



**Work Session Meeting Agenda**  
**2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT**  
**Gibson Room, Civic Center**  
**November 07, 2023**  
**5:30 PM**

The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on government access channel City-190, cable channel 190; or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>.

Public participation is welcome in the following ways:

- Attend in person.
- Provide public comments in writing by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting: Mail to City Clerk, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403, or via email to: [commission@greatfallsmt.net](mailto:commission@greatfallsmt.net). Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name of the commenter and either an address or whether the commenter is a city resident. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item, and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*(Public comment on agenda items or any matter that is within the jurisdiction of the City Commission. Please keep your remarks to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Speak into the microphone, and state your name and either your address or whether you are a city resident for the record.)*

## **WORK SESSION ITEMS**

1. Development Review Audit - Brock Cherry and Christoff Gaub.

## **DISCUSSION POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*City Commission Work Sessions are televised on cable channel 190 and streamed live at <https://greatfallsmt.net>. Work Session meetings are re-aired on cable channel 190 the following Thursday morning at 10 a.m. and the following Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m.*

*Wi-Fi is available during the meetings for viewing of the online meeting documents.*

## **UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE**

Work Session -- Tuesday November 21, 2023 5:30 p.m.

Commission Meeting -- Tuesday November 21, 2023 7:00 p.m.

# Development Review Audit



CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION  
NOVEMBER 7, 2023

## Recent Development Review Improvements

- Permit Coordinator and "One-Stop Shop"
- Checklists for all projects/permits
- Clear standards for construction
- Better pre-application meetings for permits and land use applications

## Internal Improvements

- What can we improve:
  - Allow for customer/applicant collaboration to drive improvements.
  - Full implementation of EnerGov– This allows for online submittals, greater accountability, and a true “one-stop shop” experience.
  - We're still too reliant on individuals to make up for problems. What happens when they leave???

## Internal Improvements

- Certificates of Occupancy should be more predictable for staff and customers
- Every project needs a calendar and deadlines!
- The City Promise: If everyone does their part right on the front end, you can deliver your project on time and on budget and have a positive development experience.

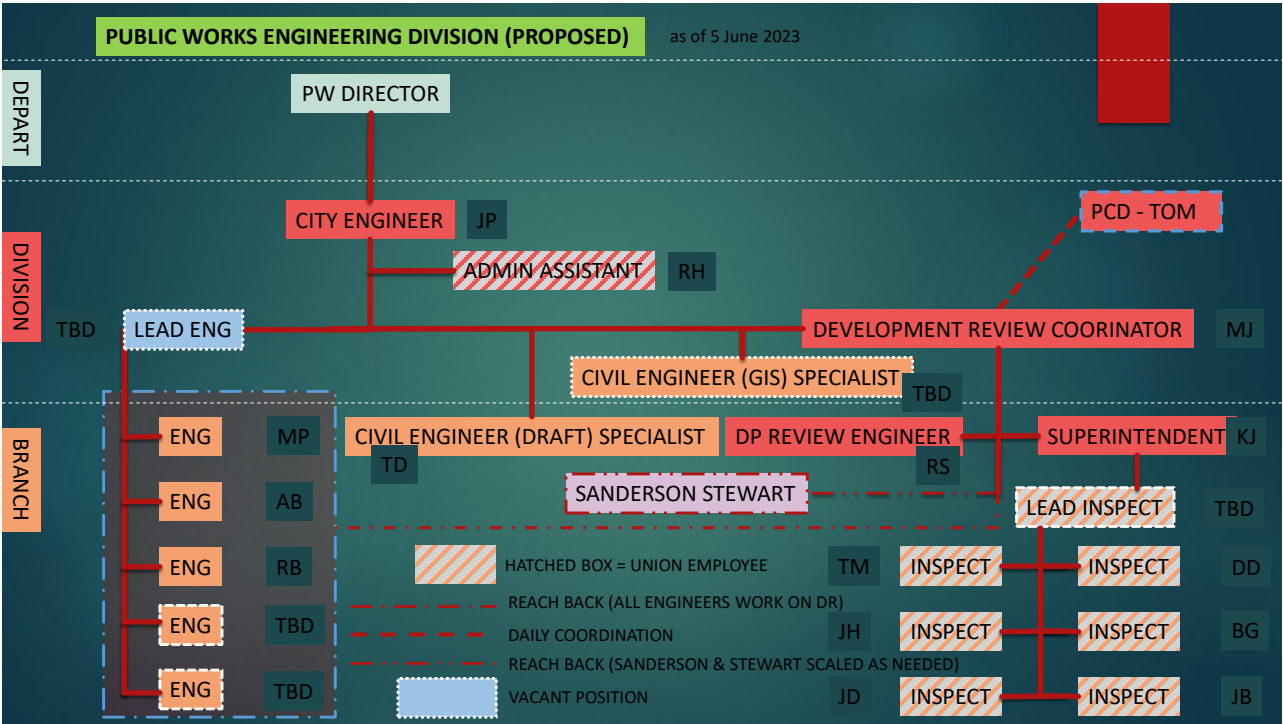
# Development Review Audit Listening Session

