

Local Governments Determination on Permits

Julie Meredith
Secretary of Transportation

Ahmer Nizam
Director, Environmental Services Office

February 2025



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Report on local governments taking longer than 90 days to make a final determination on permits

Washington [State Law](#) requires that, to the greatest extent practicable, a city, town, code city, or county must make a final determination on all permits required for a project on a state highway as defined in [RCW 46.04.560](#) no later than ninety days after the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) submission of a complete permit application for a project with an estimated cost of less than five hundred million dollars.

This report was prepared pursuant to [RCW 47.01.485](#), requiring WSDOT to annually report to the Governor and the transportation committees of the legislature on any permit applications subject to the above-stated requirements that took more than 90 days for local governments to process.

The timeframe for this report is for permit application packages submitted between October 3, 2023, and October 2, 2024. In some cases, WSDOT was advised that local government staffing challenges, increased workload, and complexity of permit application materials contributed to some of the delays in permit processing. For the timeframe stated above, eight WSDOT permit submittals took local jurisdictions more than 90 days to process. The eight belated local permits issued were all concentrated within WSDOT's Northwest, Olympic and Southwest Regions.

Table 1: Projects that took more than 90 days to process permits

Project name	Project cost (millions)	Local jurisdiction	Permit type	Calendar days to process permit	Why did it take over 90 days?
SR 503/NE Rock Creek Road Intersection Improvements	\$2.3	Clark County	Shoreline Substantial Development	98	County had comments requiring revisions after application package was determined complete. County staff also experienced an increased workload, which delayed permit processing and issuance.
SR 167/ I-5 to SR 161 New Expressway (Stage 2b)	\$475	City of Fife	Floodplain Development	149	Early coordination occurred prior to submittal. Delay occurred due to City's permit review process.
SR 167 / I-5 to SR 161 New Expressway (Stage 2b)	\$475	City of Tacoma	Floodplain Development	259	Coordination occurred with local jurisdiction throughout the project. Delay occurred due to City's permit review process.

Project name	Project cost (millions)	Local jurisdiction	Permit type	Calendar days to process permit	Why did it take over 90 days?
NWR South/ Strategic Pavement Preservation 23- 25	\$13.46	City of Renton	Noise Variance	107	Delays occurred due to staffing issues and complexity of permit application required by the City.
NWR South/ Strategic Pavement Preservation 23- 25	\$13.46	City of Mount Vernon	Noise Exception	114 days and counting	Delays occurring due to staffing issues at the City.
SR 104 Lyon Creek Fish Passage	\$8.71	City of Lake Forest Park	Floodplain Development	218	Challenges at city level in determining permit type. Also, city staff required Hydraulic Permit Approval issuance before issuing floodplain permit.
SR 202 Evans Creek Fish Passage	\$12.6	King County	Floodplain Variance	348 days and counting	Delays occurring due to complexity of application materials required and County staffing issues.
Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program – Ballast Island Monument	< \$1 *	City of Seattle	Construction	111	City review of application materials was delayed until Shoreline Permit review, issuance and appeal process was complete.

*Note: The Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program – Ballast Island Monument project cost was \$350,000. Should you have any questions, or need further information, please contact Ahmer Nizam, Environmental Services Office Director, at 360-705-7480 or ahmer.nizam@wsdot.wa.gov.