



Executive Order 2024-01

Building Construction Permitting Overhaul

I. Overview

Every building or structure that is built, rehabilitated, or significantly improved in the City of Cleveland generally requires a permit. Permits at the City of Cleveland may be reviewed and approved by up to ten, and potentially more, City departments and divisions, which often includes Building and Housing, City Planning, Mayor's Office of Capital Projects (MOCAP), Division of Fire, Water Pollution Control, Division of Air Quality, Urban Forestry, Public Safety, Cleveland Public Power, and Cleveland Water, Bureau of Traffic, Traffic Engineering, and others. These approvals ensure projects are safe for the public, code compliant, and built to improve our neighborhoods, among other specific goals held by each body.

The City of Cleveland recognizes the challenges the public faces when navigating these complex processes to permit construction projects in the City, and is committed through this Executive Order to overhauling the process for projects of all sizes. This overhaul will require a number of process, staffing, and technology changes which will ultimately make permitting easier to navigate for the public.

The overarching goals of the permitting process overhaul are:

- **Predictability:** No matter the size of a construction project, applicants will know what permits are necessary, what information they will need to apply for these permits, who will need to review their application, and roughly how long it will take to get approved.
- **Visibility:** The public and city staff across departments will be able to check online to see where a project is in the permitting process, what comments have been made and by whom, and what steps remain to get a permit.
- **Efficiency:** By implementing process changes, technology upgrades, increasing review staff as needed, and improving cross-departmental communication, overall time from starting the process to starting construction will be decreased.

The City commissioned an independent analysis by the firm Baker Tilly which outlined recommendations and a roadmap for a streamlined and efficient permitting process. Baker Tilly's report contains 39 individual recommendations and calls for improvements in four areas:

- Application & Intake Process
- Staffing & Training
- Local Codes & Policies
- Technology

Through this Executive Order, the City administration is committed to implementing the recommendations in the report and addressing the challenges outlined in the report in an iterative fashion. By doing so, we will make Cleveland a better place to do business, with systems in place that better support customers and internal staff alike.



II. Responsibilities

City of Cleveland employees of all departments and offices that are involved in the building construction permitting process shall assist with the implementation of changes, as requested by the Chief of Staff and/or the Chief of Integrated Development, to support the ongoing improvement of permitting processes.

The Directors of Building and Housing and City Planning Commission shall be responsible for the following:

- Overseeing the implementation of new processes related to permitting and monitoring the ongoing evaluation and efficacy of the measures adopted to ensure improved customer experience
- Dedicating staff time to Accela record creation, testing, evaluation, implementation, and ongoing governance
- Creating and distributing materials and web content that provide guidance on permitting processes for the public
- Establishing a higher-touch customer experience with improved response times
- Developing metrics to measure performance and results of changes implemented

The Commissioner of Information Technology Services shall be responsible for the following:

- Implementing upgrades to the City's Accela system that allow the public and all relevant City departments to have visibility on any project's status and steps remaining to project completion.

The Directors and leaders of other departments and divisions involved in the permitting process (including but not limited to: MOCAP, Division of Fire, Water Pollution Control, Division of Air Quality, Urban Forestry, Public Safety, Cleveland Public Power, Cleveland Water) shall be responsible for the following:

- Promoting the consistent usage of Accela for permit workflow tasks among all relevant staff
- Dedicating appropriate staff time to participation in the Accela Governance Board
- Dedicating appropriate staff time to timely review and regular participation in pre-development and development review meetings as needed

III. Governance

City staff across multiple departments and divisions will work collaboratively to implement an Accela Governance Program. The purpose of the program is to provide oversight over all Accela activities and to facilitate software maintenance and continuous improvement efforts, ensuring that the City's Information Technology (IT) investments support both City and resident objectives.

IV. Implementation

The City recognizes that implementation of process changes and associated technology takes time and will be iterative. The Chief of Integrated Development, in consultation with the Directors of Building and Housing, City Planning, and the Commissioner of Information Technology Services, shall establish a plan



for implementation that includes a clear timeline. As implementation takes place, it is expected that divisions will encounter new information that may change how the city adopts, adjusts, or omits specific recommendations. However, all parties shall work collaboratively, under the guidance of leadership, to accomplish the goals of the process overhaul.

V. Effective Date

This Executive Order shall go into immediate effect upon my signature and shall remain in force until modified or rescinded by me or any of my successors.

I signed this executive order on July 25, 2024 in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. M. Bibb", written over a horizontal line.

Justin M. Bibb

Mayor | City of Cleveland