

# Ingham County Drain Commissioner Customer Satisfaction Survey

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December 2007

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Lansing, Michigan

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# Introduction

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## OVERVIEW

The Office of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner (ICDC) provides for construction, maintenance, and improvement of county public storm drains. The office is responsible for the legal establishment and administration of drainage districts and assesses the property owners who benefit from drainage projects to pay for costs. Other responsibilities of the office include lake level control and soil erosion control (through a permit process). The office also acts as the County Board of Public Works and is responsible for reviewing proposed subdivision plats. Like most drain commission offices, many of their activities may directly impact local economic development activities.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the ICDC, the Greater Lansing Home Builders Association hired Public Sector Consultants (PSC) of Lansing to carry out a customer satisfaction survey. Customer satisfaction surveys are a common tool for determining how well a business or agency is performing. PSC surveyed people in fall 2007 who interact with the office on a regular basis. The purpose of the survey was to learn about the quality, timeliness, and accuracy of the services provided by the ICDC. A total of 43 surveys were completed.

## METHODOLOGY

The development of the list of survey recipients and the survey instrument was guided by a work group of ICDC customers, including commercial and residential developers, general contractors, engineers, and realtors. The work group helped to identify appropriate categories of ICDC customers and reviewed the survey questions to assure that they accurately portrayed the process of interacting with the ICDC.

A list of ICDC customers was developed through several professional organization membership lists available on the Internet for the Associated General Contractors of America and Associated Builders and Contractors. These lists were supplemented by municipal and state government unit contacts available online as well as local business listings for intended survey recipients. The final list of recipients included:

- Commercial developers
- Engineering firms
- Excavation firms
- General contractors
- Municipal government units
- Residential developers
- State government agencies

Potential respondents were sent an initial mailing, including a letter of introduction and a copy of the survey. When possible, a specific contact person was used for the mailing; when a specific contact person was not readily available from the sources used to develop

the list, a generic greeting was used. Whether a specific contact or generic greeting was used, recipients were asked to distribute the survey to appropriate people within their government unit or business. The letter of introduction also included a link for respondents to complete the survey online. This initial mailing was followed by the mailing of a reminder postcard. A final follow-up phone call was also made to a random sample of potential respondents to encourage participation.

The results of this survey are limited in two ways. First, the list of potential respondents was designed to include customers who interact with the ICDC on a regular basis in any given year; it was not designed to survey the general public or measure general public opinion about the ICDC. Second, interpretation of the results must take into account the number of potential respondents (237) and the number of respondents who completed the survey (43). While this second point is considered to be a limitation, it should be noted that the results demonstrate a strong convergence of opinion on several topics, especially the timeliness of communication and the ICDC's permit process.

## INTRODUCTION

Respondents represent a mix of respondent categories (both private sector and public), and indicated that they submit multiple requests for services in a year. Municipal government unit employees represented the single largest portion of respondents (33 percent), followed by excavation firms (16 percent), engineering firms and residential developers (both with 14 percent), general contractors (12 percent), and commercial developers (9 percent). No responses were received from state government employees. Respondents reported submitting an average of seven requests for services each year, with 55 percent submitting 5 or fewer requests and 45 percent submitting 6 or more requests.

In addition, 93 percent of respondents indicated that they had worked with drain commission offices in other counties. For this reason, they were not only able to assess the clarity, timeliness, and consistency of the ICDC, but were also able to compare the ICDC to other drain commission offices on these factors.

## OVERALL SATISFACTION

Respondents were first asked a series of questions about the overall timeliness of the ICDC and overall satisfaction with various types of services, including soil erosion permits, tap in permits, construction plan reviews, and general questions or requests for additional information.

- 87 percent of respondents reported being *somewhat dissatisfied* (23 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (64 percent) with the soil erosion permit process.
- 81 percent of respondents reported being *somewhat dissatisfied* (13 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (68 percent) with the construction plan review process.
- 57 percent of respondents reported being *somewhat dissatisfied* (17 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (40 percent) with the tap in permit process.

