

Discussion Topic: Permitting / Public Construction Impacts / Transportation
4Business – Benchmarking to be the Best for Business – December 9, 2019

	Key Issues Identified	Recent Improvements / Possible Solutions <i>Note: Recent Improvements are printed in BLACK, Possible Solutions from Listening Sessions & Survey in BLUE, Possible Solutions from 11/20 Charrette in PURPLE</i>
	DPS Issues 1-15	
1	Customer service – Although some staff members are very responsive, others are more negative or less helpful	<p>The Department of Permitting Services (DPS) is giving priority to delivering quality customer service and has already made several changes. The department has committed to performance agreements with the Chief Administrative Officer of the County. These measures cover three major areas of service: electronic intake screening services, plan review, and inspection services. Management and staff are being retrained to be service quality conscious. Managers are performing mandatory quality assurances of staff performances and service deliveries.</p> <p>Targeted customized mandatory Customer Service Training for all staff. Eight customer service training sessions will be completed by the end of November, 2019.</p> <p>Implemented a “rate my service” survey by placing electronic “Responster” kiosks in DPS customer lobby to capture and address customers need in real time.</p> <p><i>Individual performance evaluation process planned to be modified with more emphasis placed on customer service.</i></p> <p><i>Create a Customer Bill of Rights (example could be Fairfax, VA)</i></p> <p><i>One staff person should shepherd a project through the various departments/reviews. They would be considered the Case Manager across agencies, etc., recognizing that they would not have approval authority outside of DPS.</i></p> <p><i>Have someone in DPS who is familiar with agricultural businesses.</i></p>
2	Permit process is too slow – needs more streamlining	DPS provides Fast-track same day service for small scope projects. DPS offers a five-day review process for small scope projects if they don’t qualify for walkthrough service.

**Discussion Topic: Permitting / Public Construction Impacts / Transportation
4Business – Benchmarking to be the Best for Business – December 9, 2019**

	Key Issues Identified	Recent Improvements / Possible Solutions <i>Note: Recent Improvements are printed in BLACK, Possible Solutions from Listening Sessions & Survey in BLUE, Possible Solutions from 11/20 Charrette in PURPLE</i>
		<p>DPS provides five-day residential solar permit process.</p> <p>DPS streamlined process offers electronic permits and plans submissions for majority of permits. This allows for concurrent multi-discipline plan reviews. Applicants can see reviewers' comments in real time and contact the reviewers before resubmitting plan corrections.</p> <p>DPS is working on expanding electronic submissions for all permit types.</p> <p>DPS is increasing outreach efforts to promote Free Design Consultations and next day inspections which are offered for both large and small projects.</p> <p>County permit process to be benchmarked against other jurisdictions in the region to identify other streamlining possibilities</p>
3	Inconsistent reviews / inspections, especially in the area of fire inspections	<p>DPS has developed standardized check lists that can be shared with customers/agents before the review or inspection, and is better training reviewers/inspectors with a goal of reducing plans returned for corrections (checklists available on-line)</p> <p>DPS has identified inspection Quality Assurances as an area of improvement to be measured as part internal performance agreements</p>
4	Confusion over DPS website identifying a permit as "pending", but go in person and it's ready	<p>When using electronic processing, notification of permit issuance is automatically done by the permit program.</p> <p>DPS is working on a process to notify applicants who submit using paper plans either by phone or personalized email, when their permit is ready to be issued.</p>
5	Sign regulation issues: regs are too restrictive; variance process is too	Sign review for conformance with Zoning Code has been reduced in most cases from 4-6 weeks to 24-48 hours

Discussion Topic: Permitting / Public Construction Impacts / Transportation
4Business – Benchmarking to be the Best for Business – December 9, 2019

