



Concierge Permit Assistance Advisory Committee (CPAAC) Report Out - Summary of Suggestions



The Concierge Permit Assistance Advisory Committee (CPAAC) was established in May 2021 to identify areas where DEEP can improve its Permit Assistance and Client Concierge services and the user experience with respect to permitting resources on the DEEP website. Fourteen panelists were selected from the pool of volunteers to achieve a balance from various sectors and experiences, including business representatives, environmental advocates, consulting/engineering, municipalities, and state agencies. The panelists are listed on the [CPAAC webpage](#). The suggestions compiled in this report are summarized from discussions during the four CPAAC meetings (June 22, July 20, August 17, and September 14, 2021), from written suggestions submitted via email, and based on results of the survey sent out on September 7, 2021, to CPAAC panelists and all individuals signed up for the Concierge and 20BY20 Constant Contact email lists. The meetings were open to the public. At the CPAAC sessions, information gathered from benchmarking with eleven other states was compared to the services DEEP provides; panel discussion followed. The meeting recordings and unofficial transcripts can be found on the [CPAAC webpage](#), as well as the survey results. This report summarizes the CPAAC suggestions and provides information on how DEEP's Client Concierge and Permit Assistance services can be enhanced. Many thanks to CPAAC panelists!

Main Topics Discussed During CPAAC Meetings (CPAAC ranked in order of importance):

- I. Improve Permit Assistance Tools
- II. Increase Permitting Transparency by Developing Permit Portal Capabilities
- III. Improve the Pre-application Process
- IV. Improve Community User (non-applicant, non-technical) Access to Information

I. Improve Permit Assistance Tools – Discussion was centered around maps, informational and procedural videos, and permitting factsheets. CPAAC ranked the following Permit Assistance Tools in order of most important to least important:

1. Directory of DEEP permits and contacts ([GO TO DEEP: https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/About/Contact-Us/Phone-Fax-Numbers-and-E-Mails](https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/About/Contact-Us/Phone-Fax-Numbers-and-E-Mails))
2. Flow chart for general permits
3. FAQ on permit process on the landing page
4. Flow charts for common, complex permits
5. Example of well-done application and final permit
6. Video tour of the website
7. Videos to explain complex permit processes
8. Plain language explanation of the difference between a general permit and an individual permit

A. Informational and Instructional Videos:

- Use instructional **videos to help describe how to do certain tasks or to navigate processes**, such as E-filing, navigating DEEP's website, Construction Stormwater General Permits, and permitting requirements for anaerobic digesters.
- Provide **scripts for videos**.

B. Permit Process Flowcharts:

- For our generalized permit process flowchart, add **permit process timelines** for each part of the process - administrative review, technical review, etc. Be clearer that individual permits need more time. (NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY). (GO TO DEEP: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Permits-and-Licenses/Permitting-Process-Overview/Application-Process-Individual-Permits>)
- Most **common, complex permits** could use flow charting.

C. Permitting Factsheets and FAQs:

- **Suggested Topics for Additional Permitting Factsheets (CPAAC ranked in order of importance):**
 1. Solid waste transfer facilities (GO TO DEEP: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Waste-Management-and-Disposal/Solid-Waste/Municipal-Transfer-Station>) Please note: There is a factsheet or guidance for each type of permit on the same webpage as the permit application.
 2. How state permits overlay with local permits
 3. Transfer of permits/mergers and acquisitions for permit transfers (GO TO DEEP: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Permits-and-Licenses/Permitting-Factsheets/Permit-Transfer-Fact-Sheet>)
 4. Urban agriculture and aquaculture sector factsheet
 5. Municipal redevelopment projects (e.g., TOD, industrial park, mixed use) sector factsheet
 6. Cannabis sector factsheet
 7. Coastal resilience sector factsheet
- **Translation** of factsheets into other languages. (Each page on DEEP's website can be translated into eight different languages by using the "Language + Settings" button in the upper right-hand corner.)
- Provide Index of **Factsheet/FAQs Links**. (NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY)
- Include more **Environmental Justice information** on factsheets, if applicable. (NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY)

D. Maps:

- Suggested GIS map features to provide online:
 1. Approved permits
 2. Environmental Justice areas (GO TO DEEP: <https://ctdeep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d04ec429d0a4477b9526689dc7809ffe>)
 3. Environmental Land Use Restrictions (GO TO DEEP: <https://ctdeep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d37eccb2a5c3491d8f0d389a96d9a912>)
 4. Locations of Anaerobic Digesters (GO TO DEEP: <https://ctdeep.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d777aa0202814395a3396c0f50dee7a3>)
 5. Locations of grid-scale solar arrays

