

Development Review: Current-State Findings

Queueing, handoffs, and incomplete submissions contribute to review delays. Changes to intake and routing could reduce this waiting time.

To Director of Planning and steering committee	From HGMA Consulting Group	Deliverable D1, current-state findings	Status Final
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SUMMARY

The assessment identified incomplete submissions, a shared queue for routine and complex applications, sequential routing, and fragmented status tracking as causes of delay. The recommendations focus on changes to intake, routing, and reporting using the county’s existing staff and tools.

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

We traced 40 recent applications from submission to decision, interviewed 14 staff and 6 frequent applicants (engineering firms and utility contractors), observed intake and review work, and analyzed 24 months of tracking data covering about 4,200 applications.

6 days median active review time in the 40 traced applications	38% of applications arrive incomplete	62% of the backlog is routine road opening permits	3 separate systems used to track one application
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KEY FINDINGS

1. Queues and handoffs account for substantial delays

The median application now takes 41 days from submission to decision, against a 30-day county service standard. Across the 40 applications we traced, the median active review time was 6 days. Most of the remaining elapsed time was spent in queues, in handoffs between reviewers, and waiting on applicants.

2. Incomplete submissions require additional review rounds

Thirty-eight percent of applications were missing required items at submission. Site plan applications averaged 2.3 review rounds, and each round adds about two weeks.

3. Routine and complex applications share one queue

Routine road opening permits, which take under an hour to review, wait behind major subdivisions. Of the 410 pending applications, 254 are road opening permits, with a median wait of 34 days.

4. Reviews are routed sequentially

Site plans move from engineering to traffic to drainage in sequence. We estimate about 70% could be reviewed in parallel, with one consolidated comment letter to the applicant.

5. No single view of status

Each application is tracked across a legacy database, a shared spreadsheet, and email. Status inquiries make up about a quarter of front desk calls, which pulls staff away from review work.

6. Performance is not measured routinely

Leadership receives application counts once a year. There is no regular report of review times, backlog, or completeness, limiting leadership’s ability to identify delays through routine reporting.

ROOT CAUSES

ROOT CAUSE	FINDINGS IT EXPLAINS
No completeness gate or published submission guidance	2
No triage by application type or complexity	1, 3
Sequential routing built around paper files	1, 4
No single system of record or performance measures	5, 6

IMPLICATIONS

At current intake and completion rates, the backlog is projected to grow by roughly 15 applications a month. The next deliverable sets out a future-state process designed to reverse that trend within existing staffing and tools.