

# Platting & Building Permit Processes

Whatcom County  
Planning and Development Committee  
April 26, 2022

# Presentation format

- ▶ Goal: provide P & D Committee with general information about the building permit and plat entitlement processes, as requested.
- ▶ Outline:
  - ▶ Plats then Building Permits same format:
    - ▶ Statuary framework
    - ▶ Types & #
    - ▶ Exceptions
    - ▶ Review process & timeframes
  - ▶ Permitting Issues

# Platting

- ▶ Statutory basis: RCW 58.17
  - ▶ Other: GMA, RCW 36.70A; Local Project Review, RCW 36.70B; Judicial Review of Land Use Decisions, RCW 36.70C; SEPA, RCW 43.21C, SMA, RCW 90.58, ...
- ▶ Lot of Record determinations (existing lots)
  - ▶ Assessor tax parcel vs legal lot
- ▶ Types: up to 4 lots Short Plat (Ag Short Plat), 5+ Plat,
- ▶ Exemptions:
  - ▶ Boundary Line Adjustments, large lot segs,...

# How many plats?

- ▶ 5 year average:
  - ▶ Short Plats: 17 per year (includes Ag Short Plats ~ 30%)
  - ▶ Plats: 2-3
  - ▶ Exemptions: 125
  - ▶ 280 avg total land use applications

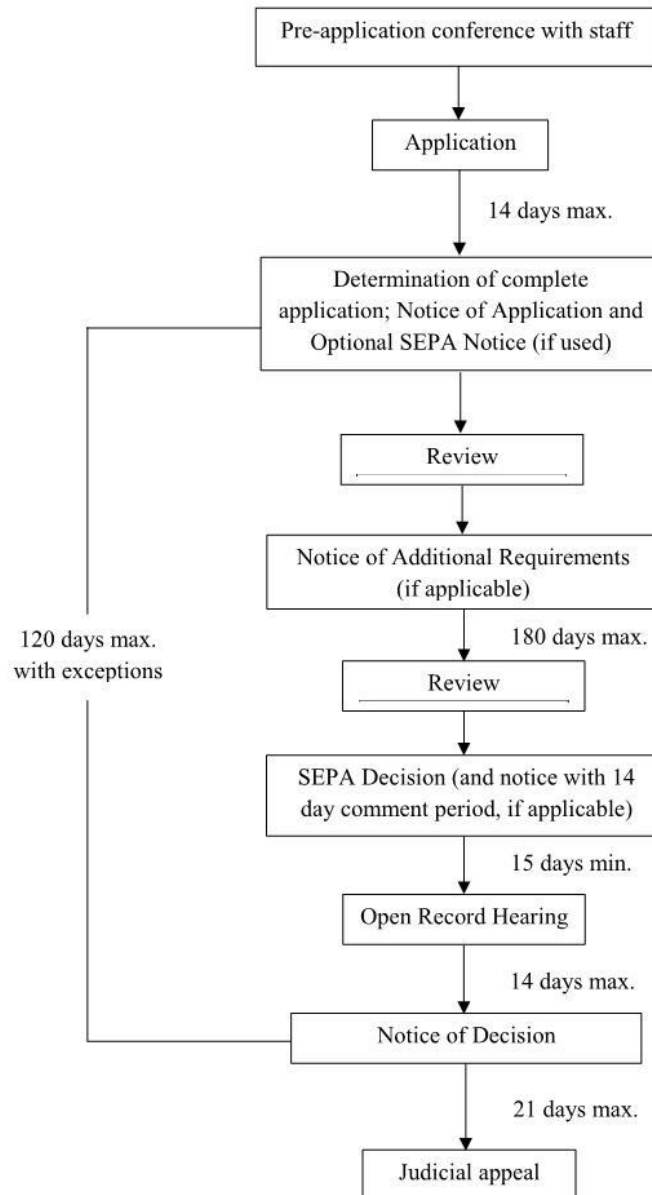
# Platting process

- ▶ Pre-app (generally 5 weeks, request to meeting)
- ▶ Preliminary plat submittal and review (SP 3 months +; Plat 18-24 months)
  - ▶ Zoning
  - ▶ Shorelines
  - ▶ Critical Areas
  - ▶ Stormwater
  - ▶ Water & wastewater
  - ▶ Fire Code
  - ▶ SEPA
  - ▶ Traffic
  - ▶ Archeological and historic
- ▶ Preliminary plat approval
  - ▶ Applicant has 5 yrs to final plats and 2-3 yrs to final SP)

