



Building Better Homes and Communities

www.actprogram.com

Affordability and Choice Today

ACT Solutions

Builder Compliance Ratings Allow Performance-Based Fees

Markham, Ontario

Incentive

The Town of Markham's Building Standards Department wanted to develop a system to measure and promote the performance of its building industry clients. The system would enable the Town to fast-track permit approvals and lower fees for top-performing builders. Markham could then focus its enforcement efforts on clients who are serial violators of the building code.

Plan

Markham's Client Performance Program would record and weigh deficiencies in building permit applications, builder administrative compliance and construction. The key would be systematic recording and weighting of builder deficiencies and violations.

Municipal staff, with assistance from high-performance builders and IT consultants, undertook the following steps:

- identification of standard deficiencies associated with several activities;
- testing and procurement of mobile computers to enable field data collection;
- software modifications designed and implemented;
- data analysis; and
- data publication.

The Town also enhanced its computerized permit and inspection management system, AMANDA, to accommodate the new Client Performance Program.

Project team

Town of Markham Building Standards Department
Mattamy Homes
Private sector IT consultants

Results

Mobile computers were central to the objective of improved on-site documentation of deficiencies.



**Top-ranking builders qualify
for Markham's Building
Excellence Awards.**

Source: Town of Markham

All of Markham's inspectors were issued with and trained in using a mobile unit. The devices are also equipped with mobile printers so that inspectors can produce documents on site, such as occupancy certificates.

Ranking of builder performance is derived from the deficiencies recorded by inspectors. The ranking reflects the relative incidence and severity of preventable deficiencies encountered.

It could work for you!

Program Partners:



Cataloguing the deficiencies proved more difficult than anticipated. IT consultants were brought in to program AMANDA to weigh deficiencies by importance and severity. This enabled the system to automatically rank builders according to their code compliance records.

John Wright, Markham's Director of Building Standards, said other municipalities who want to use AMANDA as Markham has done must be prepared for a continuous process of program refinement and defect correction. Technology applications today are inherently complex, and innovative systems often require extensive debugging and redesign at the outset.

At the end of 2005, the Town introduced an Internet-based permit application form to accelerate the application process. Markham is also modifying its website to publish builder deficiency data. The Town believes making this data easily accessible will induce better builder performance with ultimate benefits to consumers.

Initially, Markham thought it might adjust its inspection program to focus on builders with poor compliance records. Amendments to Ontario's Building Code Act in 2005, requiring mandatory inspections at certain stages of construction, precluded that.

Instead, Markham adjusted its fees to reflect compliance. For example, fees are based on fully compliant permit submissions and readiness for inspection. Markham's fee bylaw provides for additional fees where application corrections and/or re-inspections are required.

Builders proudly display award symbols like this in their advertising.

Source: Town of Markham



"Under-performing builders and designers often see no advantage in doing good work. The Client Performance Program gives builders an incentive to perform well. We are always trying to devise ways of giving high performers a competitive advantage," said Mr. Wright.

Related report

Client Performance Program Final Report (Markham Building Standards Department 2005)

This report is available from the ACT website. See "ACT projects & solutions".

Contact

John Wright,
Director Building Standards,
Town of Markham
jwright@city.markham.on.ca
(905) 475-4712

Affordability and Choice Today

Got a housing regulatory issue? ACT may already have a solution! Find out about ACT regulatory reform projects carried out across Canada:

www.actprogram.com

ACT Administration

c/o The Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Tel: 613-241-5221 ext. 242
Fax: 613-244-1515
E-mail: info@actprogram.com

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements recognizes ACT as a top global best practice for improving the living environment.

ACT is sponsored by CMHC.

It could work for you!