to be used and proof that the neighbors have been contacted. Please provide the decibel rating of equipment if it's new or unique.

On July 1, fees for noise variances will increase by approximately five percent. As in the past, the cost doubles if your request is a "rush."

Variance request forms are available at 1900 SW 4th Ave., 5th floor, or by mail, when you call **503-823-7350**. Sorry, no faxes.

IN^{the}SIDE DSC

Lunch and Learn goes natural

Naturescaping Your Construction Project

- Friday, June 14, 2002
- Noon to 1:30 p.m.
- 1900 SW 4th Ave., Room 2500A

Bring your lunch and learn the benefits of Naturescaping in urban landscapes and ways to incorporate Naturescaping into your building project.

You'll get an overview of the Naturescaping for Clean Rivers Program, learn how attracting wildlife can benefit water quality and have your questions answered by Linda Robinson, a Naturescaping expert.

No need to register. The Community Education Brown Bag series, sponsored by OPDR, is free and open to all.

Learn more about Green Building

In April, the Office of Sustainable Development unveiled its new interactive Green Building Display in the Development Services Center.

The display allows you to test the Green Building Web site, www.green-rated.org, via an IMAC computer and learn how green building can be incorporated into the remodeling, design or construction of most buildings.

Site prep time in Balch Creek

If you have projects in the Skyline Plan District, which includes the Balch Creek and Northwest Hills Subdistricts, now is the time to do your site grading. Restrictions on exposing soil to direct contact with stormwater are lifted from May 1 to September 30. As always, grading permits are required, as are proper erosion control measures.

To learn more, visit the City's Web site, www.planning.ci.portland.or.us, then click on the following links: Zoning Code; Title 33 PDF files; Plan District tab; and Skyline Plan District. Maps of the area are included in the Skyline Plan District section.

Changes speed residential inspections

In January, the Office of Planning and Development Review's (OPDR) Residential Inspections Section changed the number of hours most of its inspectors work each day. Of the 24 field inspectors, 19 are now working a flexible schedule that includes one day off during each 2-week work cycle. Days off are staggered to keep 18 to 20 inspectors in the field everyday, Monday through Friday. The rest of the field staff works regular 8-hour shifts each week.

The flexible scheduling has yielded an increase in the number of inspections completed. Currently, the team of inspectors averages 325 to 350 per day.

Before the change, inspectors were working significant overtime to keep pace with inspection requests, which have not decreased despite the economic downturn. Inspectors are out in the field earlier, often by 8:00 a.m., so to reach an inspector by phone, customers must call between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m.

"We've found that customers are getting calls back on time and the pace of inspections has picked up. The flexible schedule allows inspectors to more easily take care of personal business without taking extra time off," says Jeff Eldredge, OPDR Combinations Inspections supervisor. "We still schedule around sick days and vacations, but this system seems to give us better productivity overall." Eldredge noted that the Combinations Inspection Section would have its 24 inspectors fully certified in all four specialties within a few months.

Businesses getting A-Board notices

Inspectors from the Office of Planning and Development Review have located at least 1223 A-Board signs on the sidewalks of Portland. Letters, alerting businesses to the need for registering their signs, are already landing in mailboxes. So far, 75 percent of those notified have paid registration fees and the rest have removed the signs. An additional 628 letters will be mailed soon.

John Deer, OPDR Commercial Inspections administrative assistant, says the newly created enforcement program has been going very well. "We send out two citations before we actually confiscate a sign, and most business owners respond in plenty of time." The annual fee to register an A-Board is \$35.

The goal of the regulation and registration process is to help keep sidewalks open for pedestrians, especially those with disabilities, and to set maximum size and placement requirements.

For more information about the registration process, call Patty Van Antwerp, **503-823-7304**, or go to OPDR's Web site, www.opdr.ci.portland.or.us.

Study shows need to revisit environmental regulation enforcement

During the past 10 to 12 years, the City of Portland has adopted many environmental regulations to help protect the quality of the water and land in the city. The regulations were developed separately, to address different problems, making them difficult for contractors and developers to comply with and the City to administer.

"We've found that most people who apply for permits to develop or build in Portland want to abide by the codes and regulations, but in the case of environmental regulations, they may not learn of them early enough," says Tom Carter, Office of Planning and Development Review (OPDR) senior planner.

In response to requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), OPDR recently completed a study of the enforcement of its environmental regulations. The study explored four main areas:

- Stormwater Management
- Erosion Control
- Landscaping (including trees)
- Conditions of approval for Land Use Reviews

The results of the ESA Enforcement Study are still in rough draft form, but will be released by June. Among other recommendations, a look at the results reveals the need for OPDR to ask more

New single-family sprinkler regulations go into effect

During the 2001 session, Oregon legislators passed HB 2912, creating a residential sprinkler alternative for those single-family dwellings where fire truck access is difficult or where access to fire hydrants is limited.

To install a new system or retrofit an existing one, a plumbing permit and fee are required. The program went into effect April 1, and the permit fee is based on the valuation of the sprinkler system. The system may be either a stand-alone type or one that runs off the domestic water supply to the house. The stand-alone system is the more complicated to design and install, making it more expensive.

