

Empowering people who serve the public®



WHITE PAPER

# 8 Essential Features of Permitting and Licensing Software for Local Governments



## 8 Essential Features of Permitting and Licensing Software for Local Governments



As local governments continue to embrace digital transformation, the need for a comprehensive and purpose-built permitting and licensing software solution is paramount. Choosing the right software vendor is a critical decision that can impact the effectiveness and user experience of these essential, and often complicated, processes of permitting, land use, and licensing.

Over and above the baseline capabilities of the software – including workflow automation, inspection management, collaboration tools, public-facing web portals, mobile functionality, and payment processing to name a few – a robust suite of features that address the unique needs of city and county governments can be a game-changer for ensuring success. Let's explore eight key features that every local government should inquire about before making a decision.

### **1 PURPOSE-BUILT FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A RICH USER EXPERIENCE FOR STAFF AND CONSTITUENTS**

A company focused on the public sector understands local government's unique needs, particularly the requirement for user-friendly software that fosters civic engagement. If the company has a long history of collaboration with the public sector and a team comprised of individuals with extensive experience in this domain, they will deliver a solution with features catering to your specific permitting requirements out of the box. This includes integrated features

such as mobile apps equipped with offline functionality for use in remote areas, as well as round-the-clock online access, delivering a modern and intuitive user experience for both staff and constituents. With more permitting features available native to the software, you will save time and costs associated with setting up and supporting custom configurations to make the system work for your agency.

The optimal provider knows that a city, town, or county can't simply adopt software designed for the private sector. Functionality must be tailored to the nuanced requirements of local governments to ensure seamless management for even the most complex procedures, and effective administration of all permitting, land use, and licensing processes. Choose a vendor who works closely with their clients; developing and improving their products based on feedback from users, agency staff, business owners, and contractors.

### **2 PROVEN TRACK RECORD: AN ESTABLISHED CLIENT NETWORK**

When selecting a permitting and licensing solution, it's crucial to verify your software partner's proven track record of success. Be sure to scrutinize the specifics of their implementations. If these implementations aren't recent, fully operational, or if they're predominantly in one region or among a specific population size, it becomes challenging to gauge whether that success will translate to

your situation. Request references and examine live online examples from similar organizations. Ensure that the vendor's current clients are achieving their objectives. Opting for a provider with an extensive client network and access to user groups and peer forums can enhance your outcomes significantly.

Beyond implementation, it's crucial to know if a vendor can remain strong through adversity. For those vendors who were able to weather a storm, economic downturn, or global pandemic, consider if they continued to invest in product development and grow their business when faced with new challenges, or if they only had the resources to maintain the status quo. Since this is a long-term commitment for your community, it's vital to trust that the company will persist in innovating and possess a clear vision for the product's future.

Finally, remember to assess the financial stability of the vendor and their financial partners. This aspect provides valuable insight into the vendor's ability to navigate future challenges and sustain investments in ongoing research and development. Select a vendor dedicated to advancing their product in line with your evolving requirements to maximize your return on investment.

### **3** **ENTERPRISE SYSTEM: A SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH**

An enterprise solution for permitting and licensing should meet your full lifecycle of community development and regulatory needs. From permitting, land management, and inspections to licensing, code enforcement, and ongoing compliance, your software should aggregate all data across departments and break down silos, so users can easily access data and collaborate within your jurisdiction.

When a software is engineered to be self-contained, with all components sharing a common foundation, you eliminate inefficiencies and duplicative workflow tasks. Not having to rely on or share workflow responsibilities with third-party applications, ensures data integrity and streamlines processes, minimizing dependencies and enhancing overall system efficiency.

Choosing a vendor with a single-source-of-truth enterprise platform is a paradigm shift for your community's permitting capabilities. For example, when your public-facing portal shares the same database with your back-office system, customers can manage projects online with real-time visibility into shared data. They can easily access documentation, track application progress, and be prompted to act on tasks — all in one place.

### **4** **TAILORED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: EASY ACCESS FOR ALL**

Choose a software with a public-facing portal that offers a singular login experience for homeowners, contractors, and business owners. This individual customer experience — whether they are applying for a permit, reviewing a plan, scheduling an inspection, or making a payment — streamlines interactions with the system, promoting ease of use and accessibility. Solutions that prioritize a user-centric design based on modern best practices and feedback from users, fosters positive engagement with stakeholders, contributing to the overall success of government's initiatives.

When a vendor understands the requirements of your customers and constituents, and crafts a solution with those needs as a priority, their satisfaction will significantly rise. As online services supplant traditional face-to-face interactions, such as those at the permit counter and beyond, it remains crucial to ensure that

users still experience the warmth and assistance akin to personal interactions. Consider what features are included in the software you select that help make their experience straightforward and efficient.

