

# THE PLANS Examiner

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City of Portland Bureau of Development Services

November 2002

## Regulatory improvement a big step in the right direction

The “Top 10 List of Regulatory Code Improvements,” was adopted by the City Council on October 16 as the first major step in serious efforts to trim red tape in the area of residential and commercial development.

“This is a real plus for us,” says Margaret Mahoney, director of the newly renamed Bureau of Development Services (BDS). “It’s the first improvement effort that looks at the regulations. Other improvements and changes, implemented as part of Blueprint 2000, were to processes.”

Blueprint 2000 worked to create a seamless process for development services. With that goal in mind, the bureau’s permit tracking system has been completely revamped along with the way permit applications are accepted. The Development Services Center was moved to a new location and expanded, now offering better access to staff from all the bureaus involved in development services. An Interactive Voice Response system is accessible around the clock, making it simple to request inspections, get inspection results and check plan review status by phone. And process managers are assigned to all large projects to provide consistency from start to finish.

Now, the regulations that govern building and development in the city are getting a facelift. “Right off the bat, we are implementing programs to help small businesses get through the process more easily.

Whether it’s a relocation or a simple remodeling project, we are offering some new tools to help,” says Mahoney. The Small Business Development Guide and two special small business sessions kicked off this part of the project. In October, BDS began Small Business Night, a pilot project in the Development Services Center (DSC) for small business owners. (See Inside the DSC on page 3 for details.)

The regulations that made the “Top 10” were those that received the most feedback from potential stakeholders and city staff. According to Mahoney, “There has been a real disconnect between the regulations now in place to achieve livability and the time and staff it takes to implement and enforce them.” Regulatory improvements from the list that Mahoney is eager to see move forward include reducing minimum tree size requirements, eliminating redundancy and conflicts in connection with the Alternative Design Density, or “a” Overlay Zone, and reviewing the way non-conforming business uses are created.

“We are also undergoing an internal audit and participating in a public/private partnership to study 15 completed development projects and 15 projects that are working their way through the system. We’ll see in clear terms, what works, what doesn’t and where the roadblocks occur. Finding and fixing these regulatory roadblocks is a real plus for our customers and our staff.”

*The Bureau of Development Services works with the community and other bureaus to preserve and shape safe, vital and well planned urban environments.*



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## Code Maintenance 2003 Included in Regulatory Improvement Workplan

On October 16, the City Council adopted a list of approximately 55 Zoning Code amendments to be considered in the Code Maintenance 2003 (CM2003) legislative package. This package was adopted as part of the City's annual Regulatory Improvement Workplan, which generally seeks to address land use or building code regulations that conflict, are overly complex, duplicative or produce unintended results. The amendments to be considered reflect the input of 120 stakeholders, who participated in focus groups and meetings with the City.

Amendments included in the CM2003 list are intended to improve the clarity and structure of the Zoning Code without changing existing policy and fall into one of three categories: technical, clarification and minor policy. Technical amendments will address inconsistent wording and correct typographical errors. Amendments in the second category are intended to clarify existing language to aid daily use and improve readability of land use regulations. Minor policy amendments will address ongoing problems with the daily administration of the regulations.

Some of the more significant items to be considered in the CM2003 package include:

- clarifying parking lot landscape standards;
- eliminating the requirement for a Central City Parking Review renewal every five years for surface parking lots;
- replacing the discretionary Convenience Store Review with objective development standards;
- eliminating the Excavation and Fill Review and Hazardous Substance Review, which are duplicative of rules and regulations implemented by other bureaus;
- clarifying the public comment period for Type II land use reviews.

In January 2003, the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) will publish the Proposed Report and Recommendation, which will include commentary and proposed language for the amendments. Following publication, BDS will hold an open house to allow the public to review the proposed amendments and ask questions of City staff. A public hearing before the Planning Commission will be held in February 2003 followed by a hearing before City Council.

