PERMITTING PROCESS EFFICIENCY STUDY – FINAL REPORT

MAY 15, 2026

FINAL

JONESBORO, AR

MATRIX
CONSULTING GROUP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

2. PERMIT REVIEW PROCESSES ANALYSIS 7

3. TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION 24

4. CUSTOMER SERVICE & OUTREACH 34

5. MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION 43

6. STAFFING CAPACITY ANALYSIS 61

APPENDICES 80

- APPENDIX A: CURRENT STATE PROFILE AND BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT OF THE PERMITTING PROCESS
- APPENDIX B: PROCESS DIAGRAMS
- APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK REFPORT
- APPENDIX D: BUILDING CODE ANALYSIS
- APPENDIX E: COMPARABLE JURISDICTION RESEARCH RESULTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Jonesboro (City) retained Matrix Consulting Group (Matrix) to assess the City's permitting and inspection activities. The goal of the project is to enhance the efficiency of the City's permitting process and to improve customer-friendly, predictable, and transparent services.

Permitting and inspection services within the City are primarily handled by four departments: Engineering, Fire, Inspections, and Planning. The City's Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA), Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC), Appearance Commission, and City Council also play a role in making determinations on certain items as prescribed by the City Code of Ordinances.

(1) STUDY SCOPE AND METHODOLOGIES

The Matrix Consulting Group's project team utilized a wide variety of data collection and analytical techniques for this portion of the review study, including the following:

- **Current State Profile.** The project team developed a current-state profile that captured staffing levels, roles and responsibilities, workload, and performance metrics for each operational area. This document was used as a baseline for future analysis to demonstrate how the recommended changes differ from existing practice.
- **Best Practices Assessment.** This assessment compared current City practices with industry best practices. The project team focused on best management practices for management and administration, review processes, technology utilization, and customer service. This assessment was used to identify current strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- **Existing Process Diagrams.** Visual flowchart diagrams were created to document each step in the existing development, permitting, and inspection processes. This allowed the project team to identify opportunities to refine the review processes and to increase overall efficiency and timeliness.
- **Focus Groups and Stakeholder Survey.** Past customers of Jonesboro's development review, permitting, and inspection processes were sent an online survey to collect feedback on their experiences. In addition, a smaller group of randomly selected stakeholders was invited to in-person and virtual meetings with the project team to provide more in-depth feedback.
- **Building Code Analysis.** An in-depth analysis of the relevant sections of the City's Code of Ordinances for the permitting review process and how it relates to the State of Arkansas requirements. Recommendations entirely within the scope of regulation are included in this deliverable.
- **Analysis and Recommendations.** Based on the project team's activities and initial findings, the team analyzed issues, explored alternative service delivery options, and developed recommendations to improve organizational and operational efficiency. These recommendations address management and administration, technology, process, customer outreach, and staffing to identify reforms that will help the City better understand existing operations and reach its goals.

(2) KEY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF THE ORGANIZATION

While the focus of this assessment identifies recommendations for improvement, it is equally important to recognize areas that are currently operating well and to ensure that these strengths are maintained and reinforced as improvements are implemented.

Key Strengths

- Department and division leaders meet weekly to review current permitting reports and to focus on stalled, delayed, or long-in-the-system projects. This management practice reflects a strong commitment to accountability and helps prevent applications from falling through the cracks.
- The City has implemented ProjectDox as a centralized intake portal for building permits and the majority of planning applications, providing a single point of digital submission for applicants.
- All permit forms, planning applications, and City regulations and codes are available to the public digitally.
- The City recently created a dedicated Construction Outreach Coordinator position to assist the business and development community in navigating the permitting process. This proactive step reflects a meaningful commitment to improving the applicant experience and reducing barriers to development.
- Plans are routed only to the review disciplines with relevant jurisdiction, and concurrent review is generally expected to be completed within three business days, reflecting an efficient approach to routing and review coordination.
- The City allows same-day inspections, provided they are scheduled before 8:00 a.m. on the day of the inspection, offering flexibility valued by the contractor and development communities.
- Zoning inspections are conducted before the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy, and all inspectors are required to attend the final CO site visit to ensure a coordinated and thorough closeout process.
- The City has adopted both iWorQ and ProjectDox as the core technology platforms for its permitting operations. Digital intake, plan routing, and real-time performance reporting are occurring, and applicants can track permit status and receive review comments through the ProjectDox portal. GIS is also utilized, with public access to zoning information, flood zone data, and other map-based resources.

Current Challenges

The comparison of the City's current approaches to best management practices also identified notable opportunities for improvement.

- The City does not have clearly defined performance objectives for the permitting review process, and access to performance dashboards within the current software systems is limited. As a result,

management reporting relies primarily on informal tracking rather than consistent, data-driven oversight.

- The City's permitting fee schedule has not been updated since 2017, and no plan review fee is collected before permit issuance. This limits cost recovery and does not reflect the current level of staff effort required to deliver these services.
- Formal training programs for permitting staff are limited. There is no standardized onboarding program, and training in response to code changes, process updates, or software modifications is not consistently coordinated across departments.
- The City is not currently gathering formal feedback from the development and business community regarding the permitting process. Without a structured mechanism for collecting applicant input, the City lacks a consistent basis for evaluating customer experience or identifying service gaps.
- There is no comprehensive "one-stop shop" for permitting activities, either in person or online. Applicants must navigate multiple departmental pages and points of contact to find information and submit applications, which contributes to confusion and inconsistent customer experiences.
- The City's development guide is more than three years old, and existing permit forms and application checklists have not been fully updated to reflect the current digital submittal process through ProjectDox.
- Application intake responsibilities are currently distributed across four administrative-level positions across three departments, with no clear, unified understanding of roles and responsibilities at each step. This fragmentation is a primary driver of the challenges in the completeness review described in this report.
- Formal plan review timelines and resubmittal timelines have not been established or consistently communicated to applicants, limiting predictability and accountability in the review process.
- Inspection scheduling does not currently support online requests; applicants must contact staff directly. This adds administrative burden and is inconsistent with the City's broader move toward digital service delivery.
- The use of two separate permitting systems—iWorQ and ProjectDox—affects the City's ability to maintain consistent permitting data and introduces manual steps into workflows that modern integrated systems are designed to automate, including fee calculation and performance reporting.

The above items do not align with best practices and pose challenges to the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's permitting operations. The subsequent chapters of this report expand on these and other issues and provide specific recommendations to improve the effectiveness and consistency of Jonesboro's development review process.

(3) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The recommendations in this report are included in the table below. Each recommendation was prioritized as either:

- High (within the next year)
- Medium (within 2 years)
- Low (within 3 years)

A calendar quarterly timeline is also provided for each recommendation to help determine financial or budget implications:

- Q1 = January – March
- Q2 = April – June
- Q3 = July – September
- Q4 = October – December

CITY OF JONESBORO PERMITTING PROCESS STUDY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Budget Impact	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline
2. PERMIT REVIEW PROCESSES ANALYSIS			
Y	2.1: Establish a Centralized Development Services / Permit Center with a Standardized Staffing Model for all application and permit intake.	**High**	Q3 2026
	2.2: Replace the current "double completeness check" with a single, clearly defined completeness review process.	**High**	Q3 2026
	2.3: Ensure the completeness verification step occurs before routing applications for review.	**High**	Q3 2026
	2.4: Formalize communication protocols for interdepartmental coordination at key process milestones.	**High**	Q4 2026
	2.5: Establish a coordinated and consolidated review comment process across all review disciplines.	**High**	Q4 2026
	2.6: Require all review comments and project communications to be documented within the permitting system.	**High**	Q4 2026
	2.7: Establish structured communication approaches for complex projects, including staff presentations for projects requiring board or commission review.	**Medium**	Q1 2027
	2.8: Integrate external agency coordination into the permitting review process with defined timelines and contact responsibilities.	**Medium**	Q2 2027
	2.9: Establish and enforce minimum inspection request timeframes across all inspection types.	**High**	Q4 2026
	2.10: Implement a structured inspection scheduling approach that improves predictability and workload management.	**High**	Q4 2026
	2.11: Standardize coordination practices across inspection disciplines, including sequencing and documentation expectations.	**High**	Q4 2026
	2.12: Reevaluate the use of partial permits to support phased construction activities.	**Medium**	Q1 2027
	2.13: Review and refine permit expiration and re-review policies to reduce redundant effort and unnecessary delays.	**Low**	Q3 2027

	2.14: Designate the Chief Building Official as the official signatory for all Certificates of Occupancy.	High	Q3 2026
	2.15: Define clear eligibility criteria for issuing Temporary Certificates of Occupancy.	High	Q3 2026
3. TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION			
Y	3.1: Update development review services' technology and software capabilities to incorporate best-practice features for technology utilization.	Medium	Q4 2027
Y	3.2: Comprehensively integrate ProjectDox and iWorQ, or implement a single software solution for the permitting process.	High	Q2 2027
	3.3: Allow paperless submittals for all application types.	High	Q4 2026
	3.4: Activate online inspection requests.	High	Q4 2026
	3.5: Reconfigure the applicant upload portal.	Medium	Q1 2027
Y	3.6: Deploy a parent/child permit structure.	Medium	Q1 2027
	3.7: Reassess the resubmittal workflow.	Medium	Q2 2027
Y	3.8: Create a standardized training program on permitting and inspection systems.	High	Q4 2026
	3.9: Create user documentation related to the systems in use.	Medium	Q1 2027
	3.10: Create consolidated application categories.	High	Q3 2026
	3.11: Prioritize performance reporting within the existing or future system of record.	Medium	Q2 2027
4. CUSTOMER SERVICE & OUTREACH			
Y	4.1: Create a central development services webpage for people seeking information on navigating the City's permitting review process.	High	Q1 2027
	4.2: Assign Department leads to help facilitate contributions for each department's page.	High	Q4 2026
Y	4.3: Create a central customer counter for permitting.	Medium	Q2 2027
	4.4: Update and provide clear, comprehensive checklists for each application and permit type, identifying the minimum items to be submitted for review.	High	Q4 2026
	4.5: Ensure checklists are available on the City website as downloadable documents and cross-referenced on the ProjectDox customer portal.	High	Q4 2026
	4.6: Implement a post-permit customer satisfaction survey to collect structured applicant feedback and inform continuous improvement of the City's permitting and development review services.	Medium	Q2 2027
5. MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION			
	5.1: Conduct a comprehensive review and update of job descriptions for all positions involved in the permitting review process to reflect actual responsibilities, required qualifications, and updated supervision expectations.	High	Q3 2026
Y	5.2: Evaluate compensation and classification alignment for key permitting support roles as part of a broader organizational structure review.	High	Q4 2026
	5.3: Standardize supervision and oversight of administrative functions supporting the permitting review process.	High	Q3 2026

	5.4: Establish redundancy and backup coverage for all critical permitting functions.	High	Q3 2026
Y	5.5: Develop and implement a formal onboarding program for all permitting-related positions.	High	Q4 2026
Y	5.6: Standardize training on permitting workflows, procedures, and systems across departments.	High	Q4 2026
Y	5.7: Implement ongoing training and refresher programs tied to process and system changes.	Medium	Q2 2027
	5.8: Expand cross-training for adjacent permitting functions to ensure backup coverage and reduce single points of failure.	Medium	Q1 2027
	5.9: Establish a clearly defined application coordination function for the permitting review process.	High	Q3 2026
	5.10: Define and document decision-making authority and escalation protocols.	High	Q4 2026
	5.11: Develop a responsibility matrix (RACI) for the permitting review process.	High	Q4 2026
	5.12: Establish consistent expectations for interdepartmental coordination at the staff level.	High	Q3 2026
	5.13: Establish formal performance metrics and service level expectations for the permitting review process.	High	Q4 2026
	5.14: Implement a centralized performance tracking and reporting system.	Medium	Q2 2027
	5.15: Differentiate internal review time from applicant response time in performance tracking.	Medium	Q2 2027
	5.16: Incorporate performance monitoring into routine management practices.	Medium	Q1 2027
Y	5.17: Designate a management lead responsible for cross-departmental accountability for the City's permitting functions, including oversight of communication protocols, performance monitoring, and process improvement.	High	Q3 2026
	5.18: Develop and formally adopt a mission statement for the City's permitting and development review function, developed collaboratively with staff across all participating departments.	High	Q4 2026
	5.19: Establish and formally adopt defined service goals for the City's permitting function, aligned with the adopted mission statement and applicable City-wide strategic priorities.	High	Q1 2027
6. STAFFING AND WORKLOAD EVALUATION			
Y	6.1: Consider hiring one dedicated commercial plans reviewer.	High	Q3 2026
	6.2: Ensure all inspectors spend similar amounts of time between inspections and plan review.	Medium	Q1 2027
	6.3: Reduce the CBO's time allocated to plan review to approximately 25%.	High	Q3 2026
	6.4: Maintain current staffing levels allocated to inspections.	Low	Ongoing
Y	6.5: Implement an organizational restructure for the City's permitting and development review function.	High	Q4 2026
Y	6.6: Develop and execute a structured transition plan for the organizational restructure, including updated job descriptions, revised classification and compensation alignment, and a staff engagement and communication plan.	High	Q3 2026

2. PERMIT REVIEW PROCESSES ANALYSIS

The permitting review process is considered the primary mechanism through which the City evaluates new development proposals, coordinates across review disciplines, and ensures compliance with applicable codes and standards. For applicants, it represents one of the most visible and important interactions with the City, directly influencing project timelines, costs, and overall experience.

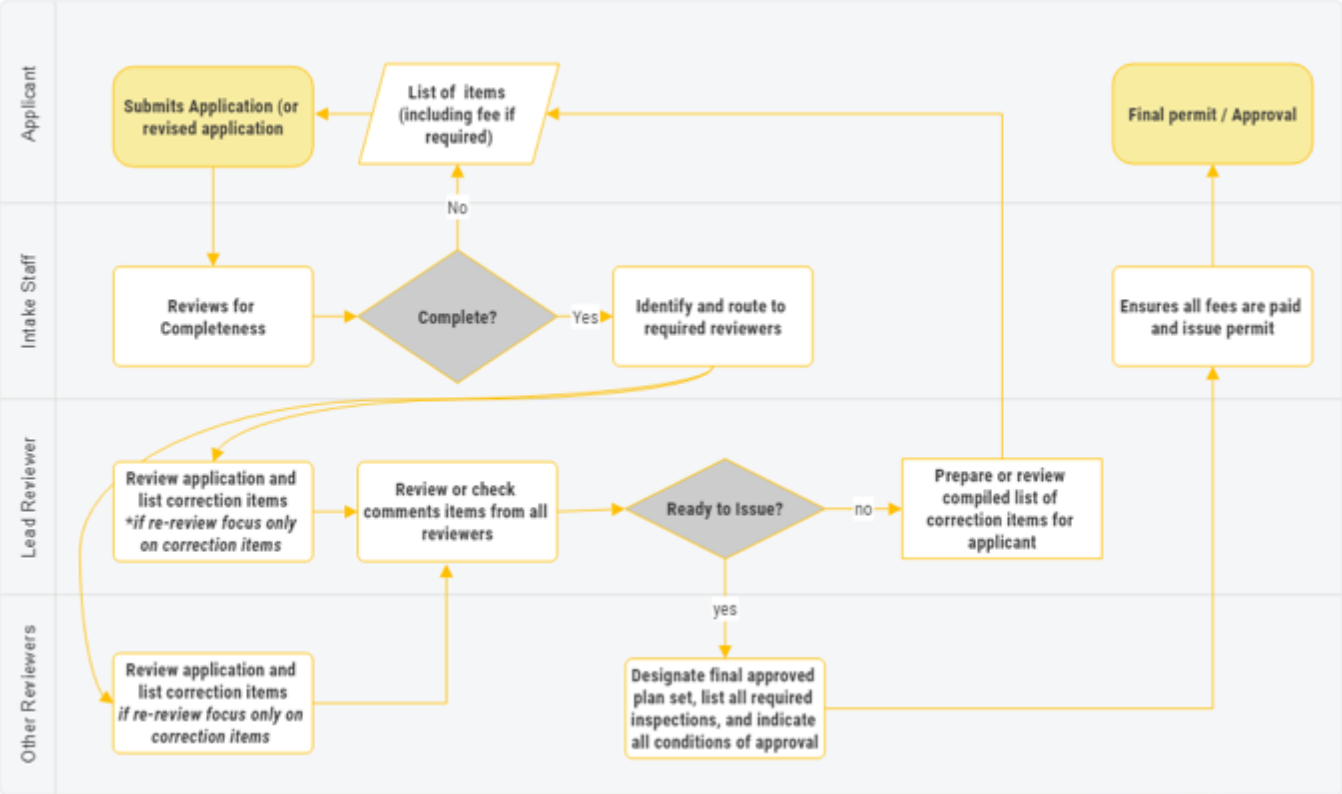
In Jonesboro, the permitting review process is functional but not consistently efficient or predictable. While staff across departments work to move projects forward and resolve issues as they arise, the process itself is not consistently structured or applied in ways that support timely, coordinated, and transparent review. As a result, applicants may experience variability in review timelines, receive inconsistent or uncoordinated feedback, and encounter delays that are not always clearly tied to project complexity. The following section examines best practices for a local government permitting process.

(1) PERMIT REVIEW PROCESSES BEST PRACTICES

Any application review and permitting process should be designed to allow for a predictable, consistent approach. The City should speak with a single voice, even when reflecting input from multiple review disciplines (e.g., engineering, building, fire, planning). For each application and permit type, one department or division should act as a filter to ensure that critical issues across the City organization are addressed. Any conflicts between comments or perspectives should be resolved before these comments are provided to applicants.

A best-practice approach, outlined in the flowchart below, should generally be followed by all review disciplines. However, the complexity of the review process may vary, necessitating flexibility in applying best practices.

BEST PRACTICE APPROACH FOR A PERMIT REVIEW PROCESS



Before analyzing specific building permit processes, it is important to highlight best practices that should be in place regardless of the permit type or the division leading the process.

- **Completeness Review**: There should be clear, written standards on what constitutes a complete application or permit. All received applications and permits should be checked against these criteria before acceptance. Determining what should be included in these standards requires a balance. If the requirements are too stringent, applicants may end up doing more work than necessary before reviewers even see the application. But if they are not stringent enough, the reviewers may lack sufficient information to complete a thorough review. The process of developing the completeness checklist for each application type should be collaborative among staff.
- **Routing Criteria**: There should be clear criteria that determine who should receive an application or permit for review. For example, when reviewing building permit applications, planning should assess those that meet specific criteria, such as a change of use, a change in the building's footprint, or a change in height. These criteria can also be established instead based on what a division does NOT need to see. For example, engineering does not need to review building permit applications unless there is soil disturbance, site work, driveway construction, or utility work. These criteria should be in writing to guide intake staff and project managers.
- **Established Review Response Timeframes**: Individuals reviewing applications or permit materials should have an expected timeline for reviewing the application and passing/failing it in the permitting software system.

- **Group Review**: Grouping review disciplines within a review committee (such as a Development Review Committee) helps ensure that issues in the proposed development are identified earlier rather than later in the review process. This will also help prevent comments that may contradict each other.
- **Sequencing**: In addition, while many communities employ a "first in – first out" approach for all applications, it is almost always more efficient to set aside time for simpler permits to be reviewed and issued, instead of allowing these to be stuck behind more complex projects or projects that are waiting on additional information.
- **Comprehensive, Clear, Consolidated Comments**: The applicant should receive a comprehensive set of comments and be required to respond to each comment. Comments should be consolidated into a written narrative and can reference comments added to the plan sets. There should also be a standard style and approach for writing comments across all review divisions, such as requiring code references/citations, rather than simply "Provide X on plans."
- **Review and Re-Review Completeness**: When revisions are required, reviewers should focus primarily on the revisions made and any changes to the original application. If a staff member (due to lack of knowledge and experience or inadequate plans) misses something in the first review, the applicant is not absolved from meeting the requirement. However, the City should have a clear policy that these are to be avoided and that, generally, new issues should not be brought up that should have been caught in the first review. Reviewers should be trained on this expectation, and managers should address frequent new comments on re-reviews as a performance issue.

The subsequent subsections will provide a more detailed analysis of the best practices that the City is not currently meeting.

(2) PERMIT INTAKE AND COMPLETENESS REVIEW

The effectiveness of the permitting review process depends directly on the quality and completeness of applications and permits at intake. In Jonesboro, the current intake and completeness review approach is not consistently structured or coordinated, allowing incomplete or unclear submittals to enter the permitting review process and creating inadequacies that persist throughout subsequent stages.

CENTRALIZED INTAKE LOCATION ("DEVELOPMENT SERVICES/PERMIT COUNTER")

The City should establish a single, clearly defined intake location, both physically within City Hall and virtually through its permitting systems, to serve as the primary point of entry for all applications, permits, and customer inquiries. This function should operate as a Development Services or Permit Center, providing a consistent and predictable "front door" to the permitting review process.

While a customer portal is set up through the ProjectDox permitting software and serves as the virtual center for many of the City's applications and permits, applicants must navigate multiple departments and points of contact to submit planning and zoning applications, building permits, and engineering permits, and to ask questions and receive guidance. This fragmented approach contributes to confusion, inconsistent submittals, and increased reliance on staff to redirect or clarify information. A centralized

intake location would address these challenges by providing a unified customer interface where all applications are received, reviewed for completeness, and routed for further processing.

The existing public-facing space in City Hall, signed as the Planning and Zoning area and where the Planning Administrative Assistant is located, provides a strong opportunity to establish this function without requiring significant physical reconfiguration.

By formalizing this space as a Development Services or Permit Center, the City can create a visible and accessible location where applicants can engage directly with staff, receive consistent information, and be guided through the digital submittal process. Rather than serving as a point for paper intake, this space should function as a customer service hub, equipped with freestanding computer kiosks that allow applicants to access and submit materials through the ProjectDox portal with staff assistance as needed. This approach reinforces a standardized, digital-first intake process while ensuring applicants have the support they need to navigate submission requirements successfully.

A Development Services or Permit Center would be responsible for:

- Receiving and processing all digital applications and permit submittals
- Performing initial administrative completeness reviews
- Coordinating secondary technical completeness checks
- Serving as the primary customer interface for permitting-related inquiries
- Routing complete applications to the appropriate review disciplines

Establishing a centralized intake location and function will improve consistency, strengthen accountability, enhance customer experience, and reduce inefficiencies caused by incomplete or inconsistently processed applications.

In addition to a physical location, the City should align its virtual intake processes, particularly within ProjectDox, to reflect this centralized model. This is discussed in the subsequent chapter (3. Technology Utilization).

STANDARDIZED STAFFING APPROACH FOR INTAKE

In addition to establishing a centralized intake location, the City must implement a standardized staffing model to support intake and completeness review functions. The current distribution of responsibilities across multiple administrative and technical roles has resulted in duplication, inconsistent practices, and a lack of accountability. A clearly defined, tiered staffing approach is necessary to ensure that applications are consistently reviewed for completeness before entering the permitting review process.

Multiple staff members across different departments currently handle application intake and completeness review responsibilities. The table below lists those staff positions, organizational location, and key roles:

Position Title	FTE	Department	Key Roles
Administrative Assistant	1	Engineering	• Provides broad administrative and clerical support to the Department (responding to customer inquiries, handling purchases, etc.). • Responsible for performing initial intake of Engineering permits and routing to relevant reviews. • Schedules Engineering inspections.
Administrative Assistant	1	Inspections	• Provides broad administrative and clerical support to the Department (responds to customer inquiries over phone and email, handles purchases, etc.). • Performs intake of Over-the-Counter (OTC) building permit and issues same day. • Assesses fees for all building permits prior to issuance. • Issues all building permits following plan review. • Schedules building permit related inspections. • Prepares building permit reports for management. • Handles Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
Administrative Assistant	1	Planning	• Provides broad administrative and clerical support to the Department. • Addresses customer questions at public counter. • Performs initial review (“intake complete”) of all digital applications and permits submitted through ProjectDox.
Planning Technician	1	Planning	• Performs completeness checks of all applications and permits in ProjectDox after initial intake. • Routes applications and permits to all required review disciplines through ProjectDox and transfers to iWorQ. • Answers customer inquiries and generates permitting reports as needed.

These staff members are performing some steps in the City's permitting intake process. They are distributed across three departments and report to separate supervisors. This reflects a legacy paper-

based model of permit intake, in which applications were received and processed by hand within individual departments rather than through a centralized digital system. While each role performs important intake-related functions, their responsibilities are duplicative and highly siloed within their respective departments. There is no unified intake function or coordinated approach to the receipt, screening, and advancement of applications into the development review process. This is likely due to an organizational structure and staffing approach that have not fully adapted to support a modern, digital, and centralized intake process. The misalignment is the primary reason the City is unable to fully leverage digital systems and contributes to ongoing inefficiencies at the front end of the permitting review process.

From an operational standpoint, this fragmented model limits accountability and makes it difficult to enforce standardized intake practices. No single role or team is responsible for ensuring that applications are complete before entering review, and no single supervisor has full visibility into how intake functions are being performed across departments. As a result, the City is unable to consistently apply expectations, monitor performance, or improve the intake process in a coordinated manner (this is further explored in Chapter 5, "Management and Administration").

Under a standardized model, a 'Permit Technician' or 'Development Services Technician' role should serve as the first level of intake, responsible for performing an initial completeness review of all applications and permits. Intake-related functions are beyond the scope of a typical administrative classified position. The intake completeness review step verifies that all required materials, forms, and supporting documentation were submitted via the ProjectDox portal in accordance with established submittal requirements. A correlated step would be to ensure that all submitted data, once deemed initially complete, is accurately transferred to iWorQ and routed to other disciplines for further technical review.

By consolidating intake functions within a centralized team under a unified supervisory structure, the City will be better positioned to enforce standards, monitor performance, and continuously improve intake practices. This model reduces incomplete applications entering the review process, improves efficiency across all review stages, and creates a more predictable and reliable experience for both applicants and staff.

SINGLE COMPLETENESS CHECK

The City currently uses a 'double completeness check' approach in which applications and permits pass through two sequential reviews before entering the technical permitting review process. In principle, this tiered structure should provide an effective quality-control mechanism by separating administrative-level screening from a more detailed technical-completeness review. However, in practice, the process is not functioning as intended. It results in duplication of effort without consistently improving the quality or completeness of submittals.

The first-level check is not consistently performed as a rigorous screening function. Staff indicated that training emphasized processing speed over verification, leading to an 'accept and click' approach in which applications are advanced without confirming that required materials are present and sufficient for

technical review. The second-level check, while intended to provide more detailed scrutiny and facilitate the transfer of data from ProjectDox to iWorQ, also continues to prioritize speed rather than thoroughness. Deficiencies not identified at the first level are frequently carried forward rather than resolved. As a result, the two checks do not function as a coordinated, tiered quality-control system. They operate as disconnected steps that may overlap in some areas while still allowing critical gaps to pass through undetected.

System limitations compound these issues. ProjectDox is not consistently configured to enforce required fields across all application types, allowing applicants to submit incomplete forms. Delays and inconsistencies in the transfer of information between ProjectDox and iWorQ further reduce the reliability of the completeness review process and require additional manual verification by staff. The operational complexity of managing two separate permitting systems creates confusion about who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that an application is complete before it enters review (further analyzed in Chapter 3, Technology Utilization).

Best practice for application completeness review is not defined by how many times an application is checked, but by how clearly each review step is defined, who is accountable for it, and what standard is being applied. A single, well-structured completeness review, performed by clearly identified staff members, against an explicit checklist (further discussed in Chapter 4, Customer Service & Outreach), with a formal determination communicated to the applicant, is far more effective than multiple informal checks that lack defined criteria or accountability. When completeness review is grounded in a clear standard and tied to a formal determination step, applicants receive consistent guidance, staff operate with shared expectations, and applications enter technical review only when they are ready.

ENSURE COMPLETE SUBMITTALS AND ELIMINATE DOWNSTREAM PROCESS IMPACTS

Because of these combined factors, incomplete submittals are routinely accepted and routed into the permitting review process. The burden of completeness verification is shifted from the front end of the process, where it is most efficient and least costly, to later stages, where it consumes significantly more staff time and creates avoidable delays. Review staff must identify missing information, issue comments on incomplete submittals, and track deficiencies through multiple review cycles. In some cases, incomplete applications at intake generate extensive review comments that reflect issues that should have been identified and resolved before routing.

These intake failures also create downstream administrative bottlenecks. By the time applications reach the “permit issuance” step, critical information is sometimes still missing, requiring staff to manually contact applicants to obtain basic data, project details, contact information, or valuations that should have been provided at submission. This phenomenon occurs because the City uses two software programs: ProjectDox, which acts as the intake software, and iWorQ, which acts as the issuance software. When information is missing or not transferred correctly between the two software programs, it not only delays permit issuance but diverts staff time from core permitting functions toward corrective administrative tasks.

Applicants also bear the cost of this dysfunction. Without clear, standardized, and consistently enforced submittal requirements, applicants must rely on informal guidance that varies by staff member and project type to understand what is expected. Incomplete or incorrect submittals lead to resubmittal cycles, extended timelines, and frustration with a process that appears inconsistent and unpredictable. Providing clear, standardized checklists for each application and permit type, and consistently enforcing them at intake, will improve application quality, reduce resubmittals, and create more equitable and predictable expectations for all applicants.

Ultimately, the core issue is not the existence of multiple completeness checks but the absence of a clearly defined, consistently executed, and system-supported intake process with distinct roles and accountability at each level. Without this structure, the City expends additional staff time at both intake and review without achieving the intended benefit of improved submittal quality. Resolving this requires organizational change, clearer staff training, an updated configuration of the permitting system, and enforced submittal standards, all of which are addressed in the recommendations above.

> RECOMMENDATION 2.1: ESTABLISH A CENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT SERVICES / PERMIT CENTER WITH A STANDARDIZED STAFFING MODEL FOR ALL APPLICATION AND PERMIT INTAKE.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 2.2: REPLACE THE CURRENT "DOUBLE COMPLETENESS CHECK" WITH A SINGLE, CLEARLY DEFINED COMPLETENESS REVIEW PROCESS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 2.3: ENSURE THE COMPLETENESS VERIFICATION STEP OCCURS BEFORE ROUTING APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW.

(3) PERMIT REVIEW COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Best practices for development review communication indicate that all substantive coordination between staff, between departments, and with applicants should occur within or be documented in the permitting system. This ensures that the project record is complete, that all reviewers are working from the same information, and that applicants receive consolidated, coordinated feedback rather than fragmented direction from multiple sources. The applicant should never be put in a position of reconciling conflicting feedback from different departments.

In Jonesboro, communication during the permitting review process is not consistently structured or centralized. While staff regularly communicate to resolve issues and move projects forward, these interactions frequently occur outside of formal systems and processes. Review comments, project status updates, and interdepartmental coordination are not always visible to all relevant staff, making it difficult to maintain alignment throughout the review. Coordination often occurs after discrepancies have already emerged rather than being built into the review workflow as a standard practice.

COMMUNICATION OUTSIDE OF FORMAL SYSTEMS

Review comments requiring changes to an application are sometimes communicated directly to applicants outside of the City's permitting system (iWorQ), bypassing formal documentation and

coordination with other review disciplines. This practice creates visibility gaps: other departments may not be aware of issued comments or requested changes, leading staff to review outdated plans or work from incomplete information. The result is conflicting feedback, missed issues, and additional review cycles that could have been avoided through coordinated communication within the system.

To compensate for these structural gaps, staff have developed informal coordination practices, including direct conversations, email chains, and management-led coordination meetings. The use of weekly 'Thursday Meetings' among department leadership to review active or stalled projects is a clear example of this dynamic. While these meetings reflect a genuine effort to keep projects moving, they serve as a reactive management workaround rather than a substitute for a consistently coordinated review process built into the system. Requiring that all review comments, revisions, and project-related communications be documented in the permitting system will improve transparency, ensure alignment across disciplines, and create a reliable, complete project record.

FRAGMENTED AND UNCONSOLIDATED REVIEW COMMENTS

Review comments are not consistently coordinated across departments before being issued to applicants. As a result, applicants may receive multiple sets of comments at different times from different departments or receive feedback that is not fully aligned across review disciplines. This fragmented approach increases the likelihood of conflicting directions, places the burden of interpretation on the applicant, and contributes to additional resubmittals and extended review timelines.

In best-practice jurisdictions, review comments are coordinated internally before release to ensure that all disciplines have had the opportunity to identify conflicts or inconsistencies. This is often facilitated by the permitting system, which requires all reviewers to complete their comments before any are released, or by a brief, coordinated review discussion before issuance. The outcome is a single, consolidated set of comments that applicants can respond to comprehensively and with confidence that addressing all items will move the project forward. Implementing this approach in Jonesboro will improve clarity for applicants, reduce rework, and streamline review cycles.

For more complex projects, particularly those requiring Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) review, there is currently no consistently applied structure to ensure that review findings and staff recommendations are clearly communicated to decision-makers and applicants in advance of public meetings. The absence of structured staff presentations for complex projects limits planners' ability to communicate project details, identify key issues, and frame staff recommendations for the record. This can create misalignment between staff, decision-makers, and applicants that is difficult to resolve once a project has been publicly heard.

EXTERNAL AGENCY COORDINATION

While the City has made positive strides by integrating the independent utility, City Water and Light (CWL), into the digital ProjectDox plan review portal, coordination with external entities like CWL and the Craighead County Health Department still creates significant workflow bottlenecks. Required external

reviews frequently experience delays due to workflow sequencing issues and a lack of early coordination, resulting in timeline delays that are difficult to explain or anticipate.

For example, a major bottleneck occurs when applicants fail to submit fire protection plans to CWL early in the front-end design process. By the time CWL is engaged, the subsequent requirement to coordinate with the Health Department can tack on an additional two weeks, extending overall project timelines by up to six weeks. Furthermore, CWL's integration with the City's software is limited; CWL reviewers cannot digitally redline plans in ProjectDox, so they must write narrative comments, which slows the review cycle.

Beyond process delays, there is a severe lack of regulatory alignment and clear authority between the City and CWL. City plumbing inspectors enforcing state safety codes frequently clash with independent CWL requirements on issues such as outside self-piping, condensate disposal, and cross-contamination. When these safety disputes arise, it is entirely unclear who holds the final decision-making authority, leaving contractors caught in the middle.

Establishing clear coordination points and defined expectations for external agency involvement will reduce avoidable delays. This includes formalizing requirements for early fire plan submittals to CWL, enabling digital redlining capabilities for external partners within the permitting software, and establishing a formal mediation process to resolve code conflicts and determine the ultimate decision-making authority between the City and CWL.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4: FORMALIZE COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION AT KEY PROCESS MILESTONES.

RECOMMENDATION 2.5: ESTABLISH A COORDINATED AND CONSOLIDATED REVIEW COMMENT PROCESS ACROSS ALL REVIEW DISCIPLINES.

RECOMMENDATION 2.6: REQUIRE ALL REVIEW COMMENTS AND PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS TO BE DOCUMENTED WITHIN THE PERMITTING SYSTEM.

RECOMMENDATION 2.7: ESTABLISH STRUCTURED COMMUNICATION APPROACHES FOR COMPLEX PROJECTS, INCLUDING STAFF PRESENTATIONS FOR PROJECTS REQUIRING BOARD OR COMMISSION REVIEW.

RECOMMENDATION 2.8: INTEGRATE EXTERNAL AGENCY COORDINATION INTO THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS WITH DEFINED TIMELINES AND CONTACT RESPONSIBILITIES.

(4) INSPECTION SCHEDULING AND FIELD COORDINATION

The inspection phase is the critical enforcement component of the permitting review process, ensuring that approved plans are implemented correctly and that construction complies with applicable codes and safety standards. Best-practice inspection programs operate within a structured scheduling framework that sets clear expectations for advance notice, defines daily routes and workload standards,

sequences inspection disciplines logically, and provides mechanisms for accountability when issues arise in the field.

In Jonesboro, inspection scheduling and field coordination are not consistently governed by clearly defined expectations or standardized procedures. Inspection requests are not managed within a structured scheduling framework, and there are no consistently enforced minimum advance-notice requirements for certain inspection types, particularly Engineering-related inspections such as driveway, sidewalk, and stormwater inspections. Stakeholder input indicated that unpredictable inspection timelines and inconsistent field practices have contributed to frustration among the development community and concern among City staff about the reliability and consistency of the inspection program.

LACK OF DEFINED INSPECTION REQUEST TIMEFRAMES AND SCHEDULING STRUCTURE

The City's current inspection scheduling relies heavily on manual phone calls and emails managed by administrative staff, rather than utilizing the online customer scheduling portal available in the City's iWorq system. Because clear advance-notice requirements do not universally govern inspection requests (such as the Engineering Department currently requiring only one hour's notice for same-day inspections), scheduling is often driven by incoming demand rather than by a planned, prioritized workflow. While the Building department holds daily morning meetings to determine routing, inspectors frequently adjust routes, reprioritize tasks, and respond to changing conditions throughout the day. This reactive approach reduces overall efficiency, increases unnecessary travel time, and limits the City's ability to manage its workload consistently or to plan field coverage during peak demand periods.

Establishing minimum advance-notice requirements for all inspection types, and shifting away from phone-based scheduling to an online request portal (further discussed in Chapter 3), will improve scheduling predictability and enable better workload planning. Best practices typically allow applicants to request building permit-related inspections up to the close of business on the day before, and next-day inspections are available for 100% of requests. Jonesboro is currently meeting and exceeding this best practice for building inspections, offering next-day service and guaranteeing same-day inspections if requested before 8:00 a.m. However, it is also best practice to give applicants an estimated time for the inspector's arrival. Jonesboro is not currently meeting this, as applicants are generally only given a standard 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. arrival window. Moving forward, the City needs to begin providing customers with estimated arrival windows. These standards should be published, consistently enforced, and reflected in the configuration of online inspection scheduling in the City's permitting systems. The table below illustrates a recommended inspection scheduling framework for Jonesboro. The table below illustrates a recommended inspection scheduling framework for Jonesboro.

RECOMMENDED INSPECTION SCHEDULING FRAMEWORK

Inspection Type	Minimum Advance Notice	Scheduling Approach	Notes
Building - Standard	1 business day	Online/phone request; assigned to daily route	Applies to most residential and commercial inspections

Building - Complex/Multi-Trade	1 business day	Coordinated scheduling with all required trades	Requires pre-inspection coordination call
Engineering - Driveway/Sidewalk	1 business day	Route-based scheduling	Currently no defined minimum notice requirement
Engineering - Stormwater/Grading	2 business days	Coordinated with assigned project manager	Field conditions may require same-day flexibility
Fire - Life Safety	2 business days	Coordinated with building inspection	Applies to final and phased inspections
Final / Certificate of Occupancy	3 business days	All disciplines coordinated simultaneously	All open items must be resolved prior to scheduling

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION AND FIELD QUALITY

Inspection responsibilities are distributed across Planning, Inspections, and Engineering, and coordination between inspection roles is not always structured or consistently applied. While communication occurs among inspection staff, it is often informal and dependent on individual practices rather than defined protocols. This inconsistency can result in coverage gaps, misaligned inspection sequencing, and uneven enforcement expectations across disciplines.

The lack of structured coordination also contributes to broader concerns about inspection quality and trust in the inspection program. When scheduling is compressed or coordination between disciplines is informal, inspectors may have insufficient time to conduct thorough field reviews. Stakeholder input indicates that this dynamic has contributed to instances where field errors were not identified until later in the project, particularly those related to life-safety, requiring corrective action after the fact and reinforcing concerns about the reliability and consistency of the inspection process. These concerns, if not addressed, can damage the working relationship between the City's inspection staff and the contracting and development community.

Establishing clear protocols for interdepartmental coordination, including defined sequencing expectations, communication standards, and documentation requirements, will improve consistency, build confidence in the inspection program, and reduce the risk of field issues being missed. These protocols should be formalized in standard operating procedures, reinforced through regular coordination among inspection supervisors, and supported by consistent training and oversight. Improved accountability structures, including performance monitoring of inspection outcomes and follow-up rates, will also be essential to sustaining quality improvements over time.

RECOMMENDATION 2.9: ESTABLISH AND ENFORCE MINIMUM INSPECTION REQUEST TIMEFRAMES ACROSS ALL INSPECTION TYPES.

RECOMMENDATION 2.10: IMPLEMENT A STRUCTURED INSPECTION SCHEDULING APPROACH THAT IMPROVES PREDICTABILITY AND WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 2.11: STANDARDIZE COORDINATION PRACTICES ACROSS INSPECTION DISCIPLINES, INCLUDING SEQUENCING AND DOCUMENTATION EXPECTATIONS.

(5) PERMIT PROGRESSION AND PROJECT CLOSEOUT

Policies governing permit progression and final project closeout define the bookends of the permitting review process: when construction can begin and when it is considered complete. Best practices maintain policies in this area that are flexible enough to support efficient project delivery while ensuring appropriate oversight and regulatory compliance through final occupancy. When these policies are poorly calibrated, they create unnecessary delays at the front end of construction, extend the administrative lifecycle of permits, and divert staff time toward tracking and follow-up rather than new project review.

In Jonesboro, several existing policies and closeout practices introduce avoidable delays and increase administrative workload without a proportional benefit to project outcomes or regulatory compliance. Stakeholder input indicates that applicants experience frustration with delays in permit activation, difficulties reaching final closeout, and an administrative process for final Certificates of Occupancy that is more burdensome than the process for obtaining temporary occupancy. These dynamics reflect policies that, while established with valid intent, are not applied in ways that support efficient and customer-responsive project completion.

PARTIAL PERMITS AND PERMIT EXPIRATION POLICIES

The City has eliminated the use of partial permits, such as site grading, demolition, or foundation-only permits, which would otherwise allow applicants to begin the early phases of construction while full building permit review is still in progress. Without this option, applicants must wait for full permit approval before initiating any construction activity, even when portions of the work could be independently reviewed, permitted, and safely constructed. This creates unnecessary delays in project start times, particularly for larger or more complex projects where phased construction starts are a standard industry practice in peer jurisdictions.

Reintroducing partial permits, where appropriate, with clearly defined parameters and tracked consistently in the permitting system, will allow projects to advance more efficiently while maintaining necessary oversight. Partial permits should be limited to project phases that can be independently reviewed and safely constructed without the remainder of the permitted work. Applicants should clearly understand that partial permit issuance does not prejudge the outcome of any remaining review.

Current policy also requires that approved but unissued building permits within a defined timeframe, typically 180 days, undergo re-review and resubmittal to ensure compliance with current codes. While the

intent is to maintain code compliance, this requirement generates redundant review effort for projects that have not materially changed. Refining this policy to distinguish between substantive code changes and minor technical updates, and to allow expedited re-review for projects with no material changes, will reduce unnecessary workload for both staff and applicants without compromising regulatory standards.

TEMPORARY CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY PROCESS

The City issues Temporary Certificates of Occupancy (TCOs) frequently, often for projects with relatively minor outstanding items at the time of occupancy. While TCOs are a legitimate and useful tool for allowing occupancy before full project completion, their routine use for minor items creates an ongoing administrative burden. Staff must track open TCOs, follow up with applicants to resolve outstanding items, and manage permits that remain in a partially completed status indefinitely. This extends the effective lifecycle of individual permits and diverts staff capacity from active project review toward administrative tracking and follow-up. It can also pose a substantial risk to the City. Establishing clearer criteria for when a TCO is appropriate, and reserving TCO issuance for circumstances involving genuinely outstanding work rather than minor documentation items, will reduce administrative burden, reduce risk, and improve overall closeout efficiency.

Here are some strategies the City can put in place if it elects to issue a TCO, along with key best practices for managing the associated risk:

1. Define Clear Eligibility Criteria

- Require that all life-safety systems (fire alarms, egress lighting, sprinklers, means of egress) be fully installed, tested, and approved before a TCO is issued.
- Restrict occupancy to only those portions of the building that are fully compliant—e.g., ground-floor retail or core common areas—while finishing work continues elsewhere.
- Specify what activities may occur (e.g., "storage only," "shell retail," "office work with limited occupant load") so no one misunderstands the condition of the space.

2. Time-Bound and Conditional Approval

- Limit TCO validity to a narrow window of time (e.g., 30–90 days), with no automatic renewals.
- Tie the expiration date to completion dates for outstanding elements (e.g., "CO expires in 60 days or upon final fire-marshal approval, whichever comes first").

