Title
Streamlining transportation permitting in Washington through use of integrated web-based permitting tools and applications

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Abstract

The State of Washington, under the sponsorship and leadership of the State Office of Regulatory Assistance (Agency of the Governor’s Office), has embarked on a multi-agency, multi-phased effort to integrate permitting and regulatory requirements across the state for Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) projects through use of innovative web-based technologies, applications, and leveraged partnerships. Partner agencies involved in this multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction integration effort include:

- **Federal.** US Army Corps of Engineers for Section 10 and Section 404 permits; US Coast Guard for Section 9 permits; and Federal Highways (WA);
- **State.** Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife for HPA permits; Washington State Department of Ecology for Section 401, CZM consistency, and shoreline permits; Washington State Department of Natural Resources for Aquatic Use Authorizations; Washington State Department of Health for on-site septic approvals; Washington State Department of Transportation; Washington State Office of Regulatory Assistance; Washington State Office of Financial Management; and Washington State Natural Resources Information Portal Project; and
- **Local.** King County for local shoreline, critical areas, and zoning permits.

Key elements of the web-based permitting approach include:

- **One-Stop JARPA Permitting Site.** Interactive web application providing WSDOT and others with: (i) a single, integrated source of local, state, and federal permitting and regulatory guidance, glossary, tips, FAQs, examples, and step-by-step instruction from the above permitting and regulatory agencies; (ii) downloadable “one-stop” permitting forms (e.g., web-enabled multi-agency Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) form); (iii) secure upload functionality to ensure all regulatory agencies are looking at and seeing the same application materials and environmental discipline reports; and (iv) on-line search, retrieve, and archive capability. See [http://www.one-stop-jarpa.org](http://www.one-stop-jarpa.org)

- **On-Line Permit Assistance System (OPAS).** Interactive, query-based application designed to help applicants and WSDOT determine permitting requirements based upon answers given to select project questions and the extent to which certain regulatory thresholds are met or exceeded. Conclusion of query session is a customized, narrative report of applicable permits and their descriptions. See [http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/opas/](http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/opas/)

- **Permit Process Schematics.** Interactive process and timeline flowcharts depicting sequence and steps associated with select permitting and regulatory processes, including Section 404, Section 10, HPA, Shoreline, CZM, SEPA, NEPA, NPDES Stormwater, Air Operating, Water Rights, NPDES, and more. Permit Process Schematics coupled with customized OPAS narrative reports provide applicants and WSDOT with a comprehensive overview of applicable permit and regulatory requirements. See [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/pac/ppds_inforeview.htm](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/pac/ppds_inforeview.htm)

Project Purpose Statement: The purpose of the Office of Regulatory Assistance’s effort to work with WSDOT and others to advance integration of permitting and regulatory requirements through the above described web elements is largely to:

- Provide clear, accessible, and uniformly presented information in a similar format and level of detail;
- Enhance and promote permitting and regulatory accountability and transparency;
- Provide a means to foster and enable continuous process improvement and innovation; and
- Improve by lessening decision-making review and transaction times and increasing overall quality of submitted application materials and documentation.

Brief Project Overview and Methodology: Development of the above described web elements has largely occurred through cooperative agreement and participation from the above agencies. Leadership and staffing from the Office of Regulatory Assistance has provided the vision and sense of direction necessary to unify and secure the engagement and participation from the agencies. Development occurs through a consultant, agency IT staff, and a multi-agency steering group.

Explanation of Current or Anticipated Results: Beta testing to date has resulted in higher quality permit applications being submitted to local, state, and federal regulatory agencies (via the Washington State Multi-Agency Permitting Team for Transportation). Additionally, web elements have generated productive process improvement and process clarity changes within the regulatory agencies. Clear and accurate information, acquired and factored in early in the process, results in greater attention to regulatory and permitting requirements as well as better and more fully informed compliance (or better yet, impact avoidance as a result of likely regulatory obligation).

Recommendations for Future Research: Advance thinking and planning is underway for merging and linking work done in the environmental and natural resources realm with the work occurring in parallel with State Departments of Licensing, Revenue, and Community, Trade, and Economic Development.