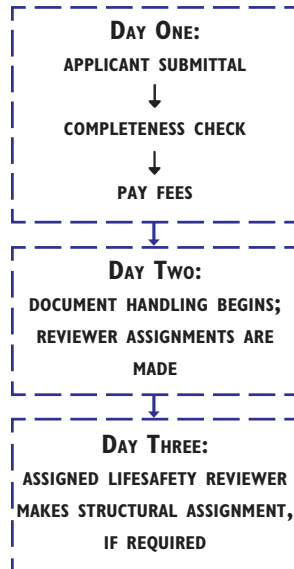


# THE PLANS Examiner

Vol. 6, No. 5 City of Portland Office of Planning and Development Review

May 2000

## Residential permit application process changes



*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.*



### INSIDE

- 2 - CLEANING UP THE CODE
- 2 - STREET TREE PROGRAM
- 3 - MEASURING THE GRADE
- 3 - COMMUNITY COURTS
- 4 - HOW TO REACH US

The Office of Planning and Development Review is making a concerted effort to reduce the total processing time for building permits, especially those for new single family residences. Here are some things you, as residential permit applicants, can do to help:

**Duplication of Plans.** If the plan you're using has already been constructed somewhere in Portland, we may not need to review the design if has been reviewed and approved before. Bring in the address and City of Portland folder number of the previously-built dwelling, and we can look it up in our files. If there are minor differences between the plans, please give us a brief written description of those changes.

**Plan Alternates and Options.** Many plans show a number of alternates or options. Save time by "X"ing out all alternates or options that won't be built under the current application on all sets of plans.

**Complete Plans and Application.** The submittal checklist is intended to help you determine if you've given us all the information we need to review your project. When you submit your plans, be sure all items are included. In addition, please identify the type of lateral bracing system (CABO or engineered) and which energy path (one, eight or other) has been used in designing the house. Plans examiners and field inspectors will use this information.

Here's what we're doing to make the process more helpful to builders and other applicants:

**Day Three Project Assessment.** Our life safety / structural reviewers are assessing the plans assigned to them, generally on the third day of the building permit process.

This process:

- Verifies that all necessary information is included;
- Verifies that the plans meet our submittal standards, per "Plan Alternates and Options";
- Determines if there are structural components to be reviewed by a structural engineer;
- Helps gauge the plan reviewer's workload, based on the types of plans assigned.

Following the project assessment, the examiner contacts the applicant to alert them about any additional information that's needed, any plans that need clarification, the need for combined or separate life safety and structural reviews, and the amount of time anticipated for the life safety/structural review to be completed. Our goal is to give you a better idea of how long the life safety / structural review(s) and the total process will take to complete.

**General Notes and Supplemental Information.** Rather than reviewing basic code information that may or may not appear on your plans, on April 10 we began appending a set of Supplementary General Notes on basic code to all approved plans. These are items that are more efficiently enforced by our field inspectors. The notes pertain to the 1996 One- and Two-Family Dwelling Code for projects accepted through March 31 and will be modified to show changes resulting from the statewide adoption of the new International One-and Two-Family Dwelling Code, effective April 3, 2000. The list will be gradually expanded to cover plumbing, mechanical and electrical notes.

Send your comments or suggestions about the submittal process, to [stalsberg@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:stalsberg@ci.portland.or.us).

## Code Maintenance 2000 cleans up

Over the past several years, Development Services Center customers and city staff have submitted numerous requests to clarify or merely clean up outdated language in the City's Zoning Code. The requests went into a database. Then last March, Code Maintenance 2000 (CM 2000) was created to consider the more than 500 requests and select from them amendments that would be consistent with Blueprint 2000. The objective was to improve the clarity and usability of the code, while avoiding significant changes to the code's policy or intent.

On March 16, 2000, the City Council adopted the report on Code Maintenance 2000 and amended the Zoning Code to match the report's recommendations. The amendments became effective April 17.