When asked about the length of time it took to get a response from the ICDC, responses varied from “hours to days,” to “8 to 15 months.” To facilitate comparison, responses were recoded into categories of less than one month, one to three months, four to six months, and more than six months. As shown in Exhibit 1, respondents indicated that construction plan reviews took the longest to receive responses from the ICDC, with only 15 percent indicating responses are received in less than one month and 12 percent saying it takes more than six months. Tap in permits and soil erosion permits had better ratings for overall timeliness, with nearly half (47 percent) of tap in permit responses taking less than one month and just over one-half (54 percent) of soil erosion permit responses taking less than one month. The ICDC had the best ratings for timeliness of general questions or requests for additional information, with 88 percent reporting it took less than one month.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**Overall Timeliness of Response for Services**

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	One month or less	One to three months	Four to six months	More than six months
Soil erosion permit	54%	23%	23%	0%
Tap in permit	47	26	26	0
Construction plan review	15	46	27	12
General questions or requests for additional information	88	8	4	0

Respondents were also asked to rate several specific aspects of service related to the construction plan review process as excellent, good, fair, or poor. Responses to this question also clearly demonstrate dissatisfaction among respondents:

- 89 percent rated the *overall timeliness of responding to application materials or providing needed information/feedback* as poor.
- 86 percent rated the *overall quality of customer service* as poor.
- 75 percent rated the *overall consistency of the guidance or feedback given* as poor.
- 67 percent rated the *overall clarity of the guidance or feedback given* as poor.

While the *overall technical expertise of staff* was rated as good by 25 percent of respondents, the majority (74 percent) rated it as either fair (44 percent) or poor (30 percent).

## **INTERACTION WITH THE ICDC**

The process of interacting with the ICDC was divided into five specific parts:

- Accessibility of forms, applications, and other information
- Initial response to submitted applications and other documents
- Follow-up response
- Issuance of permits
- Monitoring and enforcement

Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were (very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied) with each of the five parts based upon their experience interacting with the ICDC. Results are presented separately for each of the five sections.

### ***Accessibility of Forms, Applications, and Other Information***

Respondents are not satisfied with the accessibility of forms, applications, and other information from the ICDC.

- About half (55 percent) of respondents said they are *very dissatisfied* with the consistency of the information provided.

- The majority of respondents (66 percent) also indicated that they are dissatisfied with the clarity of information obtained from the ICDC; 32 percent are *somewhat dissatisfied* and 34 percent are *very dissatisfied*.
- A majority of respondents (58 percent) also indicated that they are dissatisfied with the ease of access to information and documents; 37 percent are *somewhat dissatisfied* and 21 percent are *very dissatisfied*.

In addition to being asked to rate their satisfaction with the accessibility of forms, applications, and other information, respondents were asked if they had used the information that was available at the ICDC website and, if so, how useful they felt the information was. Sixty-seven percent indicated that they had not used the document *Economic Benefits of Lot Seeding*, and 55 percent said they had not used the document *Environmental Impacts of Construction Sites*. Nearly half (46 percent) of respondents said that they had not used the *Rules of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner; Standards for Stormwater Management*. Of those who had used the documents or information:

- The majority (52 percent) reported that they found the *Rules of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner; Standards for Stormwater Management* helpful.
- 41 percent said the *Environmental Impacts of Construction Sites* was helpful.
- 38 percent said that they found the *Economic Benefits of Lot Seeding* helpful.

### ***Initial Response***

Initial response is another area in which respondents are not satisfied with the ICDC.

- 78 percent of respondents said they are *very dissatisfied* with the timeliness of response.
- The majority (55 percent) of respondents also said they *very dissatisfied* with the consistency of the information contained in the feedback.

Respondents are also dissatisfied with the clarity of the information and knowledge of the staff. Eighty-four percent said they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (50 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (34 percent) with the clarity of information provided in the initial response. Sixty-nine percent indicated that they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (24 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (45 percent) with the knowledge of staff providing the response and feedback to the initial application.

### ***Follow-up Response***

Respondents are not satisfied with the follow-up response from the ICDC.

- 78 percent of respondents are *very dissatisfied* with the timeliness of the follow-up response.
- The majority (55 percent) of respondents are also *very dissatisfied* with the consistency of feedback in the follow-up response.

The majority of respondents also indicated that they are dissatisfied with the knowledge of staff and the clarity of the information. Eighty-two percent of respondents said that

they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (42 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (40 percent) with the clarity of information provided in the follow-up response. Sixty-eight percent of respondents said they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (22 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (46 percent) with the knowledge of the staff providing follow-up.

