

BuildingConnections

Department of Planning and Development News and Events

City Launches Expedited Permitting for Green Projects

September 30, 2009

Seattle – The City of Seattle announced today the start of a new expedited permitting process for highly energy efficient development projects. On September 30 the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) launched the Green Q permitting program for single family and other small residential projects. A second phase for larger and more complex projects will begin in early 2010. This implements a recommendation from the Green Building Task Force.

The program offers the following benefits:

- Priority Intake Appointments
- 50% Faster Initial Plan review
- Application and Review assistance from staff with green building expertise
- Green Building/ Energy Efficiency Recognition.

“I’m excited to offer this new, expedited permitting process for sustainable development projects,” said Diane Sugimura, DPD Director. “This program recognizes those who are creating energy, water, and resource efficient buildings, and encourages others to do the same. The Green Q is a very important step in the effort to raise the sustainability bar in Seattle.”

To qualify for Green Q, applicants must: recycle construction waste; limit dwelling unit size to no more than 2,400 square feet; meet existing code requirements; and design the project to meet one of the following sustainability standards:

- LEED Silver, Gold or Platinum
- Built Green 4 or 5 star
- DPD’s Green Q Alternative Path

The LEED and Built Green programs include broad green building strategies and require third party verification. DPD’s Alternative Path focuses on energy efficiency and provides an option for applicants who choose not to pursue third party verification. The Green Q Alternative Path requirements closely align with the anticipated 2009 Washington State Energy Code, scheduled to be applicable in summer 2010.

The Green Q will further Seattle’s leadership role in climate change initiatives and support DPD’s efforts to make sustainable design the standard rather than the exception. Faster permit reviews will encourage the construction of more energy efficient buildings, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing jobs for green building designers and contractors.

Other Green Building assistance available at DPD for sustainable development includes:

- Priority Green – an integrated review process for projects pushing the envelope of green building. Facilitated permitting support by DPD is provided for highly innovative projects that will serve as visible models of high performance and sustainability. Projects must meet stringent environmental criteria, including adherence to the 2030 Challenge. Launched in 2008.
- Deconstruction Permits – code change to allow residential builders the additional time needed to deconstruct buildings for re-use and re-cycling that would otherwise be slated for the landfill. Adopted by City Council in 2009.

- The Innovation Review Board – a new advisory board created to provide objective, technical input from members of the community and development industry, assisting developers seeking to use innovative new technology not currently recognized by technical code standards. To convene fall 2009.

- Living Building Challenge – working with developers seeking to meet the advanced sustainability standards set by Cascadia Green Building Council’s Living Building Challenge. Living buildings generate all their own energy, process their own waste, and meet a number of other requirements, thus presenting the most challenge to design, permit and construct. Legislation to City Council in fall of 2009.

DPD is working to advance Seattle’s Action Agenda by improving the regulatory climate for sustainable development.

To learn more about Green Q go to: www.seattle.gov/dpd/GreenQ

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