

Process Improvement Team Charter 2024

Introduction

The Process Improvement Team formed in 2016 to evaluate current processes, identify waste, and explore efficiencies. The founding members along with new team members wish to build upon that work by re-examining the purpose of our Process Improvement.

Vision

Process Improvement provides a forum/system to recognize and strengthen the practice, coordination and understanding between departments and divisions.

Purpose

To continually improve permitting, review and other processes to create efficiencies that add value and will reduce time from application submittal to review completion and permit issuance.

Agreement upon a system - Process Improvement - will lead to efficiencies to make the permitting process uniform, reduce time reviewing processes and ensure anyone interacting with the process can easily understand it.

Guiding Principles

- 1 Continue and promote open communication and coordination between departments and divisions.
- 2 Create consistency with the processes.
- 3 Focus on the functions that will affect the process the most.
- 4 Be open to new and creative ideas that are not necessarily the "norm".
- 5 Maintain a positive environment for everyone involved and celebrate accomplishments.

Membership

All Lewis County departments and divisions that play a role in the permitting and review processes, even if the role is small, are encouraged to participate in Process Improvement. Many staff will only participate ad-hoc when they have identified a potential improvement to bring before the core team. The core team members will include representatives from Community Development, Environmental Health and Public Works because those departments have a critical and frequent role in permitting and review processes.

Core Team Members		
Position	Staff	Division
Co-lead	Brad Clark	Permitting, Community Development
Co-lead	Megan Sathre	Administration, Community Development
Co-lead	Katie Johnson	Administration, Community Development
Participant	Doyle Sanford	Building, Community Development
Participant	Karen Witherspoon	Current Planning, Community Development
Participant	Mindy Brooks	Long Range Planning, Community Development
Participant	Kirsten Wecker (alternate) John Abplanalp	Environmental Health
Participant	Tiffany Alexander	Public Works

What

Prior to enacting a change, no matter how small, to a permit or review process, staff or the public should bring forward the idea to the Process Improvement Team to make sure the change is vetted. Any staff or member of the public can bring an idea forward to the Process Improvement Team, please see the "How" section for more information. No idea should be considered too out-of-the-box to bring forward for discussion. Often "crazy" ideas can result in the biggest and most impactful changes.

The following are examples of the types of improvements that can be brought to the Process Improvement Team:

- Water screen in 2018
- Electronic building plan review
- Master Site Review process added in July 2018
- Septic permit application tasks/review electronically in December 2020
- SEPA Adept routing January 2021
- Website and online application forms
- Building inspections online
- Road approach process

How

The Process Improvement Team meets at least monthly on the first and third Tuesday from 3-4pm at the Community Development office. The Co-Leads will prepare an agenda and distribute to all members who will be in attendance. Once a process improvement has been implemented, the Team will coordinate to make sure changes are shared with all those impacted.

To bring an idea forward to the Team, staff or a member of the public should contact one of the Co-leads to have the idea put on a future agenda. When someone brings an idea forward, please provide the following information. It is not necessary to have the answers fully fleshed out. For example, question 2 might be a brainstorming exercise with the Team.

1. What is the problem to be solved?
2. Whom, if anyone, has already discussed the problem?
3. Have you identified any potential solution(s)?
 - a. If the solution(s) were to move forward to implementation, who should be the lead?
 - b. If the solution(s) were to move forward to implementation, which departments/divisions will be impacted?
4. What do you need from the Process Improvement Team to move forward?

Deliverables

The Co-Leads are responsible for tracking the process improvements that are made and producing an annual report. The Co-Leads are not responsible for documenting the specific process changes as they occur; that is the responsibility of the staff lead(s) identified under the "How" section.

The Process Improvement Report is a document that is updated every year to document constant and meaningful improvements to permitting and review processes. Ideas that were also considered but abandoned should be included, including the roadblock(s) that prevented implementation. The goal of the annual reporting is to demonstrate Lewis County's commitment to process improvements and hold the county accountable for that commitment. The audience for the Process Improvement Report is the

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the general public. The report will be presented to the BOCC annually and will be uploaded to the Lewis County webpage for the general public.

Every individual solution that is implemented will be documented. The lead identified in the "How" section will produce the document. The documentation may take many different forms that are specific to the process and solution. The document will be stored in a common electronic folder that is accessible to all departments and divisions and will be cited in the Process Improvement Report.