	Key Issues Identified	Recent Improvements / Possible Solutions <i>Note: Recent Improvements are printed in BLACK, Possible Solutions from Listening Sessions & Survey in BLUE, Possible Solutions from 11/20 Charrette in PURPLE</i>
	difficult for small businesses, and enforcement is inconsistent	<p>DPS Zoning enforces the sign regulations to conform to Chapter 59 as established by Council. DPS Zoning staff meet several times with applicants for sign variance and sign concept plan to go over the process and advise as to what is needed for the submittal and approval of their application. DPS agrees that the sign variance/concept plan process is a lengthy process, but certain timeframes are set to allow for public feedback.</p> <p><i>Review the Sign section of the County Code by Council in light of changes in digital marketing, and urban settings</i></p> <p><i>Examine the variance process of the sign ordinance to identify any simplification and streamlining</i></p>
6	Food-related business concerns: it takes too long to get permits, inspections, and approvals for restaurants, especially for very small operations	<p>Food businesses & restaurants may involve permits from multi departments & agencies (HHS, DPS, Liquor, Historic Preservations, MNCPPC, SHA, WSSC, Utilities; etc.). DPS processes food vendor applications on the same day, but many food-related permits involve obtaining permits from other departments and agencies such as health & Human Services and WSSC</p> <p>DPS, in coordination with others, has streamlined the process and developed a guide containing extensive Questions and Answers relating to food establishments called “Recipe for Success” https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/Resources/Files/Customer_Service/RestaurantWelcome.pdf</p> <p><i>DPS is considering a Green Tape process to expedite food establishments with less than 50 occupants.</i></p> <p><i>Provide more outreach to promote “Recipe for Success” program and free design consultation.</i></p>

Discussion Topic: Permitting / Public Construction Impacts / Transportation
4Business – Benchmarking to be the Best for Business – December 9, 2019

	Key Issues Identified	Recent Improvements / Possible Solutions <i>Note: Recent Improvements are printed in BLACK, Possible Solutions from Listening Sessions & Survey in BLUE, Possible Solutions from 11/20 Charrette in PURPLE</i>
7	Permit fees are too expensive – especially paying a separate fee each time plans have to be re-submitted	<p>In 2015 a comprehensive functional analysis was performed by an independent consultant who assessed the fee structure. Fees were modified per that study.</p> <p>Review cycles are dependent on quality of plans. For public education, DPS’s new website provides plan submission guidelines and videos. Staff education is taking place with the goal of reducing plan resubmissions, which will be measured in accordance with the performance agreements.</p> <p>Council Office of Legislative Oversight is in the process of Benchmarking permit codes against other local jurisdictions in the region as part of an economic development strategy.</p>
8	Too difficult to get specific feedback or comments – Need it posted on a website like Fairfax and Arlington counties	<p>Status is now posted on-line. Applicants can see comments posted on ePlans.</p> <p><i>Improve the quality of the feedback</i></p> <p><i>Streamline and standardize the responses</i></p>
9	Inspection failures for small items should be easier to rectify – maybe send photo of corrections instead of having to get re-inspection	<p>DPS performs next day inspections. Fire and Life safety inspections must be performed by the fire inspector and commercial building inspector.</p> <p><i>Explore virtual inspections</i></p>
10	Interior projects should not have to go through Zoning and Building Use and Land Use approval	<p>Interior alterations can trigger zoning and or other disciplines reviews. Interior alteration which may have a change of use, needs to be reviewed under multiple codes and multiple review disciplines including zoning.</p> <p>No change in use, such as Business to Business or Mercantile to Mercantile are currently reviewed under Fast Track Process. These permits are processed while waiting.</p> <p><i>DPS is investigating the permit system’s ability to differentiate between interior and exterior alteration processes. System generated land development reviews could possibly be eliminated for all interior alteration projects if an existing septic system is not affected; whereas exterior alterations still require land development review.</i></p>

Discussion Topic: Permitting / Public Construction Impacts / Transportation
4Business – Benchmarking to be the Best for Business – December 9, 2019

	Key Issues Identified	Recent Improvements / Possible Solutions <i>Note: Recent Improvements are printed in BLACK, Possible Solutions from Listening Sessions & Survey in BLUE, Possible Solutions from 11/20 Charrette in PURPLE</i>
11	Confusion over DPS website identifying a permit as “pending”, but go in person and it’s ready	When using electronic processing, notification of permit issuance is automatically done by the permit program. DPS is working on a process to notify applicants who submit using paper plans either by phone or personalized email, when their permit is ready to be issued.
12	Simplify and cut fees for individual condo remodeling to be more like home remodeling	Explore potential of simplification if an individual remodeling project doesn’t involve relocating amenities. Would require Council approval of new fee schedule.
13	Zoning for Landscaping business should be less restrictive and allowed in more areas	Landscaping business is a conditional use in Agricultural Zones, Rural Residential and Large Residential zones; only allowed by right in Medium Industrial zones. In July, 2019, the County Council approved a zoning text amendment allowing a Landscape Contractor as a permitted use in all Industrial zones.
14	Permitting Services website is confusing	Website was recently overhauled based on user feedback. New website includes many more tools for businesses and process pages for various types of businesses (Recipes for Success for restaurants), design consultation, special events, design-for-life, etc. Continue to make improvements based upon user feedback.
15	Adjacent private development has negative impact on business	DPS regularly participates in coordination meetings with DOT, utility companies, developers and other parties to discuss and try to avoid potential impacts related to construction activities. DPS plan review uses software tools to identify possible conflicts with sidewalk, lane or street closures. Our maintenance of traffic staff works with construction crews in the field to reduce the impact of construction activities o local businesses and residents. Consult with MNCPPC to require developers to submit an overall business impact mitigation strategy during the Planning Board approval process with MNCPPC (multi departments & agencies)