The Bureau of Planning and the Office of Planning and Development Review selected more than 100 Zoning Code amendments to include in CM 2000. During the process, the focus was on cleaning up the code to fix existing problems without creating new obstacles. The amendments fit into one of four categories:

- Wording in the code that needed clarification;
- Sections of code that were in direct conflict with other sections or with city bureau requirements;
- Language that was outdated, inconsistent between sections or grammatically incorrect;
- References that were outdated or had been changed.

Of these amendments, a few resulted in minor policy changes, while improving the language. The benefits of clarifying the code exceeded the "no policy change" objective in these cases. Some were suggested during two public hearings before the Planning Commission and recommended for inclusion in the amendments.

The amendments ranged from changing "Bureau of Buildings" to "Office of Planning and Development Review," everywhere it appeared in the code, to exempting flag lots from transit street setbacks.

To get a copy of the amended code, contact the Bureau of Planning, **503-823-7700**.

### Residential appointments by fax

Appointments for new single-family residential (NSFR) construction permits may now be scheduled by fax. Simply call **503-823-0672** to request a residential appointment packet. NSFR appointments are being scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings only.

## New form speeds trees program

It will only take a few minutes to complete, and it may help you add "curb appeal" to your property. It is the new Urban Forestry (Street Tree) Review Checklist. If you'll be doing a residential or commercial remodeling project with a value greater than \$25,000, your answers will determine if your property needs a street tree review (and maybe a permit) from Urban Forestry.

If the checklist shows that a street tree review is required, you'll pay the fee along with your other permit fees. Your permits won't be slowed down by the need for a review. If the review of your site by Urban Forestry indicates that street trees are required, they must be planted before the building inspector signs off on the final inspection. You'll be provided with information on the kinds and sizes of trees to plant, as well as directions for planting and spacing them.

Whether or not onstruction or remodeling is visible from the outside, the number of trees between the curb and the sidewalk adjacent to your property will be considered. This has been the case for several years with commercial projects, and when the City Council passed the ordinance on July 1, 1999, residential properties were brought under the street tree requirement.

The new form is available in the Development Services Center. It can be completed quickly and must be turned in to the plan reviewer along with your permit application.

Though the form is still evolving, the goal is to smooth the permitting process, while helping property owners and contractors comply with the new ordinance. If you have questions about the ordinance or the form, call Vince Salomone, Urban



## Interactive Voice Response coming

In June, the Office of Planning and Development Review will have its Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system up and running. The new system, similar to other IVR systems in the Portland metropolitan area, will allow permit applicants to check on permit status and inspections over the phone. Watch the special June issue of the Plans Examiner for details.

## How do you measure height?

There was a time when flat, developable lots were easy to find. But with Portland's rapidly growing population and restrictions on urban sprawl, these sites are all but gone. Now, development has taken to the hills. With it has come a new set of concerns.

Recently, during the Code Maintenance 2000 (CM 2000) Planning Commission hearings, a group of West Hills citizens requested that the definition of "grade," from which to measure the allowed height of a building, be changed in the Zoning Code. The Bureau of Planning expects to present an alternative amendment to the City Council in June or July.

To get on the list for notification of hearings for this amendment, call Jay Sugnet, Bureau of Planning, **503-823-5869**.

Initially, the Planning Commission recommended that the "original" grade be used to measure height, instead of the current policy, which allows height measurement to be based on the finished grade of the site. The amendment was included in the CM 2000 recommendations.

During the City Council hearing on CM 2000, the Office of Planning and Development Review (OPDR) asked that the amendment be removed because of significant concerns and questions about how to implement it. OPDR was concerned about defining the term "original" and how to administer the definition during a plan check.

After hearing public comments, the council decided the issue needed more attention, particularly on sloping sites, and requested alternatives. This sent the CM 2000 crew back to the drawing board to develop a new amendment, which provides a narrow and focused solution to the problem.

## It's time to move some dirt

If your project is in the Skyline Plan District, the moratorium on exposing the soil to stormwater is ended. From May 1 through September 30, construction work in these sensitive areas may proceed. Both Northwest Hills and Balch Creek Subdistricts, which are located on slopes and in Environmental Zones, are affected.