3. Financial and Contractual Protections

- Require the developer to post an amount sufficient to cover the cost of completing the remaining work (often 125–150% of the estimated punch-list).
- Hold a deposit to cover the cost of extra inspections, re-inspections, or enforcement actions if inspections fail.
- Charge a premium TCO application fee to recoup the added administrative burden.

4. Insurance & Indemnification

- Mandate that the project's general liability and builders' risk policies name the City as an additional insured.
- Require the insurer to waive subrogation rights against the City.
- Include a strong hold-harmless agreement in the TCO form, shielding the City from liability for any injuries or damages arising from incomplete work.

5. Rigorous Inspection Regime

- Schedule weekly (or more frequent) follow-up inspections until the full CO is granted, to ensure outstanding items are addressed.
- Give inspectors clear authority to "stop occupancy" immediately if unsafe conditions are discovered.
- Require the developer to provide photographic or third-party progress reports at each inspection stage.

6. Transparency and Notification

- File a public notice or "Notice of Temporary Occupancy" against the property title so future buyers or lenders are aware of the building's incomplete status.
- If spaces are leased under a TCO, require tenants to sign an occupancy acknowledgment outlining the limited scope of approvals and potential disruptions.

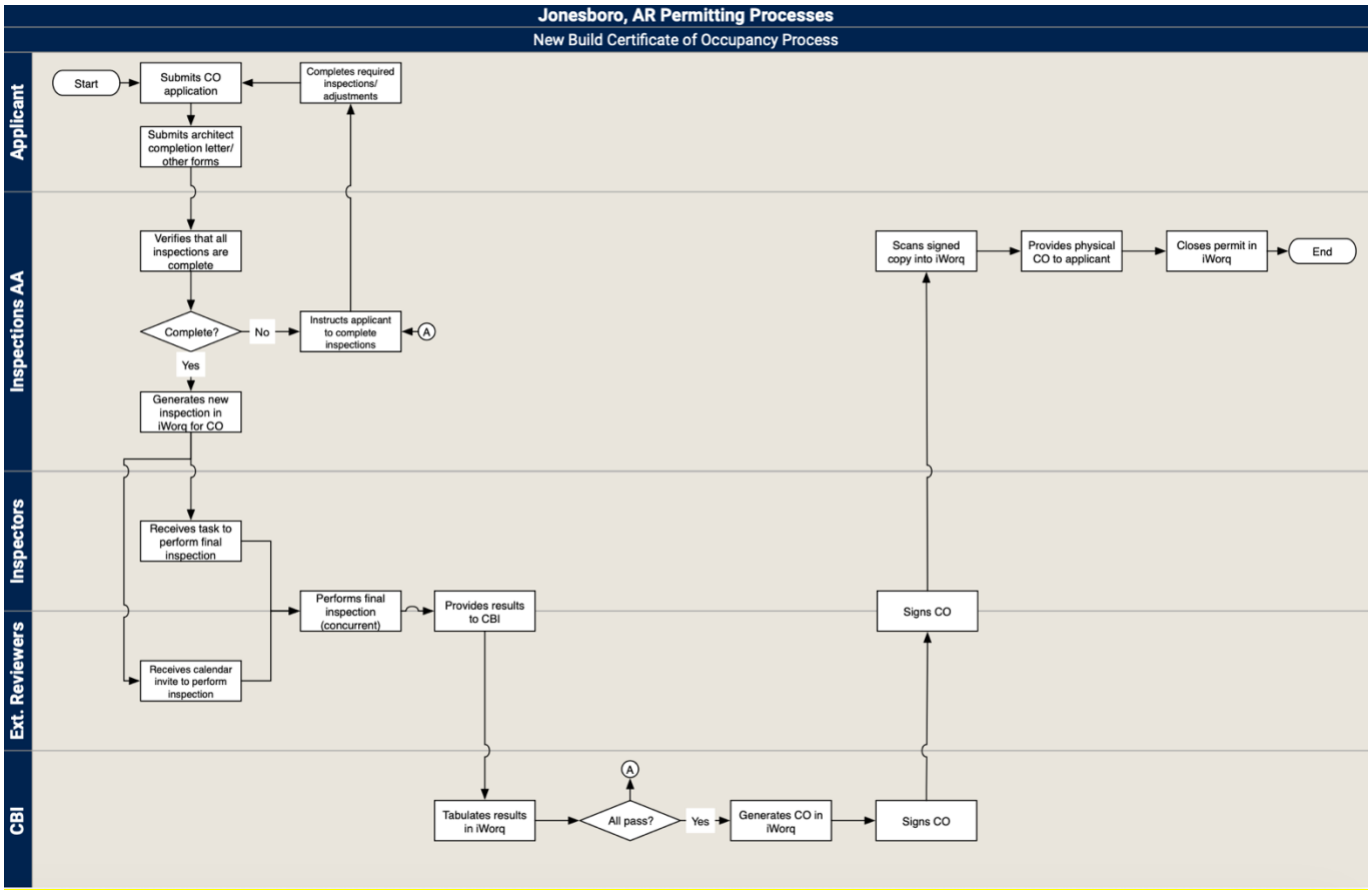
7. Revocation & Enforcement

- Spell out in the TCO form the City's right to revoke the TCO on 24-hour notice if conditions change or work stalls.
- Institute fines or daily penalties for failure to complete punch-list items by the TCO expiration date.
- Preserve the City's right to place a lien on the property to recover unpaid fees or enforcement costs.

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY PROCESS

The City is following several best practices for the Certificate of Occupancy process. Below is the City's current process diagrammed.

CO/FINAL INSPECTION PROCESS FOR BUILDING PERMITS



The best practices being followed by the City are:

- A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) application must be submitted to initiate the process.
- Verification that all required inspections have been completed occurs.
- A new CO permit is added to the workflow, which initiates the request for a final CO inspection.
- All review disciplines perform their final inspections concurrently.
- Results are added to the permitting software.
- The CO certificate is generated in the permitting software (saved as a template).

Some of the current steps in the City's CO process do not follow best practices. They include:

- Inked/manual signatures on the final certificate
- Requiring signatures from multiple directors.

These steps create a multi-step approval workflow that can introduce delays at the end of a process. Best practice is to issue the CO through the City's permitting system using secure digital approvals, rather than requiring manual signatures. This approach improves efficiency, maintains a complete audit record, and aligns with modern digital permitting workflows. Additionally, it is best to designate a single

approval authority—typically the Chief Building Official—to issue a CO following confirmation that all required departmental approvals have been completed. This approach maintains appropriate technical review by all disciplines while eliminating unnecessary administrative steps associated with multiple manual signatures.

Simplifying the CO approval process, through clearly defined delegation of authority, concurrent rather than sequential sign-off, or digital approval workflows within the permitting system, will reduce administrative delays and allow for timelier project closeout. These changes should be grounded in formal authority delegation documented in standard operating procedures, ensuring that appropriate oversight is maintained while unnecessary sequential steps are eliminated. Timely and efficient project closeout benefits both applicants and the City: it frees up staff capacity, completes the permitting record, and signals to the development community that the City is committed to a responsive end-to-end process.

RECOMMENDATION 2.12: REEVALUATE THE USE OF PARTIAL PERMITS TO SUPPORT PHASED CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES.

RECOMMENDATION 2.13: REVIEW AND REFINE PERMIT EXPIRATION AND RE-REVIEW POLICIES TO REDUCE REDUNDANT EFFORT AND UNNECESSARY DELAYS.

RECOMMENDATION 2.14: DESIGNATE THE CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL AS THE OFFICIAL SIGNATORY FOR ALL CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY.

RECOMMENDATION 2.15: DEFINE CLEAR ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ISSUING TEMPORARY CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY.

3. TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION

This chapter focuses on recommendations for the use of technology in the City's permitting and inspection process. Software and hardware technology are integral to efficient and effective service, both internally and to the public they serve. It can be used in various ways and ideally should make the process more efficient for customers and staff. Analysis in this chapter will primarily focus on the City's two core systems – ProjectDox and iWorQ.

(1) IMPLEMENT DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SOFTWARE SYSTEM BEST PRACTICES

The following table provides an overview of best practices for permitting and the utilization of inspection technology. The subsequent subsections outline the key adjustments needed to utilize and integrate technology into the City's processes.

BEST PRACTICES IN TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION

Process Step	Best Practices
Intake	The applicant submits a full application electronically, including all attachments. Documents that require an engineer or architect stamp or seal are affixed with an electronic stamp or seal. The full record, including site plan and supporting documents, are either attached or linked to the permit record in the software system. The system includes checklists to ensure that all required documents are uploaded at intake. *Note this does not include the intake of scanned plan sets or applications.*
Fee Calculation	Calculates application and permitting fees and accepts payment through the software and/or online portal. This should be through integration with the City's finance software or through the permitting system itself. If payments taken through the permitting system, integration with the City's finance software should be implemented to enable direct transfer of data and information. An estimated fee feature should be included when an applicant is applying, although fees may not be collected until later in the process. The fee calculator may be a separate feature on the webpage prior to starting an application.
Linking of Permits	Permits should be easily linked across and within review disciplines (e.g., entitlement to engineering to improvements to building to electrical). This would include the ability for the system to flag the permit if there are any open/unresolved code enforcement cases. All trade permits should be linked to the primary building permit workflow.
Distribution and Review	Plans are electronically routed to plans reviewers who mark-up documents digitally. Reviewers of different disciplines can see each-others' comments and mark-ups, directly on the plan sheet. Any written comments / reports are electronically attached to the application record.

	Reviewers can electronically access any permit history on the project, including past permits issued, conditions associated with prior approvals, and special conditions associated with the property.
Digital Application Review	All application materials should be reviewed and marked up in a plan review software platform (e.g., BlueBeam, ProjectDox, ePlan Soft, etc.). Plan review software systems should be integrated into the application workflow through the permitting software systems. Review software should include the capability to mark up the plan set, cloud issues, and include the ability for all reviewers to see other's comments.
Comments to Applicant	The applicant is notified via email when comments are available and can follow an electronic link to see comments and (where relevant) marked up plans. Alternatively, the software may email the applicant the comment letter and marked up plan set. As part of the comment feedback, the applicant can identify who made the comment, their role, and contact information. *Note – for complex applications it is important for the application/permit project manager to review the comments from all disciplines before they go to the applicant for a response. At this point no technology is able to look at comments from different review disciplines and ensure that they present one clear, consistent set of directions to the applicants.*
Applicant Resubmittal	The applicant uploads a re-submittal once all comments have been addressed (but not before). The system should require a response to every comment from every review discipline. Once resubmitted and accepted by intake staff, the resubmitted version would be easily identified for the applicant and staff.
Re-Review	Reviewers can digitally compare the re-submittal with the original submittal. This may include the incorporation of "clouding" or another feature that easily identifies changes from the original submittal.
Timeline Status	Feature that allows development review staff to notify the applicant about the anticipated review timeline, and if there are delays in the review, with an updated completion time.
Public Hearings	A copy of the full application packet is linked to the public portal. Public hearing video, audio, and minutes are also linked to the application after public meeting.
Approval / Issuance	The applicant receives an approval letter or permit electronically along with an electronic version of the approved plans and/or any conditions associated with the permit. This includes conditions that were established based on a prior permit (e.g., a planning approval that then turned into a building permit).

	Approved plans / approval letter is uploaded to the permit tracking system as record of the final approval. All previous versions of plans submitted would be archived within the system. All conditions of approval are included in the online record and delineated in the system. If these are linked to another application (e.g., a building permit linked to a planning approval) they should be linked in the system as well.
Inspections	All inspection types can be requested electronically through the applicant portal and are linked to the permit record online. Inspections are scheduled based on two- to three-hour blocks, not specific times. This best practice increases inspector efficiency in the field. Inspectors can see a link to the final approved drawings either from their desktop or from a tablet in the field. Inspectors can enter inspection results electronically in the field. All inspection results, including any reasons for failure of inspections, are visible in the City's permit portal to the applicant and to administrative and professional staff in the office. Inspection results are automatically sent to the applicant/contractor. This may be via email or notification directly from the permitting software system. Inspectors can automatically route themselves for their inspections.
Certificate of Occupancy / Permit Close Out	When a certificate of occupancy is required, it may be requested through the applicant's portal. Prior to the ability to request a CO, the system will identify what project close out materials (e.g., as-builts, maintenance bonds, etc.) are required prior to requesting a CO. Once a CO is requested, all applicable inspectors will be notified of the CO request. CO results will be distributed automatically to the applicant. If approved, the CO will be automatically generated and awaiting staff signature. Once approved, the CO will be emailed directly to the customer.
Post-Issuance	The system tracks conditions of approval and whether and how these conditions have been met. This will include a workflow for maintenance/warranty bonds and automatic notifications prior to the bond expiring for follow up inspections.
Reporting	The system automatically generates management reports for internal and public use. This will include reports that can be linked to online dashboards. Public reports should provide meaningful, clear information regarding timelines, and workloads, and performance over time.

The current software stack, iWorQ and ProjectDox, has allowed the City to incorporate most of the practices identified in this table into its processes. However, there are further opportunities to integrate additional best practices into its technology utilization approach.

> RECOMMENDATION 3.1: UPDATE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SERVICES' TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE CAPABILITIES TO INCORPORATE BEST-PRACTICE FEATURES FOR TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION.

(2) IMPROVE INTEGRATION BETWEEN SUBMITTAL, REVIEW, AND ISSUANCE SYSTEMS

The City has deployed a unique approach to how it receives, reviews, issues, and reports on its permitting function. Currently, Jonesboro utilizes two distinct software systems: iWorQ and ProjectDox. ProjectDox is used to facilitate online submittal, route applications, and conduct reviews. iWorQ is used to issue permits and conduct result inspections and serves as the system of record.

Two distinct software companies develop these systems, and thus, connectivity between them is highly limited. Information from ProjectDox is sent to iWorQ within 24 hours, but it is a one-way transfer. iWorQ cannot communicate information back to ProjectDox. This results in inefficiencies from both a process and reporting perspective. Staff are required, at a minimum, to perform spot checks on data transferred from iWorQ to ensure that a permit's status and supporting documentation are properly transferred throughout the process. This sometimes requires manually entering data and submitting status updates to iWorQ when information has not been successfully transferred. Two specific examples of data that often fail to transfer between systems include general contractor information and property information (such as square footage).

From a reporting perspective, the lack of connectivity and reliance on manual review have led to inconsistent tracking of performance data. A review of the City's permitting data revealed inconsistent data quality and information gaps. A later section will discuss specific issues with the City's tracking of its key performance indicators.

The City must resolve this issue by either improving connectivity between existing systems or implementing a single software solution (or a software family). Regardless of the approach, the result should enable seamless management of intake, review, issuance, and data management for an application.

> RECOMMENDATION 3.2: COMPREHENSIVELY INTEGRATE PROJECTDOX AND IWORQ, OR IMPLEMENT A SINGLE SOFTWARE SOLUTION FOR THE PERMITTING PROCESS.

(3) EXPAND AND IMPROVE SOFTWARE CAPABILITIES

(Note: The following subsections are specific to both iWorQ and ProjectDox.)

ALLOW PAPERLESS SUBMITTALS FOR ALL APPLICATION TYPES

The City has transferred the majority of its application types to the online system, though some are still handled via paper forms and/or email. Applications such as trade permits, mobile vending, short-term rentals, and business licenses are not presently accessible through the online portal. This requires City personnel to manually enter the permit in iWorQ. The City has signaled that it will digitize all remaining applications and should continue to prioritize this effort.

While not necessarily paper-based, over-the-counter (OTC) permits require manual data entry from administrative personnel. It was noted that these application types are not configured with the required fields, which sometimes results in information being missed on a permit that has already been issued. iWorQ should be configured to require specific data to be entered for each OTC permit type before issuing the permit.

ACTIVATE ONLINE INSPECTIONS

While inspections are currently conducted through iWorQ, there is no way to schedule an inspection online. Applicants are required to contact the City by phone or email, and Inspections staff must create the inspection request in iWorQ after collecting the applicant's information. The City shared that it currently has access to the inspection request module in iWorQ, but it has not been activated. Implementing this solution will result in a more streamlined process that reduces the workload allocated to administrative positions within the department. Applicants will then be responsible for submitting their request and providing information directly to the City, rather than the current, more duplicative approach. Online inspection requests through the customer portal are a best practice.

RECONFIGURE THE APPLICANT UPLOAD PORTAL

In the present configuration, applicant file uploads are limited to one page at a time. This can make uploading large plan sets much more taxing on the applicant. While limiting bulk uploads may assist with the initial completeness check, there should be a way for applicants to submit an entire PDF application, especially for large and complex projects.

DEPLOY A PARENT/CHILD PERMIT STRUCTURE

In development review, permitting, and inspections, all activities can be tied to a property, address, parcel, or building. There should be a single identifier for all activities for a single address or parcel in the system (e.g., the parent). Then all other activities will branch from this single point (e.g., the child). For example, for commercial building permits, there is a single approved and issued building permit for the building. Then there are individual trade permits that must be obtained (often by a different contractor) that are associated with the project. Currently, the trade permit is a separate application and permit and is not tied back to the parent building permit. When child permits are not tied to the parent permit, it can create challenges during final inspections and project closeouts.

Trade permits, rental registration, and code compliance cases should all be linked back to the primary building (or site development) permit. The building (or site) permit should be the parent permit, and all

other secondary/ancillary permits, registrations, or code cases should be classified as a child permit and attached to the parent permit (if it exists).

Child workflows properly linked to a parent permit (or other single identifier) will improve workflow efficiency and ensure consistency in the permitting and inspection processes. This will also help reduce potential challenges with future applications, permits, code enforcement, rental registration, or business licenses. This change to the workflow will provide a more streamlined approach for permit closeouts.

REASSESS THE RESUBMITTAL WORKFLOW

There are two components of how comments and resubmittals are handled that should be assessed. The first is how comments are communicated to the applicant during the review process. Presently, applicants receive reviewers' comments in real time. This results in applicants receiving comments before all reviewers have completed their reviews. This has led to applicant confusion about what should be addressed, to applicants missing comments on their resubmittals, and to generally poor-quality resubmittals. The ProjectDox portal should be reconfigured to issue comments only once all reviewers have completed their assessment of an application.

Additionally, resubmittals do not appear to be adequately linked to the original application within ProjectDox. Resubmittals appear to create a new project in the system and do not reference the prior application. This impacts reviewers' ability to research prior submittals when assessing the applicant's response and also makes data management much more difficult. The City should ensure that resubmittals are directly linked to prior submittals associated with each application.

> RECOMMENDATION 3.3: ALLOW PAPERLESS SUBMITTALS FOR ALL APPLICATION TYPES.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 3.4: ACTIVATE ONLINE INSPECTION REQUESTS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 3.5: RECONFIGURE THE APPLICANT UPLOAD PORTAL.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 3.6: DEPLOY A PARENT/CHILD PERMIT STRUCTURE.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 3.7: REASSESS THE RESUBMITTAL WORKFLOW.

(4) PROVIDE STANDARDIZED TRAINING ON PERMITTING SOFTWARE

As part of its rollout of iWorQ and ProjectDox, the City provided training for system users. This included external entities such as City Water and Light (CWL). However, this training has not continued since its initial implementation, at least in a formal manner. The City should develop a formal training program for all users of the system(s) currently in place, for both existing and incoming personnel. Components of this program should include:

- A comprehensive onboarding training program for all new staff, designed to provide an overview of the system and a more detailed training program for their specific role (e.g., intake and permit issuance for intake staff, reviewing and posting comments for plan reviewers, etc.). This onboarding training program should be provided for all staff before the launch of the new system updates.

- Ongoing training for the software as new updates and features are implemented. The vendor or internal staff may provide this training.
- Training for managers on utilizing the software system and performance reporting features.
- A user guide/desk manual (electronic) so that staff can reference most of their questions. This manual should be updated as new features are released.

As noted above, this training should be offered on an ongoing basis to address major workflow changes and onboard new staff. Specific reasons for refresher training could include software updates, code changes, and adjustments to the City's internal workflows. When these changes occur, internal documentation should also be updated to reflect the current approach.

> RECOMMENDATION 3.8: CREATE A STANDARDIZED TRAINING PROGRAM ON PERMITTING AND INSPECTION SYSTEMS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 3.9: CREATE USER DOCUMENTATION RELATED TO THE SYSTEMS IN USE.

(5) IMPROVE REPORTING CAPABILITIES

The City faces several challenges in managing permitting data, leading to ineffective performance reporting. Issues include how applications are named in the system, where tasks are assigned, and the use of disparate systems for permitting.

Both iWorQ and ProjectDox allow the creation of performance reports, with each system containing several pre-made templates (either created by the developer or by City personnel) for management use. It is worth noting, however, that ProjectDox limits user access to report creation under its agreement with the City. Jonesboro must reach out to the ProjectDox developer to create new report types.

CLEAN AND STANDARDIZE APPLICATION NAMING CONVENTIONS

One challenge for the City, from a reporting perspective, is how application types are named in its system of record (iWorQ). A review of workload data showed that many application types are filed under duplicative or inaccurate names. This makes tracking and reporting on the permitting process significantly less effective, and the City should aim to reconfigure its application naming structure in its system of record. The following table shows an example of how existing application types may be restructured:

Original Permit Type	Department	MCG Category
C – Storage Building	Building	Accessory Structures
Canopy	Building	
R - Storage	Building	
R – Swimming Pool	Building	
C – Addition	Building	Additions
R – Addition	Building	

Original Permit Type	Department	MCG Category
R – Foundation	Building	
C – Signs	Planning	Administrative Planning
C – Temporary Tent/Trailer/Structure	Planning	
Fence	Planning	
Fence/Wall	Planning	
Mobile Vending	Planning	
Storm Shelter	Planning	
Certificate of Occupancy	Building	Certificates / Occupancy
Existing Certificate of Occupancy	Building	
Demolition	Building	Demolition
R – Reinspect	Building	Express Permits
Communication Tower	Planning	Land Use Applications
Minor Plat/Subdivision/Replat	Planning	
Building	Building	New Construction
Commercial Building	Building	
Duplex	Building	
Multi Family Building	Building	
Single Family Home	Building	
C – Alteration	Building	Remodels / Tenant Improvements
Industry	Building	
R – Alterations	Building	
Encroachment	Engineering	Right-of-Way
Lane Closure	Engineering	
Miscellaneous	Engineering	
Right of Way	Engineering	
Street Cut	Engineering	
Traffic Camera	Engineering	
Traffic Closure	Engineering	
C – Foundation/Footing/Grading	Engineering	Site Development
Driveway	Engineering	
Grading/Footing/Foundation	Engineering	
Parking Lot	Engineering	
Subdivision Construction	Engineering	
Insulation	Building	Specialty Building
Re-Roof	Building	
Rice Well	Building	
Backflow Only	Building	Trade Permits (MEP)
C – Electric Meter	Building	
C – Electrical	Building	
C – Electrical Alteration	Building	
C – Electrical Reconnect	Building	

Original Permit Type	Department	MCG Category
C – Gas Test	Building	
C – HVAC	Building	
C – Job Site Trailer Electrical	Building	
C – Lawn Sprinkler	Building	
C – Plumbing	Building	
C – Temporary Power	Building	
C – Water Meter	Building	
Electrical	Building	
Electrical Change Out	Building	
HVAC Change Out	Building	
Mechanical	Building	
Multi – Electric	Building	
Multi – HVAC	Building	
Multi – Plumbing	Building	
Plumbing	Building	
Plumbing Change Out	Building	
R – Electric Alteration	Building	
R – Electric Meter	Building	
R – Electrical	Building	
R – Electrical Reconnect	Building	
R – Gas Test	Building	
R – HVAC	Building	
R – Lawn Sprinkler	Building	
R – Plumbing	Building	
R – Sewer	Building	
R – Water Meter Per	Building	
Swimming Pool – Electrical Bond	Building	
C – Sewer	Engineering	Utilities / Sewer
C – Sewer Connection & Street Cut	Engineering	
C - Sewer Stubout	Engineering	
R – Sewer Street Cut	Engineering	
R – Sewer Stubout	Engineering	
R - Sewer with Street Cut	Engineering	

In this example, the City's 80 existing application types have been consolidated into 14 categories. While it may be prudent to create additional subcategories (e.g., specific types of trade permits), this more streamlined approach is recommended for sorting applications initially. Doing so will allow the City to more effectively track and report on the permitting process as a whole.

UTILIZE ONE SYSTEM FOR PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Another issue facing performance tracking is the City's use of two systems to facilitate permit processing. As previously noted, the transfer of data between ProjectDox and iWorQ is not always consistent and is one-way (from ProjectDox to iWorQ). From a reporting perspective, this affects the quality of the data ultimately stored in iWorQ, which is currently the City's system of record for permitting operations. A previous recommendation noted that the City should prioritize improving this integration or consolidating its permitting processes into a single system 'family'. This also extends to how the City reports on its permitting data.

The City is generating reports from each system to piece together management reports on the permitting process. Different types of data are stored in each system, possibly due to poor integration between the two. A prime example of this is processing times. ProjectDox is used to report on the time it takes to complete review tasks, which is not currently tracked in iWorQ (though there are reports in this system that can generate this).

This two-system approach means the reporting process is highly piecemeal and not automated at all. For example, for permitting staff meetings, progress reports must be manually created by pulling information from each system. This approach is inefficient and may also result in inaccuracies due to user error and/or poor data integration.

Regardless of the City's future approach to its permitting system, there should be a single system of record used to create all performance reports on the permitting and inspections process. The data in that system should be accurate and cover all metrics important to understanding the current state of operations, including processing times, application counts, resubmittal counts, and more. If a two-system approach continues to be used, ProjectDox (or another intake system) should only serve to supplement or verify the data stored in the system of record (iWorQ).

> RECOMMENDATION 3.10: CREATE CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION CATEGORIES.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 3.11: PRIORITIZE PERFORMANCE REPORTING WITHIN THE EXISTING OR FUTURE SYSTEM OF RECORD.

4. CUSTOMER SERVICE & OUTREACH

This chapter analyzes and develops recommendations on customer interaction and education practices related to the City's permitting and inspection process. It includes topics related to providing applicants with general and specific information about the process to help them succeed with their request. It also covers topics that can assist staff by educating the customer before an application or permit is submitted for consideration.

(1) EXPAND ONLINE CAPABILITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SERVICES

CREATE A CENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SERVICES WEBSITE

The City's webpage (www.jonesboro.gov) contains subpages for each City department, including those involved in the permitting and inspections process. Each department involved in the process has published relevant information, including process details, supporting documentation, and instructions for applying for or obtaining a permit.

In its current state, the City has developed a relatively useful website for the reasons listed above. To further improve the user experience, however, the City should deploy a centralized page that consolidates all components of development review (including permitting and inspections) into a single location on the City's website. Having a single virtual location with links to each review discipline's specific codes/standards, forms, and application gateways would help reduce customer confusion overall.

Customer confusion was one such issue raised by responses to the customer survey distributed by the project team. 48% of respondents found it hard to find answers to their technical standards questions online, and 49% found it hard to find answers to process questions on the City's website. While improving the quality of the website's content is one way to resolve this, the other is ensuring that the information is easily accessible to users. A centralized page would help reduce the number of clicks needed to access useful information.

Elements of a centralized development review website should incorporate the items listed below. Several of these elements are discussed in further detail as separate recommendations in this section.

1. **Accessibility**

- The centralized development webpage should be linked on the City's homepage and easily findable. This may also include linking from the primary webpage banner or drop-down menus.

2. **General Information**

- An overview of the entire development review process in narrative and graphical formats.
- Link to a comprehensive digital development guide that overviews the entire development process.

- Narrative for responsibilities of the respective departments/divisions involved in the development process. This can also be a visual document, such as a "flow chart" or "road map."
- Links to individual departmental/divisional development webpages.

3. Contact Information and Meeting Scheduler

- Division contact information, including a division-specific email address and phone number. Individual email addresses and phone numbers can be included for employees who are topic experts (for example, stormwater review).
- Link to an online meeting scheduled for "General Inquiries," "Chats," and "Pre-Application" meetings.

4. Application and Permit Submittal Information

- Simplified inventory of application and permit checklists, which is easy to find.
- Explanation of when particular applications and permits are needed.
- Informational one-pagers or single webpages for more complex applications and permit processes.

5. Application and Permit Fees

- A fee schedule and a fee estimator/calculator for all development fees (including impact fees).
- Link to the customer portal, including a "How To" guide (or videos) for submitting an application or paying a permit fee.

6. Maps and Ordinances

- Link to all interactive maps that can be used for development research and planning.
- Webpage links to adopted ordinances, design standards, and other regulations that are specific to the development review, permitting, and inspection processes.

7. Informational Handouts and FAQS

- Informational handouts on specific application or permit processes should be created and saved as individual PDF documents.
- Updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that include the most frequent questions received from potential applicants and customers about the City's development review process.

8. Performance History

- Summary of review timelines for each application and permit type. Indicate both the typical time required for the initial completeness review and for the review of resubmittals.
- Dashboard to applications and permits currently being processed and reviewed.

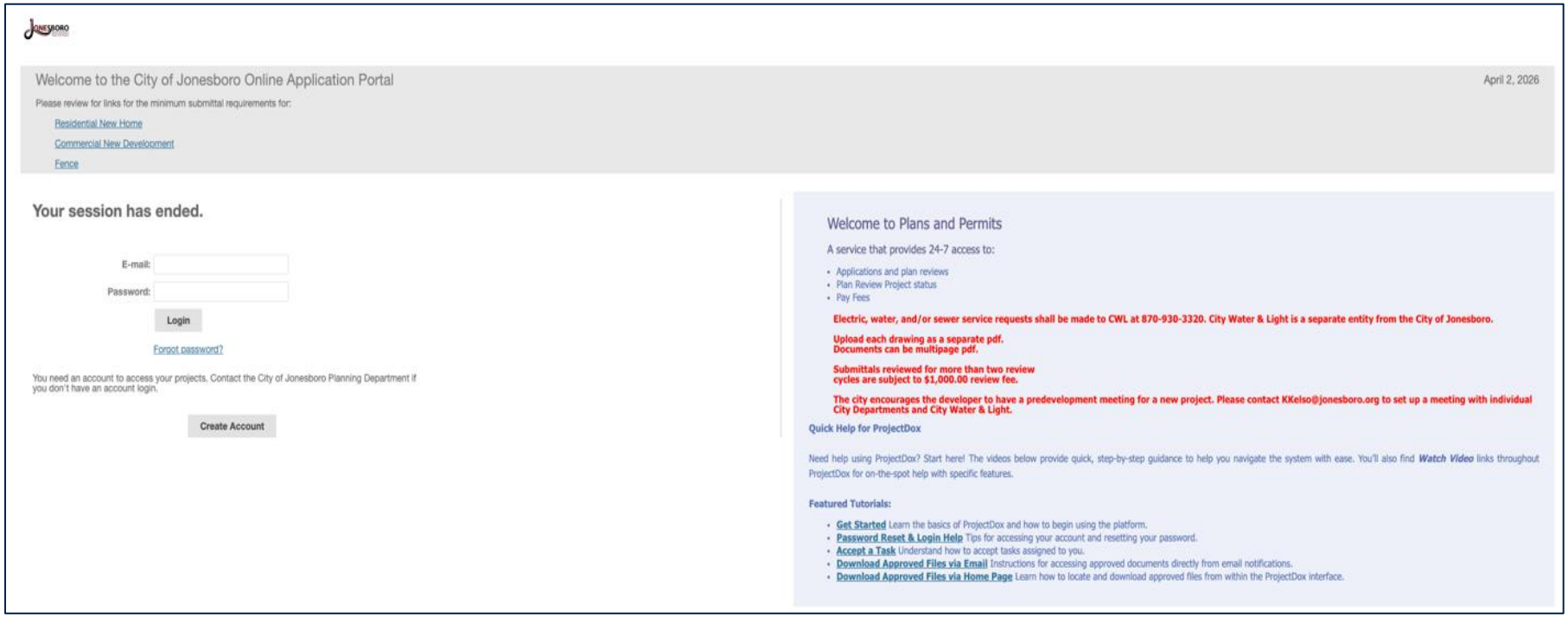
- Performance reports on the number of applications and permits received and the average review timelines.

Development of this website will require coordination between the several departments involved in reviewing applications, as well as external departments such as City IT. Leads from each department should be assigned to facilitate contributions to their department's page.

IMPROVE THE PROJECTDOX SOFTWARE CUSTOMER PORTAL

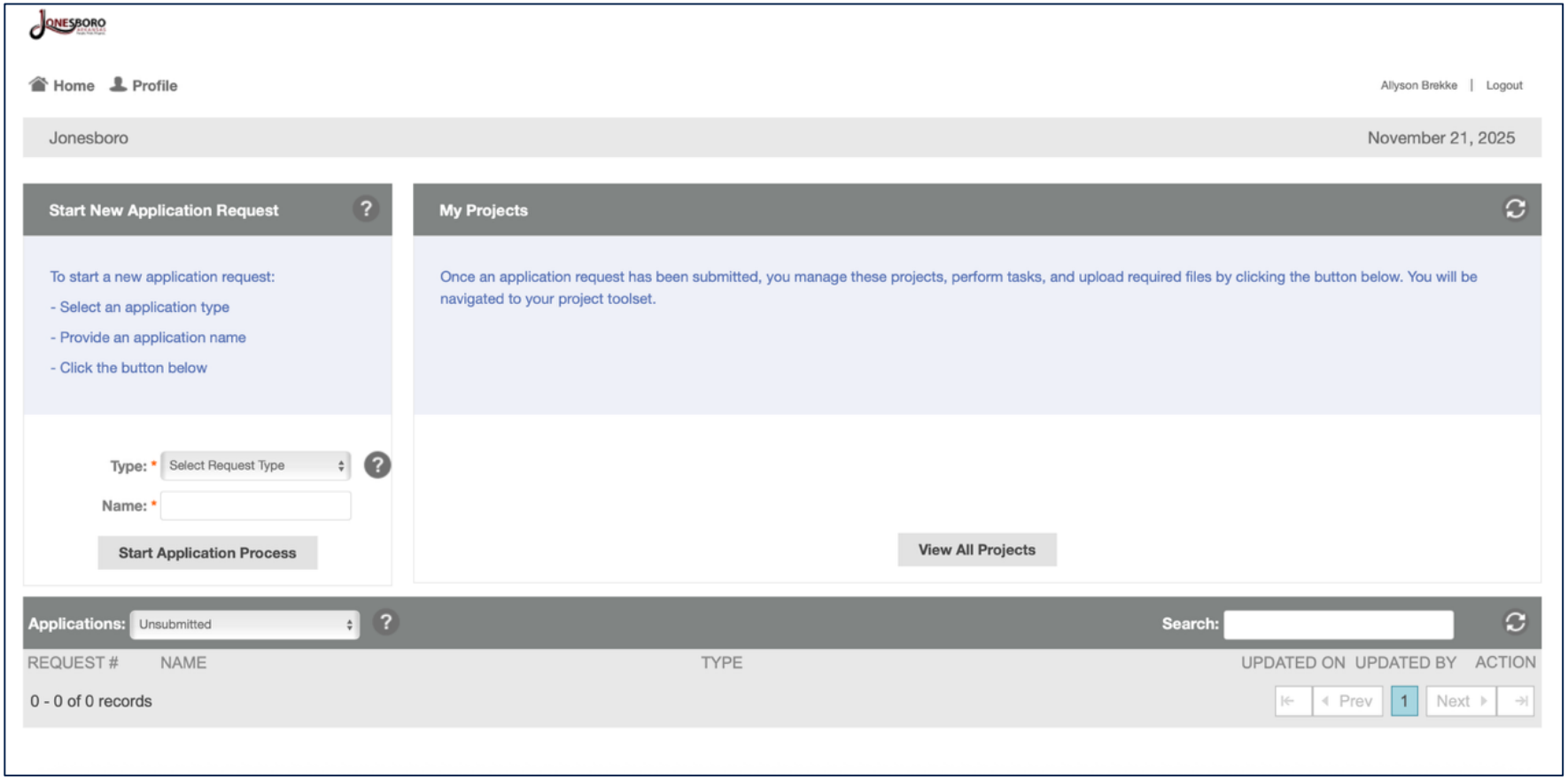
Jonesboro currently uses ProjectDox to intake the majority of its permit applications, except for those that have not yet been transferred to a digital format. Users can access the portal through the City's website by selecting "Apply for a Permit" from the Inspections or Planning department pages. Doing so directs users to a login/registration page, as shown on the following page.

PROJECTDOX LOGIN



The login page provides an overview of the system and includes tutorials on how to utilize ProjectDox best. Tutorials appear to be content created by the ProjectDox team. The City has also created minimum submittal checklists (in Word) for new residential homes, commercial developments, and fence permits.

PROJECTDOX APPLICATION HOME SCREEN



After logging in or registering, users are then taken to a page where they can start a new application request. Users first select an application type. The options include: a building permit, a building permit revision, a MAPC or BZA application, a sign permit, or a subdivision and plats application. Users are then required to name their project before selecting “Start Application Process”. The applicant is then directed to complete a form based on the type of application they are submitting. For revisions, applicants are prompted to enter the project number associated with their original submittal.

In general, the City's online portal is a solid foundation for facilitating a paperless permitting process. There are opportunities to improve this system. The table below lists features considered best practices for online permitting portals. Those highlighted in bold denote practices that do not appear to be in effect in Jonesboro:

Features Considered Best Practices for Online Permitting Portals
Clear instructions on how to create an account through the portal.
A "User Guide" containing instructions for customers on how to use the portal.
Online application portal should be accessible and linked on the centralized development webpage and associated pages.
"How-To" PDF documents and HTML pages for all permit and application types. This is either stand-alone documents that are provided through links, or requirements within the submittal steps.
Ability to submit all types of permits and applications.
Establish an inspection scheduler for all types of inspections (to replace manual processes and phone line requests).
Provide a list of the required inspections that must be scheduled for each approved building permit type.
Links or copies of applicable fee schedules for permits and applications.
A dedicated phone number or email of staff that is specific to portal questions and technology challenges.
Applicant has permissions to access staff comments and status updates on their submitted permits and applications. Ideally, this is also set up to be delivered as automated email notifications.
Add a public status tracker for permits and applications without the need to create an account (for any member of the public, not just applicants).

The City is already meeting some standards, while others are currently not in use. One practice, having application-type guides, is partially in place. The City offers guides on some application types directly within the portal, but not for all applications received through ProjectDox. The City should ensure that the highlighted practices are incorporated into the customer-facing portal. Several other practices (such as online inspections) are recommended elsewhere in this report.

RECOMMENDATION 4.1: CREATE A CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES WEBPAGE FOR PEOPLE SEEKING INFORMATION ON NAVIGATING THE CITY'S PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2: ASSIGN DEPARTMENT LEADS TO HELP FACILITATE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR EACH DEPARTMENT'S PAGE.

(2) CENTRALIZED CUSTOMER COUNTER

As initially recommended in Chapter 2, the City should have a centralized location for all development-related applications, permits, and inspections. Currently, applicants can interface with all but two of the main review entities (CWL and Fire) at a single physical location: the Municipal Center, located at 300 S Church St. However, each review entity has its own desk in a different part of the same floor.

The use of physical one-stop shops for permitting and inspections is considered an industry best practice. There are several benefits of using this approach, particularly from a customer service perspective. Using a centralized desk for permitting improves overall process accessibility for applicants. Inquiries specific to the permitting process are directed to a single location, reducing time spent determining which entity to contact with questions about their application. Customers will also be able to address all components of their application (e.g., multiple required permits/inspections) from a single location, rather than having to explain their project and understand their requirements at multiple locations.

Centralizing permitting staff at a single desk or location has several staffing and operational benefits. A central permitting location allows the City to further standardize intake procedures, as there is a single intake point for all permitting and inspection activities. This will result in a more consistent process overall, which in turn will help promote a more customer-friendly experience.

While some municipalities use a single physical desk for their one-stop shop, others achieve this by consolidating staff from multiple review disciplines into a single central location. This approach could be accomplished in Jonesboro from a staffing and infrastructure perspective. By using the space currently occupied by the existing Planning Permit Coordinator desk, the City could consolidate its intake staff into a single central location. This is an easily accessible area located near the customer elevator.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3: CREATE A CENTRAL CUSTOMER COUNTER FOR PERMITTING.

(3) EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR PERMITTING SERVICES

IMPROVE AND UPDATE APPLICATION AND PERMIT SUBMITTAL CHECKLISTS

To supplement the application and permit submission process in the ProjectDox portal, application and permit submittal checklists should be provided on the City's development services webpage. This approach allows applicants to review the submission requirements before beginning an application through the portal. Providing checklists in advance will help reduce incomplete applications and ensure applicants understand what is required before initiating an official submittal.

The City currently has several forms, permits, and applications available on the different review discipline webpages. A review of these documents indicates they are outdated and reflect a paper-based submittal process—for example, requiring applicants to manually enter their name and property address directly into a form. They require a complete update and revamp to reflect the City's digital submittal process through ProjectDox.

As discussed in the permitting review best practices in Chapter 2, the first step of any review process should include a completeness check. This requires the City to maintain clear, written standards for what constitutes a complete permit or application submittal. All applications received should be checked against these criteria before being accepted for review. Determining what to include in these standards requires a balance; if the requirements are too stringent, applicants may be asked to do more work than is necessary before reviewers have even seen the application. If they are not stringent enough, reviewers may lack sufficient information to conduct a thorough review.

Clear application and permit checklists ensure that applicants understand what is required to achieve intake completeness, and that they are doing their part in accurately documenting their proposed development and demonstrating how it meets City regulations. The development of checklists should be a collaborative effort among staff across all review disciplines. Checklists are typically provided as PDF documents available on the City's website, ideally as part of a refreshed, centralized development services section, and should be kept current as submittal requirements evolve. It is also essential that the submittal requirements listed in the checklists are fully aligned with the fields and requirements configured in the ProjectDox portal, so that applicants encounter consistent expectations whether they are reviewing requirements on the website or actively submitting through the system.

> RECOMMENDATION 4.4: UPDATE AND PROVIDE CLEAR, COMPREHENSIVE CHECKLISTS FOR EACH APPLICATION AND PERMIT TYPE, IDENTIFYING THE MINIMUM ITEMS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 4.5: ENSURE CHECKLISTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE VILLAGE WEBSITE AS DOWNLOADABLE DOCUMENTS AND CROSS-REFERENCED ON THE PROJECTDOX CUSTOMER PORTAL.

(4) CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

High-performing development review programs treat customer feedback not as a supplementary courtesy but as an operational management tool — a structured mechanism for identifying process weaknesses, validating improvements, and building sustained trust with the development community. Jurisdictions that perform consistently well in applicant satisfaction do so not because problems never arise, but because they have built institutional habits for identifying them early and responding in a documented, accountable way. A formal feedback program transforms what is otherwise anecdotal and reactive into something measurable, comparable over time, and useful for driving continuous improvement.

CUSTOMER SURVEYS

At present, the City gathers applicant feedback informally and inconsistently. Feedback is most commonly received through direct communication with staff through phone calls, counter conversations, or email exchanges, and is not systematically captured, tracked, or reported. While staff are responsive to individual concerns when they arise, the absence of a structured feedback mechanism means that recurring issues may go unidentified until they escalate, and that patterns in the applicant experience are difficult to assess in aggregate.

This gap is reflected in findings from the customer survey distributed as part of this study. Nearly half of respondents reported difficulty finding process information and technical standards on the City's website, and survey responses reflected inconsistent experiences with communication and turnaround times across permit types. These findings, while useful as a baseline, represent a single point in time. Without a recurring mechanism for collecting applicant input, the City cannot assess whether conditions are improving, measure the impact of process changes, or identify emerging concerns before they become systemic.

The most effective and scalable approach to customer feedback in a permitting context is the automated post-transaction survey. At its core, this means sending a brief, structured satisfaction survey to applicants at defined completion points, typically at permit issuance and at final inspection close-out. These touchpoints capture the applicant's experience at the moments when the process is freshest in their memory and when the outcome is known.

Surveys should be brief (five to eight questions) and focused on dimensions most relevant to permitting performance:

- Clarity of the process,
- Responsiveness of staff
- Quality and consistency of communication
- Overall satisfaction with the experience.

Where possible, surveys should include at least one open-ended question allowing applicants to describe issues or suggestions in their own words. Survey responses should be aggregated monthly and reviewed as part of the performance reporting framework recommended in Chapter 5, alongside the quantitative metrics for review turnaround and intake completeness. A target satisfaction rate of 80% or greater is consistent with peer-jurisdiction benchmarks and represents a meaningful standard for the City to pursue.

