

VII. PUBLIC WORKS

A. PROFILE

Overview and Authority

The Development Engineering Group operates under the direction of the Director of Public Works who also serves as the City Engineer for Kirkland. The Development Engineering Group is a separate group within the Public Works Department, however additional Public Works Department Groups or Divisions including Surface Water (quality) Engineering and Transportation also perform development review work under the direction of both the Public Works Director/City Engineer and the Manager of Development Services. A detailed table illustrating the staff with development review responsibilities and their reporting relationship is shown in Figure 26 below.

The Public Works Director/City Engineer general authority is initially described in the Kirkland Municipal Code (KMC) Section 3. The Director of Public Works serves at the pleasure of the City Manager. As a registered professional engineer (PE) in the State of Washington the City Engineer has certain statutory authority mandated by State Law. That statutory authority pertains to a Washington Registered Professional Civil Engineer (PE) being in responsible charge of approval of legal subdivision maps, surveys, and parcel maps as well as approval of infrastructure plans for various public works in the City of Kirkland. The Kirkland Municipal Code (KMC) further defines the Director of Public Works/City Engineer authority in Sections 12, 18, 19, and 27 detailing additional authority and responsibilities related to development review.

Basic Function

The basic function of the Development Engineering Group includes the review/approval of various improvements required as a part of private development. The Engineering Group is the designated engineering team that reviews improvements that are required of private developments including both private and publicly owned infrastructure and landscape improvements. In addition, inspection of all development related infrastructure construction including onsite and offsite grading under direction of the City Engineer is within the Development Review Engineering Group's responsibilities.

Capital Improvement Projects by the City are not a functional responsibility of the Development Engineering Group. Plans for utility lines owned by the City (water and sewer) are reviewed when necessary by other groups within Public Works Department. The development review group coordinates such review by those utility groups. Gas Company, cable, and electrical power lines are not the direct responsibility of the City Engineer; however, coordination and permitting for

implementation of joint and separate trenches is a significant responsibility of the Development Engineering Group. Overall the engineering review is a portion of an integrated process and flow of work that involves Planning, Fire/Building, and Public Works.

The city’s website very correctly describes the function of the Engineering Group:

“The Development Engineering Group reviews, permits, and inspects the construction of water, sewer, storm drainage utilities, right-of-way improvements, and erosion control associated with the development of private property. New connections, reconnections, and repairs to water, sewer, and storm drainage; and digging in the public right-of-way is also overseen by the Development Engineering Division. We also maintain the "Pre-Approved Plans" standards book and oversee the maintenance of private storm water detention systems.”

Activity

The six-year activity level for all new City Development appears to have been near its highest level during 2006/2007. The decline of the general economy during the years since has resulted in a decline in Public Works permit levels as illustrated in Table 24 below. There was an increase of activity due to a major annexation in 2011. Permits approved by the County prior to the annexation remain and may possibly activate during 2013. In addition there is an apparent increase in the rate of development activity from the lowest year of 2010. As can be seen in the Fire/Building chapter of this report, there have been significant increases in activity in 2012, partially due to the annexation but also likely increased economic activity.

