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The Latimore Company

The Latimore Company is a government services consulting firm that is dedicated to improving predictability, timeliness, efficiency and collaboration. The firm has assisted over 20 local government agencies since 2004, designing coordinated development review processes and standards, creating comprehensive plans, policies and codes, applying innovative technology, and integrating the framework together to achieve local planning objectives and improve departmental and applicant efficiency.

The firm's principal, Kurt Latimore, is an experienced process analyst, systems engineer and management consultant. Kurt, a professional engineer and process improvement specialist for over 25 years in the diverse fields of land use and permitting, aerospace, software, and communications, applies proven methods such as Lean, the Theory of Constraints, Structured System Specification, Earned Value Management, and multiple stakeholder facilitation. He brings these methodologies to life with outstanding communication and team-building skills. Kurt fully engages your organization and customers, identifies unique strengths and opportunities, and guides the team all the way to the finish line with effective implementation of improvements. He is a frequent conference and continuing education speaker on best practices for technical process management.

The following illustrate the services provided to local communities by The Latimore Company.

Skagit County

The Latimore Company conducted an assessment of the Skagit County Planning & Development Services and Public Works departments during a period of high permit demand.

This analysis revealed a pattern of revision cycles that was slowing review timelines and increasing backlog for the growing agricultural community of 50,000 residents (Fig. 1).
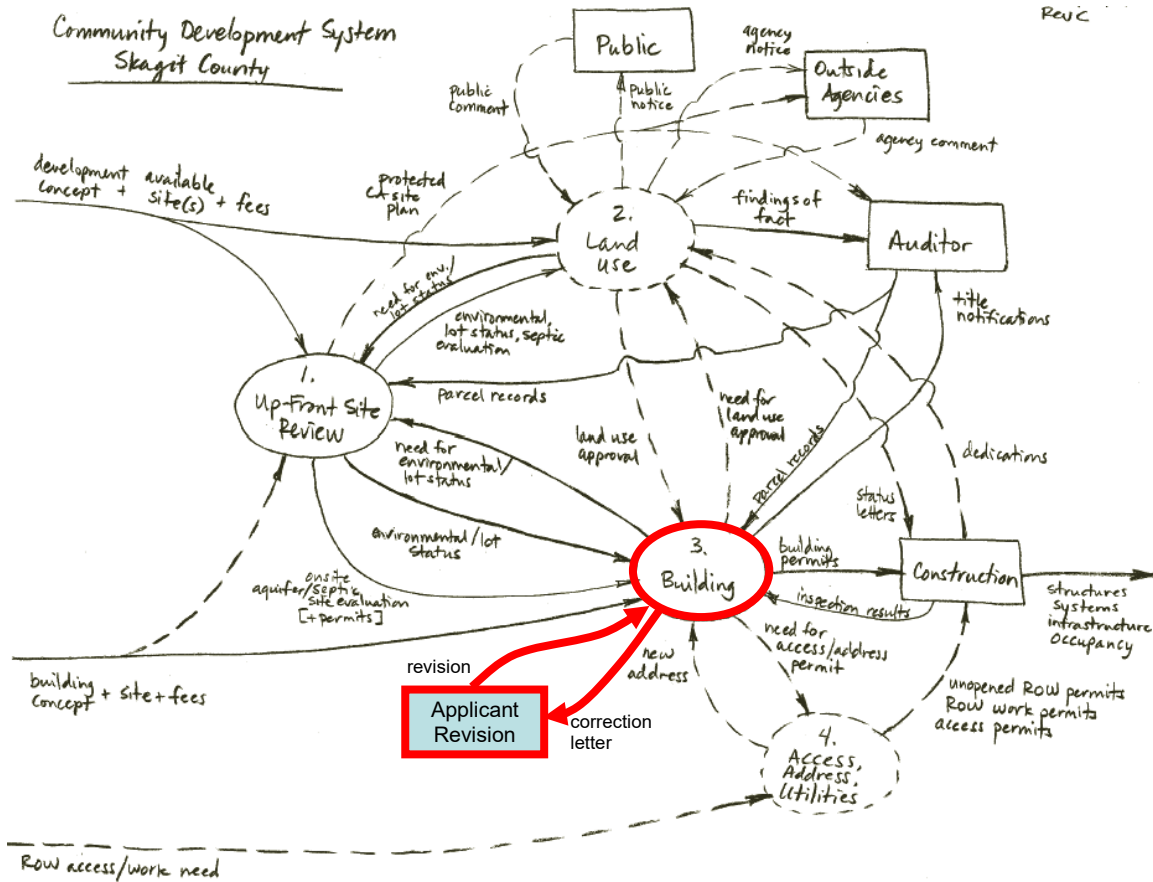
Predictability ● Timeliness ● Efficiency ● Collaboration

