CITY OF
GOLETA

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Peter Imhof, Planning and Environmental Review Director

CONTACT: Brian Hiefield, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: Magnet Permit Tracking System Public Portal

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a presentation and report on the Magnet Permit Tracking System Public Portal.

BACKGROUND:

Upon incorporation in 2002, the City received historic permit records from the County of Santa Barbara for the properties within the City. The records were paper or microfiche-based and were stored in filing boxes, filing cabinets, and crates throughout City Hall. This paper/microfiche-based method of permit tracking and storage continued for several years after City incorporation. The records were comprised of approximately 560,000 individual sheets of paper, 36,000 paper plan sheets, and 12,300 microfiche cards. These records were difficult to access due to the sheer volume of files and multiple storage locations. The records were vulnerable to degradation due to lack of climate controls, aging of paper with time, and exposure to physical elements and handling. The files were also at risk of total loss in the event of fire, water damage or theft, as no backup storage system existed.

The records continued to grow in volume as permits, inspections, and citations were issued by the Planning & Environmental Review (PER), Public Works (PW), Neighborhood Services and Public Safety (NSPS), and Finance Departments at a rate of approximately 5,100 individual permits, inspections, and citations annually.

In addition to a paper-based archival system, the City's system for permit intake/issuance, maintaining the administrative record, case monitoring, and filing letters, memos, and sign-off forms was manually based, generating a large volume of paper files as previously described. Permit fees were also calculated manually at the Planning and Building Counter and both intake of fee payments and generation of receipts were by hand as well.

The sharing of information across departments throughout City Hall and with outside agencies for case processing was also done manually, hampering interdepartmental and interagency communications. This manual system was labor intensive and inefficient, resulting in increased potential for project scheduling errors.

In order to address the inefficiencies associated with manual, paper-based records management and permit intake procedures, the City Council adopted Strategic Plan goals prioritizing critical technology solutions.

On October 5, 2010, the City Council authorized staff to obtain document-imaging services and develop an electronic permit tracking system for the City. Contracts were subsequently entered in 2011 with DataArc, LLC for document imaging services and Computer Software Incorporated (CSI) for the Magnet Permit Tracking System. Since then, the project continued through the economic downturn, the new zoning ordinance process, and global pandemic. During that time, PER has successfully overseen the scanning of many of the City's paper records, including Goleta's own and those received from the County of Santa Barbara, representing over one million individual sheets of paper, plans, permits, licenses, and other vital public records. The digitization of records has been a monumental task by itself. In order to organize and share those digital documents, the City also needed an electronic permit tracking system.

Following its successful development and beta testing over the preceding years, City staff has been successfully using the Magnet Permit Tracking System internally since November 2019. In addition to archiving and tracking all scanned legacy data, it has allowed us to completely digitize the City's permitting, licensing, inspection, and Code Compliance processes and simultaneously greatly improve interdepartmental and interagency communications. The final step in the development of the system is to share this new digital environment with the public using the Magnet Public Portal (Public Portal).

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this agenda item is to present to Council the new Magnet Public Portal, made available to the public as of March 16, 2021. The existing Permit Tracking System functions have proved vital during the Covid-19 pandemic, where physical access to City Hall is limited and the pandemic has forced all City business to be conducted in an online environment. The Public Portal will greatly enhance access to public records and allow more seamless delivery of City permit services in an online environment. It will remain useful even as City staff transition back to a physical presence in City Hall sometime in the future, as many permit applicants have indicated that they would prefer to do their City business online.

What will the Public Portal do for Goleta?

- Streamline the Permit Process
- Make Data Immediately Accessible
- Allow Interdepartmental/Interagency Access to Information
- Allow Submittal of Permit and Business License Applications Online

- Compile Data in One Location
- Provide Consistency and Clarity of Project Review
- Provide a Publicly Accessible Information Archive
- Allow Submittal of Code Compliance Concerns Online

The Public Portal can readily display all recorded information, in one place, about a particular parcel (e.g., zoning, permit history, copy of the permits, approved plans, etc.), including legacy data received from the County of Santa Barbara upon incorporation. The Public Portal will afford the public easy access to parcel permit history from a computer with an internet connection.

