



REPORT TO COUNCIL

City of Sacramento

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Staff Report
December 15, 2009

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

Title: Facilities Permit Program Amendment

Location/Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Receive and File

Contact: David Kwong, Acting Director of Community Development, 808-2991; Carl Hefner, Interim Chief Building Official, 808-8779; Joy Patterson, Principal Planner, 808-5607.

Presenters: David Kwong, Acting Director of Community Development

Department: Community Development

Division: Building

Organization No: 21001211

Description/Analysis

Issue: At the October 27, 2009 City Council meeting, related to the discussion on an interim ordinance for Beverage Bottling Plants, concerns were raised regarding some of the processes associated with the Building Division's Facilities Permit Program (FPP). The Council requested a report back on the program to insure that it is compliant with Sacramento City Code.

The FPP program was designed to offer a streamlined building permit process for certain types of commercial and industrial projects. The FPP utilizes a team concept to facilitate all of the work needed for the project. One team of inspectors completes plan reviews and inspections, allowing the team to achieve a high level of familiarity with the project which in turn leads to faster and more efficient service.

The aspect of the program that raised concern was that, in some cases, an oral or written "Authorization to Start Work" was given to a project prior to the issuance of the actual building permit. The department temporarily suspended the FPP program until it could be reviewed and determined compliant with city

codes and appropriately applied to projects.

A team consisting of the City Attorney's Office, the Fire Department, and the Community Development Department reviewed the program components including who and what types of projects would qualify for the program, the practice of issuing the authorization to start work and program checks and balances. Several program revisions resulted from this review.

The components of the revised program are set out in Attachment 1. Key changes are as follows:

1. The original program required people participating in the program to register their building with the city. The revised program does not require registration of the building (or the \$150 registration fee) and is available to a wider range of project types and applicants throughout the city.
2. The original program allowed individuals to start work with an oral or written "Authorization to Start Work". The revised program requires that a building permit is issued before work is started as required by city code.

The name of the program has been changed to the "Facilitated" Permit Program to more accurately reflect the purposes and benefits of the revised program. The Community Development Department will produce a more detailed program guide for use by staff and applicants by the middle of January 2010. The revised FPP program will be reactivated on Wednesday December 16, 2009.

The Community Development and Fire Departments will monitor the program and report back to the City Council on the impact of the program on department resources and applicants. The departments, in concert with the City Attorney's office, are continuing their review of "concurrent review" which would allow work to proceed simultaneously with plan check.

Policy Considerations: The Facilitated Permit Program is consistent with the city's Strategic Plan goal to expand economic development throughout the city.

Environmental Considerations:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

The FPP program is an administrative activity and is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2)).

Sustainability Considerations: There is no sustainability considerations associated with this report.

Commission/Committee Action: None

Rationale for Recommendation: The FPP is a streamlined program that supports the City's economic development objectives and serves the public. It is to the benefit of the city to continue the program, as revised, in compliance with all city codes.

Financial Considerations: There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): No goods or services are being purchased under this report.

Respectfully Submitted by: 
David Kwong
Planning Manager

Approved by: 
David Kwong
Acting Director of Community Development

Recommendation Approved:


Ray Kerridge
City Manager

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City of Sacramento – Building Division
Facilitated Permit Program (FPP)
December 8, 2009

Advantages of FPP over Regular Building Permit Submittal

1. Plan intake and permitting is streamlined (plan review in five days or less)
2. The same team of Building Division personnel conducts plan review and inspections for the project.
3. Applicant can call inspectors directly for inspections. Inspectors are familiar with project and can determine readiness for inspection.

Qualifying Project Criteria

1. Project comprised of only interior alterations to office (B occupancy), retail (M occupancy), warehouse (S occupancy), and assemblies less than 100 people.
2. Project does not involve change in building occupancy.
3. Project is “like for like”, with no fire/life safety systemic improvements needed.
4. Project does not require structural review that requires structural analysis and supporting documentation.
5. Proposed building use (land use) is consistent with zoning regulations.
6. Parking requirements are met.
7. Minor exterior changes are permitted if zoning requirements met (no plan review modification, special permit modification or other planning entitlement required).
8. County Health Department approval (if required for building use) must be obtained prior to building permit submittal.
9. Design professional takes responsibility for submittal of complete and accurate set of plans.

Fees

1. For Facilitated Permit Program, 50% of plan check fee is paid in addition to regular plan check fee at time of plan submittal.
2. When permit is ready to issue, pay remainder of building permit fees and all other fees per city code.
3. Applicants are subject to re-inspection fees if inspectors are called out to the project site but work is not ready for inspection.
4. Fire plan review and inspections are billed at \$140 per hour.

Process

1. Staff determines that the project meets FPP criteria, project building permit application is submitted to the Building Division and all FPP plan check fees are paid.
2. Plans are reviewed (turn around is 5 working days or less per cycle)*

3. Plans are approved, all remaining building permit and other fees per city code are paid, and building permit issued. Work can commence.
4. Applicant calls designated inspector(s) to schedule inspection(s) when work is ready.
5. Permit finalized and building ready for occupancy.

*If, during plan review, it is discovered that plans need corrections, plan check comments will be given to design professional for corrections.

Comparison between Regular Building Permit Program and FPP

Item	Regular Building Permit	FPP
1 st cycle plan review	10 days	5 days
2 nd cycle plan review	10 days	5 days (if needed)
Inspection Lead Time	1 day building 1-3 days fire	1 day 1 day
Personnel	1. Plan review and building inspectors in different work group 2. Call automated inspection line for inspection	1. Team approach, same team of people does both plan review and inspections 2. Call inspector directly for inspection
Plan Check Fee	Standard Plan Check fee	Plan Check fee plus 50% for facilitated review (expedited permit fee)

Differences between Original FPP Program and Revised Program

1. Certain types of industrial uses are no longer permitted in the program.
2. The original program required people participating in the program to register their building with the city. The revised program does not require registration of the building (or the \$150 registration fee) and is available to more individuals throughout the city.
3. The original program allowed individuals to start work with an oral or written "Authorization to Start Work". The revised program requires that a building permit is issued before work is started as required by city code.

Next Steps for Program Improvement

1. As the revised Facilitated Permit Program is available to more individuals, the Community Development and Fire Departments will need to monitor the program and report back to the City Council on the impact of the program on department resources. Staff will provide a full evaluation of the program at a later date.
2. Departments will research the feasibility of concurrent review to allow work to proceed simultaneously with plan check.
3. Development of a Facilitated Permit Program Guide by the middle of January 2010.

