

# Coos County Community Development Work Plan

## I. BACKGROUND:

While community development can encompass various programs and initiatives, Coos County's Community Development includes three core programs: Land Use Planning, Building, and Enforcement. Here's a brief overview of each program:

1. **Land Use Planning:** Land use planning focuses on the strategic management and regulation of land within the County's jurisdiction. This program involves the development and implementation of comprehensive plans that guide future land use decisions. It includes activities such as zoning, land division, urban growth boundary management, and the creation of development regulations and policies. Land use planning aims to promote sustainable development, balance growth with environmental preservation, address community needs, and create functional communities. The majority of land use regulations are based on Statewide Planning Goals, Oregon Revised Statutes, Oregon Administrative Rules, or case law. There is limited discretion at the local level, but some flexibility exists.
2. **Building:** The building program is responsible for regulating and overseeing construction activities within the community. This program ensures that buildings and structures meet safety, accessibility, and quality standards. It involves the review of construction plans, issuance of building permits, and conducting inspections at various stages of construction to verify compliance with building codes and regulations. The building program focuses on ensuring that new construction, renovations, and additions meet structural, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and fire safety requirements. Building Codes are based on Oregon Revised Statute, Oregon Administrative Rules, Oregon Building Codes (dependent on discipline) and some international building codes. There is little discretion at the local level but the Building Official does have some flexibility.
3. **Enforcement:** The enforcement program is responsible for ensuring compliance with various regulations and codes related to land use, building, and other community development requirements. It involves monitoring and investigating potential violations, responding to complaints, and taking appropriate enforcement actions. Enforcement activities may include issuing citations, fines, or orders to correct violations. The enforcement program plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of community development standards, protecting public safety, and addressing non-compliant activities or structures. This is based on local ordinances, codes, statutes, rules and building code provisions.

These three programs often work together to create a cohesive approach to community development. Land use planning provides a strategic framework for guiding development, while the building program ensures that construction activities adhere to established standards. The enforcement program acts as a regulatory arm, ensuring compliance with applicable regulations and taking corrective actions when necessary.

By integrating these programs effectively, communities can achieve sustainable development, balanced growth, and a safe built environment that meets the needs of residents and preserves the community's overall well-being.

## **II. WORKPLAN SUMMARY**

The work plan aims to address the key objectives and activities related to code enforcement, land use, and building in Coos County. It emphasizes the importance of compliance, public health and safety, neighborhood preservation, fairness, education, outreach, collaboration, and performance measurement. The plan includes several strategies to achieve these goals, such as:

1. **Redeveloping the code enforcement program:** Incorporate the Building Codes Program and establish new enforcement codes, priorities, and processes. Hire a hearings officer to handle legal aspects, facilitate public outreach, and ensure fairness in enforcement actions.
2. **Enhancing collaboration and partnerships:** Foster collaboration among various departments, agencies, and community organizations to address complex enforcement issues more effectively. Share information, coordinate efforts, and leverage resources and expertise.
3. **Streamlining processes and improving efficiency:** Assess and improve the efficiency of permit processing, development reviews, and building inspections. Monitor and reduce processing times to enhance customer satisfaction and encourage timely decision-making.
4. **Performance measurement and evaluation:** Implement performance measures to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of code enforcement, land use, and building activities. Regularly monitor compliance rates, response times, case closure rates, repeat offender rates, public satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness.
5. **Public outreach and education:** Conduct educational campaigns to inform and engage property owners, businesses, and the community about regulations, compliance requirements, and the importance of code enforcement. Provide resources, assistance, and clarity regarding land use and building processes.

By implementing this work plan, Coos County aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of code enforcement, land use, and building processes. It seeks to ensure compliance, protect public health and safety, preserve neighborhoods, foster fairness, promote education and outreach, and enhance collaboration. Regular monitoring of performance measures will help track progress, identify areas for improvement, and achieve the desired outcomes for the community.

## **III. LEADERSHIP, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Providing effective leadership in responsible Community Development requires a combination of skills, qualities, and strategies. Here are some key considerations that administrative staff has used to create a strategic plan for Community Development:

1. **Vision and Goal Setting:** Develop a clear vision for your department and set strategic goals aligned with the needs and priorities of the public. Communicate this vision and goals to your team and inspire them to work towards a shared purpose. Making sure that we are listening to our team and setting obtainable goals is very important.

