



King County

Department of Assessments
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ATTACHMENT A
13336 2010-400

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Assessor

DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS

Response to King County Council
Proviso Regarding

Electronic Transmission of King County
Cities' Construction Permit Data

July 13, 2010

Proviso Language

The purpose of this report is to respond to Proviso P1, Section 43 of the 2010 King County Budget. Proviso P1 states:

Proviso 1 stipulated and directed that of the department's 2010 appropriation, \$1,000,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the council approves by motion a report from the Assessor's office that describes its efforts to require that cities in King County transmit construction permit data electronically, and establishes a work plan for achieving full implementation of electronic permit data submission. The work plan shall identify a deadline for when all cities will be required to submit permit data electronically to the assessor's office. The report and motion required to be submitted by this proviso must be filed by July 15, 2010.

Background

The primary purpose of the Department of Assessments is to provide the services necessary for the maintenance and certification of a fair and equitable county assessment roll as mandated by Chapter 84 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). This includes subsequent levy rate determination and tax roll, established annually for the purpose of administering the property tax system for all real and personal property located within the geographic boundaries of King County.

The Department of Assessments is presided over by the Office of the Assessor, a separately elected countywide official, elected to a four-year term by the voters of King County. The County consists 165 separate taxing districts, including 39 cities, 20 school districts, 28 fire districts, 27 water districts, 14 sewer districts, and 32 other districts including unincorporated King County. The Department's authorized FTE staffing level for 2010 is 224 FTEs.

The Department of Assessments' lines of business, as mandated by state law, include:

- Residential Assessed Valuations – which includes the Department's residential appraisal, appeal response and new construction functions;
- Commercial/Business Assessed Valuations – which includes the Department's personal property assessment, commercial appraisal, appeal response and new construction functions.
- Accounting – which includes Mapping, GIS, Abstract, Levy Administration, and Accounting Support;
- Customer Service – which includes public information, education and outreach, exemptions, and appeal processing for all appeals filed by or on behalf of taxpayers;

Critical to, and necessary to provide the above mandated functions, are:

- Information Services – which is the Department’s Systems Development Group, and includes general IT support, along with mainframe programming as needed;
- Administration – which is the Department’s administrative services group, and is necessary to support the above mandated functions, such as budget, finance, purchasing, payroll, human resources, etc.

The Department does not operate any discretionary programs. All of our core activities are statutorily mandated. Oversight responsibility for the department is vested with the Washington State Department of Revenue (DOR) by the Washington State Legislature.

Description of Assessor's office efforts to require that cities in King County transmit construction permit data electronically

An important new source of revenue to support our agency as well as cities is the property tax collected from new construction. I am requesting that each city submit their building permits and CAD drawings to the Department of Assessments in digital formats.

I have recently sent a letter to all city leaders within King County requesting that they collaborate with our office to support this digital submission format. (See Attached.)

Upon assuming office last November, I immediately directed staff to survey local governments and other departments within King County to determine the status and feasibility of electronically transmitting permits to the Department of Assessments. The Cities of Bellevue, Federal Way and most recently Tukwila are already sending some permitting information to us electronically either individually or through the eGov consortium. King County DDES is working on electronic permitting. The City of Seattle and a number of other communities have expressed an interest but either lack funding or have no immediate plans to move to electronic permitting transmittal without King County’s leadership and possible cost-share arrangement to defray the cost of migration to electronic data transmission. We continue working on developing a successful path forward. We will be meeting with various jurisdictions later this summer/fall and have submitted our 2011 FY budget to include a revenue stream that would help us co-fund/cost-share a county-wide electronic permitting initiative.

Communications

A copy of my letter to city leaders is attached.

We will need the following information from the cities:

- Their permit data in an electronic format. Ask them to extract the following data at a regular interval in CSV format:
 - Parcel number
 - Address
 - Permit number
 - Permit type (New Building, New Accessory, Remodel, Demolition, Move, Hazardous Waste, Other)
 - Permit value
 - Issued date
 - Project name
 - Project description

The cities can email us the extract or we can pull it from their FTP server.

Work Plan

The rough outline of our work plan is as follows:

Task	Status
• Survey of local jurisdictions to determine current status and capability	Underway
• Survey of existing e-Permitting options, including	Completed
○ eGov used by Bellevue & Federal Way	
○ DDES system now being developed	
○ Transitional system of scanning hard copy to create electronic data	
• Discussion with stakeholder jurisdictions	Set for September
• Build consensus around implementation option	Fall 2010
• Project costs and possible cost-sharing revenue stream	Fall 2010
• Approval of revenue option – state & local levels	Spring 2011
• Implementation of e-Permitting transfer	Winter 2011

Status Report

Current cities that report data electronically:

- Bellevue
- Federal Way
- Tukwila

Summary

As you know, and well understand there are important reasons why this change is important and why my department is moving to complete this project. Specifically:

- Cost savings
 - it eliminates multiple handling of data, labor costs
 - reduces errors
 - eliminates copying and paper costs
 - postage costs
 - storage costs of originals
- Green/environmental by reducing paper
- Revenue enhancement by assuring that new construction data is captured early and quickly with a simple mouse click; data is updated in a more timely manner
- Smart management-best practices

As Assessor, I would like to capture as much new construction for the county as possible but I need your help with our limited resource and additional budget cuts next year.

With your assistance and collaboration to communicate this important project with other city leaders we can work together to obtain electronic permit data which will help our department be more efficient and at picking up new construction. I would ultimately like to see all King County cities capture and share electronic building and site plans with our office. As of right now, we have to redraw the building floor plan from paper copies which takes a lot of time; time that can be spent picking up new construction.

My department contacts for this initiative/work plan are Hoang Nguyen, IT Director and John A. Wilson, Deputy Chief Assessor.