

# THE PLANS Examiner

Vol. 6, No. 4 City of Portland Office of Planning and Development Review

March 2000

## Instant inspection results coming in May

Contractors will be able to request an inspection at the touch of a button when the city of Portland launches its Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system in May. Contractors simply need to enter the IVR number, issued along with their permit, to request an inspection from their touch-tone phone. They may also cancel a request, get the results of an inspection and leave a message for, or retrieve a message from, their inspector. Plan check status will be available by fax also through IVR.

On the other side of the transaction, inspectors will be able to leave and retrieve messages no matter where they are.

The IVR system was developed by the same company that created systems for the city of Gresham and Clackamas and Washington Counties. It will be similar to these other systems in many ways. Contractors must use the IVR inspection request number that was issued with their permit and an inspection code to request an inspection. Contractors will get a wallet card listing the code for each type of inspection.

As implementation of the IVR system gets closer, the Office of Planning and Development Review will send contractors instructions on how to use the system along with a request for updated contractor information. Instruction materials will also be available in the Development Services Center before the system is activated.

Though the city isn't planning to conduct training classes for IVR, contractors who would like us to offer a one-hour class are encouraged to call. If there is enough

interest, we'll set up a class. If you are interested in a training class or have questions about IVR, call Ann Kohler, OPDR communications manager, **(503) 823-7886**.

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## Gas Express gathers steam, requests double

In just one year, use of Gas Express inspections by contractors more than doubled, from 646 in 1998 to 1,379 in 1999. This popular joint program between the City of Portland and Northwest Natural saves both time and money for the city and for contractors. And customers get their heat and hot water turned back on faster.

David Rock, senior mechanical inspector, estimates that last year the city saved the equivalent of half of one full-time inspector's hours, significantly reduced the number of "Emergency - No Heat" calls received and trimmed overtime because of the success of Gas Express. In addition, the number of mechanical and related plumbing and electrical permits marked as "final" increased significantly.

Gas Express, which began in March, 1998, allows Northwest Natural technicians to witness and approve air pressure tests on behalf of the city and turn on the gas without waiting for a second inspection. The program may be used on all gas conversions, involving new meters, and furnace and water heater installations.

If you have questions about Gas Express, call David Rock, **(503) 823-7401**; or Al Baracco, Northwest Natural, **(503) 226-4211**.

*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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## You get more than what you see from the Development Services Center

It seems that since the Development Services Center moved, the hours are shorter. But what you don't see behind closed doors has helped us cut phone response time, customer waits and lots more.

Customers can come in every weekday between 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Residential permit customers get extra time from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays, so they don't have to compete with big commercial projects. But after the doors close, customers who were in by 3:00 p.m. stay inside to finish up their business, and on average, many don't leave until 4:30 p.m. or later.

When our staff aren't meeting with customers after the doors close, they are returning phone calls, reviewing plans, preparing permits to issue, faxing responses to customers, responding to fax and mail requests for permits, updating computer records and completing other work.



"We've only been in our new location for a few months, so we're still working out the kinks. One of our major goals is to increase the ways our customers can do business with us without having to drive downtown," says Bonnie Morris, DCS manager.

Here are a few changes that we're sure will help:

### **One and two-family residential intake appointments**

As of March 1, we reinstated appointments for new one-and two-family residential permit applicants. With everything set up in advance, it's possible to get a lot done in one visit. Each appointment will be 45 minutes and is for a single site only. Before applying for permits, the final plat must be signed off by all city representatives and released for recording by the county. Property Line Adjustments and Lot Segregations are the only exceptions.

During the appointment you will meet with someone from our zoning staff who will check for compliance with the zoning code and land use review conditions. At the same time, a building plans examiner will do a preliminary plan check for essential structural, fire/life safety and energy conservation information.

To get started, you may pick up an application packet at the first screen desk inside the Development Services Center, or call **(503) 823-0672**, and one will be mailed to you.

### **Pre-submittal set-ups for multiple new residential applications**

It takes a long time to set-up multiple new residential permits for a customer. If you have more than two permit applications at one time, you need to submit the initial intake information several days in advance. We will have the records set up and ready when you come in to submit your plans. Call **(503) 823-7357** for additional details.