2. **Effective Communication:** Strong communication skills are essential for a leader. Be transparent, open, and accessible to both your team and the public. Clearly articulate your expectations, priorities, and decisions. Listen actively, encourage feedback, and foster a culture of collaboration and inclusivity. In land use this requires reviewing all the facts and not always taking a statement at face value, because it may be incorrect, and in order to be an effective communicator in land use, justification for compliance is the number one key. We have team meetings and make sure all team members have a voice to ensure maximum participation.

3. **Decision-Making and Problem-Solving:** Leaders face complex challenges and make critical decisions. Develop your decision-making and problem-solving skills in any land use case by gathering relevant information, analyzing data, considering various perspectives, and seeking expert advice that are related to the applicable set of laws called criteria. Be decisive and accountable for your decisions while being open to adjusting course when and if necessary. In all three areas of the Community Development there is a process and staff are the gatekeepers of these processes. We strive to ensure that decision makers remain impartial.

4. **Ethical and Integrity-driven leadership and decision making:** Demonstrate the highest ethical standards in your decision-making and actions. Uphold integrity, honesty, and transparency in all aspects of your leadership role this is very important in all three disciplines.

5. **Team Building and Empowerment:** In Land Use, Building and Enforcement this requires building a competent and diverse team that represents different perspectives and areas of expertise. Delegating authority and empowering your team members to take ownership of their responsibilities. Encourage professional growth, provide opportunities for skill development, and foster a supportive work environment. What does this mean, it means listening and talking to a team member about a situation and not taking a position that there is a right or wrong answer or way to deal with a situation as laws are sometimes unclear in the law that applies.

6. **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement:** Effective government leaders recognize the importance of collaboration and engagement with stakeholders. Foster partnerships with other government agencies, community organizations, businesses, and citizens. Seek input, build consensus, and involve relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process to ensure inclusive and well-informed policies and programs.

#### **IV. OVERALL GOALS FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PROGRAM**

1. **Adaptability and Innovation:** Navigate a rapidly changing environment. Be adaptable and open to new ideas, technologies, and approaches. Encourage innovation and experimentation, allowing for the exploration of creative solutions to address challenges and improve service delivery within the legal requirements of the programs. Staying on top of case law, legislative changes and rulemaking.
2. **Continuous Learning:** All programs require a lifelong learning and professional development. Stay informed about emerging trends, best practices, and advancements in the field. Seek opportunities for training, attend conferences, participate in relevant networks, and leverage resources to enhance your knowledge and skills as a leader.
3. **Political Savviness:** Understand the political landscape and dynamics within which you operate. Develop relationships with elected officials, understand their priorities, and

effectively advocate for your agency or department. Navigating political challenges may require engaging in tough conversations with elected officials who may disagree with the legal requirements that the department is obligated to uphold.

4. Results Orientation and Performance Management: Set performance targets, measure outcomes, and hold yourself and your team accountable for delivering results. Foster a culture of continuous improvement, learning from both successes and failures. Monitor progress, celebrate achievements, and adjust strategies as needed to achieve desired outcomes.

Within these goals, all staff members are provided with training and educational opportunities. The Director actively participates in various groups, including the Association of County Governments, Association of County Planning Directors, Oregon Building Officials Association, Floodplain Administrators, Partnership for Coastal Watersheds, Coquille Watershed (as a board member), Coos County Noxious Weed Advisory Board, and the Housing Action Team. Additionally, all staff members participate in the annual Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development Coastal Conferences.

The Director meets with individual commissioners to understand their respective needs, desires, and concerns for the program. She provides feedback on legislation that may affect the program. Works with other leadership to address barriers and ensure all program legal requirements are met.

The Building Official is a member of the Oregon Building Officials Association, local Building Officials group, consults and builds relationships with other Building Officials statewide including the State of Oregon employees. This provides a network that allows him to track changes to the program and ensure we are providing the highest level of service possible.

The Business Operations Manager is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day administrative aspects of the program and may attend meetings on behalf of the Director or Building Official as required. They ensure compliance with all accounting protocols and maintain accurate financial records. Additionally, they analyze fees to ensure that the programs cover the costs incurred. Their responsibilities also include tracking applications, processing timesheets, managing time-off requests, and ensuring the smooth operation of processes. She attends to employee needs so that employees can attend to the needs of the clients.