> RECOMMENDATION 4.6: IMPLEMENT A POST-PERMIT CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY TO COLLECT STRUCTURED APPLICANT FEEDBACK AND INFORM CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE CITY'S PERMITTING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SERVICES.

5. MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Effective management is critical to the success of a jurisdiction's development review and permitting functions, serving as the operational foundation for planning, building review, inspections, and related regulatory activities. In accordance with standards established by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and guidance from the American Planning Association (APA), department managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that programs and services align with adopted policies and strategic goals. This includes facilitating cross-functional coordination, maintaining clear accountability structures, and employing data-driven methods to evaluate and improve organizational performance.

The findings presented in the preceding chapters, related to permitting review processes, technology utilization, and customer experience, are not solely the result of individual workflow or system limitations. Rather, they are closely tied to the underlying management and administrative conditions that shape how the permitting review process is coordinated, executed, and maintained across departments. As a result, many of the challenges identified in earlier chapters are reinforced by gaps in management structure and administrative alignment. Staff often rely on ad hoc coordination, recurring meetings to resolve stalled projects, and the institutional knowledge of specific individuals to maintain process continuity. While these efforts reflect a high level of staff commitment, they do not provide a predictable or scalable framework for managing development activity. The current model increases the risk of inconsistency, creates inefficiencies in how work is coordinated, and places a disproportionate burden on certain roles to maintain system functionality.

The following themes identify key management and administrative conditions contributing to these challenges. Each theme reflects patterns observed across divisions and departments and is supported by internal and external stakeholder input and operational observations. Addressing these areas will be critical to improving coordination, consistency, and the long-term performance of the City's permitting review process.

(1) JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND CLASSIFICATION ALIGNMENT

Several positions within the City's permitting process have evolved to assume responsibilities beyond their original scope, without corresponding adjustments to role definitions, supervision, or organizational structure. Chapter 2 discussed this reality in the administrative positions and its impact on the permit intake process.

This misalignment between formal role definitions and actual work responsibilities is a common challenge in development review programs that have evolved organically over time without a corresponding update to organizational structure. It is best to periodically conduct role alignment reviews to ensure that job descriptions, classifications, compensation, and supervision structures accurately reflect current responsibilities and support consistent service delivery.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND ROLE DEFINITION

A foundational requirement for any role alignment effort is the existence of current, accurate job descriptions for every position involved in the permitting review process. In many jurisdictions, including Jonesboro, job descriptions were written when a position was created and have not been meaningfully updated to reflect shifts in responsibilities over time. As a result, the formal record of what a position is expected to do may bear little resemblance to what that position actually does on a day-to-day basis.

This is not simply a matter of when a description was last revised. Even where job descriptions have been recently updated, they may not fully capture the scope of responsibilities that have accumulated incrementally, particularly in roles where technology management, coordination functions, and technical review duties have been added over time without a corresponding structural adjustment. Without accurate job descriptions, classification decisions lack a defensible basis, supervisors cannot consistently set or measure performance expectations, and the City has no reliable foundation for compensation equity reviews or recruitment efforts. Updated job descriptions also serve as an organizational accountability tool: when roles, reporting relationships, and required qualifications are clearly documented, it becomes easier to identify where workload has drifted, where classification levels no longer reflect actual scope, and where structural adjustments are warranted.

Several positions involved in the permitting review process illustrate this dynamic clearly. The Chief Building Official, a department head role whose primary purpose is departmental oversight, policy direction, and regulatory authority, currently performs plan review for all commercial building permits and the majority of residential building permits, excluding trade-specific reviews. This means a significant share of the Inspections Department's core plan review production is concentrated at the director level, leaving limited capacity for the supervisory, administrative, and strategic functions the position exists to perform. In a well-structured department, plan review production of this volume would be distributed among dedicated plan reviewers, with the Building Official focusing on oversight, quality control, and final authority decisions.

The Civil Engineer in the Engineering Department faces a similar challenge from a different direction. In addition to serving as the sole engineering plan reviewer for all private and public development and supervising two construction inspectors, the Civil Engineer has also taken on the role of internal lead for the implementation and maintenance of iWorQ and ProjectDox software. Technology platform management is a substantive and ongoing responsibility that is distinct from engineering plan review, and combining these functions in a single position creates significant risk: when workload peaks, the other is likely to be deferred.

Overlapping responsibility is also evident at the intake level. Both the Planning Administrative Assistant and the Planning Technician perform sequential completeness checks on the same applications. Yet neither role operates against a clearly defined standard, has formal authority to reject incomplete submittals, or is within a supervisory structure that connects their work to a unified intake accountability framework. In addition, the Administrative Assistants in Inspections and Engineering are performing work that is more typical of a Technician, in addition to providing general administrative support to their directors.

The table below summarizes the key positions where formal job scope and actual operational responsibilities are misaligned.

Position	Department	Formal/Original Function	Actual Responsibilities Performed	Structural Issue
Chief Building Official	Inspections	Departmental oversight; regulatory authority; final CofO approval	Performs plan review for all commercial and majority of residential building permits in addition to all supervisory and administrative duties	Director-level position absorbing production-level plan review workload; limits capacity for oversight and management functions
Civil Engineer	Engineering	Engineering plan review for private and public development; construction inspector supervision	Engineering plan review (all development); CIP project management; supervision of Construction Inspectors; internal lead for iWorQ and ProjectDox software implementation and maintenance	Unrelated technology management responsibility layered onto an already broad technical and supervisory role
Administrative Assistant	Planning	Administrative and clerical support; counter customer service	Primary intake completeness review for all ProjectDox submissions; first-level screening of all application types	Permit technician-level function performed by an administrative classification
Planning Technician	Planning	Completeness checks; application routing	Detailed completeness review; multi-department routing decisions; manual ProjectDox-to-iWorQ data transfer; customer inquiry response; permitting reports	Scope spans two distinct functional roles without dedicated support

Position	Department	Formal/Original Function	Actual Responsibilities Performed	Structural Issue
Administrative Assistant	Inspections	Administrative and clerical support; customer inquiries	OTC building permit intake; fee assessment; permit issuance following plan review; inspection scheduling; FOI requests	Combines counter service, technical issuance, and scheduling functions across a single administrative classification
Administrative Assistant	Engineering	Administrative and clerical support	Engineering permit intake; routing to review disciplines; Engineering inspection scheduling	Intake and scheduling function performed outside of any centralized or coordinated intake structure

Reviewing and updating job roles, classifications, and expectations to reflect actual responsibilities will improve clarity, support accountability, and ensure that staff are appropriately positioned and compensated to perform their functions effectively. Of particular priority are the Building Official's plan review workload and the Civil Engineer's technology management responsibilities, both of which should be examined as part of any near-term staffing or organizational review.

COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION ALIGNMENT

Some staff performing critical permitting functions have responsibilities that may not align with their current classification or compensation structure. When formal job descriptions do not accurately reflect the work being performed, it can contribute to internal inequities, reduced staff morale, and challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. This misalignment is particularly significant for front-end permitting roles, where the scope of responsibility has expanded without a corresponding update to classification.

Assessing and aligning compensation and classifications with actual responsibilities will support retention, improve morale, and reinforce the importance of these roles within the permitting review process. This review should be conducted as part of a broader role realignment effort. It should incorporate input from staff, supervisors, and human resources to ensure that recommendations are practical and equitable.

SUPERVISION STRUCTURE AND OVERSIGHT

Supervision of administrative roles involved in the permitting review process is not consistently aligned with how the work is performed. Administrative staff may report through different departments or management structures, limiting opportunities for consistent oversight, training, and performance management. This fragmentation reduces the City's ability to standardize practices and ensure that key functions are executed consistently across the permitting review process.

Aligning supervision or establishing more coordinated oversight of these roles will improve consistency, support staff development, and ensure that key functions are managed more uniformly. This may involve formalizing reporting relationships, establishing shared performance expectations for staff performing similar functions across departments, or designating a supervisory lead responsible for coordinating and ensuring the quality of front-end permitting functions.

> RECOMMENDATION 5.1: CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND UPDATE OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR ALL POSITIONS INVOLVED IN THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS TO REFLECT ACTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES, REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, AND SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.2: EVALUATE COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION ALIGNMENT FOR KEY PERMITTING SUPPORT ROLES AS PART OF A BROADER ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE REVIEW.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.3: STANDARDIZE SUPERVISION AND OVERSIGHT OF ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS SUPPORTING THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS.

(2) TRAINING, ONBOARDING, AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Training and onboarding for staff involved in the permitting review process are not consistently formalized across departments. While staff develop knowledge and proficiency over time, much of this learning occurs informally through on-the-job experience, peer guidance, and individual initiative rather than through structured and standardized programs. This reliance on informal knowledge transfer creates significant organizational risk and contributes directly to variability in the execution of the permitting review process. At the same time, the City's current staffing approach relies heavily on a small number of individuals performing critical functions, with limited redundancy or cross-coverage built into the structure. These two conditions are closely connected: when training is informal and narrow in scope, staff develop expertise in their own function but limited awareness of the broader process, making it difficult to build the organizational depth and resilience needed to absorb disruption.

Effective development review programs establish formal onboarding processes, standardize training across departments, and invest in ongoing professional development. The APA's Planning Advisory Service reports, and ICMA management standards both identify structured training and knowledge management as essential components of organizational resilience, particularly in regulatory environments where consistency and defensibility of decisions are critical. The absence of both

structured training and formal cross-coverage limits the City's ability to ensure consistent service delivery and maintain process continuity during staff transitions or periods of high workload.

INFORMAL TRAINING AND INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE DEPENDENCY

Stakeholder input and operational observations indicate that new staff are often introduced to the permitting process through informal shadowing or brief demonstrations, with limited documentation of workflows, expectations, or system use. In multiple instances, staff described onboarding that consisted of spending a short time observing a colleague's work or being shown the basics of operating the permitting software, without any structured orientation to the broader process, their role within it, or the responsibilities of adjacent departments. Similarly, ongoing training related to changes in codes, procedures, or technology systems is not consistently coordinated across departments, with staff expected to adapt based on informal communication or individual initiative.

This reliance on informal training contributes to variability in the execution of the permitting review process. Staff may apply procedures differently, interpret requirements inconsistently, or rely on personal experience rather than standardized guidance when making decisions. In some cases, staff must rely on more experienced colleagues or management to clarify expectations, reinforcing dependence on institutional knowledge rather than on documented practices. These conditions contribute to several challenges:

- Inconsistent application of procedures across departments and individual staff.
- Variability in how applications are reviewed, processed, and communicated to applicants.
- Increased likelihood of errors, incomplete reviews, or rework due to differing interpretations or expectations.
- Longer onboarding periods for new staff and disproportionate reliance on experienced colleagues for guidance.

STRUCTURED ONBOARDING AND STANDARDIZED TRAINING

Staff interviews across multiple departments identified the absence of a formal onboarding program as a primary challenge. New employees are typically introduced to their role without structured orientation to workflows, system use, or the responsibilities of other departments involved in the permitting process. Department leadership specifically identified the need to improve onboarding for frontline staff so that employees can understand not only their own responsibilities but also how those responsibilities connect to the work performed by other review disciplines. Without this holistic orientation, staff develop expertise in their individual function while remaining largely unaware of how their actions affect upstream and downstream stages of the process.

This gap in process-wide understanding has direct consequences for coordination and accountability. Staff interviews reflected widespread uncertainty about who is responsible for key functions — including who serves as the primary point of contact for applicants during the review process, and how responsibilities are divided between administrative and technical roles at the front end of the permitting

workflow. When staff lack a shared understanding of how the full process is intended to work, coordination depends on individual initiative and management intervention rather than on clearly defined expectations. This dynamic reinforces the patterns identified elsewhere in this chapter: informal escalation, inconsistent applicant communication, and reactive rather than proactive process management.

Staff interviews also confirmed that no formal training or ongoing instruction is provided for the City's permitting software systems — iWorQ and ProjectDox — requiring employees to develop proficiency in these systems independently. This compounds the onboarding gap: staff who are not oriented to the process are also not equipped to use the tools that support it.

Establishing a structured onboarding program — including documented procedures, role-specific training modules, clear performance expectations, and an orientation to the full permitting process from intake through issuance — will improve consistency and reduce the time required for new staff to become fully effective contributors. Standardized training materials should be developed and consistently delivered across departments, and training programs should be reviewed and updated whenever significant changes to codes, procedures, or technology systems occur.

CONCENTRATION OF CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

Stakeholder input and operational observations indicate that several critical components of the permitting review process — including permit intake, routing, coordination, and portions of plan review — are concentrated within specific roles or individuals. In many cases, these responsibilities are not distributed across multiple staff or supported by formal backup coverage. As a result, when key staff are unavailable, workload increases, or priorities shift, the permitting review process can slow or stall.

This reliance on individual staff creates variability in how the process operates day-to-day. Applications may advance efficiently when key staff are available and actively managing their responsibilities, but progress can become inconsistent when those individuals are unavailable or when the workload exceeds capacity. This dynamic is compounded by the informal training conditions described above: because knowledge transfer occurs person-to-person rather than through documented procedures, the departure or absence of a key staff member removes not just a worker but the institutional knowledge that holds a piece of the process together. Ensuring that multiple staff members are trained and capable of performing key functions will improve continuity and reduce delays caused by staff absences or workload fluctuations.

CROSS-TRAINING

Cross-training in a development review context should be understood as training staff to perform similar and adjacent duties — not as preparing every employee to step into a technically distinct discipline. A planner cannot be cross-trained to conduct engineering plan review, nor should that be the goal. The value of cross-training lies in building coverage for the functions most vulnerable to single-point-of-failure risk: intake processing, application pre-screening, inspection scheduling, and basic permit

coordination. When staff in adjacent roles are equipped to perform these functions as needed, the organization gains meaningful resilience without blurring the boundaries of technical expertise.

Staff interviews illustrated the gap between nominal and meaningful cross-training. In at least one case, a staff member designated as a backup for application pre-screening was trained simply to accept and forward submissions without actually reviewing them against completeness criteria — a practice that defeats the purpose of the backup function entirely. Effective cross-training requires that backup staff are trained to the same standard as the primary role, with a clear understanding of what constitutes an acceptable outcome, not merely how to execute a mechanical step in the system.

Formalizing cross-training for adjacent functions, paired with documented backup coverage assignments for all critical permitting roles, will reduce the City's vulnerability to disruption and support more consistent process performance. Backup coverage expectations should be documented in standard operating procedures and reviewed periodically to ensure they remain current as roles and workflows evolve.

RECOMMENDATION 5.4: ESTABLISH REDUNDANCY AND BACKUP COVERAGE FOR ALL CRITICAL PERMITTING FUNCTIONS.

RECOMMENDATION 5.5: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A FORMAL ONBOARDING PROGRAM FOR ALL PERMITTING-RELATED POSITIONS.

RECOMMENDATION 5.6: STANDARDIZE TRAINING ON PERMITTING WORKFLOWS, PROCEDURES, AND SYSTEMS ACROSS DEPARTMENTS.

RECOMMENDATION 5.7: IMPLEMENT ONGOING TRAINING AND REFRESHER PROGRAMS TIED TO PROCESS AND SYSTEM CHANGES.

RECOMMENDATION 5.8: EXPAND CROSS-TRAINING FOR ADJACENT PERMITTING FUNCTIONS TO ENSURE BACKUP COVERAGE AND REDUCE SINGLE POINTS OF FAILURE.

(3) OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS

Responsibility for managing permit applications across the full lifecycle of the permitting review process is not clearly assigned within the City's current organizational structure. While individual departments are responsible for completing discrete components of the review, there is no single role or function accountable for ensuring that applications move efficiently and consistently from intake through final issuance. In practice, this results in a permitting review process that relies heavily on informal coordination and management-level intervention rather than on a structured, consistently applied approach.

Best management practices, as defined by ICMA and widely adopted across peer jurisdictions, call for clearly designated ownership at each stage of the development review process. Jurisdictions that perform well in permitting efficiency typically assign a defined coordination role, often a permit coordinator, project manager, or lead reviewer, who is accountable for shepherding applications through each stage of review, facilitating communication between departments, and ensuring applicants receive

timely and consistent information. This structure reduces reliance on management intervention and creates a more predictable experience for applicants and staff alike.

APPLICATION COORDINATION AND PROCESS OWNERSHIP

Intake, completeness review, routing, and permit tracking responsibilities are currently distributed across multiple staff and departments, with no unified structure or consistent coordination among these roles. This distribution results in gaps in accountability at the front end of the permitting review process. It contributes to incomplete applications being accepted, inconsistent routing, and delays in advancing permits through the system.

The project team's findings indicate that when issues arise during the review process, such as conflicting comments, unclear requirements, or delays in review timelines, resolution typically depends on escalation to department leadership or discussion during weekly management meetings. While these mechanisms are effective in addressing individual issues, they function as reactive solutions rather than components of a clearly defined process. Staff are generally responsible for completing their individual reviews but are not consistently positioned or empowered to coordinate across departments, reconcile discrepancies, or provide applicants with a unified, consistent set of expectations.

Consolidating or more closely aligning intake, completeness review, routing, and permit tracking responsibilities under a defined role or coordinated function will improve consistency at the front end of the process, reduce rework during plan review, and ensure that applications are actively managed throughout the review lifecycle. For complex or multi-departmental permits, this coordination function should also serve as the primary point of contact for both applicants and internal staff.

DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY AND ESCALATION

When conflicts arise, such as differing interpretations of code requirements, unclear approval conditions, or questions about next steps, resolution often requires escalation to management. While effective in resolving individual issues, this approach introduces delays and contributes to inconsistent outcomes depending on who is involved in the decision. The absence of clearly defined decision-making authority at the staff level limits the City's ability to resolve routine issues efficiently and increases reliance on management intervention.

Establishing clear authority for code interpretation, conflict resolution, and final determinations, along with a structured escalation process for more complex issues, will improve consistency and reduce delays. It is best to document escalation pathways that specify who has authority to make different types of determinations, when issues should be elevated, and how decisions should be recorded and communicated. This structure reduces ambiguity, empowers staff to act within defined authority, and supports more timely and consistent decision-making across departments.

These conditions contribute to several recurring challenges:

- Applications experience delays when issues require cross-departmental coordination that is not clearly assigned or actively managed.

- Applicants receive conflicting or uncoordinated feedback, particularly on projects involving multiple review disciplines.
- Responsibility for advancing applications can become unclear, leading to periods where projects stall without clear ownership.
- Applicants are often required to navigate between departments to advance their projects.

RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX (RACI)

Roles and responsibilities within the permitting review process are not consistently defined across departments, particularly at key transition points, including intake, routing, resubmittals, and permit issuance. This lack of clarity contributes to duplication of effort, gaps in accountability, and uncertainty regarding who is responsible for advancing applications at different stages.

A formal Responsibility Assignment Matrix, commonly known as an RACI matrix, will clarify who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed at each step of the process. This tool is widely used in high-performing development review programs to reduce ambiguity, improve coordination, and support more consistent execution of permitting activities across departments. The table below illustrates an example RACI structure applicable to the Jonesboro permitting review process.

EXAMPLE RACI MATRIX FOR THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS

Process Step	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted/Informed
Application Intake	Permit Technician	Permit/Dev. Coord.	Building, Planning
Completeness Review	Permit Technician	Permit/Dev. Coord.	All Review Depts.
Application Routing	Permit Coordinator	Dept. Manager	Review Staff
Plan Review (Technical)	Assigned Reviewer	Dept. Supervisor	Other Reviewers
Comment Consolidation	Permit Coordinator	Dept. Manager	All Review Depts.
Resubmittal Review	Assigned Reviewer	Dept. Supervisor	Permit Technician
Conditions of Approval	Lead Reviewer	Dept. Director	Legal, Applicant
Permit Issuance	Permit Technician	Permit Coordinator	All Review Depts.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION EXPECTATIONS

Coordination across departments is not consistently structured at the staff level and often occurs only after issues have emerged or been elevated to management. Staff may lack clear expectations or mechanisms to align with other departments during the review process, leading to conflicting comments, duplicated efforts, and delays in resolving cross-disciplinary issues.

Defining clear expectations for how and when staff coordinate during the permitting review process, including aligning review comments and communicating project status, will reduce reliance on management intervention and improve the consistency and efficiency of interdepartmental coordination. These expectations should be documented in standard operating procedures and reinforced through regular staff-level coordination, not solely at the management level.

Importantly, the challenges identified above are not indicative of a lack of effort by staff. Rather, they reflect a system that depends on individual initiative and management oversight to function effectively, rather than on clearly defined ownership, accountability, and structured coordination. Without realignment of these fundamental elements, improvements to technology or process design will have limited and unsustainable impact.

> RECOMMENDATION 5.9: ESTABLISH A CLEARLY DEFINED APPLICATION COORDINATION FUNCTION FOR THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.10: DEFINE AND DOCUMENT DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY AND ESCALATION PROTOCOLS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.11: DEVELOP A RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX (RACI) FOR THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.12: ESTABLISH CONSISTENT EXPECTATIONS FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION AT THE STAFF LEVEL.

(4) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The City does not currently utilize a formalized performance management framework to monitor, evaluate, and manage the permitting review process. While some data is available through existing systems, and staff have a general awareness of workload and project status, there are no consistently defined performance metrics, service-level expectations, or regular reporting mechanisms to assess how the process is functioning overall.

Data-driven management is a cornerstone of high-performing development review programs. ICMA guidance and best practices from peer jurisdictions emphasize the importance of establishing measurable targets, generating regular performance reports, and using performance data to inform staffing decisions, identify inefficiencies, and support continuous improvement. Without these elements, management decisions are necessarily reactive, and the City lacks the visibility needed to systematically evaluate and improve the permitting review process.

ABSENCE OF PERFORMANCE METRICS AND SERVICE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

Oversight of the permitting review process is largely reactive. Stakeholder input and operational observations indicate that staff and management typically identify issues, such as delayed reviews or stalled applications, on a case-by-case basis, often through direct communication with applicants or internal follow-up during coordination meetings. While this approach allows the City to respond to immediate concerns, it does not provide a systematic way to evaluate overall performance or identify patterns.

This lack of structured performance monitoring creates a disconnect between day-to-day activity and broader process management. Without clearly defined metrics or expectations, it is difficult to determine whether review timelines are meeting reasonable standards, whether delays are isolated or systemic, or how workload is distributed across departments. As a result, decision-making related to staffing, process

improvements, and resource allocation is not consistently informed by comprehensive or comparable data.

In addition, the absence of clearly defined service level expectations limits accountability across the organization. Staff are generally committed to completing reviews promptly, but without adopted targets or benchmarks, performance expectations are not consistently defined or measured. These conditions contribute to several challenges within the permitting review process:

- Delays and inefficiencies may persist without being clearly identified or quantified.
- Staff and management have a limited ability to distinguish between routine workload variation and systemic process issues.
- Opportunities to improve coordination, reduce review times, or streamline workflows are more difficult to prioritize.
- Communication with applicants about expected timelines is less predictable and may vary by project or department.

PERFORMANCE TRACKING AND REPORTING

Although data on permit activity exist within current systems, they are not consistently compiled or used to monitor performance across the permitting review process. As a result, staff and management rely on informal methods to identify issues rather than structured reporting. Establishing a centralized dashboard or reporting system will allow the City to track key metrics in real time, identify trends, and proactively manage workload and process performance.

Current practices do not consistently distinguish between the time the City spends reviewing applications and the time applicants spend waiting to provide additional information or respond to comments. This can obscure the true sources of delay in the permitting review process and make it more difficult to accurately assess the City's internal performance. Separating these timeframes, often referred to as 'City time' versus 'applicant time', will provide a more accurate understanding of process performance and allow the City to target improvements better. The table below illustrates key performance metrics and service level targets recommended for adoption.

RECOMMENDED PERMITTING PERFORMANCE METRICS AND SERVICE LEVEL TARGETS

Metric	Description	Recommended Target	Reporting Frequency
Initial Review Completeness	% of applications deemed complete at intake	90% or greater	Monthly
First Review Turnaround	City time from acceptance to first comment issuance	By permit type (10-20 business days)	Monthly
Resubmittal Review Time	City time from resubmittal receipt to comments	50% of initial review time	Monthly
Total Permit Cycle Time	Calendar days from acceptance to issuance	By permit type	Quarterly

Metric	Description	Recommended Target	Reporting Frequency
Number of Review Cycles	Average resubmittals required per application/permit type and per review discipline	Decrease over time	Quarterly
Applicant Response Time	Days between comment issuance and resubmittal (applicant)	Tracked separately	Monthly
Customer Satisfaction	Applicant satisfaction rating via post-permit survey	80% or greater	Quarterly

DATA-DRIVEN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Performance data is not currently used consistently or in a structured way to inform management decisions or evaluate process effectiveness. This limits the City's ability to address issues and continuously improve the permitting review process proactively. Regularly reviewing performance metrics during management meetings and decision-making processes will support more informed resource allocation, improve accountability, and ensure that process improvements are sustained over time.

Supervisors and managers should employ data-driven management to monitor project status, workload distribution, review timeliness, address cross-departmental coordination issues, and identify process improvement needs. This approach requires generating regular reports from the permitting system, reviewing them during staff and management meetings, and using the findings to drive decisions about staffing, process changes, and resource allocation. Without integrating performance data into routine management practices, the City will continue to rely on reactive problem-solving rather than systematic process improvement.

> RECOMMENDATION 5.13: ESTABLISH FORMAL PERFORMANCE METRICS AND SERVICE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PERMITTING REVIEW PROCESS.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.14: IMPLEMENT A CENTRALIZED PERFORMANCE TRACKING AND REPORTING SYSTEM.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.15: DIFFERENTIATE INTERNAL REVIEW TIME FROM APPLICANT RESPONSE TIME IN PERFORMANCE TRACKING.
>
> RECOMMENDATION 5.16: INCORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING INTO ROUTINE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

(5) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY, REORGANIZATION, AND PERMITTING MISSION

The preceding sections of this chapter have addressed the foundational management and administrative conditions necessary for an effective permitting review operation, including role alignment, training and

organizational resilience, process ownership and accountability, and performance management. These elements address the operational layer of the organization:

- *How work is assigned,*
- *How staff are prepared, and*
- *How performance is monitored.*

However, organizational effectiveness also depends on a clearly defined management accountability structure that provides sustained direction across departments, resolves systemic coordination challenges, and anchors the work of development services within a coherent institutional purpose. Without this structural foundation, the operational improvements recommended throughout this report will remain dependent on individual initiative rather than durable organizational design.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The communication and coordination protocols established in Chapter 2, including formalized interdepartmental coordination at key process milestones, consolidated and documented review comments, structured approaches for complex projects, and defined external agency coordination timelines (Recommendations 2.4–2.8), represent significant improvements to the day-to-day functioning of the permitting review process. These protocols will only be effective and sustained if there is clear management-level accountability for their implementation, compliance monitoring, and ongoing reinforcement.

In the City's current structure, management responsibility for the permitting function is distributed across multiple department heads, with no single role designated as accountable for the function's overall coordination and performance. This arrangement has contributed to the escalation of dependencies, inconsistent coordination, and reactive management practices documented throughout this report. Best management practices, as recognized by ICMA, identify a designated management authority, whether titled a Development Services Director, Permit Center Manager, or comparable role, as a foundational element of high-performing permitting organizations. This role provides a unified point of accountability for the permitting function as a whole, while working collaboratively with department heads who retain technical authority within their respective disciplines.

Formalizing this management accountability structure will provide the organizational capacity to sustain the protocols and performance frameworks recommended in this report. The designated management lead should be responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation of adopted communication protocols and interdepartmental coordination expectations;
- Monitoring performance metrics, service level compliance, and reporting regularly on permitting function performance;
- Facilitating resolution of cross-departmental coordination issues not resolved at the staff level;

- Advancing process improvement initiatives and ensuring that changes to workflows, technology, and procedures are implemented consistently across departments; and
- Serving as the primary management point of contact for applicants with complex projects or unresolved concerns.

The specific organizational placement and reporting relationships associated with this management accountability function are addressed in the proposed reorganization presented in Chapter 6. Two alternative organizational structures are presented there, each of which establishes a designated management lead with the authority and responsibilities needed to provide sustained oversight of the permitting function. The selection of an organizational structure should be understood as a structural decision with direct implications for management accountability and not simply an administrative realignment.

PERMITTING MISSION STATEMENT

An effective and efficient development review and permitting function requires a clearly articulated sense of purpose that guides staff across all participating departments. A formal mission statement for the City's permitting function establishes a shared institutional identity, communicates the City's service philosophy to applicants and the broader community, and provides a consistent reference point for evaluating organizational decisions, staffing priorities, and process changes over time.

The City's permitting functions currently operate across multiple departments without a unifying mission or defined service purpose. This fragmentation contributes to variability in how staff approach their work, how applicants experience the process, and how the organization responds to evolving service demands. Establishing and formally adopting a mission statement will create a cohesive identity for Jonesboro's development services function that is independent of departmental or divisional boundaries and reflects the cross-disciplinary nature of the work and the shared responsibility of all staff who contribute to it.

Developing a mission statement for a multi-departmental development review and permitting function poses inherent challenges because of the range of disciplines involved. These include building structural integrity, land use and zoning requirements, engineering site design standards, and fire and life-safety review. The process is further complex because it serves multiple customer groups simultaneously: residents, property owners, contractors, developers, and more. Each customer group interacts with the City's permitting function differently and has different expectations. Despite these complexities, it is essential that the City establish a clear and unified statement of purpose that reflects the collective commitment of all staff involved in the development review process.

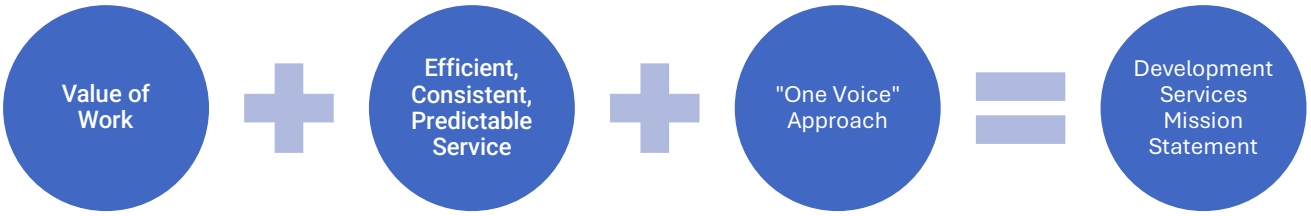
All staff and leadership involved in the permitting review process should be engaged in developing the mission statement to ensure it reflects the organization's values and operational realities. The outcome should be a unified statement that incorporates the following elements:

- A clear statement of purpose reflecting the City's commitment to regulatory service as a foundation for public health, safety, and community development;

- A commitment to delivering a predictable, consistent, and transparent permitting experience for all applicants;
- Recognition of the multiple customer groups served by the permitting function and the City's responsibility to serve each with equity and professionalism; and
- Acknowledgment of the collaborative, multi-departmental nature of the permitting review process and the shared responsibility of all participating staff.

The graphic below shows the primary elements of a successful mission statement:

MISSION STATEMENT ELEMENTS



Value of their Work	Good Service	One Voice
Environmental protection	Facilitate and problem solve	Allow applicants to interact smoothly with the process without having to understand your organizational chart
Buildings are safe not only for today but for future occupants	Anticipate issues and address them	Speak with one voice when responding to questions
High-quality infrastructure	Educate and engage applicants	Ensure reviewers and inspectors don't contradict each other
Ensure first responders will be able to do their job	Create understandable, equitable and predictable processes	Understand how other divisions operate and where you fit in
Livable and attractive communities	Apply approaches consistently	
Minimizing negative impacts of new development		
Economic vibrancy		

On the subsequent page, there are some sample, best-practice mission statements from other communities:

SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MISSION STATEMENTS

"The mission of the Development Services Department (DSD) is to: Facilitate appropriate and timely development; Deliver a process that is predictable, efficient and understandable to the people who use it; Act as a single organization in the delivery of development services; and to protect the quality of public and private infrastructure, the safety and integrity of the built and natural environment, and the livability of the City." Source: Bellevue, Washington

"Foster the development of communities and neighborhoods that have a distinct character and identity and that offer the best possible conditions in which to live, work, shop, and play [and]…provide the best possible service to our constituents by being accessible and accountable, by maintaining and demonstrating a high level of expertise, and by being a valued source of information and guidance that is clear and concrete, timely and relevant, and reliable." Source: Monmouth County, New Jersey

"The mission of the Development Services Department is to develop a healthy, vibrant city through thoughtful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, Unified Development Code, and other adopted development policies. The Department is committed to providing superior customer service with an emphasis on creating a City with a strong economic base and a wide range of diversified housing opportunities while still promoting an attractive small-town atmosphere." Source: Hutto, Texas

Established mission statements are meaningful when staff can clearly see that they will receive the support, resources, and tools they need to achieve that mission, including the latitude to take risks and make mistakes to help create a system aligned with the City's goals. Given this, it is vital that elected officials and Department and Division managers sign off on and support the mission statement, providing a reference point and common ground as budgetary, policy, and decision-making considerations arise. City leadership needs to define City-wide development and permitting goals and how each department/division is expected to contribute toward those goals. The core services of review disciplines are primarily regulatory; it is best practice to have staff focus on delivering those services, while other proactive approaches and initiatives occur separately from regulatory efforts.

SERVICE GOALS

A mission statement provides organizational direction but requires supporting goals to translate that direction into measurable action. The City should adopt a defined set of service goals for the permitting function that reflect the priorities identified in this study, establish clear performance expectations for staff and leadership, and provide a framework for evaluating continuous improvement over time. These goals should be aligned with any applicable City-wide strategic priorities and revisited periodically to ensure they remain current with evolving organizational needs and community expectations.

The following service goals are recommended for the City of Jonesboro's permitting and development review function:

- **Timeliness**: Review and process all permit applications within the adopted service-level expectations for each application/permit type and communicate proactively with applicants when timelines cannot be met.
- **Consistency**: Apply codes, standards, and procedures uniformly across all review disciplines and project types, reducing variability and supporting a more predictable applicant experience.
- **Coordination**: Operate as a unified development review team across all participating departments, ensuring structured, predictable, and solution-oriented communication and coordination.
- **Transparency**: Provide applicants with clear, consolidated, and timely information at every stage of the review process, from intake and completeness review through permit issuance and project closeout.
- **Continuous Improvement**: Regularly review performance data, collect and analyze applicant feedback, and identify opportunities to improve workflows, reduce delays, and enhance the overall quality of development review services.

RECOMMENDATION 5.17: DESIGNATE A MANAGEMENT LEAD RESPONSIBLE FOR CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE CITY'S PERMITTING FUNCTIONS, INCLUDING OVERSIGHT OF COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS, PERFORMANCE MONITORING, PROCESS COMPLIANCE, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 5.18: DEVELOP AND FORMALLY ADOPT A MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE CITY'S PERMITTING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW FUNCTION, DEVELOPED COLLABORATIVELY WITH STAFF ACROSS ALL PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS AND REVIEWED BY CITY LEADERSHIP BEFORE ADOPTION.

RECOMMENDATION 5.19: ESTABLISH AND FORMALLY ADOPT DEFINED SERVICE GOALS FOR THE CITY'S PERMITTING FUNCTION, ALIGNED WITH THE ADOPTED MISSION STATEMENT AND APPLICABLE CITY-WIDE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, AND INTEGRATE THEM INTO PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING PRACTICES.

6. STAFFING CAPACITY ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an evaluation of the staffing and workload of the City of Jonesboro's permitting, plan review, and inspections operations. For this analysis, the following general assumptions were made about staffing capacity:

GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption	Value	Description
Productive Annual Work Hours (per FTE)	1,760	This is the assumed number of hours 1 FTE is "productive" in a year. Productive hours exclude time spent on leave and training.
Productive Annual Workdays (per FTE)	220	Based on Productive Annual Work Hours, divides this number by 8 (standard workday) to calculate productive annual workdays.
% Time Dedicated to Task	Varies (see specific table)	Estimates the % of total productive annual work hours each staff member dedicates to specific functions (inspections, plan review, and case management). See the appendix for a full list of these assumptions.
# Hours Dedicated to Task	Varies (see specific table)	Estimates the # hours each staff member dedicates to case or inspection type. See the appendix for a full list of these assumptions.

Later charts show additional assumptions used to develop this model, specifically, the staff time allocated to the review and the time required to conduct it. The chart below provides an overview of the staff positions that work directly on application and permit review across the different review disciplines. A survey was distributed to staff asking each position to identify their role and provide an overview of the percentage of time allocated towards all tasks related to permit intake and review. The remaining time would then be allocated to tasks outside the permitting function, such as inspections, customer interactions, management, and other non-review tasks. For each functional area, full-time equivalents (FTEs) have been calculated based on staff time commitments. This is shown in the table on the following page.

PERMIT AND APPLICATION REVIEW – CURRENT STAFFING AVAILABILITY

Title	FTE count	Percentage of work hours spent on active review of applications	Annual Hours spent on active review of applications *(assuming 1,760 hours per year for 1.0 FTE)*
		Current	
Inspections			
CBO	1	25%[1]	440
Senior Inspector	1	50%[2]	880
Senior Inspector	1	40%	704
Senior Inspector	1	70%	1,232
Senior Inspector*	1	70%	1,232
Administrative Assistant	1	50%	880
Total Inspections Staff (FTE)			**3.05**
Engineering			
Engineering Director	1	3%	53
Construction Outreach Coord.	1	0%	0
Administrative Assistant	1	25%	440
Senior Construction Inspector	1	0%	0
Construction Inspector	1	0%	0
Construction Inspector	1	100%	1,760
Stormwater Program Manager	1	100%	1,760
Civil Engineer	1	70%	1,232
Total Engineering Staff (FTE)			**2.98**
Planning			
Planning Director	1	35%	616
Senior Planner*	1	95%	1,672
Planner II**	0	0%	0
Planner II	1	95%	1,672
Planning Admin. Assistant	1	90%	1,584
Planning Technician	1	85%	1,496
Total Planning Staff (FTE)			**4**

[1] This is a proposed allocation based on prior analysis. The CBO's self-reported plan review allocation was 70%.
[2] This is a proposed allocation based on prior analysis. The inspector's self-reported plan review allocation was 0%.

Title	FTE count	Percentage of work hours spent on active review of applications	Annual Hours spent on active review of applications *(assuming 1,760 hours per year for 1.0 FTE)*
		Current	
Fire			
Fire Marshal	1	50%	880
Fire Marshal	1	50%	880
Fire Marshal	1	60%	1,056
Fire Marshal	1	30%	528
Fire Marshal**	0	0%	0
Total Fire Staff (FTE)			**1.9**

Some positions (denoted by an asterisk) were either unfilled at the time of this analysis or the project team did not receive feedback on application-review time commitments. Positions marked with two asterisks are unfilled and not intended to be retained in future budgets. These have been included in the staff listing as they still exist as City positions, but have not been allocated any time in the staffing model. Finally, the project team manually adjusted the CBO's allocated time for plan review from 70% (self-reported) to 25% per a prior recommendation.

(1) PLAN REVIEW TIME WORKLOAD ANALYSIS

The determined workload volume is the average of the last three years of overall application and permit workloads that require review before approval or issuance. From this, the project team estimated the average number of hours required to review each application or permit type. It is important to note that an application or permit type may require review from multiple disciplines. The table on the following pages provides estimates of the time required for each application or permit type, and the annual time required for each type.

REVIEW TIME ESTIMATES (HOURS) BY APPLICATION AND PERMIT TYPE

Category	MCG Permit Type	Intake Time	Inspections Review Time	Planning Review Time	Engineering Review Time	Fire Review Time
Inspections	Accessory Structures	0.75	1	0.5	0.5	0.5
Inspections	Additions	0.75	1	0.5	0.5	0.5
Inspections	Certificates / Occupancy	0.75	2	2	2	2
Inspections	Demolition	0.75	2	1	1	1
Inspections	Express Permits	0.75	1	0	0	0
Inspections	New Construction	0.75	3	1	0.5	0.5
Inspections	Remodels / Tenant Improvements	0.75	2	1	0.5	0.5
Inspections	Specialty Building	0.75	3	1	1	1
Inspections	Trade Permits (MEP)	0.25	0	0	0	0
Engineering	Right-of-Way	0.75	0	0	2	0
Engineering	Site Development	0.75	0	0	4	0
Engineering	Utilities / Sewer	0.75	0	0	2	0
Planning	Administrative Planning	0.75	1	4	1	1
Planning	Land Use Applications (Public Hearing)	0.75	1	16	1	1

Using these time estimates, we can then project the total average workload in hours to compare against staff capacity:

WORKLOAD ESTIMATES BY APPLICATION AND REVIEW TYPE

Permit Type	Average Permits per year	Intake Annual Time	Inspections Annual Time	Planning Annual Time	Engineering Annual Time	Fire Annual Time
Inspections						
Accessory Structures	43	32	43	22	22	22
Additions	44	33	44	22	22	22
Certificates / Occupancy	102	77	204	204	204	204
Demolition	70	53	140	70	70	70
Express Permits	2	2	2	-	-	-
New Construction	318	239	954	318	159	159
Remodels / Tenant Improvements	96	72	192	96	48	48
Specialty Building	1216	912	3,648	1,216	1,216	1,216
Trade Permits (MEP)	2509	627	-	-	-	-
Engineering						
Site Development	79	59	-	-	158	-
Utilities / Sewer	235	176	-	-	940	-
Right-Of-Way	37	28	-	-	74	-
Planning						
Administrative Planning	721	541	721	2,884	721	721
Utilities / Sewer	53	40	53	848	53	53
Total	**5,525**	**2,889**	**6,001**	**5,680**	**3,687**	**2,515**
Full-Time-Equivalents (FTEs)		**1.64**	**3.41**	**3.23**	**2.09**	**1.43**

The output shows the required number of FTEs to handle the average intake and review workload over the last three years. This can then be compared against the current estimated staff capacity for review. The next page presents a table comparing the current required number of FTEs based on estimated workload against the number of FTEs based on staff capacity:

STAFFING COMPARISONS BY FUNCTIONAL AREA

Review Group	WL Hours	WL FTEs	Staff Capacity	Avail. FTEs	Difference
Inspections	6,001	3.41	5,368	3.05	-0.36
Engineering	3,687	2.09	5,245	2.98	0.89
Planning	5,680	3.23	7,040	4	0.77
Fire	2,515	1.43	3,344	1.9	0.47

The above table shows the difference between the staff required to handle the workload ("WL FTEs") and the number of FTEs available based on staff capacity ("Avail. FTEs"). A negative number indicates that staffing may be slightly lower than what the workload demands. This table specifically measures the workload associated with the review of plans and does not factor in intake. For all but one function, Jonesboro appears to be operating with a minor staff surplus, with each position under 1 full-time equivalent.

The project team adjusted the time allocated to the Chief Building Official (CBO) and one Senior Inspector. As previously stated, the CBO should have a reduced role in plan review, as this position currently spends 70% of its time on this function. In the current structure, all Senior Inspectors should contribute to the plan review process in addition to performing field inspections. One Senior Inspector who noted spending 0% of their time performing plan review should therefore be cross-trained to spend approximately 50% of their time performing review. This was factored into the staffing calculations shown in the table above. Depending on workload volume, the City may opt to deploy a dedicated plan review position in the future to accommodate this workload, though this is not recommended at this time.

As previously referenced, this table does not address the staffing requirements (approximately 1.64 FTEs) for handling intake and issuance associated with the permitting process. This should be considered when analyzing the minor work surplus associated with each discipline. With this in mind, no staffing adjustments are recommended at this time. However, the workload for each department should be continuously monitored using robust reporting standards to ensure the permitting process is adequately resourced to meet performance demands.

RECOMMENDATION 6.1: CONSIDER HIRING ONE DEDICATED COMMERCIAL PLANS REVIEWER.

RECOMMENDATION 6.2: ENSURE ALL INSPECTORS SPEND SIMILAR AMOUNTS OF TIME BETWEEN INSPECTIONS AND PLAN REVIEW.

RECOMMENDATION 6.3: REDUCE THE CBO'S TIME ALLOCATED TO PLAN REVIEW TO APPROXIMATELY 25%.

