



Isiah Leggett
County Executive

CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

July 2010

Carla Reid
Director

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/permittingservices/>



Carla Reid, Director
Department of Permitting Services

REID THIS!

I am excited to announce that Constructive Comments, the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) newsletter, is back by popular demand. Constructive Comments will be electronically distributed on a quarterly basis. Constructive Comments will keep you up to date on what's going on in DPS – this includes strategic initiatives, code updates, service improvements, new business procedures, upcoming events, outreach activities, and other important announcements.

I hope that every time you receive our newsletter, you will take the time to **REID THIS!** column. In this column, I will highlight what I am focusing on in the department. Since I came to the County three years ago, my goal has been to promote the department's lofty mission of providing the highest quality of public service while ensuring compliance with Montgomery County's development and construction standards. It has been a challenge given all that has occurred in the building industry during this time, but we are getting the job done... and there is more to do still.

Lastly, I realize that two-way communication has always been superior to one-way communication. So consider this to be your open invitation to share your thoughts with us, give us feedback about your DPS experience, and recommend service improvements. We are always looking for ways to make your experience a pleasant one.

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The Department of Permitting Services Reorganizes

On July 1, 2009, the Department of Permitting Services was reorganized. Structurally speaking, no major changes occurred. There were three divisions before the reorganization (Casework Management, Building Construction, and Land Development), and there are three divisions after the reorganization. Only the name of one division changed. The Customer Service Division replaced the Casework Management Division. Customer Service is a more descriptive name, which accurately reflects the work performed by the division.

More importantly, the reorganization was implemented to address two critical issues:

1) Lack of dedicated staff responsible for outreach to DPS customers

The Customer Service Division proactively educates residents and the development community about the permitting process by maintaining and improving the DPS web site, publishing the DPS newsletter, coordinating outreach events and providing information to applicants. Additionally, the Customer Service Division develops customer satisfaction surveys, analyzes the results, reports findings, and

recommends a course of action for improvement.

The Division is also responsible for facilitating “cases” through the permitting process. A case is a construction project that is assigned a employee to facilitate the permit process from beginning (permit intake) to end (final inspection).

For more information on DPS Cases, please read the article on page 4 or call Simin Rasolee on (240) 777-6283 or Reginald Jetter on (240) 777-6275.

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Wheaton Glenmont Civic Association Spring Festival 6/5/10



World of Wheaton Festival 10/11/09



DPS Building Construction Open House 6/28/10

2) Misalignment of DPS Functions

To resolve this issue, the Zoning Section and the Site Plan Enforcement Section were moved from the Casework Management Division to the Building Construction Division. Also, the drainage review and drainage complaint functions were moved from the Building Construction Division to the Land Development Division. With these changes, customers benefited from a more coordinated permit process (having like functions organized in a single division, rather than in multiple divisions) and an increase in the type of permits eligible for Fast Track (one day, in and out of DPS service). For a complete listing of the responsibilities of (and changes in) each division, please see DPS’ web site, “What’s New” and select “Functional Responsibilities for DPS” and “DPS Organization Structure”.

DPS’ MANAGEMENT TEAM



Building Construction

Land Development

Sitting from left: Susan Scaldemby, Gail Lucas. Standing from left: Hemal Mustafa, George Muste, Steve Thomas, Ehsan Motazed, Hadi Mansouri

Sitting: Christina Contreras. Standing from left: Stan Wong, Gene von Gunten, Mike Reahl, Leroy Anderson, Rick Brush.



Customer Service

From the left: Reginald Jetter, Simin Rasolee.



Information Technology

Tom Laycock

CUSTOMER SERVICE

CONFUSED ABOUT ALL THOSE PERMITTING RULES AND REGULATIONS?

WOULD YOU LIKE ONE POINT OF CONTACT TO GET YOU THROUGH THE PERMITTING PROCESS?

REQUEST A CASE FACILITATOR!

Case Management Program

The Department of Permitting Services (DPS) July 2009 reorganization focused on dedicating staff to public outreach and education. The Case Management Program is designed to educate applicants about the permit process for their specific project before they begin. The Case Management Program strategically guides applicants from the preliminary design concept to the issuance of permits to final inspection. The goal is to take the mystery out of the permitting process for the applicant and to give DPS staff an application that can be approved the first time around. This program creates a win-win situation for the applicant and DPS staff.

What Is A Case Project?