## **V. LAND USE PROGRAM – PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

The Community Development Director shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners and shall act as the Planning Director to serve the role defined in ORS 215.042. The Community Development Director shall also oversee all administrative duties related to the Community Development Program and may serve as the Building Official at the determination of the Board of Commissioners.

Coos County has been managing its land use program since the late 1960s, even before the statewide mandate for land use planning bill, SB 100 was signed into law by Governor Tom

McCall signed into law in 1973. While the county may not have initially embraced the land use program willingly, over time, the Community have recognized the importance of adhering to land use laws and prioritizing certain objectives. When someone believes a county has made a land use decision that violates a local or state planning or zoning regulation, their recourse is to appeal the decision to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). This is the appropriate avenue for most disputes over land use decisions. However, a decision-maker may be making a series of decisions that do not comply with relevant regulations. In this case, rather than appealing each decision to LUBA, a party may petition the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) to enforce the regulations. Staff works diligently to ensure this does not happen. As Decision makers, including County Board of Commissioners, County Staff, or Planning Commissioners, are required to follow the laws. This means decision makers should minimize conflicts arising from ex parte contacts and remain unbiased in their decision making. There are always two sides to every story, and the truth should be supported by factual evidence.

As communities evolve and face changing circumstances, it is common for attitudes towards land use programs to shift. Local governments often adapt to the evolving needs and expectations of their constituents while recognizing the long-term advantages of comprehensive land use planning. By embracing the land use program, Coos County demonstrates a commitment to responsible and sustainable development that aligns with state laws and benefits the community as a whole.

If a decision maker disagrees with a land use regulation, it would be appropriate to work with the Community Development Department to request background information or establish a nexus to better understand the requirement and determine if it can be amended.

## **A. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LAND USE DECISION MAKERS**

### **1. ALL DECISION MAKERS**

In Oregon, land use decision-making involves various individuals, each with their specific roles and responsibilities. Decision makers may vary, including staff, appointed officials, elected officials, or hired hearings officers, but they all have important responsibilities that are required to be followed.

In Oregon, there are requirements in place to ensure the disclosure of conflicts of interest or biases in the land use decision-making process. These requirements aim to maintain transparency, fairness, and integrity in the decision-making process. Here are some key aspects related to disclosing conflicts or biases:

1. **Ex Parte Contact Disclosures:** Decision makers, including appointed officials and staff involved in the land use process, are typically required to disclose any ex parte contacts they have received related to a specific land use application. This disclosure ensures that all parties involved have access to the same information and helps prevent any undue influence on the decision-making process.
2. **Public Official Statements of Economic Interest:** Elected officials and certain public officials in Oregon are required to file Statements of Economic Interest. These statements provide information about their financial interests, including any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to their decision-making roles. This helps identify any potential biases that could affect their decision-making in land use matters.

3. **Code of Ethics:** Decision makers, including elected officials and appointed officials, are typically bound by a code of ethics that outlines their responsibilities and expectations. These codes often include provisions requiring disclosure of conflicts of interest and the avoidance of biases. Decision makers are expected to act in the public's best interest and make decisions impartially.
4. **Public Records and Open Meetings Laws:** Oregon has public records and open meetings laws that promote transparency and public access to government decision-making processes. This means that relevant documents, communications, and discussions related to land use decisions may be subject to public scrutiny, further ensuring accountability and reducing the potential for undisclosed conflicts or biases.

Overall, the aim of these requirements is to ensure that decision-makers involved in land use processes in Oregon act in the public's best interest, free from undisclosed conflicts or biases, and provide transparency and accountability in their decision-making. For more information about ex parte, conflicts, or bias, staff can provide training or reference materials. One of the Community Development Director's roles is to ensure that the process is followed.

In the Oregon Land Use System, planners play a crucial role in managing and guiding land use and development activities. Their primary responsibility is to ensure that land use decisions align with the goals and policies established by the state's land use planning program, as outlined in the Oregon Statewide Planning Goals.

