



**City of Seattle**  
Office of Economic Development

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**Memo**

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**Date:** February 14, 2013

**To:** Councilmember Sally Clark, Chair of the Committee on Economic Resiliency and Regional Relations  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, Vice Chair  
Councilmember Richard Conlin, Committee Member  
Councilmember Jean Godden, Committee Alternate

**From:** Steve Johnson, Office of Economic Development  
Amanda Allen, Office and Office of Economic Development

**Re:** Restaurant Permitting Reform Update

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The City's Office of Economic Development (OED) is working on formalizing a partnership with State and King County partners to improve our coordination of the permitting processes for new restaurants. The overall goal of our collaboration is to increase the transparency and predictability and reduce redundancy of the processes across governmental jurisdictions.

City Council added to OED's 2013 Budget \$75,000 to support this work. These funds are restricted by proviso until a MOA with the County and the State Department of Commerce is reached, identifying agency staffing and funding responsibilities through 2014 to improve the related processes. Before this MOA can be developed and in order to bring these partners towards collaboration two main pieces of work are currently under development:

1. A detailed scope of work for the launch of a jointly managed 'Navigator Service' with the State and the County to provide a single point of contact for restaurant owners to help them through the permitting process.
2. Data collection on the permitting process across jurisdictions. Specifically, agencies are pulling data to:
  - A. Establish the average turnaround times of their respective processes and assigning them to a Restaurant Permitting Road Map; and
  - B. Develop a dataset of businesses which opened in 2012 and which can be tracked back through the permitting process from jurisdiction to jurisdiction to provide insight into the handoffs between departments.

**Next Steps:**

- **Engage State and County Policy Makers** to review the findings from our data collection efforts and to weigh in on the staffing and resource level available from each jurisdiction to launch and manage a Navigator Service.
- **Develop a MOA between King County and the State** which includes a negotiated work plan and articulates staffing and funding responsibilities to further reform and improve the permitting processes affecting restaurateurs.
- **Hire a consultant** to identify and help resolve conflicting and duplicative permitting requirements across agencies.
- **Engage in training for and information sharing with** public employees that serve as points of contact for individuals seeking permits for restaurants so they can provide coordinated and enhanced customer service. Work with City, County and State departments to ensure they share the guidance tools they already have developed as well as develop and publish a simple checklist of all permits and inspections needed for a restaurant opening.

***When we are done:***

This project is focused on creating a work plan that results in a tool/product useful to the restaurant industry that:

- Makes the permitting and inspections process easier;
- Increases compliance in obtaining the required permits;
- Reduces redundancies and policy conflicts between regulatory authorities; and
- Eliminates unnecessary bureaucracy among and between agencies in Seattle, King County and the State responsible for permit management and compliance.