Figure 1 - Skagit County Process Analysis Excerpt

By redesigning submittal standards and the way that counter personnel evaluate incoming applications, timelines for roughly 1,200 annual building permits improved dramatically (Fig. 2).
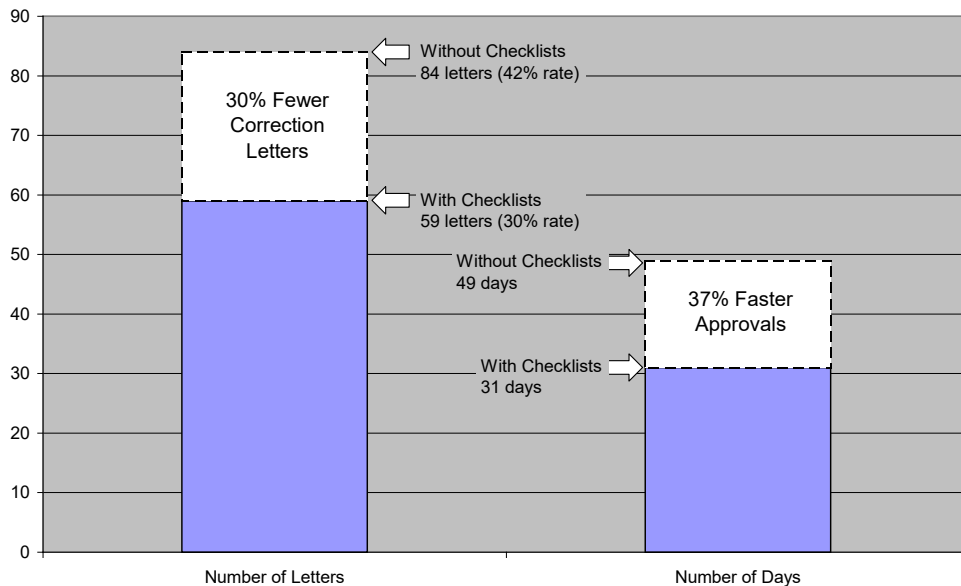

Figure 2 - Skagit County Performance Improvement

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City of Redmond

The Latimore Company conducted a similar assessment of the Redmond (49,000 pop) Planning & Development Services, Public Works, Fire, and Natural Resources departments. The analysis found that once conceptual plans received preliminary approval, nearly a year lapsed before the developer and city could agree on detailed site development plans. Restructuring the way that applicant and city teams collaborate (Fig. 3) produced 75% faster decisions (Fig. 4).

Figure 3 - Redmond Coordinated Civils Process
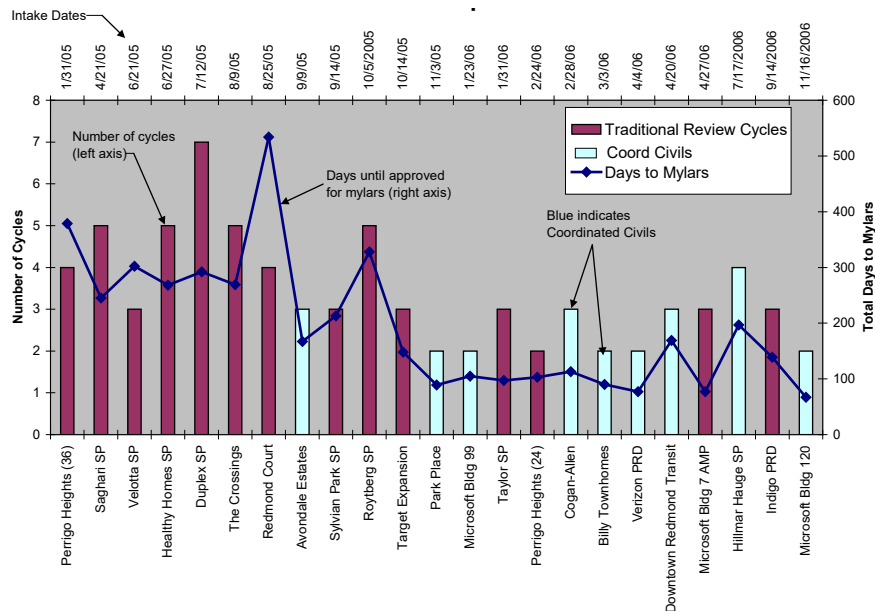
Figure 4 - Redmond Performance Gains