## **5 GIS INTEGRATION: PARTNERSHIP FOR INNOVATION**

Most permitting and licensing software will integrate with your Geographic Information System (GIS). It's important to select a partner with a strong, long-standing partnership with industry-leaders, like Esri®. The real value of GIS is more than just mapping, though. A modern software should have GIS natively infused into all processes. This shows the vendor's commitment to providing state-of-the-art GIS integration and empowering local governments with advanced spatial intelligence capabilities.

Trends, relationships, and patterns that visually emerge based on multiple sources of spatial information allow for better planning, forecasting, and decision making. The data can help you improve accuracy and enhance communication among agency partners. You can also automate workflow processes, assignment notifications, fee calculations, and business rules. Using GIS mapping, field workers and back-office staff can plan the most efficient route for inspectors to accomplish their daily goals.

## **6 CONFIGURATION NOT CUSTOMIZATION: STREAMLINED WORKFLOW DESIGN**

You can experience enhanced stability, consistency, and predictability in performance over time when your software provider takes a configuration-focused approach versus a customization approach. Instead of the need for complex, back-end SQL

scripting for customization to meet your unique business processes, choose a solution that offers extensive workflow design, configurability, and automation toolsets directly within the application's graphical user interface (GUI). This ensures flexibility without sacrificing system reliability, empowering local governments to adapt to evolving needs seamlessly.

Reduced dependency for routine modifications, whether from the vendor, a consultant, or your IT team, not only accelerates the implementation of necessary adjustments, but also minimizes the associated costs and potential disruptions. Moreover, empowering non-technical staff members to make changes directly within the application's intuitive interface fosters agility and innovation within the organization, ultimately enhancing operational efficiency and driving continuous improvement efforts.

## **7 DATA INSIGHTS & REPORTING TOOLS: UNPARALLELED ANALYTICAL CAPABILITIES**

Actionable, real-time reporting enables your agency to be more efficient and transparent. Access to advanced data and insight tools via a unified interface enables secure sharing of analyses, visualizations, and performance metrics across various departments and programs ensuring informed decision-making at every level. This integrated approach not only enhances efficiency but also ensures that local governments have access to robust reporting tools without the hassle of additional purchases or dependencies.

Choose a solution that allows you to build user-friendly dashboards tailored to your diverse user needs. Seamlessly surfacing pertinent information empowers users to gain insights into their workload deadlines, and pending tasks, while offering

managers a comprehensive view of team tasks, SLAs, and trends. Leaders across your agency should also have a view into real-time metrics, so they can easily identify bottlenecks across a series of operational performance indicators, make informed decisions, and drive action through internal collaboration.

## **8 SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT: END-TO-END SUPPORT FROM IMPLEMENTATION AND BEYOND**

Implementing a new software is a significant undertaking, so it's critical to have a vendor that is with you every step of the way. Choosing a company that designs, develops, implements, and supports their products in-house, reduces the risks involved when outsourcing to a third party. This direct-from-source approach helps ensure the quality of the solution, ease of configuration, and supportability are exceeding industry expectations.

Successfully implementing on schedule and within budget while meeting clearly defined goals is just the beginning. Seek a provider that offers in-house support and customized programs for training, ongoing assistance, and strategic planning to maximize your investment. Look for a company that consistently invests in innovating and improving their software, allowing you to grow and innovate alongside them. Aim to collaborate with a technology provider prepared for the future, actively shaping industry changes rather than merely reacting to them.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is no room for error in local government. The decision to invest in permitting and licensing software holds immense significance. Opt for a purpose-built, enterprise-grade, GIS-integrated, data-savvy, customer-centric, and configuration-focused solution to streamline and optimize the permitting and licensing process. By prioritizing these essential features, you guarantee that the selected solution not only fulfills your present needs but also remains adaptable to the ever-changing demands of your community.

## ABOUT TYLER TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Tyler Technologies (NYSE: TYL) is a leading provider of integrated software and technology services for the public sector. Tyler's end-to-end solutions empower local, state, and federal government entities to operate efficiently and transparently with residents and each other. By connecting data and processes across disparate systems, Tyler's solutions transform how clients turn actionable insights into opportunities and solutions for their communities. Tyler has more than 44,000 successful installations across 13,000 locations, with clients in all 50 states, Canada, the Caribbean, Australia, and other international locations. Tyler has been recognized numerous times for growth and innovation, including on Government Technology's GovTech 100 list. More information about Tyler Technologies, an S&P 500 company headquartered in Plano, Texas, can be found at [tylertech.com](https://tylertech.com).

[tylertech.com](https://tylertech.com) | 833.895.3783 | [info@tylertech.com](mailto:info@tylertech.com)