Here are some key roles and responsibilities of planners within the Oregon Land Use System:

1. **Comprehensive Planning:** Planners are involved in the development and implementation of comprehensive plans at the city, county, and regional levels. These plans serve as a framework for long-term land use decisions, including zoning, transportation, housing, natural resource protection, and urban growth boundaries. Planners work to implement the Statewide Planning Goals established by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). These goals cover a broad range of areas, including urbanization, agricultural land preservation, natural resource conservation, and public facilities. **Environmental Protection:** Planners assess the environmental impacts of proposed development projects and work to protect sensitive areas, including wetlands, forests, and wildlife habitats. They promote sustainable development practices and advocate for responsible land use to minimize negative environmental effects.
2. **Zoning and Development Review:** Planners review and assess development proposals, ensuring compliance with zoning ordinances and land use regulations. They evaluate factors such as environmental impact, transportation, infrastructure, and compatibility with surrounding areas. This is a role of current planner.
3. **Public Engagement:** Planners engage with the public, stakeholders, and community groups to gather input and facilitate discussions on land use issues. They organize public meetings, workshops, and hearings to provide opportunities for public participation in the decision-making process.
4. **Policy Development:** Planners contribute to the formulation and revision of land use policies and regulations at the local, regional, and state levels. They analyze data, research best practices, and recommend policy changes to address emerging issues and align with evolving community needs.

5. Collaboration and Coordination: Planners collaborate with various stakeholders, including other government agencies, developers, engineers, architects, and community organizations. They coordinate efforts to ensure efficient and effective land use planning, infrastructure development, and growth management.
6. Monitoring and Enforcement: Planners monitor and enforce compliance with land use regulations, permit conditions, and comprehensive plans. They conduct site inspections, review reports, and address violations to ensure adherence to approved plans and regulations.

Overall, planners in the Oregon Land Use System play a vital role in shaping communities, balancing competing interests, and promoting sustainable and responsible land use practices while considering the social, economic, and environmental aspects of development. It is important to remember that there is always an appeals process and it is crucial to follow the process.

## 2. STAFF

The Coos County land use program has the following staff dedicated:

- Director (40 % of time dedicated) – Administrative Staff
- Business Operations Manager (40 % of time dedicated) – Administrative Staff
- Associate Planner
- Permit Specialist (Counter and correspondence)

Activities processed:

Budget Year 22-23 Staff processed the following:

- 985 planning applications (only one resulted in a denial but they were given an option to reapply and are in the process and 2 referrals to Planning Commission). All timelines are subject to a complete application.
  - Ministerial Applications take an average 2 hours to process but requires other departments or agency response before release of decision. Average turn around time to 32 days.
  - Administrative Application take an average of 10 hours to process. Requires responses from other agencies, and a process found in Article 5.0. Average turn around time when an application is found to be complete is 68 days.
  - Hearings Body Conditional Use Applications take 14 hours to process. Requires public hearing notices and process. Average process time three (3) months.
  - Amendments and Rezones take 22 hours and have to publishing cost. Requires 35 advance of any hearing to DLCDC, one hearing before Planning Commission (first Thursday of every month) then Board of Commissioner Hearing (when Board is available) has to have a minimum of 14 days between hearings. Average of four (4) months.
- 25,037 emails regarding land use matters.
- 258 meetings (mostly Administrative Staff)
- 720 total phone contacts
- 326 counter visits

Overall, the average number of public contacts per employee for the last fiscal year was approximately 5,268. Since the onset of COVID, there has been a significant increase in

electronic communication. Return time on emails and phone calls averages same day response with up to 72 hours over a weekend or holiday times. The administrative staff checks the planning email box at the end of each business day to ensure staff has responded to all emails or responded that additional research is needed.

When someone makes a request to develop on a property, staff offers all available options. However, staff is unable to directly assist in developing specific findings for applicants. Instead, they have reworded the development supplemental criteria to provide guidance to individuals throughout the application process. Often, individuals choose to hire a consultant who is a trained professional capable of assisting property owners in meeting application requirements.

Staff makes all relevant decisions accessible on the website and provides links to other applications as examples to help individuals navigate the process. Additionally, staff offers research assistance to the public upon request, which includes aiding with records, mapping, and deed research.