If you have questions about CM2003 or would like a list of amendments to be considered, contact:

Douglas Hardy  
**503-823-7816**  
**dhardy@ci.portland.or.us**

## Regulatory Improvements Web site features regular project updates

To find out the latest news about the Regulatory Improvement Workplan, visit the Web site at **[www.regulatoryimprovements.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.regulatoryimprovements.ci.portland.or.us)**

The plan is moving quickly to review and revamp a number of the City's regulations to reduce confusion, conflicts and overly complex requirements.

The Web site is updated frequently by the Bureau of Development Services to show the latest progress. Access the Top 10 Regulatory Improvement List adopted by the City Council on October 16 and White Papers on all the items. Learn why these regulations made the list. See the projects in the plan along with a timeline for their completion.

Click on "Contact Us" to send us your comments on the Top 10 and Code Maintenance projects or to send email to the Mayor's Office.

## OPDR gets a name change

Effective October 9, the Office of Planning and Development Review officially had its name changed to the Bureau of Development Services (BDS). While the bureau's mission remains the same, the name change, suggested by the Mayor's Office, was made to help reduce confusion between BDS and the Bureau of Planning.

# INSIDE<sup>the</sup>DSC

## December Lunch and Learn

**“Signs of the Times”**

**Friday, December 13, 2002**

**Noon – 1:30 p.m.**

**1900 SW 4th Ave, Room 2500A**

Learn the latest on signs and the City’s Sign Code. Find out what types of signs are allowed and where. Get time-saving tips on permitting, sign registration and design standards. Hear case studies involving actual signs. Get the information you’ll need to use banners and A-boards in your business and learn what you need to do to make changes to existing signs.

This is a must for small business owners. Bring your questions. A specialist on the City’s Sign Code will be the key presenter in this session.

The session is free and registration is not required. You bring lunch - we provide the punch and cookies.

## Small Business Guide now in second printing

The newly published Small Business Guide to Development Services was such a success that it’s already into its second printing. The guide, developed by the Bureau of Development Services, is available free in the Development Services Center.

It tells you what you’ll need to know about locating, expanding or building a small business in Portland, based on the most frequently asked questions about permitting, zoning, design and land use.

The General Business Resources in the back of the guide are a must for anyone just getting started and a helpful tool to seasoned small business owners.

If you can’t make it in to the Development Services Center, the guide is also available at the Multnomah County Library and online at [www.bds.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.bds.ci.portland.or.us). Just click on “What’s New?” to get started.

## Bureau launches Small Business Night

A four-month pilot project began last month to help the DSC’s small business customers, who can’t make it in during regular business hours. Small Business Night began October 10 and will be offered two Thursdays each month through January.

The pilot, run in conjunction with Residential Permit Night, allows small business customers access to the same services as daytime customers at a time that may be more compatible with their business hours. The pilot will be reviewed after it wraps up in January to determine if it generated enough participation to become a regular service.

The dates and hours of the  
Small Business Nights are:

**5:00 to 7:30 p.m.**

**Thursday, November 7 and 21;**

**December 5 and 19;**

**January 9 and 23.**

## Holiday closures

The Development Services Center will be closed on the following days:

**Monday, Nov. 11**

Veteran’s Day

**Thursday & Friday, Nov. 28 & 29**

Thanksgiving

**Wednesday, Dec. 25**

Christmas

**Wednesday, Jan. 1**

New Year’s Day

There will be no  
Residential Permit Night  
on November 28,  
December 26 or  
January 2.

## Incident shows how inspections help ensure safe buildings

When smoke from a faulty piece of equipment triggered the Fox Tower's smoke detection system, everything worked according to plan. Sixty-one firefighters and eight engines were on the scene within minutes. No one was injured. And no property was lost.

After design, construction and testing of a building's fire life safety systems, Bureau of Development Services inspectors are the ones who make sure everything was done according to state and local buildings codes. "Everybody expects a building to be safe. Our bureau is about making sure that it is," says Karl Pfeifer, Bureau of Development Services commercial structural and mechanical inspector.

When smoke triggered the smoke detectors on the 16th floor of the tower, alarms immediately came on and the system went into smoke control mode. Fans kicked in and egress lighting came on, clearly marking the stairway exits from the floor.