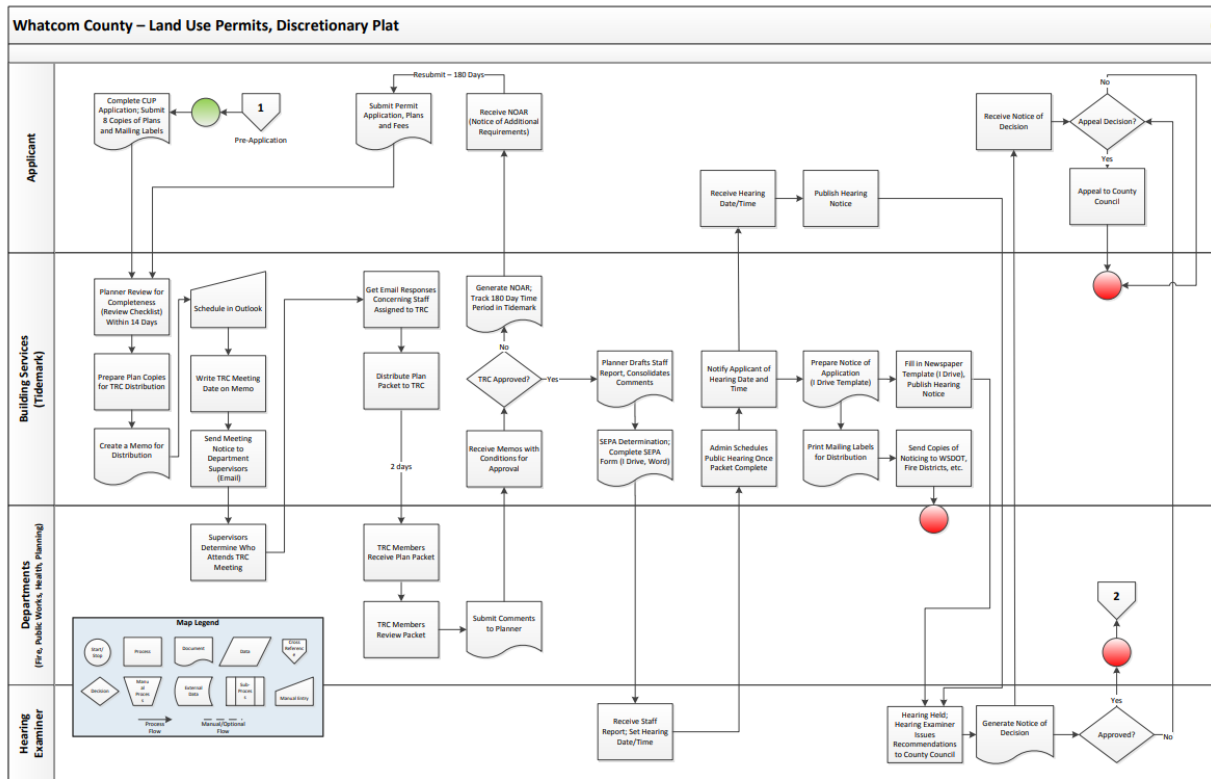
# Platting process cont.

- ▶ Engineering permit submittal, review, approval (New)
- ▶ Developer built infrastructure: roads, stormwater, water,...
- ▶ Final plat submittal and review (1 yr)
- ▶ Final plat approval
  - ▶ Record final plat
  - ▶ Sell lots
- ▶ Apply Building Permit for homes

**TYPE III PROCESS**  
(Hearing Examiner Decisions)



# Platting Process





# Building Permits

- ▶ State statutory basis: RCW 19.27
  - ▶ Other: Other: GMA, RCW 36.70A; Local Project Review, RCW 36.70B; Judicial Review of Land Use Decisions, RCW 36.70C; SEPA, RCW 43.21C; SMA, RCW 90.58; Subdivisions, RCW 58.17 ...
- ▶ Types: residential & commercial/industrial...
- ▶ Exceptions:
  - ▶ Storage sheds under 200 sq feet, ...