## **B. SPECIFIC GOALS FOR THE LAND USE PLANNING PROGRAM:**

The goals set out for the Land Use Planning Program are as follows:

- Sustaining high client response times while adjusting to staff training and cross-training:
  - Currently, there are two Permit Specialists, with one undergoing training in planning and the other in building. Once training is completed, they will undergo cross-training to provide the highest level of professional response.
  - The process of merging staffing has posed challenges due to split placement, but we are continuously working through logistics to foster a cohesive team atmosphere.
  - Service: When addressing client requests at the counter, the response is never a simple 'yes' or 'no.' Instead, staff will present the available options based on their request. While some options may be challenging, it is crucial to maintain a positive outlook while conveying the information. Responding with professionally is a priority.
  - Reducing application response times while ensuring a legally defensible case.
- Providing education and training opportunities:
  - Staff: Ensuring staff members have the opportunity for training and education as it becomes available.
  - Decision Makers: Conducting trainings for all decision makers on processes, impartiality, ex parte contacts, statewide planning goals, statutes, and rules related to land use. Trainings can be in video or in-person format, depending on the availability of time. Staff is working with DLCD to provide at least two trainings per year.
  - Public: Offering land use training, providing guidance on providing testimony and soliciting input on the program. This should be offered twice a year or facilitated through citizen advisory.
  - Professionals: Facilitating technical discussions on legislative changes at the local and state levels.

- Website and Application Design – Continue to work on the website and applications to ensure they are both as user friendly as possible.
- Continuing to work on housing and economic development strategies to benefit the community.
- Identification of barriers: Conduct a thorough assessment to identify the specific barriers that are hindering Coos County's development. These barriers can include regulatory hurdles, outdated policies, bureaucratic inefficiencies, infrastructure limitations, or economic challenges.

To monitor results client feedback page will be created on the website and an email folder will be maintained to store all feedback. This can be shared with the Planning Commission and Board at the next work plan discussion or presented at monthly meetings.

## **VI. BUILDING PROGRAM**

In the early years, building codes in Oregon were not standardized, and each jurisdiction had its own regulations. This lack of uniformity led to inconsistencies and challenges in construction practices. In 1973, The Oregon Building Codes Division (BCD) was established under the Department of Consumer and Business Services. The division was tasked with developing and enforcing statewide building codes to ensure the safety and structural integrity of buildings. In 1974, the first edition of the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) was adopted. This code provided regulations for the design and construction of structural components in buildings. In 1997, the Oregon Structural Specialty Code was replaced by the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) and the Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC). These codes addressed structural requirements for both commercial and residential buildings, respectively. In 2004, the Oregon Energy Efficiency Specialty Code (OEESC) was introduced. This code aimed to promote energy efficiency in buildings and set standards for insulation, heating, cooling, and other energy-related aspects. In 2011, the Oregon Zero Energy Ready Commercial Code (ORZEC) was developed, focusing on energy-efficient design and construction practices to achieve near-zero energy consumption in commercial buildings.

Continuing Updates: The building codes in Oregon continue to be updated regularly to incorporate new technologies, address emerging challenges, and align with evolving national standards. These updates are made by the Oregon Building Codes Division in consultation with stakeholders and industry experts. It is important to note that the specific details and editions of the building codes may vary over time. The Building Department provides the most current additions codes on the website. They may be direct links or PDF's depending on what is available to staff to post.

### **A. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DECISION MAKERS**

#### **1. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners has a lesser role under the building program. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for adopting local codes that are consistent with the State Building Codes. Staff prepares this information and brings it to the Board when the laws are changed. There are very few local decisions for the Board of Commissioners in Building program, most decisions requires a specific certification for a discipline. Certifications to administer that specific portion of the program (plumbing, electrical, mechanical, structural, plans examiner, building official) are obtained from the State of Oregon.

The Board of Commissioners does adopt within the County Code certain local decision making around enforcement and can apply additional standards in the code for items not regulated under the building code. For explain billboards and dock construction are two examples that are not regulated under the building code but could be regulated by the local government but for a comprehensive list please see ORS 455.020. Coos County choose not to adopted above the mandated requirements with the exception of some enforcement policies. There are other administrative oversight such as fees that fall within the Board of Commissioners decision making responsibilities.

It is important for the Board of Commissioner to bring issues raised by the public to the Building Official or Community Development Director to be addressed. If client disagrees with a decision of an inspector the appeal is to the Building Official. If the client disagrees with the Building Officials decision it can be appealed to an appeal Board as set out in Coos County Code Section 13.03.095.

Preserving the process is indeed crucial, and it's important for municipalities to comply with the necessary regulations and guidelines. In the case of Coos County and its building inspection program, the renewal process is mandated by OAR 918-020-0095, which requires municipalities to renew their programs on a four-year reporting period cycle.

According to the information provided, Coos County assumed the program on October 1, 2022. This means that four years from that date, Coos County will need to report and reapply and be assessed by the State of Oregon for compliance. The assessment will determine if the county is meeting the required standards set by the state law.