### ***Issuance of Permits***

Respondents are not satisfied with the issuance of permits from the ICDC.

- 78 percent of respondents are *very dissatisfied* with the timeliness of the issuance of permits.
- 70 percent of respondents are *very dissatisfied* with the receipt of unexpended funds as an escrow release.

The majority of respondents are also dissatisfied with the clarity and consistency of information and the knowledge of staff. Eighty-three percent of respondents indicated that they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (33 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (50 percent) with the consistency of the feedback received during the issuance of permits. Seventy-seven percent of respondents said that they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (37 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (40 percent) with the clarity of information provided. Seventy-two percent of respondents said they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (33 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (39 percent) with the knowledge of staff involved in the issuance of the permit.

### ***Monitoring and Enforcement***

While slightly more positive compared to the other aspects of interaction with the ICDC, respondents are not satisfied with monitoring and enforcement.

- The majority (57 percent) of respondents said they are *very dissatisfied* with the consistency in the way that regulatory issues are enforced.
- The majority (53 percent) of respondents are *very dissatisfied* with the timeliness of communication regarding regulatory issues.

The majority (68 percent) of respondents said that they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (26 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (42 percent) with the clarity of information provided regarding regulatory issues. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated that they are *somewhat dissatisfied* (37 percent) or *very dissatisfied* (26 percent) with the knowledge of staff involved in regulatory monitoring and enforcement.

## **OTHER INDICATORS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

In addition to indicating their level of satisfaction with aspects of their interaction with the ICDC, respondents were also asked about their experience with the accounting procedures and fee structures of the ICDC, to compare the ICDC to drain commission offices in other counties, and to offer any suggestions for how to streamline or improve upon the permitting process.

Respondents were given three statements about the accounting procedures and fee structures of the ICDC and asked to indicate if they felt the statements were true all of the time, true most of the time, true some of the time, or true none of the time.

- The majority (55 percent) of respondents say “the fee structures of the office are appropriate for the services performed” is *true none of the time*
- The majority (53 percent) of respondents say “unexpended escrow monies are released back in a timely fashion” is *true none of the time*.
- The majority of respondents (83 percent) say “the invoices that we receive from the office provide clear detail” is *true some of the time* (63 percent) or *true none of the time* (20 percent).

As indicated above, 93 percent of respondents have interacted with drain commission offices in other counties in the past. The most cited county was Eaton County (74 percent) followed by Clinton County (72 percent), Shiawassee County (28 percent), and Jackson County (19 percent). Respondents were asked to compare the ICDC to other drain commission offices on six specific items:

- 78 percent of respondents say that timeliness of communication is *much worse* at the ICDC compared to other drain commission offices.
- 76 percent of respondents say that overall customer service is *much worse* at the ICDC.
- The majority (54 percent) of respondents also say that the consistency of information provided by the ICDC is *much worse* compared to other drain commission offices.
- The majority of respondents also say that the clarity of information at the ICDC is *somewhat worse* (35 percent) or *much worse* (41 percent) compared to other drain commission offices.
- The majority of respondents say that the accuracy of information provided by the ICDC is *somewhat worse* (22 percent) or *much worse* (43 percent) compared to other drain commission offices.
- The majority of respondents also say that the technical expertise of staff at the ICDC is *somewhat worse* (39 percent) or *much worse* (25 percent) compared to other drain commission offices.

Thirty-one respondents provided suggestions for improving the permitting process. These responses also indicate clear frustration with the timeliness of communication received from the ICDC. Twenty-five percent of these responses specifically mention the need for the ICDC to improve in the area of returning phone calls. One respondent stressed the need for “timely communication...regardless of whether it is an initial response or a follow-up response.” “The [ICDC] needs to speed up their responses and recommendations to projects we have submitted,” said another respondent. “We continually have to call them to obtain project status.”

These responses also provide more detail about the dissatisfaction with the knowledge of staff. “Let the people who know how to read plans issue the permits,” said one respondent. Another respondent echoed this sentiment, saying that the ICDC should “hire more experienced people with engineering knowledge and drain background.” Another respondent said the ICDC should “ensure that staff has the necessary technical training and education to perform their job duties.”

