

ALDER COUNTY · ENGAGEMENT CHARTER

Development Review Process Improvement

Assessment and redesign of application intake and review using existing staff and systems.

Client Alder County Office of Development Review	Practice Operations & Process Improvement	Duration 14 weeks	Executive sponsor Director of Planning
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BACKGROUND

The Alder County Office of Development Review reviews site plans and subdivisions that affect county roads and drainage, and issues road opening permits for work in the county right-of-way. An 11-person team handles roughly 2,100 applications a year: about 1,500 road opening permits and 600 site plan and subdivision reviews.

Review times have grown steadily. The median application now takes 41 days from submission to decision, against a 30-day county service standard, and 410 applications are pending. Applicants, municipalities, and elected officials have asked for faster reviews and clearer information about where an application stands. The county engaged HGMA to diagnose the causes and redesign the process without adding positions or purchasing new software during the engagement.

OBJECTIVES

1. Bring the median time from submission to decision to 30 days or fewer.
2. Reduce the backlog of pending applications by at least half.
3. Reduce the share of applications incomplete at submission to under 15%.
4. Provide county leadership with a monthly performance dashboard and prepare a version for public release.

In scope

- Intake, completeness check, routing, technical review, comment letters, and decisions for site plans, subdivisions, and road opening permits
- Operating procedures, checklists, and applicant guidance
- Interim tracking using existing county tools
- Performance measures and a monthly dashboard

Out of scope

- Changes to county ordinances, fee schedules, or technical standards
- Selection or purchase of a permitting system (requirements outline only)
- Municipal land use board processes
- Staffing levels and classification decisions

APPROACH AND TIMELINE

WEEKS 1-3	WEEKS 4-6	WEEKS 7-11	WEEKS 12-14
Assess Process walk-throughs, staff and applicant interviews, 24 months of tracking data.	Design Future-state process, review lanes, operating procedures, measures, and roadmap.	Pilot Pilot the redesigned process on new applications and use scheduled review sessions to reduce the backlog.	Sustain Adjust, document, train, and hand off to the division supervisor.

DELIVERABLES

#	DELIVERABLE	DUE
D1	Current-state process map and findings memo	Week 3
D2	Future-state process design and implementation roadmap	Week 6
D3	Operating procedures, completeness checklists, and applicant guide	Week 7 (draft guide week 5)
D4	Pilot of the redesigned process, with weekly results	Weeks 7-11
D5	Monthly performance dashboard	Week 10, then monthly
D6	Sustainment plan and permitting system requirements outline	Week 14

GOVERNANCE AND ROLES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Executive sponsor (Director of Planning)	Owns outcomes, approves process changes within existing county policy
Steering committee	Deputy County Administrator, Director of Planning, County Engineer, IT Director; meets monthly
Process owner (division supervisor)	Leads the pilot day to day and owns the process after handoff
Review staff working group	Designs and tests changes; meets weekly for 30 minutes
HGMA principal consultant	Leads analysis and design, facilitates the working group, builds measures, coaches the process owner

SUCCESS MEASURES

MEASURE	BASELINE	TARGET BY WEEK 14
Median days from submission to decision, all applications	41 days	30 days or fewer
Pending applications	410	205 or fewer
Applications incomplete at submission	38%	Under 15%
Monthly performance dashboard delivered to leadership	None	Monthly

CONSTRAINTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- No new positions or software purchases during the engagement; changes must work within existing county policy and tools.
- Public-facing communications are routed through the county public information office.
- Review staff can allocate about two hours per week to the working group and pilot activities.