If the State of Oregon Building Division finds that Coos County is non-compliant during the assessment, there could be potential consequences. One of these consequences could be the loss of the program, meaning that the county would no longer have the authority or responsibility to conduct building inspections. Additionally, the county may be required to make payments to the state to have the program run by them instead.

It is important for Coos County to ensure that its building inspection program is operating in accordance with the State of Oregon regulations to maintain compliance and avoid any negative outcomes.

## **2. STAFF**

The Community Development Director does have a Building Official Certification and can assist with any administrative issue. However, the Building Official hired to serve the official role for Coos County is dedicated to operating the Building Program. The Building Official role in Oregon is an important position within the field of building and construction regulation. Building Officials are responsible for overseeing and enforcing building codes, regulations, and standards to ensure the safety, accessibility, and quality of buildings and structures. The Building Official oversees the following portions of the program:

1. **Building Code Enforcement:** Building Officials enforce the applicable building codes, such as the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) or the International Building Code

(IBC), to ensure that construction projects comply with safety, structural, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and accessibility requirements.

2. **Plan Review:** Review building plans, construction documents, and permit applications to verify compliance with building codes and regulations. They assess architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing designs to ensure they meet the necessary standards.
3. **Permitting:** Issuance of building permits after reviewing construction plans and ensuring compliance with applicable codes and regulations. They collect permit fees, maintain records, and track the progress of permitted projects. Inspectors conduct on-site inspections at various stages of construction to verify that work is being done according to approved plans and code requirements. Inspections may cover areas such as foundation, framing, electrical, plumbing, mechanical systems, and fire safety.
4. **The Building Official, Plans Examiner and Inspectors** enforce compliance with building codes by addressing code violations, issuing citations, and taking appropriate enforcement actions. They work closely with property owners, contractors, and legal authorities to ensure that corrective actions are taken when necessary. The Building Official works with Code Enforcement Staff to assist in the enforcement program.
5. **Code Interpretation:** Building Officials provide guidance and interpretation of building codes to architects, engineers, contractors, and property owners. They clarify code requirements, address questions, and resolve code compliance issues.
6. **Code Development and Updates:** The Building Official and Community Development Director may participate in the development and revision of local building codes, ensuring alignment with state building codes and industry best practices. They stay updated on the latest code changes, advancements in construction technology, and emerging building safety issues.
7. **Collaboration:** Building staff collaborate with other government departments, such as planning, zoning, fire departments, and public works, to ensure coordination and consistency in building and development processes. They may also interact with architects, engineers, contractors, and other stakeholders to resolve technical issues and ensure compliance.

The Building Department consists of the following Staff:

Community Development Director (40%) – Administrative Staff  
Building Official – Administrative Staff  
Business Operations Manager – (40%) Administrative Staff  
Plans Examiner  
Structural Inspector  
Plumbing Inspector  
Electrical Inspector (vacant currently)  
Permit Tech  
Permit Specialist

From October 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

The Building Department has processed 2366 permits and 4414 inspections. Contacts are estimated to be about 9828 between email, phone and in person. There fewer personal contacts than land use because land use receives a lot of speculation or real-estate inquires and I did not count the automated email responses from the Building Department Software.

Return time on emails and phone calls averages 48 hours over a weekend or holiday times may extended. The administrative staff checks the building email box at the end of each business day to ensure staff has responded to all emails or responded that additional research is needed. Inspection requests may be made in person, by phone, by fax or emailed. Inspections are normally next day but in certain cases may need to be scheduled out. The electrical for Curry County is two days a week.