A case is a construction project that is deemed to be:

- Complex (i.e. large commercial construction or unique homes);
 - Unique in nature (i.e. new building concept);
 - Place of Worship;
 - Priority County Projects
 - Time Sensitive (i.e. collapsed or unstable structures); and
- Green Tape Projects (building projects in Silver Spring, Wheaton, Long Branch, and Affordable Housing Projects).

How Does The Program Work?

The applicant submits a written request to DPS to assign their project to a case facilitator. Send written request to:

Department of Permitting Services
Customer Service Division
255 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20850
Or go to

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/311
and search for "Case Management" and submit a service request.

The Manager of Customer Service Division reviews the request and determines if a Case Facilitator should be assigned. Once accepted into Case Management Program, a Customer Service Permit Technician will be assigned as Case Facilitator to serve as the liaison between the client and the department.

What Is Expected From Case Facilitators?

- Facilitate Pre-Design Consultation Meetings;
- Inform applicants of the entire permitting process as it relates to their project;
- Coordinate permit intake, processing, and issuance of all permits;
- Assist applicants through the permitting process by keeping them informed of their permit status; and resolve issues that impede the timely completion of the permitting process.

What Is Expected From Clients?

Applicants provide a detailed description of the project; identify the current and proposed use; outline land or building code compliance issues; identify a point of contact; identify a timeline and submit the permit application through the DPS Case Facilitator.



311
Replaces Department of
Permitting Services
Main Telephone Number

On June 18, 2010 Montgomery County launched the 311 call center. One of the eight policy objectives of County Executive Ike Leggett is to create “greater responsiveness and accountability” in meeting the needs of a very diverse County. As part of this overall objective, Leggett believes a county government that “listens” must have a single one stop phone number and user friendly website for concerns and request. This single number, 3-1-1, eliminates the need for residents to know how County government is structured. MC311 provides significantly enhanced service delivery and allows the County the ability to capture any individual's information or service wants and needs and analyze that information to the benefit of the general public and Government as a whole. The goal of MC311 is to answer all calls for service quickly and effectively and to provide the appropriate response in all instances. The MC311 Customer Service Representatives

(CSR) handle requests for County services, answer general questions and listen to complaints of all kinds. For calls that require departmental action, CSRs create a service request that is sent to appropriate staff, as determined by each department. Callers are given a tracking number they can use to follow the status of their request. Calls regarding technical codes or standards maybe transferred to DPS for immediate response. For more information, click on the following link <http://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/>

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Commercial Intermediate Track

WHAT IS THE "INTERMEDIATE TRACK" PERMIT PROCESS?

The "Intermediate Track" process is for minor projects that do not qualify for our “Fast Track” process, but can otherwise be reviewed and approved by DPS’ staff within a short period of time – not to exceed 10 working days.

WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS QUALIFY FOR THE "INTERMEDIATE TRACK" PROCESS?

Qualifying projects are interior alterations such as:

- Minor interior alteration only
- Tenant fit outs for first time tenant on a single floor level

Projects that include the following do NOT qualify for Intermediate Track:

- A tenant with a High Hazard or Institutional Use Group
- A change to the building code or fire code Occupancy Classification

- Any use where hazardous materials (other than limited amounts of cleaning solutions) are used or stored in significant quantity, such as laboratories using chemicals
- Site changes affecting building setbacks or number of parking spaces
- Pending zoning “special exception”
- A change in the building’s construction type
- A major revision to the base construction of a building

Note: If the commercial plans submitted for Intermediate Track review have a complex design and/or structural modifications, a more extensive review will be required. Therefore, the project will be reviewed through the regular commercial plan review process.

WHAT IS THE PERMIT PROCESS FOR INTERMEDIATE TRACK PROJECTS?

The applicant must submit the following documents and information:

- A completed Commercial Building Application
- Two complete sets of construction drawings (engineer/architect signed/sealed with certification and title block on each page)
- A Code Analysis, with scaled and dimensioned floor plans, elevations, sections and details, as appropriate; room/door/window schedules, and partition schedules with fire ratings and test numbers, as appropriate
- The project’s Scope of Work
- Floor plan(s) showing the space being altered and all means of egress to the identified floor exits
- Floor plan(s) clearly distinguishing between existing conditions and new

work. (Note: Clouds are not an acceptable method to indicate new work.)

