

City of Vancouver Maintains Permitting Revenue Stream Online During COVID 19 With Avolve's Online Software



With budget cuts drastically impacting municipal funding in the COVID 19 pandemic, cities with online services have been able to maintain vital revenue streams. The City of Vancouver WA uses 100% online permitting and plan review and has therefore been able to maintain their process of issuing building permits.

“We've been able to stay online and continue business as usual with staff working from home.”

Revenues from building permits and construction projects have continued to flow into the City of Vancouver during the pandemic crisis.



Small screen size of laptops made reviewing building plans at home challenging. Screen mirroring to larger monitors or smart TVs has been an effective solution.

With municipal revenues currently crippled by the pandemic crisis and layoffs and furloughs a new reality, the City of Vancouver was fortunately positioned to continue the critical revenue-generating process of issuing building permits. Located across the Columbia River from Portland OR, Vancouver is the fourth largest and second fastest growing city in the state of Washington. To accommodate the swift growth, the City's Community and Economic Development Department began implementing an electronic plan review solution in 2015 to accelerate their building permit process. By July 2019 the Department achieved a 100% paperless goal having automated all permit types including land use and engineering applications, commercial, multi-family, industrial, fire, grading, residential, mechanical, plumbing and electrical permits.

In 2019 alone, the total valuation of all building permits received was \$641 M. When the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions began, the Department was able to send staff home to work safely and continue the plan review and approval process, thus ensuring continued permit revenues. This was all because of its prior adoption of ProjectDox®. ProjectDox is an Electronic Plan Review (ePlan) solution that digitally transforms the way localities review and approve projects. A fully digital web-based software platform, ProjectDox can be accessed and used from anywhere on any device with an internet connection. Through ProjectDox, permit applicants in the City of Vancouver interact safely in a completely online environment. ProjectDox delivers efficiencies via a proven plan review process thereby accelerating the permit review process which stimulates economic growth - all while assuring building safety compliance.

“Productivity has actually increased in the work at home environment due to fewer distractions versus an office environment.”

Lisa Eruhow-Hagan, Computer Support Specialist, City of Vancouver WA