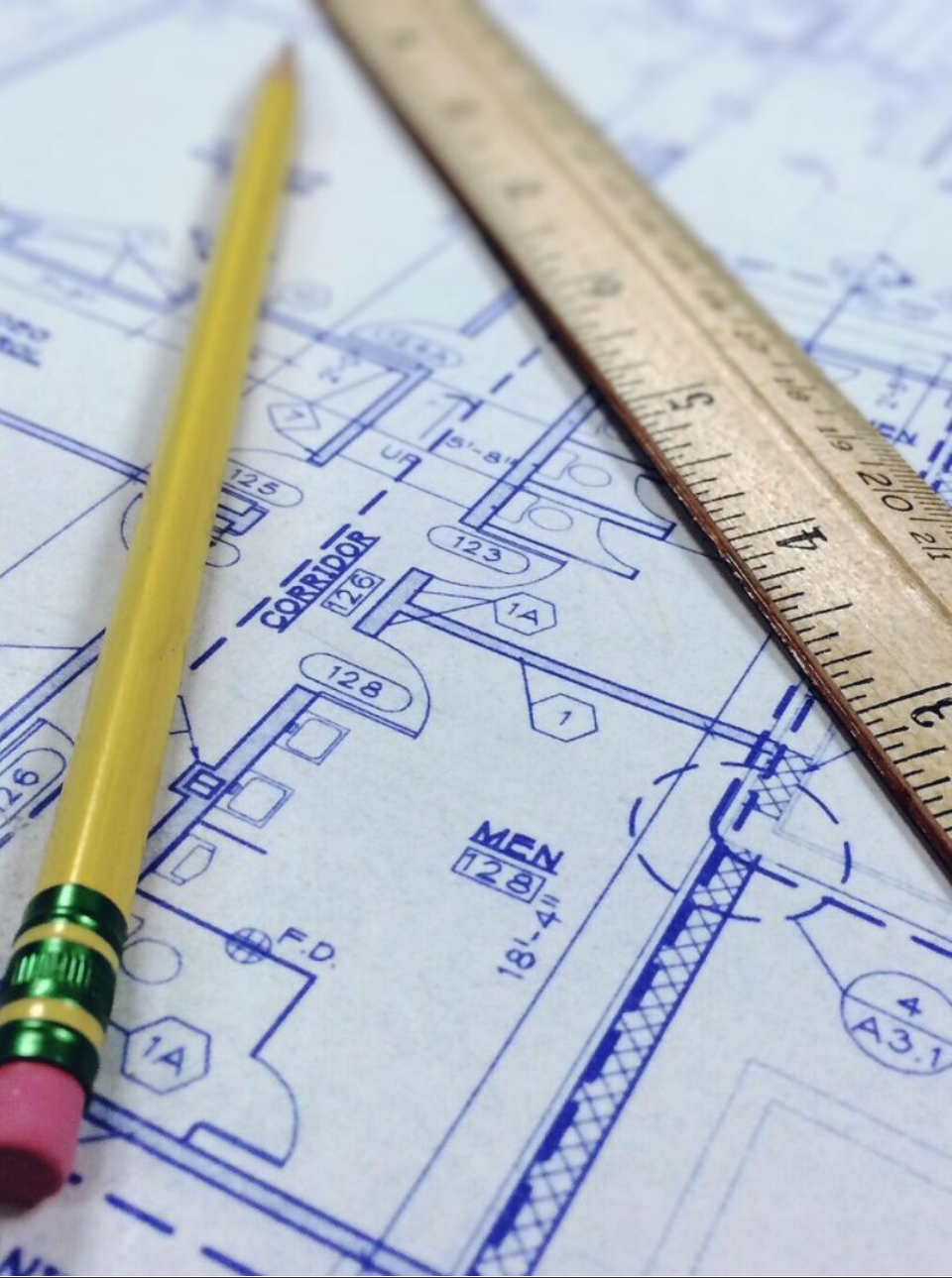


A close-up photograph of a yellow pencil with a green and pink eraser, and a wooden ruler, resting on a blue architectural drawing. The drawing features various lines, circles, and text labels such as 'CORRIDOR', 'MEN', '128', '125', '126', '123', '1A', '1', 'F.D.', '18'-4"', '4', and 'A3.7'.