(2) INSPECTIONS WORKLOAD ANALYSIS

Inspections are another major component of the permitting process, all of which are presently handled by the staff in the Inspections, Engineering, Planning, and Fire divisions. Generally, a manageable target for full-time inspectors is 12-15 inspections per day. The following table shows the total number of inspections (by type) from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025:

INSPECTIONS COMPLETED (2023 – 2025)

Inspection Type	2023	2024	2025
Blank	18	12	6
Bonding	50	37	42
Certificate of Occupancy	0	0	4
Commercial Final Electric	0	3	0
Commercial Framing	3	1	0
Commercial Reconnect	115	132	127
CWL Certificate	443	478	402
Driveway Cut	0	1	0
Driveway Final	337	318	328
Driveway Form	334	318	306
Engineering	0	1	0
Exist CO	160	113	140
Final	6	4	2
Final Building	448	495	492
Final Electric	496	555	493
Final HVAC	404	496	420
Final Plumbing	558	619	552
Fire Alarm Witness Test	0	0	3
Fire Department Final	0	0	4
Fire Sprinkler Final	0	0	2
Fire-Firewall	0	0	19

Inspection Type	2023	2024	2025
Firewall	71	62	30
Flow Inspection	17	27	36
Footing	503	487	382
Framing	485	543	445
Gas Certificate	56	23	18
Gas Inspection	272	238	261
Gas Test Inspection	23	21	33
Hood Suppression Witness Test	0	0	4
HVAC Change	221	212	121
Inspection	0	0	2
Pipe Inspection	1	2	129
Reinspection	3	0	1
Residential Electric Reconnect	79	48	44
Residential Reconnect	141	172	152
Roof	0	1	0
Rough In Electric	534	611	449
Rough In HVAC	388	441	376
Rough In Plumbing	568	481	477
Slab	62	287	269
Storm Shelter	0	1	0
Storm Water	278	237	275
Street Cut	92	68	80
Subdivision Inspection	899	649	417
Subdivision Steps		29	10
Temporary CO	19	26	22
Temporary Electrical Connection	1	0	0
Top-Out Plumbing	533	555	488
Underground	12	13	9
Venta Hood	12	8	3
Total	**8,642**	**8,825**	**7,785**

Overall, the inspection workload has remained somewhat steady over the last three years, with the City processing an average of 8,447 inspections annually. This equates to approximately 38 inspections per day, assuming 220 days of availability overall.

Using data stored in iWorQ, the project team was also able to see the number of inspections assigned to each inspector over the same period. This allows further insight into the workload associated with inspections. For this document, inspector names have been swapped with numbers (e.g., Inspector 1):

AVERAGE ANNUAL INSPECTIONS BY INSPECTOR (2023-2025)

Inspector	Average Annual Inspections	Average Inspections P/D
Inspector 1	4	0.0
Inspector 2	17	0.1
Inspector 3	656	3.0
Inspector 4	1,272	5.8
Inspector 5	127	0.6
Inspector 6	1	0.0
Inspector 7	1	0.0
Inspector 8	6	0.0
Inspector 9	1,999	9.1
Inspector 10	1	0.0
Inspector 11	584	2.7
Inspector 12	1	0.0
Inspector 13	1	0.0
Inspector 14	13	0.1
Inspector 15	1	0.0
Inspector 16	814	3.7
Inspector 17	1,529	7.0
Inspector 18	1	0.0
Inspector 19	191	0.9
Inspector 20	700	3.2
Inspector 21	1,276	5.8

No inspector on staff performs more than 10 inspections per day, assuming an availability of 220 days. While this is lower than the previously referenced target range, it is also important to note that inspectors are required to perform plan review functions (as shown in the staffing availability table in the previous section). It is not recommended that any adjustments be made to staffing assigned to inspections at this time, though the workload should continue to be monitored as needed.

RECOMMENDATION 6.4: MAINTAIN CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS ALLOCATED TO INSPECTIONS.

(3) ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The findings documented throughout this report consistently point to a single, underlying structural conclusion: **the City of Jonesboro's permitting and development review function requires a dedicated organizational home with a designated leader accountable for its performance**. The staffing and workload analysis presented in the preceding sections confirms that the City's overall staffing levels are generally commensurate with current demands. Still, staffing capacity alone cannot resolve the coordination gaps, accountability deficiencies, and service inconsistencies rooted in the current structure of the permitting function.

Currently, the City's development review and permitting functions are distributed across four primary departments: Engineering, Fire, Inspections, and Planning. The Engineering Department's Chief Engineer is serving as the informal coordination lead for the City's development review process. This role has evolved over time without formal designation or cross-departmental authority. The Construction Outreach Coordinator and the Civil Engineer's technology management responsibilities are also situated within Engineering, further concentrating development services functions in a department whose primary mandate is engineering operations rather than development services. The Planning Department is led by a Director of Planning, and the Inspections Department operates under the Chief Building Official, each functioning independently and with no unified management structure connecting their development review responsibilities. Application intake is currently handled across four administrative-level positions distributed among the Engineering, Planning, and Inspections Departments, without a centralized or coordinated function to ensure consistency.

In response to these findings, it is recommended that the City establish a new Development Services Department, which would consolidate the Planning and Inspections Departments and the key development review functions currently situated within the Engineering Department, under a newly appointed Development Services Director. The establishment of the new Development Services Department draws on all three departments to create a consolidated organizational structure with a designated management lead, a unified customer service and intake function, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities across all core development review disciplines.

The Development Services Department is specifically designed to address three structural gaps identified consistently across this study:

1. **THE ABSENCE OF A DESIGNATED MANAGEMENT LEAD WITH CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE PERMITTING FUNCTION;**

2. **THE FRAGMENTED DISTRIBUTION OF INTAKE, TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT, AND COORDINATION RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS DEPARTMENTS WITHOUT CLEAR OWNERSHIP; AND**

3. **THE LACK OF A UNIFIED INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AND SERVICE PURPOSE FOR THE PERMITTING FUNCTION.**

Both alternatives build directly on the centralized development services recommendations in Chapter 2, the role alignment and management accountability findings in Chapter 5, and the staffing analysis presented in this chapter. The mission statement and service goals recommended in Chapter 5, Section (5) should be adopted by the City before or concurrent with implementation of the selected structure, as they establish the institutional purpose the new department is designed to serve and ensure that the structural changes are grounded in a clear and shared commitment to consistent, accountable, and unified service delivery.

The following subsections present two alternative structures for the new Development Services Department, both designed to address the core organizational gaps identified in this study and anchored by the mission statement and service goals recommended in Chapter 5, Section 5.

ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE A —CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH INDEPENDENT OUTREACH FUNCTION

Alternative Structure A establishes a new Development Services Department, consolidating key development review and permitting functions under a newly created Development Services Director. This new department directly addresses the absence of unified management oversight, identified as a core structural gap in Chapter 5, and creates a single organizational home for the City's permitting function, with a designated Director accountable for its overall coordination, performance, and continuous improvement. The Development Services Director serves as the City's primary point of management accountability for the permitting function, with cross-departmental coordination authority, responsibility for performance monitoring and reporting, and oversight of the operational protocols recommended throughout this report. Additionally, the Construction Outreach Coordinator functions as a neutral, ombuds-type position reporting directly to the Development Services Director, serving as an independent advocate for developers and contractors navigating the permitting process, escalating systemic barriers, and providing a high-level point of contact for complex or multi-departmental projects. Otherwise, three divisions report to the Development Services Director:

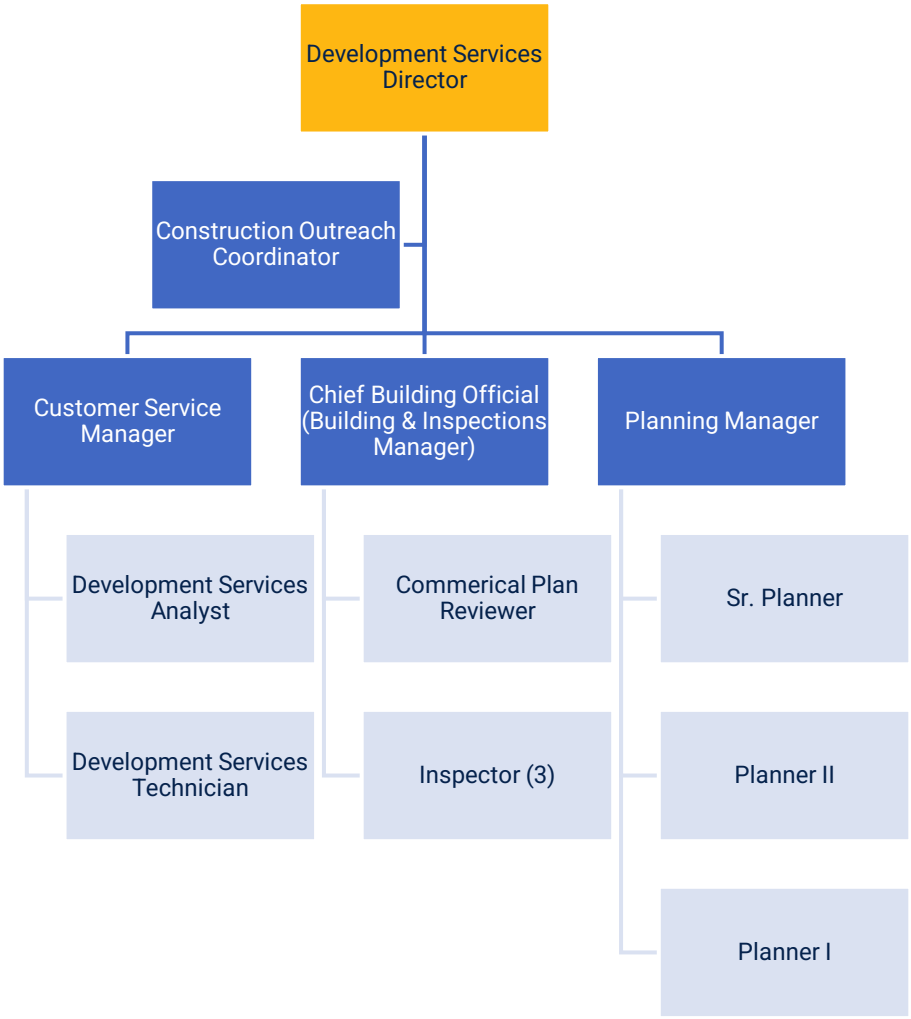
- **The Customer Service Division** is led by a Customer Service Manager and is responsible for application intake, completeness review, applicant communication and tracking, and technology administration. A Development Services Analyst position within this division assists a Development Services Technician with intake operations and is also primarily responsible for administering the City's permitting software systems and developing performance reporting outputs to support data-driven oversight of the process.

- **The Building and Inspections Division** is led by the Chief Building Official (Building & Inspections Manager), who retains regulatory authority and technical oversight for building plan review and inspections. Consistent with Recommendation 6.3, the CBO's direct involvement in plan review is reduced to approximately 25% of work time, freeing capacity for the departmental oversight, management, and policy functions appropriate to this director-level position.
- **The Planning Division** is led by a Planning Manager and is responsible for overseeing planning and zoning application review, land use determinations, and coordination with the City's planning board and commission processes. This division retains its current review and advisory functions within the consolidated structure.

Engineering and Fire review disciplines continue to provide technical review within their existing departmental structures. Under Structure A, their participation in the permitting review process is governed by the coordination protocols and accountability frameworks recommended in Chapters 2 and 5, with the Development Services Director serving as the cross-departmental point of accountability for performance and coordination issues that extend beyond individual review disciplines.

The organizational chart for Alternative A is shown on the subsequent page:

ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE A



ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE B — INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICE AND OUTREACH CONSOLIDATED CUSTOMER SERVICE AND OUTREACH MODEL

Alternative Structure B is built on the same foundational element as Structure A: a Development Services Director leading a new Development Services Department and serving as the City's designated management lead for the permitting function. This Director-level accountability is equally central to both structures. The distinction between the two alternatives lies not in the Director role itself, but in how the Customer Service function is organized beneath it. In Structure B, the Construction Outreach Coordinator and the Customer Service Manager roles from Structure A are merged into a single consolidated position.

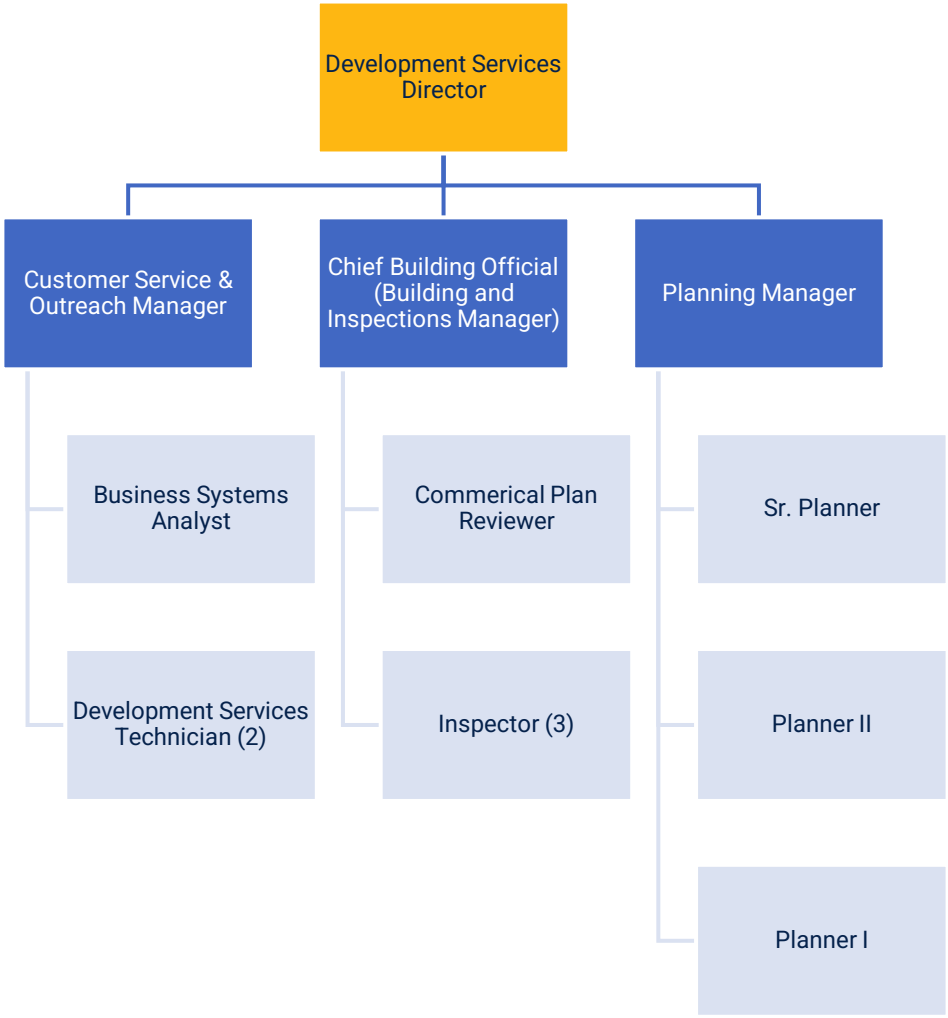
This combined position provides a concierge-like service for developers and contractors interacting with the development review process, serving as the primary point of contact from initial inquiry through permit issuance. In addition to applicant-facing coordination responsibilities, this role assumes direct oversight of the intake process and works closely with the Management Analyst on software management and performance reporting. To ensure that intake and issuance functions are adequately

resourced within this model, Structure B adds a dedicated Intake Technician position (creating a total of two). This role, along with an existing technician, focuses on application intake, permit issuance, and routine customer inquiries, allowing the consolidated Customer Service and Outreach Manager to focus on higher-level coordination, complex project support, and process oversight.

Structure B is particularly well-suited to a service philosophy that prioritizes applicant experience as a defining characteristic of the City's permitting function. By consolidating outreach and customer service leadership, the City creates a single, highly accountable point of contact for development applicants, reduces handoffs between roles, and positions the permitting function as a proactive and responsive partner in the development process. This model may be especially effective for commercial and multi-departmental projects where consistent, high-touch coordination has historically been lacking.

The organizational chart for Alternative B is shown in the following graphic:

ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE B



COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES

The table on the subsequent page summarizes the key positions, reporting relationships, and primary responsibilities under each alternative structure, as well as the current organizational arrangement, to support the City's evaluation and selection process.

KEY POSITION ROLES — CURRENT STATE AND PROPOSED STRUCTURES

Position	Current State	Structure A	Structure B
Chief Engineer (Engineering)	Exists. Engineering Department; currently serves as informal coordination lead for the City's development review process in addition to Engineering Department leadership responsibilities.	Development review coordination responsibility transitions to the Development Services Director; Chief Engineer retains full leadership of the Engineering Department	Same as Structure A
Development Services Director	Does not exist.	New position; reports to City Manager or designee; serves as designated management lead for the new Development Services Department with cross-departmental coordination authority, performance monitoring responsibility, and oversight of operational protocols	Same as Structure A
Customer Service Manager	Does not exist.	New position within Development Services Department; reports to DS Director; leads Customer Service Division; oversees intake operations, completeness review, applicant communication, and technology administration	Role consolidated into Customer Service & Outreach Manager — see below
Customer Service & Outreach Manager	Does not exist.	N/A	New combined position within Development Services Department; reports to DS Director; provides concierge-level service for developers and contractors navigating the permitting process; oversees intake operations; collaborates with Business Systems Analyst on software management and performance reporting
Development Services Analyst	Does not exist. Technology management responsibilities currently performed informally by Civil Engineer (Engineering).	New position within Customer Service Division; reports to Customer Service Manager; assists with intake operations; administers permitting software	N/A

Position	Current State	Structure A	Structure B
		systems; develops performance reports to support data-driven management	
Business Systems Analyst	Does not exist. Technology management responsibilities currently performed informally by Civil Engineer (Engineering) and application/permit reporting currently distributed across by the Planning Technician (Planning) and the Administrative Assistant (Inspections).	N/A	New position within Customer Service Division; reports to Customer Service Manager & Outreach Coordinator; administers permitting software systems; develops performance reports to support data-driven management
Construction Outreach Coordinator	Exists. In Engineering Department and serves as primary liaison to developers and contractors; mediates permitting issues across disciplines.	Repositioned to Development Services Department; reports directly to DS Director as an independent, ombuds-type role; serves as an advocate for developers and contractors navigating complex or multi-departmental projects	Responsibilities and functions consolidated into the Customer Service & Outreach Manager position
Development Services Technician(s)	Does not exist. Intake functions currently distributed across the Planning Administrative Assistant (Planning), Planning Technician (Planning), and Administrative Assistant (Inspections).	Existing intake staff consolidated under the Customer Service Division as Development Services Technicians; unified under common oversight and standardized intake procedures	Two dedicated Development Services Technician positions within Customer Service Division; one position represents an addition to current staffing levels; focused on intake, permit issuance, and customer inquiry functions
CBO (Building & Inspections Manager)	Exists. In Inspections Department and serves as department head; currently performs plan review for all commercial and majority of residential building permits in addition to administrative and oversight responsibilities	Transitions to Development Services Department as Building & Inspections Division lead; reports to DS Director; plan review allocation reduced to approximately 25% per Recommendation 6.3, restoring capacity for management and oversight functions	Same as Structure A
Senior Inspectors (x4)	Exist. In Inspections Department.	Transition to Building & Inspections Division within Development Services Department; workload	Same as Structure A

Position	Current State	Structure A	Structure B
		distribution and cross-training per Recommendations 6.2 and 6.4	
Planning Manager	Does not exist. Current roles of Planning Director. Serves as department head with oversight of five positions.	Transitions to Development Services Department as Planning Division lead; reports to DS Director; retains current planning and zoning review, commission liaison, and land use responsibilities	Same as Structure A
Senior Planner / Planners	Exist. In Planning Department.	Transition to Planning Division within Development Services Department; current review functions retained	Same as Structure A
Engineering Staff	Exist. In Engineering Department	Remain in Engineering Department; continue to provide technical plan review and inspections as a participating discipline, governed by coordination protocols in Chapters 2 and 5	Same as Structure A
Fire Marshals	Exist. In Fire Department — Fire Marshal's Office	Remain in Fire Department; continue to provide fire and life-safety plan review and inspections as a participating discipline, governed by coordination protocols in Chapters 2 and 5	Same as Structure A
Total Positions in Development Services Department	**—**	**15 filled / 3 newly created**	**14 filled / 4 newly created**

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

Regardless of which structure is selected, the following steps should be taken to support a successful and sustainable transition. First, the City should engage staff from all affected departments early in the planning process to ensure that role changes, revised reporting relationships, and new operational expectations are communicated clearly and collaboratively. Staff participation in transition planning is essential to building the organizational buy-in necessary for long-term success.

Second, job descriptions, classifications, and compensation structures for all new or substantially revised positions should be updated before or concurrent with implementation, consistent with the role realignment recommendations in Chapter 5 (Recommendations 5.1–5.3). This is particularly critical for positions whose formal classifications have not kept pace with their actual responsibilities, a pattern documented throughout this report.

Third, the mission statement and service goals recommended in Chapter 5, Section (5) should be formally adopted as part of the implementation process, providing a clear institutional foundation against which the reorganization's success can be evaluated. The performance management framework and monitoring practices recommended in Chapter 5, Sections (3) and (4) should be activated at or shortly after the implementation of the selected structure, ensuring that the new management accountability arrangement is supported by the performance data needed to guide ongoing decisions.

Finally, the communication and coordination protocols, RACI matrix, and interdepartmental coordination expectations recommended in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 should be formally operationalized as part of the transition, so that structural changes are paired with clear operational expectations from the outset.

RECOMMENDATION 6.5: IMPLEMENT AN ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURE FOR THE CITY'S PERMITTING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW FUNCTION.

RECOMMENDATION 6.6: DEVELOP AND EXECUTE A STRUCTURED TRANSITION PLAN FOR THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURE, INCLUDING UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTIONS, REVISED CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION ALIGNMENT, AND A STAFF ENGAGEMENT PROCESS TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CURRENT STATE PROFILE AND BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT OF THE PERMITTING PROCESS

APPENDIX B: PROCESS DIAGRAMS

APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK REPORT

APPENDIX D: BUILDING CODE ANALYSIS

APPENDIX E: COMPARABLE JURISDICTION RESEARCH RESULTS

APPENDIX A: CURRENT STATE PROFILE AND BEST PRACTICES ASSESSMENT OF THE PERMITTING PROCESS

March 16, 2026

FINAL

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

APPENDIX A: TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 1

2. CURRENT STATE PROFILE 2

2.1 ORGANIZATION & STAFFING *2*

2.2 APPLICATION AND PERMIT WORKLOAD *11*

2.3 TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION *21*

2.5 CUSTOMER SERVICE APPROACHES *22*

3. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES 23

3.1 DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT *23*

3.2 KEY STRENGTHS *30*

3.3 KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT *31*

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the first deliverable for the City of Jonesboro's assessment of its permitting review and inspection processes. It contains the Current State Profile of the City's permitting operations, which outlines the current organizational structure, staffing, technology, and workload of the permitting functions, as well as the Best Practices Assessment, which compares the City's permitting operations with national best practices and standards. The information herein was developed by reviewing existing City data, conducting in-person interviews and facilitating process diagram meetings with managers, supervisors, and line-level staff between November 17 and December 10, 2025. Staff interviewed were primarily located within City departments involved in the permitting review process but also included staff from the Jonesboro City Water and Light organization.

The primary objective is to document the existing approaches utilized by the City in providing its development review services and functions, focusing on documenting the following items:

- The organizational structure of the City's permitting operations, including all aspects of permitting and inspections across review disciplines (Inspections, Engineering, Fire, and Planning).
- The roles, responsibilities, and service delivery approaches for each functional review discipline.
- The organizational composition and allocation of staff assigned to each functional permitting discipline.
- An exploration of how technology is utilized by City staff within the existing permitting and inspection processes.
- The historic workload associated with the City's permitting operations.
- Summary of the current customer outreach efforts and public information related to the City's permitting functions.
- A comparative evaluation of the current practices against best management practices to identify areas for alignment and improvement, along with identifying where the city meets current industry best practices.
- Summary of top strengths and opportunities for improvement from the best practices assessment.

The project team will analyze the issues identified in this document further, resulting in the development of a draft final report and implementation plan.

2. CURRENT STATE PROFILE

2.1 ORGANIZATION & STAFFING

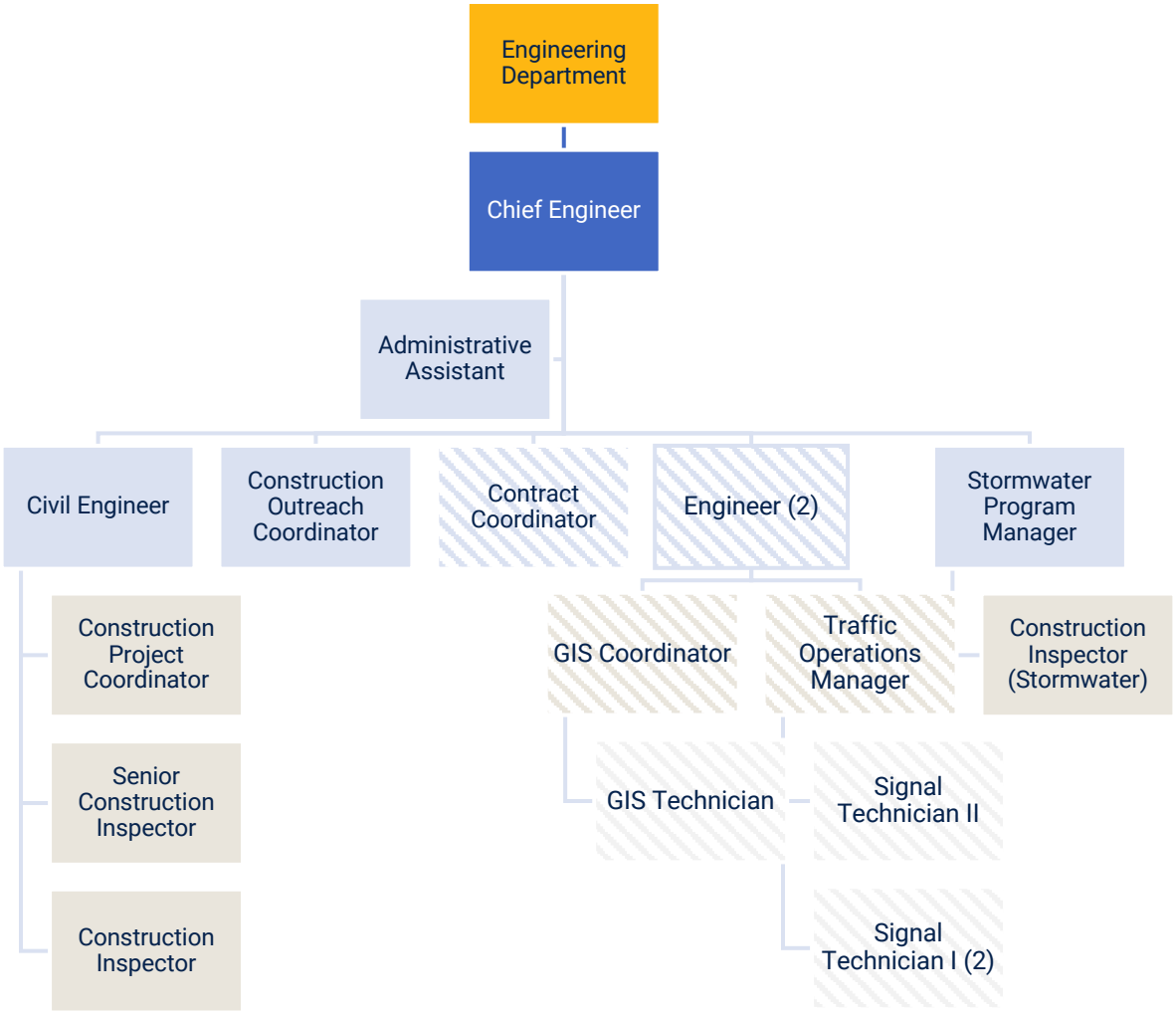
The City's permitting review functions are largely centralized under four City departments: Engineering, Inspections, Fire and Planning. A part of the City's overall permitting review process is building permits, engineering permits, fire permits, planning and zoning applications, and all related inspections to permitted and approved work. The Jonesboro City Water and Light organization, a municipal improvement district providing water, sewer, and electricity utilities, is separate from the City but is involved in the permitting process.

Below is an organizational chart of the City's overall organization, which is led by the Mayor and two primary Chief positions: Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Operations Officer. All departments a part of the City's permitting review process are found under the Chief Operations Officer position. The Director-level positions responsible for facilitating the permitting process ultimately report to the Chief The departments that have a defined role in the permitting review process are shown in a solid color.

CITY OF JONESBORO ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The City's Engineering Department is led by the Chief Engineer position and has six general focus areas (though not official Divisions): Administration, Capital Improvement Plan/Contract Management, Civil Engineering (permit review), GIS, Stormwater Management, and Traffic Signal Operations. Below is an organizational chart[1] highlighting the positions that have a defined role in the permitting review process.



The following table is a summary of the Engineering Department's staff positions, organized by their respective focus areas. A summary of each position's key duties, as they relate to the permitting and review process, is included. The summary is not meant to be a comprehensive

[1] *Note: Positions that are shown with diagonal lines are not considered to be directly involved in the City's permitting review process.*

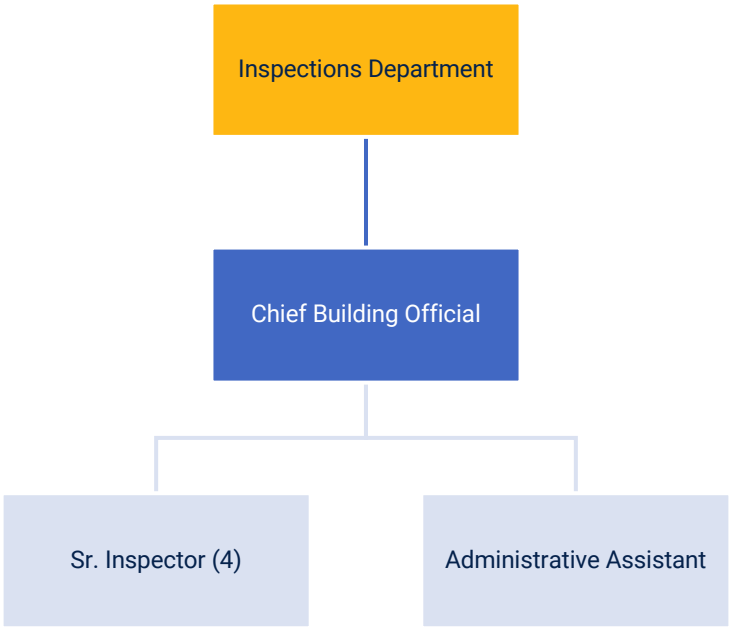
job description but rather highlight the work that the position is currently doing within the City's permitting.

Position Title	Authorized Positions	Key Roles and Responsibilities
ADMINISTRATION		
Chief Engineer	1	• Oversees the operations of the Engineering Department. • Serves as the City Engineer. • Serves as primary overseer of the City's permitting and development review process. • Manages the engineering select Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects. • Staff liaison to the City Traffic Control Committee. • Performs staff evaluations and annual reviews. • Prepares Department budget for management.
Construction Outreach Coordinator	1	• Serves as the City's primary liaison to developers and contractors to facilitate permitting and construction. • Meet with all permitting review disciplines to mediate issues as they arise. • Advises Chief Engineer as need on development trends or needs. • Attend public advisory boards and committees as needed.
Administrative Assistant	1	• Provides broad administrative and clerical support to the Department (responding to customer inquiries, handling purchases, etc.). • Responsible for performing initial intake of Engineering permits and routing to relevant reviews. • Schedules Engineering inspections.
CIVIL ENGINEERING		
Civil Engineer	1	• Performs engineering plan review for all private and public development, prepares conditions of approval as needed for engineering design standard and regulation compliance. • Supervises two Construction Inspectors. • Responsible for management of active CIP engineering projects. • Internal lead on iWorq and ProjectDox software implementation and maintenance.
Construction Project Coordinator	1	•
Sr. Construction Inspector	1	• Senior level of Construction Inspectors and assigned to more complex projects when necessary. • Conducts inspections of private and public development to ensure compliance with City engineering design standards and plans. • Performs inspections of construction projects with City right-of-way (sidewalks, driveway approaches, etc.). • Ensures private driveways comply with City design standards. • Prepares inspection reports and collects field data as required.

Position Title	Authorized Positions	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Construction Inspector	1	• Conducts inspections of private and public development to ensure compliance with City engineering design standards and plans. • Performs inspections of construction projects with City right-of-way (sidewalks, driveway approaches, etc.). • Ensures private driveways comply with City design standards. • Prepares inspection reports and collects field data as required.
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT		
Stormwater Program Manager	1	• Responsible for City's compliance efforts of the NPDES Phase 2 Stormwater General Permit. • Oversees the City's compliance to the National Flood Issuance Program (NFIP). • Responsible for performing stormwater review (e.g., floodplain, SWPP, etc.) for all residential and commercial building permits and City construction projects (including in the right-of-way) • Manages the Community Rating System Program.
Construction Inspector	1	• Conducts inspections of private and public development to ensure compliance with City engineering design standards and plans, with a focus on stormwater compliance • Performs inspections of construction projects with City right-of-way (sidewalks, driveway approaches, etc.). • Conducts proactive inspections of areas prone to flooding during wet weather events.

INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT

The Inspections Department is led by the Chief Building Official and is tasked with performing plan review and inspections of all residential, commercial, and industrial construction within the City. Building Inspectors can perform electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and structural inspections. The following organizational chart shows the structure of the Inspections Department:



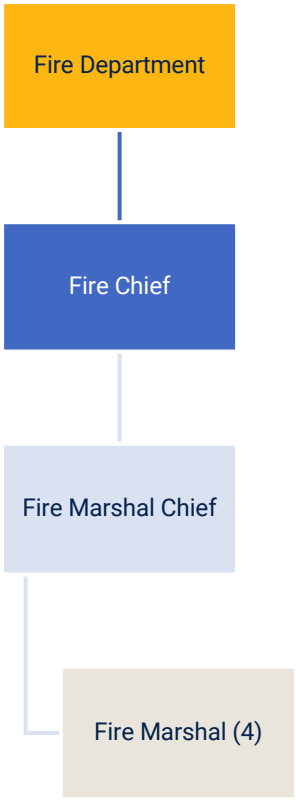
The following table is a summary of the Department's staff positions, organized by their respective focus areas. A summary of each position's key duties, as they relate to the permitting and review process, is included. The summary is not meant to be a comprehensive job description but rather highlight the work that the position is currently doing within the City's permitting function.

Position Title	Authorized Positions	Key Roles and Responsibilities
ADMINISTRATION		
Chief Building Official	1	• Oversees the operations of the Inspections Department. • Serves as the City's Building Official and is the approval authority for all final Certificates of Occupancy. • Performs plan review of all commercial and majority of residential building permits (excluding trade specific). • Conducts building inspections as needed. • Performs staff evaluations and annual reviews. • Prepares Department budget for management.
Administrative Assistant	1	• Provides broad administrative and clerical support to the Department (responds to customer inquiries over phone and email, handles purchases, etc.). • Performs intake of over-the-counter (OTC) building permit and issues same day. • Assesses fees for all building permits prior to issuance. • Issues all building permits following plan review. • Schedules building permit related inspections. • Prepares building permit reports for management. • Handles Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
PLAN REVIEW & INSPECTIONS		
Senior Inspector	4	• Performs building and trade specific (electrical, plumbing, and HVAC/mechanical) inspections on all permitted residential and commercial construction.

Position Title	Authorized Positions	Key Roles and Responsibilities
		• Cross-trained to provide coverage for all inspections. • Serves as backup for Administrative Assistant.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Fire Marshal's Office (FMO) is a division of the Jonesboro Fire Department. It is led by a Fire Marshal Division Chief and is responsible for providing a variety of investigative and educational services in addition to its role in the permitting process. The FMO is responsible for performing all fire/life safety plan reviews and inspections for construction projects within the City of Jonesboro. The organizational structure of the FMO division is shown below.



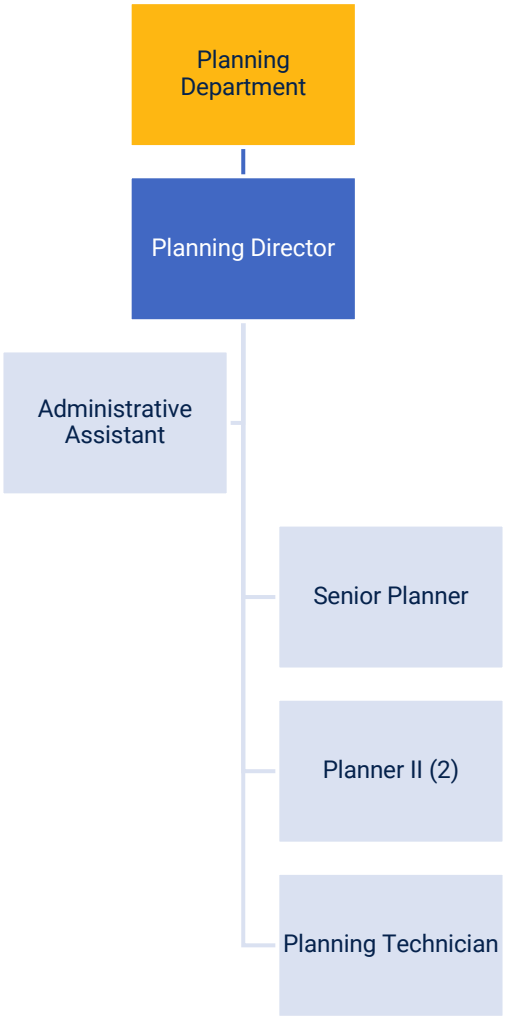
The following table is a summary of the Division's staff positions, organized by their respective focus areas. A summary of each position's key duties, as they relate to the permitting and review process, is included. The summary is not meant to be a comprehensive job description but rather highlight the work that the position is currently doing within the City's permitting.

Position Title	Authorized Positions	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Fire Marshal Chief	1	• Oversees all Fire Marshals within the division. • Performs fire plan review and inspections for all commercial and multi-household residential projects. • Performs other Fire Marshal division duties, such as public education, annual inspections, etc.

Position Title	Authorized Positions	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Fire Marshal	4	• Performs fire plan review and inspections for all commercial and multi-household residential projects. • Performs other Fire Marshal division duties, such as public education, annual inspections, etc.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The City's Planning Department is led by the Director of Planning position, who has five direct reports below them: one Senior Planner, two Planner II's, one Planning Technician and one Administrative Assistant. Below is an organizational chart for the Planning Department.



The following table is a summary of the Planning Department's staff positions, organized by their respective focus areas. A summary of each position's key duties, as they relate to the permitting and review process, is included. The summary is not meant to be a comprehensive

job description but rather highlight the work that the position is currently doing within the City's permitting.

Position Title	Authorized Positions	Key Roles and Responsibilities
Director of Planning	1	• Oversees the operations of the Planning Department. • Manages the Land Bank Program and required maintenance of properties owned by the City. • Serves as staff liaison to the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and Land Bank Commission. • Drafts zoning ordinance amendments for consideration. • Performs review of all subdivision requests and zoning entitlements. • Conducts zoning plan reviews of commercial building permits. • Performs staff evaluations and annual reviews. • Prepares Department budget for management.
Administrative Assistant	1	• Provides broad administrative and clerical support to the Department. • Addresses customer questions at public counter. • Performs initial review of all digital applications and permits submitted through ProjectDox.
Senior Planner	1	• Processes applications for developments permitted under the zoning ordinance and coordinates review by other disciplines. • Prepares staff reports and conditions of approval for development requiring review by the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of Adjustment. • Conducts zoning plan review of residential building permits and issues zoning certificates. • Assigns addresses for newly created properties and housing units. • Provides guidance to Director about zoning review processes. • Performs day-to-day management duties of the Land Bank.
Planner II	2	• Reviews all commercial sign permits to ensure zoning compliance. • Addresses sign violations from complaints. • Provides education on the City's sign requirements. • Considers minor zoning requests and issues zoning certificates. • Conducts plan reviews for single-household, fence and pool building permits.
Planning Technician	1	• Performs completeness checks of all applications and permits in ProjectDox after initial intake. • Routes applications and permits to all required review disciplines through ProjectDox and transfers to iWorQ. • Answers customer inquiries and generates permitting reports as needed.

2.2 APPLICATION AND PERMIT WORKLOAD

BUILDING PERMIT WORKLOAD (IWORQ)

The City provided building permit data for the period from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025. The following table shows the number of permits (by type) marked as "Completed" in the City's system of record (iWorq) over this time period:

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED 2023 -2025

Permit	2023	2024	2025	Average
Backflow Only	7	11	3	7
Building	1	0	0	1
C - Addition	8	9	2	6
C - Alteration	57	51	33	47
C - Electric Meter	1			1
C - Electrical	63	58	30	50
C - Electrical Alteration	40	28	20	29
C - Electrical Reconnect	104	121	84	103
C - Foundation/Footing/Grading	2	2	1	2
C - Gas Test	31	25	38	31
C - HVAC	62	41	27	43
C - Job Site Trailer Electrical	9	6	9	8
C - Lawn Sprinkler	8	12	8	9
C - Plumbing	71	53	24	49
C - Sewer	10	14	1	8
C - Sewer Connection Street Cut	6	6	1	4
C - Sewer Stubout	0	0	14	7
C - Signs	217	200	173	197
C - Temporary Tent/Trailer/Structure	0	0	1	1
C - Water Meter	12	15	9	12
Canopy	0	3	0	1
Certificate of Occupancy	1	1	1	1
Commercial Building	18	15	4	12
Communication Tower	12	18	11	14
Demolition	67	58	65	63
Driveway	42	33	28	34
Duplex	3	8	0	4
Electrical	2	1	0	1
Electrical Change Out	4	3	1	3
Existing Certificate of Occupancy	110	84	78	91
Fence	475	500	422	466
Fence/Wall	0	0	1	0
Grading/Footing/Foundation	3	0	0	2

Permit	2023	2024	2025	Average
HVAC Change Out	475	560	452	496
Landscaping	0	1	0	0
Minor Plat/Subdivision/Replat	0	0	1	0
Mobile Vending	9	2	10	7
Multi - Electric	27	32	10	23
Multi - HVAC	19	36	5	20
Multi - Plumbing	42	27	2	24
Multi Family Building	26	16	0	14
Parking Lot	5	4	1	3
Plumbing	6	1	3	3
Plumbing Change Out	141	150	55	115
R - Addition	26	19	6	17
R - Alterations	16	19	5	13
R - Electric Alteration	21	23	13	19
R - Electric Meter	1	0	0	1
R - Electrical	290	334	204	276
R - Electrical Reconnect	203	191	170	188
R - Foundation	0	2	0	1
R - Gas Test	131	109	107	116
R - HVAC	285	306	190	260
R - Lawn Sprinkler	8	10	11	10
R - Plumbing	292	317	174	261
R - Reinspect	0	4	0	2
R - Sewer	64	54	49	56
R - Sewer Street Cut	8	17	2	9
R - Sewer Stubout	196	65	143	135
R - Sewer with Street Cut	30	10	5	15
R - Storage	1	11	5	6
R - Swimming Pool	38	9	11	19
R - Water Meter Per	70	42	58	57
Re-Roof	938	1,529	1,010	1,159
Rice Well	5	5	2	4
Single Family Home	239	246	122	202
Storm Shelter	6	2	0	4
Street Cut	26	28	15	23
Swimming Pool - Electrical Bond	37	22	30	30
Traffic Closure	5	0	1	3
(blank)	0	1	1	1
Total	5,132	5,380	3,962	4,825

Permit workload remained similar between 2023 and 2024 but decreased by 1,418 between 2024 and 2025. The average number of applications across all three years was 4,825. Re-roof,

fence, and HVAC change-out permits were the most common applications during this time period.