**Table 24
Public Works Activity Levels Valuations**

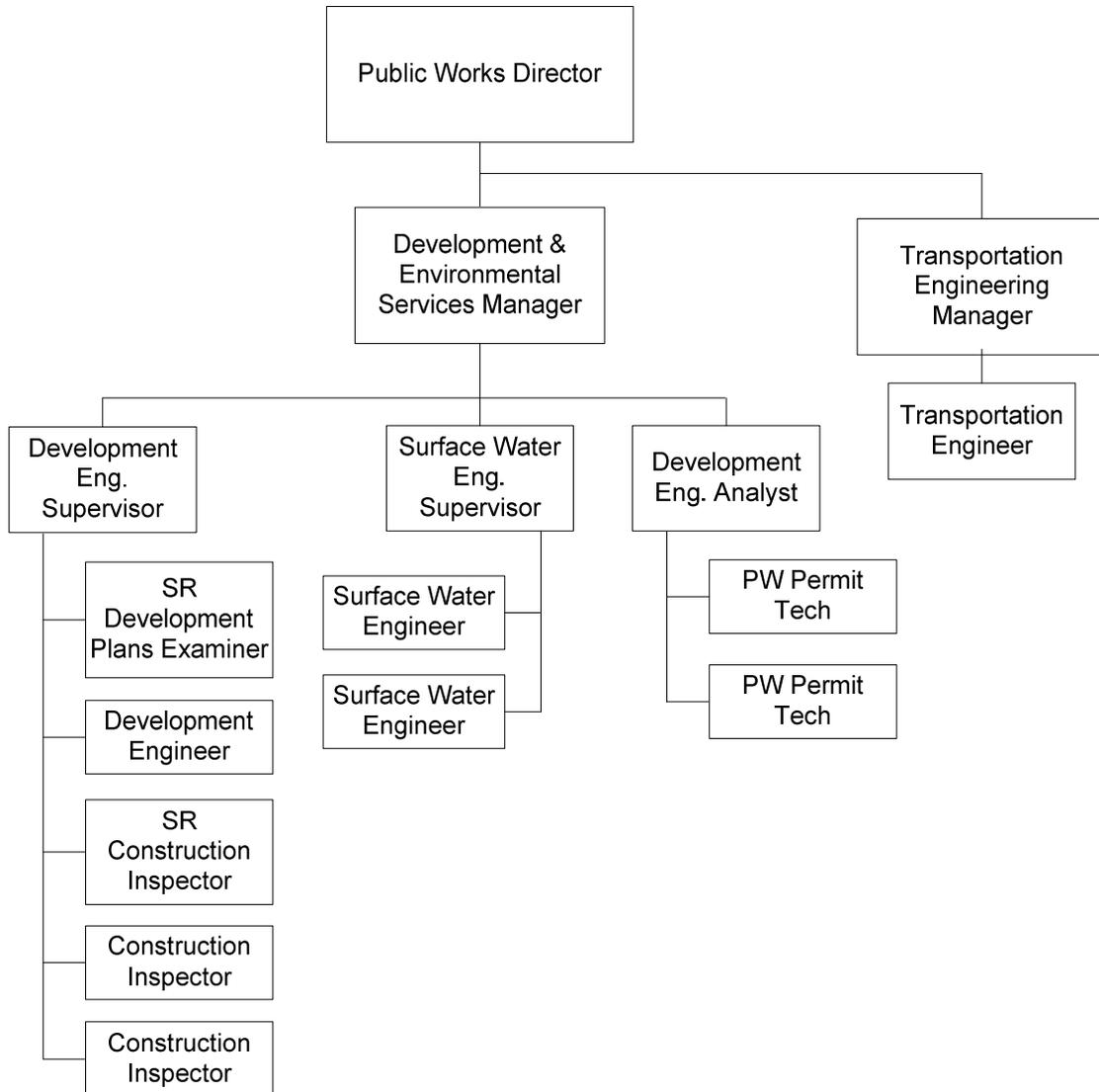
Year	Public Improvement	Pvt Storm Drain	Total
2005	\$6,271,303.00	\$1,957,934.00	\$8,229,237.00
2006	\$5,583,234.00	\$1,400,156.00	\$6,983,390.00
2007	\$5,311,513.00	\$1,396,185.00	\$6,707,698.00
2008	\$4,420,427.00	\$1,452,031.00	\$5,872,458.00
2009	\$3,396,546.00	\$1,515,924.00	\$4,912,470.00
2010	\$2,260,414.00	\$815,767.00	\$3,076,181.00
2011	\$6,371,897.00	\$1,831,288.00	\$8,203,185.00
2012	<i>Estimated*</i>		<i>\$10,000,000.00</i>
2013	<i>Estimated</i>		<i>\$5M to \$7M</i>
2014	<i>Estimated</i>		<i>\$5M to \$7M</i>

*This estimate includes both activated County (annexation area) permits and schools constr.

Organization

The Development Engineering Review Group is shown in Figure 26 and listed in Table 26. The additional Public Works Staff (Surface Water Utility and Transportation) engaged in Development Review are also listed below in Table 25.

