



# REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT OVERSIGHT COMMISSION City of Sacramento

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915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671

STAFF REPORT  
October 9, 2006

Members of the Development Oversight Commission:

**Subject:** Procedural Improvements for Over-the-Counter Minor Excavation  
Encroachment Permits

**Location/Council District:** Citywide

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Commission support the proposed procedural improvements. The proposed procedural improvements to over-the-counter excavation encroachment permits will result in a 72-hour turn around and support the Development Services Department Goal of having a development review process that is predictable, timely and clear, and supports the DOC Goal to "Assist the City of Sacramento in becoming a development friendly city." Staff recommends that the Commission support the proposed procedural improvements.

**Contacts:** Edward Williams, Development Engineering Manager, 808-5440;  
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**Presenter:** Edward Williams

**Department:** Development Services

**Division:** Development Engineering

**Organization Number:** 4881

## **Description / Analysis:**

**Issue:** Minor excavation encroachment permits are permits that allow individuals to do minor construction work within the City right-of-way (i.e. small repairs of sidewalk, curb or gutter, or removal of driveways). The Development Engineering Division, with the goal of streamlining and expediting the process, is proposing the implementation of procedural improvements for those minor over-the-counter encroachment permits where no engineering is required.

**Policy Considerations:** Enacting these procedural improvements is not a change in policy but rather a friendlier and more timely and predictable way of doing business.

**Rationale for Recommendation:** The Development Engineering Division serves as the facilitating arm for private development of public infrastructure. Its scope of work ranges from minor permits to large-scale public improvements. With regard to minor excavation encroachment permits, Development Engineering works collaboratively with several workgroups (i.e. Dept. of Utilities' Engineering Services, Dept. of Transportation's Construction Inspection Section) as a processing and reviewing agency. In 2003, when Development Engineering was moved from the Public Works Department to the Development Services Department, it maintained its function as the in-take/processing group for minor excavation encroachment permits, while the Department of Transportation's Construction Inspection Section remained responsible for final inspection and permit issuance.

As the respective divisions moved into different departments, the approval and issuance process began to experience delays and inefficiencies that limited the quality of service provided to customers. As the gatekeeper to the minor excavation encroachment permit process—processing on average one minor excavation encroachment permit a day—Development Engineering has mapped out the process and coordinated several procedural improvements to create efficiencies and eliminate unnecessary steps for a more seamless and predictable process to our customers. The changes are as follows:

### **Information**

#### Issue

- With many permittees being one-time or infrequent applicants, their familiarity with the process is limited. Providing documentation such as traffic control plans or drawings resulted in delays due to revisions.

#### Procedural Improvement(s)

- Phase 1: Development Engineering coordinated with the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Construction Inspection Section to create standardized traffic control plans (See Attachment 1) that are available on the City's website.
- Phase 2: The two groups are also in the process of creating templates that will be added to the application packet to clarify acceptable drawings of work within the right-of-way.

### **Timeliness**

#### Issue

- With the reviewing agencies residing in different departments, delays in project commencement has been an ongoing complaint from customers.

Procedural Improvement(s) (Committing to a 72-hour turn around)

- Phase 1: Development Engineering acquired a commitment to a 24-hour turnaround from the Department of Utilities on comments relating to minor excavation encroachment permits.
- Phase 1: DOT has also committed to streamlining the process and will now be issuing permits on-site at the inspection visit within 72 hours of the complete application submittal.
- Phase 2: The City of Sacramento is in the process of acquiring capabilities that allow online payments via the City website. Once implemented (early 2007), applicants will be able to submit a full submittal package via the internet, thereby increasing convenience to our customers.

**Insurance Requirements**

Issue


- Per City Code Chapter 12.12.160, excavation permit applicants are required to provide proof of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in general liability insurance. For homeowners, who typically carry three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in coverage, this coverage change would require a fee.

Procedural Improvement(s)

- Development Engineering has coordinated with Risk Management and the City Attorney's Office to have these requirements modified. In Phase 2 of our procedural improvements, Development Engineering will be proposing a revision of the City Code to reduce this requirement to \$300,000 for those applicants utilizing homeowner's insurance.

**Financial Considerations:** There is no impact to the general fund.

**DOC Goals and Recommendations:** The proposed procedural improvements to minor over-the-counter excavation encroachment permits support the Development Services Department's Goal of having a development review process that is predictable, timely and clear, and supports the DOC goal to "Assist the City of Sacramento in becoming a development friendly city." Staff recommends that the Commission support the proposed procedural improvements.

Respectfully submitted by:   
Edward Williams  
Development Engineering Manager

Recommendation Approved:


  
William A. Thomas  
Director of Development Services

Table of Contents:

Report Pg 1

Attachments:

- 1 Sample Traffic Control Plan Pg 5
- 2 Minor Excavation Encroachment Permit Process Flowchart Pg 6