Suggestions also include some specific recommendations regarding the timeliness of responses:

- “Applications should be categorized and ‘simple’ or ‘standard’ applications should be processed routinely.”
- “Issue modification letters instead of disapproval letters (which should only be issued when significant deficiencies exist). Modification letters should not result in materials/applications going back to the bottom of the pile.”
- “[ICDC should] commit to return calls within 24 hours, complete plan reviews within 1 week, issue permits the same day, release monies within 1 week, and rely on consultants.”
- “Deputies should defer to professional staff regarding application of engineering principles. Response time to submittals is generally poor to non-existent. Response time for requests for information or services provided by professional staff is usually excellent!”

# Conclusion and Recommendations

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## SUMMARY

Respondents were clearly dissatisfied with many aspects of the office of the ICDC. Eighty-six percent of respondents consider the overall quality of customer service provided by ICDC as *poor*. In every aspect of interaction with the ICDC detailed in the survey, respondents demonstrate the most dissatisfaction with timeliness and consistency of feedback. Respondents indicate dissatisfaction, not only with the amount of time it takes to process a permit application, but also with the inefficiency of the overall process.

The knowledge of staff and clarity of information provided by ICDC is also roundly criticized by respondents. While detailed information about staff knowledge was not part of the survey, respondent comments make a distinction between the perceived knowledge of professional staff and that of the deputy commissioners within the office.

ICDC did not compare favorably to drain commission offices in other counties. Seventy-six percent of respondents say that overall customer service of ICDC was *much worse*, and the majority of respondents say the ICDC is *somewhat worse* or *much worse* than other drain commission offices in every category (accuracy of information, clarity of information, timeliness of response, technical expertise of staff, and consistency of information).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon survey results, PSC recommends that the office of the Ingham County Drain Commissioner consider two approaches to improving customer service and overall customer satisfaction:

- A best practices approach
- A Value Stream Mapping (VSM) exercise

Because respondents clearly consider the ICDC to be ineffective when compared to other drain commission offices, PSC recommends that a best practices approach be used to scan other drain commission offices to identify successful processes for consideration. Particular attention should be paid to staffing levels, staff responsibilities, and issues related to staff knowledge and the timeliness of responses. The role of technology in the permit process should also be examined as a means to streamline the process and to create opportunities for efficiency through electronic submission of permit applications.

VSM is a useful tool to analyze the current permit process, beginning to end, and to develop a system that better meets the needs of ICDC customers. A visualization tool oriented to lean manufacturing, VSM helps organizations and businesses better understand and streamline work processes by mapping their current process, looking for opportunities for improvement, and then mapping a desirable future state including specific endpoints.

Taken together, these recommendations offer an opportunity for the ICDC to modify current practices and better serve its constituents while helping to facilitate local economic development activities.

# Frequency Report

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Which of the following categories best describes your profession or employer:

Commercial developer	9%
Engineering firm	14
Excavation firm	16
General contractor	12
Municipal government unit	33
Residential developer	14
State government agency	0
Other (please specify):	2

2. How many applications related to development activities on a parcel did you submit to the ICDC during the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

- Average = 4
- Range {0 to 20}

3. How many requests for services do you submit each year, on average? \_\_\_\_\_

- Average = 7
- Range {0 to 30}

4. Based on your experience, how long does it take for you to receive a response from the ICDC’s office when you contact the ICDC about the following types of service? (If you have no experience with a particular type of service, please check “*Not applicable.*”)

	Average number of days	Not applicable
Soil erosion permit	Range {7days to 4 months}	16%
Tap in permit	Range {3 days to 6 months}	23
Construction plan review	Range {21 days to 18 months}	23
General questions or requests for additional information	Range {2 days to 3 months}	0

5. Based on your experience, what is your overall satisfaction with the following services provided by the ICDC? (If you have no experience with a particular service, please check “*Not applicable.*”)

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
Soil erosion permit	0%	3%	23%	64%	10%
Tap in permit	0	6	17	40	37
Construction plan review	0	3	13	68	16

