



Community Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Emily Arteche, Director
Date: March 18, 2024
Subject: Concerning consolidating local permit review processes and amending the SMC

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this memo is to introduce a forthcoming Snoqualmie Municipal Code, SMC amendment, relating to consolidating local permit review processes in response to recently amended sections of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) including: RCW 36.70B.140, 36.70B.020, 36.70B.070, 36.70B.080, and 36.70B.160; reenacting and amending RCW 36.70B.110. New sections were added to chapter 36.70B RCW.

BACKGROUND:

The Growth Management Act, GMA directs fully planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations. Development regulations include zoning ordinances, official controls, subdivision ordinances, and other regulations. State regulations controlling permit review timeframes date back to the mid 1990's; and required permit decisions to be issued within 120 days.

During its 2023 session, the Washington State Legislature passed and the Governor signed [SB 5290](#) which intends to provide prompt and coordinated reviews for project permit applications. The bill specially is designed to decrease permit processing review times by standardizing processing timeframes, i.e., days by permit type. The bill also requires that some cities over 20,000 conduct an annual performance report, by collecting certain data.

ANALYSIS:

City's project permit application time periods are regulated under SMC 14.30.120 -Time limitation for issuance of notice of decision, which states a standard 120 days requirement for issuance of a notice of decision. The new legislation requires local governments to establish and implement time periods for each type of project permit application in their development regulations. Although, there is some flexibility in adjusting the specific number of processing days for each permit type, these timeframes may not exceed the processing timeframes established in SB 5290 unless specifically modified by the local government. A summary of the new timeframes is listed below.

Summary of New Permit Processing Timeframes

65 days for permits which do not require public notice;

100 days for permits which require public notice; and
170 days for permits which require public notice and a public hearing.

Other components to the new legislation include, establishing for the temporary suspension of a permit application, initially collection of only 80 percent of a permit fee, and refunding a portion of the permit fee if the permitting time periods are breached. At this time, the City does not have any established permit fees, with the expectation of Wireless Community Facility permit fee.

Other provision of the bill requires the establishment of a digital permitting process at the Department of Commerce.

The provisions of SB 5290 this act takes effect 7 January 1, 2025.

NEXT STEPS:

Discussion only. Staff will prepare amendments to the SMC, include a crosswalk (matrix) showcasing the existing code and proposed revisions necessary to bring the development code into compliance at a future meeting.