Predictability • Timeliness • Efficiency • Collaboration

Cowlitz County

The Latimore Company worked together with the Cowlitz County Department of Building, Planning and Environmental Health to redesign the permit process. Cowlitz County (41,000 pop) features highly variable topography, numerous environmentally sensitive areas, and marginal soils for onsite septic systems. These factors led to extensive revision, delay and surprise in the permit process as site constraints were uncovered during review. In addition to more efficient timing of septic system, land use and building approvals, The Latimore Company worked with the County to create a new online tool called a parcel report that combines GIS, web technology and regulatory logic into an intuitive, 24/7, report in mere seconds (Fig. 5). The Latimore Company then wrote press releases, prepared and delivered industry briefings, and equipped the team to utilize and sustain the new capabilities. Now, prospective applicants enter the permit process informed, and the process automatically adapts to the nature of the site to streamline where appropriate.
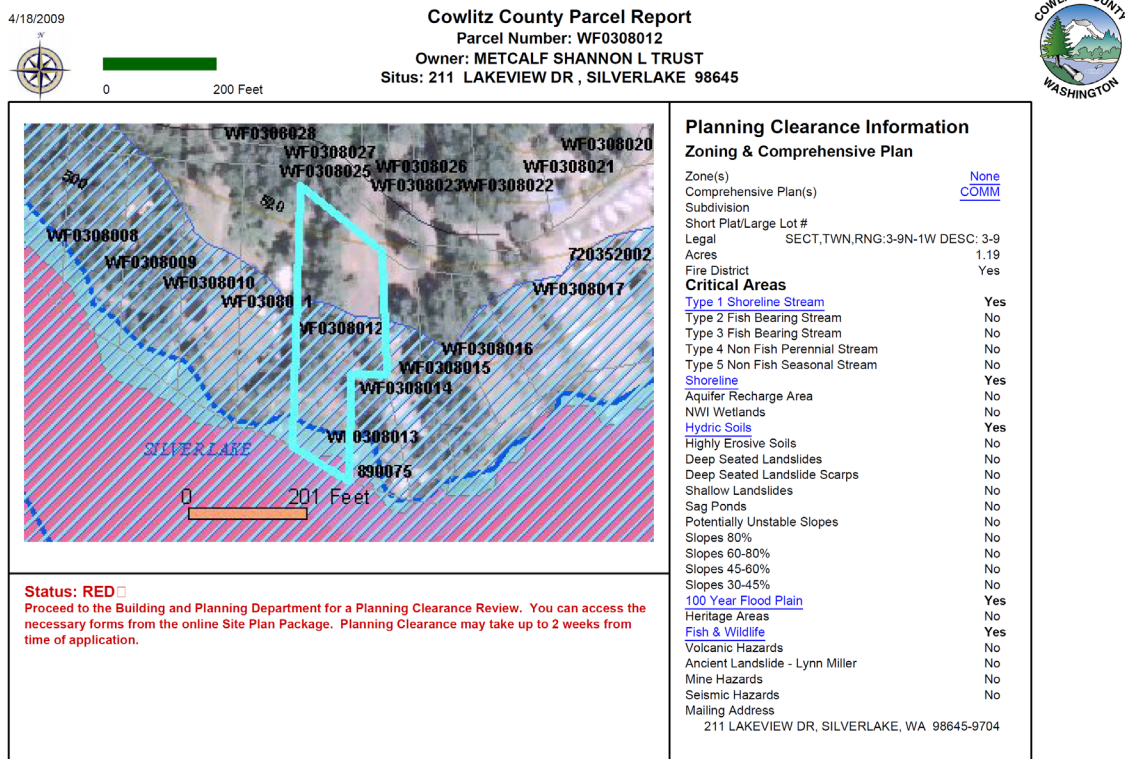
Figure 5 - Parcel Report

City of Gig Harbor

The Latimore Company worked together with the City of Gig Harbor to revise the comprehensive plan and development codes to recognize and nurture distinctive areas of the historic city of 6,800 residents as it grows (Figs. 6 and 7). This included extensive coordination with the planning commission, local residents, interest groups, and department staff.