Figure 26
Development Engineering Group Organization



**Table 25
Development Engineering Review Staff**

Position	Number of Staff	Responsibilities	Reports to	%
				Dev. Rev.
DPW&City Engr Manager	1	Plans, organizes, and directs entire PW Department (100+ staff). Approves final maps, plat, plans	City Manager	5
Development Review (Jammerman)	1	Supervises/coordinates all PW Devel. Review staff & processes, attends Joint departmental Development (DRC) meeting. Supervises PW Surface Water Engr. and Environmental groups	DPW	90
Development Engrg Supervisor (Burkhalter)	1	Supervises plan check and Field Inspection staff	Manager of Dev. Rev.	100
Senior Plans Examiner (Reed)	1	Plan check/field review complex projects	Devel. Engr. Supervisor	100
Development Engr. (Vartanian)	1	Engr plan check, Elect plan review	Devel. Engr. Supervisor	100
Construction Inspectors (Christ-Sr>) (Gunter&Pray)	3	Construction & Environmental inspection	Devel. Engr. Supervisor	100 =3FTE
Development Engrg. Analyst (Coleman)	1	Development Records mgmt.; <i>Energov</i> permitting system coordination; Group budget prep and mgmt	Manager of Dev. Rev.	100
Permit Technicians (Ayers & Corp)	2	Permits issuance including R/W encroachment. OTC permits at counter	Manager of Dev. Rev.	100
Sub Total	10	Staffing for Development Engineering Group (incl DPW)		8.9 FTE
		Additional Development Review Staff in PW Dept.		
Surface Water Engrg. Supervisor (Gaus)	1	Supervises and direct WQ staff, (5 staff total); City wide NPDES program	Manager of Dev. Rev.	20
Surface Water Engineers (Rush, Jones)	2	NPDES compliance reviews, storm runoff and SD requirements	Surface Water Supv.	50 ea.= 1 FTE
Transportation Engineer (Nguyen)	1	Circulation model management, Traf. Impact Fee determination, traffic review and conditions for development	Manager/Transp.	85
Transportation Manager (Godfrey)	1	Manages city wide traffic and transportation planning program for Kirkland	DPW	5
Total FTE Development Rev.		Public Works Dept. development review		11 FTE

B. POSITIVE FINDINGS

The Public Works Department Development Review team has incorporated many Best Practices in their day-to-day operations. We were very pleased to find that this operation stands out as one of the best we have seen among the many organizations reviewed by the Zucker Team. The following list includes several of our findings.

- Staff is committed to help all applicants solve problems and issues associated with their individual project.
- All the Public Works staff participating were cooperative, forthcoming, and helpful during this study.
- Team work with Planning and Building Departments is good. No “silo” issues between Public Works and other departments were evident.
- Experienced staff with long-term history and personal knowledge of Kirkland.
- Several staff have professional engineering registration in the Department.
- Easy access to all development staff on the same floor in City Hall including Planning and Building Departments.
- There is a strong ethic among all PW staff to assure the highest quality of improvement in the City of Kirkland.
- The development review team is solely dedicated to the review effort, and do not have capital project or other responsibilities.
- The entire Development Engineering Group including inspection is in the same building on the same floor and is co-located in the same building with the Transportation and Water Quality Groups in Public Works as well as the Planning and Building Departments.
- All development grading work for both onsite and offsite is plan reviewed and inspected by this group.
- The GIS used by the city with its various links to Google Earth and other programs is very useful to the Engineering Review program and is one of the best we have seen.
- *Blue Beam* plan electronic plan check software along with large dual monitors is available to the Public Works Dept.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Cost Recovery

The subject of cost recovery for development review is discussed in other sections of this report along with specific recommendations. There are just over two full time equivalent (FTE) staff engaged with development review that are budgeted in Surface Water and Transportation groups.

187. Recommendation: Consider inclusion of all FTE Development Review PW staff in any staffing model used for future fee study and analysis.

Counter Access Policy

Discussion elsewhere in this study deals with the need for a common front counter design and reception function. Concerns expressed by several Public Works staff indicates that the priority demand to respond to the front counter often interferes with ongoing plan reviews and other work thereby adding to the turnaround time to review plans. At the same time the excellent reputation currently enjoyed by Public Works is due in part to the high level of service provided at the public counter.

