



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia
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**CHANGE TO BUILDING PERMITTING PROCESS
EFFECTIVE 04/08/13**

During the past few years, there have been instances where building permit applications were processed, approved and issued through our current procedure, only for the project owner to find out later that questions or issues may exist. For example, the project may require a water meter upgrade, an entrance change could not be made as desired or City refuse service could not accommodate their needs. These and other issues can result in unanticipated expense and delay for the project owner and stress for both the project owner and the City in trying to accommodate a project already underway.

A City staff team, comprised of representatives from Community Development, Public Works, Public Utilities, Fire Department, Economic Development, Information Technology and the City Manager's Office, has evaluated the building permitting process to more proactively address these situations. The team decided the best solution is to move awareness and resolution of these issues to the front of the permitting process. We have developed a "Building Permit Checklist" that is to be completed before a building permit application is accepted. This checklist targets items such as plumbing fixtures, fire suppression, entrance configuration, and refuse disposal. If a project answers "no" to all of the questions, the permit will be accepted at the Community Development counter and proceed through the review process. If a project answers "yes" to questions, further information must be submitted to the applicable City department and an authorized signature obtained before a building permit application will be accepted into the review process. We hope this interaction between the City and project developers will result in a better understanding for all of what the project involves and resolve potential problems before the project begins. Use of the checklist will begin April 8, 2013.

City staff recognizes that a "yes" on the checklist will involve additional communication between the applicant and a City Department, but we anticipate that any delay this adds to the process will be briefer than a delay at a crucial time further into the permitting or construction process. The questions on the checklist are ones that may have been considered prior to beginning a project and if this consideration has occurred, there should be little to no delay experienced.