## INTERACTION WITH THE ICDC

6. Please rate the following aspects of service from the ICDC in connection with *the construction plan review* process:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Overall timeliness of responding to application materials or providing needed information/feedback	0%	3%	9%	89%
Overall technical expertise of staff	0	25	44	30
Overall clarity of the guidance or feedback given	0	11	22	67
Overall consistency of the guidance or feedback given	0	8	17	75
Overall quality of customer service	0	11	3	86

For questions 7 through 11, the process of interacting with the ICDC has been divided into five parts:

- Accessibility of forms, applications, and other information
- Initial response to submitted applications and other documents
- Follow-up response
- Issuance of permits
- Monitoring and enforcement

7. Based on your experience with the ICDC, how satisfied are you with *accessibility of forms, applications, and other information needed to work through a permitting process?*

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Ease of access to information and documents	5%	37%	37%	21%
Clarity of information obtained	0	34	32	34
Consistency of the information provided	0	29	16	55

8. Based on your experience with the ICDC, how satisfied are you with *initial response to submitted applications and other documents?*

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Clarity of information provided in response	0%	16%	50%	34%
Timeliness of response	0	5	16	78
Consistency of the information contained in the feedback	0	11	34	55
Knowledge of staff providing response and feedback to initial application	0	32	24	45

9. Based on your experience with the ICDC, how satisfied are you with *follow-up response?*

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Clarity of information provided	0%	18%	42%	40%
Timeliness of response	0	3	19	78
Consistency of the feedback	0	16	29	55
Knowledge of staff providing follow-up	0	32	22	46

10. Based on your experience with the ICDC, how satisfied are you with *issuance of permits?*

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Clarity of information provided	0%	23%	37%	40%
Timeliness	0	3	19	78
Consistency of the feedback	0	17	33	50
Knowledge of staff involved in the issuance of the permit	0	28	33	39
Receipt of unexpended funds as an escrow release	0	13	17	70

11. Based on your experience with the ICDC, how satisfied are you with *monitoring and enforcement*?

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Clarity of information provided regarding regulatory issues	0%	32%	26%	42%
Timeliness of communication regarding regulatory issues	3	18	26	53
Consistency in the way that regulatory issues are enforced	0	16	27	57
Knowledge of staff involved in regulatory monitoring and enforcement	0	37	37	26

12. Based on your experience with accounting procedures and fee structures of the ICDC, please indicate to what extent the following statements are true.

	True all of the time	True most of the time	True some of the time	True none of the time
The invoices that we receive from the office provide clear detail.	0%	17%	63%	20%
Unexpended escrow monies are released back to us in a timely fashion.	0	10	37	53
The fee structures of the office are appropriate for the services performed.	0	12	33	55

13. The following documents are available on the ICDC website. Based on your experience, how helpful have these documents been for your projects? (If you have not used this information, please check “*Have not used.*”)

	Very helpful	Helpful	A little helpful	Not at all helpful	Have not used
<i>Rules of the ICDC; Standards for Stormwater Management</i>	0%	28%	10%	15%	46%
<i>Economic Benefits of Lot Seeding</i>	0	13	10	10	67
<i>Environmental Impacts of Construction Sites</i>	0	18	13	13	55

14. From the following choices, please indicate other drain commission offices with which you have interacted in the past (check all that apply).

74%	Eaton County
16	Calhoun County
72	Clinton County
19	Jackson County
14	Livingston County
28	Shiawassee County
14	Washtenaw County
16	Other Michigan counties (specify):
7	None

15. [IF YOU HAVE NOT INTERACTED WITH OTHER DRAIN COMMISSION OFFICES, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 16] Based on your experience, how does the ICDC compare to the other drain commission offices with which you have had experience?

	Much better	Somewhat better	About the same	Somewhat worse	Much worse	Don't know
Accuracy of information	0%	8%	27%	22%	43%	0%
Clarity of information	3	3	19	35	41	0
Timeliness of communication	6	3	3	11	78	0
Technical expertise of staff	3	6	25	39	25	3
Consistency of the information provided	5	0	27	14	54	0
Overall customer service	5	5	5	8	76	0

