

Client Service Charter

One of Quinte Conservation's (QC) Operating Principles, identified in our 2021-2030 Strategic Plan, is to provide quality service with fiscal responsibility. The following Charter explains how QC strives to provide quality client service in the Planning and Regulations Department.

WHO ARE OUR CUSTOMERS?

Clients of the planning and permit application review program include municipal staff, provincial governments, elected officials, watershed residents, engineers, consultants, legal staff, and real estate staff.

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR CUSTOMERS IS TO:

- Provide customer service that is timely, welcoming, and helpful.
- Provide knowledgeable, professional, and courteous service.
- Treat you with respect, fairness, openness, and equity.
- Ensure it is easy and convenient to contact us.
- Identify a staff person as the 'client service facilitator' for issue management. The client service facilitator for both planning and permit files is the Manager of Planning and Regulations.
- Maintain customer confidentiality and abide by all privacy legislation.
- Ensure our customer service locations are safe and healthy environments.

OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS ARE TO:

- Answer telephone calls to our main reception desk within two business days and when it is not possible to answer a call in-person, ensure that messages are forwarded to appropriate staff within two business days.
- Ensure staff voicemail messages provide a courteous and accurate voicemail greeting indicating when staff will be available to respond to messages.
- Acknowledge receipt of voicemail and email within two business days.
- Explain our processes related to the review of planning and permit application files.
- Review permit applications per the review timelines specified in the *Conservation Ontario (CO) Client Service Standards* and to review planning applications as per the *Planning Act*.
- Keep customers informed of the review timelines and explain if there will be a delay in the issuance of a permit/planning comments.
- Post notice of service disruptions on our website and telephone system.

- Respect our customers' time by keeping scheduled appointments and strive to attend to general queries from customers without appointments within two business days.
- Use plain language whenever possible and provide more detail or explanation when asked.
- Post screening tools online including regulated area maps, policies, procedures and guidelines, technical checklist for planning applications, complete application requirements for permit applications, fee policies, and schedules.

THROUGH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WE WILL:

- Ensure that all customers have the opportunity to provide feedback on the service they receive through a feedback form.
- Monitor feedback and review performance regularly, and provide an annual report to our customers via our website.
- Review our commitments and standards annually.

CLIENT SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

As QC strives to provide the best possible client service experience, respect for the client is essential and in turn staff must be afforded that same level of respect in return. QC has a duty to protect employees from all forms of harassment and violence while in the workplace and interactions with staff must be handled in a respectful and appropriate manner. Breach of this could result in processing delays or a denial of service. The role of the client in the service partnership is crucial and you are asked to please:

- Ensure your dealings with staff are respectful and courteous.
- Provide honest, accurate, and detailed information to staff.
- Whenever possible, make appointments with staff.

ISSUE MANAGEMENT ON PLANNING AND PERMIT FILES

The protocol below outlines QC's policy when handling issues related to the submission requirements which deem an application complete and/or concerns over the length of time required to review a file:

- The Regulations Officer/Planning Technician will resolve file issues by working with the municipality/applicant to find solutions which are supported by QC policies/regulations.
- If a resolution is not achieved, the Client Service Facilitator/Planning and Regulations Manager will be engaged to work towards a resolution. If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision the applicant can request an administrative review by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Please note, this review will be limited to a complete application policy review and not the technical merits of the application.

ANNUAL TIMELINE REPORTING FOR S.28 PERMIT APPLICATIONS

QC staff commit to providing a high standard of customer service for the delivery of all our programs and services. Our service standards for the processing of applications received under s.28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* are defined in the 2019 Conservation Ontario (CO) document entitled, *"Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review."* The best practice service standards outlined in this document provide for shorter review and approval time frames in comparison to the *"Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities, 2010."* However, it should be noted

that review timelines may be impacted by unexpected circumstances such as seasonal disruptions (significant snow/ice coverage) and/or high volumes of applications. Staff will ensure clear communication with the municipality and the applicant to establish and manage expectations during these times.

Table 1 below shows the difference between the 2010 and 2019 service standards. Please note that all timelines reflect business/working days.

Table 1: Service Standards

Steps in the Permit Process	2010 MNRF Service Standards	2019 CO Service Standards
Notification of Complete Application Requirements (Pre-consultation)	All Applications – 21 Days	Major Applications – 14 Days Minor Applications – 7 Days
Notification of Complete Application	All Applications – 21 Days	Major Applications – 21 Days Standard Applications – 14 Days Minor Applications – 10 Days
Application Decision	Major Applications – 90 Days Minor Applications – 30 Days	Major Applications – 28 Days Standard Applications – 21 Days Minor Applications – 14 Days