



**City of Seattle**  
Office of Economic Development

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**Memo**

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**Date:** March 20, 2012

**To:** Councilmember Sally Clark  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen  
Councilmember Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Jean Godden

**CC:** David Yeaworth, Legislative Assistant to Councilmember Sally Clark

**From:** Steve Johnson, OED

**Re: Mapping the Restaurant Permit Process**

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In response to Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 48-1-A-1, the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) inventoried and categorized all City-issued licenses and permits required to open and operate a business in Seattle. The SLI recommended mapping the current process to open a restaurant in the City of Seattle.

OED and FAS are moving forward with this recommendation and has developed a draft scope of work and identified funding to map the restaurant permitting process. The restaurants were chosen because of the complexity of the industry's permitting and regulatory process. In addition, restaurants are:

- Most frequent type of new business license issued
- Regulated on the city, county and state levels
- Interfaces with more departments than other business types
- Includes high concentration of immigrant, women, and minority entrepreneurs

The Executive has allocated \$25,000 for mapping both the permit process and the regulatory environment for a new restaurant. OED has identified a consultant (DeMarche' Consulting) that is extremely knowledgeable of many of the City's permit systems. The consultant has redesigned development permit process in DPD, SDOT, SPU and SCL and has assisted many other departments with organizational and work load planning. Below are the major elements of the draft scope of work:

- Interviews with subject matter experts in the involved City departments
- Facilitated focus groups and discussions with industry representatives
- Production of permit process maps and documentation of the regulatory environment
- Identification of redundancies, policy constraints, and unnecessary steps in the existing process

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- Recommendations for a streamlined permit process and “tools” to assist in navigating the permit process within the City and King County

The ultimate goal of this project is to streamline the permit process which would allow business owners to plan and schedule the work in a more efficient manner. A clearer, more predictable permitting process will help businesses avoid leasing property that may not be conditioned for this type of use thus saving both time and money and inform them of what to expect in order to secure necessary financing. This work will be a bellwether for assisting other types of businesses through the permit and regulatory systems.

### **Next Steps**

OED is in the process of finalizing the scope of work by the end of the month. We anticipate this body of work will take between three and four months to complete. We will look forward to reporting back in later in the year on the progress we have made.