

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Plumbing Plan Review and Inspection Services
DEPARTMENT: PADS
PRESENTED BY: Tim Stewart, Planning and Development Services Director,
Bridget Smith, Building Official

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

King County currently provides plumbing plan review and inspection services in the City of Shoreline. The State provides the permits for electrical work. The City provides all other plan review and inspection services. This overlap can be cumbersome and duplicative for our residents. The City, County and State must review and inspect the same project. In our effort to constantly find new ways to provide better customer service, staff has investigated the potential of the City assuming responsibility for these services. We have concluded that the City could assume the plumbing plan check and inspection services from the County without additional cost to our residents and with improved customer service. We are still investigating the feasibility of assuming the electrical work now provided by the State.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

This proposal is anticipated to be revenue neutral. About \$52,000 in annual revenue is anticipated. The cost of providing this service includes about \$38,600 in direct costs and about \$13,400 in indirect costs. The total cost of providing this new service would be about the same as the annual revenue.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council review and discuss the proposal to provide plumbing plan review and inspection services in house and indicate its preference to include (or not include) this new program in the 2004 city budget.

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney _____

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of providing plumbing permit services in-house is to provide improved customer service.

BACKGROUND

There are several types of ancillary permits required for building construction. Ancillary permits may include and are not limited to mechanical, fire systems and plumbing permits. Customers currently come to the City of Shoreline to obtain building, mechanical and fire systems permits. In order to obtain a plumbing permit, the customer needs to go to King County. Our inspectors then coordinate with the King County plumbing inspector before providing final approval of construction projects. There have been delays and errors due to this process.

It is customary for a City to provide plumbing services in-house and it is often a surprise to new customers that Shoreline doesn't.

The building inspectors we currently have in Shoreline are certified in plumbing inspections. But they have not been using their skills and will need some additional training. We anticipate that our current plans examiners and building inspectors will be the primary service providers for plumbing permits and inspections. We plan to use "on call" consultants for plan review and perhaps inspections, when needed.

The City does not have a contract with King County regarding plumbing services. King County is required to provide the services by the State unless the City takes on the responsibility. The City can take over the service by sending the County a letter of notification that we will assume responsibility for the service on a certain date.

DISCUSSION

Planning and Development Services customers are often frustrated by the need to deal with King County for plumbing permits. Consolidation of the plumbing permits with building permits would improve service. Some of the other factors affecting the decision to assume this responsibility include revenues, expenses and our implementation plan.

REVENUES:

Based upon information from King County, we anticipate annual revenue of \$52,000 in permit fees.

EXPENSES:

The primary direct expense for providing this service would be labor for plan review and inspections. We estimate that this cost would be approximately \$36,800. There would be some cost savings for inspections. One City inspector would perform the duties that are now performed by a City building inspector and a King County plumbing inspector. But there would also be increased workload for the City's current plan reviewers and inspectors. We anticipate "backfilling" this additional demand with outside consultants on an as needed basis. In addition, the City has other indirect costs. We anticipate that revenues would cover the total expense for this new service.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The timing for implementation of the plumbing plan check and inspection services could be coordinated with the adoption of the new International set of codes. The new codes will be implemented by the State, and therefore by jurisdictions, in July of 2004. The plumbing services could be rolled into the overall changes of the codes. Before the program is implemented a number of tasks would be required, including:

- Training for staff.
- Changes in the Hanson Permit Tracking System.
- Changes in the City Ordinances.
- Changes in the City Fee Schedule.

We anticipate that these tasks could be completed by July 2004 and that the program could be operational by that date.

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