- Two complete sets of electrical drawings to include riser diagram, panel/light schedules and power/light plans. Clearly distinguish between new work and existing conditions.
- Two complete sets of structural drawings to include structural floor plans, sections and details, as appropriate; general structural specifications and loading criteria; and computations as appropriate. Clearly distinguish between new work and existing conditions.
- Two complete sets of mechanical drawings to show the location of all existing supply and return registers (if the system and ductwork are existing), indicate as such; and completed duct layout with all main branch sizes, register sizes and CFM at each register (if ductwork is new). In addition, provide the equipment schedule for all new equipment.
- If a new Use and Occupancy certificate is being obtained, a completed Use and Occupancy Application with two Site Plans.
- All drawings must not exceed 36” x 48”.

DPS Staff will determine whether or not the application is placed in the “Intermediate Track” during the application intake process while the applicant is present.

The applicant will know at the end of the intake process that their application has been placed in the “Intermediate Track”.

Once all reviews are approved, DPS

staff will contact the applicant with the remaining permit fee that is due. Once all fees have been paid the permit will be issued.

WHAT WILL THE PERMIT COST?

Permit fees are assessed in accordance with Executive Regulation No. 11-08, Schedule of fees for Permits, Licenses and Certifications. A 10% Automation Enhancement Fee will be added to the above cost.

INSPECTIONS INFORMATION

Inspection requirements are attached to the approved set of plans. Inspection requests received *before 12:00 noon* are scheduled for the next business day (Monday – Friday). Inspection requests received *after 12:00 noon* are scheduled within two business days (Monday – Friday).

County Adopts 2009 Family of I-Codes

The International Code Council (ICC) is a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention. ICC develops the codes and standards used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools.

The International Codes, or I-Codes, published by ICC, provide minimum safeguards for people at home, at school and in the workplace. The I-Codes are a complete set of comprehensive, coordinated building safety and fire prevention codes. Building codes benefit public safety and support the industry's need for one set of codes without regional limitations.

On May 18, 2010, Montgomery County Council approved Executive Regulation No. 26-09AM. This Regulation adopts the 2009 editions of the International Building Code, The International Energy Conservation Code, The International Fuel Gas Code, The International Mechanical Code, and The International Residential Code with amendments, and supersedes Executive Regulation No. 28-07. The above 2009 editions of International Codes are in effect now; however, per our past practices, the Department will offer a 60 day grace period. This grace period will expire on **July 18, 2010**. All applications submitted to the Department on and after Monday, July 19, 2010, for permits related to the above codes must comply with Executive Regulation 26-09. For more information on purchasing I-Codes click on the following link <http://www.iccsafe.org/Store/>.



Burtonsville CVS Pharmacy First Regulated Green Building to Receive Occupancy Approval

On December 4, 2007 Montgomery County adopted Executive Regulation 19-07AM, Buildings-Energy Efficiency and Environmental Design creating the Green Buildings Law. This regulation is codified in Chapter 8 Article VII of the *Montgomery County Code* and is enforced by the Department of Permitting Services. The Green Buildings Law went into effect on September 1, 2008.

Intended to enhance public health and welfare, this regulation requires an integrated approach to planning, design, construction, operation and landscaping to reduce energy and environmental impacts and create buildings that are more energy efficient, sustainable, safe, accessible, and cost effective.

This regulation applies to any newly constructed or extensively modified non-residential or multi-family residential building that has or will have at least 10,000 square feet of gross floor area.

Buildings covered by this regulation must meet compliance under the LEED rating system or its equivalent. LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) was developed by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) and is recognized as the “benchmark” for rating and evaluating green building design and construction standards.

DPS Promotes Building Safety Month in our community

For the last 30 years the 50,000 worldwide members of the ICC have celebrated advances in building safety, and widespread interest in the campaign has grown significantly. In recognition of the overwhelming support of the building safety movement, the 30th anniversary marks the expansion of Building Safety Week to Building Safety Month.

The International Code Council Foundation sponsored Building Safety Month throughout the month of May to help

create community-wide recognition and understanding of building safety, sustainability and the critical role of codes and code officials. The theme was “Building Safety: Where You Live, Work, and Play.”

The Montgomery County Council and County Executive Isiah Leggett on May 11 jointly recognized May as Building Safety Month in Montgomery County. Councilmember Marc Elrich (second from left) presented a proclamation on behalf of the County to DPS inspectors, plan reviewers, and others who work to ensure the safety of the structures in which all of us live, work, attend school, worship, and play. These officials provide the first line of defense against building disasters. They are silent but vigilant guardians who work daily to ensure safety in the built environment.