### **Extended same-day service for faxed trade permits**

Effective immediately, fax requests for trade permits can be processed the same day if they require an inspection within 24 hours and are received by 4:00 p.m. Be sure to check the box on the application that lets us know you will be calling for an inspection within 24 hours.

### **Plan review status checks by fax**

In May, you'll be able to get same day faxed permit status checks through our new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. (See the related story on page 1.)

And soon you'll be able to get more application forms and instructions by accessing our Web site.

We appreciate your patience. We'll keep working to make our services even better.



### **Development Services Center Hours**

7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday — Friday

5:00 – 7:30 p.m., Thursday  
Residential Permit Night

## Erosion and Sediment Control Regulations are in effect as of March 1

Portland's new Erosion and Sediment Control Regulations went into effect on March 1 along with temporary rules for their administration and enforcement. All construction projects, regardless of location, must now file an erosion control plan and receive an erosion control permit before any ground-disturbing activity can begin.

Once installed, the erosion control measures must be inspected and approved by the city to ensure that no measurable or visible sediment leaves the site. A sign, showing the phone number of the Erosion Control Hotline, **(503) 823-0900**, will be posted on the site after the inspection and must be visible as long as ground-disturbing activity continues. Contractors are responsible for keeping erosion control measures in place throughout construction and routinely checking them, especially after major rainfalls.

Erosion control measures will be inspected as other inspections are done during the course of a project. If any field inspector discovers that soil or sediment is flowing onto another site or into a stream or the street, or if stockpiles of dirt are left exposed, work on the main project may be stopped. The field inspector will immediately notify the site development team, which will revisit the project and work with the contractor to correct erosion control problems. The project must be reinspected before other inspections will be resumed. Minor erosion control problems won't halt a project; however, the field inspector will note these on the correction notice, and they must be cleaned up before the next inspection.

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### Help is in the book

The city's Erosion Control Manual was adopted in December at the same time as the regulations. The manual provides a variety of erosion and sediment control options, plus installation and maintenance tips and detailed drawings. It explains requirements to obtain an erosion control permit and what must be included in an erosion control plan.

The Erosion Control Manual is available for \$5.00 through the Development Services Center. The team that created the manual is now working on a more condensed, user-friendly version to give home builders and remodelers quick tips. Like a cookbook, it will contain "recipes" to help contractors comply with erosion control and stormwater management standards and tree preservation requirements. The Erosion Control Cookbook is due out in the next few months.

When construction is complete, the site development team returns to conduct another inspection to determine that the final erosion control measures, usually landscaping, are installed. Then four to eight months later, a final inspection will ensure that trees and landscaping have survived and other measures are still working. Though the building permits may be closed out, the erosion control permit will remain active until after this final inspection.

Trade permits may still be done over the counter and by fax for existing construction. A standard erosion control plan will be issued for this work and erosion control inspections will be done at random or in response to complaints.




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### Wanted: Volunteers

The Office of Planning and Development Review is putting together a committee for the long-term maintenance and revision to the Erosion Control Manual. This committee will also help us clarify standards in the code. People with erosion control and construction experience are especially encouraged to apply, as are citizens who recognize the effects of improperly controlled construction-related erosion.

If you're interested in being part of the Advisory Committee for long-term maintenance and revision of the Erosion Control Manual, call Kermit Robinson, **(503) 823-7619**.

## Balanced Cut and Fill in flood hazard areas (Title 24)

By taking away an amount of soil material equal to what is being used as fill in the same flood hazard area, the flood plain's capacity to handle heavy rains is not diminished. This practice, called balanced cut and fill, is now required in all Flood Management Areas and Special Flood Management Areas.

The Johnson Creek flood plain has the most stringent regulations, with proposed fill being considered on a case-by-case basis. Specific requirements for related cuts and fills in the Columbia River and Columbia River Slough flood plains and the Willamette River flood plain are described in Title 24.50.060.

Areas exempted by Metro, when it adopted its flood plain maps, are recognized by the city as exemptions from balanced cut and fill. However, sites within the 100-year flood plain are still required to meet the other flood plain regulations in Title 24.50.




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### New Fees for erosion control (Title 10)

Fees for erosion control permits will cover administration, plan review, inspections and enforcement of required erosion control measures. Fees for remodels will not exceed fees for new construction. If construction work is started before permits are issued, a special investigation is required and additional building permit fees can be charged.