BUILDING INSPECTION WORKLOAD (IWORQ)

The number of completed Building inspections, with a completed date between the date range of January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025, is summarized below:

BUILDING INSPECTIONS COMPLETED 2023 -2025

Inspection Type	2023	2024	2025	Average
Bonding	5	26	5	12
Commercial Final Electric	0	2	0	1
Commercial Reconnect	4	77	25	35
CWL Certificate	8	270	86	121
Driveway Cut	0	1	0	1
Driveway Final	324	311	326	320
Driveway Form	307	300	295	301
Exist CO	7	36	19	21
Final	1	2	0	1
Final Building	24	54	50	43
Final Electric	19	316	97	144
Final HVAC	374	441	377	397
Final Plumbing	25	43	36	35
Fire Alarm Witness Test	0	0	2	1
Fire Department Final	0	0	2	1
Fire Sprinkler Final	0	0	1	0
Fire-Firewall	0	0	1	0
Firewall	3	2	1	2
Flow Inspection	3	4	2	3
Footing	48	54	24	42
Framing	35	50	41	42
Gas Certificate	2	0	1	1
Gas Inspection	22	24	28	25
Gas Test Inspection	0	1	1	1
Hood Suppression Witness Test	0	0	3	1
HVAC Change	218	206	116	180
Inspection	0	0	1	0
Pipe Inspection	0	2	129	66
Reinspection	3	0	1	2
Residential Electric Reconnect	5	29	7	14
Residential Reconnect	5	84	31	40
Roof	0	1	0	1
Rough In Electric	25	338	89	151

Inspection Type	2023	2024	2025	Average
Rough In HVAC	365	401	345	370
Rough In Plumbing	26	25	36	29
Slab	9	42	35	29
Storm Water	220	224	260	235
Street Cut	99	63	79	80
Subdivision Inspection	902	653	418	658
Subdivision Steps	0	29	10	20
Temporary CO	0	6	1	4
Top-Out Plumbing	26	45	31	34
Underground	0	12	2	7
VentAHood	12	8	3	8
(blank)	4	8	1	4
Total	3,130	4,190	3,018	3,446

Assuming a work year of 260 days, the City performs an average of 13 inspections per day. Inspections increased by 1,060 between 2023 and 2024, before decreasing to 3,018 in 2025.

APPLICATION AND PERMIT REVIEWS (PROJECTDOX)

While iWorq is the software system used to record approved and issued building permits, the City uses ProjectDox to track all staff discipline reviews performed during the permitting process (known as "tasks" within ProjectDox). ProjectDox treats applications as "projects" and assigns tags based on their project type. The tags are BLD (Building), PLN (Planning), and SGN (Sign). The PLN tag represents a division of land (any lot split, including a major subdivision). The SGN tag represents a sign permit or sign modification request that results in an SGN permit issued by iWorq. The BLD tag applies to all building permits that require review prior to issuance (non-trade or over-the-counter permits). The following table shows the number of projects in the system, by tag, over the last three years.

PROJECT TAG TOTALS 2023-2025

Project Tag	2023	2024	2025	Average
BLD	1,385	1,389	1,270	1,348
PLN	68	92	88	83
SGN	252	207	194	218
Total	1,705	1,688	1,552	1,649

Review groups are utilized in ProjectDox and are described on the subsequent page:

REVIEW GROUP STAFF MEMBERS

Review Group	Staff Included
Addressing	Planning (Senior Planner)
Commercial (Eng.)	Engineering (Civil Engineer)
CWL	CWL (3 staff members)
Engineering	Engineering (Stormwater Project Manager)
Fire	Fire Prevention (4 staff members)
Inspections	Inspections (Chief Building Official and 1 Senior Inspector)
Planning	Planning (Director, Senior Planner, 1 Planner II)
Residential (Eng.)	Engineering (Stormwater Project Manager)

The following table shows all tasks by the year of completion for each review discipline. Allyson to add narrative to report to better clarify which review disciplines are in each "review group." Addressing is one (Senior Planner), Commercial Eng (Michael), CWL (group of them), Engineering (Roger - SW), Fire (4 review), Inspections (Tim and Shirley), Planning, (three, Darryl, Anik, Shun), Engineering - Residential (Roger):

TASKS BY REVIEW GROUP 2023-2025

Review Group	2023	2024	2025	Average
Addressing	479	345	252	359
Commercial (Eng.)	519	463	453	478
CWL	5	370	1,738	704
Engineering	546	512	476	511
Fire	540	498	459	499
Inspections	1,448	1,484	1,291	1,408
Planning	2,544	2,370	2,095	2,336
Residential (Eng.)	1,729	1,648	1,343	1,573
Total	7,810	7,690	8,107	7,869

Review tasks appear to have increased between 2024 and 2025, most likely due to the inclusion of City Water and Light (CWL) in the ProjectDox portal as an assigned reviewer (370 tasks in 2024 to 1,738 in 2025). Other review groups had fewer assigned tasks in 2025.

ProjectDox also comes pre-loaded with reporting metrics that measure the time per review task. A summary of this data is found below:

TASK LENGTH (DAYS) BY REVIEW GROUP 2023-2025

Review Group	2023	2024	2025	Average
Addressing	0.8	1.6	1.1	1.1
Commercial (Eng.)	2.2	3.0	1.8	2.3
CWL	3.4	1.1	0.6	0.7
Engineering	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.6
Fire	1.8	2.3	1.8	2.0

Review Group	2023	2024	2025	Average
Inspections	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.5
Planning	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Residential (Eng.)	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total	7,810	7,690	8,107	1.0

Across all review groups, the average time for a review task was 1 day. Tasks listed under the Commercial (2.3), Fire (2.0), and Inspections (1.5) review groupings had the longest associated completion times.

REVIEW TASKS BY REVIEW CYCLE (2023-2025)

Review Cycle	2023	2024	2025	Average
1	4,567	4,533	4,823	4,641
2	2,123	1,988	2,049	2,053
3	727	737	726	730
4	266	246	282	265
5	71	113	129	104
6	27	35	48	37
7	17	32	23	24
8	10	6	11	9
9	2	0	11	4
10	0	0	5	2
Total	7,810	7,690	8,107	7,869

Out of the 8,107 tasks performed in 2025, 59% were performed during a project's initial review. 39% of tasks were performed on applications in their second-to-fourth review cycle. 1% of tasks were performed during cycles six through ten.

The next table expands the above data to include the review disciplines performing each task:

REVIEW TASKS BY REVIEW CYCLE/ GROUP (2023-2025)

Review Cycle/ Group	2023	2024	2025
Addressing	**479**	**345**	**252**
1	282	155	98
2	132	96	76
3	45	54	37
4	18	19	19
5	2	12	13
6	0	4	5
7	0	4	2
8	0	1	1
9	0	0	1
Commercial (Eng.)	**519**	**463**	**453**

Review Cycle/ Group	2023	2024	2025
1	245	214	206
2	150	124	136
3	70	68	62
4	34	31	25
5	10	15	14
6	5	5	5
7	2	5	3
8	2	1	1
9	1	0	1
CWL	**5**	**370**	**1,738**
1	0	263	1,110
2	1	80	419
3	1	23	131
4	2	4	47
5	1	0	16
6	0	0	6
7	0	0	3
8	0	0	2
9	0	0	2
10	0	0	2
Engineering	**546**	**512**	**476**
1	260	243	213
2	164	138	144
3	72	75	69
4	31	30	25
5	9	15	15
6	4	5	5
7	3	5	3
8	2	1	1
9	1	0	1
Fire	**540**	**498**	**459**
1	249	233	204
2	163	137	135
3	73	75	67
4	35	28	26
5	9	14	15
6	5	5	7
7	4	5	3
8	2	1	1
9	0	0	1
Inspections	**1,448**	**1,484**	**1,291**
1	816	824	715

Review Cycle/ Group	2023	2024	2025
2	404	418	357
3	149	154	130
4	54	51	48
5	15	23	24
6	5	7	8
7	3	6	4
8	2	1	2
9	0	0	2
10	0	0	1
Planning	**2,544**	**2,370**	**2,095**
1	1,609	1,522	1,357
2	644	570	481
3	197	181	153
4	64	58	63
5	17	25	23
6	7	7	9
7	4	6	4
8	2	1	2
9	0	0	2
10	0	0	1
Residential (Eng.)	**1,729**	**1,648**	**1,343**
1	1,106	1,079	920
2	465	425	301
3	120	107	77
4	28	25	29
5	8	9	9
6	1	2	3
7	1	1	1
8	0	0	1
9	0	0	1
10	0	0	1
Total	7,810	7,690	8,107

PERMIT LETTER WORKLOAD (IWORQ)

iWorq is also used to track the issuance of permit letters, which include various types of certificates of occupancy issued by the City:

CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY ISSUED (2023-2025)

Permit Letter Type	2023	2024	2025	Average
Alteration Certificate of Occupancy	8	23	21	17
Certificate of Occupancy	536	598	591	575

Permit Letter Type	2023	2024	2025	Average
Certificate of Occupancy (Fire)	0	0	29	10
Commercial Certificate of Occupancy	176	155	126	152
Temporary Certificate of Occupancy	35	41	45	40
Total	755	817	812	795

The number of COs and TCOs has remained steady between 2023 and 2025. All CO types tracked in iWorq have increased steadily each year, except for Commercial COs, which have decreased year over year since 2023.

MANAGEMENT REPORTS

The City has developed several management-focused reports based on information collected from both ProjectDox and iWorq. These provide leadership with at-a-glance insights into current application/inspection counts and also define application timelines. It is important to note that the time an application or permit is waiting on the applicant to complete a task is currently shown as time expended by the City. The following tables separately summarize the workload for Engineering, Inspections, and Planning.

ENGINEERING WORKLOAD (2023-2025)

Metric	2023	2024	2025	Average
Driveway	286	326	286	299
Floodplain	25	15	48	29
Grading	262	253	131	215
Lane Closure	9	4	2	5
Right-of-Way	2	4	0	2
Stormwater Management	49	41	35	42
Street Cuts	73	66	50	63
Total Permits	**573**	**594**	**465**	**656**
Total Plan Reviews	**3,065**	**2,986**	**2,505**	**2,852**
Total Inspections	**934**	**2,394**	**3,400**	**2,957**

In these three years, Engineering received an average of 656 engineering permit applications, conducted 2,852 plan reviews, and performed 2,957 inspections. The next table shows the same data for the Inspections department:

INSPECTIONS WORKLOAD (2023-2025)

Metric	2023	2024	2025	Average
Electric	1,981	1,908	1,809	1,899
HVAC	1,735	1,824	1,678	1,746
Building	1,003	1,142	907	1,017
Electric	1,506	1,827	1,588	1,640
Total Permits	**6,225**	**6,701**	**5,982**	**6,303**

Metric	2023	2024	2025	Average
Total Plan Reviews	**1,449**	**1,479**	**1,285**	**1,404**
Building	1,421	1,669	1,499	1,530
Electrical	1,831	682	1,311	1,275
HVAC	1,223	1,394	1,212	1,276
Plumbing	2,046	2,071	1,882	2,000
Director	174	216	184	191
Total Inspections	**6,695**	**6,032**	**6,088**	**6,272**

Between 2023 and 2025, Inspections received an average of 6,303 permit applications, performed 1,404 plan reviews, and conducted an average of 6,272 inspections. The final table shows this data for the Planning department:

PLANNING WORKLOAD (2023-2025)

Metric	2023	2024	2025	Average
C-Signs	236	199	187	207
C-Temp Trailer/Structure	0	0	3	1
Communication Tower	14	18	13	15
Fence	525	506	455	495
Fence/Wall	0	0	1	0
Minor Plat/Subdivision/Replat	65	10	37	37
Mobile Vending	9	7	17	11
Storm Shelter	6	2	6	5
Total Permits	**855**	**742**	**719**	**772**
Total Plan Reviews	**2,621**	**2,263**	**1,346**	**2,889**

Planning received an average of 772 permit applications and performed an average of 2,889 plan reviews between 2023 and 2025.

Lastly, the plan review tasks performed by the Fire Marshal's Office were provided:

FIRE MARSHAL WORKLOAD (PLAN REVIEW) (2023-2025)

Metric	2023	2024	2025	Average
Plan Review	497	513	480	497

Fire Marshals conducted an average of 497 plan reviews during this time period.

Additionally, the City provided an internally developed management report tracking application review times for BLD and SGN applications between 2023 and 2025. The following table shows the processing times associated with these applications:

MANAGEMENT REPORT BLD AND SGN TIMELINES (2023-2025)

Tag	2023	2024	2025	Average
BLD	54.5	23.3	24.5	35.2

Tag	2023	2024	2025	Average
SGN	19.1	11.2	12.4	14.6
Total	**49.7**	**21.7**	**22.9**	**32.5**

Both BLD and SGN applications saw a significant decrease in processing time between 2023 and 2024, followed by a slight increase in 2025. The following table shows this information, including the total number of applications (Projects), the City's review time (City), and the time allocated to applicant tasks (Appl.):

MANAGEMENT REPORT BLD AND SGN TIMELINES BY ENTITY (2023-2025)

	2023			2024			2025		
Tag	Projects	City	Appl.	Projects	City	Appl.	Projects	City	Appl.
BLD	1,607	14.57	38.62	1,444	11.89	11.43	1,301	12.93	11.48
SGN	251	9.79	9.30	217	8.64	2.58	192	9.00	3.35
Total	**1,858**	**13.93**	**34.66**	**1,661**	**11.47**	**10.27**	**1,493**	**12.43**	**10.44**

In 2024 and 2025, the time split between the City and applicants on projects for BLD submittals was relatively equal, while SGN applications saw a heavier time investment from City personnel.

The data in each of the preceding tables includes all review cycles associated with a larger project. The review cycle associated with each task is also tracked as a field in the City's ProjectDox reporting framework. The table below shows the total number of tasks performed in review cycles one through ten (across all review disciplines):

2.3 TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION

The City utilizes iWorq as its system of record for its permitting process. ProjectDox is utilized as its intake, routing, and review software.

Name	Use
Adobe	Used by some reviewers for digital markup of plans.
iWorq	Permitting system of record. Used to issue permits. Also used to result inspections.
Microsoft Office	Emails, documentation, general use
ProjectDox	Used to allow for online submittal and digital plan review. All routing and review is performed through this software. Used by all review disciplines.
Springbrook	Used to reconcile fee payments.

2.5 CUSTOMER SERVICE APPROACHES

IN-PERSON SERVICES

With the exception of Fire and CWL staff, all review disciplines are located on the third floor of the City's Municipal Services building. There are several public-facing counters located in this area, including a main counter for customers to collect paper applications (primarily for over-the-counter permits). The counter is staffed by an Administrative Assistant, but other staff are available to field customer inquiries if needed.

WEBSITE SERVICES

Each division/department involved in review has a dedicated homepage on the City's website accessible via the "Departments" tab. Each City review group – with the exception of the Fire Marshal division – provides some means of applying for a permit. The information available to users online for each team is listed below:

- The Engineering department has a "Plan Review" tab on the sidebar of its page. This provides an overview of the steps involved in Residential and Commercial review. Applicants are directed to the Planning department to apply, and there is no direct link to an online portal. Additionally, there is a hyperlink to the State of Arkansas' website detailing General Stormwater NPDES Permits.
- The Inspections department page contains links to all current codes in use, and also provides an overview of the steps involved in Residential and Commercial review. Users are directed to submit an email to request an inspection, and an inspection fee schedule is provided. Selecting the "Apply for Permit" option on the page's sidebar takes the user to the City's ProjectDox portal. This page allows for online submittal and also contains submittal requirements for Residential New Home, Commercial New Development, and Fence permits.
- The Planning and Zoning department page provides users with PDF copies of various planning application types, directing users to submit via email. There are user guides on submitting various online applications, including residential, commercial, and on/off premise sign permits. Lastly, the homepage contains links to various resources (primarily local ordinances) as well as some FAQs pertinent to the planning process. From the sidebar, users can select "Apply for Permit" to access the City's ProjectDox portal.
- The Fire Marshal division has its own dedicated page, but this does not contain any resources or other documentation related to its role in plan review. Users are directed to the division's email with any questions.

3. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

3.1 DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

This Best Management Practices (BMPs) assessment represents an important step in reporting initial findings and improvement opportunities related to Jonesboro's overall permitting review process. The evaluation is presented in a checklist format and identifies whether current practices meet the target.

These BMPs are drawn from a combination of nationally recognized standards and professional guidance, collectively including:

- Documented best practices, recommended practices, and performance benchmarks established by nationally recognized professional and regulatory organizations relevant to community development and development review, including but not limited to: American Planning Association (APA), International Code Council (ICC), National Association of Counties (NACo), International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and applicable state and federal guidance.
- Prevailing practices observed in comparable, high-performing community development organizations, informed by the study team's direct experience evaluating development review, permitting, and land-use administration functions across a range of local governments.
- An objective assessment of the extent to which the City's current practices align with, partially meet, or fall short of these established performance standards and benchmarks.

According to the statement description, BMPs and industry standards generally require a policy, procedure, or program to be documented to meet the standard. By comparing existing practices against these standards, the evaluation identifies strengths, potential gaps, and opportunities for improvement to guide future policy updates, workflow refinements, and strategic investments in administrative capacity.

An 'X' In the Meets column indicates that the practice does not meet the described operational target. A '~' indicates some progress toward the operational target, but the best practices are still unmet. A '✓' indicates that the best practice is met.

Best Practice / Operational Target	Meets Target	Improvement Opportunity / Notes
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION		
1. The City has goals, objectives, and performance measures for development review activities.	X	Goals and objectives for development and permitting activities do not exist.
2. Managers routinely review performance (speed, efficiency, customer service) of the development review process.	✓	Chiefs/Directors meet weekly to review application and permit review times by reviewing reports.
3. Managers and staff have access to clear and accurate reports showing current workload, timelines, and other measures of performance.	~	Reports are available in both ProjectDox and iWorQ. Staff need ProjectDox customer service assistance to change existing reports or create new reports in that system. Access to reports is provided to Directors and Mid-Managers with administrative permissions in ProjectDox and iWorQ.
4. The department has backup plans in place in the event of the absence or departure of key staff.	X	No formal plans are in place.
5. Customer satisfaction with each phase of the development process is monitored.	X	Surveys or other satisfaction gathering tools are not currently utilized.
6. Staff are provided with ongoing in-service training opportunities for their professional development.	~	Inspections and Fire Inspectors are maintaining their inspection certifications. Other staff in Inspections, Planning and Engineering have limited opportunities for their professional development.
7. Internal staff training is provided for technology, process policies and code changes.	X	There is no formalized training in place. The Civil Engineer is primarily the one who provides permitting software training to new staff.
8. The organizational structure of each department is designed to promote career progression.	~	Career progression is possible with the organizational structure of the review discipline departments but is not formally promoted.
9. There is clear oversight and coordination of development review processes.	~	The Chief Engineer has taken on this role informally.

Best Practice / Operational Target	Meets Target	Improvement Opportunity / Notes
CUSTOMER INTERACTION AND INFORMATION		
10. The City provides easy-to-understand and attractive guides to the planning, building permit, and inspections process.	~	There is a development guide in place, and it is available online, but it is over 3 years old and requires an update. Otherwise, there are some other submittal checklists that can be found on the City's website or three that are available in the ProjectDox customer portal (Fence, New Commercial Development, New Residential Home).
11. The City has an in-person "one stop shop" that includes all development review entities at one location.	~	While the development review disciplines are on the same floor as City Hall, they aren't working together as a one stop shop.
12. The City's website includes a virtual "one stop shop" that provides an overview of all development review requirements and links to development review requirements by department.	X	The City does not have a single development webpage that provides an overview of the development review process. ProjectDox is the software used for the permitting and application submittal customer portal.
13. The fee schedule is published and regularly updated.	X	No, last updated in 2017. Needs to be updated. Consider a plan review fee as part of an updated fee schedule.
14. The City proactively engages the business and development community through periodic communications.	✓	Construction Outreach Coordinator (COC) was actively involved with local homebuilders' association (but that group has since dissolved). COC is now proactively engaging with business and development community.
15. The City regularly obtains input from the business and development community, and recent customers on issues related to development review and permitting.	X	No formalized and regular efforts are in place.
16. The City provides clear and comprehensive checklists identifying all items required to be submitted for each application type.	~	Some checklist elements are a part of the ProjectDox fillable forms on the customer portal.
17. Application forms are available online and can be completed electronically.	✓	All planning applications and building permits must be submitted through ProjectDox portal.
18. Long-range planning documents and land development codes are available online.	✓	These are accessible through the Planning Department webpage.

Best Practice / Operational Target	Meets Target	Improvement Opportunity / Notes
19. The most recently adopted ordinance, regulations, and design standards are available online.	✓	These are located through respective department's webpages.
20. The City has a dedicated webpage that identifies major ongoing development projects.	~	Monthly reports are posted on the City's website (under the Inspections Department) that lists the number and type of building permits submitted.
21. The City's website provides direct contact information for department staff.	✓	Each department's webpage has a link to their respective directory that includes staff listing, email address, and phone number.
22. The City has established standards for responding to customer inquiries.	X	No formalized standards have been adopted.
REVIEW PROCESSES		
23. Intake staff review applications for completeness at time of submittal.	~	This step is a part of the intake process but it was noted that some information is missed at intake. It is unclear If it because of poor transfer capabilities between ProjectDox and iWorQ or other challenges.
24. Plans are routed only to departments for whom the project is relevant.	✓	Manual routing occurs.
25. Staff uses a case management approach for larger projects.	X	The concept of having an application project manager lead an application or permit from start to finish is not currently occurring.
26. Pre-application meetings are held for major projects.	~	These are available upon applicant request, or are recommended by the Construction Outreach Coordinator. There is no formal application for the meetings to be held.
27. Review timelines have been established and are posted on the City's website.	~	No formal timelines have been adopted. However, ProjectDox is set to three days (business days) for each review. State law is 30 days for building permits (newly approved in last legislation cycle). Stormwater reviews are 15 days per local ordinance.
28. Expedited building plan review services are provided.	X	This service is not an option.

Best Practice / Operational Target	Meets Target	Improvement Opportunity / Notes
29. Adopted review timelines are met consistently.	X	Review timelines are not currently adopted. ProjectDox has a generic three-day review period set for each task within a review.
30. Resubmittal review turnaround times are quicker than new applications.	~	While resubmittal timelines are not in place, the data indicates re-reviews are happening faster than the initial review.
31. An internal staff review committee is responsible for ensuring that larger scale developments, involving public improvements, address all City requirements.	~	This is not formalized as a committee, but Chiefs/Managers and the Civil Engineer meet weekly on Thursdays to review the timing of applications and reviews. Applicants are not present in the meetings. The goal of the meetings is to identify permits or applications that are delayed (stagnant by 10 days), discuss the reason for the delay, and to determine a course of action (what staff follow up is needed).
32. All review comments are incorporated into a single comment letter and distributed to applicant by project manager.	✓	Comment letters are not being created, Rather, staff review comments are made available to applicants as a batch in ProjectDox, not individually. Review status will indicate when a review discipline is complete, but comments are not made available until all review disciplines have completed their reviews.
33. Review comment letters are consistent in their approach, format, and information provided.	~	Review comment letters are available in the customer portal as a list organized by review discipline. Several “template” comments are included, but no consistency. No single staff member is reviewing staff comments before they are distributed.
34. Project review / comment letters provide reference to checklist and / or code reference.	~	Project and plan review comments are added by staff in the ProjectDox system. No consistency is occurring across review disciplines.
35. Plans are reviewed by each review discipline concurrently to avoid delays.	✓	Applications are concurrently reviewed by all disciplines.

Best Practice / Operational Target	Meets Target	Improvement Opportunity / Notes
36. For re-submitted plans, reviewers focus on ensuring that comments have been addressed, not issues that should have been brought up in initial review.	~	There is informal guidance to ensure initial reviews are comprehensive, but there isn't anything formalized in procedures that clarifies when new issues can be brought up in re-reviews.
37. Applicants can track their permit application online.	✓	Yes, until the construction phase of the permit (or when the permit/application is transferred to iWorQ and inspections can be scheduled).
38. Staff reports to Plan Commission and/or City Council are thorough.	✓	Staff reports appear brief but do address criteria.
39. Simple permits (e.g., basic electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits, minor building alterations, PV/EV permits) can be issued on the spot or online with no review, subject to inspection.	~	Not instantaneous but approved with no plan review.
40. An online inspection request system is utilized to receive inspections with linkage to the permit information system.	X	Inspections are requested by phone in the Inspections Department. Staff then add the inspection to the permit information within iWorQ. iWorQ has capability for online inspection requests but is not currently being utilized by the City.
41. Applicants can request inspections up to close of business on the day before; next day inspections are available for 100% of requests.	✓	Yes, requests can be made up to 8 a.m. the same day. Inspectors can prioritize inspections.
42. Customers are given an approximate time to expect their inspector.	X	No 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. except for the ones that are prioritized.
43. Combination inspectors are used to reduce the need for duplicate inspections at a single project.	~	All Senior Inspectors are certified to perform combination inspections, but this is not typically occurring unless one is covering the other.
44. Building Inspectors conduct between 12 and 15 inspections per day.	✓	As a whole, the City conducted an average of 13 inspections per day between 2023 and 2025.
45. The City charges a re-inspection fee to encourage builders to make sure work is complete and ready to inspect at time of inspection.	~	A re-inspection fee permitted but not always charged.

Best Practice / Operational Target	Meets Target	Improvement Opportunity / Notes
46. Zoning inspections are completed before the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is approved.	✓	Yes, this is a standard process.
47. For a CO inspection, all applicable inspectors complete the inspection at the same time.	✓	Yes, even with a re-inspection.
TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION		
48. All review entities have access to the City's primary permitting and plan review software systems.	✓	Including the non-City review agency, Jonesboro City Water and Light.
49. The application/permit software system can calculate the appropriate plan check, permitting, and development review fees.	~	Staff member must initiate an invoice.
50. Applicants can apply, pay for, and receive applications/permits, some instantly, using an online portal.	✓	Online portal can be used after invoice is issued. Also, a pay in person option.
51. Staff can look up the status of an application/permit, including comments from reviewers, online or using the software.	✓	Comments are entered into the ProjectDox system and are transferred into iWorQ.
52. Application/permit tracking software is used to manage the permit intake, review, and issuance process as well as related inspections.	✓	ProjectDox and iWorQ are used in combination.
53. All plan review comments are entered into the system and available to other reviewers, permit techs, and applicants (via the front end).	✓	There is no consistency in how review comments are entered, or when they are required.
54. The permitting system electronically routes applications to all reviewers, who can also electronically approve, disapprove, and provide comments.	✓	This step needs to be initiated by the Planning Technician in ProjectDox.
55. The City is moving towards a paperless system for all stages of permitting and development review.	~	City does not accept all planning application types and engineering permit types through the permitting software systems. However, there is intention for the City to move toward a 100% paperless system.

Best Practice / Operational Target	Meets Target	Improvement Opportunity / Notes
56. The permitting system generates clear, user friendly reports on permitting activity which can be posted to the internet.	~	Reports are possible and are being created. Used for internal team discussions to ensure review timeliness and some posted to the internet for public viewing. There is room for improvement to automate more reports.
57. Development staff has access to applicable Geographic Information System (GIS) map layers.	✓	Staff have access to view, but there is limited access to staff for permissions to modify data.
58. The general public can look up zoning information, flood zones, and other pertinent information using a web-based GIS.	✓	This is available on the embedded link.
59. Inspectors enter inspection results and correction items in the field via tablet and have it instantly available and viewable online.	✓	Laptop is available in City vehicles are used to view plan sets and log inspection results.
60. The application/permitting software system is utilized as a database for all development related information for the parcel/address.	~	A combination of the two permitting software is the development related database (which can be problematic for public records).
61. Staff users of the permitting software are provided with new user training upon hiring with the City.	~	No formal training is established but guidance is provided to new hires from existing staff.
62. Staff users of the permitting software are provided with training when new features of the permitting software are released.	~	No formal training is established but guidance is provided to new hires from existing staff.

3.2 KEY STRENGTHS

Although the best practice diagnostic assessment is designed to identify opportunities for improvement, it also recognizes the strengths of the current processes. Some of the key strengths of the Jonesboro permitting review process include:

- **Management and Administration:**
  a. The division/department leaders meet weekly to review current permitting reports and focus on projects that are stalled, delayed or otherwise in the system for longer than 10 business days.
- **Customer Interaction and Information:**

a. There is a sole customer intake portal (ProjectDox) that applicants utilize for to all building permits and for some planning applications.

b. All permit forms, planning applications, and city regulations and codes are available to the public digitally.

c. The City has recently implemented a dedicated outreach position to assist the business and development community in navigating the permitting process.

- **Processes:**

a. Plans are routed solely to relevant review disciplines, and reviews are generally expected to be completed concurrently within 3 days.

b. The City allows for same-day inspections as long as they are scheduled before 8 a.m. on the day of the inspection.

c. The City ensures that zoning inspections are conducted before CO issuance, and all inspectors are required to attend a CO site visit for final inspection.

- **Technology Utilization:**

a. The City has implemented and adopted the use of permitting software (iWorq and ProjectDox) as a core component of its permitting process.

b. Digital intake and processing of the majority of applications/plans and real-time performance reporting is occurring.

c. Applicants are able to track their permit status through ProjectDox and receive all review comments in a batch format.

d. GIS is utilized by the City, which extends to allowing the public access to zoning information, flood zones, and other map-based information.

These are just a few examples of the strengths of the current operations and where the City is meeting or is actively working to meet best practices.

3.3 KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The comparison of the City's current approach to best management practices also identified opportunities for improvement.

- **Management and Administration:**

a. The City does not possess clear performance objectives for the permitting process, and performance reporting may be limited due to a lack of access to performance dashboards in the software system(s).

b. The fee schedule used to assess permitting fees has not been updated since 2017, and there is no plan review fee collected prior to permit issuance.

c. There are opportunities to expand training offerings within the various review groups. As well, there is an opportunity to develop a formalized training program for all new and existing staff in response to code changes, process changes, and software utilization.

- **Customer Interaction and Information:**
  a. The City is not gathering formal input from the development and business community (as well as other recent customers) regarding the permitting and review process.
  b. The City is not utilizing a comprehensive "one-stop shop," both digitally and in person, for permitting activities.
  c. The City's development guide is outdated (over three years old). There are also opportunities to update and formalize the forms and checklists currently available to customers.
  d. The City does not have a standard approach for responding to customer inquiries and does not publish major development project updates online.
- **Processes:**
  a. The intake process is crossing over four different administrative level positions and there is a lack of clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for each position for the intake process.
  b. Opportunity to utilizing a case management approach for larger building permits and planning applications.
  c. Adopt formal plan review timelines and resubmittal timelines.
- **Technology Utilization:**
  a. Implementing online inspection requests.
  b. The use of separate systems (iWorq and ProjectDox) may be impacting the City's ability to maintain permitting data. There are additional technology improvements that can be made, including automating the fee calculation process, automating permitting performance reports, and providing user training on the software system(s) upon initial hire and in response to major updates.

The above items do not align with best practices and pose challenges that affect the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and operations. The Matrix project team will expand on these and other issues in subsequent analyses, drafts, and final reports.

APPENDIX B: PROCESS DIAGRAMS

FEBRUARY 25, 2026

FINAL

JONESBORO, AR

MATRIX
CONSULTING GROUP

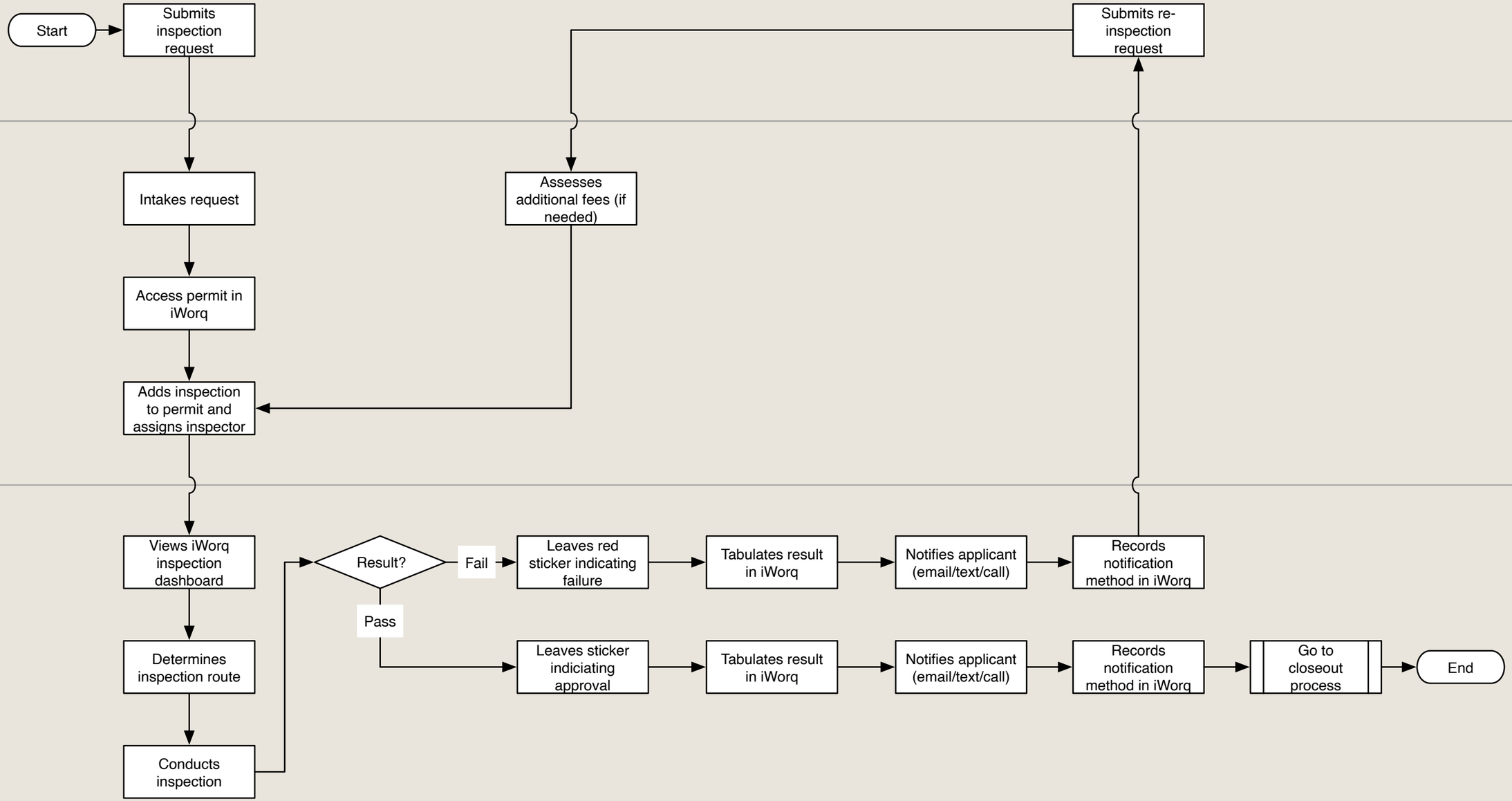
Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

Building Permit Inspections

Applicant

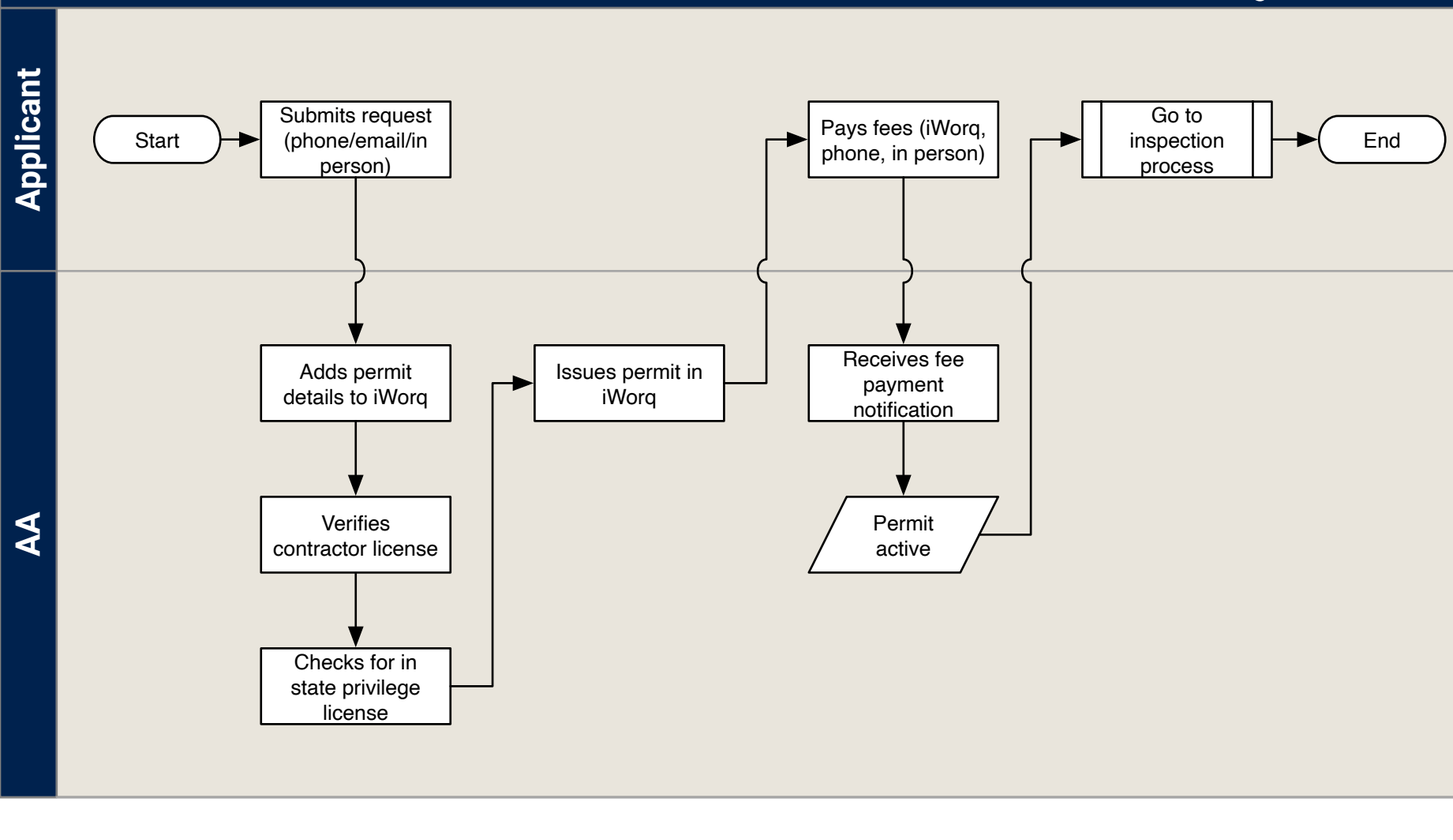
Staff

Stakeholder



Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

OTC Building Permit Process

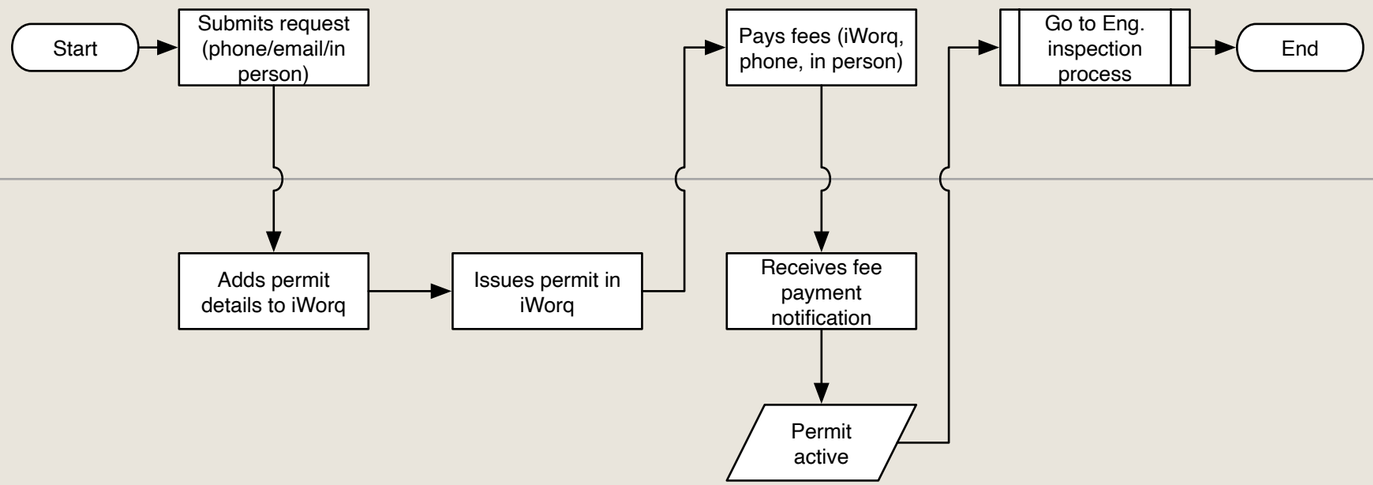


Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

OTC Engineering Permit Process

Applicant

AA



Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

Building Permit Plan Review Process (Pg. 1 of 3)

Applicant

Start

Starts application via ProjectDox

Enters request type and project name

Uploads plansets

Revises and resubmits

Permit Tech

Accepts pre-screen review task in ProjectDox

Project Planner

Performs completeness check

Complete?

No

Selects “pre-screen corrections” in ProjectDox

Yes

Assigns reviewers in ProjectDox

Checks permit in iWorq against ProjectDox data

Accurate?