## Our Core Mission for the Audit

- Support and prioritize development
- Be timely, consistent, but still listen, communicate, and problem solve
- Ensure that you know your budget through upfront fees, not rolling costs
- If applicants provide complete plan sets that comply with requirements, your process will be straightforward
- Cross-train our team so multiple people can help you

## Development Review Audit Listening Session – What's Next

- October 26 – Conducted first Listening Session with the development community
- November 7 City Commission Work Session – Similar presentation with input – 5:30 pm – Gibson
- November 16 – Listening Session Part 2 (more input) – Gibson Room 9:30 am-11:30 am
- November - February 2024 - Smaller listening sessions and work groups for special topics
- Spring 2024 – Final report and presentation to Commissioners – We want it to be yours also





## ***2023 - 2024 Development Review Audit Action Plan***

The City of Great Falls understands the importance of providing a streamlined, predictable, and collaborative approach to development in the community. We, the City's Development Review Team, consisting of Planning & Community Development, Public Works, and Fire Department staff, are currently reviewing and analyzing our existing development processes.

We have identified several processes and issues that can be improved upon during this process. However, we also recognize the significance of listening and collaborating with the development community to understand their concerns and ideas that may not have been identified as part of our audit effort. To ensure we hear these concerns and ideas, we have scheduled two listening sessions for October 26th from 5:30 – 6:30 PM and November 16th from 9:30 – 11:30 AM at the Gibson Room in the Civic Center. Additionally, the staff will continue to work with the development community to address specific topics throughout the audit. We will also send out a short survey to hear concerns and gather ideas.

Upon completing the audit, we will summarize the findings and recommendations for further improving the development process. We plan to present the Development Review Audit Findings and Recommendations to the City Commission in early 2024

### ***Development Review Audit Topics of Concern***

#### **Goal/Task #1: Fixing existing Development Review & EnerGov shortfalls:**

- a. Issue: Communication between the multiple departments involved during the development review process is not optimal. Inefficient communication hinders development timelines and creates unpredictability for applicants.

**Action Team:** Jesse, Mark, Bruce, Jamie, Kayla, Tracy, and Rachel

- i. Action: Set up meetings with Engineering and Permit Techs to discuss communication and process issues – discuss and implement solutions. Sit down to discuss how we can administer permits to make permitting and inspection go as smoothly as possible.
- ii. Action: Resolve the “Gold Card” / EnerGov confusion. Establish a clear process all departments follow regarding inspections and the issuance of

Certificate of Occupancy – Including communication between permittee and CoGF, Status Tracker, Customer Portal, Green Card too, PW needs to be able to “Fail” an inspection

**Action Team:** Kyle & Kyle & Jesse & Bruce & Mark

- b. Issue: Existing development applications, handouts, and supporting materials need to be updated. Staff must ensure that all “paperwork” regarding development processes is easy to understand, interpret, and complete. Further, Staff needs to ensure that none of the documents contradict each other or how the development review is implemented.
  - i. Action: Update existing building and zoning permit handouts. Ensure they are simple, descriptive, and easy to comprehend. Breakdown processes if necessary
- Action Team:** Kayla, Lonnie, Joelle, Sara, Rachel
- ii. Action: Review existing zoning applications, building permits, and public works permits regarding the development. Discuss how they can be improved and better understood and utilized by the customer.
- Action Team:** Mike, Bruce, Thad, Joelle, Jeremy, Brock, Rosa, Jesse, Kyle J, Kyle A, Nate)
- c. Issue: EnerGov has not been implemented to its total capacity since it was first introduced a few years ago, particularly the online customer access portion. Implementing EnerGov fully as soon as possible is imperative to ensure greater quality, expediency, and delivery of development review.