- Other suggestions for **additional information on an interactive GIS** map for planning projects:
 - Transfer Act filings
 - NPDES discharge locations
 - Groundwater and surface water classification (**GO TO DEEP:** <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Water/Water-Quality/Water-Quality-Classification-Maps>)
 - Income levels
 - Air quality/pollution
 - Locations of concentrated pollution such as trash plants, landfills, airports, highways, etc.
- **Provide energy resources map:** electric substations, places where you can get energy demand, link in with solar projects, fuel cell projects, energy storage, interconnections, SCEF sites. (**IN COORDINATION WITH STEPS**) (SEE INTERCONNECTIONS MAP: <https://eversource.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4a8523bc4d454dda5c1e3f9428d8d8f>)
- **Provide map of major landfills and/or brownfields for siting clean energy.**
- **Create Map index.** (**NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY**)

E. Permit Assistance Services:

- Add to description of general and individual permits discussion of lower cost of general permit and shorter processing time, encourage use of GP if activity is eligible. (**NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY**)
- **Provide a factsheet with permit approval or an initial follow-up from Permit Program Staff for permit compliance obligations** (describe financial assurance, compliance auditor, site inspections, DEEP reporting, etc.).

F. Permit Grouping and Shovel Ready:

- **Explore New York State’s “shovel ready”** – pre-permit sites for specific development, such as: size of building, parameters, designation of sector type uses (i.e., office park, distribution warehouse, solar).
- **Explore use of permit envelopes for setting up larger sites** (a Permit Envelope was defined as “may consist of a large land area over which there are inter-related multi-media permits”).
- Explore facility wide approach on how to group facilities, public notice, etc. for a multi-faceted permitting.

G. Other Resource Ideas:

- Add references to **EPA programs and resources** to more of our webpages.
- Publish a **directory of all currently issued permits.** (**GO TO DEEP:** <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Permits-and-Licenses/Forms-Guidance-Fact-Sheets>)
- Provide an example of a good application and a good permit to show how it transforms from start to finish. Provide links for this example with the permit info online.
- **Publish a directory** of all the current permits with a list of DEEP program contacts for each permit so questions can be directed to the appropriate staff.

- **Provide Gantt charts** to display how permitting timeframes fit together and describe sequencing.

II. Increase Permitting Transparency by Developing Permit Portal Capabilities

- Provide virtual public file room with more access to information on active permit applications. (GO TO DEEP: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Online-Services/Other-DEEP-Online-Resources>)
- **Create a permit portal to apply for permits, check on the status of permits, enhance/upgrade the current online filing and status viewer system “EZFile”.** (GO TO DEEP: <https://filings.deep.ct.gov/DEEPPortal/>)
- Create an **online payment system for purchasing and processing** permits and licenses. (IN PROGRESS)
- Explain difference between Registered Users and Non-Registered Users of online permit portal. (NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY)
- Consider reorganizing the structure of permits by **grouping technical requirements** that appear under the applicable statute or regulation while grouping similar facility specific/operation/management separately.

III. Improve the Pre-Application Process (ALL NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITIES)

- **Improve the [pre-application questionnaire](#)** with more check boxes/questions, request for specific project-specific information and timeframes for pre-application meeting availability and projected start of construction and operation.
- Explore the possibility and benefit of a **decision-tree type, automated pre-application questionnaire** to provide immediate information for potential, probable permitting requirements for projects for planning purposes, prior to the pre-application meeting with permit specialists.

IV. Improve Community User Access to Information (non-applicant, non-technical)

- **Provide information online about the public outreach side of permitting** – include links to **public notice webpage** and to sign up to **receive emailed public notices**, information regarding Environmental Justice, **videos** explaining public processes. (NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY)
- Explore coordination with municipalities, COGs, and other groups to share pertinent updates and information.
- **Increase connection between state and municipal processes.**
- **Inform municipalities about permits**, including a Community User webpage and factsheet for towns and cities to share on their website.

Miscellaneous:

- Provide translation services for all pages including PDF document materials.
- Make permitting contacts and organizational charts more readily available. (GO TO DEEP: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Human-Resources/Org-Charts/Organizational-Charts>)
- Add links to regulatory/statutory references by permit. (NEAR FUTURE ACTIVITY)