In celebration of Building Safety Month 2010 DPS offered free deck inspections for Montgomery County residents. DPS received 120 inspection requests for single-family detached homes, townhouses, and duplex. Also, at the DPS headquarters, a series of video tapes were shown to increase the visitors’ awareness to this event and inform them about the importance of codes in building design and construction.



LAND DEVELOPMENT

LD SERVICES COUNTER



All Land Development Permits will be handled through this counter. This includes:

- Submission/intake of plans for Right of Way, Water Resources and Well and Septic review
- Driveway Permits (Public Right of Way)
- Engineered Right of Way Permits (ie: Grading Permits, Storm Drain Permits, Paving Permits)
- Floodplain District Permits and Floodplain Information
- Floodplain Studies
- Public Right of Way Permits
- Sediment Control Permits
- Stormwater Concepts
- Utility Permits
- Well and Septic Permits

If you have any of the above submittal/permitting needs, you can bypass the Permitting Information Counter and come straight to the Land Development Counter. The counter will be staffed during normal business hours (7:30 am to 4:00 pm). Please follow signs directing you to the counter. For questions concerning the above, please contact Christina Contreras, Manager of the Land Development Permit Processing Section at 240-777-6307.

State Grants Available for Failing Septic System

The Maryland Department of the Environment has \$78,000 in grant money available to Montgomery County for upgrades to septic systems serving Montgomery County homes through the 2010 Bay Restoration Fund. The grant will be available for the period of July 1 to December 31, 2010; and will be available to qualified applicants who have a failing septic system. These grants compensate the owner for the installation of “nitrogen-removing” treatment devices which can help reduce the nitrogen inputs into the Chesapeake Bay ecology. The septic system grants will be made on a sliding scale based upon household income.

The Bay Restoration Fund was established by the Maryland General Assembly and each owner of a home served by a septic system contributes \$25 per year which is added to property tax bills. A portion of these funds also is available to farmers to plant cover crops which can also reduce nitrogen pollution.

For additional information contact Gene von Gunten, Permitting Services Manager, Well & Septic Section at 240-777-6319.

Stormwater Management Update

The State of Maryland’s Stormwater Act went into effect May 4, 2010 and requires the use of Environmental Site Design (ESD) to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). Each local

jurisdiction is required to adopt ordinances that meet the new state requirements. Montgomery County has received approval from Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) for our draft legislation and it has been submitted to the County Council for final adoption. Stay tuned for upcoming Council work sessions. For more information on updates to the Maryland's Stormwater Act of 2007 click on the following web site. <http://www.mde.state.md.us/Programs/WaterPrograms/SedimentandStormwater/swm2007.asp>

State Commends DPS for Sediment Control Enforcement

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) commended the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) for its erosion and sediment control program following its bi-annual review and program evaluation. MDE granted continued enforcement authority to the County until June 30, 2012.

Montgomery County was first approved by the MDE to administer its own enforcement of an erosion and sediment control program in 1985. The program is reviewed by the State every two years and DPS has consistently been approved for enforcement authority. "Montgomery County is consistently granted enforcement authority by the State of Maryland for its erosion and sediment control program," said DPS director Carla Reid. "Our staff of inspectors work diligently to monitor and inspect construction sites for erosion and sediment control violations, in an effort to protect local streams and restore the Chesapeake Bay."

"A review of active construction sites in Montgomery County found erosion and sediment controls in good condition," said MDE Water Management Administration director Jay G. Sakai. "Additionally, documentation of problems and routine enforcement by the County inspection staff was found to be very effective in gaining compliance with the approved erosion and sediment control plans. The County's inspection staff should be commended for their hard work and dedication."

The state's report found that more than 17,000 inspections were performed during fiscal years 2008 and 2009 and 770 violation notices were issued. Additionally, 65 stop work orders were issued and 245 fines were levied resulting in more than \$80,000 in fines collected.

For more information about the County's erosion and sediment control program, call 240-777-6344. To report sediment control concerns, call 240-777-6300, or use our online services to file a complaint at the following link on the web <http://permittingervices.montgomerycountymd.gov/permitting/c/cform.asp>.



DPS Budget Update

Developing the budget for DPS for FY11 was extremely challenging, and at times heart-wrenching. The economic downturn has had a tremendous impact on the construction industry and consequently on DPS as well. Because DPS is an enterprise fund, it is completely

funded through the collection of fees for permits and services. During the second half of FY09, our fund sustained a dramatic decrease in revenue, which resulted in a negative fund balance at the end of FY09. Although we held vacant 36 positions and drastically reduced operating expenses as much as possible, we will have a negative fund balance at the end of FY10 as well.