Everyone working that Saturday was able to get out quickly and safely. But because the system never sensed flames, the sprinklers did not activate. The computer-oriented business occupying the 16th floor had no property damage.

"We inspect systems to be certain they will work as designed, especially in an emergency," says Pfeifer. "The outcome at the Fox Tower is a real-life example of how inspections pay off when it counts."

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## Safe drinking water focus of wellhead protection program

The Columbia South Shore Wellfield (CSSW) is the second largest water source in the State of Oregon, with about half the capacity of Portland's Bull Run source. The Portland water system serves one-quarter of the state's population.

For more than two years, Portland, Gresham and Fairview have been working with business, industry and community leaders to review and update the program to protect the wellfield from contamination by hazardous materials. The resulting proposal will replace existing programs in Portland and Fairview and initiate requirements in Gresham.

The most significant elements of the program will expand the boundary around the protection area and change the requirements regarding the use, transportation, loading, unloading and storage of hazardous materials for affected businesses operating inside that boundary. The new requirements were modeled on provisions in the Uniform Fire Code, making them compatible with existing regulations.

Specified quantities of halogenated solvents, carcinogenic materials, DEQ-listed hazardous wastes and petroleum and petroleum products are the targeted materials. The requirements are directed at the areas of businesses that handle more than the threshold quantities of these materials. The requirements are spelled out in detail along with a comprehensive set of regulatory

requirements and Best Management Practices in the Columbia South Shore Wellfield Wellhead Protection Program Reference Manual, available in its entirety at [www.water.ci.portland.or.us/groundwater/referencemanual.pdf](http://www.water.ci.portland.or.us/groundwater/referencemanual.pdf).

As part of the permitting process, the Bureau of Water Works will continue to participate in the review and approval of plans for site alterations, construction, building alterations, repairs or other work in the CSSW that involve or affect the storage, handling, use, transportation or containment of hazardous materials before permits are issued. In addition, fire inspectors in the three jurisdictions will conduct inspections and do enforcement. There will be no additional fees in connection with the program.

Hearings on the CSSW Wellhead Protection Program are set for November or December in the three cities. The Bureau of Water Works Web site will continue to be updated on all aspects of the program and dates and times of the hearings.

Adoption of the final versions of the code and the reference manual are anticipated in time to meet the proposed implementation date of July 1, 2003. After adoption, businesses will have from two to five years to implement the requirements of the program. If you have questions about the program or upcoming public hearings, contact Rosemary Menard, project manager, **503-823-7792**, or E-mail [rmenard@water.ci.portland.or.us](mailto:rmenard@water.ci.portland.or.us).

## BDS consolidates fees for residential site development

As of November 15, fees charged for site development of residential projects by the Bureau of Development Services have been consolidated into a single Residential Site Development Fee. Instead of paying separate fees for erosion control, tree preservation plan review, onsite stormwater plan review and onsite stormwater facilities inspection, a flat \$350 fee is assessed for new construction on a simple site. Projects on complex sites, those over 10,000 sq. ft., having a slope of 10 percent or more, or located in a special overlay zone, pay a single fee of \$450.

The Residential Site Development Fee applies to all residential building permits that include ground-disturbing activity and is slightly less on average than the total of the separate fees that have been eliminated.

A new single fee also applies to residential alterations, additions, garages and carports that involve ground disturbance. Simple site projects are assessed a fee of \$150 and jobs on complex sites are charged \$225.

The consolidated fee covers the cost of administering and enforcing non-structural City code regulations, such as stormwater management and

drainage, development standards for slopes, floodplains and environmental zones, site preparation, landscaping and tree preservation and erosion control. At the same time, the fee provides a single, consistent rate for residential customers. The higher fee assessed on complex sites reflects the additional time needed to review the plans and inspect the work.

For commercial projects, the existing fee schedule is still in effect; however, fees for Erosion Control and Onsite Stormwater Inspection have increased 5.1 percent. For example, a new commercial construction project on a simple site, with a value of \$1.5 million, would be assessed a fee of \$640. Prior to the increase, the fee was \$609. Site development permits and associated fees have also increased 5.1 percent.

