

Local Governments Determination on Permits

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Secretary of Transportation

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Washington State
Department of Transportation

RE: RCW 47.01.485 (2) – Report on local governments taking longer than 90 days to make a final determination on permits

The 2015 Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to track and report any permit application for a project, with an estimated cost of less than five hundred million dollars on a state highway, that took more than 90 days for local governments (cities, towns, code cities, and counties) to process following the submission of a complete application. RCW 47.01.485 (2) states:

“The department must report annually to the governor and the transportation committees of the house of representatives and the senate in compliance with RCW 43.01.036 regarding any permit application that takes longer than the number of days identified in subsection (1) of this section to process.”

WSDOT Response

The timeframe for this report is for permit application packages submitted between October 3, 2022, and October 2, 2023. Local government staffing challenges such as increased workload and training of new employees contributed to some of the delays in permit processing. Based on information from WSDOT’s regional offices, for the timeframe stated above, 10 WSDOT permit submittals took local jurisdictions more than 90 days to process. The ten belated local permits issued were located within WSDOT’s Northwest, Olympic and Southwest Regions.

Project name	Project cost (millions)	Local jurisdiction	Permit type	Calendar days to process permit	Why did it take over 90 days?
I-5 /East Fork Lewis River North Bound Bridge Replacement	\$100	Clark County	Shoreline Substantial Development	197	A combination of new, less experienced County staff and increased workload delayed the County’s review and comments of WSDOT’s permit application.
Washington State Ferries Construct New Coupeville Agents Office	< \$1 *	Island County	Shoreline Variance	128	County staff experienced an increased workload, which delayed permit processing and issuance.
SR 92/Pilchuck River Chronic Environmental Deficiencies (CED) Large Woody Material	\$2	Snohomish County	Floodplain Development	112	County delayed assigning staff to review WSDOT’s permit application, which delayed permit processing and issuance.

*Note: The Washington State Ferries Coupeville Agents Office project cost was \$850,000.

Project name	Project cost (millions)	Local jurisdiction	Permit type	Calendar days to process permit	Why did it take over 90 days?
SR 167/SR 161 to SR 410 – Rebuild Interchange Project Stage 2a	\$215	City of Puyallup	Shoreline Substantial Development	188	It took the City 74 days to determine application completeness and staff requested additional information from WSDOT due to comments the City received about the project.
I-90/SR 18 Interchange and Widening Project	\$130	King County	Shoreline Substantial Development	182	It took the County 65 days to schedule and conduct a pre-application meeting with WSDOT. Additionally, County delayed assigning staff to review WSDOT’s permit application, which delayed permit processing and issuance.
I-90/SR 18 Interchange and Widening Project	\$130	King County	Shoreline Conditional Use	142	Same as above.
I-90/SR 18 Interchange and Widening Project	\$130	King County	Clearing and Grading	103	It took the County more than 30 days to determine application completeness. Additionally, County delayed assigning staff to review WSDOT’s permit application, which delayed permit processing and issuance.
I-90/SR 18 Interchange and Widening Project	\$130	King County	Floodplain Development	133	County delayed assigning staff to review WSDOT’s permit application, which delayed permit processing and issuance.
I-90/SR 18 Interchange and Widening Project	\$130	King County	Critical Areas	315	It took the County 49 days to determine application completeness. Additionally, County delayed assigning staff to review WSDOT’s permit application, which delayed permit processing and issuance.

Project name	Project cost (millions)	Local jurisdiction	Permit type	Calendar days to process permit	Why did it take over 90 days?
SR 18/Preston Mill Mitigation Site	\$10	King County	Clearing and Grading	237	It took the County 60 days to determine application completeness, and 177 days to review the application and issue the permit.

Should you have any questions, or need further information, please contact Ahmer Nizam, Environmental Services Office Director, at 360-705-7480 or ahmer.nizam@wsdot.wa.gov.