**Action Team:** Brock, Lonnie, Joelle, Mark, Jesse

**Goal/Task #2: Building, Engineering, Public Works, and Zoning Permit Lifecycle Analysis; Identify inefficiencies and determine improvements –from application submittal to permit review to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy:**

- a. Issue: Zoning Entitlement Process
  - i. Action: Identify how the zoning entitlement process can be accelerated and still meet state code – Discuss other steps of the process that could be modified or eliminated to accelerate the development process
- Action Team:** Brock, Tom, Andrew, Sara D., Rachel T. and Lonnie.
- b. Action: Zoning Staff Report Audit – How can our Staff reports me improved or be more effective? How do we make our staff reports easy to understand and comprehend quickly
- Action Team:** Brock, Tom, Sara, Lonnie, Kayla and Andrew
- 2. Goal/Task: Analysis of Building Permit Lifecycle and Review Process
  - a. Action: Lifecycle review of the following building permits:
    - i. New Residential



1. Discuss realistic review timelines; what timeline do we feel comfortable committing to? Can the timeline be improved?
  2. Sub-Action – Explore the concept of a “Site Plan” permit (Mark).
  - ii. New Commercial
    1. Discuss realistic review timelines; what timeline do we feel comfortable committing to? Can the timeline be improved?
    2. Sub-Action – Explore the concept of a “Site Plan” permit (Mark).
  - iii. Tenant Improvement
    1. Discuss realistic review timelines; what timeline do we feel comfortable committing to? Can the timeline be improved?
    - b. Action: Explore the implementation of “comprehensive” permitting for new residential and new commercial.
  3. Goal/Task: Analysis of Public Works and Engineering Permit Lifecycle and Review Process.
  4. Goal/Task: Temporary Certificate of Occupancy Discussion
    - a. Action: Discussion regarding how we currently utilize and administer Temporary Certificates of Occupancy. Is what we are doing most effective? How does a TCO remain a tool to aid development instead of the goal for the builder/developer? For example, bond for TCOs, implement the process from 2019 that would have required extra fees for 30, 60, and 90-day delays until CO. Too intensive, re-inspection fees for failed red-zones or failed COs, consider implementing Fire Inspection Fee Concept. Good contractors are being penalized for complying with inspection requirements. Fees for re-inspections are too low, and contractors aren’t concerned.
- Action Team:** Brock, Bruce, Mark, Kyle, Joelle, Tom.
5. Goal/Task: Implement a new fire review process
    - a. Action – Replace 3rd party life safety plan review. This would require internal staff to perform the plan review. It would require certifications for staff. Missoula has a 3rd party reviewer. If Safety Levy passes, this would allow a staff member to be added to do this process. Question – How much would it cost? There would be a question about not having a certified reviewer. Womer is not sure if they can handle our workload in the near future. Possibly Shums Coda because they already have a commercial plan review contract with the Building Division. FSCI could also be retained to do the same work. Fees for FSCI are based on square footage or the number of sprinkler heads.

**Action Team:** Mike, Bruce, Joelle, Thad



**Goal/Task #3: Address other development hurdles and issues regarding development.**

1. Goal/Task: Geotech Requirements:
  - a. Action: Discuss three (3) options provided by legal regarding Geotech requirements. Discuss the options internally – determine which option is best.  
**Action Team:** Brock, Bruce, Tom, Sara S., Jesse, Mark, Homebuilder Association, Private Engineering groups.

***2023 – 2024 Development Review Audit Survey****Applicant Survey*

As part of our commitment to providing a streamlined, predictable, and collaborative approach to development in the community, the City of Great Falls is reviewing and analyzing its existing development processes through its Development Review Team, which consists of Planning & Community Development, Public Works, and Fire Department staff.

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To help with this, we value your feedback on the following questions:

1. Based on your most recent interaction, please rate the development review process. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest recommendation and 10 being the highest, how likely are you to speak favorably regarding the interaction with your peers in the development and contracting community?
  2. What is the primary reason behind the rating you gave us?
  3. In what areas have we excelled? What did we do particularly well in your interactions with us?
  4. We are interested in identifying areas for improvement. What aspects of our services or processes could we improve upon in order to better serve your needs?
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## *Development Review Audit Timeline*

- **September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023** –Development Review Audit formally initiated
- **October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023** – First “Big Picture Listening Session” with community development partners regarding identified topics of concern and if additional topics need to be added.
  - Location & Time: Gibson Room, Great Falls Civic Center 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
- **November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023** – Present to the City Commission proposed Outline (Brock Cherry, Christoff Gaub), schedule, and initial findings.
  - Presentation Materials due to Krista by November 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Workgroup representatives present specific items.
- **November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023** – Second “Big Picture Listening Session” with community development partners regarding identified topics of concern and if additional topics need to be added to the discussion.
  - Location & Time: Gibson Room 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
- **November – February 2023** – Conduct smaller listening sessions with specific groups focused on specific topics.
- **Spring 2024** – Present audit findings and recommendations to City Commission with
  - Deliverable Content:
    - What did we do?
    - Who did we include in listening sessions?
    - What are our recommendations and how will it improve the development review process?
  - Deliverable Format: Word Doc / Report and PowerPoint Presentation