No

Manually updates iWorq

Yes

Updates iWorq status to “In Review”

Reviewer

Receives review task in ProjectDox

A

Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

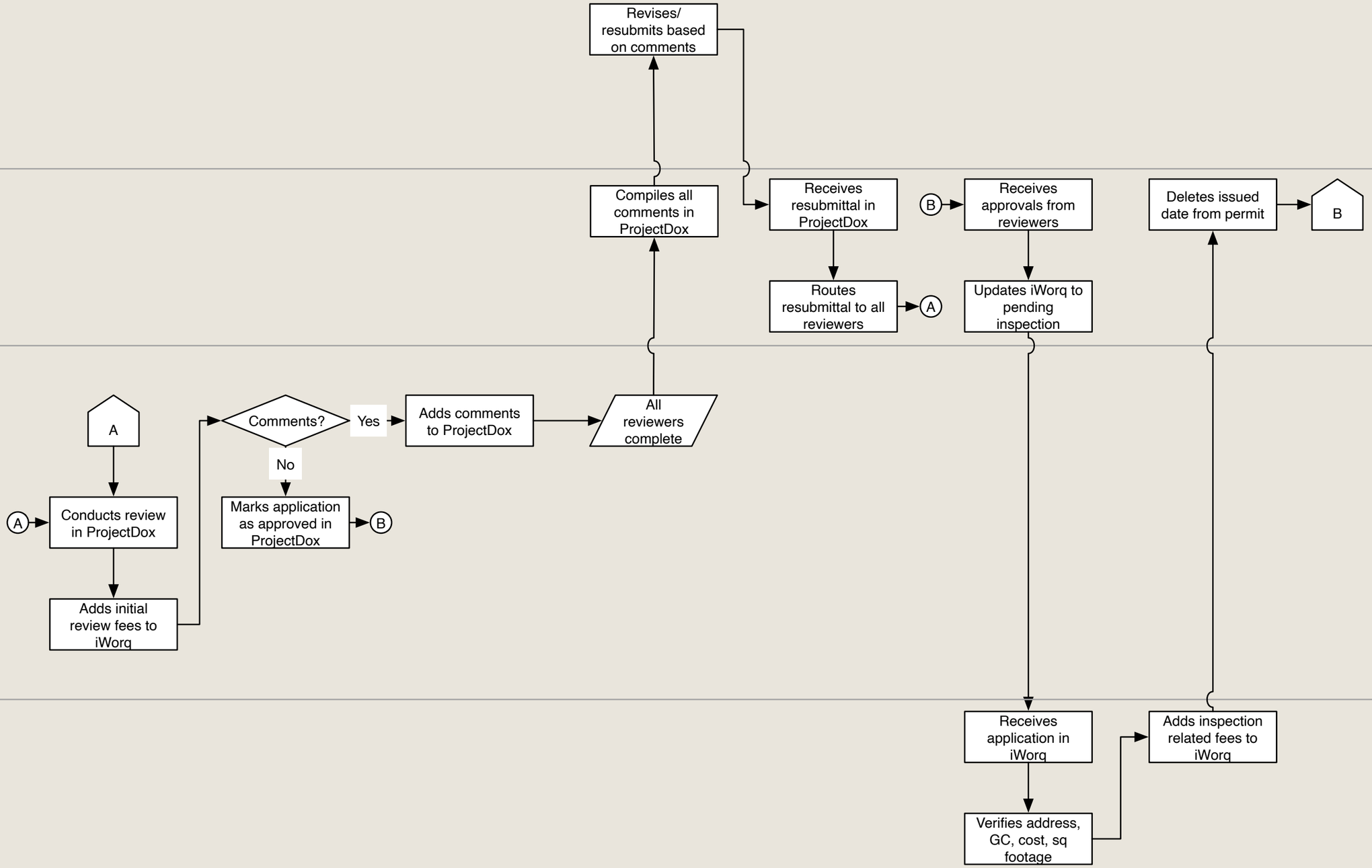
Building Permit Plan Review Process (Pg. 2 of 3)

Applicant

Project Planner

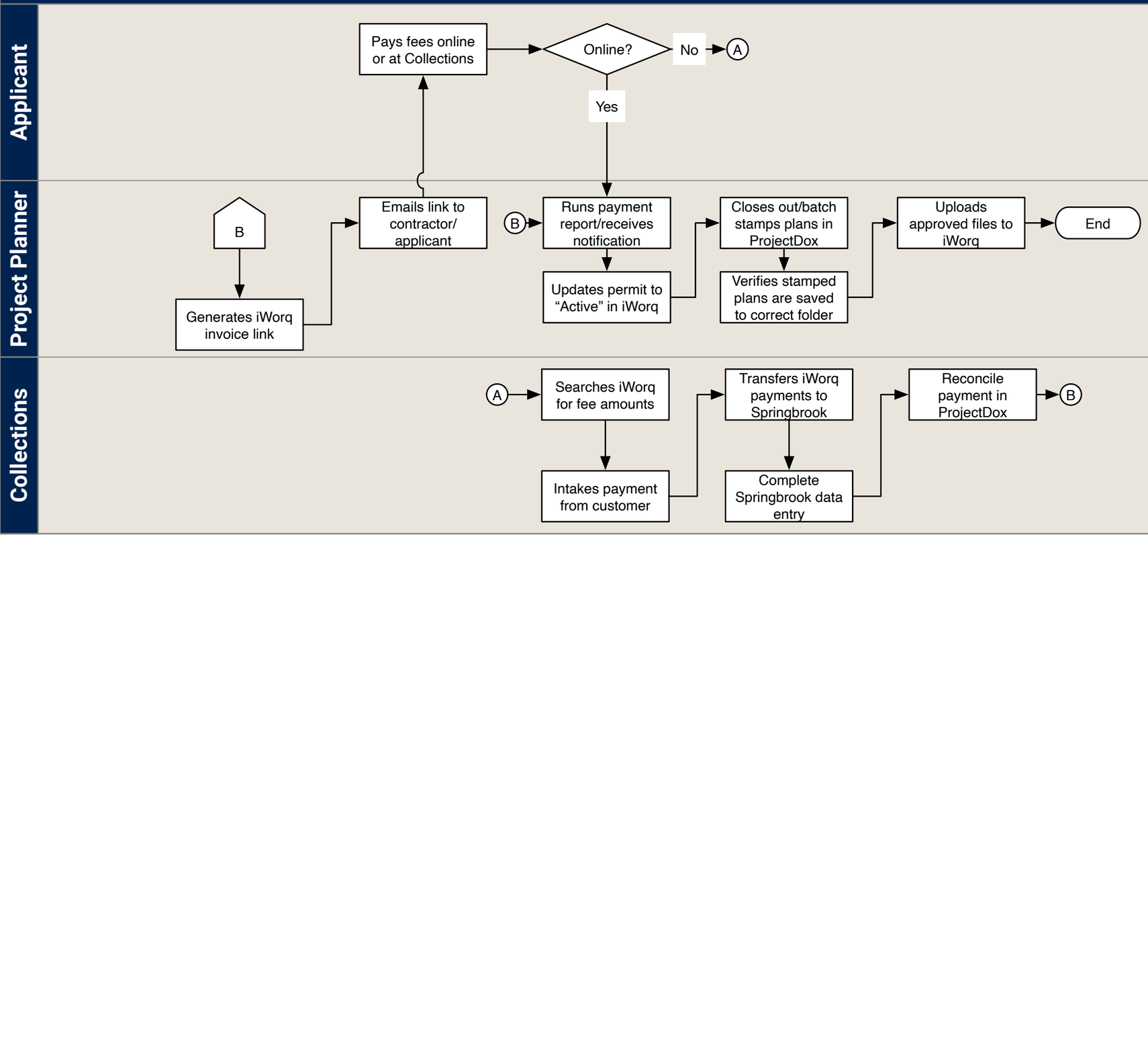
Reviewers

Inspections AA



Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

Building Permit Plan Review Process (Pg. 3 of 3)



Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

Existing Certificate of Occupancy Process

Applicant

Start

Submits paper application (Privilege Lic.)

Planning

Reviews for acceptable use

Inspections AA

Adds information into iWorq

Generates permit in iWorq

Go to inspection process

Issues CO through iWorq

Collections

Collects fee

Issues Privilege License

End

Jonesboro, AR Permitting Processes

New Build Certificate of Occupancy Process

Applicant

Start

Submits CO application

Completes required inspections/ adjustments

Submits architect completion letter/ other forms

Inspections AA

Verifies that all inspections are complete

Complete?

No

Instructs applicant to complete inspections

A

Yes

Generates new inspection in iWorq for CO

Scans signed copy into iWorq

Provides physical CO to applicant

Closes permit in iWorq

End

Inspectors

Receives task to perform final inspection

Ext. Reviewers

Receives calendar invite to perform inspection

Performs final inspection (concurrent)

Provides results to CBI

Signs CO

CBI

Tabulates results in iWorq

A

All pass?

Yes

Generates CO in iWorq

Signs CO

APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK REPORT

January 23, 2026

FINAL

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

MATRIX
CONSULTING GROUP

APPENDIX C: TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS 1

1.1 KEY FINDINGS 1

2. GENERAL SURVEY QUESTIONS 3

3. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 5

3.1 OVERALL PERMITTING PROCESS 5

3.2 PLANNING AND ZONING 10

3.3 BUILDING PERMITS 14

3.4 BUILDING INSPECTIONS 18

3.5 ENGINEERING PERMITS 22

3.6 ENGINEERING INSPECTIONS 26

3.7 FIRE PERMITS 30

3.8 FIRE INSPECTIONS 34

4.1 STRENGTHS 38

4.2 IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES 40

5. FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK 42

5.1 KEY FINDINGS 42

1. INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

Matrix Consulting Group was engaged by the City of Jonesboro, Arkansas, to assess the organizational structures and operational practices of its permitting process and building code. As part of this assessment, the project team conducted three focus group sessions (one virtual, two in person) and issued an anonymous survey to past participants of the process. This report summarizes the feedback and findings of these exercises, with the first portion focusing on the results of the customer survey. The survey was issued via SurveyMonkey and was run from December 15, 2025 to January 9, 2026. It received feedback from 220 respondents in total.

1.1 KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings were identified as a result of this analysis:

- **Overall Process:** Respondents were mostly positive towards the level of customer service they received from staff, and also likely to indicate that their questions regarding technical requirements and the review process were answered. Participants were mixed towards the availability of information online, as well as the overall culture of the City towards development.
- **Planning:** Regarding planning applications, participants were likely to agree that they knew what to submit, who was responsible for reviewing it, and how to address their comments. Mixed input was provided on initial review quality, review coordination between teams, comment clarity, and overall timeliness.
- **Building Permits:** Building permit applicants understood the required permits and documentation, how to submit, and found review comments to be clear and actionable. Slightly less well-received statements related to initial review quality, review coordination, and timeliness.
- **Building Inspections:** All statements related to building inspections received strong agreement overall. The most positively received statement dealt with the punctuality of building inspectors.
- **Engineering:** Those who had applied for engineering permits were likely to understand what types of permits and supporting documentation were required, as well as how to submit their application. Applicants were generally less positive towards the quality of their initial review, coordination between review groups, and the length of time it took to process their application.

- **Engineering Inspections:** Nearly all statements regarding engineering inspections received highly positive results, with the lowest-scoring statements relating to inspectors' consistency in applying codes and the efficiency of the final inspection/COO process.
- **Fire Permits:** Fire permit applicants largely understood the required permits and where to submit. They also received clearly applicable code references in their comments. Lower-rated statements pertained to coordination between reviewers and processing times.
- **Fire Inspections:** Most respondents provided positive feedback regarding fire inspections. The lowest-rated statement in this section dealt with the consistency in which inspectors applied code.
- **Strengths:** Open-response comments highlighted staff's knowledge and helpfulness as the greatest strength of the process. Other frequently cited strengths included the overall ease of the process and the online system.
- **Improvements:** The most commonly suggested improvement area was improvements to the portal/permitting software, while other common improvement suggestions related to the speed of the process as well as various permit requirements and rules.

2. GENERAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey began by asking a series of general questions, including their role in interacting with the process, the functions they interacted with, and the frequency of their interactions with the permitting function:

What is your primary role in interacting with the process?	%	#
Architect / Designer	5%	10
Builder	13%	28
Business Owner (local/small)	17%	38
Contractor for specific trades	24%	52
Engineer	5%	11
Environmental Consultant	0%	1
Homeowner	24%	53
Planner	0%	0
Property Developer	5%	11
Other (please specify)	7%	16

The most common respondent groups were contractors and homeowners, with each comprising 24% of responses, respectively. Those who selected “other” provided roles such as roofing, house demolition, office/property management, sign construction, and land surveying.

Which permitting functions do you primarily interact with?	%	#
Planning and Zoning Applications	38%	83
Civil Engineering Review/Infrastructure Plan Review	20%	45
Building Plan Review and Permits	67%	148
Building/Engineering Inspections	27%	60
Other (please specify)	12%	27
None of the above	0%	0

67% of respondents had utilized the City’s building plan review and permitting function, with planning and zoning applications being the second most commonly interacted with function (38% of participants). Functions listed under “other” included fence permits, demolition, road closures, and licenses to operate.

How often do you interact with permitting?	%	#
Several times per month	19%	41
Several times per year	28%	62
Once or twice per year	20%	43
Less than once or twice a year	34%	74

66% of respondents interact with the process on at least an annual basis, while 34% interacted with permitting less than once or twice per year.

When did you last interact with permitting?	%	#
Within the last 3 months	45%	99
Within the last 6 months	16%	35
Within the last 12 months	17%	38
Over 12 months ago	22%	48

45% of participants had interacted with permitting within the last three months, making it the most common response to this question.

3. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Multiple survey question banks presented statements for participants to react to. Respondents were given the option to strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with each statement. A not applicable option was also provided. Question banks were grouped based on key themes (e.g., overall satisfaction, communication, workload, etc.).

3.1 OVERALL PERMITTING PROCESS

The first question bank gauged overall satisfaction with the permitting process. It received input from 186 respondents.

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Permit intake and counter staff provided good customer service	36%	46%	10%	8%
2	Review staff (who answer technical questions and who review and comment on the application) provided good customer service	30%	48%	13%	9%
3	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to find the answer online	20%	33%	31%	17%
4	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	32%	40%	16%	12%
5	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to find the answer online	23%	27%	34%	15%
6	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	34%	42%	13%	11%
7	The City's technology for submitting plans was easy to use	21%	42%	22%	15%
8	The City's process for scheduling inspections (by phone call) was easy	33%	46%	14%	7%
9	The City's culture is one of facilitation ("here's how you can move forward") more than regulation ("you can't do that")	23%	33%	21%	23%
10	It was easy to understand what permits and approvals were required to move forward with my project	27%	40%	19%	15%

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
11	It was easy to understand what I needed to submit with my application so that it could be reviewed	26%	43%	20%	10%
12	The City did a good job coordinating input from different teams/departments	28%	37%	21%	14%

The average agreement rating for statements in this section was 67.5%. While no statements in this section received a disagreement rating exceeding 50%, the average disagreement rating was 32.5%.

Customer service quality from intake and review staff (#1 and #2) was generally well-received by respondents. Participants were also more likely to indicate that they found it easy to find answers to questions regarding technical requirements (#4) and the review process (#6) by consulting with a staff member. Finally, respondents were generally positive towards the ease of scheduling inspections (#8). Respondents were more mixed towards the availability of information online (#3 and #5) and were also split on the overarching culture of the City towards development (#9).

3.1.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	Permit intake and counter staff provided good customer service	3.6	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.2		3.2	2.8	2.6
2	Review staff provided good customer service	3.4	2.7	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.2	2.6	2.6
3	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to find the answer online	3.0	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.6	1.0	2.6	2.2	2.4
4	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	3.1	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.6	2.6
5	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to find the answer online	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.6	1.0	2.7	2.4	2.3
6	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	3.1	2.9	2.9	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.6
7	The City's technology for submitting plans was easy to use	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.9	2.8	2.0	2.6	2.8	2.4
8	The City's process for scheduling inspections (by phone call) was easy	3.3	3.4	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.7
9	The City's culture is one of facilitation ("here's how you can move forward") more than regulation ("you can't do that")	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.8	2.5	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.3

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
10	It was easy to understand what permits and approvals were required to move forward with my project	2.8	2.8	2.6	3.2	2.9	1.0	2.7	2.5	2.3
11	It was easy to understand what I needed to submit with my application so that it could be reviewed	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.2	2.9	2.0	2.9	2.6	2.5
12	The City did a good job coordinating input from different teams/departments	3.0	2.7	2.6	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.5

3.1.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	Permit intake and counter staff provided good customer service	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.0
2	Review staff (who answer technical questions and who review and comment on the application) provided good customer service	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.9
3	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to find the answer online	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.5
4	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	2.9	3.1	2.8	2.8
5	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to find the answer online	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.6
6	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.9
7	The City's technology for submitting plans was easy to use	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.7
8	The City's process for scheduling inspections (by phone call) was easy	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.1
9	The City's culture is one of facilitation ("here's how you can move forward") more than regulation ("you can't do that")	2.7	2.8	2.1	2.5
10	It was easy to understand what permits and approvals were required to move forward with my project	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7
11	It was easy to understand what I needed to submit with my application so that it could be reviewed	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8
12	The City did a good job coordinating input from different teams/departments	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.8

3.1.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	Permit intake and counter staff provided good customer service	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.0
2	Review staff (who answer technical questions and who review and comment on the application) provided good customer service	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1
3	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to find the answer online	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7
4	If I had a question about technical standards and requirements, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	2.9	3.1	2.9	2.9
5	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to find the answer online	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7
6	If I had a question about the permit application and review process, it was easy to receive the answer by consulting a staff member	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0
7	The City's technology for submitting plans was easy to use	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8
8	The City's process for scheduling inspections (by phone call) was easy	3.1	3.1	3.2	2.9
9	The City's culture is one of facilitation ("here's how you can move forward") more than regulation ("you can't do that")	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.6
10	It was easy to understand what permits and approvals were required to move forward with my project	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8
11	It was easy to understand what I needed to submit with my application so that it could be reviewed	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.0
12	The City did a good job coordinating input from different teams/departments	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8

3.2 PLANNING AND ZONING

This question bank was made available to those who indicated having interacted with the Planning and Zoning review and entitlement process. 45% of respondents indicated having experience with this function:

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I clearly understood what planning approvals / permits would be required for my project.	20%	49%	20%	11%
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	22%	42%	24%	12%

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
3	If my application required review/approval from the MAPC, the BZA, or City Council, I understood the process and timeline for these public hearings.	24%	52%	12%	12%
4	I clearly understood who had the decision-making authority (Staff, Board, or Commission) for my application.	20%	44%	19%	17%
5	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	16%	39%	20%	25%
6	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	20%	30%	30%	20%
7	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	19%	39%	30%	12%
8	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	19%	48%	16%	16%
9	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	13%	42%	17%	28%

The average agreement rating for statements in this section was 62%. While no statements in this section received a disagreement rating exceeding 50%, the average disagreement rating was 38%. Participants were more likely to agree that they understood what information was required for their submittal (#1), who had authority over their application (#3), and how to address the comments they received (#8). Each of these statements received agreement ratings higher than 65%.

Respondents provided more mixed input towards the quality of their initial review (#5), coordination between review groups (#6), the clarity of comments (#7), and the timeliness of the process (#9). Each of these statements received agreement ratings lower than 60%.

3.2.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	I clearly understood what planning approvals / permits would be required for my project.	2.5	2.9	2.5	2.8	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.2	2.4
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	2.0	2.8	2.4	2.8	3.3	2.0	2.9	3.2	2.4
3	If my application required review/approval from the MAPC, the BZA, or City Council, I understood the process and timeline for these public hearings.	3.0	2.8	2.4	2.9	3.4		3.2	3.0	2.8
4	I clearly understood who had the decision-making authority (Staff, Board, or Commission) for my application.	2.0	2.6	2.3	2.6	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.8
5	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later.	1.5	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.3		2.8	3.0	2.5
6	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.0	2.5	1.9	2.9	2.3		3.0	3.0	2.4
7	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	1.5	2.8	2.5	2.3	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.8	2.6
8	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	2.0	2.9	2.2	2.6	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.7
9	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.5	2.0	1.9	2.4	2.4		2.9	3.0	2.6

3.2.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	I clearly understood what planning approvals / permits would be required for my project.	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.9
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	2.8	2.5	2.7	2.8
3	If my application required review/approval from the MAPC, the BZA, or City Council, I understood the process and timeline for these public hearings.	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.9
4	I clearly understood who had the decision-making authority (Staff, Board, or Commission) for my application.	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.7
5	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
6	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities (the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.6
7	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.7
8	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.8
9	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.4

3.2.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	I clearly understood what planning approvals / permits would be required for my project.	2.9	2.6	2.9	2.7
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.8

3	If my application required review/approval from the MAPC, the BZA, or City Council, I understood the process and timeline for these public hearings.	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.9
4	I clearly understood who had the decision-making authority (Staff, Board, or Commission) for my application.	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.5
5	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later.	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.4
6	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.5
7	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8
8	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6
9	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.6

3.3 BUILDING PERMITS

This question bank was provided to those who had applied for building permits through the Inspections department. 73% of respondents shared that they had interacted with this function:

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	27%	49%	12%	12%
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	25%	48%	16%	11%
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	30%	53%	12%	6%
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	25%	44%	18%	14%
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities (the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	25%	41%	22%	13%
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	23%	51%	12%	14%
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	24%	48%	15%	12%

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	24%	45%	12%	20%
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	26%	43%	17%	14%

The average overall agreement rating for this section was 72.2%, while the average disagreement rating was 27.8%. Participants were most positive towards their understanding of permits and their requirements (#1 and #2), understanding where an application was to be submitted (#4), and the overall clarity and actionability of comments (#6 and #7). All of these statements received agreement ratings exceeding 70%.

While no statements received agreement ratings lower than 60%, the lowest-rated statements pertained to the quality of initial review (#4), coordination between reviewers (#5), the timeliness of the process (#8), and the applicant's understanding of who to contact with questions (#9). Each of these statements had a range of disagreement from 30% to 34%.

3.3.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.2	3.3	2.0	2.8	2.5	2.7
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	3.0	2.9	2.7	3.2	3.0	2.0	2.8	2.5	2.7
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	3.5	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.7
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later.	2.8	2.7	2.5	3.1	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.3	2.4
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	3.2	2.8	2.5	3.0	3.0		2.9	3.0	2.3
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	2.8	2.9	2.4	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.0	2.3	2.6
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	3.0	2.9	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.0	2.9	2.3	2.4
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.5	2.5	2.3	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.4
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	3.2	2.8	2.4	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.4

3.3.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	2.9	2.8	2.8	3.0
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.2
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	2.8	2.9	2.5	2.9
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.6	2.9	2.5	2.9
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.9
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	2.8	2.9	2.6	3.0
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.7	2.9	2.4	2.7
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.9

3.3.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.8
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	2.8	2.8	3.3	2.8

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	3.1	2.9	3.3	3.0
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	2.6	2.9	3.1	2.8
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.7	2.8	3.1	2.6
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	2.9	2.8	3.1	2.6
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	2.9	2.8	3.2	2.6
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.5	2.7	3.4	2.8
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	2.9	2.7	3.2	2.5

3.4 BUILDING INSPECTIONS

Those who had interacted with the building permit process were also asked about their experience regarding the building inspection process:

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	32%	44%	14%	10%
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	35%	47%	8%	10%
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	33%	45%	13%	9%
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	36%	48%	8%	7%
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	25%	52%	15%	8%
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	29%	50%	13%	9%
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	32%	46%	8%	13%

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	29%	45%	11%	15%

The average agreement rating for this section was 78.7%, while the average disagreement rating was 21.3%. All statements in this section received agreement ratings of 70% or higher, with the highest rated statement pertaining to the timeliness of inspectors (#4) at 85%.

3.4.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.		3.3	2.9	3.2	3.0	2.0	2.8	3.0	2.7
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.		3.3	2.7	3.3	3.0	1.0	3.1	3.0	2.8
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.		3.3	2.7	3.2	3.0	1.0	3.2	2.5	2.7
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.		3.4	2.9	3.3	3.5	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.8
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.		3.1	2.6	2.9	3.5		3.1	3.0	2.8
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.		3.2	2.6	3.1	3.5		3.1	3.5	2.8
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.		3.3	2.5	3.1	3.5		3.1	2.5	2.6
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.		3.0	2.4	3.3	3.5	2.0	2.9	3.5	2.6

3.4.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	2.9	2.8	3.1	3.2
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	3.0	3.1	2.7	3.1
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.3
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.1
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	2.9	2.8	2.8	3.2
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.1
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.1

3.4.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.7
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	3.1	3.1	3.5	2.6
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	3.0	3.1	3.5	2.6

4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	3.2	3.2	3.5	2.6
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.6
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	3.1	2.8	3.4	2.4
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	3.1	2.8	3.2	2.6
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.4

3.5 ENGINEERING PERMITS

This question bank was provided to those who had applied for engineering permits. 24.3% of participants had interacted with this function:

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	29%	46%	9%	17%
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	25%	56%	6%	14%
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	28%	56%	3%	14%
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	20%	31%	20%	29%
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	21%	29%	26%	24%
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	29%	40%	14%	17%
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	23%	46%	11%	20%
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	14%	34%	17%	34%
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	26%	40%	11%	23%

The average agreement rating for this section was 65.7%, while the average disagreement rating was 34.3%. Respondents were more positive regarding their understanding of required permits and forms (#1 and #2), as well as their understanding of where to submit an application (#3). These statements all received agreement ratings exceeding 70%.

Respondents were more mixed towards the quality of their initial review (#4) and the coordination between review functions (#5). These statements received agreement ratings lower than 60%. Participants were more likely to find that the time it took to process their application was unreasonable (#8), with 51% of respondents disagreeing with this statement.

3.5.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.		3.3	2.5	3.7	3.2	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.4
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.		3.3	2.5	3.7	3.2	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.6
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).		3.3	2.7	3.7	3.2	3.0	2.0	4.0	2.4
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later.		2.8	1.8	3.7	2.0		2.0	3.0	2.2
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.		2.6	2.2	3.7	2.2		2.0	3.0	2.2
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.		3.0	2.2	3.7	3.2		2.0	4.0	2.4
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.		3.1	2.3	3.7	2.5		2.0	4.0	2.2
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.		2.4	2.0	3.3	2.3		2.0	2.0	2.0
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.		2.8	2.0	3.7	2.8		2.0	4.0	2.6

3.5.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	2.7	2.2	2.9	3.1
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	2.7	2.2	3.1	3.1
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	2.7	2.3	3.0	3.2
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later.	2.7	1.7	2.4	2.7
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.7	1.8	2.3	2.8
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	2.7	2.0	2.8	3.1
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	2.7	1.8	2.8	3.0
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.7	1.5	2.2	2.6
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	2.7	2.0	2.8	2.9

3.5.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	3.1	2.7		2.3

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	3.2	2.6		2.3
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	3.3	2.6		2.3
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	2.6	2.3		1.8
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.7	2.3		2.0
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	3.1	2.4		2.0
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	3.1	2.4		1.8
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.5	2.1		1.8
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	3.0	2.4		2.0

3.6 ENGINEERING INSPECTIONS

These statements addressed professional development opportunities afforded to staff. 16 responses were collected:

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	30%	43%	10%	17%
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	30%	47%	10%	13%
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	33%	43%	10%	13%
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	33%	50%	3%	13%
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	29%	54%	4%	14%
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	28%	52%	7%	14%

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	28%	45%	14%	14%
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	28%	38%	10%	24%

The average agreement rating for this section was 76.1%, while the average disagreement rating was 23.8%. All but one statement in this section (#8) received agreement ratings higher than 70%. The timeliness of inspectors (#4) and their ability to highlight code sections when identifying deficiencies (#5) were positively received by more than 80% of respondents. While statement #8 was the only statement to receive an agreement rating below 70%, overall agreement was 65.5% regarding the efficiency of the final/COO process.

3.6.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.		3.3	2.7	3.7	3.0	2.0	2.0		2.4
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.		3.2	2.7	3.7	3.0	2.0	2.7		2.6
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.		3.5	2.5	3.7	3.0	2.0	2.7		2.4
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.		3.5	2.7	3.7	3.0	3.0	2.7		2.4
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.		3.2	2.7	3.7	3.0		2.7		2.5
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.		3.2	2.5	3.7	3.0		2.7		2.6
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.		3.2	2.3	3.7	3.0		2.7		2.4
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.		2.9	2.3	3.7	3.0		2.0		2.4

3.6.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	2.7	1.5	3.0	3.2
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	2.7	2.0	3.1	3.1
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	2.7	1.8	3.3	3.2
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	2.7	2.0	3.3	3.3
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	2.7	2.0	3.1	3.2
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	2.7	1.8	3.1	3.2
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	2.7	1.8	3.1	3.1
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	2.7	1.3	3.1	2.9

3.6.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	3.2	2.7		2.0
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	3.2	2.7		2.4

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	3.3	2.5		2.2
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	3.4	2.5		2.4
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	3.3	2.4		2.4
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	3.3	2.5		2.2
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	3.2	2.3		2.2
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	3.1	2.3		1.8

3.7 FIRE PERMITS

The final multiple-choice section featured several statements related to organizational culture, such as the level of civility in the workplace and consistent application of policies. This section received input from 16 participants:

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	26%	53%	5%	16%
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	26%	47%	11%	16%
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	26%	63%	5%	5%
4	The initial review of my application was complete, and additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	26%	47%	16%	11%
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	26%	37%	16%	21%
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	32%	47%	5%	16%
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	26%	47%	21%	5%

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	21%	42%	5%	32%
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	32%	42%	11%	16%

The average agreement rating towards this section was 74.3%, while the average disagreement rating was 25.7%. Respondents were most likely to understand what permits were required (#1) and where to submit their application (#3). Additionally, respondents were likely to share that the comments they received clearly cited applicable codes (#6). All three of these statements received agreement ratings higher than 75%.

The two lowest-rated statements dealt with the coordination between reviewers (#5) and the time it took to process their application (#8). Agreement levels for these statements was 63%.

3.7.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.		2.7	2.8	4.0				1.0	3.3
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.		2.6	2.8	4.0				1.0	3.3
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).		3.0	2.8	4.0				3.0	3.3
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later.		2.7	2.8	4.0				1.0	3.3
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.		2.4	2.8	4.0				1.0	2.8
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.		2.9	2.8	4.0				1.0	3.3
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.		2.7	2.8	4.0				2.0	3.3
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.		1.7	2.8	4.0				1.0	3.3
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.		2.4	2.8	4.0				2.0	3.5

3.7.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	3.0	1.0	3.3	2.9
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	3.0	1.0	3.3	2.8
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	3.0	1.0	3.3	3.3
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later.	3.0	1.0	3.0	3.0
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.6	1.0	3.0	2.8
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	2.8	1.0	3.3	3.1
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	3.0	1.0	3.3	3.0
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.8	1.0	2.7	2.5
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	3.0	1.0	3.3	2.9

3.7.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	I clearly understood what building permits would be required for my project.	2.9	2.3	3.3	3.0
2	I clearly understood what information and documentation I needed to include when I submitted my application.	2.8	2.3	3.3	3.0

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
3	It was clear where I needed to submit my application (e.g., through the City's portal).	3.3	2.3	3.3	3.0
4	The initial review of my application was complete and comprehensive. Additional comments were not provided later that should have been identified in the first review.	2.9	2.3	3.3	3.0
5	If my application was reviewed by multiple entities the City did a good job coordinating this input and providing a clear path forward to approval.	2.7	1.7	3.3	3.0
6	The comments I received on my application clearly cited what codes or standards needed to be addressed.	3.1	2.3	3.0	3.0
7	After receiving comments on my application, I clearly understood what changes were needed to achieve compliance.	3.0	2.3	3.3	3.0
8	The time it took to process my application was reasonable given the complexity of the project.	2.4	2.3	3.0	3.0
9	It was clear who to go to if I had questions about my application.	2.9	2.7	3.0	3.0

3.8 FIRE INSPECTIONS

This question bank was made available to those who had applied for fire permits. 12.9% of participants had interacted with this function:

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	26%	53%	16%	5%
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	37%	47%	11%	5%
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	37%	47%	11%	5%
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	32%	63%	0%	5%
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	32%	53%	11%	5%
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	32%	47%	11%	11%
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	32%	37%	21%	11%

#	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	26%	47%	5%	21%

The average agreement rating towards this section was 80.9%, while the average disagreement rating was 19.1%. While most statements received agreement ratings above 80%, statement #4 was particularly well received. 95% of respondents shared that their inspector arrived on time. The only statement to receive an agreement rating lower than 70% was statement #7. 68% of respondents felt that inspectors were fair in their application of the code.

3.8.1 DIFFERENCES BY ROLE

The following table shows differences in response rate by role. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). Blank spaces in the table indicate that no respondents from that group provided input towards the statement.

#	Statement	Architect	Builder	Business Owner	Contractor	Engineer	Env. Consultant	Homeowner	Other	Prop. Dev.
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.		3.0	2.8	4.0				2.0	3.0
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.		3.1	2.8	4.0				3.0	3.3
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.		3.3	2.8	4.0				2.0	3.3
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.		3.3	2.8	4.0				3.0	3.3
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.		3.1	2.8	4.0				3.0	3.0
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.		2.9	2.8	4.0				3.0	3.0
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.		2.9	2.8	4.0				2.0	2.8
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.		2.4	2.8	4.0				3.0	2.8

3.8.2 DIFFERENCES BY FREQUENCY

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how often each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	One or Twice/Year	Less Than Once/Year	Several Times/Month	Several Times/Year
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	3.0	1.0	3.3	3.1
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	3.4	1.0	3.7	3.1
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	3.4	1.0	3.7	3.1
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	3.2	1.0	3.7	3.3
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	3.0	1.0	3.3	3.3
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	3.2	1.0	3.3	3.0
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	3.0	1.0	3.3	2.9
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	2.8	1.0	3.3	2.8

3.8.3 DIFFERENCES BY LAST INTERACTION

The following table shows differences in response rate based on how recently each respondent interacted with permitting. For each statement, a weighted average was applied, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).

#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
1	I clearly understood what inspections were required for my building project.	3.1	2.0	3.5	3.0
2	It was easy to request and schedule a building inspection.	3.2	2.3	3.8	3.0
3	I was able to schedule the inspection for a convenient time.	3.2	2.3	3.8	3.0

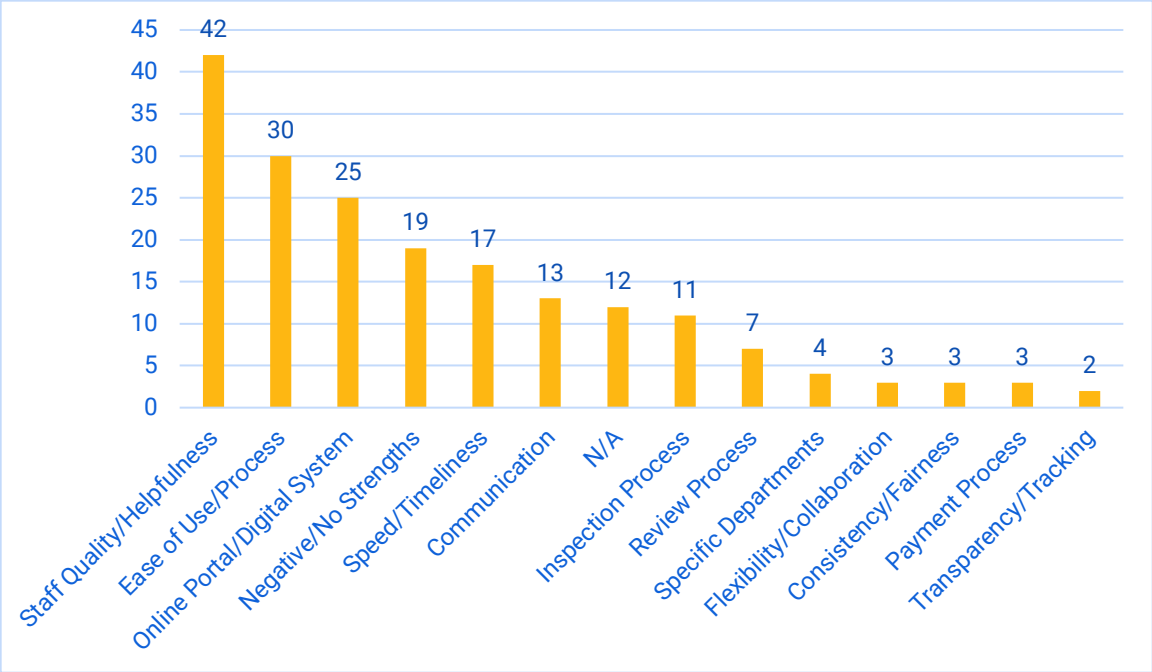
#	Statement	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
4	Inspectors arrived at the scheduled time.	3.4	2.3	3.5	3.0
5	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors indicated the code section at issue.	3.3	2.0	3.5	3.0
6	If deficiencies were identified during an inspection, inspectors were helpful in explaining what I needed to do to address them.	3.0	2.0	3.8	3.0
7	Inspectors were fair and consistent in applying the codes and regulations to my project.	2.9	1.7	3.8	3.0
8	The process to obtain the final inspection/certificate of occupancy for my permit was efficient.	2.8	1.7	3.5	3.0

4. OPEN RESPONSE QUESTIONS

This section provided three open-response questions that prompted respondents to provide input in their own words. To present these findings, the project team categorized each comment into themes based on the content of each response. These findings are shown in bar charts identifying the number of responses per theme.

4.1 STRENGTHS

The first question asked respondents to identify three of their department's greatest strengths. 75 participants provided a total of 191 comments, as summarized below:



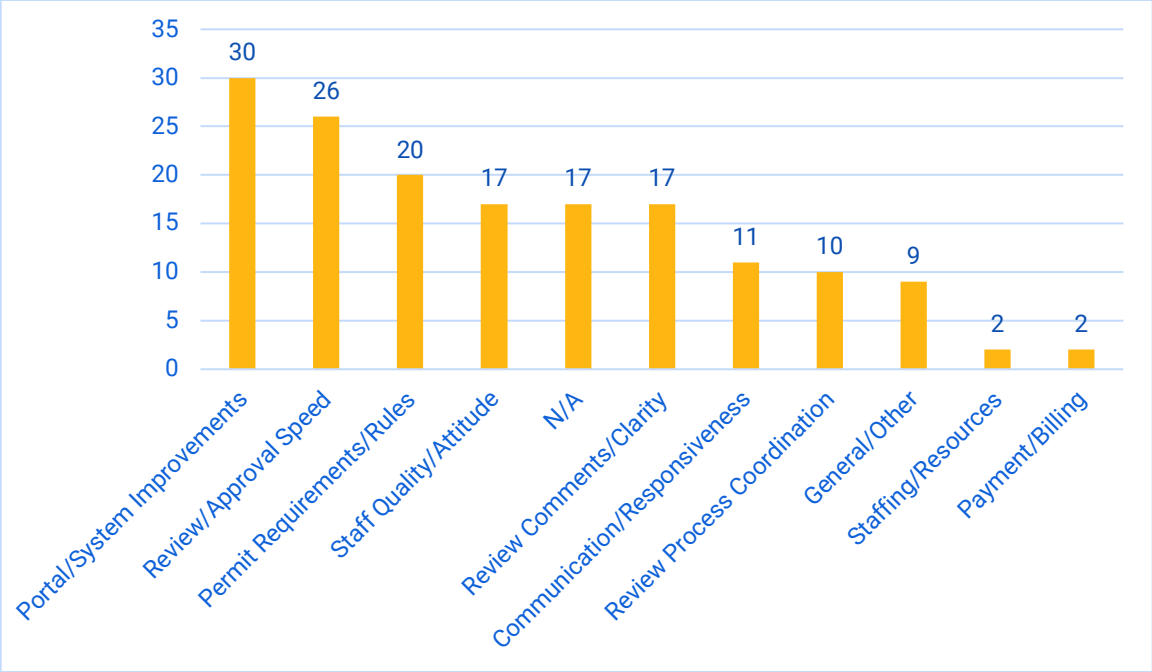
The following bullets provide context for each category:

- 42 comments shared that they found staff to be knowledgeable and helpful, highlighting that they provide a high level of customer service.
- 30 comments focused on the fact that the overall process is easy to interface with. These were general comments, such as stating that the process was easy and/or efficient as a whole.
- 25 comments specifically called out the online system used in the process as a strength. Respondents appreciate that several aspects of the permitting process have been digitized, from initial submittal to accessing comments.
- 19 comments shared that they had no strengths to share (in a negative context), while 12 stated N/A.
- 17 comments indicated that they found the permitting process to be quick and that the response time from staff was also timely.
- 13 responses highlighted the level of communication afforded to them throughout the process as a positive. This referenced not only direct interactions with staff, but also notifications from the portal and other sources that allowed them to keep track of their application. Two more comments found the process to be transparent, especially as it related to tracking permit status in real time.
- 11 comments specifically stated that the inspection process was easy to navigate, that inspectors were on-time, and that scheduling was easy.

- Seven comments shared that the review process is a strength of the organization. Three more noted that the process is collaborative and that staff will work with applicants. Respondents noted that different review disciplines collaborate well, and that their reviews are comprehensive and based on applicable code.
- Four comments highlighted specific departments as a strength (e.g., "Planning", "Inspections").
- Three comments felt that the overall process was fair and consistent.
- Three comments highlighted that the payment process and the affordability of permits were strengths.

4.2 IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This question asked respondents to identify up to three opportunities for improvement regarding the permitting process. Note that some of these comments may contradict strenghts presented in the previous section and reflect respondent's opinions. A total of 161 comments were provided by 70 respondents:



The following bullets provide context for each category:

- 30 comments shared desired improvements to the portal/online system. Common suggestions included allowing streamlining the upload process (including having one pdf upload instead of page limits), more clarity on naming conventions, allowing multiple applications to be uploaded in a batch format, and making general improvements to the portal and surrounding website.

- 26 comments indicated that they would like to see the review and approval process occur faster than it currently does, with several respondents sharing that their permitting process was delayed.
- 20 comments highlighted issues with permit requirements and rules. This included having fewer required permits for the work they were doing, requiring less supporting documentation with permits, having a dedicated code for Jonesboro, and incorporating some flexibility into code interpretation.
- 17 comments indicated that the City could make review comments clearer. Some shared that they do not always understand why a review/inspection failed, while others noted that they had received new comments upon a second submittal.
- 17 respondents did not provide any improvement opportunities or simply stated that they could not think of any.
- 17 comments shared experiences with staff who were not as knowledgeable or customer-service-oriented as they expected.
- 11 comments dealt with communication and responsiveness. These comments broadly refer to items such as answering phones/emails and providing more assistance and information to applicants.
- Ten comments shared issues regarding review group coordination, noting that the process can be made more complex and/or become delayed due to failure for reviewers to adequately coordinate.
- Nine comments fell under “general/other”; these did not fit any of the above categories or were very broad (e.g., “fix everything”).
- Two comments highlighted that the process would benefit from additional administrative staffing, as well as backup reviewers.
- Two comments indicated that current permitting costs were too high.

5. FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

In addition to the survey, the project team hosted three focus group sessions with individuals who had frequently engaged with the permitting process. The two in-person sessions occurred on December 9, 2025 and December 10, 2025, while the virtual session occurred on December 17, 2025. Focus group participants consisted of engineers, developers, contractors, builders, and other professionals who regularly engage with the permitting process. Focus group invites were sent to randomly selected prior development review, permitting, and inspection customers of the City.

5.1 KEY FINDINGS

The discussion began with discussing the key strengths and challenges related to the permitting process. The topics discussed during this conversation touched on a number of topics, including technology, staffing, communication, review process, and more. A summary of key findings for each of these topics can be found below.

CODE INTERPRETATION/REVIEW PROCESS

The following points regarding the review process were noted:

- Some participants took issue with the City's code, stating that it is, in parts, overly stringent (referencing the Downtown Development District and landscaping requirements). Additionally, some participants highlighted that the code does not always appear to be applicable to the type of community that Jonesboro is.
- Some participants highlighted the perception that codes are not always interpreted consistently, depending on the reviewer assigned.
- During the review process, some participants experienced conflicting comments between different reviewers, and many stated that they had received new comments on second (or more) submittals.
- Comment clarity/helpfulness can sometimes be lacking, with some comments simply referencing a code section verbatim.
- Some focus group members disagreed with the current approach to handling comments, with participants stating that being unable to address comments until all reviewers have completed their tasks is inefficient. Similarly, some users disagreed with the approach of having resubmittals routed to all original disciplines even if only one had provided comments.

- Some participants took issue with the fact that permits can be reassigned to other contractors without the original applicant's input.

COMMUNICATION/CUSTOMER SERVICE

Key findings related to communication and customer service included:

- There is the perception among focus group participants that the City takes an adversarial approach to development, in that staff do not appear to be supportive in assisting applicants through the process. Some participants shared that they are of the belief that this may be deterring outside developers from doing business in the City.
- Some participants described a lack of responsiveness from staff during the application process, as well as occasionally poor customer service.
- There is a potential lack of communication when the City implements code and/or process changes. Participants would like to see more public engagement when such changes occur.
- Communication between review entities can occasionally be lacking, resulting in a slower process.
- Many users stated that they would benefit from a pre-application meeting to discuss their application before submittal.

INSPECTIONS

The following points are regarding inspections:

- The inspection process is not adequately tracked, and many participants keep their own documentation to help avoid issues due to missing data.
- An online portal for inspection scheduling and tracking would be a great benefit.
- Inspectors do not have access to final plans during site visits.
- Some participants saw a potential benefit in allowing third-party inspections for certain projects under certain values. One example was allowing third-party site engineers to perform site grading inspections.

PERMIT TIMELINES

The following points highlight findings from the discussion surrounding permit timelines:

- Residential permit timelines (outside of the Downtown Development District) are acceptable.
- Commercial and complex projects often experience delays, according to many participants.

- There appears to be a lack of urgency regarding timelines, and many participants stated they would like the City to commit to defined permit timelines based on the application type.
- Trade permits are still not digitized, so they do not benefit from the efficiencies gained via the online portal.
- Conversely, some participants stated that the digitized demolition permit process is more inefficient than it was previously.

STAFF FINDINGS

The following are findings related to staff:

- Some participants noted that there are inconsistencies in the application and enforcement of code between different staff members.
- There is a perception that the departments involved in permitting lack internal controls and direction.
- Staff lack project information during site inspections.
- Some participants noted that staff may lack appropriate training on the current systems and processes in use.
- Participants would like to see additional staff training on customer outreach and process management.

TECHNOLOGY

The following key findings were noted regarding technology:

- The online portal is well-received and considered an improvement over paper processes. Participants enjoyed having the ability to monitor permit status and found the interface user-friendly.
- Users would like a way to upload plan sets in bulk rather than individually as PDFs.
- Some system glitches were noted, including missed notifications and being unable to access drawings.
- The disconnect between iWorq and ProjectDox was cited as a potential efficiency issue.
- Revisions can generate new projects instead of linking to the original submittal.
- Naming standards are confusing and inefficient.
- There are some permits that cannot be applied for via the portal, including short-term rental permits, business licenses, and mobile vending permits.

