



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councilmember Sally Clark, Chair, PLUNC
Councilmember Tim Burgess
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

FROM: Diane M. Sugimura

DATE: March 6, 2009

SUBJECT: Committee Briefing: DPD Monthly Report on March 11, 2009

Overview of DPD Permit Activity, Revenues and Staffing

Starting with the good news – turnaround statistics for the month of February 2009:

- 48 hour initial review: 96.7% (goal = 80%)
- 2 week initial review: 79.7% (goal = 80%).
- 6 week initial review: 84.6% (goal = 70%)

Intake value for the first two months of the year was \$157 million compared to \$277 million in 2008 (more than a 40% reduction in building revenues). Intake volume was almost 40% lower than 2008, 817 compared with 1,307. Issue value was \$319 million compared to \$607 million, almost 50% lower than 2008. As usual, we are watching this very, very carefully. January and February are traditionally low months. Are they an indication of the year to come?

In terms of MUPs (Master Use Permits), in February we received 30 applications, down from 37 in January but more than the 19 applications in December. During the height of development activity in 2007, we averaged almost a 100 a month. More than half were short plats for townhouses. Not surprisingly in this housing market, that has changed significantly.

We have completed the difficult task of delivering the lay-off news, ultimately to 26 people. We provided six weeks notice. We've seen some amazing supportive responses from staff in spite of the challenges we are facing. We've worked closely with Personnel and their Project Hire teams. We are hopeful all will be able to find another job, but that is getting harder as other departments and businesses are facing similar reductions.



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Review of Code Enforcement Litigation in 2008

When DPD staff is unable to convince a property owner to correct a code violation, cases ultimately may be referred to the Law Department to initiate a civil action to collect penalties for noncompliance. In most instances, we are able to achieve compliance through voluntary action by the party responsible for the violation, but in approximately 5 to 7 percent of the cases legal action is required.

In 2008, DPD referred 154 cases for legal action, resulting in 116 cases that were closed after legal referral in either 2008 or earlier years. The chart below summarizes the volume of law referrals and cases closed for the past eight years.

Year	# Cases Referred for Legal Action	# Cases Closed After Legal Action
2001	166	141
2002	141	117
2003	105	149
2004	100	93
2005	83	94
2006	134	137
2007	138	130
2008	154	116

* Closed cases may total more than the number of referred cases in a given year since some were referred in earlier years.

A highlight for us in 2008 was the collection of more than \$31,000 in penalties from a well-known owner of many properties in the Roosevelt neighborhood, plus the demolition of two unfit houses to avoid even higher penalties. In addition, just last week we collected another \$25,000 from the same property owner; four more dilapidated houses are scheduled for demolition or repair to code compliance, before the end of 2009. We continue to work with the Law Department to address the negative neighborhood impacts from these properties and will update you as the year progresses.

An overview of 2008 payments made in connection with enforcement cases is below.

Settlements and Other Payments

2001	\$ 36,673
2002	\$ 37,250
2003	\$ 76,859
2004	\$ 71,807
2005	\$ 82,579
2006	\$137,307
2007	\$173,560
2008	\$130,265

These figures do not include money collected on judgments we obtained in court or via the citation process. The Civil Enforcement section of the Law Department collects past court judgments and liens we have obtained through the code enforcement process. In 2008 we obtained judgments totaling \$588,079.

Planning Activities

Multifamily Code Update: Staff will be briefing Council on March 11; the Planning Commission will be providing their response on March 25.

Shoreline Characterization Report: The report has been completed and will soon be released for public review. This provides a comprehensive look at the health of Seattle's shorelines along the Duwamish River, the Ship Canal, Lake Union, Lake Washington, Green Lake, and Puget Sound. These findings are an essential part of the City's ongoing effort to update its shoreline regulations. DPD collaborated with King County to create this report, applying a characterization model to existing GIS data on water quality, land use, vegetative cover, shoreline armoring, and other factors relevant to ecological functions.

Administrative Design Review: A new administrative design review process for Townhouses is well underway. A recent public meeting indicated some general support for the concept; however, we know there are still a range of opinions. We will have a proposal to Council later this summer; we believe this will help inform Multifamily zoning decisions.

Zoning Analysis for Some Industrial Lands: Staff are meeting with the community about possible rezones of industrial land in urban villages. We've been to Fremont; Ballard will be next. We are coordinating with DON on the outreach. We are also working on the report that Councilmember Clark requested summarizing work on industrial lands.

Design Guidelines: The Design Guidelines for Queen Anne and Uptown are on their way to Council. These will be the 18th and 19th neighborhood guidelines to be adopted.

Neighborhood Plan Updates: Community workshops on Neighborhood Plan Updates in Southeast Seattle begin on March 14th. We have retained a dozen Public Outreach Liaisons to engage underserved communities.

Recent and Upcoming Public Meetings and Outreach to the Community

March 2: Mt Baker Community Club – Neighborhood Planning discussion

March 3: African Business Association of Seattle at the Rainier Community Center – Neighborhood Planning discussion

March 5: Beacon Hill Lutheran Church – Neighborhood Planning discussion

March 10: Downtown Seattle Association – overall Livable South Downtown project update

March 14: MLK @ Holly (Othello) Neighborhood Planning Public Meeting at Miracle Temple of God, 7100 42nd Avenue S.

March 17: Next NPAC (Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee) meeting

March 21: North Rainier (Mt Baker) Neighborhood Planning Public Meeting at Franklin High School, 3013 S. Mount Baker Blvd.

March 28: North Beacon (Beacon Hill) Neighborhood Planning Public Meeting at El Centro de la Raza, 2524 16th Avenue S.