We have found that the policies for each department pertaining to hours of operation and other business access to the public counter vary. While the implementation of joint counter evolves, the three departments have an opportunity to create a uniform policy for public counter operations in the near term. This can be accomplished through the Development Review Committee II. Hours of operation, access for applications, project inquiries and information, and other business can be subjected to a policy that is the same for all departments without waiting for the creation of a new counter. For example if there could be some restriction to public access after 4 pm or on certain days of the week, the staff could be more productive without severely impacting the good service currently being provided.

188. Recommendation: The DRC II as a part of its regular meeting agenda should develop a uniform policy for public counter hours and operations. Consideration should be given to maintaining a high level of public service and allowing some access limitations that provide for staff to concentrate on expeditiously completing reviews of ongoing submittals.

Inspection Services

One of the most important functions of any engineering development review program is field inspection services. If inspection is unable to verify and assure that all the various project plans, conditions, and other city requirements then the work of the planners and other development review staff cannot be effective. Additionally the City needs assurance that all public infrastructure is constructed in accordance with its requirements and standards.

With its limited staff and the broad range of development requirements in Kirkland it is essential that each inspection staff member have expertise and versatility in the several disciplines all related to the City's requirements

Kirkland has two full time regular inspection staff plus an additional full time contract inspector at the present time. Inspection staff numbered 3 FTE's during the 2006/07

years when there was over \$5M/yr of new public improvement work being permitted. At that time, the demand for special LID and other water quality inspection appears to have been lower than at the present. In addition, the ROW inspections for franchise utility work were being handled with that staff at that time. It is our view that there is currently an inadequate level of inspection for both franchise utility lines (ROW inspection) or the city's Surface Water or water quality program. It is also our understanding that the contract inspector will not be extended beyond May 2013. A Right of Way (ROW) inspector has been approved for hire to start in February 2013. It is also evident that one of the reasons that inspections for surface water requirements is not keeping up with demand is due to the fact that the inspectors have not had the technical training necessary to perform this work.

The level of new construction completed in 2009/10 ranged from \$5M to \$3M per year. It also appears that the amount of work for 2012 is increasing and may exceed levels experienced in 2005/06/07. Allowing the contract inspection to expire to bring the full time regular staff to two staff may not be appropriate at this time to accommodate the City's basic construction inspection needs. If the apparent increase in construction/permit activity is sustained, then the City should continue to utilize the services of the contract inspector with the inspection team beyond the May 2013 date. If the value of new construction permits exceeds the approximate rates of \$3-5M/year an additional contract inspection staff member is warranted. If the County contract cannot be extended then contract inspection from consulting firms in the area should be considered.

189. Recommendation: Monitor the permit activity level and maintain an option to continue contract inspection services beyond May 2013. Continue the contract inspector position if the sustained rate of permits issued exceed \$5M per year.

190. Recommendation: Add the approved ROW inspector to the inspection team at the earliest date, preferably starting February 2013. Include training and assignments for both ROW and Surface Water quality in addition to normal construction inspection for this position.

191. Recommendation: Initiate a comprehensive training program for inspection staff with the following objectives: Cross training in all disciplines including ROW; Surface Water Quality requirements including LID (Low Impact Drainage); along with updated construction methods for grading paving, and highway structural improvements

Project Managers

Kirkland has a designated planner in charge during the planning and entitlement phase and a building plan checker in charge at the building phase. However, this system is not as clear as it should be and the way engineering and tree issues get resolved has

been an issue. Part of our suggested program is to train staff to assume greater degrees of responsibility and expertise by instituting a designated “Project Manager” system for key projects moving through the Kirkland system. At the present time it appears that the Manager of Development Review serves in this role for all PW development projects. A project manager can be designated for selected projects in the early stages of a project during the DRC meeting process. Any staff member from Public Works, including Surface Water and Transportation can be designated and thereby participate during the full range of development review work for that project. This need not be done for all projects, but can be a benefit for both training and enhancing the process. A key objective that should also be included in this suggested system is to reduce overall review times.

192. Recommendation: Designate a Public works “Project Manager” for selected development review projects to participate during the full development review process.