"System design is fairly simple, but there may be some snags on retrofits, especially with the stand-alone system," says Ray Kerridge, OPDR Commercial Division manager. "In some situations the existing water meter may not be big enough to handle the increased volume, so a new water meter may be required."

For more information about the new regulations, contact Jed Scheuermann, OPDR senior combination inspector, **503-823-7394**.

targeted questions and provide more specific information during the initial stages of the permitting process.

OPDR will be holding open houses on the results of the study during June. "Contractors and developers will be particularly interested in the study's recommendations," says Carter. "Our goal is to take a report to the City Council in July for approval and implement its recommendations by the end of 2002."

To be notified of the dates and times of the open houses, call Tom Carter, **503-823-4989**, or email, cartert@ci.portland.or.us.

Title 33, Land Division Code Update

Complete code now available

The new Land Division Code with amendments has been consolidated into a single document. You may purchase a copy for \$15 in the Development Services Center or download the complete text without charge from OPDR's Web site, www.opdr.ci.portland.or.us.

Get your questions answered

The Office of Planning and Development Review (OPDR) is still scheduling appointments to answer your questions about the new Land Division Code. Four 30-minute appointments are available between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. every Monday and Wednesday in the Development Services Center (DSC). There is no fee, but appointments are on a first-come, first-served basis.

You'll have more time to ask questions and get detailed information — a planner from the Planning and Zoning staff and a member of the Land Division Team will be on hand at each appointment.

To schedule an appointment, call **503-823-7526**, or talk to a planner in the DSC.

Land Division Code Workshop

- Wednesday, May 22, 2002
- 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
- 1900 SW 4th, Room 2500A

Free and open to all interested parties

This informal workshop will provide opportunities to ask detailed questions about the new Land Division Code and get feedback on specific land division proposals. Information will also be available on the proposed private street standards that go into effect with the new code on July 1, 2002.

To reserve your space, contact Stephanie Beckman, beckmans@ci.portland.or.us or call **503-823-7056**.

**The Plans Examiner is a bi-monthly publication of the City of Portland
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Commissioner Charlie Hales, 503-823-4682**

How To Reach Us

All Area Code 503
Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
(e) = Electronic Messaging System
Please leave detailed information.
Your call will be returned.

While browsing the internet,
visit our home pages —
www.opdr.ci.portland.or.us and
www.planning.ci.portland.or.us/

OPDR — Administration	503-823-7308	TRANSPORTATION	
Building Code Questions	503-823-7310 (e)(4)	Development Requirements and/or Right-of-Way Policy	
Fire Code Questions	503-823-7366	Glen Pierce	503-823-7079
Blueprint 2000	503-823-7822	Minor Partitions—Cherrie Eudaly	503-823-7081
24-hour Inspection Request Recording	503-823-7000 (e)	Local Improvement Districts	
Inspection Section — 1 & 2 Family Dwellings	503-823-7388	Andrew Aebi	503-823-5648
Commercial {	Plumbing	503-823-7302	Street Permit Engineering
	Building & Mechanical	503-823-7303	Jerry Markesino
	Electrical	503-823-7304	503-823-7057
Development Services Center	503-823-7310	Transportation Plan Review	
Development Services Center FAX	503-823-3018	Richard Eisenhauer	503-823-7080
Trade Permits	503-823-7363	Systems Development Charge	
Newsletter Contact — Ann Kohler	503-823-7886	Richard Eisenhauer	503-823-7080
Permit Status via FAX	503-823-7000 (4)		
Permit Status via Voice Mail	503-823-7357		
Permit Records		TREES — Urban Forestry (7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.)	
Document Control / Current Applications	503-823-7357 (e)	Pruning/Planning/Removal Permits	
Inspection Records/Finalled Permits	503-823-7660	N / NE — Luke Miller	503-823-4511
Building Record Center FAX	503-823-7765	NW / SW — Charley Davis	503-823-4523
Septic Tanks / Cesspools	503-823-7247	Southeast — Ned Sodja	503-823-4440
Planning & Zoning – Information	503-823-7526	Tree Cutting Ordinance	
		Frank Krawczyk	503-823-4011
		Transportation Improvements	
		Joe Hintz	503-823-4025
		Commercial Planning and Development	
		Frank Krawczyk	503-823-4011
		Residential Development and Improvement	
		Myles Black	503-823-4018
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		WATER	
Development Assistance	503-823-7761	Water Service Information	503-823-7368
Construction & Demolition Recycling Info	503-823-7107	Hydrant Permits	503-823-7368
Industrial Source Control	503-823-7585	Plan Review — Commercial — Tony Re	503-823-7400
		Residential — Todd Aschoff / Mari Moore	503-823-7368
FIRE BUREAU		Subdivision Planning — Tony Re	503-823-7400
Development Standards, Sprinklers, Alarms		Backflow Valve Installation Requirements	
Rich Butcher	503-823-3802	Dave Barrigan	503-823-7479
Flammable Liquids, Tanks, Hazardous Processes			
Doug Friant	503-823-3935		

Development Services Center

1900 SW 4th Ave.

Hours
7:30 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.

The Center is also open
Thursday from
5:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.
for Residential Permit Night.



Printed on recycled paper.

If you have comments about the Plans Examiner newsletter or have suggestions for stories you'd like to see covered in the future, please call Ann Kohler, 503-823-7886.

We want to hear from you!

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