APPENDIX D: BUILDING CODE ANALYSIS

MARCH 27, 2026

FINAL

JONESBORO, AR

MATRIX
CONSULTING GROUP

APPENDIX D: TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY 3

3. CHAPTER 34 – FIRE PREVENTION 5

4. CHAPTER 105 – BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS 12

5. CHAPTER 112 – STORMWATER MANAGEMENT (SELECTED SECTIONS) 19

6. CHAPTER 113 – SUBDIVISIONS (SELECTED SECTIONS) 21

7. CHAPTER 117 – ZONING 23

8. MULTI-CHAPTERS 26

9. COMPARABLE JURISDICTION ANALYSIS 32

10. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS 40

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Matrix Consulting Group was retained to conduct a comprehensive review of the City of Jonesboro's building-related codes and ordinances as part of its broader assessment of the City's permitting, plan review, and inspection processes. The review focused on Chapters 34 (Fire Prevention), 105 (Buildings and Building Regulations), 112 (Stormwater Management), 113 (Subdivisions), and 117 (Zoning) of the Jonesboro Municipal Code and evaluated these provisions against the 2021 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC), other state-adopted technical codes, and current best practices in municipal code administration.

Overall, the City's regulatory framework is functional but fragmented, with several provisions that are outdated, internally inconsistent, or not fully aligned with Arkansas state law. These issues do not reflect a failure of the City's regulatory system, but rather the cumulative effect of incremental code updates over time without a comprehensive alignment effort. As a result, the current code structure creates unnecessary complexity for staff and applicants, increases the risk of inconsistent enforcement, and in several cases introduces potential legal exposure.

The most significant findings from this assessment fall into five primary categories:

- **Alignment with the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC)**
  The most critical issues identified relate to gaps and inconsistencies between Chapter 34 and the mandatory provisions of the AFPC. While the AFPC is formally adopted through Chapter 105, Chapter 34 contains several provisions that are narrower in scope or incomplete when compared to state requirements. These include limitations on fire marshal plan review and inspection authority, the absence of a clearly designated fire code official and codified enforcement authority, and missing provisions for stop-work orders, operational permits, and fire code penalties. While the AFPC remains enforceable upon adoption, these inconsistencies pose a high risk of under-enforcement, staff confusion, and challenges in defending enforcement actions.
- **Outdated Technical Code Adoption Approach**
  Multiple chapters adopt model codes by specific edition year rather than referencing the current state-adopted version. This approach requires periodic manual updates and results in the City operating under outdated technical standards in several areas, including electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and accessibility codes. Transitioning to a rolling adoption framework tied to state code updates will reduce administrative burden and ensure the City consistently enforces current standards.
- **Lack of Defined Administrative Framework (Vesting, Timelines, and Enforcement Tools)**
  The code lacks several foundational administrative provisions that are standard in comparable jurisdictions. These include clearly defined vesting rights for building permits and subdivision approvals, maximum plan review timelines, and administrative citation authority for code enforcement. Without these tools, applicants have limited certainty regarding review timelines and regulatory expectations, and staff are constrained in their ability to enforce compliance efficiently and consistently.

- **Fragmentation and Limited Coordination Across Chapters**
  Several issues identified in this assessment stem from a lack of coordination between code chapters. This is most evident in the relationship between Chapters 34 and 105, where overlapping or incomplete provisions create ambiguity in enforcement authority. Similar gaps exist between zoning, fire, and building codes in change-of-use scenarios, where applicants are not clearly directed to required fire and building code compliance reviews. Strengthening cross-references and clarifying chapter relationships will improve both staff coordination and applicant understanding.
- **Fee Schedule Currency and Cost Recovery**
  The City's planning and inspection fee schedules have not been updated since 2017 and do not reflect the current cost of service. In particular, fire permit fees appear significantly below the staff time required for plan review, and certain adopted fees are not currently being charged. Without periodic updates or an automatic adjustment mechanism, the City is likely under-recovering the cost of development review services.

This assessment includes a comprehensive set of prioritized recommendations designed to address these issues. **High-priority** recommendations focus on alignment with state law, public safety requirements, and legal authority provisions. **Medium-priority** recommendations address process improvements, regulatory clarity, and cross-code section coordination. **Low-priority** recommendations focus on clarification, modernization, and administrative consistency.

Collectively, these recommendations provide a practical, phased roadmap for modernizing the City's regulatory framework. Implementation will improve consistency in code administration, reduce legal and operational risk, and support a more predictable and efficient development review process for both staff and applicants. These recommendations will also inform the final report for the broader Permitting Process Study currently underway for the City.

2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The City of Jonesboro retained Matrix Consulting Group to evaluate whether its building-related municipal code provisions are current, internally consistent, and aligned with Arkansas state law. The assessment is intended to support updates to the City's codes and to inform policy decisions related to permitting, enforcement, fees, and development review timelines.

Primary state law references include the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC), Volume I – Fire and Volume II – Building, as well as related state-adopted technical codes.

2.2 SCOPE OF REVIEW

The following code chapters and state documents were reviewed:

Chapter / Article	Scope of Review
Jonesboro Municipal Code, Chapter 34	Fire Prevention (Articles I–II, Sections 34-1 through 34-39)
Jonesboro Municipal Code, Chapter 105	Buildings and Building Regulations (Articles I–X)
Jonesboro Municipal Code, Chapter 112	Stormwater Management (selected administrative, permitting, and design standard sections)
Jonesboro Municipal Code, Chapter 113	Subdivisions (Articles I–IV)
Jonesboro Municipal Code, Chapter 117	Zoning (Article II, Sections 117-31 through 117-35; Division 3, Sections 117-83 through 117-89)
2021 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC), Volume I	Chapters 1 (Administration) and 9 (Fire Protection Systems), including Appendices D and E
2021 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC), Volume II	Selected sections related to building code adoption, change of occupancy, and special inspections (IBC/IEBC framework)
Jonesboro Fee Schedule Resolutions	Res. 17.091 (Planning, August 2017) and Res. 17.092 (Inspections, August 2017)

2.3 METHODOLOGY

The review team examined the full text of each referenced Municipal Code chapter and compared local provisions against applicable sections of the 2021 AFPC and related state statutes[1]. The analysis also evaluated internal consistency across chapters and alignment between zoning, building, and fire code requirements.

[1] *Note: The review incorporated a combination of manual code analysis and technology-assisted tools to support cross-referencing, consistency checks, and comparison against state-adopted standards. All findings and recommendations reflect the independent professional judgment of Matrix Consulting Group.*

Findings are organized by chapter, with cross-cutting issues consolidated in Chapter 8. Each recommendation is prioritized as **High**, **Medium**, or **Low** based on legal risk, public safety impact, and implementation complexity.

To provide additional context, this assessment compares code administration practices in two Arkansas jurisdictions—Conway and Springdale—both of which operate under the same state code framework. A full comparative analysis is presented in Chapter 9.

3. CHAPTER 34 – FIRE PREVENTION

Chapter 34 establishes the City of Jonesboro's local fire prevention provisions. Article I contains general provisions addressing novelty lighters, fireworks, and fire hydrant inspection. Article II establishes local fire prevention enforcement mechanisms, including plan review, permits, appeals, contractor licensing, acceptance testing, inspections, and correction of deficiencies.

Importantly, Chapter 34 is not the vehicle through which Jonesboro formally adopts the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code. That adoption occurs in the City's Chapter 105, Sec. 105-21 (State fire prevention code adopted by reference), which provides that "the state fire prevention code…is hereby adopted by reference, and shall become part of the laws and ordinances of the city." As a result, the AFPC, including all of its mandatory provisions, is already Jonesboro law in its entirety. Chapter 34 operates alongside that adoption as a set of locally enacted fire prevention ordinances.

This relationship with Chapter 105 shapes the findings discussed in this chapter. Where Chapter 34 provisions are narrower than, or inconsistent with, the AFPC, they do not technically override or nullify the AFPC, which prevails by virtue of the Sec. 105-21 adoption. However, the inconsistency creates a significant risk of under-enforcement and confusion for those applying Chapter 34 without reference to Chapter 105. Similarly, where Chapter 34 is silent on mandatory AFPC requirements, those requirements already apply through Sec. 105-21, but their absence from Chapter 34 leaves the local ordinance incomplete and ambiguous in practice.

Accordingly, findings in this chapter are characterized as **AFPC Inconsistencies** (where Chapter 34 affirmatively states something narrower or different from the AFPC) or **AFPC Compliance Gaps** (where Chapter 34 is silent on a mandatory AFPC provision), rather than state law conflicts. Both categories warrant attention to ensure that Chapter 34 accurately reflects and reinforces — rather than undermines or obscures — the AFPC standards the city has already adopted.

3.1 ARTICLE I – IN GENERAL (SECS. 34-1 THROUGH 34-3)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Section 34-1 prohibits the retail sale, gifting, or distribution of novelty lighters within city limits. It is not a general definitions or administration section.**
• **Section 34-2 prohibits the sale, discharge, or possession of fireworks within the city. It is not an administrative designation of the fire code official.**
• **Section 34-3 governs hydrant inspection and use — requiring monthly property owner/lessee inspections of hydrants and prohibiting unauthorized private use of public hydrants.**
• **Article I does not cross-reference AFPC Chapter 1 definitions, which may create definitional inconsistencies when the AFPC is applied locally.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 34-1	Novelty lighter prohibition — retail sale, gift, or distribution within city limits.	**LOW PRIORITY**. The prohibition is specific and enforceable. No substantive gap in this provision itself. However, the absence of a general definitions section in Chapter 34 is a gap. AFPC Section 202 should be adopted by reference or cross-referenced in Chapter 34 for definitional consistency.
Sec. 34-2	Fireworks prohibition — sale, discharge, or possession of fireworks within the city.	**LOW PRIORITY**. The prohibition is clear. Enforcement under state fireworks law (A.C.A. Sec. 20-22-701 et seq.) is referenced. No substantive gap in this provision. However, Chapter 34 contains no section designating the fire code official or defining the fire code official's authority. This is a significant gap — AFPC Sec. Sec. 103–104 require a designated fire code official with defined enforcement authority. The authority appears to be exercised in practice but is not codified in Chapter 34.
Sec. 34-3	Hydrant inspection and use — monthly inspection requirement for property owners/lessees; prohibition on unauthorized use of public hydrants.	**LOW PRIORITY**. These are useful operational provisions. Recommend cross-referencing AFPC Sec. 507 (fire protection water supplies) to ensure consistency with fire code water supply requirements. Also note: Chapter 34 contains no general fire hazard prohibition. AFPC Section 101.2 (Scope) provides a comprehensive scope statement for fire hazard prevention; this should be codified locally or adopted by reference in Chapter 34.

3.2 ARTICLE II – FIRE PREVENTION CODE (SECS. 34-33 THROUGH 34-39)

KEY FINDINGS
• **AFPC Section 101.2.2 prohibits local jurisdictions from adopting any fire prevention code other than the AFPC 2021 as their sole foundation document, limiting the City's ability to layer separate local fire code provisions.**
• **Article II does not include an equivalent authority provision to require construction documents for fire protection systems, a gap relative to AFPC Section 901.2 (grants the fire code official authority). This gap will be addressed in the Chapter 9 analysis of this report.**
• **Section 34-33 requires the fire marshal's office to review all plans and construction documents for public buildings submitted to the city. This limits fire marshal review to public buildings — it does not constitute an AFPC adoption and does not address private structures.**
• **Section 34-34 addresses permit requirements, but does not specify timelines for permit issuance or plan review.**

- **Section 34-35 routes appeals of fire marshal's office decisions to the city council within 20 days; the city council serves as the appeals body. The provision does not establish a five-member expertise-based Board of Appeals as contemplated by AFPC Section 111.**
- **Section 34-36 addresses contractor licensing requirements for fire sprinkler, hood suppression, and fire alarm contractors.**
- **Section 34-39 addresses correction of deficiencies for when code violations are found. Warning notice, court citation and evacuation of the property are discussed. The City should ensure it's currently following the process as regulated for when code violations are found. Section currently lacks a standalone fire code penalty section, which is a gap relative to AFPC Section 112.4 (Class A Misdemeanor, up to $1,000/day).**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 34-33	Review of plans — fire marshal review required for construction documents submitted for public buildings.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. AFPC INCONSISTENCY. The plan review requirement is limited to public buildings, which is significantly narrower than AFPC Sec. 101.2 (applies to ALL structures). This means construction plans for private commercial buildings, multi-family residential, and industrial facilities are not subject to fire marshal review under this section. Amend to require fire marshal review of all construction documents subject to AFPC Sec. 101.2 scope. Also, the section does not specify or cross-reference a review timeline (in Sec. 34-34).
Sec. 34-34	Permits.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. No plan review timeline specified. Recommend adding a 30-business-day plan review standard consistent with AFPC permit processing expectations. If there isn't a desire to adopt review timelines in regulatory language, the City can choose to adopt an administrative policy instead.
Sec. 34-35	Appeals — fire marshal's office resolves disputes over disapproved applications, refused licenses or permits, and interpretation of Article II provisions.	**LOW PRIORITY.** The provision does not establish a five-member expertise-based Board of Appeals as described as an option for municipalities by AFPC Sec.111 (5 independent members with expertise in fire hazards, explosions, hazardous conditions, or fire protection systems, who are not city employees). Appeals are currently routed to the city council, which lacks the technical qualifications described for a formal Board of Appeals. Consider creating a unified technical Board of Appeals serving both Ch. 34 and Ch. 105, satisfying AFPC Sec. 111 composition requirements.

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 34-36	Licensing of fire sprinkler, fire extinguisher, hood suppression, and fire alarm system contractors.	AFPC Sec. 105.6 (Required construction permits) and Sec. 104.2 (Applications and permits) are the relevant authority provisions — Sec. 34-36 appears to be consistent with state licensing law.
Sec. 34-37	Acceptance test.	**LOW PRIORITY**. Sec. 34-37 requires acceptance tests witnessed by a city fire marshal. This is partially consistent with AFPC Sec. 108 (Inspections) and Sec. 109 (Maintenance), but the section limits witnessing to a city fire marshal. Generally consistent with AFPC requirements, though it doesn't cross-reference AFPC Sec. 109 recordkeeping requirements or the maintenance/testing standards in Sec. 109.3.
Sec. 34-38	Inspections.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. AFPC INCONSISTENCY. The inspection requirement is limited to public buildings, which is significantly narrower than AFPC Sec. 108 (grants the fire code official authority to inspect all buildings for code compliance, not just public ones).
Sec. 34-39	Correction of deficiencies.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. AFPC INCONSISTENCY. Section currently lacks a standalone fire code penalty section, which is a gap relative to AFPC Section 112.4 (Class A Misdemeanor, up to $1,000/day).

3.3 ADDITIONAL AFPC ALIGNMENT GAPS

Beyond the provisions addressed in Articles I and II above, the following areas are absent from Chapter 34 entirely and represent gaps relative to AFPC Volume I requirements spanning multiple chapters. Review of the full Jonesboro Municipal Code confirmed that these topics are not addressed in any other chapter.

KEY FINDINGS
• **Chapter 34 contains no operational permit system for hazardous activities. The AFPC (Sec. 105.5) requires operational permits for facilities storing or handling hazardous materials above threshold quantities, high-piled combustible storage exceeding 500 square feet, open burning, and pyrotechnics. Jonesboro's Sec. 34-34 only addresses construction permits for fire system installation.**
• **Chapter 34 contains no local fire flow or hydrant spacing requirements. The AFPC (Sec. 507) expects local jurisdictions to adopt minimum fire flow standards for new construction. Without them, the City has no code basis to require developers to demonstrate adequate water supply for fire suppression.**

KEY FINDINGS
• **Chapter 34 contains no Knox box (key box) authority. If the Jonesboro Fire Department uses Knox boxes, the authority to require them for certain occupancies should be codified (AFPC Sec. 506). Without a code basis, installation is voluntary rather than required.**
• **Chapter 34 does not include liability protection for the fire code official or designated deputies acting in good faith (AFPC Secs. 104.7–104.7.1). This exposes individual officials to personal liability for enforcement actions.**
• **Chapter 34 does not expressly grant fire investigation authority to the fire code official (AFPC Sec. 104.11). While the fire marshal's office conducts investigations in practice, an explicit code provision is needed to establish jurisdiction and protect findings.**
• **Chapter 34 contains no cross-reference to Sec. 105-21 of Chapter 105, which formally adopts the AFPC by reference. Anyone reading Chapter 34 in isolation would have no indication that the AFPC applies in its entirety. A cross-referencing provision should be added to Chapter 34 to clarify this relationship.**
• **Chapter 34 contains no provision designating a fire code official or codifying that official's enforcement authority, a gap relative to AFPC Secs. 103 (Creation of agency) and 104 (Duties and powers of the fire code official).**
• **Chapter 34 contains no stop-work order provision. AFPC Sec. 113 authorizes the fire code official to issue written stop-work orders when work is being performed contrary to code or in a dangerous manner, with immediate cessation required upon issuance.**
• **Chapter 34 contains no applicability provision addressing existing structures undergoing a change of occupancy. AFPC Sec. 102.3 requires compliance with the AFPC and the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) before a change of occupancy is permitted.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
AFPC Sec. 105.5/105.6	Operational permit requirements for hazardous activities.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Establish a two-tier permit system in Chapter 34: (1) construction permits for fire system installation (already in Sec. 34-34); and (2) operational permits for hazardous materials storage, high-piled combustible storage, open burning, and other activities required under AFPC Sec. 105.5 (Secs. 105.5.1-105.5.52). Conway, AR has an equivalent operational permit system in place.
AFPC Secs. 507–508	Water supply and fire flow requirements.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Adopt local fire flow and hydrant spacing standards in Chapter 34 or Chapter 105. At minimum, adopt NFPA 1 fire flow tables by reference and specify maximum hydrant spacing (recommended:

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		600 feet for residential, 400 feet for commercial/industrial). Bowling Green, KY codifies specific hydrant spacing and flow requirements in Secs. 12-4.02 through 12-4.04 as a best-practice model.
AFPC Sec. 506	Knox box / key box authority.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add a provision authorizing the fire code official to require key boxes (Knox boxes) for buildings with restricted access or automated entry systems, consistent with AFPC Sec. 506.1. Codification makes compliance enforceable and provides a legal basis for the requirement.
AFPC Secs. 104.7–104.7.1	Liability protection for fire code official.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add an express liability protection provision stating that the fire code official and authorized deputies are not personally liable for acts performed in good faith in the discharge of their duties, consistent with AFPC Sec. 104.7 (Liability) and Sec. 104.7.1 (Legal defense).
AFPC Sec. 104.11	Fire investigation authority.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add an express provision granting the fire code official authority to investigate the cause, origin, and circumstances of fires, consistent with AFPC Sec. 104.11 (Fire investigations). This protects investigation findings and establishes clear jurisdictional authority.
Ch. 105, Sec. 105-21	Cross-reference between Chapter 34 and Chapter 105, Sec. 105-21 (AFPC adoption).	**HIGH PRIORITY — AFPC COMPLIANCE GAP**. Chapter 34 contains no cross-reference to Sec. 105-21 of Chapter 105, which formally adopts the AFPC by reference. Anyone reading Chapter 34 in isolation has no indication that the AFPC applies in its entirety. Recommend adding a provision to Chapter 34 explicitly acknowledging the AFPC adoption in Sec. 105-21 and clarifying that Chapter 34 operates as a supplement to — and must be read in conjunction with — the AFPC. This cross-reference should also be considered for Chapter 3 of this report.
AFPC Secs. 103–104	Fire code official designation and enforcement authority.	**HIGH PRIORITY — AFPC COMPLIANCE GAP**. Chapter 34 contains no provision designating a fire code official or codifying enforcement authority. AFPC Sec. 103 requires creation of a code compliance agency and designation of a fire code official. AFPC Sec. 104 defines duties and powers, including authority to enforce the code, conduct inspections, issue notices and orders, and grant modifications. While authority is exercised in practice by the fire marshal's office, it is not codified in Chapter

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		34. Recommend adding a section designating the fire code official and codifying enforcement authority consistent with AFPC Secs. 103–104.
AFPC Sec. 113	Stop-work order authority.	**HIGH PRIORITY — AFPC COMPLIANCE GAP**. Chapter 34 contains no stop-work order provision. AFPC Sec. 113 authorizes the fire code official to issue a written stop-work order when work regulated by this code is being performed in a manner contrary to its provisions or in a dangerous or unsafe manner. Upon issuance, cited work must immediately cease. Non-compliance is subject to penalties under AFPC Sec. 113.4. Recommend adding an explicit stop-work order provision to Chapter 34 consistent with AFPC Sec. 113.
AFPC Sec. 102.3	Applicability to existing structures on change of occupancy.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY — AFPC COMPLIANCE GAP**. Chapter 34 contains no applicability provision addressing existing structures undergoing a change of occupancy. AFPC Sec. 102.3 (Change of use or occupancy) requires that a change of occupancy shall not be made unless the use or occupancy is made to comply with the requirements of the AFPC and the International Existing Building Code (IEBC). Recommend adding a cross-reference provision in Chapter 34 to AFPC Sec. 102.3 and the IEBC to ensure that change-of-occupancy scenarios trigger appropriate fire code compliance review.

4. CHAPTER 105 – BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS

Chapter 105 is the primary building code chapter for the City and covers ten articles ranging from the adoption of model codes to electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and energy standards. Critically, Section 105-21 of this chapter is the vehicle through which the City formally adopts the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC) by reference, making the AFPC — including all of its mandatory provisions — Jonesboro law in its entirety. This adoption is the foundation for the findings in Chapter 4 (Chapter 34 – Fire Prevention) of this report, and Chapters 3 and 4 should be read together on fire code matters. Chapter 105 is the most comprehensive chapter in terms of scope, but it contains several provisions that warrant updating.

4.1 ARTICLE I – IN GENERAL (SEC. 105-1)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Section 105-1 addresses unsafe buildings and provides the City's authority to address such conditions.**
• **Does not contain a general applicability provision establishing the overall scope of Chapter 105 (i.e., what types of construction, alteration, and repair are governed).**
• **No explicit definition of 'building official' or delegation of authority is included in Article I; authority is implied through later articles.**
• **Does not cross-reference state licensing requirements for contractors.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Article 1	In General.	**LOW PRIORITY.** Add a general scope and applicability provision to Article I to establish what construction activities, structures, and occupancies Chapter 105 governs — and cross-referencing Arkansas contractor licensing requirements as necessary – and add a definitions subsection cross-referencing the AFPC "Building Official" definition.
Sec. 105-1	Unsafe buildings — authority to address unsafe, unsanitary, or fire-hazardous structures.	Adequate as an enforcement provision for substandard structures

4.2 ARTICLE II – BUILDING CODE (SECS. 105-19 THROUGH 105-24)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Section 105-19 adopts the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design; Section 105-20 adopts the 2012 Existing Building Code (IEBC); Section 105-21 adopts the State Fire Prevention Code (AFPC Volumes I–III). The AFPC Vol. II is the IBC-based statewide building code for Arkansas — no**

KEY FINDINGS
separate IBC adoption is required. However, each adoption references a fixed edition year, creating an obsolescence risk.
• **Section 105-21 adopts the AFPC by reference, including specific appendices, but incorrectly identifies both. Appendix D is labeled 'fire districts' — the actual AFPC Appendix D title is 'Fire Apparatus Access Roads,' which is optional and not mandatory for local adoption. Fire district provisions are addressed separately in Sec. 105-24. Appendix E is labeled 'supplementary accessibility requirements' — the actual title is 'Hazard Categories.' While the base IFC designates Appendix E as informational and 'not intended for adoption,' AFPC Sec. 101.2.1 confirms Arkansas adopted it statewide, making local adoption valid. Both appendix labels in Sec. 105-21 should be corrected. See Section 8.8 for full analysis of Appendix E.**
• **Section 105-22 governs house demolition, not general permit requirements. No general building permit procedures article exists in Article II — permit fees and procedures are addressed piecemeal in Sec. 105-23.**
• **Section 105-23 (Permit Fees) contains the City's core permit procedures, including a tiered expiration structure (6 months initial; 18 months if substantial work is in progress for new construction; 24 months for projects over $3,000,000; 12 months if work in progress for renovation/rehab), but does not define 'substantial work is in progress' or specify a maximum plan review timeline.**
• **Section 105-24 establishes the geographic boundaries of the City's fire limits.**
• **There is no language that discusses a general building code penalty authority. Verification this exists is necessary.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 105-19	2010 ADA Standard Code adopted by reference.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY.** Adoption by specific year (2010) creates an obsolescence risk as ADA standards are periodically updated. Recommend updating adoption language to reference "the most current edition of ADA Standards for Accessible Design as adopted by the State of Arkansas."
Sec. 105-20	Existing building code adopted by reference.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY.** Update IEBC adoption to 'most current state-adopted edition' rolling language.
Sec. 105-21	State fire prevention code (AFPC) adopted by reference, including Appendix D ('fire districts') and Appendix E ('supplementary accessibility requirements').	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Amend Sec. 105-21 to: (1) use rolling adoption language referencing 'the most current edition of the AFPC as adopted by the State of Arkansas'; (2) correct the Appendix D reference — the actual title is 'Fire Apparatus Access Roads,' not 'fire districts.' Fire district provisions are locally addressed in Sec. 105-24 and should

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		not be attributed to an AFPC appendix. Consider whether Appendix D adoption is intentional or should be removed from the list; (3) correct the Appendix E label from 'supplementary accessibility requirements' to 'Hazard Categories' (see Section 8.8); and (4) add a cross-reference to Chapter 34, explicitly stating that Chapter 34 operates as a locally enacted supplement to the AFPC and must be read in conjunction with it. The Chapter 34 cross-reference recommendation is addressed in Chapter 4 of this report.
Sec. 105-22	House demolition — permit and fee requirements for demolition of buildings and structures.	**HIGH PRIORITY.** Permit triggers are adequate, but the section does not require pre-demolition inspection, utility disconnection verification, or documentation of adjacent structure conditions prior to permit issuance. These are standard safeguards in demolition permitting. Recommend adding: (1) a requirement for documented utility disconnection confirmations (gas, electric, water, and sewer) prior to permit issuance; (2) a provision requiring a building official inspection or authorization for demolition of structures that are attached to or share a wall with an adjacent occupied structure; and (3) coordination language with the City's utilities department.
Sec. 105-23	Permit fees and permit procedures, including permit expiration tiers.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY.** Permit procedures are addressed but no plan review timelines are specified, and the term "substantial work is in progress" (used in the permit expiration tiers) is left undefined. Consistent with AFPC Vol. II [A] Sec. 105.3.1 (Action on application), the building official shall examine permit applications within a reasonable time after filing. Recommend adding a maximum 30-business-day plan review standard — either in regulatory language or as an administrative policy with a deemed-complete provision — and defining "substantial work is in progress" to prevent disputes over permit expiration.
Sec. 105-24	Fire limits — geographic boundary descriptions for the City's fire districts.	**LOW PRIORITY**. The fire limit boundaries established here should be reconciled with AFPC Appendix D (fire districts), which is adopted by reference in Sec. 105-21. Consider modernizing the metes-and-bounds descriptions with a reference to an adopted GIS map.

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Article II gen.	No general penalty provision for building code violations.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY.** No general penalty provision for building code violations was identified in Article II. The City should verify where its penalty authority for building code violations is codified.

4.3 ARTICLE III – ELECTRICAL CODE (SECS. 105-52 THROUGH 105-97)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article III adopts the National Electrical Code (NEC) by specific year, creating the same obsolescence risk as Article II.**
• **Inspection requirements are present but do not specify inspector qualifications or third-party inspection acceptance criteria.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Secs. 105-53	National Electrical Code adopted.	**HIGH PRIORITY.** NEC 2011 edition is multiple cycles behind current state adoption. Recommend updating NEC adoption to reference 'current state-adopted edition.'
Article III gen.	Electrical permit and inspection requirements.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add language clarifying whether third-party electrical inspectors must be ICC-certified or state-licensed.

4.4 ARTICLE IV – GAS (SECS. 105-123 THROUGH 105-124)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article IV is brief and adopts the Arkansas State Fuel Gas Code, 2006 Edition, by reference.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Secs. 105-123–105-124	Adoption of Arkansas State Fuel Gas Code, 2006 Edition.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY.** Update to 'current state-adopted edition.' No other substantive gaps identified beyond the edition-year issue.

4.5 ARTICLE V – MECHANICAL CODE (SEC. 105-147)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article V adopts the 2010 Arkansas Mechanical Code.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 105-147	Adoption of 2010 Arkansas Mechanical Code.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Update to 'current state-adopted edition.' No other substantive gaps identified.

4.6 ARTICLE VI – PLUMBING CODE (SECS. 105-178 THROUGH 105-180)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article VI adopts the Arkansas State Plumbing Code.**
• **No provisions address cross-connection control or backflow prevention separately from the Arkansas State Plumbing Code adoption.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Secs. 105-178	Adoption of Arkansas State Plumbing Code.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Update to 'current state-adopted edition.'
Sec. 105-179	Permit and inspection procedures for plumbing.	Consider adding a cross-connection control provision or reference to the City's water utilities code.

4.7 ARTICLE VII – BUILDING NUMBERING (SECS. 105-199 THROUGH 105-214)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article VII establishes address assignment and building numbering requirements.**
• **The article does not reference 911 addressing standards or coordination with the county 911 system.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Secs. 105-199–105-214	Building numbering and address assignment.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Coordinate with Craighead County 911 addressing standards. Add a provision requiring address assignment prior to permit issuance.

4.8 ARTICLE VIII – SWIMMING POOLS (SECS. 105-229 THROUGH 105-230)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article VIII contains basic permit requirements for swimming pools.**
• **Section 105-229 provides definitions for 'family pool' and 'swimming pool.' Section105-230 establishes pool enclosure requirements.**

KEY FINDINGS
• **No permit trigger or inspection requirement is included in Article VIII; permit authority is elsewhere in Chapter 105.**
• **The enclosure requirements are functional but do not reference an edition date or state/national standards for pool barriers.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 105-229	Definitions (family pool; swimming pool)	**LOW PRIORITY.** Definitions are functional. Consider clarifying whether above-ground pools meeting the "family pool" size threshold are subject to the same enclosure requirements as in-ground pools.
Sec. 105-230	Enclosure required — 4-foot non-climbable fence with gap limits and self-latching gates	**MEDIUM PRIORITY.** The fencing specifications are detailed and consistent with current IRC pool barrier minimums. However, the code enforcement modification authority in Sec.105-230 is unbounded — recommend adding criteria (e.g., requires written findings, alternative must provide equivalent safety) to prevent inconsistent application. Add a cross-reference to Ch. 105 permit requirements to make clear that pool construction requires a building permit.

4.9 ARTICLE IX – UNSAFE STRUCTURES (SECS. 105-254 THROUGH 105-268)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article IX provides authority to declare and abate unsafe structures.**
• **The appeal process references the Board of Appeals but does not specify a timeline for appeal hearings.**
• **The cost recovery provision for abatement does not address placement of a lien on the property.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Secs. 105-254–105-268	Unsafe structure declaration, abatement, and appeals.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add a specific timeline for Board of Appeals hearings on unsafe structure orders (recommend 30 days). Add express lien authority for abatement cost recovery to ensure enforceability.

4.10 ARTICLE X – ENERGY CODE (SEC. 105-291)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Article X adopts the Arkansas Energy Code for New Building Construction.**
• **The current reference is to the 2014 edition; Arkansas has since updated its energy code.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 105-291	Adoption of Arkansas Energy Code.	Section 105-291 contains rolling language to ensure future editions of the Arkansas Energy Code are adopted. The City should verify they are actively enforcing the current edition administratively, since the code doesn't specify a mechanism for tracking updates.

5. CHAPTER 112 – STORMWATER MANAGEMENT (SELECTED SECTIONS)

The selected sections of Chapter 112 were reviewed in the context of their interaction with building permit issuance and construction site controls. The primary focus was on permit triggers, inspection authority, and coordination with ADEQ NPDES permit requirements.

5.1 ARTICLE I – IN GENERAL (SECS. 112-7 THROUGH 112-11), ARTICLE II – ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT (SECS. 112-42 THROUGH 112-44), ARTICLE III – PERMIT APPLICATIONS AND CONDITIONS (SECS. 112-103 THROUGH 112-107

KEY FINDINGS
• **Chapter 112 requires stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPPPs) for construction sites disturbing more than one acre.**
• **The chapter does not specify coordination between the stormwater inspector and the building official for permit issuance holds.**
• **Post-construction stormwater management requirements reference City design standards but do not specify an adoption or update mechanism for those standards.**
• **Section 112-104(e) includes a 1-year approval expiration — SWMP approvals are terminated if construction is not started within one year of approval. However, no broader vesting rights language is present (e.g., protection against code changes during the approval period, or renewal provisions beyond the 1-year window).**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Ch. 112 generally	Stormwater permit triggers and SWPPP requirements.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add a provision requiring building permits for sites of 1+ acres to be conditioned on ADEQ NPDES permit issuance or exemption confirmation. This closes a gap between building permit issuance and stormwater compliance.
Sec. 112-104(e)	SWMP approval expiration — approval terminates if construction is not started within one year of issuance.	**LOW PRIORITY**. Sec. 112-104(e)(1)(d) terminates SWMP approvals if construction is not started within one year of approval. No broader vesting protections are present — there is no protection against code changes during the approval period, and no renewal provision beyond the initial approval cycle. Recommend adding a provision allowing SWMP approval renewals upon request and clarifying that the design standards in effect at the time of original approval govern the project during a renewal period.

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 112-106(c)	Reference to City design standards.	**LOW PRIORITY**. Specify the mechanism by which design standards are adopted and amended (e.g., by resolution of the City Council or Director of Public Works) to ensure standards are enforceable and current.

6. CHAPTER 113 – SUBDIVISIONS (SELECTED SECTIONS)

Chapter 113 governs the subdivision of land within Jonesboro. The review focused on Articles I through IV, covering general provisions, preliminary and final plat procedures, and improvement requirements. A significant gap was identified: Chapter 113 contains no vesting rights language.

6.1 ARTICLE 1 – IN GENERAL (SECS. 113-1 THROUGH 113.4), ARTICLE II – PLATS AND PLATTING (SECS. 113-48 THROUGH 113-52, ARTICLE III – DESIGN STANDARDS (SECS. 113-78 THROUGH 113-85)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Chapter 113 contains NO vesting rights language for preliminary or final plats. A preliminary plat approval confers no specified period of protection against code changes.**
• **Section 113-49(f) specifies that preliminary plat approval lapses unless a final plat is submitted within one year, with a planning commission extension option. The 1-year period may be shorter than best practice (2 years is common in comparable municipalities), but an expiration mechanism does exist.**
• **Chapter 113 does not specify whether phased subdivision approvals are subject to the code in effect at the time of each phase or at the time of the original approval.**
• **Section 113-4(b) already references a "funded escrow agreement" as a mechanism for deferring required improvements. The provision exists but should be expanded with specific terms: acceptable surety forms (letter of credit, performance bond, or cash deposit), required coverage amount, and release conditions.**
• **No provisions address the relationship between subdivision approval and building permit vesting under Chapter 105.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Ch. 113, Art. I	General provisions — no vesting language.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Arkansas does not have a state vesting statute for plat approvals. Without local vesting provisions, subdividers have no certainty about how long an approved preliminary plat remains valid. Recommend adding a 2-year preliminary plat vesting period with a 1-year extension option, consistent with best practices in comparable Arkansas municipalities.
Preliminary plat approval	1-year preliminary plat approval expiration under Sec. 113-49(f) — shorter than best practice.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Section 113-49(f) establishes a 1-year expiration for preliminary plat approvals unless a final plat is submitted (with a planning commission extension option). However, a 1-year period

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		is shorter than best practice — 2 years is the standard in comparable Arkansas municipalities. Recommend amending Sec. 113-49(f) to extend the default expiration period to 2 years with a 1-year extension option, to provide subdividers adequate time to complete final platting without reliance on stale approvals.
Phased subdivisions	No phase-specific vesting provisions.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add language clarifying that each phase of a phased subdivision is subject to the standards in effect at the time of preliminary plat approval for the phase, provided the overall preliminary plat remains valid.
Improvement deferrals	Section 113-4(b) — funded escrow agreement mechanism already exists.	**LOW PRIORITY**. The funded escrow agreement provision in Sec. 113-4(b) is the right framework but lacks procedural detail. Recommend adding: (1) acceptable surety forms (letter of credit, performance bond, or cash deposit); (2) required coverage amount as a percentage of estimated improvement costs; (3) release conditions upon completion and City acceptance of improvements.
Ch. 105 / Ch. 113 coordination	No cross-reference between subdivision and building permit vesting.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add a provision clarifying that building permits issued within a vested subdivision are subject to the building codes in effect at the time of permit application, not the codes in effect at the time of plat approval.

7. CHAPTER 117 – ZONING

The relevant provisions of Chapter 117 include Article II (Administration and Enforcement, Sections 117-31 through 117-35) and Article II, Division 3 (Nonconforming Structures and Uses, Sections 117-83 through 117-89). This chapter focuses on those provisions as they relate to building code enforcement, change-of-use analysis, and vesting rights.

7.1 ARTICLE II – ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT (SECS. 117-31 THROUGH 117-35)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Section 117-31 designates the city planner as the administrative official responsible for administering and enforcing Chapter 117, under the direction of the department of planning, inspection, and code enforcement.**
• **Section 117-33 is the City's certificate of occupancy (CO) provision. It covers CO requirements for new structures, additions, and changes in occupancy; building official authority; temporary COs; and references AFPC Volume II, Sec. 110.3 in Sec. 117-33(g)(4). However, it does not cross-reference AFPC Section 102.3 for change-of-occupancy fire code compliance under AFPC Volume I.**
• **Section 117-35 provides for Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) appeals.**
• **No provisions address vesting rights for zoning approvals.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 117-31	Zoning administrator designation and enforcement authority.	**LOW PRIORITY**. Adequate as an enforcement provision. Recommend adding a coordination provision with the building official for change-of-use determinations requiring both zoning and building code review.
Sec. 117-33	Certificates of occupancy — CO process and fire code alignment.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Sec. 117-33 is substantive and covers CO triggers, building official authority, temporary COs, and a reference to AFPC Volume II, Sec. 110.3 in Sec. 117-33(g)(4). Sec. 117-33(g)(6) requires all life safety inspections to pass before a temporary CO is issued. However, the section references AFPC Volume II (Building) only — it does not require the fire code official to independently sign off under AFPC Volume I (Fire) authority. Add an express requirement that the fire code official certify fire code compliance before final CO issuance, complementing the existing AFPC Vol. II reference. Also add a cross-reference

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		to AFPC Sec. 102.3 and the IEBC for change-of-occupancy applications.
Sec. 117-35	BZA appeals.	**LOW PRIORITY**. No substantive gaps identified. Ensure BZA appeal timelines are consistent with standard due process requirements (notice, hearing, decision).

7.2 ARTICLE II, DIVISION 3 – NONCONFORMING STRUCTURES AND USES (SECS. 117-83 THROUGH 117-89)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Section 117-83 defines nonconforming structures and uses generally.**
• **Section 117-84(b) provides that a nonconforming use that is discontinued for 12 months loses its nonconforming status.**
• **Section 117-85 (Change of Use) governs what types of nonconforming uses may be substituted for one another without triggering full compliance requirements. Section 117-85(b) also contains a separate 3-month discontinuance trigger for land without substantial buildings or structures. This creates an internal inconsistency: Sec. 117-84(c) establishes a 6-month discontinuance standard for the same asset type (land without enclosed structures), while Sec. 117-85(b) establishes a shorter 3-month standard for the same category. The City should verify which standard is intended to govern and reconcile the two sections.**
• **Section 117-85 (Change of Use) does not cross-reference AFPC Section 102.3 (change of occupancy fire compliance) or Sec. 105-20's adoption of the 2012 Existing Building Code (IEBC). Applicants seeking a change-of-use certificate have no notice that fire code and building code compliance reviews are required.**
• **Section 117-85 does not cross-reference the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), which governs compliance requirements for change-of-occupancy projects.**
• **Section 117-89 addresses amortization of nonconforming uses but does not specify procedures for determining amortization periods.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 117-83	Definitions for nonconforming uses.	Adequate foundation provision. No substantive gap beyond general cross-referencing.
Sec. 117-84(b)	12-month discontinuance standard for loss of nonconforming status.	**LOW PRIORITY**. The 12-month discontinuance standard for structure-based uses in Sec. 117-84(b) is appropriate best practice. However, the 6-month standard in Sec. 117-84(c) for land without enclosed structures is inconsistent with the 3-month

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		standard in Sec. 117-85(b) for the same asset type. Verify which standard is intended to govern and reconcile the two sections. Consider consolidating all discontinuance standards in Sec. 117-84 for clarity.
Sec. 117-85	Change of Use — (a) governs substitution of nonconforming uses; may change to similar or less intense use, but not revert from more restricted; (b) 3-month discontinuance trigger for land without substantial structures.	**HIGH PRIORITY** — MISSING CROSS-REFERENCES. Sec.117-85 contains no cross-reference to AFPC Sec. 102.3 (change of occupancy fire compliance) or to Sec. 105-20's adoption of the IEBC. Applicants seeking a change-of-use certificate may proceed without fire or building code review. Recommend: (a) require fire code official determination of AFPC Sec. 102.3 compliance before any change-of-use certificate is issued; (b) require building official IEBC determination where physical alterations are involved; (c) add cross-references to Sec. 105-20 and Sec. 105-21. Note also that Sec.117-85(b)'s 3-month discontinuance standard for land-only uses is shorter than Sec.117-84(c)'s 6-month standard for the same asset type — verify the discrepancy is intentional.
Sec. 117-86–117-88	Nonconforming structures and lots.	No major gaps identified. Review for consistency with current state enabling legislation (Ark. Code Ann. Sec. 14-56-416).
Sec. 117-89	Amortization of nonconforming uses.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Amortization standards are vague. Recommend adding factors for determining reasonable amortization periods (investment amount, period of operation, cost of relocation) consistent with Arkansas case law.

8. MULTI-CHAPTERS

Several issues identified in this review cross multiple chapters and are addressed here as unified findings. If priorities related to these issues haven't already been identified earlier, they are included here.

8.1 OUTDATED TECHNICAL CODE ADOPTIONS

KEY FINDINGS
• **Multiple chapters adopt model codes by specific year (2012 IEBC, NEC, IMC, IPC), requiring manual amendment each time the state updates its adopted edition. The AFPC adoption in Sec. 105-21 should also use rolling language tied to the current state-adopted edition.**
• **The Arkansas Energy Code reference is to the 2014 edition, which is significantly out of date.**
• **Best practice is to adopt by reference to 'the most current edition as adopted by the State of Arkansas,' eliminating the need for periodic local amendments.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Multiple chapters	Year-specific code adoption creates obsolescence risk.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Amend all code adoption provisions to use rolling state-adoption language: '[Code Name] as adopted and amended by the State of Arkansas, as may be amended from time to time.' This eliminates the need for local amendments each time the state updates its code adoption.

8.2 REDUNDANCY BETWEEN CHAPTER 105 AND CHAPTER 34 (AFPC)

KEY FINDINGS
• **Some building-fire interface provisions appear in both Chapter 105 (building code) and Chapter 34 (fire prevention code), creating potential conflicts.**
• **AFPC Section 101.2.2 limits local ability to layer additional fire prevention requirements on top of the AFPC.**
• **Consolidating or clearly delineating the boundary between the two chapters will reduce enforcement ambiguity.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Ch. 34, Art. II / Ch. 105, Art. II	Overlapping scope provisions.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Conduct a provision-by-provision comparison to identify and eliminate duplicative requirements. Establish a clear enforcement boundary: AFPC Volume

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		II governs construction and occupancy; AFPC Volume I governs ongoing fire safety operations.

8.3 VESTING RIGHTS FOR BUILDING AND SUBDIVISION PERMITS

KEY FINDINGS
• **Chapter 105 contains no vesting rights language for building permits.**
• **Chapter 113 contains no vesting rights language for preliminary or final plats.**
• **Without vesting provisions, permit holders have no protection against mid-project code changes, creating legal uncertainty and potential claims.**
• **Arkansas does not have a state vesting statute; local ordinances must fill this gap.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Ch. 105 (Buildings and Building Regulations)	No building permit vesting or duration provisions.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Add vesting language: a building permit vests the right to construct under the codes in effect at the time of complete application submittal, provided construction commences within 180 days and proceeds without substantial interruption.
Ch. 113 (Subdivision)	No vesting rights language.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Add a 2-year preliminary plat vesting period. See Chapter 6 for full recommendation.