## **B. SPECIFIC GOALS FOR THE BUILDING PROGRAM:**

- Sustaining high customer service levels while adjusting to staff recruitment challenges and training for new staff members. When the staff was transferred from the State there was an electrical inspector vacancy and the plumbing inspector retired at the end of 2022. The structural inspector was promoted to the Building Official so the department is working with relatively new staff.
- Providing construction plan reviews, consultation and inspection services throughout the rural county and the cities of Bandon, Coquille, Myrtle Point, Powers, (Electrical and Plumbing) Coos Bay and North Bend. Also, work with Curry County to provide Electrical inspections as required.
- Public Education and Outreach: Engaging with the public to raise awareness about building codes, construction regulations, and safety standards. They provide educational materials, conduct workshops, and offer guidance to help individuals understand their rights and responsibilities related to construction projects. This may include developing a technical advisory group to work through education and outreach in the profession community. This also includes updates to the website to provide all materials need to have a successful application.
- Staff Education and Outreach: Training and cross-training of staff members are essential components for maintaining a successful building inspection program. By providing training and educational opportunities to employees, municipalities like Coos County can ensure that their staff is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This is accomplished by develop comprehensive training programs that cover various aspects of building inspection, including relevant codes, regulations, and best practices. These programs can be conducted through workshops, seminars, online courses, or in-house training sessions. By investing in training and educational opportunities for staff and continuously seeking ways to improve the program's efficiency, Coos County can enhance the skills of its employees and ensure the long-term success of its building inspection program.

Cross-training by encourage cross-training among staff members to broaden their skill sets and promote flexibility within the program. Cross-training enables employees to learn about different roles and responsibilities within the inspection program, which can be beneficial during times of staff shortages or when additional expertise is required.

Continuing education will promote ongoing educational opportunities for staff to stay updated on the latest developments in building codes, inspection techniques, and relevant industry practices. This can be done through attending conferences, participating in webinars, or pursuing certifications or professional memberships.

- Efficiency assessment: Regularly evaluate the inspection program's processes and procedures to identify areas where efficiencies can be achieved. This can involve reviewing administrative tasks, leveraging technology for data management and reporting, or streamlining workflows to enhance productivity and effectiveness.
- Encouraging feedback: Create a culture that encourages staff members to provide feedback and suggestions for improving the program. Employees who are actively engaged in the process can offer valuable insights and innovative ideas for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness.

## **VII. CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM**

Code Enforcement is different from Land Use and Building as it is part of each program and doesn't have a separate history. The program is responsible for ensuring compliance with various regulations and codes related to land use, building, and other community development requirements. It involves monitoring and investigating potential violations, responding to complaints, and taking appropriate enforcement actions. Enforcement activities may include issuing citations, fines, or orders to correct violations. The enforcement program plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of community development standards, protecting public safety, and addressing non-compliant activities or structures. This is based on local ordinances, codes, statutes, rules and building code provisions.

Under Commissioner Sweet's leadership in Coos County, a code enforcement group was established to address property-related complaints and facilitate efficient resource utilization. The group consisted of various stakeholders, including the Department of Environmental Quality, cities, Charleston Sanitation, Land Agent, Road Department, Coos Health and Wellness (inspection side), and the Sheriff's Office. Notably, the Building Codes department did not participate in this collaboration.

By convening once a month, the code enforcement group facilitated information sharing and coordination among the participating departments and agencies. This allowed them to identify properties with multiple complaints that required the involvement of multiple departments. This collaborative approach helped streamline enforcement efforts and optimize resource allocation.

However, due to staffing limitations, the county's enforcement activities were primarily handled by the Planning Director and one Deputy Sheriff for about 25% at the time. This resulted in limited enforcement capabilities.

Additionally, when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, the enforcement program and meetings were put on hold. This temporary halt likely affected the county's ability to address enforcement issues effectively during that period.

Subsequently, the program was redeveloped with the incorporation of the Building Codes Program. County Counsel worked with the Director and the Board of Commissioners to develop

new enforcement codes and set priorities for enforcement. The Board of Commissioners approved the hiring of a hearings officer to handle the legal aspects of enforcement and assist with ex parte contacts. This hiring also allows the Board of Commissioners to take on the role of public outreach. Additionally, some land use enforcement cases may result in land use applications, providing a necessary buffer for decision-makers.

The case load is high at about 400 cases but the code enforcement program is set up to encourage volunteer compliance with a lot of opportunity to correct a violation before a citation is issued and the matter heard by the Hearings Officer. There has been a lot of positive feedback for this program.

Staffing for this program is as follows:

Community Development Director (20%)

Business Operations Manager (20%)

Land and Compliance Specialist

The Land and Compliance Specialist strives to serve the community by prioritizing all health and public safety matters first. The citizens of Coos County have made it clear in the past that crime, unsanitary, and unsafe conditions are huge concerns. Upon investigation, it was determined that most of these concerns were associated with unpermitted RV use, unpermitted campgrounds, unpermitted conversion of dwellings, and the accumulation of solid waste. In every case, a letter is sent, providing the opportunity for the recipient to respond. Almost all cases begin with citizen complaints, while others may originate from other agencies or be observed during the normal course of the workday. Additionally, compliance issues may be discovered when a property is for sale or when someone applies for an application.