Records/GIS/Electronic Files/Scan

Public works permit staff have been progressing with scanning the Public Works development files and map records into a digitized file that can be used throughout the entire City. They initially attempted to outsource the scanning process but found that much of that work was not usable without substantial correction and modification. It was determined that any outside contractor would not have enough knowledge to properly establish a usable file by simply scanning documents

The result has been that the process in Public Works to develop a complete and usable electronic (ie. paperless) records and file system has been progressing slowly. The permit tech performing the scanning/filing is only able to do this work on a periodic basis due to the priority demand for permit issuance. The files being digitized are only the Public Works documents and plans. It is unclear if there is a cross-departmental master system for the ultimate storage and use of these digitized files.

As stated elsewhere in this report the Kirkland GIS records system is excellent. However some GIS records/files such as utility lines are not available to the developers and their engineers. The stated reasons for this omission are related to security particularly for the City water system. As a result staff has to frequently provide this information upon request to help engineers and others develop their plans accurately thereby adding time to the overall review process.

193. Recommendation: Coordinate with the City Clerk’s Office to make sure that an integrated paperless master filing system for all city development records and plans is developed, and that each department enters its scanned files into a common system.

194. Recommendation: Expedite the digitizing of the files and records. Consider retention of temporary staff to work in City Hall offices under the direct supervision of the permit tech to assure that the scanning/digitizing process is performed according to the city's needs.

195. Recommendation: Set a deadline or certain date for the conclusion of establishing a functional City wide digitized electronic file and records system

196. Recommendation: Evaluate the benefit of providing increased access to GIS utility line information by qualified professionals. Consider increasing access to the City's GIS system by utilizing a password system for engineers and planners that have been vetted and pre-qualified by the City

Supervision and Management

The Development Group Manager often works directly at the front counter assisting applicants with their particular application. This extraordinary level of service has no doubt contributed to the positive responses we have received from the development community and others about the high quality of service by the Public Works staff. It is our suggestion that lower level staff assume this work ethic practice so that the positive benefit of good quality service can be maintained for the City's development customers. Simply stated the Manager of Development needs to develop a tradeoff of his workday time by replacing time at the front counter with time to bring other development staff to the fore.

197. Recommendation: The Manager of Development Review and the Public Works Director work together to develop a plan that takes into consideration how the Manager can accomplish the twin goals of bringing up the direct experience level of staff by trading management time for counter time and maintaining the current high service level provided to development clients. To include assigning project level responsibility to staff, with oversight, to help them gain firsthand experience with broader development issues outside of their normal assignment.

Staff Longevity and Training

Many of the staff in the Public Works Development team have more than 15 and some have as much as 25 years of working experience, most in the City of Kirkland. This is obviously an advantage for the benefit of processing reviews in the near term. It presents a dilemma in that it is likely that future staff retirements by many of those key staff can leave the City at about the same time. It is reasonable to expect that

within the next four to five years many of those highly experienced individuals will no longer be available to the City.

It is imperative that the next tier of management and supervisory staff commence with appropriate training for management, supervision and advanced technical work. Part of that training can be accomplished by having that next tier of staff begin to assume a greater degree of responsibility for processing development projects to allow them to be engaged at an advanced level.

There are recommendations elsewhere in this report pertaining to allocation of resources for staff training. It is particularly important that training for Public Works Engineering include preparing individuals to succeed to upper management levels in the relatively near future. It may be appropriate for example for an individual to be given responsibility for carrying a project through to its conclusion as a project manager rather than working in the narrower confines of their regular assignment

198. Recommendation: Include training specifically oriented to prepare lower level Public Works staff to assume greater management and leadership roles in the near future.

Staff Training/Technical Electronic Plan review

Discussion elsewhere in this report deals with the specifics of the need to improve the web based permitting system, EnerGov. It is clear that while technical issues exist with the startup of that system, hands on staff training is also very necessary.