# How many building permits?

- ▶ 5 year average:
  - ▶ 1,043 total per year (homes, sheds, outbuildings, commercial...)
  - ▶ 610 associated with single-family home (new homes, remodels, additions,...)
- ▶ 2000-2021
  - ▶ ~316 new single-family homes per year

# Building Permit Overview

- ▶ 3 general paths to building a home:
  - ▶ Pre-screen:
    - ▶ Site Plan approval (4-8 weeks)
      - ▶ Building Permit (2-3 weeks)
    - ▶ Land Disturbance Permit (LDP) (6-8 weeks)
      - ▶ Building Permit
    - ▶ Building Permit only (recently platted...)
  - ▶ What determines the path?
    - ▶ The site
    - ▶ Applicant timing and wishes

# Site Plan & LDP

- ▶ What is reviewed?
  - ▶ Stormwater, critical areas, location of home, on-site sewage system (septic), driveway/access,...
  - ▶ Any ground disturbing activity
- ▶ What does it authorize?
  - ▶ Site plan approves location of items but does not authorize work
    - ▶ Building permit authorizes moving dirt
  - ▶ LDP authorizes location of items and to move dirt

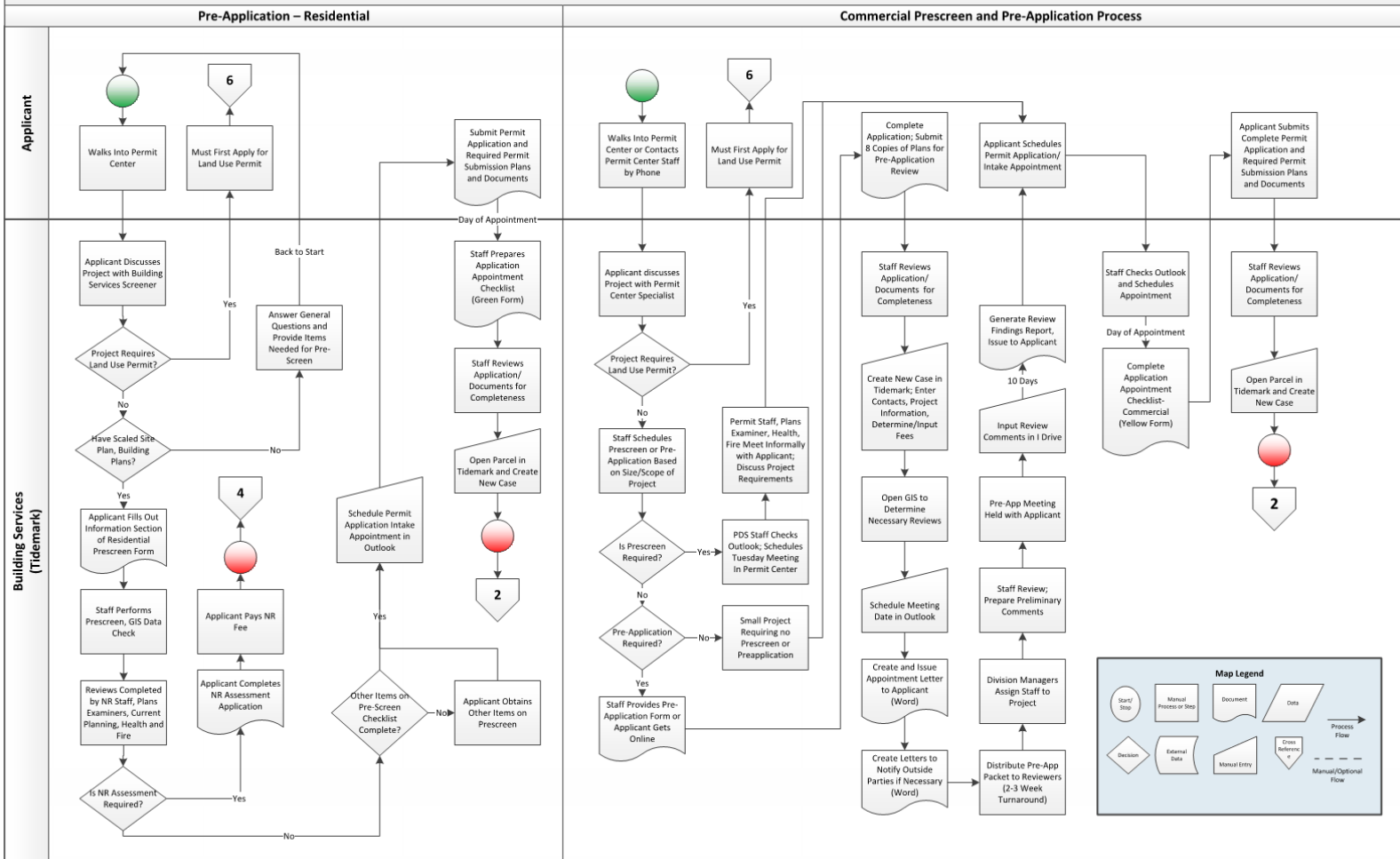
# Overview Building Permit Process

- ▶ Pre-screen
- ▶ Building permit application submittal
- ▶ Review and issuance (2-3 weeks)
- ▶ Authorized to build structure(s)
- ▶ Inspections
- ▶ Occupancy