8.4 FEE SCHEDULE CURRENCY

KEY FINDINGS
• **Both fee schedules (Res. 17.091 and Res. 17.092) were adopted in August 2017 and have not been updated since.**
• **Fire permit fees ($50 for fire sprinkler permit, $50 for fire alarm permit) appear significantly below the cost of service based on typical plan review hours.**
• **Temporary CO fee is confirmed at $50 residential / $500 commercial. Existing Structure CO is listed at $50. No standalone new construction CO fee is identified. The City should confirm this is intentional and that new construction CO cost recovery is adequate.**
• **The Planning fee schedule includes a category for 'Additional Fees Not Being Charged' (3rd-submittal fees at $1,000) that represents unrecovered cost.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Res. 17.091 and 17.092	Fee schedules last updated August 2017.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Conduct a cost-of-service study for building permits, fire permits, and zoning applications. Update fee schedules to recover actual costs or desired cost recovery goals. Establish an annual CPI escalator or biennial review cycle to prevent future obsolescence.
Fire permit fees ($50–$85)	Likely below cost of service.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. A typical fire sprinkler system plan review requires 2–4 hours of staff time at a loaded hourly rate of $80–$120, suggesting minimum fees of $160–$480. Recommend cost-of-service analysis and fee update.
Uncollected 3rd-submittal fees	'Additional Fees Not Being Charged' category.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Activate both 3rd-submittal review fees listed in Res. 17.091 — Multi-Family Dwelling Review ($1,000) and Commercial/Industrial Review ($1,000) — which are currently designated as 'Additional Fees Not Being Charged.' Activating these fees requires a council resolution amending Res. 17.091 or adoption of an updated comprehensive fee schedule.

8.5 PLAN REVIEW TIMELINES AND VESTING

KEY FINDINGS
• **Neither Chapter 105 nor Chapter 34 specifies a maximum plan review timeline.**
• **Without a specified timeline, applicants have no recourse for delayed reviews and no basis for vesting claims based on deemed approval.**
• **Industry best practice is 30-business-day plan review after a confirmed complete application.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Ch. 105 / Ch. 34	No plan review timeline provisions.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY.** Industry best practice recommends a maximum 30-business-day plan review timeline. If not wanting to add into regulatory language, recommend creating a policy about a maximum plan review period with a deemed-complete provision.

8.6 ENFORCEMENT AND TICKETING AUTHORITY

KEY FINDINGS
• **Chapter 105 does not clearly authorize the building official to issue administrative citations (tickets) for code violations.**
• **AFPC Section 113 authorizes stop-work orders, but Chapter 34 does not echo this authority explicitly.**
• **Enforcement relies primarily on criminal misdemeanor prosecution, which is resource-intensive and may deter enforcement of minor violations.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Ch. 105 / Ch. 34	Enforcement authority gaps.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Add an administrative citation provision authorizing the building official, fire code official, and their designees to issue civil citations for code violations, with fines in the range of $100–$500 per day. Add explicit stop-work order authority in Chapter 34 consistent with AFPC Sec. 113.

8.7 THIRD-PARTY INSPECTION CREDENTIALING

KEY FINDINGS
• **Chapter 105 does not specify when third-party special inspectors may be used in lieu of city inspectors.**
• **No credentialing standards (ICC certification, state licensure, or approved agency designation) are specified for third-party inspectors.**
• **AFPC Volume II Chapter 17 provides a framework for special inspection programs that Chapter 105 should adopt by reference.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Ch. 105	No third-party inspection credentialing provisions.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Add a special inspection program provision adopting AFPC Vol. II Chapter 17 requirements, specifically: (1) a statement of special inspections prepared by the registered design professional in responsible charge and submitted as a condition of permit issuance (Sec. 1704.2.3/Sec. 1704.3); (2) approved agency designation — agencies must be objective, independent from the contractor, and employ experienced personnel educated in conducting and evaluating special

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
		inspections (Sec. 1703.1); (3) a report of special inspections submitted at a point in time agreed upon prior to the start of work, with a final report documenting all required inspections and correction of any discrepancies (Sec. 1704.2.4). Note: AFPC Vol. II Sec. 1703.1.3 does not specify ICC certification or state PE/SE licensure by name — it requires "experienced personnel educated in conducting, supervising, and evaluating tests and special inspections."

8.8 APPENDIX E ADOPTION AMBIGUITY

KEY FINDINGS

- **Section 105-21 of the Municipal Code expressly adopts the AFPC including Appendix D ("fire districts") and Appendix E ("supplementary accessibility requirements") by reference. Both appendix labels as written in Sec. 105-21 are incorrect — the correct AFPC titles are "Fire Apparatus Access Roads" (Appendix D) and "Hazard Categories" (Appendix E). Labeling correction recommendations for both appendices are addressed in Chapter 3 of this report. AFPC Sec. 101.2.1 confirms that the State of Arkansas adopted the AFPC including Appendix E statewide, which resolves the "not intended for adoption" concern at the state level. The local adoption in Sec. 105-21 is consistent with state law.**
- **The 'not intended for adoption' label appearing in Appendix E originates from the base International Fire Code (IFC) published by ICC. Arkansas superseded this limitation through Sec. 101.2.1 of the AFPC.**
- **Section 105-21 of the Municipal Code adopts Appendix E by local reference, which is consistent with the state adoption. No legal conflict exists.**
- **However, the presence of the 'not intended for adoption' label may cause confusion for applicants or code users who reference the base IFC rather than the AFPC. A brief clarifying statement in Sec. 105-21 is recommended to affirm that Appendix E is adopted and enforceable.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 105-21 / AFPC App. E	Appendix E adopted despite 'not intended for adoption' label.	**LOW PRIORITY**. The local adoption of Appendix E in Sec. 105-21 is consistent with AFPC Sec. 101.2.1, which confirms statewide adoption of Appendix E by Arkansas. No corrective action is legally required for the adoption itself. However, to prevent confusion, recommend adding a brief clarifying statement in Sec. 105-21 noting that Appendix E is adopted pursuant to AFPC Sec. 101.2.1 and is enforceable

		locally. For labeling corrections to the Appendix D and Appendix E references in Sec. 105-21, see Chapter 3 of this report.

8.9 CHANGE OF USE: INTERACTION BETWEEN SECTION 117-85, AFPC, AND THE IEBC

KEY FINDINGS

- **Section 117-85 governs change-of-use determinations under the zoning code but does not cross-reference AFPC Section 102.3 (change of occupancy) or the IEBC.**
- **AFPC Section 102.3 requires that any change of occupancy comply with the AFPC and with the IEBC to the extent the change involves construction.**
- **Without a cross-reference, applicants for a change-of-use certificate may not know that fire code and building code compliance reviews are required.**
- **Section 117-85(b) contains a 3-month discontinuance trigger for land without substantial structures — shorter than the 6-month standard in Sec. 117-84(c) for the same asset type. The 12-month standard in Sec. 117-84(b) applies to structure-based uses and represents appropriate best practice. Verify whether the 6-month vs. 3-month discrepancy for land-only uses is intentional and document the policy rationale.**

Section	Provision Summary	Finding / Assessment
Sec. 117-85 / AFPC Sec. 102.3	Change of use — missing fire code cross-reference.	**HIGH PRIORITY**. Amend Sec. 117-85 to require, as a condition of issuance of a change-of-use certificate, a fire code official determination that the proposed use complies with AFPC Sec. 102.3. Also require a building official determination of compliance with the IEBC where the change involves physical alterations. This closes the regulatory gap between zoning approval and fire/building code compliance.
Sec. 117-84(b) vs. Sec. 117-85(b)	Sec.117-85(b) 3-month discontinuance for land uses vs. Sec.117-84(c) 6-month standard — verify consistency.	**LOW PRIORITY**. Verify whether the discrepancy between Sec.117-85(b)'s 3-month standard and Sec.117-84(c)'s 6-month standard for land-only uses is intentional and document the policy rationale. No structural code conflict exists; the 12-month standard in Sec.117-84(b) for structure-based uses is internally consistent and represents best practice.

9. COMPARABLE JURISDICTION ANALYSIS

To provide meaningful context for the findings and recommendations in this assessment, Matrix Consulting Group reviewed the building and fire prevention code frameworks of two Arkansas jurisdictions comparable to Jonesboro in size, regulatory complexity, and state law obligations: Conway and Springdale. Both cities are subject to the same Arkansas Fire Prevention Code (AFPC) and Arkansas state building code adoption requirements as Jonesboro, making them appropriate benchmarks for evaluating local code administration practices.

The comparison focuses on seven areas directly relevant to this assessment: (1) code adoption structure; (2) Board of Appeals provisions; (3) plan review timelines; (4) fee schedule currency; (5) operational permits; (6) Knox box/key lock box requirements; and (7) vesting rights and approval expiration provisions. Where Jonesboro's practices fall below or diverge from those of the comparable jurisdictions reinforces the corresponding recommendation in this assessment.

9.1 CONWAY, ARKANSAS

Conway is a rapidly growing city of approximately 70,000 residents in Faulkner County. Its building and fire prevention regulatory framework is codified in Chapter 11.12 (Fire Prevention Code) and Chapter 11.16 (Building Code) of the Conway Municipal Code. Conway provides a useful benchmark because, like Jonesboro, it administers both building and fire prevention functions and has experienced significant development pressure over the past decade.

CODE ADOPTION STRUCTURE

Conway Practice: Conway's fire prevention code (Chapter 11.12) adopts fire safety standards by reference. The building code (Chapter 11.16) was most recently amended by Ord. No. O-24-65 (September 24, 2024), which updated penalty provisions and permit requirements.[2]

Jonesboro Finding: **MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Jonesboro's Chapter 34 does not contain an equivalent explicit adoption ordinance citing the 2021 AFPC edition by name and date, but its Chapter 105 does include an explicit adoption. A cross-referencing provision should be added to Chapter 34 to clarify this relationship. Jonesboro should add update mechanism modeled on Conway's ordinance amendment process.

[2] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.12 (Fire Prevention Code); Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.16, as amended by Ord. No. O-24-65 (Sept. 24, 2024) (Building Code).

BOARD OF APPEALS

Conway Practice: Conway's fire prevention code (Chapter 11.12, Section 11.12.07) provides that any person aggrieved by a Fire Chief decision may appeal to the City Council within thirty (30) days. No five-member, expertise-based Board of Appeals recommended by AFPC Section 111 is established.[3]

Jonesboro Finding: **LOW PRIORITY**: Conway and Jonesboro share this gap — neither city has established the five-member, qualification-based Board of Appeals authorized by AFPC Section 111 (which uses permissive "may establish" language). While not a mandatory state-law requirement, the absence of a qualified technical appeals body poses due process risks and is recommended in both jurisdictions.

PLAN REVIEW TIMELINES

Conway Practice: Conway's Chapter 11.12 and Chapter 11.16 do not codify specific building permit plan review timelines in the reviewed code text. Timelines are administered operationally by the Department of Building Permits and Inspections.[4]

Jonesboro Finding: **MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Neither Conway nor Jonesboro has codified building permit plan review timelines. Jonesboro should establish timelines in Chapter 105, or through an administrative policy, to provide applicants with certainty, regardless of staffing changes.

FEE SCHEDULE AND PENALTY CURRENCY

Conway Practice: Conway's building code was updated in 2024 (Ord. No. O-24-65) to establish penalties of $100–$500 per day for building code violations, with each day constituting a separate offense. Work begun before permit issuance triggers a doubling of the applicable permit fee. The fire prevention code (Section 11.12.08) currently imposes penalties of $10–$50 — significantly below AFPC Section 112.4's $ 1,000-per-day (Class A Misdemeanor) standard.[5] [6]

Jonesboro Finding: **HIGH PRIORITY/ MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Jonesboro's fee schedules have not been updated since 2017, and its fire code penalty provisions similarly fall below AFPC Section 112.4 requirements. Conway's 2024 building code update provides a model for a penalty revision; both cities' fire code penalty provisions warrant review against AFPC Section 112.4.

---

[3] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.12.07 (Appeals): 'Whenever the Chief of the Fire Department shall disapprove an application or refuse to grant a permit…the applicant may appeal from the decisions of the Chief of the Fire Department to the City Council…within thirty (30) days.' (Ord. No. O-99-78, Sec. 7).
[4] Conway Mun. Code Sec. Sec. 11.12, 11.16 (reviewed in full; no plan review timeline provisions identified).
[5] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.16.01, as amended by Ord. No. O-24-65 (Sept. 24, 2024) (building code penalties: $100–$500/day; each day a separate offense).
[6] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.12.08 (fire prevention penalties: $10–$50 fine or 1–10 days imprisonment, or both; Ord. No. O-99-78, Sec. 8).

OPERATIONAL PERMITS

Conway Practice: Conway's fire prevention code (Chapter 11.12, Section 11.12.05) addresses open burning permits — the Fire Chief may issue seasonal permits by publication for outdoor burning. This is a limited provision; no full operational permit system consistent with AFPC Sec. 105.5 (covering high-hazard occupancies, flammable liquids storage, fireworks sales, and other regulated activities) was identified in Conway's reviewed code.[7]

Jonesboro Finding: **HIGH PRIORITY**: Neither Conway nor Jonesboro has implemented the comprehensive operational permit system required by AFPC Section 105.5. This is a shared regional gap. Jonesboro should adopt a full operational permit ordinance consistent with AFPC Section 105.5 (Secs. 105.5.1-105.5.52).

KNOX BOX / KEY LOCK BOX

Conway Practice: Conway Municipal Code Section 2.60.04 mandates key lock boxes for: (1) commercial/industrial structures with automatic fire alarm or suppression systems secured against emergency access; (2) all institutions including schools, colleges, hospitals, and nursing care facilities; (3) subdivisions and multi-family units secured against emergency access; and (4) all new commercial/residential buildings with elevators. New construction must have the lock box installed and operational before CO issuance.[8]

Jonesboro Finding: **MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Jonesboro has no Knox box or key lock box provision in Chapter 34 or Chapter 105. Conway's Section 2.60.04 mirrors AFPC Section 506 requirements. Adding a Knox box requirement tied to CO issuance would fill this gap and align Jonesboro with peer Arkansas practice.

VESTING RIGHTS AND APPROVAL EXPIRATION

Conway Practice: Conway's Subdivision Ordinance (Ord. No. O.19.131, December 10, 2019) establishes codified approval expiration timelines: preliminary plat approval expires 12 months from the date of approval, with one 12-month extension available upon demonstration of sufficient progress. Final plat must be recorded in the office of the County Recorder within two (2) years of Planning Commission

[7] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.12.05 (Burning Permits; Ord. No. O-99-78, Sec. 5): open burning by seasonal permit only; no comprehensive operational permit system identified in Chapter 11.12 or 11.16.

[8] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 2.60.04 (Lock Boxes): requires key lock boxes at main entrance for commercial/industrial structures with alarms or suppression systems, all institutions, secured subdivisions and multi-family units, and all buildings with elevators; installation required prior to CO issuance.

approval; failure to record results in the approval being deemed abandoned. No explicit building permit vesting or protection from subsequent code changes was identified in the reviewed code.[9] [10]

Jonesboro Finding: **MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Conway and Jonesboro share a lack of explicit language regarding building permit vesting rights. Jonesboro should add codified plat approval expiration timelines to Chapter 113, using Conway's 12-month/2-year structure as a model, and reference the Arkansas Vesting of Rights Act (Ark. Code Ann. Sec. 14-56-416) to protect building permits.

9.2 SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

Springdale, in Washington and Benton Counties in Northwest Arkansas, has a population of approximately 90,000 and is Arkansas's fourth-largest city. Fire prevention is addressed in Chapter 46 (Fire Prevention and Protection) and subdivision regulations in Chapter 112 of the Springdale Municipal Code. Springdale's larger development volume and recent code updates make it a useful benchmark for evaluating scalable code administration practices.

CODE ADOPTION STRUCTURE

Springdale Practice: Springdale's Chapter 46, Section 46-51, formally adopts the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, 2021 edition, by reference, with three copies maintained in the office of the City Clerk as required for public adoption. This was accomplished by Ord. No. 5816 (March 14, 2023), providing a clear, dated adoption trail.[11]

Jonesboro Finding: **MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Jonesboro's Chapter 34 does not contain an equivalent explicit adoption ordinance citing the 2021 AFPC edition by name and date, but its Chapter 105 does include an explicit adoption. A cross-referencing provision should be added to Chapter 34 to clarify this relationship. Springdale's Section 46-51 approach — a brief adoption ordinance with a specific edition citation and date — provides a simple model for Jonesboro.

BOARD OF APPEALS

Springdale Practice: A formal Board of Appeals for fire code matters was not identified in Springdale's Chapter 46 as reviewed. Appeals appear to be handled administratively and, if necessary, through the City Council — consistent with Conway's approach.[12]

---

[9] Conway, AR Subdivision Ordinance, Ord. No. O.19.131 (Dec. 10, 2019), Sec. 5.D (Expiration of Preliminary Plat Approval): automatic 12-month expiration; one extension of up to 12 months upon request with proof of progress; no more than one extension.
[10] Conway Subdivision Ordinance Sec. 5.D (Recording): final plat must be filed with County Recorder within two (2) years of Planning Commission approval or approval is deemed abandoned.
[11] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 46-51 (Adoption of Fire Prevention Code): 'There is adopted by reference by the city…the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code 2021 edition.' (Ord. No. 5816, Sec. 2, Mar. 14, 2023).
[12] Springdale Mun. Code Ch. 46 (Fire Prevention and Protection) reviewed in full; no AFPC Section 111-compliant Board of Appeals provisions identified.

Jonesboro Finding: **LOW PRIORITY**: Springdale, like Conway and Jonesboro, does not appear to have established the five-member, expertise-based Board of Appeals authorized by AFPC Section 111 (which uses permissive "may establish" language). This is a shared gap across all three peer jurisdictions; while not mandatory under state law, establishing a qualified Board is strongly recommended to address due process risk.

PLAN REVIEW TIMELINES

Springdale Practice: Springdale's Chapter 112 (Subdivisions) provides that the Planning Commission shall conduct a public meeting to review preliminary plats within 60 days of acceptance for review, and final plats within 60 days of acceptance. These timelines are codified and provide applicants with defined expectations.[13] [14]

Jonesboro Finding: **HIGH PRIORITY**. Jonesboro's Chapters 105 and 113 do not establish codified subdivision-review timelines. Springdale's 60-day Planning Commission review deadline provides a practical model.

FEE SCHEDULE AND PENALTY CURRENCY

Springdale Practice: Springdale's building code was updated in 2014, with the trade permits being updated before that date. No date was found for fire prevention code penalties. The fire prevention code (Section 11.12.08) currently imposes penalties of $10–$50 — significantly below AFPC Section 112.4's $ 1,000-per-day (Class A Misdemeanor) standard.[15] [16]

Jonesboro Finding: **HIGH PRIORITY/ MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Jonesboro's fee schedules have not been updated since 2017, and its fire code penalty provisions similarly fall below AFPC Section 112.4 requirements.

OPERATIONAL PERMITS

Springdale Practice: Springdale's Chapter 46 addresses two categories of operational permits: open burning permits (Section 46-2, available at Fire Station 1, Monday–Friday; burn permit required before any fire commences; large burns subject to fire marshal site inspection), and fireworks sales permits (Section 46-56, $500 per location, with half the fee directed to fire department inspection costs;

[13] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 112-3(2)(c): 'Within 60 days after acceptance for review of the preliminary plat, the planning commission shall conduct a public meeting.' (Code 1973, Sec. 30-3; Ord. No. 6114, Sec. 2, Aug. 12, 2025).
[14] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 112-3(4)(c): same 60-day requirement for final plat Planning Commission review.
[15] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.16.01, as amended by Ord. No. O-24-65 (Sept. 24, 2024) (building code penalties: $100–$500/day; each day a separate offense).
[16] Conway Mun. Code Sec. 11.12.08 (fire prevention penalties: $10–$50 fine or 1–10 days imprisonment, or both; Ord. No. O-99-78, Sec. 8).

$1,000,000 premises liability insurance required). This is a limited system; no full AFPC Sec. 105.5 operational permit program was identified.[17] [18]

Jonesboro Finding: **HIGH PRIORITY**: Jonesboro's Chapter 34 contains no operational permit provisions. Springdale's system, though limited, is more developed than Jonesboro's. Both jurisdictions fall short of a full AFPC Sec. 105.5.1 operational permit system. Jonesboro should adopt a comprehensive ordinance governing operational permits.

KNOX BOX / KEY LOCK BOX

Springdale Practice: Springdale's Chapter 46, Section 46-28 requires key lock boxes for: (1) commercial or industrial structures with automatic fire alarm or suppression systems, or secured against emergency Fire Department access; and (2) all institutional and nursing care facilities. The Fire Chief has designated the Knox Box system for citywide implementation and has the authority to require all structures to use it. New construction must have the lock box installed and operational before CO issuance.[19] [20] [21]

Jonesboro Finding: **MEDIUM PRIORITY**. Jonesboro's Chapter 34 contains no Knox box or key lock box requirement. Both Springdale (Sec. 46-28) and Conway (Sec. 2.60.04) have codified this requirement consistent with AFPC Section 506. Jonesboro is out of step with both peer jurisdictions and state code requirements.

VESTING RIGHTS AND APPROVAL EXPIRATION

Springdale Practice: Springdale's Chapter 112 contains meaningful development approval expiration and vesting provisions. For large-scale development plans (Section 112-5(1)(f)): approval expires one year from the date of approval unless the applicant (1) receives a building permit, (2) pours footings, and (3) receives all required city, state, and federal permits and approvals. A one-year extension is available upon a showing of good cause; failure to complete conditions after the second year requires a new submission. The same framework applies to non-large-scale development plans under Section 112-

[17] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 46-2(a)(1)–(2) (Open Burning Permits): burn permit required before burning commences; obtained at Fire Station 1; large burns subject to fire marshal inspection. (Ord. No. 3341, Sec. 1, June 24, 2003).
[18] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 46-56(a)(2) (Fireworks Sales Permits): $500 per location; 50% to fire department inspection fund; $1,000,000 liability insurance required. (Ord. No. 4268, Sec. 1, Oct. 28, 2008).
[19] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 46-28(a): key lock box required for commercial/industrial structures with alarms or suppression systems, and all institutional/nursing care facilities. (Ord. No. 3291, Feb. 11, 2003).
[20] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 46-28(b): new construction must have lock box installed and operational prior to CO issuance.
[21] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 46-28(c): Knox Box system designated citywide; fire chief has authority to require all structures to use designated system.

5(2)(d)–(e). For preliminary plats, approval lapses after one year unless construction is ongoing and work is actively progressing on required improvements.[22] [23] [24]

Jonesboro Finding: MEDIUM PRIORITY: Springdale's Chapter 112 represents a best practice — linking approval expiration to specific construction milestones (building permit issuance, footing pour, and all permit approvals) provides clear, enforceable vesting standards. Jonesboro's Chapter 113 contains no equivalent provisions. Springdale's Section 112-5 framework, combined with the Arkansas Vesting of Rights Act (Ark. Code Ann. Sec. 14-56-416), provides a ready model for adoption.

9.3 SUMMARY: BENCHMARKING IMPLICATIONS FOR JONESBORO

The document-based review of Conway and Springdale yields a more nuanced picture than initially anticipated, with several important corrections to common assumptions. Most significantly, neither Conway nor Springdale has established the five-member, expertise-based Board of Appeals authorized by AFPC Section 111 (which uses permissive "may establish" language) — Conway's fire code routes appeals to City Council, and no equivalent board was found in Springdale's Chapter 46. Jonesboro is not uniquely out of compliance on this issue; it shares the gap with both peer jurisdictions. While not a mandatory state-law requirement, establishing a qualified Board is strongly recommended. Similarly, neither peer city has implemented a full AFPC/IFC Table 105.5.1 operational permit system. However, Springdale's burning and fireworks permit provisions are more developed than Jonesboro's complete absence of any operational permits.

Where Jonesboro stands alone in falling short is the Knox box requirement: both Conway (Sec. 2.60.04) and Springdale (Sec. 46-28) have codified key lock box requirements tied to CO issuance, while Jonesboro has none. On vesting rights, Springdale's Chapter 112 Sec. 112-5 provides the strongest framework of the three jurisdictions, linking the expiration of development plan approval to specific construction milestones. This provides the clearest model for Jonesboro to adopt.

Practice Area	Conway, AR	Springdale, AR	Jonesboro Finding
Code Adoption Structure	Adopts fire safety standards by reference. The building code last amended by September 24, 2024.	Formally adopts the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, 2021 edition.	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**: A cross-referencing provision should be added to Chapter 34 to clarify relationship to Chapter 105.
Board of Appeals	Appeals to City Council (Sec. 11.12.07); no AFPC Sec.	No AFPC Sec. 111 Board of Appeals in Ch. 46; City Council appeals	**LOW PRIORITY**: All three jurisdictions share this gap

[22] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 112-5(1)(f)–(g) (Large Scale Development Plan Expiration and Extension): approval conditioned on building permit, footing pour, and all permits/approvals within 1 year; 1-year extension for good cause; failure after year 2 requires new submission. (Code 1973, Sec. 30-5).
[23] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 112-5(2)(d)–(e) (Non-Large Scale Development Plan Expiration and Extension): same 1-year/1-year-extension framework. (Code 1973, Sec. 30-5).
[24] Springdale Mun. Code Sec. 112-3(2): preliminary plat approval lapses after one year unless construction is ongoing and work actively progressing on required improvements. (Code 1973, Sec. 30-3).

Practice Area	Conway, AR	Springdale, AR	Jonesboro Finding
	111 Board of Appeals codified		
Plan Review Timelines	Building permit plan review timelines are not codified in Ch. 11.12 or 11.16	60-day Planning Commission review timeline established for subdivisions/plats (Sec. 112-3)	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**: No permit review timelines in Chapters 34 and 105; **HIGH PRIORITY:** No codified timelines in Jonesboro Ch. 105 or Ch. 113
Operational Permits	Burning permits only (Sec. 11.12.05); no full IFC Table 105.5.1 system	Burning (Sec. 46-2) + fireworks permits (Sec. 46-56, $500/location)	**HIGH PRIORITY**: Jonesboro has no permits at all; Ch. 34 needs full AFPC Sec. 105.5 system
Fee / Penalty Currency	Building: updated 2024 (Ord. O-24-65); Fire penalty: $10–$50 (below AFPC Sec. 112.4)	Fireworks permit $500/location (Sec. 46-56); building updated Dec. 2024	**HIGH PRIORITY**: Jonesboro fees last updated 2017; fire penalties below AFPC Sec. 112.4
Knox Box Requirement	Sec. 2.60.04 — comprehensive; alarms, suppression, institutions, elevators; CO required	Sec. 46-28 — confirmed; commercial/industrial + institutional; CO required	**HIGH PRIORITY**: Jonesboro uniquely lacks Knox box; not shared by either peer city
Vesting Rights / Plan Expiry	Prelim. plat 12 mo. (Subdiv. Ord. Sec. 5.D); final plat 2 yr. to record	Dev. plan: 1 yr. to BP + footing + all permits (Sec. 112-5); 1-yr. extension — best model	**MEDIUM PRIORITY**: Jonesboro has no codified expiration or vesting; Springdale Sec. 112-5 recommended model

10. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table summarizes all recommendations from this assessment, organized in the order they are discussed in the body of the report (Chapters 3–8). Each recommendation is presented as a discrete, actionable step intended to improve regulatory clarity, align the City's codes with Arkansas state law, and strengthen the efficiency and consistency of development review processes.

Recommendations are prioritized as **High**, **Medium**, or **Low** to support implementation planning. **High-priority** items involve direct conflicts with state law, significant public safety gaps, or legal exposure and should be addressed within 90 days (3 months). **Medium-priority** items represent meaningful improvements to regulatory clarity, process efficiency, or cost recovery and should be addressed within 3 to 6 months. **Low-priority** items are housekeeping updates, minor cross-reference additions, or provisions that are generally adequate as written but would benefit from clarification; these should be addressed within 6 to 12 months. Where a provision is identified in the body of this report without a corresponding recommendation, it was found to be substantively adequate and requires no corrective action at this time.

RECOMMENDATION TABLE

#	Chapter	Section	Recommendation	Priority
1	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-1	Add cross-reference to AFPC definitions for consistency.	Low
2	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-2	Designate a fire code official and codify enforcement authority.	High
3	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-3	Add cross-reference to AFPC fire protection water supply requirements.	Low
4	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-33	Require fire marshal review for all structures subject to AFPC scope.	High
5	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-34	Establish a defined plan review timeline for fire permit review.	Medium
6	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-35	Establish a qualified Board of Appeals consistent with AFPC requirements.	Low
7	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-38	Expand inspection authority to apply to all structures, not just public buildings.	High
8	Ch. 34	Sec. 34-39	Add a standalone fire code penalty provision consistent with AFPC requirements.	High
9	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Establish operational permit requirements for hazardous activities per AFPC.	High
10	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Adopt local fire flow and hydrant spacing requirements.	High
11	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Add Knox box / key box authority provisions.	Medium
12	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Add liability protections for the fire code official and designees.	Medium
13	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Add fire investigation authority for the fire code official.	Medium

#	Chapter	Section	Recommendation	Priority
14	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Add cross-reference to Chapter 105 confirming AFPC adoption and applicability.	High
15	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Add stop-work order authority consistent with AFPC.	High
16	Ch. 34	Ch. 34 gen.	Add applicability provisions for change of occupancy referencing AFPC and IEBC.	Medium
17	Ch. 105	Art. I	Add a general scope and applicability provision to Article I identifying regulated construction activities and structures, and add definitions cross-referencing the AFPC "Building Official."	Low
18	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-19	Update ADA adoption language to reference the most current state-adopted edition.	Medium
19	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-20	Update IEBC adoption language to reference the most current state-adopted edition.	Medium
20	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-21	Amend AFPC adoption language to reference the most current state-adopted edition.	Medium
21	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-21	Correct Appendix D and Appendix E titles and references to align with AFPC terminology.	Medium
22	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-22	Require utility disconnection verification prior to demolition permit issuance.	High
23	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-22	Require inspection or authorization for demolition of attached or adjacent structures.	High
24	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-22	Add coordination requirements with utility providers for demolition permits.	High
25	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-23	Establish a maximum 30-business-day plan review timeline or adopt an administrative policy.	Medium
26	Ch. 105	Sec. 105-23	Define "substantial work is in progress" for permit expiration determinations.	Medium
27	Ch. 105	Art. III	Update NEC adoption to reference the current state-adopted edition.	High
28	Ch. 105	Art. III	Establish credentialing standards for third-party electrical inspectors.	Medium
29	Ch. 105	Arts. IV–VI	Update gas, mechanical, and plumbing code adoptions to current state-adopted editions.	Medium
30	Ch. 105	Art. VII	Require address assignment prior to permit issuance and coordinate with 911 standards.	Medium
31	Ch. 105	Art. VIII	Add criteria governing administrative modifications to pool enclosure requirements.	Medium
32	Ch. 105	Art. VIII	Add cross-reference clarifying that pool construction requires a building permit.	Medium
33	Ch. 105	Art. IX	Establish a defined timeline for Board of Appeals hearings on unsafe structures.	Medium
34	Ch. 105	Art. IX	Add lien authority for cost recovery of unsafe structure abatement.	Medium

#	Chapter	Section	Recommendation	Priority
35	Ch. 105	Art. II	Establish or verify general penalty provisions for building code violations.	Medium
36	Ch. 112	Ch. 112 gen.	Require building permit issuance to be conditioned on NPDES permit compliance.	Medium
37	Ch. 112	Sec. 112-104	Allow renewal of stormwater approvals and clarify vesting of design standards.	Low
38	Ch. 112	Sec. 112-106	Define the mechanism for adopting and updating stormwater design standards.	Low
39	Ch. 113	Art. I	Establish vesting rights for subdivision approvals.	High
40	Ch. 113	Sec. 113-49	Extend preliminary plat expiration period to two years with extension option.	High
41	Ch. 113	Ch. 113 gen.	Establish vesting provisions for phased subdivisions.	Medium
42	Ch. 113	Sec. 113-4	Define acceptable financial surety mechanisms and release conditions.	Low
43	Ch. 113	Ch. 105 coord.	Clarify relationship between subdivision approval and building permit vesting.	Medium
44	Ch. 117	Sec. 117-33	Require fire code official sign-off prior to issuance of final certificate of occupancy.	Medium
45	Ch. 117	Sec. 117-33	Add cross-references to AFPC and IEBC for change-of-occupancy review.	Medium
46	Ch. 117	Sec. 117-85	Require fire and building code compliance determinations for change-of-use approvals.	High
47	Ch. 117	Sec. 117-84/85	Reconcile conflicting discontinuance timeframes for nonconforming uses.	Low
48	Ch. 117	Sec. 117-89	Establish criteria for determining amortization periods.	Medium
49	Multi	Multi	Update all code adoption provisions to reference current state-adopted editions.	Medium
50	Multi	Multi	Clarify boundaries and eliminate redundancy between Chapters 105 and 34.	Medium
51	Multi	Multi	Establish building permit vesting provisions tied to complete application.	High
52	Multi	Multi	Establish plan review timelines or administrative policies for permit review.	Medium
53	Multi	Multi	Establish administrative citation authority for code enforcement.	High
54	Multi	Multi	Establish third-party inspection program consistent with AFPC/IBC requirements.	Medium
55	Multi	Multi	Amend zoning provisions to require fire and building code review for change of use.	High
56	Multi	Multi	Conduct a cost-of-service study and update fee schedules.	High

#	Chapter	Section	Recommendation	Priority
57	Multi	Multi	Update fire permit fees to reflect actual cost of service.	**High**
58	Multi	Multi	Activate third-submittal review fees currently not being charged.	**Medium**

APPENDIX E: COMPARABLE JURISDICTION RESEARCH RESULTS

MARCH 16, 2026

FINAL

JONESBORO, AR

MATRIX
CONSULTING GROUP

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of its assessment of the City of Jonesboro's permitting process, Matrix Consulting Group conducted a brief research exercise that aimed to compare the City against peer jurisdictions on the following metrics:

- **Community Information:**
  - Population and recent growth trends
  - Land area (square miles/acres)
  - Major industries and economic drivers
  - Form of government (e.g., Council–Manager, Mayor–Council)
- **Organizational Structure:**
  - Where and how are development review functions organized (Planning, Building, Engineering, Fire)
  - Budgeted staffing counts by function (where published)
  - Use of in-house vs. contract reviewers (if identified)
- **Review Timelines and Permit Counts:**
  - Published target review times by permit/application type
  - First-review vs. total review timelines (if distinguished) (NOTE: First review = first review comments/ Total review = Total review time estimates for issuance) - identify if timelines are calendar vs. business days
  - Annual counts for planning and permit applications (where available)
- **Technology:**
  - Permitting software (Yes/No)
  - Online application/permit portal (Yes/No)
  - Public dashboards or annual performance reporting (Yes/No)

The project team researched publicly available data on City websites, budget documents, annual reports, and other pertinent documentation to conduct this effort. The City of Jonesboro agreed upon the following five comparable jurisdictions in the general South Central region of the United States:

- Bowling Green, KY

- Conway, AR
- Cordova, TN
- Springdale, AR
- Springfield, MO

The subsequent chapters will analyze each metric above in more detail. Findings from this research will be used in the permitting process study's analysis and will help to build recommendations for the City of Jonesboro.

2. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

The table below summarizes the general community information of each comparable jurisdiction, including the City of Jonesboro:

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SUMMARY

City	Population of Service Area	Area *(square miles)*	Population per Square Mile	Median Household Income	Form of Government
Jonesboro, AR	**82,384**	**Growing ~1.7%/yr**	**80.7**	**Healthcare, Higher Ed, Manufacturing, Logistics, Agriculture, Food Processing**	**Mayor-Council**
Bowling Green, KY	76,212	Growing ~2.6%/yr	40.7	Manufacturing, Higher Ed, Healthcare, Automotive	Manager-Commission
Conway, AR	70,711	Growing ~1.7%/yr	46.5	Higher Ed, Healthcare, Technology, Telecommunications	Mayor-Council
Cordova, TN*	68,779*	N/A	8	Retail/Commercial, Residential suburb	N/A
Springdale, AR	89,368	Growing ~1.0%/yr	49.7	Food Processing, Logistics, Manufacturing	Mayor-Council
Springfield, MO	170,596	Growing ~0.1%/yr	83.7	Healthcare, Higher Ed, Retail/Corporate HQ, Manufacturing	Council-Manager

The City identified the above communities as comparators due to perceptions that these jurisdictions directly compete with the City of Jonesboro for share of economic drivers and population. As shown by the table, all communities are estimated to have been growing since the 2020 census (based on 2024 estimates), and most communities have similar economic drivers to Jonesboro. Another commonality is the form of government: two of the five comparators use a Mayor-Council form of government, the same as Jonesboro.

It is important to note that during the research, the project team identified that Cordova, TN, is not a standalone municipality. Much of the community has been annexed by the City of Memphis, while the remainder of Cordova lies in unincorporated Shelby County. Therefore, data for this jurisdiction was limited.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The following table shows data related to the organization structure and placement of key permitting functions for each comparator. This information was derived from online research of each organization's website and budget documents (as well as other publicly available information). The table begins on the next page:

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE SUMMARY

City	Overall Organization	Building/Inspections	Engineering	Fire	Planning
Jonesboro, AR	**Applications submitted to Planning Dept, plans distributed to Engineering, Fire Marshal, and Planning for concurrent review. MAPC handles zoning/plats/conditional use.**	**Inspections Dept handles plan review for building code compliance and issues permits. Also performs field inspections.**	**Engineering Dept reviews stormwater, site plans, drainage, infrastructure**	**Fire Marshal reviews fire code compliance as part of plan review distribution**	**Planning & Zoning Dept staffs MAPC**
Bowling Green, KY	Neighborhood & Community Services (NCS) Dept houses Building Division. City-County Planning Commission of Warren County handles zoning/subdivision review jointly for city and county. Separate Stormwater Division under Public Works.	NCS Building Division issues building & electrical permits, performs plan review, inspections	Public Works reviews stormwater, grading, drainage, paving, traffic design	Fire Dept performs fire code review	City-County Planning Commission of Warren County addresses zoning, subdivisions, comprehensive planning
Conway, AR	Building Permits & Inspections Dept processes permits and conducts plan reviews. Planning Commission reviews development proposals. Applications can be submitted via Civic Access Portal.	Building Permits & Inspections processes permit applications, conducts plan reviews and field inspections	Engineering reviews site plans, stormwater, infrastructure	Fire Dept performs fire code review	Planning & Development Dept; staffs Planning Commission and Historic District Commission
Cordova, TN*	N/A. Governed by City of Memphis or Shelby County. Memphis Office of Planning & Development and Construction Code	City of Memphis Division of Planning & Development	City of Memphis Engineering Division	Memphis Fire Dept performs fire code plan review	City of Memphis Division of Planning & Development

City	Overall Organization	Building/Inspections	Engineering	Fire	Planning
	Enforcement handle development review.				
Springdale, AR	Building Dept and Planning Dept handle development review. Building Dept issues permits; Planning Dept handles zoning, subdivisions, land use. Applications accepted at City Hall.	Building Dept permits, inspections, plan review	Engineering reviews stormwater, site improvements	Has a Fire/Life Safety Inspector within Building Dept	Planning Dept handles zoning, subdivisions, long-range planning
Springfield, MO	Building Development Services (BDS) Dept coordinates development review. Pre-development review available free. Departments involved: BDS, Planning, Public Works/Engineering, Fire, Stormwater.	Building Development Services Dept Director oversees permits, plan review, inspections	Public Works/ Engineering reviews stormwater, public improvements, infrastructure	Fire Dept performs fire code plan review	Dev Review Team: Zoning & Subdivisions; staffs Planning & Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment, Landmarks Board

Based on the information available, Jonesboro's approach to structuring its development review/permitting entities appears similar to the comparators selected for this assessment. All comparators have some equivalent to Jonesboro's Inspections department, which is responsible for the initial intake of most permit applications. Additionally, each jurisdiction appears to have a distinct planning and development arm responsible for planning applications (e.g., zoning, subdivision, land use, etc.).

BUDGETED STAFFING

The following staffing information for each jurisdiction was sourced from budget documents for the most recent fiscal year. A tilde ("~") indicates incomplete information and/or that the specific function falls under a division (e.g., fire plan review as a function of a building department).

STAFFING SUMMARY

City	Building /Inspections	Engineering	Fire	Planning	Contracted Staff	Notes
Jonesboro, AR	**6**	**9**	**4**	**6**	**None**	
Bowling Green, KY	8	~	10	Through City/County Commission	None	Total of 33 FTEs in NCS Dept
Conway, AR	8	~	~	6	None	
Cordova, TN*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Administered through City of Memphis and/or Shelby County
Springdale, AR	10	10	1	10	None	Fire review occurs within Building Dept
Springfield, MO	45.2	~	2	19.8	None	Engineering review under Public Works

4. REVIEW TIMELINES AND PERMIT COUNTS

The project team also aimed to capture baseline workload metrics on review timelines and the number of permit applications received by comparable entities. Response quality was limited, however, and only two of the selected municipalities provided data: Springdale, AR, and Springfield, MO.

APPLICATION COUNTS

Springfield, MO, provided the following information regarding permits processed in 2025:

- Residential: 1,090 permit applications, of which 263 required plan review.
- Commercial: 1,681 permit applications. The City indicated the majority of these required plan review, but did not provide a specific number or estimate.

Springdale, AR, did not provide a total number of permit applications, but did share that they conducted 207 plan reviews in the last year.

REVIEW TIMELINES

Due to limited response rates, the project team expanded its search to include other cities and counties with published online review timelines for residential and commercial projects. The following table includes results from initial comparators and from several jurisdictions in Arkansas and its surrounding states. All review timelines are counted in business days:

City	Residential	Commercial	Notes
Jonesboro, AR	**3-5**	**5-15**	**No resubmittal timelines posted.**
Benton County, AR	N/A	10	Residential timelines not posted. Commercial for initial review only.
Bossier City, LA	5	10	City estimates for complete submittals. No resubmittal timelines posted.
Conway, AR	3-5	10-15	Trade permits take 1-2 days. No resubmittal timelines posted.
Davidson County, TN	3-10	10-20	No resubmittal timelines posted.
Fort Smith, AR	7-10	7-10	No resubmittal timelines posted.
Little Rock, AR	5	5	Same timeline for each. No resubmittal timelines posted.

City	Residential	Commercial	Notes
Kansas City, MO	7	10-20	Ranges based on project complexity. No resubmittal timelines posted.
Midwest City, OK	3-5	14	No resubmittal timelines posted.
Shreveport, LA	2	10-15	City estimates for complete submittals. No resubmittal timelines posted.
Springdale, AR	7-10	7-10	For first and all subsequent reviews.
Springfield, MO	5	5	Subsequent reviews are completed in 10-15 business days.
Tulsa, OK	4	12	Publishes average turnaround times for first review at least monthly.
Tyler, TX	5	10	No resubmittal timelines posted.

In general, Jonesboro's published plan review timelines are competitive with several similar and larger jurisdictions. Among these jurisdictions, residential plan reviews take an average of 6 days, while commercial reviews average around 12 days. This is, of course, based on published review timelines, which can be extended when an initial submittal was incomplete.

5. TECHNOLOGY

This portion of questions aimed to identify whether peer jurisdictions utilized permitting software, an online application portal, or provided annual performance dashboards to the public. The results of this research are as follows:

City	Permitting Software?	Application Portal?	Public Dashboards?	Notes
Jonesboro, AR	**Yes**	**Yes**	**No**	**Utilizes ProjectDox and iWorq for permitting process.**
Bowling Green, KY	Yes	Yes	No	e-permitting via Tyler Technologies
Conway, AR	Yes	Yes	No	Utilizes CivicHost for permitting and inspection applications
Cordova, TN*	Yes	Yes	~	Utilizes Accela for permit review
Springdale, AR	~	No	No	Applications are submitted via email
Springfield, MO	Yes	Yes	No	Utilizes ProjectDox for plan review

All entities appear to use permitting software, with Springfield using ProjectDox for plan review, similar to Jonesboro. Springdale, AR, requests applications to be submitted via email and does not have an online application portal. They are the only jurisdiction without an online portal. Public dashboards specific to the permitting function are not common among the communities polled for this exercise.