Discussion Topic: Permitting / Public Construction Impacts / Transportation
4Business – Benchmarking to be the Best for Business – December 9, 2019

	Key Issues Identified	Recent Improvements / Possible Solutions <i>Note: Recent Improvements are printed in BLACK, Possible Solutions from Listening Sessions & Survey in BLUE, Possible Solutions from 11/20 Charrette in PURPLE</i>
	DOT Issues 16-21	
16	Find a way to make travel times more predictable and provide better mobility for employees and business deliveries	<p>Easier Commutes is one of the County Executive’s priorities. Numerous road, transit and pedestrian/bike improvement projects are programmed in the County’s capital budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purple line light rail is under construction • Bus Rapid Transit is proceeding on Route 29 and planning continues for other routes • Currently testing the effectiveness of scooter and bike rentals • County is actively engaged with the State on the best approach to easing congestion on the 270 and 495, and advocating on behalf of the Corridor Cities Transitway <p>Better outreach to businesses to promote these tools as well as conversations over what other tools would be most helpful for business owners, employees and customers</p> <p>Better publicize the information that is available on-line about real time information and transportation improvements, including web pages, and sign-ups for newsletters or alerts about projects</p> <p>Improve communications with the business community when doing outreach on road, ped & bike improvements. Any suggestions would be welcome.</p> <p>Give more adequate notification of road closures, etc.</p>
17	Do we have any apps that can link to various real time information on Metro train and bus, Ride On, which is available on digital screens in some buildings	<p>Applications exist on Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) website and in mobile form. In the App Store, search for the “Ride On Real Time” app and the “DC Metro and Bus” app. Also available is Metro’s Trip Planning on-line tool.</p> <p>Suggestions welcome to improve outreach to businesses to promote these tools as well as conversations over what other tools would be most helpful for business owners, employees and customers</p>
18	Purple Line construction and Wheaton redevelopment project construction have	<p>Montgomery County Small Business Assistance Program grants and Montgomery County Small Business Impact Fund grants are available through an application process for areas impacted by specific County construction projects (i.e. Wheaton Redevelopment, Studio</p>

Discussion Topic: Permitting / Public Construction Impacts / Transportation
4Business – Benchmarking to be the Best for Business – December 9, 2019

	Key Issues Identified	Recent Improvements / Possible Solutions <i>Note: Recent Improvements are printed in BLACK, Possible Solutions from Listening Sessions & Survey in BLUE, Possible Solutions from 11/20 Charrette in PURPLE</i>
	had a negative impact on adjacent businesses	<p>Plaza Silver Spring, and Bethesda Metro Station South Entrance CIP Projects). The Business Solutions Group is coordinating assistance in targeted areas.</p> <p>MCDOT created pages on their website for major road and bikeway projects with background information and updates on construction – people can sign-up for regular newsletters/updates</p> <p><i>Encourage businesses to sign up for newsletters and project updates on MCDOT website</i></p> <p><i>Encourage businesses to attend Purple Line’s Community Advisory Team’s meetings. The County has a Purple Line Manager, who is the liaison to the state.</i></p> <p><i>Continue working with business community to address parking issues around the Wheaton Redevelopment site</i></p>
19	Elimination of parking for Purple Line construction is severely impacting business	<p>MCDOT monitors and reallocates short and long term parking spaces in County owned lots and garages in response to specific construction activities</p> <p><i>Work with the State and Purple Line Transit Partners (PLTP) to update maps to nearby parking and wayfinding signs to commercial areas</i></p>
20	Need strong engagement with business community before making decisions to close roads, bridges or take away parking	<p>For County projects, MCDOT currently reaches out to Chambers of Commerce and Regional government centers, as well as sends targeted correspondence to property owners when designing plans for road projects, but there is often a great deal of time that passes in between the design and construction phases.</p> <p><i>Suggestions welcome on how best to target businesses impacted by projects and how best to publicize the required public meetings and create a dialogue.</i></p>
21	Lack of parking near Upcounty transit options	Facility planning underway to address parking issues at Milestone Transit Center and Boyd’s MARC station.