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Analysis of the development review process also drove improvements in the way that the city departments mutually prioritize and manage application reviews, implementation of a new permit tracking system, creation of a new permit coordinator role, and a new series of optimized staff procedures.

Figure 6 - Comprehensive Plan Excerpt (Neighborhoods)
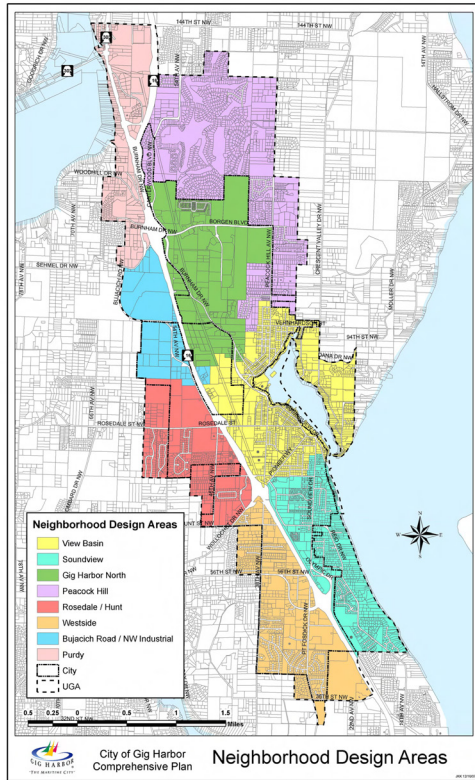
Figure 7 - Gig Harbor Neighborhood Plan Areas

Best Practices for Local Permitting

The Latimore Company was selected by the Washington State Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance in 2008 to produce a handbook on best practices for local government permitting (Fig. 8).

This is available online from the State of Washington.[1]
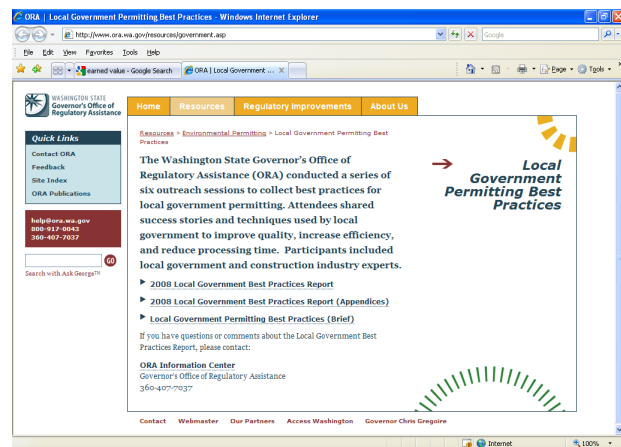
Figure 8 - Best Practices for Local Government Permitting

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[1] http://www.oria.wa.gov/Portals/_oria/VersionedDocuments/Local_Government/lgp_best_practices_report.pdf

The Latimore Dashboard©

One of the major challenges department managers face is making it clear to staff, who often review a wide range of applications, what to work on next to deliver best service: This garage permit or that subdivision? The Latimore Company has solved this problem with its proprietary workflow management system, the *Latimore Dashboard*©. The *Dashboard* prioritizes applications by turnaround time targets (Levels of Service) you set. All reviewers then see their individual to-do lists in real time priority order, indicate results as they go, and see the status of their peers. A keystroke extracts information for posting online to provide transparency to applicants. Used by four cities with more on the way, this friendly Excel-based system is designed for agencies without permit tracking systems or as a complement to those that do (Fig. 9).

Figure 9 - Latimore Dashboard©

Contact Information

For more information, please call Kurt Latimore of The Latimore Company at (360) 805-2999, visit latimorecompany.com, or email klatimore@latimorecompany.com. Thank you.

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