



Date: July 7, 2025

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Geoff Soderquist, Director, Public Works  
Mindy Broks, Director, Community Development

Cc: Ryan Barrett, County Manager

**RE: Permit Efficiencies between Public Works and Community Development**

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Over the past ten years significant process improvements have been made to increase permitting efficiency. Improvements made at the end of 2024 in anticipation of SB5290 mandatory deadlines Community Development, Public Works and Environmental coordinated to make changes related to subdivisions applications. Since January 1, 2025 all deadlines have been met. Implementation of the SmartGov permitting software will result in an online portal where property owners and developers can apply for permits online and check on permit status; this will create additional efficiencies. All that said, process improvements should occur continuously and will always be a high priority.

There are two next steps recommended to improve permitting associated with public roads and stormwater. Staff are asking for the Commissioner's feedback.

First, relocated one Senior Planner/Associate Engineer and one Engineering Technician from the Public Works building to the Community Development building. Being located in the "Permit Center" will create two efficiencies. First, those staff will be available to speak with applicants at the counter. Often applicants have questions about roads and stormwater that can be quickly answered and having staff in the building would make that more possible. Second, Public Works staff could be included in Community Development meetings. The Planner Team and Permit Tech Team meet weekly and could include Public Works staff. In addition, simply having staff in the same building will increase ad hoc discussions.

Second, updating Chapter 12.60, Road Development Standards, Lewis County Code, and creating a design manual. Updates will focus on creating clearer standards and simplifying the process; as well as, working with cities to create urban street standards that will support further annexation. During the update, staff will update permitting processes accordingly. Community Development will dedicate a portion of staff time to assist in this update. The schedule is July through December 2025.