16. Based on your experience, do you have any suggestions for how to streamline or improve upon the permitting process?

{RESPONSES LISTED ALPHABETICALLY}

- 2005 'Rules' need to be re-evaluated for conflicting requirements. Permitting should be based upon engineering principles, not political ideology. Non professional Deputies should defer to professional staff regarding application of engineering principles. Response time to submittals is generally poor to non-existent. Response time for requests for information or services provided by professional staff is usually excellent!
- Be more consistent with changes and DO NOT make changes in the 2nd review that could have been made in the 1st review.
- Be responsive in a timely manner. There is very little that can not be processed in 2 weeks and definitely everything should be processed within 4 weeks. This does not mean approval-several submittals may occur but each should average 2 week turn around time.
- [ICDC should] commit to:

- Return calls within 24 hours
  - Complete plan reviews within 1 week
  - Issue permits the same day
  - Release monies within 1 week
  - Rely on consultants
- Customer Service
  - Delegate some responsibility so someone besides [the Drain Commissioner] can make a decision.
  - Develop a customer service mentality. Review FIFO process when only a minor bit of info is missing on original application. Return calls.
  - Drain commissioner and staff are a major obstruction to development in Ingham County. The cost of building in Ingham County is not worth it to many owners.
  - Elect another ICDC with some integrity and honesty.
  - Hire more customer service directed staff and management that return calls.
  - Hire more experienced people with engineering knowledge and drain background. Hire an attorney that knows drain issues! Don't hire "yes people," hire people to get the job done.
  - ICDC office needs to work closely with other government units so applicants do not get bounced back and forth between agencies.
  - Issue permits within 4 days of application submitted on lots within developed subdivisions (you already know the players). Or issue permits immediately and inspect site within 5 days after backfill for compliance. Since ICDC has convinced local municipalities not to issue building permits unless an SEP is attached, ICDC's lax adherence to a timetable is extremely frustrating. Their goals combined with poor execution gives the office a reputation of pompous ineptitude.
  - Let the people who know how to read plans issue the permits. The Drain Commission would be better off with lower fees and by allowing direct contact with staff, for their responsibility. Need to have a better attitude when working with the general public, not an attitude of disdain. We are your employers!
  - Need to have clearly defined rules and processes. Must have a full and complete response within allotted time for review. Inspections must be consistent for everyone not just for contributors to re-election.
  - On four projects, the drain office indicated that they never received them, when I checked on the status of permits. The first one was UPS and the last three were hand delivered. Typically, it takes 60-90 days to get the first response and 120 days for the permit in this county. Other counties I could have permit within 30 days of plan submitted.
  - Replace the Drain Commissioner.
  - Replace them.
  - Return Calls! Get information when you say you will get information and stop changing the rules at every turn.

- Return phone calls. Issue modification letters instead of disapproval letters (which should only be issued when significant deficiencies exist). Modification letters should not result in materials/applications going back to the bottom of the pile. Look at the private sector as a partner not an adversary in the pursuit of the goal of clean water.
- Staff should be neutral on their view of proposed developments, rather than anti development; conduct analysis in adjacent communities to figure out why they don't have the same problems; encourage local control of soil erosion and sedimentation control; ensure that staff has the necessary technical training and education to perform their job duties.
- Stop using the phrase "I have 30 days to do it." Develop a system of returning calls. Allow engineers to do their work with the drain office engineer. Cost of permitting and inspections are very excessive. The amount of time wasted is unbelievable.
- The 1st in 1st out policy is flawed. Applications should be categorized and "simple" or "standard" applications should be processed routinely. Instead, every application seems to get mired down in the process. Result = avoidance of projects in Ingham County.
- The Drain commissioner should not be an elected position. The current commissioner is a no growth environmental extremist.
- The [ICDC] needs to speed up their responses and recommendations to projects we have submitted. Their responses and communication with us are one way from our side. We continually have to call them to obtain project status.
- The drain office needs to speed up their recommendation; their responses and recommendations to projects and communication with us are slow; we continually have to call them to obtain project status.
- This office is a microcosm of what is wrong with government in general, and this state in particular. The only hope this office has is to bring in an entire new staff. We are no longer residing or working in Ingham County.
- Timely communication with applicant regardless of whether it is an initial response or a follow-up response.
- We need a new drain commissioner.
- Work on regionalizing the permitting process with surrounding agencies.
- Work with the small contractor to help him through the process and just return calls would be nice. [One staff member] NEVER returned any calls and his name was all over my permits.