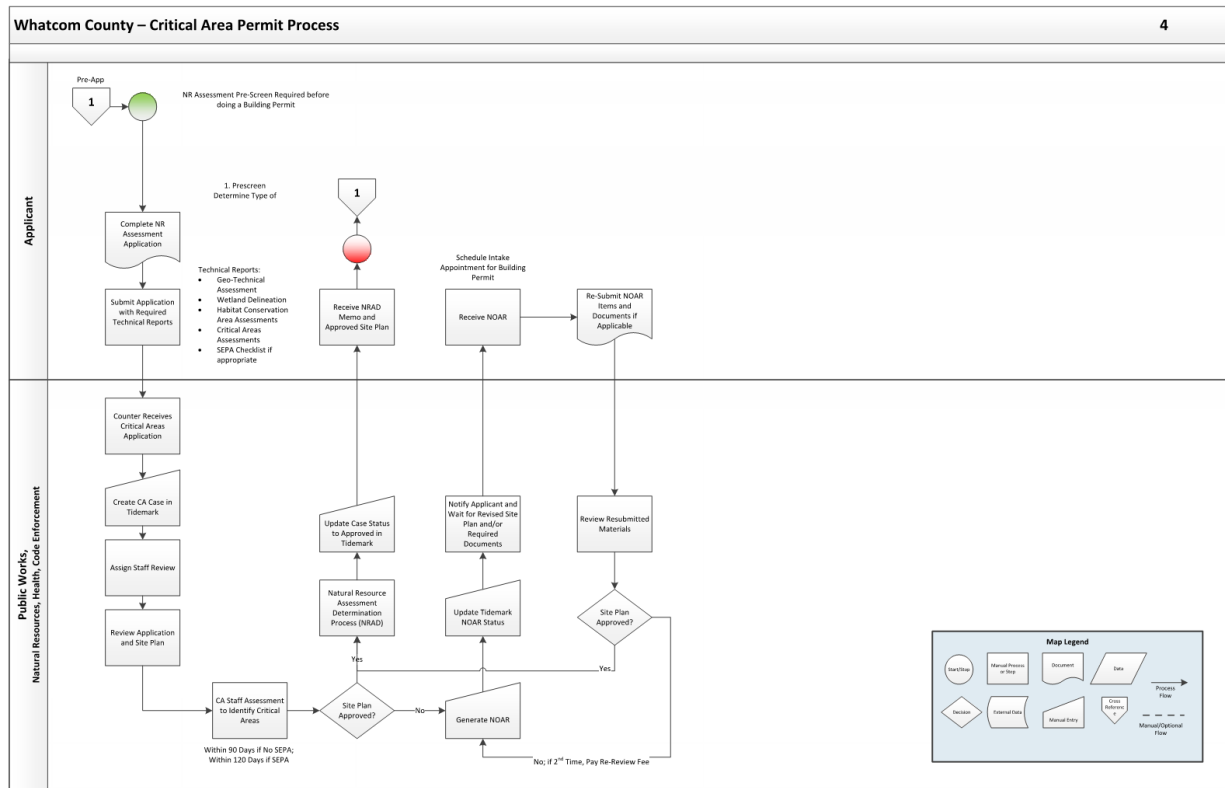
# BP process

## Whatcom County – Permit Application Process

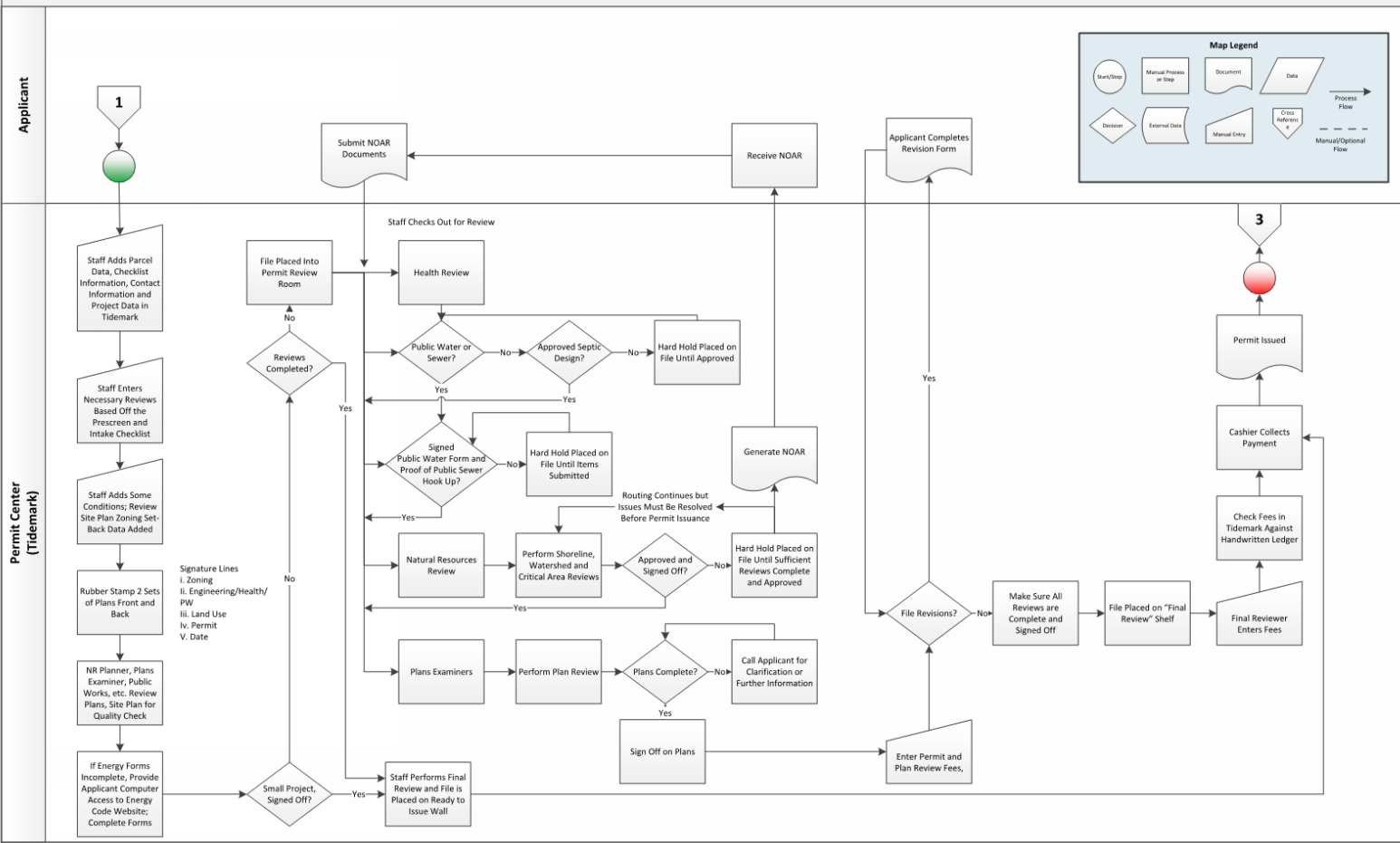
1



# BP Process (CA Review)



# BP Process (review and Issue)





# Permitting Issues

- ▶ Most “easy” sites are developed.
- ▶ Communication with customers- online, in-person, **workshops, handouts** etc. What is best mode, how spend resources...? (Goal: create clear path with defined requirements and processes.)
- ▶ Reviewing internal processes
  - ▶ Consistency
    - ▶ Process
    - ▶ Time
    - ▶ Application of codes
  - ▶ Internal coordination
    - ▶ Within PDS
    - ▶ With other Whatcom Co Dept and external agencies (ie Ecy, DFW, DAHP,...)

Questions?