The City also has available the *Bluebeam* electronic plan check system. It is being used in the all the departments including to a limited degree in Public Works. The procedure for the use of this system is summarized as follows:

- *Bluebeam* software is used by development reviewers (BLD, PW, PCD & FD) as a communication and review tool when electronic permit applications are made. All electronic permit applications are received via FTP site.
- Development Review Committee (DRC) group members are notified to access the server to evaluate the application for completeness. A Plan Reviewer from each department does a quick review of the application to determine if it is complete for review.
- The application file is moved electronically from the server (holding area) to the plan review case and is available for first review by each department. (Depending on the size or urgency of review, the plans can be separated to allow concurrent review by each department, e.g. civil, tree and building).
- Each department has a responsibility to coordinate different types of permits to approval stage. e.g. a grading permit will have the PW engineer assigned to be the coordinator/contact person and provide communication with the applicant

and all other departments to finalize plan review efforts. Each reviewer will provide mark-up comments on the plans. The City's comments appear as the top layer on each page/sheet in different colors. The software also creates a continuous list of corrections and comments. This list can be used by the design consultant to provide a response and input back to the reviewers. All markups from the departments show up on one set of plans and are flattened (fixed as a layer) and saved. Then these plans are uploaded to a FTP site (under their application/permit number) to be accessed by the applicant. The lead plan reviewer will make the notification to the applicant, usually via e-mail.

- After corrections are picked up by the design team; plans are resubmitted back to the FTP site (under the permit number). Second review of the submitted plans is continued in a timely manner by all departments waiting for comments when the new design is deemed approved, conditions and fees are created for the permit by each department. Review lines are signed off by each department. The approved/final plan set is attached with an electronic stamp and flattened. A copy of the approved plans set is moved to the FTP site. The permit tech is notified by the lead Plan Reviewer that the application for the permit is approved and proper notification should be made to the applicant.
- The applicant downloads a copy of the approved plans and is responsible for printing copies of plans for construction and site inspections
- It is our observation that the *Bluebeam* program could be used to a higher degree for Public Works plan review. More formal training and hands on experience by all the plans examiner staff will ultimately result in greater use and can result in more expeditious plan check turnaround times. There is discussion in the "Process Issues" section of this report about the compelling need to shorten plan review turnaround times. At the present time, the Public Works staff is teaching themselves how to use *Bluebeam* software. It may be more effective if expert formal training is brought in and used to bring all the plans examiners as well as other Public Works staff to higher proficiency levels. Additionally, an evaluation should be conducted to ensure that Public Works staff has all the appropriate hardware and software or "plug ins" to assure the best compatibility with electronic plan submittals specifically for engineering construction and grading plans.

199. Recommendation: Assure that direct staff technical training on the use of the EnerGov system keeps pace with the mandatory upgrading and de-bugging of that system.

200. Recommendation: Bring expert training for the Public Works development review staff on the effective use of the *Bluebeam* program for engineering plan check.

201. Recommendation: Assure that all PW staff including Transportation and Surface Water Quality staff engaged in development plan review have large dual monitors along with appropriate computing hardware/software/plugin to facilitate *Bluebeam* electronic plan reviews.

Supervision of Transportation Staff

The Transportation Engineer currently devotes approximately 70-85% of his time to development review. Traffic operations and longer term transportation planning are critical and essential elements of the development approval process for both Planning and Engineering. The question is can this function operate more effectively if it was operating directly in the Development Review Group.

There is no indication that making such a change would enhance review turn around time or that there has been any difficulty with securing timely response and participation by Transportation in the development review process to date. We have not seen any silo issues or inadequate participation by Transportation. The Transportation Engineering Manager has expressed his policy of cooperation with the Development Review team.

202. Recommendation: Retain the current organizational structure for Transportation to participate in the development review process

Tree Removals/Trimming

It appears that management of the City's tree preservation program for street trees has become a stepchild to the overall development and maintenance efforts. It would help if the tree preservation requirements were modified to take into account the needs to properly stage construction and grading with new development. The existing requirements have caused conflicts that unnecessarily hinder construction and do not materially save or preserve more trees. There are also conflicts between the requirements of new development and maintaining existing trees by an individual property owner not engaged in any new development work. Any work, trimming or removal of an existing tree requires a permit after review by the Field Arborist who works in the maintenance group. The permit is processed by the permit tech in Public Works Development. It is possible the "Project Manager" system recommended below may help reduce some of the apparent confusion for tree issues with new development. However, there is still a problem when an individual citizen or property owner needs to trim or remove an existing tree.

