



## ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Kurt Hanson, Director

**Permit Center**

Barbara Napier, Permit Center Manager

Director's Rule 2020-5

Effective: October 20, 2020

Approved:

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### **Code and Section Reference:**

- KCC 2.30.010
- KCC 2.30.040
- KCC 12.01.185
- KCC 12.15
- KCC 13.01.030
- KCC 14.01.030
- KCC 12.14

**Intent:** To resolve difficulties created by the State of Washington Stay at Home Order and restrictions on most types of construction activity by granting automatic extensions on all permit and land use applications valid as of January 1, 2020. Further, to allow backlogged permit applications submitted in 2020 to avoid paying 2021 permit intake fees.

**Background:** As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, Governor Inslee declared a state of emergency on February 29, 2020 through Proclamation 20-05. Soon after, Mayor Dana Ralph similarly declared a state of emergency on March 6, 2020. The orders resulting from these declarations significantly impacted construction projects in the City of Kent, and resulted in a temporary, but near total shutdown of commercial and residential construction during the months following the declarations.

The Governor has ordered Washingtonians to stay home and has allowed only certain essential construction activities to proceed during the duration of the order. The construction supply chain has been affected by the availability of construction workers and materials, and social distancing requirements under the Governor's order have resulted in fewer workers being on job sites.

The City of Kent's permit process has similarly been impacted by the Governor's order. Most permit staff work remotely, and all documents are transmitted electronically, resulting technical challenges and unanticipated backlogs throughout the system. Currently over 500 permit applications are awaiting intake, and initial assessment of fees that normally increase with inflation each January 1 per City Council Resolution 2000. Further complicating the matter, Kent's permitting software for calculating and assessing fees is only able to reference one year at a time. Unless the effective date of the 2021 fees is delayed, applications submitted in 2020 will be charged 2021 fees.

The impacts of COVID-19 have resulted in substantial delay to this point and will continue to have lasting effects even after construction activities are permitted to begin again following the lessening of the restrictions in the Governor's order.

**Validity:** In light of these rare and unique circumstances surrounding the outbreak of COVID-19, and in recognition that significant delays in all construction progress is due to circumstances entirely beyond the control of all permit and land use approval applicants, pursuant to my authority in KCC 2.30.010, .040, and 12.01.185, 13.01.030, and 14.01.030, I am granting a universal one hundred eighty (180) day extension on the period of validity for all permit and land use applications, issued permits, and land use approvals, including those under chapters 13.01 and 14.01 KCC, that were valid as of October 20, 2020.

**Fees:** In light of these rare and unique circumstances surrounding the outbreak of COVID-19, and in recognition that significant delays in Kent's permitting process is due to circumstances entirely beyond the control of all permit and land use approval applicants, City permit fee basis will not be updated to reflect 2021 rates until such time as all applications received in 2020 have been assessed 2020 intake fees.