The main goals for code enforcement include:

- **Compliance:** The primary goal of code enforcement is to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and codes. This involves ensuring that properties, structures, businesses, and activities meet the established standards and requirements set forth by the governing authorities.
- **Public Health and Safety:** Code enforcement aims to protect public health and safety by addressing issues such as hazardous conditions, unsafe structures, unsanitary practices, and environmental concerns. It involves identifying and rectifying situations that pose risks to individuals or the community as a whole.
- **Neighborhood Preservation:** Code enforcement strives to maintain and enhance the quality of neighborhoods by addressing issues that can negatively impact the aesthetics, livability, and property values of an area. This can include addressing property maintenance, noise disturbances, blight, or other factors that may disrupt the character and well-being of a community.
- **Fairness and Equity:** Code enforcement seeks to ensure fairness and equity by applying regulations and enforcement actions consistently across all properties and individuals. It aims to prevent any preferential treatment or discrimination, ensuring that everyone is subject to the same standards and consequences.
- **Education and Outreach:** Code enforcement often includes an educational component to inform property owners, businesses, and the community about the applicable regulations and the importance of compliance. Outreach efforts may involve providing information, resources, and assistance to help stakeholders understand and meet the requirements.

- Collaboration and Partnerships: Code enforcement agencies may collaborate with other departments, agencies, and community organizations to address complex issues effectively. By fostering partnerships, sharing information, and coordinating efforts, code enforcement can leverage resources and expertise to achieve its goals more efficiently.
- Training and Education: Providing training in both land use and building to this position along with allowing connections with other professionals in this trade.

This program is relatively new but these performance measures in code enforcement help assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the enforcement efforts:

1. Compliance Rate: This measures the percentage of cases or properties that achieve compliance within a specified timeframe. It provides an indication of the success in achieving the goal of bringing properties into compliance with regulations.
2. Response Time: This measures the average time it takes for code enforcement to respond to complaints or issues raised by the community. A shorter response time indicates a more timely and efficient enforcement process.
3. Case Closure Rate: This measures the percentage of cases that are successfully resolved or closed within a given period. It reflects the efficiency of the enforcement process in addressing and resolving violations.
4. Repeat Offender Rate: This measures the frequency of recurring violations by the same property owner or entity. A lower repeat offender rate indicates effective enforcement actions in preventing repeated non-compliance.
5. Public Satisfaction: This measures the level of satisfaction among the public or stakeholders regarding the code enforcement process. It may involve surveys or feedback mechanisms to gather input on the responsiveness, professionalism, and overall satisfaction with the enforcement efforts.

These performance measures provide insights into the effectiveness, efficiency, and public perception of the code enforcement program. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these measures can help identify areas for improvement, guide resource allocation, and demonstrate accountability in code enforcement efforts.

A report will be made available along with a look at the year.

## **VIII. PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR ALL DEPARTMENTS**

Performance measures for land use and building can help evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of planning and development processes. Here the proposed performance measures:

1. Customer Satisfaction: This measures the level of satisfaction among applicants, developers, and stakeholders with the land use and building processes. A surveys or feedback mechanisms to gather input on the responsiveness, clarity of guidelines, and overall satisfaction with the planning and development services will be developed and placed on the website and a link included in all reports.
2. Permit Processing Time: This measures the average time taken to process land use and building permits, from application submission to approval. It assesses the efficiency of the permitting process and can help identify bottlenecks or areas for improvement.

3. **Development Review Time:** This measures the average time taken to review and approve development proposals, including site plans, subdivision plans, or rezoning requests. It reflects the speed and efficiency of the review process, ensuring timely decision-making for development projects.
4. **Building Inspections:** This measures the number of building inspections conducted and completed within a specified timeframe. It ensures that inspections are carried out promptly to verify compliance with building codes and ensure safety.
5. **Removing any barriers possible to the permitting process** such as moving the driveway and parking standards to the end of the building process to allow by building and planning permits be reviewed concurrently.

These performance measures provide insights into the effectiveness, efficiency, and outcomes of land use and building processes. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these measures can help inform policy decisions, streamline processes, and improve the overall planning and development framework.

If you have any questions please contact:

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