The permit tech at the public counter in City Hall is most often the first stop for an individual desiring to obtain a permit for tree work. There is an inevitable delay related to getting the permit request and information and coordinating a field review when necessary since the Field Arborist works out of the Public Works Operations

offices and not in City Hall. It doesn't help either by placing the burden on the individual citizen attempting to comply with the City's tree regulations to travel to the Public Works Operations center to get their permit. It may be possible that the permit tech at the public counter and the Field Arborist have a special communication link that would allow the applicant to have communication with both at the same time from the public counter.

203. Recommendation: Public Works Operations and Permit Processing should develop a communications link and system to facilitate the timelier processing of tree permits for non-development applications. Include consideration of available electronic media as well as possible City Hall public counter office time for the Field Arborist.

204. Recommendation: The Deputy Planning Director should lead a review of the City's tree regulations by a team that includes Planning, the Field Arborist, a Professional Landscape Architect, and Construction Inspection and Permit staff representatives with the objective to modify the regulations without compromising the tree preservation goals of the city

D. POLICY AND REGULATION ISSUES

Pre-Approved Plans Document

The Public Works Department maintains a "Pre-Approved Plans" manual with specific policy and design details pertinent to Kirkland's infrastructure improvements. It is a well-organized and comprehensive document including policies and regulations as well a design details for infrastructure facilities. The contents include 8 separate sections as listed below and it is updated annually.

- 1) Public Works Policies; 2) Water System; 3) Sanitary Sewer; 4) Storm Drainage;*
- 5)LID Storm; 6) Roadway;7) Erosion Control; 8) Traffic Signals*

The document is large, (479) pages, and is one of the most voluminous we have seen. The document is more than a typical standard plans compendium. It also serves as a Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM), which is very useful to both staff and the development community. We were advised that many of the standards and details have evolved over the years in response to input from many sources including maintenance, outside contractors, and other staff. It is possible that some of those changes and plan details are outdated.

It is our concern that there may be minor design details of various improvements unique to the City of Kirkland that have no significant impact on the function of the facility when compared to standard designs required by the County or nearby cities. This feature can also add to the time it takes for the City to complete a plan review

and to achieve corrections to a submitted plan to conform to the specific Kirkland Standard. While there may be any number of very good reasons that justify a unique standard for some facilities in Kirkland it is also very possible that the Pre-Approved Plans document could be simplified and even reduced in volume by incorporating plans that are the same as those used by other agencies in the region.

We have also observed that cities have benefited by partnering with developers, local engineers and architects to improve and update their standard plans manuals. The objective is to have those plans be in greater conformance to the plans used in the region without compromising any of special needs of the City of Kirkland and/or incurring significant cost to update the manual.

205. Recommendation: The Public Works Director should consider requesting the participation of local developers, engineers, local agencies, and architects to partner with the City of Kirkland to convene and provide a comprehensive update/revision to the Pre-Approved Plans Manual during the next update cycle.

E. PROCESS ISSUES

Inspection Procedures and Equipment

The City policy provides that calls for inspection that are received up to 3 pm on the day prior will be responded with inspection service. Calls for inspection are currently received from three separate sources. They include *EnerGov*, voicemail at the city hall, and “*My Building Permit.Com*”. An inspector receives and sorts out the calls each morning and sets up the run sheets for all inspections for the day. It would be desirable if all inspection requests could be concentrated through fewer communication media. Public Works staff has indicated that *EnerGov* would be preferable system for calls for inspection if it allowed the caller to leave a phone number for possible follow up. It is also apparent that inspection staff responds to late and last minute calls for inspection to the point that the 3pm prior day deadline may become meaningless. This may not be a problem when workload is low, but will ultimately become a problem to be able to effectively cover the most important inspections each day when volume increases. This is obviously another area where extraordinary service can both help and hinder the Public Works review program.

The field inspection staff have computers and portable communication available while in the field. Each inspector has a laptop and docking station with a large monitor in the office. Because of the problems with *EnerGov*, there is no access to plans or other data while they are in the field. This equipment is underutilized at the present time. They also have smart phones with 3G connectivity. Electronic field communications equipment such as lap top computers should be available in the field as standard equipment for each inspector. A system, which permits plans to be accessed and viewed in the field along with voice communication to the office, can expedite

inspections and help avoid errors particularly with ROW and Surface Water inspections.