Information on the moratorium can be found in the Zoning Code, Sec. 33.575. Visit the Web site, [www.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.ci.portland.or.us), then click on the following links: City Code; Planning Bureau Information; Title 33; Zoning Code; Plan Districts; Skyline Plan District. Maps of the area are also available on the site.

## Community Courts help neighborhoods

By paying attention to smaller problems- petty theft, graffiti, vandalism, broken windows, overgrown yards, litter and abandoned properties - a neighborhood can help check deterioration and criminal behavior. Left unfixed, these problems are like beacons that signal criminals that neighbors are willing to look the other way.

This "broken window" theory has been a cornerstone of Community Policing. Now, it has become the turning point for some neighborhoods when it comes to dealing with nuisances. While Community Policing sets the wheels in motion to discourage crime, Community Courts work to provide "restorative" justice.

Portland has two such courts on the eastside - one that meets at the Brentwood-Darlington Community Center, another at the King Neighborhood Facility. On the westside, a neighborhood district attorney handles the cases until a Community Court can be set up there. These courts use sentences that "restore" something to the community as their primary enforcement tools, rather than fines or jail time.

Portland Code Enforcement Teams work through Community Courts with property owners and occupants whose properties are the objects of frequent complaints from the neighborhood. Violations of city codes for nuisances, zoning or solid waste are the most common. The goals are to bring properties into compliance, while giving something back to the neighborhood. At the same time, the court is able to identify individuals who may need social service assistance and steer them to the appropriate agencies.

Though fines and criminal prosecution can still be used, the case against the owner or tenant may be dismissed if he or she agrees to stop the violation and perform specific community service, such as litter or graffiti clean up. Those who violate their agreements can then be fined or face prosecution.

To find out more about how Community Courts work to help neighborhoods, call **503-823-7327**.

### Development Services Center Hours

**7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Monday - Friday**

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

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	Glenn Pierce 823-7079	
Fire Code Questions	823-7366	Minor Partitions	Cherrie Eudaly 823-7081	
Blueprint 2000	823-7822	Local Improvement Districts	Matt Brown 823-7027	
<b>24-hour Inspection Request Recording</b>	823-7000 (e)	Street Permit Engineering	Jerry Markesino 823-7057	
Inspection Section — 1 & 2 Family Dwellings	823-7388	Transportation Plan Review	Joyce Reyman 823-6108	
Commercial {	Plumbing	823-7302	Systems Development Charge	Joyce Reyman 823-6108
	Building & Mechanical	823-7303		
	Electrical	823-7304		
Development Services Center	823-7310	<b>TREES (7a.m. - 3:30 p.m.)</b>		
Development Services Center FAX	823-3018	Pruning/Planning/Removal Permits		
Trade Permits	823-7363	N / NE — Joe Hintz	823-4025	
<b>Newsletter Contact — Ann Kohler</b>	823-7886	NW / SW — Charley Davis	823-4523	
<b>Permit Status</b>	823-7357	Southeast — Ned Sodja	823-4440	
<b>Permit Records</b>		Tree Cutting Ordinance	Myles Black 823-4018	
Document Control/Current Applications	823-7357 (e)	Transportation Improvements	Joe Hintz 823-4025	
Inspection Records/Finalled Permits	823-7660	Commercial Planning and Development	Vincent Salomone 823-4011	
Building Record Center FAX	823-7994	<b>WATER</b>		
Septic Tanks/Cesspools	823-7247	Water Service Information	823-7368	
<b>Planning &amp; Zoning – Information</b>	823-7526	Hydrant Permits	823-7368	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>		Plan Review — Tom Chambers	823-7477	
Development Engineering	823-7761	Vern Freeman	823-7489	
Construction & Demolition Recycling Info	823-7107	Subdivision Planning — Hill Hampton	823-7485	
Industrial Source Control	823-7585	Backflow Valve Installation Requirements	Dave Barrigan 823-7479	
<b>FIRE BUREAU</b>				
Development Standards, Sprinklers, Alarms				
Rich Butcher	823-3802			
Flammable Liquids, Tanks, Hazardous Processes				
Doug Friant	823-3935			



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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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