Proposed fees are as follows:

- **New single-family and duplex:**  
E-Zone, \$255;  
Other zones, \$170.
- **Grading permits, clearing permits and all other new construction up to one acre:**  
E-Zone, \$255;  
Other zones, \$170.  
(Each additional ½ acre of lot or portion thereof, \$43.)
- **Exterior utilities:**  
\$15 for first 100 feet of line;  
\$10 for each additional 100 feet or portion thereof.
- **Additions and exterior remodels up to one acre:**  
E-Zone, \$150;  
Other zones, \$100.  
(Each additional ½ acre of ground disturbed or portion thereof, \$25.)

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### Public Hearings

The adoption of rules for the fees for erosion control permits, clarifications to the requirements for balanced cut and fill and bonding standards are still subject to public hearings, scheduled for April 4 in Room 5A, 1900 SW 4th Ave., Portland, as follows:

- Fees: 2:00 p.m.
- Balanced cut and fill: 3:00 p.m.
- Bonding: 4:00 p.m.

Written comments are due by 5:00 p.m., April 4, to OPDR, 1900 SW 4th Ave., STE 5000, Portland, OR 97204. Copies of the proposed rules are available from the receptionist on the 5th floor. If you have questions about the rules discussed in this article, please call Kermit Robinson, (503) 823-7619. For more information on erosion control standards and enforcement, call Bill Freeman, (503) 823-7537.

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### Bonding (Title 10)

Monetary performance guarantees may be required on certain special sites to assure that erosion control plans are implemented.

The required bond won't be returned or allowed to expire until all work is complete and related permits are closed out or the property is sold and a new performance guarantee is posted.

## City Council to wrap up Hollywood and Sandy Plan with March hearing

After more than two years of public discussion and revision, followed by recommendations from the Portland Planning Commission, the *Recommended Hollywood and Sandy Plan* will get a final public hearing and City Council action on March 15. The hearing is set for 6:00 p.m. at the Rose City Park Presbyterian Church, 1907 NE 45<sup>th</sup> Ave.

The plan charts the course for the future of Sandy Blvd., between 12<sup>th</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Avenues, and all of the Hollywood District. The concept for these areas includes development of commercial "nodes" at major intersections along Sandy Blvd. to serve adjacent neighborhoods; development of an urban-scaled mixed-use area near the Hollywood Transit Center; and enhancement of Hollywood's commercial core.

At its meeting in December, the Planning Commission responded to public testimony by making several significant amendments to the plan, including:

- Removal of the proposed commercial node at 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and Sandy Blvd. along with reducing the proposed 65 foot maximum building height to 45 feet, and removing the proposed main street and design overlays. Improvements in the transportation infrastructure were also reduced for this area;
- Increased residential requirements for new development and building additions in the area south of Sandy Blvd. and north of the Hollywood Transit Center;
- Application of the design overlay to new development and exterior alterations in the Main Street Node and Corridor overlay zones and all commercially-zoned areas in Hollywood. Projects must meet the Community Design Standards **or** go through a discretionary review process;
- Requiring new development in commercial zones to match the height of abutting residential zones for the first 25 feet from the lot line, and for the next 25 feet requiring a maximum building height of 45 feet. If across the street from a residential zone, building heights must be the same as the residential zone for the first 15 feet from the lot line.

In addition, Planning Commission recommended that the City Council direct city bureaus, identified as primary implementers, to prioritize funding for the plan's actions and improvements.

All those interested in the plan are encouraged to attend the hearing on March 15. Public comment is welcome. Copies of the Recommended Hollywood and Sandy Plan may be picked up at 1900 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., STE 4100. Or review a copy at the Hollywood Branch of the Multnomah County Library, 3930 NE Hancock; and at Central Northeast Neighbors, 5540 NE Sandy Blvd.

For more information, call Debbie Bischoff, Planning Bureau, **(503) 823-6946**.

## City enforces existing regulations on site preparation without permits

In the past, builders have often begun site preparation while waiting for building permits, even though Title 24, the Oregon 1- and 2-Family Dwelling Code and the Oregon Structural Specialty Code prohibited this practice.

As of March 1, the Office of Planning and Development Review began enforcing the existing regulations for soil disturbing activity citywide. The enforcement stems from the increasing concern for water quality, more development on slopes and requirements under the Endangered Species Act.