Improving Vermont Permitting Outcomes through Centralized Support

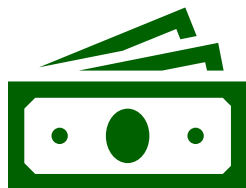
Presentation to Environmental Oversight Committee
10.8.2026

DEC Permitting at a Glance (2025)



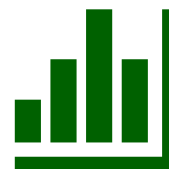
5,315

Permits issued



\$11.3M

Permit Fund
revenue



86%

Permits meetings
DEC Permit
Standards
(PEP Times)



175+

Types of permits
and approvals

Vermont Environmental Permit Center (VEPAC) Initiative

- DEC manages a high volume of permit programs critical to balancing development and other regulated activities with environmental protection.
- Growing regulatory complexity and internal silos have sometimes contributed to project delays and public frustration.
- This initiative seeks opportunities to improve the permitting experience while maintaining strong environmental protection.
- Feedback was collected from DEC staff, other state agencies and external users to DEC's systems including municipalities, planning commissions, engineers and designers, conservation organizations, and trade organizations.
- Recommendations and next steps presented in Final Report (available in mid-October)

VEPAC Goals



Customer Experience: Provide a consistent and supportive user experience to increase applicant satisfaction.



Application Quality: Maximize the number of administratively and technically complete applications reaching DEC programs.



Transparency: Build internal and external dashboards to ensure the public and staff have visibility into permit status.



Operational Efficiency: Reduce the total cycle time from project intake to permit issuance.



Active Deconfliction: Explicitly coordinate across programs to resolve conflicting directives early in the process.

What We Heard

The Process

Often viewed as slow, inconsistent, siloed, and difficult to navigate.

The Experience

Customer service and the permitting experience averaged roughly 60%.

The Need

More upfront guidance, clearer requirements, predictable timelines, and better coordination.

Key Message

DEC staff are viewed as knowledgeable, helpful, and committed. The greatest opportunity is to improve the systems and processes around them.

Engagement at a Glance

47

DEC staff
completed the
internal survey.

43

Staff
participated in
17 interviews.

172

External survey
responses.

59

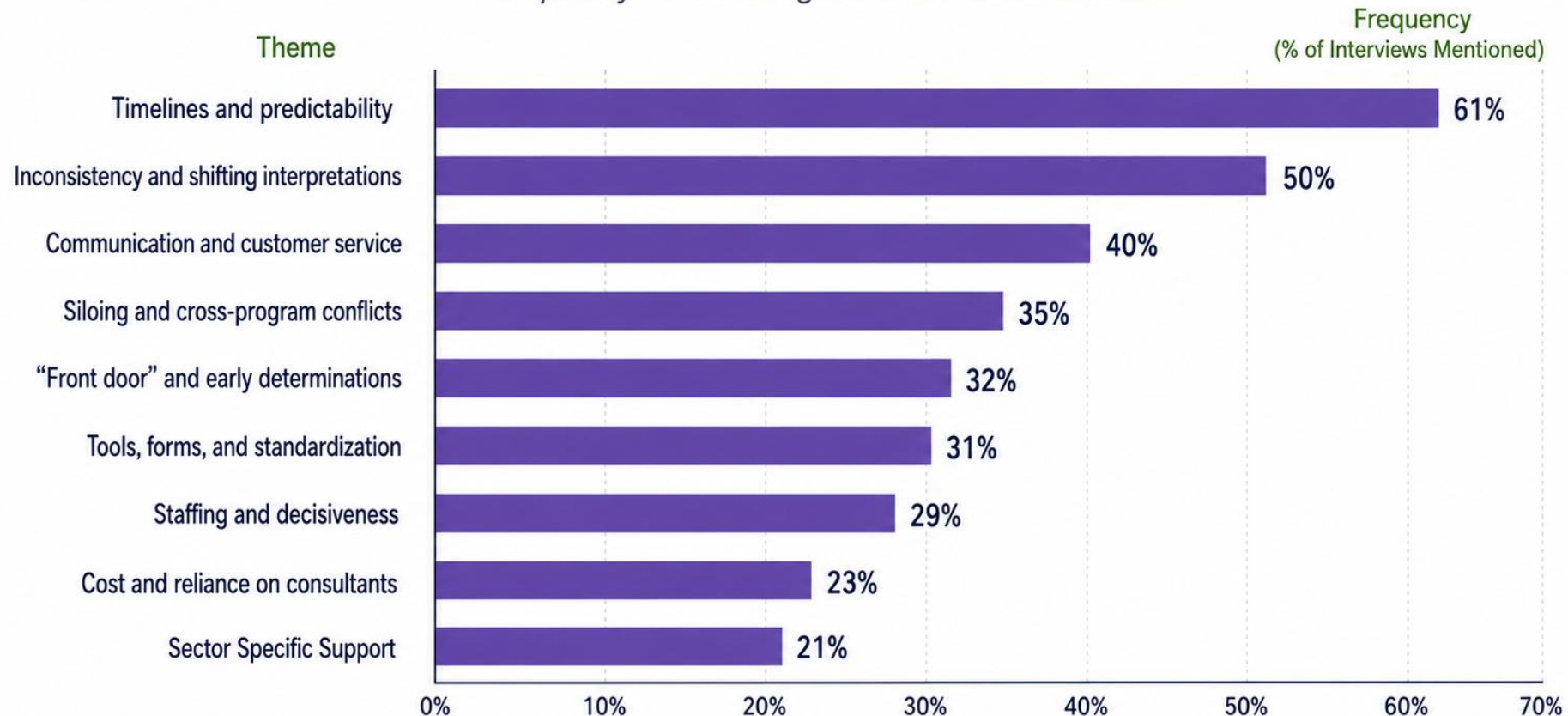
One-on-one
stakeholder
meetings with
municipal officials,
designers and
engineers, regional,
conservation non-
profit, and
businesses.