206. Recommendation: Assure that training for all inspection staff is up to date on the effective use of field communications and computing equipment

207. Recommendation: Develop run sheets based on calls for inspection on the calls made prior to 3pm on the day before the requested inspection in compliance with the city policy for inspection requests. Incorporate a return call phone number into the *EnerGov* calls for inspection service as soon as possible.

Plan Review Turnaround Time

The time for completion of a first review of submittal of engineering plans is currently about four to six weeks in Kirkland. The majority of this work is review of Land Surface Modification (LSM) permits. As mentioned in other sections of this report, the total amount of time in Kirkland is greater than the review first check turnaround time that we have found to work well in many jurisdictions. It is also our understanding that the review times in Kirkland are within the norm for this region. Inasmuch as Kirkland has a well-developed process for preliminary or pre-application review a shorter formal plan check time for Public Works engineering review should be fairly easy to achieve without compromising the quality or thoroughness of the formal review.

Several of the forgoing Public Works recommendations for development review have outlined how review time frames can be reduced. Additionally as the volume of work is trending to increase in the coming year, reducing review time will materially contribute to maintaining a good workflow through the department without having projects “bog down”. At some point, adding staff can be part of the solution to keeping up with the workload demand. However, it shouldn’t be the first step taken to reduce the review times. Kirkland has the opportunity in our view to clearly be the regional leader in terms of providing expedient reviews for projects submitted for development approval.

Here is a partial re-listing of previous recommendation subjects that can all have a material effect on reducing review time:

- EnerGov- several recommendations related to improving this system are essential.
- Traffic Concurrency database update.
- Simplify/Update Pre-Approved Plans.
- Training- particularly for electronic plan reviews.

- Tree Permit modification/coordination.
- Public counter hours and access policies.
- GIS access for qualified professionals.

Table 26 below suggests a phased plan to achieve significant reduction in the Public Works infrastructure (LSM) plan review time that will be consistent with the adoption/implementation of the previous recommendations in this report.

**Table 26
Public Works Review Times**

Time Period	First Review - (90% of submittals)	2 nd Check	3 rd Check
Existing Schedule	4-6 wks/35 work days	14 days	5 days
Goal-Jan to June 2013	4-5 wks/25 work days	10 days	3 days
Goal-July to Sept. 2013	3-4 weeks/20 work days	7 work days	2 days
Permanent Goal/Schedule Starting Oct. 2013	15 work days	5days	next day

208. Recommendation: Achieve the goal of completing Public Works first review improvement plan check to three weeks (15 work days) for at least 90% of LSM submittals by October 2013 or sooner.

Transportation Review and Concurrency Process

The traffic impact development review varies for SEPA (State Environmental requirements) and non-SEPA work. A brief description of the concurrency process follows for SEPA qualified projects.

Applicants are encouraged to request a pre-application meeting with all departments to define general scope, code requirements and to get feedback from staff. Before a development can proceed, it must pass the traffic concurrency test.

The applicant traffic engineer provides a description of the development project, land use type, size, location, driveway locations and trip generation information along with the concurrency test application and fee to Public Works. The project

is then incorporated into the EnerGov system. A traffic concurrency test result memo is prepared with a copy to the planner and the applicant. An up to date database for the concurrency process becomes increasingly important as this review progresses. If the project does not pass, the concurrency test will tell which system intersection(s) do not conform and what will be necessary to mitigate the problem.

The applicant then proceeds with their SEPA and building permit process and submits a traffic impact analysis for review by the City. Planning and the Building departments create their own SEPA and Building permit cases on EnerGov. However, there's no link between the different permits within EnerGov.

Turnaround time for reviewing the traffic study and providing a staff report and recommendation to the Planning department is about two weeks but could take longer if there are outstanding issues have not been reconciled. An up to date concurrency database could possibly help shorten this time.

A planner schedules a meeting for the project and sends out information to impacted parties for review and comments. If there are questions about traffic then they are typically responded to prior to the hearing.

A Transportation representative typically attends the SEPA hearing.

209. Recommendation: All development review staff including Transportation and Surface Water should receive a weekly list of active permit applications that identifies the Project Manager, the staff involved and a short project description.

210. Recommendation: Update the Traffic Concurrency Data Base as soon as possible. Incorporate it within the *EnerGov* system after the other issues with *EnerGov* have been resolved