The Public Portal will allow submittal of permit and business applications online and will also allow anyone to view both current permit status and historical permit information about a particular parcel within the City. Additionally, Geographic Information System data (GIS) for particular parcels can be viewed through the Public Portal, including aerial photographs, General Plan designation, zoning, Coastal Zone boundary, environmental constraints, soil type, flood hazard zones, airport safety zones, and roads.

A key advantage to having a web-based permit tracking system is that this type of data and information about a particular parcel or parcels is available to any internet-capable device anywhere in the world at any time. This technology allows multiple audiences (a realtor, interest group, neighbor, news media, applicant, agent, or other public agency representatives) to access information about what is going on relative to a particular parcel and any permits related to that parcel.

PER staff is excited to share the Public Portal with the City Council as the tool becomes available for use in the community. The Magnet team (CSI and PER staff) will showcase some of the functionality at the meeting.

GOLETA STRATEGIC PLAN:
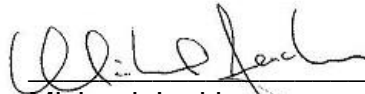
The Magnet Permit Tracking System Public Portal is consistent with City-Wide Strategy 5 in the Goleta Strategic Plan, entitled "Strengthen Infrastructure." Specifically, an electronic permit tracking system meets the Strategic Goal "Enhance the efficiency of the City's organizational infrastructure" by implementing and encouraging widespread use by the public of the electronic permit tracking system to increase efficiency, accessibility, and transparency.
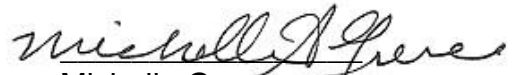
Reviewed By: **Legal Review By:**   **Approved By:**

Kristine Schmidt   Michael Jenkins   Michelle Greene
Assistant City Manager   City Attorney   City Manager

ATTACHMENT:

1.   Magnet Permit Tracking System Public Portal PowerPoint Presentation

ATTACHMENT 1

POWER POINT PRESENTATION

City of Goleta

Magnet Permit Tracking System
Public Portal

City Council Public Hearing

Presentation By:
Brian Hiefield

March 16, 2021

What will the Public Portal do for the City of Goleta?

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➤ **Make Data Immediately Accessible**	➤ **Provide Consistency and Clarity of Project Review**
➤ **Allow Interdepartmental/Interagency Access to Information**	➤ **Provide a Publicly Accessible Information Archive**
➤ **Allow Submittal of Permit and Business License Applications Online**	➤ **Allow Submittal of Code Compliance Concerns Online**
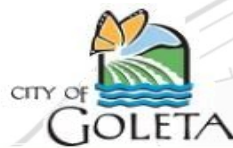
Public Portal

Home Screen

Submit an Application

Apply for a Building & Safety Permit

① Project Selection　**②** Location　**③** Contact Info　**④** Application Details　**⑤** Fees & Payment　**⑥** Confirmation

Please select your project from the following available projects:

[Permit Type ⌄]

Please Note:
This online application is not accepted until reviewed by the responsible staff member. Staff will review the materials submitted and contact applicant regarding the acceptability of the application packet that is necessary to facilitate receipt by the City and allow the initial review to commence.

Supporting Documentation
Supporting documents and plans can be uploaded to the system on the Confirmation page following payment.

Submittal Checklists

Please review the submittal checklists available below for the available permit types if you are submitting an application for one of these permits

Commercial Plan Submittal Checklist
Residential Plan Submittal Checklist

Next >>

Public
Portal

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

≫ How do I contact staff with questions?

≫ How do I submit/upload plans/documents?

≫ What is the anticipated length of time it may take to get a response regarding the adequacy of my initial web submitted materials?

≫ What is the anticipated length of time for review of a Business License?

≫ What is the anticipated length of time for review of an Encroachment Permit?

≫ How do I submit payment for my application?

≫ Can I submit my plans for Building Plan Check review before my Planning Permit has been issued?

≫ Do I need to submit plans drawn by an architect or engineer?

Public
Portal

Mapping

Accessing the Public Portal

- https://goleta.onlinegovt.com

<u>Thank You</u>

- ## Brian Hiefield, Associate Planner
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- **Business Licenses**
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Public Portal