An erosion control plan must now be submitted before or in conjunction with your building permit application. A separate permit will be issued for the erosion control plan. This permit may be issued before the building permit, so that erosion control measures may be installed and inspected before other permitted site work begins.

Necessary geotechnical studies are the only activities that may be done before permits are issued. If construction work is started before permits are issued, the state building code provides for a special investigation, and additional building permit fees can be charged.

If you have questions about any of these requirements, please call Jeff Eldredge, Larry Pamer, or Lee Hiltenbrand, Combination Inspections, **(503) 823-7388**; or Bill Freeman, Site Development, **(503) 823-6892**.

## So, what's in a name?

The CABO One- and Two-Family Dwelling Code has a new name and a few tweaks, but little else has changed. The new International One- and Two-Family Dwelling Code goes into effect April 1, as do the 2000 Electrical Specialty Code, based on the 1999 NEC, and the 2000 State Plumbing Specialty Code, based on the 1997 UPC. The codes and state amendments are available now at all the usual places.

The few changes that you may want to review in the one- and two-family code include:

- Clarifications on lateral bracing;
- The addition of prescriptive requirements for metal stud framing;
- An appendix, containing prescriptive requirements for straw bale construction.

If you have questions about the codes or state amendments, call Kermit Robinson, Office of Planning and Development Review, **(503) 823-7619**; or Mike Ewert, Oregon State Building Codes Division, **(503) 373-7529**.

**The Plans Examiner is a bi-monthly publication of the city of Portland  
Office of Planning and Development Review  
Commissioner Charlie Hales, 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.ci.portland.or.us/buildings](http://www.ci.portland.or.us/buildings)  
and  
[www.planning.ci.portland.or.us/](http://www.planning.ci.portland.or.us/)

<b>Development Services Center</b>
<b>1900 SW 4th Ave.</b>
<u>Hours</u> 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.

<b>OPDR — Administration</b>	823-7308	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	
Building Code Questions	823-7310 (e)(press 4)	Development Requirements and/or Right-of-Way Policy	
Fire Code Questions	823-7366	Glenn Pierce	823-7079
Blueprint 2000	823-7822	Minor Partitions	
<b>24-hour Inspection Request Recording</b>	823-7000 (e)	Cherrie Eudaly	823-7081
Inspection Section — 1 & 2 Family Dwellings	823-7388	Local Improvement Districts	
Commercial } Plumbing Building & Mechanical Electrical	823-7302	Lola Gailey	823-7563
	823-7303	Street Permit Engineering	
	823-7304	Jerry Markesino	823-7057
Permit Center	823-7310	Transportation Plan Review	
Permit Center FAX	823-3018	Alex Bejarano	823-7575
Permit Information (how to apply & fees)		Systems Development Charge	
Combination, Building & Street Use	823-7385	Joyce Reyman	823-6108
All Others	823-7363		
<b>Newsletter Contact — Ann Kohler</b>	823-7886	<b>TREES (7a.m. - 3:30 p.m.)</b>	
<b>Permit Status</b>	823-7357	Pruning/Planning/Removal Permits	
<b>Permit Records</b>		N / NE — Joe Hintz	823-4025
Document Control/Current Applications	823-7357 (e)	NW / SW — Charley Davis	823-4523
Inspection Records/Finalled Permits	823-7660	Southeast — Ned Sodja	823-4440
Building Record Center FAX	823-7994	Tree Cutting Ordinance	
Septic Tanks/Cesspools	823-7247	Myles Black	823-4018
<b>Planning &amp; Zoning – Information</b>	823-7526	Transportation Improvements	
		Joe Hintz	823-4025
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>		Commercial Planning and Development	
Development Engineering	823-7761	Vincent Salomone	823-4011
Construction & Demolition Recycling Info	823-7107	<b>WATER</b>	
Industrial Source Control	823-7585	Water Service Information	823-7368
<b>FIRE BUREAU</b>		Hydrant Permits	823-7368
Development Standards, Sprinklers, Alarms		Plan Review — Tom Chambers	823-7477
Rich Butcher	823-3802	Vern Freeman	823-7489
Flammable Liquids, Tanks, Hazardous Processes		Subdivision Planning — Hill Hampton	823-7485
Doug Friant	823-3935	Backflow Valve Installation Requirements	
		Dave Barrigan	823-7479



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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