



proud past, promising future

CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

Development Engineering Program - Final Engineering Review

Typical Timelines and Tips

Clark County continues to receive periodic complaints about the amount of time it takes for applicants to receive engineering approval on development requests.

This document provides some background on this issue and offers tips that developers and consultants can use to quickly work their way through the county's process.

What is Final Engineering?

After you receive a land use decision for a land division or site plan, most projects need a final engineering review, known as an "ENG" permit. This is a technical review to ensure final construction documents meet Clark County code for stormwater and transportation.

Typical 2009 Timelines

The county has made significant progress in reducing the length of time for engineering reviews. In fairness, a slumping economy has slashed the number of development requests. But the county also has fewer employees available for engineering review than it did in previous years.

Here are the final engineering performance results for 2009. Note that all days are calculated as calendar days (weekends/holidays are included). These numbers do not include the preliminary review process that has a fixed schedule set by Community Development.

Number of approved projects = 35

Average number of days for county review (and corresponding county goal):

1st review = 16 days (goal = 21 days; 17 projects approved with one review)

2nd review = 10 days (goal = 14 days; 14 projects approved with two reviews)

3rd review = 5 days (goal = 7 days; 2 projects approved with three reviews)

4th review = 7 days (goal = 21 days; 2 projects approved with four reviews)

Mylar approval by review engineer = 5 days (no target goal)

Average number of days for the total county engineering review: 27 days

(This is less than the sum of the individual review averages, since not all projects require more than one review. In 2006, the county spent an average of 52 days for total engineering review, which means the county has cut the time almost in half.)

Average total number of days from 1st submittal to construction approval: 83 days

(This longer time period includes both consultant and county review and Mylar routing to external agencies/other county departments.)

Tips

To shorten the process, the county has identified common problems on engineering applications. Following these eight tips will accelerate the process, saving applicants, as well as the county, time and money.

- 1) Complete the "Presubmittal Checklist" and include it with your initial application.
- 2) Review your land use conditions of approval. Note the timing of when a condition is required. Many conditions must be satisfied before final construction plan approval can be given.
- 3) If your project is a site plan, request "final site plan" review at the same time as final engineering. Before submitting, make sure the site plan and engineering documents are consistent, since they might be prepared by different consultants.
- 4) Request a meeting with the assigned final review engineer to present your design concepts and details. Discussing your approach and reasons for complex design decisions will assist the review engineer.
- 5) Our review is only for code compliance. If you feel a review engineer is questioning your professional judgment, please ask to speak with a supervisor.
- 6) Make sure current versions of county standard details are included on the construction plans.
- 7) During final engineering review, resolve issues with other departments, such as Environmental Services (habitat/wetlands) and Community Development (landscaping). We often see delays at the time of final Mylar approval due to unresolved issues with other departments.
- 8) Ensure that all development fees are paid.

Upcoming Changes

The development community has requested the county further reduce its review time for the overall land use process. Work is underway to modify the existing "fast lane" process, which is an expedited review for large economic development projects. Proposed modifications would allow concurrent preliminary land use and final engineering reviews for all site plans, regardless of economic development potential. The county hopes to implement this revised process in mid-2010.

In addition, the county will continue working with its Development and Engineering Advisory Board, a group of private and public sector professionals who offer their expertise on how to improve and streamline the system, both for applicants and county reviewers.

Contact: Sue Stepan, Development Engineering Program Manager
360-397-6118 ext. 4064
Sue.Stepan@clark.wa.gov