DEC – External Survey Feedback

 RESPONDENT GROUP	 NUMBER OF SURVEYS COMPLETED	 DEC OVERALL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SCORE (1–10)	 RATING OF DEC'S PERMIT PROCESS (1–5)	 SATISFACTION WITH PERMIT NAVIGATOR (1–5)
 Designer, Engineer, Consultant	55	5.8	2.8	2.2
 Municipal Officials	81	6.5	3.2	3.3
 Regional, Conservation, Non-Profit, Businesses, Other	36	5.6	2.7	2.7
 Total / Average	172	6.0	2.9	2.7

Themes and Frequency from Stakeholder Feedback

Frequency = Percentage of Interviews Mentioned



Based on 62 total interviews. “% Interviews Mentioned” reflects how often each theme was referenced by interviewees.

External Feedback: Where improvement is most needed

30%

agreed the DEC website is easy to navigate

30%

were satisfied with the amount of outreach.

36%

agreed decisions are consistent and predictable.

34%

agreed DEC provides technical assistance and support for applicants.

35%

agreed staff coordinate well across programs.

29%

agreed permitting timelines are reasonable.



Consistency

- Permit application forms
- Fee payments
- Response times
- Improved database
- Inconsistent interpretation of rules
- Development vs. Restoration Projects



Communication

- Pre-application assistance
- Municipal site visits
- Website simplification
- Fact sheets and handouts
- People don't know who to talk to
- Transparency on permitting times
- Decisions early in process



Culture

- Problem solving
- Staff technical expertise and training
- Phone calls
- Written communications
- Cross training among programs
- Staff turnover
- Accessibility



Accountability

- Use data and feedback to inform change
- Process improvement
- Ensure rules are followed
- Final permit decisions

Next Steps

1. Establish an Environmental Permit Center to provide a centralized entry point for permitting assistance. Services will include project reviews, a customer support center, and project coordination.
2. Onboard six high-volume permit programs: wetlands, stormwater, wastewater, public drinking water, rivers, lakes and ponds
3. Decommission the Permit Navigator
4. Improve, upgrade, and standardize technology, databases, and dashboards
5. Develop a process improvement framework
6. Track key performance indicators
7. Review and reallocate internal resources to staff and support the center

The full scope of services will be rolled out over the course of the next year with initial services going live in early 2027. The center will track and measure its successes through key performance indicators and adjust the approach through continued internal and external engagement.