Since an enterprise fund cannot have a negative fund balance for three consecutive years, we had to make further reductions in our FY11 budget. Even though per employee personnel costs have increased, and fixed operating costs have increased, we have not increased permit fee rates in two years. While we are projecting revenue to increase in FY11 as the economy improves, we still had to abolish 16 filled positions to achieve a positive fund balance at the end of FY11. We have been fortunate that most of these positions have been vacated through retirement and voluntary transfers.

Total expenses budgeted for FY11 are \$23,995,250. Revenue for FY11 is projected to be \$29,126,860.

What is a Contact ID?

A Contact Identification number ("Contact ID") in the Department of Permitting Services' (DPS) automated permit system is a unique alphanumeric code assigned to each DPS customer for use throughout the entire permit and licensing process. A Contact ID is required to perform the following online functions on DPS' website:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/permittingservices>

- You will need a Contact ID to schedule an inspection and to cancel an inspection online;
- You will need a Contact ID and a PIN (Personal Identification Number) number to view permits linked to your Contact ID. Establishing a PIN for this function is required and will ensure privacy. Your PIN can be a maximum of 7-digits.
- Your Contact ID and PIN will be assigned by a Permit Technician when you first submit an application for a permit or license to DPS. Once assigned, use this number for all future applications. Multiple numbers should not be assigned for the same individual or agency/association. A Contact ID can be assigned to a homeowner occupying a residential address, an engineer, an architect, superintendent or any other representative or agent associated with a project.

If you have questions or need additional information please call in Montgomery County 311, outside Montgomery County call 240 777-0311.



ASK NANCY

Dear Nancy:

I never know which building permit fee to pay. The fee schedule has two sets of rates for the same permits. There are fees for building permits **with** Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) Site Plan approval and there are fees for building permits **without** Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) Site Plan approval. How do I determine

which building permit fee to pay? Can you shed some light on this subject?
Yours Truly,
Baffled and Perplexed

Dear Baffled and Perplexed:
You can determine if your building project requires MNCPPC Site Plan approval by clicking on the web site below, typing in your address, zooming in to the property, selecting the “Development Review” layer and the “Site Plan” review layer. Site plan properties will be red, assuming no other layers are checked.

[Http://www.mcatlas.org](http://www.mcatlas.org)

This geographical information system

(GIS) web site was created and is maintained by MNCPPC. If you have questions about the web site, please call 301 495-4610.

Nancy

Dear Nancy:
Where do I submit my questions to be answered in the next edition of Constructive Comments?

Curious

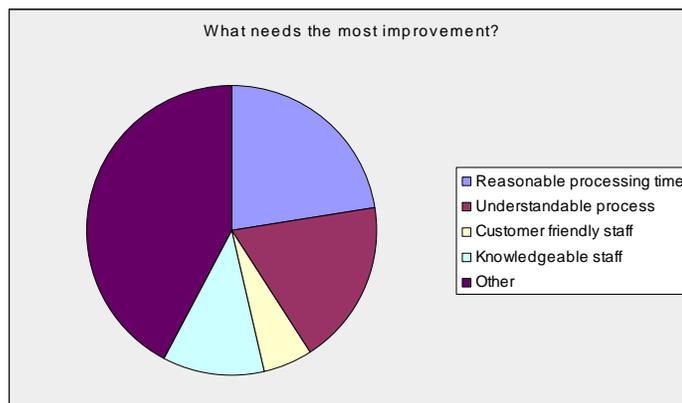
Dear Curious:
Please email your questions to Reginald.Jetter@montgomerycountymd.gov

Nancy

DPS Customer Satisfaction Survey

DPS created a Customer Satisfaction Survey in January of 2009. We have received many valuable comments including recommendations for improvement, compliments and complaints. When asked “What needs the most improvement?” Forty-two% of the respondents answered “Other”; 22.4% answered “Reasonable processing time”; 18.4% answered “Understandable process”; 11.4% answered knowledgeable staff; and 5.5% answered “Customer friendly staff” (see chart below). We need you to help us qualify and quantify responses in the “Other” answer. What additional responses should be included in the multiple choice answers below? Click on the following site to respond:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N8MPCBM>



If you have questions or comments regarding Constructive Comments call Reginald Jetter, Editor, 240-777-6275 or email him at Reginald.Jetter@montgomerycountymd.gov