For a copy of the complete Site Development Fee Schedule, see [www.bds.ci.portland.or.us/pubs/fees\\_schedule.pdf](http://www.bds.ci.portland.or.us/pubs/fees_schedule.pdf).

The Portland Department of Transportation (PDOT) implemented a minor fee change in July. Plan Check and PDOT Turnaround fees were combined into a single Plan Check fee. The fee for Residential Plan Checks is now \$121; a Commercial Plan Check is \$203.

## Wildfire Hazard Zone map, roofing requirements considered

With fire ravaging the Bluffs near the University of Portland last year and the worst forest fire season in Oregon history just ended, urban wildlands have been getting special attention. In November, Portland City Council will consider an ordinance, mapping the locations of Wildfire Hazard Zones in the city and regulating the types of roofing materials that may be used in those zones.

The proposed ordinance employs the criteria adopted by the state in 1993 to assign and map the locations, based on type and density of vegetation, topography and weather. The roofing requirements are based on additional construction standards for wildfire hazard zones in the Oregon One-and Two-Family Building Code and the Oregon Structural Specialty Code.

The proposed roofing requirements will affect only new construction and reroofing, when more than 50 percent of the roofing material is being replaced. Dave Flood, Portland Fire Bureau inspector, says the roofing requirements are intended to improve safety without creating more burdensome regulations.

New roofs and 50 percent replacements must be Class C or better for residential applications and Class B or better for commercial applications. Untreated treated shakes and shingles will not be allowed.

"We've worked closely with Oregon Department of Forestry and Metro to assign and map the areas of concern. We will do more public outreach in these parts of the city, so people are aware of the risks and the types of roofing materials that meet the requirements."



The Plans Examiner is a bi-monthly publication of the City of Portland  
 Bureau of Development Services  
 Mayor Vera Katz 503-823-4120

**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.bds.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.bds.ci.portland.or.us) and  
[www.planning.ci.portland.or.us/](http://www.planning.ci.portland.or.us/)

<b>BDS — Administration</b>	503-823-7308	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	
Building Code Questions	503-823-7310 (e)(4)	Development Requirements and/or Right-of-Way Policy	
Fire Code Questions	503-823-7366	Elizabeth Papadopoulos	503-823-7647
Blueprint 2000	503-823-7822	Minor Partitions—Cherrie Eudaly	503-823-7081
<b>24-hour Inspection Request Recording</b>	503-823-7000 (e)	Local Improvement Districts	
Inspection Section — 1 & 2 Family Dwellings	503-823-7388	Andrew Aebi	503-823-5648
Commercial {	Plumbing	Street Permit Engineering	
	Building & Mechanical	Jerry Markesino	503-823-7057
	Electrical	Transportation Plan Review	
Development Services Center	503-823-7310	Richard Eisenhauer	503-823-7080
Development Services Center FAX	503-823-3018	Systems Development Charge	
Trade Permits	503-823-7363	Richard Eisenhauer	503-823-7080
<b>Newsletter Contact</b> — Ann Kohler	503-823-7886		
<b>Permit Status via FAX</b>	503-823-7000 (4)	<b>TREES — Urban Forestry (7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.)</b>	
<b>Permit Status via Voice Mail</b>	503-823-7357	Pruning/Planning/Removal Permits	
<b>Permit Records</b>		N / NE — Luke Miller	503-823-4511
Document Control / Current Applications	503-823-7357 (e)	NW / SW — Charley Davis	503-823-4523
Inspection Records/Finalled Permits	503-823-7660	Southeast — Ned Sodja	503-823-4440
Building Record Center FAX	503-823-7765	Tree Cutting Ordinance	
Septic Tanks / Cesspools	503-823-7247	Frank Krawczyk	503-823-4011
<b>Planning &amp; Zoning – Information</b>	503-823-7526	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
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>		<b>WATER</b>	
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
<b>FIRE BUREAU</b>		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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